



6th July 2026

Dear Parents

On the last Tuesday of term, I was able to get out for an hour or so to Youldbury, a nearby outdoor education centre, where the Shell year-group were involved in an overnight camp. They had walked there accompanied by their form masters – a very good thing. I drove. There was a lovely atmosphere: boys variously recounting the walk happily to me (some more navigationally successful than others, by all accounts), helping Mr Crump set up a volleyball net, debating which was the best activity so far (the ‘Leap of Faith’ seemed popular), arguing about the relative merits of the different tents and waiting for the all-important supper to arrive. Courtesy of the Deputy Head Pastoral, it did. The catering department surpassed themselves. Though I had not earned it, it felt to me the right thing to sample what was on offer: delicious chicken wraps, potato wedges, sweetcorn, cookies and watermelon, all ably served by the new co-curricular prefects. Mind you, I am not sure it was not too generous; after all, the aim of an evening camp is to build resilience. One boy came up as the meal neared its end to complain. ‘I didn’t get any watermelon.’ The travails of life.

It is a small snapshot of an activity at the end of a term and academic year. I mention it to illustrate a wider point. Taking all the Shells away overnight needs a huge amount of organisation – thank you to Mr Saul and dons supporting the campers in what is a heavy week of marking and report writing. It was good to see four members of the College Management Team joining in (well, three plus me). The catering department went above and beyond. The new prefects were happy to give up their time. And the boys were having fun. A microcosm of boarding life at its best with an insight of what goes in to make it all work. I headed back to College and, of course, there was plenty more going on. The 1st XI was winning a famous – narrow – victory over Malvern. The Vths were heading off for a final form outing and the 6.1s were starting their Futures and Networking event. Hosted by the Radleian Society. And there was a lovely Leavers’ recital in the Silk Hall.

That was Tuesday. I want to mention Wednesday as well as that saw an inaugural event that I hope will be repeated year on year: the final of the Radley Dragons’ Den competition. Six pitches (three individuals and three pairs from Shells to 6.1s) had won through to the final for the right to be interrogated by three OR Dragons with a prize of £1,000 on offer. It was a splendid occasion. In a world where entrepreneurial opportunity and spirit is crucial, the entire process was most encouraging with many involved in earlier rounds, culminating in an excellent final which saw innovative and varied ideas, confident and detailed presentations and admirable calm under Dragon pressure. The winner was a simple device to avoid having to keep pressing the button in the shower. I now worry about the College’s water bills.

While I am at it, let’s move on to Thursday. It was fitting that, as she departs Radley, the last responsibility of the Director of Drama, Victoria Buse, was to make a cameo appearance in a student led production (*‘The Unreturning’*), conceived and directed by two 6.1 boys. It was a sobering production about three soldiers returning from war – one past, one present, one future – and it was excellent. There have, of course, been many memorable productions in Tor’s nine years but it is her selfless support of boys to do their own things in drama that I will remember most.

The same selfless support has been seen in the way in which Stephen Giddens has run C social as its Tutor for the last ten years. The boys and parents of C have rightly acknowledged all he has done and been, but it is right that I mention it too. He has had an uncanny knack of finding in every boy under his charge something that will inspire them and draw out the confidence needed to be a success. Generations of boys owe him a great deal and I echo their thanks. We wish him and Brigid all the best as they return to their native New Zealand.

I wanted to mention a third departing colleague as well. Elisabeth Anderson has been a tremendous Development Director over the last six years. As some of you will know, she is a superb fund-raiser and her success has made a tangible difference over her time. She has been a great advocate for our funded places and many boys owe their places at Radley to her; she has not only helped them come but she has helped them find their voice and be proud of their story. It is an important legacy.

We say a huge thank you to all who have served the College and depart this Summer. It is not an easy place to leave; seeing former staff return at Gaudy to chat to their former charges is proof enough of that. Amidst all the farewells, to staff and boys, we managed to award a few prizes in celebration of all they have achieved.

Senior Prefect Prize	Ben De Laszlo
Outstanding Contribution to the College	DingDing Zhou
Richards Gold Medal for Academia	Kelvin Lam
Wade Prize for Leadership	Hector Scott Plummer
HAC Prize for Courage	Rodion Radetskyi
Hector Scott Russell Chalice for Performing Arts	Jovan Samuel
Simon Molyneux Prize for Commitment	Matthew Thompson
Warden's Art Prize	Boaz May
Warden's 'Moment of the Year'	Owen Fung

The last award is a new one. Last Sunday, Owen played the first movement of the Greig Piano Concerto in A: a tour de force of technical skill and musical drama. What was just as impressive was the playing of the College orchestra, wanting to give the best possible support to one of their own. Memorable – a great moment. Hence the new award.

