

The **CLOCK** TOWER

Winter/Spring 2018
Issue 13

Ripon Grammar School alumni magazine

Cycling the world

One past pupil's
epic adventure

First class boarding

RGS rated
outstanding

School of rock

Band formed at
RGS is a big hit

The award-winning
illustrator whose work
reaches millions

GRAND DESIGNS

PLUS: A teacher turned preacher Reunion news RGS abroad

Back to the future

While we are busy preparing students for the future, new head **Jonathan Webb** says we also have much to learn from the past

Dear former students and friends of RGS,

Unbeknownst to many, except perhaps the most pedagogically nerdy, the educational world is something of a battleground of theory and counter-theory, much of which relies on the connectivity of the World Wide Web to generate its ideas and content. Educationalists and teachers outside the established schools of education have been able to use this platform to engage with other professionals in dialogue and debate, giving rise to such manifestations as the social media-savvy 'tweacher' or blogger.

A core debate has centred around what the school of the future might look like and whether our current system will continue to prepare students for an unknown future, performing jobs we supposedly don't even know exist yet. Schools of course help shape the future by educating the next generation. To what extent therefore should the future help shape the school?

Historically much of our curriculum has been shaped by the past. The Greeks created the foundation of most educational systems with four 'scientific' arts of music, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy wedded to the three humanities of grammar, logic and rhetoric. Logic predominated in the medieval schoolroom where scholars debated the rational basis of God's divine will, but it was during the Renaissance that the study of grammar - more specifically Greek and Latin - predominated, with a smattering of history and ethics for good measure. This emphasis on the mechanics of the ancient languages of course gave us our 'grammar schools' which, in addition to modern science, predominated well into the 20th Century.

The 1960s witnessed the developments of so-called progressive child-centred education and, in more recent times, the preference for teaching transferable skills, soft skills and employability. Intelligence is no longer seen as fixed but as a malleable quality which can be expanded with 'brain gyms' and theories about learning styles. In more recent years the concept of 'growth mind-set' has won many converts. In essence many educationalists have been more interested in the process of learning rather than the content itself. Students these days are meant to be able to collaborate and think creatively in any new context.

Much of this, of course, is right. We naturally want our students to be good communicators who

work flexibly and apply knowledge. But modern education has nevertheless stubbornly clung to the traditional classroom's focus on the teacher as the impartor of knowledge in its widest scope. In fact the proponents of subject-based knowledge have been mounting a fightback of late in the social forums of the web. Transferable skills will indeed only take you so far, they argue, citing, for example, studies into the abilities of air traffic controllers who, one might think, make the best multi-taskers, yet in reality seem just as much at a loss outside the narrow confines of their domain knowledge as the rest of us. We are more alike in our learning preferences than we are different.

While as teachers we should not see our subjects as bodies of discrete knowledge - witness the radical attempts in Finland to recreate their education system on the basis of cross-curricular learning - it is nevertheless heartening to the old guard that what seems unlikely to change is the need to apply knowledge taught in part through well-planned teacher-led instruction. It is not quite as straightforward therefore to say that all students need are transferable skills and the ability 'to Google it'. Ripon Grammar School will, I hope, remain true to its foundation that knowledge [grammar] once applied [logic] can therefore be presented [rhetoric].

With best wishes,
Jonathan Webb

Remaining true to
Ripon Grammar
School's foundation:
new headmaster
Jonathan Webb

Nicola Woolfenden catches up with former RGS students to discover what they are up to now

JOHN RICHMOND Left RGS 1951

Teachers who inspired me at RGS were Mr Thomas, who taught English, French teacher Mr Kempster and chemistry teacher, John 'Masher' Brown. But owing to my father's ill health, I left school at the early age of 15 to assist on the family farm. I could see small farms were already in decline and decided management of larger farms was for me so secured a post at a highly intensive dairy farm near Harrogate. After a couple of weeks my boss, who was part of the Bletchley Park code-breaking team during the war, handed the reins over to me. I married Barbara during the first month of my new job, spending five years living in a small cottage on the farm.

In 1963, with two small children, we bought the Nordale guest house in Ripon and I was elected to the city council in 1967, becoming mayor in 1975 and a county councillor in 1977. The battle over grammar schools was at its height, York and Tadcaster having lost four grammar schools between them. The prospect of the same thing happening in Ripon, where both my children attended the grammar school, was imminent. At my first full county council meeting in 1977, I persuaded the ninety-strong council to agree to defer a decision to administer comprehensive education. It was my only chance. The strategy paid off, and by the time Margaret Thatcher was elected in 1979, all existing grammar schools were allowed to retain their status. Whilst mayor, I also became the city's hornblower over Christmas, later sharing the duties. The same



A full life: John in his garden today, above, and pictured fourth from right, middle row, in 1948 form picture

year, I became captain of Ripon City Golf Club, establishing a link with Ripon, California, and setting up a biennial golf tournament between the two countries, which still runs today. Having sold the guest house at the age of 52, I gained another interest - filming family documentaries and civic historic occasions as well as Royal visits and Brian Stanley's last speech day as headmaster. I have also been heavily involved with Allhallowgate Church and was a Methodist Lay Preacher for over 40 years. I spent 30 years in Ripon Rotary and was awarded the Paul Harris Fellowship in 2004. The same year, I was lucky enough to be made a Freeman of the city of Ripon. More recently, I have joined Ripon's University of the Third Age and have enjoyed the singing and writing groups particularly. The latter

has inspired me to write my memoirs, which I am wading through as I write. (A longer version of this article has been posted on the alumni section of the RGS website)



NIGEL STOCKILL Left RGS 1986

When I left school I took a year off to travel and work out exactly what I wanted to do before starting a sports science degree in 1987.

Seven years later, after gaining a first-class BSc honours degree (yes, I did finally knuckle down and concentrate on my studies) and an MSc, I joined the team at Lilleshall Human Performance Centre and worked with professional footballers, elite athletes and national squads from a variety of sports. During this time I was lucky enough to be awarded a Winston Churchill Fellowship, which allowed me to combine my love of sport and travel, as I jetted off to Australia, the US and the West Indies to perform

research. Some of the data gleaned from this trip contributed to an International Young Researcher Award, proving it wasn't all beaches and cocktails.

After five years at Lilleshall, I was offered a job with the England Men's Cricket Team and became their sports science manager (a posh term for fitness guy), touring with them full-time for nearly eight years.

By 2007, it was time to settle and put down roots in London. To facilitate this, I helped set up a company called Optima-life, which enables me to continue to work in sport as well as the corporate world, combining my knowledge, expertise and passion for developing people's health, wellbeing and performance, both off and on the field. Just before I left my cricket job, I met my wife-to-be Rachel in India, courtesy of an introduction made by

another former RGS student, Becky Stones.

I have many, many things for which to be thankful to RGS and Becky's introduction is definitely one of them. I now live with Rachel and son Max in Dulwich Village, South London, and work as a performance scientist with professional sports and corporate teams in the UK and Australasia, (proving my passion for travel has not waned).

Over the years my athletic pursuits have become less athletic, though I do still enjoy running, weightlifting and, just to add to my frustration levels, golf. I have also recently, in true mid-life crisis fashion, rekindled my passion for music in the form of, no, not Duran Duran (that never wavered) but drumming. Apologies to the residents of Dulwich in advance - the new kit is arriving imminently!



Thankful to RGS: Nigel Stockill pictured as a prefect, back row fourth from right, in 1986 and celebrating England's win at the Ashes in 2015, back row, middle





Happy times: Diana is pictured below, front row, far left in fifth form, 1964, and, left, today



DIANA HALL
Left RGS 1966

After RGS I studied viola for three years at the Royal Manchester College of Music with Frederick Riddle and it was a gift to study with him. I am thankful for all the great teachers I had, notably Gilbert Shufflebotham, who started off so many of the string players in Ripon and also created the Gilbert String Orchestra, a great experience for all us young players.

His daughter Gillian also went to RGS, a wonderful violinist. Music teacher Philip Miles was a great inspiration too, enthusiastic, encouraging and very kind. I experienced a lot of the joy of music, especially Brahms, playing chamber music, along with Andrew and Stephen Orton, at the home of maths teacher Eric Kelsey.

Since graduating, I have been fortunate to play with the Royal Ballet and Scottish National Orchestra, travelling to other countries, including Carnegie Hall in New York, with the latter.

I was a founder member of the inspirational New English Orchestra of Christian musicians, founded by Nigel Swinford. A lot of our time was centred around Salzburg. Nigel's wife, Carolyn, and I first met on a Grantley Hall chamber music course.

I was also a founder member of Opera North and in 1990 was number three viola, going on an exchange to Goteborg in Sweden.

In 1991 I was invited to do more work there, including one year as principal viola in a Portuguese chamber orchestra.

More recently, I have played in Israel. I now live in Ripon, freelancing, doing some teaching and also play with the Castle String Quartet, formed by Kelvin Gott, a multi-talented man who taught for a while at RGS.

Education is so important. Thank you RGS - but what counts most are our teachers & colleagues.



High praise for outstanding boarding



Boarding students at RGS excel academically while enjoying a positive live-in experience, say government inspectors. Sarah French reports



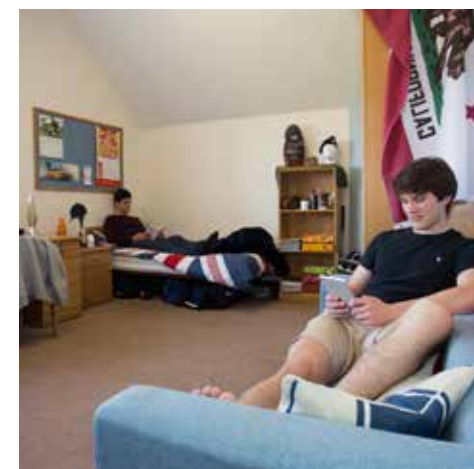
Ripon Grammar School has had its outstanding reputation enhanced still further with the same top grading for its boarding provision.

