

Clocktower

Keeping alumni in touch with Ripon Grammar School and each other



**RGS retains
top school
ranking**

'Our wildlife is precious'

**Award-winning Human
Planet director Mark Flowers
tells his story**



**Former head girl
makes media history**

**NEW RGS
BOARDING
PLACES**

A letter from your alumni society



Dear former students and friends of RGS,

Nothing, it seems, ever stands still, particularly at Ripon Grammar School. The facilities which today's pupils enjoy are a far cry from those when I was at RGS in the Eighties, with more than £10m invested in technology, buildings and sports facilities in recent years. Students continue to excel in so many different areas, a reflection on the quality of teaching in a school which has much to be proud of.

We feel privileged to have such a thriving and engaged alumni community and, since technology has drastically reduced our running costs, we have recently been able to offer free membership, which means the Old Riponians' Association is now truly universal and inclusive.

Former students can be inspiring role models and mentors and one of the aims of the Old Rips is to utilise this wealth of experience and expertise by setting up a careers network for the benefit of both past and current students. Many Old Rips have already been in touch to offer their help in launching this initiative so if you feel you may be able to help in some way, no matter how small, please do get in touch.

Our sincere thanks go to Ruth Savage for the immense work she puts into producing this magazine – we hope you enjoy it.

Please continue to send us your news and views – we look forward to hearing from you.

With very best wishes,

Nicola Woolfenden (Richardson)

President, Old Riponians' Association

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Where are they now?

Have you ever wondered what happened to those old friends you lost touch with? We find out what some former RGS students are up to now



Paul Winship (left RGS in 1984) I studied law at Leeds University then worked in London for a large plc as a chartered secretary, moving to KPMG in Leeds to specialise in corporation tax. Then I took a three year career break and worked as an overland expedition leader for an adventure travel company, which involved driving groups of tourists on trips of three to six months from London to Katmandu, Tibet and China and around South America. Returning to the UK, I settled in London working for Ernst & Young in corporate tax and then as head of compliance for a US Bank in securitisation. More recently, I worked for more than two years as company secretary for the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development near Paris. My wife is Spanish and we have two daughters aged 9 and 6 who attended school in Paris, making us a tri-lingual household! Back in the UK now, I work for JP Morgan in London. It's been quite a year for us—new job, relocating and new house—and the girls are getting to grips with the UK curriculum. I have many great memories of my time in the sixth form at RGS and owe a great deal to the headmaster, Mr Stanley, and my teachers, who were an inspiration.



Paul Winship, today and as a schoolboy. Top, pictured front left in the 1st XV from 1983/4

Mark Hills (left RGS in 1999) I am a computer programmer at a company called Framestore. We are a British visual effects company based in London. I was on the team for the film Gravity (starring Sandra Bullock and George Clooney) for which we won the Oscar for Best Visual Effects. There was a large team on the project, over 400 people, and I head up one of the software teams - we build custom software for doing the huge quantity of rendering on the film. Despite the job as a programmer, we can be quite 'hands on' when it comes to the actual film production and we have to solve a lot of very different problems; I think that's what makes it a lot of fun. More recently, we have also worked on the Tom Cruise movie Edge of Tomorrow and the recent Paddington film (with Ben Whishaw, Nicole Kidman and Hugh Bonneville). When I was at RGS I used to make short films, along with my friend Chris McAleese (who has gone on to be assistant cameraman in the film industry). I also used to help out with the technical work involved in school plays and DJ lower school discos. Back then films like Toy Story had just been released and I had a vague idea that I'd like to work in computer animation, but it was something I didn't really think would be possible. What I did know when I finished RGS was that I wanted to work on computers in some way. So I went on to a degree in Computer Science at the University of Nottingham, and actually ended up staying there for a total of six years to do a PhD as well. But it was during university I did my first 'real' work; in a radio station called Galaxy FM (now Capital FM). It was followed by



Challenges:
Emma Lister



Kerrang and Kiss FM. This got me a taste of the technology and creativity that happens there. I loved working in radio but the film industry is very strong in the UK and the technical challenges can be much bigger, so it was the logical next step!

Oscar triumph: Mark Hills, above, and as a schoolboy, right. Paddington in the recent film

Emma Lister (left RGS 2011) I left school with no idea about where I was heading or what I wanted to do with my life. All I knew was that university wasn't for me! I started working for Pure Collection, a cashmere company based in Harrogate, as a customer service advisor. While I knew this wasn't my lifelong ambition it was a step on the ladder in an ever competitive market. After 9 months of "living my life" I started to consider where I wanted to go and I came back to RGS to seek the advice of Mrs Wilson. In July 2012 I applied for a training position at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Leeds and despite the gruelling application process and to my surprise, I got the job! I started at PwC in September 2012 working in Business Recovery Services and have recently had the opportunity to undertake a secondment to the Corporate Finance

team. I walk into the office each day excited for the new challenges and experiences I will face. Looking back, not going to uni was one of the best decisions I ever made. It gave me an opportunity to think about what I really wanted to do, I've made and retained some great friends and will finish my training next year as a fully qualified chartered accountant.

RGS FACT
Our students have raised more than £50,000 for charity over the past five years

COVER STORY



Mark pictured at RGS in 1984

Mark Flowers, who got into trouble for bleaching his hair at RGS, has directed and produced a range of natural history programmes, including The Human Planet and Ice Age Giants for the BBC. He loved being in school plays at RGS, he says, and one of his most abiding school memories is the sixth form ball: "It had an under sea theme and we had really old-fashioned ballroom dancing and people wore ball gowns and tuxedos. Pupils from all years made mobiles of undersea creatures including killer whales, sharks and shoals of fish to decorate the hall. It was amazing."

Read his full story on pages 14-17

Main cover photograph by KIERAN DOHERTY

Where are they now? continued

Anna Coles (left RGS 2007) I studied geography at Durham University and went on to take an MSc in risk and environmental hazard at Durham. I now live in Saskatchewan in Canada, where I am a PhD student at the Global Institute for Water Security, a research institute at the University of Saskatchewan. It's a nice city, but right now very cold! We're in the -30s at the moment, and due for pretty low wind chill temperatures (-50C!). It's definitely a different and exciting place to be living in. I started here in September 2012. My research is in hydrology, and is specifically looking at the drivers of surface runoff during rainstorms and snowmelt events, to try to understand and predict the timing and volume of flood events and the delivery of contaminants (such as fertiliser chemicals) to streams during runoff events. My research involves a lot of fieldwork, mostly around the Canadian prairies - measuring and monitoring soil conditions, rainfall, snow amounts, and ultimately the amount of water that runs off a landscape. I combine this with data analysis and computer modelling to try to understand what's going on, and extend this to predicting future events. I also get to travel a fair amount - to conferences and events. In the last year, I've presented research in San Francisco, Boston and Luxembourg, and done fieldwork in Arizona. Nice perks!



Snow survey:
Anna, above, and right,
installing instrumentation
in a snowpack.



To find out more about Anna's research group,
visit www.usask.ca/watershed/index.php

Liam Connolly (left RGS in 2010) I was one of the quiet students at RGS, more at home with my handful of friends in the library or computer room than on the field or the stage. I have many treasured memories from those years and still regularly meet with the friends I shared them with, but sixth form was a difficult time and, despite fantastic support from my teachers, I left with slightly disappointing A-levels. Nevertheless, I was able to take up a dream place at the University of York, reading archaeology, and graduated last year with a first class honours. I am now at Bradford University, undertaking an MSc in forensic archaeology and crime scene investigation and, contrary to my younger, bookish self, compete as a foilist with the men's 1st fencers. I'm thoroughly enjoying my course, which has so far seen me fingerprinting, flying drones on the moors, and even excavating suitcases in the night-time woods! University has hugely improved my confidence and blissfully afforded me time to work on my writing, enabling me to move a step closer to an eventual career as an author. My first book, *In Full Circle*, was published online 18 months ago, and I'm now looking to engage an agent, whilst working on my next one. My focus is on young adult, fantasy adventure novels, though I also still have a passion for poetry, some of which appeared in my university's annual anthologies.

