A king reborn

Golden boy

Diving star Jack triumphs at the Games

Back from the brink

How losing it all made Sean a winner

Most desirable schools

RGS in the North’s top five

PLUS We report on boarding life today as RGS offers more places and CBI leader opens new classroom block
Dear former students,

We hope you enjoy reading the latest edition of Clockclown, which is full of stories and news about our school, not just from the past and present but also looking to the future.

As head boy and girl, we are constantly finding out more about RGS and the diversity of opportunities offered to students here.

Discovering what pupils from previous years go on to do after leaving RGS can often be particularly inspirational. An engineer who is now technical director of the Lotus F1 team, the forensic anthropologist who recreated the face of Richard III and a former entrepreneur who is building his own eco-friendly home are among the many remarkable past pupils featured in this issue.

Staff at RGS work hard to prepare us for life after school but we also find the help we get from former students, who return to school to talk to us about careers and give us advice, invaluable. We are extremely grateful to those who help with interview practice and offer interview experience too.

We hope you enjoyed your time at RGS as much as we do now and would love you to come back to talk to us about what you have done since you left school. I am sure we would benefit from your experience. Please keep in touch.

With best wishes,

Lauren Langham and Nick Edwards

Dr Paul Hullah, pictured right and in newspaper clipping, below left (left RGS in 1981).

Insatiable cravings for books and betterment instilled and installed deep in my seminal nomadic heart by unsurpassable RGS mentor-teachers, I retired Edinburg University in 1981 to achieve an MA (first class with honours) in English language and literature and, subsequently, a PhD (‘The Poetry of Christina Rossetti’), partly funding/interrupting my studies with work as a musician and journalist. Active, notorious, and impeccable awhile on the UK underground music and arts scene (labelled a ‘silver-tongued devil’ by Sounds, and my band, Teenage Dog Orgy, hailed as ‘legendary’ by the NME). I fled to Japan in 1992 and have taught English literature at universities there for the last 22 years. I am currently tenured Associate Professor of British Poetry and Culture at Meiji Gakuin University, Tokyo, and co-founder of a life, in expectation for discussion and defence of the role of literary texts in the English curriculum worldwide. I have published, presented, and performed internationally in literary studies, EFL, and multimedia poetics, and have published 14 textbooks for English learners in Japan, most featuring ‘literary’ texts at their core. Recent textbooks include Britain Today: Old Certainties, New Contradictions (Cengage, 2011) and Rock UK: A Sociocultural History of British Popular Music (Cengage, 2013). My first award-winning collection of poetry, And Here’s What You Could Have Won, was published in Britain in 1997 by Discomedia; my sixth collection Scenes (a book-and-vinyl album collaboration with the eminent musician/artist Martin Metcalfe) was published in August 2014 by Word Power.

In 2013 I received the Asia Pacific Brand Laureate International Personality Award, an honour endorsed by the 4th Prime Minister of Malaysia as well as the country’s 11th King. The award citation stated that I was selected for ‘paramount contribution to the cultivation of literature [that has] exceptionally restored the appreciation of poetry… [and] contribution to the literary education of students in Asia’. I am currently working on a critical study of the poetry of Christina Rossetti to be published in Britain in 2015.

I am blessed and very content. So many good things in my life, and in me, I owe to RGS. paulhullah@hotmail.com is where my cage can be rattled. (If I don’t owe you money, please do so.)

Paul Clegg.
in the two years since the London Olympics, Laugher has developed into one of the leading divers in the world

Golden boy

Jack Laugher, who left RGS last year, won two gold and one silver medal at the Commonwealth Games. Leading North-East sports journalist Scott Wilson was there

A sk most people to name a British diver, and if they don’t say Ashley Young, it’s a safe bet the vast majority of respondents will plump for Tom Daley. Young, photogenic and an Olympic bronze medallist at the age of just 18, Daley has transcended his sport to become a bona fide British celebrity, with all the various opportunities and pitfalls that entails.

He has spearheaded his own TV shows, Splash and Tom Daley Goes Global, advertised a range of products and companies from British Gas to Nestle, and found his private life thrust into the media spotlight. Increasingly, it has become apparent that Daley’s celebrity entails.

He has spearheaded his own TV shows, Splash and Tom Daley Goes Global, advertised a range of products and companies from British Gas to Nestle, and found his private life thrust into the media spotlight. Increasingly, it has become apparent that Daley’s celebrity entails.

The growing spotlight afforded to a sport that increasingly sees British competitors challenging the traditional powerhouse of China. Laugher’s recent hat-trick of medals – two golds and a silver – at the Commonwealth Games makes him one of the most successful divers at this particular Games, but also one of the biggest British winners in the event’s history. First, he claimed the 1m springboard crown, then added the synchronised 3m springboard title. In between, he claimed silver in the 3m individual competition.

With his boyish looks and carefully gelled hair that would not look out of place in One Direction, Laugher is attracting a growing audience that stretches way beyond those who would normally be interested in diving.

His Twitter account has more than 71,000 followers, he increasingly finds himself stopped when he walks the streets of Leeds after a training session at the city’s John Charles Pool, and there has even been an internet campaign in which more than 1,000 respondents demanded to know what music he listen to when he clamps his state-of-the-art headphones to his ears after every dive. For the record, it’s “chilled out house”.

If not quite yet a household name, these Commonwealth Games will surely come to be recognised as the point at which Laugher stepped up to another level and evolved into a genuine British sports star. That will inevitably present challenges, but with his happy-go-lucky persona and laidback attitude, the teenager appears more than capable of handling them.

“I love having a higher profile and being in the limelight a bit,” said Laugher, who has successfully banished the memories of a disappointing London Olympics thanks to the strength of his performances at the Glasgow Games.

“It’s a great thing, and it’s fantastic when people show an appreciation for what you’re doing,” he said.

“I take a lot from that. It’s great when people are appreciative of the work you’re putting in and the performances you’re producing. It’s great having the support that we do, and diving in this country is just growing and growing and growing.

“You can tell by the crowds that we’re attracting to events now, people know about diving and are taking an interest in it. Having all that behind you, it just should spur you on to do really well.”

Laugher certainly seems to have drawn inspiration from the level of crowd support at Edinburgh’s Royal Commonwealth Pool at the Games, and after missing out on another potential gold medal when he made a crucial error in his penultimate dive in the individual programme, it says much about the strength of his character that he went on to perform so strongly alongside his close friend and house mate Chris Nears.

The pair finished fifth in the World Series this season, a level of performance that entitled them to start as strong favourites against the best of the Commonwealth. They still had to complete the job though, and eventually finished almost 30 points clear of Australians Matthew Mitcham and Grant Nel thanks to a wonderfully consistent series of dives.

“I went to bed the night before and all I could think about was nailing those dives,” said Laugher. “We laid them down pretty well. Everything that happened in the 3m just gave me a really good feeling that I could go out there and do everything I could to get another gold. That was all I wanted really.”

The joy when their final score was confirmed was clear to see, and the pair’s close friendship is clearly a key part of their professional relationship in the pool. It says much that they had to fight not to break into giggles as they received their medals.

“We say a lot to each other whenever we’re competing,” said Laugher. “We just try to get each other laughing because that calms us down. It can range from everything from corny jokes to movie references - it’s basically just two mates messing about.”

