

WELCOME TO OUR SECOND EDITION



The prime purpose of a school is to broaden the experiences and horizons of each individual.

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In this, the 525th anniversary of Shaa's foundation, it is right that we reflect on the extent to which his legacy survives in his home town of Stockport. Thanks to the support of all sections of the school community and the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, Stockport Grammar School is now as successful as it has ever been – in the number of boys and girls we educate, in terms of academic results, in extracurricular sport, music and drama and in the quality of facilities and working relations which exist in the school.

The prime purpose of a school is to broaden the experiences and horizons of each individual and it is easy to underestimate the value of participation in extracurricular activities in fostering personal development.

Last term's spectacular production of *Oliver!* together with the seasonal round of concerts and recitals demonstrated the wealth of talent which exists within our school.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award programme goes from strength to strength. Our sports teams have enjoyed notable success in national competitions this year, whilst the recent Model United Nations Conference was a fine example of the capacity of our young people to think both for themselves and of others.

The new Woodsmoor classroom accommodation is due for completion this summer and will give us outstanding facilities for the teaching of arts subjects. But we do not build in bricks and mortar alone. Our Bursary campaign seeks to ensure that local boys and girls can contribute to and benefit from the education we offer irrespective of family circumstances.

There is no better way to mark this anniversary year than by celebrating and promoting the influence of Edmond Shaa's legacy to future generations.

Andrew Chicken
Headmaster



Cast of *Oliver!*



Tom Gare President of the OSA 2011-12

TOM GARE (OS 1957) SHARES HIS EXPERIENCES FROM HIS YEAR AS PRESIDENT OF THE OSA

On leaving the school in the late 1950s I automatically became an Old Stopfordian. I played lacrosse for the Old Boys' teams and attended the Stopfordian Annual Ball held in the Stockport Town Hall. More than fifty years later the title 'Old Stopfordian' seems apt.

Today, with technological advances and ease and speed of communication, our school is hardly recognisable. Noticeable differences are the far greater number of pupils and staff, the addition of female pupils, the considerably wider curriculum and much larger and continually expanding facilities.

I have attended almost all of the musical and theatrical performances this year. They have been a delight to the ear and eye and confirm the school's reputation for excellence in this area. Many performances are a 'sell out' well in advance and I recommend them to all Old Stopfordians.

On 11th November 2011 more than one hundred former pupils and guests joined current pupils and staff in the Main Hall for the annual Service of Remembrance and a 1930s to 1950s Old Stopfordians reunion.

In a moving dedication we learned of the visits of today's pupils to the first world war battlefields and cemeteries in Belgium and France, where a wreath was laid on behalf of the school and our association. This is an annual event worthy of our support.

It remains for me to thank my fellow Stopfordians for their help and guidance during the past year and record my gratitude on the occasions when members of staff at the school have smoothed my way.

OSA President 2012/2013

Ken Clough was due to take over as President at the Old Stops' AGM in April. Unfortunately, Ken has been undergoing medical treatment and will be unable to assume office this year. All Old Stops wish him well and very much hope that he will be able to become President in April 2013.

Meanwhile, we are grateful to Paul Carr who, following a unanimous request by past presidents on the committee, has stepped into the breach and taken on the presidency for this year. Paul has returned to live in the area after being based down south for a number of years where he served the Association on the committee of the London Branch, acting for some years as Branch Secretary.

FROM THE HELM

From 1980 to 2012 – Building a Future for the School

Just over 30 years ago, we celebrated the acquisition of the former Convent buildings and co-education at the school. However in the period between 1980 and the present day, the school has enjoyed unprecedented growth in both numbers of pupils and resources. Strong financial commitment and strategic planning has seen the further expansion of the site and a raft of new building.

Very little money had been spent on the Convent buildings over the last years of the previous occupancy and substantial refurbishment was necessary to conform to planning regulations and health and safety considerations. Even the 'jewel in the crown', the Swimming Pool, needed major work on its roof. These buildings, however, were able to provide substantial accommodation for the growing school population in the initial years.

In March 1985 the school bought a strip of land on the south side of the drive known as the 'Orchard' and in 1986 the Governors approved the building of an extension to the Junior School and a new Bursary, Kitchens and 400 seat Dining Hall which were completed in early 1987, the year of the Quincentenary.

Next, a further programme was announced to build new Geography rooms and Chemistry laboratories, a further Sixth Form Common Room, a Design Technology centre and an Exhibition Room to be housed around a new courtyard adjacent to the Dining Hall. These welcome additions were opened in September 1991.

In 1992 an All Weather Pitch on the north side of the site, named in memory of Junior School Headmaster Richard Reeman, was added. In March 1991, the house immediately to the south of the drive on the A6 was bought, enabling the school to add much needed additional car parking. This was followed a little later by the house just to the north and in December 1994, the purchase of 3 Clifton Park Road allowed for further expansion of the Junior School.

In January 1995, the school acquired The Davenport Theatre from Apollo Leisure. A year later a major planning application was submitted to increase the size of the Junior School still further, re-orientate the entrance to face the Senior School, and to extend the car parking facilities on the Woodsmoor site including an additional entrance on the A6. This work was completed in 1998.

In the autumn of 1999 the Governors were able to announce plans to build a comprehensively equipped Sports Hall and Technology Centre, adjacent to the Swimming Pool which was completed by the start of the Autumn Term of 2001. Following on from this, a new Library and Resource Centre with Physics Laboratories on the floor above was opened in 2005.

The new Woodsmoor teaching facility nearing completion.



WELCOME
We are delighted to welcome our new Alumni Assistant, Maili Lavin (OS 2008)

This brings us to the present, with the most recent development being due for completion this summer. This provides a major new teaching block located on the site of the original Woodsmoor Hall and classrooms which were demolished in the summer of 2010. Full details of this development may be found on the website. These recent buildings have all been constructed in a style which is sympathetic to that of the original Hallam Buildings of 1916.

