



THE GATTONIAN

SPRING 2018

NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF THE GATTON ASSOCIATION

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME



Hello once again
Gattonians.

The time has arrived for me to prepare and deliver the introduction to the 2018 Spring edition of The Gattonian. I feel that the time is now appropriate,

when producing this introduction, to spend some time outlining the work, and thanking publicly, two of our Associate Committee Members, who, through the good offices of the School, carry out so much important work behind the scenes on behalf of the Gatton Association. Helen Pollard and Sefora Dias, who are highly valued members of the School's Marketing and Development Department, carry out a plethora of administrative duties for the Association. Their professional skills are unsparingly used to promote and foster the best interests of the Association and I would like to publicly thank them in this edition for the huge amount of work that they perform on our behalf. I'm sure you will want to join me in offering Helen and Sefora a huge thanks for their unstinting efforts to ensure the Gatton Association continues to thrive and expand. Their efforts have been, and will be, invaluable in ensuring that the links and connections between individuals, the Association and the School will continue to be vibrant and positive. Sefora and Helen, on behalf of all Gattonians, thank you for what you do for the GA.

In later parts of this edition you will see some of the initiatives that are being developed within the School to ensure that



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those who are in need of an education, within the widest sense of the word, are being given such an opportunity at the RAAS. Of course, as many of you are only too well aware, this education is not restricted to the academic curriculum but encompasses so many other valuable skills and experiences outside of the classroom that the RAAS, through Boarding and Flexible Boarding, is able to offer. I truly hope that the GA with the help of its ever developing, innovative Committee can be in some way helpful in providing support to the initiatives you will read of later on in this edition.

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME *continued*

Indeed it's exciting times for the future of the School and also on the Gattonian front. Some of you would have attended the Gattonian Day we held last year at the beginning of September 2017. Two hundred plus Gattonians met at the School to cheer on our Old Gattonian rugby, football and netball teams who competed against local opposition in three very entertaining matches. This was followed by a barbecue and a very large gathering centred on the lawn area adjacent to the Dining Hall. We were blessed by a warm and sunny day and many Gattonians mingled and reminisced late into the evening. Sean Blyth and David Harbison captured the whole event on video and photos and many of you will have seen the results of their skills on our various Facebook pages. Many of the "younger" Gattonians then continued their get-together in Reigate and a memorable evening was had by all! From what I hear on the grapevine those who attended have passed on to other Gattonians the need to be there next time as it was such a great day.

Indeed such was the success of this day that we have decided to make this an annual event in the GA calendar. To add to the experience, the Friends of the RAAS (the School's PTA) have offered their help and assistance. This will expand the gathering to offer children's fun events, which may include a bouncy castle for the children of Gattonians plus existing younger pupils of the School who live locally. It promises to be a day where we hope to see the numbers from last year double, so please pencil in the 1st September as the day where you will return to your old haunts with your children to celebrate Gattonian Day. It promises to be another wonderful gathering for all. Further details will be published on the Gatton Association Facebook page as well as the Gatton Association Sports Society page. More details will be available once everything has been finalised and Helen and Sefora will soon communicate these to all Gattonians.

We are looking forward to seeing you at Gatton on the first Saturday in September.

You will also read later on in this edition a short article regarding the generosity of one Gattonian. I must also thank Gattonian Nicky Whaley for her very generous sponsorship for the provision of uniform for the OG's netball team. Thank you Nicky! It is hoped that this part of the Association will increasingly become more active, as has been the case with rugby, and engage in competition against other netball teams. Of course, this is not only for the sake of competition but also to bring Gattonians back together at specific times of the year. The other generous donation I am sure will be found to be most touching and appropriate and will bring back many memories for those who attended the School between the mid 1950's and later 1980's.

You may be aware that Gatton Hall is in the process of undergoing a most extensive refurbishment. As the jewel in the centre of the Park I know it holds many happy memories for countless generations of Gattonians. The extensive work that is being carried out ensures that it will be enjoyed by future generations of Gattonians. We hope to be in the vanguard of some of the opening celebrations. We are tentatively in the process of planning an event that will be appropriate for such a fine building, as well as performing a feat that we hope will benefit those who need the support of the RAAS at Gatton Park. Watch this space!

