

# CLOCK TOWER

The RGS community magazine

2018/19

## TOP CLASS

RGS is one of the best-performing schools in the country

## INSIDE WESTMINSTER

How Tommy got into the thick of it



## GIRL POWER

The past pupils making history

# Art & SOUL

A talented former RGS student's remarkable creative legacy

## WHAT KATIE DID NEXT

The benefits of taking a gap year

**PLUS:** Careers network launched

Reunion news

Sports successes

# Where are they now?

We catch up with former RGS students to discover what they did after leaving RGS and find out what they're up to now



## A letter from our chair of governors

'Treasure your schooling' was just one of the messages given to us at Speech Day. Our Spring Concert in the beautiful environment of Holy Trinity Church was just one justification for the obedience of this command. The performance of Haydn's Nelson Mass at the end of a musical extravaganza involving more than 150 students, staff and supporters epitomised the values of our precious institution. A consequence of collaboration, perseverance and dedication, combined with amazing talent, students and staff delivered a beautiful masterpiece.

We have, over the last year, had much cause for celebration, both on and off the sports field, including outstanding musical, drama and academic achievements. This edition of Clocktower, celebrating the many and diverse accomplishments of past and present members of our school, provides evidence of the numerous opportunities available. From diving to teaching, journalism, politics, community projects overseas and scientific research, what is abundantly obvious is how the alumni of our school are equipped with the skills and talents to strive to succeed and follow their dreams.

Our role as governors is to support the school in the maintenance of this exceptional environment, where students can pursue their love of learning, feed their curiosity and achieve their very best within a community of mutual respect, care and support, where co-curricular life is as fundamental as the rigour of the classroom.

Clocktower is a celebration of everything RGS has to offer and we are indebted to our editor Ruth Savage for yet another exceptional publication. In a world where news is not always good, and there is uncertainty, scepticism and concern, we can be justifiably excited by the diversity and talent celebrated here.

With best wishes,  
Elizabeth Jarvis



Living the dream: sporty Alison Wilson is enjoying the great outdoors in New Zealand

### ALISON WILSON Left RGS 2006

After leaving RGS, I went on to study sport and exercise science at the University of Bath, before going on to complete my MSc in physiotherapy at the University of Southampton.

Having worked in the National Health Service for a few years and loving the great outdoors, I decided to pursue my dream and move to New Zealand, where I am currently working as a private practice musculoskeletal physiotherapist.

In 2015, I re-discovered my love of sport, which was always something I enjoyed at school. I have taken part in Ironman long-distance triathlons, competing in the 2016 and 2017 Ironman World Championships in Kona, Hawaii, where I finished sixth and second respectively in my age group. I still continue to pursue my love of sport and racing and am regularly found on the start line of numerous events. I am continuing to pursue a career in physiotherapy here in New Zealand.



### DAVID PRESTWICH Left RGS 2017

After sixth form, I secured a place at Newcastle University to study medicinal chemistry but deferred my place to take a year out. I found myself at the Swinton Park Hotel working as a food and beverage assistant in The Terrace restaurant in mid-August and worked there until mid-December. I then went to Australia and New Zealand for 22 weeks in total, all from the money I earned at Swinton. During my travels, I saw the whole of New Zealand, which was spectacular, and hiked the infamous Roy's Peak Track

in Wanaka. And in Gippsland, Victoria, I helped build the first approved 'earth bag' sustainable roundhouse in Australia, using a combination of 'earth bag' or super adobe construction, with layered long fabric bags filled with adobe to form a compression structure, and rammed earth.

After I returned from my travels, in early June, I went back to Swinton Park to work there for a further two months before taking up my place to study medicinal chemistry at Newcastle University.

Earning money to pay for his adventures abroad: David Prestwich at Swinton Park, above



### AMY BARRETT Left RGS 2010

After seven years of attending almost every extra-curricular club Ripon Grammar School had to offer - rather than revising - I missed out on my first choice course at Newcastle University.

Instead, I studied biomedical science at Keele University, achieving a first class degree after three years. Following my unexpected move to the Midlands, I enjoyed working in laboratories, almost full-time in the Students' Union and rediscovering a love of academia. Success in my undergraduate course opened the door to take on a medical degree as a postgraduate at Warwick University in the West Midlands.

After being 'sent to Coventry', four years of intense placements and relentless examinations followed. Outside the lecture theatre, I also

had the opportunity to briefly volunteer for a charity in India. Focusing on palliative care in Kerala, I worked with some of the poorest communities to support families with end-of-life care.

Finally emerging from academia, I am working as a foundation-year doctor in respiratory medicine at Heartlands Hospital in Birmingham. This has followed placements in paediatrics and colorectal medicine.

Perhaps because of my long-winded and unexpected path to becoming a doctor, I am still undecided where my passion lies in terms of specialist training. That said, I am enjoying the many varied opportunities foundation training offers and a long overdue study break!

Dr Amy Barrett, left. Right, pictured at the Trivandrum Institute of Palliative Sciences in Kerala with colleague Dr Lucy James and Dr M R Rajagopal, founder of Pallium India



Joy Sutcliffe is one of two gifted former RGS students who have made history at Durham Cathedral. The talented singer tells us how she won its first female choral scholarship

# GIRLS allowed

It may come as some surprise to hear that there are still church choirs which won't accept female altos. Thankfully, the fact that Durham Cathedral had never appointed a woman in the role didn't put former RGS student Joy Sutcliffe off.

The 19-year-old recently made history when she won the first female scholarship at the prestigious 900-year-old Norman-built place of worship: "It's great that these opportunities are now finally being made available to female singers and I hope that Durham is setting a trend for other UK cathedrals," she says.

Now in her second year studying music at Durham University, Joy explains how she wasn't hopeful when auditions for the scholarship came up: "I knew there hadn't been a woman before."



Having already joined the college chapel choirs and Durham Cathedral's Consort of Singers, she examined the website before applying and discovered the cathedral didn't actually state a preference for countertenors - the male equivalent of Joy's voice part. "I had to check because there are still many places in the UK which won't accept applications from female altos," she explains.

After her audition, she was delighted to hear she had been offered one of the two alto choral scholarships but was initially slightly nervous to enter such a male-dominated workplace. However, the appointment of another former RGS student, Imogen Morgan, as Durham's first female organ scholar last year soon boosted her confidence.

She needn't have worried: "Everyone at the cathedral has been very supportive and welcoming and it's been very easy to settle into the routine of performing in such a stunning place every day," she says.

Joy now sings in the magnificent cathedral building eight times a week, alongside five other scholars, all undergraduates at the university, and six lay clerks, who are local professional singers.

She looks back on her time at RGS with fondness: "I was incredibly lucky to be surrounded by so much high-quality music-making at school," she says. Joy was a chorister at Ripon Cathedral and a member of RGS's chamber and senior girls' choirs before she left RGS, where she studied music at A-level with Edward Seymour, in 2017.

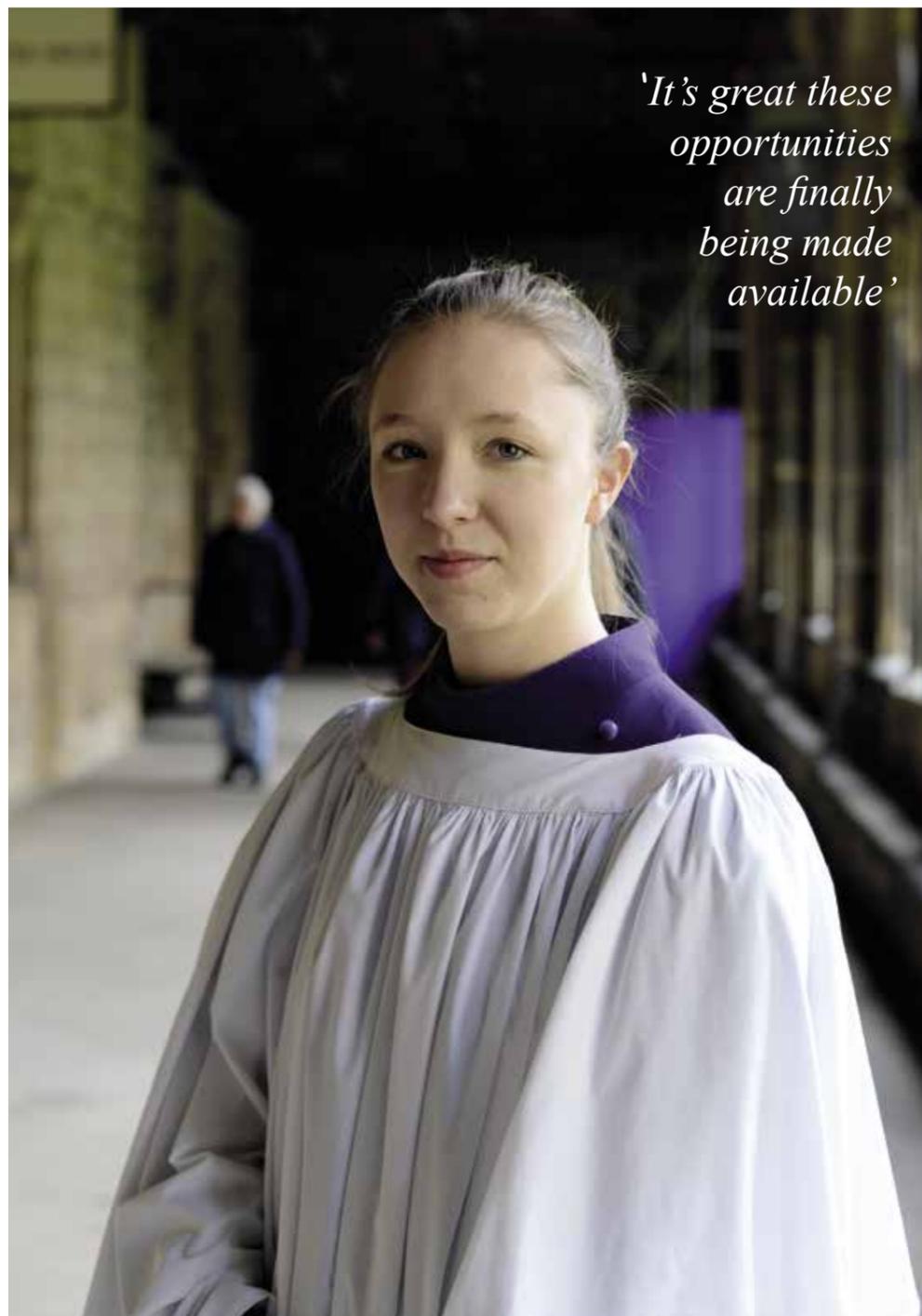
"Mr Seymour showed me the importance of studying music academically as well as encouraging my choral involvement," she says. Her advice to other student singers is: "Definitely keep your eyes open for scholarships and places in choirs that will keep you singing regularly alongside your job or degree and certainly don't let traditions limit where you apply."

Mr Seymour adds: "I've had great pleasure in working with many talented musicians at RGS. Joy is not only talented but also incredibly determined. She would never settle for 'adequate' or 'second best' and would always strive to give the best of herself and encourage the same in others. I'm delighted she is pursuing her passions as a singer and even more delighted to see her championing women in church music."

## Entrepreneur Hazel defies TV Dragons



Brave decision: Hazel has no regrets



*'It's great these opportunities are finally being made available'*

Championing women in church music: Joy Sutcliffe, above, and left, singing in the cathedral

Card games designer Hazel Reynolds stunned viewers of TV's Dragons' Den when she took the brave decision to turn down a £50,000 investment offer, leading Peter Jones to remark: "She's going to live to regret that."

But Dragon Jenny Campbell was asking for two-and-a-half times the 10% share of the equity Hazel was offering in her Gamely Games company.

The 31-year-old entrepreneur, who left RGS in 2005 and featured in Clocktower in 2018, says she has no regrets after her appearance on the BBC2 TV show, which saw the Dragons enjoying playing her original game, Randomise. Since filming, Hazel's company, which wanted new investment to help move into international markets, has gone from strength to strength. Gamely Games, which

she launched before having her first child, now employs two further staff members, in addition to Hazel and her husband. Having launched two German language games, they are now operating in the UK, Germany and the USA and have sold more than 70,000 games, with 25,000 games sold last Christmas on Amazon alone.

"The business is my third baby and I couldn't give away such a large part of it. I can understand why the Dragons were surprised, it was fantastic to get such a great offer, but we've had amazing success without it," said Hazel. Gamely, which has also developed Soundiculous and The Pretender games, plans to reach a £4m turnover within five years and will be releasing two more games this summer.

[www.gamelygames.com](http://www.gamelygames.com)

# Cooking up success



Jack Baldwin, who left RGS in 2017 to follow his passion for cooking, is making a name for himself as a young chef

A former student who left RGS to take up an apprenticeship as a chef has been crowned Young Chef of the Year at the Flavours of Herriot awards, just a year after leaving school.

Jack Baldwin beat off stiff competition from 200 other entrants to win the coveted award. He also got down to the final six in the Grand Final of the Toque d'Or competition in London, having reached the last 60 out of 500 chefs selected in the semi-finals.

Jack said of the Herriot award: "It's been the highlight of my career so far. It was a tough competition and to win it meant a lot. It has given me the confidence to grow further."

His first job was with The Bruce Arms in West Tanfield, where he worked part-time as a pot washer and was inspired by head chef Dave Mathews, who trained him up as a commis chef: "I couldn't have had a better mentor,

friend and work colleague," he said.

After two years there, the talented young chef has now been snapped up by the new five-star luxury hotel Grantley Hall, near Ripon.

Jack says: "I love so much about my job: the accomplishment I get from serving good dishes of food, the feeling after a long successful shift and also working with a great group of colleagues. The most difficult part is the working hours, but I have a passion for the catering industry and I wouldn't have it any other way."

His signature dish is a mouth-watering chocolate torte and many of his recipes are inspired by eating out in acclaimed restaurants, he says. "I've always wanted to be a chef and this was apparent through my food technology lessons with my brilliant teacher, Mrs Solden. Other favourite teachers at RGS were Mr Spiers, Mr Fell and Mr Walker."

## Hebe's star continues to rise

Fans of actress Hebe Beardsall may have spotted the former RGS student - who played the half-blood Ariana Dumbledore in Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 - in the acclaimed film Funny Cow, which stars Maxine Peake.

The film, an unflinching, gritty comedy-drama, follows the life of a woman trying to make a name for herself in stand-up comedy in northern working-men's clubs in the Seventies and Eighties.

Hebe, who left RGS in 2011, has also recently appeared in a number of TV series, including Victoria, Casualty, Press and Lore.



# What Katie did next

**KATIE VEITCH**, who left RGS in 2017, worked in Cambodia with the charity Project Trust and spent three months au-pairing in Paris during her gap year. She is now studying theology at the University of Cambridge



**Why did you decide to go abroad for a year rather than straight to university after leaving RGS?**

I felt that after an intense few years at school, I needed a break from studying, and as a lover of travel, I wanted to use this year as an opportunity to live in a different country and see a bit more of the world.

