Welcome to the February 2014 edition of *The Grammarian*, your Rockhampton Grammar School Past Students’ Association newsletter. The Rockhampton Grammar School has a long and proud history since it was first established in 1881. This newsletter acknowledges the achievements, celebrations and news of the School’s past students. If you have any contributions for the newsletter please contact editor Rachael McDonald on 4936 0776 or email rmcdonald@rgs.qld.edu.au. Looking forward to hearing from you.

(Photograph (above) - The ever changing RGS landscape. Quarry Street is now home to a new building for primary school classes. An additional class has been added from Prep to Year 5 providing three classes in each Year group. The Year 7s already had three classes. In 2015 they will move into the secondary school system where a new building will be completed later this year to cater for the expanding Secondary School).

Visit www.rgs.qld.edu.au to keep in touch with current happenings at the School.

From the President.....

The Past Students’ Association Calendar is filling up quickly with events for 2014. RGS reunion dates for this year are the classes of 1960-65, 1984, 1994 and 2004. The Rockhampton Grammar School Race Day is on Saturday 17 May at Rockhampton’s Callaghan Park. We would love to see you there both supporting the Race Day and catching up with friends. There are also plans underway to hold a Past Students’ Dinner at the School later this year which will honour RGS Distinguished past students. Nomination details will be available soon. All years reunions will also be held in Brisbane, Townsville, Sydney and Melbourne this year. I attended an All Years Reunion in Brisbane at the Irish Club on the 2nd November 2013 organised by Lance Currie (RGS 1959). I recommend everyone attend one of these if given the opportunity; it was a great day and I enjoyed meeting Past Students of all years from the 1960’s to the Class of 2012. Some of the stories definitely opened my eyes to how different school was back in the 1960’s. However the best thing about the day was that everyone, no matter how long ago they graduated, had such pride for the School and their School life. I look forward to catching up with as many of you as I can at these events in 2014.

- Meleisha Tennent

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Robert discovers a passion for healing

Robert Don (RGS 1972-1973) now works as “chief inventor” for Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi) in Switzerland. This is his story:

I remember when I was young, reading about African explorers in the 19th century and the exotic diseases they encountered. At the time I would never have guessed I would be designing drugs for those diseases or that the existing drugs hadn’t changed since the days of the those explorers. At school I wanted to be an architect. I have been very lucky but I think luck is really just about taking advantage of opportunities that are always there. I have turned every job I have had into something quite different from the original description by growing it as an opportunity arose. In doing so, I have had a lot of challenges, a lot of fun, met a lot of influential people and opened up countless new opportunities for each stage of my life.

DNDi was founded 10 years ago by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), using the money they received for the Nobel Peace Prize as seed money to develop new drugs and treatments for infectious diseases only afflicting the poor. These diseases have no commercial value for the pharmaceutical industry. Some you may know of such diseases as African sleeping sickness, malaria, HIV and elephantiasis. Others may seem more obscure such as leishmaniasis and Chagas’ disease, even though they cause death and misery for many, many millions.

I am Director of Discovery and Preclinical Research, which probably best translates as Chief Inventor. I am responsible for taking an idea up to the point where we have a medicine for testing in patients. This involves directing my own research with contractors around the world, including Australia, and collaborating with a number of pharmaceutical companies and universities. We also work very closely with MSF.

As part of the job, I travel regularly to centres of research around the world as well as to regions where the diseases are endemic such as India, Latin America and several African countries. We have had some great successes in our first decade. For example, we developed a new malaria drug and licensed it to a pharmaceutical company a couple of years ago. They now sell 70 million treatments a year in Africa at $1 for adults and 50c for children. This is basically the cost of manufacture. International organisations such as UNICEF and the Global Fund purchase the drug for governments in many of these countries.

One disease that is particularly close to my heart is African sleeping sickness.

It is an infection of the brain spread by the tsetse fly and leads to all sorts of behavioural changes including insanity over a couple years before patients fall into a coma and die. When I joined DNDi, the first-line treatment was a form of arsenic that killed one in twenty patients as a side effect. The diagnosis included a lumbar puncture to find the parasite in spinal fluid because the treatment was so poisonous and one did not want to use it unless absolutely sure of the infection. This test usually involved the patient sitting behind a tree in the village, for privacy, while a doctor inserted a needle into their spine without anaesthetic. A few years ago, we developed a new treatment that combines intravenous infusion of a new drug plus a course of tablets. It is still a cumbersome treatment regimen but it is painless and does not kill the patients. Right now we have two more treatments that are in clinical trials and looking very promising.

The first is a handful of tablets taken over a period of 10 days and the second is treatment with just one pill. Based on this we are working with the World Health Organization to formulate a plan to completely eliminate the disease over the coming decades.

From old treatments which killed many hundreds of people a year with arsenic, to planning for elimination of the disease with something as simple as an aspirin for headache, my tenure at DNDi has certainly been rewarding. That said, there are still many more neglected patients and neglected infectious diseases that remain almost completely ignored. It is a very expensive exercise to make a new drug and current funding remains low and erratic. The biggest challenge is to devise sustainable funding and research mechanisms to bring modern medicines to the great majority of the world who have nothing or, at best, poisons to treat these neglected diseases.

As part of a large community of researchers and committed health workers, I have made many wonderful friendships, had some fascinating experiences such as snacking on dried caterpillars with a beer in the middle of the Democratic Republic of Congo and even had a (continued next page)
few close calls such as being detained by officials in Brazzaville for having US dollars to telling a taxi driver in Delhi that “I design the sort of drugs that pharmaceutical companies don’t make”. It was 2:00 in the morning and I was very jet lagged. He looked at me in silence for some time as I realised what I said and then changed the conversation to cricket.

