

## Junior Prize Giving 2016

Lord-Lieutenant, *Councillor Morgan, Mayor of Ripon and his wife Robina*, Councillor Nick Brown Mayor of Harrogate, and his wife Linda, Councillor Val Arnold Chair of North Yorkshire County Council and her husband Steve, governors, distinguished guests, staff, parents and members of the Lower School. Welcome to Ripon Grammar School's Junior Prizegiving 2016 to celebrate another fine year of achievement and endeavor by both students and staff. Perhaps this is even more notable this year given the increasing turbulence in education policy that we have been experiencing in recent times; it must be to do with the weather. Forced academisation by 2020 followed by a U turn. A plethora of changes in the national examination system at all levels; A level, GCSE and the National Curriculum, if that still exists any more. Progress 8, attainment 8. The impending retirement of Sir Michael Wilshaw of Ofsted which is bound to present further change and reanalysis of what is now important in education following the expected appointment of Amanda Spielman, a non-teacher, someone who has never lead a school and who presided over the recent examination debacle at JCQ. British Values, Community Cohesion, Anti Radicalisation, Diplomas, School Improvement Partners, Specialist status; the endless list of fads and failed ideas come and go with successive Education Ministers. Of course, by making many changes at once, we have no idea what actually is changing the outcome, as any scientist would realize. Secondly, the word Conservative means to conserve. The amassed knowledge of hundreds of years of trial and error has left us with an education system which, although not perfect, works. As G K Chesterton put it; 'the democracy of the dead' i.e. the wisdom accumulated over the years should not be cast aside unthinkingly. However wise the current generation is, perhaps we are being foolish, nay arrogant, to challenge the collective wisdom of our forefathers.

But the key components of teaching and learning, the relationships between staff and students, the breadth of educational experience, preparation for life beyond school never change. It is this relentless focus on **this** activity within school which is of the highest priority, ensuring that staff are not distracted from these key goals, whilst ensuring that there is enough money coming into the school, which makes RGS the school it is today. I have always been a fan of the KISS philosophy, keep it simple stupid. The best ideas are always the simplest ones. If an idea needs a very detailed explanation of why it is good, then it is not likely to be that good after all.

Our link with North Yorkshire has continued to be mutually beneficial and I am pleased to see Val here today; I am very grateful for the level of financial support which we have received in terms of facility development and also the freedom to get on with the job without interference. It is ironic that the DfE suggest that local authorities are very restrictive and controlling when it comes to schools. That has not been my experience at all. My real fear is that if we were part of a MAT, a multi academy trust, then the autonomy which we currently enjoy would be lost. Ironically some MATs are more controlling now of other schools under its control than the worst of the local authorities back in the 1970s. We shall see. After 12 years of headship doing the opposite of what government wants me to do, I am beginning to feel like the radical that Michael Wilshaw says we need more of!

I was fortunate enough to spend 2 weeks in India, my first visit to the sub-continent. An incredible experience. As someone said to me, people either love India or hate it. I loved it. It was our 30<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. My pre-conceptions were dispelled. As one local said to me, people either come and see the litter, chaos, poverty and terrible roads or they see vibrancy, colour, energy and beauty. I suppose it depends on whether your glass is half-full or half empty. Mine was definitely half-full. We did a village discovery walk in the foothills of the Himalayas and stayed overnight in a villager's house. It was part of the Mondo Challenge and the money saved on our hotel bills was presented to the charity. We were also fed by local villagers on the way. The food was fantastic. It is an educational charity. The importance attached to education by the Indian people is incredible. Education has the power to transform lives, particularly in a place like India, and it reminded me why I came into teaching in the first place. Students would walk up to 2 hours per day to school and 2 hours back to access education. To ensure they would turn up at school looking smart they would wear their uniform inside out so that that, when they got to school, the uniform was reversed so that the mud was on the inside. This was a particular issue during the monsoon when everywhere was very muddy. The facilities in school were completely lacking. Not enough chairs for children to sit on. No pencils or exercise books. Just a blackboard and a piece of chalk. Almost 80% of Indian children go to fee paying schools; fees are not high. Perhaps £70 per year. But for those who can't afford it, the state option is desperate...and corrupt. There was a state school in the village where we stayed which employed 3 teachers. Money was claimed by the school to educate the children in the school, a system like

that which exists in the UK where each child has a certain amount of cash given to the school by the government to educate him or her. How many children attended the school? One. How many children did the school claim attended? 120. And they claimed for 120 uniform allowances as well. Corruption is rife. But the standard of education in the Mondo school, the other school in the village, was incredible. English was learnt from a very early age and to a superb standard. The attitude the average Indian child has towards education is inspiring. When I hear from our new German teacher that he is finding the amount of work in translation diminishing because much of it is being subcontracted to India where the local population is learning the language to such a standard that it is not worth paying higher European prices for translation work. When you realize that over 1000 languages are spoken in India, it is no wonder that Indians are good at languages. English is, of course, the official language in India. The world is changing rapidly and India has the potential to be a global force based on its well educated work force.

