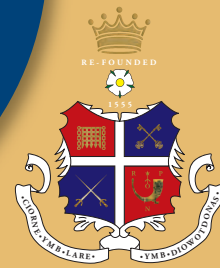


RGSnnews

Issue 33 Winter 2012



**Welcome to new
members of staff**

**Charity Week
2012**

**World Challenge
trip to Vietnam
and Cambodia**



Photograph courtesy of Mr Clarke



Specialist Schools
and Academies Trust
EXCELLENCE AND DIVERSITY



WELCOME FROM THE HEADMASTER

Dear Parents,



I hope you have had an enjoyable term. This has been the longest autumn term for some time, spanning fifteen weeks, and I am sure that many of the students are very tired and deserving of a break.

I am delighted with the way the new staff have settled in during their first term and you will see introductions to them in this copy of the RGS News. Our thanks and best wishes go to Mrs Garner, who will be

leaving the English department at Christmas. Mrs Mars will be joining the department in her place. Mr Langford, GAP student, will be leaving at Christmas to return to Australia and we thank him for his contribution during his time here. He will be replaced by Jack Marchinton, who will arrive in the new year.

As you are aware, Dr Mason is now Chair of Governors and Mr Edwards is Vice Chair. They will be supported by current governors and newly-appointed parent governors, Dr Cavell-Taylor, Mrs Sutcliffe and Ms Smith, together with Mrs Savage, who has been appointed as a community governor. I am grateful for all the hard work they will

undertake on behalf of the school.

There have been a number of very successful events towards the end of term, notably the carol concert in the cathedral and the Old Riponians' day. The Parents' Association hosted a very successful Christmas Fair which raised almost £2,000 for their funds. The students also did extremely well during Charity Week, raising over £10,000 for 'Operation Smile', which is comparable to sums raised in previous years. This is a tremendous effort.

Sixth form students will be sitting January module examinations for the last time after Christmas since the Government have now removed the facility for all sixth form students to sit examinations at this time with effect from September 2013. As a consequence, sixth form students will be busy preparing over the Christmas holiday, as will the fifth form who have science modules in January.

The challenge for this summer is to maintain the very high standard achieved in 2012 which placed Ripon Grammar School 79th out of all state schools in the country in a recent Sunday Times league table. The Good Schools' Guide also awarded Ripon Grammar School a record seven awards for high achievement nationally at A-level and GCSE in art and design, chemistry, astronomy, French and physics. www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk

I hope that you will have a very enjoyable Christmas and a happy new year. I look forward to seeing you next term.

M L Pearman (Headmaster)

ENGINEERING COMMITTEE

The newly appointed engineering co-ordinator, Mr Barker, set up an engineering committee at the beginning of this school year. The committee was intended to help emphasise the engineering specialism within the school and to offer new opportunities to students interested in this field. represent each house to compete in three separate heats.

Currently, the committee consists of around twelve students who are already making a large contribution by helping to widen the engineering opportunities within school. There have already been two engineering talks organised by the students. The first, which discussed the future of nuclear fusion, was of particular help to upper-sixth form physics students as they are currently studying the topic. The second talk was given by Mr Ken Bell from ABB – a company which is leading the development of automation and power industries. Mr Bell gave a presentation about the role of chemical engineers and the products they manufacture. The insight into both the company and chemical engineering was fascinating and helped to inspire students to further research into this specific aspect of industry. Other opportunities that the committee have organised include volunteering at local primary schools to introduce engineering to their students, as well as the Engineering Education Scheme and courses such as Smallpeice and Headstart.

Talks by mechanical, aeronautical and civil engineers are planned for the coming weeks; these will provide students with both the inspiration and information they need to pursue their interests in engineering.

Philippa Bell, U6C

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT AT RIPON CATHEDRAL

Ripon Cathedral was filled to capacity on the evening of Thursday 8th November for a commemorative concert to celebrate the merging of Ripon Girls' High School with Ripon Grammar School in 1962.

It was great to see so many former students, parents past and present and friends of the school spanning several generations.

With a packed and varied programme, the audience had a most enjoyable evening and one to remember on such a momentous occasion.

The first year choir opened the concert with a fantastic rendition of Gary Barlow and Andrew Lloyd Webber's 'SING'. It was their debut performance and they most definitely did themselves proud! Musicality and the senior choir added their talents to the celebration too with a selection of songs.

The String Orchestra, Wind Band, Brass Ensemble, Big Band and String Quartet also played a major part in the evening, performing a number of great pieces. We mustn't forget the Hornblower Brass Band; they got the celebrations off to a terrific start by performing on the steps of the cathedral as everyone arrived.

Readings from Mr Pearman, Mrs Morgan (Old Riponian) and Mrs Bellamy, (President of the Old Riponians) made the evening complete.

All in all, it was a fabulous evening. What better way to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the merging of the two schools, to create the school we know today? I felt honoured to be just a small part of it.

Alice Scorer, U6D

KENYAN ADVENTURE

In August this year, after spending just under two years fund-raising (mainly wages from our part-time jobs) we were very excited to be embarking on our voluntary trip to Nakuru, Kenya. Our decision to go on this trip followed our interest in the World Challenge Expedition; however we felt there was a greater satisfaction in independently finding and organising our own expedition.

The school where we were situated was set up by a local pastor for children who live on and bordering Nakuru's rubbish dump, otherwise known as Hilton Slum. We weren't quite prepared for the culture shock, so our first impressions were filled with anxiety due to the sudden realisation of the enormity of what we were doing, and just how close the poverty was to our front door. Yet, over the month, we became accustomed to holes in the ground for toilets, the lack of running water and sitting down to beans and rice for lunch and dinner every day.

The Walk Centre School is a pre-primary school for children aged between 3 and 7, but it also provides a meal for the older children who attend Prisons Primary School nearby. We volunteered as teachers and, although there was a difficult language barrier between Swahili and English, we taught the children a variety of subjects, from English to mathematics. They particularly enjoyed learning about the UK and where we were from. The pupils' work ethic amazed us, especially with the lack of basic resources the school had to offer.

We were fortunate to visit the slum that started the whole project and we will never forget the living conditions we saw. We were struck by the fragility of the houses, which was even more evident on a later visit when, after we'd experienced heavy thunderstorms, we noticed empty spaces where houses had previously stood. It was touching

how the children treated possessions like gold, even if it was a piece of wood found on the rubbish heap.

Near the end of our trip we held an appropriately timed Mini-Olympics at the school, with running, jumping and throwing events for the children. We surprised winners with prizes of pencils, stickers and balloons. The whole school also excitedly accepted our leaving present of a couple of crates of bananas.

The trip was, to be clichéd, life-changing. We experienced another world and made many friendships along the way. We are both determined to return some time in the near future, but remain in contact with our host family and continue to fundraise for the school, our next immediate goal being to run the Great North Run for the students and teachers at The Walk Centre.

Grace Ireland & Hannah Hickingbotham

www.thewalkcentre.org

www.justgiving.com/hannah-and-grace



INTERVIEW WITH DR PETER MASON



Hugh McHale-Maughan and Lizzie Tearle interviewed Dr Peter Mason, the new Chair of Governors at Ripon Grammar School. It was a fascinating hour in which Dr Mason spoke of his past and his vision for the future of the School. His love of education, educational history and RGS really shone through.

Hugh and Lizzie (H & L): *Dr Mason – welcome and congratulations on your new role as Chair of Governors. Can you tell our readers a little about your background?*

Dr Mason (PRM): My background is deeply rooted in education. Before taking up this role I taught chemistry in Lancaster and at the Royal Grammar School in Newcastle, and was Headmaster of Reading School and Principal of the Stamford Endowed Schools, where I taught alongside RGS's current Headmaster, Mr Pearman. I have been a community governor here at RGS for four years.

H & L: *How does it feel to be Chair of Governors at an outstanding school?*

PRM: Not too different from before! Having been involved in education for such a long time, and having already sat on the board of governors for four years, the role is fairly familiar. Essentially, the role of Chair is to lead and direct the collective skills and wisdom of the multi-talented governing body.

H & L: *Your predecessor as Chair, Richard Marsden, obviously did a fantastic job. What would you say his main achievements were?*

PRM: You're right; Richard did a fantastic job as Chair, as did his predecessor Ian

Pringle. The huge achievements for Richard are the major capital developments that took place during his tenure: the sports hall and the astro-turf; the new teaching blocks; the music block. Let's not forget that Ripon Grammar School was also judged by Ofsted to be outstanding in all departments (including the governing body) during Richard's last inspection.