My book is available for download via Amazon. Blog: amomentseized.wordpress.com;
Email: liammattconnolly@gmail.com

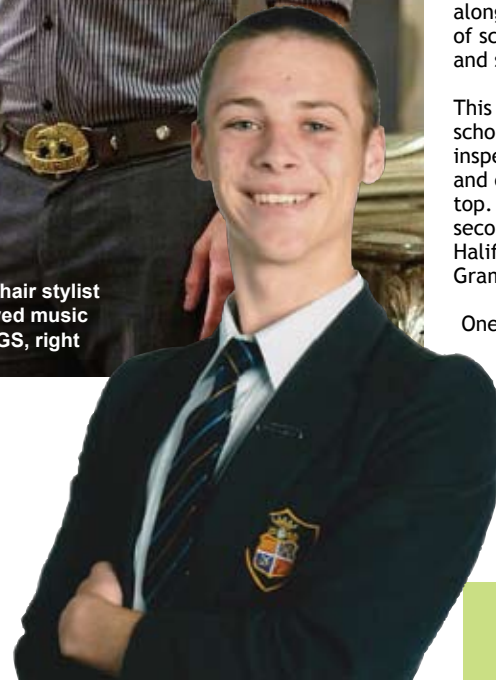


Digging university:
Liam Connolly

Billy Burgin (left RGS 2006) I left school at 16 to study music (piano) at Leeds College, but I had worked in hairdressing part-time since I was about 14 years old and always knew that that was what I wanted to do. My Mum was a hairdresser and my Nan had her own hairdressing salon in the village of Wath. I went on to do a two year hairdressing course at Intuitions School of Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy, in Harrogate and worked in a number of salons in the Ripon and Leeds area. I won first place in a creative hairdressing competition for junior stylists throughout Leeds and York in 2011, with an avant-garde peacock feather inspired hair style. I have been working as 'creative stylist' at Baroque in Ripon for the best part of a year and love it here. As well as cutting and colouring, I have been trained to do neck and shoulder, scalp and head massages. It's a really creative job and I'm busy all day. I love meeting new people and talking to clients. I couldn't sit at a desk all day, I like to be active. I enjoyed music and maths at school and played a lot of rugby, which I still do. I also played in a folk and a rock function band and played saxophone with the RGS Big Band, going on tours to places like Amsterdam. I now play violin and dance with Ripon Morris Dancers. I enjoyed my time at school very much. It taught me to "crack on with life".



Baroque and roll: hair stylist
Billy, above, enjoyed music
when he was at RGS, right



School wins top accolade for second year in a row and is placed 70th out of all English state secondary schools surveyed by The Sunday Times, **Ruth Savage** reports.

RGS rated top state school in the North

Ripon Grammar School is celebrating being named the top performing state secondary school in the North in the latest Sunday Times Parent Power guide.

The rankings in the secondary school league tables, which highlight academic excellence, are determined by the percentage of entries gaining A* to B grades at A level in the summer and returning A* and A grades at GCSE.

The latest accolade comes after 68.5 per cent of GCSEs awarded to RGS students were either A* or A, while 76 per cent of A level grades were A* to B. Now in its 22nd year of publication, Parent Power is widely acknowledged as the most authoritative survey of the country's best schools.

Headmaster Martin Pearman said: "I am delighted the school's achievements have been recognised in the latest Parent Power survey. This reflects the hard work and commitment of our staff, as well as the tremendous effort and determination of our students to do their very best at school."

Although, he added, RGS, where every pupil is expected to pursue at least one of the many and wide-ranging extra-curricular activities on offer, is about so much more than exam results: "These outstanding results have been achieved alongside excellence in many other areas of school life, including music, drama and sport."

This is the second year in a row the school, rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted inspectors, who praised its 'well-rounded and confident' students, has come out top. Skipton Girls' High School came second in the list, followed by The North Halifax Grammar School and Ermysted's Grammar School.

One of only 38 state boarding schools in England, where education is free but boarding is paid for, Ripon Grammar School is also placed 70th nationally in the newspaper's survey of state secondary schools. It comes 72nd in the Daily Telegraph national secondary school league tables.



Leading from the front

HEADMASTER Martin Pearman was inspired by a pupil's plight to enter the 26-mile London Marathon for the first time.

Last year, student Jenny Unwin broke her back in an accident while cycling home from her part-time job, just weeks after completing her GCSE exams. Now Mr Pearman hopes to raise at least £1,500 for Calvert Trust, a charity that provides outdoor activities for people with disabilities.

"Jenny's accident prompted me to do something for an organisation that she and other young people in similar situations can use to remain active and enjoy the outdoors," he said. "The staff of Calvert Trust work tremendously hard to provide opportunities to help children regain their confidence and take part in activities that perhaps they thought

By Sarah French

they'd never have the chance to do again."

Calvert Trust, which operates entirely on donations, runs three centres at Exmoor, Kielder and the Lake District where people can do climbing, horse riding, sailing and even abseiling down a cliff face in a wheelchair.

A keen sportsman who plays cricket and five-a-side, Mr Pearman, 55, has also completed the Great North Run three times. His training route around the Fountains Abbey World Heritage Site and surrounding countryside is particularly inspirational, he says. To support Mr Pearman's fundraising effort, visit www.justgiving.com/Martin-Pearman

Latest results show RGS has topped North Yorkshire's A level league tables for the second year running. It was also the top performing state school in the whole of Yorkshire last year.

It is not widely known that students have more than one chance at joining RGS. As well as the autumn term entrance exams

taken by primary school pupils in year 6, there are 13 additional places (4 boarding and 9 day) for entry into year 9. There are also around 30 additional places available in sixth form, open to both day and boarding students.

■ Please visit www.ripongrammar.co.uk for further details.

PARENTS' DIRECTORY: Do you have a local business that would benefit from advertising to RGS parents and alumni? Please contact our Parents' Association c/o Karen Williamson 01423 358189 kwilliams@mwlegal.co.uk for information

*The world of bespoke gentlemen's tailoring used to be dominated by men. **Ruth Savage** talks to a former Ripon Grammar School head girl and chemistry graduate who is proving women can cut it here too*

A JOB THAT SUITS

When Alexandra Robinson ditched her high-flying career in the pharmaceutical industry in order to get a job in the world of bespoke men's tailoring, it seemed like a leap in the dark.

But the Newcastle University chemistry graduate, who had always loved high quality, traditional British clothing, felt that, at last, she was about to do what she really wanted, rather than what was expected of her.

So she swapped a lucrative job with excellent prospects in London to return home and live with her parents in North Yorkshire, determined to land a job in this highly competitive and once all-male dominion. For Alexandra, 24, who left Ripon Grammar School in 2009, it's a gamble that paid off. Having won a position with a prestigious firm of bespoke tailors within weeks, she is one of a new generation of women proving that she really can cut it in a world full of immaculately suited gentlemen.

She works as a tailor and account manager



for family run Mullen & Mullen, which, while based in York, does most of its business in London. On a typical day, Alexandra will meet up to eight of her company's clients in prestigious locations all over the city, including the Gherkin and the Shard.

Her love of tailoring began at a young age when her mother, a fashion-loving sales executive, would dress Alexandra and her sister in beautiful clothes: "My Mum always had us looking immaculate. She'd say a nice jacket and a good pair of shoes would take us anywhere."

"There were always fashion magazines in the house and when my parents went to America, Mum would come back wearing labels like DKNY. She bought me a lovely Jack Wills tailored jacket when I was young. I have loved jackets ever since," she says, confessing that she has just treated herself to a stunning red velvet Dolce and Gabbana one.

"The anatomy of a tailored suit is fascinating, the history and influence behind it and the effort that goes into making it," she says.



Although much of her job involves sales and meeting with clients, Alexandra is also learning the basics of tailoring: "I cut button holes and do little tweaks but leave the highly skilled work to the experienced cutting room staff," she says.

The 3D design skills involved in creating a suit to precisely the right measurements and shape are complex, and when Alexandra first started, she was thrown in at the deep end but, surprisingly, found her knowledge of chemistry helped.

