



# THE GATTONIAN

AUGUST 2017

NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF THE GATTON ASSOCIATION

## CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME



Dear Gattonian,

After spending so much time in education, for me it is very difficult to stop thinking of a year that starts in January and ends in December. My year still begins in early September and ends in July! So the

Gatton Association year that started last September 2016 and ended in July 2017 was busy and action packed, and I hope will be a springboard to an even more successful 2017/2018.

Starting in September, we had three Old Gattonian RFC (Rugby Football Club) matches with two wins and a draw. Over a £1000 was raised by the Old Gattonian RFC arm of the Gatton Association towards the massively successful trip undertaken by the School's Senior Rugby team to South Africa. They were undefeated on the field and apparently were winning off the pitch too, making many friends and a host of life long memories for those who made this pioneering tour. Well done boys and all the staff who made it happen. Well done to you Gattonians for the helping hand you gave. Your efforts, whether big or small, were greatly appreciated by the children.

In the same month, there was a Sunday lunch at a local hotel marvellously organised by Nigel Edwards, which was attended by a mixture of OGs of all generations - a sumptuous lunch was had and a myriad of memories shared!

In May, after Founders' Day, there was a great lunch in Gatton Hall for Gattonians' Day, with some touch rugby for the children and grandchildren of OG's. Unfortunately there was a heavy storm in the afternoon which spoiled some of the fun.

## INDEX

Page No.

Chairman's Welcome	1
Summer Ball	2
South Africa Tour	3
Upcoming Events	4
Congratulations	5
Bust - A Mystery	5
Obituary - Ken Sidle	5
Why are we a Royal School?	6
Orphan Working School/Alexandra Orphanage/Royal Alexandra School	6
Royal Albert Orphan Asylum/ Royal Albert School	7
Royal Alexandra and Albert School	8
Committee	10

Later in June there was a never to be forgotten Summer Ball with all attendees attired in black tie suits and sparkling gowns. This was certainly a highlight and we look forward to repeating it. Brilliant evening, thank you all who made it so.

We have also had a batch of informative and entertaining newsletters with a wide range of topics and news for us all to ponder over. Thank you all the contributors; especially John Billingham for his first in a series of articles that enlightened us all about aspects of the history of the School (The Royal Albert and The Royal Alexandra, and all its various guises).

## CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME *continued*

### BUSY! BUSY! BUSY!

But we haven't stopped. In fact, we're just about to begin. To kick off 2017/18 we will be having a day of treble sport on 2nd September 2017 when there will be an OG rugby game (probably against Dorking RFC) and, if not more importantly, an inaugural OG football match and an inaugural OG netball match. I hope that those who will be competing will be equally as excited as the thought of taking part as at the thought of attending and meeting up with friends of old.

"Meeting up? Attending? Do you mean you want me to come along? But I don't play rugby, football, or netball."

So what!

We want you all to come along and get together with other Old Gattonians, have a drink and a bite to eat. There will be an informal get together after the matches which will take place outside the Gatton Staff Club, which is adjacent to the Dining Hall. We hope to also be able to provide simple but delicious summer refreshments with a BBQ. The cost for the BBQ will be about £5 per person which can be paid on the day.

If you would like to be there, it would be appreciated if you could let us know via the following modes of communication: Tel: 01737 649168 or 01737 649211 and speak to Sefora or Helen to let them know about your attendance.

Email: [OldScholars@gatton-park.org.uk](mailto:OldScholars@gatton-park.org.uk)

## SUMMER BALL

The Committee was delighted to welcome back over 80 guests for the inaugural Summer Ball. The evening was certainly one to remember.

It started with a nice glass of prosecco and music from the school's excellent Jazz band, overlooking the stunning views of the lake and park from the parterre. We were indeed very lucky to have chosen an evening with superb weather and plenty of sunshine.

