

8<sup>th</sup> September 2014

Dear Parents

It has been a busy Summer, with no holidays for many maintenance staff.

Cornwall House and Elizabeth House have swapped buildings. This means that Mrs Hartigan and her team have all had to move house as have Mrs Jones and her team. Why ? Because we need more Sixth Form boarding accommodation. The old Cornwall House has a lovely *London Plane Tree* in front of it whereas there was enough space in front of the old Elizabeth House to build an extension – and it did not make sense to add a Sixth Form Annexe to a house for boarders aged 11-13 !

But the story does not end there ! The builders encountered major problems with the foundations for the Cornwall Annexe, meaning that it is not yet ready. But we had already recruited Sixth Form boarders for Cornwall House so needed a solution. In slightly under two months a modular Sixth Form Annexe has been built onto Gloucester House and this will house the Cornwall Sixth Form girls until their own Annexe is ready.

Mr Alistair Phillips took over as Housemaster of Kent House towards the end of last term and we have two more Heads of House in Miss Lily Lawrence in Alexandra and Mr Willem Truter in Gloucester. I am so pleased that we could recruit three current teachers for these most important jobs.

Mrs Kate Ross joins us as Head of Sixth Form and her first task was to deal with the A level results a few weeks ago. I am thrilled to be able to confirm that **61% of all grades obtained at A level were grade B or better**, which is a long way above the national average and has ensured that all those who applied to university have been successful, with only a handful not getting their first or second choice and having to go through clearing. Indeed a quarter of applicants gained places at Russell Group universities. With 75 in the Upper Sixth and around 85 in the Lower Sixth, it is pleasing to see the growth of the Sixth Form both in terms of numbers and results.

GCSE results were a bit mixed, with the percentage achieving five or more GCSEs including Maths and English a little lower than last year at 57.4%, but, most positively, the percentage of pupils achieving 3 A/A\* was up as was the overall percentage of A/A\*. My congratulations go to Josef Willsher who has been awarded a £1,000 Sixth Form Scholarship for achieving more than 8 GCSEs at grade A\* and to Ronald Kwok who received a £500 Sixth Form Minor Scholarship for achieving at least 6 GCSEs at A\*.

Key Stage 2 results were very pleasing and the Level 5 Reading results, which were way above the national average. Even more important is that over 90% of pupils achieved two levels of progress between the end of Year 2 and Year 6, though some only joined us at the start of Year 6.

The junior playground was resurfaced during the holidays and further work will be carried out at half term to create a really first class play space.

The path through the woods to the Monson Road entrance to the School has been resurfaced and the land to either side cleared. Cables have been put in a trench alongside the path and the task of putting in pillar lights will be completed over the next couple of weeks. This will make the path that many boarders and flexi boarders take into Redhill much safer.

Work to reinforce the dam of the Main Lake started last term and has now been completed. This has meant bringing in some eight thousand tons of soil to reinforce the dam and there will now be a programme of planting of trees and shrubs to cover up the current expanse of bare earth.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939 Neville Chamberlain declared war and a day later the crew of a Wellington bomber were killed, thus starting the sad list of those killed in that conflict. On Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September we had an Assembly in Chapel for Years 7-9 pupils to commemorate the first of those victims, Kenneth Day, a boarder here. An RAF Group Captain laid a wreath and a French Air Force Colonel read a lesson.

The story has a twist. Kenneth Day's body was recovered from the sea and brought ashore in Germany. He was given a full military funeral by the German Air Force - an act of respect and humanity by the men of one Air Force to a fellow flyer at the start of a conflict which cost so many lives.

On Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September we will be marking the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the *Royal Albert School*, one of the two Royal Orphanages which amalgamated to create this School. There will be a Chapel Service for Years 10, 11 and the Sixth Form which will also be attended by a number of Old Scholars and members of staff. The School was a memorial to Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria, and the first patron of the School was Queen Victoria herself. It is thus very fitting that Dame Sarah Goad KVCO, her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Surrey, will be giving the address.

We have four elected Parent Governors, two elected by parents of Full Boarders and two by parents of Flexi Boarders. A vacancy has arisen for a Full Boarder Parent Governor and elections will be held later this term. If you are interest in finding more about this then please do contact me.

The Parents and Friends Association is holding an event for new parents on in Gatton Hall on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September from 7.00 to 8.30pm. Further details will be circulated soon.

With my best wishes for this School year

Paul D Spencer Ellis

Headmaster