The school's 90 boy and girl boarders, who pay to board but not for tuition, enjoy an outstanding experience, according to Ofsted, which says the school's boarding provision contributes to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Inspectors noted that boarding at Ripon Grammar School brings significant benefits to boarders' independence, their confidence and self-discipline, and personal and academic achievements, providing them with a good springboard to their futures. "They are happy and enjoy being at school," the report says. And the boarders themselves are praised for being a credit to themselves and the school.

The school is welcoming and friendly and students make strong and lasting friendships, supported by very effective safeguarding practice, specialist services for health and emotional well-being needs, and outstanding leadership and management, added the social care inspectors.

"There is an excellent balance of safe risk-taking and promoting boarders' development and life experiences," they observed.



The report details how boarders are part of a strong school community which recognises their individual needs and any vulnerabilities associated with living away from home.

They are supported to manage their time doing homework and revision, the comprehensive range of activities, pursuing talents and socialising, and appreciate having house parents who are also teachers.

"Sustained improvement in their lives is evident in their achievement records, academic results and their higher education plans after A-levels," the inspectors said.

"Boarding's great because you always have friends around you"

Boarders are able to influence life in the boarding houses, with ideas on menus, technology and social events and inspectors noted the investment in a new extension to the girls' boarding house, the junior boys' washroom, new beds for boys and Wi-Fi.

Recently retired headmaster Martin Pearman said: "We have implemented a long term plan of investment in the quality of accommodation to meet the very high demand for boarding. This is a tremendous outcome of which we should all be very proud."

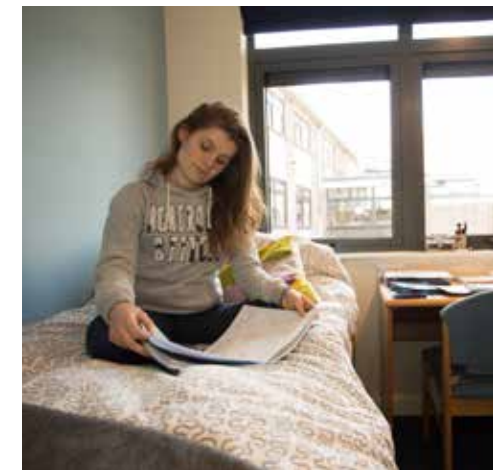
Boarder Lachlan Moon, 15, of Wetherby, said: "Staff are very good at recognising our differences

and not treating us all the same, while at the same time treating us equally."

Harry Williams, 14, also of Wetherby, added: "Boarding's great because you always have your friends around you."

Abigail Burke, 15, whose father is stationed in Bristol, said: "My dad is in the RAF so although he's been posted, boarding allows me to have a stable school life."

There are a number of places still available for boarding students, for more information, visit www.ripongrammar.co.uk/boarding or contact Marita Murray on murraym@ripongrammar.co.uk



A former RGS student is cycling around the world on a bike he built himself. **Ruth Savage** caught up with him on the first leg of his epic 18,000-mile journey

From his desk on the fourth storey of a city centre office block, accountant **Iain Johnston** used to look out on the same grey stretch of urban sprawl, with dismal congested streets below.

But, since ditching his job and jumping on a bicycle he built himself to set off on an epic 18,000-mile journey around the world, he is now greeted with a variety of stunning and ever-changing landscapes each day.

Inspired by celebrated Scottish cyclist Mark Beaumont, 29-year-old Iain started cycling from Leeds city centre just a week after Beaumont set off from the Arc de Triomphe on his record-breaking mission to circumnavigate the globe in 80 days.

Iain is planning to take a little longer, stopping off to see some of the sites along the way, and reckons he will be returning home next July.

In order to help raise the £12,000 it is costing him to fund the trip, he even slept in an under-stairs cupboard for the week before he left so that he could rent out his bedroom.

So far, he has cycled more than 3,600 miles, climbed 44,500m and spent 360 hours in the saddle, having travelled through Holland, Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia and Turkey to arrive in Georgia, the 11th country on his route.

He camps in secluded spots most nights and gets up at 5am to set off by 6.30am, cycling 100km, or 62 miles, in temperatures ranging from minus four to 43 degrees Celsius for around six-and-a-half hours each day.

It's a far cry from the 62 miles a week he normally cycles in the temperate climate of Yorkshire throughout the year: "But it's a good balance between getting the miles done and not feeling too rushed to stop off for a cup of tea or two."

During rest days Iain, who grew up near Ripon and left RGS in 2006, stays in hotels to shower and charge his gadgets: "If I want to visit a city, I'll take a detour. But in more remote parts, I end up cycling non-stop."

Some of the astonishing sights he has seen along the



way, he says, include Istanbul's Sultan Ahmed Mosque and the ancient city of Troy, and he enjoys seeing the sunrise and sunset every day.

More recently, he found climbing a challenging 2,550m summit on the Turkish border, where the Eastern Anatolia converges with the Lesser Caucasus mountain range, particularly breathtaking.

Having descended from there into Georgia, he now

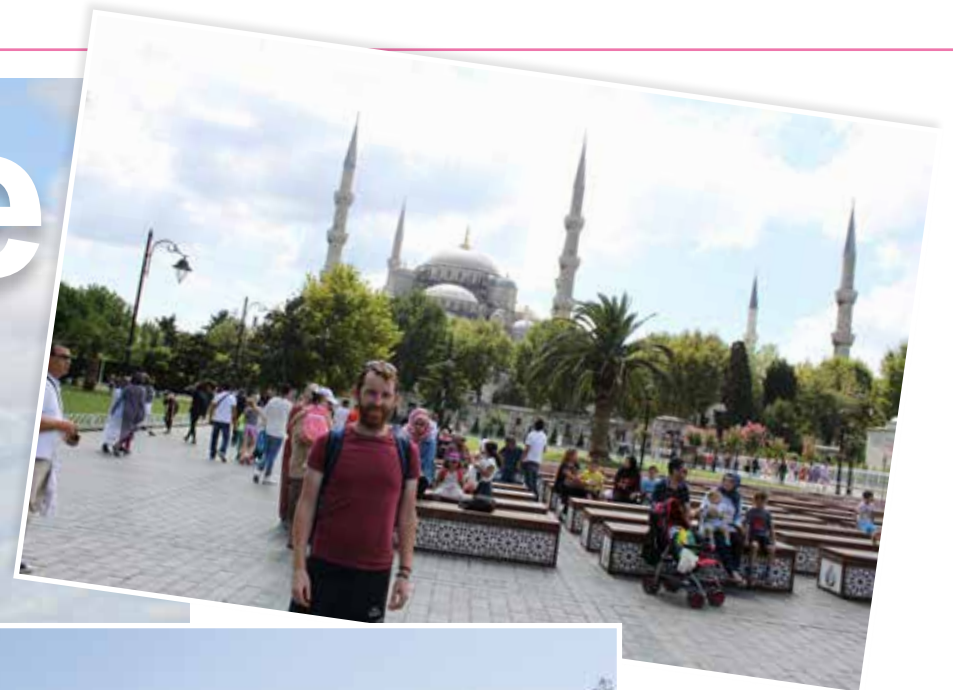
from Leeds to London in 24 hours last year, and built his bespoke bike from scratch, purchasing parts from a specialist company.

It was watching a BBC documentary about Beaumont with his twin brother James, back in 2010, that gave Iain, then studying economics at Manchester University, the idea of setting himself a challenge: "We decided we would go on a cycling trip once we graduated, before starting work."

After university, the pair flew to Venice with their bikes and cycled the 1,800 miles back over four weeks. It planted the seed for something bigger and better: "I enjoyed it so much and Mark Beaumont's trip had sparked my imagination, although I wasn't originally planning to cycle

around the world."

While working and studying for his final chartered accountancy exams, Iain, who has recently purchased a house with James, found the idea of taking time out difficult: "Then I came home from work one day and said if I didn't commit now, I never would."



Below left: Iain's bike next to the Camlica Baraji Lake in Turkey, camping and with his odometer set to zero

Around the world on two wheels: main picture, Iain on his bike on the first leg of his journey in Ely, Suffolk. Above, at the Hagia Sophia mosque in Istanbul. Left, visiting the ancient city of Troy, which he recalls learning about at RGS in ancient history classes with Miss Richardson

himself for company, but the incredibly generous and welcoming people he has met along the way make it easier to bear: "I've had meals bought for me, and fruit and water given to me by locals, who enjoy having a friendly chat, by the side of the road."

And, although he decided to camp to cut costs, he says: "I enjoy the camping as much as the cycling."

Carrying a GPS transponder, so friends and family can track his progress and alert emergency services if necessary, Iain is delighted with the performance of

his bike, having only suffered five punctures and a broken pannier rack so far.

When he returns home, he says: "I'll have to get a job to start paying the bills as James is planning a 12 month motorbike trip after I get back. But, for now, I'm living my dream, and loving every second."

"It would be nice, though, if I could inspire a few people to get on their bikes and head off on an adventure themselves."

FAVOURITE TEACHERS



Iain pictured far left, next to brother James, on their last day in sixth form at RGS in 2006

"Mrs Swainston because of her patience, sense of humour and willingness to spend time helping me understand things. Also Mrs Knowles, who was so supportive and even tracked me down on results day to congratulate me on my GCSE English mark"

Sky's the limit for high flyer David

A former student and RAF cadet who hopes for a career in aircraft design has been awarded a major accolade. **Ruth Savage** reports

Former RGS student David Owens was honoured to be one of just 50 people selected from the UK's 45,000-strong RAF Cadet organisation for a prestigious US exchange trip this summer.

