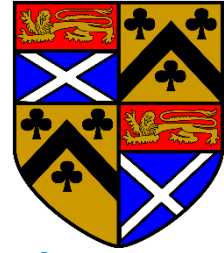


The Rochester Grammar School 2025 Alumni Newsletter



Welcome to the 2025 RGS Alumni Association Newsletter!

Thank you to all of you who have sent email addresses for us to use instead of receiving the newsletter expensively by post. We still need more email addresses please. It may also be possible to access the newsletter via Facebook.

Thank you to those of you who have kept in touch this year; we are always delighted to hear from you and enjoy reading news from alumni and your associates. It is always wonderful to see old friends and classmates reconnect and to hear about and see our school as it is today.

Unfortunately, our 2024 AGM and lunch were cancelled because of lack of numbers, very disappointing. As a result we are trying a different format for 2025.

The AGM will be held at school with refreshments for those who like to attend in person, and via Teams on WEDNESDAY 7th MAY 2025 at 6pm.

Using Teams will mean that more of you will be able to join us.

If you choose this method PLEASE make sure that Ruth (Head's PA) has your email address. ruth.rivers@rochestergrammar.tsat.uk

There is more information on how to RSVP at the end of this newsletter.

A membership form can be found at the end of this newsletter so that you can encourage friends from school days to join us and stay in touch all year round. We of course take the security of your personal data seriously. We securely retain only name, time at RGS and contact details of members for our own purposes. If you wish to update your details or be removed from our mailing list at any point, please contact us on ruth.rivers@rochestergrammar.tsat.uk, at which point we shall delete your details permanently.

This year's newsletter features news and information from 2024–2025 so far, but we are always open to contributions. If you feel inspired while you read this edition, please do not hesitate to contact us with ideas for next year's content. If you have news or photographs which you would like to share, or any other questions, you can contact the committee through all the usual channels and Ann's (Chairman) and Carolyn (Treasurer and Membership Secretary) details are at the end of the newsletter. In addition, you can email us RGSKentAlumni@gmail.com or on twitter [@RGSKentAlumni](https://twitter.com/RGSKentAlumni).

Happy reading!

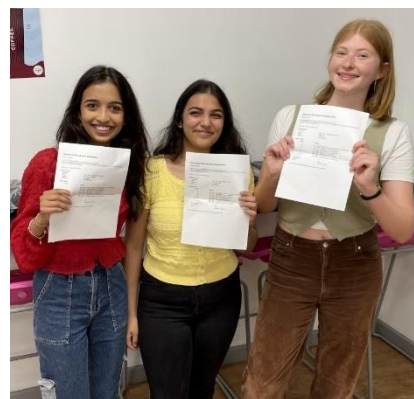
With our warm regards,

The Alumni Association Committee

HEADTEACHER'S REPORT FOR THE ALUMNI

We have had an enjoyable start to the new academic year with the Year 7 students settling in well and embracing the RGS life. One highlight is teaching the new students the school song on their induction day and then hearing them sing it in Singing Assemblies every week.

The school and the Sixth Form Team celebrated another year of outstanding results in July. Our students achieved an average point score of 34 in the International Baccalaureate with nearly 20% of students scoring over 40 points which is the equivalent to A*A*A at A-Level. Students are graded out of 45 for the entire International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. Again this year we had one Year 13 student who scored 45/45 so putting her in the top 0.7% of students globally.



Our GCSE results in the summer were also a cause for celebration. Over 62% of students achieved a grade 7 or higher in their examinations. More than 1 in 3 results were at grade 8 or 9 and 100% of students achieved a pass in both English and Maths. Our students have done incredibly well. We saw particular success in the core subjects with 69% of students achieving a grade 7 and above in Maths, 75% in Biology and Chemistry, 65% in Physics and more than 70% achieving a grade 7 in an English GCSE. A particular well done to two Year 11 students for obtaining a clean sweep of grade 9s in all 11 subjects that they took.

Our impressive GCSE and Sixth Form results contributed to RGS being placed in the top 50 for The Sunday Times' Parent Power League Table of the UK's top schools for 2025. We were proud to be the only secondary school from the Medway towns to be listed in the top 50 schools.

The Real Schools Guide recently unveiled its 2025 league table which ranks the top 200 secondary schools across the UK. The list highlights Rochester Grammar School as the highest-rated secondary school in Medway.

The Real Schools Guide's rankings take into account a range of factors, including GCSE and A-Level results, and provide an invaluable resource for parents and students when choosing the right school.

We are incredibly thankful to all the staff at RGS who work so hard to ensure that our students have the very best opportunities and learning experiences. In addition to our fantastic academic achievements, the pastoral care of our students remains our highest priority and this includes the trips, visits, clubs and events that we arrange.

