



From the Headmaster

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Prize Giving 2009

The 4th Symphony of Vaughan Williams was written in the 1930's by the great British composer whose anniversary has been celebrated in this last year especially in our Chapel. With all its cacophonous outbursts and menacing fury many saw it to be a sinister prophecy of World War II and mass destruction. It now seems that it was actually Vaughan Williams' musical condemnation of the Dorking by-pass! No grand theories for me today, just highlights of excellence.

"Achievement in wide range of academic and extra-curricular areas is outstanding."

"Quality of pupils' personal development is outstanding."

"Pupils' social development is outstanding."

Quotations from Epsom's ISI Inspection Report of May 2009.

A - Academics

In our centre of humble diligence, 37 out of 40 early iGCSE takers gain an A* at Maths this year, in an exam designed to replace the often awful GCSE.

Our desire for better 6th form syllabuses, harder exams and more stimulating academic material has led us away from A Level in English to the Cambridge Pre U and to introduce the Extended Project with the new family of research-based academically demanding extended projects at A Level. Have the A Level Boards done enough with revisions to the current A Level, the A* and fewer modules? Perhaps not: the dumbing down will continue.

Jae Hoe Chung came runner-up in the 2008 Institute of Economic Affairs essay competition; 'How and Why Do Markets Fail?'

And two OEs won £200,000 in the Dragons Den.

Our History and Politics Department branched out to Washington with our first academic visit to US.

We have our largest number ever of pupils studying Maths and Physics in the Sixth Form.

Edward Leung Zheng, Russell Ramagge and Charlie Weaver got top marks in the new AQA extended project. 'Is Mind Just a Part of the Body?' (one of the essays).

Baroness Greengross adjudicated the Dodd speaking prize; Mary Lawson talked to the community of parents, pupils and teachers about her work as a novelist and Sophie Rayworth about her work as a leading BBC news presenter.

B – Sport

We may quickly come to hate and loath certain other schools for which we felt no particular dislike before, such is school sport, but it is good to win; our girls' Hockey and Netball first teams were unbeaten all season. our shooters have completed the hat trick of the Ashburton National Shooting competition.

In rugby Tom Flynn played for the United States U17 side, Ben Francis for the Scottish U17, and Joe Trayfoot for the England U18. George Lowe and Chris York (recent leavers) played for the England U20 side and were photographed by the national press being welcomed to Tokyo by the British Ambassador (also an OE) when England played Japan.

Golfers were centenary cup winners and national finalists (again).

Gaurav Gupta won the Indian gold medal at Fencing, we won national honours at Squash, Netball, Basketball and Athletics which gives me the opportunity to congratulate Judd Drinkall on 21 years of having led one of the most outstanding Epsom sports in modern times.

Rosie Andrews won a top Army Scholarship, reminding me of another anniversary of excellence: Lt Col Mike Hampshire commanding Epsom CCF for 21 years.

C – Performing Arts

The Crucible, Vortex, Blythe Spirit and this week The Madness of King George III, are the year's dramatic highlights. Hansel and Gretel, the Chapel Choir throughout the year and over two dozen concerts have delighted audiences all year. Elspeth Marrow won a choral scholarship to Royal Holloway College. Next year sees an Epsom Shakespeare season: 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' (senior play) and 'Macbeth' (junior play) with 'Kiss me Kate' Cole Porter's musical.

D – Partnership

Epsom launched its partnership with Lambeth Academy in November aimed to give help and experience to them about Sixth Form work, medicine, careers, leadership and sport with exchange of excellence between the two schools. Epsom provided teachers and valuable GCSE lessons for Epsom and Ewell High School our local comprehensive which went into 'Special Measures' this year.

The Project to create a sibling International Epsom College in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, is still at the discussion stage after the recent change in Government there. But it remains our ambition for cooperation and internationalism in excellence across the world.

E – Recession

Institutionally we are little affected as yet by the traumas that the recession has brought; personally however much damage has been caused to families and pleas for help have quadrupled in three years.

The school's almost continuous building and refurbishment programme over the last 10 years has almost been completed with Rosebery last summer and Fayrer this. More ambitious projects are now on hold as the recession bites!