That is as much, but that “messing about” means Laugher has returned to North Yorkshire with three Commonwealth medals in his possession.

“The Commonwealth Games have been an absolute dream for me,” he said. “I was hoping to do well, and I thought if I could come away with three medals, it would be a dream come true.

“For two of them to be gold and the other one silver is absolutely fantastic. And to get the last one alongside my best mate is just the best thing ever.”

“Scott Wilson is chief sports writer on The Northern Echo

Banishing the Olympic nightmare

If you missed the diving on TV, read Scott Wilson’s report from the Games on the magnificent performance that won Jack his first gold medal, and showed the world he’s one to watch

30 July 2014

FOR the vast majority of British competitors, the London Olympics were the stuff of dreams. For Ripon diver Jack Laugher, however, the 2012 Games were an unmitigated nightmare. Competing in the London Aquatic Centre as an inexperienced 17-year-old, Laugher freely admits he froze on the biggest of stages. One of his dives in the 3m springboard qualifying round went so spectacularly wrong it earned a score of zero, and he was left slapping the water in frustration as his hopes of glory collapsed around him. All of which makes tonight’s triumph at the Commonwealth Games all the more rewarding and uplifting.

In the two years since London, Laugher has developed into one of the leading divers in the world, with this month’s third place in the Shanghai World Cup confirming his ability to take on the best Chinese performers at their own game. But the questions about his ability to handle the pressure of a major Games remained. Not anymore.

Laugher didn’t just beat the best the Commonwealth has to offer in the 1m springboard competition at Edinburgh’s Royal Commonwealth Pool tonight - he demolished them, claiming victory by a mammoth 45 points, a margin that is just about unheared of in elite-level diving.

Laugher’s performance in the preliminaries had marked him out as a strong favourite in the final, but he trailed his team-mate, Chris Nears, after the opening two dives. His third effort, which earned a string of high marks, changed that, and with Nears dropping away in the second half of the final, Laugher had opened...
**Old Rips to the rescue**

WHEN RGS’s talented under 18s rugby team reached the final of the prestigious Yorkshire Cup, there was just one problem. Their team strip was faded, worn and frayed at the edges. Staff and students alike were full of pride as the boys prepared to battle for the sought-after trophy, the first time in living memory that the school had got through to the final, which RGS famously won in 1994.

And, following an appeal by Mike Garvey, head of boys’ PE, the Old Rips alumni association stepped in at short notice to buy a brand new DBB team strip, ensuring our players looked their best when they ran out to meet the challenge.

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**Poignant tribute to our WWI heroes**

LD boys and masters of Ripon Grammar School who gave their lives in the First World War have been remembered with the unveiling of a centenary plaque.

Nearly 300 former pupils and teachers from Ripon Grammar School served their country in the First World War. We will never forget them,” she said.

A total of 49 wooden crosses were planted next to the memorial stone, and ‘much cheaper than independent schools’. Yorkshire’s only state boarding school to parents, adds that the school is a ‘highly desirable school’. RGS is a ‘best in Yorkshire’ award winners for its outstanding performance in the arts, sciences, and all-round education, said the school in memory of those who gave their lives in the 1914-18 war, and ‘also attended the Second World War’, also attended Ripon Grammar School, unveiled the bronze plaque, made by her family’s company HA Green and Sons. “We gratefully acknowledge the part of staff and students at RGS did not come home. In 1922, the school library hosted an unveiling ceremony, the school library hosted an unveiling ceremony.

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**The Good Schools Guide**

Ripon Grammar School is one of the most desired schools in the country. Ruth Savage reports

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**Best in Yorkshire**

OUR students’ latest examination results place them top in Yorkshire. RGS is the top performing school at A level in North Yorkshire for the second year running, and the top state school in the whole of Yorkshire. More than 75 per cent of our 2014 A Level grades were A*/A. This placed RGS third in the Daily Telegraph national league tables. At GCSE, 65 per cent of grades were at A*, with a third of all results graded A*. Ranked on A/A* per centage, RGS was the highest performing school in North Yorkshire at GCSE. RGS is the top school in the country for progress between GCSE and A Level and in the top 20% of schools for progress up to GCSE.

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**RGS is a ‘highly desirable school’**

say the school strives to serve the local community with a high quality education, in order to increase the life chances of ordinary boys and girls, added: “I am delighted to receive due recognition from such a respected guide which understands parental perception of schools. It is also testament to the excellent work undertaken by staff and students at RGS.”

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**RGS students excel in the arts and sciences, below and left**

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**Talented: Stephen Laws**

FORMER student Stephen Laws, who lives in Ripon and is now reading engineering at Imperial College, London, has been awarded the prestigious King’s Scholarship, worth £20,000 a year for four years, recognising his outstanding potential and talent for engineering.

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**Sunday Times lists RGS as top state school in the North**

SCHOOLS in Yorkshire dominate The Sunday Times guide to the north of England’s best secondary schools, but it is Ripon Grammar School that takes the top state school spot. The only state school presence in the paper’s Parent Power North Top 20 comes from three North Yorkshire grammar schools, with RGS in the top spot. Skipton Girls High School two places behind and Old Rips Grammar School a further four places after that, in 20th position. Reporter Julie Henry describes Ripon Grammar School as having first class facilities: “And every child is expected to pursue at least one extra-curricular interest. Most students gain places at top universities, including Oxford and Cambridge,” she adds. In the school’s latest ‘outstanding’ Ofsted report, she says, students are described as ‘well-rounded and confident’ and ‘outstanding ambassadors for the school.’

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**£80,000 prize**

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**Our students’ latest examination results place them top in Yorkshire. RGS is the top performing school at A level in North Yorkshire for the second year running, and the top state school in the whole of Yorkshire. More than 75 per cent of our 2014 A Level grades were A*/A. This placed RGS third in the Daily Telegraph national league tables. At GCSE, 65 per cent of grades were at A*, with a third of all results graded A*. Ranked on A/A* per centage, RGS was the highest performing school in North Yorkshire at GCSE. RGS is the top school in the country for progress between GCSE and A Level and in the top 20% of schools for progress up to GCSE.**
Technology has changed so much in the 20 years since I left RGS. Back then, we didn’t have any access to computers, they were just starting to be introduced. At university we had to go to the library and grab a copy of the book we needed for an assignment before they all went, and now kids just go to the internet on their smart phones to find all they need.

I started work for Bronco, a digital marketing company, in 2003. He was into computers and very techy and it was his desire to learn new technologies that led us down this path. Indeed, the setting of our route in SED (Search Engine Optimisation) and the demand for the service grew. As Dave was one of the first into the industry, his reputation grew and that’s how we got to where we are today.

From the early years of growing the business we’ve travelled the world, attended huge conferences, have friends across the globe and have met the founders of Google.

We started the company when the time was right to go it alone. It was a massive challenge when you give up paid employment, especially when you have two young kids. The main aim for the company in the first year was to have enough in the bank to pay the big quarterly bills. As we were a search engine service provider we have always hosted websites from our offices in Ripon. In the early days our biggest overhead was paying the electricity and the cost of the internet pipe, to keep the company switched on.

Now we work with global clients and local companies, including many brands that don’t have a high street presence but are more well-known online, like the likes of Cittileak, WebbyArmCa, Meccalingo, Coast Fashion, BBM, Schub, Virgin, Sixt and MyVoucher. We work across many competitive industry sectors and have clients based in the UK, USA, South Africa, Dubai and Tel Aviv.