I grew up in Mackay and attended RGS for my senior years 1972-3. I was a member of the RGS canoe building club and recall a visit by the Duke of Edinburgh. The School turned out in force and our club stood proudly in front of our puce coloured canoes - the colour you get when mixing leftover RGS paints. The Prince told us they were fine canoes. We later took them to Ritamada where they broke up in heavy surf.

I went on to the University of Queensland after finishing school and spent a couple of years exploring different disciplines thanks to the introduction of free tertiary education by Gough Whitlam. It was there that I met my wife and lifelong soulmate. She was a Rockhampton Range girl but we did not meet until we were at university. I finally settled on biochemistry and molecular biology and having found a science that enthused me, I went on to graduate with an honours degree and completed a PhD a few years later. This was followed by postdoctoral studies at the medical school in Geneva, Switzerland. My wife and I returned to Australia three years later for the birth of our daughter and I developed a research interest in cancer. Following a few years of research and teaching at NSW and Queensland universities I moved to industrial research and took on the role with the newly formed DNDi through these contacts and moved to my current job in Switzerland.

My wife and I now live in the tiny village of Dully (pop. 505) surrounded by vineyards on the shores of Lac Leman in Switzerland and have been here for almost a decade. My daughter, who lives in Australia, calls it Dullsville even though we do have a restaurant, a winery and a shop.
If Dully had a microbrewery as well I would probably call it heaven.

DNDi website - www.dndi.org

Brittany achieves top marks in 2013

Brittany Lauga (nee McKee RGS 2003) is topping the class with an impressive list of achievements in 2013. The most recent accolade was winning pre-selection as the ALP candidate to contest the seat of Keppel at the next Queensland election.

Brittany was also last year named the Queensland Young Planner of the Year in the Queensland-wide Planning Institute of Australia’s (PIA) 2013 Awards for Planning Excellence. The 27-year-old, who leads CQG Consulting’s Planning, Approvals and Community Engagement team and is helping deliver complex projects including the Great Keppel Island Revitalisation Plan and the redevelopment of Rockhampton’s Grand Hotel, only graduated from university studies at QUT four years ago. Brittany was also last year appointed vice president of PIA in Queensland.

PIA Queensland President Kate Isles said Brittany was a passionate representative of her region, working tirelessly to deliver new services to PIA members in Central Queensland and has enthusiastically contributed to raising the profile of both planning and young planners in Regional Queensland.

“Planning is such a dynamic, stimulating and expansive profession. Planners get to be right at the forefront of making our streets, neighbourhoods, cities and regions a better place to live,” Brittany said.

A planning career was not always in Brittany’s career sights. It was only when she was researching careers in Year 12 that she stumbled upon the idea of working in this sector.

Brittany (centre) accepts her Queensland planning award.

“I was trawling through University course guides looking for something that triggered my interest when I found the Urban and Regional Planning course at QUT. I loved the sound of advising on the economic and environmental needs of particular localities or regions as they relate to the built environment and the community. “It was also an opportunity to work on large-scale projects such as new suburbs, towns, industrial areas, commercial and retail developments, transportation and urban renewal projects.”

Brittany has also welcomed the opportunity to bring her planning studies back to her home town.

“I would encourage people in regional areas to study Planning and return home with their skills. It is a wonderful feeling when you have the opportunity to make a difference in your own home town.”
Discovering the world

Past students' lives head in many different directions. For this group of RGS Past Students their journeys have taken them overseas. Here are their stories.

Stuart McLaren (RGS 1992) - Loughborough University Head Football Coach (England)
What does your job involve?
We want to develop the person through lessons learnt in the football club so that whatever career path they take, in football or otherwise, they are looked at as good individuals. We also develop players so they have the opportunity to play at the highest level they are capable of. Aside from coaching the Elite 1st Team Squad (65 matches per season), I help manage aspects of the programme including working on budget and support staff management and oversee the entire mens football club, which has about 120 players. It has its challenges but they are outweighed by the rewards.

How long have you been working in the UK?
I've been back in the UK for 2 1/2 years but had been here playing football for 2 years in my early 20's.

Living in the UK compared to Australia?
It doesn't! I try not to torture myself too much by thinking about Australia's weather and lifestyle - I miss the beach and BBQ's. Accents aside there is obviously no language issue and I have a lot of family and friends here so I have no complaints. There are family reasons as to why I'm in the UK and after all those years I'm in the UK and near my family. I've never been further away from the place I grew up in.

Working in the UK?
In my chosen field there are many large leagues so we often travel to other countries to play in tournaments. Over the past two years my Gaelic Football team travelled to Singapore, Vietnam and Malaysia.

Working in Thailand?
I work with a range of people from around the world. We all have opportunities to learn about each other. The children are motivated and engaged in their learning. They love school and every day is fun. Having been here longer term, I've had the opportunity to see my first Year 3 class graduate and I now get to see the kids I taught in Year 1 down the road. I walk into a beautiful campus each day, surrounded by greenery and warmth.

Kerry Meaden-Kendrick (RGS 1993) - Head of Year 6, Bangkok Patana School (Thailand).
What does your job involve?
There are 8 classes in my year group. I teach a class of 22 students and also manage all the pastoral matters across the year group. I am also responsible for the performance management of the teachers and assistants within my team.

How long have you been working in the Thailand?
This is my 14th year.

Living in the Thailand compared to Australia? Living in Thailand is amazing. This is a hub for easy travel in Asia. The people of Thailand are warm, friendly and genuine. I miss their smiles when I travel. The food is gorgeous and there is such a variety readily available. I live in a Japanese neighbourhood with lots of hidden gems. Playing sport here is great. There are not many large leagues so we often travel to other countries to play in tournaments. Over the past two years my Gaelic Football team travelled to Singapore, Vietnam and Malaysia.

