



Spring
2016

Friends of BRGS

A newsletter produced by BRGS for former students, parents and the community

Ofsted Outstanding!

All at BRGS are celebrating moving from a 'good' to an 'outstanding' Ofsted judgement after a two-day inspection on the 19th-20th January 2016.

Alan Porteous, Headteacher, is delighted that BRGS has been awarded the best possible rating of 'outstanding' by a team of Ofsted inspectors. After the visit, Ofsted wrote a glowing report which praised standards in each of the inspection criteria: quality of teaching, learning and assessment; personal development, behaviour and welfare; effectiveness of leadership and management; and outcomes for pupils. Our Sixth Form, which is non-selective with approximately half of its intake from neighbouring schools, was also rated outstanding.

In a letter to parents, Alan Porteous said: "This the best Ofsted report that BRGS has ever received; The 'outstanding' judgement is a remarkable achievement, given the increased challenge in the most recent inspection framework. The report is testament to the dedication, commitment and energy of a superb team of staff supported by an experienced governing body. It is also a reflection of the quality of our students; during the inspection, the team was hugely impressed by their mature approach to their learning, their active engagement, their self-discipline and excellent behaviour.

They did themselves, the school and you proud."

Alan Porteous commented: "We are continually engaged in reflecting on our current provision and looking for ways to improve it for our young people. We are delighted with the 'outstanding' judgement and will seek to build upon it as we continue to equip our students to play a significant role in the community as they progress beyond BRGS."

In building on BRGS's success, we will be looking to focus on offering further opportunities for students to develop verbal communication skills; further improve careers education to meet the needs of all; and audit our extensive extra-curricular provision to ensure that activities meet the needs of learners and that there is wide engagement across all pupils.

Chairman of Governors, David King expressed the delight of the Governing Body at the 'outstanding' judgement; it is to the credit of all staff that they provide education to such a high standard.



Welcome!

We realise there has been quite a delay between editions of the newsletter and would like to thank you for your patience.

The reasoning behind the gap in publications is highlighted in the letter accompanying this newsletter. I encourage you to read this and decide whether you would like to continue receiving a physical copy of the newsletter through the post to you at a nominal charge or whether you would like to receive future copies via email for free. Linked to this is the launch of a new alumni database and I would request that you take a moment to check that your details are up to date on this. Again, details are in the letter.

There is an awful lot of news to share with you this time. We reflect on the significant contribution that Philip Clark made to countless former students and, alongside celebrating Philip's legacy, we also celebrate our recent Ofsted outcome.

Do keep sending in all your news, photos and ideas for features. We try to include as many of your contributions as possible.

With best wishes,

Emma

Emma Gauntlett
Development Director
ecg@brgs.org.uk
Tel: 01706 234500
www.brgs.org.uk



Philip Lane Clark, Headmaster of BRGS 1969-1987

“We are what we are because we stand on the shoulders of those who have preceded us. May we so live that those who follow us may stand on our shoulders.” Old Scandinavian saying, quoted by Philip Clark at Speech Day 1980.

We were saddened to learn at the start of the academic year of the death of Philip Clark who ably led BRGS for 18 years. Current Headteacher Alan Porteous paid tribute to Philip's legacy: **“Since the school's inception in 1913 there have only been seven headmasters. Philip Clark's leadership saw the school go from strength to strength academically and saw the introduction of a comprehensive intake Sixth Form which continues to thrive today. Countless students owe him a great debt of gratitude for his tireless work, good humour and compassion.”**

The following information is based on the extracts from *75 years of BRGS and Reflections of a Headmaster*.

Unlike his three predecessors, Philip Clark did not have to contend with the threat or aftermath of the World Wars but did have to fight for the school's existence against “pretty fierce in-fighting between the 11-18 lobby and the 11-16 protagonists” (*75 years of BRGS*) alongside the possibility of Grammar School closures.

Philip Clark came from the Midlands but received some of his education in Sheffield and had strong leanings towards Yorkshire. After completing service as an Education Officer in the RAF he was Head of Geography at Coleshill Grammar School in Warwickshire and then he proceeded to Bingley where he became Deputy Head of a School which was becoming comprehensive.

He believed that headteachers should live locally and with his wife, Cynthia, and two sons, Stephen and Nicholas, he lived in Rawtenstall. As a non-car owner, he would catch the bus alongside early-rising pupils and his lack of car has never stopped him from travelling to various educational functions. In fact, over the course of his 60 teaching years for the WEA (Workers' Educational Association) in Wolverhampton

which he retired from in his mid-80s he caught 6,000 trains and delivered 400 sessions!

On his arrival at BRGS, PLC inherited a school of over 700 pupils, and a nucleus of long-serving, experienced teachers among a teaching-staff of forty (of whom 12 were alumni). Nineteen of these were still at BRGS at the end of Philip Clark's headship, with 8 having retired during the course of his leadership.

Philip Clark was deeply involved in the life of the school and a great skill of his was to know everyone by name. Known as a raconteur, keeping his audience engrossed in his stories, his first Speech Day was a great success with one colleague commenting that they had not expected to be rolling in the aisles whilst listening to the Head's speech! In one of his Speech Day reports he gave an indication of how his school day begins. A lost pencil-case, for example: "How", I ask, "can the pencil-case be identified?" "Well," says the girl, "it's blue denim and has a female woodpecker on the front." "I'm sorry, I don't know how to recognise a female woodpecker." "Oh, that's easy – it's wearing a skirt."

