

ROYAL  
ALEXANDRA  
& ALBERT  
SCHOOL



ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2019/20



ROYAL  
ALEXANDRA  
& ALBERT  
SCHOOL



DEVELOPING IMPRESSIVE  
INDIVIDUALS READY TO  
FLOURISH.....

# Headmaster's Report

**The academic year 2019-2020 was not quite the year we expected.**

**We welcomed pupils in September and they embarked on their studies and activities with the usual enthusiasm. You will see in the following pages how much they achieved in terms of academic attainment, their work with the community and personal development in the first six months of the school year.**

It has been truly heartening to produce this review of the year because it shows how much progress was made despite the best efforts of the Covid-19 virus which meant that most pupils were not in school from March 2020. Staff and pupils embraced technology to move teaching and activities online from March to July and I was delighted to see how well pupils adapted to the 'new normal'.

After the initial closure in March, we gradually brought back some pupils; those with parents who are key workers; those with difficult home circumstances; then those in Year 10 and Year 12 and those moving up to Year 7 the following year. In fact, the School remained open continuously from February to July, as some pupils remained with us through the Easter and May half term holidays too.



Simultaneously delivering lessons online and in person, as well as keeping some boarding houses open throughout the pandemic was a major undertaking. None of this could have been achieved without a committed staff who often went beyond the call of duty to give pupils the education and pastoral care they needed at a very worrying and uncertain time.

I hope you find this Annual Report uplifting – it shows the true Gatton spirit will triumph whatever the circumstances.

With best wishes

Mark Dixon  
Headmaster

# IN THE NEWS.....

## STILL THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER SCHOOL IN SURREY!

**The Royal Alexandra and Albert School is the most sought-after secondary school in Surrey for the second year running. This is according to data from the Department of Education.**

There were around six applications for each of the 74 Year 7 places in September 2020, with over 450 families naming the School as one of their preferences. 160 applicants named the Royal Alexandra and Albert School as their first choice – over 80% more than two years ago.

Headmaster Mark Dixon says “This year we have received more applications for Flexi Boarding and Full Boarding places than ever before. I am pleased so many families are choosing this school for their child. As a School we place great emphasis not only on supporting academic achievement, but also on providing fantastic pastoral care. We aim to offer opportunities for all children to flourish, whatever their background, abilities or interests.”

## GCSE RESULTS DAY

After two years of hard work, and months of not seeing one another, Year 11 pupils were able to open their GCSE results in August. There were many relieved smiles and joyful moments throughout the morning as pupils celebrated a strong set of results.

The School is proud of pupils' hard work and their resilience throughout the year that led to so many individual success stories. This year's results saw the School's Progress 8 score (the Government's measure of academic progress) increase once again, meaning that a child, whatever their ability, made well above expected progress.



..... Brilliant GCSE Results ..... Brilliant GCSE Results ..... Brilliant GCSE Results .. results CSE Results ..



# IN THE NEWS.....

## A LEVEL RESULTS DAY

**It was a very different A Level Results day, but one thing hadn't changed: the hard work and determination of pupils to achieve success.**

After the disruption and cancellation of exams due to Covid-19, our Sixth Formers didn't really know what to expect when they came to collect their A Level results. For many students there was relief and joy as they opened their results.

Many students secured their first-choice university with places across various subjects, such as: Psychology, Aerospace Engineering, Medical Physics, Dentistry, Art and Performing Arts.

With regard to Russell Group, students went to destinations including Newcastle, Durham, Exeter, a number at UCL, Warwick, Edinburgh, York, Bristol and Birmingham. Approximately a third of all pupils who applied to University achieved a place at a Russell Group University.

Headmaster, Mark Dixon said "It has been a stressful six months for our Sixth Formers but I am pleased so many have achieved their goals. It has been great to welcome students back to school to collect their results, and to see so many happy and relieved faces."



# IN THE NEWS.....

## GROUND SOURCE HEATING SYSTEM

This year, work started on a major project that will see the School move towards installing renewable energy in all its buildings. The new Ground Source Heating system is believed to be the largest such project in the UK. Previously, the School and its boarding houses were all heated by oil, with 23 separate boiler rooms burning more than three quarters of a million litres of oil per year. The new scheme will draw heat from 2 lakes and some 170 bore holes driven into the chalk of the North Downs.

The first phase was made live on 10th March. As well as being cost-effective, the new Ground Source Heating system will mean the School no longer relies on 755,000 litres of oil each year to heat the School and boarding houses. The source of the energy is the bedrock beneath the school and lakes within the park.

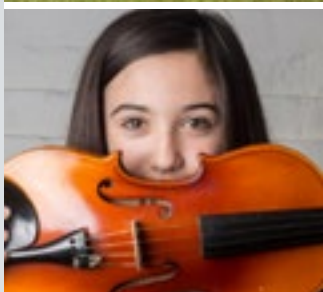
Tony Samuels, Chairman of Surrey County Council, officially opened the first phase, in the presence of school staff, governors and members of the School's ECO Society.

The project is costing over £5million to install which is funded by a 20-year green energy bank loan from Lloyds Bank which will be repaid from fuel savings, together with funding from the Government's Renewable Heat Initiative. In addition to the new heating system, all the boarding houses have had their insulation improved and the School is changing all its lighting over to LEDs to save energy. Within 20 years, the project will save 15 million litres of oil.