Our school Handball team go from strength to strength. The sport is fast paced, high action game and our students are embracing the competition. They have a high number of wins under their belt and are looking forward to the Handball Regional Finals that will be taking place in our Sports Hall at the end of the month.

NChant continue to impress with every performance. They qualified for the Barnardo's National Choral Competition which took place at the Birmingham



Symphony Hall. They have also sung at Choral Evensong in Rochester Cathedral, sung with the local Salvation Army and visited some of our neighbouring hospices. As one thank you letter said "singing can be so healing for the performer and listener" and we are proud of our students for giving their time to support others.

We continue to have a very high percentage of students involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award, completing either the Bronze, Silver or Gold Award. We are particularly pleased to have 19 students on track to achieve their Gold Award and Dr Vickery and myself have already been invited to return to the Buckingham Palace for the awards ceremony for last year's cohort.

I don't have enough space to cover all the trips that have taken place in school but it would be remiss of me to fail to mention them at all. In addition to the trips to support the curriculum, in the last academic year we have:

- Taken Year 7 students to the pantomime in Chatham.
- Visited Chessington World of Adventures with Year 8.
- Enjoyed a week-long residential stay in Cornwall with Year 9 students.
- Travelled to Belgium for two nights where we visited the Comic Strip Museum, Darcis Chocolate Museum and met our pen pals.
- Visited the theatre in London with Year 11 to see Frozen.
- Supported the London Marathon with Year 12 volunteering at the finish line baggage reclaim.



The Japan exchange visit took place in October and we look forward to welcoming Japanese students to us in the summer.

A new tradition has developed of visiting the Christmas Markets in Aachen and it involves travelling overnight by coach, visiting the markets during the day followed by another overnight coach journey home. I don't know how the students and staff find the energy but it is an incredibly popular trip.

Fundraising for charity events takes place throughout the year. Our Founder's Day charity this year was Demelza and we were able to make a donation of almost £2000 to their important work. The charity has close links with some of our students and staff.

We have also supported Save the Children, Macmillan Cancer Support, World Vision UK, Daisy Chain (Autism & Neurodiversity) as well as beginning to fundraise for our own school minibus.

As always, school life is busy but we wouldn't have it any other way.

I will share more with you next year.

Mrs Clare Brinklow



PRIZES AND AWARDS

The Alumni Award



The award is a beautiful trophy which is given annually, for service before self, as the trophy remains in school, it is accompanied by a gift voucher.

Jointly awarded to Seth and Esha for their work with Medway Youth Council.

The Butterfield Cup

This cup is awarded for commitment to school. Awarded to Lilia who volunteers to support the wider school for many after school events. She runs student clubs, attends many extra curricular events whilst maintaining an outstanding academic work ethic. This student has shown this dedication since starting at RGS in year 7.



New Alumni Student Links

We welcome the new Executive Officer Team and our current Alumni Student Links. Lilia, Amelia, Dani, Ede, Liezel and Kiki are the pathway which keeps RGS students from former and current years connected. The students contribute to assemblies, act as role models for the younger years and support at all school events.

The students are fundamental in the smooth running of RGS' Student Voice and are working to enhance the community feel of the school.

This year the team have a particular interest in increasing the support between year groups and community engagement.



(left to right – Lilia, Amelia, Dani, Ede, Liezel, Kiki)

SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT

The Alumni has a thriving Facebook group, which continues to grow with a membership that currently exceeds 1200 people.

As with all large Facebook groups, we are targeted by people looking to sneak into the group in order to exploit the marketing potential. As a result, membership questions have been introduced, which must be answered by the applicant before their membership is approved.

These are not difficult questions for anyone who was a pupil at the school and some of the answers we have received (from people who have clearly never been pupils) have been quite amusing.

If you are not yet a member of the Facebook group, or know of former pupils who are not members, do please join and encourage others to join too.

The purpose of the group is to create a community of former pupils of the school so that they can share their memories, maintain contact with each other and continue to maintain a relationship with the school.

We are always looking for interesting content to add to the page. We are particularly interested to receive news from, or about, former pupils and photographs to add to the albums that you can find on the page. Old photographs of the school buildings and former teachers and pupils are always very popular, together with current photographs of former pupils who continue to meet up and maintain the friendships that they established whilst at school.

The Alumni Association has arranged their annual AGM to take place at the school on Wednesday 7th May 2025 at 6pm. For the first time we are also arranging attendance via Microsoft Teams for those who are unable to join in person.

The link for the Teams meeting will be posted on the Facebook page, together with updates and feedback.

