

Richian
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



Term 1 Newsletter, 2017



A Message From the Head of Alumni Relations



Dear Alumni,

I hope that you and your families enjoyed a lovely Christmas and that those New Year resolutions are still intact and making a difference!

Our new Year 7s have settled in very well, helped by the traditional 3- day residential to Stratford at the start of the Autumn term, as have our Y12 students who have joined us from other schools in the county and beyond. Mr Williams thinks that his U12 A team, who beat Warwick earlier in the season, is probably the best he has had, praise indeed!

We were delighted to hear that our most recent GCSE results were the best in the county based on a range of different criteria and that Y13 student, Peter Methley, had won Cambridge University's highly prestigious Roentgenium Award for his outstanding performance in their Chemistry Challenge Examination aimed at Sixth Form students.

Brexit doesn't seem to have had an adverse effect on foreign travel here at Rich's; our Y13 Geologists were in Spain over the October half term and in November a large group of Year 9s were in Belgium and Northern France on the annual Battlefields' Trip. In addition, our Y10 Spanish students have been with their exchange partners and closer to home, the Art department were in residence in Bristol and our Y12 Geographers and Geologists have been on fieldtrips to Devon.

Our 1st XV, under the captaincy of Conor Gresty, have had an excellent season so far, the highlights being the outstanding wins away against four of the top schoolboy sides in England and Wales – Millfield, Monmouth, RGS High Wycombe and Llandovery College!

We were delighted in early January to discover that 6 Year 13 students had received conditional offers at Oxford and Cambridge for 2017-18. We are most grateful for the support of members of the Alumni who gave their time to come in and provide valuable practice interviews. Thank you!

The 1666 Club continues to grow and we now have 43 members. One of the benefits of being a member is that your name is entered in a Prize Draw, the prize being a pair of tickets to watch England in the Six Nations at Twickenham.

There are a number of events coming up to which you are warmly invited. Please come along if you can, it would be great to see you.

Garde Ta Foy,

Chris Carter

Deputy Head and OR

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Since the last newsletter we have had 7 more sign ups to the 1666 club, making it 46 in total, generating £2825. If you would like to become a member and receive the Richian Magazine twice a year for an annual contribution of £16.66, please visit our [website](http://www.strschool.co.uk/alumni/1666club).

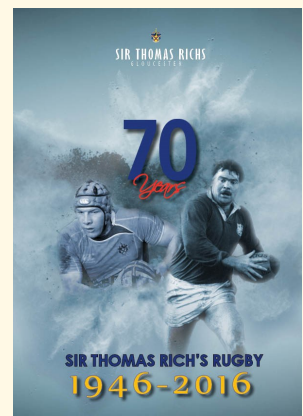
www.strschool.co.uk/alumni/1666club

All members of the 1666 Club go into a prize draw, the prize each year being a pair of tickets to watch England in the Six Nations at Twickenham. This year's winner is Ciaran Conway [OR 1999-2006] who is just finishing his GP training in Bath. Ciaran is married to another OR, Susannah [nee Champion] and is one of 3 brothers who all came to Rich's, the other 2 being Joe and Ben.

If you would like to become a 1666 Club member, please contact Vicki Lynn.

Memorabilia

We have a variety of merchandise available to remember your time at Rich's, including mugs, cufflinks, anniversary tie, and more. Visit our [website](http://www.strschool.co.uk/alumni/1666club) to purchase stock online.



Sport

Swimming Champions

Sir Thomas Rich's won the Gloucester District Boy's Swimming Championships for the eleventh consecutive year. The Senior girls team also performed well in the event. In the ESSA Regional Round held at Millfield School, the Junior Boys finished 11th in the Medley Relay, the Intermediate Boys finished 12th in the Freestyle Relay, the Senior Boys finished 15th in the Medley Relay and the Senior Girls came 24th also in the Medley Relay.

Cross Country Success

The Senior Boys, Senior Girls, Intermediate Boys and Junior Boys all won their sections in the Gloucester District Cross Country Championships. The Minor Boys finished second. The Junior and Intermediate Boys teams also competed well in the ESAA Championships.

