

OLD STOPS' REVIEW

Issue 5 2015

In this issue...

Freediving with
Rebecca Coales

**Thinking Business
with Vikas Shah**

School News



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Headmaster's Welcome

The Old Stopfordians of the future are children in our school today. How can we ensure that the bond they feel to the school and its community remains as strong as that enjoyed by previous generations - in an age where friendships are not restricted by place, not limited to personal contact and not cemented in shared experience? Certainly there is no shortage of hurdles to anticipate and obstructions to overcome, but the future strength of this school lies in our shared capacity to adapt Shaa's legacy to the needs of each new generation within the secure framework of the principles of the past. Nobody has done more to raise our awareness of this golden thread than Richard Griffiths, who as an Old Stopfordian, Governor and parent demonstrated his deep commitment to the ethos of our school, its history and its future, through his involvement and service to the pupils of our school – past, present and future. His untimely death will be keenly felt by many.

Only two years ago we reflected upon how Edmond Shaa would have evaluated the strength and vigour of his creation at the end of our 525th Anniversary. This year we are beginning to look forward to what is, arguably, a more significant landmark in the history of Stockport Grammar School – the centenary of our move from Greek Street to the Hallam Site – which we will celebrate in 2016.

“ We seek to connect young people to the town in which they live, to give them a sense of pride in and responsibility for the neighbourhood and to provide each with an understanding and appreciation of the needs of others. ”

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These days, of course, our purpose is much broader than the passing of examinations. Our excellence in academic study is complemented by an extensive range of co-curricular activities, which foster the personal development of young people through experience, opportunities for service and the instilling of those values that lie at the heart of success and fulfilment in life beyond school.

We remain committed to being a school rooted in the local community. We draw talented boys and girls from over seventy local primary schools. We make our facilities available to local residents and groups, as well as working in partnership with local charities to raise significant amounts of money for the benefit of good causes.

In doing this we seek to connect young people to the town in which they live, to give them a sense of pride in and responsibility for the neighbourhood and to provide each with an understanding and appreciation of the needs of others. In schools like ours, the talented child finds in the company of his or her peers, an environment, an ethos, especially relevant to him or her and receives a stimulus and incentive fully to stretch their abilities. It is especially important that the able child from the less fortunate home can benefit from this unique opportunity – and at as early an age as possible.

This year, through the continuing generosity of donors, we hope to be able to increase the number of bursary awards to pupils entering the school at both 11+ and Sixth Form level. We provide well over £1 million in financial assistance each year – and we hope the centenary of our re-foundation on the Hallam site in 1916 will provide additional opportunities to promote the cause to Old Stopfordians and other friends who value what we do for young people.

Every donation however modest contributes towards preserving the school as Shaa intended it to be. In the current economic climate there is much talk by the politicians of the need to 'invest' in the future. The best investment is in human beings. In no area is the cause so deserving or the need so clear. We do not intend to keep quiet about the benefits we offer to all sections of the community; we do not intend to close the gates of our school to those of the people of Stockport, who do not enjoy the affluence of a minority.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Andrew Chicken
Headmaster



Cast of 2014's
Lower Sixth Form Play

A Year in Office

Michael Cheslett (OS 1981) reflects on his year as President of the OSA.

I left SGS in 1981 and with a group of friends have attended most of the OSA annual dinners over the last 33 years. In 2012 I was asked to join the committee with a view to becoming President in 2014 - it was an honour to be asked.

Now, as I write, my year as President is drawing to a close and it has been a most enjoyable and rewarding experience. I have attended many school and Old Stops events.

The talent and quality of musicianship displayed throughout the year at the concerts and carol services has been outstanding. The performance of the musical *Godspell*, various plays and the Junior School nativity have shown a depth of ability and style within the school for drama and I would recommend anyone to attend given the opportunity.

I attended Speech Day and again the tremendous ability of the pupils was evident for all to see and an acknowledgement must be made to the work and enthusiasm of Governors and staff which enables the pupils to realise their full potential.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Rachel Horsford and the External Relations team for the work they put into the organisation of the various alumni events bringing together Old Stops, young and old. Those I have attended include: the Oxbridge Dinner, Summer Reunion, the Remembrance Service and most recently the evening in London. The OSA welcomed Rebecca Taberner to a recent meeting as she has been appointed as the new Alumni Officer which is part-funded by the OSA.

