

9 July 2010

Dear Parent

This summer term has just flown by as always. A huge amount of hard work has been done for CE, scholarships and exams, and as predicted they all managed to peak at the right time. However, very few boarders will remember those last few weeks of extra prep sessions and late night revision when they recount their sunny boarding days at Vinehall! They will remember their friends, and hopefully the staff who have worked so hard to make living away from home as enjoyable an experience as possible.

We all have enjoyed the wonderful grounds and facilities of Vinehall this term. Our theatre has become a second home for a number of our older boarders, and we are sure that one day they will appreciate how lucky they are to have a theatre of such quality in a Prep school (as well as their very talented music and drama teachers). The "South Pacific" leavers have put together a wonderful production and we are very proud of them. We were so proud that so many of our boarders managed to land lead roles and performed them with such aplomb.

In recent weeks we've been lucky enough to enjoy fantastic weather and the boarders have made the most of our grounds. The water slide has been out a few times and remains hugely popular – especially combined with a water fight after a long day on the tennis courts. Ever since the "Mixed Generation Golf and Tennis" day we have found a large group of boarders on the courts each evening, and we have some very promising tennis players amongst them. On our final weekend we spent some time learning new tricks with a "Circus Skills" workshop on the lawn, and of course Vines Day was a glorious occasion this year.

Activities this Summer term have included a wonderful day in the woods near Mayfield completing an obstacle course, making woodland shelters and trying to light a campfire without matches, and undertaking various team challenges. Like last year, the highlight of this day with "Adventure Unlimited" was "getting muddy"! We've visited Knockhatch Adventure Park, enjoying go-carts, laser questing and bungee trampolining, and had an electricity free day here where we played rounders and football as well cooking a BBQ lunch. We've had an afternoon at Tenterden Leisure Centre and a lovely day on Camber Sands. Many of our boarders have been away at either Year 6 Camp or to the Lake District – Mr. Caithness particularly enjoyed houseparenting in the Lakes! Some boarders have visited Bodiam Castle, others have been mountain biking or sailing, or campfire cooking in the woods here. We've had a BBQ and disco at Benenden, a late night curry delivered to Hurricanes, shopping trips, and we have cheered on various teams in the World Cup matches and supported contestants in "Over the Rainbow". We've baked cakes and watched movies, played golf at 5 o'clock in the morning, been running before breakfast and stayed up talking late at night. We have also found time for "chilling out" and put in many, many hours of revision!

Our weekends are always much looked forward to and we would like to thank the rest of our Saturday Clubs team - Mr. Whitehead, Dr. Jarratt, Mrs. Harmer and Mrs. Redstone – and the Sunday duty members of staff, for their enthusiasm in organizing events, activities and trips that appeal so much to a variety of boarders. If you have a particular

interest or skill that you would like to share with some (or all) of our boarders for an hour or two one weekend next term, we would be delighted to hear from you!

The hotly contested termly Dorm Cup was won by the Year 7 boys in Mousehole dorm – another victory for Bobby Bensted-Smith! Congratulations to him and to the boys for keeping their room immaculate day after day. Ruby and the Year 7 girls in Squirrels dorm came a close second.

The winner of the Junior Boarders' Cup this year is Tom Bass. Tom is in Year 6 and has completed two full years of boarding. This term he took on the role of Dorm Leader for 6 other boys in Years 5 and 6 which has been tiring and challenging but he has maintained his lovely sense of humour and kept the dorm really tidy. He has earned 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Dorm Cup challenge, with a couple of infamous Caithness Teas throughout the term. Tom leads a very busy life but still finds time to look after new and younger boarders and make them feel welcome. He is a real character; best known for his constant singing or for tearing around the grounds on his bike.

Jack Huntington-Rainey was awarded the Matrons' Cup (awarded to a leaver who has most impressed them). Jack came to Vinehall from Antigua when he was in Year 4 and the Matrons have watched him grow (and grow, and grow) from a quiet, laid back little boy into a self-assured, accomplished and charming young man. The boarders' talent show on Saturday night was really the "H-R talent show" as Jack sang and strummed throughout the evening, leading the appreciative audience with many popular songs. Jack's musical and acting talents ensure he will always be remembered at Vinehall, but the Matrons will remember Jack because he never fails to thank them and because he is, quite simply, excellent company.

We would like to wish all our leavers happiness and continued success in their new schools. We will look forward to seeing our "South Pacific" leavers on Vines Day 2011, if not before, and hope that they will stay in touch with each other as well as us. We will remember them every Sunday thanks to the wonderful new chapel windows, which look absolutely beautiful.

Have a very happy summer holiday! As usual we will spend most of ours in Yorkshire and in Scotland, and aim to be outside as much as we can. The Boarding House is being let for the whole summer, and we will be back in our office on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> August.

Yours sincerely

*Magnus Caithness*

*Helen Caithness*

Magnus, Helen, Archie and Elizabeth Caithness