



Re-founded 1555

Ripon Grammar School

Helping shape the future since 1555



26 October 2018

Dear Parents

It would be hard to not to notice the beautiful display of poppies adorning many of the landmarks of Ripon, or the silhouette soldiers which stand so starkly in the landscape. The city has begun a two-month period of remembrance, culminating in the service of remembrance in the cathedral on 11th November.

Of course, RGS was deeply affected by the First World War that ended 100 years ago this year. On our war memorial in the library, there are 48 names of old boys of the school who died in that conflict. Remarkably, 48 are listed having died in the Second World War also. Recent research now suggests that at least 50 and 49 Old Riponians died in those respective conflicts. Either way, the impact on a school, much smaller than we are today, must have been catastrophic. Many young men from the public schools and grammar schools served as young officers, and it was men of that rank who died disproportionately in the conflict.

Reading the school's magazine, *The Riponian*, from 1914-18, it strikes one how stoically the school dealt with the news. The December 1914 edition opens with the remark that the many boys who had joined up 'reflects great credit on our School, which taught them to be men'. The December 1916 edition neglects to mention the recent conflict on the Somme, and chooses to open with a reflection that 'heartfelt sympathy' must be extended to the Headmaster 'on his recent operation'! The 1918 edition makes no comment on the war's ending apart from the fact that the recent paper shortage should now end and the June edition be restored. Clearly, it would take longer for the enormity of those years to sink in.

On 9th November, we will be holding a whole school act of remembrance. The school will assemble at the memorial stone and it will one of a very few occasions that the whole school can congregate and reflect together. Governors, parents and guests associated with the school are very welcome to attend. The ORs will also be producing on display on RGS and the First World War, which will be on display in the North Corridor.

This half term has of course culminated in Charity Week in aid of St Michael's Hospice. There has been a super mix of break and lunchtime entertainments ranging from 'The Chase' [against 'The O'Donovan Chaser'] to zorb football, an inflatable assault course to sumo wrestling. Not to be outdone, there have been various attempts by members of staff to recapture their youth on stage with the staff panto as the finale today. Only those who witnessed it can only truly describe the version of *Shrek* that was presented. Overall, it has been a hugely successful week, so ably organised by the School Officer Team. The current total stands at just over £9000.

This term we had a number of new staff starting with us. I am pleased to say they have all made an excellent start and have really enjoyed working as part of the RGS community. They have particularly commented to me on the politeness, hard work and generous ethos of the students. What else would I expect? This half term we will be saying goodbye to Mr Peter Holt who has worked in our DT

department as technician. We wish him all the very best for the future and thank him for the dedication and friendship he has shown. He will be greatly missed by staff and students. I would also like to inform you that Mrs Jusane Sanderson will be standing down as Senior House Parent in Johnson House at the end of term and I will extend the school's thanks for all her dedicated care in my Christmas letter.

We have recently held a Parent Governor Election and I am pleased to announce that Mrs V Barton-Brown, Mrs A Edmondson, Mr D Winspear and Mrs K Wood have been elected with effect from Wednesday, 31 October 2018. I look forward to working with them all after half term. I would also like to thank Dr M Day, Mr R Groves, Mrs H Suckling, and Mr P Ratcliff for their work as governors.

The current Upper Sixth are in the midst of **UCAS** season. They have had plenty of advice and support about higher education and alternative careers and pathways. The deadline for medicine, veterinary medicine and Oxford and Cambridge application has passed, so I wish all students the best of luck. I know that after half term there will be plenty of opportunities to prepare for what I hope will be a successful round of applications interviews.

We have also had a busy half term of trips and activities. We have seen a party of Fifth Form historians descend on North Wales to study the splendour of Edward I's castles and an equally exciting trip to Jodrell Bank, led by the Astronomy Department to study the wonders of space. In addition, our Lower Sixth artists had a successful trip to London. Not to be outdone, next half term the Upper Sixth artists will head off to Paris for 4 days. On the 22 and 23 November, we will also hold our annual house drama competition and the houses are already busy rehearsing.

Musically it has also been a term of success. The Autumn Concert was very well attended and proved a superb showcase for our musical talent. In addition, several of our choral groups sang beautifully in Holy Trinity Church in support of Christian Aid. Immediately on return after half term, the Chamber Choir will be singing choral evensong in the cathedral at 4.30 on Monday 5 November. This is an incredibly beautiful occasion and one not to be missed, if you find yourself in Ripon at that time. On 13 December, we have our Christmas Concert held in the school hall and on the 18 December we will hold our annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols in the cathedral. Parents are warmly welcome to attend. While on the subject, I am sure Mr Seymour will not mind me giving another plug for the latest CD of school music, 'O Holy Night', which can still be ordered from reception and is an excellent stocking filler. This is a real treat of Christmas carols, recorded in the cathedral, and so generously supported by the FRGS.

On 16 November, we will be holding our annual Speech Day and Prize giving. This year our guest speaker is Sir Gary Verity, businessman, sheep farmer and, for the last ten years, Chief Executive of *Welcome to Yorkshire*. He led the successful campaign for the Grand Départ of the 2014 Tour de France to be held in Yorkshire.

It has been a very busy half term with over 65 sports fixtures in over 25 different competitions. The major headlines are that both the U18 rugby and U18 hockey won the northern round of the State Boarding Forum competition and will represent the North at the national finals next half term. The U18 rugby team are also through to Round 4 of the National Schools Vase competition after impressive wins against Ampleforth and Pocklington. They will now face Newcastle School for Boys. The junior rugby teams have all had good starts to the season and will begin their Yorkshire Cup campaigns after half term. The U18 hockey team are through to Round 2 of the national schools competition, whilst both the U14 & U16 hockey teams are through to the North East finals of the national schools competition. The U18 netball team are through to county finals of the national schools competition as well Round 2 in the national knockout tournament. The inter girls have

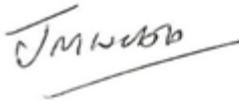
qualified for the national swimming finals that will take place at the Olympic pool in London. They have achieved this at the first time of asking, as the school have not entered the competition before and this is a fantastic result. The Junior Boys, Junior Girls and Inter Girls cross country teams are through to the regional finals in November and will look to qualify for nationals in late November. It has also been a busy half term for the football teams with the boys competing in the county and national cups. Sadly, some tough draws have resulted in a number of early exits. Individually there has been plenty to celebrate but I am delighted to report that Abi Smith, who joined this year in the Lower Sixth, has been selected for the British Cycling Junior Academy, which is her route into elite international competition.

Also in relation to sport, I have been asked on a number of occasions about the planned construction of a 3G pitch at RGS. This project is still very much a live one but the planning and logistics of the programme has taken longer than anticipated. We are still in discussion with the developer and I am hopeful that further news will be available soon.

Finally, I would just like to remind you of my letter several weeks ago concerning the school's Activity Fund. We had a good response but if you intended to make a donation and have not quite got round to it, I attach the link to the form again here [Activity Fund Form](#)

With best wishes for an enjoyable half-term break.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J M Webb', with a horizontal line underneath.

Jonathan M Webb
Headmaster