The 19-year-old, who is studying aeronautical and aerospace engineering at Loughborough University, so impressed his superiors that on his return he was promoted to the highest rank possible in the Air Cadets.

The newly-appointed cadet warrant officer, who hopes to pursue a career in aircraft design, is now the most senior non-commissioned officer in a squadron of more than 50 cadets.

One of the highlights of the American exchange, where David was guest of the US Civil Air Patrol and the United States Air Force, was a visit to a ground attack squadron which has recently returned from operations in the Middle East.

"We were lucky enough to get a flight over Baltimore and the East Coast in a five-seat Civil Air Patrol Airvan. With my cadet flying experience, I was able to take the co-pilot's seat and fly the aircraft, the largest I have flown to date," says David.

Other memorable moments from the highly-prized trip, attended by cadets from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and South

Korea, include exploring search and rescue and special forces aircraft and a tour of an operational nuclear attack submarine. "It was amazing, certainly the pinnacle of my cadet career to date," adds David.

This is not the first accolade he has received. Four years ago, David was awarded a special commendation for administering first aid and calling an ambulance to a man he found collapsed in the road.



Flying high: David in the US Civil Air Patrol aircraft he co-piloted over Baltimore

A member of the City of Ripon squadron since he was just 13, David has flown with the RAF in light aircraft, motor gliders and the mighty Merlin helicopter.

Keen musician David, who leads the trombone section of the Air Cadet National Concert Band, also represented his squadron on an overseas camp at Gibraltar last year and has qualified as an instructor, teaching other cadets subjects such as principles of flight, aircraft engineering and first aid.

His commanding officer, Flight Lieutenant Howard Bickerdike, said: "David is an exemplary cadet. Places are highly sought after and only the best cadets in the UK get this opportunity." David is encouraging RGS students to consider joining the organisation: "This is just one example of what you can do and we have a fantastic unit, just down the road from RGS."

Nick's Formula for success

One of the behind-the-scenes stars of the Grand Prix world returned to his old school and gave current students useful advice. **Sarah French** reports

A former student who spends his life in the Formula One pit-lane returned to Ripon Grammar School for the annual lower school prize-giving ceremony.

Nick Chester, who is technical director of Renault F1, a key position in the most prestigious motor racing class in the world, urged today's students to consider the huge array of possibilities available, to find something they felt passionate about and work hard to achieve their goals.

He was a student at Ripon Grammar School from 1980-87 before studying engineering at Cambridge University and breaking into motorsport in 1991, joining Renault in 2000.

"I hugely enjoyed my time at RGS," said Mr Chester, whose father owned a garage in the



city's Dallamires Lane. "I was fascinated by cars and engineering from an early age and got my first taste of racing at club level with my father.

"If ever I did drift off in lessons I would find myself sketching car layouts, but now I work for a French team I realise I should have worked harder in languages. You need to work hard in everything as you never know when that knowledge may come in useful."

The packed hall also heard how Ripon Grammar School, now considered outstanding for both learning and boarding by Ofsted, is the top school in North Yorkshire and the North East for results for the fourth successive year, with current and past students achieving at the highest levels on a local, national and international stage.

Taking the chequered flag, retiring Ripon Grammar School headmaster Martin Pearman, Old Riponian and Renault F1 technical director Nick Chester and chair of governors Peter Mason

FAVOURITE TEACHER

"Mr Ward because he was approachable, understanding, knowledgeable, relaxed, yet respected. When I was struggling with statistics, he tutored me and I came out with 100 per cent"

Paul's top tips



Inspirational: Paul

1. You can't teach attitude and passion
2. Give yourselves options - skills are transferable
3. Use your friends and family
4. Start/keep building your network
5. Always be curious
6. Have the courage of your convictions
7. Fail fast
8. People buy love
9. Love what you do
10. Be yourself

FORMER student Paul Carolan, who left RGS in 1989, has returned to school to inspire current students with a talk about his career in the advertising industry.

Paul, managing director and executive coach of training company Archipelo, entertained students with a brand logo quiz and his top ten tips for how to win at life.

Paul, who has a post-graduate diploma in advertising, is a volunteer with Speakers4Schools, a UK-wide education charity which provides young people in state secondary schools and colleges with talks from influential figures, who share their experience and insights free of charge. This summer, the charity expanded to enrol speakers who will offer work experience at their companies.

For more information, visit speakers4schools.org and S4SNextGen.org



Thank you, Mr Pearman

WHEN Martin Pearman retired in July, the Old Riponians RGS alumni association was keen to show its appreciation and gratitude for his outstanding contribution during 13 years as headmaster.

"The gift," says Martin, "is a kind and thoughtful gesture which will be a permanent reminder of my association with the Old Rips over many years."

We hope Martin will continue to join us for Old Riponian events in future and wish him a long, happy and fulfilled retirement.

Great honour

OLYMPIC champion Jack Laugher's mother Jackie has shared this photograph of Jack receiving his MBE from Prince Charles for services to diving: "What a wonderful day, full of pomp and ceremony and certainly memories that I'll treasure for a long time," she says.



A boy band formed at Ripon Grammar School is tipped to be the next big pop sensation. **Ruth Savage** catches up with them in the middle of their UK tour

Three school friends who formed a band while they were at RGS are taking the UK by storm with their debut single, which has gone viral on Amazon and Spotify.

When :PM, formerly known as Purple Mafia, released Grown Ups in the summer, the music press likened them to the new McFly. The catchy track, accompanied by a quirky, light-hearted video which they shot themselves, was launched with an exclusive release on the Metro website in London.

The site, which reaches 1.7 million visitors, announced: "Boy bands come and go but there's something rather special about this brand new Yorkshire fivesome who are about to swing a wrecking ball through the boy band market with their addictive debut single."

Guitarists, 20-year-olds Harry Yates and Josh Stockdale, founded the group during their early school years and when they heard Dan Reynard sing during a school assembly they immediately asked him to become lead singer, with drummer Alex Boulton, who was Josh's neighbour, joining soon after.

The boys write all their own songs and started out rehearsing in a spare bedroom: "We'd paint :PM all over the walls and blast out music for a good few hours every day," says Dan, 21.

After they won the Harrogate AMP Music Awards in 2012, they were invited to Los Angeles to record in actor Jonny Depp's studio, which inspired them to pursue their passion for music instead of going to university or travelling.

Dan says the boys owe much to Ripon Grammar School: "RGS is where we met, started the band, rehearsed, recorded, wrote a lot of the songs and

School of rock



Famous five: will these Yorkshire lads, who are taking the UK by storm with their debut single, Grown Ups, be the next One Direction? Alex, Harry, Dan, Josh, Joe of :PM

where we decided this is what we want to do. We loved our time there."

And he praised staff for their support: "Being such an academic school, it could be easy to imagine staff being opposed to what we wanted to do, but teachers were so supportive of us."

Having added bassist Joe Morley to the band three years ago, and inspired by everyone from Nirvana to The 1975, Kings of Leon, Justin Bieber and Arctic Monkeys, they say their aim now is to create ear-catching, buoyant pop.

Metro described Grown Ups as a tune that 'gets trapped in your head', praising the 'tight vocals with an endearing Yorkshire twang', with their reviewer remarking that :PM sing 'pop tracks bound to make girls go weak at the knees.'

And the boys' experience on the road would seem to confirm this. It was a recent tour of girls' schools throughout the UK which brought them national attention: "We'd never released any recorded music, but they all went online before the gigs and searched for anything they could find about us. They were so enthusiastic," says Dan.

The band also played at a number of music festivals before being signed to Marshall Arts Live agency of London and Los Angeles.

Currently on UK tour with X Factor's Emily Middlemass, the boys say they are enjoying every minute of their new-found fame: "We don't take ourselves too seriously. We just want to play music. We don't care about getting a job that pays well. When you're on stage playing, there's no better feeling in the world," says Dan.

To find out more, visit www.pmtheband.com

Facebook - :PM; Instagram - pmtheband
Twitter - thebandpm; Snapchat - pmthe band

A song that gets inside your head

Grown Ups chorus:

*I wanna' go buy a bed for two,
Have a couple of kids that look like you
Everything that comes with love, everything but growing up.
I wanna' get drunk in the afternoon,
Buy a Haribo ring & marry you.
Ooooh ooooh but I don't wanna' do, do what grown ups do.*

FAVOURITE TEACHERS

"Mr Fell, Mr Demir and Mr Pepper, along with loads of others, were so supportive of us"



Rising star: Multi-talented Grace also played piano, harmonica, saxophone, clarinet and flute in Footloose

IN THE NEWS

Actress Grace Lancaster, who left RGS in 2010, has received rave reviews after stepping into the lead female role of Ariel, the preacher's daughter, alongside stars Gareth Gates and Maureen Nolan in the hit musical Footloose. Grace took centre stage for the last two weeks of the production's seven-month UK and Europe-wide tour, taking her final bow at the Liverpool Royal Court Theatre. One reviewer said of her: "With more zip and bling, zest and bravado than almost everybody else on stage, hers is a performance to savour." Grace, who graduated in actor musicianship from the Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance, will be appearing as the princess in Aladdin, the Rock'n'Roll Panto, at the Leeds City Varieties Music Hall over Christmas.

Jack Render was one of the youngest 2017 general election candidates in the country when he stood for the Yorkshire Party in Skipton and Ripon, aged just 19, shortly after finishing sixth form, winning 1,539 votes. Jack, who now works as a product designer and enjoyed taking part in political debates while he was at RGS, said: "I have visions for the future and wish to make the UK better for the youth of tomorrow."