Chess – National School's Knockout Qualification

Our 1st team won the regional heat of this year's ECF National School's Competition convincingly beating Academy (Somerset), QEH (Bristol), hosts Bristol Grammar School and Hereford Cathedral School.

In the North Gloucestershire (adult) League we are currently top of Division 2, with 4 wins and a draw from our first 5 matches, having beaten both Cirencester 1st team and Gloucester 2nd team. This is the highest league position the school has achieved in recent memory.

Rugby

The 1st XV have had another excellent season so far, reaching the Quarter Final stage of the Nat West Cup for only the second time and going down 28-13 in a close fought game away to a powerful Bromsgrove side. They have won 15 and drawn 1 of the 20 games played so far, the highlights being the excellent victories over Northampton School for Boys, St Peter's and RGS High Wycombe in the Cup, King's School Worcester, Pate's, Monmouth away for the first time and another outstanding performance away against Millfield.

The U15s are also progressing nicely in the Nat West Plate competition. Their impressive away win over St Bede's in Bristol and excellent victory at home in the last 16 match against Magdalen School, Oxford who they beat to set up a quarter final match away against Bishop Vesey's Grammar School in Sutton Coldfield.

Football

The 1st X1 Football side have made a most impressive start to the season beating Beaufort away 6-1.

Netball

Girls netball continues to expand and we now have 3 teams. The teams have begun their seasons well with excellent victories over the High School for Girls [Denmark!], Ribston, Bournside and Pates.

Hockey

Hockey also continues to grow and the U15s gained a superb win [5-1] against Rendcomb College in January.

Individual Achievements

Myles Wilson (Year 11) won the U16 British title in the 500m event at the British Indoor Rowing Championship at the Lee Valley Velodrome in December

Robbie Hicks (Year 9) took part in the UK Rubik's Cube Championship held in Bristol. Robbie competed in the 3x3x3 cube event and achieved his personal best competition time of 12.30 seconds. This has given him a UK ranking in the top 50.

James Chantler (Year 12) is the British Triathlon Youth Champion.

Noah Smerdon (Year 11) played for Wolverhampton Wanderers Academy against the Republic of Ireland U17s.

Former Pupil Sam Underhill Signs for Bath Rugby Club



Former pupil Sam Underhill is set to leave the Ospreys at the end of this season to join Aviva Premiership outfit Bath. Switching to the Rec will make Sam eligible to be selected by England.

Underhill captained England at U18s level and was on the books of Gloucester as a teenager, making his debut for the Cherry & Whites at 17. But then he moved to Wales to study economics at Cardiff University and joined the Ospreys in 2015. He made his regional debut at the beginning of last season and rapidly caught the eye with his dynamic carrying, his tenacious defence and his work over the ball.

Along with playing rugby Sam aims to complete his final year of his degree. We wish him well!

Academic Success

Exam Results

Whilst this summer's GCSE results were impressive for Gloucestershire as a whole, we are delighted that STRS fills the top slot with the best results in the county. It is the only school in Gloucestershire with 100% of its pupils gaining a grade C or better in Maths and English.

Alongside this impressive achievement, 84% of pupils achieved the crucial English Baccalaureate, where pupils need to achieve a grade C or above across a range of subjects, including English, Maths and Science. STRS also out-performed all other Gloucestershire Grammar Schools with a Progress 8 measure of 0.53. This new data tracks pupils' progress from Key Stage 2 through to Key Stage 4, and is an additional measure of the added value schools are giving to pupils' achievement.

Source: [Gloucestershire Live Article](#), [Government DfE Data](#)

GCSE Students achieved a minimum of six GCSEs at Grade C and above, the average being 9.9. 74% of entries gained grades A and A*. 95 students each gained five or more passes at grades A and A*, 61 each gained ten or more passes all at a grades A and A*.

AS Students achieved a pass rate of 98%. 69% of entries were at grades A and B; 85% were grades A to C. 70% of students each gained at least one grade A pass, 52% each gained two or more grade A passes, including 34 who each gained four or five A grades.

A2 Students achieved a pass rate of 99.8%. The average number of 'A' Levels gained per candidate was 3.6. 52% of entries passed at grades A and A*; 80% of entries were passed at grades A*, A and B; 94% were grades A* to C.

