



From the Headmaster

In a book called *The Great Acceleration: How the world is getting faster, faster*, the author Robert Colvile investigates how the ceaseless advance of technology and our fundamental appetite for novelty and convenience have contributed to speeding up almost every aspect of daily life. The book illustrates this through a range of eclectic examples, from the fact that chickens grow four times more quickly now than they did 50 years ago to the statistic that the average walking speed has gone up 10% in the last 20 years. Colvile also talks of the herd mentality, the concept of entrainment in which living creatures' natural rhythms unconsciously adjust to each other, hence our pace of life, so he argues, is governed by the nature of our environment.

Schools are clearly not exempt from this culture: access to information is literally at our fingertips; global communication is instant; results are expected immediately; the desire for everything to be faster and more streamlined is insatiable. Add to this, in a school setting, youthful exuberance and it means that RGS boys seem to be endlessly in an enthusiastic, energetic rush! There is, of course, a certain irony in mentioning this at the end of a half term into which an extraordinary number of things have been squeezed including two recent events for which speed is one of the primary goals: the House Cross-Country Competition and our *RGS Race Across the World*. Yet, perhaps, within this context, this message is all the more potent and poignant.

As we race towards the future – a world packed with new technologies, new ideas and new discoveries as we look to find solutions to many of our global problems – ironically, slowness has never been more important. The chance to reflect, digest and re-evaluate can only occur when time is not the priority. Reading books, spending time with friends and family, good conversation, and just taking time out to quietly think and daydream should be intrinsic parts of a modern lifestyle. Creating this space and time in our busy lives for private reflection and for pressing the pause button is so important for our emotional wellbeing and physical health, and that applies to students and staff alike.

Robert Colvile mentions that, "*Where our grandfathers sauntered and our fathers strode, we now find ourselves scampering about our daily tasks.*" So at a time when speed is of the essence, we must learn when and how to apply the brakes and how to enjoy the ride. As we catch our breath after a first half term of great intensity, I hope that there is still a place in all our lives for appreciating the importance of taking things slowly and for sauntering. And that is something surely worth taking the time to reflect upon.

I wish you and your families a very relaxing, enjoyable half term and look forward to seeing the boys return refreshed and ready for the second half of the Michaelmas Term.

Latest News

Academic: In the Lower Sixth Form *RGS Explore* competition, students were given the chance to respond to subject-specific tasks set by academics at Cambridge University. The following awards were made: *Most Imaginative* - **Ollie Liversedge** who created his own unique language; *Humanities* - **Faaïq Ali** who explored Nietzsche; *STEM* - **Theo Collins** who asked whether quantum computing will threaten data security; and *Best Exploration* - **Noah Campbell** who curated the music for a hypothetical documentary on the British Raj.

Author Visit: Pupils from Sandfield School and RGS Prep joined our First Form at an author event for *Guildford Book Festival*. The visiting author was Chris Wakling, who spoke about his *Jack Courtney Adventure* series, co-authored with Wilbur Smith. He led a lively discussion about the elements of a good story and how to go about writing an exciting tale, reading several extracts from the first two books in the series by way of example: descriptions of a very turbulent flight, a close encounter with an angry gorilla and diving for treasure in shark infested waters were all listened to intently by a near-silent audience.

Masterclasses: This first half of term has seen the RGS opening its doors over four weekends, welcoming 27 Primary Schools and well over 120 pupils, supported by our amazing Sixth Form volunteers. Boys and girls from local schools have had a chance to immerse themselves in a range of inspiring and stretching classes, from Operation Parliament to Fibonacci codes to learning new skills in Design and Technology.

Music: It has been lovely to continue to enjoy live music events. The last fortnight has included a return to the monthly Market Day Concert at Holy Trinity Church and the Junior Music Scholars' Concert. These were followed by a stunning piano concert in the Recital Room, where our Head of Keyboard, Jan Newman, and Maureen Galea, one of our piano teachers, gave a concert of music written for two pianos. This included music by Rachmaninov, Piazzola and our very own Mr White.

RGS Race Across The World: Our inaugural event for all the schools in our global RGS family saw students, staff, parents, families and the wider community coming together for one weekend to cover as much distance as possible using non-motorised methods of transport. Despite the distances between the schools in the UK, Nanjing, Qatar and Dubai, the similarities were far more evident than the differences. With all proudly supporting the Tudor rose and RGS-branded kit, with the genuine warmth, energy and enthusiasm of all, and with a desire to participate and collaborate, the schools managed to cover an extraordinary 8,150 km. In addition, we raised significant sums for our local, national and international charities in the process.

Sports News

Chess: The RGS hosted the Russell Trophy in which 14 teams, 93 pupils and eight different schools competed in an over-the-board chess tournament. In the Championship section of the competition, in a very strong field of schools, our 1st VI achieved an impressive victory; in the Major section, our 2nd VI came second.

Fencing: In the Newham Under 16 Boys Foil, **Freddie Cheng** (L6) secured the Bronze medal.

Football: An Under 18 side secured a very creditable 1 – 1 draw against Winchester College, with **Sam Astles** (U6) scoring our only goal of the game.

Golf: In the Independent Schools Knock-out Competition, the RGS team comprising **Lucas English** (4H), **Oliver George** (5A) and **James Wiles** (L6) were convincing winners by 3 – 0 against Charterhouse School.

Rugby: The challenging start to the term continued with block fixtures against St John's School, Leatherhead and The Judd School, including the annual Super Friday fixture where all First Form boys were given the chance to play in a competitive inter-school fixture. With just under 40 fixtures in the two blocks – and over half of them won by RGS teams – our sides impressed as the 2nd XV recorded another two fine victories and the Under 15Bs maintained their excellent unbeaten start to the season.

Shooting: Our team won a 10-bull match by 463 to 446 at Lancing College, with **Brandon Tan** (L6) top scorer.

Skiing: In the English Schools Age group and Open Finals, our A Team was placed fifth at Under 16 level.