A Yorkshire Party spokesperson said: "Jack represents a generation of young people who feel disengaged with what the main political parties offer and he and the Yorkshire Party are setting out a plan for what a modern, prosperous Yorkshire will look like in future."

Former student Ellie Eve's textile work at the Glasgow School of Art fashion show has been featured in The Telegraph newspaper. Her mother, Jane Eves, told Clocktower: "She had wonderful art teachers, it's taking her far!"

Catherine, also known as Kat, Spedding, who left RGS in 2010, has appeared in the Daily Mail and Sun newspapers, helping to increase awareness of the skin condition vitiligo, which she was diagnosed with at the age of 13. Optical assistant Kat says she has learned to embrace her condition, which causes the immune system to attack pigment in the skin.

'I found the career I love Down Under'

Polly Sands, who left RGS in 2010, is an account manager at a global branding consultancy in Melbourne



Global branding account manager Polly in Melbourne and at school, below

Why did you decide to work abroad?

I visited Melbourne on a family holiday when I was 12, fell in love with the city and decided there and then I would move here after finishing school.

How did you go about getting a job?

I was lucky in that I knew people working at the design studio where I now work in Melbourne and asked if I could help out with general administration. I tried to get involved as much as possible, to embed myself into the company and show my passion. Eventually, after working as receptionist for six months, the managing director offered me a position in client services and a working visa.



What are the advantages?
I love the lifestyle here. That is a huge advantage. Everyone has such a great relaxed attitude. Of course there are beautiful beaches as well, which doesn't hurt.

And the disadvantages?
It's so far away. I

can't pop home and see my family, and that can be really challenging at times.

What do you miss most about home?

Mum's Sunday roasts with Yorkshire puddings is definitely a big one, but I also really miss the Yorkshire countryside, there is nothing like it in Australia.

What do you miss least?

The weather. Though Melbourne does sometimes remind me of Britain with the amount of rain we get.

What advice would you give to others?

Try and make contacts before you move over, I have friends who have moved over and tried to find a job once they get here and really struggled. Make sure you do your research about visas and where you want to stay as well. Other than that, just go for it!

Do you plan to return to the UK eventually?

I'm planning to become an Australian citizen this year and then I think I will move back to the UK for a couple of years. After that, who knows?

What do you wish you'd known at 18 that you know now?

Not to stress too much. In my last year of school I was worried because I hadn't figured out what I was going to do, beyond moving to Australia, and I ended up finding a career that I really love but never expected to be doing.

www.elmwood.com

**Past pupil Chris Barber, who left RGS in 1962, is seeking former students who have made a new life abroad for our 'RGS worldwide' series. Please contact him on: chrisandpambarber@talktalk.net*

A fine body of work

As a schoolboy, Andrew Baker spent much of his free time in the RGS art room. Now his illustrations reach millions of people. **Ruth Savage** talks to the award-winning artist about his work and new book about the human body

The name Andrew Baker may not ring a bell. But most of us will recognise the award-winning artist's eye-catching images, which regularly appear in our leading national newspapers and magazines.

Having mastered the art of encompassing complex ideas and a myriad of information in one strikingly beautiful image, using fresh block colours and crisp, clean lines, his pictures, as the old cliché goes, really do speak a thousand words.

Former Ripon Grammar School student Andrew's latest project, a stunning book called **BODY: A Graphic Guide To Us**, shows us as we've never seen ourselves before, with witty graphics shining a spotlight on everything from the smallest cells to the largest bones and the secret elements hiding in our bodies.

Given Andrew's talent for transcending language, making things appear simple and straightforward when they are anything but, it is hardly surprising much of his inspiration comes from the comic books he read as a child.

Born in Ripon, the son of a painter and decorator, Andrew, 50, remembers his mother Barbara, who still works in a fish and chip shop in the city, buying him early Marvel comics: "I must have been about four. I remember reaching up to get them from the top of the ice cream cabinet."

He started drawing as a toddler and grew to love watching and talking about old science fiction films and TV series like *Thunderbirds* and *Stingray* with his dad: "This helped my imagination grow."

"I drew as soon as I could get my hands on a pencil, creating pictures of superheroes and cars, futuristic cities and cross sections of King Kong's Skull Island."

He suffered from bad asthma and couldn't

do sports at RGS, which he left, after taking his O-levels, in 1982.

"Drawing was my thing," he explains. "I used to spend lunchtimes in the art room and all weekend drawing diagrams for biology, I was obsessed with making pictures."

He was an early pioneer of computer illustration and wrote animation and graphics programmes on one of the earliest and most basic of computers, a Lynx 128K: "I bought it with an insurance policy Mum and Dad took out for me, although they wanted me to buy a car. It cost £225, a fortune back then."

Inspired by his art teacher LV Smith, he went on to study advertising design at Harrogate School of Art from the age of 16: "I don't think it would have happened otherwise," he says.

"Mr Smith had come up from London and only recently left art school himself. He thought a bit differently about things, and got us to see things differently."

"I think he had been a hippy in the Seventies and had enjoyed the alternative scene in the capital before he started teaching. There wasn't anyone else like him. He was a really inspiring teacher."

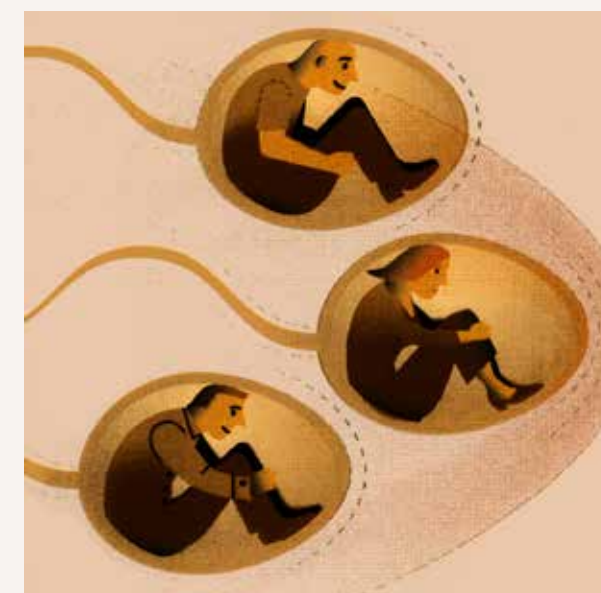
When Andrew got to art school, he felt it was what he had been waiting for all his life, and knew just what he wanted to do: "Art school was brilliant. It completely changed my life."

"I had never been to any art exhibitions when I was a boy, but I saw plenty of comics, book covers and vinyl album sleeves in the shops so I knew someone had a job making these. I wanted that job."

He went on to study graphic design at Liverpool Polytechnic, where he specialised in illustration, then won a place at the prestigious Royal College of Art, where he had access to the cutting edge technology of the time.

Continued over

THIS PAGE: illustrations from **BODY**
OPPOSITE: from top, illustration for an article about how people who aspire to work in film production often have to start at the bottom of the industry, **Fertility** and **Sperm** for the **Radio Times** and **Oil Fields**





FAVOURITE TEACHER:
“L V Smith encouraged me to go to art school. I don’t think it would have happened otherwise.”



LEFT: Debt, for The Times Money section
ABOVE: Map of the UK, illustrating popular holiday activities, for The Times.
BELOW: the cover and inside pages from Andrew’s new book, BODY
THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: a selection of Andrew’s small illustrations which appear regularly in the Radio Times listings pages



“The RCA was ahead of the game. There were Apple Macs with Photoshop, and Illustrator and colour photocopiers, which were new. I embraced all these things.”

Even now, he still draws everything with his Apple Mac mouse: “I never use a tablet or pen,” he explains. But the RCA was a peculiar environment, he says: “They push you to the point where it’s uncomfortable, disorientating you. You have to find your feet again and start a process of reinvention.”

As a result, Andrew emerged producing edgy, experimental pieces, which didn’t make him particularly employable. It took him a year to get his first commission, for Vogue magazine’s horoscope page. At the time, he was signing on, looking for work and sharing a room in Camden with his artist girlfriend Linda, now his wife: “I had to call clients from a phone box in the park.”



Although they didn’t have much money, they were doing what they wanted and enjoyed city life: “We always kept busy doing free work to build up our portfolios and I sold my records to produce folders of work to show magazines.” That first horoscope commission, he says, changed his life: “It was the first time in a year I thought I might well be an illustrator.”

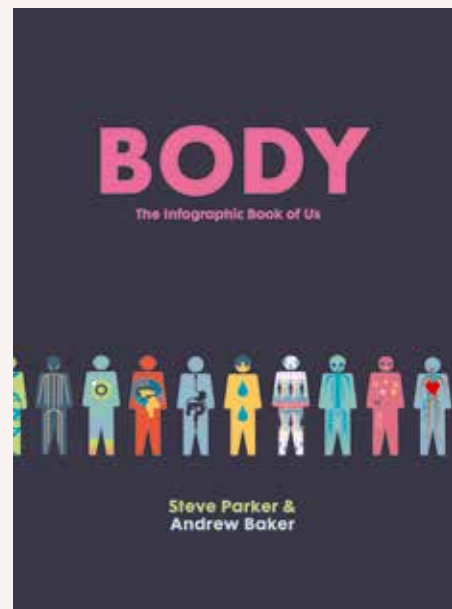
But after that his income, based on occasional pieces for the Observer and Guardian newspapers and a BBC music magazine, remained patchy. Then the animation company Linda worked for went bankrupt: “We could just about pay rent and buy food but I needed other work, so went into teaching.”

After working full-time at Barnet College in London for two years, he decided he had to create time for his art: “I was going mad not doing any of my own work. So I went part-time and decided I had to make my work more palatable, to find a way of constantly bringing in money.



