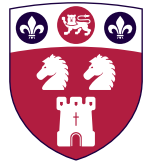


ONIA

OLD NOVOCASTRIANS ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE



RGS

CREATIVE ARTS AT RGS

IN CONVERSATION
LEO PEARLMAN

ONA is the magazine for the
Old Novocastrians' Association

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Contribute! We are always looking for
articles and news from Old Novos to
include in the magazine, so send your
contributions, via email (if possible) to:
development@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk or
by posting to the Development Office
at the school.

Please include relevant pictures if
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*"All the world's a stage, And all the
men and women merely players..."*

An apposite quote by Jacques in *As You Like It*.

When I learnt of the theme of this *ONA Magazine*, I felt it was an ambition
almost beyond achievement, but as a summary of the Creative Artists of the
RGS covering so many ages, we hope you'll enjoy this broad brush, this attempt
at portraying the breath-taking results of so much dedication, energy and
talent. It is not a definitive list. "Many a name on the scroll of fame is the
heritage of our land..." goes the old *School Song*. Within these pages, we hope
you will see demonstrated across a panoply of artistic categories, that our
school has nurtured a kaleidoscope of talent equal to anything out of the
Great Establishments of England. **David Goldwater** (51-62), Guest Editor

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WELCOME

BY GEOFFREY STANFORD

HEAD

I am delighted to be able to introduce this latest edition of the *ONA Magazine*. I took over the leadership of the RGS from John Fern (17-19) this year and have been very grateful for the warm welcome that I have received from the RGS community. Although John had a relatively short tenure, he was clearly a hugely respected Headmaster and his focus on building our Bursary and other philanthropic programmes, have clearly benefitted our great school.

As the Development Team were putting the finishing touches to this magazine – and I am greatly indebted to **David Goldwater** (51-62) for stepping in as Guest Editor of this splendid edition – the Coronavirus, Covid-19, outbreak hit the UK. This is an extraordinary time for the school, indeed the last time that RGS was mandated to close, was in 1939, when our (then 800) students, were evacuated to Penrith, and Eskdale Terrace became the North East's regional war room.

I have no doubt that the school's closure in 2020 will feel surreal to students, to parents, to staff and to Old Novocastrians but the most important thing is to look after people within our community. As a school, we remain open for vulnerable children and the children of a number of key workers who have no other alternative provisions of care in order to ensure that NHS and other key services are able to continue their vital work. All other students are being taught via remote learning. At the moment it is not clear how long these arrangements will need to continue.

However challenging the Coronavirus outbreak turns out to be, I firmly believe that there is a tremendous amount that we can learn from the current situation, whether it be in facilitating pupils

learning independently, in engaging with education technology or in developing resilience in the face of adversity. I also believe that the RGS is not just a building; it is a community, of students, of parents, of staff and Old Novocastrians, as well as former staff and parents. Many of our community will find themselves challenged, whether by losing loved ones or by suffering from the economic impact of the Coronavirus. Every single member of this RGS family now has a role to play in maintaining our sense of community.

We recently launched **#RGSGives** on our social media channels, which celebrates the proactive roles that everyone can play in supporting our community. In particular, we are grateful for parents and Old Novocastrians who work in the emergency services on whom we all rely; RGS's single parent families; or our bursary families who are likely to be most affected by the economic effects of the Covid-19. If you are an Old Novocastrian in need of contact, then please do let us know; if you are an Old Novocastrian who could join our efforts to help others in need, then please do get in touch.

I have no doubt that the school and our community will experience some indelible changes in this most challenging of times, but I also know that our solidarity is our strength, and the RGS community, will emerge from this episode with our values as steadfast as ever.

Finally, I must wish the ONA President, **Kate Harman** (06-08) and her husband Tom Harman (Teacher of Modern Foreign Languages) many congratulations on the birth of their first son, Louis. He is a small blessing of hope at this most difficult of times.

With all good wishes.

WELCOME

BY SUSAN BECK

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT



“

The outbreak of the Coronavirus, and in particular the role that so many of our ONs are playing on the front line, makes this next edition even more poignant.”

Our original inspiration for this magazine – focussed on ONs involved in creative industries – was Robert Burns Dick, who attended RGS between 1880 and 1884. We discovered that this colourful character was one of the architects of Whitley Bay’s Spanish City, now gloriously restored to its former splendour. Robert’s architectural achievements across Newcastle clearly changed the landscape of our City, and it seems fitting to celebrate his – and other wonderful ONs dedicated to creativity – contribution that has undoubtedly enriched the quality of all our lives.

Before we even went to print, we had already planned our next edition – *Meet the Medics* – which intended to pay tribute to some of the many Old Novocastrians who have gone on to study and/or work in medicine. The outbreak of the Coronavirus, and in particular the role that so many of our ONs are playing on the front line, makes this next edition even more poignant. Please do get in touch with your ideas for articles, we’d love to hear your stories.

I add my heartfelt congratulations to ONA President, **Kate Harman** (06-08) and her husband Tom Harman (also MFL Teacher at RGS!) who welcomed their new baby boy to the world in April 2020. On the theme of looking ahead, we will be electing a new ONA President in the Autumn of 2020. In advance of this, we would very much like to hear feedback from Old Novos – what do you enjoy about our publications and events? What suggestions do you have to improve your alumni Association? Please do drop me a line at s.beck@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk with thoughts, or indeed if you’d like to volunteer on the ONA Committee.

Finally, I wanted to say a big thank you to the formidable **David Goldwater** (51-62) who has been a truly exceptional support in pulling this magazine together. We hope that you enjoy the edition.

Please also get in touch if you feel you could support the Bursary Campaign, which is always a priority for the school, but your support is now more critical than ever. The needs of our bursary students are growing at this most challenging of times, and we have responded to extend our support; in particular we have been providing food parcels to those who otherwise relied on school meals at RGS. The hardship facing these local families is immense, and your support will enable us to continue to be there for these bright boys and girls whose families are deeply affected by the crisis.

With all good wishes.

Photograph by Ruth Gibson

FROM THE ARCHIVES

BY **GENNY SILVANUS**
RGS SCHOOL ARCHIVIST



Genny Silvanus joined RGS in October 2018 (the same day she submitted her PhD), when the School Archives were stored 'cheek by jowl' with the CCF equipment in a small basement room. Fortunately, the new Library planned for 2019 included a new purpose built Archives Room and with the help of a handful of ON volunteers and students, vital books and historic memorabilia dating back to 1519, are now safe and accessible in excellent new quarters. Here, Genny writes about her vital role in helping to preserve aspects of RGS's long heritage.

As you might expect, the variety of RGS's involvement in the arts is evidenced in the Archive.

Over the last year, I have been busy sorting and cataloguing these to make them available to students, staff, ONs and interested members of the public. Here is a small selection...

Sketch book

Our earliest example of a school exercise book is actually a sketch book from the 1840s. Belonging to James Hall of Blaydon and gifted by a book collector last autumn, it is filled with pencil sketches, which improve over the course of the book.

Art and poetry were regular features in the NOVO from the beginning. During the 1980s and 1990s, Fifth and Sixth Form artwork featured on the front cover, making each edition more striking than the previous editions – particularly when they were produced in colour. The Archives has a complete set from 1885 until the present day, all available to view.

“

Our earliest example of a school exercise book is actually a sketch book from the 1840s.”

If anyone is having a clear out, please let me know! Similarly, if you would like to spend an hour or two identifying names on photographs, you would be very welcome in the Archive. Or even just pop in to see what we have...

Photographs and programmes of plays

We have concentrations from 1910s to 1960s, and again 1980s-2000s. Some photographs are identified by play, some have named actors, others are just bundles of unidentified photographs. These include a variety of productions from the Junior School to the Linguist Plays, from the Fourth Form Shakespeare productions to the Twenty-One Club, and now Senior School productions.

Recordings of plays and concerts

These are held on a variety of media, including LPs, VHS, audio cassettes, DVDs and CDs. Our earliest is the Gala Concert of 1975, featuring 'past and present members of the school's First Orchestra'. Some of these recordings are supported by programmes and other ephemera. Of course, we also have a recording and copies of the sheet music of the *School Song*.

We also hold minute books of the Twenty-One Club (the name of the dramatic society from c.1932 until the 1960s), newspaper cuttings and scrapbooks. **AR Laws** (1892-1928) (known to many as 'Daddy Laws'), was a meticulous collector and amongst the notebooks which he gave to the Archive is one tracing the story of 'The School Play' from its beginnings in the 17th Century until 1939.

There are various written histories, memoirs and reports covering these subjects and showing how they have changed over time. One such is a 'Progress Report' for the Music department for September 1926 to March 1934, was written and signed by **AF Milner** (26-48) in 1934.



ART AT RGS

BY **GRAHAM MASON** (89-96)
ON & RGS HEAD OF ART

Having been spread across six studio spaces all of different past subject and teaching histories, our previous accommodation – the now ‘old art department’ branched out from the original singular Art studio of 1931 through four science labs.

Above: Art teacher Christine Egan-Fowler and a student in the new Art Department. Opposite: Graham Mason, Head of Art at RGS

Under the ambition and vision of Kevin Egan-Fowler, art@rgs was expansively and progressively developed into an art department that continues to enjoy a stellar reputation for launching a countless number of inspired, creative and academically successful student experiences.

We hadn’t been motioning to move, but in 2014 when, then Head, **Bernard Trafford** (08-17) asked if a new Art Department was something I’d be interested in, it was an opportunity that drew immediate attention and one that had to be acknowledged that if not grasped may never come around again.

With a strong history of popularity with students and academic success which has only increased under our current staff team, space was becoming ever more restricted. We’d have gone on and we’d have found imaginative ways around things, but we have a regional and national reputation to uphold. Could we continue to go on attracting the most interesting students from RGS and the North East community when we were struggling to house students and provide the exciting, diverse and spacious facilities needed to accommodate the ambitions of our current and future students?

You can’t stay in out-of-date accommodation. The advantages of being able to have a purpose-built Art Department that fulfilled an “art school” vibe are extraordinary, never mind one of

our new all encompassing size. It has already given us more of a profile and will make us more visible, an Art Department for the 21st Century. Something we will continue to develop under the 'fine art' umbrella that allows students to diversify from their own knowledge and experience of life across a multiplicity of approaches and practices.

You don't get to build an Art Department very often and however much you plan, it had to be able to change because the world changes. The students change the way they live their lives and the way they want to learn; the staff – how they want to teach and what they want to teach – so it had to be adaptable and that is what I believe we've achieved.

We were concerned about moving from our original studio base, so close to the central hall of the school where the top balcony corridor led to an environment of creativity, culture, inclusion and where every student could be individual.

The conceptualisation of the project was collectively exciting and the expansive, inspirational visions were complemented and supported by those of other RGS staff, as well as architect, Neil Turner from Howarth Litchfield. I was energised by every meeting, momentarily anxious and unsure but confident we could add incredible value to the experience of learning at RGS. It is different and it is still a bit 'Argh!' because snagging is going on all around us. Importantly though, the Art Department staff are at the centre of it and will make it great.

The centrepiece of the Art Department new home is the office – a hub open to all, and original furniture that bring the patina of ONs who've left their mark. That connection to the past implicitly influences



You don't get to build an Art Department very often and however much you plan, it had to be able to change because the world changes."

exciting experiences of the new learners.

The Sixth Form spaces house the oak tables dating from 1931, they have got such a rich history and such a quality to them, they keep us in touch with the past – literally under our elbows. We have managed to get new and old juxtaposed together, which is the beauty of the mix. In the words of one of our students – 'it is immediately comfortable'.

There are several elements in the design that links the building's future with its main counterpart. For example, the oak cladding, old tables and box stools for the students are in keeping with the Main Hall. We are re-interpreting the past premises and bringing it back to the students' imagination in a new environment.

We always wanted and believed it would be a fantastic building but at the

end of the day it is the staff and students who make the building, not the architecture. The students under the direction of Miss Bray, Mr Edwards, Mrs Egan-Fowler, Mrs Nowicki, Ruth Gibson and myself are the ones who bring it to life, especially because of the nature of the school. They have completely enlivened the spaces with exceptional drawing, painting, animated projection, virtual reality, digital modelling and textile.

"Nietzsche wrote: 'Freedom appears only in creation. Our only happiness consists in creating. Our salvation does not lie in knowing but in creating,' 'As a creator you transcend yourself.' The students make Art a truly inspiring subject to teach, they bring an infinite number of connections, experiences and relationship possibilities from which to establish learning dynamics within themselves and the spaces provide those opportunities for them to be established at their most inspiring. The five open plan studios and three additional branch off rooms have been established and driven in to function through student interest and intuition of exploration. The students have been given the confidence through environment to express themselves in a most eclectic range of approaches. This subject is very free and so are the spaces, an exception to the other spaces inhabited and subjects that students study at school. Art does not consist of learning facts and dates, the students learn more about themselves and explore the ideas from themselves, exhibiting those celebratory and publicly for the community. Art is a form of expression. It opens everything up – expressing not only likes and dislikes, but emotions, desires, feelings, fears and views. Our spaces are brave – they are reflective of our students.

The success of art@rgs is not a single factor, if there was, then everybody else would do it anyway. It's about ambition, both of staff and students, it's about confidence, about a culture where we encourage the students to take risks, and you take gambles because that's how you learn.

What will be a success for me is, if in five or ten year's time, our core values are still recognisable: As a risk taking institution that develops the individual into the most interesting world talent, both in staff and students, and that they are continuing to make an impact beyond NE2 4DX. The build is reflective of us all – itself an 'asset to the collective' community of past, present and future RGS society. It tells the truth: we're bold, proud and never boring.





