

THE GATTON ASSOCIATION



Incorporating
The Maitland Association,
The Royal Albert Old Boy's Association &
The Royal Alexandra and Albert School

Chairman: Phil Wade

President: Ray Davies

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NEWSLETTER MENU

Chairman's Welcome

Dear Friends and Member,

Welcome to the Spring Newsletter. I hope this newsletter finds you and your families all well and on top form at the start of another year. Spring is just starting to give us a taste of warmer days, especially after the wintery weather over the past few months. For our antipodean members, the approaching autumn with the prospect of cooler weather following the heat of summer.

Speaking of far off friends and members, our thoughts go out to all those who have suffered and are still suffering following the tragic events following the earthquakes in Christchurch NZ and Japan, and the terrible floods in Australia. The Pacific ring is certainly getting the brunt of it at the moment. Our thoughts and best wishes go out to all our friends wherever you are.

If you have been affected by any of these events please drop us an email or letter and let us know your experiences. We will publish them in our next newsletter. Our thoughts and best wishes go out to you and your families wishing you all safe and well.

Departures

I am sorry to announce the retirement of Benny Jones, who has decided to take early retirement from the end of the summer term 2011. He has been teaching at the school since around 1973 in various roles and has been housemaster of Gloucester House for many years. Many of our members, young and old will have fond memories of their time with Benny. He has been a great ally and link over the years between the Old Scholars and the current school. We thank him for his support over the years and wish him well in his future endeavours.

Do you have a memory of Benny? We would like your anecdotes and memories of Benny, and we will put them to Benny for his response to these stories, and his memories of you. So don't be afraid to put your name to your tales and memories of Benny. We will be publishing your recollections in our next newsletter. We look forward to your memories of Benny, and his memories of his time at the school.

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Founders Day Sunday 8th May 10.30. Founders day service and prize giving will take place in the chapel from 10.30, if you plan on attending please be in your seat by 10.15. Lunch and refreshments will be served in the dining hall after the service. Followed by The Challenge Football Match, which will take place in the afternoon - kick off 2.30pm - further details below. After the football, catch up with old friends in the Staff Club. The head has said that founders day on the 8th is also the day for past pupils to go and bid farewell to Benny, and have a beer with him

Gatton Goes Green Sunday 3rd July 1.00 – 5.00. The July Open Day is a special event and a great day out for all the family. Country crafts and demonstrations, children's activities, gardens and grounds open. Bring your family and friends, show them where you spent your formative years. Take a stroll around the gardens and park and see the changes that have taken place since you left. A great day is to be had by all. Cost; Adults £4.50 children free.

Vice Chair of the GA

Hey everyone,

The time has finally come for Mr Jones to say good bye to the school. I have fond memories of being in Mr Jones's history class and him telling me I'll be a factory girl when I leave school, with a fag in my mouth and curlers in my hair. But I wasn't always naughty in his class - particularly when I was on report card. This was simply because I wanted him to sign it at the end of class with 'Very good BJ'...yes, we thought that was hilarious. One day I even got an 'Excellent BJ', I was very pleased!

Hopefully this won't be the last we see of Mr Jones as we have another super exciting reunion planned.

2012 see's many important events hitting the UK, one being the Olympics, but nothing compares to a good old school reunion. You have plenty of time to book time off work and to save up for it!

I am very excited to be appointed new Vice Chair of the GA, I hope to expand the association through new avenues such as the social network sites which are taking over our lives (come on, we all love facebook) and I'd like to get all of you newbies fresh out of school signed up, as well as the 'missing' generations who we need to track down! Another key focal point for me is the 2012 reunion. 2008's reunion was such a blast, everyone who went, regardless of their nervousness about going back, had an amazing time and even made new school friends the second time round. I want you ALL to be there!

Please see the Gatton Park Facebook page for details, or email / write to the GA.

Check out the DVD section of the newsletter. Lots of exciting variety shows and school plays for you to choose from! Let me know if you have any old videos hiding away at home that we can transfer to DVD and sell to help raise funds for the GA.

I hope to see you all there in 2012!

Alicia

Founders Day 2011 Football Match

Founders Day Annual Football Match 8th May kick off @ 2.30pm.

The annual gathering on Founders Day for the 'Old Scholars Football Match' is upon us again, and as such we need to get our team together for another great event in this annual event, which has been running since 1994.

The Old Boys have lost the last 2 meetings. This is a run we aim to end with your input. If you feel that you are willing to take the field against the school, please contact me and commit yourself to this great annual event.

To put yourself in the winning team please contact Phil Wade on 07903 192989 or email me at gattonassociation@gmail.com.

NOT FIT ENOUGH??? Don't worry, if you want to play but feel that you are not fit enough, you can as I change out players at regular intervals to enable all to have a run out and a chance of immortality.

If you aren't playing come and support the 'Old Boys'. Bring your family and friends along for a fun day out. After the match, join us in the staff club to catch up on old times. A marvellous day to be had by all, ex-scholars, friends and school alike. Sign up for a great day out, contact me now!! Phil Wade on 07903 192989 or email me at gattonassociation@gmail.com.

