Still making a splash
The swimming pool dug out by pupils 100 years ago

A novel occupation
A past pupil in print

Travels with my camera
From shy schoolgirl to TV news reporter

Life of Pie
The food lover who bought a Ripon institution

Plus:
21st century boarding
Class of 1985 reunion
Where are they now?
Sporting successes
Job Market
A letter from the headmaster

Dear Alumni

I hope you will enjoy reading the Clocktower. I am deeply grateful to Ruth Savage and her editorial team for all their hard work in putting this edition together.

When I ask current students what they most value about Ripon Grammar School, you may suspect some reference to facilities or teaching. Important though these undoubtedly are, the most valued aspect mentioned is the strong sense of community, which I must admit is what I most value and sensed when I came for interview nine years ago. There is a genuine sense of ownership by the students of the school; they care about it and the people associated with it. I am therefore delighted to see the same warmth and affection for the school manifest in its former students. The ability to get on with people, to communicate clearly and to be enthusiastic, which is so evident in our current students, is clearly a characteristic of former students too.

It is wonderful to see such success in a wide variety of careers such as TV news reporting, fashion design, writing and the food industry in this edition. I am not surprised of course that students of Ripon Grammar School are extremely talented, writing and the food industry in this edition. It is wonderful to see such success in a wide variety of careers such as TV news reporting, fashion design, writing and the food industry in this edition.

LD school friends who were last together at Ripon Grammar School more than 25 years ago have enjoyed an emotional reunion in the city. Around 50 former students, some of whom travelled from as far as America and Spain for the event, revisited a number of old haunts in Ripon during a memorable evening out together which finished at about 3am.

They found their lives had taken many different paths with those attending including BBC nature and documentary programme maker Mark Flowers, London stockbroker Becky Stones, National Geographic and Time photographer Mark Read and art teacher Joanna Billingham.

Kuno Van der Post travelled from Florida, Rob Marchant from Spain, Denise Prentice (Anderson) from Ireland and Ian Coupland from Jersey. Many former boarders stayed at the Old Deanery and visited school for a short tour the following day.

The reunion was organised by Leicester-based games teacher Lesley Jennings (Smith) and Stuart Borchard following the funeral of schoolfriend Susy Daish, a former RGS boarder, who sadly died suddenly in November 2011.

Those past pupils who attended the funeral decided to get more people together the following summer: “We wanted to do it partly in memory of Susy but also because it was so great to see everyone,” said Lesley. They had last all been together at school to sit A levels in 1985. Some left school after O levels in 1983.

The event was organised through Facebook. “There are several people still living in the Ripon area, but the rest are spread far and wide. Word very quickly spread. It was that simple,” said Lesley. “People dug out old photos from school days and posted them on the group page beforehand or brought them to the reunion and passed them round. It was a great night - very informal, talking to people we hadn’t seen in over 25 years.”

They came from far and wide: from left, Kuno Van der Post and Wes Dawson, who both travelled from the States for the event, and Simon Watt, who flew in from Spain.

Mr and Mrs former classmates Phil and Lynn Mortimer (Allardyce), who went on to marry many years after leaving school.

Contact rgsconnect@ripongrammar.co.uk or write care of RGS, Clotherholme Road, Ripon.

EXCLUSIVE SWINTON PARK RGS ALUMNI REUNION OFFER

The luxurious Swinton Park castle hotel, set in a 20,000 acre sporting estate, is offering a complimentary function room for any RGS alumni reunion booked for groups of 20 or more, or a 10% discount on private dining alumni bookings for groups of ten or more in its award-winning Samuel’s restaurant. In both cases, alumni accommodation discounts are also available on application. All offers valid until 31 December, 2013. Please quote ‘RGS Alumni’ offer.

