

HEADMASTER'S LETTER 4 December 2023



Dear Parent

ADVENT

As the late poet, Sir John Betjeman, wrote; *'The Advent wind begins to stir'*. It feels very much like that on this Sunday morning! We are heading very rapidly towards the end of term, one which has been packed with activities which will continue until the day we break up (15 December). Our Festival of Lessons and Carols takes place at All Saints', High Wycombe, on Monday 11 December at 7.00pm. It is always a splendid occasion and I know that the choirs have been working very hard on some new repertoire. Prepare to be dazzled by Mrs Jashari's brass and organ arrangements of the carol accompaniments. All are welcome - arrive early to get a seat!

SNOW

Just a reminder that, should a school closure be necessary, parents will be notified through the school website and the Buckinghamshire Council [website](#). I do not issue announcements on X (Twitter) and certainly don't enter into conversations on it! Remaining open was always the default position but I am conscious that many parents would work from home on a 'snow day' and that we can deliver an effective virtual education. The decision to close is based upon the intelligence I receive regarding a) the safety of the school estate and b) whether sufficient staff can get into school for it to operate effectively. The coach companies make their own decisions and it is for parents, rather than the School, to assess the risk of their son's undertaking the journey to RGS and back.

GOOD LINGUISTS MAKE GOOD SPIES!

Congratulations to the two Year 9 teams who entered the incredibly tough GCHQ languages competition. This was a national and very challenging competition where students competed in teams to complete a series of increasingly difficult languages-based code breaking challenges. One of the teams (Adam Franko, Luke Thomas and William Kisler) completed an impressive 82% of the challenges over five days and completed everything in their own time, competing hard every break, lunchtime and before and after school. This meant they came 33rd in the entire country out of thousands of teams who entered. This is a fantastic achievement.

And whilst talking about languages, congratulations to Tom O'Keeffe and Adam Franko who both won in their age category in the International Poetry Recitation Competition. Their recitation of a German poem came 1st out of entries from around the world. It is an impressive achievement which has seen the boys receive some books from the Goethe Institut.

Felicitations! Glückwünsche! Felicitaciones!

RUGBY

Commiserations to our U15 A team who, being the only remaining state school in the competition, were narrowly beaten by Berkhamsted School in the National Cup. Our 1st XV, again the only non-fee paying school left, beat Marlborough College in the senior competition - the next game is against Monmouth School for Boys, for which I wish them good luck.

BURNS NIGHT

Hot on the heels of a very successful Sportsman's Dinner, the next FRORGS event is the [Gala Burns Night Supper](#) on 27 January. Pipe in your haggis!

PHYSICS

We were delighted to discover that two of our Year 13 physicists from last year's cohort, Giorgio Amasanti and Nakul Nataraj, have been selected to receive a Salter's Institute A level Award for Physics. These awards are granted to the top five students in the UK based on their marks in the Physics A level exams. We are extremely proud that of the top five Physics students in the UK, two of them are from RGS! Furthermore, we have received confirmation that Giorgio scored the very top mark in the UK. Both Giorgio and Nakul are extremely talented and modest young men. Huge congratulations to them both.

HOUSE EVENTS

Now in its sixth year, our House System has gone from strength to strength to the extent that, for many, it is hard to imagine why RGS abolished it all those years ago. House Assemblies are proving to be another vehicle for different staff, other than the Senior Team, to reinforce key messages, values and the celebration of success. House Drama was filmed on Thursday, and the videos will be available in the next few weeks.

However, I really must share with you some information about our Rubik's Cube competition. (I could not do it, even with instructions, in my teens and haven't tried since!) Two videos capture the event perfectly, and click on the links on our website for the [long](#) and [short](#) versions to see information about the competition. Many thanks to Ishbir Singh for organising the event and to Hassan Malik for organising the media!

- *The competition ran over four lunch times*
- *Over 80 students involved*
- *Junior and senior competitions*
- *Followed official rules*
- *5 finalists, Buckingham House winning overall 24 HPs, but HPs for all houses according to participation and results (Sandringham 18 HPs, Kensington 12HPs, Windsor 10HPs, Balmoral 10HPs, St James 8HPs)*
- *Junior finalists in final winning position order: Aaron Chan 7WI, Tom Winning 7BU, Henry Barker 7SJ, Alex Kynaston 7KE, Haroon Khalid 7SA (all under 57 second average)*
- *Winner of Junior comp: Aaron Chan, 7WI with an average of 31.54 seconds*
- *Senior finalists in final winning position order: Ishbir Singh 11NM, Noor Rauf 9KE, Sohun Verma 8SA, Khalil Meer 13BR, Ege Celik 8KE (all under 25 second average)*
- *Winner of the Senior comp: Ishbir Singh, 11NM with an average of 17.22 seconds*
- *Special mention to Ishbir Singh, Ryan Allbrook, Adam Franko, Boran Celik, Sraam Sivaruban, Jago Wall, Jack Wardle, and Nicky Clayden for significantly contributing, as either organisers or volunteers, to ensure the competition ran smoothly*
- *Cube prizes for 1st, 2nd, 3rd for both competitions*

TRIPS

YEAR 9 has enjoyed two rather special events recently. The annual History Department trip to Portsmouth Dockyard, HMS Victory, Mary Rose and HMS Warrior took place a couple of weeks ago. The [Portsmouth Trip](#) was followed by a 'Creative Industries Day' in which students learned about the opportunities open to them in this very vibrant area.

Steve Forrest Smith (Storyboard Artist who has worked on films such as Harry Potter, Solo, Wonderwoman); James McDonald (OW / Animator who has contributed to animations such as Warhammer on Netflix); Tyrone Antoine (OW / current Fashion Student at Cental St Martins); Emma Smith (Series Editor for programmes including Homes Under the Hammer & Escape to the Country); Saf Tharib (Lecturer at BNU talking about the expansive realm of the Creative Industries, with a particular emphasis on Games, Animation, and Visual Effects, mirroring the specialised courses on offer at BNU), and our very own Chris Bowen (OW, Ceramicist & Artist in Residence).

Many thanks to the Art and History Departments for providing these opportunities.

CHALLENGE PARTNERS

We participate in Challenge Partners, a national programme of professional development and quality assurance. We had our annual Quality Assurance Review last week where senior staff from a range of schools, led by an experienced 'Lead Reviewer' joined our Senior Team to observe teaching, assemblies and to meet with staff and students. Members of our Senior Team are trained and participate in reviews elsewhere. The team were very impressed with what they saw throughout the three days; I will share the report with you when it is published. What I can tell you, however, is that our Careers Provision, so wonderfully led by Sweta Thakrar, has been awarded 'Area of Excellence' status. This is very well deserved - I know from my own inspection work just how strong an offer we provide for our students.

If you missed my Co-ed Sixth Form letter, it is [here](#) for you to read.

Philip Wayne