

HEADMASTER'S LETTER 2 May 2019



Dear Parent

It has been a while since my last letter. I'm making a particular use of this one in that it comprises a series of reviews written by staff and students so is rather more of a newsletter. I am, therefore, breaking my self-imposed two page rule on this occasion!

I trust all is going well for exam preparation. Please see attached my 'Headmaster's Revision Guide' which may give you and your son a little food for thought as well, hopefully, a smile!

CCF - 11 Brigade Military Skills Competition – A report from Second Lieutenant Pettengell

Over the weekend of 22-24 March, Youens Company sent a team of 8 cadets to St Martin's Plain, Folkestone to take part in the 11 Brigade Military Skills Competition. This involved 19 teams from both CCF and regional Army Cadet Forces competing in various areas of military skills such as first aid, navigation, shooting and fieldcraft, with the intention of being crowned Brigade champions. The team from RGS performed admirably, with strong performances shown on the section attack and shooting stands. Particular mention goes to Cadet Serjeant Dom Holland who was top shot of the competition. Whilst not quite clinching a win overall, the team came second, qualifying to take part in the national Cadet Cambrian Patrol in 2020, the most challenging exercise possible for Army Cadet Forces. The team consisted of the section commander - CSjt Jakob Leuzinger, section 2i/c - Sjt Dom Holland, Cpl Ned Forster, Cpl Sam Feltham, Cpl Nick Bennett, Cpl Finlay Porter, Cdt Alex Darvill and Cdt James Turvey. Well done to all involved.

CCF Report – Adventure Weekend - A report from Flying Officer Taylor

On 14 March 15 boys and 4 staff headed to The Brecon Beacons National Park for 3 days of activities staying in a camping barn near Pen-Y-Can. On Friday, after a hearty breakfast cooked by the boys (supervised by Head Chef Sqn Ldr Matthews) we set out for the day's activities – rock climbing and gorge walking. It was a blustery (and wet day) but the boys (and staff) made the most of the challenges and opportunities returning to the barn for masses of tea and toast followed later by a well-earned chili! Saturday brought torrential rain so we headed to Llangorse to spend the day at an indoor climbing centre. On Sunday we spent the day working on our navigating and map reading skills. The sun came out (briefly) but then came the snow and hail. It was a challenging but invigorating weekend. Well done to all who participated and thank you to all those who supported the event.

Photo of one team navigating with Sgt Barrett in the nice weather before the snow came in
Photo of one team getting ready to gorge walk.

CCF - Cadet Cambrian Patrol 2019 - Gold Medal – A report from Captain Rose

Over the weekend of 26-28 March 2019, eight members of Youens Company deployed to the Brecon Beacons to take part in the gruelling Cadet Cambrian Patrol, which is a 48 hour military skills based patrol exercise run on Sennybridge Training Area. Despite the impact of Storm Hannah causing horrendous weather conditions, and with the team reduced to only seven men after one cadet was pulled off the hills with hypothermia, the lads battled on to cover 25km, carrying rifle, ammunition and equipment to secure a Gold Medal. Congratulations to the patrol commander, Cadet Colour-Serjeant Jakob Leuzinger, Patrol 2IC, Cadet Serjeant Dom Holland, Cadet Corporals Finley Porter, Tom Poulton, Ned Forster, Sam Feltham, George Ashton and Cadet Lance-Corporal Murray Montgomery for their success.



Exchange visit to Barcelona – A report from Kabir Hundal (Year 10)

On 29 March 2019, thirty boys in Year 10 boarded a flight to Barcelona, not knowing it would be one of the most memorable weeks of our lives. As we all met our Spanish exchanges, there was obvious tension and nervousness, but this was soon to disappear. Right from the start we had a packed itinerary, visiting every major attraction in perfect Spanish weather. We learnt about Gaudi's influence on the city and I found La Sagrada Familia incredible! We had a day on the beach in Sitges, exploring the town and playing football on the pristine beaches. We also visited a WWII air raid shelter - there was something for everybody, not to mention the places we were taken with our exchanges, with some even going to watch Barcelona play at the Nou Camp stadium. Overall, it was a brilliant, unforgettable week, with amazing friendships developed and made. I cannot wait for them to come back in June.