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US football team welcomes RGS dedication

Louisiana State University’s Football department has welcomed former RGS student Jamie Keehn (RGS 2006) into its fold since joining the University’s football program in 2012.

Tigers Head Coach Les Miles contacted RGS last year with the following note:

“We are proud that he (Jamie) is an LSU Tiger, and we are committed to helping him achieve his best in the classroom and on the field.

“Jamie’s experiences at Rockhampton Grammar School will always be a significant part of his life. We hope his years at Louisiana State University are as meaningful and productive.”

This season Jamie is the starting punter for the Tigers in the NCAA South Eastern Conference.

His RGS days were spent with sporting success in rowing and athletics. Post-school he travelled to Victoria for further javelin training and it was there that he started playing Australian Rules Football and was then noticed at an American Football camp.
Swimming -
Congratulations to Wheatley House for winning the 2014 swimming carnival ahead of Jardine, Kellow and Wheatcroft Houses. Carnival records:
- Jacob Spark (boys 13 & under years 50m freestyle - 28.68)
- Jacob Spark (boys 13 & under years 50m butterfly - 30.90)
- Jeremy Walsh (boys 17 and over years 50m freestyle - 25.46)
- Rylee Olsson (girls 16 years 50m breaststroke - 36.53)
- Wheatley House (girls 16 years 200m freestyle relay - 2:11.94)
- Kellow House (boys 16 years 200m freestyle relay - 1:56.39)

Leadership Ceremony -
On Wednesday, 19 February, the Year 12s of 2014 were presented with their leadership badges at the School’s annual Leadership Ceremony.
There are 175 students in Year 12 at RGS this year with 121 students receiving leadership badges. Badges were presented for a variety of leadership positions including School Captains, Vice Captains and Prefects; House Captains; Co-Curricular Captains (for various sports); Form Senior Captains; and Captains for numerous committees including the Valentine’s Day Committee and Grammar Global. Good luck to the Seniors of 2014.

You can’t wipe the smile off the face of Sheridan Spark (RGS, 2005-2013) when you congratulate her on her selection in the Australian Junior Track Cycling Team to contest the 2014 UCI Junior Track World Championships in Seoul, South Korea, from 8-12 August.
The Rockhampton Grammar School remains Sheridan’s home base for this year, working in the Primary School administration office while also striving to take her cycling to the highest possible level.
It has not been an easy ride to this honour - ranging from a gruelling training program to plucking 20 splinters out of her backside after a fall at January’s nationals. She still won 2 silver and 1 bronze medal at that event.
This is just Sheridan’s second year of cycling after starting in November 2012 winning 3 gold and 2 silver medals at the Queensland Cycling Championships.
Before that Sheridan was busy with cross country, athletics, surf lifesaving (State champion), touch football (State team) and triathlon (placing 16th in her age group in Australia).
“It has always been my dream to represent my country at the Olympic Games and stand on the top podium with a gold medal around my neck. I can only work my hardest and hope that someday my dreams will come true. But cycling for me is more than a sport; it’s a special way of living.
“I expect the competition of Worlds to be like what I have dreamed about since I was four years old; tough and gritty. Everyone will be training as hard as they can, and at the end of the day it may just be whoever wants the gold more.”
Sheridan will also keep drawing on inspiration from her cycling inspiration - fellow CQ track star Anna Meares. “She is a legend not only through her cycling achievements but in also remaining true to herself. She never changed in personality and she has always been considerate to others, she’s a wonderful role model and I look up to her.”
In the meantime Sheridan will start competing in the road season as well as keeping up her track training.
So how do you get to this level in your chosen sport?
“The same principal applies to anything anyone does; work hard and dedicate yourself to that one thing you love doing, and someday things should start to fall into place.”
Also helping Sheridan stay on the right path are her cycling coach Ken “Reggie” Tucker and personal strength coach Glenn Hansen (Vector Health).
“Of course I can’t forget Mum and Dad, they are incredible people and have worked so hard to give Jacob (RGS, Year 8) and myself the best opportunities in life (including sending us to The Rockhampton Grammar School), but without them none of this would have been possible.”

Sheridan Spark.
Photograph courtesy of Cycling Australia

Sheridan sprints into Australian cycling team
The Rockhampton Grammar School Past Students’ Association will once again host the annual RGS Race Day at Rockhampton’s Callaghan Park on Saturday 17 May 2014. Fashions, food and music will all feature in a fun-filled day, along with hopefully the odd success on the punt. The Class of 1984 and 2004 reunions will also be held at this year’s event. It’s a great opportunity for both the School’s past and present student and parent community to celebrate the School and enjoy a day’s racing. Each year the Race Day raises valuable funds to give back to the RGS community, for today’s scholars and those in the years ahead. All tickets must be pre-purchased. There are two sections in the RGS function area. Gazebo tickets cost $130 per person, which includes gate entry, food and drinks throughout the afternoon. Tickets are also available for the Marquee section of the function area. Marquee tickets cost $1900 per table (for a table of 10 people). This includes track entry, fine dining and drinks throughout the afternoon’s racing. For RGS Race Day enquiries contact Adrien Lang (RGS, 1989-1993) on 0401 006 814 or email adrien@askme.com.au or Rachael McDonald (RGS) on 4936 0776 or email rmcdonald@rgs.qld.edu.au Hope to see you trackside.