The Remembrance Service saw more than 100 former pupils join current pupils and staff in the Main Hall. This was followed by a reunion lunch in the Hallam Hall and a presentation from pupils of their experiences on a recent visit to the cemeteries in France and Belgium.

The recently re-decorated Hallam Hall has been a splendid venue for many events and the newly refurbished memorial boards put in place over the summer were funded by the OSA.

I would like to thank the Headmaster and members of staff at school for their warm welcome at the events I have attended. I also thank the members of the OSA committee for their hard work, guidance and advice over the last year.

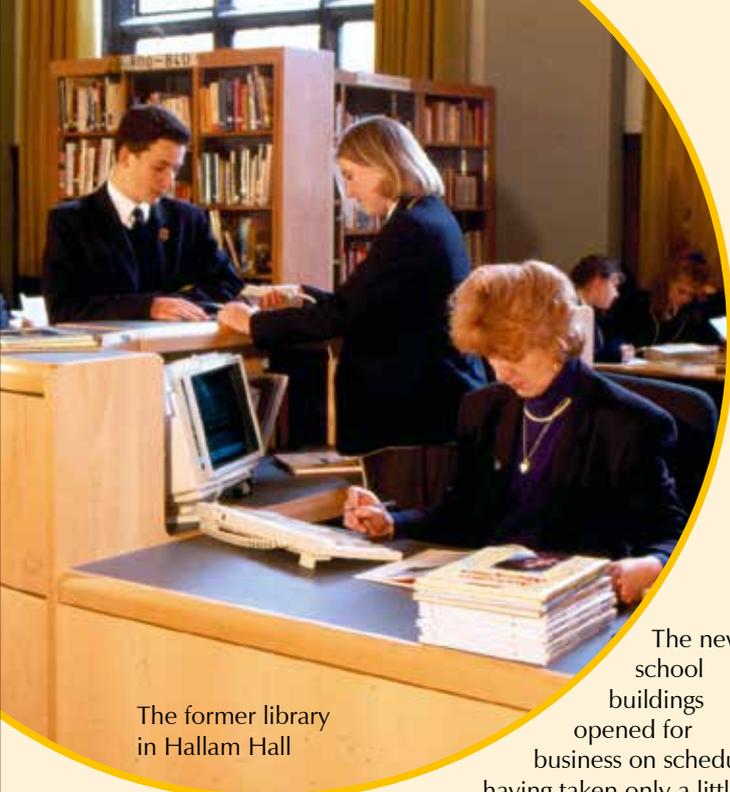
In the week I am writing, I have attended the funeral of Richard Griffiths. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him and especially within the OSA for all his hard work, enthusiasm and support over many years as the OSA Secretary.

I have had a superb year as President and feel honoured to have been elected and wish my successor, David Garrett (OS 1981) all the best for his coming year in office.



From the Helm

Looking back 100 years...



The former library in Hallam Hall

The new school buildings opened for business on schedule, having taken only a little over twenty months to complete.

The move to Buxton Road took place during the 1915 Christmas holiday and classes were held there from January 1916 with a formal opening ceremony taking place on Saturday 29th January.

The new buildings were designed for 250 pupils in ten classrooms grouped in a block on one side of the quadrangle. The hall was named after the benefactor Ephraim Hallam while other benefactors were commemorated in the Sykes Lecture Room and the Norris Gymnasium. Both these last two facilities have, over the years disappeared as alterations and additional buildings have changed the landscape. The Science and Art departments were located above the administrative rooms on the third side of the quadrangle. Four fives courts were built adjacent to the terrace which had thoughtfully been provided to watch sporting events. There was provision for a large dining room with service kitchen adjoining. Strangely, the school's Founder was not to be remembered until 1979 when the Headmaster's residence was named Shaa House.

The extent of the site was initially very conservative, although considerably better appointed than the previous location at Greek Street. The school drive, then called Worsley Road, connected Buxton Road with Devonshire (later Devonshire Park) Road. The land adjacent to Woodsmoor Lane, and on which stood Bramhall Lodge (the home of the Bell's Brewing family) was acquired by the Sisters of the Holy Family in 1922 and opened as the Convent School in March 1923. It was this site that the Grammar School eventually purchased in 1980.