H & L: *Does it help that you worked with Mr Pearman at Stamford?*

PRM: We have that deep, professional trust for one another that is essential for the relationship between Headmaster and Chair of Governors – it is especially essential in understanding each other's roles. My role as Chair is not to run the school – that would be like Alex Ferguson coming on and trying to score goals for Manchester United. Instead, the role is to provide strategic direction and support for the School; to fight the battles for RGS, to maximise income and so on; and, like Alex Ferguson, to pick the best team and give them my full support.

H & L: *What would you say are the major challenges of being a Governor at RGS?*

PRM: Well, RGS is a great school, with great staff and students, so it's a real delight to be here. Some of the current issues are ones at a national level. The governors need to focus on the financial challenges, as well as keeping a strategic vision about how the current extensive educational reforms are going to affect Ripon Grammar School. We need to continue to listen to the staff to see how RGS can be best placed to adapt to the changes. We're also trying to set up a new committee to see how RGS can develop its community links. Schools are not isolated institutions; they operate within the local community.

H & L: *Looking at the current educational reforms, what do you think of the academy programme?*

PRM: The question we as governors, with Mr Pearman and all the staff at the school continually ask is: how can we provide the best education for pupils of the School? At the moment, we feel that is with the Local Authority – but it always has to be under review. We always have to make sure that we are, as Ofsted say, 'relentlessly pursuing excellence', and that we continue to serve the local community, the regional community through the boarding facilities and build our national reputation.

H & L: *How important do you think the selection test principle is to those aims?*

PRM: Bright students in selective schools achieve a huge amount. The problem with selection is not the Grammar Schools but the

stigma that is sometimes attached to the other schools in a selective system. In order to maximise the potential of all children in the country we have to provide and celebrate high quality vocational and practical education alongside the academic. I stand amazed at the skill of, say, a plumber; I would never be capable of doing what he does.

H & L: *What would you say the role of the alumni is within RGS?*

PRM: It comes back to the concept of community that I mentioned earlier. RGS can be viewed as a collection of concentric circles, each layer focused on playing their part in trying to provide the best education possible for the students who are at the very centre. Not only do alumni bring a deep affection for the School, but also a mix of skills to help with, for example, mock interviews and careers events, as well as fundraising. And there is also the wider community: the students, being helped by the staff, who are supported by the governors, all of whom rely on parents, with the alumni and the wider community also helping. One of the most important roles that alumni can fulfil is 'gossiping the good news' about RGS: telling the community what a great job the School is doing.

H & L: *With all of this in mind, what are your main aims for your chairmanship?*

PRM: The main objective identified within the next five-year strategic plan is to address the remaining accommodation weaknesses: we need a purpose-built classroom to replace the temporary classrooms. Moreover, we need to maintain Ofsted's outstanding status. As Ofsted probably will not come back for another six years, if that, we will need a continuous process of self-evaluation to make sure that we are relentlessly pursuing excellence.

H & L: *And finally, on a more personal level, who would you say your hero was?*

PRM: Not so much a hero but one man I admire enormously is the late Reverend John Stott, who sadly passed away in 2011. He was a remarkable Christian leader whom I had the good fortune to meet, and whose books I avidly read and refer to. His high intellect, humility and display of service over reputation demonstrate to me that it is essential that one employs one's gifts to the full, and that service to others should be at the heart of our society.

It was a pleasure to meet Dr Mason, and Ripon Grammar School is clearly in very safe hands for the foreseeable future.

Hugh McHale-Maughan, U6F & Lizzie Tearle, U6A

WELCOME TO NEW STAFF



Dr Kern

I have been lucky to have had a very varied and interesting scientific career in research and development for the agricultural and pharmaceutical research industries both in the UK and abroad. The teaching

of science has been a much desired new challenge for me, and one which I have been thoroughly enjoying.

My interests are many and in the little free time I find I have between school and home, I enjoy singing, bike riding, swimming and quizzing.



Dr Linklater

Before arriving at RGS, I enjoyed five fantastic years at North London Collegiate School where, in addition to teaching biology, I oversaw mock interviews, mock examinations and the biology

enrichment programme. I love teaching my subject, particularly genetics, biochemical pathways and evolutionary biology. My real love however is Laura my wife. We were married in May in the magnificent Northumbrian countryside, following which we moved back to the enchanting north. We love living in Yorkshire and have both enjoyed our first term's teaching in our new schools. Away from RGS I enjoy rugby training in Otley, spending time in the countryside and with friends and family.



Maren Thumm

I am the new German GAP student. I'm mostly involved with helping in German lessons but also a few times a week in PE. In my free time I do lots of sports like handball, tennis and running. I'm very happy to have

the chance to stay here for a year before starting University. I really like the region of North Yorkshire with all the nature and the friendly and welcoming people.



Miss Campbell

I joined RGS in September 2012 and I teach religious studies up to A-level. Originally from a small village on the beautiful north coast of Northern Ireland, I moved to

North Yorkshire in 2010. Last year I was teaching religious studies in Gateshead whilst living in the city of Durham. I was delighted to return to North Yorkshire in August as in my spare time I enjoy walking in the countryside and visiting National Trust properties. I have a passion for visiting old houses and churches and discovering the history steeped within them. My hobbies include reading fiction books (with Shelia O'Flanagan and Jodi Picoult being two of my favourite authors), card making and cross stitching. I am thoroughly enjoying my time at RGS and look forward to what the rest of the year may bring!



Miss Hargreaves

I studied medical biochemistry at Sheffield University, and am currently completing my Masters at Durham where I trained to teach. As well as teaching chemistry at RGS, I am also helping out with girls'

boarding in Johnson House. I enjoy travelling, running, reading and really long walks up on the moors.



Mlle Bouhala

I am the French assistant and I'm from Nice in the south of France. I like to take photographs, listen to music and read loads of books.

North Yorkshire is a beautiful place and everybody is incredibly nice, I am very happy to be here!



Miss Nicholson

I am Miss Nicholson, the new French and German teacher. I have just moved to the area from Durham but I'm originally from Appleby in Cumbria.

Outside of school I like sports, mainly running and walking in the Lake District but I used to row as well. I really enjoy travelling – before I was a teacher I lived in Russia and France and I have also visited Madagascar!



Sebastián Arteaga

I have come to RGS from Ecuador, for a year as Spanish language GAP assistant. I grew up in Cuenca, in the south of Ecuador, and studied in the Colegio Asunción, specialising

in mathematics, physics and information technology. I enjoy a variety of sports, including rugby, football, basketball and gymnastics. I will be practising spoken Spanish language with A-level and GCSE students throughout the year.



Mr Bruce

I grew up in Cornwall and Huddersfield, and entered teaching after a modern history degree and a spell teaching English in eastern Europe. I am thrilled to be teaching in a school with students as friendly and

hard-working as ours – and to be teaching history specifically, in an area blessed with a wealth of places of special historical interest, is especially rewarding.



Mr Chamberlain

Having previously worked in the languages department at Yarm School as Head of Spanish, I am joining RGS as Head of Modern Languages. I teach both Spanish and French, and have experience of

learning and teaching a variety of other languages including Mandarin and Dutch. I am a keen climber and runner in my free time, and thus find working in North Yorkshire to be particularly rewarding! I also enjoy music, and play 'cello in the Harrogate Symphony Orchestra.



Mr Fearnley

I spent my first two years as a teacher in a comprehensive school in North London before moving on to Bishop's Stortford College, an independent school in Hertfordshire where I taught for seven years. During my time

there I was Head of the English Department and the Housemaster of a day house. When not in the classroom I have been known to coach some basketball and, like all English teachers, I obviously love reading.

Having moved north this summer, my family and I have had a great first half term and I personally have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know the students and staff of this busy but very welcoming school community.

STUDENT DESTINATIONS 2012

Last year's upper-sixth form have now moved on to higher education, training schemes, apprenticeships and the world of work.

From last year's upper-sixth form, eighty-eight are going to university. This year, the most popular university was the University of Manchester, a member of the Russell group. The second and third most popular choices were Northumbria and Newcastle, and fourth was Durham University. The universities of Cambridge and Oxford received four of our students, and thirty-four students are now settled into Russell group universities – with a further seventeen attending universities in the 1994 group.

Of the thirty-two students who are not attending university this year, one is following an art foundation scheme at Harrogate College, two are attending training schemes, three are taking up apprenticeships, eight are entering into employment, and fifteen are applying to university in 2013 with our current upper-sixth form. Students who chose to take on work experience have secured places with employers, particularly with engineering firms, and veterinary practices.

We wish everyone best of luck in their futures, and hope they go everywhere they want to go!