Last summer's exam results were superb with record results at GCSE with almost two thirds of the grades being at A\*/A. The value added progress measure of 1035 placed RGS firmly as one of the top performing schools in the North of England once again. At A level, 72% of the grades were A\*/B. This ranked RGS as one of the highest performing state schools in the North East and Yorkshire according the Sunday Times Parent Power Series for the fourth year in succession. The success on the sports field has been exceptional this year, particularly in the lower school. Moreover, there was success in music, business and enterprise and in virtually every possible sphere of school activity you can imagine, a tribute to both the staff and students; the students for seizing the opportunities; the staff for giving up their free time to provide them.

I am delighted to welcome the Lord Lieutenant of Yorkshire, Mr Dodd. The fundamental principle concerning the office of lord-lieutenant is that he or she is Her Majesty's representative in his county, and consequently it is his first and foremost duty to uphold the dignity of the Crown. As the representative in his county, the lord-lieutenant remains non-political, does not hold office in any political party and is unpaid.

Mr Dodd is a successful entrepreneur and wealth creator especially interested in creating employment in rural areas. Amongst his many

achievements is the creation of a multinational Global Services and Manufacturing Group with four manufacturing plants in the UK. He is Chairman and major shareholder in two high tech software and systems companies.

For the past eleven years Mr Dodd has devoted a day per week to unpaid public service. In addition to his duties as the Lord-Lieutenant, Mr Dodd's public sector activities include: Member of the Automotive Industry Council; Chair and Pro-Chancellor of the University of Hull; Chairman of the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Chair of the joint Hull York Medical School. Past appointments have included Chair of Yorkshire Forward, CONNECT Yorkshire and of the Yorkshire and Humber Sustainable Development Company and Vice Chair of Business Link, York and North Yorkshire. In 2014 Mr Dodd was awarded a CBE for services to the UK economy. I am sure we all have much to learn from him and I am really looking forward to what he has to say to us.

The **access improvements** are almost complete with ramps installed at the end of the admin corridor, the clock tower entrance and the end of the North Corridor. Issues of an underground room and ancient steps delayed the work but it will be completed any day. Mr Hogg the new premises manager is beginning to catch up a maintenance backlog and the school is looking increasingly smarter-but there is still a long way to go. Planning permission for the new 3G pitch has been submitted and we hope to hear whether planning has been granted in August. The wish to build a new dining hall is still a declared aim and this development would certainly improve the school's infrastructure significantly. Architects are currently working on plans but no funding is yet in place.

There are a number of staffing changes: perhaps the most significant is the retirement of Mr Garvey after 32 years of service to RGS, a remarkable achievement nearly reaching a century of terms. Mr Garvey is very fondly regarded by students who appreciate his caustic wit and unstinting enthusiasm, whether it be on a sports field or in the classroom. I don't think we will see his like again; a teacher of PE and Classics, a most unusual combination reflecting a member of staff with a most unusual range of talents; painting, fishing as well as sport. Mr Garvey joined RGS in 1984 from St Bede's in Manchester. He will be remembered for his myriad of rugby tours, as well as accompanying a ski trip in 1997 when the worst snow storm