Make tracks to the RGS Race Day

RGS Race Day fans:
Meleisha Tennent (RGS 2003) and Adrien Lang (RGS 1993)

Vale: Tribute to RGS Olympian

Adrian Holmes (1941) was a young man from the family farm near Theodore when following a brief stay at The Rockhampton Grammar School went on to join the ranks of Australian Olympians. Adrian first laced on the gloves as a 20-year-old in 1946 and inside his first two years had claimed two Queensland titles and two Australian crowns. Left out of the Australian boxing team to contest the 1948 London Olympics, Adrian received a helping hand from the residents of Theodore to get the then 22-year-old to London. Dominant through the preliminary rounds, the light heavyweight boxer was favourite to claim the gold medal, but lost on points in the semi-finals. He fractured his ankle and was forced to withdraw from the bronze medal bout. It was the last time Adrian ever boxed. A memorial service was held in Adrian’s home town of Theodore on Saturday, 8 February, to honour Adrian’s life. Vale: 8 January, 2014. (Aged: 87 years) Sources: The Morning Bulletin, 6 February, 2014

Adrian Holmes (left) boxing for Australia during the 1948 Olympic Games in London. Source: State Library of Queensland.
Ron Robertson banks on RGS pride

Short stay leaves lasting impression

Ron Robertson (RGS 1962-1963) might have only spent two years at The Rockhampton Grammar School, but that time made a lasting impression on his life. He still holds his school days very close to his heart, just as he does his 47 years working with Westpac Bank (formerly the Bank of New South Wales).

“RGS remains dear to my heart even though I only had two years there as a boarder,” Ron said. “Those two years built me up for my working life,” said Ron, now retired on the Gold Coast.

Ron completed his primary education to Grade 8 (Scholarship) at Blair Athol State School and Junior at Clermont. The Clermont school was about 8km from home so he boarded with an Aunt in the first year before travelling daily by bus.

“My parents were adamant that I get a higher education and not end up a coal miner,” Ron said. His parents’ education aspirations next landed Ron at The Rockhampton Grammar School.

“This School has thousands of cases of people that have been given an opportunity.”

“I got a small scholarship from the local Rotary Club and being an only child my Dad took weekend cattle mustering work to assist with costs. Term fees - payable in advance were £84.8.0 ($168.80) I still have a booklet provided by the Trustees setting out details of the School for new students and parents.

“RGS was a great experience for me in character building, camaraderie and sport. To make the First Rugby League team under coach and English teacher Pat Ryan in both 1962 and 1963 (finish 2nd to St Brendans both years) set me up to play in Fitzroy Club Under 19 Premiership Team in 1964 and Springsure “A” Grade and Central Highlands Leichhardt League Rep Team in 1965 and 1966. Coach R.M. Deeth got us to the Interschool First Cricket final in 1963 and we defeated North Rocky High which boasted local A Grade players.

“Boss Jardine made me a Senior Prefect in 1963. Bernie Scott and I supervised the Primary boarders dormitory sleeping in a cubicle in a corner of the room. Other duties were to supervise Junior years 9 and 10 night prep and dining room. We also escorted boys to dancing lessons at the Girls Grammar on a number of Friday nights throughout the year.

“Leave weekends got me into the Westmoreland and Ross homes of day boys Howard Westmoreland and Lex Ross as well as Frank Sprenger’s family farm at Yarwun. We still communicate with each other to this day.

“This School has thousands of cases of people that have been given an opportunity.

“For me, coming from the country, it was an opportunity to play sport and enter my working life with the confidence I needed.”

There were no credit cards when Ron was at school – Mr Colan Antill Spencer Wills would regularly hand out the pocket money allowances, each boy receiving two shillings a week. It was the first association Ron had with the Bank of New South Wales - which has been The Rockhampton Grammar School’s bank since the School was established in 1881.

After completing school Ron returned to Blair Athol where a family tragedy led to a long and successful banking career.

His father was accidentally killed at the mine not long after Ron had finished school and he was pumping petrol at his Aunt’s corner store when the secretary of the Blair Athol Coal and Timber Company approached Ron about his future ambitions now that his father had passed on.

“Mum also lost her father in the coal mines, when she was only three, and she said she’d like me to get a job as a ‘Bank Johnny’.

“At school I thought I might have been a school teacher, but I didn’t get the grades. He (Company secretary) got me that job in the bank.”

In 1964 Ron was employed as a Junior with the Bank of New South Wales (now Westpac) Rockhampton branch in Quay Street.

After 47 years, 6 months and 21 days - on 11 November, 2011, Ron retired from Westpac.

“I have long positive memories of boarding school and banking is the same thing.”

When Ron started in banking it was

Sub-Senior Class, 1962:
(back row, from left): J Macarthur, Lex Ross, J Stevenson, W Spring, T Shaw, H Tan, J Harvey, D O’Connor;
(Middle Row) R Robertson, B Latcham, D Martin, R Olsen, G Twigg, B Scott, B Berglund;
(Front Row) D Patteson, H Westmoreland, A Guerassimoff, R Clarke, M Kennedy, R Hop Yek, F Sprenger, B Cox, R Sayce.
also about pounds, shillings and pence (before changing to decimal currency in 1966). There were hand ledgers and calculations were done in a person’s head – not on a calculator.

“Everything was manual and we had more staff,” said Ron. (pictured above in October, 2013).

“All businesses operated with cheques which had to be exchanged between banks which was my first job. There were 10 banks in Rockhampton then with two daily exchanges and settlement weekly. Ledger records were maintained by machines in large branches and written in small sites such as Springsure where I was transferred as Ledger keeper in 1965. The currency was pounds, shillings and pence with decimalisation introduced on 14 February, 1966. Customers held passbook for savings and money boxes were provided to collect coins for banking into these accounts.

“The bank conducted a training school in Brisbane which you attended with each promotion to a new position eg., junior clerk, ledger examiner, teller. More males were employed in early days with females to cover typist and machinists roles. You had to be mobile and usually were transferred every couple of years. Females had to resign when they started a family!”