The lively atmosphere continued in the very well decorated marquee - thank you to Ruth Turner and Diane Martin for their efforts. The menu consisted of a delicious choice of



*Gattonian Day 2017*

Further details for the day will be posted on all of the Facebook groups/pages linked with the Association and on our website: [www.gatton-park.org.uk](http://www.gatton-park.org.uk)

Hope to see you there at this curtain raiser for 2017/18.

Much more to follow with another action packed year. More of that later!

*Benny Jones*

Vice-President and Chairman of the Gatton Association

Ps. Don't forget: we want to hear from you; other Gattonians want to hear from you. So, share your thoughts, memories, curiosities, achievements and big life events [oldscholars@gatton-park.org.uk](mailto:oldscholars@gatton-park.org.uk)



beef bourguignon and coq au vin, served with buttery new potatoes. For dessert, it was homemade crème brûlée, which many a Gattonian was seen enjoying more than once.

## SUMMER BALL *continued*



The live band played a good mix of 80s music, rock classics and recent favourites. They got people up on their feet and dancing under the disco ball. The bar also helped certain Gattonians with their dancing... Excellent moves were observed by some of the more reserved amongst us who chatted around the dance floor.

The evening was topped off with a spectacular sunset and a perfect, glowing full moon.

It was wonderful to come together, all dressed up, for a special evening to remember childhood years spent at a school that to many of us remains very dear. The highlight was, of course, catching up with school friends and members of staff who were an integral, but sometimes forgotten, part of our earlier years.

To all who attended, contributed, helped, or simply gave their support for the occasion, the Committee would like

to say a very big thank you. The Ball, or any other event for that matter, can't take place without your enthusiasm.

Next year, we will be switching things up. We are planning to host a relaxed Summer Barbecue at the beginning of September for all Gattonians and their families (We're hosting one this year, too!). For the next Summer Ball, keep a look out in 2019.



TABLE MOUNTAIN, CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA.



## SOUTH AFRICA TOUR

For the first time, the School's senior rugby team went on an overseas tour. Their chosen destination, South Africa. And why not? The beautiful country is well known for its love of rugby and great sport facilities. So our boys set off, overseen by Gattonian and PE teacher, George Fowler, and three of his colleagues from the PE department, Ed Carne, Mike Brown and Rob Woodward.





## SOUTH AFRICA TOUR *continued*



If you happen to follow the rugby team on twitter, you will know that they had a very successful tour, both on and off the field. Not only did they make amazing memories playing some very talented South African boys, but they also had an awe-inspiring experience, visiting Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town.

They spent 10 days playing rugby and enjoying the South African scenery, even squeezing a safari into the schedule. The boys had an incredible time, and all of the fundraising efforts of the Gatton Association and its members were much appreciated. This is one school trip they won't forget!



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Sports Event & Summer BBQ – 2nd September 2017

– Join us for an end of summer sporting event. The Old Gattonians Rugby club will be attendance, as will the newly formed Old Gattonians Football club. Ladies (and gents), if you are interested in playing a good game of netball, please come along. The event is open to all, if you are playing rugby, football or netball, or simply heckling from the sidelines (only gentle heckling, please). More information about the event can be found on the dedicated Facebook groups:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1109487669150286/> (Rugby)  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1313508635384244/> (Football)

**Christmas Carol Service – Christmas 2017**– Many of you probably still remember the popular carol services

held at the school every Christmas. The wonderful carols and the beautiful singing at the end of a long Autumn Term (of barely contained chaos) was a highlight for many. To bring back this cherished tradition, we are planning to hold a Christmas Carol Service this year. This will be a free event and Gattonians will be treated to mince pies and mulled wine after the concert. Bring your family and friends. More details to follow closer to the date.

**Gatton Country Fair – Summer 2018**– The Gatton Country Fair is a big deal. Hundreds of people from the surrounding area come to Gatton for a wonderful day of family-friendly entertainments, such as dog competitions and pony rides. We don't want Gattonians to miss out on the fun and are extending an invitation to Gattonians and their families. We're still working on details of how we're going to make things extra special for you, but we will keep you updated.