ART AT RGS

THE EARLY YEARS

BY **BRYAN STEVENS** (44-49)

Bryan Stevens is a retired lawyer, past President of the ONA and has maintained an unique link with the school as a frequent contributor to these pages. As well as his authoritative *History of Cricket at the RGS*, he wrote the invaluable *School Register* in 1955. More recently, he published a volume of his own poems, *Laughter and Reflection*, his first collection at 87 years old, drawing inspiration from Northumberland's history, natural beauty and his childhood memories in Tynedale. Bryan records here a brief overview of early art at RGS.



Through most of its history, there is little sign that Art featured significantly in the life of the school, though that seems to have changed in more recent years, when excellent exhibitions of artwork have been mounted. But in my time, Art was only compulsory in the three lowest forms, after which it was dropped except for the 'C' stream. However, a few ONs have made their mark in the artworld, often inspired by good teaching.

In the 18th Century, drawing and painting was often thought of as a desirable accomplishment for young ladies. For boys, schools of standing introduced 'drawing masters' from the late 18th Century. At Eton, Alexander Cozens was allowed to teach drawing on the curious grounds that, as an illegitimate son of Peter the Great, he might help raise the tone of the school. Drawing in boys' schools was for long treated as an 'extra', for which parents were charged. RGS was at a low ebb for much of the 19th Century and until 1870, short of accommodation and so the first recorded Art master was **JC Watson** (1876-1919), an accomplished painter, appointed 1876, retired 1919 (the longest staff career in the history of the school).

But the first known ON in the field had appeared much earlier. **Michael Bryan** (1757-1821) was not an artist but a connoisseur, who became a nationally recognised authority on the pictures of the 1780s, acting in the sale and purchase of artworks by the aristocracy. In 1801, he received the King's permission to search in Paris for such works as he thought worth bringing to England. His *Biographical and Critical Dictionary of Painters and Engravers* (in two parts) appeared in 1813-16. New and enlarged editions appeared until 1903.

George Gray (1758-1819) was a geologist and botanist, as well as an artist, making his name in Newcastle as a portraitist and painter of fruit. The most eminent artist to date was **William Nicholson** RA (1781-1844), the son of a master at school. He was self-taught, but became a distinguished landscape and portrait painter. After exhibiting at the Royal Academy (1808-22), he moved to Edinburgh and became the co-founder and first secretary of the Scottish Academy. He produced a famous portrait of Thomas



Above: Penshaw Monument, designed by architect and ON, Benjamin Green. Opposite: The world's oldest painting of a professional football match, Sunderland vs Aston Villa (1894) by Thomas Hemy

“*In the 18th Century, drawing and painting was often thought of as a desirable accomplishment for young ladies. For boys, schools of standing introduced 'drawing masters' from the late 18th Century.*”

Bewick and acclaimed portraits of eminent Scots such as Sir Walter Scott in oils and watercolours.

It was unknown until recently that **Benjamin Green** (1790s), who with his architect father John, was responsible for the Theatre Royal, Grey's Monument, the Penshaw Monument and numerous churches and mansions, had been at the school, but he left a memoir in which he refers to his time there. Like many architects, he had some ability as an artist, but sadly died in an asylum.

In the 1840s, Henri F Hemy, a musician and composer, settled in Newcastle. His three sons all made their reputations as painters, though their education was interrupted when they emigrated to Australia in the 1850s. **Charles Hemy** (1841-1917) and

Thomas Hemy (1852-1931) were remembered by contemporaries at the school, though their time there was probably brief. The third son, Bernard, was probably there too. Charles studied for the priesthood briefly at Ushaw College and spent some time as a monk in England and France after a short spell at sea. In 1863, he started painting, became an RA and was described as the greatest marine painter of his era. One of his works fetched a record £110,000 and his paintings can be seen at the British Museum and the Tate Gallery. Thomas also found fame as a marine artist, after studying at Newcastle and Antwerp. His painting of Sunderland vs Aston Villa (1894), the world's oldest painting of a professional football match, hangs in the Stadium of Light at Sunderland.

In more recent times, **L Donovan Gibson** (22-27) became a successful portrait and still life painter in oils and watercolours and **Peter Chase** (30-39) has been a well regarded industrial and landscape painter and print maker and tutor, exhibiting in London and South. **Malcolm Gleghorn** (44-50) was a landscape painter with a studio at Newton-on-the-Moor and taught Art for many years. Finally, **Gerald Laing**, who was in the Junior School (1940s) before going to Berkhamstead, made his mark as a pop artist and disciple of Lichtenstein, as well as a sculptor. He passed away in 2011 aged 75.

Undoubtedly, other ON artists will be developing out there as I write. I certainly hope so.



PAC REPORT

BY JILL GRAHAM

RGS PERFORMING ARTS MANAGER



I joined RGS in the summer of 2006 – just as the new Performing Arts Centre (PAC) was being finished. **James Miller** (94-08) was the Headmaster at the time and he was extremely proud of the building and the theatre that is now named in his honour.

Above: The 1930 Theatre between the Junior and Senior Schools

The Director of Performing Arts was **Neal Parker** (99-12) – now Headmaster at King Edward VI School in Southampton. Since 2006 I have enjoyed being part of a vibrant team, working with my colleagues Mark Burton and Ben Squire and, of course, the academic teaching staff and our wonderful visiting music teachers. Over those years we have produced a large number of musical and dramatic productions to an extremely high standard. The Miller stage has also hosted a large number of external productions and events including performances by Newcastle University Gilbert and Sullivan Society, Blackeyed Theatre and a myriad of local dance and theatre schools. We have also enjoyed hosting BBC Radio 4's *Question Time*, events for the The Royal Television Society and the WI and a fabulous concert by ON **John Harle** (65-74). I am confident that the PAC will go on from strength to strength.



Clockwise: Exhibition of RGS productions over the years – currently on display in the Performing Arts Centre

Photographs by Ruth Gibson





MUSIC AT RGS

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS BY **TONY BIRD**
STAFF SINCE 1990

Arriving in a cold and snowy Newcastle, in late December, 1990, was a really positive experience. Having been given a memorable send off from my colleagues at Bolton School (an evening of 'Geordie' music, culminating in conducting a performance of *Cushy Butterfield*, and the formal presentation of a bag of coal).



arrived in Jesmond, and was immediately scooped up by Alistair Cox (72-94) and his wife, Janet, who took great delight in introducing me to new colleagues at their end of term get-together. Howard Baker (77-03), Howard Burchell (67-99), Mike Oswald (66-03), Jeremy Thomas (77-05) and Norman Baker (76-09), all provided lots of support and help in singing with the Senior Choir, whilst Howard Baker spent some considerable time helping me with my Latin pronunciation for the various choral pieces we studied.

My first impressions of the school, were of a can-do environment, with plenty of musical talent amongst students and teachers. At interview, I had the opportunity to coach a fabulous string chamber orchestra – in a Vivaldi Concerto – a really enjoyable rehearsal, and a group which later became the basis of a strong symphony orchestra. In the early 90s, instrumental music was strong with two full orchestras, a concert band, coached and conducted by Mike Walton (75-97), and a choir, ably accompanied over the years by the two Eds (Ed Marsh (91-99) and Edward Clark (86-91)). We had Saturday morning orchestral rehearsals for the First Orchestra, in those days; three hours of training each week, which allowed us to tackle some great repertoire. I still have a clear memory of my first orchestral and choral concert at RGS. The programme began with *Finlandia*, by Sibelius; the brass section fortified by the Rowarth family. Schubert's *Symphony No 8*, the 'Unfinished', came next, with Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Tchaikovsky's *1812* to finish.

Vivaldi's *Gloria* got a second outing, with Gill Brunton, singing soprano. This latter performance, I remember quite clearly. As a choral conductor, I found it very difficult not to sing all the parts – it just happened. I can remember Gill taking me to one side, during a rehearsal, and asking me to stop singing her soprano line, because I was putting her off. Easy to say, but very hard to do, I found!

“My first impressions of the school, were of a can-do environment, with plenty of musical talent amongst students and teachers.”

Alistair and Janet Cox were strong supporters of RGS music, a common trait amongst all Heads I have known here. Jeremy Thomas, then Head of English and Drama, encouraged them both to take lead roles in an RGS production of *Mikado* – a challenge they both rose to. It was as if the parts had been especially written for them – Jeremy being cast as the Lord High Executioner!

Chamber concerts provided a platform for many students to demonstrate their strengths; a number of students going off to follow successful careers in music – Peter Huntington (84-91) and Jonathan Bloxham (89-96), and Kazunari Shiraiso (92-94), who didn't follow a musical career but made a profound impression in his performance of the *Schumann Piano Concerto* with the RGS Orchestra, in the spring of 1994. Janet Nicolls, his piano teacher, spent a lot of time with Kazu; his performance, from memory, was outstanding – one of those moments that really stays with you. Similarly, other concerto performances spring to mind; the *Weber Clarinet Concerto* with soloist Sam Jones (88-95) and Mozart's beautifully melodic *A Major Concerto*, played by Jonathan Simmance (89-96). Alexander Borthwick (86-96) and Gerald Gregory both successfully auditioned for the National Youth Orchestra, and Alex went on to perform with the NYO Chamber Orchestra, a smaller group taken from

the very best of this international group of teenagers.

Similarly, there were other high points; a further collaboration with students from Bolton School Boys' Division, in a performance of Handel's *Messiah*, at the University King's Hall, and a combined choir (students, parents and staff) and orchestra of 250, at St George's, Jesmond, performing Mendelssohn's oratorio, *Elijah*. An incredible piece and a massive sound!

In September 1999, Neal Parker (99-12), another string player, became Director of Music. Having received his schooling at the Purcell School of Music, and having completed his undergraduate years at Oxford (St Anne's), Neal soon established himself at RGS – demonstrating his talent in the staff football team as well as in the concert hall. Jazz and rock flourished, and the Choir travelled to Venice in 2001, their highlight being a performance in St Mark's Basilica, whilst outside, the Venice Lagoon was lapping at the doors in unseasonal weather conditions. This was also a period of students singing with the Jazz Bands, a notable occurrence being a 'Soul and Sinatra' evening, with Duncan Harte (90-00) providing the voice of the Master. Orchestras and bands continued to perform ambitious programmes. In 2000, Sixth Form student, Ben Scholl (94-01), performed the Beethoven *C Minor Piano Concerto* with a joint orchestra of students from RGS, Central High and Church High Schools. 2001 turned out to be a good year for CD recordings for the music department, the Choir producing a recording of their Venice trip repertoire, closely followed by the Jazz Band with a rich mix of jazz repertoire. In 2003, the Wind Band performed with the Normandy Band of the Queen's Division from Catterick Garrison, whilst new groups started to appear; a Sixth Form A Capella group and a Madrigal group, demonstrating the wide interest of RGS students, and the willingness of their teachers to try new things and experiment. This was further highlighted with one of largest line ups, of jazz ensembles in memory, in 2004, whilst the Senior Choir sang in St Peter's, Rome. In 2006, Neal oversaw the Music Department move into its new headquarters in what we now call the PAC or Performing Arts Centre – a purpose built home for music and drama with excellent acoustics and the ability to seat 300 in the auditorium. Music continued to flourish under Neal's baton until May, 2012, when he took up a new post as Deputy Head at the Grammar School at Leeds.



SMELLS GOOD

BY PAUL CAMPBELL (70-77)



Reflecting on a lifetime in creative industries, Paul Campbell, has worked in the media for 40 years, starting as a BBC trainee in 1980. He has produced for Radio 4, as well as BBC TV.

After the BBC, Paul freelanced with a number of production companies, before establishing his own TV production company making programmes for Sky TV and Channel 4. This developed into multi-media work across the entire media spectrum. Then came the Amazing brand, beginning as educational software, evolving into the Amazing Media Group. Paul is an accomplished musician, freelancing as a timpanist with the Northern Sinfonia and other orchestras. He is also a jazz drummer and pianist. Somehow he also finds time to act as a Governor for the school.

One Saturday in 1973, I walked into a dowdy BBC studio and a lifelong passion. I was 13, in RID, and alongside **Jack Wolstenholme's** (48-75) First Orchestra, a drummer in the Ever Ready brass band, competing to be BBC Band of the Year. (We won, incidentally). Looking round those sound-proofed walls, something clicked. I sniffed the musty air and thought 'I want to work in broadcasting'.

Seven years later, fresh out of Oxford, I applied for four jobs at the BBC and was offered all of them. I ended up a General Trainee, a swanky training course intended for future management. Fiercely ambitious, I became the youngest ever Producer and wanted to be Director General. Today, I cannot think of a worse job.

The BBC then was an extraordinary place to work. Expertise dropped off the walls. The commitment to quality was absolute. Seized by the passion, I worked long hours for no overtime making documentaries for Radio 4 and BBC2. I directed single camera on film, sternly warned not to over-shoot because of the exorbitant cost. Best fun was directing live TV: the world's best train set. But after seven years I resigned, accepting I would never feel at home in a place so rife with internal politics. After freelancing in London I started my own company, which evolved from making TV to commercials



to 'multimedia', and in 1997 built something called 'a website'. Three years later, as dotcom fever gripped the world, my company had offices in New York and Carnaby Street and was building dozens of websites for people with more money than sense. Which, those days, was everyone.

Bank account suitably plenished, the family moved to Northumberland in 2002 and I started Liberty Bell, the TV company that made *Grumpy Old Men*. This reminded me why I had left TV. I began the search for a business that could grow without requiring me to be in an edit suite at 3am or kowtow to 12 year-old commissioning editors.

James Miller (94-08), former Head of RGS, provided the opening. My friend **Tom Gutteridge** (63-70) and I went to our first ever ONA London Dinner, agreeing we would flee if any Transport Circle members were there. James and I fell into conversation and the result was Amazing Grades, online resources for schools. We were the first to use podcasts in education, but soon realised internationalising the content would be costly; nice brand, shame about the scalability.

