



From the Headmaster

As a school which has been established in the heart of its local community for over 500 years, a school which has collaboration as one of its core values, the themes of self-sacrifice and charity, kindness and compassion, generosity and altruism would seem particularly fitting. In this light, our annual Commemoration Service served to remind us all of the extraordinary debt we owe to those individuals and families without whom the modern RGS would not exist.

Guildford Cathedral provided the wonderful setting for us to unite in communal celebration: a chance to welcome those new to our community – staff and students alike – and to reflect on a rich tradition of which we are all proud to be a part. Our service of thanksgiving allowed us to recognise the good fortune of the RGS and to thank those who have supported it. This was all the more poignant as it was the first time the whole school community had joined together in person for almost two years.

The RGS is, undoubtedly, as I mentioned in my address, a very fortunate school and has been throughout its 500-year history. From the initial endowment of Robert Becketingham to the support of King Edward VI, our early history was blessed and secured by the benevolence of others. That good fortune continued through the struggles and trials of our existence, even through to the 1970s when the School faced the prospect of losing its name and identity when comprehensive education was being endorsed for the young people of Guildford. The Service allowed us to express formally our gratitude to *“our founders and many benefactors, men and women whose generous gifts and dedicated service have built, maintained and improved the School over the centuries”*. These individuals showed exceptional vision and generosity to support an institution which continues to educate and inspire so many talented local students.

We have a duty and a responsibility in the twenty-first century to continue to embed this generosity of spirit. I firmly believe that our values and our learning habits mean that we are nurturing students who have a conscience and an awareness of their responsibility as citizens to make a difference, students who are capable of listening and collaborating with others. As the RGS family continues to grow, this sense of working together has never been more fundamental. Last week we held a delayed event for the Class of 2021 and their parents as we formally welcomed the latest cohort into our Old Guildfordian community. Our exciting merger with RGS Prep, our official opening of our wonderful international school in Dubai, alongside our schools in Qatar and China, as well as our partnership schools in Cambodia and Nepal, mean the RGS family has never been more geographically diverse and yet ironically never more connected and united. Despite each school’s individuality, personality and character, at heart we all share our fundamental School Values of inclusivity, scholarship, integrity, respect, courage and collaboration. As author Morgan Scott Peck once said, *“Share our similarities, celebrate our differences”*; this particularly chimes for me.

Every time the RGS has faced challenges and threats to its very existence, we have been supported by the individuals we celebrated today. Our School has been tested throughout its existence and has always risen to meet such trials and to overcome them. The challenges of the past 18 months have necessitated great resilience, flexibility and adaptability of which we can all be proud. Such a response is very much in keeping with the nature of this school through its history and, as our global family increases, so the values and ethos which make the RGS so special give me great confidence for the future and make me immensely proud to be part of what is such an extraordinary family.

Latest News

Charity: With so many fantastic charities put forward by staff and students and a staggering number of votes, the phenomenal engagement in this year's charities spoke volumes for the desire of the whole community to make a difference to others. As a result of this vote, the three nominated charities which the RGS will be supporting this year are: the *Max Windle Memorial Trust* (local) which focuses on mental health in young people; the *Alzheimer's Society* (national) which provides information and support, funds research and creates lasting change for people affected by dementia; *Compassion* (international) which tackles children's poverty all over the world. We hope you join with us in supporting these fantastic causes through our various charitable initiatives throughout this academic year.

Essay Competitions: A number of boys achieved notable success in national essay competitions over the summer. This ranged from junior boys including **Kiki Akin-Olugbade** (2R) who won the Jo Cox Memorial Award 2021 in the national *Show Racism the Red Card* competition for his poem *Black* to a number of successes for our seniors. **Amardip Ahluwalia** (U6) was Highly Commended in the Russian Studies Competition held by Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge; Sebastian Norris's essay, *Did racism exist in the ancient world?*, likewise was highly commended in a competition by the same college; and Mattie Sutton also received a highly commended award for his essay where he discussed *whether the sea always linked rather than divided people in the ancient world*.

Music: We were delighted to return to Holy Trinity Church for our traditional Concerto Concert, which featured seven astonishing performances from the recent Upper Sixth Form musicians with *Southern Pro Musica*, the professional orchestra for Guildford. The whole evening was a wonderful celebration of our extremely talented musicians, featuring **Ruben Berstecher** (piano), **Solomon Poole** (horn), **Salvatore Nigrelli** (oboe), **Harry Hodge** (piano), **Stan Lawrence** (trumpet), **Henry Forrest** (saxophone) and **Alex Thow** (piano). The standard of playing took everyone's breath away and the atmosphere and support from the audience was overwhelming, with sustained and fully deserved standing ovations for every performer.

Sports News

[View the full sports results](#)

Fencing: In the British Cadet and Junior Championships, **Xavier Wallin** (5P) particularly impressed finishing twelfth in the Under 17 foil.

Rugby: After a fiercely contested and extremely enjoyable junior House competition in the morning in which Austen won the First Form competition and Beckingham the Second Form competition, inter-school rugby matches returned with the block fixture against Epsom College. Against an accomplished Epsom first team, the RGS 1st XV went into half time 8 – 0 ahead but, despite a challenging second half, emerged with significant credit in an 8 – 22 defeat. Other highlights included a clean sweep of wins for our Under 15 A and B teams, as the pre-season programme paid off with some very encouraging performances. As part of the gradual, phased return to contact, in addition, seven of the matches were touch games, as on-pitch coaching and support prepared the boys for a return to greater physicality.

Swimming: In the first gala of the year, a team of RGS swimmers travelled to Reed's School and won the event by 125 to 120 points in a hard-fought, close and exciting finale.