**Why did you decide to volunteer with Project Trust?**

Project Trust is one of the only gap year organisations in the UK to offer long-term volunteering placements (for seven or 12 months) as opposed to just a couple of months. My sister had spent a year with Project Trust in India and through going to visit her, I saw how well Project Trust is set up for young people to become fully immersed in a completely different culture and do some very rewarding work.

**How difficult was it to get a place?**

Project Trust is based on the Scottish island



**'Everyone should take a gap year': Katie in Paris, left, and, right, teaching in Cambodia, where she enjoyed the local fish market, above**

of Coll and all applicants travel to Coll for a week-long selection course a year before they plan to go overseas. This was a very intense week of workshops, team activities, interviews and practice lessons. It was hard work but also really enjoyable and it gave me so much more information about what I could spend my year doing. A few weeks later, I got my letter of acceptance and the saving began!

**What costs did you have to pay towards the trip and how did you finance it?**

Part of the experience is raising around £5,000 to finance your time. I did this through applying to charitable trusts, running cake stalls at RGS, working in Ripon and then going to work in Paris for three months. I got a job as an au pair in the autumn of my gap year, which turned from a money-making time-filler into a wonderful experience in its own right. I looked after five children (which was very daunting at first!) doing the school run, cooking for them and helping

with homework and bedtimes. Au-pairing is an amazing opportunity to experience a different culture without spending a lot of money, through living with a local family. I became very close to my host family and felt a lot more Parisian than if I'd been living alone. I also loved exploring Paris in my time off!

**What did your volunteering involve?**

I was a teacher at a small, rural primary school called Sala Monkey. I had a class of 11-year-olds with little to no English ability and my job was to teach lessons in very basic English. I worked with the same class every day; this meant I got to see their progress over the seven months I was there, which was hugely rewarding. I watched them grow in confidence in speaking English; listening to students reading their first ever English book because of the work I'd done with them was just as proud a moment as anything I had ever achieved academically.

**Where did you live and what were the conditions like?**

I lived in pretty basic conditions in a cottage in the school grounds. There were many times when we had no running water or electricity and I got used to living with geckos, spiders and rats in our house! Once, I came into our outdoor kitchen to discover that my precious Nescafé sachets had been nibbled into by rats... as was my shower gel and anything else I left lying around!! I have a huge rat phobia so that was not easy!

**What sort of food did you eat?**

I ate a lot of Khmer noodle soup, coconut curries and fried bananas.

**How would you describe the country and culture to someone who has never been?**

Cambodian people are very warm and welcoming; wherever we went in the village,



people would say hello. Family is central in Khmer culture, as is Buddhism, the national religion. Monks in saffron robes were an everyday sight for me, along with seeing at least five people and a basket of mangoes crammed onto a single motorbike! It is incredible to see how much positivity and progress there is in the country given its turbulent recent history.

**What was the most challenging aspect of the whole experience?**

I think that creating a new life for yourself in any new country is a big challenge, and one I experienced twice in my year. Adjusting to first Parisian and then Cambodian life was not easy. Teaching was another huge challenge. I had to go from being a student to a teacher in a short space of time, and so finding a teaching style and authority was difficult. This was especially hard given the language barrier - communicating with children who don't speak your language, whilst trying to get them to listen and behave was really hard! I have a huge amount of respect for teachers now, having experienced for a short time what a challenging job it is.

**What did you enjoy most?**

Although at times it was difficult to settle in, my favourite part was forming a routine for myself and becoming integrated into a community that is completely different to the one I'd grown up in. I loved that things like going to a market or dancing at a Khmer wedding were part of my day-to-day life for a while.

**What was the most important thing you learnt?**

The most important thing I learnt was actually how narrow my world view prior to this year had been. I realised that my British way of life is only one way of life, that there are incredible places, cultures and people out there that previously I just had no idea about. Also, I learnt just how resilient and adaptable people are; I have so much more confidence now that I can take on a challenge and learn to live just about anywhere.

**Did you travel with anyone else and did you make new friends easily once you got there?**

Project Trust matches you to another young person, so that every project has two volunteers. Having someone to experience it with is such a big reassurance and living that closely with another person creates a unique relationship - I know I'll always stay in touch with her given what we've been through together. I also made friends with the Cambodian teachers at school, which helped me understand their culture a lot better.

**How did you cope with the language barrier?**

I picked up a little bit of Khmer (I found that telling children to stop fighting in their own language was a lot more effective than trying to shout at them in English...) but a lot of people spoke enough English for me to get by.

*There are incredible places, cultures and people out there that I had no idea about*



The basic bungalow where Katie lived in the school grounds

She enjoyed visiting local places of interest, such as this temple, below

What did you miss most about Yorkshire?

I definitely missed the food! After a few too many noodles and vegetables, I was dreaming of cake and a good cup of tea.

Did you ever feel like giving up and coming back home? If so, what made you stay?

There were a few times when I was considering giving up but it felt like letting myself down - I'd worked really hard to get there and knew I'd regret it if I spent my gap year in Ripon. Both in Paris and Cambodia, the children I was working with always made it worthwhile.

Did you have much free time and were you able to travel to other parts of the country while you were in Cambodia?

In weekends and school holidays, we were able to travel and so I saw a lot of Cambodia. It is a country of huge diversity with beaches, cities, jungle and its most famous attraction - the ancient temples of Angkor Wat, the largest religious monument in the world.

What advice would you give to current RGS students who want to do something similar?

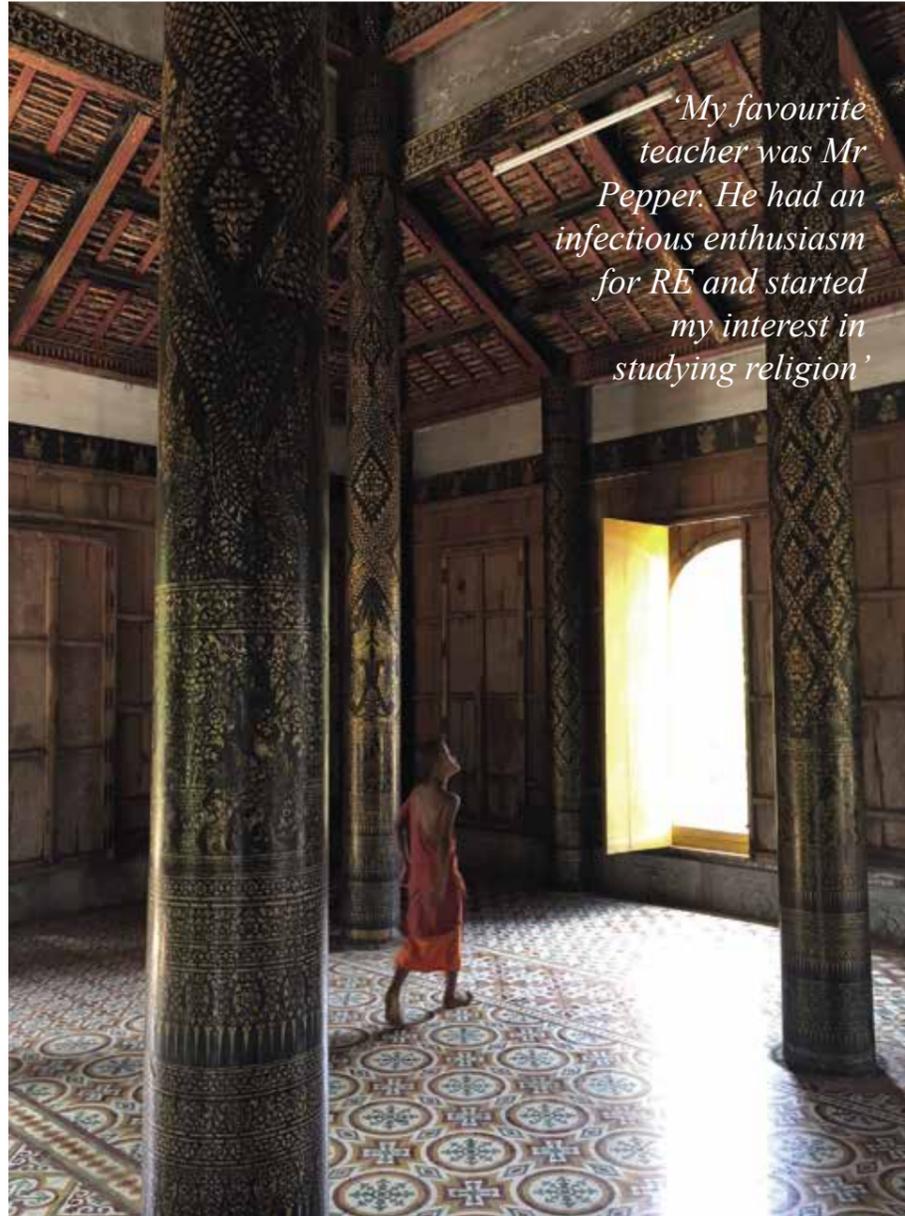
I would advise everyone to take a gap year! Even if it's not teaching or travelling, being given a year to do something completely different is an opportunity that doesn't come along very often. I think it's really beneficial to take time away from studying to gain some perspective and try something new: university will always be there, and I feel better-prepared now that I've had some time doing something else.

Do you want to go back again?

I definitely want to spend more time in both Paris and Cambodia- Paris is a little more achievable, but I know I'll be back in Cambodia, even if it takes me a while!

Where do you plan to travel next?

Wherever my student budget will take me! I have the travel bug now, so I'll be keeping an eye out for more opportunities to explore or work abroad.



*'My favourite teacher was Mr Pepper. He had an infectious enthusiasm for RE and started my interest in studying religion'*

Head of RGS sixth form **TERRY FELL** argues that, used productively, taking a year out can be a valuable life-changing experience, which can make applicants much more attractive to universities and employers

# Eight good reasons to take a gap year

The last few months of school can seem an overwhelming time, when life is swallowed up by the raft of huge life decisions to be made, the looming examinations, pressure from comparing ourselves with friends who always seem to be far more collected and certain about life (although they very rarely are!), and the unsettling knowledge that we are coming to the end of a major and largely stable phase of our lives, and facing uncertainty and change.

At times like these, it can be tempting to follow the crowd and to find certainty and security in treading a well-worn path directly into a university course or taking up the promise of a job or apprenticeship now and getting a career started.

However more and more of our students are choosing to pause for breath after completing their A-levels, and to build into their plans a period away from formal education or training. This may be in the traditional form of a gap year where a deferred university offer awaits them in a year's time, or it may be that they will simply apply again in the next UCAS cycle, safe in the knowledge that they will be fully supported by school in doing so.

As a school we, like most universities, see immense potential value in a gap year so long as it is used productively, and to enhance the student's experience and skillset. Whether through travel, volunteer work at home or abroad, work experience and internships, au pairing, gaining additional qualifications, Year in Industry programmes, organised gap year programmes such as Camp America or the International Citizen Service, or a combination of several of these activities, a gap year well used can be a life-changing experience, and can make an applicant even more attractive to universities and employers.

Here are eight very good reasons to take a gap year:

**1** It gives you time to decide on what you want to do next - away from the pressures of the final year of school.

**2** Opportunity for reflection also ensures you don't rush into a university course (and the student debt that accompanies it) which isn't right for you.

**3** A gap year can be an opportunity to actually try out working in a particular field or profession before you commit to the degree course that could take you there. Taking time to gain insight and experience of industry -



Opportunity knocks: Mr Fell, above, believes gap years can be a great experience

whether through a series of work experience placements, internships or industrial placement schemes - can give a real steer to future career plans, as well as priceless technical and life experience that sets you apart from other applicants. It may also give you valuable contacts and links to use later, or alternatively offer you an entirely new and different direction to follow that you hadn't considered before.

**4** Travel can broaden your horizons immensely, allowing you to meet new people from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds and to see places and try experiences which are totally new to you. Whether journeying independently, as part of an organised group, or even just inter-railing with friends, travel builds confidence, resourcefulness and all manner of life skills.

*It's a golden opportunity for adventures you may never have the chance to undertake again*

**5** Using a gap year to undertake volunteer work - whether as part of a charity or non-governmental organisation abroad, or within the UK - can be immensely rewarding and allow you to acquire and develop key qualities such as people and communication skills, self-confidence, leadership, time management and life experience that will form the foundations for the career which follows.

**6** Taking a gap year also usually involves working to raise funds, which in itself carries benefits in terms of acquiring skills, experience, work history and a measure of financial independence.

**7** It is very noticeable that young people joining university courses or employment after a gap year tend to be significantly more mature and at ease with themselves than peers fresh from school. The gap year allows you to reflect on what you want from life, and to establish a sense of purpose that is a great quality when undertaking study at the highest level, or to take the first steps upon a career.

**8** Finally, the year after school is perhaps the one time in your adult life when you tend not to have considerations of family, career, health etcetera to tie you down. This is the golden opportunity to undertake experiences and adventures that you may never have chance to do again. So, whether it is a month volunteering with the National Trust, backpacking through Greece, working as a nanny in the US or training as a lifeguard in Knarborough, a gap year can be an amazing opportunity.



## Diver Jack crowned the best in Europe

Diver Jack Laugher has been crowned European male diver of the year for a second time.

Olympic champion Jack, who also picked up the title in 2016, has celebrated a successful season in 2018 with five international titles.

The 23-year-old, who left RGS in 2014, won three golds at the Commonwealth Games on Australia's Gold Coast last April. At the European Championships in Glasgow four months later, he secured two further golds.

The award is organised by Ligue Europeenne de Natation (Len).

"This award is the culmination of a lot of hard work, not just last year but throughout my career," said Laugher.

With the Olympics in Tokyo now just a year-and-a-half away, Jack has been performing well in the new Diving World Series, claiming a pair of bronze medals, in both the 3m synchro - with new partner Dan Goodfellow - and the individual 3m springboard event, in Japan.

"I was really happy with the synchro with Dan," said Laugher. "To come out at our first international and get a medal was really good."

He added of his individual dives: "The first three were great, the last three not so much. But it's a learning curve. Hopefully I'll use what I've learned to move forward and do better."

In Beijing, in the Chinese leg of the World Series the following week, Laugher won his second World Series bronze in a row in the men's 3m springboard event.

# Unpicking the whirlwind

**A**claimed singer-songwriter Billie Marten has been releasing music since she was 15 years old. After too much time spent juggling constant travelling and back-to-back recording schedules with her studies and exam revision, Billie has spent the past few years working to unpick the whirlwind.

The result is a revelatory new album, *Feeding Seahorses by Hand*, which includes the stunning single *Betsy*. It's the result, she says, of unlearning everything she thought she knew previously.

With her previous single receiving the best reviews of her career to date, critics are predicting 2019 will be her big, break-out year.

The new 12-track record follows on from her 2016 impressively sophisticated debut album, *Writing of Blues and Yellow*s, released while she was still at school.

Following a tour of the US, where she is supporting multi-platinum-selling stadium rock band *Snow Patrol*, in May, the mesmerising 20-year-old will be setting off on a headline tour of the UK in June.

Billie left RGS - where she was known as Billie Tweddle - in 2017. By then she had already been signed to Sony's Chess Club Records and shortlisted for the BBC Sound of 2016 award.