“What I had been producing was a bit ‘beyond’, scribbly drawings of machines, which didn’t make me employable. I had to temper it. I made a conscious decision to become more mainstream,” he says. “I wanted every picture to be like a hit single - popular. I got an agent and was promoted widely. I have worked non-stop ever since.”

“My art teacher was inspirational”

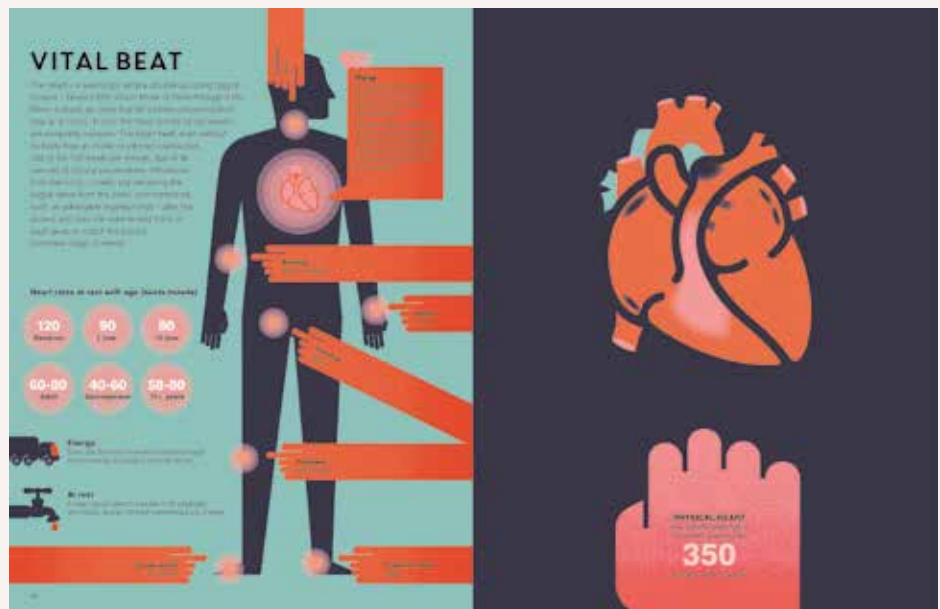


Soon his images were regularly appearing in the UK’s leading design magazine, Design Week, which propelled him to national prominence.

Before long, he was seeing his work blown up onto huge bill boards in the street and had regular commissions from publications like the Radio Times, Financial Times and the Guardian. Andrew knew he had finally made it when, in 2003, he won the distinguished Association of Illustrators Gold award.

Having gone on to lecture at Middlesex University, Andrew continues to enjoy teaching art part-time: “I find the students stimulating, engaged with the world and lovely to be around.”

They force him to think about how and why he makes images: “Technology may have changed but the job hasn’t. It’s about how you fill that white rectangle. You start with the written word, what it’s about and what you want to say.”



When Andrew, who has exhibited his work in London, was offered the chance to work on the 225-page BODY book with science writer Steve Parker, he knew it would be a challenge: “They wanted it in six months and I worked out I would have to work every day apart from Christmas Day.”

It meant missing out on time with Linda and their sons, 17-year-old Ray and 15-year-old James, he says: “But the thought of somebody else doing the book was more than I could bear.”

So every other day, when not teaching, he worked on BODY at his East London home from 9am to 10.30pm, occasionally breaking off to walk the dog or go to the supermarket. In the end, he managed to take Valentine’s weekend as well as Christmas Day off.

While Linda, who now works as an illustrator and printmaker, held everything together, his sons helped with the book: “They would say they didn’t understand certain things, which was good because they’re part of the target audience.”

Now BODY has been published, Andrew has ambitions to produce a graphic novel and already has storylines in his head: “I want to go back to comics,” he explains.

He loves returning to Yorkshire, particularly his home city of Ripon, where his love of art was nurtured. Looking back on his time at school, he says he is grateful for the valuable education he received at RGS: “There were lots of good teachers, including Mr Smith and Mr Allinson, a maths teacher who had amazing confidence in us.”

But he says the greatest lesson he learnt was to follow his own path.

“I liked all subjects, I was getting the best education in Yorkshire but I didn’t want to do more of it. You have to stick to what you want to do. I wanted to do art and the grammar school provided an excellent springboard into that world.”

He suggests current RGS students interested in a similar career should consider prospective art courses carefully.

“It’s a great way to make a living and live a life, but it’s very competitive too, so you need really good training from a good art school. Look carefully at where you want to study and make sure it has the right ethos.”

The best advice he can give, he says, is to keep on drawing: “If you stop for a little while it’s hard to start again, and if you stop for a long time it’s harder still. And don’t worry what other people think about your work. Just keep drawing.” He adds: “When you start up professionally, keep going and get good at self-promotion.”

Andrew reflects that, even today, his time at the grammar school influences his life, both as an artist and art lecturer: “Both involve a lot of communication and problem solving, and my time at school really helped me organise the way I think.

“A good, all-round education is vital and my knowledge of the sciences and also English is very important for my work now. Some of the illustrations in BODY remind me of the drawings I did in biology and physics classes all those years ago.”

**Andrew has donated a copy of BODY to the school library*



BODY, A GRAPHIC GUIDE TO US, by Steve Parker and Andrew Baker (Aurum Press, £25)



Memories of Clem



Left: In the thick of it: Clem, pictured third from right with his team after enjoying a mud bath on the rugby pitch. Right, Clem, middle row, second left, with friends from Ripon Rugby Club at an awards evening to celebrate the last time his team played together, in 2012

Clem Carter, who left Ripon Grammar School in 2014, died suddenly aged 21. Some of those who knew him well at RGS share their memories of the talented student, who was studying pharmaceutical chemistry at the University of Huddersfield

Former RGS headmaster Martin Pearman: "I have many fond memories of Clem - he was always keen to engage in debate and challenge the accepted view of everything, from school rules to politics. He never accepted received wisdom and his fierce intellect shone through, particularly at moments of animated debate.

"Clem was loyal to the school and to his friends and I know he was a very good friend to many.

"I also knew Clem well through his involvement with Ripon Rugby Club. He enjoyed his rugby and I recall many visits to far-flung venues on a Sunday - Guisborough or maybe Whitby. We have a very happy photo of the team 'aqua-planing' on a water-logged pitch following a match, the kit barely recognisable as that of Ripon Rugby Club. Clem was beaming. I also have cause to be grateful to Clem for protecting my son during many a ruck! Clem's dry sense of humour will always be remembered by me. He touched the lives of so many students at RGS, particularly in his year, and as far as they are concerned he will never be forgotten. A true character, the world will be much less interesting with Clem's absence."

History teacher Michael Spiers: "Clem was a truly original student. It is rare to find such curiosity

and even rarer to find a student with an ability to consume and then share knowledge in a more articulate manner than those who had the pleasure to teach him.

"There are too many stories concerning Clem's originality to detail within a short passage; however I will always remember my debates with Clem regarding 'what if?' counterfactual scenarios in the works of Tolkien (he was very well-read and Tolkien-literate) and Clem's ability to win these lengthy arguments through his persuasive language and intelligent humour.

"Clem's enthusiasm for learning and his penchant for debate was evident throughout his time at the school, from discussions relating to the legal requirement of white fish content in fish fingers to his encyclopaedic knowledge of quotations relating to Nicholas Cage. Teaching Clem was hugely enjoyable and his contributions to lessons and form time are etched in the mind of his friends and teachers alike. In his later years at RGS Clem developed a wonderfully eccentric interest in augmenting popular music through incorporating cow bells and it was both poignant and fitting that cow bells accompanied him during the celebration of his life at Ripon Cathedral. Clem will be remembered very fondly by all who had the pleasure to meet him."

Former student, Aidan Clancy:

"Words have always felt too imprecise to describe Clem. I used to find that, when I introduced him to new people, no matter how much I prepared them for the meeting, he would always manage to surprise them. He was utterly unique in a way that still managed to constantly surprise those who knew him best. He would always have a conversation or question up his sleeve that would manage to surprise or interest. Over the almost ten years Clem was my best friend I can't think of two conversations that were alike. I don't think any of us who knew him will ever get used to his absence and I'm confident I can speak for all of us when I say he will forever occupy his own, unique, indescribable Clem-shaped place in our lives."

Former student, Charlie Yates: "Clem was 21 years old. One year older than me. The striking thing about Clem's death is that he's not coming back. Not ever. I'll never see his stupid little black blazer again, his feral hair, his idiotic moustache, his endearingly gappy smile. I'll never see him sitting in Wetherspoons, haranguing the clientele, or harassing his friends, recounting his latest misadventures on the internet in brutal detail (I urge no one to ever google a Cleveland steamer). I'll never be able to tell him that I miss him. I'll

Sadly missed: Clem, pictured with his mother, below, and with friends from Ripon Grammar School

never be able to show him how much his friends loved him. I'll never be able to show him the beautiful, heart-wrenching tributes left on his Facebook wall. But what gets me, Clem, is I never got to tell you I love you. I love you because I respect you, like you and understand that you are part of what made me how I am today: an irreplaceable and majestically unique thread in the tapestry of my life. We played rugby together, we sat in the same classes, and we shared the same jokes, the same friends. I never got to tell you that mate, but I do. We all do. And we miss you mate. If only death gave a day's notice, we could have all come to you and said goodbye. We would have told you how much we care, shown you how much of a poorer place the world is without you: our outspoken, offensive, glorious Clem. I hope there's a memorial bench with spikes on it or a plaque on the wall that tells offensive jokes, because that's what you would have wanted."

