

HEADMASTER'S LETTER 14 July 2022



Dear Parent

Valete

We say goodbye to the following staff:

Ruth Smith joined RGS in 1997. A passionate linguist and first-class teacher, Mrs Smith has inspired generations of RGS boys. One can see immediately the rapport she has with students past and present. Her work in running ski trips, the French History Trip and previous Classics trips has been much appreciated as has her regular attendance at concerts and shows. We all wish Mrs Smith a very happy retirement.

Kouaho Gueye was appointed in 2004. His infectious enthusiasm has led to students really enjoying learning both French and Spanish and his regular support of the French History and Toulouse trips has been much appreciated. A very popular teacher, staff and students alike will miss him. Mr Gueye is going to teach in Hong Kong.

Andrew Zair has worked at RGS for nine years as a Geography teacher, expedition leader and rugby coach. More recently, Mr Zair has been a very highly thought of Head of Year. He has a passion for leading on Wellbeing - a post which he will be undertaking in his promoted role at The Misbourne. Earlier this year, Mr Zair talked with Year 13, as part of their Lecture Series, about his mental health and losing his father at a young age. The talk is [here](#). And I know that Mr Zair would welcome contact from anyone affected by similar issues.

Claire Whybourn joined the School in 2015 as Subject Leader for French. A fine teacher, hugely respected by her department and students, Mrs Whybourn has achieved a promoted post of Associate Assistant Head at Lynch Hill Enterprise Academy in Slough. She cares deeply about her students and I feel certain that her new school will greatly benefit from her work there.

Sanum Khan joined RGS in 2016. I would credit her with rescuing a subject that, had it not had its statutory status, would have drifted into oblivion. An energetic and passionate teacher with a well-researched interest in diversity, Mrs Khan has built sustainable GCSE groups as well as being an excellent source of advice in a range of areas. Her leadership of the Iftar has been inspirational. I wish Mrs Khan every success in her promotion to Assistant Head at Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School.

Natasha Chan joined in 2018, initially to administrate the cover rota but more recently as Attendance Officer. This is a very large role, even in a School without 'attendance problems', one that Mrs Chan has carried out with great care and efficiency. The Student Hub is a busy place, but students have been assured of a cheery smile and solution from Mrs Chan.

End of Term

I think it is true to say that this has been a very busy term for us all; I fear we may have tried to pack too much into what has been a very short half term. I warmly thank and pay tribute to all members of staff, who have pulled together to get so many events 'over the line' as well as continuing with their day jobs with their usual commitment. New systems are never easy and our new MIS has led to some challenges. It is always sorry to say 'goodbye' to colleagues, but you will note that there is one retirement, an emigration and three promotions.

Your sons have been superb. The manners that greet me as I walk around the School, their willingness to engage in conversation (often witty) and their learning attitude in the lessons I have observed this year is a complete joy. I should like to thank all students for their contribution to the life of the RGS throughout the year, whether in the classroom or in co-curricular activities.

School of Rock

Around 1,000 people saw our musical production of School of Rock. With two very strong casts, superb administrative, technical, musical and stage direction fortified by typical Friends of Music 'front of house', it was a fantastic show. The combination of the young casts supported by more senior Principals led to an evening to remember.

Choral Evensong

I was also very privileged to accompany some of the Choral Evensong this afternoon. As we had to relocate to All Saints, we had the added bonus of a large congregation of parents and friends. My thanks to the Music Department and young musicians for an excellent event; thanks also to Rev Gareth Morley who sensitively officiated.

Capital Investment

Further to my recent optimism, I can now confirm that we have a busy few months ahead.

- We have now signed a contract to replace the Sports Hall roof, which will also facilitate redecoration. We have secured a full government grant for this job which is close to £900k in cost
- The Foundation have agreed to fund the full repair of the swimming pool with energy efficient credentials and a brand new building around it. As well as being of benefit to our own students, it will enable us to generate income from hires.
- Those of you with sons at the top end of the School will know that it has been my mission to create a Sixth Form Centre in the heart of the school. I am so pleased that the preliminary work will start on Monday. I will update in September. Whilst we have a funding plan in place, we will be seeking parental support to get us over the line. This is a very exciting project and will make a real difference to our current and future students.
- There are some smaller renovation jobs taking place over the summer to improve the experience of staff and boys.

CCF news

Over 30 Cadets from the CCF (Army) Section deployed to Crowborough Training Camp, East Sussex from 26th June - 1st July to attend the 11th Security Force Assistance Brigade Summer Camp alongside almost 320 Cadets from 12 other CCF Contingents. This was a fantastic week of activities including Adventurous Training (climbing, mountain biking and paddle boarding), Fieldcraft activities (including axe throwing!) and in camp training led by the Cadet Training Team. This was a great opportunity for Cadets to go outside their comfort zone and to learn new skills in a challenging, yet rewarding environment. The last day of the camp concluded with an inter-Contingent competition where the Cadets worked fantastically as a team to bring home the 'Best Contingent' Award after a challenging 10-stand competition. This was only possible due to brilliant performances throughout the day. These included 3rd place on the Dismounted Close Combat Trainer, 2nd on the Shotgun range, 2nd on the Survival Stand, 1st on the Obstacle Course, 2nd on Mountain Biking and 1st on the Field Gun Run. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Cadets, Staff (Lt Mostyn, Capt Rose and CSgt Barrett) and their parents for the support and assistance that allowed such a fantastic camp to happen.
Captain Pettengell, OC Army Section, RGS HW CCF.

Mr Kirkham also reported great news from the RAF camp - a photograph is at the top of the page. A real credit to their respective schools. This was the first RAF camp for six years. Here is a diary entry from one of the days:

'The cadets had to build a Typhoon model from pieces of MTA kit. They were split into teams (UK, Spain, Germany) just like the real production was, and given a plan for their part of the build. This was then complicated by the fact that Spain and Germany could not talk directly to each other, all communication having to go through the UK! Lots of teamwork, planning and delegation went on, and many of the cadets said it was one of their favourite tasks of the week.'

Rowing

Despite the lack of a river, RGS Rowing continues to punch above its weight. Here is an update from Friends of Rowing: *'We spent two days at Kingston Regatta which first raced in 1857. Saturday was for J15s and up. We entered five boats with Dom and Ben in a J15 double making it to the semi-final, but losing out to the eventual winners. On Sunday we had six boats, two J14 doubles and four J14 quads. The J14 quad event was after 5pm so by then the heat was intense. All four J14 quads raced well in their heats. The J14A Quad were dominant in their heat going straight round to their semi-final, winning again in a tight race against Claires Court by half a length half an hour later. They went around again and there were some delays due to races needing to be re-rowed. By now they had been on the water for two hours and went into the final against the Guildford RC boat that had taken Bronze at the National Schools' Regatta, so to come within 1.5 lengths of this boat was exceptional; well done to Jasper Tong, Henry Curzon, Max Roughton, Owen Folmer with Jack Dunlop as cox.'*

Please may I take this opportunity to wish you all a very enjoyable summer. I renew my thanks for your support this year.

I look forward, with some relish, to September.

Philip Wayne