



Taking Stock

STOCKPORT GRAMMAR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Congratulations to the Fifth Year and Upper Sixth Formers on another outstanding year of results! For more information on GCSE and A Level results, **turn the page.**



OUT OF AFRICA

Twenty two Sixth Form pupils experienced a summer they will never forget when they flew to Namibia to spend a month exploring the country and working in a school. The group flew into the capital, Windhoek, where they split into teams and set off on their journeys, accompanied by staff and expedition leaders.

One team's route took them on a trek through the Fish River canyon. At about 100 miles long and, in places, over 500 metres deep, the trek took five days, with pupils carrying their own food and resources whilst avoiding wild horses, baboons and scorpions.

The team then travelled back north towards Sossusvlei, in the Namib desert, amidst some of the highest red sand dunes in the world, before meeting the second group in the coastal city of Swakopmund.

However, the most memorable part of the expedition for many was the week spent in a pre-primary school in the tiny village of Dordabis, where the pupils embarked on a maintenance project constructing a lintel to stop animals from getting into the playground, painted cartoon characters on the outside of school buildings, and spent valuable time playing with the young children from the local townships.

Trekking in the Naukluft mountains, abseiling and encountering even more types of wildlife in Etosha National Park were amongst some of the other activities enjoyed during the life-changing trip, which is described by U3 pupil Kate Mitchell: "A highlight of the trip was the thoroughly enjoyable time we had painting and teaching some English at the school in Dordabis, and getting to know the wonderful kids. At the end, we reluctantly said goodbye to the children, and the owners of the wonderful farm we were staying on. I think I can speak for everyone when I say the trip was an incredible experience that we will never forget."



JUNIOR SCHOOL GETS SPORTY

Councillor Les Jones, the Mayor of Stockport, enjoyed an afternoon at the Infants Sports Day as children from the Nursery, Reception and Infant classes made the most of the dry weather to run, jump and throw in front of their proud families.

The children competed in races from the hurdles to the sack race with Arden House finishing on top with 429 points, followed by Warren, Nicholson and Vernon respectively. Thanks are due to the Year 6 children and the SPA for helping the afternoon run so smoothly.

The good weather wasn't to last but the enthusiasm of Junior School pupils wasn't dampened by the downpour on their Sports Day. The Years 5 and 6 events saw excellent performances in the long jump and throwing, while there were several close finishes in the track events, none more so than in the relay which saw Nicholson House enjoy victory in the boys' and girls' races.

The afternoon session began on time with only light clouds and the temptations of the SPA's cake stall threatening the children's performances.

The Year 3 children thoroughly enjoyed the new experience of Junior Sports Day with the afternoon being brought to an exciting climax by the shuttle relay, with Vernon victorious in the girls' race and Arden winning in the boys' relay.

The effort and determination of all those participating made for a very successful day.



JEREMY BRINGS THE PAST TO LIFE

Fourth Year pupil Jeremy Dunn was the winner of a top prize in the Historical Association's *Write Your Own Historical Story* competition, which attracted entries from pupils across the world.

Judges were looking for stories that combined a gripping plot with a strong sense of the past, and Jeremy's tale, set in 1815 during the Battle of Waterloo, won praise from the judges for being written with such a degree of historical accuracy and demonstrating excellent use of characters and plot.

History teacher, Mrs Wilson felt "very proud to be entering the story on Jeremy's behalf and so pleased he has deservedly won the award."

As well as winning prizes himself, Jeremy's achievement also means that the school receives a year's free membership to the Historical Association.

A TASTE OF 'LE TRAVAIL EN FRANCE'



Over the summer, a group of ten AS French students travelled to Nantes in South Brittany for five days of work experience. Each of them lived with a French family and worked in different placements ranging from restaurants to leisure centres, clothes shops and nurseries.

Once the students overcame the hurdle of speaking with confidence, each day of work that passed improved their fluency and grew their vocabulary, proving to them the importance of oral communication.



GCSE CELEBRATIONS

Pupils had plenty to celebrate when they collected their GCSE results. 35% of the grades awarded were at A*, over 70% were at A* or A, and over 89% at A* to B. The A* to C success rate was above 98% for the sixth consecutive year. 42 boys and girls, over a quarter of the year group, achieved a clean sweep of all A* and A grades in ten or eleven subjects.

Zoe Harris and Rowland Williams achieved 10 A*s, whilst also being involved in varied extra curricular activities. Rowland has played an active part in the school sports teams and completed the Duke of Edinburgh's Silver Award, while Zoe is a member of several school bands, orchestras and choirs. Zoe competes annually in the UKMT Maths Challenge and this year was awarded gold on the test paper and went on to achieve a merit at the Olympiad.



SHINING STARS

The Upper Sixth Form group celebrated yet another year of outstanding A Level results. With a 100% pass rate and 57% of all exams taken graded at A* or A, as well as 86% at A* to B, the results were the second highest on record.

41% of the year achieved at least one A*, with 27 pupils gaining a mixture of A* and As. Five pupils were accepted at Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

Amongst this year's successful candidates were Kaysan Nikkiah and George Toole, both of whom gained 4 A*s in Maths, Further Maths, Chemistry and Physics and who, earlier in the year, were on the winning team at the regional final of the National Maths Challenge.