A true inspiration



Born in 1927, Kenneth Simon joined Ripon Grammar School in 1957 with a BA from Leeds University after teaching in both France and Leeds. He retired in July 1980 after 23 years of service to RGS. A considerable scholar and linguist, his main contribution

to the work of the language department was in the teaching of French, but he will also be remembered for his work in junior English and his courses in Italian and Spanish for sixth-formers. Mr Simon gave up much of his spare time to helping in the school library; his keen interest in it was shown on his retirement by his gift of a variety of books to suit all age groups. He also was known for his whole-hearted singing and acting in the chorus of many school musical productions. Mr Simon died in July, aged 92.

Dedicated teacher: Kenneth Simon, above. Below: Back row, fourth from right in RGS staff photo from 1959

His former students sent us the following memories:

"Mr Simon was a very formative influence on my learning of French, which I studied at university before taking up a teaching career in languages."

"I have many fond memories of his lessons. On Friday afternoons we used to read and translate the French magazine *Chez Nous*. I have vivid memories of the serial based in the Luxembourg Gardens. It has given me an abiding love of those gardens. Every time I visit Paris, I insist on visiting them."

"I well remember his signature (KRS) on my reports and the generous words he often wrote. The seeds he sowed led to me going to Merton College, Oxford, in 1967, to read French and German - a happy and worthwhile time. I could see he was a decent, honourable and sincere person. Today I mourn his passing."

"Good memories of a dedicated teacher and many informal chats on the school bus back to Harrogate. He is single-handedly responsible for my love of languages. I went on from learning French in his classes at RGS to learning German, Italian and Russian, with a smattering of Spanish. A true inspiration to many of us back in the Sixties."



Pioneer's lasting legacy

Born in 1947, Dr Margaret Colquhoun, daughter of Ripon Grammar School maths teacher Eric Kelsey, studied zoology and genetics at Edinburgh University after leaving RGS. Her interests included rock climbing in the Highlands and she even trekked to the base camp of Mount Everest. Following her Ph.D, she spent four years studying scientific methodology in Germany and Switzerland, before returning to Britain where she continued teaching and researching, with an emphasis on landscape, medicinal plants and animal evolution. Later, she founded the Life Science Trust, an environmental education charity in East Lothian which, in 1996, purchased Pishwanton Wood, at the foot of the Lammermuir hills. Hundreds of people, from all over the world, have come to work

and study at Pishwanton and in May this year Margaret opened the first residential chalet on the site. The pioneering project, which explores ways of integrating agriculture, horticulture, woodland management and conservation activities to create a practical demonstration of sustainable land use, continues to thrive. Margaret died in August, aged 70.



Pioneering scientist: Margaret pictured middle row, third from right, in lower sixth form in 1964, and, right, at the Pishwanton chalet opening

From teacher to preacher

A former RGS history teacher swapped the classroom for the Church. **Rebecca Chamberlain** finds out about his important new role supporting the Archbishop of York

Former teacher turned vicar Richard Carew says he has always thought of the word 'career' as a verb, rather than a noun - but there is plenty to unite the two apparently different paths he has taken.

His first role after qualifying was as history teacher at Ripon Grammar School, and he very nearly didn't take the job. "I was shown round the school and it was very pleasant, but seemed starchy, not the sort of school I thought I'd end up in. I had imagined a comprehensive."

He was ready to pull out of the interview itself later that afternoon but went for a walk in the city first. "I went inside the small chapel underneath the cathedral and prayed. And all the misgivings I had felt evaporated."

So, in September 1996, Richard began his life as history teacher, later also becoming general studies coordinator and deputy head of sixth form. He also helped out in the boys' boarding house and with rugby and cricket practices: "I was straight out of teaching college," he says. "I remember being in a first form class that first week and asking if there were any questions after outlining the lesson, thinking, 'I've got this sorted'. Isla



Answered a calling: Richard Carew

McTaggart put up her hand and announced 'There's a squirrel in that tree, Mr Carew.'

"That was my first lesson in how teaching can keep you on your toes and can bring you down to earth with a bump."

It was soon followed by the challenge of teaching sixth form students: "A-level classes were stretching. I taught some outstanding minds, far more intelligent than mine."

"Working at RGS was great fun. We took the teaching incredibly seriously, but had a laugh too. I had some terrific colleagues, and Terry Fell, Simon Naylor, Steve Rouse, Alan Chamberlain and I still meet up as a group to talk about our days at RGS." When English teacher Mr Fell suggested starting the house drama competition, Richard agreed to help. "Each house was given a £25 budget to put on a one-scene play, and for me, it was the highlight of the school year," he says.

"The acting, directing, lighting and costumes were all up to the students, they were set free to excel. There is so much delight in seeing young people discover how talented they are. House and junior drama productions gave so many children the chance to believe they could be the best at something, no matter what that was. For me, that is what teaching is all about."

Richard continued at RGS until 2002, when he began to fulfil a destiny - one that had been foretold when he was younger. "When I was 17, I was at a friend's house and his mum asked what I planned to do in life. My friend said: 'He's going to be a vicar' which was news to me, but it stayed with me."

"Then after the death of my father, who was a lay preacher, I was listening to another preacher one Sunday. A voice inside my head said 'One day, you'll be doing that' and I remember silently replying, 'I bloomin' won't'. But from that moment I began thinking and praying about it."

Richard found it hard to believe God could possibly be calling him to be ordained. "I was very happy teaching." It took him four years to approach his local vicar to talk about it. That led to a Church



Photo courtesy of Kippa Matthews

Important role: Richard, pictured behind the cross in the back row, joined the Archbishop, along with the Queen and other members of the Royal Family on the steps of York Minster on Maundy Thursday

selection process to discern whether the calling was genuine, and when the right time to begin training might be.

The time was right in 2002, and Richard began his theology degree at Durham University, moving from one glorious building in Durham to another, in East Yorkshire, when he went to Beverley Minster as a training minister for five years.

When the time came to move on, he applied for a parish role in York, but was unsuccessful. "Mum said, 'Don't worry, God has something else in mind for you.'"

Then came the opportunity to become domestic chaplain to John Sentamu, the Archbishop of York, supporting him in his role as bishop for his local diocese, which stretches from the Humber to the Tees and from the A1 to the coast.

Every day at the Archbishop's Bishopthorpe Palace is different, but most begin with a morning service. One of the biggest tasks in recent years has been the Archbishop's Pilgrimage of Prayer, Witness and Blessing.

It was the idea of the Archbishop himself back in 2015 to walk the whole of his diocese between December and May, meeting parishioners, talking and praying with them and blessing the good things he sees.

"It was hard work to co-ordinate, but something wonderful happened every day. He met recently-diagnosed cancer patients, and time seemed to stand still when he talked and prayed with them. He carried out impromptu baby baptisms in streams and wells, what an incredible memory for the parents, and an experience to share with their children as they grow up."

"It is an amazing and inspiring job, full of incredibly public moments - like standing on the steps of York Minster with the Queen and Prince Philip on Maundy Thursday - contrasted with private moments of prayer with one person in need. The Archbishop's energy is phenomenal."

"The delight I had in teaching - seeing pupils discover their strengths, and excel in them - I now have from helping people to see how God can intervene in their lives, bring transformation, and show them something of all that they have been created to be."

For more information visit www.archbishopofyork.org/ and <http://pilgrimage.archbishopofyork.org/>



School days: Richard with his form class, top, in a staff photo, middle, and with staff on a second year French trip

Richard and his uncle, Malcolm Rice, pictured together during a pilgrimage with Archbishop John Sentamu



Pressing matters

Whitby Gazette reporter **Sam Jones**, who left RGS six years ago, tells us how he got into journalism and what he loves about his job

The job of a journalist is not an easy one. It carries a huge weight of responsibility, a responsibility that must be taken very seriously. What we write and produce can truly change people's lives, whether for good or bad, meaning fact checking and accuracy is of paramount importance. But it is also a great privilege.

Whereas some stories do naturally provoke an unwelcome reaction, it's the ones that make a difference which stay with you. Any journalist will tell you, human interest stories that help change people's lives for the better really do make the job worthwhile.

I started working for the Whitby Gazette around one year ago, and I love it. My strengths have always been on the writing side of things, meaning working as a print journalist really is my dream career. Like any job, there are challenges, but our hard work at the paper has been hugely rewarded recently. In late September we were crowned the Best Weekly Newspaper in Yorkshire at the O2 Media Awards, while I was highly commended as a runner-up in the Young Journalist category, something that makes me really proud.

Looking back on my time at Ripon Grammar School, it's almost impossible to believe it's now more than six years since I left, and a lot has happened in that time. Inspired by the religious studies department, I opted to study the subject at the University of Manchester for three years, then following a spell of wondering

FAVOURITE TEACHER

"Mr Spiers got the balance perfectly right. He was knowledgeable and passionate about his subject, commanded respect, but equally was always willing to have a laugh and a joke. I look back on those history lessons with affection"



what on earth I was going to do for a career, I set my heart on journalism and have never looked back. A postgraduate degree, coupled with the NCTJ course (the qualification you need to be a reporter) at Teesside University followed, before I landed my current job shortly after finishing the course.

Would I recommend the job of a journalist as a prospective career path? Absolutely. It is not for everyone and is renowned as a fiercely competitive industry to break into, but anybody who can demonstrate a passion and desire to tell other people's stories in a tight and concise manner has a real chance. My advice is to start building up a portfolio of work, however small or futile it might seem. Demonstrating that commitment opens doors and a lot of people know each other in the media business. What you might perceive as a small opportunity can often lead to much bigger things down the line.

Training to be a journalist is not an easy process, with learning shorthand the stumbling block that often separates the men from the boys, but with a bit of persistence and enthusiasm it's perfectly doable.

Also, to be a reporter you have to be prepared to talk to anybody, to ask the tough questions others daren't. If the prime minister was sat in front of you right now, what questions would you ask? A journalist could reel off five questions instantly, and not just any old questions, ones that probe important issues that matter to everyday people.

That is what it takes.