This programme of land acquisition, building and continuous refurbishment over the last 32 years has been an act of faith by the Governors and the Senior Management of the school with the support of the teaching staff and all members of the school community. It has been achieved through prudent financial planning and good housekeeping and continues to facilitate the growth and development of the school.

Records of all aspects of school life are housed in the Archives and you are always welcome to explore any areas of interest in greater depth by initially contacting the External Relations Office on 0161 419 2408.

Best wishes
Stuart Helm (OS 1964)
Archivist and OSA Membership Secretary



CHAIRMAN OF GOVERNORS RETIRES

Richard Rimmington (OS 1962) was elected onto the Board of Governors in April 1992 and has been Chairman for the past ten years. Richard has enjoyed a long and distinguished association with SGS, which began when he joined the school as a pupil in 1949.

He will be succeeded this year, by Ron Astles, who has been on the Board of Governors since 1993 and has been Vice Chairman since 2002. Ron is the Father of Old Stopfordian Christopher Astles (OS 1991) and was formerly Chief Superintendent of GMP prior to his retirement.

We will be running a full article on Richard in the next issue of Old Stops' Review. We would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his dedication to SGS.

REACHING FOR THE SKY

Lucy Cotter (OS 1998) is the Sky News Arts and Entertainment Correspondent.

She has the enviable job of covering the major award ceremonies and red carpet events including the Oscars, Baftas and Brits and securing interviews with the world's most influential artists.

After leaving SGS, Lucy studied Psychology, Sociology and Politics at Cambridge University followed by a postgraduate diploma in Broadcast Journalism.

Lucy, please cast your mind back to your days at SGS...

My fondest memories of Stockport Grammar School are Biology lessons with Mrs Bridges and English lessons with Mr Howson who is one of the most inspiring teachers I've ever had. Psychology with Mrs Braude was also great and I went on some brilliant trips to Salcombe.

I think SGS gave me the confidence to interact with whoever I come across in whatever sphere of life, it also gave me discipline to work independently and made me ambitious to go for what I want to achieve.

Is there such a thing as a typical day for an Arts Correspondent?

The huge appeal of my job is that every day is different. When I was covering the Oscars I was getting up at 5.30am to report live into our 5pm (British time) programme. We would then go off filming for the rest of day.

We interviewed an Executive at Universal and had a tour around the sets, we interviewed Harvey Weinstein and spoke to all the British nominees at the British Consulate. Each day would end with editing our packages and finally getting to bed at about 11pm for it all to start again the next day! The actual day of the Oscars was crazy; live broadcasts for Sky News and Sky Movies from 8.30am till 2pm from the Red Carpet and then the celebs start arriving. We then had to turn round a package for our Breakfast Show at 6am British Time.

When I'm in London, I'm on the sofa with Eamonn Holmes at Breakfast talking about the big entertainment or Arts story of the day and then I'll either shoot a story or report live from a premiere or event that evening. My hours are very varied as are the stories I cover, from Whitney Houston's death (when I was called in at 1am and finally went home about 6pm) to covering the Lucian Freud Exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery.

What do you love most about your job?

I love the variety of my job and I love live television – it is always exciting, as well as nerve-wracking and stressful. I get to interview people who are at the top of their game and I research and talk about the arts and culture every day.

Who has been your favourite interview?

George Clooney – I've interviewed him three times and he never fails to impress – what's not to like!! He even said "yes" when I proposed to him on the red carpet! I'd love to interview Nelson Mandela.

What is the most interesting place your job has taken you?

I've now done the Oscars four times which is always fascinating – Hollywood is like no-where else during awards season.

However while I was working for Granada, I did an investigation into gangs in New York, visited gang members in prison in New Jersey and filmed in the Bronx with an ex-gang leader – fascinating and quite scary!

What does the future hold?

Well I'm getting married in August in Wilmslow so there's lots of planning ahead....

Work wise – my role has recently been extended from Entertainment Correspondent to Arts and Entertainment Correspondent so I'm looking forward to doing more stories on the arts. Sky is a great place to work with lots of opportunities and I'm hoping to have a long and varied career in broadcasting both in News and beyond if the opportunities arise!



Lucy recently visited the school- to help First and Second Year pupils with the school newspaper and to talk to Upper School pupils about a career in journalism. This was an incredibly informative and insightful visit, and staff and pupils alike were extremely grateful to her for sparing the time to talk to budding journalists of the future.



I think SGS gave me the confidence to interact with whoever I come across in whatever sphere of life.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

HONORARY CANONSHIP

Andrew Braddock (OS 1989) has been installed as an honorary Canon of Gloucester Cathedral in recognition of his ministry as Diocesan Missioner, a post he has held since 2006. Prior to that, Andrew was Rector of Cringleford, Norfolk, and rural Dean in the Diocese of Norwich. Andrew is married to Victoria and they have two children, Benedict and Beatrice.



HOME SWEET HOME

Sara Turner (née Margolis) (OS 1998) is co-director of *Rosi Interiors* based in Altrincham. The company are Interior Designers with a retail showroom. The business comprises many different interior design elements, with jobs ranging from full project-management of the interior of a new-build to single room schemes involving curtains, carpets, wallpaper and upholstery. With no two days being the same, Sara tends to split her time between being on site with clients and contractors and working in the showroom.

RUNNING THE NEW YORK MARATHON

Helen Gemmel (OS 2004) tells of her experience:

Running a marathon was something I had always believed simply required application. A case of keep putting one step in front of the other, and just keep on going.

The 26.2 miles of the New York Marathon (and every mile in training) proved my simple theory to be very wrong. The experience required both physical and mental strength, combined with 3 pairs of trainers, multiple packs of compeed, litres of energy drink, and a very patient training partner! Having so much support back in the UK helped get me through the wall (at mile 19, in the Bronx!), and enjoy every minute of the last 4 miles through Central Park, finishing in a time of 4hrs 20.