# IN THE NEWS.....



## INTRODUCING MUSIC AND SPORTS SCHOLARSHIPS

**Exciting developments and enhancements in the Music and Sport departments have propelled the School to launch new Music and Sports Scholarships for talented musicians and pupils with outstanding sporting ability.**

The School recently appointed five specialist Heads of Sport to oversee the progression of pupils who excel in sport and the development of the School's five main sports: netball, swimming, cricket, football and rugby.

With the current piano stock being replaced with instruments from Steinway & Sons, all music scholars will receive tuition exclusively on Steinway pianos. Pupils will have access to the highest quality tuition as well as packed diary of performances, concerts, musicals, and music tours.

The introduction of the new Sports and Music Scholarships will see the most talented applicants given further opportunities to develop as sports or music specialists whilst they are pupils at the School.





## Chairman's statement



### ROYAL ALEXANDRA & ALBERT SCHOOL FOUNDATION

The last financial year was unprecedented in the Foundation's history as the School's staff, Trustees and members of the Governing Body worked tirelessly to deal with the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. The School was effectively closed from 23rd March 2020 to all but the children of key workers who could not be cared for at home and vulnerable children, and remained in this state until June when certain year groups were allowed to come back. During this time, we worked with our charity partners to provide support at home (providing laptops and food vouchers) for vulnerable pupils who did not stay at school during lockdown. The Foundation decided that fees for the Summer Term should be reduced by 50% in order to alleviate the financial strain on parents when many were being furloughed.

Despite the pandemic, we continued with some of our major infrastructure projects. Rank Weston House, our Junior boarding house, was refurbished at a cost of £1.25 million and work continued on our Ground Source Heating project.

We currently have 104 Foundationers, a record number. The Foundation has also been active in providing financial help to those parents who have been worst hit by the impact of the pandemic by establishing a scheme to help them through these difficult times.





# Easter Holiday Camp

**After the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the School remained open for the children of key workers and those with difficult home circumstances. The need for them to stay in boarding didn't stop after the official end of term, so the School remained open right through the Easter holidays and May half term.**

The Easter holiday camp was themed around Harry Potter and Alice in Wonderland. One of the highlights was Alice in Gattenland – a tough mudder chase through lakes and round the park, finishing with a waterslide from the Parterre down Gatten Killer. But all tastes were catered for with pompom animals, gardening, tea parties, robotics, and an Easter egg hunt.

We held another holiday camp in the May half term break, and this time we had a little more time to plan. We turned the Serpentine Woods into our own Forest School. We now have an outside classroom, reading rooms, bug hotels, a fairy garden, and a labyrinth, which can be used in the future.

Throughout this, we used both school facilities and the Park. The Engine Pond and a new fleet of kayaks and our old rafts meant we really made the most of the sunny weather. Lockdown was difficult for everyone, but with our beautiful grounds, and the support of the School's Foundation, we provided our pupils with a fun environment during the holidays.

This allowed more key workers to focus on their jobs, and provided a stable home from home for children with difficult home circumstances.



# COVID-19 **HARDSHIP FUND**

Covid-19 has had serious financial repercussions for many, and our parents were not immune. Along with the rest of the working population, our parents had to cope with furlough and redundancy. Being so close to Gatwick Airport we found that many of our parents were affected by the collapse of international travel. The 50% reduction in fees for the Summer Term did make a difference but for some, this was not enough.

We wanted to provide support to those families hit hard by this pandemic and alleviate the financial worries that can affect the whole family. We also wanted to ensure that every one of our pupils was able to remain at our school in an environment they know, and be able to remain close to their friends in these uncertain times.

**The Hardship Fund was launched and the response from parents and alumni was overwhelming: to date we have raised £10,800. We would like to thank everyone who has kindly donated in 2019-20 making it possible for us to help those families in need. Individuals who donated are:**

Mr and Mrs Avery  
 Mr A Brown  
 Mr and Mrs Cull  
 Mr R Cutting  
 Mr and Mrs Dixon  
 Mrs R Fitch-Carpenter  
 Mrs A Fleetwood  
 Ms M Harding  
 Mr P Howells  
 Mr and Mrs Hutchison  
 Mr Mark Kimpton  
 Mrs G Lewis  
 Mr and Mrs Lindfield  
 Mr D McIntyre  
 Dr New and Dr Bance  
 Mrs Nunn  
 Mrs M Pudney  
 Mrs C Reid  
 Mr P Rolfe  
 Mr P Spanyol  
 Mr Tran and Ms Vu  
 Mrs Verlander  
 Mr L Wallis  
 Mr J Wells  
 Mr S Yates

We also received donations from people who have chosen to remain anonymous.

# Junior School Music Project

We have been successful again this year in securing grants for the Music Department. Last year we managed to secure grants to pay for a complete set of string and brass instruments as well as 15 extra woodwind instruments. We still needed to complete the set of woodwind instruments but in December we were delighted to receive an additional £1,900. This has enabled us to purchase the remaining instruments we needed.



The Music Department is now equipped for the Junior School Music Project, where every pupil in Year 4, 5 and 6 will receive two terms of instrumental lessons. Our juniors can now discover a passion for music by gaining hands-on experience with an instrument.

It has also meant that several of the Year 6s were able to join the beginners' orchestra which caters for the absolute beginner instrumentalists. Being able to teach these young musicians on orchestral instruments is not only a wonderful opportunity for them but it also offers us the ability to teach them how to read music in the most practical manner. They are learning the fundamentals of music whilst learning a brilliant life skill.

