

21 January 2011

Dear Parents

**Casual Clothes Day in aid of the New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth - Thursday 27 January 2011**

We are pleased to announce that Portsmouth Grammar School will be raising funds for the New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth on Thursday 27 January. The proceeds from the day will be donated to the "Let's Make It Great" campaign to raise £4 million pounds needed to rebuild the rear of the theatre destroyed by fire in 1972.

Situated in Guildhall Walk, the NTR is a beautiful 19<sup>th</sup> Century theatre which, in addition to a programme of dance, drama, comedy and music, is committed to education in the community. The theatre has strong links with PGS and works alongside the school to provide both a venue for pupil performances and workshops. It participates in the Portsmouth Festivities and two members of PGS staff serve on its Board of Directors (Trustees).

There have been four 'Theatre Royals' in Portsmouth. The first was known to Charles Dickens and features in Nicholas Nickleby. Situated in the High Street, it was demolished in 1856 to make way for the Cambridge Barracks and its site is now occupied by the archways that are the entrance to the school. In the same year, a replacement was built on the present site. Later replaced by the Victorian architect CJ Phipps, it was enlarged by Frank Matcham, possibly the greatest theatre architect who also built the Kings Theatre and the London Palladium. The New Theatre Royal is the only surviving Phipps/Matcham building still operating as a theatre.

Over two hundred years many great names have performed at the theatre. Paganini and Liszt performed in the original building and Sir Henry Irving, Sarah Bernhardt, Ellen Terry and Marie Lloyd and Morecambe and Wise at the present site.

The NTR closed in the 1960s, was vandalised and finally set on fire in 1972 destroying the stage, dressing rooms and back stage accommodation. Only the intervention of a group of supporters prevented its demolition and led to the Trust which has slowly re-established it as a successful arts venue for the region. The Trust is working with the University of Portsmouth to rebuild the 'back lot' in an ambitious project that will include teaching accommodation, a new stage, dressing rooms and rehearsal space and allow the theatre to increase its educational provision and attract bigger and more adventurous performances.

Traditionally, the Casual Clothes Day in the Spring Term has been dedicated to a worthwhile local cause and the funds raised by our pupils will help a great deal. **Pupils who wish to wear casual clothes will be required to bring £2 prior to or on the day itself.** Money should be handed in to Tutors.

Casual clothes are to be clean, non-offensive and sensible for school activities. Unacceptable hair styles, fancy dress and scruffy clothing will not be acceptable. The future of such events requires all pupils to be mindful of these principles. The normal running of the school is paramount.

Thank you in advance for you kind support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin Charles". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "Yours sincerely".

Mr Ben Charles  
Deputy Head (Co-curricular)