Through fundraising nights and sponsorship, I raised over £3,600 for the fabulous charity Get Kids Going!, which supports access to and involvement in sport for disabled children.

The six bridges on the NY marathon course are not something I will be looking to repeat, but, having reignited my love for running, I have signed up for London 2013!"

FAITH, HOPE AND THERAPY

Faith, Hope and Therapy: Counselling with St Paul is **Dr Roger Grainger's (OS 1951)** latest book to be published. A Parish Minister and Chartered Counselling Psychologist, Dr Roger Grainger works in the secular world every day. His book is based upon his non-religious work with a number of his clients, each of whom has a unique story and the need to discover their true paths in life. Dr Grainger demonstrates how his faith was informed and illuminated by these encounters. Through these stories, he seeks to offer models to anyone seeking to change his or her way of doing things.

A SONG FOR EUROPE

David Mort, former Head of French, has had his debut novel *A Song for Europe* published. The story tells of Pete, a 1960s failed pop musician and 1990s loser, who ends up getting involved in an Eastern European Eurovision Song Contest bid.

Sex, drugs, rock and roll, high-level international political intrigue and low-level farce ensure the book gets 5 star reviews from Amazon customers. The book's cover was designed by David's son and Old Stopfordian **Dan Mort (OS 1998)**,

whose exhibition of sculptures, *Obliquity*, at New York's Charles Bank Gallery last year was a massive success which saw all of his pieces sold.

ANOTHER ERA

Malcolm L. Hall (OS 1936 and Former Governor) wrote to us from his home in Tenerife with his memories of a much smaller school divided into two streams, Latin and German, a 'highly qualified and dedicated group of masters' and his best friends Jack Sugden and Bert Sidebottom. Disputes between boys were settled in the boxing ring and tram monitors kept order on the journeys to and from school. Malcolm was a keen member of the drama group run by History teacher "Johnny" Johnston and remembers the consternation caused by his appearance in a frock as the wife of the Prime Minister in George Bernard Shaw's *On the Rocks*. Malcolm's fascinating and personal recollections are available in full on the school website.



Bobsleigh Silver

Louise Webster (OS 2008) won a silver medal and the trophy for Best Female Novice Driver in the 2011 British Bobsleigh Championships in Germany last October.

Since being commissioned as an officer in the RAF in 2009, Louise has been continuing her training as an air traffic controller and is now based at RAF Waddington, Lincoln, home to RAF air command surveillance and reconnaissance assets.

It was while representing the RAF in an athletics sprinting event in 2010 that she was spotted by the RAF bobsleigh coach, with her speed and agility making her a good candidate for the sport.



LENDING TO THE ROYAL ACADEMY

Georgina Cohen (OS 1994), studied History of Art and Design at Manchester University and is now a Director at Gagosian Gallery, London and private art collector in her own right.

Earlier this year, she loaned a piece by acclaimed contemporary American artist, Sterling Ruby from her collection to an exhibition entitled *Generation Y* at the Royal Academy of Arts.

Sterling Ruby *Stalagmite/ Icolagnia* 2008

NEUROLOGICAL RESEARCH

Rob Pitceathly (OS 1997) studied Medicine at St Andrew's University before working as a junior doctor in Manchester. He has since specialised in the field of Neurology and has recently decided to further sub-specialise in neurological diseases affecting muscles.

He is currently involved in clinical research at the National Hospital of Neurology and Neurosurgery in London, where he is seeking to identify new genetic causes for mitochondrial disorders, a rare type of muscle disease.

Rob hopes to continue combining clinical and research work in the future and would be happy to talk to any Old Stops studying medicine, who are interested in following a similar path.

Visit the website for more Old Stops' Updates

ON THE MOVE

Old Stopfordian **Charlie Baker (OS 2007)** has been appointed as a designer at luxury yacht architects Pastrovich Studio.

Claire Hamilton (OS 1990) was made Deputy Head at The Ryleys School in Alderley Edge in 2010 after holding the post of Head of Science and ICT for 13 years.

John Shackleton (OS 1973) retires this year. An Old Stopfordian, who returned to SGS to teach for six years (1977-83), John played lacrosse for the Old Stops and England, was President of the Old Stops in 1991 and is married to Isy who also taught at SGS for ten years. John has travelled the country and has been a Head in four different independent preparatory schools. His current Headship, which takes him upto his retirement is at Hallfield School in Edgbaston.

HOLDING COURT

John Amaechi OBE (OS 1989) is an organisational consultant and high-performance coach. He is a New York Times best-selling author and former NBA basketball player.

John was awarded the OBE in 2011 for his ongoing involvement in charitable work with young people, equality and minorities over the years and services to Sport as a player and also since retirement. John took time out of his busy schedule to talk to PR & Communications Officer, Tamara Shneck about what makes him tick.

John, you knew from age seven that you wanted to be a psychologist, so where did your desire to play basketball come from?

I was walking down Market Street with a steak slice in my hand and a man came up to me and said "do you want to play basketball?" and I said "yes". You never know what decisions in life are going to be pivotal but that was certainly one. The moment I decided to play basketball I decided to play at the highest possible level. I don't really do things by halves so I decided I was going to be the best basketball player ever and play in the NBA. I knew I wasn't good enough to go straight to an American university because I needed a scholarship and there is a draft system for the NBA. I knew I needed extra time to catch up as I'd only been playing for a few years. I wrote 3000 letters to American high schools and this was before email! I wrote "Hi my name's John Amaechi. I'm 6'7" and I want to play basketball – are you interested?" I received three replies and one of the schools that replied was St Johns, Toledo.

My family were able to afford one return flight and to support me for just one year over there. I took with me £100 for my host family's birthdays and other essentials and I knew that if I didn't make it to college, if I didn't get a scholarship I would be back in England in a year.