Eleanor James U6B

DEBATING

Debating at Ripon Grammar School continues to improve, with the promise of new competitions and opportunities spurring on progress. Recent participation in a range of competitions has pushed standards to ever greater heights and the assistance of Mr Bruce has proved invaluable in allowing more frequent and wider ranging debating opportunities. Difficult ideological questions that have surfaced in current affairs over the past months have given key fuel to debating motions that move far beyond those typically aired within school environments. The debating society continues to offer students the chance to debate topical issues well beyond those usually allowed for within timetabled lessons, as well as offering a unique opportunity to develop life skills which are key to many careers.

Next year promises a host of new opportunities. The Ripon Grammar School team will welcome visits by teams from several Harrogate schools, as well as Ermysted's Grammar School, to a series of debates and to which all are welcome to attend (dates will be released at the start of next term). We all hope to build on the existing improvements that have already been made to make the debating group one of the strongest school societies and one that will remain an integral part of the sixth-form and the school for years to come.

Ben Nabarro, U6E

SPORTS NEWS

OLYMPIC CONFERENCE

Following on from the success of Ripon Grammar's School's Paralympic workshops in the Great British Garden, the RGS sports co-ordinator, Mrs Mackenzie, was selected to make a presentation at the 'Get Set' conference hosted by Jonathan Edwards and attended by Lord Coe. Her theme was "How to build on sports leadership as a driver of inclusion, integration and equality, within and between schools".

Mrs Mackenzie said, "Initially, I was just thrilled that the work we do with sports leadership at RGS has been recognised and acknowledge. But once the excitement had settled, the enormity of what I had been asked to do dawned on me. I realised that I was going to have to present in front of some very important people – people who really had inspired a generation: policy influencers, curriculum developers, cabinet ministers, the DfE, Lord Coe... In fact, although I was nervous, I got into my stride, and when you speak from the heart about something you are passionate about, you can't fail to come across well. I loved the whole experience." After the presentation, Mrs Mackenzie was approached by Nick Fuller, Head of Education for the Olympic Organising Committee, and Chris Grant, Vice Chair of the International Inspiration Programme, and asked to write a case study of the work which Ripon Grammar School does with sports leadership. They were particularly interested to find out more about why sports leadership works so well for the new post-Olympic schools education programme called 'Get Set – Go Forward' so that other schools can share our good practice.



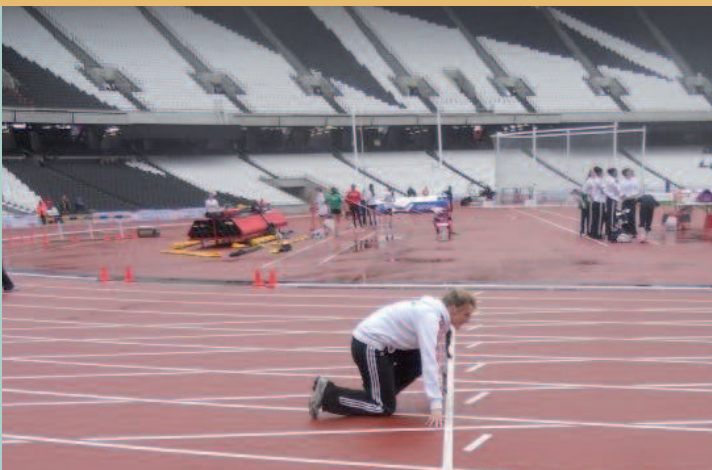
Ripon Grammar School has also been selected to be one of the flagship schools for the new British Olympic Association and British Paralympic Association joint website, which deals with the legacy of the Olympic and Paralympic Games and considers how we might build on their success and sustain school improvement and transformation post London 2012. and enjoyment. Well done to all the players!

NETBALL NEWS

Netball Yorkshire has once again chosen the RGS Sports Hall as a venue for their North Yorkshire Satellite Academy, which is held on Friday evenings from 7pm to 9pm. Thirteen RGS students have been selected for the Academy, after attending trials in York. Mrs Mackenzie is also one of the Satellite Academy coaches, a sign that netball at Ripon Grammar School is really taking off, with more than eighty girls regularly attending lunchtime and after-school clubs. More than fifty girls have also joined Ripon's new netball club, Ripon Rockets, which competes in both the North Yorkshire league and the Harrogate District league. A knock-on effect of this is that the girls come up against stiff competition – which certainly helps them to improve. RGS PE department are very grateful to Ripon Rockets for the donation of two new sets of posts and an electric ball pump.

Sarah Reed in 3C has been selected to play for Leeds Athletic – a club which feeds into the Yorkshire Jets. Well done Sarah.
The RGS girls selected for the Satellite Academy are:
1st year: Sophie Johnston, Amy Mackenzie, Emily Reed;
2nd year: Kate Charlton, Katharine Chatterton, Louisa Chatterton, Phoebe Senior, Rosie Taylor;
3rd year: Sarah Reed, Tamsin Cutmore, Laura Mackenzie, Alex Halshaw, Saffron-Rose Dean-Stone.

Mrs H Mackenzie



ATHLETE PROFILE: Charlotte Kessell

I have been competing in athletics events for Middlesbrough Athletics Club for two years. In this short space of time, I have become the North East's number one under-17 female long jumper, triple jumper and heptathlete. In May, I was one of four long jumpers to be selected to represent England in this year's UK Schools' Games that were held in the Olympic Stadium as part of the preparation for the Olympic Games. To compete there, alongside some of the UK's most talented young athletes, was a tremendous opportunity. Although I did not perform as well as I had hoped to, it was an experience I shall never forget.

In July, I represented North Yorkshire in the long jump at the English Schools' Athletics Championships. I achieved a respectable sixth place out of eighteen with a jump of 5.34m.

The season came to a close in September with the English Schools' Combined Events Championships, held in Bedford. I represented North Yorkshire in the heptathlon, finishing twelfth out of forty-two after two days of competition. I think it is safe to say that javelin and shot putt are not my strong points and, unfortunately, allowed me to slip down the points rankings. Over the winter I hope to build up my strength so that, next year, I am able to contend for the gold medal.

Hannah Hickingbotham, L6C

JACK LAUGHER



The phrase 'role model' is used an awful lot in school: sixth-formers, prefects and certainly the Head Boy and Head Girl are all expected to act as examples of good behaviour, smart uniform and academic effort to the younger students. Occasionally, however, RGS has students who go far above and beyond the call of duty in acting as role models. Jack Laugher is one of these students.

Among the plurality of district, area and county sporting representatives the school is lucky to have, Jack stands out as someone who has competed, not for club, or county, but for his nation. I am sure that many of us were glued to the television screen watching Jack dive at the London 2012 Olympics. If you were anything like me, you felt an awfully strong sense of pride that this young competitor was very much one of our own: not just Team GB's, but Ripon Grammar's.

Sadly, Jack did not do as well as he would have wished at the Olympics. He certainly did not achieve a standard commensurate with his truly immense talent. However, for me, this is not the point. My admiration for Jack was not strongest at the Olympics, as impressive an achievement as competing in them was. Rather, my admiration is strongest when I see the incomparable levels of effort and dedication which he puts into his diving – hour after hour of strenuous training, day after day. The time Jack spends refining and strengthening his diving technique is comparable with that of a full-time job; yet he has to manage this around the hefty academic involvement of his A-level studies, as well as an active social life. Diving has not allowed Jack a normal life, but he does not complain at any point. Indeed, Jack greets stress and success in exactly the same way that he treats everyone he meets: with courtesy, warmth and his trademark humour. To see Jack in the press is to witness someone mature far beyond their years.

Jack is a true role model: talented yet humble, famous yet warm and immensely likeable. He is a superb ambassador for Ripon Grammar School and our nation, and the whole school wishes him every success over the coming year as he competes at the very highest level.

Hugh McHale-Maughan, U6F

CRICKET



I was invited to play for Yorkshire Under-13s this summer and this year it was held at King's College, Taunton. Wow! What a fantastic venue. It had six cricket pitches and four astro-turf pitches. I was so pleased to be opening the bowling for this team. We played three matches and won two out of the three. The whole team stayed at the school and used the facilities. The two matches that we didn't play were called off due to rain! My best figures were 2-15 off eight overs against Ireland. However, we sadly lost that game and Ireland came top of the group and won the trophy.

Taunton was a thrilling experience that I will never forget. Since then I have started winter training at the

Yorkshire ground at Headingley, initially on an elite bowling course. After Christmas I have more intensive training, twice a week at Headingley. I am looking forward to the winter season and hope to get selected for the 'silver pathways' programme.