Time to face the music. I have never stopped playing the drums – today I play timpani about ten days a year in professional orchestras and drum kit in

three big bands. Music has always co-existed with a love of words and a fascination with technology. I decided to bring together the various strands of my picaresque career. Result: Amazing Radio, the world's only station playing 100% new music, strapline 'you heard it here first'. We combine SoundCloud and John Peel, with a ruthless focus on finding the world's best new musical talent.

And all from Gateshead. Driving past our studios by the Tyne Bridge, you might not guess we discovered Alt J, Haim, London Grammar, The 1975, Dua Lipa, Rag'n'Bone Man, Nadine Shah and Sam Fender. That Sting and Steve Case (the American billionaire who invented AOL) are shareholders. That we broadcast worldwide, with an American version launching this spring, managed from branch offices in New York and Colorado. Tyneside and Stateside: the obvious combination. My life has been about having ideas and I have been immensely lucky to do well from them. Amazing Radio is the best idea I have ever had, and the most satisfying, because it gives opportunities to musicians far more talented than me. I'm just a drummer.

I have spent 40 years in creative industries. The media landscape has changed utterly since I first stepped into that BBC studio, sniffed the air, and thought 'yes please'. But working in media today is better than ever. To pursue my dreams, I had to go to London and work for a big corporation. Today, you don't need a BBC training or a film crew of seven arriving in four separate cars; you need an idea, a laptop, and a passion. The application of technology has allowed us all to get creative – and live in our home town, if we choose. Though the studios still smell the same.

Paul Campbell is an entrepreneur and musician and founder of Amazing Radio. He lives in Northumberland and New York. His children Kate (07-14) and Ailsa (08-15) are ONs and his son Thomas is in Year 11.

ENJOYING THE MUSIC OF RGS

BY **BERNARD TRAFFORD**
HEADMASTER (08-17)



No one was going to want me to help with sport(!), so I did what I could in the Arts beyond merely attending performances.

So it was a joy to play in the band for several big productions including Sarah Davison's *Les Misérables* and **Trevor Walters'** (09-13) *West Side Story* (that was a hard one!). I donned costume and showed off dreadfully as Mr Bumble in *Oliver*, **Tim Clarks'** (84-17) farewell production (in which he was a brilliant Fagin). And I dressed up to play some discreet accordion in Rachael Shaw-Kew's *Under Milk Wood*.

I also had great fun writing the music for several productions: daft stuff for three tubas in Rachael's *The Thwarting of Baron Bolligrew*; sea shanties and the like in the Collingwood piece written by Chris Goulding for the bicentenary in 2010, and turned into a magical piece of theatre by Trevor Walters, with whom I subsequently worked on a number of shows with younger students, always

I'm not sure if I have much to add on the Creative Arts for your edition. Obviously that's my area, though, and I always thought Heads should help extra-curricularly, where they can.

put together in a fevered rush in the last week or two of the summer term. Trevor heroically directed my musical *Flotsam* in 2012, working that same summer miracle. And, of course, I loved supporting the Art Department (what a building they have now: I'm sure I never promised **Graham Mason** (89-96) quite that much space in it!). I also loved the crossover of Design Technology (now called EDT) with the art/design side, and it's not by accident that the new building brings those two together alongside Digital Technology and Computer Science (DTCS).

As for "straight" music! It was a joy to see the standard rise as its scope widened, both inexorably! I loved working with Zlatan Fazlic for the majority of my time at RGS (he joined in 2012), and with all the music colleagues over the years. They were even kind enough to perform some of my stuff... And to let me play jazz occasionally.

Blimey! I didn't mean to say all that!

ONA WELCOME GEOFFREY STANFORD



Geoffrey Stanford has been a part of the RGS family since joining us in September 2019, when he was appointed as Interim Head.

Above: (Front) Geoffrey Stanford pictured at a mountain summit and in uniform on a CCF expedition, recalling his time in the British Army. Below: Geoffrey playing the French horn as part of a school orchestra



In very little time, Mr Stanford firmly established himself within the RGS Community. From standing at the school gates to greet students every Wednesday morning, to cheering on various sports teams from the sidelines on cold autumnal afternoons and welcoming parents for afternoon tea, it was clear that he wanted to be both visible and accessible to everyone.

Students, parents and staff alike were delighted when, in January 2020, it was announced by the Governors that Geoffrey had been appointed as permanent Head. In the short time he had served the RGS, it was clear he was undoubtedly the best person to take the helm as the school started a new decade and era.

But what exactly is it that makes Geoffrey Stanford the ideal candidate to lead our beloved school?

His career in education is certainly an impressive one. Prior to joining RGS, Geoffrey was Headmaster at the highly prestigious Fettes College in Edinburgh and, before this, had a Deputy Head role at Sevenoaks School in Kent. Mr Stanford – who started teaching at Millfield School – has taught Economics, Business Studies and Latin and spent nearly six years as a Boarding Housemaster and Head of Department at Pangbourne College.



He has also served as a Governor of an 'Outstanding' State secondary school and The Dragon School in Oxford.

Having been educated at Eton, school was always an enriching time for Mr Stanford who received an Oppidan scholarship before going on to read Classics at St Hugh's College, Oxford. While it may have been inevitable that he would end up in education, Geoffrey has enjoyed multiple careers before this one, serving as a Captain in the Grenadier Guards and having worked for both The Boston Consulting Group and Citigroup.

“*Mr Stanford is looking forward to what is to come at RGS, a place he describes as having 'no typical day, only a rhythm'.*”

While his professional career is one to be envied, it is perhaps his personal experiences and interests which really set him apart from others. An avid oarsman, Geoffrey has rowed for Eton, Sandhurst and the British Army at Henley. Even more impressive than this, he has taken part in a succession of expeditions to the Himalayas, including leading an international team to the summit of Mount Everest. A keen French horn player, the discipline has allowed him many opportunities such as playing the *New World Symphony* and Beethoven's *Eroica* with his school's orchestra. It was also a way to remain close to his family – wife Susanna and their two sons – who were based in Edinburgh during his first term at RGS, as the family would engage in French horn duets over the phone.

As we head into the summer term, Mr Stanford is looking forward to what is to come at RGS, a place he describes as having 'no typical day, only a rhythm'.

IN CONVERSATION
LEO PEARLMAN

BY **SUSAN BECK**
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT



I sat down, with two RGS Film Studies Sixth Formers, to interview ON **Leo Pearlman** (87-97) over Skype, our virtual meeting a consequence of the Coronavirus lockdown.



I chose to sit in the (by necessity, empty) Main Hall to give Leo a glimpse into his past, and he couldn't hide his delight when he saw RGS's great organ funded by Sir Arthur Munro Sutherland (1878-1883) and of course the original classrooms and formidable former 'Prefects' Room 5'. Our Archivist had found Leo's admission records, along with the *Class of 1997 Yearbook*; it was a pleasure to share with Leo a flashback to RGS (and of course the fabulous hair) of the 90s. The nostalgia softened the remoteness of our interview, and I felt Leo was almost sitting next to me on the ancient pews in his beloved school.

The students started by nervously asking Leo about his memories of RGS and he rewarded us with an enthusiastic: "I loved every single second of school" then added with a cheeky grin "although not necessarily for the right reasons". Leo recalled the "incredible cast of characters on the teaching staff", specifically remembering '**Dusty**' Rhodes (67-94). Several of Leo's former teachers are still on staff today; Dr Simon Barker, Simon Tilbrook, Mike Downie, Oliver Edwards, Tony Bird, Roger Loxley, Pete Shelley and Andy Pulham. The "stench of coffee and cigarettes wafting from the Common Room" remains indelibly in Leo's memory.

Incredibly, for a man who has gone on to co-found one of Hollywood's most successful and innovative production companies – Fulwell 73 – Leo explained that at school he lacked any career plan, and focussed only on the things he

“

I loved every single second of school although not necessarily for the right reasons.”

enjoyed; advice he would still impart to any RGS student. Following his passion for History, Leo left RGS Sixth Form heading for Manchester University reading Ancient History and Archaeology, before switching to Law, Banking, Corporate, Finance and Securities Law. Armed with his degree Leo still "Had no idea what to do with my life" and again followed his interests, creating Fulwell 73 with his cousins, lifelong friends and now the unmistakeable James Corden.

Fascinatingly, the name Fulwell 73 is an homage to Leo's homeland, the North East. The Fulwell End was the name of a stand at Sunderland Football Club's Roker Park and "73" is a reference to the 1973 FA Cup Final, the last time Sunderland won a major trophy.

It's hard not to be in awe of Fulwell's achievements, which include scripting,

The Late Late Show with James Corden by Fulwell 73 Productions

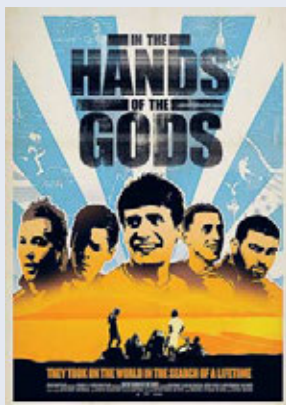


directing and producing an eclectic range of film and television productions, amongst them some of the funniest and most talked about prime time comedy, memorable music videos and hard hitting documentaries and drama. Alongside widespread critical acclaim, the Partners' awards include Emmy's Critics Choice Awards, National Film Awards, National Television Awards, Brit Awards and MTV Video Music Awards. Not bad for a humble group of childhood friends from the North East.

The breadth of the company's output chimes with Leo's aforementioned values; Fulwell 73 clearly prioritises passion rather than the norm for production companies, which is to find a niche.

Leo claims that he and his buddies fell into success by accident, although I privately questioned his humility; the Fulwell 73 crew are clearly enormously talented creatives with Leo the leading dealmaker.

"Our first film, *In the Hands of the Gods* was hugely challenging and we made massive mistakes. We'd no idea what we were doing, apart from having fun. We'd have been happy if our first film had just been seen by our mums and dads, and



“

We were so naïve, we didn't even know how to get our film to the film festival, so we loaded the film cans into the back of a car and drove them to the South of France.”

suddenly we found ourselves with an invitation to show at Cannes. We were so naïve, we didn't even know how to get our film to the film festival, so we loaded the film cans into the back of a car and drove them to the South of France. Unbelievable. Over the course of 24 hours loads of deals came in, which was completely unexpected. We were shafted by everyone, but those early deals gave us the most amazing lessons in what not to do. We were also arrogant little shits, we demanded a green carpet for the film's premiere in Leicester Square”.

In our interview I found no trace of the former arrogance to which Leo referred; if it was ever there, then he's clearly grown up. But Leo's unassuming confidence is absolutely evident:

“There is rarely any originality, but when there is, it blows everyone away. That's what we exist to do in our productions, to stay original, and to have the strength to do what we love, the confidence to never follow the crowd and to refuse to occupy one pigeonhole”.

Leo cites the current climate, the new Coronavirus world, as the most challenging time for the transatlantic business, which employs a workforce

Below: Fulwell 73 (L-R) James Corden, Ben Turner, Ben Winston, Gabe Turner and Leo Pearlman



Photograph © Matthias Clamer/GQ Magazine

Just some of Fulwell 73's productions:

- *The Late Late Show*
- *Carpool Karaoke*
- *Gavin and Stacey, A Christmas Special*
- *One Direction: TV Special*
- *When Corden Met...*
- *One Direction: This is Us*
- *Bros: After the Screaming Stops*
- *I Am Bolt*
- *When Corden Met Barlow*
- *Robbie Williams: One Night At The Palladium*
- *Gary Barlow & Friends*
- *A Very JLS Christmas*
- *When Robbie Met James*
- *Flintoff: From Lords To The Rings*
- *Gary Barlow: On Her Majesty's Service*
- *This Is Justin Bieber*
- *One Direction: A Year In The Making*
- *Freddie Flintoff: Hidden Side of Sport*
- *This Is JLS*
- *James Corden's World Cup Live*
- *One Direction: Where We Are*
- *The Guvnors*
- *The Class Of '92*
- *Sunderland 'Til I Die*
- *Piggy*
- *Turnout*
- *JLS: Eyes Wide Open*
- *In The Hands Of The Gods*
- *One Direction: Drag Me Down*
- *Only The Young: I Do*
- *Olly Murs & Demi Levato: Up*
- *One Direction: Steal My Girl*
- *One Direction: Night Changes*
- *Littlemix: Word Up*
- *One Direction: You & I*
- *Gary Barlow & Elton John: Face To Face*
- *One Direction: Best Song Ever*
- *One Direction: Midnight Memories*
- *Gary Barlow's World Cup Squad: Greatest Day*
- *One Direction: Story Of My Life*
- *One Direction: One Way Or Another*
- *Gary Barlow & The Commonwealth: Sing*
- *JLS: Proud*
- *Hollywood Secrets*
- *The Red Nose USA Brit Crew*
- *Behind The Bond*
- *Harry & Paul*
- *Andy Murray: The Movie*
- *David Walliams Exes*
- *Smithy Saves Comic Relief*
- *Jimmy Carr*
- *Smithy Wins Coach Of The Year*
- *Men Behaving Badly*
- *Smithy Meets The England Team*
- *Cinderella*



Above: Fulwell 73 productions including the hugely popular Netflix docu-series, *Sunderland 'Til I Die*

across London and LA. On talking about his employees, Leo's humanity shines, telling us with pride about the familial culture of Fulwell 73, which he and his Partners are proactively sustaining despite the international lockdown:

"We have daily meetings where we hang out online, just to check in how everyone's doing. We have a shared 11am tea break, team Pilates, virtual Friday night drinks and a weekly pub quiz."

At this point of the interview, one of Leo's (three) children comes and asks 'Daddy will you play a game?' and Leo gently promises his time straight after the call, and I am again reminded of what fundamentally kind human beings graduate from RGS.