I was fortunate enough to have a coach there who really looked after me and wanted me to be remarkable, so by the end of that year I had offers from a few different colleges. I did my research and picked the one that offered the course I wanted and combined strong academic support with excellent basketball training.

After college you were offered a contract with Orlando Magic and you then went on to receive offers from a number of big teams, not least the LA Lakers, from whom you famously turned down a very attractive offer.

That was an incredibly difficult decision. I wanted to go to *The Lakers*; I love the team, the coach and I am still friends with some of the players. It would have been a perfect fit for me because I love LA (I lived there for a number of years) but at the same time I bang on about being a man of principles, and most of the time when our principles are tested it is about letting someone else have the last bottle of milk in the corner shop, or giving up the last car parking space whereas, in this case I picked the team that had given me my opportunity in the NBA when nobody else wanted to hire me.

The year *The Lakers* approached me, there were 17 teams that wanted to offer me a job and pay me a large salary but the *Orlando Magic* were the only team that would take me the year before so I stayed with them. And that's what principles are: doing the right thing even when it is incredibly painful.

Having now retired from Basketball, you are involved with London 2012, among many other things.

I was a part of the bid from the very beginning, which seems like a long time ago now. I showed the IOC around some of the venues but I actually picked the short straw because I had to show them around, what was then The Dome, when they

were ripping out all the old stuff that hadn't worked and trying to make it into something new. Since then I've been involved in an advisory capacity – I'm on the Board, along with Paul Deighton (the CEO), Baroness Tanni Grey Thompson and a number of other people. We are critical advocates so we are there to oversee everything in terms of procurement, service provision, volunteering... and so on. We aim to ensure they haven't missed a perspective and that there won't be any horrible surprises along the way, so that no-one is asking "why didn't you think of this?" afterwards.

Having been involved in the Beijing Olympics, do you see any progress in the acceptance of ethnic minorities and the gay community in the sporting world?

LOCOG (London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games) has done a remarkable job because they have been very explicit with how welcome people must be made; LGBT, black, Asian and ethnic people in sport, women in sport, disabled people in sport... you name it we've got a pin for it. This has never happened before and symbols like the rainbow flag are being allowed to be associated with the Olympic rings. This has never been allowed and now they are, which is a big deal. LOCOG itself is an incredibly progressive organisation – more than 50% of the staff are women and it's made up of a much higher percentage of minority ethnic people than you would expect in a sporting organisation.

You co-authored a paper on self esteem, goal setting and personality. Would you say self esteem, and drive are things you were born with or something you've had to work on?

One helps the other, though I think fundamentally people misunderstand what self esteem is, because it has become one of those things that we use in everyday language now,

so if someone is shy then they have low self esteem and the two things are not necessarily related, so what I focus on is this idea of self efficacy, a precursor to self esteem. You have to believe that you are capable of achieving your goals, being a proactive agent, rather than somebody who life 'does stuff to'. You can have different temperaments, that can be affected by your socialisation, whether it be your school and parents or sports clubs and the peer groups you hang out with, your socio-economic status, how secure you feel financially... all these things impact on how much you think you can control your world versus it controlling you.

The people who tend to achieve great things are those who believe that they are the type of person, despite evidence to the contrary perhaps, who can be remarkable. Oswald Boateng for example, who comes from first generation immigrant parents – what are the chances that he goes on to own a fashion house in the middle of London's Saville Row? People like him, who despite the fact that they are poor, a minority, come from an unlikely background, have had it instilled in them that they can do great things and that's what my mum did for me, for all our family. I remember one particular teacher at SGS, my Biology teacher, Mr Gregg who was amazing and always made me feel like whatever I wanted to do I could do. I was lucky to have someone like that.

Your current career has many different facets. How do you manage to juggle it effectively and what do you enjoy most?

I'm told I have a portfolio career. I quite enjoy working with the BBC and doing the punditry bit...I do the newspapers on Saturdays and Sundays and I sit on the couch a lot in the morning and talk about various issues from the perspective of a psychologist which is fun, but its vacuous – it's not really work! Then in my 'dayjob' I have a small pool of elite individuals from lots of different backgrounds who I work with to help them go from being good to very good or great.

That is a rewarding part of what I do. I also love working with organisations, helping them with, say, HR issues or leadership training – that is great too, but this one-on-one work, it can be quite revelatory for people just hearing back their own words and being prompted to think differently. Yesterday I was with a young footballer in London. It is remarkable to sit for two hours with someone who is having revelation after revelation (not prompted by me so much) but just from me repeating back what he is saying. I think that is a great thing, whether it be in sport or business or whatever.

It's a real eye-opener for people to be in a situation where they get to just talk and talk without judgement and someone else absorbs that and bounces it back in the right way. It's brilliant – it's why I love being a psychologist, it's like being a Jedi. It really is the best thing in the world, it's amazing.

You've crammed so much into your 41 years. Do you have any ambitions yet to fulfil?

Yes, several! My first book (*The Man in The Middle*) was a *New York Times* bestseller but just did not fly in this country at all. It was an autobiography in the very purest sense in that it had no dominant theme within it. Maybe that's part of the problem – maybe that's why it didn't sell as much as I would have hoped. I'm writing two more books now... One is a very dry academic book that will be read by seven professors possibly! The other is a more motivational type of... I hesitate to say... self help book, but that type of idea.

John Amaechi OBE aims high in everything he does and is an inspiration to all who meet him. He most recently returned to SGS in April when he spent the day speaking to different year groups about the pursuit of goals, his experiences of the sporting world and much more.

I'm writing it with a friend of mine who is a Doctor of Education. The other thing is, I want to be in the House of Lords. I've decided.

I think whether you believe there should be an elected House of Lords or not, I happen to think that if you look at the new crop of people coming in, they're increasingly people who reflect the diversity of the real world.

