

**Address** Gatton Park, Reigate, Surrey RH2 0TD

**Headmaster** Paul D Spencer Ellis BA MPhil NPQH

**Telephone** 01737 649000

**Fax** 01737 649002

**Email** info@raa-school.co.uk

**Website** www.raa-school.co.uk

# ROYAL ALEXANDRA & ALBERT SCHOOL



March 2014

Dear Old Scholar

As a School, we feel we could do more to enable Old Scholars to maintain their connection with us. The School is putting further resources into developing direct links with Old Scholars and I have asked Helen Pollard, Director of Marketing and Admissions, to arrange a calendar of events. This will provide opportunities throughout the year to visit the School and to meet other past pupils. We will also continue to work closely with the Gatton Association and support their sterling work on the newsletter as well as assisting with the organisation of the August Reunion.

I am often in touch with Old Scholars and one who has maintained strong links with the school was Doug Dielhenn. I was very sad to hear of his death last December last year. Upon hearing the news from Doug's son I wrote a tribute from this School. This was read out at Doug's funeral and I was asked to share it with Old Scholars so I have attached it to this letter. In a final act of generosity, Doug, who had already given back so much to this School, asked for no flowers at his funeral but for donations to be made to the School to finance free places for future orphans to board at the School.

Old Scholars are always welcome at this School. If you would like to visit and have a look round your old haunts please contact Helen Pollard and she will arrange a time for you to come in. She can be contacted on 01737 649211 or [helenpollard@gatton-park.org.uk](mailto:helenpollard@gatton-park.org.uk).

I look forward to meeting you soon.

With best wishes

Paul Spencer Ellis

## **Tribute to Doug Dielhenn**

Doug Dielhenn left the Alexandra Orphanage a very, very long time before I became Headmaster of the Royal Alexandra and Albert School, so why would I possibly have really wanted to attend his funeral?

The answer in simple - let me tell you the story.

I became Headmaster of what is the 1949 amalgamation of two schools in 2001. One of the traditions I inherited was a very powerful Remembrance Day service. And the second tradition I inherited was your dad, who always made the journey to attend!

The school had a First World War memorial and we also had a list of victims of the Second War, but no memorial, so I had one made and it now hangs in the Chapel porch. The year that this new memorial appeared your dad spent a long time looking at it. He then joined the other guests for a cup of coffee in Gatton Hall after the Service. I casually asked him what he thought of the new memorial. His response was so honest and personal that I have never forgotten it.

He gave a name and then a comment: "He was in my class. He sat in the row in front" and then another name "and he was in my dormitory" and this was followed by another name of somebody who was in the year above him and a couple of other similar memories.

For your dad those names had real memories and I am proud that the School still reads out the full Roll of Honour every year.

And I learned more about your dad as time went on.

When we met he would tell me about the School when he had been a pupil. There was never any criticism or complaint, though I cannot possibly imagine everything was perfect for a young man living in an orphanage in those days. What he did tell me was the positive memories that he had, how the School had helped him and how without the School he would not have achieved what he had done.

And the way he talked to me: he once said "Headmaster. May I call you Paul"? How humble and self-effacing is that when he was talking to somebody at least thirty years his junior?

And then other people told me that he had run the Old Scholars Association for many years and that he was a considerable diplomat as he had managed to unite the Old Scholars of two schools which had amalgamated - a tricky task.

So please accept this tribute to your dad from a Headmaster who is a lot younger than him, but who has seen the evidence of what sort of man Doug Dielhenn was.

Doug was an unassuming man who obviously was grateful for what the Alexandra Orphanage did for him, though he never told me why he ended up in an orphanage. He was loyal to those friends who died in the Second World War, and he was loyal to those who survived as he gave a lot of time and effort to run the Old Scholars Association afterwards.

And, finally, I have just been informed that he has asked for no flowers at his funeral but for donations to be made to the school to finance free places for future orphans to board at the School.

It seems to me that this is the perfect circle; a young man who was supported by an orphanage asking that donations given at his funeral when he was a ripe old age should support new young boys and girls who need a boarding school to help them through a troubled childhood.

God bless you, Doug.

Paul D Spencer Ellis  
Headmaster  
January 2014