



# GATTON ASSOCIATION

## CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER  
OCTOBER 2015

Dear Gatton Association members,

May I take this opportunity of introducing myself to those of you who receive this regular publication of the newsletter and indeed others who may be receiving it for the first time. For many years I worked at the RAAS as a history teacher, rugby coach, Housemaster and until my retirement in 2011 as Head of Boarding. Upon my retirement I was asked and readily agreed to become Vice President of the Association and as of the most recent AGM I have taken on the post of Chairman of the Association following on from Phil Wade. At this point I must wholeheartedly thank Phil for the sterling work that he tirelessly carried out as the Chairman of the Association and I know that he has and will be willing to proffer any advice and help I might need in the near future. Additionally I would also like to thank Chas Bailey for the work that he has put in to the production of many past newsletters and wish him well following his resignation from this important post.

As you will see as you read your way through this present publication there has been a number of new committee members appointed and we now seem to have a mixture of ex members of staff from the school together with a number of ex scholars who are all committed to ensuring that the Association moves forward and fulfils the two main objectives that the organisation was established to facilitate.

The role that the School plays in aiding the Association in so many ways is of course invaluable to us and on behalf of the Association I extend my thanks to the Headmaster, Paul Spencer Ellis and the Foundation Secretary, Diana Bromley for the help that is always so willingly given. In more tangible terms much of this help is channelled through the efforts of Helen Pollard and Sefora Dias who as well as organising many school based Old Scholar events are also active in so many ways in aiding the work of Gatton Association in order to benefit the many members. Helen has taken on the role of Newsletter coordinator as one of a number of roles she performs as a GA committee member.

I believe that the future of the Association is in good hands with the committee members who have so enthusiastically volunteered their services. When such enthusiasm is allied to the positive link with the offices of the school in Gatton Park I believe that the future will offer a variety of many varied gatherings and activities which I hope all GA members will benefit from and gain much pleasure and enjoyment.

I hope that you find this edition informative, enjoyable and fulfils one of our major objectives of keeping you, the member of the Association, in touch with the Association and its members as well as being informed about the progress of the school.

Finally may I conclude by saying that you as a member of the Association will always be welcome to inform us of any event, celebration, and memorable moment etc. that you wish to share with the wider audience of GA members. I really do hope to see many of you at the future "get togethers" and gatherings that will follow in the not too distant future.

With best wishes  
*Benny Jones*

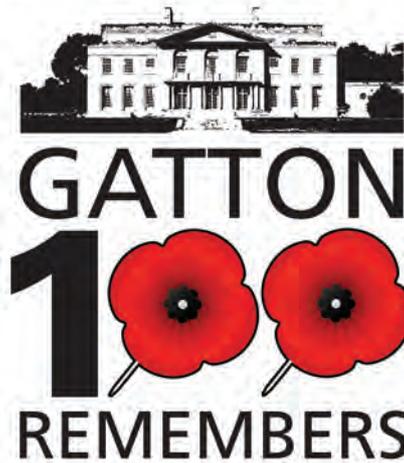
If you want to get in touch please email [OldScholars@gatton-park.org.uk](mailto:OldScholars@gatton-park.org.uk)

# EVENTS

Date for your diary...

## Invitation to the Remembrance Service

Old Scholars are warmly invited to attend the Remembrance Service on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November in Chapel. The service starts at 10.30am and guests are asked to take their seats by 10.20am. Lunch will be available afterwards. Please let us know if you would like to attend by contacting the Headmaster's PA, Sally Herrtage [pa2head@gatton-park.org.uk](mailto:pa2head@gatton-park.org.uk) 01737 649000



## Report of Events

### Founders' Day – and the return of the Connaught Medal

The guest speaker at this year's Founders' Day was Sir Eric Thomas, Vice-Chancellor of Bristol University. Sir Eric gave a very moving speech which included references to one of the School's past pupils, Chloe Rutherford who is studying Medicine at Bristol University.



