

THE REGISTER

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The termly newsletter of the Royal Grammar School, Guildford



SPEAKING VOLUMES

It's about time we started talking about the importance of the spoken word. The Register has a special section dedicated to the spoken word, featuring interviews with authors, poets, and performers. This section is a must-read for anyone interested in the power of language.



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THE HEADMASTER WRITES ...



History is filled with dates which have become synonymous with one event and one event alone: 1066 – The Battle of Hastings; 1215 – The sealing of the Magna Carta; 1815 – The Battle of Waterloo; 1914 – The beginning of the First World War; and now, for us, 2020 – Coronavirus. This will rightly dominate the headlines in the future and yet for me, in addition, there will be another far more positive, far more lasting memory.

The RGS has faced many challenges during its history and it is especially during these times of difficulty that one appreciates its true colours. In times of crisis, our natural instinct is to come together, to seek solace in company and raise our spirits with humour; this has made the current isolation all the more challenging for us. And yet, I simply could not be more proud of how our whole community has pulled together in so many ways: the dedication and commitment; the maturity and composure; the support and kindness. It is this compassion which has touched me most: the words of support; the bonds of friendship; the genuine kindness

shown by individuals towards each other; and the sense of solidarity. Our hash tag of #AlwaysPartoftheRGS has never seemed more fitting, has never seemed more apt. It is this humanity and solidarity which have really struck me.

The 21st century demands young people to be flexible and to find solutions, to be independent and motivated, to think outside the box and to respond positively to challenges. This period of remote education will have its challenges but it also provides a gilt-edged opportunity for our students to refine each and every one of these skills and for them to emerge stronger, better and more confident at the end of the process.

This edition of *The Register* on one level is trivial and insignificant in the grand scheme of things and yet on another level maintaining a semblance of normality has never been more important. These pages remind us of the extraordinary achievements of our students academically,

in drama productions, in musical performances, on the sports field, in the co-curricular sphere. These stories give us great hope that, united by our school values and with this RGS spirit of pride, determination and passion, the future perhaps doesn't look quite so bleak after all.



SPEAKING VOLUMES

Our annual celebration of reading, World Book Day, focused this year on reading aloud as its theme. Although reading to young children has been known to be important for a long time, recent research suggests that there are powerful educational benefits for all, increasing vocabulary, comprehension and confidence in tackling complex texts. With that in mind, the RGS enjoyed a day where the spoken word was celebrated and



promoted as teachers were asked to read to their classes throughout the day, and shared a variety of books including *Alice in Wonderland* for a Mathematics class, who were then challenged to discover why it was relevant to that subject, and *Peter Pan* to a science class learning about puberty. Author Jon Robinson, the author of the *Nowhere* trilogy, led a dynamic creative writing workshop with the Scriveners' Society and others, challenging the boys to choose words carefully

to show setting, character, plot and emotion. Jon then delivered a lively presentation to the First Form students in which he talked about his own experience of wrongful arrest, some of the psychological experiments that inspired him, and his journey to becoming a writer; he shared part of a less-than-joyful Christmas story that he wrote aged 11, the macabre ending of which the boys were thrilled by!

RAISING THE BAR

Any individual whose mantra is to "*change the world, one square of chocolate at a time*" deserves serious consideration and, with the philosophy of the King's Lecture series to engage, to inspire, and to challenge and with free samples provided as well, Jo Fairley certainly didn't disappoint. One of the UK's leading female entrepreneurs, Jo became the UK's youngest-ever magazine editor at the age of 23; she then set out on her wide-ranging entrepreneurial journey in

1991 when she co-founded the organic, Fairtrade chocolate *GREEN & BLACK'S*. Jo gave an insight into a rollercoaster journey which started with a taste explosion in her mouth as she sampled the darkest and naughtiest square of chocolate she had ever experienced. Now, having been voted officially the coolest brand for the last eleven years – ahead of such market leaders as *Prada* – it would be easy for success to have been the over-riding message. Instead, what struck

was the ethics which underpins the brand (*guilt-free chocolate, well almost...*) and an absolute conviction in staying true to your principles and your product. The focus on taking calculated risks, working incredibly hard, being authentic, being brave, but above all being kind, all particularly resonated for us as a school. Sustained and heartfelt applause from the appreciative audience was then reflected in raising £400 for Jo's nominated charity, *Centrepoin*t.