Hope to see you all at some point this year.

Cheers

Benny Jones

Vice-President and Chairman of the Gatton Association

If you want to get in touch please email
OldScholars@gatton-park.org.uk

SAVE THE DATE

SUMMER BARBECUE

It is a pleasure to announce that the Association will once again be hosting Gattonian Day, an end of summer BBQ on Saturday 1st September. Last year's was such a success that we of course want to top it!

We invite you, your family and friends to come along and help us make this event bigger and better.

There will be sport matches for our active and sprightly members, delicious burgers and hotdogs for the hungry ones, and the bar will be open to keep us all well hydrated. For the little ones, we're hoping to put on some child-friendly entertainment.

So, remember to dust off your football or rugby boots, get your trainers ready for netball, find that picnic blanket



(let's be honest, it's probably gone missing *again*), and join us on 1st September for a cracking barbecue.

FOUNDERS' DAY

Gattonians are invited to join the School to commemorate Founders' Day, which is taking place on Saturday 12th May. If you would like to attend, please email the Headmaster's Executive Assistant, Mrs Boyce, on ea2head@gatton-park.org.uk by Friday 20th April to confirm your attendance.



Founders' Day members in May 2015

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome three new members to the Gatton Association Committee: Connor Clark (2005-2011), Paris Lock (2002-2007) and Tobi Seriki (1999-2003). We were delighted that they agreed to join the Committee and share with us their enthusiasm and experience. Their contributions will be invaluable to help the Committee steer the ship in the right direction, ensuring that we continue to give Gattonians ample opportunity to meet with friends and keep connected to the School. It is also important that the Committee reflects the Association's membership and I'm happy to say that there are now members on the Committee from nearly every era.

Thank you Connor, Paris and Tobi for joining us and your efforts in the future.



SEVEN-A-SIDE TOURNAMENT TROPHY

The School's Director of Rugby, Ed Carne, mentioned a month or so ago his intention to establish a seven-a-side tournament to be played annually at the School. The competition would be opened to other selected schools to foster competition and also widen the opportunity to develop the quality of seven-a-side rugby at the School.

This proposal was put to a number of us within the Gatton Association and a query was made about the possibility of the Association sponsoring the winner's trophy. It was agreed that this was one way that the GA could contribute to the School and help raise our profile with current pupils.

I can say that it was no surprise what happened next and it certainly sums up the attitude of our special community. I was contacted by a Gattonian, who has asked to remain anonymous, saying that they would gladly sponsor the trophy as a way of giving back to the School.

When the donor was asked whether they would like the trophy named after them, this suggestion was quickly turned down. It was categorically stated to me that the trophy should be named after two people who had a life-shaping influence upon this generous donor. For four decades this couple was an integral part of life for many boarders. It will come as no surprise to many who were at the School in the 50s, 60s, 70s, and 80s that the two names that will appear on this new trophy will be Bill and Beth Jeffrey.



The Sovereign's Cup being awarded.

Bill and Beth were untiring in their efforts, both in the classroom and in boarding. Their contribution to school life was important and instrumental in shaping the lives of so many young people, many of whom still remember Bill and Beth with deep affection and respect.

Again, my many thanks to our anonymous donor. Like so many Gattonians, they still have an affinity with the School and wish to contribute to a place that is still special to them.

Good luck to the School in this inaugural competition when they compete for the Bill and Beth Jeffrey Sevens Trophy. We will keep you up dated of details of this forthcoming tournament.

Cheers,

Benny



THE GATTON ASSOCIATION BURSARY FUND

The Association, for many years, due to the unstinting work of those who have been elected as its officers, has constantly attempted to ensure that a “bridge” exists between those who were fortunate to attend the RAAS at Gatton Park and, of course, the other less recent locations of Maitland Park and Camberley. For many, these locations were not only a place where they attended school but also home. This continues to be true for many current pupils and staff.