to hit Vermont for 25 years with a metre of snow closing the airport. It was typical of his generous nature that he turned up at the Yorkshire Cup Finals to support his rugby team even though he had given up that side of his post at Christmas. He also featured in one of the more ingenious Aprils Fools' jokes that I have experienced at RGS. The assembly on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 was not unusual but I remember being in a rush, grabbing the notices from the tray and rushing into the Hall. Address over, I rose to read the notices. Some PE practices, music rehearsals and I started to read about an exciting trip which was open to the third form. It was a trip to Scotland to partake in a high quality fishing experience on one of Scotland's most famous salmon rivers with the erstwhile Mr Garvey accompanied by his right hand man Mr Miller. No previous fishing experience required. There were one or two audible murmurings of interest in the hall which I found surprising, not that the trip wasn't interesting but that the students are very quiet and attentive. It was towards the end of reading out the notice that I noticed Mr Garvey's signature which did not bear any resemblance to that with which I was familiar. Students 1 Mr Pearman O. Our best wishes go to Mr Garvey for a long and happy retirement and lots of more tall fisherman's tales. He will be replaced by Mr Harding, Durham graduate and rugby and cricket specialist. Mrs Lofthouse has decided to retire from her post of Head of German after 26 years at RGS. She has achieved outstanding results in her time and has kept German on the curriculum when many schools have decided to dispense with it. I am pleased that German is not kaput at RGS. Particular congratulations also go to Mr Pepper who has been appointed as Assistant Head at Ryedale School after 3 years at RGS. His outstanding teaching will be much missed as will his pastoral support of sixth form students and his passion for philosophy, soccer and boxing although we did not witness much of the latter; I am sure he **could** float like a butterfly and sting like a bee, or was it the other way around. He will be replaced by Mr McMillan who is currently acting Head of RE at Thirsk School. Mrs Pybus has sadly had to resign from her post as bursar and in a short time she made many improvements in the management of finances. We wish her well. She has been replaced by Mrs Balsdon. Mrs Garmory has been appointed Head of PSHCEe taking over the reins from Mrs Southwell who will focus on her SENCO role and we welcome back Mrs Lyons after her maternity leave. In boarding, Mr Spiers will take over from Mr Bruce as Assistant Houseparent whilst Mrs Sanderson has been appointed Deputy Senior Houseparent in

Johnson House and will be resident. Miss Bennett has been appointed Deputy Head of Sixth Form replacing Mr Pepper.

We will miss all of the leaving staff and our best wishes go to them as they embark on the next stage of their lives and careers.

On the **sporting front**, I was very pleased that two teams, the U15s and the senior team won the White Rose **rugby** tournaments whilst the U13s finished runners-up. Oscar Lees has been selected for the Yorkshire elite player programme.

**In netball**, the first form team competed in the Regional School Games at the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield and finished fifth. The team of Amelia Reed, Alice Simmerson, Ella Foster, Eve Maylor, Grace Marczak, Hannah Clark, Georgie Borchard, Charlie Taylor-Jackson and Abi Price won the area tournament to take their place in the competition. Congratulations to Katie Reed who has been selected by Yorkshire netball whilst Amelia Reed and Harriet Strachan have been selected for the Yorkshire Jets Development squad.

The U12 A and B **hockey** teams enjoyed success in their Area tournament with the A team now area champions and the B team runners up. The U15s are also Area champions and eight students were selected to represent the Harrogate and Craven hockey team which competed in the inter area annual tournament. The A team also won and the B team were runners-up too in this tournament. The following eight second form students who represented Harrogate & Craven in the Inter Area hockey tournament were Harriet Strachan, Holly Newby, Mena Scatchard, Annabelle Glegg, Holly Rutter, Lily Aikman, Imogen Hubbard and Millie Lockey. The following students have represented North Yorkshire in hockey: Olivia Borchard, Maisie Heap, Penny Baker, Henry Hanson, Poppy Lawson, Georgie Borchard. Penny Baker and Henry Hanson have been selected to attend the Leeds Junior Regional Performance Centre (Yorkshire).

Marijke Booth finished as runner-up in the U14 age group at the UK **rock climbing** championships in Glasgow followed by finishing 13<sup>th</sup> in the Euro

Youth Colours in Austria; a fantastic achievement. Christa Wilson won bronze in 200 and 50 fly in addition to gold in the 100 fly in the Regional Championships in Sheffield and will now progress to the National finals in the 100 and 200 meter butterfly. Congratulations to Imogen Vollans who finished fifth in the Regional Trampolining Finals Level 6 who has now qualified for the National Finals in July. Harry Cosham has been accepted by Ski England to represent the British team following his success in the trials.

A successful season for **cricket** so far with U12 team reaching the area final. Congratulations to Joseph Horner and Connor Eddleston who will represent North Yorkshire U15s, and to Lewis O'Donnell and Finlay Bean who will represent Yorkshire U14s, as well as Sophie Richardson who is playing for Yorkshire Ladies' U15s.

Well done to the junior and inter girls track and field cup teams after qualifying for the regional finals in Hull in June in **athletics**. Anika Schwarze-Chintapatla is the North Yorkshire 800m champion. The Junior Girls reached the North East regional finals of the Track & Field Cup. Robbie Eames, Isabella Binks and Funmi Sowole all represented H&C in the North Yorkshire Championships. Particularly well done to Isabella Binks who won the Y8 hurdles in a new area record and Anika Schwarze Chintapatla who broke 2 area records in the 300 meters and triple jump. Other area champions included Sola Sowole in the 100m and long jump, Archie Lawson triple jump, Harriet Strachan shot, Robbie Eames 300m, Will Barrett discus, Abi Knowles 200m and Funmi Sowole in the 100m. Sola Sowole has also been selected to compete in the English National Finals in the 100 meters.