*Mike Harvey (Connaught Medal Winner in 1951) and Sabrina Cheung (Connaught Medal Winner in 2015)*

Sir Eric Thomas handed out prizes to the pupils but one of the prizes was given to the winner by Mr Mike Harvey. Mr Harvey won the Connaught Medal in 1951 and recently donated his medal to the School. The original die for the medal had been lost, so in recent years, the winner of this prestigious award has only received an ordinary School Medal. New medals have now been produced in the style of the one awarded to Mr Harvey so this year's winner, Sabrina Cheung, received a real or original design medal.

To celebrate the reinstatement of the Connaught Medal, previous years' winners received a special invitation to the service and luncheon in Gatton Hall afterwards.

### Sixth Form Reunion

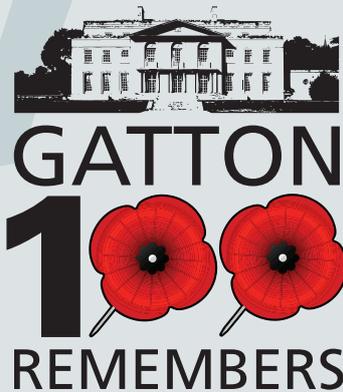
Chloe Rutherford was one of the recent leavers who returned for the Sixth Form Reunion in Gatton Hall on 19<sup>th</sup> September. They were joined by the Headmaster, Head of Sixth Form and other teachers and had an enjoyable lunch in Gatton Hall.



*Connaught Medal Winners and guests plus Ray Davies and Sabrina Cheung*

# SECOND VISIT TO FLANDERS – JUNE 2015

As part of the commemorations of the centenary of the First World War, pupils, staff, governors and Old Scholars from the Royal Alexandra and Albert School went on a trip to visit the graves and memorials of Old Scholars who perished during the War.



This was the School's second trip to France as part of its four year commemoration project, Gatton Remembers. This year, the School went to Arras where there is the highest concentration of known graves and memorials of the School's Old Scholars.

The first stop was the Canadian National Vimy Memorial. One of the School's Old Scholars, William Alfred Rutland, was buried alongside 2,232 British soldiers at the Canadian Cemetery at Vimy. The Headmaster, Mr Spencer Ellis, and a group of Old Scholars laid a wreath at his grave.

Like many of the pupils who joined the School when it was an orphanage, William Alfred Rutland lost his father at a young age and was unlikely to have had many relatives. The visit from the School was, perhaps, the first time his grave had been seen by anyone with a connection to him.

At Faubourg D'Amiens, the School's Chaplain performed a simple but touching service at the grave of Hubert, an Old Scholar who died of wounds in October 1917.



A wreath from the School was laid on his grave in remembrance. Two Old Scholars, William James Kew and Robert Charles Henry Thompson, are remembered on the Arras Memorial, located at the entrance of the Faubourg D'Amiens Cemetery. Both men were admitted to the Alexandra Orphanage

within months of each other, left the Orphanage soon after one another, and died aged 19 in May 1917 on the battlefields of France. Although they joined different battalions when they enlisted, both men are now remembered on the same panel on the Arras Memorial.

Mr Spencer Ellis explained the importance of the trip, "For the second year, pupils, staff, governors and Old Scholars have come together to remember our fallen Old Scholars who fought and died in the First World War. Visiting the graves and memorials of our Old Scholars in France is not only an important act of remembrance but also gives our pupils the understanding that we all have a personal connection to the War, be it through family history or through a less direct link. I am very happy that the School will continue to have trips to France until 2018, and we aim to visit all the graves and memorials of our Old Scholars."



Canadian National Vimy Memorial

# REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD SCHOLAR

by Peter Hamilton-Scott  
(Previously Peter van Klingeren)

I returned from South Africa in 1997 after eighteen years in Johannesburg, a city that still preserves a rough-at-the-edges frontier-town mentality, bringing my wife, from Pretoria, with me. We settled into post-midlife gentility. For a while I worked near Victoria Station and each morning as the train sped to Victoria past Merstham I could catch a brief view of Gatton Hall in the far distance before the train darted into a tunnel. And so I thought to myself, what would it be like to visit the school once more? It was an idea whose time was not quite right and once my commute to work changed and Merstham was no longer incidental, the idle commuter ramblings were buried. It lay like that until a chance internet encounter through the school's website and the Gatton Association and Philip Wade brought it all back to the simmer. I told myself I will get back to the school and almost forty-five years since I was a pupil, I jolly well did. I eventually made contact with Paul Spencer Ellis, the headmaster, and he kindly arranged to meet me and take me around one Saturday morning. It was a short appointment as he had other commitments to attend but in the time I spent with him he took me around the school buildings and houses and one-by-one long-forgotten memories and mental playbacks were kick-started.