Financial support to enable wider access to the College and to help those families with recessionary need is our immediate target. The College's Educational Trust has a new more explicit name (up to now called the Development Trust) and is key in bringing this message to support that so

memorably started by John Propert 155 years ago to the wider College community, with the OE Club, past and present parents as Friends of Epsom key supporters. *If Epsom made a difference to your life, give and make a difference to someone else.*

F – Prep School Recruitment

Prep School Recruitment has remained at top level and all categories within the College are continuing to remain full. There is no doubt that a chill wind will continue to blow in the independent sector for years to come, so these links are vital.

The College has run a music festival for over 500 pupils; a Mathmagical day; a History Forum and a Classics Forum for Prep School teachers; a Millennium Wheel DT project; a schools' Quiz Challenge; Superteams; a lighting workshop; hosting the National Rugby Competition for over 1000 boys; drama productions; Surrey CCC Kwik Cricket tournament; We support Prep Schools very directly with our admissions selection lead by prep school reference rather than the crude competition of pre-testing charade of so many other schools nationally. Over 300 sets of families were at the College's Open Days this last year and give us confidence that parents value us.

G – Leaving Staff

I cannot agree with the Frenchmen who declared that most funeral (or Leavers') ovations described people as they OUGHT to have been rather than as they WERE.

Mrs Katie Sinnett joined three years ago after two years as an investment banker having studied Economics at Cambridge. She completed her teacher training here and stayed for two years, teaching Mathematics and running Dance and tutoring in Cr. She leaves to take up a post at Francis Holland School in Chelsea as Head of Mathematics.

Miss Naomi Crossland joined us just a year ago having taught at Winchester College as a student entry physicist for 2 years after gaining a Physics degree from Oxford. She goes off to join the NHS as a trainee medical physicist.

Mr Donald Campbell came to us in the summer of 2003 as the College's cricket coach after a highly successful career in Zimbabwe playing for the national side in two world cup squads. Mr Campbell expanded his post to become a sports master and then in September 05 joined the UK Graduate Teacher Programme in History and Geography. Since qualifying he has taught History, Geography, PE, Politics, PSHE and is a genuine all-round academic schoolmaster. He has been a most successful and valued Tutor in Fayrer, and has coached first side rugby, first side cricket and junior boys hockey. He returns to run what was his father's prep school in Zimbabwe.

Mrs Carole Rice has been part of the Sports Department at Epsom for 22 years, coaching all the major and many of the minor girls' sports, all the way from when girls were a relative novelty in the Sixth Form right through to complete co-education in these last few years. Carole and her husband, Norman, ran Fayrer House for 15 years and have been guardians to many overseas pupils in the last few years.

Mr Graham Poupart became Head of Art in Epsom in 1980. He was trained at the Edinburgh College of Art and after a short career in the army in the Ulster Defence Regiment became a teacher in Northern Ireland. The Art Department has been tremendously successful in his time winning national plaudits for the exceptional quality of its Fine Art and ceramics for countless Epsomians in the last 25 years. Shaw may have quipped that '*Nothing that is worth knowing can ever be taught*' But *Graham* has vigorously refuted this and carries our very best wishes with him as he retires after a long and distinguished career.

Mrs Lynne Isaby retires having been my secretary and the School secretary for 8 years during which she has been a key Epsom voice to parents and pupils.

Mrs Jo Vernon Harcourt leaves Raven this summer after 4 years, with massive respect and affection for her consummate skills, experience and faith in her girls. Motherhood beckons: good luck!

Dr Murray Tod leaves Granville as Housemaster after 3 years to join his wife, Kirsty in Wilson - out of the proverbial male 'frying pan' into the female 'fire' perhaps? His busy intellect, loyalty to his troops and sheer professionalism will be missed in Granville but welcomed in Wilson.

Can I thank on all your behalves the teaching staff for all their commitment, non teaching staff behind the scenes and Governors for their tireless support. Also the leavers: especially the College Prefects and three Heads of School.

I hope that Humperdink did not see the sheer quick witted resourcefulness of two children keen to save youth from the evil of the wicked world of adults, as being a serious reflection on schools, but it produced some sublime music and is a great introit to our Prize Giving and end to my speech.

Elsbeth Marrow and Jess Tetley are Hansel and Gretel. [Duet from Opera produced in Big School in Lent 2009]

SRB

26/06/09