Committee Members

Positions	Name
President:	Ray Davies
Chairman:	Phil Wade
Vice Chair:	Alicia Edwards
Secretary:	Peter Page
Treasurer:	Ray Davies
Membership Secretary:	Michelle Ellis
Publicity Officers:	Phil Wade Alicia Edwards
Board of Governors & Ex-Scholar:	John Billingham
Archivist:	Position Vacant
Merchandising:	Michelle Ellis
Events Co-ordinator:	Position Vacant
News Editor:	Chas Bailey
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	Phone: 020 8648 7274
Assist - News Editor:	Andrew Bailey

Headmaster's Letter

At the start of this academic year I wrote about the introduction of our Sixth Form and two new boarding house extensions for Sixth Form boarders. I am pleased to say that our Sixth Formers have settled in well and we have had a high number of applications in the Sixth Form for next September.

On 11th November Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State for Schools came to officially open the two boarding house extensions. He made a brief speech to pupils and staff and it was good to hear his thoughts on the future of education. Since then I have met Michael Gove on a number of occasions and I always take the opportunity to promote the benefits of state boarding and ensure that we are not overlooked in any future policy reviews.

I am sure many of you were affected by the snow during December. Once again, we were one of the very few schools in Surrey that remained open throughout the snow. Against the odds we managed to get enough food into the school to feed the snowed-in pupils and staff.

The weather might have been the reason why a stone came loose from the façade of Gatton Hall. We now have scaffolding round the main entrance whilst we carry out repairs. On the other side of Gatton Hall, work has been completed on the restoration of the formal gardens or 'Parterre'. The old tennis courts have been removed and there is once again an uninterrupted view from the garden down to the lake.

When I last wrote I explained that the foundation stones had arrived from the old Alexandra Orphanage in Maitland Park. As yet, they have not been installed in a new location but I hope to be able to write to ex-AO pupils and invite them to the opening soon.

We are privileged to live in such beautiful surroundings here in Gatton Park and the parkland enables us to run BTEC courses in land based studies. Our collection of animals now includes horses, pigs, goats, lambs, chickens and bees. The three resident sows are used for clearing woodland and for breeding piglets. Aunt Vivien, one of the sows, had nine piglets last term and these were destined for the table. Pupils were well aware of their fate and took it all in their stride. In March, Gatton Pork appeared on the menu of the Oxo Tower restaurant and they were so impressed they have agreed to take any future pork we can provide.

Many of you will remember Benny Jones who has worked at this school for the last 35 years. This summer he will be retiring and to mark the occasion, the Times Educational Supplement ran a two page article about him. An extract is included in this newsletter and I am sure it will bring back memories for those of you that remember Mr Jones. We will be sorry to see him go but wish him a long and happy retirement.

The month of May is fast approaching and with it comes Founders Day on Sunday 8th May. Any Old Scholars who are able to come will be made most welcome. If you would like to come, please contact my PA, Sally Herrtage **01737 649041** so she can reserve a place for you in Chapel.

With my very best wishes

Paul D Spencer Ellis
Headmaster

Surrey Pupil Wins 'Player of the Tournament' trophy at national event

It was the first ever sports festival for state boarding schools and over 500 children from 13 schools around the country gathered to compete in a wide range of sports. The Royal Alexandra and Albert School fielded teams for dance and football at the event which was held on 17th March at Old Swinford School in the midlands.

The highlight for one particular pupil came at the end when all the prizes were given out. RAA had achieved a respectable third for Dance, and second for Football, but there were only awards for the winning teams. Nevertheless, they stayed to cheer on their fellow competitors. Then it came to the award of the Andy Boorman Memorial Trophy for 'Player of the Tournament'. 13 year old Denyl Daniel, from the Royal Alexandra and Albert School, was surprised to hear that he had made it to the final four, but absolutely stunned when he heard that he was the winner of the Trophy.



Denyl Daniel with Headmaster,
Paul Spencer Ellis

It turned out that Denyl's efforts on the football pitch, which had helped his team to achieve their second place, had not gone unnoticed. Throughout the day he had been on top form with a consistently high level of performance in every match. This culminated in a fantastic 'golden goal' in the semi final which secured his team's place in the final.



Singing Sisters' Choir Success

Sisters, Charlotte and Katie Taylor have achieved a rare feat in the world of music. The girls, who are pupils at the Royal Alexandra and Albert School, have both been accepted into National Choirs; Charlotte (aged 14) has joined the National Youth Choir of Great Britain; Katie (aged 11) has joined the National Children's Choir of Great Britain.

The National Children's Choir of Great Britain is for youngsters aged between 9 and 14. Katie had to sing a solo and do aural tests in her audition. The Choir runs two residential courses each year - one at Easter and one in the summer, and will be touring Europe in 2012.



Katie and Charlotte Taylor

The National Youth Training choir is for youngsters aged between 13 and 18. Charlotte had to sing two contrasting songs on her own and do aural tests in her audition. This Choir which runs residential courses each year at Easter and in the summer, is often used for CD recordings.

Children raise over £1000 for Marie Curie

It's not easy raising £1000. But that's exactly what seven junior pupils at the Royal Alexandra and Albert School have done. In fact they raised £1098.64 by organising a series of events to raise money for Marie Curie Cancer Care.

The Year 6 House Prefects came up with the idea of raising money for charity and initially had a target of £500. They arranged various events which included a cake sale, 'Bits and Bobs' sale, Silence Challenge, Mufti Day, colouring competition and collecting outside Morrisons in Caterham.