When I first came to the school in 1964 my rather stern parents presented their case to a small group of governors in the Connaught Library why I should be allowed to attend and board at the school. I know nothing about those discussions except being told a letter would follow in a few weeks and on the morning it arrived I cried when I was told I was going to boarding school and that was jolly well the end of the subject.

Feeling like I had been abandoned the train's guard kept me near at hand and handed me over at Merstham to a driver who took me up the winding road to the school. I felt utterly alone as I was received by the headmaster and handed over to Alexandra House where I spent my first few weeks until I was passed on to Gloucester House where I stayed for about three wonderful years before I moved to Kent House and then later in the first intake of pupils into the newly-built Rank-Weston House. In that transition I came under the wing of some really wonderful senior pupils and teachers.

I very fondly remember one houseman called Mr. Beecham who retained a Mr. Chipps down-to-earth fair play approach and who arguably was the kindest person I ever knew at the school.

When Paul Spencer Ellis took me through the school's main building we first looked in to the gymnasium. The climbing frames and ropes were long gone but the gym still maintained a busy air



about it and youngsters were playing table tennis; a far cry when we as youngsters went in there. Then, it was mandatory to climb the frames and hang by our hands until every muscle in our arms were screaming with pain and then to immediately jump down and do star jumps and press-ups and shimmy up and down the ropes not stopping until you touched the ceiling.

I don't recall who thrust us into that dark world of 1950s-esque compulsory military service PT training but one name I do recall, Peter Cotterell, who looked as if he could single-handedly take on the combined might of the Fleet Air Arm in the annual gun carriage obstacle course. For punishment, he once sent me out on a cross-country one bitterly cold February morning. Dressed only in shorts, a singlet and a jersey and plimsolls he told me to run fast to keep warm and stop for nobody. I tried my best but fatigue struck me as I ran past Gloucester. My eyes closed and the next I knew I was being pulled off the barbed wire and hauled to the nurse on duty. To this day I still have the four-inch scar on my thigh and others on my left shoulder. Peter Cotterell popped by to see me and he became a person I fully respected. I never blamed him for what happened but like so many at the school you know you could trust them. As we left the gym I keenly felt the physical presence of those years come back to me.

There was also a time when I was sent up from the playing fields for swearing at another pupil when I was tackled really horribly. I was told to wait outside the headmaster's office which at that time was occupied by Norman "Nobby" Worswick. Each time I heard a movement in his office or if I caught a glimpse of another teacher passing in or out of the staff common room I'd quickly nip out of the main doors (they're still there and they're still the same) and I'd crouch down behind the bushes until the coast was clear. I'd then sneak back in and wait by the headmaster's office and three or four times I slipped out and back in again when all was quiet again. A little later the sports master came up to me and asked if the headmaster had spoken to me. I replied that he hadn't. I was dismissed with the warning "Let it be a

# REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD SCHOLAR

by Peter Hamilton-Scott (Previously Peter van Klingeren) *continued*

lesson to you” and I went off to shower. I had the last laugh and some of my house-mates roared with laughter that I had pulled one over the head and the sports master. Until that evening when we went to the dining hall and one of the senior house pupils, Jack Plumb I think it was, vacated his chair in the dining hall and Nobby Worswick sat down next to me and said “You’ve been avoiding me.” He had seen my sudden vanishing acts and he told me he deliberately opened and closed his office door which sent me running to safety. He went to a window by the main entrance and looked down on the quivering wreck in the bushes. I thought of nothing but being pulled by the ear and being caned for my efforts but the headmaster laughed, I sort of laughed and the rest of my mates in the dormitory also laughed.

