Welcome

Welcome to the October 2015 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.

Visit www.rgs.qld.edu.au to keep in touch with your School.

From the President

Meleisha Tennent (RGS, 2003)

Welcome to the final edition of the Past Students’ newsletter for 2015.

It has been a busy and eventful year. A successful All Years reunion was held in Sydney on 9 September and the Headmaster welcomed the opportunity to catch up with past students at this event. I enjoyed catching up on all of the pictures and it is great to see our Sydneysiders taking the opportunity to catch up.

October is a busy period for reunions with both the Class of 1990 and Class of 1995. On 3 November, a Canberra All Years function will take place. A reminder that nominations for the 2nd Annual Distinguished Past Students Awards (dinner to be held in March 2016) close on 30 October. Please submit any nominations to paststudents@rgs.qld.edu.au

The final Past Students’ meeting for the year was held on 7 October. RGS past students are always welcome to attend these meetings.

Currently there are no reunions scheduled for 2016 so if you are keen to catch up with former classmates in 2016 please get in touch with the School at paststudents@rgs.qld.edu.au

The Annual RGS Past Students’ Race Day will take place on 7 May 2016. This is always a great day and we welcome any of the years looking to organise a reunion to consider joining us for a day out at the Callaghan Park racecourse.

Why not get a table of your classmates together?

Now in the final School term of the year, I look forward to welcoming a new group of RGS Past Students, the Class of 2015, and wish them luck in their future endeavours.

Rugby World Cup

Stephen Moore

RGS (1993-1996)

The Australian Wallabies rugby union team has had a touch of The Rockhampton Grammar School on the fields of England. Helping the Australians qualify for the finals has been Wallabies captain Stephen Moore, who completed his primary schooling at RGS before leaving in Year 8 with his family to move to Brisbane. Stephen has kept in touch with the School. Last year he was the guest speaker at the annual RGS Rugby Presentation Dinner. While visiting RGS Stephen also took some of the School’s rugby players through their paces and had a tour of the School grounds, which are now vastly different to his time here.
Megan Mummery (RGS 2004) launched her own fashion label OhSevenDays in 2013 and now calls Istanbul, Turkey, home. Megan caught up with The Grammarian about the world of fashion.

Was fashion something you were interested in at School? I didn't plan to work in fashion when I was in High School. I always was interested in the arts, but throughout high school I didn’t have a clear idea of what I wanted to do. It wasn’t till after high school and university that I decided to pursue a career in fashion.

What are your RGS memories? I had a great school experience at RGS! I had a great group of friends who I am still very close with to this day. My favourite memories are of sports days, go Jardine!

What did you do when you first left RGS? I went to study Mass Communications at QUT in Brisbane. Once I finished my degree, my main goal was to travel the world. So I saved some money and traveled around Europe for eight months and then moved to London to begin work.

How did you break into the fashion industry? It was whilst living in London that I truly decided to change my career path and pursue the fashion industry. I began to realise my interest and talent in the field and enrolled in the London College of Fashion (LCF) to gain skills in pattern design. From there I began an internship with the fellow Australian label, Antipodium. I then went on to work with a London-based designer, Zoe Jordan.

When did you start your own fashion label and where does the name of your label - OhSevenDays - come from? I launched my brand in 2013 after moving from London to Istanbul. The name OhSevenDays comes from the Turkish translation of ‘Seven’, meaning ‘one who loves’. The name refers to the love of everyday and versatile clothing.

What was the process in getting that label started? The process of launching a fashion label is complex and includes not just design, but strong marketing, production and sales strategies. I was lucky to combine my marketing education, experience at LCF, and on the job training to compile a viable business model.

How would you describe your fashion label style? The OhSevenDays style is minimal, modern and versatile. We incorporate sport luxe silhouettes with feminine tailoring. Our collections are season-less and aim to be relevant and modern wherever you are in the world.

You are now based in Turkey, how did you find yourself based in that country? I moved here in 2013 with my now fiancé, who is Turkish. We decided to try living in Istanbul for a few years as I loved the city so much when I visited previously.

What does the future hold for yourself and OhSevenDays? We’re growing our online presence next season and are hoping to expand in Australia! Because of opposite seasons, it’s been hard to expand within Australia. But it’s one of my major goals for next season!

How would you describe working in the fashion industry? Competitive, challenging and satisfying.
International designer

Have you met many famous people or worked in any amazing locations?
London Fashion Week was one of the most exciting events I've attended. It's packed with celebrities and loads of amazingly talented designers. We worked with Alexa Chung and Poppy Delevigne to dress them for the shows.

Any tough times along the way and, how did you beat those challenges? There are always challenges starting a business. Perservering through the initial hardship of rejection is the key. Building a brand doesn't happen overnight and neither does success. I look to my peers for inspiration and perseverance.

What advice do you have for RGS students who one day hope to break into the fashion design industry?
There are so many different careers within the fashion industry, whether it be design, buying, marketing, or production facilitation. All of which are exciting and essential. So many young students go straight into design school because they have an interest in fashion. I think it's better to identify which aspect of the industry suits you the best, and build your education to support this career. If your dream is to start your own label, I'd suggest a business degree and some design electives.

http://www.ohsevendays.com/

Battling against the world’s best bull riders

Lawson Nobbs and Sam Spencer (RGS 2014) have tested themselves against some of the world's best junior bullriders. Competing at the Youth Bull Riding World Finals in Abilene, Texas, in August, Lawson (pictured above left) placed fourth overall and Sam (pictured right) also produced some promising efforts on bulls that were completely unfamiliar to the pair. Lawson burst out of the gates to win the opening round and was still leading the pack into the second and third rounds before finishing fourth overall - collecting almost $1000 in prizemoney and two buckles.

Lawson, from the Moura district, told The Morning Bulletin newspaper that the Texas trip had given him a taste of the sport in the States. “There're are way more rodeos, some of the bulls are better and there's more of it,” Lawson told the newspaper. As always, Lawson still loves the adrenalin rush associated with the sport and the challenge to hold on tight to conquer an eight second ride.

Lawson and Sam, from the Comet district, are regulars on the Central Queensland bull riding circuit and also represented The Rockhampton Grammar School in bull riding during their School days. They would also welcome another opportunity to ride again in the US.

The Rockhampton Grammar School Distinguished Past Students’ Awards

In 2015 The Rockhampton Grammar School acknowledged the inaugural inductees for the Distinguished Past Student Awards. Nominations are now being called for the 2016 awards with nominations closing on 30 October 2015. For further information email paststudents@rgs.qld.edu.au

Gary Larson tackles health scare

This can happen to anyone

Queensland rugby great Gary Larson (RGS 1984) is making the most of life after a life changing health scare.

“My health and mind set is really good now but I still have functional issues,” Gary said.