As ever, that was just one of many musical highlights. We had the Ferguson Singing Prize. We hosted two huge partnership music events: the Mighty Flood Orchestra (400 young performers) and the Gabrieli Roar '*Dido and Aeneas*' (300). Opportunities like this are priceless and such a feature of what we do in Partnerships – I continue to be immensely proud of it. And we had a preview concert for next term's musical '*West Side Story*' – it promises to be excellent. The Shell Play - '*The Journey*' was a moving devised piece about a refugee's journey, based on a real story. The biennial Peter Cook Cup was its usual self: a celebration of excellent dramatic monologues.

We wish boys who have sat public exams all the very best for August. The UCAS team led by Mr Deasy, the Tutors, Form Masters and Heads of Department will be, as they always are, ready to give help and advice. But we remember too that academic results are not the only mark of intellectual health. Prizes and gold certificates in national academic competitions; debating success in and beyond the College; continued excellence in robotics; a new Reading Review competition (and yes, I did remind the boys to read a book over the Summer- please reinforce it!); an array of speakers who always compliment the boys on their interest and quality of questioning and the prefect-led Serpentes essay prize. Well done to all who won academic prizes at the end of the year: a reward for hard work and quality. So much that is good.

I want to thank the outgoing Pups and Prefects. This year's group has been excellent and I thank them all; I know the Heads of Social will have enjoyed their final speeches on Gaudy as they say farewell to their Socials and vice versa. I want to pay a particular tribute to the Senior Four; they do not know how important they are and how much I have valued the conversations over breakfast and beyond: a huge thank you to Ben De Laszlo (Senior Prefect), Rory Honey (Second Prefect, DingDing Zhou (Senior Academic Prefect) and Jovan Samuel (Senior Co-Curricular Prefect) and at the same time we welcome their successors: respectively Hamish Kennedy; Rafferty Blacker; Adrien De Gouttes Lastouzeilles and Harry Davies.

As I say thank you to the pups, I want of course pay tribute to the 6.2s as a whole. As we said goodbye at Gaudy, it was lovely to hear from so many parents how proud they were of the young man their son had become. We agree.

Gaudy was temporarily dampened, not in the usual way (!), but by news of an agonising narrow loss for the VIII in the semi-final at Henley; the crowd in Shop did their best to urge them on to victory from a distance but it was not to be. Despite that disappointment, the Boat Club had a stellar season. Not only did the VIII win at National Schools (for the first time since 2001), so did the 15.1; 15.2; 16.2 and 2nd VIII (who also qualified for the Temple at Henley – no mean feat). Second place for the 16.1 and 3rd VIII meant five golds and two silvers in the seven sweep oar events: remarkable. The Club is in rude health.

In terms of other sports, among many successes for the Cricket Club this term: a strong Bigside season; the 15As winning their league; 64% of games won, the statistic that excites me most is the sheer number of players (252) and matches (143). In an era when finding enough fixtures is difficult and where in other schools there is a noticeable decline in participation, these numbers are impressive. There were some great games; the win against Malvern will live long in the memory. The Tennis team finished 2nd in the Youll Shield (representing 6th place nationally), the Polo team finished second nationally and we are National Croquet Champions (dear to my heart though admittedly the fact that all four semi-final pairs were from Radley might indicate the limited field of schools). We have had boys represent their country at tennis, cricket, polo, sailing and rugby. Radley sport is flying high.

With thanks to you all for your continued support. We do not take it lightly; Radley can only be what it is because of your putting your trust in us and that is all the more appreciated in difficult times. You will have seen the number of announcements of mergers and closures in the education sector and there will be more to come. We are pleased to be playing our part through Radley Schools Group in supporting the sector; we have enjoyed a strong first year in a declining market and look forward to building that over the years to come. Our aim is simple: to be a positive and influential advocate for the charitable independent education we believe in. An education which is, with your help, alive and well at Radley.

Diana and I wish you a very happy Summer.

Yours

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John Moule', with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

John Moule

Warden