Prizewinner: Sam, second right, and colleagues from the Whitby Gazette, collecting the Best Weekly Newspaper trophy at the O2 Media Awards



Question time: Sam, top, interviewing Brigg and Goole MP and former Northern Powerhouse minister Andrew Percy

Bottom, Tool of the trade: Sam's shorthand notepad

Star students latest to join our alumni

The latest band of students to join our RGS alumni network have done themselves proud with some of the best A-level results in the school's history. **Sarah French reports**

This year's A-level results were among the best ever, with our hard-working students achieving the highest number of A*s and As.

Students scored a 100 per cent pass rate, with 55.3 per cent of grades at A* and A, placing RGS, once again, as the highest performing state school in the North. And with 78.6 per cent of grades being A*-B, that makes them the second highest set of results recorded for RGS.

More than 17 students got three or more A* grades with the vast majority securing places at their first choice degree courses, most of them at prestigious Russell Group universities.

They were the last results received by Martin Pearman, who retired in July after 13 years as headmaster, but came into school to meet students on results day.

Congratulating them personally, he said: "I have been with this cohort for seven years so I wanted to see them get their results and wish them well. I am very pleased their hard work and commitment has paid off."

One student who combined A-levels with duties as a deputy head boy, including organising the end of term ball, achieved the highest number of top grades.

Will Stobbs's five A*s and an A grade saw him lead a host of successes at the school, including Ross Sullivan, who gained five A*s to secure a place to read natural sciences at Cambridge University and Ben Wayne, whose five A* grades secured a place at Durham University.

Will, of Bishop Thornton, who has joined Ben at Durham University, where they are both also reading natural sciences said: "I did much better than I was expecting so I'm really happy."

With ambitions to be an actuary, Will, who juggled study with his part-time job at the Sawley Arms, revealed his systematic approach to revision: "Being deputy head boy was a nice way to switch off and do something completely different like ordering balloons for the ball."

Ross, of Beningborough, who was born in Kildare, in Ireland, and joined RGS in the sixth form, said: "After going on a school trip to Oxford and Cambridge I absolutely loved it. Cambridge is a gorgeous place, and the education and research is second to none. I made it my ambition to go there. I'm over the moon with my results."

Ben, of Copgrove, said: "My results are way off what I was expecting. It's been fantastic at RGS. Everyone knows each other, it's a great community and it's so easy to make friends, who I will stay in touch with. Neither of my parents went to university so I suppose you could say the apple fell far from the tree in that respect. They are very proud."

Jonathan Tanner achieved four A*s and will follow in both his parents' footsteps to study mathematics and computer science at St John's College, Oxford University.

Josh Belward, who has been a regular performer in school productions, is continuing his acting career at prestigious Bird College having achieved A*s in maths and chemistry and a B in physics.

Josh, of Ripon, said: "At my auditions they looked shocked and surprised at my subjects, even wondering if I was in the right place. I've proven I can achieve good academic results as a back-up, but there is nothing I would rather do than perform. It's my passion."

Fellow actor Grace Branch is also pursuing theatre and performance at Surrey University after gaining two A*s and an A: "I've taken pretty much every opportunity I could to perform at school and in amateur groups, but I also wanted to follow the academic side," she said.



Above: Top student: Will Stobbs

Top: Ben Wayne (left) and Jonathan Tanner, who achieved nine A*s between them

Left: Josh Belward and Grace Branch who are following their passion for drama and theatre



Jenny Unwin with
Ripon Grammar
School's sixth
form coordinator
Emma Griffiths

Jenny inspired to study medicine after accident

RGS student Jenny Unwin is now studying to be a doctor. Sarah French discovers how she was inspired by the care she received in hospital following a cycling accident

A student whose life changed when she was confined to a wheelchair after breaking her back in a cycling accident aged 16 has won a place to study medicine at Leeds University after being inspired by the care she received.

Jenny Unwin's remarkable recovery has impressed everyone at Ripon Grammar School, who watched her overcome the accident, gain 11 top GCSEs and return to the school's sixth form where she celebrated gaining A*s in all her A-levels.

After three years of study, Jenny, from Burton Leonard, achieved top grades in biology, chemistry and English literature to read medicine at Leeds University.

Ripon Grammar School invested in adaptations to the school buildings to ensure Jenny, who was cycling home from her job at a garden centre when she was in collision with a car, could return and join the sixth form.

Jenny, 19, who underwent surgery and five months of treatment and rehabilitation in hospital, said: "Straightaway after the accident I knew I wanted to come back to school, I wanted to do A-levels and I wanted to get the career I thought I was capable of.

"I love this school. They have been amazing, so supportive, and I have really enjoyed sixth form. All my teachers were amazing but Mrs Griffiths, the sixth form coordinator, in particular was so supportive to me and my family.

"Before my accident I wanted to be a vet and did a lot of work experience. But afterwards I saw there were so many interesting opportunities in medicine and spending five months in hospital opened my eyes to the health service. I'd been healthy before and had never had cause to use it so was quite oblivious really.

"School has been amazing, so supportive"

"The care I received from doctors and nurses was really inspiring. It made me want to give something back."

Leeds University has reserved a fully-equipped studio in student accommodation for Jenny, who now has her own car and enjoys swimming in her spare time.

Reflecting on how the accident changed her life, she said: "The hardest part was watching my family have to go through what they went through. But without a doubt it's the support of my family and friends that got me through it."

Phone mast rejected after parents object

RIPON Grammar School governors turned down the offer of £50,000 from a development company in return for installing a telecoms mast on the school grounds.

This followed a number of parents voicing serious concerns about having such a mast on our site.

While the £50,000 one-off payment offered by the company would have helped school at a time of tight budgets, governors felt this should not override the genuine concerns of parents.

Outgoing head Martin Pearman said he appreciated parents contacting him: "The arguments put forward by parents were thoughtful and well-balanced. Governors were also aware other parents who had not expressed views in writing also had reservations and I believe it is the right decision not to go ahead," he said.

Winning pitch set for spring

PLANNERS have given the go-ahead for a floodlit £750,000 state-of-the-art artificial football and rugby pitch to be installed at Ripon Grammar School.

Funded by property developer Persimmon Homes, the 3G 'third generation' pitch will not cost school anything and will be available for community use as well as for our students.

The pitch's durable, all-weather surface, with porous layers which let water drain through easily, can be played on for 80 hours a week as opposed to the five hours a week natural grass pitches can withstand.

Headmaster Jonathan Webb says: "I am delighted plans are now progressing smoothly for the construction of the 3G pitch on the school site. It will be a great asset, now and in the future, both for the school's sports teams and for wider community use".

The project, which Persimmon agreed to pay for in return for securing planning permission for a housing development on the former Cathedral Choir School site on Whitcliffe Lane, will take around eight weeks to install, hopefully in spring 2018.

RGS has also submitted a bid to the Department for Education for a new dining hall.

The four tops

Ripon Grammar School now has four national champions among its sporting stars. Ruth Savage reports

Four students from Ripon Grammar School have been crowned national champions in their chosen sports of mini marathon, orienteering, cycling and skiing.

Talented young triathlete Toby Osman raced into first place at the London Mini Marathon, to win the title in the under-17 men's category with a time of 14.25 for three miles. It's the latest in a series of high-profile wins, including coming third in the British Elite Duathlon Championships, for Toby, 17, who said: "The atmosphere was amazing, with lots of spectators cheering us on."

Another dedicated sporting student, Ella Jamieson, impressed the crowds this year when she sped into the lead to win the National Under-12 Road Race Cycling champion after a 2km street circuit around Milton Keynes, with a starting peloton of 66 riders.

British schools' orienteering champion Tara Schwarze-Chintapatla, who clinched the year 12

girls' section title at the national championships in Birmingham last year, has also made a big impression in her sport.

Chosen to represent England in the world championships in Sicily this year, Tara was one of a five-strong England team, and one of just 40 athletes from the country taking part.

With more than 800 athletes from 27 countries, including China, Israel and New Zealand, competing in the prestigious international event, Tara arrived in 12th place at the finish, scoring highest for her team, which managed to come in 5th place.

Up-and-coming British skiing squad member Harry Cosham, 14, came first overall in the British Alpine Skiing competition in Holland.

Harry, who has been skiing since he was 18 months old, has also competed in the English Alpine Ski Championships and represented England against five other European countries in September.



We are the champions: RGS sporting stars Tara, Ella, Toby and Harry



How Sir Gary bagged the Tour de France

THE man who brought the Tour de France to Yorkshire is coming to RGS to tell us just how he did it.

Welcome to Yorkshire tourism boss Sir Gary Verity first thought of bagging the world's largest annual sporting event for the county one morning seven years ago, while he was shaving.

Four years later, two million spectators turned out to watch as the Grand Depart showcased Yorkshire's stunning scenery to the world. The rest is history.

Sheep farmer Sir Gary, who went on to create a legacy with the annual Tour de Yorkshire, which has encouraged thousands of people to get into cycling, will explain how he made it all happen.

The Evening with Sir Gary Verity, on February 8, will finish with a question and answer session and all money raised will go towards school funds.

Sir Gary first got involved with RGS when, as chief executive of Welcome to Yorkshire, he, along with Beadnall Copley estate agents and Sunlite dry cleaners, agreed to help sponsor the school's Under-15 rugby tour to Paris. For further information and tickets, please contact the school office on 01765 602647 or email Claire Kinread on KinreadC@ripongrammar.co.uk.



Mr Yorkshire: Sir Gary Verity will talk at RGS

Our students need your help

RIPON Grammar School is always looking for opportunities to develop links with employers and would love to hear from past pupils who could contribute to our careers advice programme.

Our next careers and higher education evening will be held on Wednesday, March 14 and will focus on sciences and sport to raise students' awareness of the wide range of opportunities available.