Before we ended the interview, the students couldn't help but ask Leo about the famous people he'd worked with, desperate for a little gossip. Predictably, given his consistent groundedness, Leo explained that he and his Partners "Never work with talent because they're famous, but because they're genuinely interesting".

I suspect that Fulwell 73 puts loyalty, chemistry and creativity above any glamour, is what makes these guys so incredibly well respected and trusted in their industry.

Leo ended the call with the offer to show the Film Studies students the set of his current film, a remake of *Cinderella*, when production resumes at London's Pinewood Studios. I get the sense that he'll deliver on this promise, and that Leo has never forgotten where he's come from, or what it feels like to need a helping hand.

I somehow managed to resist the temptation to ask about the fate of Smithy and Nessa's relationship, or indeed when we might see a new series of *Gavin and Stacey*, or what Tom Hanks is *really* like, or who have been the best (and worst) guests on *The Late Late Show*, or indeed about his professional Poker playing to keep the early business afloat. Instead we say our farewells and allow Leo some well-deserved time with his children. Or perhaps to call Madonna, who knows. Maybe I'll save my burning questions for a future interview...



RAIN IS FINE...

BY **TOM GRAHAM** (02-09)

Above: Tom outside the Rovers Return on the set of ITV's *Coronation Street*

Tom Graham left RGS in 2009 and headed to Queen Mary University of London to gain a degree in Film Studies. Tom's varied career has taken him through acting (contemporaries will remember him fondly as Robert Hunter in *Byker Grove*), and into film production. Most recently a Grip, Tom talks about his – not so – glamorous but critical input to the making of blockbuster films such as *The Fast and the Furious 9* and much loved TV productions including BBC 1's *Call the Midwife*, *The Trial of Christine Keeler*, ITV's *Cilla*, the new *Poirot* and the nation's beloved *Coronation Street*, Sky's *Law and Order* as well as a range of independent film company productions.

Rain is fine when it falls down straight, there's nothing much to worry about if you can just put on a waterproof or use an umbrella to keep yourself dry. It might look a bit grim but I can stand out in that for a whole day without being too unhappy. It's horizontal rain that you have to worry about.

Consider this; you're in the middle of nowhere at 3am, with 30mph wind in your face and rain from every direction that somehow manages to soak through no matter what you do. You've still got eight hours of work before you can get home and change into something dry. That work might consist of repeatedly running up and down a mountain to deliver large bits of very heavy equipment to where it's needed, or pushing a 2.5 tonne crane around a muddy field. All with no break. Not exactly everyone's idea of fun. Welcome to the film and television industry! For many of us, we wouldn't dream of doing anything else.

It takes a certain type of person to want to put themselves through such punishing work, day in, day out, night after night. There was an ever-present theme during my time at RGS; 'it's OK to make mistakes, as long as you learn from them'. I remember Mr Masters' ability to pull ideas from the students, even when they were a little out of the box. He'd have a way of bringing me back to point without making me feel like I was ever really wrong. RGS was a happy and encouraging place, I have almost entirely positive memories of school, which I doubt many people can say about any school career. Positive encouragement creates an environment where you are happy to fall down, knowing you will be able to get back up again.

On leaving RGS, I fell down many times. I became disenchanted with university and impatient to get into work. I did several internships and work experience roles which ranged from companies taking advantage of free labour, to some where I made connections that would eventually lead me to employment. University is the best place and time to volunteer to bulk up your CV if you can juggle it with your studies; otherwise it can be fairly difficult and tedious doing free work after graduation, when student loans stop coming in. I sent out hundreds of emails to production companies and did dozens of unpaid days on anything I could



Clockwise: Tom at work on various TV productions

get my hands on; from *Dumping Ground* to *X Factor*. Through this I found my calling, the role of Camera Grip, which basically means I build and operate camera support equipment, such as cranes and dollies. As the Director of Photography's right hand man, my job puts me on the front line with the Director and lead actors too. One job led to the next and I quickly found myself jumping from one BBC or ITV drama to the next, be it *Poirot*, *Downton Abbey* or *War of The Worlds*.

In the beginning it seemed like the industry was impossible to get into, but with each job comes a little more confidence and stability. The last thing I worked on was *The Fast and the Furious 9 Stunt Unit*, one of the most technically advanced productions in my field – high-speed car crashes and huge stunts equal a high pressure and stressful environment.

We all want to do well. It's innately built into us to want to succeed in some way, be it for ourselves or for our family. My successes differ by the hour; some days it's simply cooking a nice dinner and

choosing the perfect thing to watch at home, other days involve (quite literally) giving my blood, sweat and tears at work for 36 hours, without a break.

I'd say to current RGS students, if working in the industry is a career you're interested in, you need to really want it. You will do well if you are dedicated; the industry is simply full of the people that were able to hang in there through those tough years as a trainee, then a few more as an assistant. It may be counter-intuitive but some of the best and most memorable days I've ever had were also some of the hardest.

I've learned that the most important thing is to want to challenge yourself. The 'comfort zone' can be a dangerous place to occupy for too long. Personal growth normally comes from a combination of both success and failure. Life can be hard and deals some worse cards than others, but it's about your perspective. Some days it can be hard to just get out of bed, another day, even the rain can in fact, be quite enjoyable.



RGS HALL OF FAME

As mentioned earlier, any attempt to catalogue the excellence that has permeated every corner of RGS, particularly in recent years, is going to be imperfect. We hope you will enjoy some of these school characters of yesteryear, yesterday and even today. Our apologies for any omissions. One thing is certain – with RGS about to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Thomas Horsley's Will, the foundations are firmly in place for the school in the next half millennium to carry out the mission encapsulated in the old motto adopted a century ago, *'Discendo Duces'* – 'by learning you will lead.'

ART, ARCHITECTURE, PHOTOGRAPHY



Andrew Bellis (98-08)
Professional Photographer

Robert Burns Dick (1880-84)
Architect of Spanish City, the Vermont Hotel and various other Newcastle buildings

Peter G Elphick (29-37)
North East Architect and Conservationist, restoration projects including Cragside and Gibside Chapel



Kevin Egan-Fowler (73-13)
Also inspiring Head of Art
See ONA 88

Adam Goldwater (87-97)
Head of Research & Engagement GNM Hancock

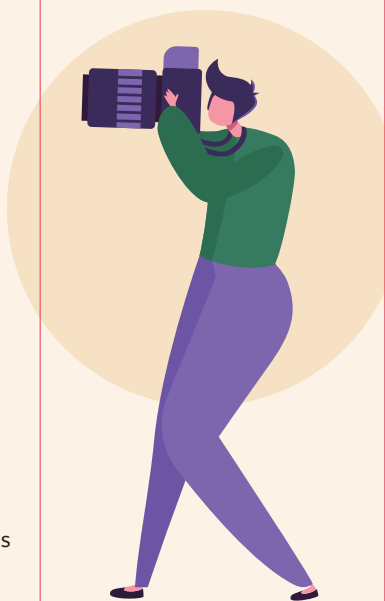
Richard Hanson (79-86)
Renowned editorial and press photographer. See ONA 81

John Hood Ward (25-33)
Poet and major awards winner



Roisin Inglesby (03-05)
Formerly Curator of Architectural Drawings at Historic Royal Palaces now at William Morris Gallery.
See ONA 96

Harry Lawson (05-12)
Artist Exhibiting art at the Catalyst Building in Feb 2020



William Kennet Loftus (1830s)
Archaeologist, discoveries in Assyria (Ur)

Richard Phillips-Kerr (02-09)
Exhibitor at the Royal Scottish Academy in their 2015 exhibition

Graham Mason (89-96)
Current Head of Art

Nicholas Posner (75-85)
Also a great Photographer who recorded much of his contemporary school life



Cecil Marfitt-Smith (32-70)
Inspiring Head of Art

Michael Roberts (staff 25-31 & 34-41)
Poet, Critic, Broadcaster.
See ONA Issues 91 & 92



Peter Stark OBE (57-65)
Director Northern Arts 1980s, cultural management specialist

Philip Warren (50-61)
Great Photographer who recorded much of his contemporary school life

Iain Watson (68-78)
Director Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums



William 'Will' Archer (02-09)
Record producer. Multi-instrumentalist

Tony Bird (02-09)
Head of RGS Music.
See main article pg.10



Jonathan Bloxham (99-04)
Conductor, Musician (Cellist),
Northern Chords Festival

Paul Campbell (70-77)
Lengthy BBC career, Founder
Amazing Media/Amazing
Music. *See main article, pg.12*



Adam von Carse (1891-93)
Academic, Musician and
prolific Composer

Harry Cawood (54-60)
Musician, Leader of Liverpool
Philharmonic and others

John Cawood (54-61)
Gifted Pianist, Scholarship
Royal Academy of Music
(became Lawyer)

Tim Clark (84-17)
Head of Classics, involved in
many productions, inc. Gilbert
& Sullivan, Greek tragedies etc.

Cornelius 'Con' Doherty (19-23)
Well known Wurlitzer Organist
for Odeon and other cinemas

James Doughty (was James
Hall, married name Lewis-Hall)
Freelance Musical Director

Zlatan Fazlic
Current RGS Head of Music
since 2012



John Harle (65-74)
60th Birthday Concert at RGS;
Musician, Saxophonist, Winner
Ivor Novello Awards Royal
Television Society awards



Johnson Hood (44-52)
Principal RGS Violin Teacher
and Chamber Music Coach

Martyn Lane (75-91)
Head of Music

Arthur Milner (26-48)
Head of Music Nationally
famous musician. *See A History
of the RGS in its People article
also ONA Autumn 2016*

David Nicholson (47-55)
One of GB's most respected
Flautists. Helped to found
Scottish Chamber Orchestra
in 1974 & other ensembles

Neal Parker (99-12)
Head of Music/Performing Arts

Barry Potts (86-93)
Musician, Producer, Musical
Director. *See ONA Spring 2010*



**Katy Silverman (née
McDermott) (06-08)**
Professional Organist

Michael Jon Smith (49-59)
Prolific Composer, Professional
Violinist and Violist. *See ONA
Autumn 2018*



Peter Murray Taylor (38-49)
Lord Chief Justice, also
talented Pianist playing
at Leeds International
Music Festival

Bernard Trafford (08-17)
Headmaster and Musician.
Winner of BBC R3 Christmas
Carol Competition 2017 with
Sir Christème

Brian Varley (55-63)
Organist

Jack Wolstenholme (48-75)
Iconic Head of Music



**Alexandra Wynne
(née Bickerton) (06-08)**
Professional Singer now
Director at Choirs at Work
formerly at Birmingham
Conservatoire

RGS HALL OF FAME



PUBLISHING, JOURNALISM

Mark Akenside (1730s)

Notable Newcastle Historian
(in *School Song*)



Tony Boullemier (57-64)

Journalist, newspaper owner,
Author of *The Little Book of Monarchs*

Henry Bourne (c1709)

Newcastle Historian
(in *School Song*)

John Brand (1778-84)

Notable Newcastle Historian
(in *School Song*)



Paul Campion (59-64)

Author



John Duns (76-81)

Director of *North East Times*
business magazine

John Forster (1820-28)

Friend and biographer
of Charles Dickens

Tom Furnice (96-03)

Publisher

George Gale (39-46)

Notable Journalist; Editor
Spectator etc; re-named by
Private Eye as Lunchtime
O'Booze



Leo Hunt (02-07)

Fiction Writer for young adults.
Works include *Thirteen Days of Midnight*

Keith Jewitt (70-77)

Writer, Poet, Founder of North
East Screenwriters



Brian Mains (76-05)

School Archivist and co-author
of *School History* with
Professor Anthony Tuck



Graeme McLagan (51-62)

BBC Crime Correspondent,
Author

Sammy Middlebrook (1918-58)

Head of History and author
of *Newcastle – its Growth and Achievement*

Michael Roberts

(25-31 & 34-41)

Poet, Editor and Broadcaster

Tom Rowley (01-08)

Correspondent, *The Economist*

Brian Shallcross (50-57)

Journalist, Political Broadcaster,
Parliamentary Lobby
Correspondent

Chris Stokel-Walker (00-07)

Journalist and Author

Bill Thornton (49-76)

Author of *Possit* and volumes
of poetry

Paul Torday (54-64)

Author of several works incl.
Salmon Fishing in the Yemen

Tim Wallace (96-06)

Deputy Economics Editor,
The Telegraph



Simon Willis (70-77)

Former BBC Correspondent,
now Author



THEATRE, BROADCAST, FILM

Paul WS Anderson (78-83)

Film Director, Producer, and Screenwriter including *Resident Evil* movies

Paul Bajoria (73-83)

Author of three novels; writes and produces quiz shows including *Counterpoint* and *Round Britain Quiz* for BBC Radio 4. See *ONA Spring 17*



Mohit Basudev (01-08)

Freelance event/lighting technician

Martin L Bell (50-61)

BBC Television Cameraman, then Director *Mastermind*, *Top of the Form*, Author

Edmund Laidman Browne (1909-13)

Actor, Broadcaster, Film Star, BBC plays from Newcastle



Caspar Berry (84-91)

Actor in *Byker Grove*, Speaker, Professional Poker Player

Ashleigh Carter (06-08)

Freelance Director of Photography



Faye Castelow (02-04)

Actress, *Rellik*, *Man and Superman* and *Inspector George Gently*, Tom Stoppard's *Leopoldstadt*

Rhodri Talfan Davies

BBC Reporter, Director Video Networks, winner BAFTA for pioneering work



John Dodds (65-75)

Film Director including *Jabberwocky* with Terry Gilliam

Ian Gardhouse (54-64)

BBC Producer of *Loose Ends*, *Funny You Should Sing That & Hello Children Everywhere*, *Late Night Sherrin*

Tom Goodman-Hill (76-86)

Actor of radio, film, stage and television

Tom Gutteridge (63-70)

Journalist/TV Producer

Lee Hall (89-96)