The children presented a cheque to Rosalind Hooper, the Area Fundraising Manager for Marie Curie who was delighted to receive the donation. She explained that the money will provide nursing care to people who are very ill and also support their families.



Year 6 Prefects at the cake sale

Interview with Benny Jones – March 2011

Who has been your biggest influence?

The first headmaster here at RAA Frank Bickerstaff who came to the school 2 years before my arrival and through his foresight turned a place that was Dickensian and draconian into an institution that became increasingly human, child-centred and generally happy. A place that had all the shades of Tom Brown's school days was moved into the twentieth century by this charismatic and highly intelligent figure.

What is your career high so far?

I have had so many in the 35 years being involved with boarding education that it would be too difficult and too unfair to pick out many of the career highs that being involved with state boarding education has given me. Of course, numerous promotions and the dosh associated with such promotions always helps and adds to these many highs that I have had.

What was your worst moment in teaching?

When this school went into special measures in 2000 however, even this disastrous low had its advantages because it was instrumental in much needed cash injections plus a revamping of the staff at the school from top to bottom

What is the best piece of advice you have been given?

Always look both ways when you cross the road. Of course I say this tongue in cheek, sound advice as it is, however, on a more serious note the best piece of advice that I have been given in a professional sense when dealing, especially with teenagers is never assume you know what superficially seems to be the most obvious reason for a problem or the most obvious solution to this problem.

What is the most outrageous thing you have ever seen a colleague do?

I remember in my early days of teaching and housemastership a good friend of mine responding to a boarder who gave him an answer which began with "I thought...". The answer was abruptly interrupted with the reply, "You thought? Don't flatter yourself son". At first glance I thought to myself "what an unkind thing to say" but when you look beyond the actual words then of course it's not so outrageous at all. How many people do you know today, sometimes in highly responsible positions who make decisions without thinking them through and of course, their initial reply when questioned about decisions many times begin with "I thought..."?

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What would you be if you hadn't become a teacher?

If I hadn't become a teacher I would most certainly have been involved in the horse racing industry; on the gambling side!!!!!!

What do you do on a Friday evening?

What a silly question to ask somebody who has been a housemaster for the last 22 years!

What car do you drive?

A Vauxhall Zafira because it's got 7 seats which is very handy when going to rugby matches and even handier for carrying all the gear an 'On Course' bookmaker needs.

Where did you last go on holiday – and why?

I am saving all the holidays up because I am just about to embark on a really long one!

What was the last book you read?

'Off to Philadelphia in the Morning' by Jack Jones, a fantastic Welsh author who has written many insightful novels about the industrial culture of the working classes (the drink and the demon, and Welsh non-conformism) of South Wales during the 19th and 20th Centuries.

Are you tech savvy or a Luddite?

I presume you are asking me about my technological / computer skills. Of course, I grew up, and for the greater part of my professional life worked on the 'chalk face'. However, I am a bit of a dab-hand when it comes to using the keyboard; there are times though when the little box does not do as it's told and I have come very close to using Luddite tactics on the confounded machine!

If you could live in any period in history, when would it be and why?

If I could live in any period of history it's quite a difficult question to answer, so let me put it another way by saying that living during the very late 60's to mid 70's would have been a perfect state of grace if I was allowed to remain there because, as you might know, Welsh rugby was in its heyday with giants JPR, Gareth Edwards, Phil Bennett, et al ruling supreme.

What is the worst excuse you've ever heard?

When Tommy Wilkinson, a scamp of a 14 year old, whom I caught smoking told me that it was necessary for him to do so and had been advised to him on medical grounds to continue to do so because of his incredibly nervous disposition. Quite amazing, as I had never come across anyone with so much verve, tenacity and confidence that he held in no trumps.



Alexandra Orphanage Maitland Park. Hampstead

By Kenneth Smith - Boarder 1933-1945

I recently read an article in the Daily Telegraph featuring your school and thought you could well be interested in my experience from age of two years until December 1945.

My father died when I was four months old which left my mother in dire straits as benefits such as one can receive today were not available. I had two older brothers the difference in years being six and twelve, at two years my brother and I were accepted by the Alexandra Orphanage, I was an infant my brother a junior the further stages being chartiers intermediates and seniors., the Head Master a Mr Fyfe, two Matrons namely Borrett and Darling, followed by masters and mistresses. The Orphanage had a swimming pool, small hospital type infirmary and a chapel, three meals a day were supplied, also bread and dripping supper with a mug of cocoa.

Football and cricket also athletics were played at times throughout the year, sports afternoon Wednesdays and Saturday afternoons. School hours were a good deal longer than they are these days with early chapel scripture lessons break for a half pint of milk at around ten to ten thirty am. Dinner was around 12.30 and I believe afternoon lessons from around 1.30 until 4.30 or so. Tea was possibly 5.00 pm and supper eight pm. On Wednesday one stood on parade at 1.30 pm to receive either a Trebor twisted stick of barley sugar or a Mars bar Frys double six chocolate bar.

The discipline was very strict but fair, we had two outings a year, one to Oughborough., home of J.V.Rank , the other to Bertram mills circus at Olympia, London, coaches were supplied by George Ewer Grey/Green based in Tottenham North London. I had my first Christmas at home 1945 after leaving the Orphanage owing to my Mother's circumstances.