Cameron O'Donnell, 3C

VX (FORMERLY ROCK-IT BALL)

Following the rebranding of this new and exciting sport, RGS students have really taken the VX world by storm. Reece Farren, Stephen Laws and Dominic Butler all joined Hannah Hale in the national squad this year and Stephen competed in the V2 World Cup in Edinburgh in the summer. V2 is the singles version – 1 v 1 – and is played in a squash court. The Ripon VX club has gone from strength to strength. The team were runners-up in the National League in only its first full year of competition, thus qualifying for the UK Club Championships. Ripon Grammar School is the National Centre of vXcellence and hosts National Squad training, festivals and international fixtures.



The relationship between RGS and VX Global has resulted in several of our students, and staff – well done Mrs Russell and Mrs Pickard, becoming Level 1 and Level 2 coaches in this activity. Pictured are Level 2 coaches Amy Ellerker, Stephen Laws, Hannah Hale and Reece Farren and course tutor, Paul Hildreth.

Mrs H Mackenzie

TABLE TENNIS TEAM HITS THE SPOT!



Nearing the end of the last academic year there was much demand for the school to take up a new Table Tennis club as many students were very keen to start playing. As the standard of play increased we decided that this year we should enter a team into the local Harrogate and District League. We have played matches against other schools,

clubs and adult teams in the region, such as St John Fisher's, Harrogate Grammar and The Harrogate Racquets Club. We are presently at the top of Division 4, with some of our players currently unbeaten and close games from the other players. At the moment we are led by team captain Tong Yi Chan who has competed previously in Division 3, with other representatives including Matthew Cotton, Coulton Hill, Benjamin Evans, Charlie Yates, Thomas Stringer and Maximus Crompton who have all shown a positive work ethic and attitude.

We welcome new players and accommodate a range of abilities, standards and ages, from students to teachers. This is a good opportunity to for players to come along to club training on Wednesdays from 4:00-5:00pm and experience and develop new skills in a great sport!

By Matthew Cotton, Tong Yi Chan and Coulton Hill

SPORTS LEADERSHIP



RGS Sports Leaders continue to promote our school in the community by assisting at primary school sporting festivals and helping the teachers at local primary schools in their provision of PE. This year's Young Sporting Ambassadors are Alannah Mansfield, Jenny Unwin, Kate Grime, Beth Grimmer, Laura Mackenzie and Emily Evans. Both Laura and Emily were selected to be the Gold Ambassadors for the

Harrogate District, which is a huge honour, and the two girls represented Ripon Grammar School at the Young Ambassador Conference in York in October.

Mrs H Mackenzie



WORLD CHALLENGE TRIP TO VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA



The school car park was strangely full at four o'clock in the morning on the 16th July as three World Challenge teams convened with an air of excitement and trepidation, creating a hive of activity in the sleepy city of Ripon. Students from the fourth year to the upper-sixth form loaded the bus with backpacks crammed to full capacity, filled only with the necessities to last a month. On board, the challengers experienced a four hour-limbo, leaving behind two years' of fundraising and heading slowly towards a strange country over six-thousand miles away. For many of us, before the trip, Cambodia was an obscure country paired with the domineering promise of Vietnam; a list of bare facts to be researched as part of the build-up before departure. The World Challenge trip brought the two countries to life and provided the team members with experiences and memories that were well worth the efforts of the two-year preparations.

Nothing could prepare the challengers for the overwhelming atmosphere of being dropped into an entirely different culture. Stepping out of the airport into the heat and dust of Phnom Penh with the weight of over twenty-four hours travelling brought a strange mix of confusion, adrenaline and inescapable exhaustion, making the hot and cramped bus journey through the vehicle-packed streets seem almost dream-like. Perhaps the first thing we noticed with great surprise (which would dull only to amazement over the month and becoming a subject of numerous wagers) was the number of people the Cambodians and Vietnamese managed to cram on to the back of one motorbike. Whole families, from grandparents to toddlers, balanced precariously on the seats, glancing up at the strange bus of westerners peering out the

windows at them (I believe the record was six people on one bike, spanning three generations). Of course, crossing the roads in a country where traffic laws are only vague guidelines to be interpreted differently from person to person and time to time was a challenge in itself. Add to the mix dangerously swerving tuk-tuks in Cambodia and motorbikes around thirty abreast, and stretching impossibly back in Vietnam. Crossing the road became a skill to be developed over the month (the rule is to never step backwards and to walk slowly into an apparent wall of traffic, waving your hand in what seems like a hopeless gesture of begged hindrance).

Of course, crossing the roads, although a difficulty, was not the 'challenge' we looked forward to. For each team, while the details and locations varied, both volunteering and trekking were big parts of the expedition. Whether it was volunteering with disadvantaged children in Siem Reap, or staying on a project in the unique village constructed by New Hope for Cambodian Children for orphans with HIV/AIDS, the experiences were both enjoyable and eye-opening for all three teams. This section of the expedition remains a highlight for many participants for good reason; the children were loving and enthusiastic and the opportunity to give a little something, no matter how small, was enjoyed. The time spent trekking is heralded by World Challenge as not only enjoyable, but an opportunity for team-building and self-development. This was certainly evident for our team as we walked through the rural villages around Kon Tum, and perhaps even more so on the longer Dalat trek where one night was spent wild camping in the rainforest. Teams took the opportunity to go on an elephant ride as part of the trekking time (an attraction for nearby Dalat residents visiting the countryside).

While in England, many people anticipated that this elephant trekking would be the highlight of the trip and challengers were surprised by their intensity of interest in the cultural exploration. Perhaps four highlights of the month (although these are bound to vary from person to person) were the Cu Chi Viet Cong tunnels near Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon); the harrowing S-21 prison and killing fields of Phnom Penh; the floating stacks of Ha Long Bay and finally the largest Hindu Temple complex in the world: Angkor Wat. These were crucial to understanding the culture in which we were immersed, for good or bad reasons. While the tunnels helped us to understand the troubles of the war which remains with an incredible clarity in the memories of the Vietnamese today, the S-21 prison provided us with an explanation of the poverty Cambodia still struggles with, as an estimated 17,000 citizens were imprisoned here between 1975 to 1979, many of them brutally tortured and executed. Whether each challenger had an interest in history and politics or not, this memorial held a strange poignancy for a group of teenagers with examination results looming over them thousands of miles away and it allowed us to reassess our values.





The trip was not to be taken lightly, yet challengers enjoyed a month of excitement, which never seemed to fully wear off. While there were so many incredible experiences, this article would not be complete without some mention of the travelling experience itself. Whether it was the beautiful river boat ride from Phnom Penh across the border into Chau Doc (with the strangest customs office I have ever seen) or waking up on the sleeper train to the beautiful vistas of the central highlands surrounding Dalat, travelling was a mixture of beauty, patience and downright surrealism. The odd Khmer



karaoke played for six hours on the pot-holed bus ride to Siem Reap was perhaps the first demonstration of this (thank goodness for iPods), yet for us it was topped by the "express" night bus to Ho Chi Minh City, which, in an incredible paradox of its name took hours to leave the town and stopped to allow vendors without a word of English to board and shove their wares under our sleepy and bewildered noses.

I think it is fair to say that the school's third World Challenge trip was a tremendous success for all who participated. The expeditions are

sold as difficult team-building and self-development projects, yet they are much more than this. Our trip provided us with the experience of travel, as members had to organise transport and accommodation and manage the budget themselves (a task far more daunting than actually difficult, as we soon found). The trip gave many challengers the confidence to travel independently, with many team members planning back-packing trips with friends for next summer around Europe and India. Certainly, the trip did not sate our desire to travel, but ignited it by providing not only confidence but the recognition of the diversity of culture. With the newly-announced trip to Costa Rica in 2014 looming apparently far in the distance, some challengers are even contemplating a second trip: proof indeed that World Challenge is well worth the effort.



Siân Avery, U6C

"The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page." So said St. Augustine, and although travel does not necessarily broaden the mind, I am convinced that our recent expedition to Cambodia and Vietnam succeeded in doing precisely that, along with developing the confidence and skills of the young people who dared to sign up to this magnificent adventure. We all have our personal memories and impressions of the expedition to last us a lifetime. Sunrise at Angkor Wat, sunset at Halong Bay, Phnom Penh's Royal Palace, Saigon, Hanoi, camping in the jungle, the wonderful seafood, the crazy traffic, the beautiful beaches, the extraordinary hill trekking around Sapa.....I could go on and on! There were many memorable moments of fun and laughter and kindness as we explored these countries together. The real heroes of the expedition are the young people who worked for two years to go and then represented their families, their school and their country so magnificently. I would like to thank all forty-four of them and their parents who supported them. Many thanks must also go to expedition leaders Matt Ilott and Chris Jackson who were outstanding in their commitment to the welfare of our young people, and I cannot, of course, fail to mention the superb staff whose unwavering support, endurance, good humour and humanity made the expedition so successful – Mr Colley, Ms Raymer, Ms Green, Mrs Pickard and Ms Sanchez, I salute you all.