Some of you were the recipients of some form of bursary that allowed you to attend the School and as a result of your attendance it hopefully provided you, in one way or another, with the necessary tools and skills that have allowed you to play a full and active part as citizen. Indeed if you were not the recipient of any bursarial help I am sure that you know of and indeed may still be in contact with others who were in receipt of such help.

The School, as a registered charity, still provides financial support through bursaries for 85 pupils whose home circumstances are such that they require a boarding education. The help provided has now also been extended to Flexi Boarders. These pupils are known as “Foundationers”.

When I was asked, upon my retirement from the School as Head of Boarding in 2011, to become Vice President and Chairman of the Association, I constantly pondered over the role that the Association plays or should be playing as an aid to its members and also to the School.

One vital aspect of the Association is ensuring that there are Gattonian events, reunions, newsletters and regular communication through social media to keep us all “part of the show”, and hopefully these help to keep the cement of friendship strong.

However, what of those who at present are pupils at the School and who in the future will form the Association’s membership? Can we do anything as Gattonians that will provide assistance to the School and pupils if help is required? I am going to suggest to you as wider members “of the family” that there is something that we can do and it will be something that will be specific to us as Gattonians.

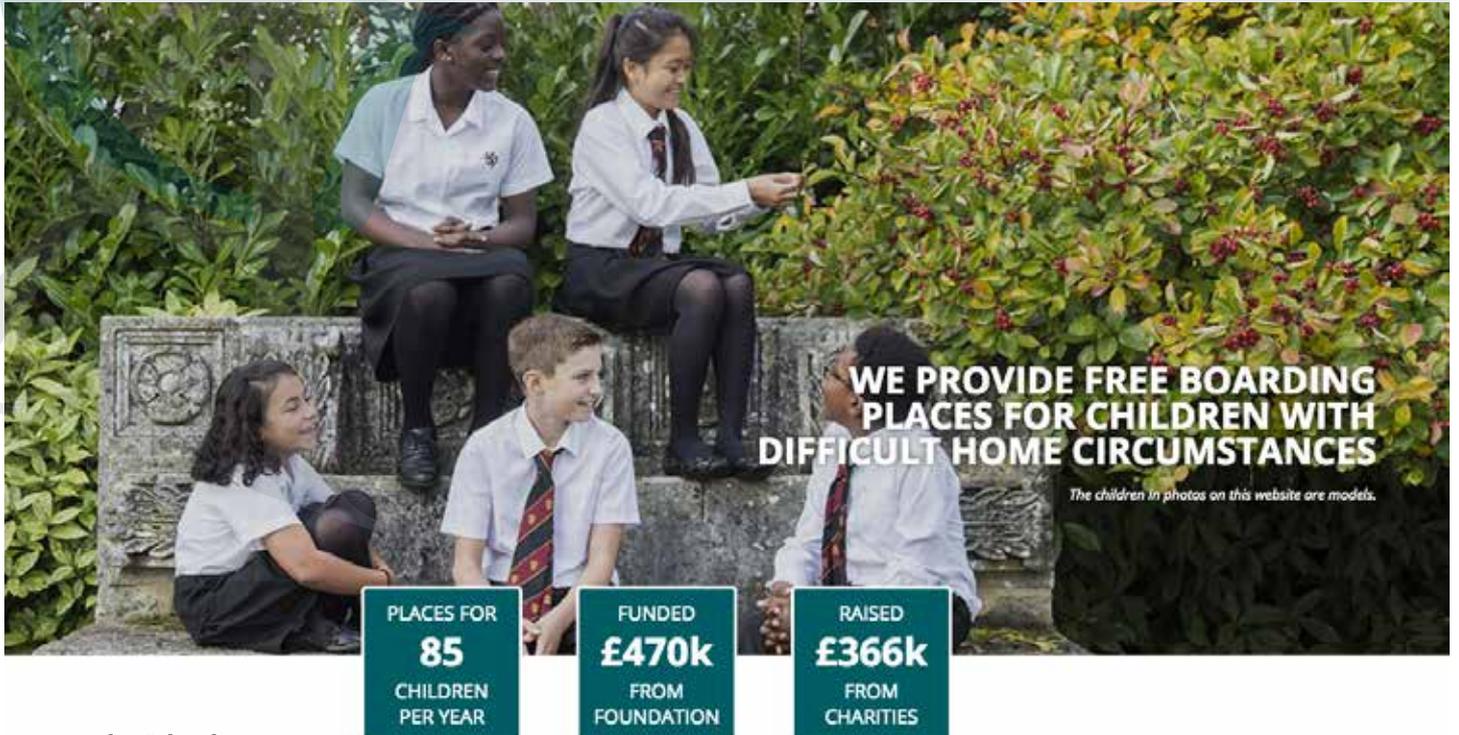
I propose we establish a Gatton Association Bursary Fund that will be voluntarily funded by members of our Association. Quite simply, any member of the Gatton Association, and of course anyone who attended the School is a member, is asked to contribute and any contributions will be placed specifically in the Gatton Association Bursary Fund and will be used wholly to fund the attendance at the School of a Boarder or a Flexi Boarder. The School has for a number of years purposefully kept their charitable works on a low profile but it is now starting to bring a light to the work it does with children who are at risk of going into care. The next article in this newsletter gives details about the School’s charitable Foundation and provides more background as to why a Gatton Association Bursary Fund is being proposed. I hope that you read it and, like me, are proud of the work that our School has quietly been carrying out.

