

## HEADMASTER'S LETTER

22 June 2023



Dear Parent

### Exams

We are very close to the end of the exam season. Whether your son has taken End of Year exams or has finished (in most cases) his GCSE and A level public exams, I do hope that all has gone well.

The 'End of Years' are an excellent opportunity to see how well boys are doing in their range of subjects and also to inform how improvements might be made. In many cases, this 'follow-up' is more important than the result itself. My thanks to all staff who have ensured that the End of Years have gone smoothly, ably led by Mr Pettengell. I am also indebted to our Exams Officer, Mrs Hogarth, who leads a team of invigilators ensuring that the exams conform to the regulations and making sure that the needs of our young people are met.

### Open Evening

We are holding an Open Evening for children (and their parents) of primary age on Wednesday, 5 July. This is the first time we have tried a summer event, but we will still hold an Open Event in the Autumn this calendar year so that we can assess how this model works. Please do spread the word! Check [here](#) for 'Start your RGS journey here'.

### Uniform

I feel certain that we have all enjoyed some summer weather. We always aim to be reasonable and, as was the case last week, we will migrate to 'summer dress' for warmer periods and return to normal uniform when it becomes cooler. Boys are expected to travel to RGS in their blazers. Any school (even RGS) could become 'rag, tag and bobtail' very quickly if standards are not maintained and we value your support in this area.

Whilst talking about uniform, please do not allow your son to come to school in 'Air Force One', black or any other trainers - the RGS uniform requires proper shoes. We will republish the 'approved' shoe list before the end of term. It applies throughout the School, including in the Sixth Form.

We are aware that kitting out your son can be expensive. Please do take a look at our [Second-hand Uniform Shop](#) - there are many items (I hesitate to say pre-loved!) in good condition at excellent prices. Resources run our [School Shop](#), which also sells stationery and memorabilia.

### Rowing

At the start of the half term, RGS competed at **National Schools Regatta**, a three-day event at Dorney Lake, alongside over 5,000 junior rowers from 152 school or local rowing clubs. We entered nine boats and all of them made it through from their initial time trial to a final.

Notable results were:

- Champ Single, Owais Hammad came 4<sup>th</sup> in Final B, 11<sup>th</sup> overall in the country
- J16 Quad of Sam Twitchen, Jonty Stowers, Dom Jowitt and Stephen Russell were 4<sup>th</sup> in Final B, 10<sup>th</sup> overall
- J14 Quad of Johnny Hawkes, Hari Mahesh, John McDougall-Hutchins, Noah McFee with Charlie Wixon as cox were 6<sup>th</sup> in Final B, 12<sup>th</sup> overall

The Champ Quad of Rowan Flanagan, Matthew Turner, Edward Baker and Sam Dunlop were 24<sup>th</sup> overall. The J15 Quad event is very competitive and the boys (Henry Curzon, Owen Folmer, Max Roughton, Jasper Tong with Jack Dunlop as cox) missed out on the B Final by 2.6 seconds over 1km, overall, they came 16<sup>th</sup>. Our other J14 quad came 24<sup>th</sup> overall and the second quads in J16, J15 and J18 came 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> respectively.

- On Saturday we were at **Marlow Town Regatta** with 17 boats and two wins for Max Roughton & Joseph Smith and Sam Dunlop.
- In June we have entries in Marlow Regatta at Dorney, Thames Valley Park Regatta and Reading Town Regatta.
- STOP PRESS: The RGS Champ Quad came second in C Final at the Marlow Regatta on Saturday.

### Careers

Our Careers Department has been busy organising numerous enrichment events for our pupils. One of the highlights of the term so far was the Y9 Careers Activities & Skills Building Day for those who were not on the French History trip. With the aim of igniting their potential, students took part in a number of tasks to develop essential skills:

- **Inspiring workshops:** Experts led interactive workshops on Public Speaking, Managing their Finances, CV Writing and many more.
- **Guest speakers:** Esteemed speakers shared their journeys, inspiring our students to dream big and pursue their passions.
- **Skills Building:** Students spent a morning outdoors doing numerous activities that covered areas such as- forming strong foundations, working in a team, persevering amidst adverse circumstances, logical reasoning and problem solving.

Through peer collaboration, uplifting talks and immersive practices, our students broadened their skill repertoire and further enhanced their character. Fuwad Mahmood said: *"It was a fun experience and taught us a lot about the skills we had to improve on and allowed us enjoy whilst also engaging in various timed problem-solving tasks."* Hamza Mostafa, in turn shared that he had learnt a lot about teamworking: *"Some tasks required abstract thinking which needed us to work as a team to overcome the challenges; we also had to listen to all the details to make the most of the task".*

Thank you to all our volunteer partners who helped make this event a success!

### Congratulations to....

...Another cohort of 15 creatively minded students who have completed and passed their Bronze Arts Award. A mix of Years 8 & 9 have been involved in a series of artistic workshops and visits over the past school year and now have a registered qualification, which is a GCSE equivalent! Well done and thanks to Mr Bowen, our Artist-in-Residence for overseeing this work

...Ned Bobbin, Jamie Williams, Vivek Vang-Nielsen and Harry King for their success in the Royal Chemistry Society School Analyst competition. Bronze Awards all round.

### Groundforce!

Our Head Groundsman and his Assistant, Howard Yendell and Peter Meads respectively, do a sterling job in keeping our grounds in good shape. I asked Howard to let me have a few points to share with you. Between them, they have chalked up ninety years in the groundskeeping trade, having both started on training schemes with borough councils - Peter in 1974 and Howard in 1983. Inevitably, there has been a lot of change in that time, with the groundsmen overseeing or facilitating new blocks being built, pitch drainage, new Astro pitch and returning the cricket wicket to grass. One of my first commissions, when I was appointed, was to soften the view of the School from Amersham Road with a laurel hedge. One particular feature, which parents may not have seen is the tree lined avenue to Chadwick Street; there is one tree in memory of every RGS boy who fell in World War I.

We have invested in new machinery to replace some of the equipment, more reminiscent of a farming museum than a modern grounds department, which has made life easier and more efficient. We are 'on a roll' with our Estates Development - who knows, one day we might even get rid of the slope on the Rugby pitches!

### Spanish: Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators

We are delighted to announce that Max Brown (Year 10) received a commendation for his translation of a Spanish text submitted to the Anthea Bell Prize. Over 15,000 students participated in 2023 so this is a fantastic achievement. A team of undergraduates and professional translators have judged entries to the competition and all commented on the excellent standard of entries this year.

### French History Trip

The French History Trip was a huge success and staff spoke very fondly about the engagement and conduct of our students. In time-honoured tradition, The Last Post and Reveille was played at the graveside of OW Frederick Youens VC by our Year 9 boys Jeremy Simmonds and Harry Prior. Many thanks to Mr Balaam, who led the trip, and his team of staff (including Mr Rose, for whom this was his final trip) and to your sons for being great ambassadors of the School. There is a little more about this on our [website](#). The departments very much appreciated the kind words of parents: *'my son talked about the expert and enthusiastic way the information was imparted'*, *'an amazing and memorable trip for the boys'*, *'thank you for giving up your weekend .... and for giving the boys such an insightful experience'*.

Our [Touch Rugby Beer and Gin Festival](#) takes place this Saturday. Give it a try!

Philip Wayne  
Headmaster