As with all social media, it is only as good as the people who engage with it. Thank you to all of you for your contributions and engagement over the past year

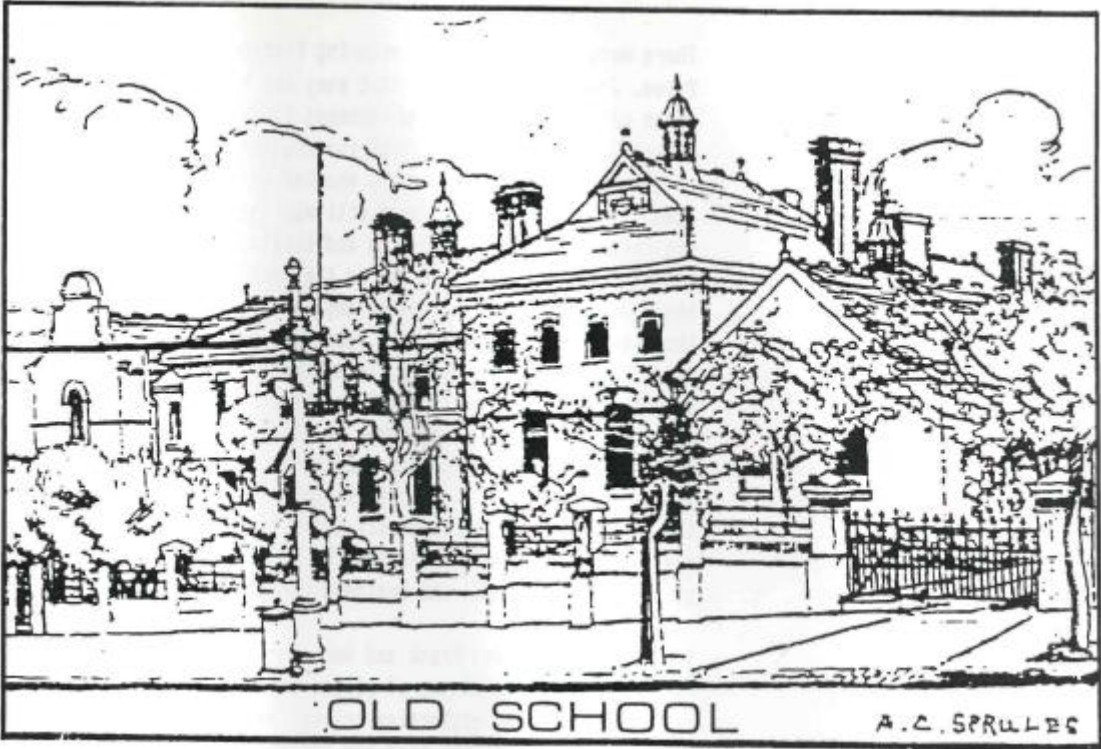
Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 363 298 414 975

Passcode: dT6GW9S4

SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE PAST



LATEST NEWS FROM THE SCHOOL

Medway Sport Awards

In December we were thrilled to announce the winner of the Medway Sport Awards “Secondary School of the Year 2024”.

This is a real testament of the hard work that the PE team have put in with our students and the number of opportunities they have created for them to learn new sports and take part in various sporting tournaments. Our students have had the chance to compete in Athletics, Rugby, Handball, Netball, Football and have also learnt Rock Climbing, Trampolining, Dance, Table Tennis, Rounders and much more. Thank you to the whole team.





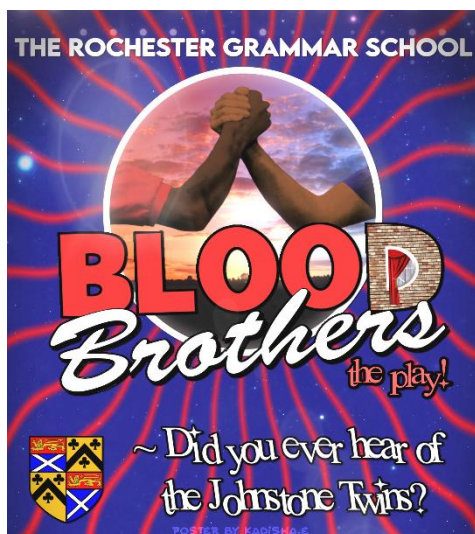
Bar Mock Trial 2024

On Saturday 22nd March, 17 year 12 students competed at the Bar Mock Trial National Final at the Royal Courts of Justice in London, following their win in the Kent regional heat back in November. This was the 3rd year in a row that RGS has competed in the national final, where they went up against the other 23 regional heat winners from across the UK. As part of the competition, students pick apart 2 hypothetical criminal trials and argue the cases as either the prosecution or the defence against other schools in front of a real judge in a real courtroom, with students taking on 1 of the following roles: barrister, witness, court clerk, usher, court artist, court reporter, or juror.