Some years ago, Philip Wade referred me to a 2006 newsletter where there’s a picture of Gloucester House’s pupils, assembled with Mr. Pickford (the housemaster) and immediately I picked out some faces I knew well. There is Simon Boniface who was noticeable for his pudding-bowl haircut, some other faces were also familiar but the names are lost to me. Apart from one, a young black pupil called Jonathan Weeks who was my best friend in Gloucester and he could play a mean trumpet which he played for the school’s sea cadets and Marine Corps and he’d sometimes play hymns at the school church service on Sunday mornings. I’ve studied that photo so often; I’m in there somewhere as I recall it being taken but there are no names other than those which are known for other reasons, like those with pudding-bowl haircuts. My wife has studied it long and hard but she too said, “There you are, oh, maybe not, what about that one who’s wearing glasses?” And still we don’t know who I am. Was I bound for faceless anonymity even at the age of twelve?

Outside the chapel there are three very tall fir trees and those are familiar to me. Some of us from Kent would wear athletic spikes and we’d run up the trunk of one of those trees and stick a knife in the trunk as high as we could. We’d then take it in turns until we pulled the knife out and we’d start again. Paul Spencer Ellis made his apology and said goodbye to me and went back to his office. I went back to the chapel and I walked around each of the trees looking for a knife but there was none to be seen. Perhaps the tree has grown around the knife or does it now sit as a claimed trophy in somebody’s toolbox?

I was much puzzled by the way in which the houses have been renamed. What used to be Gloucester is now Albert. What’s Edinburgh is something else? I mean, the buildings are the same so perhaps there’s a reason for moving the names around? Thinking of names, familiar events with other pupils would resurface but I don’t recall many from my time. In Kent there were better mates I knew: Paul or was it Richard or Graham Dodd and Chris Harvey. The soccer team was then the best in the school. Games between Kent and Edinburgh were always keenly contested fixtures and

we had some fine soccer players. Three names I do recall were our goalie, Peter Sparey, and two first-class forwards Peter Shadbolt and Graham Apps and now I mention them, a third called John Gates or was it Bill? The team from Albert was often cannon-fodder and usually lost heavily and often. We beat them one Saturday, something like 7-0 and when the game was finished and we walked back up the hill I put a consoling arm around one of Albert’s players and I told him of the corny line from the Olympics, “It’s not the winning that’s important it is the taking part.” After a pause he replied (I still remember his exact words to this day), “They have a name for people like that they’re called losers.”

Paul took me to the houses I remember most, Gloucester, Kent and Weston, which was locked at the time, but I could see the steps leading up to the dormitory on the left and my bed which would have been directly opposite the door in the corner. In those days, the beds had steel frames and each morning we had to make them with perfect hospital corners and nothing, but nothing was allowed on top of the bedside drawers as if to suggest that hard work, exercise, eddication and food is all we needed. Our housemaster in Rank was Freddie Stafford and his wife Mavis. He could be, depending on his mood, the Devil Incarnate; she was steadfastly friendly and amiable. Paul took me into what was then Kent and is now Edinburgh or has it switched places with Gloucester which is now Albert which used to be Cornwall? See, it’s all a bit confusing. He took me up to the dormitories on the first floor and we looked inside a couple of them. We never had dormitory numbers or pupil names on our doors. For sure we had names but we were often referred to by our school numbers when clothing was handed out. I still remember my number, 241.

The youth of today! They now have unmade beds, clothes tossed idly all over the place, posters on the walls, duvets even. It was nothing like that in the 1960s when it was starched sheets, itchy blankets and identical pyjamas. It was the Shawshank Redemption for youngsters. If a hospital corner wasn’t just-so or a personal item wasn’t locked away in the bedside drawers you’d be reprimanded or have your ear pulled for being an untidy so-and-so. In Rank, there is a large common room shared with Weston and how novel it was to do homework with girls and play table and board games with them. The last thing we’d do before going back to our dormitories in the evening is that we’d get to drink glasses of milk and eat a Digestive biscuit or two with them.

I walked along the path past the girls’ house, Elisabeth, where my first ever girlfriend, Doreen Lambert, was from. How childish it seems now that we’d pass notes to each other in class. It was childish but then we were children.