Gary, now 48-years-old, has had to overcome a series of challenges to reach this place in his life after his world changed in 2013 when he was diagnosed with prostate cancer.

From the age of 40 Gary had done the right thing and had PSA (Prostate-specific antigen) levels checked every 12 months.

“I had no symptoms (like blood in urine, no family history or excessive urinating),” Gary said.

Then one of Gary’s tests showed his PSA levels had doubled for his age.

A further test was taken three months later and his doctor, Dr P’ng from the Rockhampton Mater Hospital, suggested a biopsy.

“The biopsy found a few irregular patterns on the prostate. I had the early stages of prostate cancer,” Gary said.

“I remember I was working on a D11 dozer when Dr P’ng rang. I couldn’t hear a thing so I called back later.

“I was lost for words. I had to tell Kate (wife). She was shocked.’’

Gary would soon after meet with Dr P’ng, trying to figure out why and how this had happened to him.

“I didn’t get any distinct answers.”

Gary remembers everything Dr P’ng said going in one ear and out the other.

“I couldn’t remember anything. Kate went with me the second time and we wrote down everything – options, treatment, etc,” Gary said.

“We got onto other people and friends who had had various treatments.

“I confided in a lot of people. “My gut reaction, which you always learned playing footy, was to get the prostate removed.”

Gary could not fault his surgeon Dr Peter Heathcote (Brisbane Urology Clinic) and staff at the Greenslopes Private Hospital in Brisbane.

Gary would undergo robotic surgery and would spend the next eight weeks off work. It was what happened physically after the surgery that Gary struggled with.

“It’s hidden men’s business that isn’t talked about a lot,” Gary said.

“You don’t hear about the side effects on your manhood and I really battled with my confidence for six months after the operation.”

After the surgery Gary now faces blood tests every six months over five years and he is also helping spread the word with his “honest” conversations at several meetings.

Gary said it was all about awareness. “Men service cars more than they service their bodies,” Gary said.

“Most men don’t go to the doctors – I don’t know why. This can happen to anyone.”

Gary admits he does not know what will happen down the track, but he just keeps putting one thing in front of the other.

“I want to keep seeing my kids growing up,” said the father of two.

Gary Larson, left, at Tannum Sands, takes a different perspective on life following his prostate cancer scare; Below: Gary back in his Australian rugby league days with Wayne Bartrim and Steve Menzies.

Leading Australian prostate cancer specialist is an RGS graduate

One of Australia’s top prostate cancer specialists is Dr Greg Malone (RGS 1985), a graduate of Medicine at the University of Queensland in 1992. Dr Malone completed his Fellowship Training with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, undertaking post-fellowship training at the Institute for Urology and Nephrology in London. This fellowship focused on Prostate Cancer and Radical Prostatectomy, Prostatic Urology, Endourology, and the management of Complex Stone Disease.

In 2008 Dr Malone undertook post-fellowship training in Robotically Assisted (keyhole) Radical Prostatectomy and is one of the founding surgeons establishing Queensland’s first Robotic Surgery Unit at the Greenslopes Private Hospital (Qld Robotic Surgery (QRS)). Dr Malone performed the first Robotic Partial Nephrectomy (kidney preservation surgery for renal cancer) in Qld in 2010, subsequently applying this surgical approach to over 50 renal tumour cases.

Dr Malone is the past-Chairman, Australian and New Zealand Association of Urological Surgeons (ANZAUS). This is a position on the Federal Executive of the Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand.

Dr Malone recently completed his term as the Meeting Chair and Convenor of the USANZ 2014 Annual Scientific Meeting. This internationally recognised meeting, held in Brisbane, involved the work of 28 international guest faculty and attracted 950 delegates from Australia, New Zealand and internationally.
That’s Entertainment
RGS past students create theatre magic

Jaime Hadwen (RGS 2009)

“I graduated from RGS in 2009 and knew I wanted to perform. After taking a GAP year to the UK in 2010 I moved to Sydney and have lived there ever since. I love Sydney. There is so much opportunity here and the lifestyle is perfection.

In 2011 I completed a Cert IV in Musical theatre at Actors College of Theatre and Television then went on to complete my Bachelor of music - majoring in musical theatre at the Australian Institute of Music (AIM) in two years (2012-13) as a scholarship student.

I was given an amazing opportunity at AIM to be in the first Australian musical workshop of King of The Air, along side Les Miserables leading man Simon Gleeson, playing Jean Valjean in the Australian tour at the moment. That was such an honour and one of my favourite performance memories to date.

Since leaving drama school I have been extremely fortunate. Landing a wonderful agent was the first box to tick.

Last year I performed in StageTek’s production of Spring Awakening, as Thea, and also stepped into the world of children’s entertainment. I love musical theatre, and my passion lies there, however children are also a huge passion of mine. So when I can combine the two together, I am in my element.

Last year I also toured NSW in an educational musical for The Australian Book Week tour called Worlds Apart with Perform Educational musicals and then was contracted to work in the Philippines for a month in November as Alice in Wonderland in a Christmas show with Pen2Stage Productions.

2015 has been an amazing year for me so far. Playing Crissy in the 1970’s love, rock, tribal musical Hair, with Exclaim Theatre Company, and then the wonderful experience of Bring It On - The Musical, which was the Australian premier in Sydney.

I absolutely adore this show. It is contemporary, fun and vibrant...and I get thrown in the air a lot. Which is such a buzz!

Some exciting news is that Bring It On - The Musical is heading to the Gold Coast for a limited season in January at the Gold Coast Arts Center (8-17 January). I am looking forward to performing in Queensland again and hoping some of my Rockhampton friends and family can see the show now, including my parents as they were in Europe during the Sydney season.

At the moment I am back on tour with Perform Educational Musicals in the NSW Book Week tour called Shine A Light and rehearsing for an even more dazzling production of Bring It On in the evenings. I need to say that I owe a lot of my passion, success and drive to my parents. They support me almost too much! Geoff and Pam are honestly the most amazing parents I know. I couldn’t do what I do without them. And along with that wonderful pair, I also want to thank Jan Kennedy. She opened up my world to musical theatre and provided me with the stepping stones to this career, forever grateful! And finally to Elisa Williams, Christine Netherwood, Michael Robertson and all those wonderful helpers from the RGS musical society. The students at RGS don’t know how lucky they are!”

RGS Musicals

2004: (Primary) Annie Jr (Annie)
2005: The Wiz (Ensemble and Munchkin #1)
2006: Beauty and the Beast (Sausage Curl Girl, Plate and Ensemble)
2007: Alice (The Fish Footman and Ensemble)
2008: Grease (Sandy)
2009: The Pyjama Game (Babe Williams)

Andrew Conaghan (RGS 2002)

Andrew Conaghan (pictured left performing in Oklahoma) has performed throughout the world in musical theatre. Among Andrew’s latest projects has been appearing in the UK tour of Dirty Rotten Scoundrels.

