



From the Headmaster

You know it's Christmas again when...

Everyone will have their own response to this, whether it's the sighting of that first mince pie of the season, the early prediction of a white Christmas, or decorations appearing in shops. For many, however, the launch of the *John Lewis* Christmas advert heralds the true start of the festive period. People are always quick to critique this now-traditional, mini Hollywood offering. For those of you who have managed to escape it so far, in summary: an alien crash lands, finds out about the weird and wonderful traditions of Christmas, and then flies home. In terms of theme, for many it is just too tick box. Cute kid? Tick. Outsider desperate for acceptance? Tick. Maudlin cover version of a classic song? Tick? Touching moments of humour and then affection? Tick. Bittersweet ending? Tick. Is it all simply too predictable and too clichéd?

The Guardian review, albeit tongue-in-cheek, offers a far more sinister, conspiracy-theory interpretation: "...the alien decides it's time to return to her home planet. She kisses the boy on the cheek. Then she flies away, back to her laboratory so that she can weaponise the human DNA she extracted from him into a synthetic alien virus expressly designed to wage war on humanity as we know it. That's right, the *John Lewis* Christmas advert is a Coronavirus origin story. Don't argue with me. It is. It makes perfect sense."

This as it may be, the media has reacted to this advert with traditional cynicism: it's too samey or not weepy enough, it is too tried-and-tested or too predictable, or all of these and more. And yet, is this not to miss the whole point? The formulaic nature of this time of year is precisely what makes the festive period so precious. Whether we are child or adult, whatever the – many and varied – challenges of the current climate, we experience the reassuringly-familiar same sights, sounds, and smells from tinsel, to Bing Crosby, to sprouts.

The same could be said of this term. On one level, the RGS has seen concerts, plays, sporting fixtures before, but this should not in any way lessen their importance or impact, rather it makes them all the more precious and special. The last few weeks have seen events of breath-taking and extraordinary quality: the Orchestral Concert in Holy Trinity Church, the drama production of *Around the World in 80 Days*, and our *Carols from the Cathedral* being just a few such examples. It is the very fact that in the current climate we can continue to offer such a varied and diverse offering for the boys, that their talents can be showcased

on so many stages, and that they derive such pride, pleasure and satisfaction from participation, that makes each and every one of these events so significant. And so it may be clichéd and it may be predictable, but what has been achieved this term is truly worthy of celebration.

As the term and the calendar year draw to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very happy, healthy and enjoyable festive break and I look forward to seeing the boys refreshed and recharged in the new year.

Latest News

CAROLS FROM THE CATHEDRAL: This musical celebration broadcast from Guildford Cathedral and featuring the RGS choir, Brass Ensemble, and Guildford High School choir included a number of RGS traditional favourites including *Child of the Stable's Secret Birth* – Rathbone; *Lully, Lulla, Lullay* – Stopford; *My Lord has Come* – Todd; and *Ding! Dong! Merrily on High* – Trad (arr. Wilberg). You can still watch it by clicking [HERE](#).

CHARITY: Thank you to everyone who donated, supported or attended this year's Christmas Fair. Despite the many and varied challenges, the event was a great success and raised well over £2,000 for our school-nominate charities. In total, over £6,000 has been raised this term: thank you.

DRAMA: "With no PCRs or travel restrictions, no airport delays or last-minute cancellations, audiences enjoyed a rare opportunity for carefree escapism as Jules Verne's classic story *Around the World in 80 Days* provided fantastic, feel-good, festive entertainment. From the evocative set to the atmospheric sound, lighting, costumes and props, the audience was immediately immersed in a truly global experience." To read the full review, click [HERE](#).

Sports News

BADMINTON: In the Under 13 English National Badminton Championships held at Milton Keynes **Sid Shirol** (2L) enjoyed significant success. Sid emerged as the Under 13 English National Badminton Champion in both the Singles and Mixed events; he was also the runner-up in the Doubles event.

FENCING: In the FCL Cadet Under 17 Foil British Ranking Competition, RGS fencers more than held their own. **Xavier Wallin** (5P) finished 8th, **Zed Law** (L6) 31st, and **Freddie Cheng** (L6) 32nd. All three knocked out higher seeds in the direct eliminations stage; Xavier beat the 37th, 12th and 5th seeds to make the quarter finals. Xavier has now been selected for the Under 17 national foil squad and will represent Great Britain in the European Fencing Confederation event in Bratislava, Slovakia. Xavier is the fourth RGS fencer to be selected for the Great Britain squad in recent years.

FOOTBALL: In their first ever game together as a team, the Under 16s put in a superb performance against Gordon's School, under floodlights at Surrey Sports Park. Two goals apiece from **Luc Pressley** (5B) and **Kian Moodley** (5H) contributed to an excellent 5 – 0 victory.

RUGBY: Nearly 350 boys were selected to represent the 21 RGS rugby teams competing in fixtures on the final weekends of the season. The senior teams fared particularly well; the 2nd XV produced another brilliant performance on their way to a 19 – 8 victory against Brighton College, while the 3rd and 4th both scored well over 30 points on the way to convincing victories. The Under 14 teams also impressed with a scrummaging masterclass and strong carrying play. Against Seaford College and Claremont Fan Court School, highlights included excellent wins for the Under 15As by 38 – 0 and the Under 14Bs by 50 – 10. Thank you to all the RGS parents who have been so impressive and reliable as supporters, taxi drivers and launderettes this year!

SHOOTING: In the main .22 competition of the term, the British Schools Winter Open at Bisley, a squad of thirteen boys took part. Firing four sets of 10 rounds at 50m, this was a test of resilience and endurance. In the individual competition, **Daniel Cobley** (U6) came fifth in his age group.