But one thing we struggle with is finding staff. We don’t have a problem keeping staff as many have been with us for up to ten years, but location we don’t.

But because of our reputation in the industry but location is often an issue. We work for us because of our reputation in the industry but location is often an issue.

The Centre for Process Innovation (CPI) is a UK-based technology innovation centre. It uses applied knowledge in science and engineering, combined with state of the art facilities, to enable its clients to develop, prove, prototype and scale up the next generation of products and processes.

It works closely with industry, from multi-national to hightech start-ups, investors, government agencies and leading researchers to stimulate and manage market-led innovation.

CPI is constantly looking to appoint bright, talented individuals to join its team and all positions offer competitive salaries plus attractive benefits packages. Recent posts include Principal Technologist, Business Development Assistant and In House Lawyer.

Please check the CPI website for information on current positions.

The company is based at Wilton in Redcar and has sites in Darlington and NETPark - the North East Technology Park in Sedgefield, County Durham - where world class science and technology companies and individuals come together.

In 2011, CPI was named as one of the government’s elite network of Catapult Centres. The High Value Manufacturing Catapult (HVMC) is the catalyst for the future growth and success of manufacturing in the UK and CPI is one of 14 official sites across the country to have been awarded such status.

Dr Tom Taylor is one of the directors at CPI and he also sits on the Board of Governors here at Ripon Grammar School.

Please visit www.uk-cpi.com for further information.

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TS10 4NF
T: +44 (0)1642 455 340
F: +44 (0)1642 447 298

If you have any connections with Ripon Grammar School and have a post or any job opportunities you wish to advertise here for FREE, please contact us on rgssconnect@ripongrammar.co.uk

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‘Where have all the bright RGS students gone?’

Past pupil and digital marketing company boss Becky Naylor tells Rebecca Chamberlain that Ripon is suffering from a ‘massive talent drain’ and urges more RGS students to come back home.

We made a side step a few years ago and started Ripon Rugby, which is one of our clients on our official website, we designed and built. Visit Ripon and the site’s main purpose is to promote Ripon to visitors. We are always trying to put more back into the city and provide the skills to help other people out.

We never set out to be the biggest, and many of our competitors who started out at the same time are five or ten times our size. But we have always kept a tight hold of our growth to maintain the environment we have created for our staff and to stay close to the day to day running of things. We always strive to be the best.

In the future, you never know, we could have the kids at the helm.

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In the future, you never know, we could have the kids at the helm.
When the reconstructed face of Richard III was first unveiled, after being painstakingly built by adding precisely calculated layers of muscle and skin to a scan of his skull, gasps could be heard from the carefully selected audience.

Few expected to see such an eerily lifelike image gaze back at them. Forensic anthropologist Professor Caroline Wilkinson, who headed the four-strong team of scientists and artists who worked on the 15th century king, was probably the least surprised of anyone in the room.

The mother-of-one, who left Ripon Grammar School back in 1984, has been meticulously recreating remarkably accurate faces of the dead for more than 20 years.

She was working on Richard III’s remains, which were found under a Leicester car park, before DNA analysis results could confirm identity. No reference was made to contemporary portraits, descriptions or family resemblance.

And yet, when Richard’s 17th generation nephew, Michael Ibsen, stood beside the three dimensional plastic model, the resemblance was uncanny. The slightly arched nose and prominent chin were just like those featured in paintings of the king.

Thanks to the fast advancing, cutting edge computer system developed by Prof Wilkinson, facial reconstruction is becoming an increasingly exact science.

Historian and author John Ashdown-Hill said seeing Richard’s image was “almost like being face to face with a real person.” The originator of the search, Richard III Society member Philippa Langley, added: “It’s like you could just talk to him, have a conversation with him right now.”

Prof Wilkinson, who has reconstructed the faces of everyone from Johan Sebastian Bach to Mary, Queen of Scots and Saint Nicolas, feels people respond particularly enthusiastically to the realism of computer generated images.

The faces she has recreated from the human remains of bog bodies and Ancient Egyptians have been exhibited in museums around the world as well as featuring on television programmes such as BBC2’s Meet the Ancestors and Channel 4’s Secrets of the Dead.

“There are so many faces of someone who lived two or three thousand years ago, and that can be quite moving. It makes people respond to it in a more human way - they see it as an individual rather than human remains.”

The daughter of two primary school teachers from Masham, Prof Wilkinson never dreamt that her passion for both art and science at school would eventually lead to such a rewarding career.

Now 48, she was a student at Ripon Grammar School before taking her PhD in the relatively new subject of scientific illustration at Blackpool Art College.

After taking her PhD in the relatively new subject of facial anthropology, or the science of human faces, she moved to the University of Dundee, where, as professor of craniofacial identification, she headed up the human identification side of the Centre for Anatomy & Human Identification.

How about to take up a new post in Liverpool, as director of the city’s School of Art and Design, she will also have a Faces Lab in the Science Park there. “My work has always crossed over between art and science,” she says.

Her workshop may be covered in model heads, traditionally created by layering clay on top of a plaster-cast skull, but there is also a large computer system, enabling her to use 3D modelling or virtual sculpture to create the same muscles she creates in clay, using information from CT scans of the skull.

It’s thanks to this scientific precision that her reconstructed faces have also featured on TV’s Crimewatch and are increasingly used in police investigations. Her expertise in facial image analysis has also been called upon in the criminal courts.

“There is never a dull day. I didn’t take much of an interest in history and archaeology at school but it fascinates me now’
This stage. “We have to follow the same rules and
Simpler and easier to reassess than modeling
email, rather than having to transport skulls or
Scan data can also be transferred quickly by
remove layers from the original, swooping through
bone.”

have a 3,800-year-old ancient Egyptian mummy,
without handling. “We can be non-invasive. If we
means delicate human remains can be analysed
before being painted, with
This is how Richard III’s bust
using your hands, it’s more
like a computer mouse, which actually allows the
Her system has one crucial piece of hardware, a
blind testing her facial reconstruction methods on
living people.

It’s not quite the same as
using your hands, it’s more
like sculpting with a tool – you
can feel it in exactly the same
way,” she says.

This is how Richard III’s bust
was originally created. The
3D digital image was then
replicated in plastic using
a rapid prototyping system,
before being painted, with
hair, and strong features meant she had a very
sound attractive, but the paleness of her skin, red

“Mary had a big nose and strong chin so doesn’t
sound attractive, but the paleness of her skin,
red hair, and strong features meant she had a very
striking appearance.”

But it is not always the most famous characters
from history which make the most fascinating
cases: “Working with ordinary people can often be
much more interesting.”

She worked on a foot soldier killed at the Battle of Towton, in the Wars of the Roses, who had
a large, healed face wound. “He lived with it
approximately ten years before he died. It shows
ordinary people in the 15th century had that sort of
treatment available.”

But Prof Wilkinson also enjoyed recreating a ‘bog
body’, preserved in peat, from the Iron Age
period in Denmark: “He was a contemporary of
Julius Caesar. The peat preserves the soft tissues
as opposed to the skeleton, so the body was
squashed flat. We could see details on the face,
like the wrinkles.”