The school moved out of London in September 1939, six months were spent in Bedford billeted in peoples homes but I attended a large school possibly the Bedford School then moved to a newly built temporary school at Peppard Oxon, this was totally different to what one had been used to, however being in the country was obviously healthier for all, this school was demolished a while ago., it is sad to learn the fate of the Alexandra Orphanage - has the wonderful painting on the dining room ceiling of the Last Supper been saved, doubtful?

I cannot thank the Orphanage enough, the thirties/ forties were very hard for many , but thanks to J.V Rank (flour miller) Garfield Weston biscuit manufacturer) Jerimiah Coleman (mustard etc) Robinson (barley water) one was well schooled, clothed and fed., I have had a successful business career and in retirement are still active and in March 2011 will hopefully celebrate 55 years of marriage.

Kenneth Millward Smith



"Royal Alexandra & Albert School Report for 1953"

By Robert Hill

I came across a small booklet entitled "Royal Alexandra & Albert School Report for 1953" which made for considerably interesting reading in various ways - not least for comparing prices and costs (for building construction) with today - and nearing the end, almost unnoticeably, an obscure and very brief acknowledgement of the death of my brother the preceding year (1952). Apparently that same year there had been "an unusual amount of sickness and a number of cases of Encephalitis", the latter which I believe is an infection or disease, of the brain. My brother died from the very rare viral infection Laryngotracheobronchitis, which if modern-day antibiotics been available back then, he might have been saved.

The other aspect of all this is that a number of the photos I sent you appear in this 1953 booklet (I did suggest that some of them looked a little 'staged' - and I guess you may have thought so too - as obviously they were 'set up' for appearing in publications for appeals for funds - which also took place in the cinemas and on the 'wireless' as it was known then. In fact the booklet I have contains the transcript of just one such "wireless" appeal. The date of the publication (1953) explains the absence of the log booms that were chained together across the Big Lake when I first arrived at Gatton Park in 1949 and still remained when I departed (temporarily) in 1951 to Bishopswood. Also the circular ornamental pond with the cherub fountain in the middle was not ringed off with a fence in my early days, because at least one boy (David Hopping) fell in to it - as I related in the first (I think) of my two articles about early days at Gatton Park.

Interestingly, I have fairly recently had contact from a 'girl' from that era via FR, who concurs with several things that I wrote about (even though she's not a GA member and does not receive the newsletter. For instance, about the climbing frame and slide set up on the front lawns overlooking the Big Lake - and the little switchback that I recall so well.

Another thing I found was a largish photo of the Christmas Nativity play we put on every year, on the stage in that room in the upper levels of Gatton Hall. There are a number of young characters as well as myself featured in it, many (if not most) whom I can still recognize, and identify. I've located a photographic processing outfit via the 'net in Bournemouth, who as a trial, I entrusted a small batch of other hitherto 'lost' negs for D & P, and I was much impressed with their handiwork - hence I'm going to send some more - including one or two of those I sent you - to see what wonders they can do. Some of that most recent batch I had done feature the Duke of Gloucester & Duchess of Kent's visit by helicopter on 8th May 1958, and it is possible to recognize a few of the many faces of those milling around at the time. Sad to say I wouldn't have impressed my editor had I been a newspaper reporter, as my interest appeared to be more with the helicopter than the Duke and Duchess! I recall we were kept a fair distance away from the Royal party, and my camera, a 1955 Xmas present Kodak 'Brownie' 127, (with a capacity of a mere 8 frames!) was greatly at disadvantage when it called for 'distance' shots! When I get my next lot printed I'll try to put something together that may constitute an article for a future Gatton Assn Newsletter.

And before I finish on Gatton Assn - I also found my original Gatton Association membership card & rulebook, dating from 1959, and one of my 'exeat' cards (one's ticket to freedom on Sat & Sun afternoons)! Another thing I came across was my 'snake' belt - did you have one? They were basically a form of elasticated, adjustable webbing, with the fastening in the 'S' shape of a snake. Every boy in the 1950s had one. I also note from measuring it, that my waist appeared to have been around 22" - somewhat less than how it is today, so many years later!

Fond Memories of Benny Jones from the Old Scholars

"Page, you're like a daisy under a cowpat just waiting to get out".
Good luck Benny you were an integral part of my youth.

Michael Page

I worked with Benny 1998-2000 and we often went down the club after he finished work for a quick pint, what he actually meant was a quick 3-4 in an hour. Cheers

Dave Thomas

I will always remember Mr. Jones as the person who taught me about WW1 and my introduction to Blackadder. Just have to remember that it all started when a bloke called Archie Duke shot an ostrich 'cause he was hungry.

Paul Marks

Benny Jones was my rugby coach a brilliant one he was,
I can remember most Saturdays watching the rugby when the 6 nations was on well 5 nations in them days.
Always remember the kebab runs he used to do on Saturdays.
A top bloke can you pass on to him from me I'm married and my wife from Abercorn south Wales.

Alistair Thomson

Gloucester house always had the best food at supper - they had sky - Gloucester boys were spoiled - I was in Kent house - "Hey boyo..." that's all I remember lool

Anthony Tim Ogunmuyiwa

Q. Why did Benny Jones never wake the Gloucester house boys up in the morning?

A. because he couldn't get his car up there =D

Ross Carney

Best memory of Benny, definitely the disgusting weight lifting surprise at the Gloucester Xmas party every year!
Or going to the toilet in the middle of the night, and him scaring the hell out of me on the way back to my dorm!

