

HEADMASTER'S LETTER 22 April 2024



Bat Oar Ball

Many thanks to parents who supported this year's Bat Oar Ball, an annual event which raises funds for all sports. There were nearly 200 people in the Queen's Hall on Saturday night, including a few tables of Year 13 parents who were reflecting on the fact that their 'being an RGS parent' was coming to a close. I very much appreciated the kind remarks made by many parents about the great education that their son had received at RGS. I was very pleased to welcome representatives from our partners, Rayden Solicitors and Azets, both of whom support Sport. Mr Clark made an excellent compère for the evening. The event would not have happened without the hard work of Mrs Henry and Mr Honeyben whose attention to detail made certain that all went to plan.

Spring Showcase

The Music Department took us on a journey from Classical to Jazz, Close Harmony to Rock with over 200 students taking part with an ambitious programme, the massed choir sang Chichester Psalms (Leonard Bernstein) in the first half and Don't stop me now by Queen, in the second. The Senior Close Harmony group (known as 'Singers Ltd') took us 'over the rainbow', preceded by the exciting inaugural of a junior close harmony group, with unbroken voices giving an excellent performance of Chattanooga Choo Choo. Excellent soloists, choral, band and orchestral work offered the audience a very entertaining evening. YMCA, with impromptu actions ... say no more! Many congratulations to Mrs Jashari, Director of Music, Mr Chitham-Mosley, Miss Martin and Mr Lewis for their inspirational direction of the various groups and support through playing and singing.

Heritage Week

Jake Brown and Asad Tariq talked in two excellent assemblies about their heritage and what it means to them. They both referred to the sense of 'belonging' they feel as a member of the RGS community. Their inspirational talks were an indication that Heritage Week was going to be good! Students have enjoyed a range of experiences this week including Banghra dancing, steel band playing, learning how to wear a turban, banana art, Indian sport Kho-kho, sushi making and a workshop of the impact of Windrush on High Wycombe. The Sixth Form had lectures about belonging and heritage from friends of the school. Many thanks to Mrs Tan for organising the week and to all staff and students who participated with enthusiasm and curiosity.

Heritage week will culminate in an evening of celebration, showcasing RGS families' diverse heritage from around the world, starting with a talk about St George's Day, and included western classical through to Caribbean and Indian music and bhangra dancing.

Red for Ruth

We support a number of charities throughout the year. Red for Ruth is one that is close to the hearts of many of us, not least Mr Atkin who is passionate about our involvement. Staff and students are asked to wear an item of red with, in the case of students, the remainder of their uniform. This Friday, 29 April, all boys and staff are asked to contribute £1. If you would like to learn more about the charity, please click on the link for their [website](#) and [here](#) for a short video, which I found very moving.

Upcoming events this week

Family Quiz Night run by Friends of Rowing and the Friends of Cricket BBQ. These events take place this Saturday and Sunday respectively. You do not need to be adept with an oar or a cricket bat to join in, both events are open to everyone. Vital, however, to get tickets so that the organisers know how many are coming. Occasions such as these are a lovely opportunity for staff, students and parents to meet together and celebrate some of the great work going on at the School. [Little Box Office](#) is the place to go for tickets.

Revision

I know that Year 11 and Year 13 students will be up to their eyes in revision. Just a reminder that whilst, of course, hard work will reap dividends, relaxation and looking after oneself is also very important. Here is a 'Headmaster's Revision Guide' - a little tongue in cheek, but I do hope that it gives a few pointers to parents and their sons during this period.

What can I do to help my son over the exam season?

Food... *You may have noticed that your son likes to eat. Some of our boys eat a lot. Regular meals will be important during study leave, and snacks will help keep your son fuelled and focused as he goes through the revision process. There's no need to break the bank or start baking elaborate cakes and treats. A tin of biscuits would do the trick, or maybe little packets of dried fruit. Anything that will help sustain him through the day and keep his energy levels up.*

Share the revision timetable and keep it in plain view... *To mangle one of our great poets, no Year 11 is an island, and unless your son has the temperament of a trappist monk, you will come to realise that exams are a 'family affair'. It's a time when small dramas and stresses are shared, for better or for worse. Encouraging your son to share his revision timetable with you – by keeping a copy on the fridge door, for example – isn't about 'helicoptering in' on the revision process, it's about giving you the ability to support him most effectively. You can make sure his timetable is realistic and has slots for catching-up, for rest and for treats (maybe a trip to the cinema, or a sporting event?). And you can ensure your son isn't in danger of burning himself out or selling himself short.*

Hot desk? *A change is as good as a rest, they say, and if your son is tired of revising in his bedroom, then maybe it's time to work elsewhere. The kitchen table could be a good alternative, provided there aren't too many distractions. It's closer to the snacks, after all. If that doesn't work, then a lift to your local library (if there is one!) might give respite from noisy siblings.*

A digital truce... *The days when controlling your son's consumption of the internet was as simple as switching off the wifi are long gone. The 4G signal is everywhere now. This is maybe the toughest nut to crack. Blanket bans and total digital detox sound great, but there are many useful revision resources online, including those your son's teachers have uploaded on Teams and that he will be trying to access. What can work well is a digital truce: encouraging your son to agree with his friends that they will not communicate between certain hours, for example, or suggesting that he leaves his mobile phone in a 'public' space, such as on the kitchen table or by the front door, can help to keep distractions to a minimum.*

Exercise (or 'anima sana in corpore sano')... *A few years ago, the University of Cambridge conducted research into the link between engagement in sport and final degree outcomes. They found that a college consisting entirely of students who had represented the university at first-team level would be consistently close to the top of the academic rankings. Sport and exercise have long been associated with improved mental health and general well-being. That's not to say your son should be running a marathon or swimming the Channel. Getting out for a jog, or a game of tennis, or just heading out for a walk and some fresh air will help him relieve stress, lift the brain fog, and get some welcome perspective on the revision process.*

Sleep... *Some boys are early-risers and work best in the morning (yes, really!). Others function best in the afternoon. Whatever your son's sleep patterns, the most important thing is that he's getting enough. That means between 8 – 10 hours a day. As with feeding, sleep should be regular and follow a routine, with lights-out at more or less the same time each day and at least half an hour's digital detox beforehand.*

Finally... *Few students like exams. What works for one family may not work for another, and revision programmes need to be adjusted according to the characteristics of each family. During exam time, home can be a place of worry, concern and the occasional uncharacteristic outburst. Home, though, is also a place of trust, love, sympathy and support. We greatly appreciate the support RGS parents give their sons at this time of year, and everything you are doing to ensure your son does his best this summer.*

With best wishes.

Philip Wayne