Andrew, playing the cover role of Freddy Andre along with other roles, has performed at London’s Savoy Theatre on the West End and is now touring the UK.

Trained at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), the baritone singer has landed roles in a variety of musical productions.

Andrew has also performed in Oklahoma! and Shane Warne - The Musical.

He also scored the role of Seabee in Opera Australia’s production of South Pacific, performing in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane shows. Other musicals to his credit include Jekyll & Hyde, Starlight Express, Guys & Dolls, Hair, The Marriage of Figaro (Opera), Rent and Titanic.

His powerful voice has also featured on stage in The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber and I Dreamed A Dream - Hit Songs From Broadway.
Fraser Orford finds a sense of energy when he’s at the theatre. And this energy is thrust into everything that makes a spectacular show - behind the scenes. Sydney-based Fraser is currently employed as a Production Coordinator for the Ambassador Theatre Group and is working on their upcoming national tour of *Ghost The Musical*. A production coordinator provides technical support to the creative and production teams. *Ghost The Musical* has already appeared on London’s West End and New York’s Broadway and has been seen by more than a million people. The musical makes its Australian premier in Adelaide in January.

Fraser’s changed career path is proving rewarding. After School he studied a Bachelor of Regional and Town Planning at the University of Queensland before being accepted to the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) in Sydney. “At NIDA, under the tutelage of Australia’s best theatre practitioners, I studied the areas of arts management and technical design,” Fraser said. In his final year at NIDA Fraser was fortunate to work on many professional productions including *Les Misérables* (Cameron Mackintosh), *The King & I* (John Frost/Opera Australia), *Cosi* (La Boite) and *The Glass Menagerie* (Belvoir).

Fraser has always had a passion for theatre. “My performing arts began during my childhood in Rockhampton and was nurtured further during my time at RGS (2003-2007), particularly through my involvement with the School’s annual musical productions, helmed by Jan Kennedy,” Fraser said.

Fraser is also a member of the core team of TEDxSydney, the largest TEDx event in the world, which is usually held at the Sydney Opera House. TEDx is a US based not-for-profit enterprise developed to propagate ideas Worth Spreading.

The RGS Past Students’ Association would like to keep you updated on upcoming events at the School, including School Reunions. Please contact Rachael McDonald at rmcdonald@rgs.qld.edu.au to update your contact details so we can keep in touch with you.
Tara Croser (RGS 2001) still proudly remembers winning first place for her photography age group at the Ridgelands Show. “It was a photo of two horses on our farm (at Ridgelands) and I think I won $5. I was so excited,” Tara said. “I always loved playing with mum and dad’s cameras – of course they had film in them back then.”

Tara also remembers getting her very first camera in a show bag at the Rockhampton Show. Now Tara has many more admirers of her images in her photographer duties with The Courier-Mail and The Sunday Mail in Brisbane. Tara first started at The Courier-Mail in January 2013, mainly on the night time social scene rounds. At the end of that year she was offered a maternity leave contract and now finds herself as a permanent employee.

She also gets to work alongside her husband who is a crime reporter at The Courier-Mail. News, fashion and food shoots are all just part of a day’s work. “The variety of work is great,” Tara said. “You never know what you will be doing each day when you’re getting ready for work. I love being out and about and meeting new people all day.”

Some of the “new people” Tara has come across in the job are the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (William and Kate), US President Barack Obama, former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, the Dalai Lama, actress Margot Robbie, model Jennifer Hawkins and Arnold Schwarzenegger. These shoots become a mix of nervous energy and anxiousness to get that right shot.

Tara ventured to RAAF Base Amberley for the Royal photo shoot. “It was amazing, but there was also a lot of responsibility to do it properly,” Tara said. “A lot of us (photographers) were placed in different spots, and luckily I had the Super Hornet, and we were given 12 minutes in our area to take photos. “You can get nervous but it’s also very exciting. I got to be really close to the Royals and it’s good to hear them interact – just saying little things to each other like Will trying to encourage Kate to get into the Super Hornet, which she eventually did.”

Tara said it was less chaotic than she expected. The big shoots can also bring long work days. For Barack Obama’s arrival in Brisbane, Tara set the alarm clock at 1am to be at work by 2am. Meetings with journalists and picture desk staff were followed by travel to the Brisbane Convention Centre, security scanning and then more travel to RAAF Base Amberley at 6am. “I had 7 minutes to get the photos and I just wanted to get his wave coming down the stairs. My heart was racing.”

Photos downloaded onto laptops and iPads to download on the bus trip home and the job is done.

Tara also joined the State Election campaign trail with now Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk. On board a private charter with then State Opposition members and a throng of media, the two week trip included three visits to both Cairns and Townsville along with stopovers in Mackay, Airlie Beach, Gladstone and Charleville.

“We were up every morning to follow her (Palaszczuk) on her morning walk and would finish the day at around 6pm,” Tara said. “You always have to be ready in case something happens.”

Tara’s Courier-Mail work has also involved three days working with the Royal Flying Doctors Service (RFDS) in Cairns visiting an Aboriginal community, properties and an old mining town. She has also managed to avoid, for the most part, the wrath of the public – especially at court or watch house jobs, “copping just a bit of verbal abuse”.

“I have been very lucky,” Tara said. Studying at The Rockhampton Grammar School Tara remembers selecting subjects with an interest in journalism studies. Like many others she changed her mind a few times, wanted to study in Brisbane but remained in Rockhampton, instead starting Communications studies at CQUniversity. Tara majored in journalism and media. “I think I was always interested in... (continued next page)
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(continued)

photography but thought it would be too hard to get in to,” Tara said.

“I had one photography course in that degree. I loved it and did get a high distinction probably because it was the course I enjoyed the most.”

Tara had a break from studies before returning to the course and nearing the end of university scored work experience with The Morning Bulletin photographers.

As chance had it a photographer left during that time and Tara was offered a job. “I was totally in the right place at the right time.”

While at The Morning Bulletin she was mentored by fellow Courier Mail Gold Coast-based photographer Luke Marsden.

Tara was only there for six months before taking a marketing job to get her to Brisbane and would then rediscover her photography passion when working for the magazine, Style.

While Tara takes amazing photos she admits there is always more to learn as a photographer.

“Tara’s advice of any budding professional photographers is to just put your name out there. “Keep practicing and get contacts through work experience,” Tara said.

Tara returned to RGS in June this year for the Year 12 Formal, where she offered to take photos of her niece Bree Purcell.

“I have fond memories of Grammar and it was lovely to be back,” Tara said.

“I still have a lot of good friends from School. “I think at Grammar we tend to stick together and you make lifelong friends.”