Contact: Swinton Park, Masham, Ripon, HG4 4JH T: 01765 680971 W: swintonpark.com E: events@swintonpark.com

Look how we’ve grown! There were just 64 students in the school pool. Picture by David Laugher

Together again after 27 years - the class of 1985

They shared an education and all grew up together in North Yorkshire. These former pupils made life-long connections at Ripon Grammar School
Travels with my camera

Picture by Stephen Metcalfe

Olivia Richwald

BBC Look North video journalist

Age: 32
A levels: Eng Lit, Geography, Biological & General papers. As French
Newcastle University: BA Combined Studies
City University: Postgraduate Diploma in Journalism

Job description: reports, films and edits news stories throughout Yorkshire.

“Live reporting is the scarcest part of the job. There is a moment of terror before the presenter comes to you. It goes well if you tell a real buzz afterwards.”

Olivia Richwald with her camera at 3am to get there. “I’ll remember it all my life.”

The highlight of her career was when she travelled to Iraq with The Northern Echo to report on soldiers from the region. “I also went to Belize with the Army to report on their training out there and I’ve done reports from inside submarines in Scotland.”

Every day is different, says Olivia: “That’s what I like most about the job. When I wake up in the morning I have no idea who I am going to meet. It could be sheep farmers in the hills one day and people in Bradford affected by flooding the next. It doesn’t feel like work because I go out and chat to people and film them and then write and talk about it. I love meeting people.

“Those at school will remember me pestering teachers with questions and I am still doing that now. But I have never been a performer. I am shy and I have had to learn that side of it.”

Her advice to RGS students who want to become reporters is not to be put off by people telling them it is competitive and difficult.

“All you have to do is be dedicated and you will get there. Too many people are complacent and lazy, you have to push a bit. Hard work is full of self-doubt most. You can learn pretty much everything.”

She stresses the pay isn’t great: “It’s the most difficult bit of the job but really rewarding. It is what you get well you get a real buzz afterwards. There is a moment of terror before the presenter comes to you live when you think about how many people are watching.”

“It’s the most difficult bit of the job, you have to speak to a lot of people in very emotionally upsetting times, people who have suffered trauma, it does affect you. But very often they want to talk to you, it’s a way of healing for them.”

She gets to produce lots of light-hearted reports too, such as her story about Donny Davies, whose wife wasn’t impressed with his driver’s license. She stressed about two hours ago.

“Being in Yorkshire usually means I’m out in the cold with chapped hands, frozen feet and toes I lost about half a million people view it, that makes it worth it.”

Olivia does a lot of live reporting too: “It’s the scarcest part of the job but really rewarding. It gets well you get a real buzz afterwards. There is a moment of terror before the presenter comes to you live when you think about how many people are watching.”

“With the Northern Echo in particular, I was interested in finding out about stuff, always asking questions.”

She worked for the student paper and a local paper, The Morning News, while studying in Newcastle: “I was a student with fluorescent pink hair and The Morning News paid me £50 for four words, I was really chuffed.”

Olivia went on to study magazine journalism at City University in London and enjoyed it a three month placement on the English speaking China Daily newspaper in Beijing. “I was working as a sub editor. I loved it.”

When she returned to London, she did shifts on The Sun newspaper, editing and uploading stories onto the website. “It was really a good experience,” she says.

Olivia’s first job as a junior reporter was with the Evening News in Newcastle, she moved on to The Northern Echo, ending up as chief reporter after two-and-a-half years. She was trained to make video reports for the paper’s website and found she enjoyed it, going on to work as a broadcast journalist with ITV Border, Tyne Tees and, three years ago, with Look North in Leeds.

Her work now involves filming, reporting and editing news stories throughout Yorkshire for Look North. Her day starts with a call from the newsdesk, asking her to cover a particular story. She will find people to speak to, do the research and film their shots before heading back to edit the package in the office. Her finished report, around two minutes long, usually goes out on the 6pm news. “I can’t believe I work ten hour days for two minutes’ worth of TV. But when you consider the job, there is a moment of terror before the presenter comes to you. It goes well if you tell a real buzz afterwards.”

Olivia has worked on lots of big, sometimes harrowing stories, including hard hitting criminal trials, she interviewed prostitutes and members of the local council in Bradford before the self-styled “Crossbow Cannibal” killer, Stephen Griffiths, was sentenced to life. “We did the story one day, I was a little bit nervous but I went in. It was toe-curling.”