Floella Benjamin is in the House of Lords.. she's a Liberal Democrat peer. Tanni Grey Thompson is a really good friend of mine and she is a cross bench peer. She's been in there on the Welfare Reform leading the way on wheelchair accessibility as they used to have steps everywhere! Then you have Waheed Alli, who's a gay Muslim Labour peer and you suddenly realise that the new people coming in are representative of us and I would like very much to add my 'odness' to The House of Lords. But you know that will take a decade, so it's a very long term plan...



1987 QUINCENTENARY TEAM REUNITE

Danny Adamson (OS 1988) tells us all about it:

Two blokes met in a pub twenty nine years ago, aside of enjoying a couple of pints, they discussed an appropriate way of celebrating their school's forthcoming Quincentenary. Luckily for us, those two chaps were Len Kynaston and Steve Dunn. That evening they came up with the idea of a World Rugby Tour. Four years on and after a huge amount of planning and fundraising, the two coaches and twenty six immensely lucky lads embarked on what was to be a trip of a lifetime visiting California, Hawaii, Australia and New Zealand.

Twenty five years on, seventeen of the squad, including Len and Steve met up to commemorate the tour. The school very kindly supplied food and drink for the occasion along with the 1st XV pitch for a spot of touch rugby. All things considered, the standard of rugby was fair and collectively we only pulled four hamstrings with just the one requiring A&E! After the rugby we made our way, via the Jolly Sailor, to Bredbury Hall for dinner and an evening of merriment. Speeches, prize giving, singing and a little drinking prevailed as many fond memories were recollected. Full marks to PJ Mycock for instigating the reunion and many thanks to everyone for making the effort to attend, whether they travelled from Switzerland, Essex, Australia or Bramhall!

Those present were - Len Kynaston, Steve Dunn, Tony Carlin, Ian Milner, Peter Mycock, Matthew Birt, Danny Adamson, Steve Graham, Phil Browne, Alistair Birt, Mark (Zippy) Simpson, Paul (Blob) Howarth, Colin Nevitt, Andrew Gregg, Steve Foster, Dominic Huxley and Sasha Howell (pictured right).

OS SPORT

OS LACROSSE REPORT by Richard Griffiths (OSA Secretary)

The season draws to a close at the time of writing, with relegation unlikely but a possibility. The current league structure has seen Old Stops in a division of eight teams in which four have been in contention for the top two slots, whilst the remaining four have been battling to avoid relegation. Trips to Newcastle, Liverpool and Nottingham have produced valuable victories, but results against Mellor, Poynton, Norbury and Brooklands first teams have generally highlighted the gulf in abilities between the two halves of the division.

The club has been pleased to have Phil Hall turning out on a regular basis and there have been welcome appearances from other younger Old Stops. However, there is still a reliance on several of the "old brigade" and the club was devastated by the sudden and untimely death of Colin Hibbert last October. Colin had played for the club for well over thirty years and continued to be both a key defender on the pitch and a vital inspiration administratively in getting players to turn out each Saturday. He is much missed, but there has almost been a resultant desire to maintain the club's vibrancy in his memory.

Each passing year makes securing the future of the club more demanding, but the loyal Old Stops who continue to play lacrosse are a tribute to the spirit that lies at the heart of the club.

If you are interested in getting involved, please do get in touch via the Alumni Assistant, Maili Lavin.

CAMBRIDGE UNDERGRADUATES PLAY VARSITY RUGBY

The 2011 prestigious Rugby Union Varsity Match at Twickenham featured two Old Stopfordians in the Cambridge University side. Steve Townend (OS 2009) started the game at fly-half while Mathonwy Thomas (OS 2007), a regular in the centre for the team this season, started on the bench before joining his team on the pitch 65 minutes in.

The match, a regular fixture between Oxford and Cambridge since 1872, was screened live on Sky Sports 1. But unfortunately for our boys, Oxford was the winning side this time around. Steve and Mathonwy are two of four Old Stops who have captained their colleges at Cambridge in recent years. Alongside Steve (Downing College) and Mathonwy (St John's), Matthew Jones (OS 2008) has captained Queens' College while Christien Mott has led the Churchill team.



CHARLES SPEIGHT (OS 1944) WAS INTERVIEWED BY THE BBC LAST NOVEMBER FOR A SERIES OF BROADCASTS DURING REMEMBRANCE WEEK. HIS STORY IS NOW ALSO TO BE INCLUDED IN THE BRITISH LEGION'S PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOLS.

Here, Charles recalls his experiences whilst deployed in Palestine by the RAF in 1948, following World War II.

I was a pupil at SGS during the last war and not long after leaving, I went into the RAF like so many others. After training in England I went out to the Middle East, and found myself in what was then Palestine. I had quite an unexpected welcome to the country. I went by road to Port Said and crossed the Suez canal to Kantara where I joined a train with about a hundred other servicemen heading from Egypt to Lydda. We left at midnight and I spent the first two hours on guard at the end of one of the coaches and after a short nap, did another two hours from 4am to 6am.

The passengers at the front of the train were civilians and the troops were in the last three coaches. We were scheduled to make a refreshment stop at Gaza but the NAAFI had been destroyed by the Jewish resistance so the train did not stop. I therefore went to the restaurant car on my own and left my kit and rifle in the care of the others in my coach.

I was just about ready to finish when there was a huge explosion from a mine detonated from the side of the track. This completely wrecked the coach I had been in minutes before and killed almost all of the thirty occupants inside. This was the second largest loss of life in one incident, after the explosion of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem the previous year.

The next few hours were spent in a clearing-up operation and later, those of us remaining joined the front part of the train which was still intact and finished the journey. The station was a scene of chaos; I was on my way to join 651 AOP Squadron but nobody knew where it was so I joined half a dozen airmen who had arrived at the station and were going back to Kolundia near Jerusalem.