Anika Schwarze-Chintapatla, Ella Foster and Poppy Lawson all competed in the National X-Country finals. Anika has also been selected for the U16 England orienteering squad and has recently been crowned Yorkshire and Humberside Orienteering Champion.

In tennis the Under 15s combined boys and girls team were winners of the Harrogate and Craven Aegon competition and now represent H and C in the next round.

In VX, Oliver Stocks has been selected to the England Youth VX squad. In gymnastics, Georgina Borchard has been selected on to the British Gymnastics Tumbling Performance Pathway designed for those on the journey to performing at a World Class level. In dance, Mia Nixon and Lois Wilson are part of the Switch Dance group who are regional champions and have recently competed in the National Dance Finals in London.

Oscar Canning and Thomas Whitelegg are both amongst the 120 regional finalists in **the Royal Mail's Young Letter Writer of the Year**; over 100,000 entries were received.

This academic year saw a large increase in the number of pupils across all year groups taking the UKMT Maths Challenge - 403 pupils did it this year compared to 171 doing it last year. 268 pupils achieved a certificate this year compared to 120. Much of this increase in numbers was due to 1<sup>st</sup> form doing the Junior Maths Challenge and 3<sup>rd</sup> form doing the intermediate Maths Challenge for the first time.

The following pupils in second form achieved gold certificates in the Junior Maths Challenge: James Arcidiacono, Megan Bannister, William Barrett, Harry Cosham, Samyuktha Dasarathi, Amy Dunn, Freddie Dunn, Charlotte Everett, Amy Goodwin, Rafael Laybourne Ribeiro, Oscar Lees, Edward Mewes, Simeon Mitchell, Ben Rickard, Barnaby Sladden and Greta Taylor.

These are the first form pupils who got a gold certificate, also in the Junior Maths Challenge: Eileanor Brown, Bruno Holloway, Poppy Lawson, Maddie Penny, Chloe Stringwell, Shen Jie Yaw.

Chloe Stringwell and Shen Jie Yaw have collected Best in Year certificates whilst Barnaby Sladden has collected Best in School certificate for the UK Junior Maths Challenge.

Congratulations to Benedict Newman gained a Distinction for his Grade 5 Speaking of Poetry and Prose.

The **Young Enterprise** team have enjoyed a very successful year and, as I write, they have won the North Yorkshire round in York and against a

number of independent schools; they were also recognised for the Best Presentation, the Best Environmental Product and the Best Financial Management at the county final, held at the Merchant Adventurers' Hall, in York.

The highlight of this years' **music calendar** was the production of 'Anything Goes'. Whilst mainly a senior production, a good number of third form students took to the stage, the orchestra pit, or technical crew to put on a fantastic show. Those lower school pupils involved were: Emma Belward, Clara Damman, Susie Morgan, Charlotte Titterington-Coleman, Alfie McEvoy, Anika Schwarze-Chintapatla and Lewis Dunn.

**Musicality, the school junior choir**, was very successful in their entry at the Harrogate competitive festival. They won their class for choirs consisting of members from the third form and under. They beat stiff competition from Harrogate Grammar and Harrogate Ladies' College. This is a superb achievement for all involved and richly deserved. The Big Band performed at the prestigious Aldborough Festival and received rave reviews.

**The chamber choir** have had a busy period over the last term. They were invited to sing at the Ripon Cathedral Festival where they performed alongside all RGS senior choirs as well as a huge number of primary school musicians. They have recently travelled to Durham University where they sang choral evensong in the beautiful Bede Chapel. They also sang choral evensong at Ripon Cathedral in early May, helping to continue the centuries old tradition of sung services in English cathedrals.

Anika Schwarze-Chintapatla has been awarded a place in the National Youth Wind Orchestra which is a superb achievement for a student at such a young age.