We would be grateful to anyone who could share their first-hand knowledge and provide inspiration and ideas about how to stand out from the crowd when applying for jobs or university. There will also be opportunities to work with specific year groups on practice interviews or take part in informal lunchtime presentations at our careers club, which meets every month.

If you, or your employers, can contribute to any of these events or in any other areas of our careers programme, please contact Jill Locke on lockej@ripongrammar.co.uk

Poetry prize

FIFTH former Tabitha Milton is the winner of this year's Dr Paul Hullah Poetry Prize for her poem Stop. Former student Dr Hullah, now a poetry professor in Japan, said he thoroughly enjoyed the shortlist. The theme for next year's prize is 'Truth'.

Friends reunited

A group of former students who made life-long connections at Ripon Grammar School returned for a nostalgic reunion. **Nicola Woolfenden** reports on how old friendships were rekindled and memories stirred

“We just couldn’t stop talking” says John Dodd, who travelled up from London for this year’s summer reunion. John, a boarder at RGS in 1955, hadn’t seen some of his former classmates for more than fifty years but the decades seemed to roll away as the library was filled with the sound of laughter and nostalgic conversation.

Photographs, magazines and the digital archives triggered more memories, as former students like Kathryn Sedarati (nee Spooner, 1971-76) recalled their former school days.

Kathryn, who works as a sensory specialist teacher with blind and deaf students in Manchester, remarked how, despite the new buildings, so little has changed: “It was just like stepping back in time.”

Joan Hainsworth was accompanied by her three daughters, Jackie, Lesley and Nicola, all of whom attended the grammar school in the late Seventies and Eighties. “It was so nostalgic to visit the old school again after so many years,”

says Lesley. “I literally can’t remember the last time I was here. It may even have been when I was in my twenties, playing in an Old Rips hockey match against the school.”

Joan (nee Hall) attended the Girls’ High School and was one of a few girls to attend the boys’ grammar school for her A-level physics and chemistry lessons which, she recalls, took place in what are now the art rooms.

“We spent the afternoon going round each and every classroom, discussing memories and remembering where we sat for each subject. Yes, we could still remember,” marvels Lesley. “There was a wonderful atmosphere,” she continues: “And it was great fun to see the old place as we remember it, along with all the new changes which have been made since our day.”

The afternoon rekindled a great many memories for former pupils and it is reassuring and heartening to know that the school still holds a special place in the hearts of so many.



Above: Class of '55: John Dodd, Michael Thompson, Peter Ellis, John Tennyson, Colin Smith, Neil Richmond

Above right: Linda Cresswell 1983-84, Vicky Derbyshire 1983-88

Far right: Derek Crookes 1964-71, Kathryn Sedarati (Spooner) 1971-76, Ali Lunderstedt

Right: Jo Jackson (Raw) 1979-84, Julia Cresswell 1980-84

More photographs overleaf



Robert Marchant 1983-85, Lesley Jennings 1978-85



Martin Pearman (headmaster 2004 -17), Alistair Sedman 1955-62, Tim Wolstencroft 1957-64



Class of '83 Kate Johnson (Gibson), Jill Crozier (Gibson), Charlotte Weatherill (Stone), Belinda Bemrose



Annabel Andrew (Bleiker) 1978-85, Kate Johnson (Gibson) 1979-84, Nigel Stockill 1979-86



Above: Simon Stockill 1980-87, Nigel Stockill 1979-86, Max Stockill, Rachel Stockill

Right: Class of '85: George Mullen, Hazel Atherley (Robinson), Laura Polito, Jane Swiers, Richard Payne

Below Left: Adrian Abbott 1978-83; Nicola Woolfenden (Richardson) 1978-85, Richard Payne 1978-85

Below middle: Margaret Dunning, Jenny Moore 1959-66

Below right: Two generations: Nicola Smith, Jackie Smith, Joan Hainsworth (Hall), Lesley Jennings (Smith)



Class of '55: Neil Richmond, George Topping, John Dodd



Greta Hills, Barbara Dean, Joyce Baslington



Bev Curtis, Claire Green, Jane Spink (Ellender) 1972-77

Calling past pupils

Rocking the glam Seventies look: Julia Bowe (former group press and marketing director at Harvey Nichols), Helen Weatherburn (head girl in 1978) and Jackie Cooper, in her on-trend Afghan coat, who is organising a reunion



If you were a student at RGS in the Fifties, you may be interested to know that Peter Ellis (1951-57) is organising a reunion at school on Saturday, July 7. If you are interested, please contact secretary@oldriponians.org.uk.

Please email us on secretary@oldriponians.org.uk and look out for updates on the Old Riponians' section of the RGS website.

Follow RGS



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Old Rips winter reunion

OUR popular annual winter reunion will take place on Saturday, December 30, 2017, beginning with our annual general meeting at 12pm and followed by our customary hockey, football, netball and rugby games.

There's always a great atmosphere at this get-together and we warmly welcome all former students, families and friends, whether to play in the matches or support from the sidelines.

After the games, please join us for refreshments in the sports hall. If you are interested in taking part in one of the games, email us at secretary@oldriponians.org.uk. We would love to hear from you.

HELP WANTED

WE need volunteers to help write, take photographs, edit and distribute Clocktower magazine.

If you are interested in getting involved in any way, or would like to advertise in the next issue, please contact editor Ruth Savage on erc46@btinternet.com or Old Rips president Derek Crookes on secretary@oldriponians.org.uk. Thank you.

FEEDBACK

Your news and views

Write to the editor at: erc46@btinternet.com

SERVING as a headmaster appears a peculiarly difficult and unusual job. It combines a staggering variety of roles: teacher, administrator, manager, budget-holder, orator, disciplinarian, politician, and - above all else - leader. It seems from the outside a lonely and relentless job, requiring a commitment above and beyond the already significant one displayed by all teachers. So it is a true testament to Mr Pearman's unique character and ability that he has performed the role to such acclaim and success.

When Mr Pearman arrived at RGS in 2004, it was a good school that you attended despite the shoddiness of the school estate. In 2017, it is a truly outstanding one, with enviable facilities. Mr Pearman's vision and extraordinary work ethic can take the lion's share of the credit for this transformation. The change in the school buildings that I saw over my seven years at the school was remarkable; I am sure that Mr Pearman must have cleared out every North Yorkshire County Council capital account replacing portacabins with music, sixth form, maths and arts-and-humanities blocks, and building a new sports hall.

But Mr Pearman's legacy is as much the mark he left on the thousands of children

whom he met as the upgrade in RGS's fortunes. He was an inspiring headmaster, balancing deep warmth with a rigour and boundless ambition for the pupils under his charge. He embodied a spirit of public service that was deeply influential and touching. Pupils were also grateful for his approach to the more challenging aspect of headship: he steered the school through a challenging fiscal environment, and was always a judicious disciplinarian. I can vividly remember explaining to him on an autumnal Tuesday



Fond farewell: Martin Pearman pictured in our last issue

morning whether or not I believed that some of the more outrageous jokes from a charity week were appropriate...

With his recent powerful articles on the benefits of a selective education system, I am sure that I am not the only RGS alumnus wondering what comes next for Mr

Pearman. In the meantime, I, and so many of my fellow pupils, can pay him the ultimate compliment by saying how proud we were to have attended RGS under his headmastership.

Hugh McHale-Maughan
(Left RGS 2013)

THANK you very much for the latest edition of Clocktower. It was surprising how many people I knew. Our work with Changing Places is going very well. We have Windsor and Warwick Castles, Legoland, Alton Towers, M6 motorway services and cricket grounds included on our list now. Please keep up the good work!

Margaret Clough
(Founder of the charity Changing places, left RGS 1968)

MANY thanks for Clocktower. I found reading the articles on former students, teachers and headmasters very interesting. It's great to hear what's going on in relation to RGS.

Vicky Cowie
(Left RGS 1994)

IT was a joy to come to RGS's speech day, partly to applaud the achievements of current and recent students, and partly in reminiscent vein. The last time I saw the Jolly Memorial prize for history and the Bishop Burroughs prize for religious studies being awarded, 49 years ago, it was me who was receiving them! I was delighted to see several of the teachers who were on the staff when I was at the school now have prizes named in their honour. Quite right too. I am thinking particularly of Robert Atkinson (a man of great compassion despite the implacable persona he projected), Ethel Allison (an inspirational teacher who is remembered by Paul Binding in the last edition of The Clocktower), John Brown and Marguerite Terry. Looking back, they were remarkable people - more remarkable than we pupils probably realised at the time. In the immortal words of Joni Mitchell: "You don't know what you've got till it's gone". It was also a pleasure to see Ben Smith, a geography teacher in my time, who - despite his current state of frailty - was remarkably full of good anecdotes.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to enjoy this delightful event. I wish the school well, especially as it enters a new era under a new headteacher.

John Rawson
(Left RGS 1967)

THANK you for Clocktower. You've done me proud. Incidentally, I've donated a copy of Shadows of the Past, which I mentioned in the last issue, to the school library and offered to give a talk on it to any interested parties.

Maggie Cobbett
(RGS languages teacher until 2001)

WIN Hazel's new game

FORMER RGS student Hazel Reynolds, who left in 2005, has created an exciting new game which has sold 20,000 copies and was one of Amazon UK's best-selling card games last Christmas.

You can read Hazel's story in the next edition of Clocktower. In the meantime, we have three copies of Hazel's Randomise game, which she created in an attempt to lure her younger sister, also an RGS student, away from her iPad. It involves acting, drawing and describing random, and silly, identities. Write to Clocktower with your news and views on anything connected with



Fun and games: Hazel

RGS for our next edition and the best three letters will win a game of Randomise. To find out more about Randomise, visit randomisegame.com



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