Head of School of Media and Communications, Sunderland University



Zac Hamilton (Wancke) (10-12)

London College of Music, star in *Les Miserables*

Tom Howe (99-09)

Software Engineering Team Lead at BBC

Aoife Kennan (11-13)

Graduate of LAMDA, Actor

Tony Kysh (51-60)

TV Producer at BBC, Tyne Tees Television over 30 years, Freelance (*Famous Five*, *Supergran*, *Byker Grove*)

Alistair Leithead (80-90)

International BBC TV Correspondent



Tom Machell (01-08)

Actor and Writer of *Ticker* at Edinburgh Fringe

Daniel Maier (76-86)

Comedy Writer, Performer for television, radio, print and the stage

Peter C Moth (53-55)

TV Producer, Director of Programmes Tyne Tees Television, in TV for 28 years

Joe Pearlman (97-07)

Film Documentarian (incl. film about Bros). BAFTA winner

Leo Pearlman (87-97)

Film Producer



Leon Scott (93-03)

Actor, ex *Byker Grove*

Brian Redhead (40-48)

Journalist with *Manchester Guardian*, later *The Guardian*, best known for his long service hosting BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme

Keir Shiels (93-00)

Junior Doctors TV documentary, Actor, Author

Alex Vera (Alex Hall) (90-00)

Ex *Byker Grove*. Actor

Niek Versteeg (06-11)

Prolific Stage Actor

Matt Walton (04-11)

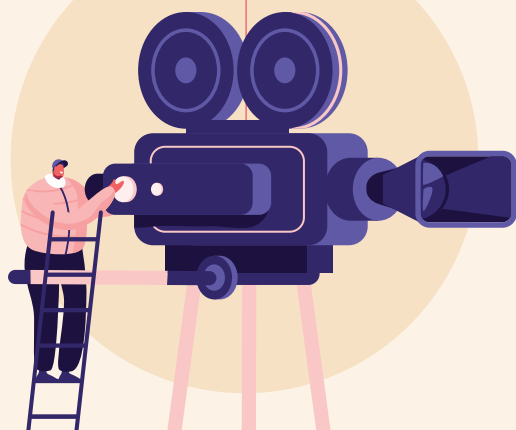
Made ground breaking film on prosthetic limbs for *BBC Newsnight* with **Zameen Hussain** (01-11)

Geoffrey Wheeler (45-48)

BBC Radio & TV, inc. *Top of the Form*, *Winner Takes All*, *Songs of Praise*, *Benny Hill*, *Morcambe and Wise* & archival BBC Radio programmes

Greg Wise (74-77)

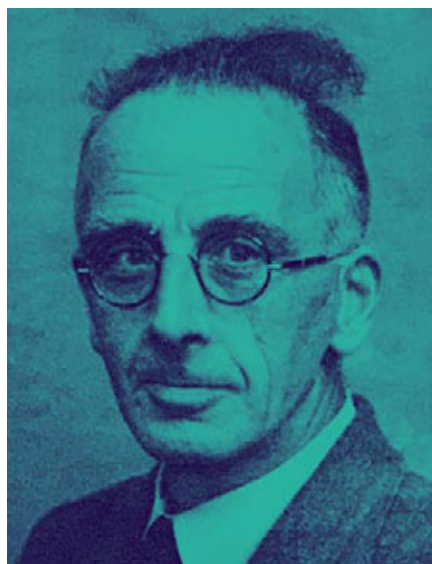
Film Actor, Producer



WHY I GIVE

BY **DAVID SELLEY** (52-57)

When I received the *ONA Magazine Bursary Edition* I was moved to consider how fortunate I am to have been at RGS in the 1950s. It was a Direct Grant school and my father paid about £15 a term for my fees.



Sammy Middlebrook

My father worked for British Railways and was moved to Newcastle in 1952, I transferring from Brigg Grammar School in Lincolnshire. I was accepted at RGS by Headmaster, OW Mitchell (48-60) – a libertarian who generally believed smart boys would behave properly if left alone, particularly in the Sixth Form. I'm not sure it always worked and I am not sure what the Masters thought of it. But it was fun.

Of the teachers, I well remember the Theakstone brothers (**Anatole** (32-53) and **Louis** (25-61), who taught me Russian and mental arithmetic), the terrifying "**Slinker**" **Owen** (23-60) (Latin), **MG Robinson** (34-72) (English) and many others. But most of all I remember **Sammy Middlebrook** (18-58), my History Teacher and mentor whose intervention in my education turned out to

“

I felt compelled to express my gratitude by donating sufficient to cover one student for one year.”

be immensely beneficial for the rest of my life. Sammy suggested I should apply to Oxford. My father was not at all keen. He thought I should start earning a living. Nobody in our extended family had ever been to university and my father had left school when he was 14. Sammy persuaded my father to change his mind. I was accepted in 1957 for 1959, after my National Service. Most of my best friends at Christ Church came from similar backgrounds. As the local authority grant wasn't quite enough to cover everything, a summer job was necessary. My two jobs were in the accounting department at the Royal Station Hotel and the following year as a Porter on Darlington station.

Sammy was an atheist, but was also Assistant Headmaster, so when Mr Mitchell was absent he led morning prayers. It was very obvious that his heart wasn't in it. Sammy was a very quiet man, physically small and very patient, the sort of teacher who made you want to learn. He got us interested in local history, for which he was eminently qualified, having authored *Newcastle upon Tyne – Its Growth and Achievement*, published in two editions. I treasure my copy of the 1950 edition to this day. My thesis was a history of the River Tyne and I thoroughly enjoyed the research involved.

I have many fond memories of RGS. I remember my tiny role in *Twelfth Night*, enough for me to conclude that acting was most definitely not my forte. A useful lesson. But I did enjoy being Archivist in the Sixth Form film *School of the North*. I also revelled in the school camps in Eskdale, the Isle of Arran and the harvest camp in Lincolnshire run by "**Tucker**" **Anderson** (24-60), probably the gentlest soul ever to teach at RGS.

In my National Service in the RAF I had trained as a Chinese linguist and spent my second year in Hong Kong before going to Oxford. This opened my eyes wide to the diversity in our country and the world and inspired my lifelong passion for travel. I had applied to read History at Oxford, but one day in Hong Kong a couple of months before I was due to be demobbed, I received a letter from my prospective History tutor hoping that my Latin had improved since I had taken the entrance exam. You can just imagine how much my Latin had improved! So I switched to PPE for which Latin was not considered necessary. On finishing Oxford, I went to Toronto for three years to become a Chartered Accountant, after which I

intended to return to England, and preferably Tyneside. However, after about three weeks I decided that Canada had far greater opportunities for me and a better quality of life, so I have lived here ever since and married a Canadian with impeccable North American ancestry partly dating back to before any Europeans arrived. Until my retirement in 1998 I worked for what is now EY in their Toronto head office. After retirement I performed many part- and full-time assignments in my specialty, which was auditing standards and methodologies. Then, in 2015 I decided I was getting pretty good at retirement and made it a full time occupation, which meant even more travel. I had travelled all over the world in my work, which included international committees, and continue to travel extensively, albeit now at my own expense.

Since the 1970s, travel has been combined with a passion for bird-watching and my wife and I have seen over 2,000 species. We visit the UK at least every year and every few years make it to Newcastle. What a change! As for RGS, the changes are obvious in the impressive physical additions (although most of the buildings I remember are still there), the smaller size of the grounds due to the encroachment of the motorway and, of course, the inspiring presence of female pupils.

I have lost touch with all my classmates except **David Dowson** (50-57), who was in my group in the RAF and I see him at some of our annual reunions. As well, I am acquainted with a couple of local ONs in Toronto and I once attended a meeting in a Montréal lawyer's office where we discovered there were no less than three ONs around a table of six or seven people! And once I literally bumped into a former classmate on a street in Hong Kong!

So when I learned about the enormous financial burden a year at RGS imposes and the huge value of a bursary, I felt compelled to express my gratitude by donating sufficient to cover one student for one year. It is the least I can do in return for the huge kick start in life I got from the RGS. A school containing only students on full fees would be a very sad state of affairs in my opinion. I would like my contribution to be in appreciation of Sammy Middlebrook. I hope that whoever the Bursary recipient may be, he or she gets as much, or more, out of their year at RGS as I did every year.

A fuller version of this piece will shortly be available online on the RGS website under 'RGS Family: Old Novocastrians'.

RGS SENIOR CAROL SERVICE 2019

REFLECTIONS OF A 'SENIOR' OLD NOVO.

BY **BURLAND JACOB** (44-49)

On Tuesday 10 December 2019, the annual RGS Senior Choir Service was again held at St George's Church, Jesmond.

It was for me, a most enjoyable occasion, not only because it offered the opportunity to hear the RGS choirs and musicians, it also reminded me of the many happy hours I spent during my formative, years participating in several church activities. Indeed, many of my friends find difficulty in believing I was once a boy chorister, mindful of the musical tones that currently emulate from my vocal chords.

Once again, the Junior and Senior school choirs and musicians did not disappoint. There can be few schools that can match or surpass the quality and standard of music at RGS.

As a former member of the School Senior Choir, under the direction of **Arthur Milner** (26-48), it is doubtful whether we ever attained the performance level of the current choir. Having said that, we did on one occasion, with the school First Orchestra, perform on a radio broadcast entitled *Children's Hour*. If my memory serves me right, two recording discs were made, though they seem to have disappeared into the ether.

My orchestral experience involved playing the violin in the third orchestra under the tolerance of Miss Watson, a teacher from the Junior School. I suppose I might have made progress to a higher standard of performance if I had not transferred my allegiance to the CCF – at least that's my excuse. Actually, I am still baffled as to how I was ever admitted into the third orchestra in the first place.

During the orchestral performance, Geoffrey Stanford, Headmaster, performed on the French horn. His playing reminded me of my first Headmaster, **ER Thomas** (22-48), who played the cello in the first orchestra. (His nickname was "Ebb", his wife "Flow"). In more recent times, **Bernard Trafford** (08-17), Headmaster, was not only a trumpet player, but also a composer, whose works included a musical. Bernard won the 2017 BBC Carol of the Year with *Sir Christëmas*, played in this 2019 Carol Service. His Headship was followed by the Mr Stanford's predecessor, **John Fern**, who sang in the School Community Choir. It makes me wonder if a prerequisite for being appointed Headmaster or, in future, a Headmistress of RGS, should include a musical background in their CV.

If one was to enquire why the standard of music is so high, the answer, in part, must lie in the talents of the students. But that is not the full story. In my opinion, the answer also lies in the enthusiastic, dedication and inspirational music staff under the leadership of Mr Zlatan Fazlic, Director of Music and Mrs Kat Clappison, Head of Music in the Junior School.

In conclusion, as mentioned earlier, the latest carol service did not disappoint, indeed, as I entered the church with my two guests, I was immediately aware not only of the numerous number of people attending the carol service, but a feeling of the warmth of the RGS family embracing me, so well done to everyone involved.

MR MURDER

BY **CHRISTOPHER GOULDING**

RGS STAFF SINCE 2004

A 'thrilling' biography is now available chronicling the life of an ON who later became Britain's first horror movie star.





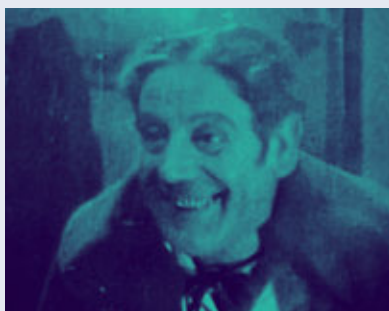
“

Slaughter's films remain available on DVD, preserving his trademark evil leer and cackling laugh for posterity and for connoisseurs of early British film noir.”

A new addition to the school's library stock is the recently published *Mr Murder: the Life and Times of Tod Slaughter* by Denis Meikle: a biography of the actor who shocked and thrilled theatre and cinema audiences in the years between the wars.

Norman Carter Slaughter (1894-1904) was born at his parents' house in Salters Road, Gosforth in March 1885. At the age of seven, he followed in his father's footsteps through the doors of RGS, then situated at Rye Hill. Tall for his age, he was nicknamed “Long Drink of Water” in the rhyming schoolboy slang of the day. Whilst not a fine scholar, he was a particularly keen member of the school's dramatic society.

At that time, the school staged an annual production of a Shakespeare play, in one of which his first starring role was as Casca in *Julius Caesar*. Slaughter had originally been cast in the smaller part of Cinna, but as he explained years later on BBC radio's *Desert Island Discs*, the actor playing Casca “met with an unfortunate accident on the rugger pitch” and Norman was promoted into the bigger part. Perhaps an early indicator of the villainy he would later portray so well?



Above: Tod Slaughter in one of his many screen roles. The new publication of *Mr Murder: the Life and Times of Tod Slaughter* by Denis Meikle

Leaving school at 16, Slaughter was soon following his dream of a life in the theatre. He quickly made a name for himself in touring productions of “blood and thunder” melodramas such as *East Lynne* and *Lady Audley's Secret*. His keen business acumen eventually saw him running his own company as actor-manager, at one point producing a season at Newcastle's old Olympia Theatre, and then later in several London venues.

After military service in the First World War, Slaughter resumed his stage career, and by 1925, Britain's emerging film industry beckoned. Adopting the stage name Tod Slaughter, he became the country's first horror movie star, in silent films and later the talkies. In the coming years, he reprised on screen several of the roles he'd made his own on the stage, including Squire Corder in *Maria Marten: the Murder in the Red Barn* (1935) and the title role in *Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (1936).

Though faded into obscurity by the time of his death in 1956, many of Slaughter's films remain available on DVD, preserving his trademark evil leer and cackling laugh for posterity and for connoisseurs of early British film noir.