As if that wasn't enough, pop star Ed Sheeran announced to his 19 million followers on Twitter that Billie's delicate songs and haunting voice was 'stunning'.

It was a tumultuous period. After leaving school, Billie headed to London and got a job in a pub. Observing the never-ending conveyor of curious punters who propped up the bar, she gradually began to find her feet in the capital and also got a job volunteering in a charity shop.

Her songs - originally written as fragmented diary entries - gradually began to reflect the people around her.

The album also takes a magnifying glass to the outside world, giving a fictional appraisal of Donald Trump from the perspective of his daughter on the saccharine *Cartoon People*, and poking fun at unnamed politicians on *Betsy*.

They're a contrast to her previous, more introspective work: "I feel like I'm more awake to society than I was aged 15. That's bound to happen," she reasons.

"This record is definitely not as much about

*Billie Marten has emerged from a tumultuous few years, having unlearned everything she thought she knew. The result is a stunning and revelatory new album*

me. It's about my view on other people, other things."

The politically-inspired *Betsy* was actually written back in 2017 with longtime collaborator Rich Cooper.

It's a slow burn of a track which combines serious, ghostly vocals with a summery hand-clapping, tambourine-shaking vibe. Billie has not lost any of her endearingly lyrical, folksy style.

Billie explains how the lyrics were instant and spontaneous: "They poured out. It's about confronting a politician, no-one in particular, but sort of ridiculing them. I didn't want the big political stance. It's representing Parliament as a whole institution really.

"The song turns the wise old politician into a child, infantilising them takes away their power.

"I think most people feel a bit unsafe with it all, because it's impossible to relate to these characters. No-one shows any personal weakness or empathy, and if they do, they've already cracked."

Billie says she considers herself very lucky: "None of this has been an ambition. I never had a specific goal: "My motto is: Nobody's looking at you," she says echoing the lyrics of her single, *Bird*.

"When I did my first gigs, my dad used to say that to me and said if no-one shows up, it's fine. It's a general sense of just do your thing. I say it to myself all the time: Nobody's looking at you and don't think too much about it."

When asked where she is happiest, she responds: "Home." And home is with her parents in North Yorkshire, she says.

\*Billie's UK headline tour kicks off on June 5 in Birmingham and concludes on June 13 at London's Islington Assembly Hall.

*'The lyrics poured out. It's about confronting a politician, sort of ridiculing and infantilising them, representing Parliament as an institution'*

**No place like home:** Billie, above, is happiest when she is in Yorkshire

# Rugby teams are the pride of Yorkshire

Two RGS rugby teams returned triumphant from the Yorkshire Cup finals. The Under-18s and Under-16s sides brought the coveted trophies home to Ripon following outstanding performances against Prince Henry's Grammar School and Ermysted's.

Seven of the school's gifted players have been talent-spotted by Yorkshire's premier professional club, Yorkshire Carnegie Academy, which seeks out the best young players in the county and is considered a stepping stone to playing at the highest levels.

Rising star and captain of the school's 1st XV squad Ted Wainwright was part of the England Under-17s squad last year, while five of the boys also represent Yorkshire.

For Ted, who is on the Elite Yorkshire Carnegie programme, which develops top players with a view to going on to play in the premiership and for their country, this was the fourth year he has brought the cup back to Ripon.



The 18-year-old boarding student from Helmsley was also in the winning RGS Yorkshire Cup teams in his first, fourth and lower sixth years.

Ted's team-mate Ollie Williams, 18, from Ripon, who represents his county, has also been selected for the Yorkshire Carnegie Academy.

"I wasn't expecting it, this is the first year I've been picked and it's a huge honour, I'm very proud," he said.

Others who have won selections with the Yorkshire Carnegie Junior Academy are RGS fourth

former Will Groves and four fifth formers, Harry Williams, Oscar Lees, Toby Boyce and Will Barrett, who have also been picked to represent Yorkshire this season.

RGS Director of Sport Adam Milner said: "They all put in outstanding performances in the finals in very poor weather conditions. Our 1st XV retained the Under-18s Yorkshire Cup they won last year with a 15-3 win while this was the first Yorkshire title at Under-16s level in the school's history - which they won 29-0. They have been working towards this for five years.

"It was also the last time a number of players will play for the 1st XV, some excellent players who have achieved great success. They have lots of positive memories to take away and will be missed.

"We are extremely pleased for all the boys, they put in a huge amount of hard work and they all have exciting opportunities ahead of them."



Top (l-r) Will Barrett, Oscar Lees, Ollie Williams, Ted Wainwright, Toby Boyce, Harry Williams and Will Groves. Above, Ted and Oscar with the trophies

# Then and now

The boy band :PM, formed at Ripon Grammar School, continues to make its mark on the national music scene. :PM (formerly Purple Mafia) - founded at school by Harry Yates and Josh Stockdale, who asked Dan Reynard to join them when they heard him singing in school assembly - are pictured, right, on stage at London's O2 Arena, where they performed in front of 22,000 people as support act to The Vamps. They are also pictured, inset, as 12 and 13-year-olds at the Battle of the Bands competition at Northallerton Forum, when they appeared before a crowd of 100.

Past pupils may have recognised the band's Driving Me Crazy track on trailers for the new Channel 4 All Star Driving School TV series: "They asked if they could use it. It was a really quick process and the next thing you know we turned on the tv and there was our song, which was crazy," Dan told Clocktower.



# High-achieving students have taken Ripon Grammar School to new heights as one of the top-performing schools in the country

# Top of the league

Students are celebrating taking Ripon Grammar School to new heights in the national league tables as latest exam results place it in the top 15 schools in the country.

RGS's exceptional GCSE results, alongside the progress students make, have secured its high ranking in the Daily Telegraph's 'Top 100 schools' league table, which includes both independent and state schools.

RGS is the only school from Yorkshire and the North-East to make it into the Telegraph's top 40 league table.

Alongside this, Ripon Grammar School has also retained its Sunday Times 'Top state school in the North' title, the sixth year running that it has been awarded top place.

Headmaster Jonathan Webb congratulated both students and staff for their outstanding achievements, hard work and dedication, especially during such a period of educational change, as schools adapt to new and expanded syllabuses and styles of assessment: "This is a testament to the quality of teaching and learning at Ripon Grammar School. Students have worked hard to attain so highly, building an excellent platform for their studies at A-level and beyond," he said.

Mr Webb, who stressed RGS also remains



Headmaster Jonathan Webb with some of RGS's high-achieving students

committed to a holistic education with music, drama and sport all thriving, added that progress scores at GCSE place the school near the top of the tree nationally: "Of particular note has been the success of students in

our boarding community where specialist facilities, tutorial and peer support play such an important role in fostering their personal development."

The Daily Telegraph ranks schools according to the percentage of students achieving five or more A\*-C/9-4 grades and Progress 8 scores, which measure progress in eight core subjects from primary to secondary school. A neutral 'zero' measure at Progress 8 means a school is performing at the national average. With a score of 0.98, Ripon Grammar School is performing significantly better than the average school.

In The Sunday Times listings, the school also jumped up the national rankings, from 54th place last year to 49th out of the 2,000 top-performing schools in the UK which feature in the 2019 league table. The newspaper's Parent Power guide - regarded as the most authoritative analysis of the country's best schools - also reports that state schools are closing the gap on private schools, with grammars leading the race to the top.

Latest results reveal a surge in the number of top grades awarded to grammar school pupils in this summer's harder GCSEs, says the newspaper. Students at RGS achieved 79.5% of A-level results at grades A\*-B and 65.8% of GCSEs at A\*/A-9-7. Skipton Girls' High School, which achieved 68% and 50.7% respectively, is ranked in second place in the northern league table. Fulford School in York is placed fourth and Ermysted's Grammar School, also in Skipton, in sixth place. Now in its 26th year, The Sunday Times guide aims to help parents compare the performance of schools, linking up to school websites and Ofsted reports.

# We're all talking about House music

Around 1,000 students and staff filled the sports hall for the first ever RGS House Singing Competition, which lit up the whole school community in March. The hugely popular inaugural event, judged by director of music Edward Seymour's brother John (of Sedburgh School) and our own Chantal Lancaster, saw Porteus House win both the group and part-performance sections of the competition. Edward Seymour, who organised the event, said he could see the positive impact it had not only on House spirit but the whole school community: "There was such a feeling of fulfilment as people left the sports hall. I'm sure it will go from strength to strength." Singing at RGS has become more prominent in recent years, with students gaining a growing reputation for stunning choral performances. The number of choirs has risen from two to five and, at the end of last year, around 100 of the school's talented singers got together to release a debut album of Christmas carols, recorded in the magnificent setting of Ripon Cathedral, where the chamber choir regularly performs. The



Headmaster Jonathan Webb and head of Porteus House Libby Rickard with judges John Seymour and Chantal Lancaster

school's musicians and singers have also had the chance to shine at a wide range of school performances throughout the year, including our popular autumn concert, when players from the Under-13s rugby team rushed back from a match while still in their muddy kits to leap on stage and take their places in the junior choir. That's dedication...



# Art & SOUL

*A talented former RGS student was tragically killed in a car crash with her husband three years after the couple founded an innovative art school in Scotland. Thirty years on their artistic legacy is still thriving*

**L**eith School of Art is a hub of creativity. Vibrant and energetic, it's an environment which has inspired the thousands of students who have passed through its doors over the past 30 years. Tragically, Lottie and Mark Cheverton, the visionary couple who founded the art school with the aim of offering a centre for creativity, intellectual awareness and personal growth, were killed in a car crash when they were just 31 and 39 years old.

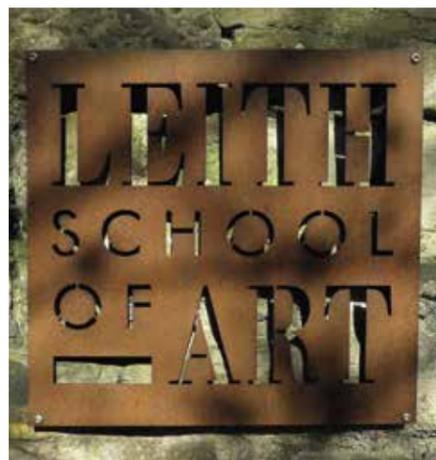
Although their pioneering Leith School of Art had been an instant success when it opened three years earlier, they sadly didn't live to see it grow and develop into the acclaimed and prestigious institution it is today.

This year the art school, also known as LSA, is celebrating its 30th anniversary with a series of parties, events and exhibitions. With its alumni including leading names in both the Scottish and international art scene, it serves as a magnificent legacy and fitting tribute to its two remarkable founders.

LSA principal Phil Archer, who met Lottie and Mark in London in the late Seventies, stepped up and took over the school in order to ensure its work would continue after the tragedy because, he says, he shared and fully believed in the couple's vision for it.



**Sunshine on Leith: Lottie Cheverton, pictured top left (and with husband Mark on our front cover) has left behind a creative legacy which thousands of students have benefited from, the Leith School of Art, right.**



Lottie and Mark were convinced anyone could learn to think and communicate visually: "They were a remarkable couple, both were very charismatic and personable and everyone loved them," he explains.

During their many idealistic discussions about art in the Seventies, Archer recalls he, Mark and Lottie concluding that it would be wonderful to see a small, community-like art school, which passionately believed in teaching art with clarity and structure, as well as any other subject, while nurturing and caring for each individual student.

That was when the idea for Leith School of Art was born.

Talented artist Lottie's artistic potential was, sadly, never to be fully realised. The youngest

child of Harrogate MP James Ramsden and his wife Juliet, she left Ripon Grammar School in 1975 and went on to study at the Slade School of Fine Art in London.

Although cut down in her prime, the body of work she did leave behind - some of which has been exhibited in the Royal Scottish Academy and Westminster Cathedral crypt - is both powerful and impressive.

Community-spirited and with a broad, international outlook on life, she won a travelling scholarship to study Christian iconography in Cappadocia in Turkey and also persuaded artists from all over Scotland to donate paintings for display in aid of developing countries in an Art for Africa appeal.

While in London, Lottie painted people living on the streets, a topic she continued to explore when she moved to Edinburgh to teach at Fettes College. Drawn to religious themes and later to the fishermen of Leith Docks, she was fascinated by other people's lives and became well known for her sculptural still lifes.

She married Harrow-born Mark, who was head of art at The Edinburgh Academy and a skilful and innovative printmaker, at West Tanfield parish church near Ripon, in 1982.

Driven by their shared vision, both left secure teaching jobs to set up the art school in a run-down 19th century Norwegian Seamen's church in Leith, which they bought with their own savings.

*More over...*

One of Lottie's creations, titled **Boat for Tim** (1986), below. A foundation course exhibition at Leith School of Art, right, showcases students' talent



A dream come true: the restored 19th century Norwegian Seamen's church, left, which remains at the centre of LSA today



With the initial aim of creating a college with a vital artistic life, emphasising both tradition and innovation, they opened a summer school with community courses to begin with but, before long, LSA was offering a foundation course, alongside a wide range of other short courses.

Recognising that studying art could be a challenging experience, Lottie and Mark were determined to create a positive teaching tradition and a nurturing learning environment which would foster work of distinctive quality and character.

It was an instant success, with courses quickly filling up, their dream rapidly turning to reality.

Since their tragic deaths, the school has continued to grow and evolve. Today, around 300 students a week pass through the studios, with most of those taking the foundation course going on to secure places at top universities.

Distinguished past students include the award-winning Aleppo painter and refugee Nihad Al Turk, who was supported by LSA after fleeing to Edinburgh from Syria. A winner of the prestigious international Golden Prize at the Latakia Beinnale, his work has been exhibited in New York, London and Dubai.

Renowned Scottish artist Toby Paterson went on to win the esteemed Beck's Futures Prize in

both 2002 and 2007 and was commissioned by BBC Scotland to create an artwork outside its Glasgow headquarters.

Painter Mary Ramsden (who also happens to be Lottie's niece) was the first LSA alumna to exhibit at Tate Britain, London, while Pernille Spence, a recipient of the Scottish Arts Council Creative Scotland Award, has been exhibiting her groundbreaking installations, performances and moving-image works throughout Europe.

The school, which now has 40 members of staff, has expanded into a nearby building, adding additional studios and lecture space to the original studios established on three levels in the main church building. Further developments include a sculpture courtyard, library and gallery area.

Alongside the highly successful year-long foundation course, and in keeping with its founders' original ideology, LSA has expanded its community classes, aimed at local people on benefits who have never had the opportunity to study art, and has established a school outreach programme, offering an art school experience to pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The school also offers three of the strongest performing art school graduates career-launching residencies with a professional development programme aimed at helping to establish them as artists.

**Celebrating 30 successful years: the invite to a big, creative party at the end of March this year - one of a series of events marking Leith School of Art's milestone - far right, middle**

**Leith encourages students both to innovate - as in this thought-provoking installation, right, - and to explore more traditional mediums, such as oil painting, far right**



*More over...*

Leith's 40 members of staff support and guide the 300 students, from beginners to established professionals, who pass through its studios every week



## Inspirational teacher wins top award

A former RGS chemistry teacher, who uses chocolate, songs and scratch cards to get her message across to students, is one of the youngest ever winners of a prestigious national award

Former RGS chemistry teacher Jo Rushworth is one of the youngest winners of a prestigious national higher education award for teaching excellence. Dr Rushworth, who was known as Miss Humphrey during her three years at RGS, has been presented with a National Teaching Fellowship, which celebrates and recognises individuals who have made an outstanding impact on students and teaching.