BRGS had long offered sixth form studies to all with favourable results. In 1970, however, Philip Clark announced the intention of a comprehensive Sixth Form intake which has thrived over the years. He introduced Form Captains and Vice-Captains alongside Form Prefects to ensure greater involvement between the sixth-form and lower school, a system which continues today.

During his headship, in 1980 Philip contended with the discovery of dry rot in the building, which meant rooms had to be stripped of plaster down to the brickwork and were successively out of action. Some lessons took place at the Lea Bank centre with significant teaching time lost to travelling between venues. The next crisis was in January 1981 with the failure of the school boilers whereby he sent for 35 electric heaters to keep the school running!

Reviewing the happenings of 1985 in the School's *Squirrel* magazine, Philip Clark reflected on the "adaptability and resilience" of pupils in the face of threats to the existence of the school

and also "two successive years in which the run-up to summer exams has been disrupted by 'teacher action', mercifully alleviated at BRGS by the fact that teachers, whilst loyal to their union, were endowed with feelings of stronger unity with the pupils they teach."

On his arrival, Philip began a boys' hockey club which by 1977 became legendary. He had played hockey in the services and introduced it with great success, training and coaching with great enthusiasm. Opponents in the immediate vicinity were few and far between which necessitated travelling for many hours to different venues. Alyn Lamb eventually played for England as well as Philip's younger son, Nick, with four further students representing their country in the sport by 1987. After that point, it became commonplace to play for his County, with BRGS in the 1980-81 season having six boys in the County U14 team, six in the U15 team, three in the U16s and three (including the Captain) in the U19s. Five played for the North-West of England and Nicholas Clark for England – all in one season!

In addition to sport, Philip had a love of music with every first year child (Year 7) learning to play an instrument, meaning that the school orchestra was healthy. Furthermore, he established the School's Charities' Committee in 1970 which has been responsible for the raising of significant funds for the local community and beyond.

One of his reflections included:

"The buildings were occupied 200 days each year by hundreds of young people who possessed a natural dignity and joy in achievement born of an upbringing that was always solid working class. Pupils were so reliable and their conduct so exemplary that, by the mid-eighties, all school rules had been abolished. The school ran perfectly well without them."

It is written in 75 years of BRGS that "no one is indispensable, but some are most certainly irreplaceable. It would be difficult to find a successor so dynamic, so hard-working, so highly-intelligent, yet so tolerant of the less able, so humane and so humorous, as Philip Clark."

Copley Maths Suite Officially Opened

On Friday 6th November, the Copley Maths Suite was opened officially by Malcolm Copley, former student and son of former Headmaster Bill Copley, and Jake Berry MP.

The building is the outcome of a successful bid to the Department for Education's Academies Capital Maintenance Fund and a substantial gift from a generous benefactor.

The eight spacious classrooms replace some dilapidated 'temporary' buildings which have been on site for at least 50 years. Representatives from the Student

Council spoke passionately, eloquently and humorously, reflecting on the crumbling classrooms they inhabited last year. They are now enjoying the new Maths rooms with touch-screen technology with the added benefit of beautiful views over the Rossendale Valley.

Head of Maths, Will Seddon,

challenged guests to pit their wits against the students in a series of Maths challenges which saw the contractors, architects, local councillors and former accountants enter into a light-hearted competition before touring the building to see teachers and students in action, enjoying this much-needed addition to BRGS.

Challenging Maths

Continuing the Maths theme, the UKMT Senior Maths Challenge was undertaken by 100,000 students from across the UK, including some of our sixth form mathematicians. Nationwide, 10% of participants received a Gold certificate, the next 20% Silver and the next 30% Bronze. At BRGS, the percentages were 17% Gold, 34% Silver and 37% Bronze.

Around 1000 top scorers are invited to take part in the British Mathematical Olympiad Round 1 and around 2000 are invited to take part in the strangely named Senior Kangaroo.

We were delighted that James Ellis (Year 13) with a high score of 113, was invited to sit the British Mathematical Olympiad, while Tom Wilkinson, Emily Stott (both Year 13) and James Heaton (Year 12) were invited to participate in the Senior Kangaroo.

Maths teacher Mark Wilbraham, who organises the Challenge, said: "The students have achieved some fantastic results and we are very proud of them. The idea behind the challenge is to test mathematical thinking and application with the level of thinking required suitable for many degree subjects."



Maths Challenge Winners

Some sample questions from this year's Challenge:

When Louise had her first car, 50 litres of petrol cost £40. When she filled up the other day, she noticed that 40 litres of petrol cost £50.

By approximately what percentage has the cost of petrol increased over this time?

A: 50% B: 56% C: 67% D: 75% E: 80%

What is $2015^2 - 2016 \times 2014$

A: -2015 B: -1 C: 0 D: 1 E: 2015

In a further Maths Competition, four Sixth Form Students represented BRGS in the Regional UKMT Final at Lancaster University on 4th December. The BRGS Team of Isabel Cormack, Aimie Foster, Arslan Ahmed and Connor Richardson were up against 20 other schools from the Lancashire and Cumbria regions. Although they did not finish in a podium place, they displayed good teamwork. Mark Wilbraham said: "Some of the other schools have competed in the Challenge for many years and have built up plenty of expertise, while we are still relative novices. Despite this, the team performed extremely well, particular in the Cross Number round, which is like a crossword, but with numbers!"

