

HEADMASTER'S LETTER

18 January 2021

Dear Parent

ISAAC HAMMOND RIP

I am very sorry to inform you that one of last year's Upper Sixth Students, Isaac Hammond, died suddenly last week. Isaac was an exceptionally bright young man who joined RGS as a Sixth Form boarder in 2018. He achieved A*s in all of his A level subjects and went on to study his true passion, Economics, at the University of Durham, where his death occurred. Those who knew Isaac will recall a student of exceptional academic talent, who had a great sense of humour, passion and enthusiasm. I am sure you will join me in sending our heartfelt condolences to his parents in the sudden, grievous loss of their son.

SUNNY AFTERNOON

I trust you have had a pleasant, if quiet, weekend. There seemed to be a lot of people out and about, taking advantage of the bright, chilly Sunday. I managed to fit in a most enjoyable, though muddy, four-mile dog walk this morning (Sunday) and in the afternoon try out my new butane gas weed killer!

WELCOME

We are very pleased to welcome to RGS Mr Tilbrook and Mr Green who have joined us for the next two terms in Biology and Chemistry respectively. We also welcome Mr Robertson who has joined the Maths Department. We wish our new colleagues well in these unusual times and hope that, before, long they will benefit from the true RGS experience. I renew my thanks to Dr Brown who has stayed on until Mr Green could start.

It is hard to predict what the 'transfer season' will bring this year - there was little movement amongst teachers last year, for obvious reasons, but it is likely that the recruitment market will open in the spring. Our belief in getting the very best into the profession and, indeed, into RGS is one of the key reasons why we play a substantial role in the Astra Alliance, which is our local 'teaching school'. We have some super trainees this year and already have a number who will be joining us in September to undertake their teacher training.

SUMMER EXAMS

You may be aware that Ofqual and the DfE have published a joint [consultation](#) on Summer 2021 assessment/exams. You may have your own views which you wish to be heard. I am working closely with Heads of other grammar schools locally and nationally and will submit a response on behalf of the School. There will be a fair amount of anxiety on the part of students, parents, teachers and (judging by the various groups I'm involved with) Headteachers, too. Please be assured that we will work carefully through the various documents and keep you informed. Please do keep an eye out for information about internal assessment which will be coming thick and fast.

LOCKDOWN LOANS - LIBRARY SERVICE

Mrs Jones, our Librarian is very committed to encouraging boys to read. Aware of the challenges at the moment, the School Library has introduced a 'Lockdown Loans' service for boys in Years 7 and 8 to borrow books. All the necessary sanitisation processes will be covered.

OUT OF KILT(ER)

The very successful Burns Night, held at Beaconsfield Golf Club last year was due to be repeated this year. Obviously, this is not possible, but the ever innovative FRORGS (Friends of Rugby) Committee have plans for a comedy evening, at only £10 per group. You'll need to pipe in your own haggis (optional), have a wee dram at hand (rude not to) and take part in the quiz (a given). It will be a super evening. Book your tickets [here](#).

LATERAL FLOW TESTING

Our Lateral Flow Testing has been working well with many staff (and students who are studying or boarding) having been tested twice. You may have read in the press that there have been issues around the reliability of the test which has caused discussions amongst various representative groups. We will continue unless we are advised otherwise by the DfE as we are pleased to be playing our part in fostering a safe and aware community.

ARM, ARM YE BRAVE

It is clear that the vaccine offers us all the hope we need to get back to a normal existence - let us hope that the promise of the most vulnerable being vaccinated first is swiftly followed by the rest of the adult population. I have intentionally kept the School focused on the essentials, viz a strong online education and securing the School's financial future at a time when we have lost significant amounts of income from our various trading arms. Paramount, of course, is the health and well-being of the whole School community. Our strong foundations have fortified us in these times, our vision will take us into the future.

With best wishes

Philip Wayne