“The introduction of computerisation was probably the major change in banking that I experienced. Electronic Data Processing commenced in Sydney in the 1960s with gradual change over the next two decades.” After 10 months working at the Rockhampton branch Ron was relocated to Springsure. In early 1960 the bank formed a Rugby Union Club in Brisbane in the Sub District competition which had teams from University faculties (Engineers, Vets, medical) Law Clerk, Commonwealth Bank, AMP Society, Gold Coast and major hotels. Ron always enjoyed reading about the competition in the bank’s weekly newsletter and expressed an interest in playing rugby.

“I was transferred to Brisbane in 1966 and played in a successful Bank team for 5 years. The team no longer exists with males no longer being the major employees.” Ron’s career was predominantly in the south-east corner, but also included stints in Julia Creek, Ingham and Townsville. It was at the Gold Coast branch in 1966 where he met his future wife Jill – also a Bank of New South Wales employee. They had three sons – Steve, Paul and John. When Ron retired in 2011 he was the last of the Queensland pre-decimal currency officers and ranked number seven in the longest serving employees across the Westpac group of approximately 40,000 staff. Over this time he filled the roles of a Junior Officer, Ledger Keeper, Agency Officer, General Hand, Overseas Officer, accountant, manager, regional credit manager, senior management roles - including his final two years with the Commercial and Agribusiness sector of Westpac.

“I have long positive memories of boarding school and banking is the same thing.”

“I became a coach and mentor in the last couple of years at Westpac – I completed the full circle of banking. “There has been a lot of rationalisation in banking over the past 20 years with many branches closing especially in the country. “There is little need today for a personal customer to go into a bank with the availability of telephone and internet banking. People no longer get a pay packet at the end of the week or fortnight with salary and wages going straight to an account. Cheques are used only by those who are not computer literate. Savings passbooks are being phased out. Banking still remains a people business and I appreciate meeting many customers and bankers who still stay in contact today. Ron still keeps in touch with some RGS past students, attending RGS functions in Brisbane.
RGS past students’ hit the right notes

German Opera Scholarship

The amazing voice of Samuel Johnson (RGS 2005) is taking him places since appearing in musicals for The Rockhampton Grammar School. The Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University student (pictured right) was recently announced as the winner of a 2013 German Opera Scholarship where he will now join the renowned Cologne Opera Ensemble for the 2014/15 season.

This award from Opera Foundation Australia is valued at $53,000 and also includes the “Swifts” Scholarship, which includes $3000 in German language lessons. The 25-year-old, who is currently completing his Masters in Operatic Performance, was selected from six exceptional young performers from across Australia.

Opera was in Samuel’s life from an early age with his parents both fans of classical music. Originally from Nambour, Samuel continued his singing lessons when the family moved to Rockhampton before his love of music was recognised by the Queensland Conservatorium. Samuel was also a member of the Lisa Gasteen National Opera School, was the 2013 recipient of the RJ Hamer Opera Scholarship presented by the Dame Nellie Melba Opera Trust, has received coaching from the Royal Opera House in London and has travelled to Sienna, in Italy and Berlin, in Germany, to improve his language skills.

During his RGS school days Samuel was a star in the School musicals. He played the lead roles in school musicals which included the role of Joseph in Joseph and the Technicolour Dreamcoat (2004) and the role of Wiz in The Wiz (2005).

Voices echo across the world

The voices of RGS past students Sophie Gregory (2011) and Corbin Thorne (2010) are entertaining audiences around the world with the Gondwana Chorale Choir. They have performed before live audiences in various Gondwana choirs since 2006 but in 2014 the choir steps into a new arena - the recording studio. It is the first time Gondwana Chorale has recorded in a studio. Sophie is very excited about the opportunity.

“It’s quite a tedious and taxing process, but at the end the rewards will be worth it,” Sophie said.

“Our conductors Paul Holley and Carl Crossin have both agreed that the sound the choir is capable of producing is now at an exceptional standard.”

Since joining Chorale Sophie has travelled to Tasmania, New Zealand, Sydney, Wales, England and France.

Sophie has also performed at the Sydney Opera House on many occasions. “It’s a really great experience for so many reasons. For one, it’s fantastic getting to work with talented choristers your age and also a similar skill level. It’s also great to get an opportunity to work with amazing choral conductors on varied and challenging repertoire. None of this would be quite as special if it weren’t for the wonderful, welcoming atmosphere.”

Sydney Opera House performances, touring the UK and France and making friends from all over the country who share a passion and talent for singing and music are just some of Sophie’s Gondwana highlights.

“Above all else I would have to say that the thing that stands out for me the most is an almost indescribable feeling shared unanimously throughout the entire choir after performing a piece, where every tiny nuance of the music was perfected. It just gives such an incredible buzz and sense of accomplishment that the piece was done the justice it deserves.”

Sophie only joined Chorale in 2013 with commitments including a two week choral camp in Sydney and the international tour. During the choral camp Sophie also has the opportunity to meet with current RGS students in various Gondwana choirs.

“It’s great to see so much enthusiasm for choral singing and music from RGS students. It has given Rockhampton (and Yeppoon) such a fantastic reputation for musical ability as it is over-represented in numbers through the Gondwana Choirs for the district’s population.

“I always loved and enjoyed music and performing. Singing in choirs is a great way to make friends/socialise with like minded people and it’s a lot of fun.”
High flyer reaches new heights on world stage

For generations young children have grown up being mesmerised by the circus. For many a child they dreamed what it would be like to run away to join the circus for a life of travel and adventure. Craig Litherland (RGS 1999) didn’t run away to join the circus but a brief introduction to a Gold Coast circus school now has him soaring under the big top around the world.

