

HEADMASTER'S LETTER



Dear Parent and OW

I trust that you have all had a great summer. RGS is 'up and running' for another academic year. I should like to say either 'welcome back' or to extend the warmest of welcomes to boys and their parents who are new to RGS. Our new Year 7 boys have settled in well and I look forward to meeting them all during the course of the year (I have, today, had my first round of 'Birthday Boys').

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

May I remind you all that general and whole year group communications, save for emergencies, are sent by email via one bulletin on Mondays and Thursdays; I endeavour to keep you informed of activities with this 'Headmaster's Letter' every ten days or so. Please also follow @RGSHW on twitter (RGSHWHeadmaster) from where you can find links to a number of departments.

WEBSITE

We hope that all parents will find our new website www.rgshw.com a useful resource, to which we will continue to add new pages in the coming weeks. One new feature is 'email a member of staff' in the contacts section. We have not used 'links' to avoid spam etc, but I trust that it will be fairly self-explanatory. May I respectfully request that parents remember that teachers often teach an eight period day and spend parts of their breaks and lunchtimes with students. Whilst we all aim to deal quickly with concerns, a 'speedy' response does not mean 'immediately'.

EXAM RESULTS

We returned to excellent examination results. I should like to congratulate all students who sat public examinations last year. Here are some statistics for you:

A Level: Just under 75% of all grades were at A*-B. This compares well with other selective Sixth Forms, particularly so for 'boys only' Sixth Forms. Around 48% of these grades were at A*/A with 26% of the year group achieving a clean sweep of A* and A grades. Good A level results mean that most boys have gone to their first choice of university – great ones too. 92% of places accepted are at highest and high tariff universities.

GCSE: These were exceptional and a significant step up on recent years. I can confidently predict that, assuming the remark/upgrade pattern is as usual, these will have been the best results for nearly 20 years. Pre-remark, 72.3% of the grades were at the new 9-7. 50% of the grades were at 9/8. This not only compares exceptionally favourably locally but has enabled us to climb many places in the BASS (Boys Academic State Schools) league table.

SCHOOL SITE IMPROVEMENT

We have continued our work around the site over the summer holiday. Rather like the Forth Road Bridge, it will never be finished, but we are very pleased to have re-painted the Rennie Maths Block, done further work in Geography, replaced all lighting around the school (government loan) with LED units, refurbished the small astroturf and started work on upgrading the décor in and around the Queen's Hall. The Parents' Association kindly donated £15,000 towards the refurbishment of the Drama Studio and this is very much underway with completion prior to the opening on 10 October. The work on renewing fire doors is due to take place in the coming months, which will be a fillip to aesthetics and security as well as fire safety.

UNIFORM

I should like to thank all parents for their co-operation with the phased refreshment of elements of our school uniform. Shoe shops, in particular, will have done a good trade - it is super to see the boys looking so very smart from top to toe!

OPEN EVENINGS

On Monday and Tuesday of next week, we have our annual Open Evenings. Thank you for allowing your son to assist with this. The Deputy Headmaster has written to parents with arrangements. We are in the great position of being over-subscribed but we should never rest on our laurels. I still believe that open evenings are a great opportunity to showcase RGS and for us all to demonstrate our great pride in an institution with Elizabethan origins. The first evening is generally very busy, the second often a little quieter, so please do come round and have a look if you wish.

NEW STAFF

We have welcomed a number of new staff and I wish them all a rewarding and successful time with us.

Teachers

Mr Oliver Harris	Physics	Mrs Candida Javaid	German
Mr Lee Rowe-Elliott	Biology	Miss Clare Gibbs	Geography
Mr Alistair Newton	Economics	Miss Lucy Wilson	History
Miss Diana Bench	Mathematics	Mr Christopher Richardson	Geography
Mr David Holmes	Mathematics		

Support Staff

Miss Mary Campbell	IT Support	Mrs Tanya Warner	Resources
Mrs Gina Barry	Matron	Mr Richard Beeson	Estates Manager

Graduate Trainee Teachers

Mrs Emilie Ashley	Geography	Mr Evan Bett	Geography
Mr Charlie Hubert	PE	Mr Luke Hashman (OW)	French
Ms Elizabeth Herrera	Spanish		

ROWING:

I was very pleased to be invited to the Friends of Rowing BBQ at Longridge, where our boathouse is situated. I was able to present certificates to a number of rowers. Xavier Davis, a boarder in Year 10, completed the great river race this Saturday 8th September. Known as London's 2nd Marathon, the race is a gruelling 23 miles from the Isle of Dogs in London's Docklands to Ham in Richmond. Xavier pictured with his crew above completed the course in a fantastic 3hrs 59 minutes.

WELLBEING

I am justifiably, I believe, proud of the manifold successes of our boys. As I said in our first assembly of the year (I could barely contain my excitement when talking about the results) we ought at all times to remember that wellbeing is a vital component of a happy and fulfilling life. Our mindfulness programme is a means of supporting boys to achieve this.

MINDFULNESS: from Mr Zair: *This is the third successive year that boys in Years 8 and 10 are being delivered mindfulness lessons as part of their PSHCE course. Over ten weeks, the boys follow a taught curriculum provided by the Mindfulness in Schools Project (MiSP). This course is supported by studies at Oxford University and taught at leading schools such as Wellington and Tonbridge. Students are taught skills to help improve their sleep, reduce exam anxiety, and respond well to challenging situations. The overall goals are to help with the challenges of teenage life, and improve academic success. Boys in the 6th Form are being offered an eight-week MBCT course, running for four weeks either side of half term, on Mondays/Tuesdays from 4.00-5.30pm. This is a more mature mindfulness course designed to promote well-being, resilience and performance. The course costs £60 and is open to any boy, regardless of experience. Boys are encouraged to speak to Mr Zair for more information AJZ@rgshw.com (deadline Monday 17th September). Parents should be aware that an adult, eight-week MBCT course with an external teacher will be running in April. This is an opportunity to put yourself first for a change – register your interest early with AJZ@rgshw.com*

SENIOR CADET INSTRUCTORS COURSE: from Cadet Corporal Dominic Holland (Year 12): *From 27th July - 3rd August, Cadet Corporals Bennett, Holland, Porter and Cook travelled by train to Sennybridge Camp in Brecon to take part in the Senior Cadet Instructors Course (SCIC). Throughout the week we revised instructional techniques, taught lessons on subjects such as drill, navigation and fieldcraft as well as leading revision sessions on skill-at-arms. At the end of the week we took part in a field exercise consisting of setting up a harbour, a reconnaissance patrol, an ambush and a section attack. We all passed the course and enjoyed our time in Wales, coming away with a feeling that we had learnt a lot about instructional techniques but perhaps more importantly, we had learnt a lot about ourselves.*

OLD WYCOMBIENSIANS: from Captain Rose, OC Army Section CCF: *It was with great pleasure that we learned that OW James Sendall had successfully passed through the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst to commission as a Second Lieutenant in the 4th Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment. He will join his unit after completing the gruelling two-week commission course for the Army Reserve which saw him pass out of the prestigious Sandhurst officer training academy on 21st July 2018. His commissioning parade was attended by fellow officer, Second Lieutenant Nick Davison whom he will join in 4 Yorks. Nick recently paid a visit to the school to update us on his progress at university and his experiences so far as the only platoon commander in his Army Reserve Centre in Leeds.*

May I take this opportunity to renew my welcome to you all. I shall look forward to your support in the coming years.

Philip Wayne