



Re-founded 1555

Ripon Grammar School

Helping shape the future since 1555



29 March 2018

SPRING TERM NEWSLETTER 2018

Dear Parents

Education should all be about horizons – expanding horizons. There's a wonderful line in Billy Elliot when Billy asks his father, 'What's it like? London?' to which his father replies, 'Don't know son, I haven't made it past Durham'. Notwithstanding the beauty of city-centre Durham, **Billy Elliot** so wonderfully juxtaposes the vibrant realities of 1980s life in the mining communities of the North - with its working men's clubs, its boxing and its brass bands, and the cosmopolitan world of London and the ballet. It is almost beyond the imagination of many nowadays to understand the impact that one industry and its associated year long strike, had, and to some extent still has, on the cultural and economic life of those communities.

For those of you who had the privilege to watch the school's production last week, you will have realised just how strong some of the creative talent is at RGS, exemplified none more so than in the superb performances of Elliot Hutchinson as Billy, Alfie McEvoy as Billy's father Jackie and Emily Reid as Mrs Wilkinson. But we should also recognise how important the performance was for all those involved in such a collaborative and creative process which surely does expand horizons and gives many a confidence that comes with being on stage. I would therefore like to thank all the staff involved in the production, and in particular Mrs Levahn, Mrs Morpeth and Mr Seymour, for their hard work and dedication in choreographing, directing and producing the acting, dance, music and song that blended so fantastically together.

This term has been a busy one for **staff appointments**. Mr Michael Smith has joined us in the Geography Department to cover for Mrs Wainwright's maternity leave. Miss Fallows [ex-RGS] is supporting the Music Department as a technician and Mr Faint has now joined us from New Zealand as a gap year student resident in School House. For 2018-19 we will have new staff joining us also. Mrs Claire Judd will be working part time in Psychology, Mrs Sophie Raymond joins us as a full time teacher of Geography and Mrs Louise Johnson will be teaching full time in the Mathematics Department. Finally Miss Katy Ball will join us part time in the Art Department and will also be helping in boarding.

This term the **Strategic Leadership Team** has been working on developing a new Strategic Plan for the school. Part of this process has been to reorganise the team in terms of their responsibilities and in order to continue to deliver progress for the school. As a consequence of this, Mrs Keelan- Edwards has taken on additional responsibilities for staff development and co-curricular calendaring and planning, alongside her current role of teaching and learning, and as a result has been promoted to the position of Deputy Head Teaching and Learning. She will work alongside Miss Murray as deputy head responsible for pastoral and boarding, Mr Auger as deputy head responsible for curriculum and assessment and Mr Fell in his continuing role as Head of Sixth Form.

Headmaster: Mr. Jonathan M. Webb, MA (Cantab).

Address: Clothierholme Road, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 2DG Telephone: (01765) 602647 Facsimile: (01765) 606388

Email: admin@ripongrammar.co.uk Website: www.ripongrammar.co.uk





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In matters of the **school estate**, we have continued to develop our site security with the installation of fire doors and new security locks in boys' boarding. We continue to strive towards progressive improvements in our school fabric including some redecoration of reception and the administration corridor over Easter and planned redecoration of boys' boarding and its social areas this summer. We are also looking closely at our parking and pedestrian access to the school buildings. As yet, there is no further news on the proposed 3G pitch other than to say that the current discussion between contractors and the developers is on-going.

As always the **Spring Term** has been packed with many activities and events. The early part of the term was taken up with mock examinations and the exam groups from 5th Form to Upper Sixth have, no doubt, been reflecting on their successes, the areas they need to develop and their revision programmes going forward. I am reliably informed, by all concerned, that revision has started in earnest. The Upper Sixth have also been receiving their university offers and many are currently making decisions on their choices. Eight students have offers from Oxford and Cambridge.

You will also today be receiving a copy of our latest **RGS News**. Once again you will find this publication packed with information about some of the many successes our students have enjoyed during the term. It is always difficult for me to summarise in one letter what has been achieved and if anybody is missed out or an event not always reported on then please accept my apologies. I am always delighted to hear about student success in whatever field, whether it be VX or girls' cricket, ESU debating or Princes' Trust. Hopefully RGS News captures all such things in all its glorious colour.

To highlight, there have been several very **successful trips** - from Art to Newcastle, to skiing in Val Di Fiemme as well as history trips to Krakow and Berlin and a Spanish trip to Madrid. As always, we are very grateful to the staff who give up their spare time to make such trips possible.

Sport has continued to flourish. In girls' sport the 1st XI hockey team were runners up in the Austin Friars 7s Hockey Tournament and reached the Northern Finals of the National Indoor Championships. The U16 hockey team reached the NE round of their National competition and the U14 hockey team won their Spring Area Tournament. 7 students represented North Yorkshire for cross country with Mena Scatchard crowned county champion.

In boys' sport, the 1st XV made it through to the semi-final of the NatWest Vase competition. This was a major achievement with the team being narrowly defeated by Wirral GS at Saracen's Allianz Park. The U16s and U18s rugby teams are through to the finals of the Yorkshire Cup- to be played next term. The U16 football team have made it through to the final of the County Cup.

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More recently, there have been further achievements for our **Young Enterprise** teams - Nestlers and Praesidio, who took part in the Young Enterprise Harrogate Showcase last week. It is the first time that Ripon Grammar School has ever entered two teams for this competition and, despite fierce rivalry from other teams, were awarded first and second place and now go forward to the next round of the competition in York. Well done to all involved.

Finally, as always, I would like to thank the generous work and support from the re-titled **Friends of Ripon Grammar School** whose financial support has helped a greater many school enterprises, with major donations to support whole school initiatives such as the recent lighting upgrade in the assembly hall, funding for chairs, tables and vinyl flooring to allow the sports hall to be used as a venue for events, including our public examinations, and replacement of the hall projector and screen. The Friends are always looking for more parents to be involved in their work, and if anybody is interested in supporting the committee, I am sure they will be received with a friendly reply!

Wishing you a restful Easter

Jonathan M Webb
Headmaster

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