"They warned me that mastering the mirror images involved in patterning was harder than brain surgery. This is where my chemistry degree actually helped as a lot of it is based on mirror images. To me, it was just molecular chemistry in a different form, so I actually found that bit easy."

Alexandra is also doing a part-time course in marketing at the London College of Fashion and enjoys writing a men's fashion blog - covering subjects like 'the history of the dinner jacket' and 'what to look for in brogues' - for the company website. "I'm getting a taste of all

aspects of the company, picking it up as I go along. It's great training," says Alexandra, who found the position while browsing local job boards.

"It is hard to get into and lots of people coming out of fashion college would love to be in my position. There are hundreds of applicants for every place and I had no connections or idea how to get into fashion. Luckily, I was in the right place at the right time."

She feels she benefited from what she learnt at Ripon Grammar School: "I absolutely loved my time at RGS. We had excellent teachers, passionate in their field and about our success and we wanted to work hard and to do well for them. At RGS, there is an in-built drive to do well, work hard and succeed, but also to be well-grounded and polite, kind individuals."

Her advice to today's students is to go with gut instincts about what they want to do in life: "The secret of success is hard work and a little bit of luck but you need to create opportunities."

The favourite part of her job now is dealing with customers: "Every day in London I get to meet some of the most successful and influential legal and business minds in some of the most luxurious offices and locations. Although they have quite exacting standards and expect a high level of perfection."

She has recently been working on a suit for multi-millionaire business tycoon Sir Anthony Jolliffe: "I love meeting people at the height of their profession, who are the best in the world at what they do. It's good to pick up life lessons from them."

After taking an order, Alexandra will meet with the head cutter to go over measurements and create a basic shape, held together by 'bastings' or loose stitches. Then she meets her client to do a first fit, during which she will make minor alterations to ensure there is no creasing or popping. Up to four further fittings and cutting room meetings follow.

She loves working with the famous cloth merchants of Savile Row, such as Holland and Sherry or Dormeuil: "There is such a history to them. In one building, they keep

Suits you, Miss:
Alexandra Robinson outside Mullen & Mullen in York, where she says her chemistry degree has helped her master the complex mirror images involved in patterning: "It's molecular chemistry in a different form."



At RGS we were encouraged to succeed, but also to be polite and kind individuals'

Continued from page 7

sample books of original cloths dating back to the early 1800s. It's fascinating." But Mullen & Mullen also offers its own top quality house cloths, woven at Dugdale Bros & Co cloth merchants in Yorkshire, which work out better value. Suits typically cost from £650 to £2,000: "But if you want gold thread, the sky's the limit."

With a staff of 30, including five tailors, the company makes 25 to 30 suits a week.

"It's a very traditional, old-fashioned operation," says Alexandra. While it is still a male-dominated environment, she has noticed more women entering the trade. In fact, Mullen & Mullen has just taken on another female trainee.

After years of being limited to finishing off button holes and linings in the workrooms of Savile Row, women are increasingly moving into the more dynamic client-facing roles. Occasionally, there is some prejudice: "I can still go for days without seeing another girl. And sometimes 'old school' chaps look shocked when I walk in. But being a female in this job has never bothered me. I have always been confident with people," says Alexandra. "And male clients often like a woman's opinion," she adds.

Her greatest triumphs, she says, are when she finishes a suit and a client reorders straight away because they love it so much. The down side is the amount of time spent travelling: "I get a 7am train from York to London and arrive back at 7pm a couple of days later, getting to my front door about 10pm."

My favourite teacher was Mr Miller (biology), he was really cool and had a nice balance between the carrot and stick, making you want to work hard for him. I cried after my last biology lesson. It got to me.'

It's incredibly tiring, she says: "It's a very physical job and takes a lot of energy to get 15 suits to 15 locations around London over two days, making all the appointments on time while maintaining composure and appearance. We have a team of bag carriers to help us. But it's very intense."

Many of Mullen & Mullen's customers in London have Yorkshire connections, such as those City lawyers who trained at York Law School. But, increasingly, the company is attracting clients from further afield who simply like the idea of good quality, reasonably priced British-made garments.

The company is planning to expand to New York, where a number of clients are now based, and Alexandra would eventually like to establish a women's tailoring department.

Her role models are former Burberry boss Angela Ahrendts and award-winning British designer and Savile Row tailor Patrick Grant. Both have been innovative and turned their businesses around: "Grant used to be an engineer and switched careers later in life, so that's particularly inspirational," says Alexandra.

She has no regrets about her career swap: "It took courage. My parents were shocked at first and wondered what on earth I was doing.

"But it has paid off. I absolutely loved the world of men's tailoring from the start. And, with most of our business based in London, it's ideal for me as I get the buzz and young professional lifestyle of the city but can still carry on living in my beloved Yorkshire."

■ Mullen & Mullen, 16, High Petergate, York.
T: 01904 633049 W: mullenandmullen.co.uk

Ruth Savage reports on the Guardian's first ever female editor and the only woman at the top of a major daily newspaper in the UK

Former head girl makes the news

It comes as little surprise to those who knew Katharine Viner when she was at Ripon Grammar School that the former head girl has just been appointed the first female editor in the Guardian newspaper's 194-year history and is now the only female editor at the head of a major UK national daily.

It was always clear that Katharine, the first state-educated editor at the Guardian since 1956, was going to go far.

The daughter of two teachers, she showed journalistic promise in fifth form, when she had her first article—about taking the last O level exams before the introduction of the new GCSE—published in the Guardian in 1987.



Inspiring leader: Viner

"I wonder how the O level will be remembered," she wrote. "Many would think what an unfair, elitist system it was. After all, for some exams, five years' knowledge had to be crammed into two and a half hours."

She described the RGS exam hall as usually containing 'hay fever sneezes as well as a hundred sweaty bodies' in summer and recalls the moment all the lights went out during a thunderstorm in the middle of a German exam. That was not the only hazard, she added: "Desks were allocated in alphabetical order, yet wherever I sat, I seemed to receive a desk with three long legs and one short one. But that's life, I suppose."

Katharine also shone as a member of the school's Top of the Form BBC national radio quiz team in 1986, when RGS lost by just three points in the semi-final and former student and fashion designer Bruce Oldfield wrote to congratulate the team on their success.

In 1988, she and fellow student Simon Stockill won the national final of the prestigious Observer Mace Schools Debating Competition in London, and were presented with their award by Lord Hailsham.

After leaving RGS in 1989, Katharine went on to study English at Pembroke College, Oxford, where, in her final year, she won a student competition to work at the Guardian for a week, when she wrote a piece titled 'Storm in a D-cup' about the lack of sports bras for the well-endowed.

Her first job was with Cosmopolitan magazine and she spent three years at The Sunday Times before joining the Guardian, where she made her name in lifestyle coverage, and won a Newspaper Magazine Editor of the Year award in 2001. She rose through the ranks, going on to launch the paper's Australian operation before taking the role of editor-in-chief of Guardian US.

As well as her journalism, she compiled a play, My Name is Rachel Corrie, with actor Alan Rickman, about an American activist who died in Gaza during a protest in 2003. It was performed at the Royal Court Theatre. As well as being on the board of the Royal Court for 13 years, Katharine was a judge in the Orange Prize for Fiction in 2006.

Widely viewed by Guardian staff as more approachable and left-wing than her predecessor, Alan Rusbridger, who is standing down after 20 years, Vine, 44, said she intends to make the Guardian: "a home for the most ambitious journalism, ideas and events, reaching out to readers all around the world."

Dame Liz Forgan, one of the Guardian's selection panel, said Vine had shown herself to be 'an inspiring and courageous leader.' Headmaster Martin Pearman said everyone at RGS was proud of

Katharine's achievement and that she was a particularly inspirational role model for current students: "We warmly congratulate Katharine on her new appointment and wish her well with all the challenges that lie ahead. We are confident she will excel in her new role."

Katharine will take up her new post in the summer.

A truly unique school

As RGS expands to meet demand, headmaster **Martin Pearman** explains why state boarding is so popular

Proud of their schools and mindful of what makes them special, many head teachers will lay claim to the uniqueness of their school. As headmaster of Ripon Grammar School, I am in the privileged position of being able to say that I lead a truly unique school - Yorkshire's only state boarding school.

