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ROYAL ALEXANDRA & ALBERT SCHOOL



5th July 2017

Dear Parent,

As I write this letter, we are reaching the end of the academic year but there is no sign that the level of activity is slowing down. If anything, the last two weeks of term have been even more hectic. The exam season has given way to the end of term celebrations of achievement and Explore Week.

Sports Day was an opportunity for pupils to compete in various events on the track and field. Juniors, Seniors and Sixth Form all took part and there was a great atmosphere as they worked hard to achieve personal and team success. It was a memorable morning and I was delighted that so many parents came along to join staff and other pupils in cheering on the competitors. Special thanks must go to the Friends of RAAS who, once again, provided refreshments to spectators. The Friends have been tireless in their support of the school. The events they run throughout the year raise thousands of pounds to provide additional resources for the benefit of pupils. They also provide some excellent opportunities for parents to socialise at the same time as supporting our pupils at events, which is an important extra dimension.



Another highlight of the sporting calendar this term was the District Athletics where our Year 8 and Year 10 boys won their competitions. We also achieved success in the District Rounders tournament where our Year 10 team won and the Year 7s made it to the semi-finals. This was a great achievement as they were competing against some very strong teams, many of which were from independent schools.

The Drama department together with the cast and crew have had another busy term. 'Twelfth Night' received glowing reviews for their performance at the Leatherhead Festival. The Junior School's summer play of 'Revolt Rhymes' was charming and very entertaining. Many congratulations to everyone who took part in these excellent productions. Work has already started on next term's productions with casting complete for 'The Tempest' in November and auditions underway for 'Pinocchio' in December.

There have been many music performances showcasing the amazing talent we have at this school. The packed calendar included classical performances in St Andrew's Church, various

ensembles at Founder's Day, the Junior School Concert on the steps of Gatton Hall, the Jazz Band at the Old Gattonian's Summer Ball, and Big Orchestra Day. The sheer variety and quality of the music at this School really enhances the experience both of the children who perform and those in the audience. I am pleased the Music Department has managed to achieve all of this during the exam period when pupils had many other calls on their time.



The activity programme continued throughout the term and will only stop for the last week when pupils participate in Explore Week. Explore Week is a way of making the most of one of our greatest assets – Gatton Park. Pupils will take part in various learning-based activities around the Park and then have a more relaxing day when they go on a day-trip on the Wednesday before we break up.

Whilst there are many enriching opportunities for pupils outside the classroom, we have also maintained our focus on teaching and learning. The Senior Leadership Team have been following the progress of pupils throughout the year and putting in place appropriate interventions if required and recognising the achievement of those who have done particularly well. I have been impressed by the work ethic of our pupils. The GCSE and A-level pupils have shone with focus and determination as they prepared for their external examinations and they really deserve to do well in the summer.

June is a time for end of year celebrations and Gatton Hall has been pressed into service for the Year 11 Prom, the Year 13 Drinks Reception, the Junior Summer Party and the Old Gattonian's Summer Ball. It is wonderful that pupils at every stage of their school career can enjoy our very own stately home, and it's even better when past pupils want to come back after they have left. I do hope that your child will keep in touch with us once they have left. Current pupils really benefit from the input of past pupils in terms of careers advice, mentoring and life experience.



As I mentioned in an earlier newsletter, Gatton Hall will be undergoing major electrical and mechanical work over the next year. We have other works planned for this summer. We will be converting Gatton House (where I currently live!) into boarding accommodation for Year 8 girls and remodelling the main school corridor to improve changing room and toilet facilities for pupils. This will include the conversion of the boys' toilets into unisex toilets which will mean that all toilets in the main school will be gender neutral. We are also starting work to install an extra pitch by the side of the lake as well as an extra pitch on the top-field, to facilitate greater opportunity for matches and for training and activities in general.

Every term we recognise the pupils who have particularly impressed us in the way that they have met our Gatton Aims. Nominations are from staff and pupils, and this week I have been pleased to give the following Gatton Awards for this term:

- Robin Gurung (year 6)
- Katie-Jo Wilcox (year 7)
- Sameen Iqbal (year 8)
- Jamie Bailey (year 10)
- Natalie Little (year 10)
- Hollie Tombleson (year 10)
- Max Rake (year 11)
- Alex Mallalieu (year 12)

The end of term is also a time to say farewell to colleagues who are moving on. I want to give a special mention to Diana Bromley, the Bursar who has been at this School for 18 years. Diana joined the School when it was at a low ebb, and during her time here she has been a major contributor to its transformation into the thriving, dynamic and successful School it is today. I want to wish Diana a happy retirement and pass on my heartfelt thanks for her personal and professional commitment to the School over the years.

I have very much enjoyed my first year of Headship at this great school and very much look forward to next year. All that remains is for me to wish you a relaxing and enjoyable summer holiday.

With best wishes

Mark Dixon
Headmaster