Tara mixes with people from all walks of life
Sasha nears dream
Rower has 2016 Olympics within sight

Sasha Belonogoff (RGS 2007) has helped qualify the men’s double scull boat for the Australian Olympic rowing team – now he just wants one of those seats with his doubles partner James McRae. Sasha and James are confident of an Olympic call-up, but they must continue to perform strongly through Australian selection trials from December to February and then continue their solid form at World Cup regattas leading into the August (5-21) Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

“It’s starting to get more real now,” said Sasha, who has been working towards his Olympic goal for the past seven years.

“Making the Olympics are not my end goal – I want to do as well as I can, not just make the team,” Sasha said.

Sasha knows how important it is to have the right combination in a boat.

“You have to respect your partner, trust them to know they’ll do their job. You can’t worry about other people in your crew.”

The leading Australian rower was back in Rockhampton (pictured above) visiting family during September and he also took the opportunity to watch the next generation of rowers in action at the Queensland Schools Rowing Championships on the Fitzroy River.

“I love seeing the RGS kids, in particular, row and it’s exciting to see the kids get excited about the sport,” Sasha said.

“For me it was a most rewarding experience at school. I liked boats so that was my main attraction of getting into rowing. “It’s a different sport. There are very few people that are naturally talented at it.

“You have to work at it and it’s about rewards for dedication and commitment. “Race daya reward people that have put in the most work.”

Sasha and James are still working on getting the right combination for the right race conditions.

“In the World Cup final, where they placed fifth, their rhythm was unsuitable for the faster conditions.

“It’s better to learn that lesson now than next year at the Olympics,” Sasha said.

“I’ve been rowing internationally since 2008 and every time I’m on the water I’m still learning something new.

“Our four-year cycle comes to an end in 2016 and hopefully we have our stuff figured out and the major learning behind us.”

After graduating from RGS in 2007 Sasha started Medicine studies at James Cook University in Townsville before deferring after he made his first Australian rowing team. He then continued studies at the University of Sydney and finished his Exercise Science degree last year.

“I’m still keen to do more study – part-time study while rowing is the perfect balance for me right now,” Sasha said.

In the meantime Sasha is also enjoying how rowing is letting him see the world.

The recent regattas included World Cups in Italy and Switzerland, a six-week training camp in western Spain and the World Championships in France.

Sasha, now based in Adelaide, knows he is currently enjoying a special lifestyle.

“I wouldn’t have seen these places if it wasn’t for rowing.”

Training AWARDS
For excellence in vocational education and training

Kiara’s work ethics rewarded

Kiara Lavia (RGS 2013) won the Bob Marshman Trainee of the Year for the Central Queensland Region in the Queensland Training Awards.

Kiara, 19, works in the technical services division within engineering services at Gladstone Regional Council.

Where are you? Past Students upload your contact information so we can take every opportunity to stay in touch with you! Go to www.rgs.qld.edu.au/psa-my-details
Blog helps discover new home

When Tara Cheyne (RGS 2003) moved to Canberra she couldn’t understand why people were so critical of the city. Tara wanted to find out first-hand more about her new home so she decided to record her findings in a blog – “In The Taratory”. This blog is now a huge hit with Canberra locals and visitors.

“I started the blog after I’d been in Canberra for a few years,” Tara said. “I heard a lot of people complain about Canberra and not having much to do, and I found that really surprising! I was doing a lot of fun and interesting things and thought, if only people knew that this thing existed, they wouldn’t think that Canberra’s boring.”

Tara’s blog really took off in 2013, the centenary of Canberra, and her Twitter and Facebook posts now reach thousands of people.

“I have strangers stop me in the street, and often people will say to me, ‘I did this experience or ate at this restaurant because you recommended it, and I loved it,’” Tara said. Tara said Canberra is a great place to live. “It’s actually got all four seasons, including hot summers and frosty winters. It’s equal distance to get to the beach or the snow,” Tara said. “There’s a real sense of pride in the city at the moment – it’s got a real foodie culture and there are so many things to do each week that it’s overwhelming.”

“I’ve worked in the public service since I moved to Canberra and love it. It’s important to me to do work that’s meaningful and makes a difference in people’s lives, and the work opportunities are varied and interesting. I highly recommend it!”

The Australian Government employee is also very community-minded. Tara is Chair of the Belconnen Community Council, is on the board of the Belconnen Arts Centre, is a foundation member of the Canberra Global Shapers Hub, is the 2014 social media ambassador for Visit Canberra, has been a Tournament of Minds regional judge since 2013 and has been a volunteer reader for Radio 1RPH (Reading for the Print Handicapped) since 2009.

As a result of the blog work and broader work in the community, a local website Her Canberra named Tara as one of the 15 women to watch in 2015.

“All of that is really humbling,” she said.

Living in Canberra or planning a visit to the nation’s capital, follow Tara’s Blog at - https://inthewaratory.wordpress.com/ or on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/InTheTaratory

Save the Date:

**RGS Race Day 2016**

Saturday, 7 May, at Rockhampton’s Callaghan Park

For more information contact: paststudents@rgs.qld.edu.au
In pictures - Sydney past students’ function (The Winery)

The Rockhampton Grammar School past students’ converged on The Winery in Surrey Hills on 9 September to meet with the School’s current Headmaster Dr Phillip Moulds.

Left: Cameron Kenna (RGS 1990) and Graeme Small (RGS 1987)

Peta Estens (RGS 1997) and Angus Lee (RGS 2003)

RGS Headmaster Dr Phillip Moulds and Jamielle Knight (RGS 1996)

Scott Norford (RGS 2002) and Jaime Hadwen (RGS 2009).

Past students’ recognised for vocational studies

Vocational training during their Senior schooling has been rewarding for three past students of The Rockhampton Grammar School.

Maddison Black, Peter Li and Tom Smith (RGS 2014) are recipients of 2014 Australian Vocational Student Prizes based on their achievements at School while undertaking vocational education and training or an Australian School-based Apprenticeship.

Only 500 awards were presented to students across Australia.

The awards promote the benefits of vocational education and reflect the commitment of schools in ensuring students not only have skills for enhanced employment opportunities but also have the skills employers need and that are central to Australia’s economic growth.

While studying at RGS, Maddison Black completed a Certificate III in Fitness (School based traineeship), Certificate II in Public Safety and Certificate I in Work Education. Maddison is now studying a Bachelor of Occupational Therapy (Honours), at University of Queensland.

While completing the school-based traineeship Maddison completed 400 hours of work at CrossFit CQ. This work, combined with valuable content studied through TAFE (now CQUniversity), enabled Maddison to apply this knowledge in the workplace.

“Although my university studies are not directly associated with the field I completed the traineeship in, it has still opened so many doors for me particularly with my training and coaching in CrossFit, which I hope to continue for a long time,” Maddison said.

