



From the Headmaster

As we returned to the RGS in September with blue skies and sunshine still upon us, Asda was the first supermarket in the UK to have mince pies on its shelves. *“Juicy raisins, festive spices and crumbly pastry, because it’s not Christmas without them!”* And apparently it isn’t September without mince pies either... Despite the increasingly materialistic nature of Christmas and the associated cynicism about our modern-day commercial celebration, I can’t help but think the message becomes more and more relevant as each year passes. Our two Carol Services this week in Holy Trinity Church and then in Guildford Cathedral encapsulate for me why this is the case. Some of our most traditional carols such as *Hark! The herald Angels sing* and *O come, all ye faithful* date back to the 1700s; arguably the messages contained in them also belong to another era.

Yet, the carols sung at the Carol Services have as their very essence the themes of rejoicing, unity, and praise: *peace on earth, good will to men; joyful and triumphant; with true love and brotherhood*; to quote just a few lines. Indeed, the traditional blessing which concludes our final assembly talks of the joy of the angels, the enthusiasm of the shepherds, the diligence of the wise men and the peace of the child. As I reflect on this term, each one of these messages, rather than simply the rhetoric of a bygone age, resonates.

Those who were fortunate enough to see the recent drama productions of *Nicholas Nickleby* or *The Tempest* could not help but be swept along by the sheer infectious enthusiasm and energy of the boys. That same *joie de vivre* has epitomised so many events this term: from the charitable initiatives such as the Stand-Up to Comedy evening or staff gunging, to our dynamic partnerships and links with local school children such as the Masterclasses or weekly Primary School Project, to the House competitions where boys have competed against their peers with no little commitment and entertaining rivalry! On the sports fields, in concerts, on stage, in the classroom, in the co-curricular sphere I continually see RGS boys who strive for ever higher standards through their diligence and yet achieve this with cohesion and togetherness, a lightness of touch, humility, and – most importantly – a sense of humour and fun.

So, as term finishes today, I would like to personally offer my sincere thanks to all the staff and governors who give of their time so generously and willingly to support and inspire the students; to you, the parents, who are supportive of the School in so many ways; and most of all to the students whose talent, commitment, and, indeed, good humour make this such a wonderful community of which to be a part.

I wish you all a very relaxing, enjoyable and happy Christmas period – including a sense of peace, plenty of joy and even the odd mince pie or two – and offer you the very best wishes for the new year. I look forward to seeing you in 2020!

Charity: Just over £7,000 has been raised by the various fundraising initiatives this term. This money will be distributed among the School's three nominated charities. The local charity is *Shooting Star Children's Hospices*, a leading hospice charity caring for babies, children and young people with life-limiting conditions, and their families. The national charity is *Cancer Research UK* which pioneers life-saving research to bring forward the day when all cancers are cured. Finally, the international charity is *WaterAid*, determined to make water, sanitation and hygiene normal for everyone, everywhere.

Drama: A 37-strong, combined RGS and Guildford High School treated appreciative audiences to a thoroughly slick, professional production of Charles Dickens' play *Nicholas Nickleby*. Plenty of rousing gusto and movement; a feast of colour; moody, evocative lighting and sound; innovative, expansive staging; and intricate costumes all served to transport the audience to early nineteenth-century England. Nicholas, played by **Ellis Baker** (L6), was perfect as the noble and earnest lead, in stark contrast to **Dan Cobley** (5H) who sparkled as the detestable, chillingly cruel and sneering Wackford Squeers. **Joe Field** (L6) was suitably evil as Sir Mulberry Hawk while **Edward Osborough** (5N) captured the vindictive nature of Ralph; **Alex Vale** (4B) was outstanding as the vulnerable and meek Smike. A suitably festive finale provided a fitting conclusion to what was a stunning production.

English: **Samuel Heatley** (3R) won his age category in the *Wild about Writing* competition with a story entitled *Frost*, inspired by the natural world.

Model United Nations: The RGS accrued seven individual awards at the Benenden Conference, making the RGS one of the most decorated schools. The delegation of Peru, comprising **Joe Colton** (4B), **Boldi Paladi-Kovacs** (4H), **Aradhya Soneja** (5B) and **Leo Wang** (5A), came away with our second *Best Delegation* award of the season. **Dev Atara** (4A), **Omeet Atara** (L6) and **Hugh Jones** (L6) also won individual awards.

Sports News

[View the full sports results](#)

Badminton: **Sam Baker** (5P) is currently ranked number 1 in Surrey at Under 18 and is in the top ten in England at Under 17.

Chess: The RGS 1st VI had a comprehensive 6 – 0 victory over Hampton School's 2nd VI to round off an excellent term in the league.

Cross-country: **Will Barnicoat** (L6) ran for Great Britain in the under 20s European Cross-country Championships in Lisbon: an incredible achievement at the age of 16 years. He ran brilliantly, being placed 22nd out of the top 100 runners from around Europe, and helped Great Britain to the gold medal.

Fencing: **Leo Kamstra** (5B) has been selected to be a member of the Under 17 England and Great Britain squads, while his brother **Ben Kamstra** (2E) will be representing England in the Under 14s.

Football: The 1st XI recorded a narrow 2 – 1 victory against Hampton School with goals from **Hari Grewal** (L6) and **Duncan Timberlake** (L6).

Rugby: Highlights of the penultimate block fixture of term against Abingdon School included an excellent 26 – 16 win for the 2nd XV and identical 15 – 12 victories for the Under 15C and D teams alike! The final weekend of competitive rugby saw the RGS enjoy a new block fixture against Brighton College. Evenly contested, the Under 16A and Under 15A teams particularly impressed with 31 – 7 and 43 – 19 victories respectively. Our thanks go to all those boys who have represented RGS teams this term and also to all those parents who have stood on the touchline in all weather conditions and provided such positive support.

Shooting: The RGS successfully defended the Suffield-Jones Hicks Cup against Bradfield College.