“I had no idea when to speak. It’s the most difficult bit of the job. When I wake up in the morning I have no idea who I am going to meet. It could be sheep farmers in the hills one day and people in Bradford affected by flooding the next. It doesn’t feel like work because I go out and chat to people and film them and then write and talk about it. I love meeting people.

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FUNDRAISING SPORTS BOOST

Those making the most of the top class sports facilities at Ripon Grammar School include Dominic Butler and James McDaniel, who have both been selected for the North of England rugby squad. Dominic, captain of the school’s 1st XV, plays at senior level in the under-18 age group and managed to supplement the current England hoarder from Lancashire to win his place. James has developed impressively as a scrum half, and has been selected in the under-16 age level.

“It is a considerable achievement,” said Headmaster Mr Martin Pearman.

Rugby performances have been particularly strong at RGS, with the U12 team winning the 2013 Yorkshire Cup and both the U11s and U13s winning their local league Grand Finals. RGS also won the recent Severn rugby tournament at St Ethelburga’s, Hetton, too, has seen a marked improvement, with RGS unbeaten under-12 team emerging as area champions. “Having such a superb indoor facility has been instrumental to their success,” said school sports co-ordinator Helen MacKenzie.

In badminton, Matt Clarke has been selected to play for England in the European championships in Holland and both the under-14 girls and under-16 boys remain undefeated after winning the Harragate and Craven area rounds of the Center Parcs National Badminton competition. In hockey, our young students have been selected to play for North Yorkshire.

The new sports hall has been fitted out with a climbing wall and cricket nets as well as six badminton courts, volleyball and indoor football. Dick Allanson, Chairman of the fundraising campaign, said: “RGS can provide a wider range of sports, with increased participation by a large number of students. Community use is also enhanced during weekends and evenings.”

RGS has also been chosen as the hub for the county volleyball, an exciting new sport which took off in the north of the county last year. Although you don’t have to have a disability to play volleyball, the GB Paralympic coach, Steve Jones, and Olympic referee, Steve Matthews are hopeful it could lead to school hosting specialist courses as well as international festivals.

“In being able to train whatever the weather a big difference. It’s thanks to everyone’s hard work that contributed to us enjoying such great sport at school.”

James McDaniel

DOMINIC BUTLER and James McDaniel, who have been selected for the North of England rugby squad, left.

Old Riponians hosting summer celebration to mark centenary of swimming pool

Still making a splash after 100 years

26 July 1912: Governors’ motion to agree to build a swimming pool. Subscription of £15 by two governors to start the fund.

Dec 1912: The Swimming Bath is the subject of the hour. Early in October a start was made, and many tons of earth and stones have been excavated, but much yet remains to be done.

July 1913 Speech Day: Bath declared open by Marchioness of Ripon. Scratch inter-house swimming races followed.

Dec 1913: We are having two plays, the object being to raise funds to pay off part of the debt on the swimming bath.

July 1914: The Swimming Bath has proved the boon we hoped for and despite the short periods for filling and heating, has been in constant use. Many of the younger boys have learned to swim, and the diving has made great strides... The hot weather has been in all favour of making bathing most pleasurable. Very many are of the opinion in the nature of a lengthy swim, the crowded state of the bath no doubt militating against efforts of this nature.

1919, F. D. NELSON writes: “With the beginning of the Summer Term, swimmers and non-swimmers have always welcomed the advent of a bath; some of the hardiest and bravest, waking from gentle slumber at 6 o’clock or thereabouts to have their morning dip, although no breaking of ice has been reported this year before entering. The introduction of a new diving stand has afforded great pleasure to the divers, whose numbers are somewhat meagre. The younger boys have shown great but ill-maintained enthusiasm in emulating the professional swimmers of the School. In this quarter a ‘coach’ would have been very welcome, as the teaching was left to the boys themselves, who were all, for the most part, beginners. We are all looking forward to improvements in this direction, and hope for winter bathing in the Utopian days when the bath shall be roofed in and an adequate provision, other than provided by the animal energy of the bathers made for the heating of the water. One might add that proficiency in the art of imitation can never be secured by the operation of merely sitting on the side. The first necessity for a bath is immersion.”