We are also celebrating the maths success of four pupils from Years 7 and 9 who were joint winners alongside Altrincham Girls' Grammar School for the North-West and will progress through to the UKMT Finals at the Royal Horticultural Halls in London on 20th June. This is the first time that we have made it through to the National Final and we wish the team of Jason Diamantis and Joseph Noglobou (Year 7) as well as Matt Denham and Edward Glover (Year 9) the best of luck!

Seeking out all Orienteers

Many former students over the past 20 years will have benefited in terms of participating in the Orienteering Club. You may have fond memories of taking part in the British Schools' Orienteering Championships, sleeping on hall floors and various other uncomfortable venues, dining at Pizza Hut, competing in the JK at Easter, travelling to Norway with the Regional Squad and so on...

In fact, we are sure that you still have the many medals won on a national and sometimes international level and hope you will have benefited from the skills learnt. Furthermore, research tells us that orienteers are more resilient and it

develops independent problem-solving skills.

The School has been fortunate to benefit from expert coaching from Hamish Willis, the local club's lead coach; however, with school funding being ever-constrained we are writing to see whether any former students or friends of the school may be interested in their companies sponsoring our orienteers.

We have a strong history of success at the British Schools' Orienteering Championships winning regular medals at various age groups and recently one orienteer has represented England in the World Schools' Orienteering Championships, returning with a silver medal!

Currently, it costs £1600 to run our Orienteering Club on an annual basis. We are hopeful that we can receive this funding from The O Foundation

(specifically set up to support orienteering) but they will only fund if we can show that we are able to provide funding for the next few years. If, for example, we could raise £4,800 to support our orienteers over the next three years then this would allow us to access the £1,600 from The O Foundation, opening the doors for young orienteers to benefit during their school career at BRGS.

In terms of profile, the Junior Orienteers go to various events across the North-West Region and on several occasions they travel to other areas of the UK for the National Championships. There are opportunities for high profile sponsorship on kit and equipment.

If your company is able to consider supporting at this or a lower level, please contact Emma Gauntlett or Hamish Willis via ecg@brgs.org.uk.

Anti-Bullying Ambassador



The Leader of our Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, Theo Hewson-Betts, has been awarded the Princess Diana Award for his work promoting anti-bullying.

Theo is a member of the National Youth Board of the Diana Trust and last year held a training event in Todmorden to train 150 young people across the region to learn to identify and tackle bullying in all its forms.

BRGS online

Some of the eagle-eyed amongst you will have noticed that BRGS now has a new website.

Please do take a look at the usual address (www.brgs.org.uk) as any feedback to Emma at ecg@brgs.org.uk is welcomed.



In memory of Tom Gallagher, former student of BRGS

An Annual Highlight

Grandparents of Year 7 pupils were invited into school for Grandparents' Day, a highlight in our school calendar with the opportunity to experience lessons at their grandchildren's new school.



As ever, we were grateful for the lovely comments received, and summed up by one guest: "I enjoyed the modern approach to teaching and was impressed by the maturity and politeness of all pupils that I encountered." One grandparent wrote: "a wonderful morning – I wish I could have stayed for the whole day. Wonderful school."



Students Have Their Say

From Years 7 – 11, each year group has two Student Council representatives to put forward their points of view. For our Year 7 students it was the first time that they had elected representatives and it was a gruelling process for the candidates, having to make speeches in front of 179 of their peers in year assembly. The following Year 7 students were elected as a result of their persuasive cases.

Hira Salman's amusing speech said that she vowed to "end all homework and get rid of the steep hill which we have to trudge up to each morning" but more seriously, that she will "listen to what you do need". She said: "I want to represent you all because I fell in love with this school from the first day... And I'm going to do my best to make your days here full of great memories." She used the following metaphor: "I believe our school is like a tree; we are all different parts of this tree, for example – the teachers are like the roots, which supplement us with knowledge and help us to grow. If elected, I would be like the fertilizer which the gardener spreads to enrich the ground, just that little added extra which can make a big difference."

Akshay Narayan said: "Some might say, 'a school that's had 100 years to improve and develop is pretty much impossible to improve further', but if we look into the future of our school, I'm sure most of us has an image of a better BRGS. Now I think BRGS is a great school (I've even underlined it on my sheet). But if you vote for me it will be AMAZING."

Since being elected, the Student Council has bid successfully for sports equipment such as new goalposts which were kindly donated by the PTA and the Council is helping to shape plans for how we develop our limited outdoor space.



Hira Salman



Akshay Narayan

The Crucible

Review by Sophie Fowler-Gibbs

On paper, the premise of *The Crucible: the musical* reads almost as incongruously as matter and anti-matter occupying the same space. In this musical version of Miller's most potent work about McCarthyism, witch hunts and the perils of individual thought against a relentless system, BRGS's Head of Drama, Martin Neve conceived and directed a viscerally emotional, thought-provoking, highly-sensitive and timely production of this twentieth century classic. It was punctuated in its most poignant and dynamic moments with music from *Culture Club* that Music teacher, Tim Webber, arranged sympathetically to not only to support the story telling but also to lift the action out of the compelling intensity that is rarely seen in a school production. This innovative conception made the play less relic of the last century and more relevant than ever to the audience and the very talented pupils who presented it to us last week.