German Exchange to Osnabrück – A report from Frau Javaid

In April 2019 a group of 22 Year 9 and 10 students from RGS and Pipers Corner School went on the return journey of the German Exchange to Osnabrück in North Germany. This was a particularly special year because the German partner school, the Ratsgymnasium, was celebrating 50 years of this partnership with RGS and 10 years with Pipers Corner. This was marked by festivities in the town hall, including a visit from the mayor of Osnabrück and the minister for culture of Lower Saxony. Afterwards all 1100 students of the Ratsgymnasium together with all the exchange partners gathered in the town hall square for a rendition of the European anthem, which they sang in various European languages. The afternoon was spent dragon boat racing with a barbecue of German 'Bratwurst' and chips. In the following days, the students enjoyed day trips to Bremen, which included a tour of the city, Osnabrück zoo and Cologne, where they climbed the cathedral tower and visited the chocolate museum. The students all enjoyed this wonderful opportunity and the generous hospitality of the host families. They also benefitted enormously from the experience, from both a linguistic and cultural point of view. As teachers we were proud of how the students were such excellent ambassadors for both schools, and sincerely hope that some lasting friendships have been forged for the future.

World Challenge: Morocco 2019 - Team 1 Mr Pettengell

Over the Easter holiday 17 challengers, two staff and a World Challenge leader set out on a ten-day expedition to Morocco. After arriving and acclimatising in Marrakech, the boys experienced the pandemonium of the markets at night and enjoyed a local meal of kebabs, taking in the sights, sounds and smells of the market. The next day we boarded a minibus and travelled through the Atlas Mountains to undertake our four-day trek through the Dades Gorge. This almost alien environment took the boys completely out of their comfort zone and over the course of the trek they had to adapt to new and challenging conditions, including the delights of the 'toilet tent', walking for several hours carrying heavy packs and eating all their porridge in the morning! Following the trek, we travelled out to Erg Chebbi, a region of sand dunes on the Algerian border. Here, we boarded a camel train for a magical, albeit slow and slightly sore journey out into the desert. That night we stayed in an authentic Bedouin camp, which surprisingly hosted the first flushing toilet the team had seen in days! The desert provided the boys with a unique opportunity to see the sun set over the dunes, an experience that will stick with them all. The expedition concluded with a three-day journey home, starting on a camel and ending in Marrakech airport, after a morning spent in the souks of Marrakech buying souvenirs and gifts for loved ones at home. Every member of the expedition team learnt something over the course of the expedition, whether that was how to look after yourself when away from home or in Mr Rizk's case that he may be losing his hair... I would like to thank everyone who assisted the boys with their fund raising. Everyone enjoyed it and I hope this has enthused them to continue going outside their comfort zone.

Young Enterprise Awards – A report from Dr Goodier

RGS were represented in the Young Enterprise Area Finals at Bucks New University on Friday 22 March by WonderBox, a company set up to produce high quality hampers and other gift items with as little environmental impact as possible. The finals comprised a trade fair, interviews and a four minute company presentation. Ayush Sanghavi, Saksham Kapoor, Will Howells, Ben Goodier (who all presented), Rohan Chopra, George Cook and Anthony Joseph made up the team. The competition was dominated by Pipers Corner School, but RGS came away with Environmental and Best Use of IT runners-up awards and can be very pleased with what they have achieved since September. A great deal has been learned about setting up a business and working as a team which will be invaluable in their future careers.

Warhammer School League Semi-Finals from Mr Pettengell

On Tuesday 26th March, seven young generals led their armies north to the Warhammer School League Semi-Finals in Nottingham. This competition saw sixteen schools vying for a place in the national finals of the School League. The day consisted of three matches against other schools, followed by a painting competition and mini game. Each event gave the team opportunities to gain points, either by winning their games or through being suitably sporting to their opponents. Whilst several of the team members, including Matt Farrell (Team Captain) who won all his matches, showed impressive performances the team ended the day in 4th place. This in itself is an impressive feat particularly with such a young team, with several boys who are relatively new to the hobby. The team included Matt Farrell, Sam Leonard, George Hill, Charlie Booth, Chris Goede, Adel Patell and Freddie Jennings. The team learnt several lessons about both how to play *Warhammer 40,000: Kill Team* and how to deal with some tricky opponents. We now start planning for next year's competition.

Spring Fair

Many thanks to those of you who were able to attend the Parents' Association Spring Fair on Saturday. It was a good event, commencing with Heads or Tails in the Queen's Hall and a range of stalls and activities throughout the afternoon including Ergo rowing machines, Batfast Cricket Simulators and an eight-lane Scalextric track. The return to 'paper' raffle tickets resulted in a disappointing return. We would very much appreciate your feedback as to the most convenient way to support the PA by taking part in the raffle.

My thanks to staff for their commitment to provide these activities for your sons, our students for their outstanding ambassadorship and to you, the parents, for your continued support.

Sportsman's Dinner

Many thanks to the FRORGS Committee for organising a most successful Sportsman's Dinner. The generosity, both in spirit and in donations was manifold during the evening. This is truly a 'go to' event for many part of the RGS community, both past and present. The speaker, Jason Robinson and MC, David Flatman were very well received during what was a really super, successful evening. As ever, our boys impressed with their charm and persuasive powers as they invited guests to take part in the various fundraisers.

Philip Wayne