The 35-year-old's unconventional lecturing methods include using chocolate, songs and scratch cards to teach biochemistry, and she is keen for her students to co-create their own lectures. Having joined RGS as a newly-qualified teacher ten years ago, she left to study for her PhD before getting a job as a lecturer at De Montfort University (DMU), where she has worked for four years.

She champions an innovative teaching approach, which provides a flexible learning experience for every student, and is known for introducing her lectures in 20 languages. Jo now teaches other lecturers on the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education course that she helped to create at DMU.

Professor Jackie Labbe, Pro Vice Chancellor for Teaching and Learning at DMU, said Jo was an inspirational role model: "She places her students at the heart of everything she does."

When she left RGS to study for her PhD, Jo said her ultimate ambition was to make teaching and learning more inclusive and engaging in higher education.

She told Clocktower 'My time at RGS inspired me and provided me with the foundations to progress in my career.'

At the core of all these developments, the primary vision of its founders remains as strong as ever: "The legacy of Lottie and Mark Cheverton continues," says Archer, who points out that one of the lecturers on the foundation course is another alumnus of Ripon Grammar, the award-winning illustrator Andrew Baker, who left RGS in 1982.

Mark and Lottie are a continuing inspiration, says Lottie's brother George, who has written a book, *Leith, Scotland's Independent Art School*, to commemorate their work: "Their lives cast long shadows," he says.

\**Leith School of Art, 25, North Junction Street, Edinburgh EH6 6HW. T: 0131 554 5761 E: enquiries@leithschoolofart.co.uk W: www.leithschoolofart.co.uk*

Year-long courses start in September, day and evening courses are booked on a termly basis.

\**LEITH, Scotland's Independent Art School (Founders and Followers) by George Ramsden, published by Stone Trough Books, £25.*

\**Clocktower cover photomontage by Andrew Baker. Photo of Lottie and Mark by Pat Aithie*



Students inspired to raise £15,397 for hospice

# RECORD BREAKERS

A school fundraising drive led by two inspirational students who lost their fathers to cancer has raised a record-breaking £15,397 for the local hospice which cared for both men while also supporting their families.

Pupils at Ripon Grammar School threw themselves into raising the staggering amount for Saint Michael's Hospice in Harrogate during the school's Charity Week with events including dance battles, a staff rock band concert, sumo wrestling and a pantomime.

The whole school rallied behind the campaign, with history teacher David Bruce running his first marathon to add £1,000 to the total and fourth former Ella Foster completing ten 10K runs to raise another £1,500.

Students from all year groups ran stalls, sixth formers organised a charity function and pupils in one form raised £390 by swimming more than the distance of a marathon - 2,131 lengths - in the school pool during their lunch hour.

Louise Taylor, 17, and Grace Withyman, 16, initiated the fundraising campaign when they presented a moving assembly to the whole school, explaining how the hospice, which needs to raise £5m annually, had helped them.

After urging their fellow pupils to support this worthy cause, the two sixth form students were overwhelmed by just how much everyone took the appeal to their hearts.

Grace, from Ripon, whose father Jim, a barrister, sadly died aged 49 in 2017, said she was delighted at how much the school had raised: "It's such an amazing cause. This charity is so important as I think all families should have the same support on offer if they need it. I know from first-hand experience that it makes the world of difference when you're losing your loved one," she said.

Louise, from Grewelthorpe, said: "I am so proud

of the way the whole school got behind the cause and made it such a school community fundraising effort." She said staff at the hospice had helped her whole family when her father Chris, a builder, sadly died aged 54: "I know our fundraising will make such a difference to so many people's lives," she said.

Louise added that she was pleased to have helped make the rest of the school more aware of the great work Saint Michael's does, following a visit to the hospice by school officers: "I think we did get the message across about the

amazing work that they do, not only in the hospice itself but also through their grief counselling and home care services."

Chief executive of Saint Michael's Hospice, Tony Collins, described the amount raised by Ripon Grammar School - the largest amount ever raised by one school fundraising event for the hospice - as remarkable and inspiring: "We would like to extend a sincere thank you to all the pupils, staff and parents for their enthusiasm and generosity," he said.

"This truly impressive donation of £15,300 will help us ensure local

people living with a terminal illness, and their families, can make the most of precious time together."

Students at RGS raise around £10,000 every year for a chosen charity, but this one has been the best yet, said Louise: "It was the most successful charity week in my seven years at RGS, not only in raising the sum of money raised but also general awareness.

"Despite the fun we all had it was for a good cause, which was something that was echoed throughout, and it makes me proud that it was for the charity that I put forward and is so close to my heart."

**Pictured above: Grace Withyman, left, and Louise Taylor, right, surrounded by their fellow students, present the £15,397 cheque to St Michael's Hospice fundraiser Beth Crewe**



## The history girls

These gifted hockey players make up the most successful sports team in Ripon Grammar School's history. They are pictured above after achieving their dream by beating the best in the country following a tense penalty shoot-out at a prestigious national finals in London's Olympic stadium.

The Under-18s team, who have been competing at top national level for the past two years, were crowned State Boarding National Champions in front of an ecstatic crowd of parents and supporters who travelled to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park from Yorkshire.

They followed this by winning a place in the Under-18s girls' National Indoor Hockey Finals, for the second time, as north of England champions, where they faced the best U-18 indoor hockey players in the country.

PE teacher Siobhan Gilfillan said the 15-strong squad were, undoubtedly, the most successful sporting team ever to have emerged from Ripon Grammar School.

Although hot on their heels is the Under-18s netball team (pictured above), who celebrated



**Our national champion hockey players are the most successful team in RGS sporting history, with our netball players close behind**

bringing home the National State Boarding Schools championship trophy in March and also reached the national schools finals four years ago. PE teacher Rachael Clark said they played outstandingly against Gordon's School in the semi and Cranbrook School in the recent final and praised the girls' dedication: "They are a superbly talented squad and have fantastic versatility."

The hockey players, who have played together for seven years, were also up against Surrey's Gordon's School in this year's state boarding finals, where they dominated the first half, but ended up in their second penalty shoot-out of the day after finishing 2-2 at full time before emerging victorious.

Player Bethany Hamby said parents were waving the Yorkshire flag from the stands: "It was really

amazing to play on such a professional pitch. The great team spirit and support carried us through."

Just weeks later, the girls' team was one of only two state schools competing in the prestigious National Indoor Finals in Worcestershire. As well as reaching the National Indoor Finals once before, as Under-16s in 2017, they narrowly missed the finals last year. This time, they defeated Hymers College in a thrilling semi-final match in Bradford and, having beaten Ilkley Grammar to secure the top North seeding, they were up against tough opposition from leading independent sporting schools including Wellington College, Repton, King's Bruton, St Lawrence College, Millfield and Cranleigh in the finals. Although they didn't come away with the trophy, they certainly did Yorkshire proud during the two-day tournament, having established themselves as one of the top ten girls' teams in the country.

Miss Gilfillan said: "It has been a real privilege to work with the girls, they are such a credit to our school. The fact they have trained together, played together and been good friends for seven years has made them gel the way they have."

## Young investors take the stock market by storm



Four budding economists from RGS beat more than 5,000 school teams from all over the world to make it to the semi-finals of a prestigious stock market challenge. The ambitious fourth formers, competing against students up to four years older than themselves, were, at one point, positioned in the top 1% of those taking part.

The boys - Archie Heap, Shen Jie Yaw, Bertie Wood and Tristan Paris - narrowly missed out on making the top eight schools from the semi-finals selected to compete for the big prize - an all-expenses paid trip to New York. The Student Investor Challenge, run by the London Institute of Banking & Finance, enrols teams to invest virtual money on the London Stock Exchange and trade stocks and shares to make a profit.

Archie, Jie, Bertie and Tristan (pictured l-r above) made up one of the 5,622 teams who started out in October 2018 with £200,000 of virtual money to invest. After three months, they were ranked 62nd in the world among the teams - from countries including the States, China, United Arab Emirates, India, Spain, Malaysia, the Czech Republic and Thailand - taking part. RGS work-related learning co-ordinator Bob Walker said the students had picked up vital skills which would equip them well for the future: "I have been very impressed with the team's work ethic and their interest in the world beyond what is taught in the classroom." They ended up in 27th place overall, which was still a tremendous achievement, he said.

## Royal honour



Success has come in threes for community-minded RGS PE teacher and founder of Ripon City Netball Club Helen Mackenzie, whose contribution to society has been recognised locally and nationally. Shortly after being crowned Riponian of the Year, she

received a prestigious British Citizen Award certificate of recognition. And, to top it all, Mrs Mackenzie, known affectionately by her students as Miss Mac, then received a letter inviting her to the Queen's Buckingham Palace Royal Garden Party on May 29. She also leads a swimming academy, on top of her Saturday role with the ACE academy, is an enthusiastic member of Ripon Lions and was one of the 2012 Olympic torch bearers.

# Inside Westminster

**What was your first job, and what did that entail?**

My first ever job was working in retail (Next and Jack Wills) whilst doing my A-levels and at university, but my first actual job was working on the new business development team for a tech start-up called Webroot. The company had developed one of the first cloud-based internet security software packages, and my role was to identify possible corporate clients and sell our solution to them, whilst gathering business-critical information about renewal dates and their competitors. It was a fun company, but relatively tedious, and based in Bracknell which is the back-end of beyond. The job only lasted three months before the entire new business team was outsourced to Ireland for efficiency savings and tax purposes.

**What is your job title now and what is your day-to-day role?**

Senior parliamentary assistant. I've worked for four MPs in my time (one backbencher, and three cabinet ministers) and each office is varied. My current role is to support the leader of the House of Commons, the Rt Hon. Andrea Leadsom MP, in her position as MP for South Northamptonshire. I manage all of her constituency priorities, from campaigning for bypasses to opposing unwanted planning applications. A lot of my work is meeting with stakeholders on Andrea's behalf, including senior management for organisations like HS2 and Highways England, and pushing these priorities forward on her behalf. I am also in frequent contact with her constituents across a variety of matters. I manage her social media presence, create content for her website, write speeches, and do a whole host of other ad hoc activities. I also have responsibility for parts of Andrea's early years/secure attachment agenda, which is focused on changing policy to ensure every baby has the best possible start in life.

**Could you outline your career path and what led you to the job you are in today?**

After being made redundant from Webroot (we were all told to pack up our desks and leave at the end of the day), I fell into recruitment for Page Group. Initially based in Guildford and Reading, I worked with corporate clients to fill part-qualified financial vacancies (for management accountants, financial accountants and finance Managers) across a range of sectors. I was promoted and asked to take on Page's new non-London insurance recruitment market, based in Reading but covering the entirety of the South West of England - a lot of very early and very late train journeys were involved to get to and from clients in Cornwall and Devon! I was then moved into Page's head office in central London to work on their London insurance market; this was lots of fun and involved some great client meetings. Brokers tend to finish their working week at around 3pm on a Thursday, so we would discuss business



**TOMMY GILCHRIST** left RGS in 2006 to study geography at university after seven happy years as a boarding student. He is now senior parliamentary assistant to the leader of the House of Commons, Andrea Leadsom

over a pint or few in the pub. I left Page Group to take up a more senior position with a small bespoke recruitment agency - RedHAT Recruitment - in central London that focused on financial recruiting for the media industry, and I worked with some very cool clients including VICE, Tiger Endemol, Hearst Magazines, and Channel 4. However, recruitment is a very repetitive industry. I got itchy feet, and decided I needed a career change. I was already involved in politics in my spare time, and had lots of friends working in Westminster, so I pivoted in that direction in 2013/14. It took

*I get an absolute thrill walking around the Palace of Westminster late at night. But the thing I love most is working for someone with a passion for tackling social injustice*

a lot of applications and an unpaid internship with Hove Conservative MP Mike Weatherley, but I managed to secure a paid role with former secretary of state for education and minister for women Nicky Morgan before moving to Liz Truss and finally into the role I have now with Andrea Leadsom.

**Could you give us an example of a typical day?**

They don't exist! But the day always starts with processing the varying amounts of inbound correspondence Andrea receives from constituents, government departments, local authorities and private companies - both via hard post and email - before cracking on with making progress on her constituency priorities. My role is mainly desk-based in the Palace of Westminster, but an average day can see me holding meetings on various local or national issues, sitting down with journalists to outline Andrea's position or views, representing Andrea at an event, or meeting with constituents. I tend to go to the constituency at least once a fortnight. Most evenings there is a reception to attend in Westminster in aid of one cause or another. The average day is around 12 hours long.

**What do you enjoy most about the job?**

I still get an absolute thrill walking around the Palace of Westminster, especially when it's late at night and you have the building to yourself - there's a real sense of majesty about the place. But the thing I love most is working for someone with a real passion for tackling social injustice, particularly through her early years portfolio. As



a passionate believer myself that our future is so much brighter outside of the EU, it was amazing to be working alongside one of the leading lights of the Brexit campaign.

**And what do you like least about the role?**

When someone gets in touch with an issue, and there's literally nothing that you can do because they're not a constituent, or it's a legal matter. MPs (and their offices) are prohibited from dispensing legal advice, and often people will contact asking for help with something we can't get involved in. You always try and signpost them somewhere if you can.

**What careers were you interested in when you were a student at RGS?**

I wanted to be a palaeobotanist, marine biologist or volcanologist. I left RGS wanting to teach geography.

**What was the most important thing you learnt at RGS?**

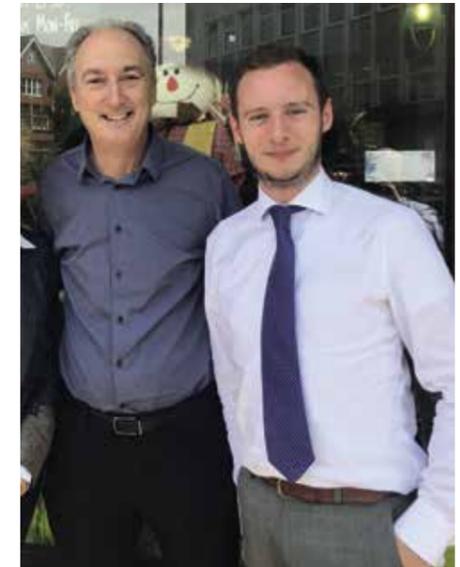
Poetry by Martial, our Latin class's favourite, was one of the best things I learnt. One of the most

**In the thick of it: Tommy, left with Leadsom and transport minister Nus Ghani, above, on the steps of No. 10, top right with MP Mike Weatherley and below with Stanley Johnson**

important? To stand up for what you believe in, and not to accept authority without questioning it.