PRIDE OF PLACE

As we move towards the end of another admissions cycle, our Upper Sixth Form can celebrate over 550 offers from the leading institutions in the country, including significant numbers from Bath, Bristol, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Nottingham, St Andrews, Warwick and the London universities. Changes in admissions strategies have meant that it has never been harder to win a coveted Oxbridge place; in this context, the 18 offers achieved in the latest round was a fine achievement. As Director of Studies, Peter Dunscombe, commented: "To secure their places, students had to undertake significant levels of wider independent study and preparation, navigate challenging admissions tests, and cope with the intensity of being put under the academic spotlight at interview. It is encouraging to see a continued breadth of subjects being covered including the less trodden paths of Biological Anthropology, Material Science and Philosophy and Psychology." As is always the case there were many highly qualified and talented students who missed out on a place. What has impressed is the mature and pragmatic way in which they have responded to this disappointment remaining fully focused on their

studies as they work towards cementing the offers that they have from other prestigious institutions. As Peter Dunscombe concluded: "Wherever they eventually choose to study, it is

already clear that the students can look forward to an exciting and transformational next stage of their lives."



SCHOOL REPORT

Biology: In the Biology Olympiad, James Miller secured a Gold Award with other boys securing six Silver, six Bronze, 13 Highly Commended and six Commended Awards.

Chemistry: In the Cambridge Chemistry Race, the RGS team *Triene our best but diene inside* took second place in this prestigious competition.

Chemistry: In the annual Chemistry Olympiad, RGS students achieved their best ever results with 11 Gold Awards. In addition, 14 Silver and 11 Bronze Awards were gained. Alex Thow's score of 86% smashed the previous Lower Sixth record of 63%, making the top 15 in the country and thereby qualifying for the three-day selection event for the GB team for the international Olympiad.

Mathematics: First Former, Yuvan Raja took part in the Intermediate Maths Challenge, a national maths competition designed for Third to Fifth Formers. He

scored 129 out of 135, which placed him convincingly as the best boy in the School and places him in the top 250 in the country out of nearly 200,000 who took part.

Mathematics: At the Guildford and Surrey Schools' Mathematics Competition involving fifteen local schools, the RGS teams were successful, winning the Year 7 and 8 categories and being placed third in the Year 9 category. In the regional heat of the Mathematics Team Challenge, Ollie Billingham, James Dicker, Yuvan Raja and Adam Zhang were convincing winners against 27 other schools and now progress to the national final, against the 80 best placed schools from around the country.

Model United Nations: At the Wycombe Abbey Model United Nations, Highly Commended Delegate awards were given to Salvatore Nigrelli and Omeet Atara representing Kuwait in the Security Council, and Jack Donnelly and Caspar Varoujan representing Ethiopia in the Economic and Social Council. Outstanding Delegate awards

were given to Oliver Walsh and Charlie O'Connor representing Saudi Arabia in the Economic and Social Council.

Student Investor Challenge: *RGS Stonkbrosers*, comprising George Hewitt, Daniel Hitchcox, Rudi Rannabugardie and Gus Scadding gained a place in the finals of the Student Investor Challenge.

Trinity Schools Book Award: Zac Warham's stunning model of Hadrian's Wall was awarded joint first prize for Best Creative Response at the Trinity Schools Book awards.

Young Enterprise: At the Y Factor, *Fantastic Without Plastic*, the branded flask company, were Highly Commended for both their presentations and their trade stand; *Centauri*, the branded slider company, won Best Company Report; *Vertex*, the GCSE and 11+ guides, won Best Use of Innovation and were approached by *Penguin* to discuss a possible publishing deal.