I never got to see any of the classrooms but the long corridor took me back in time. I recall a Mr. Davies who taught English I think, and a maths teacher called

# REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD SCHOLAR

by Peter Hamilton-Scott (Previously Peter van Klingeren) *continued*

Bill Jefferies whose temper was legendary. I recall him throwing a blackboard duster at a pupil one lesson and he almost threw several pupils to one side in his rage to get to him. How that lad's ear stayed connected to his head was astonishing. There was never any backchat in his class after that. Being as young as we were, we remember his wife (Beth?) was a decent looking lady. Even as early teenagers, the school was gradually changing us in different ways.

There used to be a small swimming pool near Gatton Hall and tennis courts where there are now formal landscaped lawns. Around 1968 or 1969 one tennis court was made over to look slightly like a POW yard and a short film was recorded and I had a non-speaking starring role, drinking water from an old bucket. I still wonder what happened to my Oscar.

When I left school in 1970 I left with the uncertainty of where I'd be going to. For sure, it was a time of great excitement for some. Some of the pupils I remember who were then wannabes or were A-level hitters were Jack Plumb, Graham Chiverton (who wanted to be a vet) and Ricki de Freitas, who sowed within me a lifelong passion for mathematics and physics. I still recall the book on calculus that Ricki gave to me shortly before he left the school.

Then there was a housemaster called Gump Andrews who for some reason I think of as a round homely-faced hobbit but whom I think was quite a tall gentleman. And of course, no reflection of my time would be complete without thinking fondly of Malcolm Cleroux who put endless time trying to teach us not just to like music but to understand music. I was sad to hear that he'd died in an accident some years ago.

Our RE teacher, Mrs. Muhletahler was another character. If the Salvation Army was ever in need of an SAS divisional commander she'd be the one to lead it. Uncompromising and steadfast fully to the point of utter devotion she somehow made what was to us a dull subject sound fresh with a taste of a Boys Own story resonating through it.

When I left school I maintained contact with Godfrey Bainbridge whose mother (Elisabeth) was a well-known opera singer and they used to have a lovely house in an older part of Chiswick and there was a sort of gung-ho character called Alan Tear who, in the mid-70s was a passionate Disco King. I also remember Mike Tabanski who once berated me for a silly reply when he said he'd lost one of his football socks. I asked him "which one, left or right?" Even then a sub-breed of Homer Simpson was stirring in the dark waters of my Murky Gene Pool.

I can honestly say my six years at the RAAS were truly the six happiest years of my life. If I could give any pupil the best advice I could give it would be to get the best from the school you can because it shapes what you aspire to be, and once you leave school you'll never get those years back again.

I made my way back to the dining hall and thought again of those naughty pupils, who, like me, would sometimes stick a knife, blade first, into the edge of the long dining room tables. If you pushed the handle down and released it the blade would bounce like a swimming pool's diving board. If you put a dollop of food or margarine on the handle you could send it heavenward where it might fly on and land on another table or pupil or stick on the ceiling where it would later, at some uncertain time, drop off on to the head of another.

I remember we'd be shown movies from a projector at the back of the dining hall. Some pupils would shape their hands into rabbits and birds and do impromptu shadow shows on the screen. We were shown one of Kirk Douglas' movies, The Heroes of Telemark and there was one slightly intimate scene where he kissed the lead actress and placed his hand on one of her "assets". In a hall full of impressionable young lads it was too much and we all cheered and thumped and slapped our hands on the tables. I stood outside the dining hall as those memories raised their hands for attention and even though the hall was empty a huge grin and chuckle came over me.

I walked past the headmaster's house where forty five years ago I waited for the clock to chime when we'd go in for the final year's exams and Nobby Worswick came over to wish us all individually good luck in our exams. I was doing humble CSEs at that time and though my grades were very average, I left school with his encouragement telling me I hadn't achieved the potential he thought I had and those words resonated after I left. I still had Ricki's book of calculus and over a period of two years I achieved the O- and A-levels I needed to get into university where I studied maths and with that behind me I moved to South Africa and later did an MSc as well. Without their encouragement I don't think I would have aspired to very much but with it, I discovered what they saw in me and you can't put a price on that.

I ambled past Gatton Hall and a short distance down the path leading to the playing field where in summer we'd lie on the grass and listen to the crackling radio reception and commentary from test match cricket games. Later, we'd play out the day's action among ourselves until it was time to go back to the house. I stood on the path and listened to the laughter of pupils carried up on the mist and out of sight from me but enjoying their time in the grounds much as I did so many years ago.

