



January 2017

Dear Parents and Carers

January always seems a long month and as we reach the end it is wonderful to see the snowdrops out in force around the chapel and the lighter evenings and mornings. Spring must surely be approaching! Our young people are very much hoping that the first lambs will arrive before the half term break.

We celebrated the start of term with our annual Awards Evening, one of the highlights of the year when we can take time to mark the many achievements of our young people within and beyond the curriculum. Our guest speaker this year was His Honour Judge Robert Altham, whose family has had a long association with Ripley. Judge Robert gave a very amusing and self-deprecating speech which was enjoyed by all and then presented the prizes to pupils in front of a packed audience in the Priory. It was very moving to hear the stories of fortitude and courage behind a number of the awards.

Charity Week: Just before Christmas we had our Years 7 and 8 charity week. The last of the money pledged for year 7 and year 8 charities week has been collected and we have a fantastic total of just a few pounds over £2500! Forms sold hand-made ornaments, baked cakes, ran a half marathon and even got to "gunge" a teacher! Owen raised £300 of sponsorship to run up and down the tower steps. Half of all money raised goes to support the excellent work of our school charity, the Funzi and Bodo Trust. The rest will be divided up by the year groups and sent to charities chosen by the young people. This is a fantastic effort by all forms, and we are already getting our thinking caps on for years 9, 10 and 11 for their charity week during lent. Well done all, and thanks to those at home for your support.

Sport: Even in this cold spell the PE department have been out in force: at the **District Schools' Cross Country** individual medallists were **1st** Gabija Raubaite (7Girls), Erin Moffat (8/9Girls) **2nd** Freddie Pearson (7Boys), Rhys Ashton (8/9Boys). Year 7 Boys and Year 7 Girls won their team competitions. A large number of Ripley pupils will now go on to represent the Lancaster district at the Lancashire Schools' Cross Country Championships. Additionally,

- **Rhys Ashton** (Year 8) won the U13 Lancashire Cross Country Championships.
- The **Boy's swimming** team won the Cutty Sark Trophy at the Bolton School Fastwater Gala ahead of Bolton, Hutton Gr, Sandbach and QEGS, Blackburn.
- **George Drake** (Year 7) represented Blackburn Rovers FC U12s in the Truce Football Tournament in Ypres, Belgium.
- **Senior Rugby:** Our 1st XV have been experiencing one of their most successful years ever! They now have the highest win percentage in Sam's 6 years looking after the team, and this includes some big private and grammar schools who the team had not beaten before. The boys are now one game away from the final of the Lancashire Plate, and play St. Edward's College on the 1st February. This is all a fantastic achievement, especially as the team is predominately made up of year 12; something which bodes well for the future.

Holocaust Memorial Day: As part of the commemorations for the Holocaust Memorial Day on Friday 27th January, four Year 13 students, Francesca Critchley, Jack Corban, Beth Cresswell and Patrycja Supinksa, led Sixth Form assemblies during that week giving an account of their visit to Auschwitz in November as part of the Holocaust Educational Trust 'Lessons from Auschwitz' Project. They spoke movingly of the horrors of the concentration camps, its contemporary relevance and how we benefit from remembering the Holocaust.

Over sixty History and RE Year 13 students took part in the follow-up project on Holocaust Memorial Day itself attending a workshop in school led by Mrs Hanley and some of our History students. The main part



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of the session consisted of a live webcast of a Holocaust survivor in which students were able to engage with survivor testimony. On Wednesday 25th January, Holocaust survivor Stephen Breuer, who has lived in Lancaster for over 50 years, delivered a talk to Ripley sixth form students. Mr Breuer was 6 years old when he was detained in a holding camp in Hungary. His father died in a concentration camp and many of the Jewish residents of his town lost their lives in Auschwitz. His talk was enlightening and inspirational, and reminded students why it is so important to remember the Holocaust and the lessons learned from it.

I am continually amazed at how much our sixth form manage to fit in alongside their demanding studies; a group of 15 has recently completed training with an outside agency in sessions held after school over a number of weeks and have been accredited as Supporters of Young Victims of Crime. Many sixth formers also work with year 7 pupils on extra Maths and English and a number are reading buddies to younger pupils. They make a real difference and I am very appreciative of what they do, particularly given the pressures on them.

On a lighter note Year 13 celebrated the birth of Scottish poet Robert Burns with a ceilidh. Our chaplain led the dancing regaled in his kilt and a great time was had, with many students keen to repeat the experience. It was a positive, energetic, if unusual, way to start the day!

Another busy month for the Music Department: Year 7 (plus 30 Yr 5 pupils from Christ Church Primary School) enjoyed a singing workshop given by a professional conductor from the National Children's Choir. Six pupils took part in a jazz improvisation workshop with members of the National Youth Jazz Orchestra (in collaboration with LRGS and LGGS musicians). We celebrated a first for Choral Evensong when it was led by Adam Hilton (Yr 11) conducting the Chapel Choir and Alex Peters (Yr 12) and Lukas Walls (Yr 8) accompanying on the organ. At the end of the month a jazz quartet from Yr 10 played foyer music at Lancaster University before a sell-out concert given by celebrity violinist, Nicola Benedetti.

Drama: Rehearsals are underway for the National Theatre Connections project. 18 students will be performing a brand new play, 'The Snow Dragons', by Lizzie Nunnery in school on Friday 3rd March 7pm. Tickets are available from school £5/£3. We will be visited by National Theatre director Psyche Stott. The play will also be performed at The Octagon Theatre, Bolton on Friday 24th March.

Security: We are now in the final stages of our security upgrade. The barriers at both entrances have made a significant difference, as has the new car park and the wider drive. At present some high security fencing is being installed at the 3 entrance points on Ashton Road. This should make the site less accessible and safer for pupils.

Thank you all for your support in combating the sickness bugs before Christmas. I am happy to report that we seemed to contain the problem and our attendance last term was over 95% which is pleasing.

We have now had our new website for some months and would greatly appreciate some feedback, positive or negative. Websites are always a work in progress and we shall continue to tweak and improve ours to provide the best service we can for you. Please respond with any comments to portal@ripley.lancs.sch.uk.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liz Nicholls".

Executive Principal