Constantly analysing the relationships between
soft and hard facial tissues, she is hoping she can
increase the accuracy of her work further: “There
is still a lot we don’t know. While the shape of
the nose is reliable, ears and lips are difficult to
predict because they are variable and
dependent on things like
orthodontic work.”

She has other, slightly more
creative, ambitions too: “I
would like to work on an
animated version of Robbie
Burns reading his own poetry,” she confesses.

While at school, she didn’t
know what she wanted to do: “I
was interested in anatomy
and physiology but didn’t want
to be a doctor. I vaguely thought of pathology,”
she says.

Her advice to students today is: “Follow your own
path and keep your options open rather than being
too focussed too early. Everybody has something
in them, even if they are not academic. If you
don’t know what you want to do, do subjects you
enjoy.”

“One of the good things about RGS was that we
did a lot of subjects. I’m glad I learnt languages,
I wouldn’t have been someone I would have
chosen but it’s a wonderful skill and good for the
brain.”

She is still in touch with friends from RGS and
misses the landscape. “I don’t know how useful it is. I have a massive fondness for York and the
Dales and Moors. I can imagine coming back to live
in Yorkshire one day.”

Regularly employed by police forces in the
Netherlands, Germany, Ireland, Taiwan and Abu
Dhabi, it is this part of her work that she finds
most rewarding: “It can be thrilling when our work
leads to the identification of a body,” she says.

One recent high profile case, known as the
Constantine Hill murder, involved the discovery
of the body of a 64 year-old woman in Edinburgh.
Prof Wilkinson’s facial reconstruction was
recognised by a relative of the victim in Ireland,
who alerted police. Her son was eventually
charged with the murder.

She is constantly striving to increase accuracy,
blind testing her facial reconstruction methods
on living people.

Her system has one crucial piece of hardware, a
mechanical arm with a pen-like attachment, used
like a computer mouse, which actually allows the
user to “feel” the surface of the model as it is
created.

“This project was different because, unusually, I
had to rework the whole face from the top of
the head down. She was a very broad
shouldered woman who was 5’8” in height. Compared
with a modern woman, she was much taller, and
heavier and more athletic.”

At times, her work takes a more creative turn.
Her team was recently asked to create a virtual
sculpture of Mary, Queen of Scots, as she would
have looked at the end of her brief but turbulent
reign in Scotland, to coincide with the biggest
ever exhibition on the life of the iconic
historical figure, Mary, Queen of Scots.

“Mary was the daughter of James V, the King of
Scotland and his wife Mary of Guise. She
married Henry VIII of England and after the split
from the Catholic Church in 1534, the Scottish
Church became Protestant. Her reign was a
period of strife and hardship for Scotland.”

“Historical records do not always give a clear
picture of what life was like for ordinary people in the
16th century. One of the problems with
recording individual lives is that historians
are now recording a lot less than they tended to do
in previous centuries. This was a way of bringing
a little bit of history to life,” she says.

“Mary’s portrait was based on her effigy
in Westminster Abbey. It was the only
portrayal of her that we had. But we
wanted to be able to record
her features in more detail, which
took a lot of work. We
were trying to show
her face, rather than
just her body.”

She had to

Simon Paul, as she
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biggest ever exhibition on the life of the iconic historical figure, Mary, Queen of Scots.

One of the greatest advantages of the new technology is it
means delicate human remains can be analysed
without handling. “We can be non-invasive. If we
have a 3,800-year-old ancient Egyptian mummy, we
don’t need to remove the soft tissue to see the
bone.”

In this case, a CT scan allows her to see and
remove layers from the original, swooping through
the sacrospinae, wrapping and preserving
soft tissue to the bones underneath.

Scan data can also be transferred quickly by
e-mail, rather than having to transport skulls or
dental casts.

Simpler and easier to reassess than modelling
by hand, where wooden pegs are placed using a
ruler and a scalpel to indicate tissue depth, the
virtual approach is still a painstaking process at this
stage. “We have to follow the same rules and
go through the same analysis, so it takes the same
amount of time,” explains Prof Wilkinson. She
uses a database of pre-modelled muscles, which
give the face its shape, while using the virtual tool
to shape and mould the face.

“We all have the same muscles, but because every
skull is a slightly different shape, each muscle
is slightly different on each individual,” says Prof
Wilkinson. Next the eyebrows, ears and nose,
deformed to fit the individual, are attached and
finally, the skin and hair.

But the most challenging part of the
project was making the face look like
Mary. “I had to make the face
look old, but not too old. I
had to create this
expression of anguish,” she
says.

“I had to recreate her
expression of
grief at her
father’s death. She
looked very
ingenuinely sad and
distraught. I had to
portray this with
my hands, which
was very difficult.”

But Prof Wilkinson
also enjoyed recreating a ‘bog
body’, preserved in peat, from the Iron Age
period in Denmark: “He was a contemporary of
Julius Caesar. The peat preserves the soft tissues
as opposed to the skeleton, so the body was
squashed flat. We could see details on the face,
like the wrinkles.”

Constantly analysing the relationships between
soft and hard facial tissues, she is hoping she can
increase the accuracy of her work further: “There
is still a lot we don’t know. While the shape of
the nose is reliable, ears and lips are difficult to
predict because they are variable and
dependent on things like
orthodontic work.”

She has other, slightly more
creative, ambitions too: “I
would like to work on an
animated version of Robbie
Burns reading his own poetry,” she confesses.

While at school, she didn’t
know what she wanted to do: “I
was interested in anatomy
and physiology but didn’t want
to be a doctor. I vaguely thought of pathology,”
she says.

Her advice to students today is: “Follow your own
path and keep your options open rather than being
too focussed too early. Everybody has something
in them, even if they are not academic. If you
don’t know what you want to do, do subjects you
enjoy.”

“One of the good things about RGS was that we
did a lot of subjects. I’m glad I learnt languages,
I wouldn’t have been someone I would have
chosen but it’s a wonderful skill and good for the
brain.”

She is still in touch with friends from RGS and
misses the landscape. “I don’t know how useful it is. I have a massive fondness for York and the
Dales and Moors. I can imagine coming back to live
in Yorkshire one day.”

At last, the cold and leaking
prefab huts are no more. Sarah French reports on
the opening of the new classroom block that
we have all been waiting for

Recomposed: Prof Wilkinson reconstructed the face of Johann Sebastian Bach, above. King in the making: Richard III model, below.

Favourite teachers: ‘Dr Smyth (biology) and Mr LV and Mr SA Smith (art)’

Building for the future

R ipon Grammar School has
celebrated the achievements of
students past and present
with the opening of a new £5m
classroom development. John
Cridland CBE, director-general of
the Confederation of British Industry,
officially opened the new humanities
classroom block at the school
today. Mr Cridland said the
students they needed ambition,
self-belief and a heavy dose of
hard work. “What I have seen in
this fantastic school is rounded
education. But even in one of the
best grammar schools in the
country it’s not all about success. There
are setbacks and failures and it’s
what you do with those failures that
matters.”

He added: “I say one thing to my
teenage children and that is: chase your dreams. Whatever you want to
do, go for it with all your guts, hard work and ambition.”

Headmaster Martin Pearman said the A level students had been an
outstanding group with 76 per cent
of their grades being A*-B, making
Ripon Grammar the top performing
school in North Yorkshire for the
second year running.

Five students went directly into
employment with the rest gaining
places at top universities.