**What do you miss most about your time at school?**

Looking back, I really enjoyed boarding but didn't realise how character-building it would be at the time. I think the thing I miss most is the freedom RGS gave to explore your own interests, and the support given by many teachers to pursue extra-curricular work. I remember Mrs Wright encouraging me to contact Margaret Atwood when we were studying *The Handmaid's Tale*, and she ended up sending me facsimile copies of all the original research she undertook for the book. Or Ms Charlton helping me to research viral haemorrhagic fevers following my interest after reading Richard Preston's *The Hot Zone*. Or Miss Murray and I discussing alternative theories of glaciation, and whether 'Snowball Earth' or 'Slushball Earth' was more likely. The teachers at RGS were and are amazing.



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

That you don't have to know at 18 precisely what you want to do when you're older or have a career plan mapped out by the time you leave school or university. That you will continually be discovering new things about the world and yourself as you grow older, and it is important to be open-minded about other people's views and experiences.

**What is the one piece of advice you would give current RGS students?**

Take advantage of every opportunity presented to you. Open every door. Be curious. Oh, and do your Duke of Edinburgh Award. This was, singlehandedly the most important non-academic thing I did at school and would always come up in conversation during job interviews.



What advice would you give those students who are interested in following a similar career to you?

If you want to work in politics, particularly in Westminster, then do as much work experience as you can. Decide which party you most closely affiliate with and join it. Go out campaigning at weekends with your local association. Ask your MP for a week's experience in the summer. Go to party conferences.

Who was your favourite teacher and why?

Too many to name them all. Miss Richardson (ancient history in first year, Latin in second and third years) for being so passionate about her subject area, and for taking the time to teach an otherwise unruly student. All of my geography teachers (Chris Wise, Sarah Maude and Marita Murray over seven years) for being brilliant and creative in their teaching methods, they all inspired me to go on to study for a BSc in physical geography at the University of Reading.

Mrs Knowles (English in second year) for her ability to bring you into the story of the text we studied, and for her mad love of Harry Potter (she proudly wore the Quidditch top she'd bought from the Harry Potter store in New York). Terry Fell (GCSE English) for his riotous sense of humour, and determination to make sure everyone in the class achieved his or her potential. Ms Charlton (biology for seven years) for her wonderful way of explaining a complex subject-matter, and being so engaging with her classes. Mr Postlethwaite for just being 'The Boss'.

Too many great stories about too many fantastic teachers.

Who or what inspired you when you were at school?

I was and am a huge supporter of Mrs Thatcher, and she was an inspiration for wanting to get involved in Conservative Party politics.



*'The teachers at RGS were and are amazing'*



The inside story: Tommy, top, with Andrea Leadsom at the Conservative Party HQ and catching up with his former Geography teacher, Marita Murray, during a return visit to Ripon Grammar School. Above, Tommy with his boss, Andrea Leadsom

Medics, dentists, vets, engineers, economists and historians studying at universities including Durham, Edinburgh, Newcastle, York, London's Imperial College, Oxford and Cambridge are among the latest former students to join the ranks of RGS's alumni

High-attaining students at Ripon Grammar School have been urged to go out and achieve great things to make the world a better place. Record-breaking A-level and outstanding GCSE students at the school's annual prize-giving ceremony in November were told that they are destined to be our future leaders.

"You are the most talented group I have probably ever addressed. And that is saying something," said Sir Gary Verity, former Welcome to Yorkshire tourism boss, who presented the awards.

The presentation marked another year of exceptional results for the school, with students achieving 95% of GCSEs at grades A\*-B/9-5 and 79.5% of A-levels at grades A\*-B.

The 2018 sixth form leavers, whose impressive performance broke all RGS records, returned to their old school to take pride of place in front of a packed hall, filled with parents, civic dignitaries, governors and staff.

The former pupils, most now studying at elite Russell Group universities, were joined by those students who excelled in their GCSEs in the summer, achieving some of the best results RGS has ever seen.

But the audience hadn't gathered to celebrate academic achievements alone. The school is also renowned for its sports, music, drama and community and volunteering work and students received special awards for excelling in these areas.

Among the school's new alumni are medics, dentists, vets, engineers, economists and historians, studying at universities including Durham, Edinburgh, Newcastle, York, London's Imperial College, Oxford and Cambridge.

Others are reading subjects as diverse as commercial pilot training, international relations, marine technology, creative writing, astrophysics, fashion merchandising and aerospace engineering, while a number have taken up high-level apprenticeships in business, accounting and with ITV.

Sir Gary told them: "You have received the greatest start in life from your education here, in this city at this fantastic school, a great Yorkshire school. I think this is a really special place.

"All of you have been equipped to be the next generation of leaders in our world. It is now



A great start in life: Sir Gary, below, says our recent leavers received a fantastic education at Ripon Grammar School



# Leaders of the future

looking towards you to take things forward. Reflect on how you are going to change the world for the better."

Sir Gary presented prizes to those A-level students who achieved four A\*-A passes or three A\*-A plus a B grade, as well as for exceptional performances in individual subjects. GCSE students who gained a C or higher in every

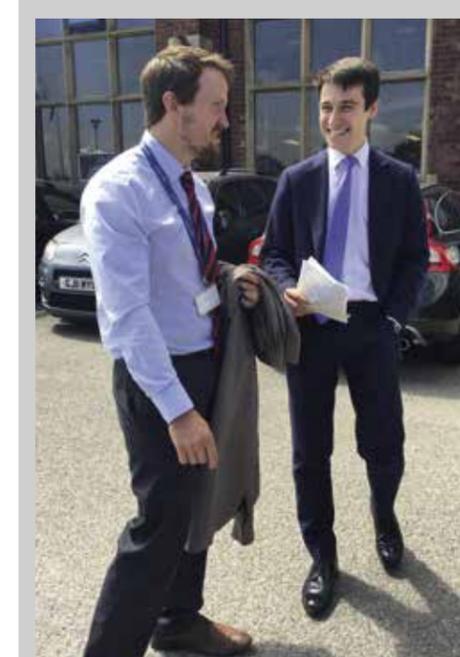
subject were recognised, and also given prizes for high achievements in particular subjects.

Headmaster Jonathan Webb described RGS - one of the few state schools which offers boarding - as a 'proud Yorkshire school', where boys and girls excel and secure their dreams.

Near the top of the tree nationally for adding

value, he told the audience that latest measurements of the progress pupils make from primary school to the end of their time at Ripon Grammar School now place RGS 60th out of 6,000 schools nationally.

Sir Gary concluded: "You all have talents. You owe it to yourself to be the very best you can be. Have great lives and achieve great things."



Happy days: Hugh catches up with his former history teacher Michael Spiers

# Treasure your school

A past pupil now working for the Treasury says Ripon Grammar School is a very special place which is preparing students well for the future. Hugh McHale-Maughan, who left Ripon Grammar School in 2013, was special guest at the annual lower school prizegiving.

Hugh, who is assistant private secretary to city minister John Glen MP, said the school was the place where he had spent his happiest years.

He told students: "Your lives are going to be great. You are some of the most well-educated students in the world living in a country that is one of the wealthiest, safest and happiest on the planet."

Hugh, who gained a first-class degree in philosophy, politics and economics at Oxford University, said the world of work the students would enter in the late 2020s would be unrecognisable: "Eighty five per cent of jobs in 2030 haven't been invented yet, so if

you don't know what you want to do, don't worry."

"The best way to prepare for the new jobs of the future is to learn a set of skills at school that you can apply anywhere.

"Working hard, being kind to each other, they are the core skills that RGS will teach you that will set you apart in the workplace."

Hugh said globalisation would be the single biggest influence on our society going forward but this would not diminish the importance of the local community, which will remain crucial to people having better and more grounded lives.

"This community is very special and will remain so. It's a place of high achievement but also of happiness, fun and kindness. This is a wonderful and precious place that will set you up for long and interesting lives."

He's done it! Former RGS student Iain Johnston has cycled around the world on a bike he built himself

# WORLD CLASS

**A** former Ripon Grammar School student has achieved his dream of circumnavigating the globe by bicycle after arriving back home in Yorkshire, where his epic 17,134-mile journey began 15 months before.

Iain Johnston successfully completed his monumental challenge when he cycled into his home town of Ripon after pedalling for more than 1,600 hours through 29 countries.

The 30-year-old accountant marked the occasion by stopping off with his bike at his old school, where students, staff and parents have been following his progress.

"It feels surreal that I can now say I have cycled around the world. It has been an incredible journey and I'm sure the trip has changed me as a person," he said.

"My plan is to rest up as the last week of cycling in the wind, rain and cold really took it out of me. I'm sure it'll take a little getting used to not having to get up on a morning and get on the bike," added Iain, who spent a remarkable 305 days in the saddle.

Headmaster Jonathan Webb said the whole school was proud of Iain's amazing achievement, an inspiration to students and staff alike: "We've all been following Iain's

progress with interest through regular updates in our alumni magazine. It is an incredible accomplishment."

Inspired by celebrated Scottish cyclist Mark Beaumont, who cycled the world in 80 days, Iain even slept in an under-stairs cupboard so that he could rent out his bedroom in order to help fund the £16,000 cost of the trip.

"I took the risk of leaving my job and told anyone who would listen about my trip to make it difficult to pull out," he explained.

Unlike Beaumont, Iain completed the solo trip with no back-up support, camping in secluded spots most nights and carrying all his kit on a bike which he built himself.

Now that he's back home in Yorkshire, and about to start a new job, Iain says it feels odd not sleeping in a tent at night: "I'm sure I'll soon get back into the swing of ordinary life again."

Getting up most days at 5am, he cycled an average of 56 miles in temperatures ranging from minus five to 50 degrees Celsius for around six-and-a-half hours each day, surviving on a diet of bread, noodles, beans, pasta and eggs, supplemented by the occasional restaurant meal.

## Mighty gift from two grateful students

**T**wo past pupils grateful for the education they received at RGS returned to present the school with the gift of an oak tree.

Rob Gibson and Lucas Fawcett both left school in 2018, Rob to study chemistry at the University of Nottingham and Lucas economics and social policy at the University of Edinburgh.

Lucas said: "Both Rob and I felt we should try and find a meaningful gift as we both cherish our time at the school and an oak tree represents

our time and the time of our peers spent at RGS. It is nice to think that future students may relax in the shade during summer lunch breaks when it's grown, long after Rob and I are gone."

Rob added: "The oak tree is a tribute to the school and a mark of the time we spent there. It's a fantastic school that really provides excellent opportunities for those who work hard".

Rob said his favourite teachers were Mr Walker

and Dr Grime: "They both helped guide me and pick my career path which I am now perusing".

Lucas said his favourite teacher was Mr Demir: "He was brilliant and it was in his lessons where I grew a deep interest in economics. Mrs Fell was also a favourite, not only an excellent teacher but the support she offered me outside of lessons was unbelievable."

Rob pictured left, and Lucas, right

*It would be nice if I could inspire a few people to head off on an adventure themselves*



Alma Mater: Iain returned to his old school after completing his monumental challenge

His journey took him through Holland, Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia and Bulgaria, where he climbed a challenging and particularly breath-taking 2,500m summit on the Turkish border before descending into Georgia.

Some of the astonishing sights he saw along the way, he says, included Istanbul's Ahmed Mosque and the ancient city of Troy, which he recalled learning about in ancient history classes at school.

From Georgia, he crossed the Caspian Sea, through Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, into India: "India was one of the hardest countries to cycle through, the roads were in an awful state of repair and the amount of pollution gave me a persistent cough. But I really enjoyed the friendliness and kindness the

local people showed me, building fires to keep me warm and sharing their food."

After spending a few months in Southeast Asia, he cycled across Australia, from Perth to Sydney.

"The biggest challenge in Australia was the vast distances between settlements and the camping in Australia was a challenge in itself with huge ants' nests, mice, curious kangaroos visiting me at dusk and, on one occasion, a dingo stealing one of my panniers full of food."

From Australia, Iain took a flight to the States: "I found North America the most difficult part of the trip due to the heat and remoteness of some sections, especially cycling across the Mojave Desert, the hottest desert in the world.

Apart from the heat, I have been faced with daily thunderstorms, hail the size of golf balls, coyotes, altitude sickness, sandstorms and the threat of tornadoes.

"But visiting the Petrified Forest National Park, the Grand Canyon caverns, the starry night skies in the deserts and the friendly Americans I met along the way made all the hardship worthwhile," added Iain, who cycled across Ireland and Wales before returning to England and making his way to Yorkshire.

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

## Grace in favour

**S**ome RGS students may spot a familiar face on TV in May. Actress Grace Lancaster, who left school in 2010, recently finished filming a guest role on BBC1's TV series Doctors, which follows the lives of staff and patients in a Midlands practice. Grace has been particularly busy over the past year. During her role as Miranda in Eastbourne Theatres' production of Return to the Forbidden Planet, she played a total of seven instruments, followed by a run as Cinderella in The Rock 'n' Roll Panto at Leeds City Varieties music hall.

"Dotted amongst acting jobs I have been travelling all over the world with the New York Brass Band, in places such as China, Georgia, Spain, Kuwait, Belgium and Ireland, with a European tour planned for this summer," she explained. "The next thing coming up on stage is a new musical about the Giles Family cartoons called Grandma Saves the Day which will be opening in Ipswich New Wolsey theatre and running until May 18," she said.



Amazing Grace: as Miranda, above

## Human rights journalism award



**C**ongratulations to Julia Atherley who was highly commended in Best Reporter and Best Human Rights Journalist categories at the Student Publication Association Awards in April. Julia, who left RGS in 2016 and is studying English literature at Durham University (where she has

just finished her role as editor-in-chief of the student newspaper) won her awards for articles exposing unfair working conditions for staff at the university and for a range of stories including reporting on racist chants at college balls and plans to introduce 8am lectures. She has also had work published in The Sunday Times and Euronews.

Former RGS boarding student Ed Ellington set up his first successful company when he was just 16 years old, in fifth form. He has now launched a new £25m property business



# GRAND DESIGNS

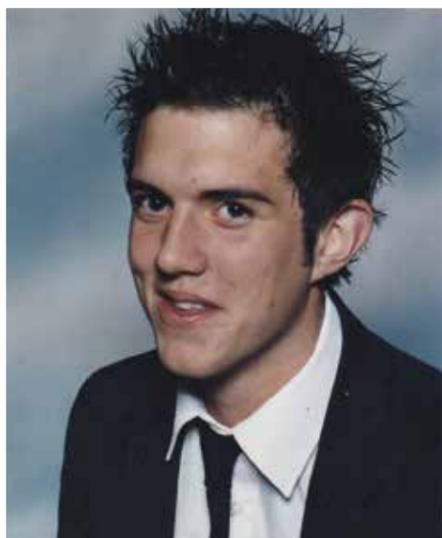
Ed, far left (centre) on the panel at the West Yorkshire Economic Growth Conference, and as a student at RGS, below

Developments he has worked on include Finzels Reach, left, Clippers Quay in Salford, below, and the Yorkshire Evening Post building in Leeds, below left

**G**round-breaking entrepreneur Ed Ellington was a 16-year-old boarding student at Ripon Grammar School when he set up his first successful company.

The ambitious fifth former established a pioneering text messaging house sale business, 118 Text Unlimited, after watching his parents look for a new property in Ripon and finding the whole process frustrating.

