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ROYAL ALEXANDRA & ALBERT SCHOOL



16th December 2016

Dear Parents,

We have had a flurry of activity in this past fortnight, inevitably so as things draw to a close after a very full term. The Junior School started our Christmas Celebrations with an excellent performance of 'Pictures of a Christmas World', and the Senior School gave a similarly high standard in their adaptation of Snow White with 'Snow White and the Seven Elves'. Along with both being of an impressive quality it was very good to see such a large cast ably supported by other pupils with the technical support and in back stage. Lots of credit and thanks must go to Miss Spencer and Mr Phillips for producing such good shows.

We were then treated to a Christmas Concert on Monday as organized by our Music Department, which included the year 7 choir who had on Saturday entertained the Belfry Shopping Centre. The concert had many pupils involved in a range of well-performed pieces and it was pleasing to see so many parents and other students present to support them. My thanks to Mrs Simms and Mr Edney for organising the concert and for all the work they have done during the term to get the performers to this level. This year we also ran, for the first time, a Sixth Form Christmas Carol Service using St Andrews Church, the Parish Church which is on our site in Gatton Park. This was an excellent event and it was very good to have the Sixth Form and Staff coming together as a community to welcome Christmas in such a way. Due to its success we have decided that this can be a new tradition, as we continue to recognise in various ways that being in the Sixth Form is different, and something special.

On top of all of the above we have had a wealth of sports fixtures during the term, as you will have seen from the weekly newsletters. It has involved a large number of students across a range of teams in a good variety of sports. My thanks go to the pupils for their involvement and contribution and also to the staff. The teams and the training for them occurs on top of everything else that the staff do, whether it be teaching or boarding duty hours – in many cases both. We are lucky to have committed staff which allow the pupils such opportunities on top of the exciting activities programme.

We say goodbye this term to three of our members of staff and wish them all the best for the future. Mrs Stedrak as our EAL coordinator and English / Drama teacher after several years of service, Mr Hairs as the Deputy Head of Edinburgh House. Also, Mrs Simms leaves us as Director of Music to be replaced by Mr Grigsby in January who has taught in a large range of boarding schools, both in this country and internationally.

Gatton Awards

You may remember that I wrote to you near the start of term about the aims for our community that we have agreed to foster; as staff, pupils and parents.

At Gatton we aim to:

- **take ownership** of our lives
- **respect** ourselves, others and the environment
- **aspire** and **persevere**
- **be courageous** and **honest**
- **contribute** to our community and to society

As a Senior Leadership Team we wanted to celebrate those pupils who had particularly shone during the term for aspects of the above. Staff were invited to nominate pupils with an accompanying explanation. We were pleased to receive many nominations and the explanations made for very encouraging reading. We then had the difficult task of deciding which pupils deserved special commendation for this by receiving a Gatton Award at the end of term assembly. The list is below. Each received applause in assembly and a framed certificate stating which aims in particular they were felt to embody. I would particularly like to point out Nathan Little, U6th, who was felt to be a shining example of all five school aims. All of the list are the first winners of the termly Gatton Awards, but Nathan is the first pupil within this to get a prize for meeting all aspects to the required level.

Gatton Award Winners for Autumn Term 2016:

Nathan Little, year 13
Farai Matonga, year 13
Sofia Guardincerri, year 10
Wilhelm Busch, year 9
Anthony McConnell, year 8
Tania Shaba, year 6
Violet Jahnke, year 5
Zoe Hart, year 3



I have now had the pleasure of four Christmas Dinners with the boarders and flexi-boarders across the year-groups. I enjoyed the company of the pupils, many of whom were dressed to impress at the evening events. The events were extremely good and the pupils celebrated in exactly the right way.

With all best wishes, and in particular, hopes for an excellent Christmas and 2017.

Mark Dixon