BLOWN AWAY

An absolutely packed Recital Room was treated to a mesmerising evening of music from phenomenally talented young musicians as one of the most keenly-contested finals of RGS Musician of the Year in recent history unfolded. As adjudicator Jonathan Willcocks – composer, conductor, artistic director, musical director – confirmed, any one of the six finalists could have been declared a worthy winner. With security of technique, persuasive musicianship and the element of performance key in his decision-making process, the bar was not only set high but surpassed. The evening opened with technically-assured and beautifully-controlled performances by Alex Thow, Solomon Poole and Angus Miller on the piano, French Horn and saxophone respectively. An

astonishingly assured performance of the first movement of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto by Ruben Berstecher was followed by Killian Hess with his wide ranging and well-chosen programme of recorder music. Finally, Stan Lawrence, trumpeter extraordinaire, delivered a programme including hugely demanding contemporary music by Anthony Plog and his own impressive arrangement of Joy Spring for flugelhorn and piano. In the end, Jonathan had the unenviable task of choosing a winner and huge congratulations must go to Angus Miller as he was awarded the Steynor Prize with special praise for his lovely liquid tones, technical high jinks, real sense of display and communication, energy and excitement: a worthy winner, indeed.







ST ALBANS

With collaboration and harmony at the very heart of the Joint Schools' Chamber Choir, the RGS students along with their counterparts from Guildford High School have sung Evensong in some of the country's most iconic venues, including Keeble College Oxford, St Paul's Cathedral, Trinity College Cambridge and Westminster Abbey. To this list the choir added St Alban's Cathedral, a magnificent building housing the shrine to Britain's first Saint and the oldest site of continuous Christian worship in Britain. Of many fascinating elements to its history, the Alban Bun, the original Hot Cross Bun, has been a part of the Easter tradition at St Albans for nearly 700 years where the buns were distributed to feed the poor on Good Friday. With not a bun in sight, however, the choir were treated to a guided tour of the Cathedral before heading to the stalls to rehearse for Evensong later that evening. The choice of repertoire, aptly chosen to suit the imposing interior of the building and the solemn period of Lent, included William Byrd's stunning



second setting of the evening canticles and Henry Purcell's *Remember not, Lord, our offences*. As Assistant Director of Music, Sam Orchard

noted: "This five-part anthem, with its tortuous chromatic lines and chains of suspensions, was sung with a real sense of drama and poignancy."



FIRING ON ALL CYLINDERS

It is no mean feat to get up in front of a live audience but when that audience contains your peers, teachers, an examiner, and you know that what you are about to perform will directly impact on your final grade, it is nerve-wracking stuff! Our GCSE drama boys, however, held their nerve and more than rose to the challenge of their scripted examination performance and instead of rushing home as the weekend started, they expertly delivered three extracts from *The Arsonists* by Max Frisch, a challenging play exploring the ability for evil to spread when good men turn a blind eye. The play previously also known as *The Firebugs* or *The Fire Raisers* was written in 1953, first as a

radio play, then adapted for television and the stage as a play in six scenes, exploring the premise that private and public morality cannot be separated. With the intimacy of the Hansford Room, the audience were treated to a performance where the emotions of the characters were powerfully communicated; the lighting, sound and props added to the moody, evocative feel. As Sophie Cox, member of the Drama Department, commented: "The boys produced polished, slick performances which ably demonstrated development of character, physical and vocal skills, and a sensitivity to the content of the piece."





MAD AS HATTERS

The distance from Guildford to Japan may be almost 6,000 miles, yet for two nights the joint RGS and Rikkyo School bilingual production immersed the audience in the world of *Alice in Wonderland* and its Japanese connections. The evening started with a light-hearted, humorous look at Guildford, its landmarks, famous inhabitants and its strange customs, with the mantra, "Nothing much goes on around Guildford!" This culminated in the links that Guildford has to Lewis Carroll and also the powerful emergence of Arisu, as the Japanese were seduced by the fantasy and imagination of the story. A festival of colour, flamboyance and feel-good energy then ensued: as the White Rabbit, Tom Postance, led Alice into a magical world where the

appearance of James Harper-Jones as a dancing Tweedledum or Silas Gordon as an emerging butterfly, William Holmes as the Jack of Hearts or Afra Jamshaid as the Mad Hatter, seemed simply the most natural of occurrences. An evening which showcased a truly collaborative initiative had everything from uninhibited polka-dot dancing extravagance to the sights and sounds of the East with beautiful national dress and vibrant yukata. Extraordinary intonation and fluency characterised the boys' performances and the audience was left spellbound by a truly magical experience where Japan suddenly didn't seem so far away after all.





