

## HEADMASTER'S LETTER 30 March 2023



Dear Parent

Welcome to Paul Gale, who has joined our Estates Team as Compliance Officer.

### REVISION

I was very pleased to have the opportunity to talk to Year 11 in assembly this week; unfortunately, I was not able to speak to Year 13, though my message would be the same.

A structured revision programme is essential; I would recommend that boys spend this week ensuring that they have all the resources they need and that they devote at least fifty hours to revision over the holiday. That amounts, at a minimum, to five hours a day for ten out of the sixteen days of the Easter holiday. Equally important is rest and relaxation and looking after oneself. I have, for a few years, produced a (slightly tongue-in-cheek) Headmaster's Revision Guide and it is reproduced here (updated by Mr Eve after we both felt it was a bit 'twee'!)

### RED FOR RUTH

The first Benevolent Fund this Summer Term is in aid of the Ruth Strauss Foundation. You are probably aware

that Ruth Strauss was the wife of the cricketer, Andrew Strauss, until her untimely death from cancer. The Charity supports families with children following the death of a parent. Mr Atkin, who is a passionate cricketer and supporter of the Charity, is leading assemblies next term and will be encouraging boys to give generously to this good cause. The assembly will include a moving video; staff have been asked to be aware that boys who have lost parents during their childhood may find the video upsetting and will talk it through with them before the assembly. There will be a 'Wear Red for Ruth' day on Friday 28 April. All staff and students will be asked to donate a minimum of £1 to wear an item of red on the day.

### BOOST THE CHEMIST!

In January, our Chemistry students took part in the first round of the Royal Society of Chemistry's Olympiad competition. Our Y13s won 5 Golds, 2 Silvers and 2 Bronzes, in a competition designed to stretch those in their second year of A level study. To earn these results, students had to analyse the thermodynamics of rocket fuels, the synthesis and decomposition of vitamin E in vape fluid and also the fragrance and acidity of cheese. Electronegativity is a timely topic as 2022 was the 90th anniversary of Linus Pauling's proposing the concept of electronegativity. With the 2023 International Chemistry Olympiad being held in Switzerland, a question on cheese was obligatory, and quizzed students on the conversion of lactose to lactic acid during fermentation in cheese manufacturing.

The Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) has released the 2023 grade boundaries for the first round of the UK Chemistry Olympiad. Round 1 took place on 26 January, with 11,838 students from 950 schools taking part – a new record for both. This year's paper was more accessible than last year's, which meant students needed to achieve higher marks to secure each award compared to last year. Students had to score 14–23 marks for the Bronze award, 24–37 marks for the Silver award and 38 or more for the Gold award.

RSC Education executive and competition organiser, Rebecca Plant, congratulates and thanks the teachers and students for their participation: "We're delighted to see record participation numbers for this year's Olympiad and extend our thanks to all the teachers who facilitated this opportunity for their students. Congratulations to all the students who took part!"

## A SPORTING CHANCE

Achieving excellence in sport is synonymous with RGS and I'm delighted that this term has been no exception. Earlier in the month, our 1st XV were victorious in the final of the U18s School Plate competition with a win against Barnard Castle School. This was a wonderful achievement for a young side, comprising players from our Years 11-13, and was enjoyed by over 300 RGS supporters at the StoneX stadium with thousands following online.

We had teams at the Sedbergh 10s, with several wins leading to our place in the Plate final where we lost in the last minute. The Under 16s made a sterling effort at the Rosslyn Park 7s, beating QEGS Wakefield and losing against Brighton and Woodhouse Grove - but great playing. The U13s came second in the Caldicott 10s (did not lose a game, but lost out on points).

Whilst rugby remains a passion at RGS, it is the breadth of sporting opportunity that is one of our key strengths. In Hockey, Rowing and Fencing, we have seen some excellent playing and successful match outcomes. For example, the Hockey U12As finished their first season with a fantastic day out at the South Regional Finals, reaching (and narrowly losing) the Plate final.

You may have read the 2022 Sport Impact Report to recognise the breadth of participation during the last academic year. The report, the first of its kind we have written, celebrates the many sporting achievements of our boys, both individually and as part of a team. Please do take a look here.

## HEY, MR PRODUCER!

As with sport, the enjoyment of and commitment to music is a particular strength of RGS and our boys continue to build on this rich tradition of musical excellence. This was demonstrated by a wonderful rendition of Mel Brooks's musical, The Producers, in partnership with girls from local schools. As ever, word gets around very quickly and a steady opening night generated sufficient excitement for great houses for the remainder of the run. The reaction of the audience said it all and I pay tribute to the stellar cast, orchestra and tech crew, supported by a number of staff who ensured that everyone had a seat and a drink! Especial thanks to Mr Mullaly and his Music team, the professional director Becky Harrison and Mr Balaam who oversees the Sound, Lighting and Stage Team. Brooks's show is ultimately a nostalgic, satirical throwback to vaudeville which the cast pulled off with aplomb.

## OW SUCCESS

I am delighted that our excellence in sport and music continues to underpin the successes of our boys after they leave

RGS. This weekend saw two of our Old Wycombiensians achieving sporting excellence with Duncan Huntley and Jack Statham in teams for Cambridge in the Boat Race and Oxford in the Varsity Match respectively. Many congratulations to you both.

## IFTAR

We are proud to host our 6th Iftar (breaking of the fast in Ramadan) event and welcome you all – all faiths and none – to join us for an evening of listening, reflecting and eating together. RGS is a diverse school and we would like to celebrate some of our diversity through this event. Perhaps you are Muslim and are looking forward to sharing in a spiritual evening with peers? Perhaps you know very little about Islam and would like to learn more? Or perhaps you would like to show a friend/peer support during the month of Ramadan? Whatever your motive, we look forward to welcoming you all on Tuesday 18 April 2023 at 7pm.

Students in the RGSHW Islamic Society will be organising the programme, including Poems, Readings and Prayers from each Year Group. We hope you can join us in celebrating their efforts.

We would also like to extend our sincere gratitude to parents who have helped to organise and fund the event. This is a non-profit event and any remaining funds will be donated to charities agreed by the organising committee. These may include the recent earthquake appeal for Syria & Turkey, One Nation, Wycombe Mind, Islamic Relief & local food banks.

If you would like to attend but are unable to afford the ticket prices, or would like to make additional donations to support us in covering, please contact Mrs Pickering (cjp@rgshw.com).

## SING FOR THE KING!

High Wycombe Parish Church, All Saints, will be hosting the town's civic celebration for the Coronation of King Charles III as part of their 10am morning service on Sunday 7 May. They are hoping to augment the choir for the morning to sing Parry's 'I Was Glad', written for the Coronation of King Edward VII and performed at every coronation and many Royal Weddings since. Sing for the King – All Saints' Wycombe.

I wish you all a very relaxing break and, if you celebrate it, a very Happy Easter.

Philip Wayne Headmaster

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