Following a long interest in acrobatics during his seven years at RGS Craig’s sporting passion was gymnastics. He started competition in Year 10 and was competing at a State level in Year 12 - receiving School colours for his sporting achievement.

After completing School Craig continued his gymnastics during university studies at CQ University and represented Queensland at nationals in 2001. A move to Brisbane the following year for work ended Craig’s gymnastics training and in 2006 he discovered circus training.

Craig has endured a few serious injuries in the last five years of performing, but the injury risk does not deter him.

“There are difficulties and challenges in keeping our act at a level that is difficult enough to “wow” the audiences and appease the circus director/producer, but it is not a day-to-day concern of being in the circus,” said Craig, who is currently based in the UK.

“The difficult part is to keep finding work,” Craig said.

“It is considered odd, especially among traditional circus, that someone would join the circus from outside a circus family - and also at my age. “There isn’t job security in this industry, contracts don’t necessarily mean much and not everyone is here to help you. There is definitely no nurturing for someone joining the circus at 26, it is more like being thrown in the deep end and seeing if you can swim.

Also in an age when entertainment is available at the touch of a button, jobs in the circus are becoming fewer and not as many people are watching live entertainment.

“Circuses are shutting down and/or directors are down sizing their tent to allow less travelling expenses to cope with smaller audiences.”

The challenges have not stopped Craig from performing in countries including Australia (Burton’s Circus), Japan (Pop Circus), United Kingdom (Netherlands National Circus and Billy Smarts Circus), the Netherlands (Limburgs Kirstcircus) and France (Imperial Show).

“I hope that in time the appreciation of live circus performance will grow again. Maybe it will never be again like it was in the past, but I can dream.”

(Photographs by (top) Dirkjan Ranzijn Circus Photography; (above) circus-online - Friedrich Klawiter)
From RGS to Austria

Another School year ends. Some students enter the workforce, others continue their studies at university and others catch the travel bug. Eloise Doak (on right of picture), last year’s School Vice Captain, is now a long way from her Rockhampton home – in Austria on a Rotary Exchange. Here’s an insight into Eloise’s exciting new chapter in her life:

Gruß Gott!
It's officially been one month since I arrived in Austria, and it's been one of the best months of my life. If what I have experienced so far is anything to go by, I have a fantastic year ahead! I started with a long journey from Rockhampton all the way to Kirchdorf an der Krems, my new home for 2014. After travelling 40 hours (Brisbane - Sydney - Dubai - London - Vienna - Linz - Kirchdorf), it was safe to say that I wasn't looking or smelling too great when I arrived. Luckily though, my host family were waiting at the airport with ski jackets, blankets and pillows on hand, and they didn't seem to mind. When I arrived at my new home, we sat down to supper (breads, cheeses, olives, donkey and elk sausage). I only discovered this after politely dropping into the conversation that the meats looked curious and that I didn't think they tasted like ordinary salami. To be honest though, they weren't half bad. That is something I have taken on board already this year – to try new things. This also included Blood Sausage, that's another story.

My first few days consisted of sleeping and organising things for my new life here. I attended a Rotary meeting and even managed a “Hello, my name is Eloise” in German! I was starting to think the language barrier wasn't going to be that bad…until I started school. What's worse than maths? Maths, in German. And what's worse than Maths in German? Latin, in German. However, the school itself is great. I am attending BRG/BORG Kirchdorf, a school specialising in music with around 1500 students. My subjects for the year include Maths, German (English (thank goodness), Chemistry, Physics, Music, Pop, Jazz and Rock, Geography, History, Ethics, Psychology and Philosophy, PE, IT and Latin. However my teacher realised that Latin probably wouldn't be so useful to me, and instead I go to the equivalent of a Year 9 Class to learn German. I also have compulsory music lessons, and I chose to further my studies in piano, which has been a goal of mine for some time. When I first arrived at school, it was very overwhelming, however within 10 minutes I already had flocks of classmates wanting to hear my Australian accent. It's fantastic that I could become so close with them within just a few days and already have made very good friends whom I see on weekends and outside of school as well. Our class (11th Form) will travel to Portugal in the Summer Holidays and I have also been invited along. Outside of school, I have also experienced so many things and they have been absolutely unforgettable. The days started to get colder, and on my first weekend, I saw actual snow for the first time. It's a sight I will never get sick of! The snow fell and within a few hours everything was white and more beautiful than ever. My host family loved how excited I was, and decided to take me bobsledding down a very steep and winding mountain. I loved it! I also met my second host family, who are currently hosting another Rotary Exchange Student from Argentina, Facundo. We are at the same school and will switch host families in a couple of months. The experiences didn't stop there though, as in my first week, my host family bought (very good) seats at the Ski World Championships in Schladming, in another part of Austria. We travelled there with a busload of very spirited Austrian supporters, and being the only Australian, they paid me lots of attention! After seeing Austrian folk dancing, plenty of supporter gear and hearing plenty of cussing against the other countries, we took our seats to see the best slalom skiers in the world do their thing. The roar of the 50000+ crowd was unforgettable, and being the only Aussie in the crowd, I adopted a very patriotic attitude when the Australian representative came down. However, I was the only voice in the entire crowd. It is hard to believe though, how much pride and joy I felt for Austria when we were winning, and how much raw hatred I felt when the Norwegians took over. However it was an unforgettable experience, and I even managed to get my cheering face on the big screen and see Arnold Schwarzenegger beaming from the VIP area. My prime goal for this year is to take a photo with Arnie, and I may have just missed out that time but I still have another 11 months to catch him! Only a few days later, my host family announced that we were going to a Ball in Graz, the second biggest city in Austria. For me it was a dream come true. This wasn't just any ball though, as I soon found out. With our ball gowns on and hair done up, I was feeling very intimidated by what lay ahead. I arrived at the Congress House, with its many ballrooms and stunning décor, and I was escorted upstairs by what I could only describe as a Prince, to another
room for pre-drinks. We then watched as the opening ceremony began and couples danced and waltzed and speeches were given (in German of course). I guess the best way for me to describe just how surreal it was, is that even if the entrée cards had been written in English, I still wouldn't know that the food I ate even existed. Later on in the night, I was invited to waltz in the ballroom and, well I tried my best. The night ended with a customary throwing of the wine glasses at the floor (yes, that is a thing) at 3am. The trip home was hard though, as heels, ice and long gowns don't mix! It was absolutely amazing though, and something I will never forget.