Unfortunately we were then ambushed and kidnapped on this journey and we had the misfortune to lose a vehicle, all our guns and ammunition but it was not practicable to argue with armed men looking down the wrong end of a gun. We were eventually released and finished our journey before I was transferred to hospital in Jerusalem. That was my welcome to Palestine on Sunday 29th February - a day to remember. The next week we faced a Court of Inquiry investigating the loss of a vehicle and our rifles and eventually found to be not guilty!

I fortunately found and joined my unit a few days later, where I remained until May 1948. Next I was stationed in Egypt and then the final year was spent in Tripoli, Libya. I returned to England in July 1949 and left the RAF the following month.



A YEAR IN ANTARCTICA

Dr Alexander Kumar (OS 2001) is currently stationed in Antarctica where he is running physiological and psychological research projects on behalf of the European Space Agency's human spaceflight and exploration programme. The research is aimed towards a future manned mission to Mars.

Tell us what brings you to the Antarctic?

Terra incognita. For me it's the history of this unique, unmapped continent. 100 years ago, Scott died here and Shackleton was about to make his famous escape – probably the single best example of leadership and survival in human history. It's planet Earth's most extreme environment and the only continent in which humans have no natural place.

And yet here we are, a party of thirteen Europeans, where I am the only British person, living, surviving, up here at 3800 metres altitude in the Antarctic Plateau, the world's largest desert, with temperatures as low as minus 80 degrees Celsius, the coldest temperatures recorded in world history, and with four months of 24 hour complete darkness with no opportunity for rescue of any sort. Outside there is a flat, white and featureless horizon. For me, this is another reason why I came here – this is the closest you can come to living on another planet. The isolation is real.

And as a team, you deal with any problem that arises. You have to. You could be living a science fiction novel.

In fact, the station we live in, called 'Concordia', was designed with this concept in mind. It most closely mimics in its conception and design, a model for a station that would be built on the surface of another planet, for example, Mars. Even the buildings we live in are cylindrical in shape, so as to fit inside a space rocket. It's quite incredible.

More importantly for me, it's about natural sciences. Studying medicine you are taught to look inward. But I have always looked out and upwards.

We are lucky to have the clearest night sky on the planet Earth's surface, which means you can look, with your naked eye, in the height of mid-winter, directly into the Milky Way Galaxy. In fact it's close to what the Hubble Telescope can view in clarity. With some of the astronomical equipment we have here, we are able to carry out cutting edge research. For example, one project searches the night sky for Exoplanets – planets most like our own that could harbour and support life. Imagine, not only being able to find and name new stars each and every night, but also name your own planet: Planet Concordia perhaps, or maybe Planet Kumar.

How long are you there for?

There is a phrase which sums up Antarctic travel, which is so often delayed due to weather. 'This Is Antarctica', abbreviated to TIA. In other words... if you need to travel today, try tomorrow or next week. With this in mind, I should be heading home sometime between November 2012 and January 2013. Overall I will spend around one year down here.

Over-wintering in Antarctica is a completely unique experience. On the one hand it scares the life out of you. And on the other, invigorates your soul – challenging nature, pushing the limits of science and living where no life exists.

What has been your most hair-raising experience so far?

Just recently, we were flying in a 1942 Basler DC-3 (Douglas) plane. In a plane made before even Macdonald-Douglas came about – when it was just Douglas! We were landing in 30 knot cross-winds on sea-ice, near to Terra Nova Bay. As the plane skimmed the mountains – I have a great photo of one wing, on the right side, pointing into the sky and the left wing, where I was sat, pointing well and truly into the ground. We made it, but only just. The yaw (or sideways rotation/ pitch) of the plane must have been 30 degrees or so. It was a spectacular sideways landing that may as well have been upside down.

What is the most important lesson you have learnt so far?

Always wear two sets of gloves, otherwise you'll lose your fingers. Always wear two pairs of socks, otherwise you'll lose your toes. Attach a piece of fishing line to a golf ball, and paint it a colour other than white, otherwise you'll never find it in the snow.

Don't listen to Italians, instead watch their hands – what they are saying is all in their hand movements. And in line with World War II propaganda... Keep Calm and Carry On.

What is your fondest memory of your time at SGS?

We went on a lacrosse tour of the East Coast of USA. I have since been back for medicine there – to Johns Hopkins University and other places and fondly recall being beaten again and again by the Americans. After all, lacrosse is a North American game.

I spent a lot of time in the library. I remember there was an old wooden plinth which held a copy of the 'Comprehensive Times Atlas of the World'. It's different to the concise version, mainly in size. The comprehensive edition is huge, allowing you to immerse yourself in the world. If you have a teenager – buy a copy for them. It's inspiring. I still have a trip around Scotland to do that I planned on that atlas, having traced it out on a piece of paper. In the past ten years since leaving school I gained my medical degree, and additional degree in International Health, and I have travelled and worked in over 60 countries, and have completed many journeys I planned to areas I found whilst wandering around in that atlas. Back then, I just left my mind free to wander. Now I let my body do the rest.

Advice to anyone wishing to follow in your footsteps

As John Lennon said, 'Life is what happens to you whilst you are busy making other plans'. Or Ernest Hemmingway, 'I don't just live life, I bite big chunks out of it'.

But whichever way you look at life, enjoy it. Help others. I have seen a great deal of the struggle in life, abroad. In Africa, Asia and more – the Amazon back to the Arctic – you name a place – believe me, it's there and sometimes you don't have to look very hard. Appreciate what you have. And live as if one day, it might well all be gone. Stop wanting to win the lottery. In my mind, we already have – being born into a soft cotton wool upbringing in the UK, relative to a struggle in a developing world country – trying to beat the inevitability of the under 5 years old child mortality rate. It took me sometime to get to this point of view, but now I am here, life is a lot simpler.