ONA INTERVIEW

ALASTAIR LEITHEAD

The moment that Alastair's face appeared, a smile was compulsory, since it's impossible not to grin when you are being beamed at. We were immediately at ease knowing that this was going to be an interview that we would enjoy. Nevertheless, we approached the first question with butterflies in our stomachs, for neither of us had been face to face with a man of such public acclaim. We gathered some courage and asked our first question: 'We understand that you are an ON, do you have any memories of RGS that you would like to share with us?' After a thoughtful pause, he responded euphorically that he remembered cross country on the Town Moor (in ice cold weather!) and writing for *NOVO*.

Speaking of journalism, we enquired as to whether the *NOVO* was where the idea regarding his future career really sparked; he replied with a glint in his eye that he supposed that the *NOVO* did really bring his idea to life. At the age of 14, he worked for the *Evening Chronicle* as a 'computer boy', which meant he reviewed games. So, what was Alastair's favourite

On 24 February 2020, BBC Journalist **Alastair Leithead** (80-90) was interviewed in California, over Skype, by RGS Junior School student reporters Bobbie D and Alfie D in Newcastle.

thing to do as a child? Spontaneously, he replied that he quite liked fencing and rugby, happily playing for Northern Rugby Club.

Delighted that the first few questions had gone down nicely, we explored further why he wanted to be a journalist. After hearing this, he grinned at us and replied as fast as a bullet that he wanted to go further in journalism, and after a short stint of work experience at the *Chronicle*, he was inspired. He had always loved finding and writing stories. His grandfather was in the newspaper

circulation industry – selling them rather than writing them. Moving quickly, he managed to secure a Geography degree at Manchester University and then went back to the *Chronicle* as a trainee. He started off writing the listings and then reporting more significant events.

But what was the most shocking thing he reported for the newspaper? He listened intently to our question and then his face grew solemn and we saw the other side to Alastair Leithead. The twinkle in his eye disappeared and he responded that the Dunblane shootings was the most atrocious event. Knowing that it was so close to Alastair's home was horrific. He couldn't imagine anyone being so evil, as to attempt to kill people. We really felt for the casualties and their families. It just goes to show, though, how important local journalism is. Without it, people wouldn't know the hardships some fellow beings have to go through.

We wondered how, from reporting for the *Chronicle*, Alastair then became a *BBC News* war correspondent. He replied, excited to inspire us that his first steps were moving to a local radio station (which was based in Sunderland) and there he learned different skills about editing and then moved to *Look North* where he got used to being on the screen. After that, he moved down to London and produced the news (for three and a half years), however, he wanted to tell the story himself, but couldn't get a job, so he decided to take a year off and move to South Africa.

'Surely if you were away for such a long-time reporting, you must have missed your family?' we questioned. He thought for a few seconds and then told us sincerely that of course he missed his parents – they stayed in Winlaton – but he knew they were very proud of him and his reporting. He presented one story whilst being with the British troops who were attacked by the Taliban.



His mum was obviously worried about his safety, but she was proud to see him on the TV and she would joke about quite serious things he did.

Dangerous experiences like this though, must have made him consider leaving journalism at times. He ferociously shook his head and responded that he never has as he had always loved journalism and never want to leave it. He explained that now is the most important time for journalism as the occupation is being attacked and undermined. It is a threat to democracy and we need fair journalism! He felt that he needed to do something to help the profession. He decided to take a year off in order to read and learn different things. During this time, he is also learning Portuguese, as his wife is from Portugal and Sweden (he has been married to her for almost ten years). He wanted to move back to Europe (Portugal,) because he missed having a home base.

Since Alastair had mentioned that he needed to run away when being attacked by the Taliban, we questioned the journalist as to whether he had had to run away any other times. He responded remembering many occasions vividly. Considering he spent two and a half years in Afghanistan, it's not a surprise. He would often get ambushed and attacked. Once, when Leithead was carrying the camera equipment they came under fire. Luckily though, his RGS rugby training came in handy when they had to dash!

Excited to find out more, we questioned, 'Have you sustained any injuries from your time as a war correspondent?' Laughing, he responded that he'd always been very lucky. He has probably sustained more injuries playing rugby than being a war correspondent!



“Once, when Leithead was carrying the camera equipment they came under fire. Luckily though, his RGS rugby training came in handy when they had to dash!”

Above: Bobbie Doe and Alfie Davidson interview Alastair via Skype. Below: Alastair with rhinos in the Sudan. Opposite: On the front line in Afghanistan



To be fair though, he nearly got killed in Bangkok as he was standing (filming) behind a man with a gun who was firing at some soldiers. He and his cameraman lay in the gutter taking cover for 20 minutes, however another TV crew came along and saw them, furthermore they reported them dead! This did not go down well with Alastair's wife.

Next, we asked, 'Have you ever won any awards?' A broad beam invaded his face and his answer came out in one fluid motion that he'd won the 1st British Guild of Beer Writers Award for the *Chronicle* and was nominated for a Bayeux award for war correspondents, which he was most proud of. He's also been working to create some VR documentaries on the Congo River as well as the Nile. He won an award for innovation which he was extremely pleased with.

Alastair clearly much preferred working in a war environment (even if he was being shot at) than reporting for the Oscars, Grammys or Globes. Whenever he was there, he always seemed to manage to annoy someone. One year he shouted at Benedict Cumberbatch, 'You lost!' and he criticized Hugh Jackman for his singing. He thinks – in a way – that covering war is much easier than other stories since the news is happening there and then. The story is less hidden.

Finally, we couldn't interview Alastair Leithead without asking him for some tips for our own journalistic writing which he generously shared. We would like to thank Alastair Leithead for agreeing to speak to us. It turned out to be the most informative and enjoyable of afternoons.

A HISTORY OF THE RGS IN ITS PEOPLE

BY DAVID GOLDWATER (51-62)

RGS, ONs and the BBC – and five iconic characters.

It seems the BBC is no longer the object of national reverence it was in former times. With burgeoning digital platforms, gone are the days when invisible but dinner-jacketed ‘Enayncers’ gave out the word from Portland Place W1. But it wasn’t always the case. The British Broadcasting Company started broadcasting from 2LO in London in November 1922, Newcastle 5NO on Christmas Eve that year shortly after. Our local Broadcasting House was in New Bridge Street, an 1826 John Dobson building, previously a maternity hospital.

In the mid 1930s, an expert on American School Broadcasting, Lester Ward Parker, returned from a visit to Europe and wrote extensively on his experiences in Britain. The BBC’s School Audience had grown extensively after a slow start and Parker was impressed. In an article in *The English Journal* in 1939, he wrote of his experiences in 1936:

“...we are in that great industrial center (sic) of northern England known as Tyneside and we spend a delightful day in the Royal



Grammar School for boys at Newcastle. As in all secondary schools in England, we find here only boys who have met a high scholastic standard. This is an especially fine school with well-equipped buildings, ample playing fields, and even an indoor swimming pool, or bath as they call it – a rare sight in England. The masters wear academic robes; a fine chapel is hung with portraits of benefactors and headmasters; and we dine together with some ceremony in the great hall...”

Whether it was the all-embracing nature of the BBC, free until the 1950s from any competition, or the glamour of stardom, without the need to cross the Atlantic, boys from RGS were attracted to the opportunities afforded by an organisation which had led the nation through a horrific war, reported on a ‘Nation on the Mend’ and thrown up early heroes in comedy, music, drama and sport. And so it was that many RGS alumni began distinguished careers in broadcasting through the organisation known as ‘Auntie’, so named because “they knew what was best for listeners and later on the viewers.”



Edmund Laidman Browne (1896-1961)

joined the school in 1909 and served from 1915 to 1918 as a dispatch rider and in the Tank Corps before receiving a commission in the RAF. He was one of the first actors to broadcast from BBC 5NO in 1923.

“The first plays we did from Newcastle (5NO) way back in 1923-4 were performed into a telephone mouthpiece hanging from the centre of the ceiling – the actors jockeying for position like the players in a game of bob-apple... Truly we must have looked a lot of lunatics.”

Laidman Browne acted in many Shakespeare parts at Stratford-on-Avon in the early 1930s, moving on to films including *Sixty Glorious Years* and *A Royal Divorce* – then more stage work. He joined the BBC Drama Repertory Company in 1939 and remained with it for 12 years, appearing in a wide range of parts, and for a time in the series *Ray's A Laugh*. From 1952 onwards, he was frequently seen on television in plays as far apart as *Children's Hour* serials and *The Tempest*. His obituary in 1961 noted: “Browne's work was marked by a thoroughness that led him, in “heavy” broadcast parts, to wear makeup and appropriate dress. ...a master of dialects from the chatter of a Marseilles dock worker to the argot of his native Tyneside.”



Arthur Milner (26-48)

Head of Music at RGS, Arthur was brought to the school in 1926 by the then Headmaster, **ER Thomas** (22-48). Though born in Manchester, he came with his parents to Tyneside as a small boy, was

educated at Dame Allan's and never left the North East. He had lectured in Music at Armstrong College, Newcastle (then part of Durham University) and taught at Lemington Adult School. In his 22 years as Head of Music, he transformed the subject at RGS from almost nothing to the nationally recognised excellence we now take for granted. The school and Milner utilised the new Broadcasting Service right from the start and an interesting first example of this was a talk from 5NO (Stagshaw transmitter) by one **E Akhurst** (Staff 1919-57) on *The Second Rome, the city of the Popes* listed in the very first *Radio Times* in September 1923. Other broadcasts included a 1946 *Children's Hour* on the *Home Service* with ‘The Choir and Orchestra of the Newcastle Royal Grammar School’. The First Orchestra and Senior Choir, under Mr Milner's baton, broadcast from the New Bridge Street BBC Studio in 1948 on the *Children's Hour*. The performance included *The Caliph of Baghdad* by François Adrien Boieldieu and Purcell's *Nymphs and Shepherds*. In the December NOVO, it was noted, after journeying to the studios and rehearsing for over an hour, ‘the Choir journeyed to Fenwick or Woolworths in search of ice cream or lemonade’ and ‘The brass section relieved the monotony of the orchestra's tuning up by playing bits of ragtime.’

(A full article on Arthur Milner can be found in *ONA Magazine* 98, Autumn 2016)



Geoffrey Wheeler (45-48)

Geoffrey was born in Manchester in 1930. As his father was posted to Newcastle, Geoffrey came to the RGS in 1945. After school and university, National Service beckoned and he was posted to Catterick. There, he successfully auditioned for BBC drama at the Newcastle Studios. He took part in several plays, *Saturday Night Theatre*, *Curtain Up*, and many plays for *Children's Hour*. A highlight was playing one of the leads in *Fame Is the Spur* by Howard Spring opposite Sir Ian McKellen.

Geoffrey had landed a BBC job in which he could both produce and introduce such programmes as *Workers' Playtime*, with embryo stars such as Benny Hill and Ken Dodd. Later, he was promoted to *Blackpool Night*, a three-hour show with the likes of Bob Monkhouse and Morecambe and Wise. He also worked with the NDO, the Northern Dance Orchestra. From *Variety*, Geoffrey went on to general programmes, and started one on which he worked on for 21 years – *Songs of Praise*. He was already working on *Songs of Praise* when he left the BBC to go freelance in 1963. His obituaries in 2014 all comment in similar terms on his distinctive qualities; his gentlemanliness, his friendly manner, his sincerity and genuine interest in those he met and interviewed.



Brian Redhead (40-48)

Entered RGS as a Scholarship Boy, becoming a journalist and broadcaster of national fame, after gaining First Class Honours in History Tripos at Cambridge. In a BBC *Children's Hour* broadcast in April 1944, Brian was listed as a clarinet duettist. It was a foretaste of a long career at the BBC. He cut his journalistic teeth on the *Whitley Bay Chronicle* and later joined the then *Manchester Guardian*, becoming its Northern Editor under its *Guardian* banner, later editing the *Manchester Evening News*. There, he hosted *Points North*, then later briefly joined the *Tonight* programme in London. *A Word in Edgeways* came later, hosted by Redhead for 20 years. Best remembered on *Today*, which he co-chaired with John Humphrys, he was no stranger to controversy (does anything really change?) and crossed swords with many a national politician.

Described as a professional northerner who became a national voice, there was much national sadness when he died at the early age of 64 in 1994.



GRAND DESIGNS

Robert Burns Dick (1880-84) was born in 1868. Not many of RGS's alumni can be said to have changed the face of Newcastle. Adapted by permission of the *Chronicle and Journal* from an article by Tony Henderson.



Above: Drawing of the iconic Tyne Bridge towers. Opposite (clockwise): Spanish City, Whitley Bay; Laing Art Gallery; Tyne Bridge and the Bridge Hotel, Newcastle upon Tyne

As an architect with grand visions for the city, Dick proposed a gigantic archway to greet people entering Newcastle via the proposed 'new' Tyne Bridge, eventually opened in 1929. As a means of entering the city of Newcastle, that now internationally-known symbol of the North East, the Tyne Bridge, could hardly be bettered.

It was Dick who designed the granite towers of the Tyne Bridge, envisaging a gigantic triumphal entrance arch complex which could have doubled as a civic centre. However, because of financial restraints, it was never built. His inclination towards the monumental is shown in the design of the practice of Cackett, Burns Dick & McKellar for the Portland stone Police Courts and Fire Station which opened in 1933 at the junction of Pilgrim Street and Market Street. Robert Dick was also responsible for the Spanish City in Whitley Bay, which is now enjoying a new lease of life after extensive restoration. Mick Sharp, author of *The Dome of Memories*, the recent book on the history of the Spanish City,



says: "Cackett Burns Dick were the best known architects in Newcastle during this period and Robert did some fantastic stuff."