The number of boys quickly exceeded 250; by the end of the year there were 256 and by the end of the decade 324. More staff were appointed. At this time, the school was to experience the first lady teachers, although only on a temporary basis because of the war. One of these, Miss Blackledge, was later to become the wife of Headmaster Daniels.

The end of the war was marked first of all by an extra week's holiday, but in 1921 a memorial was unveiled by the then Chairman of Governors, Colonel Sir Alan Sykes, to the 52 Old Boys who did not return.

One hundred and sixty former pupils had volunteered before conscription was introduced - a very substantial proportion - and many more had joined up thereafter.

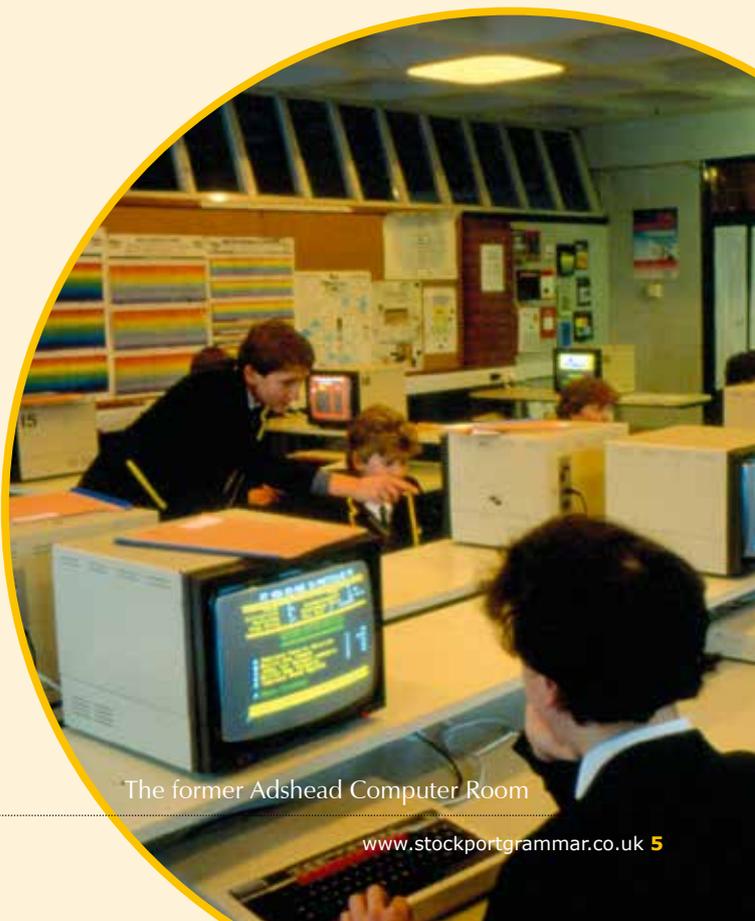
With peace had come the school's first Sixth Form, as that term is understood today, with nine members. The three subjects for the new Higher School Certificate were restricted to Pure Mathematics, Applied Mathematics and Physics. Apart from the practical work in Physics, Daniels taught the whole course. In addition there was subsidiary English.

The 1920s were years of consolidation. The old playing field at Adswood was sold and the playing fields that now face the railway line were laid out. The House system - with stunning lack of originality called North, South, East and West - was introduced for games and athletics. After several false starts, a school magazine was published in 1929 and has remained the publication of record ever since. It is clear from the breadth of articles and the general content that the school community was enjoying its purpose built facilities and making the most of everything that they offered in this new era for SCS.

Stuart Helm

Stockport Grammar School - The Years of Expansion 1980 - 2012, A Personal Perspective by Stuart Helm

has recently been published and is available to buy from External Relations for £15.



The former Adshead Computer Room

Material World

Vikas Shah (OS 1999) has interviewed some of the leading global figures of the 21st Century, alongside running a textiles business, two blogs, volunteering for several charities, not to mention lecturing in Lisbon every fortnight and mentoring fellow entrepreneurs. We caught up with him for a chat...

Vikas, firstly tell us how you came to interview so many prominent figures...

