



From the Headmaster

I would like to thank all parents for the support and encouragement that they have given to their children and the School over this term. It seems a very long time since the beginning of September, a lot of hard work has taken place over the last few weeks, and it has been wonderful to see so many fixtures, field trips, music and drama events back on the calendar.

Listening to the fantastic performance of the Choir at the carol services this week has very much reminded me that Sir Thomas Rich's may be known for academic results, but ultimately our ethos is rooted in students working together to inspire creativity within each other, developing each other and making the very most out of extracurricular opportunities.

Staggered Start to Next Term

A reminder that in order to facilitate the on-site testing of all pupils at the start of term, students in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 should return as planned on Wednesday 5 January. All other pupils should return on 6 January. Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 will be provided with remote education on 5 January, with work set on Satchel One for each lesson.

Close Contacts testing

There has been a change to the national approach to testing for contacts of those with COVID-19, effective from 14 December. Once notified by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact, staff and students should take a lateral flow device (LFD) test each day for seven days and report the results through the [NHS Online Reporting System](#) and to the School via [Parent Gateway](#). If they test negative, they can continue to attend school.

If they test positive, they should self-isolate and [order a PCR test](#) to confirm the result. If the PCR is positive, they must self-isolate for 10 days. If the PCR test is negative, they no longer need to self-isolate but should continue to carry out the remainder of the daily tests.

Staff Changes

Debbie Brake

At the end of this term, Deputy Head, Debbie Brake leaves us after 20 years. We are indebted to her for her commitment and enthusiasm as a brilliant Modern Foreign Languages teacher and an inspiring Learning and Teaching lead. Debbie is taking up the post of Deputy Head at The Skinners' School in Tunbridge Wells, and our loss is most certainly their gain. I thank her for her energy and never wavering commitment to Sir Thomas Rich's, which we will miss greatly. Debbie's legacy will be the continuing professional development programme for staff that she has worked so hard to shape over the last few years, always driven by the ethos that however good we are at what we do, we can always strive to do more.

George Angell

Our Commercial Lead, George Angell leaves us at the end of term to take up a new role at Bettridge School in Cheltenham. My thanks go to George for doing such an excellent job of running our commercial activities and handling the hiring out of our facilities to the myriad of community groups and sports clubs that are on site every afternoon after school and at the weekends. George was a pupil here, and his dedication to Rich's has been evident over the years; we wish him all the very best in his new venture.

Linda Stock

We also lose one of our Finance Assistants at the end of this term. Linda Stock is taking early retirement to pursue her many outside interests. Linda has worked in the finance office for over 10 years; her knowledge and expertise will be greatly missed.

Chris Carter

My sincere thanks also go to Chris Carter as he steps down from his role as Deputy Head and Director of Sport. Chris's passion for all sports has shone from the time he was playing rugby as a pupil at Rich's, and he has overseen many changes and developments in recent years. In particular, he has led a number of memorable overseas Rugby Tours, and he will continue to lead the summer 2022 joint Netball and Rugby tour to Canada. As the Educational Visits Coordinator, he has also overseen our wide programme of extracurricular activities, clubs and societies that have been the cornerstone of Rich's reputation for excellence for so long. We are pleased that Chris will continue to teach geography at the school.

From the start of the Spring Term, Nick O'Neil relinquishes responsibility for Year 9 and becomes Acting Director of Sport, while remaining Head of PE. Zak Hinds becomes Head of Year 8 and Year 9, and Jamie Payne moves to the

Head of Year 7 role. Assistant Head Dave Dempsey takes on the additional role of Educational Visits Coordinator.

We welcome Charlie Pearson to the Senior Management Team in January, as Assistant Head with responsibility for Learning and Teaching.

A Plea

A gentle reminder to please be careful to avoid our neighbours' driveways and park considerately when visiting the School or dropping off and picking up your children. Traffic and parking can be contentious issues for schools, and if we can mitigate our neighbours' concerns while reducing the amount of time staff spend dealing with complaints, I would be most grateful.

Finally

After a busy term Christmas seems to have arrived like a runaway Polar Express. I do hope that all members of the school community, whether you celebrate the religious significance of Christmas or not, take the opportunity to rest and reset during the holidays. I leave you with an accomplished poem from Ben Whelan in Year 9, written earlier this month as a contribution to the Gloucester Snow Globe Trail which is being installed throughout the city in late January. Pupils were set the task of writing through the eyes of one of the original 20 poor boys for whom the School was founded, to illustrate life in Gloucester in the Tudor and Stuart period. Ben has captured the spirit of Sir Thomas Rich's rather well, and his words provide a suitably inspiring note on which to leave you; I wish you all a relaxing and peaceful break.

A Poem to Tommies

The year that was known as 16-o-One,
Saw the birth of a man from whom great things would come.
Born within Eastgate, but schooled far away,
He grew to be wealthy, a success in his day.
An MP for Reading, a First Baronet,
A trader who charmed every person he met.
Born into wealth and a need to do more,
He wanted a legacy, helping the poor.
Bequeathing his house and some money aplenty,
For a school to be built for the poor boys, about twenty.
Blue Coat Hospital, paid from his will,
Was set up in Gloucester, with places to fill.
If the Master was absent, then due to a rule,
The Observator stepped up in running the school.
The boys were well tested, there was no chance to shirk,
And once they left school, they were helped into work.
The school was renamed to the one we now know,
Moving out of the city, in order to grow.
Sir Thomas Rich's School is the name we hold proud,
With our blazers of blue standing out from the crowd.
From humble beginnings, grew this man from a boy,
We salute you Sir Thomas as we say "Garde Ta Foy".

M. Sk Morgan.

Matthew Morgan
HEADMASTER

SIR THOMAS RICH'S

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