Peter Li completed a Certificate II in Fitness and Certificate I in Work Education and is currently studying a Bachelor of Science degree at UQ. He has been accepted into the university’s Doctor of Medicine programme next year.

Peter said vocational education was an integral part of any education system and the skills he learnt were useful throughout life.

Tom, who completed a Certificate III Carpentry (School based apprenticeship) and Certificate I Work Education is now working full time and finishing his apprenticeship locally with Acute Builders.

He said winning the prize was overwhelming and the prizemoney helped him buy more tools for his apprenticeship.
Motherhood inspires writing

Former RGS student and teacher Krista Becker (nee Leach, 1997) tackles the honest truth about raising young children. Here is her story, It’s Hard: A realistic View of Becoming a Mother.

In 2009, after struggling to breastfeed and also with the “newness” of being a mother, I began writing about my journey into motherhood and all of its trials and tribulations. When my second daughter was born by C-section two years later, I knew I had more to say and therefore continued writing to include the (mis)adventures of being a mother of two. Even if my goal of seeing my writing in print wasn’t going to be achieved, I at least wanted something that I could pass on to my daughters when they were older.

And so I told my story – the whole brutal, often soul bearing truth – about what it was like for me. I wanted my readers to feel as though they could either say “I’m so glad it is not just me” or “phew, someone has had it worse”. There is a plethora of information on pregnancy and parenting that is thrown at new and expecting mothers. From research papers that get reported on in the media, to the opinions of family and friends, to the multitude of social media blogs. I found that if you immerse yourself in all that is out there, you can come away a lot more confused than before and begin to second guess your own ability to cope.

Last year, I was fortunate enough to pursue my dream of seeing my book It’s Hard: A Realistic View of Becoming a Mother in print. I originally had a PDF version available to purchase from a Queensland based website, Writer’s Web, which was a platform for new writers (unfortunately, the owners have recently closed down this site to focus on other businesses). The aspiration of the owners was to pair novice writers to an audience. My work was reviewed by a handful of colleagues and the feedback I received, along with the support I had from the owners of this site, gave me the confidence to continue down the self-publishing road. I then researched this avenue and came across a Sydney based business, Publish-Me! They guided me through the steps of editing, proofreading, typesetting and printing. When the boxes of books turned up in August last year, I was so proud that I had completed my journey to see my writing in hard copy.

Throughout the whole process (and even still today), I question why people would want to read my story and whether it was worth printing. Millions of women have gone through this, so why do I think I am an expert? First of all, I am definitely not an expert. The main reason I felt the need to share my thoughts with other women is due to today’s popular notion that we should be Perfect Parents. A lot of people (the ubiquitous “they”) have an opinion as to what perfect parents are and I wanted to stand up and shout that it is okay if you don’t live up the “their” ridiculous definition of Perfection.

According to my mini Oxford Dictionary, the definition of Perfection is complete, faultless, not deficient, very enjoyable, exact, precise. In my humble opinion, therefore, it is highly improbable if not entirely impossible to categorise something as perfect because it is so subjective. Who’s to say that your “faultless” does not hold some sort of fault in another person’s eyes? Who’s to say that your “enjoyable” is the same as someone else’s?

Instead of people saying that they have achieved perfection, perhaps they should clarify this statement by adding “I have achieved perfection in my eyes”. This might take a little bit of pressure off of us individuals to achieve the unachievable.

I have subsequently had two more daughters (in 2013 and 2015) and I can still say that I find being the mother of a newborn hard. However, I know that there is light (and a screaming toddler) at the end of the tunnel and so I don’t berate myself too much anymore when I dissolve into a puddle of tears or just want to snuggle my two week old that little bit tighter.”

Photograph - Angela Mallinson

For more information on the publication contact paststudents@rgs.qld.edu.au
electricity to flow. When I started out in the eastern side, the width of another cooking bay from Quarry Street and extended back to the roundabout outside on the entrance road and laundry. The centre also moved closer to beautiful landscaped surrounds, the friendliness and how it fitted into the family was immensely rewarding. The ability to share experiences gained from the past as well as discovering new technology and how it fitted into the family was immensely enjoyable. Teaching primary has had its own rewards in seeing students gain new information each time they cooked. Finding that cookery is a science is a very positive concept for students as this is a science where they can enjoy eating as well as learning science concepts. The Certificates in Hospitality have seen students develop confidence in practical skills in non-alcoholic beverages and espresso coffees and working in a café. It is very rewarding when industry personnel are impressed with the skills students have when they do industry placement. My special memories are all the students I have met over the years and the way they engaged in the subject. I have past students that I see regularly and it is wonderful that they want to share their new experiences.

The development of the school recipe book of Primary School Recipes started out as a book for my grandchildren so they understood my past as a teacher. However this was progressed further and became a book developed by the school with the help of Mrs Debbie Moulds (photographer), Kylie Toole (Teacher Aide). I also must thank the school for allowing me to teach CQ University students in the subject Food Technology and Textile Technology. This was an experience I would never have dreamt of occurring. I have also thoroughly enjoyed working with Golf as a Co-curricular option. After 32 years I will miss driving into the School with its beautiful landscaped surrounds, the friendliness and dedication of the students to achieve to their best ability, RGS Staff and ancillary staff that have helped me along on my journey and students that arose that needed to be fixed with equipment.

The colleagues I work with in the Home Economics and Hospitality are very special people and will always be part of my family. I am pleased to announce that my daughter Nyree Malone will take over from me in the Department and I am sure she will enjoy teaching in the area as much as I have. Remember if you see me, say hello and remind me of when I taught you as after 32 years it is impossible to remember you all.

At the end of Term 4 this year The Rockhampton Grammar School will farewell Mrs Pam Drillis from the Home Economics Department.

Mrs Drillis (pictured below) has called RGS home for over 30 years, teaching countless numbers of students how to cook and sew - each still with their own memories today.

