



From the Headmaster

I mourn the demise of daydreaming. Individuals have daydreamed for thousands of years and yet, these days, spare moments are all too often filled with screen time – scrolling through social media, watching video clips, responding to emails – leaving little time for our minds simply to wander. Indeed, according to a survey from last year we check our phones on average 262 times per day. Silence and reflection are replaced with a cacophony of communication; solitude is replaced with compulsive online interaction. There are precious few opportunities in our busy lives to press pause and just reflect, to move away from being introspective to broadening our perspective through an empathetic approach.

For well over twenty years, our assembly each week has included a reflection, a thought for the day, which is delivered – predominantly – by a member of the Upper Sixth Form, or by a member of staff, on the theme of the week. This year we have focused on some of the attributes championed by our School Hymn by John Bunyan, *He who would valiant be* – progress, strength, valour, and courage to name but a few – as well as topical events such as Remembrance and Black History Month. Each individual is given free rein to reflect in any manner which they choose, thereby producing original, diverse, and insightful interpretations of the theme which may have a religious or secular approach. The quality of these talks is remarkable and I am always astonished by the maturity and sophistication of their musings. Such opportunities for public speaking even via the medium of an online assembly have innate value in themselves but also for many of the boys in assembly this may be one of the very few times in their week where they have the opportunity for peace and reflection, without other temptations or distractions. We must never underestimate the importance of such moments of contemplation and in this light, I have every confidence that this is one tradition which is set to last for many years to come.

As one of these reflections, this week our Head of History, Mr Davies, gave a very poignant and moving talk on the Holocaust Memorial by focusing on the account of just one individual, Philipp Manes, which powerfully illustrated that despite the appalling horrors, the human spirit can remain free and strong. As Mr Davies, in what could be a rationale for our Reflection, concluded: *“These small acts of resistance are what gives us our humanity. Remembering people like Philipp can help us understand that we cannot be complacent in the face of hatred, that we must challenge and resist it, come together as a community, empathise with others and do more.”* Nurturing young men who have the skills, the mindset and the determination to make a difference to others remains at the heart of what we at the RGS have a responsibility to cultivate, never more so than in the current climate.

Latest News

MATHEMATICS: In the UKMT Senior Mathematics Challenges, RGS boys have flourished. Over 79 boys took the Senior Maths Challenge, with 91% achieving an award comprising 24 Golds, 33 Silvers and 15 Bronzes. Five students qualified for the British Mathematical Olympiad Round 1 (top 1,000 in the country) and 19 for the Senior Kangaroo (top 6,000). **Sam Astles** (U6), **James Aberdour** (L6), **Henry Franke** (5H), **Leo Saarinen** (4V) and **Yuvan Raja** (3P) all achieved the top marks in their respective year groups. Yuvan gained the top mark in the school, an exceptional performance given that the competition is aimed at Sixth Form students. The boys then achieved significant success in the follow-up competitions, with special mention to Henry who achieved a Distinction, putting him in the top 100 mathematicians in the country, a superb achievement given that he is in the Fifth Form. As a result, Henry progressed to the British Mathematical Olympiad Round 2 paper, our first student to do so in over 10 years!

PHYSICS: 21 RGS Sixth Form students participated in Round 1 of the British Physics Olympiad. **Alex Jones** (U6) secured a Top Gold, placing him within the top 170 students out of the 2,300 that took part nationally; he now progresses to Round 2, which he will sit along with the British Astronomy and Astrophysics Olympiad. In addition, **Efe Görgüner** (L6) and **Thomas Thevenon** (L6) achieved a Gold, placing them within the top 400 students, despite being in the year below.

QUIZ: In the senior inter-school *Schools Challenge* quiz competition, our A team won the plate competition after victories against St Teresa's and Bedales School in the semi-final and final respectively.

Sports News

CROSS-COUNTRY: **George Vickers** (1S) came sixth in a strong field of 75 runners in the Surrey Schools Championships at Reigate Priory; as a result, he has been selected for the Surrey Team. **Eddie Wilson** (2L) has also been selected after an excellent run.

FENCING: **Xavier Wallin** (5P) competed in his maiden fencing competition representing Great Britain in Bratislava. He ended the competition 136th out of 209 which is an excellent performance in his first international, against the best fencers in Europe. He also finished with Silver in the Surrey Youth Fencing Championships Under 12 épée, a fine result for someone who specialises in foil.

FOOTBALL: The senior teams recorded excellent victories against Sutton Grammar School with the 1st XI winning 2 – 1, while the 2nd XI went one better with a 3 – 1 victory, including goals in consecutive matches for **Alex Turner** (L6).

HOCKEY: A disrupted weekend due to heavy frost meant only the Under 15s managed to play against Churcher's College; the free-scoring Under 15Bs, however, made the most of the opportunity scoring six unanswered goals. The following weekend, highlights of the full block against St George's College included a fluent, convincing 4 – 0 win for the Under 13Cs including a hat-trick for **Ethan Heritage** (2E). Remarkably, 10 of the 23 matches were decided by only one goal, highlighting the competitive nature of these fixtures. On an individual level, **Zack Grover** (3S) scored six goals for the Under 14C team. In addition, the Under 16As progressed after a tense 2 – 2 draw in the first round of the National Cup against Charterhouse School.

SHOOTING: Against Epsom College 32 shooters fired in eight details: our largest fixture for a number of years. RGS won the IV's match, with **Joshua Myers** (4H) top scoring for the RGS with 92. In the senior pairs match Epsom pipped the RGS by just one point.

SWIMMING: A strong team represented the RGS at the Surrey Schools Individual Championships where schools were limited to one competitor per event; this made our four Golds and three Bronzes all the more impressive. The Gold medal winners were **William Jones** (2R) in the 100m backstroke; **Noah Bourne-Waterhouse** (4P) in the 200m individual medley; and **Lorcan Read** (4A) and **Tommi Nebuloni** (L6) both in the 100m free. In addition, Harry Welch won the 100m breaststroke by an extraordinary fifteen seconds, only to be disqualified on a technicality on the start. The RGS finished as top school: a fantastic achievement.