The department's ambition is for all our pupils to finish Year 6 being able to read music notation and to play an instrument. This additional grant has given us the ability to fulfil this ambition and it is fantastic that we can offer this to our pupils. We could only do it with our very generous supporters!





# Junior School

## HARRY POTTER DAY

On 14th November the Junior School became Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry as pupils enjoyed a Harry Potter themed day of learning. One of the highlights of the day was the PAC full of children in robes eagerly awaiting the Sorting Hat's decision about their house.

With the sorting done, children rotated around the classrooms to experience different magical activities. Mrs Harvey and Miss Hill offered children the opportunity to buy some goodies from Diagon Alley, but they needed to convert their money first of course. Mr Mitsis and Mr Cooper were the wizard masters, requiring each child to produce a spell-like poem.

Lunch, however, was one of the standout moments for the day. Mr Cross and the entire catering team transformed the dining hall into Hogwarts' Great Hall complete with top table for the teachers, house tables for the children and a menu so good the children were checking underneath the tables to see if Dobby and his elves were responsible.

Mr Dennis (who, rumour has it, was a cousin of Professor Snape) was on hand after lunch to provide an incredible potion display which caused numerous gasps from the audience! The day was then finished, of course, by games of quidditch between the different years and houses.





In December, a group of Year 5/6 students attended a District Sports Hall Athletics event, where they came 2nd by 8-points and as a result qualified for the Surrey County Finals. They qualified having been the best 2nd place finisher in all of the District events across Surrey. The result was not only the highest point total that we have ever achieved, but we also won the 'Most Improved School' award based on our points total from the year before.

On Tuesday 4th February, the same team competed in the County Final event at Spectrum Leisure Centre in Guildford. The competition was tough and had increased dramatically from the previous event.

Despite this, the children embraced the occasion and competed to the best of their ability. As a team, RAAS finished in 9th place. Finishing as the 9th best team in all of Surrey is an amazing achievement!

We are immensely proud of this group of students as it is such a fantastic achievement for them to qualify for a County Final for the first time. The level of commitment and dedication that each and every one of them showed was amazing, as many gave up their lunch times to practise their changeovers and their turns.



# Junior School



WORLD BOOK DAY

To celebrate World Book Day Junior pupils and staff dressed up as their favourite characters from books. There was a fancy dress parade and the winners were presented with certificates. Well done to parents, children and staff who put a huge amount of effort into creating the imaginative costumes!

Other literacy-related activities took place during the day and the whole event encouraged a greater appreciation of books.



PROBATIONER CHORISTERS' FIRST CONCERT

Our youngest Choristers (called probationer choristers), consisting of Year 3 & 4 pupils only, gave their first full service in St. Andrew's Church. The service, which fell on the first day of spring, was led by Revd Mark Pullinger and the choristers were led by our graduate musician Mr Jamie Milburn. They sang beautifully and with amazing confidence for a group so young; they really are the future of singing at RAAS. The highlight was the Preces & Responses that had been written especially by Mr Milburn for his choir.



## HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

RAA hosted the annual Under 11 Quicksticks Hockey Tournament on the 4th March. The team performed amazingly well throughout the tournament, finishing with a Silver medal after narrowly losing to a strong opponent in the final. Well done to all.



## POND DIPPING

The Junior School makes full use of the School's wonderful parkland setting to enhance the learning experience. Here are pupils enjoying learning about wildlife whilst pond-dipping.



## SCIENCE IN THE SENIOR SCHOOL

In one of their regular lessons in a Senior School Science classroom, Year 5 analysed the ingredients in a cake mix provided by Mrs West.



## Physifun Training Session

In January children from five local schools joined the RAAS Junior Sports Captains to learn how to lead activities and games for other children. The training gave them an opportunity to learn how to exercise safely and develop their leadership skills.

# SENIOR SCHOOL

## SUBJECT AMBASSADORS

**On 9th December, we were delighted to announce our RAAS Subject Ambassadors.**

Subject Ambassadors are passionate about their subject with huge enthusiasm about learning new things in their subject area and demonstrate an eagerness to share their understanding with others. They help encourage, support and enthuse others to learn about the subject both in and outside of school. These are students who show a flair, apparent 'natural ability' and/or commitment to a particular subject in school.



## YEAR 8 NETHERLANDS GEOGRAPHY TRIP

In the Spring, the intrepid Year 8 students of RAAS set off to explore the Netherlands. The trip integrated studies from the Geography, English and Science departments as well as using skills from other study areas.



The trip included a visit to Deltapark Neeltje Jans where pupils learned how the dams are created and the impact they have in protecting the landscape. Exploring the landscape really showed pupils how vulnerable the Netherlands are to floods.

The group cycled around De Hoge Veluwe National Park and carried out soil explorations. This was followed by a visit to the Oosterbrook War cemetery and a museum telling the story of the battle of Arnhem.

The group then visited Amsterdam and Bruges before heading home with many happy memories.







In February, the annual ski trip set off for Kitzbühel. Not only is the skiing fantastic but pupils also spent time with each other, playing games and attending the local hockey game.



## SORRENTO

One of the highlights of the Year 9-13 trip to Sorrento was undoubtedly the Roman City of Herculaneum on the first day of the trip. It gave a glimpse into the lives of Romans before the town was buried in the ash released by the eruption of Vesuvius. Day 2 was packed with visits to Catacombs, a cathedral and Castel Nuovo, and two ice cream parlours. Vesuvius on day 3 was a challenging climb but worth it for the views and seeing all the different types of lava. The afternoon was spent looking around Pompeii. It was pizza making to start day 4 followed by a trip to the Torture Museum and one last stop for ice cream. This was a fantastic trip: we saw and learnt a lot.