In the Ripon Young Musician annual festival, the following lower school students were very successful in the Ripon Young Musician competition at the beginning of the academic year:

Shen Jie Yaw (first form) - Winner of junior ensemble and solo piano classes

Susie Morgan (third form) - Winner of Senior Piano class

James Kitchingman (second form) - Winner of junior vocal class

Alfie McAvoy (third form) - Winner of intermediate vocal class

Anika Schwarze-Chintapatla (third form) - Winner of mixed discipline (Piano and Clarinet)

Second form student Alexander (Zander) Abrahams sang the treble solos in 'Elijah' with the Cleveland Philharmonic Chorus and renowned Baritone Alan Opie and also with Aled Jones in a charity performance at Harrogate International Centre.

At the summer concert last night, music colours were awarded to Anika Schwarze Chintapatla, James Kitchingman and Harry Canning all of whom have shown great dedication to a number of musical ensembles and choirs during their time in the lower school.

The young engineers who have been working on the Engineering Education Scheme have been excellent ambassadors once again. They received wonderful feedback from the company that they were working with. This is what John Donnelly, senior design engineer for Siemens Rail Automation, wrote; 'You should be very proud of your efforts and the way you conducted yourselves. To be honest, the prospect of presenting a project to a panel of four industry hardened engineers and managers is something that terrifies me even now at the tender age of 45, but you chaps confidently and clearly summarised your project aims and how you went about solving the issues with understanding of the engineering involved, calmness and not a hint of nerves. You each played your part and more than any other team I observed that day, you all appeared to take responsibility for your individual role and deliver to the best of your ability. I thought that grit and determination were commodities that were in decline with younger engineers, thank you for correcting my misplaced perceptions and pushing on with your project despite the disappointment of having the residential event cancelled due to flooding at Lancaster University. I think we all acknowledge that time would have been the main opportunity to really develop your ideas, designs and presentation models. You took that set back on the chin and carried on as best you could with the resources available to you, well done.'

At the end of the academic year I would like you to thank the staff once again for their unstinting commitment and dedication to the students' welfare and academic progress. The strength of the relationships between staff and students is excellent and is one of the enduring and most

cherished strengths of the school. This was in evidence no better than on the Upper Sixth Leavers' evening in May which is an evening which has been going for 10 years and provides an opportunity to say farewell to parents as well as students. I must say that it is one of the best events in the annual calendar; it is great to be able to speak to parents, some of whom have had children here for over 20 years, and to thank them for the support they have provided the school in that time. It was a very emotional occasion and the warmth that both students and parents had for the school was palpable. The success of such an evening is not predicated on anything short term but is a result of a long term commitment of staff, parents and students, enhanced by the opportunities outside the classroom in music, drama, sport and trips as well as clubs, societies, competitions, work experience, Young Enterprise, Prince's Trust amongst others. The development of attributes such as resilience, optimism, enthusiasm, creativity, humility, emotional intelligence, sensitivity and determination can be nurtured to aid the long term benefits of students here.

I cannot begin to list all the trips and activities that are provided by staff voluntarily and willingly. Whatever list of trips I read out would inevitably miss out so many more but there is no doubt that this is one of the features of RGS. I am incredibly grateful to all the staff for providing students with such a wide range of opportunity to learn and develop skills outside the classroom. Please put your hands together to thank the staff for their work this year **both** in and out of the classroom. **Applause.**

Congratulations to 1A, 2A and 3A for winning their **form competitions** and they enjoyed a day out at a local theme park. In the newly created House Science Fair Competition, part of the House Competition, posters of the finalists are displayed in the foyer. Parents and students can vote using the voting cards and box in the foyer for their favourite.

I am also extremely grateful to Mrs Julia Whitham and her excellent team of parents who run an extraordinarily successful Parents' Association, who work tirelessly and willingly to help fund the school minibus, the projection unit in the hall, new hall curtains, sports equipment galore such as indoor hockey rails, new computer screen in the new classroom block which help so much. The summer raffle draw is on July 12 so please purchase tickets today; there are some fantastic prizes.

The evident success of the school is as a result of the partnership between staff and students based on excellent working relationships. With so many talented staff and students working together, the school goes from strength to strength; places at the school continue to be highly sought after and the school will be bigger than ever next year. The significant funding being invested in the school is testament to the confidence that others have in Ripon Grammar School and the dining hall would be the icing on the cake. The students have been eager to learn and seek after righteousness being true to the founding fathers of the school over 1000 years ago and whilst we may get distracted, we must never lose sight of what makes RGS a special place. The sense of community, a passion for learning, ambitious staff and students, respect for each other, kindness shown towards each other, integrity, so many qualities to develop. All of you in this hall play a part in making this school special. Thank you for all you do.

After such a superb year in all respects, it is with great pleasure that I will pass back to Dr. Mason who will then ask Mr Dodd to present the prizes after a musical interlude.