Joss Halford

Good bye and good luck in the future! I left in yr 9 which was like in 2007. He was my house master. Benny is a wicked teacher and house master he was always there when people needed him.

Mitchell Mannion

My best memory of Mr. Jones is he was rugby coach of us in year 11. Before a match he gave us a talk 15 minutes before every game and he used to remind us that we weren't just playing for fun but to represent the school and to have a bit of pride when playing. I never really thought about what he said at the time as myself and the team probably were thinking too much not to let Mr. Jones down. (He would always be honest anyway on how we played) but now as I'm older I think more about what he said. So thanks for being honest and being a great coach/teacher and as a proud ex Gattonian I wish you the very best in your new future!

Paul Surgey

I remember Benny Jones driving everywhere and I do mean everywhere in his clapped out banger of a car. Be it to and from his house to the dining hall, to outside the school block to teach. And he always turned up late, and on occasions not at all, to our lessons. The rugby lessons were ways amazing with Bj as well.

Robin Horsfall



When Benny fell asleep at break time with his bear hat on!

Jordan Gask



Remember him well; he was one of the GOOD teachers. I left in 1984. Good Luck Mr. Jones :o)

Amanda Jane Groves

Good luck Mr. Jones I remember we were the only house to have kebabs and stay up to watch the boxing because Mr. Jones was the best.

Ryan Newland

Best wishes to you Benny. I left in 1989. I remember a few years later in about 1997 when I was delivering petrol to the Q8 garage in Merstham I had to close the site and nearly told him we were closed. And instead said "Sorry sir, you carry on I'll close after." I still had massive respect for him 9 years after leaving.

Ian Neville

OMG! Mr. Benny Jones. Remember him very well. I left in 1984 and have fond memories. Good luck to him :-)

Amanda Fuller

I remember when at the end or begging of a new year, Benny would throw a party for Gloucester house. One of the games was the three man lift. First, sheets would be laid down, and Benny would pick someone to lie-down and make them put a belt on. Then he would chose two others to lie-down next to them and get them to wrap themselves around the person in the middles arms and legs. Benny would then test the weight of all three boys on the belt pretending to lift it. All the while another member of staff would go in to the hall which was out of the view of the boys involved with the three man lift, and cum back with a concoction made from anything found in Benny's cupboard. And this is to be poured on the person in the middle of the three man lift. The two who were holding the person in the middle down are to jump out of the way; although the year I did help out, I got caught and was carried and dumped outside with the person in the middle completely covered in the contents of Benny's cupboards.

Rhys Anderson

And that's "pure black and White boyo, no shades of grey about it!!!"

Ok here goes.....Mr. Benny Jones, what can I say about him other than him being one of the most inspirational men in my life, one of the best teachers you could possibly hope to be taught by, and I was lucky enough to have him as my house-master and it was better for me living there, than at home!! I have very fond memories of Benny Jones, and have no doubt in my mind that if it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be the man i am today. God bless you Mr. Jones....be lucky!!

Renny Leftwich

Oh Benny. You can't leave. Gatton wouldn't be the same without you. I have a photo of me and you at the last reunion. My First Form Tutor and English teacher. It still amazes me that after 20 years you still call me Catherine!!! Love you Ben.

Xxx

Cathy Jennings

Can't believe Benny's leaving. Gatton won't be the same without him. I left Gatton in 2000. Wish u all the best Mr. Jones.

Anne-Marie Shields

Bloody hell I didn't realise Benny Jones was still at Gatton. He was a legend with Jonny Ahern, they created a great rugby team which I was privileged to be a part of.

Simon Law

HE WAS THE BEST HISTORY TEACHER IN THE WORLD... and he used to call James Bate master Bate ha-hahahahaha ♥

Katie Victoria

He was my year tutor, in the classroom next to the library; I think it was in my 1st senior year, always chirpy and ready to chat.

Melvyn Gaskill



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Good old Benny, Gatton won't be the same with him gone!

Donna Stemp

I can remember my 1R classmates calling me fat and getting upset about it - Benny Jones turned round and said "Sammy you're not fat you're pleasantly plump" LOL

Samantha Hughes-Williams

Definite legend, was my house master, history teacher and rugby coach at Reigate when I left Gatton.

Ashley Azzopardi

I loved his raw fried egg supper in Gloucester! Legend boyo!

Adrian Murphy

"You're driving a horse and cart through my good nature, boyo!" A legend indeed.

Kristian Francis

Thanks for being such a great teacher/mentor, Gatton Park won't be the same without you. You are like an antique piece of furniture that could never be replaced. Best wishes for the future Mr. Jones. You will be missed. P.S Kent boys rule!

Jaron Sherwood

Always taking the mick about me being Italian "you come into my shop and play on the games " :;)

Alessandro Cardillo

By far the most influential teacher I ever had, great Housemaster and an all round good bloke. Was an honour sharing a pint with him in the staff bar at the first reunion.

Stewart Clarke

My mum fell in love with his accent, hehe! Great teacher :)

Leanne Shaw

He will be missed at Gatton I wish him all the best for the future.

Tracy Orr-wilson

Left before Mr Jones arrived but every time I met him he always came across as a real gent... good luck Mr Jones for the future. I am sure you will be missed.