The Gatton Association Bursary Fund is, I feel, a very worthwhile cause that many of us can connect with. I realise that many lives have already been impacted by the School’s charitable work, and I hope that we as an Association can, in a small way, make a big impact on the life of a child.

If you would like to contribute to the Bursary Fund, please contact Helen or Sefora by calling 01737 649211/ 01737 649168 or emailing OldScholars@gatton-park.org.uk. Any contribution, no matter how small, is greatly appreciated.

Cheers,
Benny

THE SCHOOL'S CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



The School's

Foundation has been supporting children through bursaries for decades. When the Royal Alexandra School and the Royal Albert School were amalgamated through an Act of Parliament in 1949, one of its main objectives was: *To establish and maintain a boarding school for boys and girls who are without one or both parents or whose special circumstances make it desirable that they should go to a boarding school.*

To this day, the School continues to support children whose families are unable to look after them full-time and who are at risk of going into care. This can be due to a parent's physical or mental ill-health, or carers who are elderly and no longer able to meet the daily needs of a child.

For these children, known as Foundationers, the benefits of being in boarding are significant. They can enjoy a real childhood, free from 'caring' responsibilities, and grow up in a stable environment with safety and routine.

The statistics for Looked After Children (i.e. those in care) make for grim reading. In 2016, only 13.6% of children in care achieved 5 GCSEs at grades A*- C including English and Maths, and only 6% of children in care in England go on to higher education.

Academic achievement is only one side of a Foundationer's life at the School. Staff, both pastoral and teaching, are heavily involved in ensuring that Foundationers receive the additional, and often complex, support they require for their emotional development and mental well-being.

Most Foundationers are success stories. Many have gone on to university and have successful careers in some of the most competitive fields, including medicine and law. For others, their time at the School has allowed them to break the cycle and ensure that their lives are ones that are productive and fulfilled.

That is why this School is so determined to continue to support children whose families are struggling to cope. We currently provide supported Boarding places to 55 children, and a further 30 pupils have supported Flexi Boarding places.

The School has recently launched a website to highlight the Foundation's work. If you are interested in finding out more, please visit: www.gattonfoundation.org.uk

NICKY WHALEY - GATTONIAN NETBALL TEAM *continued*

(Sandra Healy, Denise Deacon, Maureen Taylor, not sure who else - it was a very long time ago) who played in the outfield always seemed so much quicker than me, so once the indoor swimming pool opened up I moved inside and never looked back.