The school was re-founded in 1555 and has probably always had boarders throughout that time. Nevertheless, that such a school exists today is still a surprise to many, even in Ripon itself. Many believe boarding to be the preserve of the independent sector, but Ripon is one of just 38 state boarding schools in the whole of England.

Not all are grammar schools, nor in wonderful cities like Ripon - some are inner city schools,



A privilege to lead RGS: headmaster Martin Pearman

some are in rural areas, they are academies and comprehensives, co-ed and single sex. What we have in common is the chance for students to receive a state education with the bonus of being able to board - tuition comes free, with only the weekly or termly boarding paid for.

As more parents juggle demanding careers, children with different needs or, as is often the case in North Yorkshire, geography, where the daily trek to school is a challenge in itself, many families are looking for flexibility.

We have parents who have to travel with work, for whom boarding offers both continuity and stability for their children, while other families have moved to the area and have no support network.

For some, the schools local to their home may not meet their

needs or perhaps don't have sixth forms.

Others are attracted by the fact we offer an educational experience that's at least on a par with the independent sector, with school fees - since only the boarding element has to be paid for - substantially lower. Certainly, at Ripon Grammar School our annual boarding fees of £10,000 compare very favourably with average independent school fees of around £30,000 per year.

Students can board at Ripon from the age of 11, but demand for sixth form boarding places has led to us to extend our girls' boarding in Johnson House by a further 15 places from September.

The £1.2m development will provide single rooms for sixth form girls, as well as freeing up

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RIPON GRAMMAR SCHOOL
Helping shape the future since 1555

CAN WE LET YOU INTO A SECRET?



Good state boarding schools are one of our education system's best kept secrets. And one of the very best is in North Yorkshire. Want to know more?

five more places for boys, in a newly-refurbished annex. In the last few years we've had to turn girls away so the extension will not only meet current demand but allow us to grow our boarding provision for the future. As well as the practical benefits of boarding, there is strong evidence of positive academic outcomes for boarders.

Boarding seems to create an environment that supports hard work, with both girls and boys making exceptional progress. Boarders also appreciate the range of extra curricular opportunities they have outside school hours. As other students are journeying home, our boarders are free to play a game of rounders (with full teams!) on the fields, to

go running, play computer games enjoy exclusive use of the school swimming pool and sports hall or to join one of the many sporting clubs, before doing their prep. At weekends they go home, or our termly boarders get to enjoy trips out to the cinema, bowling or shopping. Parents are always at the end of the telephone, of course, or, more typically these days, contacted via Skype.

Another huge advantage of sixth form boarding is the chance to experience living away from home within the security of school. It means the prospect of going to university is far less daunting and students feel better prepared. Boarders learn to be independent. They tend to be confident, self-assured, socially able individuals and make the transition to higher education easily.

Our expansion will allow us to grow our boarding provision for the future



Home from home: boarders typically thrive at RGS

Our boarding memories and WW1 features will appear in the next edition of Clocktower



RIPON GRAMMAR SCHOOL
Helping shape the future since 1555

Ripon Grammar School is the only state funded school with boarding in North Yorkshire, in fact between Lincolnshire and Northumberland

NEW: 15 additional boarding places from September 2015

Our students enjoy an outstanding education in the beautiful cathedral city setting of Ripon, where boarders are well cared for and nurtured in a comfortable, homely environment.

Five good reasons to consider boarding at Ripon Grammar School

RGS is the top state school in the North (The Sunday Times Parent Power guide)

Education comes free at RGS, with boarding fees offering exceptional value for money

We have recently invested £10m in impressive modern facilities, including new boarding accommodation

Students consistently achieve Yorkshire's top exam results, with boarders' outcomes 'outstanding' (Ofsted)

RGS has achieved the highest score in the country for student progress at A Level

Call 01765 602647 for a copy of our new Boarding Prospectus (please quote P2).

For more information visit www.ripongrammar.co.uk. Address: Clothierholme Road, Ripon, North Yorkshire, HG4 2DG
Email: admin@ripongrammar.co.uk



Stefan Lewicki, former head of English at Ripon Grammar School, looks back on how school reports have changed over the years, while former students share some of their teachers' comments

'Tries hard but it all ends in disaster'

Shortly after they had been introduced to one another, Dr John Watson put together a sketch of his new colleague Sherlock Holmes, after the manner of a school report:

1. Knowledge of Literature.—Nil. 2. Philosophy.—Nil.
3. Astronomy.—Nil.
4. Politics.—Feeble.
5. Botany.—Variable. Well up in belladonna, opium, and poisons generally. Knows nothing of practical gardening.
6. Geology.—Practical, but limited. Tells

at a glance different soils from each other. After walks has shown me splashes upon his trousers, and told me by their colour and consistence in what part of London he had received them.

7. Chemistry.—Profound.
8. Anatomy.—Accurate, but unsystematic.
9. Sensational Literature.—Immense. He appears to know every detail of every horror perpetrated in the century.
10. Plays the violin well.
11. Is an expert singlestick player, boxer, and swordsman.
12. Has a good practical knowledge of British law.

That wouldn't pass muster in today's world of online reports, where one has to sum up a student's achievement in (last time I wrote one) 800 characters. Your son or daughter in five and a half tweets! Of course, I, and any number of my colleagues could have done it in a single tweet, but again, it wouldn't have been passed for publication.

I could get away with joking to a colleague that I'd met more intelligent Weetabix than

student X, but not her parents.

And I could (in my own inimitable way!) tell student Y off for slouching in my lesson and looking like a 'lobotomised grapefruit' - it woke him up and he paid attention thereafter! - but not send that comment home in writing.

I suppose I'm writing from a rather privileged perspective, having been both a teacher and a parent. Certainly, if you want the truth, you need to be a fly on the wall in the staffroom, or have contacts at GCHQ.

In former times, reports were often cruel, crass and inaccurate, as well as terse, as you can see from some of the examples I found, overleaf. But that doesn't mean untruthful.

My mother kept all my old school reports and recently handed them over to me, and very revealing they were. Teachers contradicted themselves from one term to the next. In the sixth form, I was regarded as having an

RIPON GRAMMAR SCHOOL		Name	Form	Place	Number in Form	Average Age
		T. G. WOLSTENCROFT	2B	8	30	12.4
SUBJECT	Examination Mark	Place	REMARKS	Initials of Master		
Religious Instruction	30	15				
English Language	30	15				
English Literature	70	10	Good words. Some.			
History	50	20	He must work harder next term.			
Geography	50	20	He can do better than this.			
Latin	30	15	Works well. Some very disappointing.			
French	90	5	But with great effort can be good.			
German	60	10	Good work. Progress.			
Mathematics	90	5				
Physics	50	20				
Chemistry	50	20				
General Science	50	20				
Art	10	100	This is not his subject.			
Music	10	100				
Physical Education	10	100				
Games	10	100				
Distinctions and Offices						
Other Activities						
Form Master's Remarks			Quite good but I feel he should be in the first class of this form. R.H.B.			
Headmaster's Remarks			I agree. The standard is not a very high one, and he should be able to gain 10 places. R.H.B.			



Art was not his subject: former head boy Tim Wolstencroft left RGS in 1964 and went on to become a principal law lecturer in postgraduate studies at the University of Huddersfield. Excerpts from his reports, above and below.

Subject	Mark	Place
General Science	41	10
Art	40	27
Music	54	98

attitude problem, issues with authority, and using too much bad language. No change there then, those who know me will say.

Many feel that the world of the politically correct is in danger of taking over reporting, and emasculating it. In a data-mad world, numbers, marks and grades may be seen as more important than informed comment.

Whilst I feel it's a trend that RGS has rightly resisted, I know there are schools where teachers' comments may have to be taken from statement banks and have in consequence become anodyne, verbose and have all the sincerity of a speak-your-weight machine. There are those who insist that reports shall always be positive (or circumlocutiously negative). And the report will be proof-read to make sure that the language fits in with a particular school's self-image, and that it has been written and spelt correctly.