1933: The back wall has been moved to give free space at the side of the bath, much concreting has been done and a lawn is expected to be in place in the present stone desolation.

1954: Delayed repairs made it impossible to hold the Swimming Sports, abandoned for the first time in many years.

1960: The bath had to be emptied early in the summer term when the excavation of the site by the poldermen threatened its safety. As a result there were no swimming sports this year.

1961: The school baths have been covered, tiled, and heated.

1962: The changing rooms are provided with unwavering lockers, and an impressive but utterly useless piece of modern art which looks like a box of matches. (Some wonder it must be some fandish plan by the girls; others, even more misled, use it as a towel compartment.) The bath has been miraculously transformed, and is now used by day boys and boarders. The latter swim most evenings, and these gatherings are very different from the Spartan days of the old open-air pool.

1962: First RGS girls’ swimming competitions and water polo events.

1963: The first event was an open parachute over the lengths of the bath, and was won for Allanison by Gail Keyworth in 20 seconds.

1967: Owing to the power crisis, the pool was emptied to economise on fuel, only after the highly entertaining swimming sports where, as seems to be the case year after year, new records were achieved.

1978: 107 boys and girls gained Life Saving Awards.

Research: Old Riponians, all from Riponian school magazine unless stated.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

DID YOU KNOW?

Still making a splash after 100 years

A group of students dug out the original RGS swimming pool 100 years ago then plunged into its icy waters.

Old Riponians hosting summer celebration to mark centenary of swimming pool

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Boarders enjoy a home from home

**Boarding at Ripon Grammar School** has never been more popular. A recent **£162,000 make-over** is just part of the attraction.

Boarding at Ripon Grammar School has never been more popular, with staff currently dealing with about 20 enquiries a week about places in the girls' boarding house alone. There is also increasing interest from students from independent schools and from prospective sixth formers.

Many past pupils would barely recognise some of the homey bedrooms and comfortable living spaces today, following a **£162,000 investment** in new furniture, carpets and curtains, as well as extensive redecoration, over the past three years.

Alongside the school’s excellent academic record, improved conditions and a more attractive welcoming environment are no doubt contributing to the increased demand for boarding places.

Ripon Grammar is one of only 36 state boarding schools in the country and the only one in Yorkshire. Of the 30 boys and 32 girls currently boarding, about 15 students are from outside Yorkshire, including a number from Nigeria, Hong Kong and Dubai.

“We aim to provide our boarders with a real home, where they feel safe and secure” says headmaster Martin Pearson.

Boarders today enjoy a wide range of activities, including swimming, table tennis, badminton, crafts, football and yoga. At weekends, there are trips to the theatre, cinema, shopping and bowling.

There is also a well-equipped lounge with all the trappings of home. The boarders cater for up to 70 pupils, aged 11 to 18, with annual fees ranging from £8,100 to £10,870.

Boys stay in School House, the younger boarders in traditional dormitories and sixth form girls in Johnson House, younger girls in Charterhouse and the independent sixth formers in single rooms with a study area.

In Johnson House, younger girls sharing twin study bedrooms, with a washbasin in each room. Showers and bathrooms are all nearby. All boarders have access to the school library and computer suite.

**RGS is one of ‘top twenty’ UK schools**

Ripon Grammar School has won seven prestigious national awards for teaching excellence and results this year, pushing it into the top twenty out of 4,500 schools surveyed for the Guide.

The school, rated “Outstanding” in its latest Ofsted inspection, beat all but six of the country’s leading independent schools winning top awards at both GCSE and A Level in subjects including chemistry, physics, English, classical and modern languages, history, geography and mathematics.

Headmaster Martin Pearson said: “I am very proud of both the staff and our pupils, who have achieved a record 63% achieving A/A* at GCSE and 86% at A Level.