Martin Neve's paired-back staging to intensify the issues of the drama was visually stylish; if not almost nordic-noir, it was certainly sparse and puritan in spirit. He had also impressively created a truly ensemble cast where every role was vitally important and finely-nuanced. It is therefore almost unfitting to single any pupils out but certain roles were so remarkable, it would be criminal not to pay tribute. After the opening of the show - a thematically choreographed routine by Rebecca Gore and Celena Yasuda that underscored the demise of the American Dream - the operatic soprano of Grace O'Malley sent shivers down the spines of the audience. The pathos and beauty of this voice certainly

set the right note for this soulful production.

The earnest and committed cast continued to deliver their performances with intelligence and integrity. The trio of young women who spearheaded the emotional stretch and pull of the action in the play were Charlotte Hartley's Elizabeth Proctor who betrayed a wronged and wounded wife who, like her husband, was fighting to regain a unsoiled sense of self - Charlotte's singing in this role was deeply moving and painfully emotional; Sophie Milne's Abigail Williams was a real live wire, vicious and vitriolic but all actions attributable to a broken and battered heart - indeed the chemistry between Proctor and Abigail gave real credence to why this girl responded so savagely and without conscience; Caitlin Shackleton's Mary Warren was an endearing, tender-hearted girl confined by her lowly status yet dearly wishing to be of note in the world. Unlike Abigail, she does penance for her mistakes whilst moving the audience in the process. Also noteworthy was Deborah Onuha's energetic and skilfully controlled presentation of the sometimes problematic character of the terrorised and exploited Tituba.

Additionally, there was an impressive second tier of ensemble performances that gave the piece a formidable strength and serious depth and range, such as John Chavasse's and Krysytna Milejski's Mr and Mrs Putnam or Oliver Isherwood's pious yet rebellious Reverend



the musical landscape and mood provided by a most talented band and choir. In fact, it's true to say that, even as the ages of the actors and musicians diminished, the quality did not.

All the above would have been more than enough to make this production special and noteworthy but Matthew Warren was an absolute revelation in the role of John Proctor. A faultless Irish accent and gruff, dynamic voice paired with a strong stage presence and precise physicality made him a natural in the role. However, his raw pent-up emotions when channeled into some of the heart-breaking lines were so painful for the audience it affected them to tears on several occasions. It was not a performance you could ever hope to achieve in a school but instead was every bit a highly professional performance. The balcony hanging at the climax of the production was heart-wrenching! Those lucky enough to witness Matthew's John Proctor are still talking about it!

It is great to see a production in a school that is professionally performed, truly innovative and deeply moving.

Perhaps best summed up in the words of Emma Gauntlett, Development Director: "**This was the most intense and maturely exquisite, sensitive, contemporary yet timeless production I have ever seen. Simply superb!**"

Well done to the entire cast!



Over £17k raised for LEPROA

BRGS pupils have raised over £17,000 over the past 8 years for the charity LEPROA which not only works with people with the skin disease leprosy which is completely curable, but also the staggering 120 million people who are affected with lymphatic filariasis (sometimes known as elephantiasis) which is transmitted through infected mosquitoes.

It is worrying to think that 1.4 billion people globally are at risk of lymphatic filariasis but the money which our Year 7 pupils have collected over the years will have helped the charity hugely:

- **£4.50 can buy a pair of shoes so someone can walk again.**
- **£25 can give health education to a school of up to 100 children.**
- **£75 can pay for a paramedic for a month.**

In recognition of our continued support of LEPROA, Community Fundraiser Jacqui Fairbairn presented the school with a special plaque as a token of the charity's appreciation.

Debating Matters

BRGS Regional Finalists participated in the Debating Matters NW Competition at Manchester Metropolitan University.



The debates focused on:

- The UK should introduce a levy on sugary drinks.
- The UK should renew Trident.
- Britain should pay reparations for its role in the slave trade.
- It is wrong for countries to offer tax incentives to attract investment.

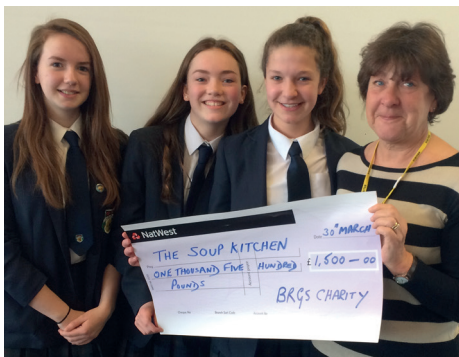
The team consisted of Will Moppett, Tara Morony, Ahmed Kouta, Josh Smith, Ben Donaldson and Aravind Narayan.

Emma Gauntlett, who leads debating at BRGS, said: “*Debating Matters* facilitates students grappling with some of the difficult issues facing society today. The competition format allows for significant interaction with students thinking on their feet whilst having their arguments tested by experts in the field. A fantastic learning experience for all whether as a participator, judge or audience member.”

The winning team on the day after some strong debates was from Hutton Grammar School, the National Champions in 2014/5. We wish them every success in the Final in London in July.