I was always amused by how inputting reports directly into a computer system with spellcheck facility produced a far higher level of inaccuracy than the old fashioned methods, and demanded far more time for checking...

Quiz time: without thinking (too much) explain clearly the difference between a target grade, a forecast grade, a predicted grade, a current grade and an effort grade. Answers on the back of your last report card, please.

To be serious for a final few moments: when our daughters were at school - both went through RGS - their reports were handwritten, and most of the time it was clear that the teachers knew the student about whom they were writing; the report supplemented the more detailed picture we were given at parents' evenings.



Stefan Lewicki was head of English at RGS from 1992 until his retirement in 2011. He was also head of sixth form from 2000-05. Before that he taught at Harrogate Grammar School and in London. Both his daughters attended RGS.

He passed the 11+ and went to grammar school in Stamford, Lincolnshire for two years before moving to boarding school near Nottingham; he then went on to enjoy eight years as a student in Liverpool, Lancaster and London.

Pictured in his early career as a form tutor, below, and pre-university days, left



Fashion designer Bruce Oldfield, OBE, left RGS in 1969. He went on to teacher training college before switching to fashion. He recalls :

“The headmaster, Mr Atkinson, known by his initials RA, was an intimidating figure in his academic gown, but he was kind to me and I made great friends with his daughter, Susan. His parting shot on my final report was: "He expects a lot from life. We shall miss him."

Surely some mistake?

Nobel physicist Albert Einstein: *“He will never amount to anything.”* said one of his schoolmasters in 1895

Novelist Charlotte Brontë was told that she wrote *“indifferently”* and *“knew nothing of grammar”*

Beatle John Lennon was declared to be *“hopeless... rather a clown in class... certainly on the road to failure”*

Poet Robert Graves: *“Well, goodbye, Graves and remember that your best friend is the wastepaper basket.”* - said his housemaster in his report.

ST. HUGH'S COLLEGE, TOLLERTON					
SCHOOL			REPORT		
Name S. K. Lewicki			Lent Term, 1972		
Age at end of term 17.2			Form VI		
This Report is a confidential one between School and Parents. It may not be used in place of a testimonial.					
	Term %	Exam %	Place in Set	Number in Set	Master's Initials
Religious Knowledge					
English Language	68	72	2	2	Stefan derives wicked pleasure from total non-participation. He has begun to read on his own! JRS
English Literature					
Spoken English					

‘An attitude problem, issues with authority and too much bad language’

Stefan Lewicki gives us a glimpse of his old school reports from St Hugh's College, Tollerton, which his mother kept in the attic until recently. Mr Lewicki found them 'very revealing':

School report Lent, 1970, fifth form tutor's report: *‘Works hard at whatever task he is doing, Always willing but could be more careful in his choice of language.*

Summer 1971, Lower sixth tutor's report: *‘Stefan is a little too inclined to take the law into his own hands or consider himself above it, but he has had a reasonable term and I have high hopes for him.*

Lent 1972, sixth form, religious knowledge teacher: *‘Stefan derives wicked pleasure from total non-participation.*

Lent 1972 tutor's report: *‘Stefan cannot be entirely blamed if the educational system does not seem to demand much of him this year, but I feel his not working to capacity has had some bad effect on other boys. I also hope that he can grow out of his attitude of passive resistance to some aspects of life and study here in his final term.*

Lent 1972 rector's report: *‘Has carried his office of prefect well though perhaps a little over-zealous. While ensuring that others keep the rules he must remember that he himself, although a prefect, is not ‘above’ these.*

Form four, 1965, age 9 years: *‘His work is very gratifying but he does not always take kindly to criticism’*

True confessions



Rebecca Russell, who left RGS in 1996, read English literature and Latin at the University of St Andrews and went on to work in journalism and communications, came across her first form autumn report in which headmaster, Mr Stanley, commented: *‘Rebecca seems to enjoy life in the classroom. She will also have learned something about examinations.*

‘This follows comments about good work in the classroom but diligence somewhat lacking in exam revision and consequent performance!’ says Rebecca.



Charlie Savage, who left RGS in 2011, studied English literature and philosophy at the University of East Anglia, and now works as a business development manager for FC Business Intelligence in London. Charlie was 14 when he received this summer report from PE teacher Ashley Casey: *“Charles has the ability but he often keeps his talents hidden or at least obscured by his preference for*

tomfoolery. He is happy when he is performing to an audience and I am sorry to say that the wish to entertain is not always conducive to good work in physical education. For a man of talents, he is not succeeding as he should; he needs to make a choice between his silliness and his progression in physical education.’

Charlie says: *‘Mr Casey probably had a point, but my talent for tomfoolery has ended up coming in very useful in life.’* Having completed his PhD in physical education and sport pedagogy, Dr Casey is now a lecturer in the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Science at Loughborough University.



Steve Smith, former head of Languages at RGS, recalls: *‘In my first form at Gillingham Grammar School my maths teacher Mr Stokes wrote about me: "Steven is very conscientious, but should experience no lasting difficulty".*

‘That's probably not what he meant to write. As it happens I was both conscientious and a little self-conscious.’



Anna Ferguson, who left RGS in 1998 and went on to study electrical and information sciences at Cambridge University, is now working as a chartered electrical power systems consultant engineer in Manchester. She came across a report from 1993, in which French teacher Miss Helen Alderson commented: *‘If Anna is to continue doing well she must adopt a slightly more serious attitude toward her work, as well as chatting less!’*

‘Oops’ says Anna, *‘I blame my friend, that Dr Nicola Stock!’*

On top of the world

It was growing up in the magnificent landscape of the Yorkshire Dales that sparked off an award-winning documentary maker's love of the natural world. The globe-trotting director and producer, who left RGS in 1985, tells **Ruth Savage** about his favourite place on the planet.

Award-winning documentary maker Mark Flowers has played with lemurs in Madagascar, swum with river dolphins in the Amazon rainforest, joined in a Mali mud festival in the heat of Africa and tracked down giant fish in the turbulent rapids of Laos. But none of these exotic locations, he says, are a patch on his favourite place on the planet - Pen Hill, near Leyburn, in the Yorkshire Dales.

Producer and director Flowers, who has worked on a succession of high profile natural history programmes, from *Human Planet* to *Iceage Giants* and the *Private Life of Plants*, is constantly drawn back to this part of Wensleydale, where he grew up and where his interest in the natural world began.

And while his acclaimed big-budget documentaries, fronted by presenters like David Attenborough and Alice Roberts, may have been watched by millions all over the world, his favourite piece of work lasts just 20 seconds and cost only pennies to make. It's a film he made on his iPhone, capturing the drive out of Leyburn towards Pen Hill.

Flowers, who studied biology at Nottingham University after leaving RGS in 1985, plays it wherever he is in the world, if he's feeling down or in need of inspiration.

"It follows the road just as it curves round to reveal the majesty of Pen Hill in front, it's like the whole world opens out, a blast of sense and reality."

He describes the ancient landscape of this particular Dale as world class: "It is a fantastic mix of savage nature and gentle, tranquil order. The natural, terraced waterfalls on the River Ure are far more beautiful than anything I have seen in the Amazon, the Andes or even along the Mekong."

Those growing up and living in this part of the world are incredibly lucky, he says: "In North Yorkshire we are blessed with living in, by far and away, the most wild and beautiful part of the world - believe me, I have seen a lot of the rest of it." Now 48, Flowers is just back from New Zealand, where he has been working on a new natural history series about the surprising wildlife and spectacular landscapes there. Based at the BBC's Natural History unit in Bristol, he spends about a third of the year working abroad.

"But no matter where I have been in the world, I still keep coming back to Wensleydale. As I get older, the pull back is stronger, it's in the blood," he says.

The son of teachers Anne and Ernest, Flowers grew up in a village outside Bedale. It was the rambles with his mother, a science teacher and biologist, along with brother Paul and sister Rachel, in the country lanes around the village of Crakehall, which first

sparked the interest in plants and wildlife that was to drive his career.

He recalls marvelling at the breeding kingfishers which he witnessed burrowing into the side of the local beck: "We loved seeing the wildflowers and would go chasing waterfalls at nearby Redmire and Hardraw Force," he says.