After the Akademiker Ball, I spent 2 weeks in Altmünster on a Rotary Language Camp, where I learned basic German with the other 31 newly arrived Exchange Students. Some came from Argentina, Brasil, Paraguay, South Africa, New Zealand and Nepal, and I was glad to see that there was a large population of fellow Australians to keep me company as well. Over the 2 weeks we got to know one another very well and already we have become close friends. We also get to see each other again in 3 weeks time for the week long Ski Camp in Schladming. At the language camp, we had class during the day with breaks for food (lots and lots of food) and the afternoon free to explore the town and surrounding area. At least once a day, we made a trip to Spar, where we stocked up on ridiculous amounts of junk food for the following night. My room of 4 girls went through 11 jars of Nutella in 14 days. The classes themselves were very beneficial, and they helped to understand the basics of the language. I still find it difficult to speak, but I can read a little and I am understanding more and more each day now thanks to the camp. During the camp we also were able to visit a neighbouring town, Gmunden, take walks to the lake, go ice-skating, take a night walk with fire lanterns, learn traditional Austrian folk dancing, and learn to sing traditional Austrian songs. I am however, yet to learn how to yodel. But like I said, I have another 11 months to go. We also got the chance to visit Salzburg on the camp for a day, and that was something I was most looking forward to. We saw the city, put a ‘love lock’ on the Lock Bridge (I’m still waiting on my European prince, but of course not until after this year because Dating is not allowed, I know), saw Mozart’s birthplace, and also visited his old house and saw his piano, which for me was a truly unforgettable moment. The language camp was a fantastic 2 weeks and I can’t wait to see the other exchange students again soon to hear more about their experiences and catch up with the close friends I’ve made.

After the ski camp, I returned home briefly for one day before heading back to Salzburg to stay with my Host-Grandma in Salzburg again. We visited more of the historical side of Salzburg, including the Schloss Hellbrunn and the older parts of the city. We also got a private tour (because I was an Aussie tourist) of the Catacombs shown in ‘The Sound of Music’. It’s funny, because to me that film is one the biggest Austrian icons, however most locals have not seen or even heard of the movie! We also visited Hallstadt, which is a town not far from Salzburg. It was truly breathtaking when walking along the lakeside, seeing beautiful Austrian architecture accompanied by glass-like water and being surrounded by snow-frosted mountains. It is by far the most beautiful city I have seen yet, and that is saying something as everywhere in Austria is stunning! Since my time in Austria, I also celebrated my 18th birthday. Seeing as I was on the language camp, I had plenty of friends to enjoy my day with. It started 9 hours early, as we started celebrating when I officially turned 18 in Australia. There were plenty of ‘Happy Birthday’s’ sung in English, German, Spanish, Portuguese and even a piano accordion to accompany it all. At midnight, every single exchange student snuck into my room and collectively jumped on me to wake me up as an official ‘Austrian’ happy birthday wish. It didn’t stop there though, as there were decorations in the hotel, multiple cakes, presents from students and teachers, teary phone calls to my family, opening of presents that were carted from Australia, ice skating in the afternoon, and a big glass of non-alcoholic beer to finish off my night. I am still yet to celebrate with my school friends, however two birthdays are always better than one!

So far my Austrian experience has been one of the best. I really could keep writing on and on, but this basically outlines my first month in my new home. Tomorrow I am heading to Leoben to visit my host-brother and get in some much needed shopping, however next week my holidays end and I will be back at school until Ski Camp. I don’t mind though, as I like the people at my school and since I am no longer in Latin class, I’m all smiles. That’s it for now and I will send my next report in one month’s time! Please have a look at the photos that are attached in the email from my first month here. I have had the most amazing time so far, and I hope to stay in contact with you all.

Tschüss for now!
Eloise
The Rockhampton Grammar School will this year welcome home the Classes of 1984 (16-18 May 2014) and 1994 (2-3 August, 2014) along with past students from the 1960-1965 era (27-29 June).

If you were in either of these year groups, including those who finished before their Alumni year, contact RGS Communications and Development Officer Rachael McDonald at rmcdonald@rgs.qld.edu.au or phone 4936 0776.

We also want to hear from any Past Students who currently live in Melbourne, Sydney or Townsville. Please contact Rachael with details.

Reunion Calendar:
- Saturday, 5 April, 2014 - All Years
  Catch-up, Irish Club. Contact: Lance Currie (Class of 1959) at lfcurrie@yahoo.com or phone 0402 094 912.
- Class of 1994 (1-2 August 2014)
- Class of 1984 (16-18 May, 2014)
- Class of 2004 (17 May, 2014)
- Class of 1960s (27-29 June 2014)

RGS updates at Brisbane catch-up

The Rockhampton Grammar School’s current Headmaster Dr Phillip Moulds, Chair of the Board of Trustees Mr Brad Beasley and current Past Students’ Association President Meleisha Tennent met with RGS past students in Brisbane in early November last year.