The innovative practice did provide another gateway building in the form of the neo-Jacobean Newcastle University Students Union, which is one of the first buildings to greet visitors on their way from the Haymarket to the Campus Arches and main quadrangle. There is more of the monumental in the practice's extension and enlargement of the 1910 Northumberland County Council offices in Newcastle, which re-opened in 1934 and is now the Vermont Hotel, and the 1911 Cross House opposite the Assembly Rooms on Westgate Road.

Robert was also operating on a grand scale in his plan for a new Civic Centre at Exhibition Park, complete with tower, which would have been connected to a Barras Bridge by a Parisian-style boulevard. But the outbreak of the Second World war put paid to ideas of a new council headquarters.

He was president in 1914 of the Northern Architectural Association, and would arrive at his office by chauffeur-driven Daimler. In 1924 he was a founder member of the Newcastle upon Tyne Society to 'Improve the Beauty, Health and Amenities of the City'. It advocated a Green Belt for Newcastle which included a string of parks and drew up a list of city centre historic buildings to save them from demolition or decay. He was principal designer for the practice, whose work also included the 1904 Laing Art Gallery, the 1899 Bridge Hotel opposite the Castle Keep, and the design of the 1920s Pendower housing estate, one of the earliest council homes developments in Newcastle. Low rise, low density and landscaped, Pendower was in the spirit of the Garden City movement.

Robert Dick built his own house, Millmount, at Cowgate, which still stands. But the modernist house he designed in 1934 for his brother, called The Wedge, was demolished to make way for the Cowgate roundabout.

He died at Esher in 1954, aged 86.

NEWS & CONGRATULATIONS

ONA DINNERS

In October, around 130 diners enjoyed the usual excellent meal provided by Barry Bulch and his team. Presentations were made by ONA President Kate Appleby to retiring members of staff **Christopher Wancke** (retired 2019) and iconic RGS sports hero **Jim Pollock** (67-77 & staff 02-19). Assisted by young musicians, Head of Music, Zlatan Fazlic provided some cool jazz to warm up the guests. After Grace by Rev **Roger Mills** (66-75), proceedings commenced with a miscellaneous medley of toasts to various groups, including those who had attended the school during the reign of King George VI, which included a 65+ year reunion of 1951/54 entrants. Guest Speaker was **Dr Ian Appleby** (70-77).

In March, just before the nation was engulfed in the present crisis, around 80 guests attended the London Dinner, held at The Lansdowne Club. Guest Speaker was **Frazer Thornton** (67-77), CEO of winemaker Chapel Down and diners were able to sample some of England's finest wines. The combined raffles at the Dinners raised almost £2,000 for the Bursary Campaign.

Why don't you consider attending this year's ONA Dinner on Friday 16 October? Come and have a look around the new, as well as the old familiar parts of the school?



Paul Haggie (L) and Peter Coates



London diners



SCHOOL SUCCESS AT GROSVENOR HOUSE

Friday 7 February saw a small contingent from RGS travel down to London for the Times Educational Supplement Awards Ceremony, hopeful that their shortlisting as finalists in the category of Alumni Engagement Campaign of the Year would bring them success. With the customary razamatazz which now accompanies these glittering events, RGS's representatives waited expectantly until about half way through more than a dozen different

awards, they were rewarded with the excitement of winning in the face of stiff competition from eight other contestants in their field.

The winning campaign is "having a massive effect on the city of Newcastle", noted lead judge Richard Walden. "This shows that what private schools are doing in their communities is very different from what is sometimes reported in the tabloid press."

Above (L-R): Host comedian Ivo Graham, David Goldwater, Scarlett Milligan, Susan Beck, Nigel Paton and Louise Bennett, Joint CEO of IDPE



CONCERT CASUALTY

The Choral and Orchestral Concert, due to be staged on 30 March in the Main Hall, was cancelled due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Sadly our Sixth Form singers and instrumentalists will not now have the opportunity to perform for their last time. We are grateful for their contribution to the musical life of our school.

NEW LIBRARY BUILDING DEVELOPMENT COMPLETED



The new Library and Archive Building

Along with many other developments around the school campus, a brilliant new Sixth Form Centre has been formed out of what was previously the Library and originally, the Old Dining Hall (between 1907 and 1969).

With the new Library and Archive Building, built on the site of the old Sutherland Swimming Baths, and the linkage to the what used to be known as the Science Block, it is now possible to walk under cover through the entire school. If you haven't visited RGS for some time (many of you not since you left school), you are most welcome to arrange a guided tour. Contact the

Development Office (0191 212 8909 email: development@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk) and with new events in the calendar (see elsewhere in this issue), you can catch up on all the exciting developments.

As well as around the school, there are many changes in Eskdale Terrace. The main Central High School Building opposite RGS is no more and a huge residential block is almost complete. The Synagogue up the road has been sympathetically turned into 12 luxury apartments and Clayton Road remains a vibrant niche shopping street. Just don't ask about the weird one-way systems in the area!



Students take time out in the new Agora

THE AGORA

The Agora (/æɡɒrə/; Ancient Greek: ἄγορά) was a central public space in ancient Greek city-states. Its purpose was to accommodate the social and political order of the city or polis. The literal meaning of the word is "gathering place" or "assembly".

Not far from where the old Sutherland Baths and Changing Room block stood, an impressive assembly area has been formed as RGS's own agora. Come and see it and 'rest awhile there!'

Congratulations to **Edward Levey** (82-92) who has been appointed a QC and will be sworn in at the Palace of Westminster in mid-June. Edward is a member of Fountain Court Chambers in London as were ONs **David Waksman** QC (66-75) and the late **Trevor Philipson** QC (62-67).

Congratulations to Rev **W Roy Large** (48-58) who has been awarded his PhD by Newcastle University for his thesis: *'Let the people sing!': Aspects of choir culture from Tyne to Tweed, 1852-1989.*

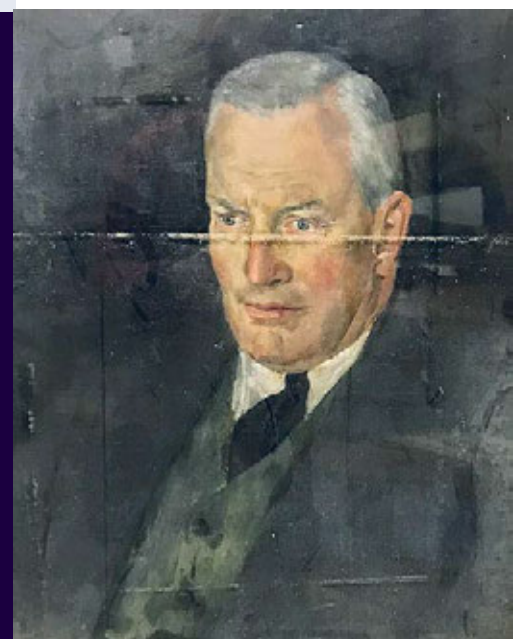
Congratulations also to **Howard Snaith** (01-11) and **Rachael Coates** (09-11) on their recent marriage. Howard and Rachael met in RGS Sixth Form.

LOST FILM

It was Coronation Year and in the July 1953 *NOVO*, a milestone in the newest technology then available was reached, when the school, under the guidance of Mr Jagger, working with form IV4, produced a minute film *The School of the North*, "a worthy record in an historic year". Does anyone know the whereabouts of this important record?

MYSTERY IN THE ARCHIVES

Lying in the new Archives Department is a mystery painting. It came to light during the preparations for the move. Can any reader recall this gentleman?



NEWS & CONGRATULATIONS



CCF NEWS

The setting up of a new RAF Section in September last year was yet another milestone in the long and prestigious CCF history at RGS, complementing the long standing RN and Army Sections and offering cadets another insight into the Armed Forces. As part of this unique experience, seven RAF cadets got a taste of what lies ahead when they visited RAF Leeming in January and completed their first flights with 11 Air Experience Flight.

Before getting airborne in the Grob Tutor training aircraft, the cadets completed some initial safety training, a familiarisation package about the aircraft cockpit and were then issued with their flying clothing.

During their sorties all the cadets took control and flew the aircraft

themselves and some even managed to complete aerobatic manoeuvres as well. One of the cadets said, "I was actually sceptical and a bit nervous about flying in a small plane at first, but the moment you take off, every fear you may have had immediately transforms into sheer amazement. Taking control of the plane and flying it yourself is one of the best experiences I've ever had and the whole flight left me speechless."

The CCF (RAF) aims to offer an exciting and challenging cadet experience based around flying and aviation, and so inspire young people to learn and develop new skills. It definitely achieved that and the smiles said it all!

By Flying Officer Hutton-Stott

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Having met when assigned to desks alphabetically in the first year of Senior School, **Charles Penn** (69-79) and **Stephen Phillips** (72-79) remain close friends. Both have returned to live and work in the North, Charles in marketing in professional services, whilst Stephen nears the end of a 41 year career as a Royal Marines Officer, latterly specialising in recruitment. Note the alphabetical sequence went: "Marston, Moor, Parker, Penn, Phillips...". Can anyone beat this?

By **Charles Penn** (69-79)

RICHARD BLOWS THE COBWEBS OFF RETIREMENT

Richard W Best (56-66), Past President ONA, after learning of this *ONA Magazine's* theme writes: At school I was taught the Violin by Johnston Hood and played in the school Orchestras from the Junior School through to the First Orchestra. Well into retirement, Cobweb encouraged me to start playing the violin again after 33 years. Cobweb now runs nine orchestras in the North of England from Morpeth in the North to York in the South and Tebay in Cumbria, where I am now their leader. It has an open access policy for players of any ability, which applied to me, as when I started playing again, I could barely play a note!

As a result of my involvement with the Cobweb Orchestra, I now play in three more orchestras and a String Quartet – Westmorland Orchestra in Kendal, Sedbergh Orchestra, and The Cobweb Chamber Orchestra.

Cobweb Orchestra and music have undoubtedly enhanced and enriched my life. Notable performances have included playing at the first concert at the RGS Music Centre, the opening of the Sage Gateshead, Hall One (conducted by **Glenn Davis** (57-64)), Durham Cathedral, in Kendal accompanying Jennifer Pike while playing in the Westmorland Orchestra, Dachau former Concentration Camp, San Gimignano in Italy and numerous concerts all over the North of England.

STAY CONNECTED



There are plenty of Old Novos social media groups around, but we have our own groups. Please join us by becoming a fan of the Old Novocastrians Association Facebook page and LinkedIn Group – Old Novocastrians' Association (RGS Newcastle).

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OBITUARIES

SIR JOHN ROWLING (63-74)

BORN 8 JANUARY 1941, DIED 17 JANUARY 2020, AGED 78



Most teachers leave a legacy, but John Rowling left more than most! Born in Doncaster in 1941, John was the first in his family to go to university, gaining a Masters in Mathematics at Durham. One of his Professors advised him to apply for a job at RGS and when he visited the school he declared himself to be 'bowled over' by it. After his appointment, it would be fair to say that he came in like a whirlwind and in his turn bowled the school over! His very positive RGS nickname was 'Happy Jack' which neatly summed up his personality and teaching style.

Frank Budden (62-80 & 80-82), Head of Mathematics and an internationally renowned mathematician, put it so well in his *Valete* for John. 'When John came to us he had a slide rule in one hand, a Bible in the other, a cricket bat under one arm and a football (sphere or ellipsoid) under the other. These three dimensions – mathematics teaching, leadership of the Christian Union (CU), and work on the games field – are possibly as diverse as could be and John had brilliant achievements in all three.'

Under John's influence the CU grew from virtually nothing to a mighty force in the school. Many students who found faith under his lively evangelism went on to serve in a variety of Christian ministries at home and abroad. He ran house parties

designed to promote the faith and organised large Inter Schools Rallies in Newcastle. At the same time, he was Assistant Minister at Bethshan Pentecostal Church and a regular speaker on TV epilogues. Frank Budden commented: "Does he eat, drink and sleep like other men?" it was asked of Sir Isaac Newton, and the question is not entirely inappropriate of JRR at RGS."

In sport, he scored a century in the traditional Masters v Second XI match in 1965 and 97 the year after. Originally a football fan and a fine goalkeeper, when he was converted and turned his hand to rugby, he coached a highly successful UI3 side to the County Championship – that side included **Jim Pollock** (67-77 & staff 02-19) who went on to be a Scottish International. Jim remembers him as 'a great man, inspirational, passionate and enthusiastic.'

'Inspirational' is a word so many who met him use of John. In his dealings with people he was interested in them, wanted the best for them and encouraged them. He was an immensely loyal supporter of those who crossed his path, managing to help them find their best and achieve it.

John left RGS in 1974 to move to the Hirst High Comprehensive School in the mining town of Ashington – a very different context from leafy Jesmond. This move was in order to be closer to Crossroads, a thriving youth church he founded there in 1973. He was there for 11 years becoming Deputy Head of the school and building a very strong Christian Fellowship which exists to this day.

John Rowling had the Midas touch, producing exceptional things from challenging circumstances. He was a true pioneer who would down tools having achieved something special only to pick up a new set and do it again somewhere new. In 1984, that somewhere new was

Nunthorpe School near Middlesbrough where he became Headmaster. Under his dynamic leadership the school became high achieving and John attracted national attention.

In 2003, he was invited by the DfE to work on the London Challenge, a school improvement programme designed to turn around poor standards in the capital. Again, a great success. After three years the DfE wanted to withdraw funding but John was reluctant to leave his family of 55 schools and they wanted to keep him. They volunteered to fund him themselves. Thus began his last great achievement, an organisation known as PiXL – Partners in Excellence. PiXL's growth has been phenomenal and it now has a network of over 3,000 educational establishments in the UK and 250 internationally which look to it for support and inspiration.

