

THE HARDY CUP

From the Headmaster

There are a number of phrases – increasingly and understandably diminishing in regular usage – which include the word *cock*: a fanciful and unbelievable story being a *cock and bull* story; exuberant elation being *cock-a-hoop*; absolute certainty being *cock sure*; the dominant individual being *cock of the walk*; even chicken and leek broth being *cock-a-leekie soup*. Many of these phrases date back many centuries and are embedded in traditions and conventions, and the phrase *cock of the school* is certainly an established part of historic British educational phraseology. Whilst the exact etymology of the term is rather varied, an article in *The Journal of British Studies* examined the cultural history of playground violence in Britain during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Through frequent playground fights, children would compete for the title of *cock of the school*, the term attached to the best fighter. Thus, the Cock House would be the dominant House, the one which won most of the individual events, as opposed to a single championship trophy. By the mid-twentieth century, it is likely this term had evolved into the House systems of many schools throughout Britain. Indeed, it seems this was a more widely used term, particularly in schools at the time, in which *cock* denoted confidence or dominance. The RGS was not exempt. A House report from the 1962 edition of *The Guildfordian* contains the first mention of a Cock House competition.

This is a significant academic year for the RGS: the 100th anniversary of our current House System. Initially set up in 1919, the names and colours of the first four Houses were introduced in 1921 and then added to, as the School increased in size in the 1960s. Initially, after a trophy was donated to the School by Messrs B Hardy and S Hardy, the Houses eagerly competed, through a variety of events, for *The Hardy Cup*. The Headmaster of the time AJB Green established the competition to generate, and provide focus to, a healthy spirit of internal competition and a sense of camaraderie between boys throughout the year groups. It seems to have worked as a report in *The Guildfordian* in 1929 notes that, “*the thing that helps more than anything else is the spirit of the boys belonging to a House.*”

With the House competition continuing to flourish to this day, the centenary feels an appropriate time to mark a return to our historical origins. As Karim Tayar, the Senior Housemaster, noted: “*The name of our House trophy should not be rooted in power, dominance, and winning; rather, the very ethos, central to the system, is about respect, teamwork, and fun.*” Therefore, as a tribute to the kind donors of the original trophy, we are resuming the tradition and boys will compete, once again, for *The Hardy Cup*.

The boys derive enormous pride and a genuine sense of belonging from our House system and thanks to the tireless work of our Housemasters and senior boys, the Houses form an integral part of the RGS experience. The opportunities also continue to increase to allow as many boys as possible to represent their Houses: new events this year have included art, debating, golf, and music. I am delighted that *The Hardy Cup* encapsulates the spirit of healthy competition, of camaraderie and friendship, and most importantly of fun and enjoyment, and I look forward, with interest and confidence, to the next 100 years of the House competition!

Latest News

DRAMA: **Ashwin Vishwanath** (L6) is currently appearing as Sai in *Heartstopper* (Cert 12) on Netflix: a story of two British teens at an all-boys grammar school. Ashwin appears in four out of the eight episodes. He was cast in his role two years ago, so has had to wait patiently; however, it is well worth the wait!

MUSIC: This term's choral and orchestral concert took place in Holy Trinity Church; in front of a capacity audience as 200 performers took to the stage. An exhilarating and varied programme of music included the undoubted highlight of the concert, the performance of John Rutter's *Feel the Spirit*. Featuring the combined forces of the Lower School Choir, School Choir and Symphony Orchestra, we were honoured to welcome the internationally-acclaimed mezzo soprano, Melanie Marshall, as the soloist in this performance. This was a truly fantastic evening of music-making of the highest quality and each performance was met with rapturous applause and standing ovations aplenty.

PHYSICS: **Alex Jones** (U6) has been selected to be one of the five members of the UK team going to the International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics in Georgia. Alex was chosen after an intense five-day selection camp at the University of Oxford, run by the British Astronomy & Astrophysics Olympiad.

STAFF: At the end of last term we bid farewell to Mr Yardley of the Modern Languages Department; we thank him for his many and varied contributions to life at the RGS. This term we are delighted to welcome our new Head of Modern Languages, Mrs Crivellari. We wish her all the very best as she starts her career at the RGS.

STUDENT ROBOTICS: An RGS team competed in the annual Student Robotics competition at the University of Southampton. Our team designed, coded and then redesigned the robot, named John, with the sole purpose of getting cans, flipping them over, and placing them into the team corner. They valiantly battled their way into the semi-finals where, out of 26 different schools, their journey finally came to an end.

Sports News

ATHLETICS: In our first athletics fixture of the season at Epsom College, **Joe Thorneycroft** (4N) dominated the sprint events, **Alessandro Harker** (L6) deserved particular mention for his all-round prowess in every area, and our Intermediate 4x4 emerged triumphant after a tense photo finish.

BASKETBALL: The Under 16 basketball team had their first fixture of the season against Guildford County School. They played very effective team basketball, and their efforts were rewarded with a 71 – 56, victory including stand-out performances by **Joss Beedie** (5V) and **Zac Tinkler** (4A). This was followed up by an 82 – 45 win against George Abbot School with **Fin Laffan** (U6) scoring 13 straight points in the third quarter.

CHESS: **Rohan McCauley** (5P) came second in the Under 18 section of the *Golders Green Rapidplay* chess tournament, winning the rating prize. This is an impressive feat in this international competition, organised by *Chess England* in London, particularly as there were 38 very fine players in Rohan's section.

CRICKET: The RGS cricket teams, started the season with a tough set of block fixtures against Trinity School, Croydon. Highlights included the 2nd XI who came back from being 16 – 5 to win their match by 24 runs, the Under 15As who posted a mammoth score of 202 in 30 overs, and the Under 12As who put in a fantastic team effort in their first outing in an RGS shirt. On an individual basis, special mentions go to **Tom Humphreys** (L6) 89*; **Zac Tinkler** (4A) 50*, **Thomas Bull** (4B) 50* and **Oliver Pickup** (1L) 52*.

HOCKEY: **Charlie Wareing** (1S) has been selected for the South Saxons Hockey team to play in the Under 13 regional-based tournament; representatives are drawn from clubs throughout the south of England.

SHOOTING: In the first full bore cadet target rifle shoot at Bisley since 2019, our A Team had a strong win against Bradfield College. Top shots of the day at 300yds were **Peter Carvell** (U6) and **Joshua Myers** (4H) and at 500yds **Dan Copley** (U6) and **Ben Vary** (L6).