Sunday Times List Ranks STRS in Top 10 Secondary Schools

Along with our fantastic examination results we are delighted to hear that Sir Thomas Rich's has been ranked as the fourth best secondary school in the Southwest in The Sunday Times Parent Power list. The rankings are based on the percentage of examination entries gaining A* to B grades at A Level and GCSE in this summer's examinations. Other schools in Gloucestershire have also done well, with the High School for Girls ranked sixth and Stroud High School ranked eighth. Our top four position reflects our continuing focus on high quality teaching and learning, and the ethos of outstanding achievement in our school community.

Oxford and Cambridge Success

6 Y13 students have received conditional offers at Oxford and Cambridge for 2017-18:

Oxford: Sam Jones, St Anne's, History

Cambridge: Tim Edwards, Selwyn, Law; Cameron Elliot, Churchill, Engineering; Joe Jollans, Jesus, Medicine; Vasthi Karshian (2014 Leaver), Corpus Christi, English; Peter Methley, Selwyn, Natural Sciences

Events

Speech Night September 2016

The Annual Awards ceremony and Speech Night this year was held on Friday 23rd September. Staff, current and past pupils, parents and honoured guests gathered in the main hall to celebrate the wonderful achievements of the academic year 2015-16.

The Brass band provided its usual stirring accompaniment to the hymn, Tommy Psalm and National Anthem. Guests were this year also entertained by Jacob Barns ('cello) and Philip Haynes (piano), two very accomplished musicians who were members of last year's Upper Sixth. We learnt of Jacob's successes since leaving Rich's, performing as principal cellist for the opening piece of The Last Night of the Proms earlier in September, and taking up his place at the prestigious Royal Northern College of Music.

Our new Chair of Governors, Mr R Ogle, introduced the evening's order of events, handing over to Mr Matthew Morgan, Headmaster, for his traditional report on the previous year's achievements. It was a particular pleasure to welcome Mr Anthony Jarvis as Guest of Honour, a former Rich's Headmaster from 1990-1994. He distributed prizes with great warmth, addressing individual comments to all the pupils who came forward to receive their books. His speech focused on three important features of school life: the importance of people in any community; of looking beyond examination results for a sense of achievement, and recognising different types of intelligence in young people. He also entertained us with many amusing anecdotes from his days as a Headmaster.

This year's new School Captains, Emma Folkard and William Barradell-Black, opened and closed proceedings with words of thanks to Mr Jarvis, and the current Bluecoat Boy, Blake Birch, presented a gift as a token of our thanks.



Careers

At Rich's we run a comprehensive programme of careers education, advice and guidance where we hope to open the eyes of our pupils to the possibilities of different careers and give them the opportunity to find out more. Pupils are invited to individual interviews with staff to discuss their next steps. Pupils in Year 12 and 13 are given extensive guidance about their possible next steps (including university applications and other post 18 options) by our staff involved with careers.

Throughout the year a selection of talks on a variety of careers are offered to students. Peter Lloyd (Head of Careers) would be pleased to hear from anyone who would be prepared to come and speak. This is always a great opportunity for students to learn and ask questions about a career that may suit them in the future.

Last year's careers fayre was a great success—thank you to the 8 Old Richians who came along to offer their expertise. This year's Careers Fayre will be held on Friday 24 March, starting at approximately 9.00am and ending at 2.00pm. If you would like to offer your expertise on this morning please get in touch with Vicki Lynn vn@strs.or.uk.



As I'm sure many of us feel I believe at Tommies I received a great education and some very useful advice that has informed me about my future. I often look for opportunities to give back to the school in any way possible.

Last year I was invited to a careers day for students from a range of years. It was a great opportunity to impart detailed employment and university information to students in the upper years, and some aspirational experience to some of the younger experience. It was brilliant to see several other recent alumni represented at the event.

I believe that within the Alumni of Tommies we have a wealth of knowledge and experience. Opportunities like this are a great way for us to make Tommies an even greater place for future generations. The event was well organised and co-ordinated and I believe is a great addition to the school calendar and the type of event that we should support even more heavily as an alumni community going forward.

