



From the Headmaster

When the school gates re-opened in September – 164 days after they first closed due to the lockdown in March – there was a sense of genuine joy that we were able to physically re-unite as a community. The energy and enthusiasm of the boys – and, indeed, staff – were very much in evidence as corridors, classrooms and year-group areas were filled once again with the infectious sound of animated chat and laughter. I am delighted to say that despite the not insignificant challenges facing schools across the UK, we have managed not only to keep our gates open but even enjoy a semblance of normality over the past few months. For this, I would like to express my genuine thanks to the boys and staff for being so co-operative and flexible, as well as adhering to the succession of rules and regulations which have accompanied every area of school life. We have undoubtedly, however, been extremely fortunate to stay healthy as a community and for that I am immensely grateful.

Traditionally, at the end of term, headteachers throughout the country in their various addresses and publications focus on the outstanding successes of their pupils. When term started in September, I had major concerns as to whether I would have much to refer to as the term drew to a close. I should not, however, have worried! This term has been rich in achievements and events: competitive cricket fixtures against other schools; the outstanding Independent Learning Assignment finals; a virtual Model United Nations Conference; Duke of Edinburgh expeditions; fieldtrips; virtual and physical Open Days; the Commemoration Service; online Remembrance and Carol Services; charity initiatives, including the *Auction of Promises*, raising over £7,000 in this term alone; virtual visits to Care Homes; the opening of RGS Nanjing; and so I could go on.

All of these, and many more, are certainly worthy of mention, worthy of celebration. And yet, for me, what has been the hallmark of this term has not been the headline successes but rather – as our termly newsletter *The Register* has served to highlight – the mundane, the ordinary, the everyday. Unashamedly, I would like to celebrate the good humour, flexibility and kindness of all our community: our support and teaching staff alike, our boys, our parents, our governors. It is the daily interactions, watching boys at breaktimes just being boys, the camaraderie and friendship: it is this spirit which defines who we are and this is truly worthy of recognition. The world desperately needs hope in these challenging times and Christmas time, perhaps more than any other, is a time for hope and for new beginnings. It is a time for reminding ourselves of what matters most in life and that is friendship and family, health and peace.

At Final Assembly in the Michaelmas Term, I traditionally finish with the following blessing and this has, perhaps, never seemed more pertinent. Our academic successes and our achievements in the co-curricular sphere are all undoubtedly important but against the backdrop of the last twelve months, it is the spirit of joy and enthusiasm, generosity and peace, and most importantly the health and wellbeing of every one of our community against which everything else pales into insignificance.

"May we receive the joy of the angels, the enthusiasm of the shepherds, the generosity of the wise men and the peace of the Christ child, and may the blessings of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us and remain among us this Christmas time. Amen."

I would like to wish you and your families a restful, relaxing and healthy Christmas break and I look forward to a much brighter, more normal new year!

Latest News

Charity: Thank you to all those who contributed promises or bid for any of the items in this term's major charity initiative, *Auction of Promises 2020*. Over £3,500 was raised which will be shared equally between the School's three nominated charities.

Enterprise: In the virtual final of the London Institute of Banking & Finance Student Investor Challenge 2020, *Team Stonkbros* represented the RGS. The Fifth Form team consisting of **George Hewitt**, **Daniel Hitchcox**, **Rudi Rannabugardie** and **Gus Scadding** achieved notable success by reaching the final seven: 9,840 teams started the process comprising over 33,000 students. Although they did not make the top three, their presentation was highly professional and they impressed throughout.

German: At the Goethe Institute's German debating tournament, our Lower Sixth Form team was drawn to argue in favour of the motion, *Should racist and colonialist street and building names be renamed?* After thorough research and equipped with a whole new set of language skills and phraseology, the RGS team were announced the winners to progress to the next round. Congratulations to team captain **Jack Burrows** for his dynamism, as well as **Alex Golding**, **Matthew Warner** and **Luca Watson-Hart**.

Hockey: **Ehsan Anwar-Khan** (4V) has been selected for South England Hockey Performance Centre.

Mathematics: In this year's Senior Maths Challenge, taken online by all Sixth Form boys studying Further Maths, 32% of our boys achieved a gold certificate, 32% silver and 25% a bronze. Of notable mention were the four boys who qualified for the British Maths Olympiad Round 1: **Alex Thow**, **Henry Benett**, **Ben Watkins** and **Yuvan Raja**. Yuvan's achievement, in particular, was remarkable as he is in Second Form and was competing against Sixth Formers studying Further Maths A Level; he was placed in the top 2% nationally.

Staff: We say farewell to three members of staff this term. We are grateful to Mr Grace who stepped in at short notice to help in the Chemistry Department. Our Head of History, Mr Bass, is leaving to become Head of Upper School at Cheltenham College; Mrs Walker is also departing but just down the road to become Head of Biology at Guildford High School. We thank them all for their wonderful commitment to the RGS and wish them all the very best in the future.

Sailing: **Ben Mueller** (L6) has been selected for the Royal Yachting Association's 29er Youth Performance Squad. Ben's selection recognises his potential to progress within British Youth Sailing to the British Sailing Team, and hopefully into their Olympic Development Programme.

Taekwondo: **Aaron Clark** (1C) has been promoted to Black Belt (1st Dan) in ITF Taekwondo: a highly impressive achievement at his age.