## BUST – A MYSTERY

There is a statue at the school that has remained a mystery for a number of years. The bust was discovered in the school's strong room and now sits in the Colman Study, but we don't know where it came from or who it depicts.

An expert from the Victoria and Albert Museum said that it is an unusual piece and suggested that the statue is likely to be of a young boy, perhaps 13 years of age. It is likely to have been made as a memorial piece.

Does anybody from either the Royal Albert or Royal Alexandra remember it being at Maitland Park, Collingwood Court or Bishopswood Camp?

Also, our records indicate that a bust, almost certainly not the one shown, was made of Admiral Sir Doveton Sturdee, a benefactor to Royal Albert in the 1920s, after whom one of the dormitories of Royal Albert was named. Can any ex-Albert boy remember there being a statue of Admiral Sturdee at Collingwood Court?

If you remember either of the statues, or perhaps any mention of them, we would be very glad to hear from you. All contact details can be found on the last page of the newsletter.



Ps. Do you have any information about the exhibition standard waterline model of the RMS Andes owned by the school?

## CONGRATULATIONS

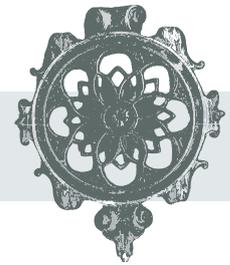


Congratulations to Gattonians Billy and Jamie Chan! They had a beautiful wedding photoshoot on the school grounds to celebrate where they met as teenagers. We hope you had a wonderful day, and all the best for married life.

## OBITUARY – KEN SIDLE

It is with much sadness that we have learned of Ken Sidle's passing in late July at the age 88. Ken worked in Kent House and many who knew him will assuredly hold many fond memories of a man who has been described as good, genuine and kind. He was, as many Gattonians put it, a true gentleman. On behalf of the Association, we forward our sincere condolences to his family and friends.





# WHY ARE WE A ROYAL SCHOOL?

**W**hy are we allowed to call ourselves the ROYAL Alexandra and Albert School?

My search for the answer has uncovered a remarkable, perhaps unique, story of Royal support, spanning more than a century and a half.

RA&A is an amalgamation of three historic Orphan School charities: The Orphan Working School, founded in 1758, The Royal Albert Orphan Asylum, founded in 1864 and the Alexandra Orphanage, founded in 1865. Queen Victoria became Patron of the Orphan Working School, which later became Royal Alexandra, in 1850 and Patron of Royal Albert in 1868. Since that time the Sovereign has remained our Patron.

We are one of about fifteen schools in Britain who currently have the Queen as Patron. Only five share the even rarer distinction of a Royal President as well. We have had Royal Presidents since 1868. Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Gloucester became our President in 1973.

An astonishing thirty one members of the Royal family have been a patron, vice-patron, president or vice-president at some time in our history. We have received at least forty four Royal visits; ten attended by more than one member of the Royal family and one occasion with no fewer than five Royal visitors. Members of the Royal family have



*The Duchess of Gloucester, the School's President, meeting children on Founders' Day 2016*

been patrons of, presided over, or attended fund raising functions on twenty five occasions. Our Royal Presidents have included a Prince of Wales, six Royal Dukes and two Royal Duchesses. Some of those most closely connected to us retained their link for sixty years or more, including Queen Alexandra (60), the Duke of Connaught (62), Queen Mary (69) and Lady Patricia Ramsay, daughter of the Duke of Connaught, an amazing eighty years.