Accomplished musician Sam Holmes achieved an A* and 2 As in Music, Geography and Religious Studies and has been awarded a place at Robinson College, Cambridge.

CENTURIES FOR THE BOYS

Cricketers Oliver Towle and Mark Orpen have completed the league season having scored centuries for the school.

Oliver's century came as he scored 114 for the Under-12s in their win against King's Chester, while Mark's 101 helped the Under-13s to victory against Arnold.



Both players are also keen cricketers out of school and consistently turn out for their local sides. Oliver is a regular for Alderley Edge Under-13s while Mark has played for the Birch Vale 2nd XI, Under-16s and Under-13s this season.

Mr Wright, Head of PE and Games, has high hopes for the boys: "Oliver and Mark are exceptionally talented cricketers who certainly have bright futures ahead."

SKILLED ANIMATORS WIN PRIZES

Animation club's Luke O'Donoghue, Robert Clarke and Christian Anderson were all highly commended in this year's UK Schools Computer Animation Competition, hosted by The University of Manchester.

Pupils began working on their animations last November with nominations for *Biology In The Body (According To Dan)* and *FaceJournal* being received in May.

The competition attracted over 1,200 entries from across the UK with the SGS pupils winning two of just 45 prizes on offer.



At the ceremony, Luke, Robert and Christian were each awarded £40 Amazon gift vouchers and were invited to a VIP lunch at The Manchester Museum, before an afternoon of activities including an inspirational talk on innovative game design and animation.

ICELANDIC ADVENTURE

Five days in the world's northernmost capital city marked the beginning of the summer for thirty three pupils as they headed to Iceland on a Geography field trip.

The geographers, from the Fourth Year through to the Lower Sixth Form, were based in Reykjavík and enjoyed some spectacular scenery when they ventured further afield to study tectonics and glaciation.

The trip gave the pupils dozens of new experiences. As well as a walk along a canyon, visits to a glacier and lava fields, they also swam in the Blue Lagoon and saw first-hand how Iceland's recent volcanic eruptions have reshaped its landscape.



SCIENTISTS' RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

Over the summer, three Sixth Formers were selected to undertake scientific research for the Nuffield Science Project at the University of Manchester.

Andrew Prossor and Chloe Withers studied the effects of diabetes on provascular adipose tissue of rats, whilst Pauline Barker completed complex computer-aided analysis of a fossilised spider, which enabled her to identify its species by segmenting its image layer by layer and creating a 3D image showing the form of the spider. The University's Professor Withers commented that Pauline has made a significant contribution to the study of fossilised spiders in Baltic amber.



UNDER-11S CROWNED STOCKPORT NORTH CHAMPIONS



The Junior School's Under-11s football team have lifted the Holgate Shield after winning the Stockport North Area league with an unbeaten record.

Winning seven and drawing just one of their games, collecting the shield capped a brilliant season which also saw the squad finish as runners-up in the Stockport Metro Cup and reach the semi-finals of the AJIS Cup.

All of the boys played their part in the team's success. Edward Francis, who has played for the team for three years and is associated with Manchester City's academy, deserves a special mention for his contribution.



CHINESE TEA FOR THE MANDARIN SPEAKERS

A Chinese tea ceremony celebrated the end of the Mandarin course which has given Third Year pupils an insight into a different culture as well as the challenge of learning a new language.

The twelve week course was run by native Mandarin speaker, Jing Jing Dong from the Stockport Ethnic Diversity Service, who has also introduced pupils to ancient Chinese traditions such as calligraphy.

The popular course, originally only open to Third Year pupils to help them complete the skill section of the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's award, has now been made available to pupils across the school.

ARTISTS SKETCH IN THE CITY

In September, the Lower Sixth Form Art students visited Salford Quays to complete preliminary drawings for their coursework. The day was spent drawing and photographing the buildings and bridges that make up the area around the Quays and Media City, before heading over to The Lowry to see the Andy Warhol *Divas* exhibition and the permanent collection of Lowry paintings.

A second drawing day found the group in Castlefield, where the scale of the bridges make for a superb environment in which to draw as well as providing a welcome degree of shelter from the elements.

The drawings that were completed over the two sessions will form the foundation for the rest of this term's work and Head of Art, Mr Davies was pleased to see how accomplished the results were.



CAMBRIDGE CALLING

In July, the school Chaplain led a group of thirty staff and students to Cambridge University, where they attended Open Days, had personal meetings with subject tutors and met admissions tutors. Pupils were able to visit and stay in colleges and they spent time with Old Stops currently studying there. Playing football amongst the sculptures in Churchill College and late night punting on the River Cam gave them a real taste for Cambridge life and the group returned worn out but hugely inspired.

LEARNING TO SAVE LIVES

Junior School pupils in Year 6 now know exactly how to deal with injuries ranging from minor to life threatening after taking part in a St John Ambulance first aid course.