Mr Pearman added: “Students at RGS are increasingly ambitious, which I
think is a tremendous legacy from the
year groups that have gone before.”

CURRENT sixth form geography students left from Luton Airport for a fascinating five day trip to Iceland in April.

The flight took three hours.

But does everyone remember the adventurous school
trip to Iceland in the summer of 1962, when it
took three weeks to get there by boat! The school
magazine reported on the three-week expedition to
the Langjokull glacier area of Iceland at the time:

Alumni can share
their experiences of
their time at the school
by writing to
Alumni@rgs.co.uk.
RGS is expanding to provide more places for boarders. Sarah French takes a peek behind the scenes to find out what everyday life is like inside one of the country’s few state boarding schools today.

As Hannah Croyther and Bridie Smith head to their next lesson at Ripon Grammar School, a notice prompts them to switch off the lights – and their music and their hair straighteners. It’s the kind of parental reminder dished out every morning, but in this case it’s a sign on the wall of Johnson House, Hannah and Bridie’s home from home Monday to Friday. The 16-year-olds are among 67 boarders, including nine who are full-time, at RGS. But this is no conventional independent boarding school with fees of £25,000 plus per year.

With its Victorian brick clock tower and 23 acres of grounds with tennis courts and pristine pitches, it is one of the country’s few state boarding schools today. The 16-year-olds are among 67 boarders, including nine who are full-time, at RGS. But this is no conventional independent boarding school with fees of £25,000 plus per year.

Due to the increasing diversity of families that benefit from boarding, Ray McGovern, chairman of the Boarding Schools Association, called for more benefit from boarding, Ray McGovern, chairman of the Boarding Schools Association, called for more benefit from boarding.

Geography, and specifically the scale of North Yorkshire, is why RGS began offering boarding in the first place, more than 450 years ago. For children living in outlying villages and on farms, boarding meant they had equal opportunity to access high quality education.

Hannah and Bridie are both from Kirby Moorside, Bridie explains: “It was easier for our friends to stay where they are and a bit harder for us learning to come here on our own. But we’ve ended up being more aware of our choices and our old friends are a bit bored now. They miss us, but we’re so busy we’ve hardly got time to think about it.”

Jess Butterell, 17, is from Skipton and in the sixth form studying A levels in religious studies, history and English literature having started at Ripon aged 11. “It would take me an hour to get here from home,” she explains. “It was quite daunting when I first came because I didn’t really know anyone but I settled in quickly. I’ve made a lot close friends in boarding that I wouldn’t have made as a day pupil, and the prospect of going to university isn’t nearly so daunting now.”

For Rachael Pond it was about finding a good school and the prospect of going to university isn’t nearly so daunting now. "It’s a far cry from once-a-week bathing, matron doing her rounds in a white coat and the coin-slot telephone rooms of yesteryear."

It’s a far cry from once-a-week bathing, matron doing her rounds in a white coat and the coin-slot telephone rooms of yesteryear. "RGS is selective, with children in year 6, many from local primaries, sitting the 11-plus entrance exam in September. Whereas opting to board may once have been a way to secure a place, that’s no longer the case."

We get very genuine boarders,” explains Miss Murray. “Parents commit for five years, which is important because it creates stability in the boarding houses. That’s particularly reassuring for those parents who are out of the country and need to know their child is safe and well cared for."

“At some schools it can be like a Travel Lodge, lacking the side, but for us it is fully integrated into school.”

For the boys, integration is literal, since their boarding house, grade II listed School House, forms part of the main school building; they even have direct access to the library on an evening which is ideal for homework, and for contacting parents via the internet. Not only that, but the team of dedicated boarding staff includes a chemist, a historian and a biologist, so there’s plenty of help at hand.

Elliot Mountain’s home is only ten miles away in Harrogate, but his mum travels the world with work. Having lived in Chile and Canada, the 11-year-old is used to different environments. “I thought boarding would be fun and it means I get all my homework done,” he says.

Certainly boarding seems to have a positive impact on academic results: far from performance dwindling due to being away from home, boarders
A far cry from once-a-week bathing and matron doing her rounds: Boarding today at RGS, above and left

**School today**

In the next edition of Clocktower, former boarders including George Topple, right, reminisce about ‘Masher’ Brown, pillow fights in the dorm, cold swims in the unheated pool and school dinners which included a ‘banana pudding’ concocted from boiled sparns.

**The friendships made by boarders, adds Marta, appear to be strong and long-lasting, with a high proportion of former boarders returning to school events.**

“We want pupils to enjoy the boarding experience, and as many being keen to return is an indication that they leave here with good memories. As staff, that’s what we want for all the children.”

**Stay in touch**

Join the RGS alumni group on LinkedIn

**Who are they?**

DO you know the lady in the centre of the top photograph, or the boys staring back at the camera? Did one of them become your granddad? All these faces have come to light in a unique film of Ripon, taken in April 1916 when soldiers from the army camp joined the townsfolk of Ripon at the racecourse for a Highland Sports Day. The Yorkshire Film Archive thinks this 1916 film, discovered in the basement of the Town Hall, might feature former RGS pupils and is appealing for our help to identify some of the faces now peering back at us, through the screen, 100 years later. Who were they, what are their stories, and what happened to them over the coming years?

If you know any of the people shown in the photographs here, or have any information, then please contact Martin Watts on 01904 876550, m.watts@yorksj.ac.uk or visit the YFA Facebook page, www.facebook.com/FilmedandNotForgotten, where there are more photographs and people to identify.

Today’s students enjoy an Old Rip-roaring read

A vivid reader in Ripon Grammar School’s sixth form have former pupils to thank for helping to widen their reading by adding to the number of novels they are able to enjoy and discuss together in school. The Old Rips RGS alumni association was delighted to fund multiple sets of books for the sixth from reading group. School librarian Sally Dring says it means the sixth formers are now able to have a say in selecting which titles to use: “The donation from he Old Rips will cover eight copies of about four titles, so providing material for a year,” she adds. The Old Rips were also pleased to provide the careers department with some much-needed magazine racks to go with their newly re-vamped careers room. Jill Locke, head of careers education at the school, explains “We are currently in the process of having the room redecorated and generally trying to upgrade the image of the room to make it more vibrant and appealing, hopefully attracting more students to come in on a regular drop in basis, to make use of the resources. We are very grateful to the Old Rips for their support.”

Nicola Woolfenden, president of the Old Rips, adds: “We are very pleased to be able to make a contribution towards improving the learning environment for today’s students in this way.”

Boarding in the Forties and Fifties

In the next edition of 'Clocktower,' former boarders including George Topple, right, reminisce about 'Masher' Brown, pillow fights in the dorm, cold swims in the unheated pool and school dinners which included a 'banana pudding' concocted from boiled sparns.

The friendships made by boarders, adds Marta, appear to be strong and long-lasting, with a high proportion of former boarders returning to school events.

"We want pupils to enjoy the boarding experience, and as many being keen to return is an indication that they leave here with good memories. As staff, that's what we want for all the children."
Entrepreneur Sean Wheatley enjoyed lucrative contracts with the White House, Formula One and the US Masters. He tells Ruth Savage now, after losing it all in the financial crash of 2008, he found true wealth

O nly a few years ago, Sean Wheatley lived the sort of life others might envy. The owner of two successful businesses, he and his family lived in a large house in a leafy suburb of Minneapolis.

