



THE RIDGE SCHOOL



From the Headmaster's Desk

March 2018 #5

Dear Parents

Having just returned from a few days away in the U.K., I thought it appropriate to share some of the experiences that James Clucas and I were able to enjoy together with a number of our Ridge Old Boys. In addition, having made good use of my time away to visit a few top English independent schools, it seems appropriate to pass on some of my observations.

The purpose of our trip was essentially to meet up with some of what is a sizeable contingent of Old Ridgeans who are temporarily based in London or who have permanently relocated to that part of the world. Coming off the back of what has been a relatively long period of 'quiet' between the school and old boys, and particularly those who live outside of the country, James and I have been looking forward to meeting up with them.



With the Centenary celebrations now coming into view there is the opportunity for old boys to play their part by joining the festivities in some form next year and, as important alumni stakeholders, to rejoin the school's orbit of influence in some way.

In addition, there is an open invitation for them to join other members of the school's extended family by signing up to our newly established Centenary Club endowment fund.



The highlight of the trip was undoubtedly the Old Boys Reunion that we hosted for close to forty men at the RAF Club in London on Tuesday evening, 13th March. For me personally, it was a reunion within a reunion as I enjoyed the great pleasure of meetings up with young men whom, as boys, I had taught and coached whilst here as Deputy Head some twenty-five years ago. The reunion was a resounding success in a number of ways; not least of which was that it brought together a collection of men who, notwithstanding the intervening years, enthusiastically engaged in the warmth of being united again under the Ridge School badge and banner.

James and I look forward to further reunions with Ridge old boys but a good deal closer to home in the months ahead. If as an Old Boy you would like to be part of such a reunion and are feeling a little in the dark on upcoming events, please get in touch with me directly or with Joe Kotwal our Director of Marketing.

School visits whilst in the U.K.

Whilst in England I took the opportunity to spend a few days visiting a few recognized and highly respected independent schools.

1. Merchants Taylor's Prep School in Rickmansworth:

This independent boys school, founded in the early twentieth century, caters for around 350 boys between the ages of four and thirteen. It's association with The Ridge is largely as a result of it being Paul Channon's prep school alma mater.

Four noteworthy observations:

- an integrated timetable where the boys enjoy games, clubs and an interesting, built-in free time system,
- small class sizes of no more than twenty boys per class,
- a recently introduced tutoring system similar to our Boyz@Ten2Eight and SALT programmes but that is built into every school day,
- an interesting *Behaviour for Learning Consequence* ladder system to help to manage and support the boys through discipline issues.

2. Yehudi Menuhin Music School:

I took the opportunity to travel some three hours into the heartland of the county of Surrey in order to visit this world renowned music school due largely to the fact that it gave me a chance to visit one of our own, Pendo Masote, one of The Ridge and Janet Fox's more recent music protégées; he won a full scholarship to Yehudi Menuhin School during the course of last year. It is a senior school and so takes young men and women from the age of thirteen. The Yehudi Menuhin Music School is a specialist music school founded in 1963 by violinist Yehudi Menuhin.

Three noteworthy observations:

- no child is turned away from what is an expensive and exclusive independent school provided that they have shown themselves to be musically gifted and so, worthy music recipients of a place at the school,
- a student teacher ratio of very close to 1 : 1 means that even when the children are involved in formal academic classes they are often being taught and tutored individually or in pairs,
- children who attend Yehudi Menuhin School are intentionally set on course for a future in music, the performing arts, and, in some cases, international stardom.

3. The Dragon School in Oxford:

This highly sort after co-ed day and boarding school is situated on the outskirts of the city of Oxford. It was founded in 1877 and is considered by many to be one of the more recognized feeder schools to colleges such as Eton, Harrow, Wellington, Radley, etc.

- ⇒ specialist teaching in all languages and the sciences from as early as year three – the equivalent of our Grade 3 year,
- ⇒ they have a Listening Circle to meet and engage with parents on real life issues such as social pressures, internet and computer usage, anxiety amongst children and parents, etc; not too dissimilar to our own Trading Places sessions,
- ⇒ the co-ed environment requires that they provide some tailored social and emotional interventions for the boys in specifically boy-centred ways that are different to how similar topics might be discussed with their girls,
- ⇒ an advanced language policy and practice that offers specialized Latin, Spanish and French classes to children from age 9,
- ⇒ an integrated school day designed to enrich the core academic learning through timetabled but

intermittent exposure for the children to co and extra-curricula activities through each school the day,

- ⇒ this is helped by the fact that most of the children are full boarders who enjoy a variety of supervised after hours activities,
- ⇒ like the Ridge, every child is encouraged to be actively involved in music. Sport (games, as it referred to in England) is not seen to be that important and therefore is not as profiled as in SA.

A Final Word ... Human Rights Day remembered

This past week here in South Africa many people enjoyed the opportunity to remember and commemorate Human Rights Day. An important public holiday set aside each year as a mark of respect to honour the many who have lost their lives in the struggle to rid our country of the scourge of apartheid and, in particular, to remember those who died in the Sharpeville Massacre of 21st March 1960.

In addition it serves to celebrate how the Bill of Rights, enshrined within our South African Constitution, is working to recognise and safeguard the rights of every individual within our land. Rights that aim to uphold and protect the basic human dignity of every man, woman and child.

Nelson Mandela said on Human Rights Day in 1996:

“It is a day which, more than many others, captures the essence of the struggle of the South African people and the soul of our non-racial democracy.

It is the day on which we remember and sing praises to those who perished in the name of democracy and human dignity. It is also a day on which we reflect and assess the progress we are making in enshrining basic human rights and values.”

Important reminder: Nene Molefi's upcoming talk:

You are cordially invited to attend a talk by Nene Molefi hosted by The Ridge School.

CO-EDITED BY JUSTICE EDWIN CAMERON

A JOURNEY OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN SOUTH AFRICA
GUIDELINES FOR LEADING INCLUSIVELY

NENE MOLEFI

Date: Monday 26 March
Time: 18:00
Venue: The Ridge School

For more information visit:
<http://www.mandatemoefi.co.za>

WHERE BOYS ARE KNOWN AND GROWN

To all members of The Ridge family who will be observing the thanksgiving that the Easter Weekend will be bringing our way at the end of next week, I wish you a peaceful time of self-reflection.

To The Ridge family at large, blessings and happy family times be yours during the four-day Easter break.

Warm regards

Richard Stanley
Headmaster