The playing fields, the almost secret ponds, and the woodland were places of excitement where we'd play war games armed with sticks for rifles and balls of mud and pine cones for grenades. Other times we'd play hide-and-seek and the only thing missing was a jar of ginger beer, cakes, a dog and school friends having fun; it could have been the furnace where The Famous Five was forged.

# REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD SCHOLAR

by Peter Hamilton-Scott (Previously Peter van Klingeren) *continued*

There are few schools that have such a beautiful setting and the RAAS is one.

Finally, I went onto the lawn at the back of Gatton Hall and I thought for a while about everything the school meant to me and so many fond memories came back to me. In 1964, I arrived at the school as a very insecure, friendless and scared pupil. I left in 1970 and there aren't many kids who cry when they leave school but I was one. On my final morning in Rank I remember so well sitting on my bed for the last time with my suitcase by my side, packed with my uniforms and such personal chattels I had and a suit given to us for free to help us make a better presentation when

we went for interviews. I recall other pupils flitting up and down the stairs shouting raucous goodbyes to everybody and nobody in particular. The stairway fell silent and I was one of the last to leave.

And, you know what, I cried that morning for every good thing the school did for me and the wonderful teachers I knew and friends I'd not see again.

It's very tangible now that I cried when I came to the school because I didn't know what I was going to; I cried when I left school for what I was leaving behind.

## GET IN TOUCH



### Family News

If you have had a special family event e.g. wedding, birth of a baby or any other significant event, and you would like to share it with other old scholars, please send in your news and we will include it in a future newsletter.

### Memories

If you would like to share memories of your time as a pupil please send them in. Photos also welcome!



### Careers Fair – Volunteers needed

The School will be holding a Careers Fair for senior pupils in February 2016. Any Old Scholars who are able to come along and talk about their careers would be most welcome. Pupils always like to hear about past pupils' careers. Please email [OldScholars@gatton-park.org.uk](mailto:OldScholars@gatton-park.org.uk) if you would like to attend.



### Connaught Medals winners – who did not get a medal!

When the School arranged the event to bring together people who had won a Connaught Medal, they heard from some winners who had never actually received a medal. Now that they have the medals, they want to make sure that everyone who won one, receives a medal. Please get in touch if you were one of the winners without a medal. We have started a list of people winners and want to make sure nobody misses out.

### Appeal for mentors

The Gatton Association would like to provide support to pupils and recent leavers and is asking for potential 'mentors' to put themselves forward. If you think you can help please get in touch with the Chairman, Benny Jones via email to [OldScholars@gatton-park.org.uk](mailto:OldScholars@gatton-park.org.uk).

### Facing up to the past – Historic sex abuse

There are ongoing investigations into historic sex abuse. If you were affected in any way by anything like this, or know somebody who was, please ring Reigate Police Station on 01483 571212.

# LETTER FROM THE HEADMASTER



Dear Old Scholar,

Last Saturday I had the pleasure of meeting an Old Scholar who had come to look round the School. Peter Hamilton-Scott was a pupil here from 1964-70 and it was good to hear stories of his time here as we walked around the school together. He commented on the many changes that had taken place since he was here but could also see that some things had remained the same.

We also welcomed Yvonne Haynes to the School when she visited in August. Her visit coincided with results day for our Year 13 students so it was a busy morning. Yvonne was in Gatton Hall from 1967-71 and enjoyed looking round despite having to contend with some very heavy rain showers.

The Sixth Form opened in 2010 and our Sixth Form students are now a very important part of the School. They participate in many parts of school life, such as being mentors for younger pupils, assisting form tutors in morning 'tutor time' sessions, listening to junior pupils to read, and leading after-school activities for younger pupils. It was great to see their hard work and commitment rewarded on results day when the majority of them achieved places at their chosen university.

Some of you might remember Mrs Da Silva who was a Learning Support Assistant here for seven years. After many years of encouraging pupils to stretch themselves to achieve their goals, Mrs Da Silva decided to enter herself for GCSE Maths to show that adults can face exams in areas where they are not confident. I am pleased to say that she passed and, like so many of our pupils, is happy and relieved that her hard work has paid off.

