

HEADMASTER'S LETTER 12 December 2019



Dear Parent

Many thanks for your unanimous messages of support after my letter to you following the recent inspection. I cannot, I'm afraid, reply to them all but there are some common questions which I will unpack in future letters. It is very much business as usual here with some extra focus on the identified areas.

PRIMARY SCHOOL ENRICHMENT DAY

On 21 November, 90 Year 5 primary school students from Tyler's Green Middle School, Manor Farm Junior School and Hamilton Academy were invited to experience life at the RGS for a day. The students were treated to lessons that involved discussing food in Spanish, looking at the microscopic world in Biology, and interpreting the work of graphic artist Nikki Farquharson in Art. Feedback has been incredibly positive and we hope to run another similar day in the Spring term with three different subjects. Many thanks to Mr Wood who is leading on a Primary liaison project.

BIOLOGY A LEVEL SCIENCE LIVE TRIP

On 22 November, 40 A level Biology students visited the Apollo Theatre, London, to listen to a number of biologists at the forefront of their fields. Highlights included Dr Adam Rutherford discussing his work on inheritance and genetics, Professor Robert Winston giving an insight into the ethics surrounding genome manipulation, and Dr Jenny Rohn discussing the problem of antibiotic resistance. The students were certainly not short of information to help with their wider biological reading and to develop cultural capital through their studies.

GYM

Our Gym is now open. We are sorry that the project overran, but it has been worth the wait. It makes very good use of the former balcony area with ample space for a variety of fitness, strength and conditioning activities, designed both to flow from our core PE curriculum offer and to support the development of fine sportsmen. There is also a Physiotherapy Room, which, in association with our partner, Arete Performance, will provide in-house professional care to our boys. Many thanks to Francis Kucera and the FRORGS Committee for their driving of the project, both financially and through their practical help in making it come to fruition.

EVENTS

A reminder to parents of Year 12 boys that we are celebrating their GCSE success at a short ceremony, followed by seasonal mulled wine and mince pies in the (not quite so festive) 'Space' on Thursday 12 December. GCSEs are the first public examinations and your sons' successes were manifold this year.

We are also holding the Festival of Lessons and Carols at All Saints' Church, High Wycombe on Monday 16 December. There will be readings and choir carols as well as the chance to join in congregational Christmas favourites. Arrive early to get a seat. Afterwards in the Oakley Hall, there will be refreshments, provided by our Parents' Association.

COMEDY COLD

Many thanks to Liz Bradshaw and team for organising a super Comedy Night, with three great comedians, a comedienne and Noodle Nation food. I've never thought of myself as a Barry Cryer, but I managed to provide the acts with much comedic material, not through natural wit but about the temperature of the Queen's Hall. My apologies to you all as it seems that despite the heating being switched on when I requested it, the thermostat had been turned to such a low setting that we remained as chilled as the Sauvignon Blanc (served by Sixth Formers, whose vocabulary was enriched during the evening...or perhaps not!).

WHERE DID YOU GET THAT HAT?

We were very pleased to welcome to the RGS, the High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, Julia Upton OBE, to talk about music in education, along with our partners the Chiltern Music Academy. She has a particular focus on arts and culture during her year in this honorary role and was heartened to hear that music was in such good shape at the School and locally through the CMA. Photo above, but without the headgear!

OW NEWS

• ALEX DADACZ RIP

We were very saddened to learn of the sudden death of Alex Dadacz aged 20 at Swansea University. Alex left RGS in 2017 having previously been a pupil at Cedar Park School in Hazlemere. A number of staff and former students attended his funeral service on Tuesday; some wonderful tributes from his relatives and friends sensitively presided over by a pragmatic Roman Catholic priest made a very sad event memorable for his mourning family.

• KEYA JAFARI

We were delighted to hear that Keya Jafari, who left RGS in 2013, was awarded several prizes for Medicine at his graduation from UCL, including those for highest performance in exams and practice. He received a standing ovation at the ceremony. Well deserved, I'm sure.

JOLLY HOCKEYSTICKS

I was very pleased to attend the Friends of Hockey Party on the Roy Page All Weather Pitch this week – great to see this sport flourishing with large numbers of boys taking part and incredible support from parents. As ever, many thanks to Mr Clark for leading hockey so well at the School.

ORDER, ORDER

Prior to the general election, we held a hustings event, in which representatives of the main parties took questions from our students - some of whom will be voting for the first time today. I am very pleased to see our students engaging with politics. Many thanks to Mr Corcoran for organising the event and taking [some photos](#).

I will be up very late tonight, watching carefully as the results come in, drinking lots of coffee to sustain me until the ballot papers are safely gathered in and enough results known so that I can comfortably retire for a few hours.

LINKS

- [BRITISH ROWING INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS](#) – report from Mrs Wendy Goodier
- [JUST EAT?](#) – report from Mr Marshall
- [THANK YOU](#) – letters from the Parents' Association and Friends of Groups

CLOSING REMARKS!

Congratulations to Tom Poulton, Jamie Barker, Bhargav Rentala and Oliver Littlewood who have achieved their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Awards. These are prestigious awards and I was very pleased to present them with their badges in assembly. These boys, accompanied by their families, will have the honour of going to Buckingham Palace next year to formally receive their award.

Congratulations also go to George Johnson who took part in the Junior European Golf Open in Alcaidesa, 23 - 30 November. George finished joint 11th after playing four rounds of golf, making the cut and playing in the final fifth round.

Finally, congratulations with a message. Jonathan Yeates initially missed out on a place at Magdalen College, Oxford. The good offices of our own Classics Department saw the injustice in the marking of one of his papers and sought a remark (unsuccessful) followed by appeal (successful). Over half a term later, the A level was upgraded and Magdalen have accepted Jonathan to start there in September 2020. It just goes to show how exam marking can, at times, be unpredictable and that it requires resilience to navigate the exam board brick walls.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Philip Wayne