When his younger brother Paul, now a professor of health at Glasgow Caledonian University, got some tropical fish, the boys started to take more of an interest in the wider world: "We read about where these exotic, colourful fish came from and learned about the Amazon, rainforests, mountain streams and the great African lakes. It inspired us to think about wildlife globally.

"We looked out on rooks in woods and walked the dogs along nettle-lined lanes, yet by trying to give our tropical fish the best home and conditions we could, our imaginations roamed the world." He got a job as a chromosomal parrot sexer after leaving

university: "I had big ideas about saving rare species from extinction," he laughs. But he didn't take to life in the laboratory so got a job as a research journalist on a gardening magazine: "This was my first big break as it got me into finding and writing up stories," he says.

His first job in TV found him working with his hero, David Attenborough, as a researcher on the *Private Life of Plants* series. Flowers had always dreamed of a career in TV: "I was 24, can you imagine how exciting it was to be working and talking with him directly? I felt like I had won the lottery.

"I was just a lad in a small Yorkshire village who had big dreams but never, ever thought they'd come true. I never imagined one day I might get to make my own series.

"His advice to students at RGS today who might want a similar career is: 'Don't say 'I want to be a presenter.' If you are serious about a career in media then watch film, pretend to be Simon Cowell and think about



Mark, left, on location, filming the *Human Planet* documentary in Dubai, where keeping this modern city pigeon-free is a challenge. His team, which was examining mankind's relationship with nature, discovered an ancient Arabian solution to this modern urban problem —falcons. Nature can't be pushed away, says Mark: "Even futuristic Dubai would falter without its falcons."

Above, Mark, pictured by a giant mammoth rock rub, filming *Ice Age Giants* in Northern California.

Falcon photographs left, and overleaf, by KIERAN DOHERTY



what makes it good, what makes it bad, analyse it. Have an overview about what is on TV and what is hot and what is not. Make stuff. It is easy to film stuff on iPhones, do simple edits, just have a go. Think up ideas and try making films.” He was something of a non-conformist at school, he says: “I wasn’t the neatest or sportiest student and was quite often in trouble for bleaching my hair and being a bit different,” he says. If he could meet his 18-year-old self now, the one piece of advice he’d give is: “Don’t worry, the fact that you can’t throw a ball really doesn’t matter.”

He believes people need a degree of talent to get going and stand out from the crowd: “But the ones who fly the highest have the clearest vision of where they’re going and what they want to get out of something.”

Flowers has been managing, writing and directing ground-breaking individual programmes and series for more than 20 years now. It has opened him up to the most amazing experiences, he says. Personal highlights include sitting in a hide in the middle of the Amazonian Jungle and watching flocking Macaws form a magnificent technicolour cloud.

While filming aerial shots in Dubai for Human Planet, featuring the story of an urban falconer, he flew over the tallest building in the world: “I often see the shot we captured on TV, used again and again, it looks like something from Star Wars.”

Capturing life in isolated, root tree hill villages in one of the remote areas of north-east India for the same series was like another world. And when the children living there saw Flowers and his colleagues, it was as if the circus had come to town, he says.

“To these children, the arrival of a gangly bunch of giant, pale-skinned strangers, brandishing weird black boxes, screens and cables, was the most surprising thing to happen in a long while.” Flowers found himself acting as a children’s entertainer: “Whenever we got the camera out, we were mobbed,” he says. “If we were to get any shots that looked vaguely natural, the crowd of children had to be distracted.”

He found it soul enhancing: “The biggest benefit of working on a Human Planet shoot is the people we encounter. It’s refreshing to step outside of a regulated, fast-paced and impersonal modern, urban society and meet people who live in a more open, communal and far more ‘human’ way.”

In a career largely driven by his love of plants, he has also enjoyed working on the Chelsea

Flower Show and directing Monty Don in Around the World in 80 Gardens.

Producing a film about wild orchids - one of his passions - was, he recalls, particularly thrilling: “It involved filming some of the strangest pollination mechanisms in the world and seeing some of the most mysterious flowers in the world in their wild home.”

Filming a documentary about Wensleydale, the landscape which inspired him in the first place, Flowers discovered rare wild plants that had survived from the Ice Age. While making the half hour documentary, narrated by actor Robert Hardy, he even encountered a kingfisher at the same beck where he had first discovered them as a boy, 35 years before: “That was just magical.”

Most of his job, though, involves planning and writing: “There are lots of emails. The business side of making a programme involves a lot of financial, legal and team issues.” He spends hours working on scripts: “Most days I’m sitting tapping away and looking at my computer for hours on end.”

And it is only once all the detailed arrangements are made to get crews to the right place at the right time and with the right support that he can get back out into the wilds, he says.

“When we go filming, we never really know what’s going to happen. In an office, life is predictable but out in the wilds, it is all about making the most of the planning you have done and then seeing what the weather, God, creatures

and local people will give you. We just always hope it will result in wonderful images.”

He is particularly enthusiastic about his latest series, Wild New Zealand, which should be on our TV screens in autumn 2016: “It is the most isolated mini continent on earth, home to giant reptiles and the strangest birds,” he says. Now busy writing scripts about what he has encountered there, he says “My aim is to tell the best stories and make them as appealing as possible.

Looking back on his time at RGS, he says the main lesson he learnt was to be himself: “There is such pressure in your teens to be part of the herd and I didn’t really conform. I wasn’t especially good at rugby or winning academic prizes. But RGS really opened up my future and gave me a chance I’d never have had otherwise.

“It taught me to try the best I could and strive for excellence. And I learnt to make the most of opportunities. My deep ambition now is to play my part, however small, in helping to remind us all how precious our world, and its wildlife, is.”

Main photograph: RICHARD DOUGHTY.,
Meghalaya photographs RICHARD KIRKBY



“I was just a lad in a small Yorkshire village who had big dreams. RGS opened up my future.”



No place like home: Mark strolls on the Green at Crakehall. Below, filming in Meghalaya, north-east India, where he tasted local delicacies for the award-winning Human Planet documentary, and on location at a frozen river in Romania. Left, a falcon in Dubai



Favourite teachers

“I have to thank David Postlethwaite for pushing me into being the best I could be. Anne Carrick and Graham Finch, who led school drama productions, inspired me.”

DRIVING AMBITION

Nick Chester, who left RGS in 1987, is now technical director at Lotus Formula 1. **Peter Craddock** finds out about his school days and discovers how he landed his dream job



Hot wheels: Chester with drivers Maldonado, Grosjean and CEO Matthew Carter in Bahrain. Australian Grand Prix Melbourne, March 2015, below



From top, Chester talks to Lotus F1 team manager Paul Seaby in Bahrain, Australian Grand Prix, and trackside.

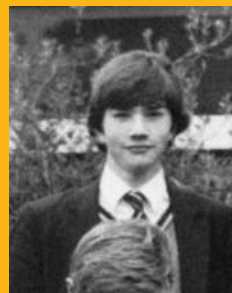


RGS FACT

Half of all our sixth formers do voluntary work and all benefit from one week's formal work experience

Favourite teacher: Mr Ashworth

"I particularly remember Mr Ashworth, my maths teacher, he was really inspiring and my favourite teacher as a result. My physics teacher, who was deeply offended by the tuck shop I ran, was 'Jock' Wallace. Both the head, Mr Stanley, and deputy head, Mr Postlethwaite, were feared and respected."



Nick Chester has been interested in cars and their design since he was a 13-year-old pupil at Ripon Grammar School. But little did the teenage schoolboy, who went on to study engineering at Cambridge University, realise that he would, one day, land such a dream job. After graduating, he worked on vehicle simulation projects with Simtek Research and when the company launched its own F1 team, he was lucky enough to travel with them, analysing data at the track. Nick went on to work in suspension design before progressing to performance, race and test engineering, eventually taking up positions as head of performance systems and engineering director until, in May last year, he was appointed Lotus F1's technical director.

"I work and have worked with some great people, determined people. I have had the pleasure of working with some great drivers, including Fernando Alonso, Kimi Raikkonen and Jarno Trulli as his performance engineer when he won at Monaco," says Nick.