## THE FIRST WORLD WAR BATTLEFIELDS TRIP – HISTORY GCSE

**In November, a group of History GCSE students visited the First World War battlefields. Across the three days, they visited sites in and around Belgium and France.**

The focus of the trip was to develop a greater knowledge of medicine on The Western Front, so students visited a range of sites including a British Army Advanced Dressing Station and a model dugout that contained a Dressing Station.

Students also visited the resting places and memorials of Gatton's Old Scholars who lost their lives in the war. We took part in the Last Post Service at The Menin Gate and laid wreaths there on behalf

of our Old Scholars at The Menin Gate (where two Old Scholars are remembered) and Thiepval Memorial (where seven Old Scholars are remembered).

Students commented that, "the trip was really enjoyable and put into perspective just how many people lost their lives during the war" and "it was really helpful to learn about the changes to medicine in the places where these changes actually happened".



## Lille Christmas Market

In December, some of our Year 9 French students visited the Christmas Market in Lille, which was a great opportunity to practise some French and immerse themselves in the French culture.

The Christmas Market of Lille was magical - with the wave of a magic wand, the city takes on a festive atmosphere and welcomes all to a winter wonderland! There were loads of chalets with gift ideas, nativity figurines, Christmas decorations and festive food. A great time was had by all.



## RECOGNISING HIGH PERFORMING PUPILS

In March, Mrs Mitchell (Deputy Head Academic) recognised the achievement of high-performing pupils who had gained more than 150 credits. Credits are awarded for excellent performance or behaviour. Each received a certificate and warm congratulations from staff and their peers in a special assembly.

## YEAR 9 OPTIONS EVENING

Each year we have an event for parents to join their children in Year 9 to find out more about the options available at GCSE. The event is held in January so pupils have plenty of time to make their selection. First there was a talk in Chapel and then an opportunity to talk to the head of each subject option in Gatton Hall.



# SIXTH FORM

## GLOBAL LEADER AWARD CELEBRATION

The Global Leader Award (GLA) was introduced in May 2018, and the first group of School's Sixth Form students to complete the programme received their awards at a special event in Gatton Hall in January.

Special guests at the dinner were Mr Bill Biddell, Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey, and Mrs Bridget Biddell, High Sheriff of Surrey. Mr Biddell gave an inspirational speech about leadership, resilience and the importance of character. The Headmaster gave the evening's congratulatory speech to students.

The Global Leader Award has proved to be a popular and successful programme,

with students embracing the challenges that aim to make them well-rounded global citizens. In its first year, 87% of students in Year 13 successfully completed the programme, and 26 students received the top Platinum award, which required students to contribute at least an additional 210 hours of activities on top of their A Level work.







# MEDIC MEETS MEDSOC

**In 2014, Jacob Sayers completed his school education at the Royal Alexandra and Albert School and took up a place in the Medical School at University College London, having achieved three A\*s and an A in his A Levels.**

In October, Jacob came back to meet members of the School's medical society MEDSOC to give a talk about his experience of applying for a place in medical school. He also talked about how he had progressed through medical school and embarked on a PhD, and how different medical schools have different specialisms. Jacob is continuing clinical medicine alongside his PhD.

One of the students who was at the talk was Zoe Thornton. Zoe joined the Sixth Form at the RAA in September having moved from a school in her home country of Barbados. She chose to come to a British school so she could make the transition to study medicine at a British university, and has set her sights on Oxford. Zoe said “The talk from Jacob was really informative. It was refreshing to hear about the application process from someone who had completed it recently. He gave us some good tips about choosing a medical school, for example, choosing one that is near a hospital.”

## EXPANDING SIXTH FORM SUBJECT RANGE

In October 2019, we announced a new subject was to be added to the School's Sixth Form. From September 2020, Sixth Form curriculum students have been able to choose to follow a BTEC course in Media Production. We are pleased we can offer this subject which will equip students with the skills and knowledge they need to develop a career in this growing industry.





# SIXTH FORM

On 25th February 2020, Sixth Form Physics A Level students visited CERN which is the site of the largest particle accelerator in the world, located in Geneva, Switzerland.

Having studied aspects of particle physics over two years, it was exciting for students to have the opportunity to question some of the leading researchers in the field, alongside visiting key research sites at CERN such as the International Space Station.

Aside from the cutting-edge science, students also enjoyed exploring the Old Town in Geneva, trying their best to navigate the tram and bus systems, counting the number of people on scooters, and purchasing food at every opportunity. The day drew to a close with a delicious meal at a restaurant next to the Cathedral, before heading back to the airport. A truly excellent learning day!

## CERN TRIP



## PUBLIC SPEAKING MASTER CLASS

In preparation for the General Election, we welcomed the Shadow Leader of Croydon Council, Tim Pollard, to give Year 12 Politics students small group training sessions on public speaking. These students would be representing the five main parties in the School's own General Election. As an experienced public speaker, Mr Pollard helped pupils improve their delivery, speeches and overall public speaking technique. Students even filmed themselves to understand what they were doing well and what they could improve.



## GENERAL ELECTION – GATTON STYLE



**Following the announcement of the General Election, the Headmaster was keen for local parliamentary candidates from all the main parties to have the opportunity to engage with Senior pupils.**

The School welcomed Susan Gregory, the Labour Candidate; John Vincent, from the Liberal Democrats; Jonathan Essex from the Green Party; and Crispin Blunt, the Conservative candidate and current sitting member of parliament for Reigate.