He owned five luxury cars, including a Porsche 911, a Lotus racing car and a Jaguar convertible, as well as a boat. His family enjoyed several luxurious holidays in Europe and America every year—enjoy the best designer label clothes and ate out in restaurants every night.

“We didn’t think twice about what we were spending. When we went to Florida, we’d stay at the Hard Rock Hotel and take over the top floor suite. My wife had a big collection of designer handbags,” recalls Sean.

But the Newcastle University graduate, who left Ripon Grammar School in 1989 and qualified as a civil engineer in 1993 before leaving the UK to make a new life for himself in the States, always felt something was missing.

Working 12 hour days, he and his wife Molly took their children out to restaurants because they arrived home so late they never had time to cook. And, although they enjoyed luxury vacations, they were always working, constantly on their phones and laptops.

The six bedroom house and six figure income wasn’t making Sean happy. “We moved to a bigger, even nicer house. But it was all getting out of control. I was filling voids with buying things. When you buy things to be happy, you just want more. We never had enough.”

While his two children, Scott and Halle, had everything they wished for materially, Sean, 44, was aware he wasn’t giving them the time and attention they needed.

“Looking back, I used to wake up with a feeling of dread. Fear ruled my life. I was living in fear of not having enough, fear of losing it. I was having to work to pay the bills, always chasing the dollar.”

When the global financial crisis hit in 2008 the car dealership Sean owned went bust as customers could no longer rely on credit. His other business, producing promotional items for prestigious clients, could no longer rely on credit. His other business, producing promotional items for prestigious clients, including large international companies and even the White House, survived a while longer, but was under pressure.

The crash was the catalyst he needed, he says, to change his life “I always wanted something different. But that is when I really started thinking about what I wanted from life.”

Today, having returned to North Yorkshire, where he grew up and his parents still live, Sean manages the 22 acre estate attached to a small holiday park near Bedale.

He and his 18-year-old son Scott, who wants to be a countryside ranger, manage the woodland, grow all their own organic vegetables and fruit and keep chickens.

Although they haven’t gardened before, they are now self-sufficient in vegetables, growing everything from kale and carrots to parsnips, onions, potatoes, garlic and tomatoes in raised beds and greenhouses.

They have even learnt to hunt, skin and prepare rabbits to eat. “We have ten rabbits in the freezer as well as pheasants and pigeons, and trade favours with local farmers,” says Sean, who forages for berries, mushrooms and nettles, which he and Scott enjoy cooking and eating.

The pair have also planted hundreds of trees: “I am earning less money but have so much more.”

Our life is so much more fulfilling now,” says Sean. Working towards a totally self-sufficient life, they have learned to bake bread and have even made cider from the apples that grow in a small orchard on the estate. They are also learning about keeping bees.

Sean, who will be offering guided walks in the area, also hopes to run specialist self-sufficiency and countryside skills courses on the site. “We want to inspire and involve other people in the community.”

Having trained in woodworking, he is helping to build four additional wooden holiday chalets on the park, and Sean and Scott also have plans to build their own eco-friendly, off-grid home on the site, which will be heated by wood burners and make use of wind energy. “grey” reusable rainwater and composting toilets.

“I was filling voids with buying things. But we never had enough’

“Everything we are doing is about heading towards a more self-sufficient, sustainable lifestyle, but it takes a lot of time and effort,” says Sean.

He accepts this life isn’t for everyone. His ex-wife Molly and 15-year-old daughter Halle struggled to cope without the modern conveniences they were used to when they joined Sean and Scott in North Yorkshire. After a few months, they returned to the States.

Sean acknowledges that his working life today is a far cry from his earlier career as a successful entrepreneur, with a knack for spotting gaps in the market, when he and Molly first got together.

Shortly after he first moved to the States, having married American-born Molly, aged 24, he started his first business: “I wasn’t really interested in being an engineer,” he says.

He and Molly initially set up a small English tea room in Minnesota but expanded to distribute Yorkshire tea to large supermarket chains throughout the whole of Minnesota and the mid-West.

Sean, they were also selling accessories, such as tea pots and framed pictures of English countryside scenes. This led Sean to spot a gap in the market for similar pictures of American landmarks, which quickly grew into another successful business, producing promotional products for business conferences and awards ceremonies for large corporations.

“We worked for all the big Fortune 500 companies, Formula One the Masters Golf Tournament, all the major events.” Before long, they were taking $1m a year.

Their Global Miniatures business even won the contract to produce outgoing President George W Bush’s farewell gifts—a framed piece of parquet floor from the Oval office - to 400 members of staff, including Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice and Donald Rumsfeld: “Everyone got a framed, signed letter from him. I still have a sample of the parquet somewhere in a box.”

But Sean, who started the business from his basement, soon became disillusioned: “In the early days, I was in the back helping make the products and getting my hands dirty. I enjoyed that. But after ten years, the business was big enough, I didn’t need to be there every day.”

He needed something new to get his teeth into: “Motorsport was a passion, so I started a car-dealership,” he says.

Initially, he started exporting American cars like Mustangs and Hummers to England. In order to get his dealer licence, he started selling Volkswagens, a car he had always loved, on the side. That

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“I am earning less money but have so much more. Our life is so much more fulfilling now’

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ALUMNI R G S

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Sean used to live fast cars but now he prefers growing veg, below.
business grew too: ‘I realised I could buy cars coming off lease at auction for the same price as the big dealers. This was a level playing field with no overheads. I have always been a decent salesman. I got ten cars to start with and took $1,400 in the first year. It grew from there.’

It suited his lifestyle: ‘I loved racing and it helped advertise my business. I had a Porsche 911 which I turned into a track car, and a Lotus racing car. It was great.”

From this business alone, he was bringing in a $220,000 salary: “But we were spending it as fast as we were making it.”

Sean had been running his car dealership for three years when the market collapsed in 2008: “The housing bubble burst overnight. It was carnage. Customers weren’t able to buy on credit. My business just tanked.”

With more than $100,000 of personal debt, he closed the business: “All of a sudden, I didn’t have anything, it was all gone. I was renting a house, I was bankrupt, it was a real catalysator.”

For a year, he didn’t do anything. Then an old friend from Ripon asked him to come up with an idea for a new business to help him and his family relocate to the States: “He needed a visa. So I spotted a gap in the market for a dog mess cleaning business and put together a real professional brand called Pet Waste Professionals.”

With a fleet of trucks, the company soon became the number one pet waste business in the county. Once again, Sean had struck gold. But by now, material success had lost its allure.

“Business was something I used to measure my success by. But as soon as I got rid of all the material stuff in my life, I started to feel a lot lighter. It wasn’t all about money any more. I knew what I was good at. A weight had been lifted off my shoulders.”

“I realised I had more than I ever had because it was not all going out faster than it was coming in. I was doing something simpler. It was a kind of awakening.”

He returned to England at the end of 2011 and began working at the holiday park, helping to improve and expand the tea rooms as well as getting involved in plans to build four new log cabin style holiday homes.

He found he enjoyed ground management, planting trees and coping: “It was spending a lot more outdoors, in nature. It was more fulfilling than anything I’d done since I was a kid,” he says.

And his son turned out to be just as passionate about this simpler way of life: “Looking back, I was stressed out now, I have time for people. We live a humble lifestyle. We have enough money, I didn’t do any chores. I planned to study about this simpler way of life: “Looking back, I was stressed out now, I have time for people. We live a humble lifestyle. We have enough money, I didn’t do any chores. I planned to study.”