You can follow Alex's adventures at www.AlexanderKumar.com

He is also keen for you to email him at alexander.kumar@concordiabase.eu



On the one hand it scares the life out of you, and on the other, it invigorates your soul.

CELEBRATING 525 YEARS

This year marks 525 years since the school was founded by Sir Edmund Shaa, who was the Mayor of London and Prime Warden of the Goldsmiths' Company.

A year of celebrations was launched in February, with a Gala Concert at the Royal Northern College of Music. The Chorus and Chamber Choir delighted the audience with a performance in collaboration with Cheshire Sinfonia and Chorale that surpassed all expectations.

This was swiftly followed by a fantastic sell-out Senior School production of *Oliver!* that ran over four nights in March. From cast, chorus and orchestra, to backstage, technical and marketing teams, the production saw 180 pupils from First Year through to Upper Sixth involved in a seamless and highly energetic show.

Later that month, the Junior School put on their first musical written entirely in-house – *Clusical The Musical*. Not satisfied with his starring role as Fagin in *Oliver!*, Sixth Former Ollie Mills wrote the music and lyrics for this original show in collaboration with Drama teacher Mrs Alison Sullivan. The production, a comedic murder-mystery full of eccentric characters, boasted polished performances from Year 6 pupils, who will surely go on to star in the Senior School productions in years to come.

On May 2nd, Old Stops, Governors, supporters of the school and representative staff and pupils attended a reception at the prestigious Goldsmiths' Hall in London, in celebration of the school's long association with the Goldsmiths' Company.

This special year is also being marked with a fundraising initiative to support the Bursary scheme, which helps children from all backgrounds join the school and fulfil their potential through an education at SGS.

For more information on how you can support this campaign, please contact the External Relations team externalrelations@stockportgrammar.co.uk



ANNOUNCEMENTS

IN MEMORY

In memory of Old Stopfordians who have recently passed away.

Alan Kershaw (OS 1942)

12th June 2011

A very distinguished Old Stopfordian and former Chairman of Governors, Alan Kershaw sadly passed away in the Isle of Man on the 12th June 2011. Mr Kershaw retired from the Board of Governors of Stockport Grammar School in 1996 after serving for 24 years, 19 of which were in the capacity of Chairman. He was a pupil at the school from 1936 to 1942, and followed his studies at Stockport Grammar School with an open scholarship to Southampton University College.

After qualifying in spherical maths, navigation, celestial and terrestrial navigation, Mr Kershaw quickly saw service at sea, firstly on North Atlantic convoy duty and later, in the far east. Following a period on the east coast of Italy, he was present at the Japanese surrender of Hong Kong in August 1945 and with the Australian special services in Hiroshima shortly after the atomic bomb was dropped. 1946 – 1947 saw Mr Kershaw on active service in Palestine.

The Navy behind him, he dedicated his working life to 42 years in the textile and garment manufacturing business, setting up his own company in 1967 and retiring as chairman in 1991. A keen sportsman, Mr Kershaw played both club and representative rugby football in Lancashire and Bristol.

During his time on the Board of Governors, he saw Stockport Grammar School move to independent status following the 1974 government announcement of the phasing out of the direct grant system. In 1980, as Chairman, he oversaw the change to co-education and the doubling in size of the school over the following 10 years.

When he retired from the board in 1996 he commented: "My gratitude encompasses everyone, particularly the ever devoted staff, thinking parents and most importantly the pupils who have made my journey so worthwhile. I would do it all again!"

Mr Kershaw was a member of the OSA, served for a period of 7 years as Secretary and was President in 1972 – 1973. He was elected as distinguished life member in 1994. Following his retirement, he and his wife Hilary moved to live in the Isle of Man.

Sara Pilkington (OS 2009)

28th February 2012

Sara was a much loved member of the school community, widely respected for her intellectual ability and her outstanding musical talent. She made a marvellous contribution to the life of the school and was a good friend and unfailing source of support to pupils of all ages. A bright light to very many, Sara will have a lasting influence on her friends and colleagues at Stockport Grammar School.

Colin Hibbert (OS 1972)

Friday 28th October

Kenneth John Tate (OS 1962)

September 2011

Frank Walton (OS 1947)

August 2011

Bert Woodhouse (OS 1935)

23rd November 2011

BIRTHS

Theo Edgar Stuart Pitceathly born 30th June 2011, son of **Rob Pitceathly (OS 1997)** and Debbie Bertfield.

Samuel Joel Turner born 3rd June 2011 son of **Laura Wolfe (OS 1991)** and Anthony Turner and brother to Natan (6).

MARRIAGES

Matthew Barnes (OS 1995) married Anna Richardson-Owen in Grange-over-Sands in May 2011.

Richard Hicks (OS 1984) celebrated a civil partnership ceremony with Nik Rushworth in May 2011.

Matthew Patrick Hanson (OS 2004) married Charlotte Mann in Shrewsbury in August 2011.

DO YOU HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT?
Why not tell us all about it?
Send in your story and help to contribute to future issues.



A SELECTION OF HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST YEAR

NATIONAL CALL-UPS

The Hockey First XI

The Hockey First XI capped a tremendous season by winning the Greater Manchester Schools Under-18s Tournament at the end of the Spring Term.

Earlier in the season the team had made it to the National Semi-Finals, narrowly missing a place in the Finals after being defeated on penalties. In further good news for the sport,



Martha has worked tirelessly not only on her goal-keeping techniques but also her fitness to ensure that she stood out at trials and I am incredibly proud of her.

Games teacher
Miss Sharon Withington

First XI goalkeeper, Martha Watson (pictured below) fought stiff competition, through rigorous trials, to be awarded representative honours for the England Under-18 squad.



Rugby First XV

Rugby First XV captain James Flynn, is now playing for his country after being selected for the England Under-18s Clubs and Schools Rugby Squad. James impressed the selectors during his excellent performances for the North at the Under-18s Divisional Festival which saw the Prop score the winning try in a 7 – 5 victory against the Midlands.