To coincide with the General Election, on Thursday 12th December, the School hosted its own election with pupils voting and standing as candidates.



The Headmaster and Senior Prefects meet the Labour candidate.

## BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE & JOE CURRAN (Documentary Film Maker)

This year, Mr Brackpool and his Film Studies students went to the British Film Institute in London for a series of talks on representation in cinema.

There was also a visit from a guest speaker, Joe Curran. Joe is a documentary film maker and is currently making a documentary called 'A Story of Bones'. He spoke about the trials and tribulations of filmmaking as well as giving students an insight into documentary making. The students enjoyed asking him lots of questions and learning about the film industry.



# Creative Arts

## MASTERCLASS TASTER IN STEINWAY HALL

**The Royal Alexandra and Albert School is the first state school in England to achieve the prestigious accolade of being an All-Steinway School.**

The School will be joining an elite group of 25 private schools in England that use exclusively Steinway pianos for music tuition. This special status means the School will take delivery of eight new pianos from the world-renowned piano makers, replacing its current stock of uprights and baby grands.

But before the arrival of the School's pianos, a group of eleven young musicians from the School were treated to a Steinway Masterclass at Steinway Hall, the company's British headquarters.

Two pupils who are working towards their Grade 8 piano exam had a one-to-one Masterclass with Charles Owen, a highly accomplished and successful pianist, Steinway & Sons UK Ambassador, and Professor of Piano at Guildhall School in London.







# Drama - Cabaret & more

We have recently been making a concerted effort to develop our performance programme in Drama in an attempt to reflect the outstanding talent many of our students have as both actors and singers. We have therefore produced a number of productions, some smaller in scale with the intention of leading us into a major production working with the Music Department.

In October 2019, we staged the musical 'Cabaret'. This was the first major production the School had staged in many years being a full-scale musical and obviously requiring a great deal of time and effort of all those involved. Auditions took place in January 2019 with rehearsals kicking in a month later. Though directed by Mr Christian Jones, the success of the production was as a result of a truly a team effort,

with Mr Adam Shea serving as Assistant Director, Ms Kerstin Dixon choreographing the show and Mr Lewis Edney and Mr Jamie Millburn serving as Musical Directors.

Performances took place over three nights and culminated in a 'Gala Dinner' performance on Saturday 19th October in which the audience were served a three-course meal before the show itself.

In November, Year 7 students staged a comedic interpretation of 'Hamlet' as part of the national Shakespeare Festival. The performance itself was staged at the Leatherhead Theatre and proved resoundingly popular with audiences.



# Creative Arts

## YEAR 7 MUSIC SHOWCASE

In October, Year 7 performed their first concert as a new year group. After rehearsals in their first few weeks, they gave a rousing performance in Chapel for their parents.



## PERCUSSION WORKSHOP AT HOLMESDALE INFANT SCHOOL

In February, Mr Edney took six senior percussionists to Holmesdale Infant Community School to give drumming lessons as part of their 'Arts Week'. Each class in Nursery, Reception and Year 1 had a 20 minute session with our percussionists learning drumming patterns and a traditional African song. Then the whole school came together for a mass performance.

## THE LIGHTER SIDE OF GATTON

A range of music ensembles performed in the 'Lighter Side of Gatton' concert in January.



# SPORT

## PATRON'S CUP WIN V GORDON'S SCHOOL

Our annual meet with Gordon's was a huge success. We came away with the Patron's Cup (combined rugby/netball A teams Years 7 to 10) for the first time ever. A fantastic result and all pupils were outstanding!



## YEAR 7 DISTRICT SPORTS HALL ATHLETICS

Year 7 pupils competed in the District Sports Hall Athletics event at Reigate College in December.

The girls' team finished in 1st place qualifying for the County Finals in Guildford. The boys' team did really well and was up against tough competition. They just missed out, finishing in 4th position.



## U14S SURREY RUGBY 7S

The RAAS team took part in the U14s SOCS Surrey Rugby 7s competition. They performed well in a closely matched competition earning the Runners Up Plate.

Well done boys!



# SPORT

## **SOUTH EAST SURREY SCHOOLS GIRLS DISTRICT CROSS COUNTRY COMPETITION**

On 5th November, we hosted the South East Surrey Schools Girls District Cross Country competition. Girls aged 11-18 years representing many schools participated in this event, it was a lovely afternoon as they ran through our beautiful Gatton Park.



## **REPORT FROM THE HEAD OF NETBALL, ALICE PEARSON**



The enthusiasm, competitiveness, progression and Gatton spirit of the netball teams this year has been amazing. Our season was cut abruptly short and I was sad not to see how we would do at the Surrey Schools netball tournaments (which 4 of our year groups qualified for)! However, reflecting on a season with an overall win rate of 68.3%, playing 101 matches and scoring over 1400 goals, it certainly has been a season to remember for many reasons.

Here are just a few highlights from netball teams:

Huge congratulations to our U12A team for winning the District Netball Tournament and being League Winners. Our U12B team have also done extremely well coming second in the District Tournament and second in the League.

It was a pleasing year for the Year 8. We knew we faced new challenges and felt we were ready to embrace them all after an almost clean sweep last year (losing only to Gordon's)!

Some unfortunate injuries and absences meant we were not able to hold on to a clean sweep this season but highlights include: Beating Gordon's, winning the 'A team' district league and increasing our squad numbers so we have a larger selection of girls involved and able to move between the teams.

