



# Royal Grammar School

## HEADMASTER'S LETTER



Dear Parent

### VALETE

I will spread the farewells over my two remaining letters of the year.

- **Dan Druce** joined the Maths department in 2016 as a newly qualified teacher. He has been very highly regarded within the Department and has also supported the School through leading a rugby team and working as a boarding tutor. Dan wishes to live in London and has secured a post at an independent school in Richmond.
- **Emma Watson** has been with us for but a short time, though the impact through her excellent teaching has been immense. We wish her well as she moves to Headington School, much nearer to her Oxfordshire home.
- **Cathie Wells** joined RGS in 2014. A most highly regarded, even 'sought after' teacher at all levels, Cathie has inspired many hundreds of mathematicians during her time with us. Sadly, for the profession, Cathie is leaving teaching, though for her this opens an exciting new chapter. The narrative has been that Cathie was 'doing a PhD in weather forecasting'. So, to set the record straight here are her plans: following a one year MRes course, Cathie will be undertaking a three year PhD at the Mathematics of Planet Earth Centre (jointly run by Imperial and Reading). The PhD will involve creating a new dynamical system of partial differential equations in order to better predict the location and severity of extreme weather events.
- **John Russell** has been our Estates and Facilities Manager since 2013. During John's tenure, there have been a number of significant estate developments in addition to the daily routine of maintaining a site which operates (on a very small budget) to serve the needs of 1,500 people. We wish John well in his retirement, with his wife Steph, about whom I shall write more next week.

We wish all colleagues well in the future. We are grateful for their time with us and also proud that we have been a part of their career journey.

We will be delighted to welcome a number of new staff to RGS in September. I will give you more information in my first letter next term, but as a taster, above is the photograph of the new teachers who joined us last week for an induction day.

### ROYAL CHARTER

Somehow, the RGS Royal Charter from 1562, signed by Queen Elizabeth I, has survived, despite not having been particularly well looked after. In recent years, it has been pinned to a wall in a small office in School House. An RGS family, Sara and Sam Littlewood, who have two sons at the school, have very kindly resourced the restoration and professional casing of the Charter. It looks fantastic and is a really important part of RGS history which all should see. The restorer was Victoria Stevens, ACR from Victoria Stevens Conservation, who has taken great care and pride in restoring the document to its former Elizabethan glory. I cannot express adequately enough how grateful I am for this project which has been carried out in memory of Mr Littlewood's mother. The Charter will be on display at Prize Giving tonight and tomorrow.

### UNIFORM FOR SEPTEMBER #dapper

Parents will have received a letter recently about the phasing in of new items of uniform (ties, sports kit etc). I will send a further letter requesting that shoes etc. should conform with the School's (long standing) policy and that you are not persuaded otherwise by your son. Thank you for your support.

Headmaster: Philip Wayne

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## **RGS CRICKET FESTIVAL**

The 1st XI visited Lancaster this year for the annual RGS Cricket Festival. Each match was played in glorious sunshine and at superb venues in and around Lancaster. Five very competitive fixtures did not quite see results go our way resulting in one win and four losses for the week. However all of the squad can be proud of their achievements in the week in at times very testing conditions. Special mentions go to James Dalby who the squad voted players' player of the week and Harry Cameron (captain) and Andy McDonald who received the coach's player of the week.

## **AWARDS**

We are very much looking forward to our Prize Giving ceremonies, Senior tonight, Junior tomorrow, with our guest speakers the Hon Rupert Soames OBE and Andy Cook, respectively, who will both, I'm sure, give us some inspiring words at the two events. I was also very pleased to present a large number of Junior Colours, Swan Awards and our new Crest Award in a special assembly last week. I hope that all boys will wear their badges with pride whether they were commended for work in sport, drama or in other aspects of RGS life.

The Swan Awards were presented to Ishaan Bharal, Max Tulloch, Dan Kimberley and Ben Harris. The new Crest Award, which features our redesigned crown, was awarded to boys for representing RGS in five or more sports this year. We will be distributing Junior Colours for Music on a separate occasion.

## **PROGRESS 8**

You will recall that I wrote to you last year forewarning you all that our position in the league tables would be affected by our historic preference for IGCSE English Language and Literature. This turned out to be the case and our upturn in GCSE results was rewarded with a 'bottom of the league' position as IGCSEs did not count. The point about last year was that we were 'so low' it was ridiculous. This year, with our very last IGCSE having been sat in English Literature only, we will be somewhere 'mid table'. The DfE are aware of our situation and understand it, though they have expressed their expectation that we move back fully to standard GCSE, which we are doing with next year's Year 11. You will no doubt have seen in the press that the IGCSE remains popular with the independent sector and there has been considerable discussion about two systems of qualification and its fairness regarding university entrance. We are confident of another good set of GCSE results this year.

## **SKI TRIP PRAISE**

It is not unusual for us to hear great things about the conduct of our boys on school trips. However, it was a great delight for Mrs Smith (who has led the trip for many years) to receive a certificate in recognition of the exemplary behaviour of our boys whilst staying at the resort. We expect no less, but it is great to have recognition.

## **ACTIVITY DAYS**

These have become a part of the 'fixture list' for many schools and not only enrich the boys' education but also 'ring the changes' post End of Year exams. They take a lot of organising and an immense amount of good will is given by staff who are taken away from their usual work to accompany trips and the like. Year 7 enjoyed a medieval day with costume drama and birds of prey, followed by a French play; Year 8 juggled hoops, rode on unicycles and circus training; Year 9 learned how to save a life with emergency first aid training; geographers used the opportunity to fulfil a practical aspect of their GCSE assignment (non-Geographers went to Cadbury World) and the Sixth Form benefitted from Higher Education seminars and talks. A couple of other trips to Harry Potter World and Warwick Castle rounded off an excellent couple of days. My thanks to all boys for their participation and I hope that they will take some time to thank their teachers, if they have not already done so.

## **ARKWRIGHT ASSOCIATES**

Many congratulations to Toyon Aydin, Raaif Hadahi, Oliver Littlewood and Ashvin Mahtey who have become Arkwright Award associates. This is hugely competitive and is a very highly regarded engineering award. My thanks to Mr Marshall and Mrs Morsing for supporting the boys – The awards are indeed prestigious and a lot of work for both staff and students.

## **JAZZ IN THE QUAD**

This was excellent – fine weather, Rebellion beer, good prosecco and a barbecue were very much the bonus in an evening of very fine jazz music. We were pleased to see so many of our boys and staff involved and also to welcome back some (not so) old boys and some former staff, both performing in the bands and in the audience.

## **IN QUIRES AND PLACES WHERE THEY SING**

On Thursday of this week, our school choir will almost fill the chapel of Hertford College at Oxford University where they will sing Evensong at 4.00pm. If you work in Oxford or can spare the time to whizz up on the new railway service, it is 45 minutes of peace, quiet, good music and, of course, worship if you wish.

May I finally commend our boys and staff for coping with unusually hot weather. I'm writing this on Sunday afternoon, sitting in the garden. This sort of weather is less conducive to school work. I have, however, asked teachers to crack on with 'business as usual' between now and the end of term. There are some pleasant distractions such as Sports Day, the Staff v Boys cricket match and a number of events involving specific groups, but all other lessons should continue as normal. Our summer dress code is being well adhered to with the vast majority of boys arriving in school in full uniform with the code kicking in after assembly.

Please do remind your sons to wear sun cream and have a hat if they are planning to be outdoors for periods during the school day.

*Philip Wayne*