OUT AND ABOUT

Despite a disrupted end of the term, the co-curricular provision has continued to be a hallmark of the RGS education with 22 off-site trips, offering 503 student places, supervised by 46 staff. Residential trips and visits saw members of the Fourth Form visit the Battlefields with the History Department, as well as the largest group that the RGS has ever taken ski-racing to Wengen in Switzerland for the British Schoolboys International Race event. In addition, a strong team represented the School at Wycombe Abbey taking part in their very special residential Model United Nations event; 60 junior boys and 24 seniors also participated in the annual ski trip just before Christmas in Les Deux Alpes in France. Day trips saw students immerse themselves in truly broadening academic, art, drama, music and other co-curricular experiences including languages days, visiting theatres, taking part in Evensong, a visit to the Crown Court, Economists visiting the Marshall Society at Eton, and numerous competitions including debating, Physics and Classics.





ALTER ECO

With the Lower Sixth boys starting to strut down the corridors and to sashay in the lunch queue, it could only mean one thing – the annual GHS Fashion Show. This year's theme was *Fashion with Compassion*, championing sustainability and proving that fashion and style do not need to negatively impact upon the environment. As always, it was a fabulous evening of fun, energy and entertainment. With tight choreography, creative dance routines, diverse music and over 100 students involved, scenes included Activism, Something Borrowed, Vintage 50s and 90s, Fashion for the Future, British

Staycation, Charity Shop Denim, Repurpose, and Faux Fur. The boys looked surprisingly at ease as they modelled an array of clothing far removed from their usual RGS sports kit. The evening finished, in the traditional way, with prom dresses and dinner jackets from recycled fabrics being fashioned, to rapturous applause from the audience. As professional and as slick as ever, the event raised just over £4,000 for the Alice Ramsay Trust, a charity established in memory of a former GHS Head Girl who tragically died of a brain tumour.





THE LAST POST

The battlefields trip to France and Belgium proved to be another moving and hugely rewarding experience as Fourth Form students immersed themselves in the History of the Great War. Notre Dame de Lorette and Vimy Ridge Canadian Memorial were the first stops, highlighting the global scale of Great War. The Vimy Ridge Memorial, in particular, was awe inspiring in the fading sun: a fitting monument to the thousands of Canadian troops who made the ultimate sacrifice. The boys were struck by the understated German cemetery at Neuville St Vaast, and developed a deeper understanding of the public reaction to defeat in Germany. A visit to the Thiepval Memorial, where

a wreath for Old Guildfordian and ex England football international Evelyn Lintott was laid, was followed by our attendance at the Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate. It is a ceremony that has occurred every evening since the war in peacetime, as a constant act of thanks to the allied soldiers who defended the Ypres Salient for so long. The German trenches at Bayernwald, as well as German cemetery at Langemark, provided further food for thought, before a visit to the site where Jon McCrae penned the famous *In Flanders Fields*. As always, this annual pilgrimage proved deeply moving, leaving a lasting impression on all who went.







PISTE LOVING

With snow in short supply in UK, to say the least, the RGS was forced to make the tough decision to head to the French Alps in search of skiing. During the first week of the Christmas holidays 85 boys from the Second to Sixth Forms, split into Junior and Senior Groups, accompanied by eight staff departed for a week in the ski resort of Les Deux Alpes. This is now the tenth year that the RGS has been visiting this resort as there is plentiful early season skiing from the village at 1,850m up to the glacier that peaks at 3,600m. The groups were based a 30-second walk from the Diable chairlift giving excellent access to the slopes. The boys all rapidly fell into resort routine: skiing hard, socialising with their peers and getting stuck into the après-ski that the resort had to offer, including bowling, ice skating, pizza nights for some, fondues for others, crepes for all, quizzes, competitions and the enforced rest and relaxation of movie nights ensuring that they were at their peaks for the skiing the next day. As Assistant Head (Co-curricular), Steve Yetman, commented: "Great conditions and great camaraderie ensured it was a really successful trip. It was also rewarding to watch just how much progress the boys made technically in just a few intense days."