"They had to spend hours staring at estate agent windows and waiting for details to be sent through the post. It seemed a completely inefficient way of finding out basic information," he explains.



Ed had already paired up with an IT specialist business partner he met through a summer job: "He had created a server which allowed us to create short code messaging but couldn't think of a way to deploy the technology."

The duo linked up with Ed's sister who was working in publishing at the time: "So we started by trying to advertise the next book in a series by putting the short code at the end of books, however take-up was low.

"It was after this I came up with the idea of advertising properties instead and set up 118 Text."

The fledgling SMA promotion business, for pre-internet enabled phones, provided home purchasers with details regarding properties via a text message and ended up being a great success.

Sixteen years on, Ed is still making waves in the property market, having recently launched an innovative new £25m build-to-rent property business, with the aim of creating 1,500 new homes in residential schemes across 20 towns and cities throughout the UK over the next few years.

"Packaged Living will create purpose-built, high-quality accommodation with service at its core," he explains. "It's about taking the headache out of renting."

Ed was encouraged by his mother and father, who ran an education business: "They were always quite entrepreneurial so I suppose some of that must have rubbed off," he says. "And they were always quite supportive of my



ventures and harnessed my entrepreneurial spirit."

He was also inspired by a number of teachers at RGS: "My business studies teacher Mr Andrew, English teacher and form tutor Mr Fell and history teacher Mrs Deeming were all genuinely passionate about their subjects and the pupils they taught."

Having boarded for seven years, Ed says he learned a number of key life lessons at RGS: "The most important thing I learnt was confidence and the ability to put my views across, to enjoy discussion and debate and to

constantly challenge the norm," he says.

After leaving RGS in 2005, Ed, who was deputy head boy, had originally planned to follow his passion for history at university. But that was before the world of business beckoned.

"I ended up deciding to defer my university place and continue with the small start-up business I had begun whilst at school in 2003 instead," he says.

The intellectual property and server rights (IP) of Text 118 were ultimately bought by HBOS through its Halifax Estate Agency brand and,



as part of the purchase, HBOS subsequently brought Ed into its banking business and thereafter its equity investment business, focusing on creating dynamic property joint ventures across Europe.

"This is where I got my first taste for property," he says.

Ed left HBOS in 2009, having moved from start-up to banking without pause, working through an extremely interesting time in the banking world following the global financial crash of 2007.

He went on to take up a place at Newcastle Business School, gaining a first class degree and achieving the highest grades on his economics and management course.

Following his graduation from Newcastle Business School, Ed joined Grainger PLC, the largest listed residential landlord.

"Thus began an eight-year career spanning the UK and Germany, which involved investing more than £1bn in building a new style of rental accommodation, now dubbed the private rental sector (PRS)."

More over...

# Doing the Wright thing

One of our longest-serving members of staff, English teacher **SARAH WRIGHT** has taught students at RGS for the past 17 years. She looks back fondly on her time at the school



**Ventures new:** Mrs Wright will be developing her holiday cottage business, after bidding a fond farewell to RGS after 17 years

**T**he past seventeen years seem to have flown by and I have seen a few changes at Ripon Grammar School since I made my way up the driveway in 2002 for an interview for the post of full time English teacher. Three headmasters and three heads of department later I have decided to try my hand at a very different line of work.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my teaching career and have taught in a wide range of schools, from a comprehensive in Middlesbrough, two schools in the south of England and a few years at Northallerton College before landing at the doors of RGS where my interest in education has continued to develop. The reasons for embarking on a teaching career - the love for my subject, the feeling of satisfaction that I was contributing to the preparation of future generations for their lives in the wider society, and the joy of interaction in the classroom - have never faded. I will miss the enthusiasm and exuberance of the younger pupils; I will miss witnessing the rapid growth of intellectual maturity during the GCSE years and the academic curiosity and thirst for knowledge that I see during the more seminar-style sixth form sessions. I have valued the support of my highly committed colleagues

- educators and non-teaching staff alike - who all contribute to the very special ethos of this grammar school where our students genuinely appreciate the high level of education and opportunities offered. However, I feel that the time is ripe for a change in direction.

For the first time since I was five years old I am facing the challenge of organising my own time instead of being prompted by a rigid timetable and the insistent demand of a bell. We are renovating two cow byres that adjoin our home and I am currently project managing the development of the second of our holiday cottages; my plan is they will provide some sort of income as we head towards a different pace

of life. The newest member of our family, Freddy, a nine-month-old Great Dane, is also keeping me busy (he has all the traits of a rumbustious teenager), and we are enjoying stretching our legs along the local lanes.

I look back with great fondness on my time at Ripon Grammar, it is a very special school and my thoughtful English colleagues have ensured that I will be reminded of the essence of the place; at a recent evening out I was presented with a montage of iconic RGS images (Mr Fearnley really should add professional photography to his already impressive list of qualifications), and was given strict instructions to hang it in the smallest room, where it can be frequently viewed!

I wish every success to the students at RGS and raise a glass to my hardworking colleagues.

school to continue its progress without the burden of unnecessary, if well intentioned, reforms.

It was typical of this modest unassuming man that he made no reference to his contribution over the past decade, which is why he has been such an outstanding chair and will be greatly missed in the future.

\*We are delighted co-opted governor Elizabeth Jarvis, who has been a governor at RGS for four years, has agreed to step into Peter's shoes as chair. Elizabeth is a consultant renal physician at Leeds Teaching Hospital and is an honorary senior lecturer within the University of Leeds. An examiner and advisor for the Royal College of Physicians, she has a particular interest in undergraduate and postgraduate medical education and has responsibilities for the training of junior doctors. She is married to Stephen, with four children, the eldest two of whom are students at RGS.

See page 2: A letter from our chair of governors



*'Mr Andrew, Mr Fell and Mrs Deeming were the teachers who inspired me. They were all genuinely passionate about their subjects and the pupils they taught'*

He left Grainger, where he was acquisitions director, in 2018 and studied for an executive MBA at Regensburg University in Germany and Harvard in the States with a view to going back into the world of start-up, which is exactly what he's done with Packaged Living.

His new business will hopefully now become a leading developer and operator of homes for future generations, he says.

Unlike most companies in the build-to-rent sector, Packaged Living acts as an investor, developer and manager, buying sites without planning consent, designing schemes and taking them through the planning process to develop and manage them.

The company has already identified 20 towns and cities in the regions where it is looking to acquire sites.

"We'll talk to customers and local authorities first to create a building that is integral to the local community.

"I want to help create truly innovative communities for the future," he says.

**Inspired at RGS: Ed and wife Melanie with daughter Beatrix, above, at their home in Lincolnshire**

## A decade of making a difference at RGS

**P**eter Mason was talent spotted for RGS governors by the then headmaster, Martin Pearman. As chemists, they had worked together at Stamford School, when Mr Pearman was head of science and Dr Mason was Principal.

It was our good fortune that earlier in his career, following a move south to Reading School as headmaster, Peter and Sue Mason bought a cottage in Mickley as a holiday home-cum-bolthole. When retirement from Stamford beckoned in 2008, they moved to North Yorkshire.

Peter joined the governors in 2008 as an associate member, taking up a vacant co-opted place in 2009. At the time he was vice-chair of the governors at Manchester Grammar School, a post he relinquished in 2012. Possessed of a keen intellect and great clarity of thought, his worth and contributions were quickly understood and appreciated, particularly in the areas of boarding and curriculum. His long experience in boarding schools and his work as a senior examiner proved invaluable.

Dr Peter Mason led the RGS governing body through a period of change, with the constant pursuit of excellence at the heart of all he did. **IAN PRINGLE** looks back on his decade at the school

The progression to vice-chair in 2011 and chair in 2012 was almost inevitable and widely welcomed by all those who had worked with him. Peter has led the governing body through a period of continuing change and a climate of tight finances. Quietly authoritative and keen to engage all governors in the debate and decision-making, the process of governing at RGS has been honed to a considerable degree under his constant eye.

A stream of emails on a whole variety of topics and issues, which reflect his wide experience of educational matters, have maintained the tempo of governing body activity.



A number of major premises developments have come to fruition during this time, namely the music block, the humanities building and the sixth form boarding extension at Johnson House. Never one to claim personal credit, it would be true to say that Peter has played more than his fair share in bringing these projects to completion.

When asked for his recollections on his time at RGS, he remarked on the pleasure of working with two headmasters, and seeing the school grow in terms of its ambition, achievement and confidence. Regarding the future, his only real concern was that future governments would allow the



**W**e also said farewell to Michael Spiers, whose enthusiasm for his subject was truly infectious. He departed after eight years as head of history and a houseparent in School House to take up the post of head of history at The Mount School in York. Headmaster Jonathan Webb praised his obsessive passion for the minutiae of historical argument and practice, which earned him a cult following among students: "Under Mr Spiers, the history department flourished," he said.



**H**ighly respected maths teacher, deputy head of upper school and a house parent in School House, Alex Margerison left us after seven years to take up the post of head of sixth form at North Bridge House School in London. As well as leading a number of successful school ski trips, he helped develop the 1st XV rugby at RGS, with the team fittingly winning the Yorkshire Cup in his final year: "I have always been impressed by his calm and assured manner," said Mr Webb.



## Swimmers win top titles

Three talented swimmers are the pride of Ripon Grammar School after two were crowned double county champions with the third winning the title for the region. The dedicated trio, who put in hours of training, usually twice a day and often involving 4am starts, are among the fastest swimmers in the country.

Christa Wilson, 15, from Dishforth, has been selected to represent the North-East region in the 200m butterfly against top competitors from all over the country at the English Schools National Swimming Championships in Crawley in March. With her sights set on making it to the Olympics in 2024, her time of 2min 15sec has already seen her ranked second fastest in Britain in her category.

Anna Marley, 17, from West Tanfield, and Imogen Vollans, 15, from Ripon, each won the Yorkshire Amateur Swimming Association County Championship titles in the 100m and 200m backstroke for their age groups. Both Anna and Christa were also among the best swimmers from across Britain to be picked to take part in the British Swimming Championships in Glasgow.

RGS director of sport Adam Milner described all three girls as supremely talented: "They do amazingly well, balancing their commitments. They spend a huge amount of time before school and after school travelling long distances to train, while also swimming for school teams. They are a real credit to school and themselves."

Christa, a member of the Newcastle Swim Team, travels more than 1,000 miles a week to train with her elite swim squad, competing at county, regional, national and international level and winning numerous titles over the years. She qualified for the European Youth Olympic Festival trials last year and has been crowned county champion for Northumberland and Durham 20 times for different events.

More than 1,000 people gathered at RGS to remember those who fought for their country, including the five Wells brothers. We have since discovered a second family of five brothers from RGS who also fought in the Great War - whose parents appealed against their sixth son being called up

**R**elatives of five brothers from Ripon Grammar School who served in the First World War led the tributes to those from the school who fought and died for their country at a poignant Act of Remembrance.

The school playing fields were tinged with red as more than 900 pupils laid individual poppies in memory of the 50 former students and masters killed in WW1 and 49 killed in WW2.

Descendants of the Wells brothers laid a wreath in memory of Arthur, who died in action in 1916, aged 22, and his four younger brothers, Norman, Tom, Wilfred and Christopher, who all survived the war.

Among others being remembered were boys from the school's 1913 cricket team. Fifteen out of the sixteen players pictured in their last school photograph together, including Norman Wells, went off to fight. Five never returned.

Given that RGS had fewer than 100 pupils at the time, the scale of the loss was devastating, both for the school and the wider community.

As the nation marked the centenary of the end of WW1, more than 1,000 people, including students, former students, staff, parents and the mayors of Harrogate and Ripon, gathered around the school's Memorial Stone, overlooking the original playing fields where these boys and young men enjoyed playing rugby and cricket before the dark clouds of war changed their lives for ever.

Third formers Eva Scullion and Hetty Simenacz and second former Maisie Willis played the Last Post and the school's brass ensemble performed during the sombre and touching ceremony, when wreaths were also laid by Old Riponians alumni president Derek Crookes and head boy and girl, Thomas Mewes and Sola Sowole.

Until recently, descendants of the Wells brothers didn't realise two of the younger sons of Ripon wine and spirit merchants Isabella and Arthur Wells had also fought in the war and attended Ripon Grammar School.

But thanks to the Old Rips, who carried out extensive research into the lives of all the school's war heroes to ensure the stories of their bravery and sacrifice would never fade from our memories, they now have a clearer picture of what happened.

Arthur, a lieutenant in the Northumberland Fusiliers, who joined up when he was 20 years



# BROTHERS IN ARMS

*We have five sons in active service and hospital. He is our sixth son. It is right and fair we should have one son left to us*

Revd John Nesbitt

old in 1914, is one of the 72,337 names on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme in France.

Both Norman and Tom joined up in 1915, when they were aged 19 and 18. Wilfred was 18 when, following Arthur's death, he went to fight in 1917. And the youngest son, Christopher, only 12 years old when war broke out, volunteered the year after Arthur had been killed, when he was just 16.

Norman's granddaughter Rachel Wiecek, from Ripon, said it was difficult to comprehend the suffering endured by so many families at that time: "I can't imagine what my poor great-grandparents must have gone through, losing their first-born, Arthur, and with every one of their sons going off to fight at such a young age."

**Heroic band of brothers: pictured from top, Arthur (who was killed in action aged 22 in September 1916), Norman (who was a member of the RGS 1913 cricket team, five of whom were killed in the war), Tom, Wilfred (who was awarded the Military Medal for gallantry) and Christopher Wells (awarded the French Croix de Guerre)**



Wilfred's grandson Andrew Wells, from Great Ouseburn, said the story of the five Wells brothers reminded him of the plot of the film Saving Private Ryan, although his family was extremely lucky four out of the five brothers survived the conflict.

"They were all so young when they went to fight. Grampie Wells was wounded when he was 19 years old on October 23, 1918 and awarded the Military Medal for gallantry and conspicuous coolness under heavy shell and machine gun fire in attacking enemy strong points. But he never spoke of his experiences during WW1.

"Laying the wreath helps me remember the five Wells boys, who were part of this great school and then went on to fight in the Great War," he said. "It was very moving to see all 928 pupils come out onto the playing fields and lay their poppies today. I felt very proud."

Students at the school were also remembering those who fought and died from their families, said Headmaster Jonathan Webb: "This is a unique opportunity for the whole school to congregate and reflect together on this, the centenary of the ending of the First World War.

"As well as the 99 known Old Rips who died in both world wars, we are remembering those who have served and died in subsequent conflicts and reflecting on the impact war has had on Ripon and its wider community."

To coincide with the ceremony, the Old Rips organised an exhibition of the WW1 photographs, documents and memorabilia they gathered after scouring military records, school archives and the internet, as well as reading through copies of old school magazines, in order to discover more about those who died.

Old Rips president Derek Crookes has since discovered the story of the Nesbitt brothers from Leyburn, who were also all students at Ripon Grammar School. Norman Nesbitt was killed in action in August 1918, he was 28 years old. His brothers Arthur, Ashton, John and Eric all fought and survived. The sixth and youngest son, Bernard Noel, had his call-up revoked after his parents appealed.