Edmund Jones [2007-14]

John Price

Former Pupil 1968-75



I left STRS in 1975 and had almost no contact with the school until last year. Then, Tommies invited me to participate in a careers day.

It was a strange experience being back in that hall, which had scarcely changed in forty years. So many memories came flooding back: of food initially - the hall used to be the canteen. I could conjure up the taste of spam fritters, spotted dick, 'hungarian goulash' (the same as the 'Yorkshire hotpot' with some tomato purée added). I remembered the dinner ladies, who said 'er' not 'she', and JAS (J. Anthony Stocks, Headmaster, 1961-1974), whose mere appearance in the doorway by the stage, caused a wave of silence to descend on our blustering self-confidence, our ritual assassination of our teachers and our crude evaluation of Ribston girls.

We were often well taught and sometimes challenged by a generation of teachers who had experienced the War or at least its aftermath. Some were strong academics and enjoyed teaching bright boys - they tried to open a few doors in our small town, provincial minds. (Just one or two read to us monotonously from the textbook or turned up very late to lessons!) We thought ourselves superior and carried thin volumes - *L'Etranger*, *Heart of Darkness*, *the Waste Land* – which poked out of our blazer pockets for effect. Those men – and they were mostly men - believed in the mission of grammar schools: as well as teaching us and torturing me on the rugby field, music masters, classicists, geographers marched us up Pen-y-Fan at weekends or even in their holidays... perhaps to take our minds off sex.

STRS was not permitted to interfere with our social lives. We had an existence outside school and that was healthy. Gloucester was then a thriving city with many lively pubs and a sense of history and hope. We were in town every weekend. We drank too much until we were 18 when it became legal. We had friends in the other grammar schools and Kings through the Five Schools Association. Tommies gave us optimism, stability, social confidence, academic challenge and a sense of personal worth. It failed to challenge our complacency – it may even have nurtured it - and later we realised how little we had read. I remember one exceptional teacher, who was greatly at odds with the ethos of the school, railing at the superficiality of our reading and our failure to understand the competition we faced in the race for university places. He was right, but we thought him quite mad at the time. But my lasting memory of the school...? Being very, very happy.

So why reconnect with Tommies now? I am still trying to work this out. The school - and perhaps all good schools do this - had an indelible influence on me, for which I am very grateful, although I struggled with it for years. The school now wants a closer relationship with its old boys (and girls), not just for financial reasons, although that is some of it, but because it sees this relationship as an intrinsic part of its present identity. My sense is that that relationship will take unexpected turns.

I have no real interest in nostalgia (or rugby) and I am not looking for things to do. We have all moved on, lead full lives and look forward, not back, but Tommies was an immeasurably rich chapter in my life as I am sure it was in that of many of my contemporaries. I should like to see the school prosper and excel in all that it does. That's a bit of a cliché. I mean I should like to see it reinvent itself constantly and ensure that its graduates have the intellectual edge, confidence and knowledge to contribute in whatever field they choose. In the seventies we were insufficiently stretched. Of course any relationship between a school and its former pupils is primarily about people and is lived now, not ten, twenty, thirty or forty years ago. Maybe the school can be part of our present as well as our past to its and our benefit. That relationship has to be dynamic and, it's worth saying, mutually beneficial.

If you would like to comment on the ideas expressed in this article by John Price (1968-1975) the school would be fascinated to hear from you as it develops its ideas about its relationship with old Richians. Email alumni@strs.org.uk.

School Production—'You Can't Take it With You'



Audiences were treated to an outstanding school production at the end of November. The American play, 'You Can't Take it With You' was a delightful mix of slapstick, romance, subtle humour and perhaps more enduring moral messages about the right way to live life. The cast was a true ensemble, with every member giving an impressive and, at time, hilarious performance. For Head of Drama, Sarah Jones, and her team it was a great triumph.



Carol Services

The 2 carol services at St Catharine's and Longlevens once again brought the Autumn term to a wonderful conclusion. The traditional festival of nine lessons and carols included a carol 'Come to Bethlehem' written by Old Richian, Alan Viner, who also accompanied the Choir on the organ.