John Housom

Mr Jones is a Gatton institution, boyo.

Shane Wilde

There can't be a Gatton Park without Mr. Jones resident in it! A History teacher who was very great at teaching me my favorite subject. I once remember him telling us to always question things and not to take anything as certain. I haven't ever forgotten that. Also he spurred me on to do well in my exam by saying I was targeted a D for GCSE. I said I was going to achieve at least a B. I got my B and he shook my hand when I went to collect my results. What a gentleman, definitely down with the kids!

Christian Stevens

I can remember him signing someone's report card "very good.BJ." & the way he called everyone boyo. Lovely man with his little blue car.

Lynsey Williams



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I remember him telling the boys off and saying that if they didn't do as he said they might as well flush their head down the toilet! Sounded funny in his accent!

Abigail Payne

Benny Jones was an utter legend, my favorite member of staff by a long shot, Best wishes for the future.....boyo

Edd Pennells

WORKING CLASS HERO!!!!

Darren McIntosh

The legend of Gatton park Gloucester house no one can say anything bad about him, even though he drove a Volvo banger at the time, and a great rugby coach all the best Mr. B.

Peter Greaney

Ahern and Jones leaving so close together, school will never be the same again. Would love to have a pint with the pair of them. Legends.

Stu Coope



Top bloke... a great rugby coach. Never understood a word that came out of his mouth, but he had a unique way of getting his message across.

Adam Coope

I remember when he made fun of Roosevelt's quote in history "I have a big one" (the atom bomb) lol. My nickname was Rodney in school and he called me Dave like Trigger does. A true legend!!!!

Martin Roberts

Straight as a die, right up there with Ken Sidle. Every one respected Benny Jones and in them days never to be seen without a tracksuit on!

Nick Sadler

He was my house master twenty years ago, top bloke!

Lee Evans

Proper dude (for a Welshman) I used to iron his shirts in Albert house for 20p a shirt, and every week he made me promise I wouldn't spend the cash on ciggies!...Soz Benny!

Kevin Allen

I'd love to see Benny again he is such a gentleman and a fellow Welshy. I hope he will be invited to the 2012 reunion & Mr Ahern.

Donna Stemp

I will always remember Benny being part of a double act with John Ahern & his dry welsh humour. Hope you enjoy your retirement Benny.

Tony Sedman

BEST teacher there by far great rugby coach with a crap taste in cars sorry Benny but that Skoda was awful :)

Scott Muir

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

He will be the last of an era for my generation, after Mr. Ahern left last year he became the only one left...too many memories and half of them could not be printed anyway!!!

Kerry Murphy

Cheers Mr. Jones u was rite all those years ago

Rikki Morefire



Thanks for the memories. have a good 'un mate

Richard moore

Benny Jones was a bloody great teacher and although he did not teach me academically as such, he did so for Rugby. He must have put in years of effort training all the boys from when he first started until the current day - I was privileged to have been trained by him as well as Jonny Ahern.

We went on a rugby tour back to his home in Wales. To cut a long story short the local boys arranged a party for the first night. John and Benny said - NO DRINKING, NO GIRLS AND NO SMOKING. When they arrived Graham Lambie (Gumbie) who was at the bottom of the stairs had a pint in one hand, a fag in the other and was kissing a girl - nice one Gumbie!

The next day we received our bollocking which we deserved and Benny asked Graham 'what do sheep do Lambie?' Gumbie quite innocently said 'eat grass Sir!' we all fell about laughing (including Benny and John) as we all knew he was supposed to say 'follow the crowd Sir'

Benny was influential and made a difference to a lot a pupils at our school including me - Top bloke.

Andrew Steeden

Mr Jones, thanks for everything. You made history fun and got me into playing rugby, thanks for the kebab runs on a weekend. You will be missed at Gatton and it won't be the same without you. All the best for the future.

Jamie Hussey

Good luck Benny you will be missed.

Barry Critchell



Good luck with the retirement Mr. Jones. You used to call me Norman (as in Norman Lamont) on account of my perpetually worried expression...haha. It won't be the same without you there. You were an excellent teacher and the inventor of the Gloucester supper and Sky TV luxury boarding accommodation. I remember us Kent boys used to hang around at 8pm trying to get something better than the usual bread and jam. Thanks for teaching me from 1988 – 1993.

Barry Gillespie

My first Teacher at Gatton....how at ease you made me feel Mr Jones...at ease enough to let me misbehave for the next 4 years!!!!....best of luck to you xxx

Sadie Greenwood

Welcome to the Gatton Park spring newsletter. After a long winter, spring is finally with us and the park and gardens are bursting into life! Our staff and volunteers have been busy working on projects in the park and gardens all winter and we hope you'll pay us a visit to see what we've been up to. We have a full events and activities schedule for the coming months so do check out our events listings. We look forward to welcoming you to Gatton over the coming months.