KNOWING THE SCORE

Nurturing and developing young talent has increasingly become the hallmark of RGS football as over 90 boys have represented the School in six teams, from Under 15s and Under 16s to the four senior sides. As Head of Football, Adam Lowe, commented: "This really has been a hugely successful season, not only in terms of performances and the quality of football on show, but also the attitude, intelligence and application that all the footballers have demonstrated both on and off the pitch." The combined biennial football and hockey to Singapore and Malaysia laid the foundations for a season which has seen the 1st and 2nd XIs reach four cup quarter-finals, and all teams recording impressive results along the way. As Mr Lowe continued, "The ability to deal with adversity and to problem-solve are increasingly important skillsets for our young men. The teamwork, intelligence and the desire to 'keep going' that all RGS footballers display really does bode well for their futures outside of the School. In an age of football academies, single sport schools and increasingly challenging



fixtures, it is to our boys' great credit that they continue to compete, successfully, against top footballing schools, in both the Independent and

State sector." With more and more boys getting involved in the Middle School football clubs, the future really is bright.

A CUT ABOVE

Holding their own not only within the cut and thrust of school life but also increasingly on the national circuit, the RGS fencers have gained an enviable reputation. The sight of boys garbed in full fencing regalia is now a common sight around the corridors of the RGS, in no small part due to the charismatic influence of master of the foil, Wai-Shun Lau. In the pinnacle of the annual competition, the RGS dominated the



British Schools' Team Championships. The Under 13 Épée team finished as Bronze medallists, while the Under 18 Épée team were Silver medallists. The Under 15 Foil team comprising captain Zed Law, Freddie Cheng, Rishikesh Mistry and Xavier Wallin went one better and secured Gold medals, thereby being crowned the new national champions. Undeclared in the event, memorable victories included wins against Eton

College and Brentwood School. As Wai-Shun Lau acknowledged: "This is the third consecutive year we have won a national team competition – a phenomenal achievement – and the first time we have captured the foil title. To compete at this level against some of the finest schools in the country is testament to the hard work, dedication and technical ability of the boys."

SPORTS SHORTS

Badminton: Sam Baker won a Silver medal in the Mens' Doubles Badminton tournament held in Cyprus. He has now been invited to compete in another international tournament in Sweden against some of the highest ranked European players. He has climbed the rankings and is currently Number 5 in England for his age group.

Chess: The RGS 1st team has continued to dominate on the schools' circuit, with wins this term including excellent victories against Trinity School Croydon and King's College School Wimbledon. A 6 – 0 win against Winchester College ensured the 1st VI's place in the regional final of the National Schools' Chess Championship.

Cross-country: The RGS team finished as third school in the competitive King Henry VIII relays, with Will Barnicoat running the fourth fastest lap out of over 350 runners. Will Barnicoat also won the Under 17 Men's National Cross-Country

Championships in Nottingham. He has also been selected to represent English Schools Athletic Association at the upcoming ISF World Schools Cross Country Championships in Slovakia as well as being invited to run a second time for the England Under 20 team in Seville.

Fencing: In the Surrey Youth Fencing Championships, Freddie Cliffe won Silver in Under 19 Épée and Xavier Wallin won Silver in Under 16 Épée. In the Under 16 Foil both Zed Law and Xavier Wallin were Bronze medallists. In Under 14 Foil Rishikesh Mistry also won Bronze. Leo Kamstra won the British championship qualifier to become South East Fencing Champion.

Orienteering: Luke Mills-Hicks has been selected to race in the World Orienteering Championships in Denmark.

Rowing: Alex Jackson has been selected to represent Walton Rowing Club in the J14 quads at the Junior Sculling Head at Dorney Lake.

Sailing: Rob Mawdsley attended the OptiOrange Optimist Regatta in Valencia. There were 27 countries competing with 345 sailors. Rob finished as the second placed British sailor and was eighth overall.

Shooting: The RGS VIII has enjoyed another excellent term: our VIII defeated Epsom College by 749 to 744 and also had a comfortable win against Lancing College by 748 to 715, our top scorers being Johnnie Matheson and Balazs Rigo with 97.