Above: Craig Chudleigh (78-82), Dr Phillip Moulds, MaryAnn Birkbeck, Mark Birkbeck (78-82);
Top right: Ross Dunlop (1954) and Moniqua Lowth (2008-2012);
Bottom right: Gordon Pullar (56-59), Kevin Anderson (54-59), George Pratt (58-59)

Class of 1973

What an experience – 40 years since I last played with Greg Wilson and Tony Lomasney in the high school rock band, “Heat”, there we were, lined up in at the trophy end what was once the school assembly hall, scene of many a school dance, honour boards plastered around the walls, playing Creedence, Stones, and Beatles covers, with a shiver running up and down our collective spines. Looking on with approval was Graham McInnes, the fourth member of that seminal outfit – no longer playing music, but he was happy to pose for the photograph that we never took in 1973, with bass guitar in hand!! That (musical reunion) was the peak experience, for Greg, Tony and myself, at least, but the weekend was so much more.

Drinks and a meal on Friday night at the Criterion Hotel, trying to put names to faces dimly recalled across the years, sharing memories. Then on the Saturday, band rehearsal (a little rusty after all these years, but the passion was still there)! That was followed by a comprehensive tour of the fabric of a school that has grown way beyond our wildest dreams – but still (under all the renovations) leaving clues of dorms and classrooms we lived and studied in 40 or more years ago. The tour wrapped up with stunning views from the current Senior Common Room all the way out to Mt Archer and beyond – leaving us searching for landmarks of our misspent youth!! Then the Saturday night reunion – two sets of songs from the boys in the band, an endless supply of food and drink, and the opportunity to chat our way across forty years of memories, filling in the pieces of our collective life puzzles.

Sunday morning, a smaller group, enjoying the extraordinary views, facilities, and nostalgia of Ritamada – we were the first year to access what were then rather primitive facilities in an incredible location. What an amazing resource this has now become for the school – there were significant envy issues all round!! So that was the weekend – 40 year reunions give you lots to talk about, much to share, much to ponder and be grateful for, and the feeling we should do this again, but much sooner than another 40 years! Thanks to Rachael McDonald for the organising, Headmaster Dr Phillip Moulds for giving so generously of his time on the school tour, and to all the others who contributed to a superb and moving experience for those of us who made the trek! - Ian Dearden (Class of 1973)

Friends and memories

Left - Past students at the reunion included: (back from left) Steve Smith, Graham McInnes, John Baker, Rob Grumbower, David Stockwell, Chris Petersen, Stewart Nobbs; (front, from left) Garth Osborne, Anthony Lomasney, Ian Dearden, Greg Wilson.

RGS past students’ Krista Becker (second left) (nee Leach, RGS 1993-1997) and (second right) Sharon Coutts (nee Grierson, RGS 1988-1992) returned to the School in November. Krista, now living near Theodore, also taught at RGS from 2002-2005 while Sharon, now in Sydney, taught at RGS from 2002-2004. They caught up with former fellow colleagues, and current teachers Miranda Broadbent (left) and Alana Mikkelsen (right).
The Grammarian

Births, Vale and Marriages

WEDDINGS

Alaina Alroe (RGS 2001) and Michael Kennedy (RGS 2001) were married at Ritamada on 11 January, 2014. The couple's honeymoon was in Honolulu, San Francisco and New York before settling in London. Both are members of the RGS Past Students' Association. Alaina was in Year 1 when the RGS primary school reopened and Michael has kept involved with the School through his photography at musicals and School functions. Both Alaina and Michael were involved with School musicals during their time at RGS. Michael's mum Jan Kennedy is the School Librarian and Alaina's mum Diana McLellan is a Past President of the Past Students' Association and RGS past student.

Naomi Landis (RGS 1999) married at Gunabul Homestead in Gympie in April last year. Naomi now works as a dentist in Gympie. Also pictured are (seated, left) Nathan Landis (RGS 1996 - barrister in Perth, (seated right) mother Myra (worked in the RGS Senior School Office Curriculum Plus, Music Council President for 10 years, raised funds for grand piano), (back, third right) Sarah (RGS 1997 - music teacher in Brisbane) and (back, second right) Rebecca (RGS 1994 - school dux and specialist pathologist in Brisbane).

Vale

Jeffrey Boreham (RGS 1955-1957) - September 2013. Jeffrey was a former School Prefect, Staff Sergeant and Quarter Master of the Store in Cadets. After School Jeffrey established himself as a prominent chemist in Bundaberg. He was 73 years old.

Adrian Holmes (RGS 1941) - 8 January, 2014. Born and raised in Theodore Adrian would later represent Australia in boxing in the men's light heavyweight division at the London 1948 Olympic Games. Dominant in the early rounds he lost his semi-final and fractured his ankle - forcing him to withdraw from the bronze medal bout. It was the last time Adrian ever boxed. Adrian was 87-years-old.

From the archives...

Jeffrey Boreham (RGS 1955-1957)

September 2013. Jeffrey was a former School Prefect, Staff Sergeant and Quarter Master of the Store in Cadets. After School Jeffrey established himself as a prominent chemist in Bundaberg. He was 73 years old.

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Naomi Landis (RGS 1999)

Married at Gunabul Homestead in Gympie in April last year. Naomi now works as a dentist in Gympie. Also pictured are (seated, left) Nathan Landis (RGS 1996 - barrister in Perth, (seated right) mother Myra (worked in the RGS Senior School Office Curriculum Plus, Music Council President for 10 years, raised funds for grand piano), (back, third right) Sarah (RGS 1997 - music teacher in Brisbane) and (back, second right) Rebecca (RGS 1994 - school dux and specialist pathologist in Brisbane).