His father, Revd John Nesbitt, wrote to the appeal tribunal: "We have five sons in active service and hospital and he is our sixth son. It is right and fair we should have one son left to us."

## Rising star Abi races against Olympic heroes

**R**ising cycling star Abi Smith has been racing against Olympic legends in the finals of the star-studded National Track Championships.

The talented 16-year-old sixth former, who was selected for the elite GB cycling team last year and has also competed for her country in mountain running championships, remains quietly modest about her success.

Qualifying for the final at the Manchester championships saw her compete against the top 23 cyclists in the UK, including Olympic and world champions Laura Kenny, Katie Archibald and Elinor Barker.

"I was pretty star-struck, to be honest," said the teenager, who is from Oswaldkirk, near Helmsley and boards at Ripon Grammar School.

"The crowds were incredible, with all the stands packed. The pace was incredibly fast and it was such hard work just to keep up.

"I think the average speed was 48km per hour. But I was just incredibly grateful to be able to race against such brilliant role models and legends and be able to just about keep up."

Abi, studying PE, psychology, biology and geography at AS-level, was also lucky enough to meet one of her all-time heroes, Dame Sarah

Storey, during the three-day event: "That was amazing."

Earlier in January, she raced in the Netherlands for the GB junior team against top cyclists from the US, France, Germany and Denmark.

"I competed in many events, the most successful being the team pursuit, where the GB second team came 3rd. Germany was second and the GB first team won.

"I gained good experience, coming 6th in the points race and 7th in the tempo race."



# Teacher who inspired Bruce Oldfield



Fashion designer Bruce Oldfield was one of many students who credited former RGS senior mistress Constance Gilbey with inspiring them.

Constance Gilbey, a graduate from Durham in French, joined Ripon Grammar School in 1962 from the Ackworth School near Pontefract. Her role and abilities as senior mistress were crucial in ensuring the successful amalgamation of the Grammar School with the Ripon Girls' High School. Headmaster Robert Atkinson praised her as she had done so much to establish sound standards within the school, while always being welcoming when approached by the students.

Constance's responsibilities also included being the first housemistress of the new girls' boarding house (Johnson House). The building was not completed in time for the amalgamation so for the first year, she had to look after some girls boarded out in Ripon homes and the transformation of the sanatorium into a temporary girls' boarding house.

Constance initiated many of the charitable activities carried out by the school and continued to be very involved in local Wakefield Charities during her later career.

In 1968, Constance left RGS to be a senior tutor at the Sheffield City College of Education but donated funds for an RGS speech day prize - The Constance Gilbey Prize for French.

Students will also remember Constance's role as a magistrate, an area in which she remained very active. At the age of 68, she was chair of Wakefield Magistrates and received an MBE in 1999 for services to the Administration of Justice and to the community in West Yorkshire.

Bruce Oldfield remembers being under the watchful eye of Miss Gilbey who he looked on as a kindly guardian: "She took me under her wing." And it was Miss Gilbey who helped Bruce pursue his flair for fashion design. "It was Constance Gilbey who came to my rescue. I had no focused idea of what I wanted to do with my life," he says.

Constance died aged 89 in Wakefield in December 2018

# Innovative physicist whose creations live on

Physicist Alan Fergusson was an innovative designer of a number of pioneering devices and also created an immune supplement which is sold all over the world.

A boarding student at Ripon Grammar School from 1945 to 1952, Alan was born on February 4, 1934. His father died 18 months after he was born and his earliest memories are of a five-star hotel, which his single-parent mother managed, on the south coast of England. They moved to the safety of Yorkshire after war broke out and he attended Ripon Grammar School. On leaving, he worked as an apprentice fitter-turner and studied as an external student at the University of Westminster, eventually winning an open scholarship to Durham University,



# A tireless campaigner

A great advocate of selective education, David Andrews served as a governor of Ripon Grammar School for over thirty years, being instrumental in seeing off the threats from both the Wilson and Callaghan governments of 1974 to '79 and the Blair government of 1997 to 2001.

Born in Scarborough on April 13, 1934, David was brought up by his mother in Wakefield and attended Thornes House Grammar School. This proved to be an experience that shaped his politics and passion for education.

Leaving school in 1950, he joined the Merchant Navy as an officer cadet, making two voyages on the tramp steamer, SS Durban Bay, and seeing much of the world. He did not settle in this role and on returning from his second voyage, joined the RAF for his national service. He attained the rank of sergeant, serving as an air gunner on B29 Superfortresses, known as the Washington B1 in the UK. These aircraft were the UK's nuclear weapons delivery system until they were phased out in favour of the Canberra. Once demobbed from the RAF in 1954, David moved into local government, and after a number of jobs became a public health inspector in Ripon in 1963.

The election of the Labour Government in 1974, on a manifesto committing it to comprehensive education, led directly to David's involvement as a founder member of the Ripon Grammar School Parents' Association. Strongly supported by the headmaster, Brian Stanley, the Parents' Association collected two petitions with thousands of signatures, and after three years the High Court ruled against the local education authority. The case was to be heard by the Court of Appeal, but the election of the Conservative Government in 1979 removed the threat, at least for a while.

where he studied physics and was also secretary of the college rowing club. As a student, he designed and built a device for identifying the radiation spectrum of alpha emitters to identify compounds which subsequently became a standard piece of equipment for Durham physics students.

He went on to work for a nuclear engineering company and developed the first alpha gauge, capable of measuring the thickness of paper as it was being made in rolls 15 feet wide and travelling at around 400ft per minute.

He was also interested in hiking, climbing and skiing - he once abseiled down the walls of Durham Castle - and was a member of the Fell

David then participated in the first elections for parent governors in 1978 and retained this role until 1982, when he no longer had any children at the school and was co-opted onto the board. After many years, he left the board of governors, continuing as a foundation governor until 2010.

As Treasurer of the Ripon Secondary Schools Partnership, David was again instrumental in retaining the system of selective education in Ripon following the election of the Blair administration in 1997, which introduced legislation to allow local votes on the system.

A challenging campaign began in the autumn of 1999, focused on a ballot the following year. David's experience from the campaign in the 70s, his passion and his eagerness to help in any way, whether providing strategic leadership, writing to newspapers or stuffing envelopes, again helped win the day. The final result - 2 to 1 in favour of the selective system - was announced on March 10, 2000.

David also was active in local politics, representing the Conservative Party on Ripon Council from 1987 to 1991 and serving a term as deputy mayor of the city between 1989 and 1990

He took early retirement from a senior role in Leeds City Council in 1986 and filled his retirement with freelance work and travel. He was a published poet, being particularly successful in his writing for children, and had a number of poems included in anthologies and broadcast by the BBC.

David married José (née Smith) in 1958, remaining happily married until his death. He is also survived by his sons, Richard and Jonathan, and grandchildren, Michael, Verity and David. He died in Pannal, January 2019.

and Rock Club in the Lakes and the Austrian Alpine Club.

He and wife Eleanor relocated to Northern Rhodesia after they married, where he worked as head of adult education for a mining company. They later moved to Canada, where he spent the last 38 years of his life.

After being diagnosed with cancer he began researching alternative treatments, which led to the creation and patent of an immune supplement approved by Health Canada and sold around the globe.

The father of three died aged 84 in October 2018.



# Pitch perfect

Ripon Grammar School's reputation for sporting excellence is to be given a massive boost as our dream of establishing a new world-class, purpose-built artificial grass floodlit pitch becomes a reality.

It's been several years in the planning, but work has now begun on the new 3G 'third generation' all-weather surface, which will also benefit the wider community of Ripon.



First steps: work begins on the 3G pitch

Students will begin playing on this exciting new facility, which is fully-funded by a property developer, in the autumn term. There are also plans for a new changing block, providing dressing and locker rooms, showers and toilets for about 80 students, due to open at the same time.

Headmaster Jonathan Webb said the latest addition to the school's first-class sports facilities was an amazing asset, which would help further enhance the development of the next generation of sporting stars: "It will make a huge difference to the amount of time students get to train and play outdoors, even in the most challenging weather conditions. Its community use will also make it a major addition for the city of Ripon."

The pitch encompasses a full-size FIFA-

compliant football pitch and three cross-width seven-a-side football pitches, all with goals on wheels. It will also provide a full-size World Rugby-compliant artificial pitch. Alongside this, contractors will re-level and re-site the 1st XV grass rugby pitch to create another first-class facility.

The 3G pitch's durable, all-weather surface can be played on for 80 hours a week and will be available for public hire outside school hours. It will also serve two partner clubs, Ripon RUFC and Ripon City AFC. Persimmon Homes agreed to fund the sporting facility - which will be part-constructed on the Memorial Field owned by the Old Rips alumni society - as part of the planning requirements for a new housing development in the city.

# Dramarama

Talented students at RGS shone on stage in a wide range of theatrical productions throughout the school year. Here are just a few of our pictorial highlights. Clockwise, from top left, Matilda, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, Alice in Wonderland and Pygmalion.



# New careers network launched



Our Old Riponians alumni society is launching an exciting new careers advice service with the aim of inspiring current RGS sixth formers in the face of increasingly fierce competition in the jobs market.

Old Rips are appealing for former students to become RGS careers ambassadors by sharing their knowledge and experience in various employment sectors, covering as many different careers as possible.

"The job market has become increasingly competitive and the demand for places at university is at an all-time high," said Old Rips treasurer George Owrarn.

"Internships and work experience opportunities can be valuable, but competition is fierce. We believe that, collectively, former students of RGS could offer a vast amount of information to those who are starting out on their careers."

He appealed to former students to add their profiles to the new database outlining the career paths of past pupils: "Looking back now, what advice would you give to your younger self?" said George. "Please remember that your experience is priceless."

Ambassadors can choose whether they are willing for students to contact them for further details by email or would rather provide more extensive information, including hints, tips and advice about their chosen field, within their profile.

If you are interested, please email [oldriponians@aol.com](mailto:oldriponians@aol.com) for further details. Members can withdraw from the database at any time.



TOBY Kinread (above) was one of a number of past pupils among more than 50 exhibitors who came to talk to current students at our popular RGS Careers and Higher Education Fair, which was attended by around 460 pupils and parents.

Toby was representing his employers, Swedish bank Handelsbanken, one of 50 exhibitors taking part.

Toby left RGS in 2013 to study International Relations at the University of St Andrews and did a summer internship with the bank, where he now works as an account manager.

Getting work experience with prospective employers is key to getting a head start in your career, he told students: "Most investment and private banks recruit from those who do internships and placements with them. It will also give you a taste of the job."

He also told students that it doesn't matter which degree they choose for a career in banking: "They are keen on variety and want to know more about your interests. Do you watch the Bloomberg channel and read the Financial Times, for example?"

## Former boarding student JANET ERSKINE, who left RGS in 1965, offers a fascinating insight into the life of a public service interpreter

If any young person is looking for a part-time, top-up job and they are fluent in a second language, they should look into qualifying as a public services interpreter.

Having been taught French to A-level at Ripon Grammar School by Miss Craig and Miss Houston and after ten years in French-speaking countries of Europe, I had a series of jobs before finding myself working in this interesting role.

There has been no such thing as routine in this job. Like the English writer and Puritan preacher John Bunyan, I've been to Bedford jail but, unlike him, I had problems getting in. I've been into many underground court cells and routinely locked in at a psychiatric hospital, as well as in the dogs' compartment in the back of a police van.

The role came into being in the late 1980s, when magistrates noticed interpreting was at times inaccurate, to say the least. Apart from the fact that justice was being seen not to be done, it cost the Ministry of Justice a great deal of money in re-trials. In fact, at times children were relied upon to interpret for their family members outside the courts.

The Nuffield Foundation funded a training course in Cambridge for European languages and Mandarin in 1989. Soon after our return to England, after ten years in Switzerland and France, I took the part-time evening course in interpreting whilst working as a teacher of English as a foreign language. During the course we compared legal systems and built up word banks which interpreted rather than translated the English legal terms into those of the other European country. Both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting had to be practised. The first is used in interviews and the court room and the latter as a running update for the client. We even drew up a code of practice. We also had role plays with police officers so that they could learn how to use an interpreter in an interview situation. The interpreter (not translator, please) was ideally to be only heard and not directly addressed by the service worker who was to ask the questions directly of the client. This meant that if 'I' was originally used by the client, it had to be relayed back again as 'I' and not 'he/she'.

The Institute of Linguists took it upon itself to devise exams for the new diploma in public service interpreting (DPSI) offering legal, local government and medical modules. Applicants who applied to be on the public register - which had to be used by the courts and police from 2000 - were vetted. An annual fee per foreign language was and still is charged and proof of having worked at least ten hours in the previous year is required.

Later, the government decided it wanted to save money on interpreting so ordained that a private body, ignorant of languages or interpreting, should register, organise and pay interpreters peanuts.

The work was on an ad hoc basis, consequently

# The job that gave me a taste of prison life

My career story



very much part-time, often at night, always varied, sometimes amusing and at times very stressful. The worst bit was finding out where to go in the dark ages before the days of SatNav especially sometimes at night and having to go to work in my day job as a teacher or translator the next morning

The varied callouts made the job interesting.



**Sporty: Janet was captain of athletics and hockey at RGS. Favourite teachers include Mr Crawford for his sense of humour and Latin teacher Mr Rowland. She also recalls: "Miss Houston introduced us to direct method learning which I found most vivid. Miss Holland was an excellent games teacher and gave us confidence to play teams like Easingwold, inspiring us in 4th year to win the form hockey cup, beating even the sixth formers."**

For example, when a locked-up client was hollering from his cell "Les assassins", the police and I were urged not to approach even though I'd been called out. He needed to be told - by shouting at him through the door - that the police in England would reciprocate good behaviour. Children on a shop-lifting spree were not uncommon and they were always surprised when they received a formal caution and not just a finger wagging. Call-outs were sometimes at night, as when a suspected drink driver was taken to the police station to be breathalysed then told he could go home but without his car and dressed in paper overalls. Once, an unhappy man in a car was in a dissociative fugue state and needed a meal and a new car battery. Because my husband and I were about to go out to eat when I was called out to a lay-by by police, we were able to oblige with a much-needed meal. I've been left, against good practice, in the company of potentially violent suspects but fortunately nothing ever happened.

On one occasion, a young solicitor asked me if I thought he should have asked any other questions in court. He had to learn that it wasn't my job to enlighten him.

It was interesting finding out about the clients when I was left with them to talk. Sometimes I would see clients more than once. If you start off interpreting in the police station you become a police witness, so cannot interpret in a subsequent court case. I found this frustrating because I'd have liked to have known what finally happened to these people. Were they imprisoned in the end for being



duped into driving a get-away car and then, on release, deported or were they cautioned by a kindly judge?

Did that indecent exposure client who was linked to a murder investigation find himself in a police station again? Did that Biblical looking refugee find the hostel after I'd put him on the right bus with instructions to the bemused driver? I'll never know.

The most distressing assignment I had was at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, during an 18-month clinical trial for a treatment for Hunter Syndrome where one of the patients, a young man of 21, finally died. By way of contrast, I was once obliged to interpret instructions whilst a young mother-to-be was being internally examined. No need to interpret, "I'm embarrassed" with all those red faces.

