

## HEADMASTER'S LETTER 13 February 2020



### STAFF NEWS

Chris Hall (Finance and Resources Director) retired at the end of January though has agreed to stay for an extra two weeks to hand over to his successor (see below). Chris has been exceptional in this role and has weaved the magic only a chartered accountant can do on the intricacies of academy and foundation finances to ensure that we stay afloat and invest in the School wisely. Prior to his time with us, Chris had a career as a global financial director in several high-profile companies. His motive for putting off retirement and coming to work with us was a desire to 'give back', having himself benefitted from a grammar school education at King Edward VI Grammar School, Aston, Birmingham, from where he progressed to Jesus College, Oxford. Chris and I grew up in neighbouring suburbs of Birmingham, though in different boroughs. Whilst we had a somewhat opposing school experience, we had much in common to talk about (although I'm a number of years from retiring, I hasten to add). We will all miss Chris, a real gentleman and a great colleague whose fine collection of cars would grace the car park when he wanted to give one of them a spin down the M40 from his Oxfordshire home, reflecting, of course, his success in his previous career!

We are delighted to welcome Deborah Vorhies to the new post of Chief Operating Officer, to reflect the broader nature of the role required to move us forward on a number of forthcoming projects. Deborah is from South Africa and has degrees in Law and Accountancy. Deborah has worked in similar roles in large international companies, NFP organisations and the International Civil Service, so brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the role. She is a passionate believer in education and, in particular, the grammar school sector. Deborah is looking forward to overseeing the great projects we have planned for the next three years.

### MOCK EXAMS

We have been very pleased with the mock exam results overall and I should like to take this opportunity of congratulating boys in Years 11 and 13 on their overall performances. We have robust data systems in place and the augury for the summer is very good indeed. We are working with your sons on target setting, revision techniques and support sessions in the coming weeks - the lessons I see as I walk round the school (which I try to do daily) epitomise focus and the intent to achieve well.

## RUGBY

The rugby season ended with an excellent block against Champion School, Hornchurch. The results are on the website - we won the majority of matches. I'd like to say a particular thank you to the senior teams - the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> XV for their commitment to School Rugby and for setting a great example for younger teams. For some, this was their last rugby game for RGS and it was a special occasion for the parents as well as the boys. For obvious reasons, I have a particular link with the U16s - again, this was a notable day in that the teams will be assimilated into the senior squad, which comprises both Years 12 and 13 next season. All U16 teams have demonstrated commitment and the desire to improve their game; they have been a pleasure to watch throughout the season.

There are a number of team photos on Twitter.

## EVENTS

The Bat Oar Ball was sold out with over 300 guests enjoying food, dancing and, of course, the Deputy Headmaster's inimitable compering. We raised a significant amount of money through the various auctions and activities on the night. The bar did a roaring trade – I'm fairly certain that paracetamol was de rigueur on Sunday morning, for most. (I had foolishly agreed to play at All Saints Church on the following morning and, somehow, managed to direct a 0900 choir rehearsal!)

On 25 January, FRORGS organised a Burns Night at Beaconsfield Golf Club. A more intimate affair, we were treated to an excellent meal of haggis, 'neeps and tatties', with alternatives for those who think haggis tastes 'offal' (sorry!). The sumptuous surroundings and traditional dancing made it a memorable occasion, which will surely be repeated.

On the same night, the Queen's Hall was the venue for an Audience with Jonathan Veira (an opera singer who tours with his 'one man show'). I have heard great reports about this well-attended event.

We hope that there is something for everyone at RGS and I should like to thank those who give of their time in staging the events, and to those who support them by attending. It is always nice for me to meet parents in a social setting.

I repeat this often, but without your support of the Friends of groups, the PA and the Annual Fund we could not do what we do for your sons. Thank you.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO

**Senior Mathematical Challenge:** A UK national competition – Distinction: Cameron Stephenson, Raaif Hadadi, Alex Curran, Angus Whittam. Merit: Jack Zhu Capp, Nakul Nataraj, Alexander Lo and Sean Cohen. Those awarded distinction are in the top 2.5% of all participants around the country.

**Goethe Institute German Debating competition:** Debating the topic of free public transport in the German language: James Bignell, Will Yeates, Maxim Dussek and Ben Underwood for progressing to the semi-final, having beaten strong competition in the quarter-finals.

**CCF:** Cadet Alex Middleton-Hill for coming top in this year's PJNCO Cadre.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to wish you a very happy half term. We have two trips going out – the ski trip to Italy and the Maths trip to Japan. Please do read the advice the School has sent out about the global health situation. May we all have a 'calm sea and prosperous voyage'.

**Philip Wayne**