He adds: "The current crop of drivers have enormous ability in their cars, are quick thinkers, fearless, whilst managing the technical aspects of tyres and fuel consumption."

He looks back on his time at RGS with fondness: "There was a lovely culture in the school, working hard was a good thing to do, as was extra curricular activity. I sang in the school choir and played for the tennis team. I enjoyed every year and made some great friends including Stephen Lloyd and Tim Armitage, with whom I'm still in contact. I particularly remember Mr Ashworth, my maths teacher, he was really inspiring and my favourite teacher as a result."

Nick who now lives near Solihull, from where he commutes to his Lotus F1 base in Enstone, recalls what it was that first drew him to motor racing in the first place: "It's obviously exciting. I wanted to get into racing via car design, and I knew I wanted to do that from around the age of 13."

About to depart for Malaysia, his current lifestyle is a roving one, a real contrast to his anchored days at RGS, although things didn't always go to plan back then. There were some difficult times: "Yes" recounts Nick, "I recall the first year being quite tough, but I really got going in years 2 and 3."

He had a mischievous side too. 'I ran an illicit tuck shop in the physics lessons, not appreciated by the officious teacher, Jock Wallace, but I managed to get away with it. I remember also being chased around on a bike by one of the games masters, Harry Locke, who with another games master Andy Ebbage, struck up a real comedy duo act, great times," he recalls with amusement

His advice to current students is: "Be aware of the possibilities out there, there are so many great careers available. If you are fired up about the possibilities, that's when the enthusiasm starts. Believe in yourself and be tenacious. For me that was about getting a good engineering degree and it went from there."

Formula for success: Nick Chester, right, and, left, as a schoolboy pictured in 1987

I ran an illicit tuck shop





The victors: George Ogram's Over-21 team celebrate their hard fought win

Former students returned to RGS to challenge current pupils on the school playing fields. We report on the exciting football and hockey matches that ensued

We are the champions

RGS FACT

Our popular student-led clubs include the medical, philosophy and feminist societies

This year it was different. The overwhelming popularity of the annual Old Rips vs Current Rips football match meant that last year's Old Rips' team had twice as many players as it needed.

So this time it changed. 2014 saw the Under-21s vs the Over-21s, in a match played with such emotion that Mr Auger could hardly contain himself on the sidelines. The Over-21s looked prepared. Complete with manager and a substitute's bench, George Ogram's boys came to play. The Under-21s team was just about a team, although several last minute

By Toby Kinread

texts had to be sent to gather some substitutes. The conditions were perfect and the boggy right side of the pitch made for some interesting manoeuvres on the wing.

Although scrappy at times, glimpses of quality football came through and the goals kept on coming. With a tight 3-all score after the final whistle the boys knew that history would repeat itself and like last year the game would be decided on penalties. The Under-21s started

the shootout with poise, tucking away their first couple of penalties whilst the older boys struck wide and over the bar.

Perhaps complacency set in though and, sadly for this author who organised the Under-21s penalty takers, some good goalkeeping and poor striking helped the Over-21s to draw level and then win the shootout.

Good is not how this game should be described. But good fun should suffice and good luck next year to the Over-21s, because we'll be back with vengeance.

More over →



Here come the girls: (l-r) Laura McCarthy, Hannah Waddington, Mabel Ellerker and Georgi Sanderson set off for the second half of the hockey match, report overleaf



Magic: the Old Rips' hockey team hit Miss Bottomley's 'number six', plus one

Old Rips on a winning streak

By Hannah Hale

The annual Old Riponians' hockey match in December 2014 was as much anticipated as ever. With the Old Rips' team ranging from the more recent leavers from just last year to the 1992 North Yorkshire champions. The match began with a few early goals, many

from Carolyn Allen of the Old Rips, setting them up for an easy win. However, the current RGS first XI fought back with vigour, putting the Old Rips under pressure and providing the crowd with some great hockey to witness. By half-time the score was almost equal and the effects were certainly showing on some of the more recent leavers of RGS.

RGS FACT

More than 30 students from other schools throughout Yorkshire join our sixth form every year

The Old Rips' team started the second half determined to reach Miss Bottomley's 'magic number 6' for a second year running. This goal was achieved with a full-time score of 7-5 to the Old Rips. Thanks to all who were able to make it this year, both players and spectators. Let's continue our winning streak next year.

Congratulations to Old Rip Jack Laugher who was the first non-Chinese winner of a World Series event in 2015 when he won the 3m springboard diving gold medal in Dubai in March.



They'll be back with a vengeance next year: the Under-21s football team with PE teacher Mr Garvey



Rovers return: (l-r) Colin Yarker and wife Taiko, Philip Jackson and Clive Butterworth. At school, below



Lower sixth, 1967 (l to r): Colin, Clive and Philip. Also pictured, physics master Michael Wallace



One family search through the school archives for old photographs.

Pictures by Nicola Woolfenden

Former students travelled from as far as Japan and Australia for this RGS reunion. **Nicola Woolfenden** caught up with them in the school library after the games.

MEMORIES are made of RGS

Visitors came from as far as Japan and Australia to support the time-honoured hockey and football matches, and to enjoy guided tours of the school and its new facilities, at our latest Old Rips' winter reunion, held on Saturday, December 20.

Following the games, refreshments were held in the school library and there was a wonderful atmosphere as former pupils, friends and families came together to share a cup of coffee or glass of wine, to reminisce about school days and to catch up on news since leaving RGS.

Amongst the visitors was Colin Yarker (1961-68) who had travelled from Japan with his wife, Taiko, to meet up with four old school friends - Clive Butterworth, Ann Dangerfield (formerly Davison), Philip Jackson and Howard Perry. "It is the first time in 46 years," says Colin, "that the five of us have met up. Starting only a few years ago, I have managed to make contact with 30 of my peers - who are scattered around the four corners of the globe." Colin has lived and worked in Japan since 1979, establishing his own company in Tokyo in 1985, which, he says, will continue to keep his mind occupied for a few years yet. Of his former school friends, Colin goes on to say: "Ann Dangerfield, an accomplished violinist, was a music teacher for many years and now lives in Liverpool. Since retiring, she has continued working as a private teacher and regularly performs with several orchestras. Clive Butterworth is a retired civil engineer currently living in Ripon. His wife Helen is known to many at RGS. Philip Jackson is a chemistry teacher who, since the official retirement age of 60, has 'retired' three times! He enjoys his job so much that he inevitably ends up accepting offers of work at different schools - he currently works in London and lives there during term time. Howard Perry's official residence is in Australia, where he has lived and worked since 1989 but is currently working on a project in Paris. He is particularly interested in environmental protection and has been responsible for replanting large areas of forest in Australia".

For the first time, thanks to a comprehensive digitisation and cataloguing of school records by the Old



Blast from the past: (l-r) Emma Holden, Charlotte Mosley and Louise Holden. Pictured with deputy head Kevin Auger, below, are (l-r) James Riley, Peter Marsden, Hannah Hale and Naomi Smith



Riponians' Association, old boys and girls were able to access the library's IT network to search the archive for items of general or personal interest. Everybody marvelled at the quality of school photographs from decades ago, ranging from pictures of school plays, speech days, form groups and team line-ups. For anybody wishing to track down a long-lost photograph, please email the Old Rips at secretary@oldriponians.org. uk and we will do our best to provide you with a digital copy.

The success of this annual event rests very much with the people who visit and thanks must go to all those who joined us this year in helping to make it such an enjoyable and memorable day. We look forward to welcoming many more of you in December 2015.



Sharing memories over coffee and wine in a packed RGS library

Coming soon
in Clocktower



The secret of
my success

RAISED by a single mother on benefits and unable to afford a university education, this former RGS student left school at 16 to start work. Now retired aged 34, having sold his IT business for £23m, he tells how being a student at RGS helped give him the confidence to turn his life around.



Girl power

THIS former student, now a top female engineer working in electrical power systems, is urging more women to enter the profession.