The students worked incredibly hard in preparation for both the regional heat and the national final, dedicating many hours after school to practice, and we are immensely proud of their performance at the national final – a huge well done to all of the students who took on this highly demanding and challenging competition. We look forward to finding out our final ranking over the next couple of weeks, and would like to thank Young Citizens for organising the competition

Events and Productions



In March the Drama Department put on an excellent production of “Blood Brothers, the play”. It ran for 3 nights and was an incredible display of the acting talent at school.

In addition to NChant’s performances already mentioned, our younger choirs travelled to the O2 in London to take part in the Young Voices show.

Over the last few years, we have added a Multicultural Showcase as a regular feature in the school calendar. Every year we are fortunate to experience a range of Music, Dance, Fashion, Spoken Word and more from different cultures within our school community.

Rehearsals are currently underway for the 2025 event in May which promises to be another fantastic celebration of our community.



OBITUARIES

Eunice Marion Tope 30th July 1934 – 30th October 2024

Written by Sally (Eunice's Goddaughter)

Eunice Marie Tope was born in 1934, her parents had been married 10 years before she was born. She was their only child. Eunice grew up in Totnes in Devon and had a happy childhood.

Unfortunately her mother died suddenly when Eunice was in her early twenties.

Eunice was very much loved by her aunt and uncle and they became important parental figures in her life. Eunice always did well in school and went on to college and then the Royal Holloway University in Surrey before she qualified as a teacher.

It was at this point in her life she wanted to travel and worked in many countries across the world with the VSO (Voluntary Services Overseas), eventually settling in Germany to teach at an international school.

When Eunice returned to England she took a post at Rochester grammar School for Girls. Eunice spent many happy years teaching Chemistry and she became Head of the Science Department which she thoroughly enjoyed. Eunice was supportive of her pupils who achieved good results enhancing the school's position in Medway. One of her ex-pupils said that she had a fearsome reputation, and recalled when walking past school some years later, (as an adult), she could still recall "Miss Tope's voice" drawing attention to the task at hand.



Eunice is the lady with the dark hair in the centre of the front row holding a box.

Eunice became Head of Sixth Form and as part of this vocational role she would spend time coaching and assisting younger girls with their choice of career. Eunice was proud of the new laboratories which were opened during her tenure at Rochester Grammar School as science had become a popular choice for many of the pupils.

Eunice was a member of the Senior leadership Team having a part to play in school innovation. Eunice always seemed to know when to bend enough to give relief, but not so much that goodwill was ever exploited or boundaries lost. She was great friends with Miss Betty Trollope (Head Teacher), and they continued to have regular contact once retired. It could be said that although Eunice never had children herself she influenced the life of so many. She was an inspirational teacher and a much-loved colleague.



Eunice is in the second row, far right

Outside of school Eunice would regularly visit France, visiting her old pen pal. She became fluent in French enjoying being part of a different culture and family life. She was an excellent linguist, virtually bilingual and was always taken as a French woman when she visited France. She was always fun to be with and every year would celebrate her birthday with a party whether she was in France or England. Eunice was very able to stand up for what she believed in and did not shy away from conflict, willing to set to right injustices or make complaint when treated unfairly. She loved cats and found them fascinating, always having a cat in her home. Her last cat was a rescue from the Cat Protection League which she supported as a charity.

Since retirement from teaching Eunice was always busy and spread happiness with generosity in her friendships. She was an accomplished cook and enjoyed a formal

dinner party. She would try out new recipes and loved to entertain. She became a Friend of Rochester Cathedral going on many an outing and throwing herself in to fundraising. She was a regular Whist player enjoying socialising and having fun and laughter with friends.

Eunice enjoyed her last birthday with a garden party. Friends and family came to be with her and hear the tales of her antics. The “fizz” as Eunice would call it, free flowing, along with laughter. I’m sure many people will have their own memories of Eunice and I’m sure through those memories Eunice will live on for us all.

Member Details and Profile

Please fill in this little profile for us - we know that there are people out there trying to contact their old school friends and they are really interested to hear how you are faring. If you are willing for the information to be published and shared with other members of the Alumni Association, please complete the form below and return it to:

Mrs Ann West
c/o office@rochestergrammar.tsat.uk

Surname:

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First name(s):

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Current Address:

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School years:

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Telephone Number:

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Email Address:

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What did you do when you left school?

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What have you done since then e.g., work, family, interests, travels?

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What are your thoughts about school, what "events" have stayed in your memory?

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Don't stop here if you have more to tell, just carry on overleaf