Helping the Homeless through Philanthropy Initiative

Year 9 pupils awarded top prize of £1500 for charity



All Year 9 students participated through their PSICHE work in a competition to raise money for charities of their choice. In a pitch to judges, the competition tests students' oracy skills and persuasive arguments as well as focusing on their commitment to their chosen charity. Both their knowledge and understanding were tested, and pupils were scrutinised on how the money would be spent. The five groups in the final were judged by The Mayor of Rossendale, the Chairman of the BRGS Finance Committee, the Headteacher, Head Boy and Head Girl. With representatives from all the charities concerned watching, tensions were high for all groups involved.

The Soup Kitchen was awarded the first prize of £1,500 with The Raft Foundation awarded £500.

Ella Brierley from the winning team said:

"When we found out we had won, we were amazed. We felt so proud to represent a charity that we had become very passionate about. This experience opened our eyes to the many great charities in our local area and made us grateful for what we have while making us determined to win the valuable money. We believe The Soup Kitchen deserved this chance and the things that this money can fund are unbelievable. We would like to say a massive thanks to all those who made it possible. The funds will make a huge difference to many people's lives."

The team which won the second prize for The Raft Foundation said:

'We learnt a lot from this experience. We enjoyed learning about the many different charities that other teams have represented, and many of us have decided to continue to help our individual charities. It allowed us to develop our communication skills, in particular, along with many other skills. We felt like we were helping out the community and felt extremely happy when we were announced as second place, as we knew that we had done a great thing in helping a great charity. It was very rewarding, not only for the charity but also for us. The final competition was extremely competitive, and you could tell that everyone was driven to win. With so much at stake, and all of the charity's representatives eagerly watching, we were under pressure to win. After all of the groups had been we were sitting on the edge of our seats as we were waiting for the results. We were delighted to come second winning the fantastic sum of £500 for The Raft Foundation.'

Judge and BRGS Governor Peter Terry commented:

"The standard of the presentations was very high and the judges were impressed with the quality of the research carried out by the teams and their understanding of the issues dealt with by the charities. Deciding the winner team is always difficult and this year was no exception. We hope that by taking part in the competition all the students will be encouraged to volunteer, either for their chosen charity or any for another charitable organisation."

Youth Mental Health First Aid Course

Sixteen members of staff from BRGS completed a Youth Mental Health First Aid Certificate. Teachers and support staff undertook a comprehensive programme focusing on young people's mental health: introducing people to risk factors and warning signs of mental health and teaching participants how to respond appropriately.

The pioneering programme which is internationally recognised, having been adapted to be delivered in 23 countries across the world, has been endorsed at the highest level with First Lady Michelle Obama speaking in March about how the course *"really gives you the skills you need to identify and ultimately help someone in need."* Michelle Obama commented that we need to refocus our efforts on mental health, breaking the silence for those who suffer from these problems and encouraging people to talk openly about mental health.

The Programme helps introduce a five step action plan to help young people get the care needed in their community whilst also supporting them emotionally. The course also looks at how to recognise the signs and symptoms of different types of mental health problems including depression, anxiety and suicide.

One person who participated in the course commented: *"I believe YMHFA has provided me with extra tools to be able to better understand and support young people – something so valuable in my line of work."*

Another colleague believed that it had changed their *"outlook and perception of mental health and well-being in others"* raising confidence to deal with issues such as self-harm, depression and anxiety.

Headmaster Alan Porteous said: *"Our aim is for students to 'enjoy and achieve' whilst at school. To ensure that students do not have any barriers to their learning we need to support them holistically in providing top-quality pastoral care and this excellent course effectively raises awareness and understanding of mental health issues."*

YMHFA Instructor Siobhan Robinson added: *"Being able to recognise and help a young person with mental ill health is so important, and raising awareness around mental health issues will reduce the stigma associated with them. This course gives people the tools to support and comfort struggling young people and could help to save a young person's life, prevent problems from becoming worse and promote good recovery."*

Sports Reports

- The UK Street Cheer Team achieved Gold in Croatia in Summer 2015 and are the new European Champions. They achieved Silver in the Stunting Category in the Open Championships. The teams featured three BRGS students: Leah Flatman, Aurora Fairbank and Eva Wroe. Eva is pictured right with her trophies.
- Richard Holt in Year 11 came 4th in the English Ski Mogul Championships in May 2015 and then in September 2015 was 8th in the European Championships, finishing 3rd British Male.



Students' Sporting Successes

Tennis Tournament Champion

Year 7 Ema Lodererova won the North of England Championships Girls' Tennis Under 12 Tournament at the end of March and in the Nationals in Nottingham she was ranked in the top 16. A name to watch for the future!

Sporty sisters excel in climbing and cycling



Maisy and Tilly Vasic have been celebrating their achievements in cycling and climbing respectively.

Maisy competed over the first weekend in April in the Youth Tour of Scotland four stage race for U16 cyclists. Maisy as an U14 went as part of SportCity Velo Team wearing green and white in the photos. Prior to a crash on stage three she was 15th out of the 54 riders and by the time she had untangled herself post-crash she had lost the lead group and dropped down to 29th. The shorter stage four was a 10 lap circuit race (21km) with a steep hill (20%) and Maisy finished in the lead group at 18th despite suffering a sore back. Overall she came 25th which is an amazing result for an U14 cyclist!

At the end of April, Maisy consolidated her cycling success by winning the North West Championship and then coming second at the Northern Omnium Round One at the Velodrome in Manchester. Her efforts over the season to date have culminated in her being the top ranked British cyclist in her age category.