Some people feel that foreign nationals who are lucky enough to have an interpreter to keep them constantly up-to-speed are better served in the court room than nationals, who at times can be equally flummoxed by our sometimes complex and confusing legal terms.

# Rich rewards

A high-flying past pupil returned to his old school from Geneva to inspire current students with his story about navigating the ups and downs of life.

Rich Bradley, who left Ripon Grammar School in 2000, is a director of the leading global consulting company Deloitte, leading their digital supply chain team in Switzerland, which works for some of the world's largest brands.

But after initially planning to study law, then changing course to take economics and French, he didn't follow a straightforward career path and took a year out after university to travel the world.

"Life is long, many things will happen, some of which you can control and others you can't. No decision you make now is permanent and it's about navigating the ups and downs of life," was his message to around 150 RGS sixth form students.

Rich went to the University of Leeds after RGS. He spent his holidays travelling the world and, continuing his love of music developed during his time at RGS, he played jazz piano in bars and restaurants to help fund his student life.

After university he took a year out to travel, then joined a large US consulting firm in London, moving out of the UK after a year. Since then, he has been working, living and travelling in around 80 countries, including a year seconded to a small non-governmental organisation working in sub-Saharan Africa to improve the lives of small-holder farmers.

He also writes and does radio broadcasts on the future of technology in business.

"I look back fondly on my time at RGS," he says.

Current sixth former George Vivian said he was inspired by the talk: "Mr Bradley has had a very interesting life and was so motivational."



Ripon Grammar School loves to welcome past pupils back to school. These inspirational former students travelled from all over the UK to give our current sixth formers valuable advice about university courses and careers

More than 40 past pupils returned to Ripon Grammar School to talk to current students about careers, university and life after leaving school.

They included an accountant, banker, doctor, police officer, solicitor, recruitment manager, and RAF officer as well as apprentices in engineering and food technology and one former student enjoying a gap year.

They were joined by those studying a range of courses, from anthropology to art, chemistry, economics, law, medicine, philosophy, politics, theology and tropical disease biology at university, who were all keen to share their experiences.

Head of sixth form Terry Fell said he was extremely grateful to all those who returned for this increasingly popular annual event: "Our wonderful former students all had something useful to tell our current sixth formers about the process of making post-school decisions, changing your mind, living away from home, getting work experience, as well as handy hints about life at university and in the world of work or employment."

Alice Scorer, 24, who is working in London as an account manager for a recruitment company after studying human biology at university, said she had taken an unusual route.

"During my degree, I took up a work placement in recruitment and decided that was what I wanted to do, I enjoyed it so much."



# Rovers return



Alice, who wants to run her own recruitment agency one day, added: "I would encourage students not to panic about being on the right course, because you don't have to stay on one specific route, you can change direction."

"And often you don't work out what you really want to do until after you leave school."

Dominic Butler, 23, agreed. After two years studying veterinary science he decided to take a different route and enter the world of hospitality, after working for an events company part-time as a student: "I just loved it and realised that was what I wanted to do," he said.

After working for The Majestic Hotel in Harrogate as a sales executive, he is now studying part-time for a degree in hospitality and business management at Leeds Beckett

University while working for the four-star Cedar Court Hotel as a field sales executive.

"I really enjoy what I am doing and, once I've had more experience in different areas of the industry, would like to run my own hotel one day."

Ben Widdowson, 23, works as a police constable in Harrogate after studying for a BTEC level 3 in uniform public services at Harrogate College: "It's a career I would definitely recommend," he said.

"I love the fact I'm not sitting in an office, I'm out in the fresh air and every day is different. I enjoy helping the public and working as part of a fantastic team."

Ryan Turner, 18, said he would also recommend a career with the RAF. The aircraftman, who has just finished his training at RAF Halton, will be taking up his first post as a technician at RAF Cosford, near Wolverhampton, in January.

"It's the best decision I ever made," he said. "I'm with a team of 14 other lads, who feel like family. And I have a secure future, with accommodation and bills taken care of."

*Pictured above, main photo: Ben, left, and Ryan, right, centre front row. Above left: Alice and Dominic.*

*"If you are interested in offering help, information or advice to our current students, please contact Jill Locke in our careers department at [lockej@ripongrammar.co.uk](mailto:lockej@ripongrammar.co.uk) or Terry Fell in sixth form at [FellT@ripongrammar.co.uk](mailto:FellT@ripongrammar.co.uk)*



of Defence as an optical physicist before studying for a PhD in neuroscience at Newcastle University and is now working as a senior healthcare photonics scientist, developing and testing optical technologies for healthcare applications, including health monitoring and treatments.

"It is always great to connect with Ripon Grammar School again," she said.

**Game on: far left, Leisha, left, and Catherine, right. In the tunnel at the Lee Valley Hockey Centre, right**

# Old friends reunited after 20 years

Two RGS past pupils had a pleasant surprise when they unexpectedly found themselves playing on opposing teams at a prestigious national knock-out finals tournament in the London Olympics hockey stadium.

The pair were at school together more than 20 years ago.

Leisha Hawkins and Catherine Hossain were competing in the Investec England Hockey Masters (over 35s) national knock-out final at the Lee Valley Hockey Centre.

Leisha's Teddington team beat Catherine's Newcastle: "It was an amazing game, a great experience and super to see Catherine again. We were both goalies at school but she played in defence and I am now a forward."

Leisha left RGS in 1997 to study modern languages at Durham University. She is now regional head of operations for the England and Wales Cricket Board.

Catherine, who left RGS in 1996, studied physics at the University of Bath. She went on to work all over the world for the Ministry



# A blast from the past

Some of the old photos the Class of 71-76/78 shared



# Together again

On speaking last year to two school friends - Louise Cook and Trish O'Shea (Pat Smith) - who I had kept in touch with, we were shocked when we realised that, in the summer of 2018, it would be forty years since we all left Ripon Grammar School.

We had previously organised a 25th anniversary reunion back in 2003 at the Black Bull in the Market Square, when the main method of trying to contact past pupils was with pen, paper, and postage stamps!

Fifteen years later, with the advances in social media, word spread very quickly, and when one person was contacted they invariably knew someone else they could get in touch with. Consequently, the links grew, and it culminated in a very successful summer reunion. We have made links with well over half the original 117 pupils, with the number growing all the time.

The day comprised of two parts. The first was a tour of the school and boarding houses which was a marvellous trip down memory lane. The tours allowed us to see the further investments that have been made since we were there, like the sports hall and new music block.

As a former boarder, I found it very poignant to revisit Johnson House where I lived for seven years. I was greatly heartened to see that it is now four to a dormitory - not eight as it was in my day. I also feel the role of a House "parent"

Past pupils flew in from as far as Hong Kong and Australia to get together with old school friends 40 years on. **JACKIE COOPER** (nee BARNBY), pictured left in Afghan coat and gown, reports

who is not a member of the teaching staff is a very progressive step.

I would like to say thank you to the current sixth formers and the deputy head for taking us round, and to the staff and pupils who laid on refreshments, which were much appreciated on what was one of the hottest days of the year.

The second part of the reunion was held at Ripon Rugby Club, where it was wonderful to see so many people enjoying reconnecting and sharing memories on a glorious summer's evening. Many had brought photographs and it was great fun seeing our younger selves from more than forty years ago.

It was remarkable that so many of our year engaged with the project, and a special thank you must be made to all those still in Ripon who worked so hard on tracing former pupils locally, and others who helped by phoning and emailing. It was very touching to see how many took the time to travel from the length and breadth of the country to attend, with a special mention to the two who flew in from Hong Kong and Australia. That was a wonderful surprise...

A lovely result of the reunion is the fact that

everyone was so keen to stay in touch, so much so that a couple of members of the group have created a WhatsApp site (Riponians 76/78), where people are posting even more stories and memories of those years, which has proved very entertaining. We would encourage any more from our year who wish to join to let RGS know, and they will happily pass on your details.

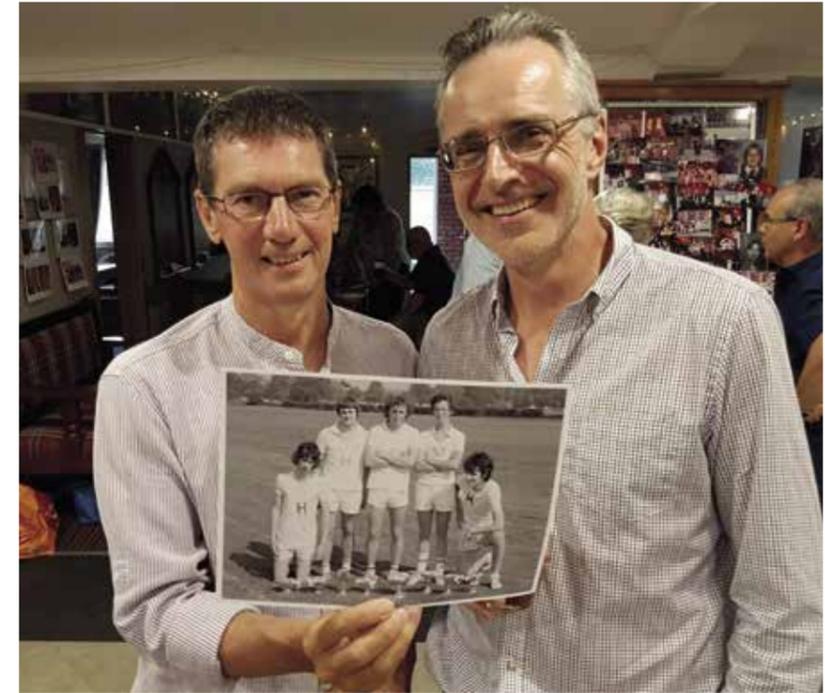
To any other year groups considering a reunion, I would urge them to go ahead. After all, time passes faster than any of us could ever have imagined...



Main photo (l-r) back row: Kathryn Sedarati (Spoooner), John Darnborough, Louis Cook, Cath Brimmil, Carolyn Dooner (White), Karen Ogden, Mark Hastings, Jackie Cooper (Barnby), Carol Saunders (Fawcett), Phil Quinn. Front row: Bill Page, Bridget North, Helen Metcalfe (Collard), Val York (Taylor), Mike Curry. Below, the year group at their last reunion in 2003. Top right: Judge Paul Richmond with Val York (Taylor) Above: David Crompton and Phil Quinn, who flew in from Australia.

MORE PHOTOS OVER...

# Reunions



Clockwise from top left: David Crompton, Linda Horseman (Bassett), Carol Abbott (Smith), Jennifer Spurgeon (Taylor), Jane Kettlewell; Jackie Cooper, Johnny Chiu; David Crompton, Mike Curry, Helen Metcalf (Collard), Carol Saunders (Fawcett), Phil Moorhouse; Simon Garside, Simon Petchey; Mike Curry, Phil Moorhouse, Jimmy Sweeney, Phil Quinn, Anthony Duncan; Bridget North, Cath Brimmel, Linda Horseman; Caroline Dooner, Julia Bowe; David Crompton, Patricia O'Shea (Smith) and former head boy Fred Alves

Thank you to Derek Crookes and his team at Ripon Rugby Club for the catering, right

Students from the Fifties also got together this summer, on the day England played Sweden in the quarter final of the World Cup, above. Organised by Peter Ellis, who left RGS in 1957, the group met in a local pub at lunchtime before arriving back at their old school.

compete against current pupils in games of rugby, hockey and netball, was as popular as ever. Old Rips president Derek Crookes said it was great to see so many old faces back at school: "We benefited from the best weather of that week. And thanks to all the players, who showed that, on this occasion at least, youth can beat experience."

Our winter reunion, when former students get together to

# FEEDBACK

## Your news and views

Write to the editor: [savager@ripongrammar.com](mailto:savager@ripongrammar.com)

AS an RGS governor whose three children have all passed through RGS, I know just how the RGS community is willing and able to contribute to worthy causes. All I am asking for here is a little of your time.

I have recently undertaken a 'later-life' career change and I'm now a postgraduate student at Durham University researching 'healthy cognitive ageing' for my PhD thesis. I'm looking to recruit volunteers who might be prepared to give up a little time to undergo a series of fairly standard psychological tests. I'm investigating factors that may protect healthy cognition as we get older. For this, I need to get as many willing participants as I can over the coming year. I'm particularly keen to hear from people at or around retirement age, although provided you are over 18, there is no age limit. All volunteers are welcome!

If you think you might be able to help, please contact me through the school or at [mark.d.avery@durham.ac.uk](mailto:mark.d.avery@durham.ac.uk) and I will tell you more about the project and what is involved."

**Mark Avery**

OVER the last decade or so, entomologists, myself included, have drawn attention to the drastic decline in the numbers of insect species that, in my youth, were relatively common. Attention has recently been focused on the state of health of wild nature, first by a report suggesting diverse insect populations are declining at alarming rates (Guardian, February 10), and now by another showing that UK pollinators are in trouble (Guardian, March 27). There is good evidence that insects are declining, and the ecological consequences may be serious. Since insects underpin most non-marine food networks, serious



**Insect crisis: Prof Simon Leather, above, is concerned**

declines would threaten the stability of wild nature. Loss of pollinators would adversely affect agriculture, since many crops depend on insects to set seed.

Similar reports in each of the last three years provoked a brief flurry of media attention and expressions of concern followed by deafening silence. Most worrying of all, there has been no

apparent reaction from science funding bodies or the government. Knowing about insects and their ways is not a luxury; the US entomologist Thomas Eisner said "Bugs are not going to inherit the Earth. They own it now." We dispossess them at our peril.

**Simon Leather**  
(RGS 1968-73)

HarperAdams University,  
Honorary Fellow of the  
Royal Entomological Society

THANK you for the recent copy of the Clocktower. I have just had my 92nd birthday so I may be the oldest Old Riponian. All my four children are Old Rips. John, the second, still visits RGS and is a trustee for the Memorial Field, making sure the county keeps paying the rent - he is a judge so it's good to have a senior lawyer on the job. I am now officially a retired priest and rely on a walking stick and walking machine, otherwise I am fully fit. I gave up driving years ago but my wife Shiela (ex matron of Johnson House) does all the driving now.

**Tony Lodge**  
(former housemaster of  
School House and head of  
religious studies)



**Superb tribute: members of the Wells family**

I JUST wanted to thank the Old Rips and Ripon Grammar School, on behalf of the Wells family, for all your research into the Wells family, and also the rest of the pupils who went to the school and then onto the Western Front.

The service out on the field was a superb tribute to those pupils who were killed in both world wars. My overriding memory will be of the thought that our grandfather and his brothers will have scored

tries, goals and runs on the very same field as we were standing on!

Finally, the respect and interest shown by all the school was a real testament to Ripon Grammar School and I am sure Wilfrid and his brothers would have been very proud of Ripon Grammar School today.

Thank you.

**Andrew Wells and  
Amanda Allen**



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Contact Marita Murray on [murraym@ripongrammar.com](mailto:murraym@ripongrammar.com)  
T: 01765 602647