“I knew I wanted to live in the countryside, maybe live in the suburbs. I was better off now than ever. We have enough stuff in our lives, I can see what’s important. A weight had been lifted off my shoulders.”

“It wasn’t all about money any more. I knew what I was good at. A weight had been lifted off my shoulders.”

“I was doing something simpler. It was a kind of awakening.”

We have enough now and we know what enough is!”

Maureen attended Harrogate Grammar School and then worked for IC, initially in Harrogate and then in Manchester and Huddersfield where she specialised in textiles and marketing. She took her City and Guilds Chemical Techniques qualifications, studying at night whilst working. On marrying David she moved to Kirby Malzeard and they worked together tackling the challenges of farming, running the business and bringing up their daughter, Sharon.

In 1983, she took employment at Ripon Grammar School as the physics/AV technician. As IT systems were developing in schools, Maureen constantly improved her knowledge and understanding of computers and was appointed to become the first IT technician at RGS. Indeed, she was also able to help the school by stepping in to teach IT when the head of department took maternity leave to her son’s birth and her correspondence. Her insatiable appetite for learning about how computers worked proved invaluable as she moved on to become computer systems manager for the school and she would often be up late at night solving problems to support staff and pupils.

Maureen was a competent swimmer and had helped out occasionally at Ripon Swimming Club while Sharon was a club member. She had taken both ASA and RGS teaching qualifications and, when asked if she would be interested in teaching life-saving classes in school, she was eager to help. Initially this was in six form games lessons, then she also took the extracurricular swimming club and later organised swimming tuition for children with special needs.

She thoroughly enjoyed learning new sports and attended coaching courses for hockey, netball, volleyball, athletics, tennis, orienteering, canoeing, windsurfing, power boating and sailing. Whilst working in the physics department we appreciated that she managed to find time to teach in second, fifth and sixth year games lessons. In addition, she gave specific training to hockey goalkeepers during lunchtime practices and was prepared to turn out to umpire school fixtures on Saturday mornings throughout both summer and winter. In winter this was followed by umpiring for Ripon Ladies’ Hockey Club matches in the afternoons. On agreeing to accompany the school outdoor pursuits holiday in Quebec, she decided to take lessons in canoeing prior to departure. She became interested in windsurfing when the Gylfe Scheme opened at the racecourse and, being the person she was, took charge of maintaining all the equipment for many years. This also enabled windsurfing classes in our sixth form games lessons and an evening club that many of our boarders enjoyed. Maureen was thoroughly involved in our third year Beverley Park trips right from the start, until her work as computer systems manager made it impossible to go on school for a whole week.

At heart she was an educator and she could win young people’s trust by trusting them. She gave each one a chance, neither quick to judge nor suffering fools gladly. She encouraged all her IT apprentices and always loved to see students blossom and reach their full potential. As if Maureen didn’t already give a great deal of time to Ripon Grammar School, when Mr. Jones asked if she would join the school’s governors, she took herself off on a course to enable her to do the job to the best of her ability. She had a packed and colourful life, enjoying climbing in her early years, being a Sunday school teacher when Sharon was young, taking up skiing and running (competing the 1999 Great North Run for St. Michael’s Hospice) and, in retirement, enjoyed bowling (outdoors at Ripon and indoors at Harrogate).

She sailed, canoed, camped and caravanned and was particularly skilled at mending clocks. Her pride and joy was her MX5 and she loved her motorbikes, having good mechanical knowledge and skills.

She was an all-rounder who loved nothing better than a project she could research and get to grips with. If she did a job, she did it well, with no half measures. She was organized, energetic and practical, with a zest for life and interest in people.

She loved her home in Kirby Malzeard and she and David were very happy there throughout their 43 years of marriage. Her retirement in 2009 was somewhat cut short by illness. She is survived by husband David and daughter Sharon.

Maureen Blackburn, born February 21,1944, died April 28, 2014.

If you would like to submit an obituary for a former RGS teacher or student who has passed away in the last year, please contact: rgsconnector@rgsgrammar.co.uk

A packed and colourful life

Maureen Blackburn until 2009

Professionals.”

Some of their eggs, below.

Favourite teachers

A packed and colourful life

Maureen Blackburn until 2009

“We have enough now and we know what enough is!”

Continued from page 5

up a sizeable advantage by the time he took to the low board for the final time. His score of 449.90, a backward two-and-a-half somersault - was right on the money, and he eventually finished with a score of 449.90, comfortably clear of his closest challenger, Australian Matthew Mitcham, who ended with 404.85.

The speed of Laugher’s execution was impressive throughout, with his control and consistency all the more creditable given the memories of two years previous. “Going last is always hard, and the first two dives were a little bit shaky,” said Laugher. “But as soon as I got into my rhythm I was picking things up and things started to go well.”

The 1m event, which is not part of the Olympic programme, is not even supposed to be Laugher’s main discipline. No matter what else is to come, tonight’s medal will always be special though, banishing the memories of London and conclusively drawing a line under an experience that has helped to make Laugher rather than break him. “This definitely puts the Olympics right,” said the 19-year-old. “I believe you learn from your mistakes and never let it happen again. It feels absolutely amazing to be Commonwealth champion - I’m nearly lost for words. I’m training really hard, and I’ve moved out of home, which is giving me my independence. I’m training with my best mate, Chris Mears, as well. I’m feeling really hard. I’m training as best as I can, and so far things are going well.”

“Dr Grime – he showed a genuine interest in my doing and helped me with my chemistry as well as he could. He’d always be checking my results online and was always a great teacher.”

Then Miss Gillifan, she was a brilliant PE teacher and our PE group had a great time in her classes. As well as being fun, she was a great mentor to me in my life and our PE group had a great time in her classes.

Champion: Jack Laugher, left

OBITUARY

Maureen Blackburn, born February 21,1944, died April 28, 2014.

ALUMNI R G S
I have been asked to describe some of my experiences in the Trenches to the Front. To do so would probably fill all the pages of the (RGS school) magazine, but I will endeavor as briefly as possible to give you some idea of the sort of life I have led. My experience extends over a period of about four months, beginning from the middle of March. I joined my battalion just after the New Zealand old battle of Neuve Chapelle, in which the battalion had played a not inconsiderable part. I thus reached France in time only for the tail end of the winter months and the bad weather, in which respect I was lucky, for even as it was I was able to realize what hardships of the winter campaign must have been. I was also lucky in another respect, namely that we have been situated near the centre of the British line all the time and we have not had to bear the brunt of the hard fighting that has taken place near the extremities of the line.

Most of my experience therefore has been of:

**Trench warfare:**
This is a somewhat monotonous work, and is more akin to a siege than anything else. Both armies hold long lines strongly entrenched, and here they have remained for many months past with but little variation. A little push here or a little push there occasionally gains a few hundred yards of ground, but to all intents and purposes the British line is the same now as it was last November. Such is the power and accuracy of modern weapons of war that fighting in the open entails very heavy casualties, and even an advance of a few hundred yards can only be obtained at the cost of enormous losses. Consequently the War has developed into what is practically a siege — a process of "wearling down the enemy".