Younger sister Tilly (Year 7) is pictured below holding a trophy for coming second in the U13 Girls' NW Region Climbing Competition. Tilly came 17th in the national competition, climbing some extremely tough routes. The team from the North West performed exceptionally well, coming second to the team from London.

We wish the girls every success in their sporting endeavours.



Gold Award Winners

Four ex BRGS pupils were amongst the 84 participants from the North of England who collected their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award in October 2015 in the Picture Gallery at St James's Palace.

Anna and her older sister Elizabeth Ainsworth, Saumitra Mishra and Daniel Gray met with the HRH The Earl of Wessex who chatted with the participants whilst proud parents looked on.

David Hempleman-Adams OBE, Trustee of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Adventurer and Gold Award Holder, presented the certificates on behalf of HRH The Earl of Wessex.

David told the Gold Award holders: *"The hardest and scariest thing I've ever done was my Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award. It was the first time I left home, the first time I shared a tent, the first time I had to cook for myself and the first time I saw bright stars in the night sky ... and then I carried on doing it for the rest of my life."*

From left to right: Daniel Gray, Libby Ainsworth, Saumitra Mishra and Anna Ainsworth.



Obituaries

We were saddened to learn of the following since publication of our last newsletter:

Jessie Lunt née Hewitt died on the 7th January 2015 aged 93 years old. She was the widow of Samuel Lunt of Welwyn Garden City. Both were from Rossendale and were pupils together at BRGS in the 1930s. She leaves behind three sons (David, Michael and Peter), seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Robert Arthur Lowthian (1931-1936) died suddenly on the 6th January 2015 aged 94. He worked locally before war service in the RAF, serving in England and India. Bob joined the Civil Service on demobilisation and spent his working life in the Inland Revenue based in Walsall, Aberdeen, East Kilbride and London. He had a long retirement in Hertfordshire and Cambridge where a neighbour described him as 'the happiest and most contented man she had ever met in her life'. He remained in touch with school friends throughout his long life, receiving Christmas greetings from Jessie Lunt (named above) and the widow of another fellow classmate, Geoff Waterson. Bob leaves a widow, Eileen, and two children, Peter and Mary.

Marion Hope née Whittaker (1934 – 1941) died peacefully in December 2014 aged 91, in a nursing home in Dunblane, Scotland. At BRGS, Marion excelled academically, was a keen hockey player, held the girls' long-jump record and was head-girl for her final two years at the school. After BRGS, she studied PPE at St Hugh's College, Oxford for two years, before joining the army as a Wren and working at Bletchley on code-breaking. After the war, she returned to her studies at Oxford, where she met her future husband, a young don, Ronald Hope. Ronald became director of the Marine Society, a charitable educational body for merchant seamen, and they moved to London. As well as bringing up their two children, Marion worked for a time as a primary school teacher and later became director of Ship Adoption, an organisation promoting links between schools and merchant ships. After their retirement, the couple moved to Scotland to help look after their grandchildren, and they celebrated 66 years of marriage before their deaths in 2014. They are survived by a daughter and son and six grandchildren.

BRGS Geography and Biology Teacher (1948 – 1982) **Eric Ward** died on the 11th February 2015 aged 95 years. Eric was part of the Royal Navy Arctic convoy team which battled sub-zero conditions under constant threat of attack from German U-Boats and fighter planes during the Second World War. Eric was awarded the Arctic Star in 2013 (one of only 200 people awarded the retrospective medal) in recognition of his efforts to tackle a treacherous expedition to take supplies to the Allied Forces in northern Russia during the war. Eric was a keen walker, artist and gardener, founding the popular BRGS Bird Watching Society. He leaves daughters Heather and Helen, son Simon, seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.



Peter Teal (1939-1946) died on Good Friday 2015 of pneumonia in Blackburn Royal Hospital. A lively member of Upper VI Science, he went on to do National Service in the army before gaining a BSC degree from Manchester College of Technology. His working life was spent as an industrial chemist at Wilkinsons' Clay and Brick Works in Elland, Yorkshire, where he was a member of the Round Table. His retirement was spent in Cloughfold in his childhood home. He leaves a sister, Marion, and her family in Canada, and a cousin Audrie in Blackpool, both former BRGS students.

Ernest Tomlinson died in June 2015 at the age of 90. He was a prolific composer, noted by the singer and broadcaster Catherine Bott as having "exceptional technical skills allied to



a rare gift for melody." Ernest founded the Library of Light Orchestral Music and came from a musical family with his father, Fred, the founding conductor of a local male voice choir, and Ernest's younger brother founding the Fred Tomlinson Singers (who featured in *The Two Ronnies* and *Monty Python* television series). When he was nine, Ernest joined the Manchester Cathedral Choir School where he was Head Boy in 1939. He then studied at BRGS where he started an orchestra and played piano duets in assembly with his brother. Subsequently, he went on to study organ, piano and clarinet at the Royal Manchester College of Music (now the

Royal Northern College of Music) until he was conscripted into the RAF in 1943. Ernest was awarded an MBE in 2012 and was recognised by his music business peers with two Ivor Novello awards. He was also a keen sportsman, playing rugby union for Saracens and club cricket in Kent and Lancashire.

