

HEADMASTER'S LETTER 15 July 2019



Dear Parent

VALETE

We are saying goodbye to five members of the teaching staff.

David Holmes has taught Maths with us as a Newly Qualified Teacher, on a one-year contract. We wish him well as he moves to a permanent post at Aylesbury Grammar School.

Ben Berryman, Master in charge of Cricket, is moving to Taunton to take up a post there. Cricket at RGS has moved forward during his tenure and his organisational skills (Bat Oar Ball, for example) will be missed.

Jamie Rizk is moving to an international school in Cairo. Jamie has thrown himself fully into the life of the School leading on Maths initiatives, the CCF and Master in charge of Chess.

Clive Greenhough joined RGS in 2003 on a joint role with World Challenge, ultimately assuming the role of Director of Co-Curricular Activities. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, trips and expeditions have grown considerably during this time. Clive was also in charge of the Royal Navy section of the CCF and taught Business Studies and Economics. Clive and his family relocated to Bath a few years ago and he has decided now to make his working life down there too.

Eric Wolton joined RGS in 1992 as Head of Biology progressing to Assistant Head. He stepped down from his leadership role a few years ago but has continued as a much respected teacher of Biology and as Professional Tutor for NQTs, trainees and staff new to the school. His annual 'Jeans for Genes' band performances have raised around £30,000 over the years. Eric is retiring and we wish him well.

BOARDING

Although boarders account for only 5% of the school population, the impact of boarding on the School is considerably more than that. I was very pleased to spend an evening in Fraser Youens House (I drew the line at actually boarding myself) and much enjoyed participating in the evening meal, observing prep and witnessing a vibrant, respectful and very caring atmosphere. I also held a 'Headmaster's Question Time' which was as informative to me as it was, hopefully, for the boys. You may wish to read the Boarding [End of Term letter](#).

SUMMER PURCHASES

Just a reminder to 'check before you buy'. The uniform rules are clear, long standing and adherence to them prevents debate and the wasting of teacher time. I have attached the Year 7-11 'shoes ready reckoner' - please don't be persuaded that 'everyone else does' because 'they don't'. Sixth Formers, new and current should note that there are specific colours for suits and that shoes should be black (just remember 'never brown in town'!)

SPORT

Sports Day was a great success with some fantastic track and field performances - Kensington House won overall. Many thanks to those who organised it, took part and to parents who came along to support it.

Seth O'Connor rows in the Henley A Quad scull. A few weeks ago they won the National Schools competition. Last week they rowed at Henley Royal Regatta. They beat Scotch College of Melbourne, Australia, Henley B and Claire's Court but were defeated by Leander A (who they beat at the National Schools) in the final on Sunday. As far as we know, Seth is the first RGS boy to get as far as the weekend, let alone the final. A great achievement, well done. The RGS Rowing Club has grown by a third in the last year, bolstered by the latest intake in Year 8. The Club offers the boys who love sports a new experience and, for those who have not yet found a favourite sport, an opportunity to try something new. We have been working with our new coaching team to design a programme for 2019/2020 and will start with a camp at the end of August. We are sorry to see the departure of our J18s and are looking forward to seeing how our Captain, Ben Hinves, thrives as he gets involved in a High Performance University programme.

We currently have a Cricket/Hockey Tour out in Barbados. Do keep an eye on twitter to follow the tour.

'CRAFTSMAN'S ART AND MUSIC'S MEASURE

We had an excellent Art and D T exhibition – some truly outstanding pieces - in the area beneath the Queen's Hall with an awards ceremony which took place last week.

WHAT DO POINTS MAKE?...

I was very pleased to congratulate boys in Year 7 who had been awarded the highest number of points this academic year (between 150-200 points in total). Boys who achieve 100 points meet with the Deputy Headmaster and those who achieve 60 points meet with the Assistant Head responsible for the House. A couple of comments in the survey asked 'how many points represents 'good?'. Not a simple answer, I'm afraid. Year 7 always achieve the most and there is a gentle decline as boys progress through the School. Their application is currently discretionary and perhaps subjective. This contrasts with behaviour points which are enshrined within a Behaviour Policy and therefore more easily applied. We will be looking into this in greater detail in September.

PRIZES!

We were delighted to welcome Sir Christopher Hum and OW Tom Ravenscroft as our guest speakers for Senior and Junior Prizegiving respectively. Many thanks to the trustees of the RGS Foundation, the Parents' Association and a number of families who generously donate prizes each year. Congratulations, too, to our prizewinners on their well-deserved success.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD

Mr Wallace presented around 120 bronze awards in an assembly last week and we had 74 boys undertaking the silver and gold expedition in Brecon a weekend or two ago. You will also recall that 17 boys received their gold awards at Buckingham Palace in May. This is an exceptional record in this highly regarded qualification which really does encourage young people to acquire skills for life.

CCF – A report from Mr Rose

Youens Company deployed with 35 cadets and 5 staff on Sunday 7 July, and after the long journey to North Yorkshire, settled into our accommodation in Wathgill Camp. Training started on Monday with an introduction to tactics, culminating in a 24 hour field exercise lasting through to Tuesday evening. Training in Built Up Areas (TIBUA) followed on Wednesday, and despite many being well versed in the art of TIBUA from March FTX, the cadets embraced the opportunity to hone their skills with full enthusiasm and professionalism. A day on the ranges on Thursday saw a number of boys stand out as crack shots who will be asked to represent the Contingent in September at the prestigious Cadet Skill at Arms Meeting (CADSAAM). The week was topped off with a day of team building and personal development provided by Adrenaline near Richmond. Thanks must go to 4 Brigade Cadet Training Team for providing an excellent camp and to all the staff from RGS and externally who gave up a week of their time to make the camp happen. Special mention to Mr Pasha, who came up all the way from Surrey just for the 24 hour exercise! Without the assistance of external staff like Mr Pasha, Mr Mostyn and Mr Woodcock, camps of the quality which we had this year would not be possible. Thanks must also go to Mr Pettengell and Miss Sowah for their hard work and dedication to CCF both in and out of school. Awards were given to the following cadets whilst on camp: Chosen Men – Cdt Darvill, Turvey and Jankiewicz; Best Cadet on Camp – Cdt Ben Taylor; Most Improved Cadet on Camp – Cdt LCpl Mustafa.

OLD WYCOMBIENSIENS

We have had a very pleasing response from OWs who are all, irrespective of their age, encouraged to sign up to the Old Wycombiensien website. May I ask all Year 13 parents (for whom this is the last letter) to ask their sons to do so and for all other readers to 'spread the word'.

FINALLY

As we approach the summer break, may I take this opportunity of thanking all members of the RGS community for their support this academic year. I am very pleased with the progress we have made towards our strategic objectives. We don't rest on our laurels of course and there is a new operational plan in place for September to enable us to move further forward.

Wherever your travels take you, I wish you all a calm sea and a prosperous voyage!

Philip Wayne