



Dear Parent,

As we have progressed through the summer term, it has been good to see the School mover closer to normality. Pupils may still be in bubbles, but this hasn't stopped them participating in a wide range of activities and making great strides with their learning. The true Gatton spirit has shone through as pupils have made the most of the opportunities they have in School and in boarding.

Teaching staff have done everything they can to deliver challenging and engaging lessons in person, for pupils in school, and online, for those who have still not been able to get back to school. Pupils have applied themselves and made excellent progress and this will be evident when Year 11 and Year 13 receive the results of their GCSEs, A Levels and BTECs in the summer.

Circumstances dictated that we held parents' evenings online this year. I have received a great deal of positive feedback about these events, particularly from boarder parents, so we are looking at how we can include this approach in parents' evenings from next year.

Whilst some things work well online, others are definitely better in person, and we will try and reintroduce in-person events as soon as possible next term. This will include open days, trips, drama performances, music concerts, and so many other things that go on in a school.

Auditions have started for our next whole-school production 'The Crucible' which will be staged in November. We are also working on plans to have an inaugural concert with our new Steinway pianos.

This term has seen a welcome increase in the number of sporting events. We have had fixtures with other schools, as well as holding inter-house competitions. In the house competitions there was a highly competitive basketball match where Gloucester emerged triumphant; and in the Gatton Cup netball tournament, Year 7-Year 10 enjoyed some top quality matches. Further afield, our boys' Cricket Teams have had fixtures with John Fisher School, Warlingham School and Oxted School, and the Girls' U15 Cricket team played Lady Taverner's U15, winning by 10 wickets. These are just some of the sports pupils have competed in this term, and we completed the sporting calendar with our own Covid-compliant sports days. Whilst we couldn't hold the usual whole-school event, pupils nevertheless enjoyed competing within their bubbles.

Sport has been a big part of the co-curricular programme too. Parkour has been particularly popular and we hope to continue offering this as part of next year's programme. Other popular activities this term were football, tennis, trampolining, dodgeball, archery, gymnastics, street dance and mountain biking. We were pleased that we were able to re-start cooking activities including Chef Ricardo once again offering 'Foods of the World', and 'Cooking for Uni' being provided by an external tutor. The Equestrian Centre has been back in action offering a full programme of riding lessons.





We have been able to venture further afield this term and trips have included the Year 8 Geography trip to Brighton, Year 10 went to London Docklands for Geography fieldwork, and the Year 7 field trip to Redhill. There are plenty more trips on offer in the next academic year and pupils are already signing up for the adventure trip to Dorset, where they will be coasteering and fossil hunting. We hope to be able to go overseas in 2021/22 and trips are planned to Paris, France, Borneo and the Netherlands, as well as the hugely popular annual ski trip.

We have maintained strong links with our local community throughout lockdown and were delighted that RAAS Interact Club could host an event for the Rotary Club in the sunshine outside Gatton Hall in June. As they enjoyed tea and cakes on the steps of Gatton Hall, they discussed how they change lives locally and internationally.

This School is proud of its strong boarding ethos and this was much in evidence last week during National Boarding Week. As we headed towards the summer holidays after a year of hard work in difficult conditions, the boarding team put on some wonderful activities for pupils. Albert House went on a hearty walk to a local viewpoint and had an early morning yoga session; Alexandra House had a BBQ and a water fight (not at the same time!); Cornwall House played hide and seek in Gatton Park; Edinburgh House had a house quiz and cooking competition; Elizabeth House had an outdoor movie night with snacks; Gatton Hall had a gathering at the fire pit in Gatton woods, and a picnic with scones, jam and cream; Gloucester House had a BBQ and a slip'n'slide activity; Kent House had a Hawaiian themed BBQ and a band; and Rank Weston had a special supper with spring rolls made by Mrs Toha. What a lovely way to round off the year!

Food is a part of many aspects of boarding life and we are very grateful for the work of Barny and all the staff at Harrison Catering Services over the last year. They had had to make some major adjustments, but have continued to deliver excellent food and provided some wonderful themed meals – which are a highlight for many pupils. I would also like to thank the Friends of RAAS (PTA) for another year where they have worked hard to raise money for the School, culminating in the Big Summer PTA Raffle – good luck to everyone who has bought a ticket!

I will be sorry to leave this School, and will miss being a part of the wonderful Gatton community, but I am confident it will continue to go from strength to strength under the interim leadership of James Malley and David Blow. I will always keep a slice of Gatton in my heart.

I would like to wish you and your family a relaxing summer holiday.

With best wishes

R Mitchell

Rea Mitchell
Acting Head