Forthcoming Events

There are a number of social events coming up this year to which you are warmly invited:

- **South Africa Tour Quiz and Pudding Night, School Hall** – Friday 3rd February at 7.30. [To purchase a ticket, click here](#)
- **Careers Fayre**, Friday 24 March, starting at approximately 9.00am and ending at 2.00pm. *If you would like to offer your expertise on this morning please get in touch with Vicki Lynn vn@strs.or.uk.*
- **Clairvoyant Evening, School Hall**, Saturday 1 April at 7.30pm. *In aid of the South Africa Rugby Tour.* For tickets please contact Chris Carter cdac@strs.org.uk.
- **Wine Tasting Evening, Sixth Form Centre**—Friday 5 May. *In aid of the South Africa Rugby Tour.* For tickets please contact Chris Carter cdac@strs.org.uk.
- **2016 Leavers' Reunion (BBQ & Drinks)** Friday 30th June- 5-8pm. This is a great opportunity for you to catch up with former staff and peers, please get your [free ticket here](#).
- **1st XI Cricket Match V MCC; Including a Tour of the School and Refreshments** – Wednesday 5th July 10am-6pm. If you would like to take this opportunity to watch a fantastic game of cricket and have a look around the School, please [get your free ticket here](#).
- **1st XI Cricket Match V Gloucester Gypsies; Including a Tour of the School and Refreshments** – Tuesday 11th July 10am-6pm. If you cannot make the MCC match here is another opportunity for you to watch a fantastic game of cricket and have a look around the School, please [get your free ticket here](#).

Reunions

This year we would like to focus on organising some successful reunions to provide you with the opportunity to come and visit the School, catch up with old friends and former teachers. We can be flexible in with dates and will help out with the organisation; all we need from you is a helping hand to get people together to make it a success.

Dr Jonathon Lowe (2000-7) is planning to hold a 10 Year Reunion in the summer here at School, so any of you who left in 2007 and would like to meet up with old friends please get in contact with Vicki Lynn; vn@strs.org.uk.

We would, of course, be very happy to help organise reunions for other years so please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Minibus Sponsorship

One way that Alumni can help financially is by sponsoring a particular aspect of the School; one such example is Minibus Sponsorship. With the ever-expanding extra-curricular provision here, there is, of course, an increasing demand for minibus transport. We now have 4 minibuses but 2 are on their 'last wheels', so we need to exchange them for newer models. The PA, who have already donated one of our best buses, are planning to help finance another but we still need to raise extra funds for an additional new bus. Sponsorship involves having your company logo printed either on the side or back of each of the 4 buses [see photographs below]. There are 2 sizes – 30cm x 15 cm for £300 for 2 years, and 45cm x 30cm for £450 for 2 years. Our minibuses travel all over the county, country and beyond so your company would get plenty of exposure. If you are interested in this or finding out about other forms of sponsorship please contact Vicki Lynn, vn@strs.org.uk: 01452 338400 or Chris Carter, cdac@strs.org.uk.



In Memoriam

We were very saddened to hear about the sudden death of John Holdaway who gave great service to Rich's as Head of Maths for many years and as Headmaster in 1990. John was a lovely man and will be sadly missed by the whole School community.

Old Richian News

The establishment of the 'Sir Thomas Rich's Alumni Association' has reconnected many of our past pupils with the school as it stands today. Newsletters and communications are always warmly received as are individuals wishing to visit the School for a tour of our facilities.

We are grateful to those who have brought in photographs for our archives, and even 'old school' blazers, caps and scarves. Former pupil and technology teacher Phil Brown has very kindly offered to work on an online archiving system to allow quick searches for photographs. All of his hard work will contribute to building a picture of the School's history, a heritage which our pupils, past and present are proud of.

We would like to introduce an OR news page in the next newsletter and would therefore like to encourage you to update us with any news you wish to share. We are interested in any news you may have such as graduating, marriage, children or even a personal success in your career.

Visitors are always welcome and we hope that more contacts are re-established over the coming year. Please contact Vicki Lynn, vn@strs.org.uk if you have any news you wish to share or would like to discuss organising an event or reunion.