The children learned how to dress wounds, treat those with suspected fractures and even what to do if a patient is suffering from internal bleeding. Resuscitation dummies were also used to help train pupils in how to administer CPR, while our first aiders also took turns to "collapse" in order to put their friends' new skills to the test.

MUSICIANS ENTERTAIN IN AUSTRIA



Over sixty of the school's top musicians spent a fantastic week performing and exploring in Salzburg, Austria, just before the summer break.

Pupils certainly rose to the challenge of five performances in three days, including a wonderful *a capella* concert in Salzburg Cathedral and an outdoor show in the world-famous Mirabell Palace gardens.

Although the busy schedule did not allow too much time for sightseeing, the group did manage to visit Mozart's Geburtshaus, explore the ice caves and even fit in a quick shopping trip in the city.



A NEW VENUE FOR SPEECH DAY

Speech Day saw pupils, parents, governors and staff celebrating the achievements of the past school year in the new venue of The Plaza, Stockport.

An opening address by Mr Richard Rimmington, Chairman of the Governing Body, was followed by a stirring rendition of *My Good Lord's Done Been Here* by the 2011 Music Tour Choir, just hours before they departed for Salzburg.

Speeches by the Headmaster, the Head Boy, Head Girl and First Year pupils reiterated all that is positive about Stockport Grammar School before Mr Hector Miller, the Prime Warden of the Goldsmiths' Company, awarded prizes to pupils who have excelled in their subjects or made outstanding contributions to school life.

The saxophone ensemble's *When The Saints Go Marching In* then preceded a vote of thanks before the audience stood for the National Anthem.

After the ceremony, prize winners and Upper Sixth leavers returned to the school for a reception in the sunshine to round off a hugely successful occasion.



GOING FOR GOLD

During the summer, 29 Lower Sixth Form pupils successfully completed their Gold qualifying expedition, with two teams in Snowdonia and three teams in the Lake District.

After an acclimatisation day and a comfortable night's sleep the teams embarked on a four day expedition walking through mountainous terrain for eight hours each day, carrying everything needed to be self sufficient and camp each night. Both expeditions experienced mixed weather conditions, from bright sunshine to torrential rain and low cloud, making navigation and walking extremely challenging.

In July, William Archer, Bruce Clarke and Amelia Reed, who had completed their Gold Award earlier in the year, attended St James's Palace to be presented to Prince Edward and receive their certificates.

COUNTY WINS FOR CRICKET TEAMS

Our Under-15 cricketers were crowned Cheshire Cup champions after beating Altrincham Grammar by seven wickets in the final.

The win caps four superb years for the squad who have won nine of their 11 games this season.

The team all excelled, but the main strength was the batting with Simon Hardy, Aaron McRoberts, Ben Haigh and captain Mike Schofield all scoring half centuries during the season.



In addition, the Under-13 side are Cheshire County Champions, after winning the Hill-Hopkins Cup at Sandbach School, in a superb performance against King's Chester. Batting first, SGS scored 110 for 9 with Ed Barlow getting a vital 27. Notable bowling performances came from Seb Croft (2 for 17), Alfie Earith (2 for 15) and Lewis Braddock (2 for 12) and SGS won by 7 runs.

During the 2011 season, the school won two of the four county cups available, and for coaches Mr Corbett and Mr Urwin it was their third consecutive county Under-13 win; an outstanding achievement.



BOB THE BUILDER DROPS IN



Author and illustrator Curtis Jobling visited school in the Summer Term, wrapping up another diverse year of events hosted by the Library.

Curtis Jobling read to Second Year English classes from his *Wereworld* fantasy books and gave them a tour of his work which featured clips of his animations and demonstrations of how his characters, such as *Bob The Builder* and *Frankenstein's Cat* were developed. Some of the attendees of his lunchtime session were even lucky enough to leave with signed drawings.

The Art department also benefited from the visit, when he gave First Year pupils pointers on drawing caricatures and set them to work sketching themselves and friends.

Comic writer, Dave Smith's entertaining lunchtime session also had pupils in stitches as he spoke about his work in the media and shared his writing secrets. Pupils put his tips to the test by writing pieces for him to read out before he went on to share his creative writing expertise with Third Year English classes.

JUNIOR ADVENTURES IN THE LAKES

Boys and girls in the Junior School enjoyed a night in the Lake District as Year 3 headed off for their annual visit to Grasmere. Based at the Youth Hostel, the children made the most of their time away with visits to Brockhole in Bowness, the aquarium and a walk in Grasmere. They even managed to fit in time for a teddy bear competition!



GRANDPARENTS COME TO SCHOOL

Dozens of grandparents of children in the Nursery and Infants were welcomed into the Junior School as part of the annual Grandparents' Day.



The pupils were delighted by the arrival of their grandparents and after refreshments and a short concert in the school hall, the children took their grandmas and grandpas back to their classrooms to enjoy a range of activities together.



SPONSORSHIP

Thank you to Brooks Macdonald for their sponsorship of the Rugby 1st XV and to Swagelok for continuing their kit sponsorship of the Hockey 1st XI. Members of the Rugby 1st XV are pictured above in their new kit.

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have contributed to this edition.

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