There have been many sporting successes this year with our Sixth Form football team victorious in the Emerging Sports final in April and our Year 8 and Year 11 Rugby teams achieving Surrey league wins. Pupils have been trying out many new sports and making the most of our parkland setting to engage in physical activity. They have been paddle boarding on the main lake, rafting, running and taking part in assault courses.

The School now has a defibrillator and staff have been trained how to use it. We were very grateful for this when a child from a visiting sports team became ill in January. It was clear to staff that he was slipping away and, following her training, one of our school nurses carried out CPR and used the defibrillator. The nurse, Sue Phongsathorn, was later told by paramedics that her timely intervention had saved the boy's life. He went on to recover in hospital. We are looking to increase the number of defibrillators we have in the School so that there is always one close at hand.

This School maintains strong connections with the military and there was a terrific event here on the first weekend of term. Army Day was attended by over 50 pupils and they had an opportunity to try activities such as field craft, weaponry, drill, obstacle/endurance course and tug of war. As a result 20 more pupils opted to join the School's Cadet detachment. They should be an impressive sight at the Remembrance Day parade and I hope many of you will be able to join us at this important event in the School Calendar.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul D Spencer Ellis'.

Paul D Spencer Ellis

The Governing Body of the Royal Alexandra and Albert School has announced the appointment of Mr Mark Dixon as the new Headmaster of the School from September 2016. Mr Dixon is currently Deputy Head of Bancroft's School in Essex.

# OCTOPUSH –

Article by Year 9 pupils

Octopush, which is a new activity at Royal Alexandra and Albert school, is just one of many new experiences provided to pupils in the enhanced extra-curricular programme this year. Organised by Mr. Foreman, it is on Friday in the swimming pool. The sport, which needs good lung capacity, also requires good swimming skills.

Octopush involves two different sports- hockey and swimming. It is played wearing flippers, using a small hockey stick and a puck. It originated in England and is a mixed sport, played by all ages, in clubs spread across the United Kingdom. National competitions take place in the Pond's Forge Olympic pool in Sheffield between April and June but other events take place at swimming pools throughout the country during the year.

At the School the club is open to years 7 to 10. A year 9 participant said, "I highly rate Octopush as a good way of staying fit and also you can enjoy it while you are playing. Octopush is a hard sport. For example you have to hold your breath for a long time. You could get hurt playing this- when you all go for the puck- but it is really fun. I chose this sport because I knew it would be something new, interesting and fun to play."



# OLD SCHOLARS

## CAN YOU HELP ME?

As an old scholar from the Alexandra Orphanage I was very interested to see the article and photos on page 15 of the Autumn newsletter 2013, regarding the Royal visit. There was mention of the late Doug Dielhann who helped to bring the foundation stone to its new resting place and a photo of old scholars, presumably standing on the steps of Alexandra House. I spent many hours talking on the phone to Doug who was helping me with my research into the orphanage. I was there in the Nursery from the beginning of 1945 until the end of 1950.

I was hoping to come down to a reunion to see the foundation stone etc. and to talk to some of the other scholars from the orphanage as I am trying to find out all I can about my early days in London. I was found in Charing Cross railway station on the 27th January 1945, one of the coldest weekends of that winter and was about three weeks old.

So I am wondering if there is anyone out there who remembers me or who was at the orphanage during that time and perhaps would be willing to share some of their memories with me. There is a lot of information about the history of the orphanage itself in Camden Archives but does anyone know where the records of the children went when the place was closed? There is only a brief entry registered for me under the auspices of the then London County Council, at the Metropolitan Museum.

Best wishes,

Janet Mary Kenton.



Janet Mary Kenton  
Age 5

# OBITUARIES

## Frank Bickerstaff

Frank Bickerstaff died on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015 at the age of 88.

A tribute from Benny Jones:

“Frank was a well liked and respected Headmaster of the school from 1974 to 1988. Personally I found him a trailblazer in developing Boarding education and was a man well liked by the pupil body because of his humanity and caring. He also served as secretary of the BSA for some years with a much wider interest in Boarding matters. His foresight turned a place that was Dickensian and draconian into an institution that became increasingly human, child-centred and generally happy.”