Swimming: At the Surrey Schools Individual Championships, RGS swimmers secured one Gold, three Silver and two Bronze medals. The Under 13s won the Junior category, and the Under 15s came second in their category. Although the Seniors were not placed, the points they scored enabled the RGS to accumulate enough points overall to win the overall Surrey Schools Individual Championships 2020.



TOP GEAR



Hockey at the RGS has shifted gears and found an even higher level. Looking retrospectively at the season's results from not only the 1st XI but also across many of our teams, fixtures that in past years were lost were either drawn or won this season. The 1st XI went into uncharted territory this year, making it through to the semi-finals of the England Hockey Schools Championships: a first for the RGS Guildford hockey programme. Unfortunately, the side narrowly lost to Reed's School 2 – 3 in the semi-final match. The game, however, was played at a notably high standard and could easily have gone either way. Both teams were fantastic ambassadors for their respective schools. The Under 15A team were

runners-up in the County Cup and the Under 16A team qualified for the Tier 2 National Semi Finals. On an individual front, several players achieved high level performance hockey through their respective clubs, with 12 of the 1st XI playing Men's hockey for local club sides. Finn Cooper represented Surbiton Hockey Club in the National Indoor hockey tournament: the highest level of senior domestic indoor in the country. As Head of Hockey, Craig Mullan, commented: "Throughout the School the high number of boys choosing to play hockey in the Lent Term is testament to the time and effort that the coaches and staff involved have put into making sure it is both an enjoyable and challenging environment."



FAST TRACK

To perform at county or national level is the pinnacle of many students' ambitions, but for Theo Collins the bar was set even higher as he was chosen to represent Great Britain at the Youth Olympic Games in Lausanne. Theo started short-track speed skating ten years ago and has also been doing long-track for the last four. It was a sign of the standards that Theo has achieved that he was the first long-tracker at an Olympic event since 1994 and the first ever to win an Olympic medal: an achievement all the more significant as there is no 400-metre rink in the UK. As Theo commented: "It was my first time competing on natural ice on a lake and the conditions were challenging. I was not expecting anything when it came to performance and so coming away with a Personal Best in the individual 500 metre and winning a silver in the mixed team sprint was a great surprise." Theo, deservedly, received plenty of attention from BBC News and BBC Sport and as he concluded: "It was an incredible experience which will no doubt be valuable in the future and has created lasting memories which I shall cherish forever."



AND FINALLY ...



RGS Guildford @RGSGuildford
Mar 1

#RGSOGs

A genuine pleasure to spend an evening with such an impressive set of Old Guildfordians. #AlwaysPartoftheRGS



RGS Guildford @RGSGuildford
Jan 20

#RGSImages

A stunning silhouetted Guildford skyline, as seen from the John Brown Building classrooms this evening. @abbotshospital



RGS Guildford @RGSGuildford
Feb 24

#RGSGuildford

Many congratulations to Laurence Holland on completing his 100 terms at the RGS: an astonishing achievement.



RGS Guildford @RGSGuildford
Feb 7

#RGSECA

Fantastic action shot of House basketball taken by a member of the Photography Society.



RGS Guildford @RGSGuildford
Feb 3

#RGSCheck

Even the staff can't resist challenging themselves, as Mr Lau, Head of Chemistry, takes on all comers at lunchtime Chess Club!



RGS Guildford @RGSGuildford
Feb 13

#RGSCrossCountry

Congratulations to both teams in their half marathon world record attempt. Just outside the men's half marathon world record (58:01)!



RGS Guildford @RGSGuildford
Jan 30

#RGSArchives #RGSSOGs

The School Captains' board in Big School including the name of Terry Jones. #RIPTerryJones



RGS Guildford @RGSGuildford
Feb 28

#RGSCharity

A full-body workout before school, followed by a full-mind workout during school. Welcome to Friday at the RGS! All in aid of @LepraUK.



RGS Guildford @RGSGuildford
Jan 29

#RGSArt

First Form students have been drawing wooden carved animals with a Masai Mara backdrop in preparation for making masks for Noye's Fludde.