J. Clarke

ART TRIP TO CORNWALL

To kick-start our development on the AS Art and Design course, lower-sixth form artists visited Cornwall and St Ives for four days in October. This trip allowed us to gain a first-hand insight into the unique and beautiful area, providing many opportunities for both photography and sketching that will help us to develop our sketchbook work and ultimately our final pieces.

A particular highlight was the visit to the beautiful Porthcurno Beach on the Friday. We used this opportunity to take photographs that could potentially become developed pieces, taking into account the lighting, movement and the angles at which these were taken to create interesting compositions. We also did sketches directly, capturing the essence of the beach within our artwork. An afternoon visit to the Tate St Ives was a valuable experience, where we saw the artwork of some of the artists that we are studying, aided by a very informative guided tour of many of the pieces. This visit also allowed us to sketch the many sculptures on display and annotate them from first-hand experience.

A day trip to St Ives allowed us to photograph and explore the area (and sample Cornish pasties!). We also visited the Barbara Hepworth sculpture garden, a peaceful area in which we could sketch the many sculptures on display.

We also paid visits to Lanyon's Quoit and tin mines in order to photograph and sketch these relics of industrial heritage. A well-earned trip to the cinema to see 'Taken 2' on our final night in St Ives concluded our visit.



The trip was a fantastic opportunity for us all to develop our knowledge and understanding of artists inspired by Cornwall, such as Peter Lanyon and Sandra Blow, and provided a firm foundation on which to base our future developments. Many thanks to Mr Duckworth, Mrs Howes and Mr Davis who gave up their time to organise this opportunity for the lower-sixth form artists and were so helpful throughout the trip. It certainly was a trip to remember!

Harriet Cunningham, L6E

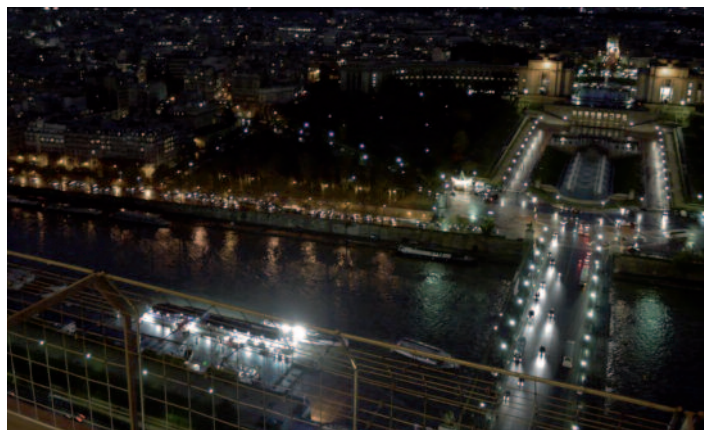
PARIS TRIP

On Thursday, 8th November, twenty-four A-level art students, set off for Paris. After seven hours of train journeys, they finally arrived. The students were glad to get to the hotel, to recharge their batteries and grab their cameras, before heading out to a talk on Jean Debuffet, a popular French artist. After the talk, they took a picturesque walk along the Seine, taking in the sparkling lights of the Eiffel Tower, which provided many photo opportunities.

Friday morning came too quickly with an 8 o'clock breakfast. Bleary-eyed and with their croissants in their back-packs, the group set off for a day in some of the famous art galleries in Paris. Visiting the Louvre, the Pompidou centre and many other art galleries, meant that there was a large range of art movements and artists available for students to admire and from which to learn. From sculpture to paint, film to light displays, the galleries had it all. A particular highlight was being able to see the Mona Lisa, in spite of the rather large, surrounding crowd. A candlelit dinner with friends to discuss the work seen that day and some Italian cuisine was a brilliant way to end an exciting but exhausting day.

Having had a good night's sleep and a typical French breakfast of crepes and pain au chocolat, the students were full of enthusiasm for the day ahead. To begin with, the group went to 'Musée de l'Orangerie', a fantastic,

newly renovated gallery containing Monet's waterlilies. Monet's work made an impact on many students with his use of subtle colour and expressive marks. However, the gallery was also exhibiting a fantastic collection by Chaim Soutine. The warped images and painterly marks were inspiring to the students, allowing them to gain a different perspective on French art. A quick break between galleries allowed some to make souvenir purchases - a few berets included! Next it was on to the 'Musée d'Art Moderne', a gallery



containing some lesser-known artists. This gave the students the ability to discover new pieces, ideas and themes that motivated them.

After a drink in the café, the group piled onto a boat, ready for a cruise along the Seine. This boat trip gave both information and history behind some of the beautiful bridges and buildings that line the river. After the cruise, everybody excitedly walked over to the Eiffel Tower. With night falling, the view from the top was mesmerising. Complaints of how cold or busy it was were forgotten as both students and staff enjoyed the view.

Once everyone had taken as many pictures from the Eiffel Tower as was possible, it was decided that dinner was next. Having decided to go back to the restaurant from the first night, both students and staff set about finding it, with Mr Duckworth assuring the group he knew exactly where it was... An hour and a half later, the restaurant was found, only to discover that they had in fact stopped serving food. With the plan abandoned, a restaurant was chosen and the group settled down for their last meal together in Paris.

On Saturday morning, students were dragged away from the beautiful views, suitcases were packed, breakfasts were eaten and last-minute gifts were bought. A trip to the Sacré-Coeur was also organised for any student wanting some more pictures.

Overall, in spite of getting lost and a sickness bug affecting a large proportion of the students, everyone involved had a brilliant time and were able to broaden their knowledge of artists and strengthen their A-level portfolios. It was definitely a trip to remember!

Philippa Bell, U6C

Parents' Association

NEWS FROM THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

We have had a great start to the academic year and I would like to extend a warm welcome to a number of new parents who have joined us following attendance at our AGM in October. If anyone is interested in attending any meetings we would be delighted to see you.

First of all, a big thank you to every parent who has bought refreshments at any parents' evening or school event – between you this raises approximately £1,000 a year for our school. Mr Pearman has agreed the purchase of on new curtains for the stage so that our excellent music and drama productions have the resplendent stage backdrop they deserve. The Queen's Diamond Jubilee bench, another purchase by the PA, is now located in the school grounds.

If you pledge £1.25 a month with our 200 Club – less than a cup of coffee in many places, you could support Ripon Grammar School and be in with a chance to win £50 or £25 in our monthly draw! It may not sound much but it all adds up and helps to improve the facilities for our children; for example, leasing the minibus which ferries school sports' teams and students to musical events. For more information about the 200 club, and details of all future events, please see the school website.

The Parents' Association has had a very busy term, starting with the wine, cheese and quiz evening in September for parents of new starters which was so much fun. Our new members have become more involved with social evenings, such as the Murder Mystery Night in October which raised a total of £1200. Thanks are due to Linda Dawson, our treasurer, who once again ran the kitchen with seamless efficiency. The Ripon Rowel Players delighted everyone with their unique mix of glamour, wit and suspense in *The Black Cat*, *The Swollen Madonna* and *The Big Cheese*. The evening also supported the Dr Barnardo charity's youth training kitchen in Harrogate which supplied the main course – and many thanks to the parents who provided a huge array of home-made puddings.



Thank you to all those who supported the Fairy-Lit Christmas Fair organised by Fiona Pearman and Peri Langdale. Opened by TV presenter Claire Montgomery (a Ripon resident) and attended by the Lord Mayor of Ripon, everything you could need for Christmas was supplied by over 35 diverse shops and individual local crafters. These ranged from organic turkeys and Christmas cake to vintage décor, stylish accessories and luxury goods. Features such as the Tutto Bello 1959 pink caravan pitched en route to the entrance to the fair, and Swinton Park amongst others added to the occasion. The festive atmosphere was created by the hundreds of fairy lights, musical entertainment from our talented musicians and singers, the scent of mulled wine, mince pies and freshly roast turkey. A spread of home-made cakes and pastries enticed customers into our refreshment area and helped to raise a grand total of £1,400; twice as much as we had anticipated! Thank you to all those who baked, served food, set up and cleared away – it was a terrific team effort.



Photos for P A Christmas Fair courtesy of Mrs N Woolfenden

Parents of first-year students, who were helping at the Christmas Fair said that it was to be part of an event that was more like a festival than a fund raiser! New committee member, Nova Briggs, who sold raffle tickets, said "The fair gave a taste of the many more fun events we have planned for 2013 including Astronomy Evenings and a Burns' Night Supper" (26th January!) All our traders, including the World Challenge students, said they were delighted with the buzz of the crowd and we are already receiving enquiries from delighted stall holders about next year! One trader said "the atmosphere, range of stalls and footfall were fantastic!"