Since leaving the School I have done a variety of things. I worked for a while in the music industry (Island Music) as PA to the MD. I then trained as an accountant, which will come as little surprise to many who knew me - I'm sure they were convinced I was boring and as I was always good at maths it was almost expected! In 2010, I was made redundant from a job I enjoyed that included significant travel to Europe and the US, so I took a year out to complete my Open University degree in Literature, finishing with a BA (Hons) 2:1. I was then lucky enough to get a place on a funded Master of Science course in Programme and Project Management at Warwick University and spent a fantastic year with peers young enough to be my children but accepting enough to say they thought of me more in their own age bracket than their parents' age bracket. I now

work for Network Rail as a Commercial Manager. Please don't blame me when your trains are late - it is as often as not the fault of the train operators rather than Network Rail, and we're doing our best to reverse decades of neglect from when the railway was nationalised under British Rail.

Outside of work, I am married with no children and live in Surrey, only about an hour from the School. Having lived in various places around the country it felt almost like coming home to move back to Surrey after nearly 20 years.

I have been back to the School a couple of times in the last couple of years to help out interviewing the Year 10 and Year 11 pupils to help them prepare for the big bad world outside the school gates. I also attended a careers evening on behalf of Network Rail hoping to encourage more girls to think about the railway (or at least engineering) as a career.

Still not sure of my feelings about the new additions to the boarding houses, but the new sports hall and all-weather pitches must make things much nicer when having to participate in sports in the winter.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

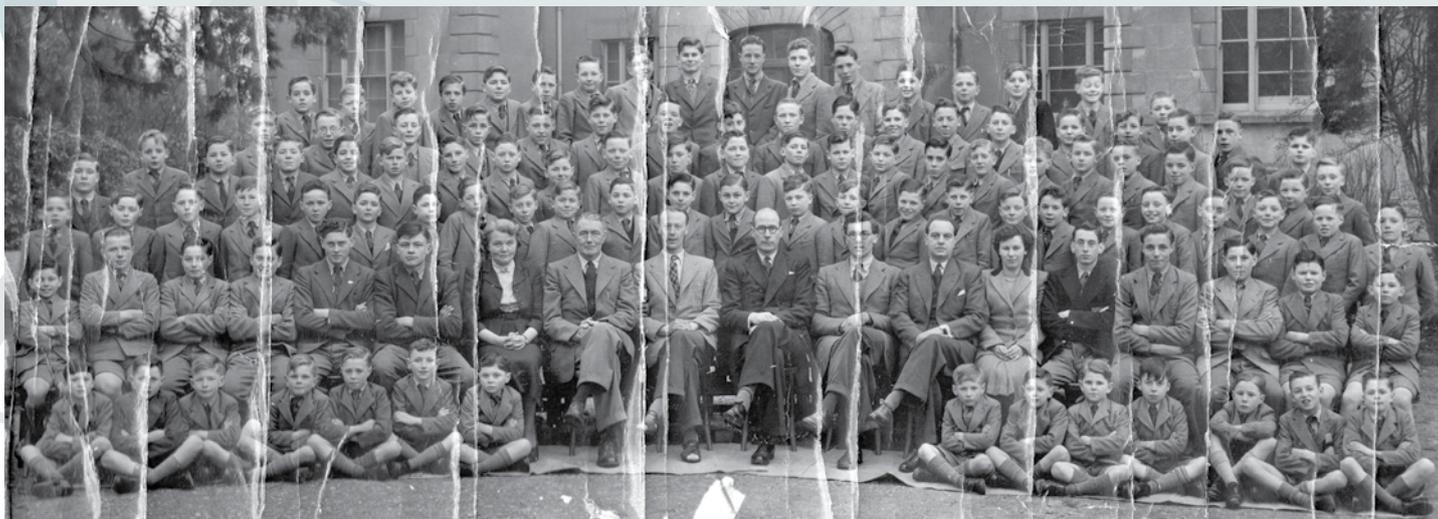
One of the most enjoyable aspects of the Association is receiving correspondence from members about their time at the School. Without fail, every letter, email or Facebook post revives a lost or forgotten piece of the School's history. From an image of the bibles given to pupils in 1971 to a memory of raising £1,200 for a VCR (Video Cassette Recorder) player for the School, Gattonians hold the School's history in their memories. We are glad that

you continue to share these with your school friends and other members of the Association.