What's new for 2011



We have had a very busy winter with lots of projects in the park and gardens starting to come together. The parterre is nearly completed with the finishing touches being done to the paths and urns. The composite bench in the parterre has also had some much needed restoration and is back to its former 'quirky' glory. The central beds of Japanese garden have been replanted with a mixture of shrubs and herbaceous perennials to freshen up this wonderful garden. Over the next few years these plantings will mature to provide a lush exotic feel, which was so characteristic of that era. The Sunday volunteers have also been busy constructing a fernery/stumpery on the northern side of the dry arch. This shady spot is now home to over 50 different types of ferns which have been acquired by Alan Wolsoncroft from all corners of the country. Great progress has also been made in the former pleasure gardens, clearing ground and sowing meadows. This project received a big boost with a grant from the Big Lottery Fund. Later this year we will be installing a path which will provide all year round access to this area. The park has also had many improvements on the lake fringes and meadows and over 40 trees have also been planted to re-establish park and garden features.

The Gatton Trust

Gatton Park,
Reigate,
Surrey
RH2 0TW
Registered charity: 1101467

Park and Gardens

Tel: 01737 649068
email: glynsherratt@gatton-park.org.uk

Education

Tel: 01737 649066
Fax: 01737 649067

The Orchid Asylum by Lorraine Spindler

I have often marvelled at the riot of colour and intoxicating beauty of the orchid displays at Kew Gardens. As I sit glancing through Gatton Park's archives on a dreary January afternoon it is difficult to imagine that in the early 1900s Gatton rivalled Kew's orchid paradise. At first Sir Jeremiah Colman's book *Hybridization of Orchids* (1932) does nothing to alter my vision of Gatton but then I recall Joe Kunisch, a New York orchid expert, who commented -'You can get off alcohol, drugs, women, food and cars, but once you're hooked on orchids you're finished' and I begin to understand.

Sir Jeremiah called orchid breeding his 'fascinating hobby' in which Gatton's twelve orchid glasshouses became an 'asylum' for the 'historic has beens' that no other orchid breeder was particularly interested. He described his plants as 'helpless and delicate children' where Gatton Park was 'Wonderland' and the orchids 'Alices who may prove curiouser and curiouser'. Fortunately Sir Jeremiah had the will and spending power to support his passion; in the 1930's Sir Jeremiah spent £1375 on *Miltonia* stock alone, the equivalent today of over £78,000.

Sir Jeremiah's expert knowledge and fame grew to the extent that he was elected Chairman of the Royal Horticultural Society's Orchid Committee between 1917 and 1932 and Gatton hosted visits by Queen Mary and Edward VII. The hybrid genus *Colmanara* was named in his honour and combines *Miltonia*, *Oncidium* and *Odontoglossum*. The archive at Gatton throws up a sea of documents expressing contemporary appreciation for Sir Jeremiah's orchids including Oakes Ames, Professor of Botany at Harvard University, on his visit to Gatton in 1915.

Sir Jeremiah was thrilled to share his expertise and knowledge. In 1933 a van packed full of 80 hybrids and 82 different species of orchids left Gatton Park destined for Cambridge, these plants were a generous and welcomed gift from Sir Jeremiah to the University's Botanical Gardens. Furthermore, a week later Sir Jeremiah funded a visit to the Botanical Gardens by his own gardener Mr Perfect to help settle the orchids in their new home.

But what happened to Gatton Park's vast collection of orchids? In 1942, after Sir Jeremiah's death, more vans left Gatton destined for Kew Gardens, filled with orchids donated by Sir Jeremiah's son. Sadly much of the collection had to be destroyed or sold in lots to anonymous buyers as this was wartime and much of Gatton Park was given over to the billeting of Canadian troops. So orchid breeding ceased at Gatton in the 1940s a situation that has not changed, apart from the delightful Orchid Society of Great Britain's Winter Shows at Gatton Hall (8th January 2011).

Spurred on by the news that Gatton Park is currently seeking funding to restore the only remaining glasshouse and that Bob Greenhalgh (working on the land course for the Royal Alexandra and Albert School) is hoping to start growing some of the Colman hybrids soon. I am inspired to contact Cambridge University Botanical Gardens and Kew Gardens to find out if Sir Jeremiah's kind acts could be returned in some way in order to restore Gatton Park as the 'orchid asylum' it once was?



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Forthcoming Adult Events

Sat 19th March Quiz Night

A highlight of the year! Bring your favourite tippie and join in the fun! 7.30pm. Cost: £7 per head including supper.

Sun 3rd April Gardens and Grounds Open

Park and Gardens open all afternoon, bird hide open, free guided tours and free activities for children.

1-5pm Cost: Adults £4.00 children free

Sat 16th April Art in the Park

Bring your materials and your chair and enjoy a day's drawing or painting in the park. There is a classroom available throughout the day for you to use as required. 10am-4pm Cost: £5 per person (bring a packed lunch).

Sun 17th April Spring Walk around Gatton

A tour around the park and gardens as they spring back into life. Guided by the Landscape/Heritage Officer. 1pm Cost: £5 including tea and cake.

Mon 25th April Percy the Park Keeper Treasure Hunt

Follow the story of Percy and find the park keepers working in the gardens as Spring comes to Gatton. Bring a picnic to enjoy on the newly-restored parterre lawns.

12-4pm Cost: Adults Free Children £5 refreshments available.

Sun 1st May Gardens and Grounds Open (See April)

Sat 14th May Art in the Park (See April)

Sat 21st May Grow your own Wild Flower Meadow

A day of activities and practical sessions for families or adults on how to establish your own wildflower meadow. In the morning adults will learn about different types of meadows for different soils and children will enjoy activities with our education team. In the afternoon we will all create a

meadow by plug planting. Bring your own picnic lunch.