Tireless energy and commitment

Philip Miles

PHILIP H Miles was appointed music master of Ripon Grammar School in January 1960. Mr Miles joined us after teaching at Wellingborough School, where he was also a pupil. He graduated from Trinity College of Music and was an associate of the Royal College of Music and the Royal College of Organists.

A gentle and genial personality but with considerable determination, Mr Miles will be remembered by numerous music students for his commitment and tireless energy, developing the school orchestra, choirs and chamber music and delivering musical productions of the highest standard. During his time at RGS, the school acquired a considerable reputation for music, producing no fewer than eight members of the National Youth Orchestra and many more members of the West Riding Schools Orchestra. Several pupils went on to become professional



musicians and are still performing with orchestras around the country. He made it his mission to ensure every pupil was encouraged to develop an understanding and appreciation of great music. He made sure any members of staff who could sing or play instruments were involved in the school's musical activities and he even organised annual carol singing evenings around Ripon which will still be remembered by many for their quality as well as their enthusiasm.

Mr Miles took great delight in his involvement with music in the local community, working closely with many other music teachers in the area and acting as accompanist for Ripon Choral Society for several years, then serving as its conductor for several more. He became a close friend of the cathedral organist, Dr Philip Marshall, and together they built a new organ for the school, housed at the rear of the stage. His wife, Elizabeth, also taught piano to a great many local young musicians. In 1975, Mr. Miles left the school to become a lecturer at Leeds College of Music. In retirement, he maintained his connection with Ripon and he and Elizabeth frequently attended concerts given by the school, the Choral Society, the Cathedral Concert Society and the St Cecilia Orchestra. Philip passed away in January 2015, he will be greatly missed.

DC and XK



A love of sport and a zest for life

THERE was standing room only at Christ Church, Harrogate, for the funeral of Tony Hill, the middle of three brothers who attended RGS in the 1950s. At school he excelled at sport. Playing cricket and rugby for the first teams marked the beginning of his lifelong love of both games. Tony trained as a quantity surveyor with Messrs Jackson & Calvert in Harrogate. After qualification and marriage to his childhood sweetheart Gilli, he started as a sole practitioner in Harrogate in 1968. Around the same time he returned to his passion for rugby and was a constant presence in the second row for Harrogate RUFC until retirement in 1974 whereupon he worked tirelessly behind the scenes.

Tony was a big man with a zest

Tony Hill

for life that matched his size. He gained a reputation as an exacting and meticulous surveyor and had a successful practice. He was a founder member of Nidderdale Round Table, later a Rotarian and Masonic Lodge member. He devoted much of his life to charitable causes, largely through these organisations, where he held high office. If he took on a post he always brought his considerable energy, knowledge and experience to the job. Tony, pictured above, died on December 20, aged 73. He was a charming and positive friend, a loving husband, father and grandfather who will be sadly missed.

DC

A loyal colleague

SUE was born in Gillingham in Kent. After leaving school she trained as a nursery nurse and worked in Canterbury's maternity unit before moving to the paediatric unit in Bath.

In 1966 she moved to Scotland to work as a nanny and for the next 20 years she worked as matron in Ripon Cathedral Choir School and then at the boys' boarding school, Ramillies Hall, in Cheadle. In 1986 she returned to Ripon and settled in the boys' boarding house at Ripon Grammar School until her retirement in 2008.

From an early age she had an aptitude for needlework and her interest in crafts became a lifelong hobby. As a talented needlewoman she was a valued member of several sewing groups, including the Cathedral Stitchers, with whom she worked on the millennium cushion project and the production of kneelers for the Justice and Peace Chapel in the cathedral. On her retirement she settled



Sue Wordsworth

in her cottage in Copt Hewick and was a supporter of many local activities. At her funeral, in Copt Hewick Church, a display of her work was held in the village hall, including a beautiful kneeler for the church.

When Sue retired from the school, Johnson House senior housemistress Ruth Smith, a good friend, wrote in the RGS News: "Whether upholstering chairs, making curtains, countless summer dresses, or costumes for many school plays, her work is outstanding. She was always ready to take pupils to hospital, help with invigilating, assist with cricket teas, entertain parents, deal with workmen and numerous other jobs in school and boarding houses. She was a loyal and stalwart colleague in all parts of the school."

She didn't have a long retirement but it was a busy and purposeful one. Sue can be summed up by the following motto that she embroidered on a small plaque: "The best man for the job is...a woman."

JB



Helping to make history

Jean Denton

MISS Denton was appointed history mistress of Ripon High School for Girls in 1953. She found herself, nine years later, thrust into the making of a kind of history when that school and this one were merged and she, with many of her colleagues, came to help establish our co-educational system of teaching. As head of history at Ripon Grammar School, Miss Denton established and maintained the new department with patient planning and a tenacious care for the principles of the subject until her retirement in 1982.

Jean was born in Wakefield and attended Thornes House Grammar School, where she was head girl, from 1934 to 1940. She then went on to read history and English at London University. After graduating,

Jean first taught at a school in Weston-Super-Mare, then in Rotherham before moving to Ripon.

Jean had a lifelong interest in and concern for the trade union movement. She worked hard for her professional association and for many years served with distinction on its national council.

In retirement, Jean continued to use her expertise in writing and editing articles for the Ripon Historical Society.

DC

Outstanding values and achievements

Simon Fogden

I FIRST met Simon in Autumn 1957. RGS and its boarding house provided the foundations for more than 57 years of friendship.

Prominent in school life were our enthusiastic representation of RGS in winter and summer sports teams at every age group, involvement in the Combined Cadet Force and the annual camps, and bouts of self importance and power as school prefects.

Compulsory outdoor exercise before breakfast, homework, exams, sports injuries and the headmaster's cane sometimes interrupted this very pleasant existence.



In our later RGS years amalgamation with the High School presented an agreeable new dimension to school life.

Subsequently Simon had an incredibly successful military career. He was a colonel in the Army Air Corps (AAC) where he was a helicopter pilot. He served for 34 years in Northern Ireland, Canada, Hong Kong, Oman, Falkland Islands, Germany and across the UK. He lived in 27 different houses in total. A highlight was leading 3 Regiment AAC in Soest, Germany.

Subsequently he became the bursar at



Devoted service to our schools

Marguerite Terry

BOTH Ripon Girls' High School and later Ripon Grammar School were fortunate in the devotion shown them over 38 years of service by their secretary Miss Terry, pictured above in 1984. Staff, governors, pupils past and present, parents and even those who only knew her briefly as a voice on the phone could not fail to be impressed by her calm, quiet efficiency and her friendly, helpful attitude.

Marguerite was a Riponian born and bred. As a girl she attended the Ripon Girls' High School, and in 1941 entered the Women's Technical Service as a trainee draughtswoman. She began work in the drawing office of Firth Brown in Sheffield and later moved to Octavious Atkinson, remaining there until 1946.

In 1946 Marguerite returned to the Ripon Girls' High School as the first full time school secretary, under the

headmistresses Miss M. W. Johnson and Miss J. Cullingworth. In 1962, on the amalgamation of the Girls' High School with the Boys' Grammar School, Marguerite moved to the grammar school where she was appointed secretary and bursar by the headmaster Mr Atkinson.

The Old Riponians' Association also benefited from Marguerite's energy in her almost 40 years on the committees, for many years as secretary.

Miss Terry also acted as a cathedral guide for five years, and as a member of the Ripon Cathedral Drama Group was involved in seven St. Wilfrid's pageants. Marguerite passed away on March 12, 2014, peacefully in a Ripon nursing home, aged 90 years.

DC

Pocklington School - one of our rugby opponents in the RGS days.

In all that he achieved in his working life Simon was supported by his wife, Lyn. He was rightly proud of the development and achievements of their children and grandchildren. Fishing and the restoration of old cars provided retirement challenges and achievements in equal measure.

Simon, who was born on November 9, 1946, died after a short illness on February 2 this

year. The legacy of Simon's outstanding values and achievements will always reach far into the lives of his family, friends and colleagues.

Without any doubt the RGS experience was very significant in shaping his character.

TW

Contributions from:
Tim Wolstencroft,
Xenophon Kelsey
and Jenny Bellamy



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