“Students can also relax in a well-equipped lounge with all the trappings of home. The boarders cater for up to 70 pupils, aged 11 to 18, with annual fees ranging from £8,100 to £10,870.

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**My space: pupils in the boarding houses like to personalise their own areas**

**“Comfortable, homely and bright”**

Sixth former, School House

“Each dorm has more personal space and new furniture such as desks, bookcases and bedside tables. The communal areas have been improved with new flat-screen televisions and sofas and all the rooms and corridors are have been painted which gives them seem much brighter. It has made a huge difference.” Miles Buttsell. (Sixth Form)

“It is easy to get to know the other sixth formers. Being on site after school, I have been able to keep in touch with my family abroad through the facilities in the library.”

(Sixth Former, School House)

**“The refurbishment has significantly improved the comfort and day to day lives of boarders over the past few years with both houses now much more homely.”** Jens Buttensli. (Sixth Form)

**“The food is great. We get snacks when we come back from school and are able to have free time before tea. There are always enough people for a game of football”** (First year, School House)

Simon Attkinson boarded from 1976-1983 now based in Singapore working for a German shipping firm - also remembers the extremely hot Victorian radiators and trying to climb out of the old wash windows:

“The Masters screwed the shades shut with clinch screws. We just udded the screws, cut the heads off then glued them back in the holes as they thought they were still screwed shut. They never did us in.”

Hilary Pegrum (Wade), a boarder in the early 1980s went on to work in publishing and marketing and is now based in York, recalls:

“Back then, we had no real expectations or experience of luxury (our parents could still recall food rationing) so the basic bedding, uncomfortable chairs, lack of showers, wash behind your ears matron in a white coat, rigid bath timetable involving a long-week bathing in 15 minute time slots, and truly appalling but probably nutritious food (including long thin fingers for breakfast) was, to us, perfectly normal. What we did have was the stuffingly high temperatures with the radiators pumping out constant heat and the windows defiantly closed. The coal-tin telephone room was uniformly dreary (for its heavy combination of intense heat and the pungent smell of old fat, dog and much loved resident pet of Mrs Simpson)”
Have you had a career in art or design after leaving RGS? We would love to hear about it.

Q: What is your favourite pie?
A: Our Roast Butternut Squash and Goats’ Cheese is great although sometimes I just want our plain Steak Pie.

Q: What do you remember about RGS school dinners?
A: I haven’t got the best memory of school dinners at RGS. It was girly called Oliver and there were a lot of fried things in funny shapes. I’m sure it’s much better now.

Q: If you hadn’t gone into the food industry what would you have done?
A: I love music and play the cello and trumpet. When I was at school I wanted to write music for film scores.

Q: If you hadn’t gone into the food industry what would you have done?
A: I’ve always been really interested in food and the whole experience of eating.

Q: What is the one piece of advice you would give to anyone wanting to set up their own business?
A: Profit is not a dirty word and worship the customers. Give to anyone wanting to set up their own business.

Q: What is the one piece of advice you would give to anyone wanting to set up their own business?
A: To open more Appleton’s.

Q: What are your future ambitions?
A: Profit is not a dirty word and worship the customers. Give to anyone wanting to set up their own business.

Q: If you could meet your 18-year-old self now, what advice would you give?
A: Have more belief in yourself.

Q: Ambition or talent - what do you think matters more to success?
A: Recognising your own shortcomings and making allowances for them.

Q: What is the most important lesson you learnt during your time at RGS?
A: I think it’s much better now.

Q: What does Independent Foods do?
A: We make delicious pies from the best local and natural ingredients.

Q: How many pies do you make each week and please are your main clients?
A: Between 7,000 and 10,000 pies a week. Our main customers are mostly London based chains of major brands, but we also supply some great pubs, delis and farm-shops.

Q: Where did you get the idea for the business from?
A: While working as a development chef in Australia I fell in love with the pies being offered by smaller independent bakeries. Imaginative fillings and flaky butter pastry.