10am-3pm Cost: Children £5 Adults £10.

Sun 5th June Gardens and Grounds Open (see April)

Sat 18th June Art in the Park (See April)

Sat 25th-Sun26th June Traditional basket making course

A two day basket making course with underwoodsman John Waller in the beautiful setting of Gatton Park. Materials and tools provided.

9.30am-4.30pm each day Cost: Adults £90 for both days.

Sun 3rd July 'Go Green at Gatton' Country Fair A great day out for all the family. Country crafts and demonstrations, children's activities, gardens and grounds open.

1-5pm Cost: Adults £4.50 children free.



Orchids Return to Gatton

It was second time lucky for the Orchid Society of Great Britain's winter show at Gatton in January. Last year our plans were scuppered by snow but this year the orchids and the orchid enthusiasts came from around the country. Orchids were exhibited in our only existing glasshouse (Jeremiah Colman had twelve in the heyday of orchid growing at Gatton) and in Gatton Hall – including some of the hybrids which Jeremiah bred. Visitors could also enjoy talks about Colman and his orchids and a guided tour of the gardens.

Willow Structures

Just as the snowdrops were starting to show their heads, a group of people attending one of our adult courses braved the cold to create a new feature at Gatton. A "fedge" is the name that has been coined for a living willow fence (half fence, half hedge!) and the team built one to learn the basic techniques of building structures from living willow. Willow is a wonderfully flexible material which can be easily planted and woven in to domes, tunnels and fences to add structure to your garden or to create natural play areas for children. At Gatton we have several structures dotted around, including the Magic Button Trees, created by local school pupils and artist Karen Lucas, which children enjoy exploring as they walk around the park. The new fedge is close to the dry arch, forming a boundary along one side of the orchard.

Art Inspired by Gatton

Gatton is a very inspiring place to be, as I'm sure you agree, and for some local children a visit to the park with their school this winter has been the starting point to inspire an art project. Pupils from Yattendon School visit Gatton as part of their project on artist Henri Rousseau. They draw the trees and plants in the rock garden and use them to inspire Rousseau-like artwork. All of this is put together to create a "Shoe box theatre" with some of Rousseau's jungle animals.

Nature's Calendar

The topic of phenology – observing the changing seasons – has become popular again in recent years, as the BBC Springwatch and Autumnwatch programmes have got the nation noting down the first time they see a daffodil or a bumblebee. Young children were introduced to this on a weekend activity at Gatton by creating a calendar for the year ahead, with ideas of what animals and plants might be doing each month. The children completed sections of their calendar and took the rest home to complete throughout the year. The photos show some of our visitors creating Spring gardens, with natural objects they found at Gatton and pictures of spring flowers.



Photo by Sarah Bonner

Forthcoming Children's Events

Sun 3rd April Gardens and Grounds Open

Enjoy a walk around the park, free activities for children. 1-5pm Cost: £4 children free.

Thurs 14th April Green Fingers (4 - 7 years)

Fun and games about growing plants. Plant your own "smelly welly" herb container to take home. 10am-12.30am Cost £5 per child.

Fri 15th April Toddler Trails and Tales (2 - 4 years)

Look out for the big bad fish! Follow the story of a tadpole who can't go Boing! Activities and art for tiny tots. 10am-11.30am Cost £5 per child.

Fri 15th April Camp Building (8 - 12 years)

Come and build a camp in the woods with your friends. 1-30-4pm Cost £5 per child.

Wed 20th April Stormy Weather (4 - 7 years)

Make some equipment to measure the weather. Games and art inspired by our climate. 10am-12 noon Cost £5 per child.

Thurs 21st April Toddler Trails and Tales (2 - 4 years)

Jasper's Beanstalk. Enjoy the story and then enjoy some activities about growing seeds. 10am-1130am Cost £5 per child.

Mon 25th April Percy and the Park Keeper Treasure Hunt

Follow the story of Percy and find the park keepers working in the gardens as Spring comes to Gatton Park. Bring a picnic to enjoy on the newly restore parterre lawns. 12-4pm Cost: Adults free Children £5 Refreshments available.

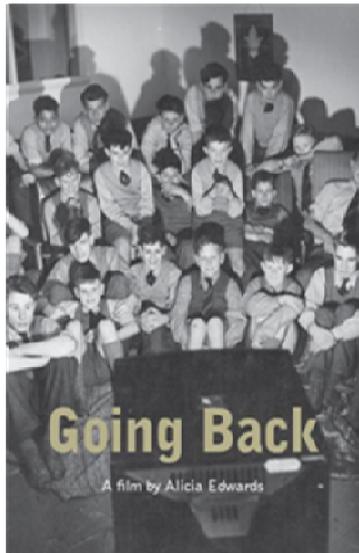
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The Gatton Association

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Gatton Association Registration Form

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Last House(s) attended:.....

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MICHELLE ELLIS

Via

Helen Pollard

Royal Alexandra & Albert School, Gatton Park, Reigate, Surrey, United Kingdom, RH2 0TD

Main Switchboard (044) 01737 649 000

Or

EMAIL: GATTON.ASSOCIATION@GMAIL.COM

If you have any comments or suggestions you would like to pass back to us,
please do so via Michelle Ellis at the address above.