We were very pleased to receive an email from Gattonian Charles Brodley with a photograph taken circa 1951. Mr Brodley's excellent memory means that we can still put some names to the faces in this fantastic photograph. If you are in the photo or remember any additional names, do get in touch.



BLAST FROM THE PAST *continued*



Second row seated from left: 5th Mike Harvey; 7th Matron; 8th Mr Bachelor, 9th Tom Fleming; 10th Chas Taverner; 11th Ray Davies; 13th Cynthia Parker; 14th Jim Elliott; 15th Len Holmes; 16th David Cooper.

Third row from left: 4th Ginger Luck; 4th from end, Feeny Fitzpatrick.

Fourth row from left: 3rd Lawrence Brodley; 4th Hugh Mearns; 7th ? Kingham; 10th ? Ryder; 16th John Billingham; 17th Brian Inglis.

5th row from left: 4th Stuart Randall; 6th George Cooper; 9th Will Carson; 15th Jackie Martin; 16th Charles Brodley.

Back Row from left: 5th Ian Richards; 9th Mike Sheehan; ? Gilbert.

GATTON HALL UPDATE

The renovation of Gatton Hall is going very well.

As mentioned in a previous newsletter, the work undertaken but will vastly improve the facilities in Gatton Hall. The renovation includes rewiring, new heating, new Sixth Form Common Room, new bathroom facilities and redecoration of the interior of the building. The chosen decoration is sympathetic to the needs of Sixth Form students but in keeping with Gatton Hall's grade-II listed status.

The first and second floor are now complete and Sixth Formers have moved into their tasteful university-style dorm rooms. The ground floor closed on the 1st April and will remain so until the end of September. This is the last stage of the renovation and will keep Gatton Hall out of action for the remainder of the academic year. There will be an official opening in the Autumn so watch this space!



Gatton Hall on 21st March



Gatton Hall on 6th April

GATTON PARK IN THE SNOW

When the cold snap called the ‘Beast from the East’ hit the UK in late February and early March, it is safe to say that it brought with it some chaos and lots of travel disruptions, particularly for those of us who commute to work. However disruptive the Beast from the East was, at Gatton Park the snowy conditions made the beautiful landscape even more picturesque.



The Town Hall



Frozen Lake (Photo credit: Rob Harrison)



Frozen Lake - photo taken from Gatton Killer (Photo credit: Marnie Burroughs)



A snowy walk through the woods

OBITUARY – JOAN STEELE

Mrs Joan Steele sadly passed away peacefully on Thursday 4th January. Joan taught shorthand and typing at the School and was the wife of Len Steele, Housemaster of Albert House. Gattonians from the 50s and 60s will surely remember Mrs Steele as the housemother to the Albert boys. Her funeral took place at Penmount Crematorium, Truro, on Tuesday 16th January. Our condolences are with Mrs Steele’s family.

WE'RE MOVING



Okay, your data is moving. The data you provided when you signed up to the Gatton Association is being moved to a database system called ToucanTech.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER TO YOU?

ToucanTech will provide you with greater control over your data and how you are contacted. Most importantly, you'll be able to update your contact details and consent options with a few clicks, meaning you'll never lose touch with us. The database has many other nifty features which will also make it easier for you to access more news stories, leave comments, get in contact with other Gattonians, and pay for events online. It will essentially be a hub of activity, which we hope you will enjoy.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO, YOU ASK?

That's simple. You will shortly be receiving an email or letter from us asking you to log in and register, or to give us the permission to do so on your behalf. Once you have your profile you can select your consent settings. Easy peasy.