**Life in the trenches:**
The word 'trench' always appears to me somewhat of a misnomer as applied to the firing-lines of the armies engaged in the present conflict; for it implies a sort of ditch dug into the ground. The modern trench is nothing of the kind. It is dug down very little, if at all, but a parapet or breastwork of earth is thrown up in front, and built up of sandbags to a height of six feet or more. One can thus walk about behind the parapet, in perfect comfort and with nothing to fear from the enemy's bullets, and at the foot of the parapet a firing-step is made to enable the men to fire over the top of the parapet. Also, loopholes are made in places for use by snipers during the daytime, but it is essential that these loopholes should be well concealed and be closed up with an iron plate or other means when not in use.

The parapet is made anything from six to ten feet in thickness, so as to be absolutely bulletproof. Occasionally the trenches are shelled by the heavy artillery. Nothing, of course, is proof against the heavy modern high-explosive shells, and on these occasions the parapet is often knocked all to pieces and has to be re-built, under cover of darkness. Such a bombardment, while having a certain "morale" effect, does not usually cause much loss of life, if proper precautions are taken, but it entails a good deal of inconvenience and extra labour.

Behind the trench another breastwork or parados is usually erected to protect against the backward-burst of a shell. It is in or behind the parados that the "dug-outs", or firing quarters, are made. They are built usually with a framework of wood and lined all round with sandbags, and roofed over with corrugated iron with a sprinkling of earth on top. Some dug-outs are quite commodious, and the walls are sometimes decorated with pictures cut from the illustrated papers. Usually one has just room to lie or sit in them with comfort, but not to stand up. Each officer generally has a small dug-out to himself, or sometimes two officers share a dug-out. There is usually one larger one, where the officers of a company mess together. The men's dug-outs are somewhat bigger as a rule, and nine or ten are to have a share a dug-out, but when the weather is fine and warm many prefer to remain in the open.

About forty or fifty yards behind the firing-trenches there is usually a second line of trenches, with communicating trenches up to the firing-line. These, of course, are quite distinct from the second line of defence, which is prepared some distance behind the actual firing-line for use in case of emergency.

The duties in the trenches are not particularly arduous, though causing a certain amount of strain. During the night double sentries are posted at frequent intervals along the trench, and the officers constantly go round to ensure that the sentries are alert and attending to their duties. At night, too, any work that requires to be done is performed, such as putting up or strengthening the barbed-wire entanglements in front of the trenches. Such work is performed somewhat eerie and a space of danger added to it by reason of the flares-sort of rockets or light balls, not unlike Roman candles —which are constantly sent up. The German flares, by the way, are much superior to ours, though we have improved in this respect.

The daylight is usually comparatively quiet, except when the trenches are shelled. Single sentries only are necessary, and at wider intervals. A look-out is kept by means of periscopes, as it is usual to show one's head much over the parapet during daylight, or a sniper will very soon get busy. It is in the daylight chiefly that one is able to rest, and under ordinary conditions one can get quite a large amount of sleep-two or three hours at a time. Every day — just before dawn and again at dusk everybody is required to "stand to"—usually for about an hour. During the night all have to keep their equipment on, but in the day a certain proportion of the men are allowed to take it off. In fine weather the conditions are on the whole quite pleasant, but in wet weather quite the reverse, for the soil being mostly of a clayey nature is soon converted into a quagmire.

**Life in billets:**
During the winter months we usually spent a spell of three days in the trenches, and were relieved by another regiment, reliefs of course being always carried out at night. Since the coming of summer, however, we have done spells of six days at a time. The intervals between the spells are spent in billets.

Some billets are much better than others, but as a rule we manage to make ourselves pretty comfortable. More often than not, we are billeted at some farm-house, and a company is always kept together as much as possible. The men are generally accommodated in the barns or stables, and given straw to lie upon, while the officers are allotted one or more rooms in the house itself. Sometimes one even gets the luxury of a bed, but in any case we can make ourselves quite comfortable by laying our sleeping-valises upon the floor or on a mattress.

If the billet happens to be anywhere near the firing-line, there is always the possibility of being shelled. My experience I have had more than once. On these occasions we have to turn out of our billets and run to dug-outs in any cover that can be obtained. Also, if hostile aeroplanes come over, and one almost forgets that there is a war on at all. While in billets, we generally do some physical drill in the evenings, or go for a short march, in order to keep the men fit. It is a piteous sight to see the ruined and deserted farms and houses that are scattered over the countryside many of them with nothing but the barren walls standing, and their roofs scattered all over the country. People at home cannot possibly realize what it means to have war brought to one's very doors. Churches, too, always afford targets for the artillery, and I have seen many a noble edifice in ruins. At the same time it is surprising how close to the firing line the civilians continue to live, and carry on with their ordinary peaceful occupations cultivating their lands within sound and range of the guns. I could fill pages with descriptions in this strain, but space forbids.

I would have liked, too, to say something about our aeroplanes, our artillery, and many other modern weapons of war, but perhaps I may be able to devote a future letter to some of these subjects. In conclusion, I should like to give you a brief description of the one battle in which I have been engaged, namely: The Battle of the Aubers Ridge (May 9th).

"Before I close there is one other subject to which I must refer, namely, the proposed formation of an Officers' Training Corps at Ripon. As one who has had some experiences of O. T. C. work I hope the project will be a success, and the Corps becomes an accomplished fact. Good luck to it!"


*From the Harrogate Herald, June 27, 1917.*

**Research by Old Rips, RGS alumni society**

Lieutenant Alan Francis Newton (West Yorks Regt.), elder son of Mrs Newton, of Crescent Parade, Ripon, and of the late Minor Canon Newton, of Ripon Cathedral, is in hospital in London suffering from a wound in the forehead and other bruises, received through the bursting of a shell over his billet on the evening of June 18th. This is the second time Lieutenant Newton has been wounded. It is only three weeks since he returned to the Front after recuperating from wounds received last July. He is an Old Riponian having been educated at Bradford and Ripon Grammar Schools. From Ripon School he gained an exhibition at St Catherinews College, Cambridge, and took his degree in the Classical Tripos in 1907. He obtained a commission in the West Yorks on the outbreak of war.

**Roll of Honour**

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*Research by Old Rips, RGS alumni society*
‘I was just a lad in a small North Yorkshire village who had big dreams’

Favourite teacher: Mr Postlethwaite

Around the World in 80 ways: BBC TV natural history documentary maker Mark Flowers, pictured left and above, describes how his love of plants and wildlife led to a fascinating career that has taken him all over the world. He tells how he got to work with his hero Richard Attenborough, make award-winning programmes such as The Human Planet, swim with river dolphins in the Amazonian jungle and play with lemurs in Madagascar.

Favourite teacher: Mr Miller

Suit you, Miss: Chemistry graduate Alexandra Robinson, left, reveals how she is cutting it in the world of bespoke men’s tailoring. A tailor and account manager for Mullen & Mullen, Alexandra meets clients in prestigious locations all over the City, including the Gherkin and the Shard. She says her chemistry degree has helped her master the complex mirror images involved in patterning: “It’s molecular chemistry in a different form.”

Favourite teacher: Mr Miller

School reports then and now

Former RGS English teacher Stefan Lewicki takes an amusing look at how school reports have changed over the years. Do you have any humorous excerpts from your old reports that you would like to share with us?

Contact us on rgscconnect@ripongrammar.co.uk

Favourite teacher: Mr Miller

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