## ORPHAN WORKING SCHOOL/ALEXANDRA ORPHANAGE/ROYAL ALEXANDRA SCHOOL

**I**n 1850, Queen Victoria purchased a Life Presentation to the Orphan Working School. Life Presentations gave the purchaser the right, in return for a single payment, to nominate a child to the school, in succession, throughout the purchaser's life. A letter from Buckingham Palace stated:

*"I beg to enclose a cheque for £262.10 being Her Majesty's donations for the purchase of nominations, during Her Majesty's life, of one person to the Orphan Working School".*

Soon after, a further letter arrived from Windsor Castle:

*"I beg to acquaint you that Her Majesty the Queen has been pleased to secure the presentation to the Orphan Working*

*School to Joseph Parrett, son of the Revd W Parrett, Independent Minister in the neighbourhood of Fowey".*

Following the presentation of Joseph Parrett, the 92nd Annual Report of the Orphan Working School General Committee recorded that:

*"It was resolved unanimously that the President be requested to apply to Her Majesty for her Royal Patronage to the Charity, which Her Majesty was also graciously pleased at once to authorise".*

Thus began our Royal history.

## ORPHAN WORKING SCHOOL/ALEXANDRA ORPHANAGE/ ROYAL ALEXANDRA SCHOOL *continued*

In 1862, the Prince of Wales (Queen Victoria's eldest son) became a Patron. The Queen purchased two further Life Presentations in his name; other members of the Royal Family also purchased Life Presentations. Frequent Royal nominations followed for children to be admitted, including some for orphaned children of Royal employees.

A separate orphanage was established in 1865 to care for infants up to the age when they could be admitted to the Orphan Working School. The Princess of Wales, Princess Alexandra of Denmark, agreed to be Founding Patron and allowed the Orphanage to take her name. The Duke of Cambridge (grandson of King George III) was then appointed Founding President of the Alexandra Orphanage. The Orphan Working School and the Alexandra Orphanage came together in 1876 and the Prince and Princess of Wales, together with the Duke of Cambridge and his sister, Princess Mary Adelaide, Duchess of Teck, opened new buildings at Maitland Park, to accommodate infants and juniors from the Alexandra Orphanage.

In 1884, the Duke of Cambridge purchased the first of two Life Presentations in the name of his daughter, Princess Mary of Teck, when she was seventeen years old. Queen Mary, as the Princess subsequently became, maintained her link with us until her death in 1953. At every Christmas, Queen Mary sent a gift: "to be expended in brightening the celebration of Christmas-tide among the children of the Orphan Working School".

When Queen Victoria died, in 1901, King Edward VII: "consented to continue to confer on the Orphan Working School the cherished honour of his august patronage" This acceptance was also on behalf of Queen Alexandra. A year later the new Prince of Wales (the future King George V) and the Princess of Wales also granted their patronage.

In 1923, the Orphan Working School and Alexandra Orphanage shortened its name to Alexandra Orphanage. In 1936, the duke of Kent, after whom Kent House is named, became President of the Orphanage. In 1944, King George VI commanded that:

"In recognition of the long service to fatherless and motherless boys and girls which the Charity has provided,

that the Orphanage be henceforth known as the Royal Alexandra School".

## ROYAL ALBERT ORPHAN ASYLUM/ROYAL ALBERT SCHOOL

The Royal Alexandra and the Royal Albert schools were totally separate entities until they joined together in 1949, but they shared a remarkably similar history of Royal patronage.

In 1864, Queen Victoria consented to the establishment of the Albert Orphan Asylum as a National Memorial to Prince Albert, her husband, who had died three years earlier and after whom Albert House at Gatton is named. Three years later, Her Majesty visited the Asylum at Collingwood Court, near Bagshot in Surrey. The Queen laid a Foundation Stone for a Hall and Chapel. The Home Secretary then announced that he had Her Majesty's authority to proclaim the institution:

"Open to receive, for all time, destitute orphan children, and to be called The Royal Albert Orphan Asylum"

The Queen then planted a tree, a *Wellingtonia Gigantua*, subsequently known to generations of ex-scholars as "The Queen's Tree", being remembered for the fact that its bark is soft and can be punched without injury, a tradition followed by many hundreds of Albert Boys including yours truly. The tree now stands in the middle of a housing estate on the site of Royal Albert. We still have the spade with which the tree was planted.