This is her story:

"I was employed from the beginning of Term 2 1983 for a trial period of six weeks to see how I coped with a young family (Inga 2½ and Nyree 1¼). This was an interesting time fitting in family with school. The Headmaster, Mr Butler informed me after three weeks that I appeared to be coping very well and I was offered a full time job, so that is where the journey began. I discovered very quickly that two stoves weren’t working in the kitchen and didn’t appear to have a power source. I contacted the School electrician to be informed I was correct and finally the stoves worked by the addition of a metal tube to the ceiling to allow had to purchase arrowroot for Heavenly Tarts that the students were making and he came back with Arrowroot Biscuits. I was surprised when the Headmaster of the time Mr Cottrell introduced me to my first Teacher Aide (Jenny Lindley). This was a welcome relief and she then bought all the ingredients for cooking. Mrs Patricia Willet became the next Teacher Aide and she worked with the School for 17 years and she knew the recipes backwards and was excellent in her job. After this a few Teacher Aides worked in the centre including Mrs Kylie Toole and now Mrs Andrea Chapman weekly and Mrs Adrienne Wall. I have worked with eight teachers - Mrs Karryn Quinton, Mrs Gillian Smith, Mrs Cheryl Thompson, Miss Krista Leach, Ms Bernadette Curry, Mrs Joy Wilson and Mrs Julie Dunlop who has been my loyal offsider for approximately 17 years. The subject has changed over 32 years. I started off teaching Junior Home Economics that consisted of seven content areas. (Food and Nutrition, Textiles, Families and Sewing, Design, Housing, Consumer Education and Management). Junior Home Economics was developed into Fashion and Catering. Senior Home Economics had changed as I entered the School. Semesters of Food and Nutrition, Textiles and Design, Housing and Families were studied. At time there was no subject Hospitality Studies (an OP subject) was introduced. We managed to get into the Pilot Program by offering Front Office and Reception as our major study area. Mrs Dunlop and I and the students had to enrol in TAFE to do the competencies to be able to teach the subject. Julie Dunlop and I have completed many updating sessions to be able to teach a VET subject in the school. Eventually Certificate I and Certificate II in Hospitality were introduced which saw the creation of Top Shots Café in the centre.

Many trips were made to the supermarket to supply the ingredients for cooking. Eventually the Manual Arts Teacher Aide Mr John Findlater, was asked to purchase the ingredients for the section as part of his job. He and I had some interesting laughs with what he purchased as one day he was looking at flour and said, ‘That looks like something useful to eat!’ I replied, ‘It is, it is called Arrowroot!’ He then proceeded to make some Arrowroot Biscuits and Mrs Patricia Willet and I ate them for lunch in the staffroom and I was surprised when the Headmaster of the time Mr Cottrell introduced me to my first Teacher Aide (Jenny Lindley). This was a welcome relief and she then bought all the ingredients for cooking. Mrs Patricia Willet became the next Teacher Aide and she worked with the School for 17 years and she knew the recipes backwards and was excellent in her job. After this a few Teacher Aides worked in the centre including Mrs Kylie Toole and now Mrs Andrea Chapman weekly and Mrs Adrienne Wall. I have worked with eight teachers - Mrs Karryn Quinton, Mrs Gillian Smith, Mrs Cheryl Thompson, Miss Krista Leach, Ms Bernadette Curry, Mrs Joy Wilson and Mrs Julie Dunlop who has been my loyal offsider for approximately 17 years. The subject has changed over 32 years. I started off teaching Junior Home Economics that consisted of seven content areas. (Food and Nutrition, Textiles, Families and Sewing, Design, Housing, Consumer Education and Management). Junior Home Economics was developed into Fashion and Catering. Senior Home Economics had changed as I entered the School. Semesters of Food and Nutrition, Textiles and Design, Housing and Families were studied. At time there was no subject Hospitality Studies (an OP subject) was introduced. We managed to get into the Pilot Program by offering Front Office and Reception as our major study area. Mrs Dunlop and I and the students had to enrol in TAFE to do the competencies to be able to teach the subject. Julie Dunlop and I have completed many updating sessions to be able to teach a VET subject in the school. Eventually Certificate I and Certificate II in Hospitality were introduced which saw the creation of Top Shots Café in the centre.

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The colleagues I work with in the Home Economics Department are very special people and will always be part of my family. I am pleased to announce that my daughter Nyree Malone will take over from me in the Department and I am sure she will enjoy teaching in the area as much as I have. Remember if you see me, say hello and remind me of when I taught you as after 32 years it is impossible to remember you all.
Greetings from a 1949-53 RBGS boarder from Monto, who became a geologist, and had a very fortunate life. My father belonged to several generations of coal miners in northern England, and was convinced that education was the best way out of the pit. Hence the Rockhampton Grammar Schools were chosen for me and my sister.

Mr Jardine and Mr Gillam stimulated my interest in science. It was Mr Jardine who introduced us to "igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary" while building rock walls at his beach cottage in Emu Park. Choosing geology to go with maths, physics and chemistry at the University of New England was an easy decision.

On visiting the School for the first time in 62 years I was delighted to see a thoroughly modern, prosperous, happily co-ed establishment. The School, just after WWII was struggling. There was no rowing or gym, less than 200 boys, ages 8 to 18, pocket money was 2 shillings a week, of which half was destined for the church plate. Our lives were controlled by bells and the routines of study, sport, cadets and church attendance kept us fully occupied. We did meet the girls from RGGS at closely supervised dance lessons, and see them across the aisle at church. Lingering was not encouraged.

Before going to University, I spent a year working at steel mills in Newcastle, and became more aware of the process of transforming ore into metal, and then into useful products. My early exposure to field work was in New England and Broken Hill. After graduating, I joined a CSIRO unit where samples of ore were examined to guide the process of mineral recovery. Then followed an enlightening period of postdoctoral study at Stanford University, with lectures in geochemistry, economic geology and materials science. The next step was to join a major Canadian mining company, which was expanding its search for base metal deposits worldwide. Fieldwork took me from near Yellowknife, North West Territories, to Bathurst, New Brunswick, and provided many opportunities to see different mineral deposits.

My wife and I returned to Australia with the same company; it soon bought into a tin mining group, and the further exploration of their existing mines was the immediate priority. Elsewhere in Australia, the exploration group found two zinc deposits, one gold deposit and revitalised an old copper deposit - all became profitable mines. For an exploration geologist, that represents "objective achieved" and is truly exciting for everyone involved.

The technology involved in mineral exploration is becoming more and more sophisticated, particularly now that the near surface discoveries have been made, and the challenge is to find large economic ore bodies, deeply buried, and under heavily weathered cover.

For many geologists, employment is a roller coaster, and they have had to be adaptable, consistently investing in new knowledge and skills. Geologists associated with the resources industry can’t help but be exposed to a marvellous mixture of professions and skilled exponents. The advances in IT, remote sensing and robotics, for example, are having a profound effect on the way our work is done.

If my career as a geologist looks planned from A to Z, it was not. Certainly plan A was to spend four years at RBGS, I was then well prepared for the good opportunities that arose and have thoroughly enjoyed the journey.
The January 2016 match will mark the 10th anniversary of a day that celebrates helping young people in need and having fun playing the game of cricket.

“By doing this it gives the guys from School a chance to get together and also catch up with Tony each year,” Jonathon said.

“Tony’s walking and knows what’s going on, but he did suffer severe brain injuries and needs full time care from his parents.”

RGS past students from Brisbane, Emerald, Rockhampton, Longreach, Sydney and Melbourne each year reunite.