James has also played for Sale Sharks' second team in the Aviva A League this season, which just further demonstrates what a promising future he has in the game.

OXBRIDGE DOZEN

Twelve pupils have celebrated offers from Oxford and Cambridge universities for courses that include Medicine, Law, Archaeology & Anthropology, Music and Chemical Engineering.

The pupils have all managed to combine academic success with well-rounded achievement in other areas such as music and sport, including Oxford-bound Head Boy, Harry Allport, who also captains the school's First XI football team.

Last year Stockport Grammar School was identified by the Sutton Trust as one of 10 schools nationally having a significantly higher acceptance rate to university than other institutions with similar A Level results.

Pictured above: 8 of the 12 candidates

INTO AFRICA



Twenty two Sixth Formers experienced an unforgettable summer when they flew to Namibia to spend a month exploring the country and working to help a school in the tiny village of Dordabis.

After arriving in the country's capital, Windhoek, pupils split into teams and set off on their journeys, accompanied by school staff and expedition leaders.

At about 100 miles long and, in places, over 500 metres deep, the initial trek through Fish River Canyon took five days, with pupils carrying their own food and resources whilst avoiding the wild horses, baboons and scorpions.

The highlight of the expedition for many was the week spent in a pre-primary school in Dordabis, where the pupils embarked on a maintenance project and played with the children from the local townships.

Trekking in the Naukluft mountains, abseiling and encountering even more types of wildlife in Etosha National Park were other activities enjoyed during the month-long trip.

OS HIGHLIGHTS

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Over 100 Old Stops attended the annual school Remembrance Service. After the ceremony, guests enjoyed lunch in the Hallam Hall, where they were entertained by Fourth Year pianist, Henry Brearley, before hearing an account from the pupils who had visited the French and Belgian battlefields this year.

Donors and legators are also invited each May to a special reception and tour of the annual Art exhibitions. If you are interested in joining the Shaa Society or donating to the Bursary Fund, please contact Rachel Horsford, Director of External Relations on 0161 419 2408.

1980S REUNION

A sudden downpour didn't dampen the enthusiasm of former pupils and staff who returned to SGS on a Saturday afternoon in September for the 1980s reunion barbecue.

Held in the Main Quad and the Hallam Hall, Old Stops and their families enjoyed catching up and reminiscing with old friends and teachers, against a backdrop of photographic displays from the archive which helped to jog their memories. And while the adults enjoyed recollecting the past whilst listening to old tunes from the 80s, their children had plenty of fun on the bouncy castle in the Boys' Gym and didn't let the rain reduce their appetite for the delights of the ice cream van!

OXBRIDGE DINNER

52 Old Stops, Governors, pupils and parents attended the annual Oxbridge Dinner on Friday 4th May, held this year at Hertford College, Oxford.

OSA DINNER

The annual dinner saw 98 Old Stops gather for an evening of food and good conversation in the Hallam Hall. Sixth Former Natalie Clark played the piano for guests as they arrived.

SHAA SOCIETY LUNCH

Legators and current donors gathered in the Hallam Hall on 22nd March 2012 for the annual Shaa Lunch. The event is open to current donors and all those who are members of the Shaa Society – that is anyone who has pledged a legacy to the school.

WASDALE REUNION

We organised a Wasdale Reunion Weekend on 11th-13th May, where many Old Stopfordians, along with their families and friends got together to camp, go walking, enjoy meals and reminisce. For photos, please go to the Old Stops' section of the website.

Visit the Stockport Grammar School Facebook page for more than 50 photographs from the day. It was great to see so many of you there.

KEEP IN TOUCH

- What are your fondest memories of your time at Stockport Grammar School?
- Have you any recent achievements that you would like to share with us? We are always keen to hear what our alumni are up to.
- Are you keen to re-connect with fellow alumni from your year? We are happy to help organise reunions. If you are interested, please contact Alumni Assistant, Maili Lavin at lavinm@stockportgrammar.co.uk
- Do you know any Old Stops that would like to be on our mailing list and aren't already? Please ask them to get in touch.

Email: externalrelations@stockportgrammar.co.uk



WERE YOU INVOLVED IN ALBERT JOHNSTON'S SCHOOL PLAYS BETWEEN 1935-1968?

If so and you wish to share your memories, we'd love to hear from you. Please write to or email External Relations with your stories.

STOCKPORT GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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We would like to thank all those who have contributed. If you would like to submit material for the 2013 edition or give any feedback on this one, please email externalrelations@stockportgrammar.co.uk or call 0161 419 2408.

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ALAN BAXENDALE BURSARIES

Thanks to the generosity of Alan Baxendale (OS 1942) the school has been able to make two additional bursary places available for pupils joining the school this September. Alan left legacy funds in trust for Stockport Grammar School and his former university, University College London. One Alan Baxendale Bursary will assist a pupil from age eleven, the other a Sixth Form student. The Bursary Scheme helps bright local children whose parents could not otherwise afford the fees.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

GOLF DAY

Thursday 21st June 2012

The annual Bursary Appeal Fundraiser takes place at Stockport Golf Club.

For more information, including team bookings and sponsorship, please contact Hannah Atenyam on 0161 419 2408.

HERITAGE OPEN DAY

Saturday 8th September

The school is taking part in this national event, which offers free access to properties that are usually closed to the public. This offers a once-a-year chance to discover hidden architectural treasures and enjoy a wide range of tours, events and activities which bring to life local history and culture. Please contact the External Relations office if you would like to book a place.

WOODSMOOR OPENING

The new Woodsmoor teaching facility will be in use from September 2012, with an official opening ceremony in 2013, once the demolition of the black and white tower and associated building and landscaping work is complete.



FOUNDED IN 1487