The funeral service was held at Blacon Crematorium in Chester on 18<sup>th</sup> August. Our thoughts are with Frank’s wife Joyce, and his family.

## June Davies

June Davies passed away on 25th June 2015, just a day after her 90th birthday. June, who was the wife of Mr Ray Davies, will be remembered with great affection by many generations of Old Scholars who attended the Royal Albert School and the Royal Alexandra and Albert School between the 1940s and 1980s. June and Ray ran a boarding house at the School for many years and June was the PCC Secretary for St Andrew’s Church.



*June with Ray and Old Scholars at the Albert Reunion in September 2014*

The funeral was held on Monday 6th July at 12.00 noon in St Andrew’s Church in Gatton Park and many Old Scholars attended. The service was followed by refreshments in Gatton Hall.

Ray was grateful for all the messages of condolence he received from Old Scholars and wishes to pass on his thanks for all the support he received.

## Joyce Keegan

Joyce Keegan was a Governor of the School for eighteen years and a Trustee of the Foundation for fourteen years, up to the time she passed away, after a long illness, on 26 July 2015.

Joyce first became connected to RA&A when her four sons, Robert, Oliver, Daniel and James joined the School as full boarders. Joyce immediately involved herself in school activities and joined the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) and was soon elected as PTA Chairman.

Joyce became a parent elected Governor in 1997. At the end of her term of office, in 2001, she was invited to be a Foundation Governor and, in the same year, was elected Chair of Governors. Joyce retired from this chairmanship in 2010 but remained on the Governing Body and the Board of Management.

Joyce worked tirelessly for the benefit of the children in the School’s care and fought ferociously for their best interest. Her last public duty at Gatton was to cut the ribbon to formally open a new adventure playground for the Junior School in May this year (picture below)



*Joyce opening the new adventure play area in the Junior School in May 2015*

For those of us who knew Joyce well: she always greeted you with a smile, she had a mischievous sense of fun and was a loyal friend. She invariably attended Founders’ Day and met many old scholars. Her contribution and wise counsel will be missed greatly.

A service of celebration of Joyce’s life is taking place in the School Chapel on 13th October.

John Billingham

# OBITUARIES

## Isabelle Gladstone – daughter of Robert Gladstone

Robert was in the class of 1990 and in Cornwall and Edinburgh Houses. Robert and his wife Sarah have had a difficult time this year because their child Isabelle Catherine Mary Gladstone who was born on 30th June 2015, passed away on the 8th July from a rare condition called lissencephaly. They have a Just Giving page, which, if you go on their website and search for Sarah Gladstone will bring up Isabelle's page, or click on this link

[https://www.justgiving.com/Sarah-Gladstone/?utm\\_source=Facebook&utm\\_medium=fundraisingpage&utm\\_content=Sarah-Gladstone&utm\\_campaign=pfp-share](https://www.justgiving.com/Sarah-Gladstone/?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=fundraisingpage&utm_content=Sarah-Gladstone&utm_campaign=pfp-share)

Robert and Sarah are raising money for a charity that is helping them through this very difficult time. Our thoughts are with them.

## THE COMMITTEE OF THE GATTON ASSOCIATION

The Annual General Meeting of the Gatton Association was held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and the following appointments were made to the Committee.

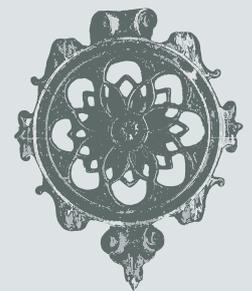
President	John Billingham
Vice President	Benny Jones
Chair	Benny Jones
Vice Chair	Vacant
Secretary	Ruth Turner
Treasurer	Diana Bromley

### Committee Members:

Ray Davies  
Jenny De'Ath  
Alicia Edwards  
Frances Hartigan  
Di Martin  
Mark Measey  
John Turner  
Will Wilson

### Associate Committee Members:

Helen Pollard  
Sefora Dias



## The Objectives of the Gatton Association

The AGM asked the Executive Committee to review the Rules/Constitution of the Association and a draft has been produced.

This will be presented to the next AGM.

The Objectives of the Gatton Association are:

- To foster, encourage and enable all former pupils and former staff to remain in touch with their school colleagues and the School
- To offer support and assistance to aid former and current pupils