Q: How did you get started?
A: I worked (for free) for a pie maker in Brighouse to learn how pies are made commercially, developed the recipes in the kitchen and borrowed from family to buy some of the equipment.

Q: What was your biggest challenge?
A: Managing and motivating staff; I’m not naturally a team player.

Q: What was your biggest mistake?
A: Being initially naive about the costs.

Q: Your greatest triumph?
A: Winning Waitrose’s Small Producer of the Year Award in 2005.

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Preserving the past for future generations

Members of the Old Riponians’ Association have spent months electronically cataloguing thousands of delicate old paper documents and photographs from the RGS archives, dating back as far as 1540. Many of the originals are currently kept in the Borthwick Institute at York University.

The aims are that everything from the school’s original 1555 Royal Charter to old exam papers and school magazines will soon be easily accessed at the click of a button by students and staff with some of the documents also available to Old Riponians & parents through a link on the school website.

The Old Riponian researchers, with help from key staff, are about half way through digitising a total of 15,000 documents up to the year 2005.

They have found governors’ meeting minutes dating back to 1629 particularly fascinating. Some have commented on the sadness of seeing the school careers of the ‘boys’ who fell in the First World War. It has also been noted that the exams the boys took in the 1870s seemed particularly difficult.

DON’T miss the next edition of the Clocktower when local historian and author Chris Lloyd, of The Northern Echo, will be delving into the RGS archives.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

July 12: Old Riponians’ dinner at the Old Deanery, Ripon, 7pm. (email George.owram@virgin.net to book)

July 13: Come and celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Swimming Baths, starting at 2pm. More details on old riponians.org.uk

Nov 8: Speech Day. Mark Damazer, former Controller of BBC Radio 4 and current Master of St. Peter’s College, Oxford, is this year’s speaker.

Dec 14: Old Riponians’ Day, sports and afternoon tea, 2-5pm. Further details on old riponians.org.uk

Dec 17: Carol service, Ripon Cathedral, 7.30pm

The appliance of science through the decades: 1910, 1949 and today. Does anyone know the identity of any of the pupils in the older photographs?

The Old Riponians’ Association have spent months electronically cataloguing thousands of delicate old paper documents and photographs from the RGS archives, dating back as far as 1540. Many of the originals are currently kept in the Borthwick Institute at York University.

The aims are that everything from the school’s original 1555 Royal Charter to old exam papers and school magazines will soon be easily accessed at the click of a button by students and staff with some of the documents also available to Old Riponians & parents through a link on the school website.

The Old Riponian researchers, with help from key staff, are about half way through digitising a total of 15,000 documents up to the year 2005.

They have found governors’ meeting minutes dating back to 1629 particularly fascinating. Some have commented on the sadness of seeing the school careers of the ‘boys’ who fell in the First World War. It has also been noted that the exams the boys took in the 1870s seemed particularly difficult.

DON’T miss the next edition of the Clocktower when local historian and author Chris Lloyd, of The Northern Echo, will be delving into the RGS archives.

DO you know of any past pupils you think would like to receive the Clocktower? Please ask them to write c/o RGS or contact us on: rgsconnect@ripongrammar.co.uk

WOULD you like to write an article for The Clocktower or do you know of anyone who would make an interesting feature for a future issue? Contact us on: rgsconnect@ripongrammar.co.uk

Bruce Oldfield, OBE, was at Ripon Grammar School from 1964 until 1969. The former Barnardo’s boy has long been renowned for dressing everyone from royalty to Hollywood A-listers and has recently created stunning couture gowns for singers Rihanna and Taylor Swift and model Kelly Brook. In the next edition of the Clocktower, he tells us about:

*The most important thing he learnt during his time at Ripon Grammar School

*The teacher who inspired him

*His advice to RGS students who want a career in fashion

*Why he thinks grammar schools are a good idea

*What he would say to his 18-year-old self now

*And why he got so many after school detentions...

Then & now: Stephen Laws, Teresa Thornton and Katie Lees pictured in one of Ripon Grammar School’s new, purpose-built laboratories, opened in 2009