In the year after Her Majesty inaugurated the Asylum, she became Patron of the Charity and her second son, the Duke of Edinburgh, after whom Edinburgh House is named, was appointed President.

A Royal estate, Bagshot Park, close to Collingwood Court, became the home of Queen Victoria's third son, Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught. Prior to the Duke taking up residence in 1879, the Asylum asked if it might make a

## ROYAL ALBERT ORPHAN ASYLUM/ROYAL ALBERT SCHOOL

*continued*

present to him on his arrival. The Duke responded that he would receive the gift of a flag. The children embroidered a drawing of the Duke's Standard, supplied by the Garter King of Arms. The boys also made a pair of boots from lasts and leather supplied by the Duke's bootmaker and the girls knitted a pair of stockings. Early in 1880, the Duke received these gifts on the first of many visits to Collingwood Court, which continued for more than sixty years.

Following the death of the Duke of Edinburgh in 1900, the Duke of Connaught became President of Royal Albert, a position he held for forty two years until his death. He established the Connaught Medal in 1932, an award still presented annually for outstanding all round achievement by a pupil.

In 1912, the Royal Albert Orphan Asylum changed its name to Royal Albert Orphanage. In 1938 it was announced that: "In order to mark the fact that the Royal Albert Orphanage was instituted in 1864 as a National Memorial to the

Prince Consort, the King has been pleased to approve that members of the Royal Family, who are direct descendants of the Prince Consort, may allow their names to appear as Vice-Patrons".

Nine direct descendants of Prince Albert accepted the invitation.

In 1941 the Royal Albert Orphanage became the Royal Albert School. When the Duke of Connaught died in 1942, King George VI allowed a Memorial Fund to be set up in the Duke's name for the benefit of the School. Fifty thousand pounds was raised, equivalent to one and a half million pounds at today's value. A truly amazing amount, given that it was raised when the country was at war. A Connaught Library was later created within the Royal Alexandra and Albert School, named in the Duke's memory.

Following the death of the Duke of Connaught, the Duke of Gloucester, after whom Gloucester house is named, became President of Royal Albert.

## ROYAL ALEXANDRA & ALBERT SCHOOL

**B**efore Royal Albert and Royal Alexandra amalgamated in 1949, both schools had King George VI as Patron. On amalgamation, the King continued as Patron of the new school, together with Queen Mary, the widow of King George V. The Duke of Gloucester became President, supported by the Duchess of Kent and Lady Patricia Ramsay as Vice-Presidents.

When King George VI died in 1952, a National Memorial Fund was established in his name. The School was one of the beneficiaries of this fund, receiving a donation to cover part of the cost of a dining hall at its new home in Gatton Park, Reigate. The new facility was named 'King George VI Memorial Dining Hall'.

When Queen Elizabeth II, after whom Elizabeth House is named, succeeded King George VI as Patron she continued the tradition of the reigning monarch being our Patron.

In 1958 the Royal Alexandra and Albert School celebrated the two hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Orphan Working School. The celebration was attended by

the Duke of Gloucester (President) and the Duchess of Kent (Vice-President). I still remember the arrival of the Duchess, preceded by a police escort. As the Duchess alighted from her car, a helicopter arrived, carrying the Duke. A perfectly synchronised start to a memorable day.

In 1973, Princess Richard of Gloucester succeeded her father-in-law as our President. In 1974 she became the Duchess of Gloucester and is now the longest serving President in our history. Her Royal Highness maintains close contact and visits regularly to meet the children. She has been to see us on eleven occasions, the most recent being in 2016. Her Royal Highness recently invited our Headmaster to tea at Kensington Palace to mark his appointment.