Trevor Nuttall, who played an important part in the regeneration of Leeds in the 1980s and 1990s, has died at the age of 78. After BRGS, he studied at the London School of Economics and Leeds University before teaching at Leeds Grammar School, King Edward VII School, Sheffield, and Preston University. He was Director of the Yorkshire and Humber Development Agency (latterly became known as Yorkshire Forward) between 1981 and 1985 and was successful in attracting new investment from the USA, Japan and Hong Kong. From 1985 to 1995 he was head of the UK grants and inward investment practice at accountants Arthur Andersen and in 1996 he became the Chief Executive of the Leeds Financial Services Initiative which co-ordinates the efforts of various professionals to put Leeds firmly on the map as a financial services centre of excellence in the UK. From 1999 to 2001 he was Chief Executive of the Leeds Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Trevor was known for his charitable work as Chairman of the Groundwork Trust and co-founder and Trustee of Emmaus Leeds for homeless people. He was a well-known county tennis player and a good football player: he recalled playing for Leeds University against the Leeds United second team and marking unsuccessfully a confident 16 year old, so he put in a tackle that knocked the youngster into the air – the player was Billy Bremner. Trevor married Geraldine in 1961 and has two daughters and a son.

Dr John Metcalfe was born in Pontefract in 1928 but moved to Bacup in 1931 when his father was appointed Borough Electrical Engineer. They lived in a council house overlooking the cricket field. John won a scholarship to BRGS where he was Captain of Football (1944-45), Captain of Cricket (1945), House Captain (1944 – 45) and played for Lancashire Schools' F.A. In 1945 he played with Rossendale United and Bacup Cricket Club 1st XI and went on to Leeds Medical School, coinciding with his father's move to Morley. At Leeds he was President of the Students' Council from 1949 – 1951 and was appointed Demonstrator in Anatomy in 1953 before entering National Service in the

RAF. At RAF Leeming and Stradishall he was promoted to Squadron Leader. In April 1954 he was married to Betty Powell, a theatre sister who only a few weeks later experienced symptoms of MS. In 1955 John was offered a partnership at a General Practice in Otley and had two children, Jane and Rob. In 1991 he retired and became an enthusiastic walker and swimmer, celebrating his 80th birthday by leading a group on a favourite 12 miler and swimming a weekly mile. Before his death he wrote: "I count myself a very lucky chap to have pursued a fulfilling if undistinguished medical career in a lovely area, and even luckier to have enjoyed a long and happy marriage, a close and loving family and pride in the achievements of Jane and Rob and our four grandchildren."

John Cannell Harrison MBE was a Vice President of the RNLi who passed away at the age of 93 in August 2014. John had a career spanning almost 30 years at Shoreham Port during which time he became General Manager of the port authority. He also held the voluntary role of secretary of the Shoreham lifeboat from 1956 until 1981. As well as being deeply committed to the RNLi he was also a past president and treasurer of Shoreham and Southwick Rotary Club. He is survived by his wife Marion, their four children Rosemary, Geoffrey, Pamela and Lucy, and their four grandchildren.

Brian Frankland, one of Lancashire's best known theatrical performers died at the age of 84 after a battle with cancer. He took the leading role in many productions of Preston, Chorley and Blackburn musical comedy and drama societies.



In 1999 he was crowned the national winner of the Whitbread Senior Citizens' Talent Contest at Southport Theatre. After BRGS, Brian studied at Leeds University where he played for their football team as well as completed his degree and postgraduate studies. Following a two-year spell as a professional singer and appearing on Opportunity Knocks he started work as an agricultural advisor before setting up his own business, Frankland Feeds. His involvement in the agricultural world led to him becoming President of the Garstang Show. He was also a keen sportsman taking on the Three Peaks Challenge and various bike rides to raise money for Derian House Children's Hospice. He leaves his wife Shirley, son Mark, and two grandchildren.

Who? What? Where? When?

Former biology teacher Rodney Brackstone believes that the photo of the girls' netball team features Pamela Barnes as Goal Attack. Yvonne Speak and Gillian Haworth kindly got in touch having recognised separately the Wing Attack as Wendy Porter, Centre as Tracy McClennan and Goal Defence as Katherine Lancaster.



If you can identify anyone in the gym team or from the photo of teachers in the 'male staff room' then please do get in touch with ecg@brgs.org.uk.



BRGS Men's Staff Room

Please do get in touch at ecg@brgs.org.uk if you spot anyone you recognise in this edition's photo.

Speech Night Speakers

Our Junior and Senior Speech Night speakers shared their messages for success with GCSE and A level certificate recipients and prize-winners.

Former student Ken Masser, Director of Rossendale Leisure Trust, returned to BRGS with his wife, Robyn, to deliver an inspirational and motivational speech at Junior Speech Night, and Martin Bissett, Founder of the Upward Spiral Partnership and a Practice Growth and Development Implementer for the Accounting Profession delivered an equally motivational speech in December at our Senior Speech Night.



Message Board

- John 'Jack' Kidd and Betty Kidd née Holt celebrated their Diamond Wedding anniversary (60 years) in March 2015. They joined BRGS on the same day in 1940 and were in the same class until they left in 1947. Betty took a medical degree at Cambridge and St. Mary's London whilst John took an MSc at Manchester and a PhD at Cambridge. They eventually married in 1955 at the Unitarian Chapel in Rawtenstall. They have two children and five grandchildren. Many congratulations!
- Congratulations to Dominic Stephen Walton who represented England in the 800 metres on the 31st January in Bratislava and came second. Dominic was selected for the British Championships finishing in fourth place in February 2016.

