

HEADMASTER'S LETTER

18 October 2018



Dear Parent

FAREWELL

We are very sorry to say farewell to Mrs Colston who is relocating to Northern Ireland. Mrs Colston moved from our reception to become Boarding Administrator in FYH and has become well known for her top-notch 'customer service'. Mrs Colston has been fully involved with the life of the School and has participated in many trips. We all wish Mrs Colston and her family every happiness in their new life.

OPEN DAYS

We have held our Open Mornings this week, following on from our earlier, very successful evening events. These mornings are held following the results of the transfer test, so boys and their parents have very sensibly come to see RGS on a working day. We have been oversubscribed from within catchment in the last three years but it is always worth reminding families who live further afield that there is no catchment area for boarding places in the Sixth Form.

We are also holding two events for Sixth Form prospects. There is an event for external candidates to hear talks from key staff, which will be followed by our main Sixth Form Open Evening on 20 November. Mr Eve has written to Year 11 parents with further information. We hope, of course, that all of our boys will stay in the Sixth Form at RGS and we are very keen for students from other schools to benefit from our excellent teaching and unparalleled co-curricular offer. There is no catchment either for boarding or day places.

MUSIC

Our Autumn Recital took place last night. Unfortunately, I was unable to be present but I have heard great reports of a wonderful evening. On Friday, we are hosting the Chiltern Music Academy 'Big Noise' event. There is a constant 'beating drum' about the decline of music in the state sector. We are delighted to buck that trend at RGS with healthy, talented cohorts involved with music both at GCSE and A level and in our co-curricular provision. We have heard some excellent news about an OW, Alexander Walker, an orchestral conductor, who has received the Elgar Society's award for the international promotion of the composer's music.

PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

We were delighted to welcome back OW William Tapley, a successful professional TV, film and theatre actor, to open our refurbished Drama Studio. This is a room that had been neglected over the years but has been transformed into a stylish, inspiring place for drama lessons and rehearsals. This has been made possible thanks to a £15,000 donation from the Parents' Association. I read an article in the Good Schools Guide last week about the decline of Parents' Associations nationally. This is another area in which we have significant strength, not only because of an enthusiastic committee but also due to the support you all give to the various events throughout the year. To find out more please click [here](#) to read about their work and how you can help them raise the money for their next project.

THANK YOU

Writing about parental generosity above gives me the opportunity to thank you all for your support of the School. We are all very grateful for your support of the 'Friends of' groups which enable their particular areas to flourish in a way that state funding would not stretch to. Furthermore, we have had an excellent response to our request for your support of the Annual Fund. £25 per month, with gift aid, becomes a very useful sum of money to the school. If you have not yet signed up but are willing and able to do so, please see the link on the [website](#).

We were delighted to receive so much support for the refurbishment of the classroom used by the late Mr Yeates. The work will be done over half term and there will be an opening ceremony on 15 November.

We have received support from parents, the PA and the various 'Friends of' groups towards our share of the cost the road crossing from the entrance gate to Uplyme. A programme has now been set up for the construction of the crossing and it should be installed by the end of January.

BIOLOGY FIELD TRIP

Luke Ryde – Year 13 Biology Ambassador writes: *On Friday 21st September, a group of Year 13 Biology students went on a field trip to Juniper Hall in Dorking, Surrey. Over the 2½ days that we were there we did many ecological studies. One of our favourites was setting the small mammal traps, which we did every morning and evening. Other activities included marking snails for a population study using Spearman's rank and checking the reptile traps. While we were there, we also performed and recorded 3 core practicals which will go towards our practical endorsement alongside our exams. These core practicals included measuring succession, the effects of coppicing and also statistical calculations such as Simpson's Index and the T-test. All of this was with the help of our extremely knowledgeable FSC tutor who was with us the whole weekend. The weekend was thoroughly enjoyable even if the weather was not so. I would highly recommend anyone who is studying A level Biology to go on the trip as it will help to understand the ecological aspects of the course.*

ROWING NEWS

Mr De Kock writes: *Ben Hinves and Duncan Huntley have been selected to attend the GB Potential camp over the October half term break, Rowing Captain Ben for his third year in a row and Duncan Huntley for his first GB camp. This camp is organised to achieve the required standard at a World Rowing Junior Championships or Coupe de la Jeunesse. Last Saturday our rowers took part in the School's first race of the season at Reading Small Boats Heads race. Top performers: Benjamin Hinves (Yr13) taking fourth place U/18 division, Jimmy Partington (Yr11) finishing 9th U/16, Duncan Huntley (Yr12) winning the U/17 Division.*

FRESHERS' FAYRE

We were delighted to hold our first 'Freshers' Fayre' in the Queen's Hall Undercroft (known as 'The Space'). This was an opportunity to celebrate the 80 co-curricular clubs and to promote them to younger students. There was also a doughnut sale, run by our own Interact branch (the youth division of the Rotary Club) to raise money for the charities they are supporting this year.

EXAM RESULTS

A few pieces of information for you:

- **A LEVEL** - Overall figures, which dipped in 2015 are now back on the way up, albeit with a steady rise over the past three years. We have had a corresponding rise in our place in the 'BASS' (Boys' Academic Selective Schools) this year too. In short, three quarters of the grades were at A*-B, half the grades at A*-A, with 26 % of boys achieving a clean sweep of A* and A grades.
- **GCSE** - We were delighted with the performance of Year 11 who achieved the best results for many years with just under 73 % (63 % in 2017) of grades at 9-7 (A*/A equivalent). The performance of our most able boys was particularly strong. One interesting fact was that out of the 298 boys nationally who achieved a clean sweep of grade 9s, eight of these were at RGS. These results propelled us from 22nd to 12th in the BASS league tables and we were the top performing boys' school in Buckinghamshire for Grades 9-7. We must really congratulate our students on these excellent results and be aware that great teaching and the right culture will have had its part to play.

I wish you all a very relaxing half term.

Philip Wayne