A truly remarkable history: six Sovereigns; three Princes of Wales; twelve Royal Dukes and Duchesses; ten other Royal Princes and Princesses; All nine of Queen Victoria's children were connected to our Schools in some way, as were all four surviving sons of King George V. Six of

## Patrons of the School

### QUEEN VICTORIA

1837 - 1901

#### Patrons

HM The Queen  
HRH the Prince of Wales  
HRH the Princess of Wales  
HRH the Duke of Cambridge  
HRH the Duchess of Cambridge  
HHH the Empress Frederick of Germany  
Princess Mary Adelaide, Duchess of Teck  
HRH the Princess Christian  
HRH the Duchess of York  
**Vice Patron**  
HRH Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein

### KING EDWARD VII

1901 - 1910

#### Patrons

HM The King  
HM Queen Alexandra  
HRH the Princess of Wales  
HHH the Empress Frederick of Germany  
HRH the Princess Christian

### KING GEORGE V

1910 - 1936

#### Patrons

HM The King  
HM Queen Mary  
HM Queen Alexandra  
HRH the Princess Christian

### KING EDWARD VIII

1936

#### Patrons

HM The King  
HM Queen Mary

### KING GEORGE VI

1936 - 1952

#### Vice Patrons

HRH the Duke of Windsor  
HRH the Duke of Gloucester  
HRH the Duke of Kent  
HRH the Princess Royal  
HRH Princess Henry of Battenburg  
HRH Princess Arthur of Connaught  
HH Princess Helena Victoria  
HH Princess Marie Louise  
The Marquess of Carisbrooke

#### Patrons

HM The King  
HM Queen Mary

### QUEEN ELIZABETH II

1952 -

#### Patrons

HM The Queen  
HM Queen Mary

*The honour board listing the School's Patrons hangs in the Dining Hall*

our boarding houses are named in honour of past Patrons and Presidents.

Some may question what practical use has Royal patronage been to us. The answer is enormous, particularly in the first hundred years of patronage. The history of our predecessor schools was one of constant financial struggle to raise the funds to support demand for the children in their care. Festival (fundraising) Dinners were the main means of meeting essential running costs. The presence of a Royal President at a dinner guaranteed more generous giving by donors. In 1922, the Prince of Wales presided at a Festival Dinner which raised a record sum of £23,000, equivalent to over a million pounds today. There were also substantial annual donations from members of the Royal family. Today, the value is more in terms of prestige in being part of the

very small cohort of Royal schools, and for the obvious pleasure given to our pupils who hugely enjoy visits from our President.

As to the question – why can we call ourselves Royal? When I started researching I expected the answer to be because the Sovereign is our Patron. I then discovered that many of the organisations of which the Queen is Patron do not have a ‘Royal’ prefix. I now realise from my research that our Royal titles came by specific Royal command: Queen Victoria in 1867 to the Albert Orphan Asylum; King George VI to the Alexandra Orphanage in 1944; King George VI to the Royal Alexandra and Albert School in 1949.

John Billingham  
2017

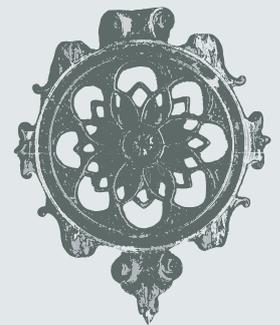
# THE COMMITTEE OF THE GATTON ASSOCIATION

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  
Nigel Edwards  
George Fowles  
Frances Hartigan  
Di Martin  
Mark Measey  
John Turner  
Will Wilson



## Associate Committee Members:

Helen Pollard  
Sefora Dias

## THE OBJECTIVES OF THE GATTON ASSOCIATION

The Objectives of the Gatton Association are:

- To 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 former and current pupils

## CONTACT DETAILS

To contact the Committee please email [OldScholars@gatton-park.org.uk](mailto:OldScholars@gatton-park.org.uk) or write to:

Gatton Association  
Royal Alexandra and Albert School  
Gatton Park  
Reigate  
Surrey  
RH2 0TD

You may also contact Helen Pollard and Sefora Dias, the Gatton Association liaising team at the School if you have any queries, newsletter contributions, or if you would like to offer any support to the School or Association.

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