- Continuing the sporting theme, Alex Willis represented Great Britain at the ETU Long Distance Triathlon European Championships (colloquially known as an Iron Man competition) for the 24 and under age group which he won!



- Current student Hannah Goldswain represented England at the World Schools' Orienteering Championships in Turkey where her team was awarded a Silver Medal.
- Former BRGS chemistry teacher Bert Beaumont is now a basketball coach in Barnsley and he was awarded the BBC Get Inspired Unsung Hero Award for Yorkshire. In his mid-70s he has coached the sport for nearly 50 years!
- Former student Lyndsey Spiers (1996-2003) was Assistant Cruise Director on a cruise ship for a few years and has just published *Diary of a Cruise Ship Entertainer* which is available through Amazon at <http://amzn.to/1oDb3A7>. Her next book will focus on her climbing Kilimanjaro in August as she leads a team of 15 students from

the University of Leicester to raise money for Childreach International. If you would like to support her fundraising efforts, please go to <http://bit.ly/2193wu1>

- Joe Wallwork (left BRGS in 2012) is currently in his final year of an undergraduate MMath (Hons) degree in Mathematics at the University of Manchester but has just been offered a place at the Mathematics of Planet Earth Centre for doctoral training, shared by Imperial College London and the University of Reading. The central aim of the programme is to apply mathematical knowledge to the enormous problem posed by climate change. We wish Joe well with his further studies.
- Degree congratulations to Marie Hartley who graduated from Edge Hill University with a first in her Mathematics teaching degree and is working as a maths teacher at Calder High School. Marie has also completed her Queen's Guide Award since leaving BRGS.
- Elliot Fosong (Class of 2015) has been recognised as an engineering rising star and has been awarded a Diamond Jubilee Scholarship. Elliot has received the scholarship from the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) and is one of an elite set of engineering students who have been awarded the prestigious award as the IET and its partners invest £3 million in the UK's up and coming engineering talent over the next five years to tackle the lack of engineers.
- The piece in the last newsletter requesting your favourite poems and books inspired Marion Beck née Teal to get in touch regarding her memory of BRGS Sixth Form in the late 1940s when the teacher Mrs Ebdon introduced verse-speaking as part of the annual school concert, whereby a dozen students were expected to recite verse in unison, with a bit of mime thrown in occasionally for good measure. The selection would generally include a psalm, a humorous piece and a serious poem. The same article also encouraged Muriel Holden to write, who spoke of how the first lines of Masefield's 'Sea Fever' remain with her since studying the poem at BRGS.

Message Board

- Wedding news: former students Dayne Powell and Kirsty Preston married in July 2014. Kirsty briefly taught science at BRGS in 2012. Dayne and Kirsty were in different years at school but finally got together in 2012. The wedding was attended by over 30 former BRGS students, with Danny Shellard acting as best man, 'Mickle', Andrew Foster and 'Strange James' as ushers along with Jenna Powell as bridesmaid.
- Kirsty Knight and Chris Priestley were also former students before going on to study at the University of Liverpool (Kirsty studied French and Chris read Chemistry). They met at BRGS in 2004 and got married on the 18th October 2014, which was their ten year anniversary. They celebrated their wedding at Oakfield Manor inside Chester Zoo.
- Congratulations to Lynda Taylor (former BRGS Deputy Head) who is now Dr Lynda Taylor with her thesis focusing on The Cultural Significance of Elves in Northern European Balladry at the University of Leeds, School of English.
- Andrew D Walsh who left BRGS in 2009 has qualified as a medical doctor and is currently working at Lancaster Royal Infirmary. He studied medicine at the University of Liverpool gaining his MBChB degree in July 2014.
- John Holland (1999-2006) completed his doctorate in astronomy at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich in June 2015.
- Phil Walmsley (class of 1992) has been awarded a Masters in Physics.
- Joseph Jackson is now working at Laing as a Design Consultant after being sponsored by the company during University. He graduated from the University of Sheffield with a First Class Honours degree in Structural and Civil Engineering.
- Former student Georgina Brown is currently studying at LAMDA, one of the top five drama schools in the country. LAMDA attracts around 10,000 applicants for approximately 20 places. Another former student Casey-Leigh Bull has been awarded a first in her Drama and Theatre Arts degree. Watch this space!
- Former student Ben Langridge was a finalist in BBC2 Gareth Malone's 'Naked Choir' with Glasgow-based a capella group Choral Stimulation. Ben is a member of the multi-award winning choir which was formed at Glasgow University in 2008 and which Ben joined in 2009 when he started studying history at Glasgow. Six years later and after his masters degree, he is still singing. You can find out more about Choral Stimulation on their website at choralstimulation.wordpress.com/
- Four classmates recently celebrated their 60th birthdays on the *Oriana* visiting Amsterdam and Bruges. Pictured left to right are Barbara Hodgins, Janet Whipp, Barbara Ratcliffe and Jane Whittaker.



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Glen Road, Waterfoot,
Rossendale,
Lancashire BB4 7BJ

T: 01706 234 500
E: enquiries@brgs.org.uk
W: www.brgs.org.uk

Sixth Form:
T: 01706 233 400
E: sixthform@brgs.org.uk