“This is a match for mates,” Jonathon said. Earlier this year the match also jointly raised funds for a former RGS team mate, Martin Grant (RGS 1998) who lost his life in a car accident.

The School donated some RGS baggies for this year’s match to remember Martin. RGS past students involved in the annual match include: Garreth Angel, Andrew Quinn, Jonathon Offord, Phil Forster, Ben Mabin, Tom Mylrea, Duncan Ray, Alec Sutherland, Ross Burnett, Michael Thomson, Cam McClymont and Tony’s brother, John O’Brien.

Youngcare is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year and Tony was a special guest of His Excellency The Governor of Queensland and Mrs Paul de Jersey at Government House to commemorate this milestone.

For further information on Youngcare visit: https://www.youngcare.com.au/

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**Roffey: pioneer of the skies**

Victor Roffey, who started his education at RGS in 1921, pushed the boundaries of aviation in the 1930s.

Far from his “Melba Ville” home, in the Duaringa district, Roffey completed the first flight from Oaco, New Caledonia, to Australia on 21 November, 1931.

Roffey and his flying partner Clifford Brown had made many flights around New Caledonia in the “Golden Eagle” - making the aviators celebrities of their time.

Roffey then decided to fly the “Golden Eagle” back to Australia. Taking off at 5am New Caledonia time Roffey landed his two-seater Gipsy Moth at the Connor Park aerodrome in Marlborough at 3pm. After a refreshment he finished the 43 minute flight to Rockhampton.

New Caledonia was unable to inform anyone that Roffey had taken off and it was only near the end of his journey that the attempt was known.

On his arrival in Australia Roffey was sunburnt and had battled one big storm on his journey, but both himself and the aircraft were in good shape.

The next day he flew home to the Duaringa district.

The Sydney Morning Herald reported “the hazardous flight” as “The plane which Mr Roffey will use would normally carry 10 gallons of petrol, sufficient for 3 1/2 to 4 hours flying, giving cruising range of about 300 miles. Apparently auxiliary tanks have been fitted to enable the long flight of 900 miles to be undertaken”.

Aviators regarded the flight as very hazardous given it was in such a small plane.

The 23-year-old, who had only been flying for 10 months, arrived with the first air mail from New Caledonia which he handed over to the postmaster.

A monument still stands in New Caledonia today of Roffey’s achievement and the country honoured his feat with a postage stamp.
Welcome Back

Past students visit old school grounds

**Left:** Graham Clark, of Brisbane, returned to RGS in August. Graham was a day student at the School in 1955-56. The Clark family had a long association with the School with his father attending RGS in 1924 and 1925 and his great-great-grand uncle, John Macfarlane, was chairman of the Board of Trustees when the School was built.

**Cameron McLachlan** (RGS 1994-1998) visited the School on his return home from Brisbane. Cameron, who started as a boarder and finished as a day student, was Captain of Rowing in both 1997 and 1998.

**John Shearer** (RGS 1956), now a long time resident of Wodonga in Victoria, never imagined he would pursue a career in education after welcoming the end to his own schooling. John completed a Bachelor of Education at Monash University in 1975 which was followed by 25 years designing, delivering and assessing competency based training courses in the Victorian TAFE system.

**David de Verelle-Hill** (RGS 1953) has fond memories of his years at RGS, cut short by the sudden death of his father. After completing his schooling in Mackay David pursued a career in science research and secondary school teaching. During his school days he always loved poetry and drama. In his early 20s he pursued a passion for ballet dancing and, later, teaching. During his return to RGS David conducted a class for RGS Dance and Musical Theatre Academy (DMTA) students.

**OAM honours - Students’ united with medals**

When **Ray Young** (RGS 1942) recalls his school days from the 1940s he also remembers two other fellow past students, **Frank Luck** (RGS 1942) and **Rol Oxenham** (RGS 1944). Apart from all studying at RGS they also had another common thread - they would be awarded OAM (Medal of the Order of Australia) honours for their respective passions in life. Ray Young, who is a member of the Order of Australia Association Central Queensland branch, was awarded his OAM in 2001 for service to the community of Rockhampton through sporting, youth and service organisations. Frank Luck received his medal in 2000 for service to the community of Rockhampton, particularly through the support of educational and artistic institutions, as a benefactor, and to tropical livestock importation. Rol Oxenham received his OAM in 1991 for public service. Many fellow RGS students over the years have also been acknowledged for their work in various areas of the community. Congratulations to all RGS OAM recipients.
Here is a snapshot of what is happening at your School today:

**Vanuatu Diving Trip**
RGS staff and students added a new dimension to the annual scuba diving trip this year. Diving in the waters off Vanuatu, the students and staff also helped villagers on the Islet of Mele where a kindergarten is under construction. The RGS visitors contributed thousands of dollars’ worth of textbooks, stationery and sporting equipment to supply the new school, along with an emergency first aid kit. The School also raised money to help provide construction and other materials.

**Year 10s Explore New Worlds**
The Year 10s embarked on a range of different trips in recent months. The options included a trip to Borneo, working in villages and seeing orangutans in their natural habitat, a New Zealand winter, tall ship sailing in the Whitsundays, adventures in the Sunshine Coast hinterland and hikes at Carnarvon Gorge and Great Keppel Island.

**Mr Moodie's Garden**
Mr Moodie has a passion for getting primary school students working in the garden. His project continues, now on its third site alongside the RGS tennis courts, having first started on the Duggan Hall site followed by the plot where the Beasley Centre now stands. Students keep busy in the garden during their lunch breaks.

**Rowing State Champions**
The RGS Rowing Club competitors produced strong performances at the Queensland Schools Rowing Championships in Rockhampton in September. The School topped the medal tally, which included 5 gold, 1 silver and 5 bronze medals. The Open Boys and Girls quads collected gold along with the Open Boys and Girls double and the Year 8 girls double. The regatta was a successful farewell for RGS Head of Rowing John Smyth who is joining the UTS Rowing Club in Sydney.

**Rugby and Netball Top Honours**
RGS rugby union and netball teams claimed top honours in the State. The Open First XV rugby union team defeated Sunshine Coast Grammar School to win the Ballymore Cup while the netball girls claimed back-to-back QISSN (Qld Independent Secondary Schools Netball) titles in Brisbane after a grand final victory over Matthew Flinders College (Sunshine Coast).

**Rowing State Champions**
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**Tennis Country Champions**
The RGS girls tennis team won the Country Championship at the Tennis Queensland Teams State Finals in Rockhampton and placed fourth overall against teams from across Queensland.

