

HEADMASTER'S LETTER 16 May 2022



Dear Parent

Staff News

I am delighted to inform parents that Miss Sabrina Lawson, currently Subject Leader for Spanish has been promoted to the post of Assistant Head, with effect from September 2022.

Estate News

A long-standing mission of mine has been to make improvements to the School estate. We were just getting on a roll before the pandemic, but I'm really pleased that we are now in a position to progress some long-standing projects. I will share more news once we have final costings for various improvements, but the initial news is that Government grants (Condition Improvement Fund – a fund for academies for which we have to bid) are enabling us to replace the windows in the John Prior Languages Block. It is more exciting than it may sound, not least that installing windows that can be open or closed will be a boon to those who teach and study in the rooms. Furthermore, and hot off the press, we have been awarded a CIF grant of c£900k to replace the roof on the Sports Hall, which is in a poor state despite its relative youth. We have deferred redecoration of this area in the hope that we might be successful. We have, and we will crack on with this work as soon as possible.

Examinations

Examination Leave has begun for Year 11 and Year 13; the Queen's Hall is set up for the exams which start this week. I should like to take this opportunity of wishing both year groups all the very best in the exam season. A reminder that it is really important to find relaxation time amid the revision programme that your sons will be undertaking. My '[Headmaster's Revision Guide](#)' may be of help in supporting your son. It is tongue-in-cheek, but makes an important point.

I shall very much look forward to seeing Year 11 when they return for their Sixth Form Taster Day (Thursday 30 June) to prepare for their A Level courses and life in the Sixth Form.

Valete

This is the twenty-ninth time I will have said 'goodbye' to a Year 13 cohort. An odd one for me this year - this was my first year group, as we started on the same day. Many of you will know that I am also an RGS parent so with a son in Year 13, I am soon to join the ranks of 'former parents'. A strange feeling indeed.

Year 13 have celebrated in style, with a fantastic Ball at the Crown Plaza in Marlow. It was a really wonderful evening attended by boys, partners and a record number of staff. Tomorrow, they have their Leavers' Day - a light hearted event with Bucking Broncos and other forms of inflatable excitement finished off with a barbecue with staff and an ice cream van. Very well deserved!

Garth Ratcliffe

We had an excellent send-off for the late Garth Ratcliffe at St James, Gerrards Cross. It was a very well attended service with current and former staff (including two of my predecessors), current and former boys joining his family and many friends. A number of eulogies talked about his strong faith and excellent teaching. He was fondly remembered for his penchant for pranks on staff and boys; although very much of their time, there was much laughter as memories were shared.

Steve Baker MP

Steve Baker, MP for Wycombe (and, ergo, the RGS is in his constituency,) is a supporter of local schools and we were very pleased to welcome him to School to learn more about his role. Mr Powrie has written the following comments: *'Year 12 Politics have been engaging with their studies outside the classroom. All Year 12 students, and some Year 13, were lucky to have a question and answer session with Steve Baker MP. Mr Baker offered interesting insights into life as an MP, and our boys were keen to ask questions relating to their own studies and interests. Furthermore, Mr Powrie and Mr Rose accompanied 20 students to the Houses of Parliament on Wednesday 4 May. The boys enjoyed a tour of Parliament, which included a chance to stand in the House of Commons. After two years of restrictions, the boys were very lucky to have such an amazing experience. They were, as always, a credit to the School.'*

Ambassadors

As Mr Powrie points out above, RGS boys are great ambassadors for the School. Most recent examples include:

The Leadership and Presentation Course Showcase – these courses run throughout the year and give our Year 12 boys the opportunity to learn how to prepare a three-minute speech and to deliver it, without notes, to a live audience. It was a superb evening - humour, pathos and encyclopaedic knowledge entertained us all.

Young Enterprise is a charity which supports Sixth Formers in entrepreneurialism - a slightly less daunting *sans Sucre ajouté*. Many thanks to Dr Goodier who has, for many years supported our teams. The regional showcase was held at Buckinghamshire New University and both of our teams presented very well. One of our teams 'Vangelico' came second in the 'Financial Management Award' and won the 'Most Engaging Video Advert' accolade as part of the competition. Congratulations!

Our Interact Team have had a successful year raising around £2000 for mental health charities. I was pleased to join them at Whiteleaf Golf Club for a Rotary Club event at which Guy Tristram (Year 13) gave the supportive crowd an update on their success.

An excellent night of reflection, discussion and exploration. So proud to share the deep-thinking of our students and the commitment to ongoing learning. 'Facing History UK' afforded a great opportunity leadership, role-modelling and building bridges between communities.

Congratulations to:

- Hockey - an excellent Hockey Awards evening as the summa of a successful season.
- Cricket and Rowing for consistently great performances – I will include reports in my next letter.
- Finn Lacy, Year 12 - Winner of the RGSHW History Department 'Sharpe Shooter' Trophy.
- U12 Loic Folmer playing for Amersham and Chalfont Hockey Club in the National Finals! Amazing opportunity to play some top hockey at one of the best venues in the country.

Mindfulness

Mr Zair has resurrected his mindfulness and wellbeing course for parents. He writes:

'The current mindfulness and well-being course is the first since the pandemic and one of the main themes is to encourage a new way of being with our daily experiences; a way of noticing and cherishing all the good stuff (which often passes us by) and encouraging a new way of interpreting the things which typically cause us stress. In Session 1 we've rekindled our childlike curiosity towards mundane daily tasks, and are deepening attitudes of non-judgment and awareness, whilst building foundational skills in meditation. Another course, secular and open to all, will run in the autumn term for RGS parents.'

"Wear Red for Ruth" – Friday 20th May

A reminder about our Benevolent Fund charity this half term, Ruth was the wife of the cricketer, Andrew Strauss, until her untimely death from cancer. The charity supports families with children facing the death of a parent.

All boys are encouraged to wear one item of red (otherwise full school uniform) on Friday 20 May, including all boys who have an exam on this day.

With best wishes

Philip Wayne