



From the Headmaster

An article this week claimed that there are at least 10,000 images of lions in London alone: from the Landseer Lions, the four enormous bronze cats that surround Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square, to the proud lions adorning the north entrance to the British Museum, to the regal lions on the main gate of Buckingham Palace and the nearby Queen Victoria Memorial. Lions are part of British life, part of British history, part of British popular culture. In fact, lions go back even further to the world of myth and legend: the first labour of Heracles was to slay the Nemean lion; Aesop told the fable of the lion and the mouse; and Androcles won a lion's friendship by removing a thorn from his paw. Literature and fiction provide a more humane, insightful depiction. In the 1939 film *Wizard of Oz*, the cowardly lion is sweet and vulnerable; in *The Chronicles of Narnia* by CS Lewis, Aslan represents among other things, kindness, wisdom and generosity. And lions remain part of our modern-day culture to this day: "Three lions on our shirt!" sang Baddiel and Skinner in the 1996 football anthem; the British and Irish lions tour in the southern hemisphere in rugby; and England cricketers wear three lions on their caps.

Bringing it closer to home, Guildford also has a pro-occupation with big cats as it boasts the *White Lion Walk* named after *The White Lion Inn*: one of the first of the town's five large coaching inns which survived until 1956. Even the RGS is not exempt from this pre-occupation with the so-called King of the Jungle. A guilt lion – accompanied by a red dragon – keeps watch over the main entrance to the courtyard of the Old Building on the High Street and the School Hymn from the 1600s, *To be a pilgrim* by John Bunyan reminds us that "No lion can him fright; He'll with a giant fight," in the valiant man's quest to be a pilgrim.

And so what do our RGS lion references mean for our students and our community in the 21st century? Is it simply an outdated heraldic depiction of royalty and kingship or does it have more relevance and resonance? Traditionally in mythology, in culture, in folklore, the lion represents courage, justice, power, strength, wisdom, pride, honour, family and dignity: this could almost be an overview of our current School Values. And this spirit is what, I hope, the lion keeping watch over the Old Building symbolises.

For me, the presence of lions all around us is a constant reminder of how we should conduct ourselves, how we should approach life, even in or especially in the twenty-first century. Stand tall and hold your head up high when times get hard. Conduct yourself with dignity and never give up. Protect what's yours with everything you have. Have courage and have faith. Lead others with a loving heart and compassion. And if these messages don't make our protective guilt lion relevant in the current climate, I don't know what does!

Latest News

Duke of Edinburgh's Award: During half term, 20 members of the Upper Sixth completed their Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award Qualifying expedition. The expedition was modified to fit with Covid procedures, taking place on the Greensand Way that stretches across Surrey into Kent, with the teams returning home each evening. The teams walked in excess of 100km over the four days and impressed the assessors with their expedition skills and camaraderie, especially on the very wet second day. As Mr Yetman, Assistant Head (Co-curricular) commented: "It is worth noting that although the Greensand Way is much less mountainous than in the Lakes, due the undulating nature the overall height climbed is actually very similar and the navigation is also a challenge in places."

King's Lecture: We were delighted to welcome families from throughout Surrey and beyond to this term's online King's Lecture. With record numbers attending, the event – despite the remote nature of it – proved a great success as businesswoman and writer Jo Wimble-Groves delivered a talk which chimed with so much of our messaging in the current climate. She told the story of her journey from a girl on her first day at school with a trusty red suitcase full of "hopes, dreams, and aspirations" to now being a phenomenally successful entrepreneur with her multi-million pound global, award-winning communications company, *Active Digital*. She spoke of the importance of tenacity and resilience, not being afraid to fail, and having the flexibility to cope with an uncertain landscape. A succession of take-away messages resonated: focusing on what is right, not what is wrong, with you; celebrating your own unique individual strengths and skills; not being afraid to voice your opinion; and being confident to give it a try and put yourself out there. As Jo said, "Be ambitious, be bold, and take opportunities!" A rapid-fire Question and Answer session covered a range of topics from business to equality, from motivation to Covid, from the environment to self-esteem. An excellent Vote of Thanks by **Ishan Nathan** (L6) brought to a close a genuinely inspiring and thought-provoking evening.

Remembrance Service: For the first time in the School's history our service of remembrance was held online and broadcast simultaneously to all boys. After the reading from *Wisdom III 1 – 9* by **Guy Tregear** (U6), wreaths were laid on behalf of the old boys of our school and the current school community respectively by Religion and Philosophy teacher and Old Guildfordian Mr Tayar and School captain **Theo Lakin** (U6). The two-minute silence concluded with a beautiful, haunting performance of the Last Post by **Stan Lawrence** (U6). The Second Form choristers also were outstanding as they sang selected verse from *O God, our help in ages past* and *Immortal Invisible*. If you would like to watch our short service of remembrance, please click [here](#).

Sports News

Hockey: **Christopher Hitchcox** (3P) has been selected by Surrey Hockey as a member of their Under 15 Academy.

Health and Safety

The health, welfare and safety of our community continue to remain our highest priority. In *The RGS Today* which is circulated via email to students each week day, we include regular reminders to the students about the importance of protecting themselves and prioritising their health, especially while travelling to and from school and when moving around our site. Your support in reiterating these key messages would be very much appreciated. Our Covid Golden Rules include a focus on (but not exclusively):

- good health with a focus on hand and respiratory hygiene;
- cleanliness of desks, chairs and areas used;
- good ventilation and being outside whenever possible;
- structured movement around the School;
- sensible social distancing as well as adherence to year-group bubbles and designated areas while in school;
- strict adherence to government guidelines with regard to social distancing and the wearing of masks in corridors, communal areas and on public transport.