I was writing an economics blog and was getting good feedback. I was interviewing people like hedge fund managers and bankers, but I decided that there was so much more to life and I wanted to write about it, so one day I got hold of Jimmy Wales, the founder of Wikipedia and he was good enough to agree to do an interview with my little tiny blog and it went really well. I got a lot of readers. So then I got a bit ballsy and got on the phone to NASA, and fast forward a few months and I'm on the phone to Buzz Aldrin! Once you have a few good names under your belt, people take you a lot more seriously. Since then, I've interviewed FW de Klerk, Brazil's Minister of Defence, Moby... all sorts of amazing characters who have helped to shape the world as it is now. I was expecting Moby to be a typical pop star but he's such a philosopher and incredible to listen to. Two people have really changed the way I look at the world – Maya Angelou and Auschwitz survivor Iby Knill - both have a depth of experience in their life and spoke with such authenticity about the world, which comes from having lived 80-90 years through real struggle. That they decide to share that truth is incredible.

You also run textiles company Swisscot, having increased the company's turnover massively since you joined...

Yes, we are one of the key textiles merchants in the UK. Turnover was well under a £million when I started, but we did £12 million last year and it's looking like £14.5 million this year. We supply a third of the UK's hospitality textiles. The business has grown and reshaped. We are pretty solid; we're growing, we've got UK manufacturing and we're taking on people in the UK.

Aside from your day job you spend a lot of time mentoring and doing charity work...

I believe we have a social contract with the world. We all rely on somebody for something every day. I've been lucky, I've had opportunities and built some things along the way. But I have an immense sense that I should help those who haven't had that luck. I believe it's important to give up some time to volunteer or give a bit of money if you can.

I am working with The Mustard Tree and Street Soccer Academy, as well as The Elephant Family and Cancer Research. I headed up the fundraising for a major centre they've built in Manchester just by The Christie. The way I look at it is: can I add value to what they are doing? Can I help them? If the answer is yes I get involved.

You started out in business at a very young age...

I was at school when I started a business, which I ran for ten years. I just figured it out as I went along. At the time there was zero support for start-ups, so I value mentoring hugely. Luckily there is a lot more support infrastructure available now.

I started my business in the school holidays. I was phoning companies in The Yellow Pages, offering web design for £50! It just grew, almost by accident and I ended up with clients like Nike.

How did you get them to take you seriously as a teenage boy?

It never occurred to me they wouldn't. It wasn't even about confidence. I just didn't see my age as an issue. For me it was naïvety. I don't think it was any different from the kids at school who were great at rugby or lacrosse. It never occurred to them that people might not take them seriously when they went out on the field. I was only different because what I was doing was unusual. This was my discipline. Because it's an odd thing for a young person to do, it's viewed differently. But I really see it as the same thing.

How did you juggle the business with your schoolwork?

I made sure that the plates that were spinning fine were left alone and gave more attention to the subjects that needed more work. I wouldn't ever call myself academic. I wasn't good at regurgitating facts in exams. But I enjoyed English and Art and funnily enough Business Studies was pretty easy. I was interested in Science and Maths but didn't find them easy. I went on to study Management and Textiles at UMIST. This course had the fewest academic hours per week which allowed me to carry on with my business.

You lecture in Lisbon now as well...

I'm there every couple of weeks during term time. I was asked to teach after speaking at a conference over there, which was a big surprise. I was appointed onto the faculty, and it's great because it's the toughest challenge I've ever had. It keeps me up-to-date with management thinking. I also travel round the world to see my Swisscot clients and suppliers. Technology is a big help – it allows me to run my office from my laptop.

“ You have to come out of your comfort zone and experience life. ”

How does one 'teach' entrepreneurship?

I actually don't think it exists! It's a word that gets banded about because of *Dragon's Den* and *The Apprentice*. "Enterprise" is a real thing and can be taught; the mechanics of how a business works, negotiation skills, understanding how to sell and so on. These are things we need to learn regardless of career. Let's say you do want to start a business – there is a whole learning programme around how you do that, dealing with growth and failure. But what you can't teach is that little sprinkle of magic which helps you come up with an idea. That either happens or it doesn't. I give students a toolbox they can use, with practical experience, role models etc, but it is upto them to have a magic idea or take those skills into a corporation and do the same thing.

What are your secrets for success?

Even if you're not academic, you have got to want to be more than you are. If you don't have that drive, you won't achieve anything. You have to come out of your comfort zone and experience life.

In your busy portfolio career, what do you most enjoy?