**Quality entertainment on stage**
The Rockhampton Grammar School continues to produce brilliant theatrical productions. Over the past months students performed Disney's Beauty and the Beast before full houses at Rockhampton's Pilbeam Theatre. Congratulations to all staff and students, and past students, who did their part both on and off stage. The Rockhampton Grammar School Dance and Musical Theatre Academy’s (DMTA) inaugural production was also on stage at the Pilbeam Theatre. Students performed That's Entertainment, a variety of dance performances from both Primary and Secondary aged students, followed by Disney’s Aladdin Jr. in the second Act.

**Sports Aerobics nationals**
RGS won a silver medal at the National Aeroskools Championships in Bendigo with a strong performance from the Year 10 girls group of four.

RGS had 11 students competing at nationals, qualifying after winning medals at the State championships.
Marnie Hungerford (RGS 2014) –
The RGS School Captain now calls the Western Australia Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) home in Perth. Returning home to Rockhampton to catch up with family on holidays Marnie also gives her time to dance choreography at the DMTA. “It (DMTA) gives you the opportunity to do your schooling and dance all in the one place, and it has a focused organisation behind it,” Marnie said. Marnie has some simple advice to DMTA students. “Always back yourself and take every opportunity – go to that ballet seminar you really want to go to,” Marnie said. “Keep your eyes open and keep researching new ways of training and techniques.” Marnie admits to keeping “super busy” at WAAPA with 10 units of study including ballet, contemporary dance, dance history, anatomy, music, yoga, choreography, performance, alignment and improvisation. “It’s 70% theory and 30% practical,” Marnie said. “It (WAAPA) gives you a three year run up to professional life and you are surrounded by performing arts as a whole – from students studying set design to costumes and theatre. Everyone tries their hardest and everyone is so determined.” Marnie’s passion is dance. “Dance is such a great art form. It allows you to express so many different feelings and explore different dimensions,” Marnie said. “You get to move around and be visual. It’s a great source of keeping fit and there is always a goal you are going for in dancing.”

Elizabeth Perez (nee Kennedy, RGS 1998) has been enthralled with dancing since she first started as a four-year-old. Back home in Rockhampton, Liz was put to work – helping with lessons at The Rockhampton Grammar School’s Dance and Musical Theatre Academy (DMTA) and also helping her mum Jan Kennedy choreograph the School musical, Disney’s Beauty and the Beast. Liz returned to San Francisco on 10 August, the day after the School musical ended. The RGS past student has also welcomed the School’s initiative to further develop dance at the School. “It’s frustrating we had no dance when I went through, it was all about sport,” Liz said. “It’s an amazing opportunity with many students not needing to leave campus for lessons, and that’s also a good thing for parents not having to run around town after school.” Liz is also pleased to see Rockhampton has retained its strong dance culture. “It’s (dance) a part of me. I grew up with it, either with my own dancing or spending weekends at RMU (Rockhampton Musical Union) rehearsals with my parents.” The discipline and commitment of dance also appeal to Liz. “You need to work hard and be dedicated. These traits carry on to different aspects of your life, like work.” Liz was fortunate enough to carry to her passion for dance into a career. After graduating from RGS Liz attended the Conservatorium of Music in Mackay (music and theatre course) and then finished her ballet exams to become an accredited teacher. The next move landed Liz at Brent Street (performing arts school) in Sydney. While in Sydney Liz signed for a dance agency and performed until she was 12 weeks pregnant with her first daughter. Since then she has focused on choreography and teaching. She has also been approached to teach dance in San Francisco. “You don’t realise how much you miss it until you start doing it again.”

In recent months RGS past students’ have been familiar faces at RGS Dance and Musical Theatre Academy (DMTA) rehearsals at the School. They have both welcomed the opportunity to work with the young students and are also in awe of the opportunity students have to enjoy a dance academy at their School. Marnie Hungerford (RGS 2014) is now studying at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) while Elizabeth Perez (nee Kennedy, RGS 1998) was visiting home from the United States. The DMTA was launched in 2015.
Alison Payne was in Year 12 in 1985 when a fire broke out in the RGS Library during renovations. In an email to The Rockhampton Grammar School, Alison wrote: I was in Year 12 at the time of the fire and in the computer lab on the lower floor of Boland. I remember the alarm going off [and] Mr Houston walking out of the classroom door and coming back with a very serious look on his face. He asked us to stand and evacuate via the stairs at the Agnes Street end of the building onto the Top Oval. There could be no misunderstanding as to the reason for his request, with the smoke and noise of the fire. The view from the oval was spectacular.

RGS Librarian Joan Peacock recalled that the fire had started as a result of welding to a steal beam extension. “The staff and I were working and everything looked fine, we didn’t realise there was a fire [at first].” 12,000 books and other items were lost to the fire but the archives remained intact, according to Joan Peacock, who transferred and secured vital documents at Memorial Assembly Hall because she was concerned the grit and grime caused by renovations would damage the collection. Thankfully, said Mrs Peacock, there were no students in the library at the time of the fire. “The library went up like a bomb. The video collection just exploded.”

Alison Payne remembers sitting on the Oval and hoping the flames she could see licking the boarding house didn’t make the jump. Firefighters had a tough time. “An electricity strike in Rockhampton at the time meant that the pumps that supplied water to the school were not functioning,” Alison recalled. Later, there was an appeal to past students for donations of items for the library. “I remember Dad digging out his Newsweek collection, among other things and sending it up,” Alison said.

Years later Alison revisited the Library whilst on a School tour with [Head of Primary] Mr Hadwen. “It was quite comforting to see it standing there. It’s a little taller now, with an extra storey, but also appears a little smaller situated next to Islay Lee Learning Centre. But still, a mighty symbol of the resilience of Grammar and our community.”

The Library notes in the 1985 Capricornus Yearbook summed up the fire of that year: February, Fire! Total destruction, total loss. “Phoenix” Appeal Temporary Library in the Memorial Assembly Hall. Elizabeth Park reported in the 1985 Capricornus:

One very heartwarming effect of the fire was the response from everyone; our parents, our friends and our colleagues. We were overwhelmed with offers to help, with donations and with support. … As we approach moving into the new building perhaps we can reflect that although the loss was disastrous at the time, we have gained tremendously in new friendships and in up-dated resources so that there was much on the credit side also.”

Schools from Rockhampton and across Queensland donated resources to the School and the CIAE (now CQUniversity) made their premises available to RGS students.

Alison has shared recordings of news programming made that night of the fire on her family’s VCR (kids, ask mum and dad what that is). See the videos on YouTube at https://youtu.be/cQYNapvLYPE

Images from the Capricornus, 1985

(Clockwise from left) Mr Bob Harvey, Head of Mathematics, helps clean up after the Library fire; The library after the fire; A temporary Library in the Memorial Assembly Hall; Headmaster Mr Arthur Butler with President of The Ladies Auxiliary Mrs Delaney; Mr Butler with Simon Harris, Warwick Anderson, Gavin White, Matthew Ganter and Wylie Steel.