The U14A Netball team have steadily progressed through the season; in the league they lost just one game by a single point. However, they regained composure and efficaciously cruised through the district tournament to be crowned champions. Highlights of the year include the team's unity and group cohesion and constantly striving to be the best they possibly can be. The U14B Netball team have embarked on a fantastic

journey this season. As a newly founded team, they remain undefeated this season – securing 3 wins and 2 draws. Not only this, they found themselves finishing 2nd in the District Tournament, narrowly missing out on the top spot by goal difference.

The U15A Netball team have stormed through the season, with a 91.7% win rate – their only defeat was during the 'Sisters n Sport' National Cup against Walthamstow Hall; reaching this stage in the competition was a great achievement and will hopefully spur the team on for next season. Highlights of the year include their domination during the District tournament where they were placed first, their victory against Gordon's in the Patrons Cup (22-16) and other successes such as their triumph against City of London Freeman's school in a closely contested match, where they pulled away in the last quarter to win 23-17.



# BOARDING



## First Weekend in September

As boarders settled at the start of the academic year, boarding staff made their first weekend one to remember. Giant inflatables were set up in the grounds of Gatton Park and boarders were able to take part in various inflatable activities. A great icebreaker for new pupils and generally a lot of fun for everyone!



## SELF-CARE CHALLENGE

Boarders in Alexandra House were challenged to complete a small task each day to keep them smiling during the dark and rainy month of February. Tasks ranged from being active for 30 minutes to random acts of kindness. Each girl who completed the challenge received a pamper gift.



# Photo Competition

Cornwall House arranged their third annual photography competition with entries displayed on the walls in one of the Common Rooms. Pupils took photos of a wide range of subjects including animals, landmarks and our own Gatton Park.



## RAAS RUNNING CLUB

Some of our teachers are enthusiastic runners and they were joined on Friday mornings in January by some equally enthusiastic pupils for the early morning Running Club. Mr Gale, Mr Fowles and Max the dog, set off at 7am with pupils for a hearty run around Gatton Park before breakfast. What a great way to start the day!



## SPECIAL SUPPERS

With pupils from all over the world, we like to celebrate the important events from different countries, and what better way to celebrate than with food?

Our wonderful catering team make a huge effort with the theme nights in the Dining Room and these are a firm favourite for pupils. Two examples this year were the Chinese New Year where Chef Ricardo cooked his famous Kung Po Chicken, and Burns Night where pupils tucked in to Haggis Tatties and Neeps!



# CO-CURRICULAR

## BOARDER TRIP PROGRAMME



Even during a year with half being in lockdown, we still managed to pack in loads of trips for boarders. We try to ensure

there is a balance in our trips – some are fun, others sporty, cultural or educational.

Our annual visit to Fright Night at Thorpe Park was as popular as always and a new trip climbing the O2 attracted a lot of interest. Unsurprisingly, food-based events are still in demand.

Many of our trips have a military theme, with visits to HMS Belfast, Bletchley Park, the Imperial War Museum and the RAF Museum. We like to celebrate our military links as the main cohort of students on trips are boarders, many of whom have at least one parent currently serving in the Forces.

For the adrenaline junkies, trips to Teamsport Go-Karting, Go Ape high ropes and paintballing are enjoyed by all, even in the mist and drizzle.

On a more sedate note, we have been to Chessington Zoo, Coral Reef Waterworld, Clip n' Climb, Mercedes Benz, Body Worlds, and innumerable cinema and theatre trips.



## DofE GOLD CELEBRATION DINNER

Completing any Duke of Edinburgh Award is hard work, but completing the Gold Award is particularly difficult and we are pleased so many of our Sixth Form students achieved this. To recognise and celebrate their success with the Gold Award, there was a formal dinner in Gatton Hall.

# EQUESTRIAN FUN TIMES!

Down at the Equestrian Centre, it has been a hive of activity.

Some students have been lucky enough to take part in the vet dental check-up demonstration, and have a farrier talk on how to shoe various horses' feet. Also taking away with them a horse shoe, which most of them chose to paint and decorate.

The Equestrian Centre has been working very hard with the BHS to set up the BHS challenge awards which we hope will take place in the very near future.

Excitingly, the team have a beautiful new Connemara pony named ..... Sid

He has settled in extremely well, and has been performing to a very high standard at home. We look forward to taking him out to some shows in the future.

The students that took part in the "24 Hour in a Boarding School" programme had a wonderful time helping and learning about the Media industry. Not only did the students have a good time but the horses also had a wonderful time nibbling at the equipment!

The staff and students have had a wonderful time hacking around Gatton Park and have made great progress.

The Equestrian staff are also training hard on their own horses, working with superb trainers, so they can pass on their knowledge and be good role models to all the students.





# Community

## AGE CONCERN LUNCH AT GATTON HALL

On 5th December, we had the absolute pleasure of welcoming to Gatton Hall 30 people that benefit from the wonderful charity - Age Concern. Individuals were collected by mini bus from their homes, and once at Gatton, RAA students helped to seat and serve each person a Christmas lunch, whilst the RAA choir performed Christmas songs. It was a truly wonderful event, something the students and invitees will hopefully remember, and look forward to for next year.



## ANTI-BULLYING AMBASSADORS & ANTI-BULLYING WEEK

In November, pupils held a series of events for Anti-Bullying Week. The events, which included Odd Sock Day, spread the message that we should embrace difference and indeed, we should celebrate it. In February, we had Anti-bullying ambassador training. A group of pupils spent the day with Diana Award anti-bullying coordinators to find out more about how to prevent bullying and support people who are victims of bullying.





# MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Model United Nations is an educational simulation in which students can learn about diplomacy, international relationships and the United Nations (UN). When participating in MUN, the student takes the role of 'Delegate'. They are then invited into a committee, and assigned a country and a set of topics in advance. As representatives of their countries, delegates debate the issues presented, while staying true to their country's perspective.

In this environment, students strive to increase their international political awareness, public speaking skills and usage of the English language. MUN also has the benefit of being internationally recognised, which means that any student planning to study abroad will find it very beneficial.

Our Sixth Formers had a great time at Croydon MUN with two of our students winning best delegate in their committees.



# Community

## SLEEPEASY 2020

This is the third year that RAAS have supported the YMCA East Surrey charity by taking part in Sleepeasy. Pupils built cardboard shelters in the 'Cage' and experienced the harsh reality of sleeping outside, and eating a basic meal of soup and bread. A representative from the charity came to speak to pupils about homelessness and how it can affect many aspects of a person's life.



## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Our Year 8s decided to partake in Operation Christmas Child to show their love and support to other children around the world who are less fortunate than themselves. They worked together to make up shoeboxes filled with small toys, hygiene items and school supplies. These simple gifts were sent to children affected by war, poverty, natural disaster famine and disease.



# COVID-19

## CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

**On the 20th March 2020, schools were closed by the Government due to the Covid-19 pandemic.**

All Schools were required to provide face to face education for key workers' children where they could not make other arrangements, and for vulnerable children. At the same time, we had to provide online and remote learning opportunities for all other students.

Then there was the issue of exams. With the cancellation of the annual exams a new system was introduced for awarding grades for GCSEs, A Levels, and other important qualifications.

We remained open throughout the outbreak, even during the Easter Holiday and summer half term.



### COVID SAFE CHARTER

We adopted the Boarding Schools' Association COVID-SAFE Charter. This is a voluntary code that outlines measures to ensure that boarding is a safe environment for pupils.

# COVID-19

## The Headmaster, Mark Dixon's interview on BBC News

At the beginning of the pandemic the Headmaster, Mark Dixon, was interviewed on BBC News. He talked about our School's response and how we would be staying open even during Easter and half term, for our vulnerable pupils and pupils whose parents are key workers.



## DAILY MOTIVATION

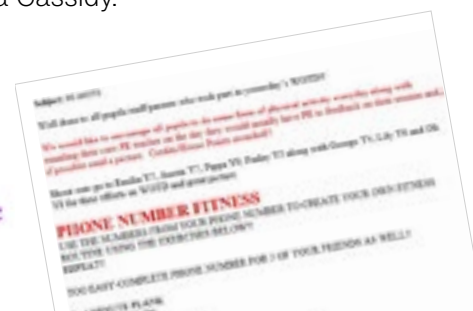
The PE and Music departments helped pupils and staff get through the pandemic by sending out daily emails.

WOTD (Workout Of The Day) included a different physical activity each day. The activity could be easily completed under lockdown conditions and pupils were encouraged to send in photos. That, combined with the Joe Wicks workouts, kept pupils fit throughout the pandemic.

## THE POWER OF MUSIC

The Power of Music emails were sent out each day by the Music Department.

A YouTube channel was set up called Daily Wellbeing Playlist, and each morning a new piece of music was added. A link was sent out with information about why it was chosen. There was a huge range of music and styles and the first song was 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' by Eva Cassidy.





# VISORS FOR THE NHS

At the start of lockdown School DT Departments across the country used their workshops to make clear visors for NHS workers.

DT staff at RAA were no exception and they researched different designs, eventually making visors to our own design. They used materials we had to hand and that would be available to order at short notice.

The team made nearly 1000 visors for local health organisations.



# COVID-19

## QUARANTINE FOR OVERSEAS PUPILS RETURNING IN SEPTEMBER

**When the Government introduced its quarantine policy for people arriving in the UK, we recognised some of our overseas families might struggle to make arrangements for two weeks quarantine prior to the start of the new term in September. We therefore set about arranging for pupils to quarantine at School before the start of term.**

For two weeks in August, Gatton Hall, which is usually a Sixth Form boarding house, was converted to a quarantine boarding house. With one floor for boys and another for girls, and shared common rooms, the house was perfect for the job. Special arrangements were made for food to be cooked and delivered for pupils to eat in the downstairs state rooms.

Around 50 pupils from around the globe including Spain, Romania, USA, Moldova, Uganda and The Netherlands signed up so they could come back to School at the start of term.

Pupils participated in activities consisting of both indoor and outdoor sports, games, walks around the grounds and arts and crafts. Each day pupils had quiet time and in the evenings there were movie nights, quizzes, games nights and a BBQ.

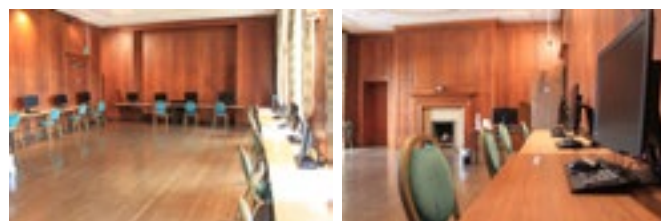
## YEAR 6 RETURN TO SCHOOL

As lockdown gradually eased, in June, Year 6 came back to School. In socially distanced classrooms, and in groups of no more than 15, pupils were delighted to be able to come back for face-to-face lessons with their classmates.