Our most successful event of 2012 was the Olympic-themed raffle organised by Ruth Savage which raised £2,600. For the last two years, it's been an amazing one woman effort so we are looking for volunteers who can share this task now that Ruth has become a governor. A very big thank you to her for all the effort she always puts into this enterprise and thanks to all the parents who bought tickets and sold them to others.

A reminder that if you are clearing out old uniform (in good condition), or needing replacements, the Scope charity shop in Ripon is the place to go. If they haven't got the items you are looking for, just ask, as they are unable to display all the second-hand uniform.

Looking ahead, Mr Barker has offered to run two further Astronomy Nights on Thursday 17th and 24th January when, if there is a clear sky, you will see the Moon, Jupiter and some key constellations. The evening includes a talk and an observatory visit with both Mr Barker and some of his very keen and knowledgeable students. This is an evening not to be missed and is suitable for children aged 10 upwards!!

Burns' Night, now in its eighth year, is always very popular. Tickets, which are available from Mrs Kinread in the office, are £20 for a three-course supper and true Scottish entertainment, including music and dancing.

You can share the enjoyment of raising money for our children in all kinds of ways, large and small. Julia Whitham co-ordinates volunteers for refreshments at parents' evenings drama productions, and other events in the year. We always need baking for big events and we especially want ideas and feedback on different, exciting fund raisers – would a magic evening suit you? Or a fashion show with a tea party? We are thinking about holding a second alternative comedy night – what events would you like to see and how could you contribute? Talk to me, Alison Reed, or any member of the committee. Contact us on pa@ripongrammar.co.uk

Future 2013 dates for your diary

17th and 24th January – Astronomy Nights with Mr Barker – details to follow.

26th January 2012 – Burns' Night – tickets now available from School Reception

2013 – Girls' Night-In at RGS – Fashion Show and Pamper Night – details to follow

CHARITY WEEK

After weeks of planning by the school officers and all the sixth-form team, charity week began. This year, the school had chosen to raise money for 'Operation Smile', an international childrens' medical charity which works to perform reconstructive surgery for children born with facial deformities such as a cleft palate. In many countries, being born with facial deformities can lead to stigma, abuse and neglect. With the help of Operation Smile, forty-five minutes of their time and only £150, a child's life can be transformed.

The week began with a lively performance by Ripon Grammar School's very own 'Purple Mafia' during break-time on Monday, getting the week off to an exciting start. This was followed by a compilation of stand-up comedy and popular quiz-show moments, performed by some of the sixth-form boys, which created a lunchtime of comical mishaps!

Tuesday's break-time entertainment was a definite highlight of the week, featuring a competitive 'dance off' between the mathematics and science departments. Students watched with awe the excellent dancing skills of teachers from both departments, as they cart-wheeled, break-danced and moon-walked to PSY Gangnam Style; this was something the students won't forget any time soon! Lunchtime included some stomach-churning entertainment, when students and staff took part in 'I'm a Celebrity ... Get me Out of Here!'. Everything from maggots to McDonalds was consumed to test the stomachs of participants. After school, film of 'The Hunger Games' was shown in the hall for second-year students to enjoy whilst eating popcorn and having fun with their friends.

Wednesday break-time consisted of 'voice battles', a musical masterpiece from Alice Scorer and Miss Green. Lunchtime saw the equally exciting 'teacher wipe-out'; after many rounds of staff members pushing one another off a beam, Dr Linklater was crowned champion.

The rugby team dancing to Mr Walker's vocal accompaniment started off Thursday's activities. Although the dancing was of questionable quality,

no fault could be found with Mr Walker's singing! This was followed by a lunchtime talent show. A wide range of talents were displayed, including a beautiful duet by Jonathan and Sally Pitts, a boy-band performance by 'Batteries Not Included' and a last-minute dance performance by the school officers. After school, an auction of promises was held. The auction itself offered some remarkable items, including a short break in Europe and a year-long gym membership. These generous donations allowed a number of bidders to compete to raise a substantial amount of money for the cause.

The week concluded with Friday's entertainment. At break-time, a crowd of sixth-former students broke out into a well-rehearsed, well-choreographed 'flash mob' routine, to the surprise of the rest of the school. The routine ended with Jack Laughter back-flipping on the stage to a round of applause, and a sigh of relief from the sixth-form that it had ended as well as they had hoped!

Finally, the week ended with the traditional staff pantomime. The staff took to the stage to perform The Sleeping Beauty, to cheers from students of all ages. Arguably, Mr Walker stole the show with his portrayal of the 'Fairy of Loveliness', wearing his handmade fairy wings and a football t-shirt. However, each staff member brought enthusiasm and hilarity to their roles, creating an amazing pantomime overall.

Though Charity Week ended, the fundraising continued, with a 300-mile bike-ride by members of the upper-sixth form Stephen Laws, Jacob Lockwood and Matthew Bell. Starting in Edinburgh, the trio averaged over sixty miles per day and finished back at Ripon Grammar School on the Thursday during October half-term. In total, the boys managed to raise over £1,000 for Operation Smile and should be very proud of their achievements.

Through the hard work of staff and students alike, Ripon Grammar School has raised over £10,000 for Operation Smile; everyone involved should be proud of this monumental achievement.

Philippa Bell, U6C

HAREWOOD HOUSE ART COURSE

Harewood House has been organising and funding a week-long art course for the past few years. The Lascelles family are well-established patrons of the arts and the course gives sixteen students the opportunity to develop their own art work and work with a number of different artists who all work in different media.

I was fortunate enough to win a place on this prestigious art course, studying daily at Harewood House. I was one of the sixteen students from across the county who had been chosen after submitting a selection of our recent work.

The focus of the week was 'medieval' which tied in with the house's focus for the year. This meant we used the subject as inspiration in the workshops throughout the week. Every day we worked with two different artists who worked in different media. Artists ranged from traditional painters to milliners, to photographers and stone carvers. Each artist demonstrated some of their work and taught us certain techniques from their own field. Every evening we received informative talks from different art-related professions, including an architect and archaeologist, on their respective fields. We also received a talk from the Earl of Harewood, David Lascelles, who is a TV producer. He gave

us an insight into the process of producing and showed us some of his recent work. A highlight for me was our day spent at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park on a stone carving workshop and also working with the photographer in our own dark room.

Currently, Harewood House is organising monthly follow-up sessions for the sixteen of us. This month's session is a public-speaking workshop. Each month's session varies with the common aim of helping with university applications and developing transferable skills for the world of work.



*Medieval harwood 2012
© the photographer & Harewood House*

Ellie Mason, U6E



OLD RIPONIANS' ASSOCIATION

President:
Mrs Jenny Bellamy
Secretary:
Mr Euan Raffel
Treasurer:
Mr George Owram

EUAN RAFFEL AT THE 2012 OLYMPICS

I left Ripon Grammar School in 2008 to study Live Event Technology (lighting, sound and other technical wizardry for theatre, television, etc.) at Glamorgan University. Three years later, I graduated with a 2:1, but there was no sign of a job.

My tutor asked if I fancied applying for the Broadcast Training Programme which was organised by OBS, the host broadcaster for all Olympic and Paralympic Games. The premise was that students or graduates from selected UK universities, studying or having graduated from media-related courses, were invited to apply for a place on the programme. Successful applicants would receive specialist training in the broadcast sector in camera operation, sound engineering, production and archiving, with the possibility of working at the London 2012 Olympics.

I submitted my application, and was surprised to receive an email to advise me that my application was successful. I attended a four-day training workshop at Bournemouth University where I, and two-hundred other successful applicants, attended seminars and lectures, and received practical tuition in our respective roles from, amongst others, Dennis Baxter, head of sound for the Olympic Games since 1994. The course was hard, but exciting and enjoyable, involving a lot of learning new jargon, and some very long days.

A few weeks later, I received an email from OBS confirming a job offer at the Olympics! I was to be posted to the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff. This was outside the main buzz of the Olympics, but it did mean that my contract lasted for the entire three weeks of the Games, rather than the ten days I had expected.

With my Olympic accreditation in hand, I set off to Cardiff in July to begin my three-week stint working on the biggest event in the world. As host broadcaster, OBS handle all international television and radio broadcasting for the Olympics. Broadcasters such as the BBC buy the rights to broadcast these signals, adding their own commentary and presentation to the signals OBS produce. With an audience of up to four billion, there was no room for mistakes.