While you're at it, have a little nose around the new Gatton Community hub website, which is a website for all Gattonians, past and present. It's very interactive, and with everything now in one place, you'll never miss an important piece of news (or gossip).

We hope you enjoy the new website and that you find the new database useful and easier to use.

SCHOOL NEWS

SCHOOL PUPILS SLEEPING ROUGH

On Saturday 24th March twenty-four pupils at the Royal Alexandra and Albert School spent the night sleeping rough.

The SleepEasy challenge was created by the YMCA to raise awareness of homelessness and raise funds for the cause. Since 2010, over 6,000 people have participated in one of the YMCA's SleepEasy events, where participants sleep

rough for a night to highlight the country-wide issue.

Pupils arrived for the challenge at 9pm to experience a small aspect of what it is like to be homeless. The School's Chaplain Reverend Jonathan Boyce, one of the organisers of the event, was keen for pupils to get an idea of what it is like to be a homeless person.



SCHOOL PUPILS SLEEPING ROUGH *continued*

The challenge took place in the School's covered sports area that is open to the elements on three sides. Pupils were welcomed by Mr Frank Kelly, Deputy Mayor of Reigate and Banstead Council, who thanked them for taking part and raising awareness for the issue. Pupils were then tasked with building the cardboard shelters that would be their homes for the night.

The School's Catering team provided the group with a simple meal of soup, bread and hot chocolate to keep them warm during the cold night. Pupils were made aware

of how lucky they were to receive the food, as a rough sleeper would not have a guaranteed meal.

Rev Boyce said of the SleepEasy experience, "We were so impressed with the twenty-four pupil participants. The event was aimed at giving our pupils an insight into the sort of issues a homeless person faces. Our young people responded to the overnight challenge admirably. Additionally, it was great to show our support as a School for the important work done by the YMCA East Surrey."

SUCCESS FOR RIDERS AT FELBRIDGE CLEAR ROUND SHOW

On Friday 16th March, four pupils from the Royal Alexandra and Albert School competed at the Felbridge Clear Round Jumping Show.

The team were taken to the Show by the School's Stables Manager, Irini Economou, and Stables Assistant, Bob Farrell. The Felbridge show was an opportunity for the girls to compete again after a break from attending external jumping shows.

Team member and Year 10 student, Katie Thomsett, said "The show was a good opportunity for us to work as a team and get some experience for future competitive shows. We had a really fun time and we all cleared our rounds."

The show was the first time the four girls had jumped as a team, and it was an experience they wish to repeat in the future. They jumped heights ranging between 60 to 80cm and cleared every round, winning rosettes for their



performances. They rode on the School's horses, Achilles, Cookie, Dexter and Lily.

Now the girls want to keep training as a team with the hopes of competing in future inter-school shows that will put their talents to the test.



THE COMMITTEE OF THE GATTON ASSOCIATION

President	John Billingham
Vice President	Benny Jones
Chair	Benny Jones
Vice Chair	Vacant
Secretary	Ruth Turner
Treasurer	Tony Murray

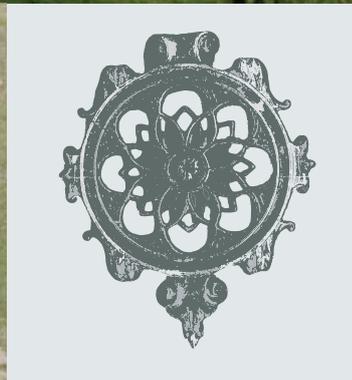
Committee Members:	Ray Davies
	Jenny De'Ath
	Alicia Edwards
	Nigel Edwards
	George Fowles
	Frances Hartigan
	Di Martin
	Mark Measey
	John Turner
	Will Wilson
	Connor Clark
	Paris Lock
	Tobi Seriki

Associate Committee Members:
Helen Pollard
Sefora Dias

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE GATTON ASSOCIATION

The Objectives of the Gatton Association are:

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



CONTACT DETAILS

To contact the Committee please email OldScholars@gatton-park.org.uk or write to:

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

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

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