

HEADMASTER'S LETTER

21 March 2022



Dear Parent

We were very sorry to learn of the death of Garth Ratcliffe. Garth joined the RGS in 1983 on a temporary contract; he left RGS at Christmas 1999, after 16 years of dedicated service to the School both as a teacher of Economics (later becoming Head of Department), and RE. Please click [here](#) to read a fuller obituary.

Ukraine

Following some helpful charity advice, we made the decision to support the British Red Cross as our part in supporting Ukrainian families, rather than collecting and sending goods. To complement our weekly benevolent fund which itself raises many thousands of pounds, boys have given generously to this extra collection.

CCF

The CCF is an integral part of RGS. We regularly have 140-160 boys who gain excellent skills and enormous joy from their participation. Year 9 have the opportunity to sign up and to benefit from this great experience.

Last week from Thursday to Sunday, 20 boys from the CCF travelled to the Brecon Beacons to take part in Adventure Training. They rock climbed and abseiled on Friday in quarries above Merthyr Tydfil. On the Saturday the group went caving and gorge walking, the latter a thoroughly exhilarating experience. On Sunday they practised their navigation skills in upland terrain with some boys reaching a mountain summit at 725 meters. Throughout the boys were responsible for their own cooking and cleaning in a bunkhouse. Although the experiences were occasionally disconcerting for some boys, the whole event aimed to push the boys in unfamiliar activities and it is to their credit that they showed great courage in embracing the sometimes daunting challenges. They also learnt a great deal about teamwork and personal administration while cleaning and cooking for themselves, all important life-skills that the CCF looks to impart. Well done to all that took part.

Fencing - RGS at the Public Schools Fencing Championships

Last week, 24 fencers from Years 9 – 13 travelled down to the Lee Valley Athletics Centre in Enfield to compete in the Public Schools Fencing Championships, a competition that draws together many of the best fencers in the country. Our highest-placed finisher over the three days of competition was Sam Holden in Year 12, who finished 12th in the Senior Boys sabre competition and still has a year to run in his age-group. Several of our younger fencers also showed great promise. Kai Rancurel and Jasper Tong (both Year 9) put together strong runs in the foil. Kai made it through to the last 16 of the foil and narrowly missed out on reaching the same stage of the epee competition after losing 15-14 in the last 32. Alex Stewart in Year 10 also impressed in the Junior sabre by winning his second-round group then progressing to the last 16 after winning an all-RGS battle against fellow RGS sabreur Max Littlewood in the round of 32. Other fencers who reached the last 32 in their weapons were Captain of Fencing George Hill (Year 13), and Aaron Tecke and Ben Kirby (both Year 11). Congratulations to all who took part representing the School after two years away from competition due to Covid.

Away from the PSFCs, separate congratulations also go to Sam (Bronze medal), Ben (Bronze medal) and Alex (Gold medal) for finishing highly in the sabre section of the Southern Regional Fencing heats to qualify for the finals of the British Youth Championships in May.

Hockey (update from Mr Clark)

Please see below a summary of the hockey players recent achievements:

- U16A's reached the last 8 of the National Cup, losing out to The Leys School in their quarter-final
- 1st XI reached the last 16 of National Plate
- U14's qualified for and competed at South Plate finals, finishing 5th overall
- U13's made it to the South Cup finals, just missing out on the semi-finals and the chance to go to Nationals
- Two Y12's, Oscar Neil-Dwyer and LJ Ekdahl, have been selected to take part in DiSE programme delivered by England Hockey & Loughborough College to help high performing hockey players pursue sporting excellence alongside full-time education.

All of this is off the back of two highly disrupted school hockey seasons and shows how well the boys have done working hard and staying focused in their training and games.

Duke of Edinburgh Award – Bronze Weekend

I am pleased that our DofE programme inspires so many boys to enjoy the outdoors and learn new skills. This year's cohort got off to an impressive start on March 12 and 13, with over 140 Year 9 students undertaking their Bronze practice expedition. They were subjected to all four seasons, lots of smiles, even more mud and a real sense of teamwork. As the boys themselves said: *"I had a great time in the DofE practice expedition, and it was great fun. I learnt many things like learning to do a map route card, navigating using a map and cooking with stoves outside. I am very much looking forward to the Bronze expedition!"* Harshaan Webhra 9AP *"My DofE practice was an amazing experience, it was a great opportunity to walk through areas I have never been to before, and it was even better to share the experience with my friends. As Mr Pettengell would say it was Type 2 fun as the walking was very tiring and all my group's shoulders were in pain because of the weight of the bag. Despite this after we'd finished there was a real sense of achievement. I'm sure everyone is excited for the DofE assessment just as much as I am."* Armaan Dass 9AP. Many thanks to the staff who ran the weekend, the boys who participated so well and, of course, to parents who supported their sons with lifts, purchases and, no doubt, a lot of washing of muddy clothes.

Character Education

In Mr Wilson's letter today, he outlines the work we are doing surrounding Character Education. We have been heavily involved with the IBSC over the past 3 years supporting the work of CIRCLE (The Centre for Innovation, Research, Creativity and Leadership in Education) on Character Education. In his letter, you will see a link to a survey which we have asked an external company to carry out for us. Please may I ask you all to find some time to complete this; it will form a vital part of the development of our Character Education strategy.

Ed:Gen

We are busy behind the scenes migrating all our data held in SIMS to Ed:Gen. With any transition of major IT systems, there will be some time where there is a crossover of system use. We will continue to send reports home via email in the final week of this term but if for any reason this isn't possible, a hard copy will be sent home via the students. There is a chance that the SIMS parent app may stop working in that final week; more information will follow on the Ed:Gen parent app and portal.

Support Sessions

There are many support sessions on offer to make sure that students are well prepared for their forthcoming exams or simply to stay abreast of particular areas of a course. [Here](#) is the programme that is currently taking place. Many thanks to departments who are offering their support in this way.

Dates for your Diary

Friends of Cricket are holding a BBQ on April 3, around the Cricket Pavillion - click [here](#) for further details. You'll see that there is the opportunity to win a handcrafted cricket bat, worth many hundreds of pounds. Please email RGSFOC@gmail.com to buy a ticket for this special raffle. All proceeds to support our cricket programme.

Following the triumph that was House Music, the Department is busy preparing for Spring Showcase. This event is almost sold out, so please do buy your tickets early on to avoid disappointment. A wide range of groups - choral, classical and jazz will be on show, demonstrating the immense talent we have at RGS. More details are [here](#).

The auditions for the Junior Summer Production 'School of Rock' have taken place with 100 youngsters from RGS and neighbouring girls' schools treading the boards. This could well be a 'cast of thousands'! More details later.

Student Update

- I was delighted to meet Oscar Panayi who has won the Year 9 History essay prize, writing a piece which would comfortably be awarded a high grade at GCSE. Oscar is pictured above with me and Mr Carr, from the History Department, who oversees the award. Well done, Oscar!
- I was delighted to meet and congratulate Henry Simpson, Isaac Jones and Josh Fiwana. These chaps took swift action when a member of staff collapsed in a lesson. Our colleague is on the road to recovery thanks, in part, to these three cool heads. Impressive!

Best wishes
Philip Wayne