## YEAR 10 AND YEAR 12 RETURN

As pupils returned to School in the summer in smaller class groups, we needed classrooms that would allow separation. Gatton Hall was pressed into service including the Oak Room which became a Year 10 classroom.



# SCHOOL EVENTS

## RUN LIKE THE GALE

**Deputy Head, Joe Gale, took on a running challenge for Young Minds, a children's mental health charity in May. With the support of the Gatton community he raised an amazing £4,297!**

On 16th May, Mr Gale ran around the School's 260-acre park for 12 hours non-stop. This was the equivalent of two marathons, or all the way to Brighton and back in a single day.

One of the main reasons for the fundraising was to train two therapy dogs for our school.

And here they are! These very good boys are Fin and Max, and they are pictured wearing their rather smart new therapy dog coats. Both passed their initial assessment, which is the first step towards them becoming fully qualified therapy dogs. They will complete their training in 2021 and then provide therapeutic support for pupils.



## VE DAY CELEBRATIONS

On 8th May, whilst the nation was adjusting to living through the pandemic, we all adapted and found different ways to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of VE Day.

Pupils and staff came together around the flag pole for two minutes of silence to remember the sacrifice of brave men and women whose actions culminated in Victory in Europe in 1945. Pupils sang 'We'll Meet Again' and sent in clips which were compiled into a video on YouTube and shared with the whole community.



# OUR GATTON FRIENDS

## REMEMBRANCE DAY

Remembrance is an ideal time to bring people of all ages and backgrounds together to reflect upon the services and sacrifice of the Armed Forces. This is particularly poignant for us as many of our pupils are from MOD families. This year we had two touching services for Remembrance Day. Our pupils were fantastic and respectful throughout the commemorations.



## FRIENDS OF RAAS CHRISTMAS FAIR

The PTA make a fantastic contribution to the School, from funding picnic tables for pupils and the sound system in Chapel, to supporting themed evenings in the Dining Hall (amongst many other things!).



They hosted the annual Christmas Fair in the run-up to Christmas providing an opportunity for pupils and parents to stock up on gifts for their loved ones. Music was provided by the School choir and there were plenty of tasty treats on offer.

Our grateful thanks to the team of volunteers who work tirelessly to support our School with these enjoyable events.



## GATTON TRUST

**The Gatton Trust's role is to restore the parkland and gardens of Gatton Park and to encourage the local community to visit for leisure and learning. This year all of the work was significantly affected by the Covid-19 crisis.**

Volunteers are at the core of the work of the Trust, assisting with every aspect of our operations. Approximately 90 people support the Trust's work in some way. When the national lockdown was announced, our volunteer teams were unable to come to the park and this left a skeleton staff to maintain our 260 acre site, until their return in the summer.

In the height of the growing season, the volunteers who were safe to return took up the challenge and made up for lost time. Although some of our projects have been delayed, the 'Capability' Brown landscape and Edwardian gardens are looking in great shape.

The Japanese Garden has been the focus of a project, supported by Postcode Local Trust. The teahouse roof thatch has been replaced by cedar shingles and access works including steps and a path will be put in place.

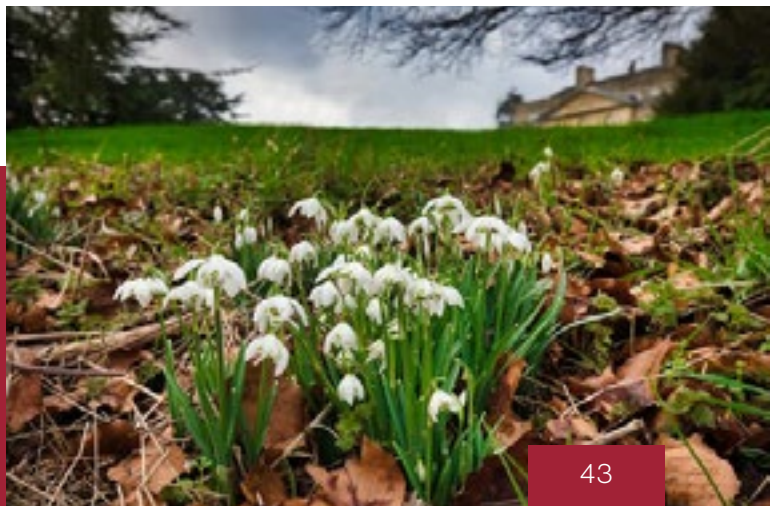
A new restoration project has also started. Amongst the trees near our Pleasure Gardens, there lies a garden which has been largely undisturbed for 80 years. The Old World Garden is thought to be named after the Old World roses which surrounded the rectangular pool, within a yew hedge. All that remains is a pond and some very tall yew trees which have grown up from the original hedge.

This year, work started to cut these trees back, to encourage new growth and to bring the hedge back to life. Further pruning and planting will be required before work starts on the garden itself.

Our busy summer season of events, school visits and activities for families was limited this year but during the winter our intrepid Forest School families enjoyed the activities (and the mud!) down in the woods. We also ran a project for local families who are supported by the Red Oak Family Centre, so that they could experience Forest School too.

## SNOWDROP SEASON

In February each year residents, pupils and visitors to Gatton Park enjoy the spectacle of blankets of snowdrops around the park and especially the Rock Garden.



# ROYAL ALEXANDRA & ALBERT SCHOOL



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