Early on Sunday 22nd July, a few days before the first match, over sixty of us, including local BBC crew, my tutor and recent university graduates, gathered to get the stadium ready to broadcast to the world. Working with Norwegian broadcaster NRK, we set up the compound, carrying several tonnes of cameras, sound equipment, cables and accessories into the stadium. Some of the hard work had been done and lines carrying the feeds from the stadium back to the compound had been installed, but we had to do the rest. The tasks for the sound technicians included running several miles of cable around the pitch, installing around thirty microphones, testing them and protecting them from the zealous groundskeepers who were watering the pitch every few hours. Not all the microphones were pitch-side; some were destined for capturing the crowd ambience. A head for heights was needed for this, as these microphones were installed in the stadium roof, some 240 feet above the pitch!

The following weeks were fairly straightforward. Call time was five hours before kick-off, doing checks and testing, making any repairs or replacements that were needed. We would then break for our team meal before making final preparations and directing guest

broadcast teams to their positions. Our broadcasts started forty-five minutes before kick off, as we often had three or four broadcasters booked to do pre-match pieces to camera.

During the matches, there were four of us whose job it was to sit pitch-side with special hand-held microphones and follow the action. Perhaps not the most glamorous of jobs (I did get hit on the head by a few balls) but it offered one of the best seats, and we got to see some of the football highlights, from the first match between the GB and NZ women's teams, to that terrible penalty kick that knocked the GB men out of the running, and the controversial bronze medal match between Japan and South Korea.

As an added bonus, OBS made available some of the broadcaster seats at morning sessions in the Olympic Stadium at Stratford. I was lucky enough to get a seat for various heats, including hurdles, discus, shotput and 1500m. The atmosphere at the Olympic Park was electric and in the stadium itself there wasn't a single seat free! In the afternoon with my broadcaster privileges I wandered around the International Broadcast Centre, seeing where all the hard work happens to package and broadcast the signals worldwide. I also spotted a few famous faces, including Sue Barker and Gary Lineker!

All good things come to an end. Our last match, the men's bronze medal match, was on 10th August. The match was a lively one with lots of foul play. South Korea won the bronze medal in the end. Our jobs didn't finish as the final whistle blew because a new event was coming into the stadium, and the trucks were heading back to Norway the following morning. We had to strip out all our equipment and cabling, carry it back to the compound, and pack it into trucks and storage containers. We finally clocked out for the last time, just after 1am. It had been an amazing three weeks, such an exciting opportunity and unique learning experience. With a few teary goodbyes, we parted ways into the darkness hoping to be reunited in a few years time in Rio!

Euan Raffel

50 YEARS IS NO TIME AT ALL REALLY!

July 12th 2012 was such a happy time for hordes of Old Riponians who flocked back to the school to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the amalgamation of the two Ripon Grammar Schools in 1962. Most simply couldn't believe that fifty years had passed since that day.

Many of them had never visited the school since they left and, as they took a tour round the buildings and the grounds to discover the new buildings, they could hardly believe the changes that had been made. The sports facilities, the mathematics block, the sixth-form centre, and the music block, which was almost finished, were all greeted with delight.

However, as one former student said, "It's the atmosphere in a school that matters and that hasn't changed a bit. Everyone is still just as friendly and committed to the place as they ever were!"

Another commented on how well turned-out and informed the sixth-formers who led the tours were. No change there either.

The exhibition material, based mainly in the library, was of particular interest to everyone.

The tea provided by the Parents' Association was delicious, and those who went on to the Old Rips Dinner at the Old Deanery, organised by George Owram, said what a wonderful way that was to end the day of celebration.

As President of the Old Riponians' Association, and a former member of the teaching staff, I felt that while it had been hard work, both by the school and the ORA, it had all been worth every minute. We're now looking forward to next summer when we hope to hold another reunion.

Jenny Bellamy

LIBRARY NEWS

A BUZZ IN THE AIR...



There has been a busy start to the year in RGS Library.

Diving straight in with a Roald Dahl competition to celebrate 50 years of the BFG, students were invited to invent their own words in the Gobblefunk style. A winner was 'embazzled', meaning 'to be embarrassed about being puzzled over something', a word which I've used several times already!

The 'Book Buzz' scheme, which offered first-year pupils the opportunity to choose a FREE book, was financed jointly by

the school and the charity Booktrust. To help them choose from an excellent variety of titles, pupils took part in a half-day drama session run by Dave Cryer, during which they could act out small scripts based on the books in the selection. This gave students a real insight into books they may not otherwise have been interested in, and there was an impressive amount of dramatic talent on show, with virtually every student having the chance to rehearse and perform as part of a group.

Later in the term, a 'short story takeaway' display went down a treat, with pupils borrowing story selections in brown paper takeaway bags so that they could not see what they had chosen! The pupils' task was

to read just one of the stories in the book and then record their opinion of the short story on a review sheet. Once the sheet was returned, pupils could collect their own 'takeaway' edible prize.

To celebrate National Poetry Day we were visited by Ash Dickinson, a performance poet who has performed at the Edinburgh Fringe and all over the world. He enthralled us with his surreal take on the world around us and guided students in their attempts to make up their own poetry. Amazingly, Ash managed to perform for or work with students in almost every form during his two-day visit. Feedback showed that students loved participating in something different and hadn't realised poetry could be about mundane experiences and everyday life. They even commented that they now enjoyed poetry more!

To stimulate our creative juices further, Mrs Morris organised a poetry relay competition in the library. Pupils worked in teams and a throw of the dice determined which team member should set off on a lap round the room, collecting a word as they went. They could choose from nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and 'other words' and were allowed to add in four words of their own choosing. The task was then to use the words to create their poetry. The results were intriguing ...

Mrs S Dring,



PRESTIGIOUS HONOUR FOR HIGH PERFORMING CADET: Sarah Owens, L6B

Sarah Owens has been awarded the prestigious appointment of Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet – an achievement recognised as the highest honour in the cadets – in recognition of her outstanding service in the Air Training Corps (ATC).

The certificate was presented to Sarah by Lord Crathorne, Lord-Lieutenant for North Yorkshire, at a ceremony held at the Cadet Training Centre in Strensall, York, on the 20th September. The accolade means Sarah now holds the position of Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for North Yorkshire.

Joining the cadets in 2009, Sarah's leadership potential was soon identified and she progressed quickly through the ranks to her present rank of Flight Sergeant. Sarah's enthusiasm and dedication to the Corps has seen her attend many camps and sports activities, and, being an accomplished musician, Sarah has also played for the ATC National Concert band and National Marching band at RAF Cranwell and the Royal International Air Tattoo. Contributing significantly to the annual Wing Training Days, Sarah was a member of the 2011 winning Banner drill team, which went on to win the Regional competition, while also acting as the squadron's Team Manager. A very committed cadet, Sarah always leads by example and regularly supports the running of the squadron, helping instruct younger cadets in addition to giving up one weekend every month to instruct at the Air Operations Acquaintance Centre, at RAF Linton-on-Ouse.

Reflecting on the ceremony and her new role as ambassador for the cadets in North Yorkshire, Sarah said: "I joined the Air Cadets so that I could experience new challenges and find out about military life, and I've achieved things I never thought possible. But I had no idea that I would achieve such a prestigious award as this. I'm absolutely delighted to represent 886 (City of Ripon)

Squadron and Central and East Yorkshire Wing ATC as the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet."

Lieutenant Colonel Jeremy Bleasdale, Deputy Chief Executive of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (RFCA) in Yorkshire and the Humber commented: "The Lord Lieutenant's Certificate is a prestigious award that recognises cadets who have performed above expectations. I'm delighted for Sarah, who is a shining example of what can be achieved when young people involve themselves in extra-curricular activities."



WORK EXPERIENCE

In the current economic climate, the importance of work experience in preparation for the future is undoubted. Ripon Grammar School has always seen work experience as an intrinsic part in the pursuit for any career and, therefore, has always made time to allow students to get the key experience they need. The range of different work placements secured by the sixth-form students is testament to the range of interests that exist within the school. Here is a summary of a few.

GEORGINA SANDERSON

In preparation for my university applications, I have spent time in York and Harrogate Hospitals on work-experience placements. These have enabled me to gain a valuable understanding of, and insight into, what a career in medicine entails, reaffirming my aspirations to pursue this career. I was fortunate in being able to shadow consultants and junior doctors in clinics, theatres, laboratories, on wards and to spend time in a range of departments, from radiology to obstetrics and pediatrics. I saw an incredible range of cases and was particularly fascinated by how closely the specialties are intertwined. The medical staff were very encouraging and generous with their time and knowledge. I thoroughly enjoyed my work experience; it continues to provide a source of inspiration for me to pursue a medical career.