Sir John Rowling – he was knighted for his services to education – an amazing life. In all this he was supported with immense solidity and love by his wife Sheila and children Rachel and Nick. In 2018, a *TES* article about John asked, 'Is this the most influential man in UK schools?' – the implied answer being yes! Praise indeed, but more important for John would be the highly applicable words of Jesus, in Matthew's gospel: 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'

By **Dave Merritt** (63-73)

OBITUARIES

RICHARD JONATHAN 'JON' PATRICK LYNN (70-74)

BORN 27 JUNE 1957, DIED 22 FEBRUARY 2020, AGED 62

Jon was born in Sheffield on the 27 June 1957 to Jack and Mari Lynn. His father Jack was a distinguished architect who had been born in North Seaton and studied architecture at Durham University.

He became well known for designing the large Park Hill complex in Sheffield in the "Brutalist" style and worked on the development of Newcastle University's campus from the late 1960's onwards, at which time he and the family moved back to Northumberland, first to Jesmond and then to Gosforth.

Jon joined RGS in September 1970 into the 3rd Year and joined the form class of the late John Elders. He enjoyed all sports at the school, particularly rugby, where he later played for Old Novos into the 1980s and participated wholeheartedly in many events at the school, where he also made a number of lifelong friends. In his spare time, Jon was a also keen angler and many days were spent fishing in the North Sea.

He left RGS just after his O Level year in 1974 to take a Foundation Course in Art in Carlisle and then studied Architecture for a year at Canterbury in Kent before switching to Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic (now Northumbria University) where he graduated in 1982 with BA (Hons) in Design for Industry. After graduation, Jon carried out a variety of roles before moving into teaching, qualifying as a teacher of CDT, with a particular interest in teaching design and practical skills. He married in 1989 and subsequently moved to Essex with his wife Ann, their daughter Nicola and Ann's daughter Katy. He enjoyed a long career in education and especially took great pride in helping those young people who otherwise struggled with formal education.

After many years in Essex, Jon and Ann moved to warmer climes near Alicante in southern Spain and Jon thoroughly

enjoyed his life there with a great many friends. It was there that Jon suddenly passed away on the 22 February.

Jon is perhaps best described as a lively, fun-loving character who enjoyed life to the full, in whatever he did, and he will be sadly missed by his family and friends who knew him, particularly in Jesmond and Gosforth, where many a raucous night was spent at the County Hotel!

Jon leaves Ann, Katy and Nicola, and his sister, Inez, who was the Librarian (Chief Executive) of the London Library for many years.

By **Colin Young** (68-75)

BRIAN ALLISTER RICH (54-64)

BORN 20 APRIL 1946, DIED
18 NOVEMBER 2019, AGED 62



The Rich family lived in Jesmond and Brian and his elder brother Alan attended both RGS Junior and Senior schools, a short walk away.

Brian left Sixth Form to complete a degree in Electronic and Electrical Engineering at Imperial College, London, and was subsequently apprenticed at C&A Parsons in Walker, where he would spend several years in heavy duty

electrical engineering, which included commissioning new generators at the Ferrybridge C power station.

He continued his career with an MSc in Management at Durham University, where he began his life-long engagement with computers and Information Technology, as it came to be called. His skills as a software engineer and developer took him to the Midlands in the early days of computing when the average corporate IT system was the size of a pantechicon, but with air conditioning.

His interests were in the new "microcomputers," subsequently known as PCs. As a result, he was keenly sought after and worked for companies as diverse as Parker Knoll, Bass Breweries and Istel, who all required off-site data collection and analysis, and real-time data transfer. He was recognised as one of the foremost UK experts in the then new Apple Macintosh. Later he set up his own company, Helpful Systems, but continued to work on a consultancy basis, long after "retirement" on projects related to advanced military systems.

Brian was a family man and his house was always full of children and grandchildren. He still found time to assist in the running of Ruralnet, a rural regeneration charity, with the Studley Food Bank, and with Redditch Lions, where he was a past Chair. He put his heavy engineering skills to good use in the restoration of a narrowboat, and could often be found with his head in the engine-room, usually within the vicinity of a canal-side pub.

Brian died unexpectedly at his home in Studley, Warwickshire.

By **Alan J Rich**

DAVID PREEST (64-72)

BORN 1938, DIED 22 MAY 2019, AGED 81

David was born in 1938 in Whitecroft, a village on the edge of the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. He attended the village primary school and from there gained a scholarship to Monmouth School. He was encouraged by the head of Classics to apply to Merton College, Oxford and was awarded a State Scholarship. David spent five years at Merton, following his degree with a Cert.Ed. He loved all ball sports and played rugby and cricket for the College.

Following teaching practice at Llandovery College, David took up posts at Loughborough Grammar School, RGS – undoubtedly his happiest teaching post – and subsequently Highgate School, which he joined in 1972, on the day his third child was born. In teaching, David had found his natural calling, as many letters from former pupils testify. One wrote, ‘David was an inspirational teacher who shared his love of literature and culture, not just classics, and did much to shape the way I’ve thought, critiqued and analysed in very different fields of work for fifty years’. And another, ‘Latin took on a glorious clarity under David’s tutelage. When I retired, I was still capable enough in both Latin and Greek to be able to read them again with pleasure’. A former colleague wrote that ‘David’s classroom was quite unlike any other in the school, an oasis of stillness amid the hurly-burly of school life, reflecting the calm and order of his mind’.

After a period of ill health in the early 1990s, David retired early and became Deputy Director of St Albans Cathedral education centre. This was a post he held for ten years, engaging children of all ages as he unfolded the life of the building, past and present, using role-play, practical workshops and his skillful style of questioning.

Retiring from full time work at 60, David ‘looked for something to do in the

mornings,’ (afternoons were for outdoor activities – gardening, walking, cycling) and after consulting a former pupil, then a don at Oxford, David set about translating the *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, or *The Deeds of the Bishops of England*, by William of Malmesbury, which had never been published in English. This was published by Boydell & Brewer in 2002 and was the start of 20 years of translating medieval Latin histories and chronicles. David researched and wrote the introduction and notes to his first translation, but subsequently worked in collaboration with historians, including James Clark, professor of history at the University of Exeter. David’s translations were praised for their elegance and readability; *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham* won a ‘Choice’ academic award. *The Deeds of the Abbots of St Albans* was published in June 2019 and he had sent a final translation to his publisher the day before he was taken ill, to be published next year.

Some years ago, David took a break from translating and wrote a commentary on every one of Emily Dickinson’s 1,787 poems. He made this available at emilydickinsonpoems.org and was delighted when people came across it and contacted him.

David’s capacity for friendship was unlimited. An extremely modest man, he looked for, and found, the best in people he met, resulting in a large group of people whom he loved, and who loved him. But he was above all a family man and was in his element devising games and quizzes for family occasions and playing cricket and football in the garden. He had three children, William (who died in 2005), Tom and Harriet, with his first wife, Jane. David married Verity in 2000 and was beloved Pop-Pops to five grandchildren, Lauren, Oliver, Emily, Willoughby and James.

By Verity Preest

RICHARD ‘DICKIE’ DUNFORD (68-78)

DIED 18 NOVEMBER 2019, AGED 59



It is with sadness that I have to report the death of Richard ‘Dickie’ Dunford (68-78) on 18 November 2019.

The son of **J Brian Dunford** (29-37) (past ONA President) I first met Richard at Akhurst, prior to RGS. We remained friends throughout Junior School but drifted apart on entering the Senior School – he going to IIX and me to ILY, we were never in the same forms again.

After school, Richard went on to read History and English at what was then Newcastle Polytechnic – now University of Northumbria – he graduated with an Upper Second in 1982 and then taught A Level English at Newcastle College.

According to former colleagues, he was a highly respected tutor, by fellow staff, students and their parents. He was highly regarded in his skills of teaching students with Asperger’s. Richard left teaching in 2017 and started his own business connected with the ‘Sport of Kings’, which had been a long-held passion and which was successful for him. A very private person, Richard lost touch with his cohort from school, shortly after leaving, presumably for his own reasons, but that will not prevent us from not letting his passing go un-noticed. RIP.

By **Robert Newton** (68-78)

OBITUARIES

JOY KNOWLES (52-84)

DIED 21 NOVEMBER 2019, AGED 92



Joy Patterson joined the staff at the RGS in 1952 and retired in 1984. She taught the youngest boys in the Junior School with Pat Gordon. Joy ran a Scottish dance club for the Sixth Form and discovering that I had an interest in English folk dancing from my school days, thought that I might help. Feeling that I should find out how to do it properly, I joined a beginners' class at West Jesmond School, thus beginning a lifetime's interest and enjoyment.

She married fellow teacher Jeff Knowles, and I joined them for the Border Camp in Race Week, later to become Whit Week. About 35 boys attended and walked various hills culminating in climbing the Schill on the last day. They also ran a camp on the island of Eigg, where the Sixth Form did various pieces of geographical research. There the boys joined the islanders at their dances, even managing to follow signs to outside refreshments! One year, having agreed to go with them, I almost decided to stay on the island as we had had a very rough crossing and I am not a good sailor. Fortunately the crossing back was much calmer.

They moved further west before Jeff retired and were able to prepare for a more rural life which they enjoyed until Jeff's death. Joy then moved into Hexham where their daughter, Juliet, lived and worked, and she was able to have a social life without having to drive.

By John Douglas (56-94)

BARRY SHACKLOCK (39-44)

DIED 4 JUNE 2019, AGED 91

Sadly, I have to inform you that Barry Shacklock passed away on 4 June 2019 at the age of 91. We know he was at the school during WWII after he was evacuated from Shanghai just before the Japanese invasion. I believe that the school had been evacuated to the Lake District at the time.

Barry's career was in civil engineering and during his short time in the RAF, he assisted in the rebuilding the Berlin airports that were pivotal in the later airlift. He authored numerous internationally referenced research publications, as well as working and advising in over 50 countries around the world.

He became Director of Administration Services at Cement and Concrete Association (C&CA) and was later appointed Secretary-General and Treasurer of Fédération Internationale de la Précontrainte (FIP). I believe that RGS took no small part in his meritorious career.

By Nick Costello

MO BINNS (48-53)

DIED 6 DECEMBER 2019, AGED 82

AM BOOKLESS (44-51)

DIED 18 DECEMBER 2019, AGED 84

STEPHEN R CAHILL (87-94)

DIED JANUARY 2020

PW GARVEN (38-49)

DIED 21 DECEMBER 2019, AGED 93

TA JONES (39-47)

DIED 28 OCTOBER 2019, AGED 89

HUGH ROBERT THORNTON TREVELYAN (81-91)

DIED 19 JUNE 2019, AGED 46

PHILIP ANDERSON (46-51)

BORN 6 JULY 1935, DIED 18 JULY 2019, AGED 84



Philip joined RGS as a scholarship boy in 1946, enjoying his school life, but for family reasons left before his A Levels.

After farming in Thropton and National Service, he was fast-tracked to Nottingham University, including a six month stay in Tours, France. After a school career teaching languages ending up as Head of Department, he moved to managing two public houses with land attached, where he was able to resume his love of horses, retained from his early farming days. Despite a heart attack at 70, he moved to carriage driving with horses always welcome at his door! Philip passed away aged 84, after 61 years of marriage to Margaret.

STEPHEN ROY CAHILL

(84-87)

After leaving RGS, Stephen took a year out doing voluntary work in Israel and then read Law at Liverpool University. He practiced as a Solicitor in London for several years but then decided on a complete career change and entered the Prison Service.

He first trained at Long Lartin prison in Worcestershire and then transferred to Wormwood Scrubs. He became a Senior Prison Officer and an accomplished negotiator, especially in hostage situations. He also joined the elite Tornado Squad that are sent to tackle major riots in prisons all over the country.

Stephen passed away in January 2020. He is survived by his wife and two children.

By Ann and Alan Cahill

ONA SHOP



To order from our range of merchandise, please send a cheque payable to ONA, confirming your delivery address and contact details. For further details and postage costs, please email: development@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk.



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DIARY DATES



95TH ANNUAL OLD NOVOCASTRIANS DINNER

Friday 16 October 2020

RGS, Newcastle upon Tyne

Guest Speaker:

Alastair Leithead (80-90) Award-winning journalist, BBC foreign correspondent and Virtual Reality film maker.

Champagne reception in the school hall, followed by four course dinner including wine. £47 per person. £37 for ONs aged 25 or under or aged 80 and over. To reserve your place please email development@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk

PERSONAL DETAILS AND DATA PROTECTION

The school has a very special relationship with its former students and we very much wish to continue to keep in touch with you. To do this we would like your consent to keep basic details of your time at school, what you have been doing since

leaving school and your contact details. A copy of the letter and consent form can be found at <https://bit.ly/2OAWpXB>

Please complete the consent form so that we can continue to keep in contact.

Alternatively, to unsubscribe or change your preferences please contact us at development@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk or call us on 0191 212 8909.

'BACK TO SCHOOL' SEPTEMBER 2020

In September 2020, RGS is delivering a cluster of high profile and stimulating events, which are a wonderful opportunity for Old Novocastrians to come 'Back to School'. We are encouraging Old Novos from across the country – and indeed the world – to join us for one, or more of these really special occasions. Why not come back and reflect on your own school years, while seeing how RGS operates in 2020? With both school events and the return of the Peter Taylor Lecture, there's something for all hearts and minds.

Wednesday 23 September

- Tour of the school and the RGS Archive
- Peter Taylor Lecture Series – Professor Anya Hurlbert
- Founder's Service in the RGS Main Hall
- Viscount and Viscountess Ridley becoming 'Fellows of the RGS'
- Afternoon tea in the RGS Dining Hall
- Optional Old Novos' supper at The Vermont Hotel

Thursday 24 September

- History talk on **Robert Burns Dick** (1880-1884)

For more details on any of the 'Back To School' events please email development@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk



PLEASE NOTE:

ALL DIARY EVENTS ON THIS PAGE ARE SUBJECT TO THE RESOLUTION OF THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS.

Please continue to check www.rgs.newcastle.sch.uk for further details.