KATHERINE MAY

Following an initial interest in communications, I was successful in securing an internship with the marketing company Acceleris. I was lucky enough to be shown all the work that the team has done for the charity Leeds Surgery Heart Fund, as well as what they plan to do in the future to try and help prevent the closure of the heart surgery unit at Leeds General Infirmary. I had not previously realised the huge variety of work that the team undertake at Acceleris and I was extremely fortunate to be able to spend time there and to receive training from a team who have a combined experience of more than 150 years. Throughout the week I was given a variety of jobs, including completing evaluations, documenting newspaper articles, writing articles and press releases (one of which appeared in all the major national newspapers), and designing the front cover for a book. After spending time at the company I feel sure that marketing is a line of work I would like to pursue further.

SAM WAINWRIGHT

During the summer holidays I managed to arrange a work experience placement with JP Morgan at their head offices in London. I was involved in conferences and meetings with companies and trust-fund managers. I also gained an insight into the three sectors of investment banking: corporate, research analysis and trading. My work experience has really helped me on the A-level economics course, supporting in particular the 'current business' unit. Even though investment banking has been given a bad press recently, I really enjoyed my time in a busy and hectic environment.

CAMERON McCORMACK

I spent a week at Process Combustion in Harrogate in order to pursue my interest in chemical engineering. I was fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to work within all disciplines in the company, ranging from 3D computer modeling to more practical skills such as welding. It was extremely useful to see examples of jobs in the field, and I feel that I have developed many essential skills. The placement was informative and enjoyable, and I have since applied to study chemical engineering at university.

HOUSE DRAMA COMPETITION 2012

House Drama is an incredibly unique experience at school where each year a group of Upper Sixth students are given the momentous task of directing a House play of their choice. This year it was no different, with auditions beginning at the start of term and rehearsals taking place at lunchtimes and after school. There were only nine, busy weeks of preparation time before the two evenings of drama. In this short space of time the plays need to be cast, props and costumes need to be found, staging and lighting needs to be organised and a workbook for each House also needs to be made; a roller-coaster ride for everyone involved, but one which is well-worth the outcome.

On Thursday, 15th November, Porteus performed a thrilling adaptation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's highly acclaimed novel 'The Great Gatsby' and School performed a strong, committed adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's 'Hound of the Baskervilles'. The following evening saw De Grey take to the stage to perform their stunning adaptation of Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' followed by Hutton performing an ambitious, original play called 'Crisis'. Notably, the standard of all four plays was extremely high, emphasising the talent Ripon Grammar School has to offer.

The judges chose De Grey's 'A Christmas Carol' as the winning performance with Lucy Watkiss and Izzy Sykes sharing the trophy for Best Female Actor and Jonathan Pitts winning the trophy for Best Male Actor. The judges also selected Ranjeet Shahi as the winner of the 'Judges Discretionary Award' for his performance in School's 'The Hound of the Baskervilles'.

Thank you to everyone involved in the House Drama Competition this year for making it another fantastic event- the students, parents and staff who came to support, the 'techies' for their fantastic contribution once again and Mr Fell for his dedicated commitment shown every year.

Jonathan Pitts L6F



STUDYING FOR AN EPQ

An 'EPQ' is an Extended Project Qualification, which all sixth-form students at RGS have the opportunity to begin in the lower sixth. The qualification is worth half of an A-level and as a result it earns UCAS points, which can help a university application. The idea of the EPQ is to enable sixth-form students to study a topic which is of interest to them, and is completely separate from their school work. Many students chose to study a topic which supports their university application; however, the central idea is to develop independent research skills and do something enjoyable.

An EPQ can be about any topic: for example some of this year's titles are:

'To what extent have European fairy tales altered due to the cultures in which they are presented?'

'What are the benefits of surgical treatments over pharmacological treatments with regard to the search for a future cure to Idiopathic Parkinson's disease?'

'How did Percy Shelley's life and context shape his poetic works?'

The EPQ title can be revised throughout the project as students discover different aspects of the topic and wish to develop their project in an alternative

direction. Thus the freedom that the EPQ allows is important in providing students with an opportunity to demonstrate their skills for independent study.

Students are required to complete a written project – normally an essay – and to present their findings to an audience. However, the build-up to these final outcomes are also crucial, as every part of the EPQ – from the planning to your final review – is marked and contributes to the overall grade. As a result, the research element is a major aspect which takes time and careful planning. Two separate trips were organised to help us improve our ability to plan and research successfully. The first of these trips was to the British Library at Boston Spa, where students had the opportunity to pre-order books and then make notes from them. The library atmosphere proved perfect for work, and a short tour and introduction of the library meant that students could easily return when at a later date. The second trip was to York University, where the staff put on a number of presentations and workshops that informed students about the whole EPQ project, from the beginning to the final presentation. The skills which were taught were both new and reiterations of old ones, about composition, presentation and research.

Therefore, an EPQ is a responsibility that is not to be undertaken lightly, as the standard of work involved is high, but so too are the rewards, as students come out of the process with new skills and knowledge of a topic that they have studied in depth and with real passion.

Eleanor James & Emily Bowes, U6B

SPEECH DAY 2012

Speech Day offered the perfect opportunity to reflect on a truly outstanding year for Ripon Grammar School.

The school has continued to make progress over this past year and Speech Day is the perfect opportunity to reflect on all the achievements of both students and staff. Clearly the Ofsted inspection in February was a particular highlight, but listening to the Headmaster's annual report one gains a true sense of the academic, dramatic, musical and sporting talent which are appended within the student body, as well as the huge effort, talent and achievements of the staff. As figures such as the A* grade percentage for GCSE and A-level students were listed, one began to get a sense of the true scale of the academic achievement; even on a grey November day, that still pulls ex-students back to Ripon Grammar School. Some exceptional individual performances from students such as Laurence Holmes (who achieved 6 A* grades at A-Level) can be properly appreciated and it is great to give the achievements of the past year the credit that is truly deserved.

It is always lovely, as a student, to see the mixture of governors and committed community members within the school on Speech Day. The hard work of these individuals is so often key to the school's very survival and without which so many student opportunities would simply disappear. Being able to see the community links gives a good perspective on the school's role, as well as the long tradition of service the school maintains in Ripon. The long line of successful 'Old Riponians', all willing to offer their wealth of experience and advice, is not only one of the school's greatest assets but, as a student, something that can really help you to appreciate and understand the strong traditions at Ripon Grammar School and aid you as you move forward.

However, the true highlight of any Speech Day comes from the keynote speaker. Professor Sir Ian Kennedy stands as a testament to hard work and academic focus. Following a law degree his ability to untangle even the most difficult moral and ethical issues has made him famed for his ability on topics of medical ethics and moral issues in other areas of society. This has brought its own challenges as he has grappled with some of the most controversial and difficult topics to face modern society to date (most recently ensuring that appropriate standards are maintained in the remuneration of MPs). However, as an academic working with contemporary professionals, his perspective on different topical issues was fascinating. His hard work, determination and sheer intellect made him a fascinating person to listen to and I'm sure his speech will remain with many in the audience for years to come.

Speech day remains a highlight of the year for students and staff and being able to see the appreciation of the school by Riponians, past, present, and the wider community's appreciation of the school, really helps to shine a light on all the good work of Ripon Grammar School that would otherwise go unheeded. More than anything else, it is often so satisfying for students and staff alike to see and listen to students from last year's Upper Sixth who have moved on and are already having exceptional success at university. Speech Day is a final recognition of the school's, and particularly the students', achievements. Seeing the ease with which they have taken to university life is the final mark of success and now we look forward to what should be another year of 'outstanding' success for Ripon Grammar School.

Ben Nabarro, U6E

PHOTOGRAPHIC CLUB



by Beau Roddis, 2C



by Emma Beaumont, 4B



by Emma Beaumont, 4B



by Mr Davis

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

January

Tues 15	First form parents' evening 4.30pm – 7pm
Wed 23	Fourth form parents' evening 4.30pm – 7pm
Sat 26	PA Burns' Night Supper 7pm
Mon 28	Open Evening for Sixth Form intake in September 2013 6.15pm

February

Tues 5	Third form information evening 5.30pm
Wed 13	Second form parents' evening 4.30pm – 7pm
Thurs 14	School closes for half term 3.55pm
Mon 25	School opens 8.45am
Wed 27	Third form parents' evening 4.30pm – 7pm

March

Wed 18	Third form Outdoor Pursuits Course, Beverley Park, begins and Fourth form examinations begin
Fri 22	Outdoor Pursuits Course ends and Fourth form examinations end
Wed 27	RE trip to New York departs
Thurs 28	School closes for end of term at 12.30pm
Sun 31	RE trip to New York returns

April

Mon 15	School opens for Summer term at 8.45am
Thurs 25	Higher Education Evening

For further information please contact us:

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