I like to stay inspired. I am always involved in a variety of projects. I find it really rewarding that I am able to do that. I had a dream to be an airline pilot. Yes I am sad that I didn't pursue it, but no one goes through life without a certain degree of melancholy about what could have been. But it's fine. Things work out as they work out and I'm really OK with it.

Is downtime important to you?

You have to look after yourself, with things such as good nutrition and exercise. I protect this time rigorously, no matter how busy I am nothing interferes with that. I also enjoy writing, photography and anything remotely arty. I do lots of drawing and illustration too.

Where do you go from here?

I set myself broad goals, to continue helping the community, continue interviewing interesting people and to keep trying to improve myself. That way I know I'm going to achieve it. There is no sense in setting a five year goal in an unpredictable world. I plan little things that I can do every day that are achievable.

You can read Vikas' interviews on his blog thoughtstrategy.co.uk

Follow him on twitter @mrvikas



Where are they now?

Pitchside Treatment



Suzy McRitchie (OS 2001) graduated from the University of Birmingham in 2004 and now specialises in sports and musculoskeletal physiotherapy for private practice Atherapy in the Midlands, where she treats professional athletes as well as the public.

Whilst working for the NHS, Suzy successfully applied for a physiotherapy position at the Commonwealth games, which resulted in her working pitchside on emergency care, in the treatment room and out on the training pitch. Suzy remembers: "Hockey can be a pretty brutal game, so there were plenty of strains and big injuries to attend to. It was great working with such a specialised team and medics from all over the world within elite sport." As well as working hard, Suzy enjoyed watching the other sports, cheering on athlete friends and she even met Prince Andrew and the Queen.

Suzy tells us "It reminded me of the great time I had playing for SGS First XI and has spurred me on to get playing club hockey again."

The Main Event

Simon Hill (OS 1986) is the MD of professional sports events management company Xtra Mile Events. With the support of his wife Gemma, Simon organises a range of triathlons and duathlons from North Wales to West Yorkshire as well as the ASICS Greater Manchester Marathon which was voted the UK's Best Marathon at the 2014 Running Awards. Since the company formed in 2007, they have welcomed more than 50,000 participants to their events.



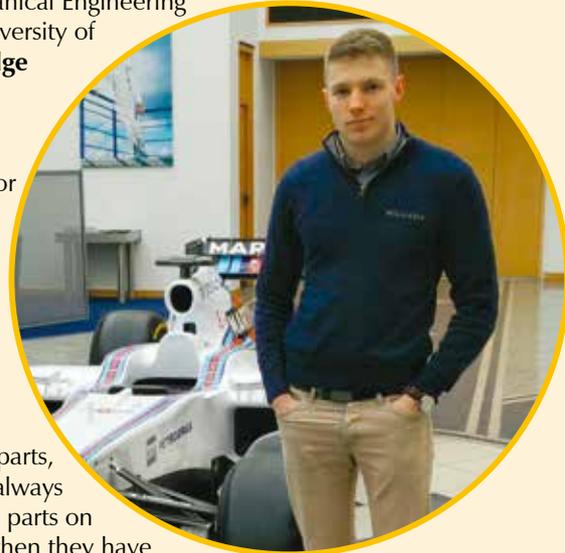
Visit www.xtramileevents.com to sign up to an event. There is an exclusive 10% discount for all Old Stops who want to challenge themselves. Just use the discount code OldStops10.

Local events coming up:

- 28th June Peak District Triathlon at Chatsworth
- 20th September South Manchester Triathlon

Formula 1

As part of his Mechanical Engineering degree with the University of Bath, **Oliver Cartledge (OS 2012)**, has been selected for an industrial placement as a Junior Design Engineer with Williams Formula 1. Working in conjunction with the Aerodynamic and Production departments to realise designs into efficient composite parts, Oliver told us, "It's always amazing to see your parts on the car, especially when they have improved the car's performance or saved a driver's life."



He added "Without SGS, there is no way I would be in this position. I was lucky enough to receive a bursary, so the gratitude I have towards the school is monumental."

From Football to Fortune 500

Since leaving SGS, **Ashley Shakibai (OS 2006)** has completed degrees in Accountancy, Business Strategy and Law as well as studying International Marketing at Harvard University in 2009. A role in Wayne Rooney's marketing team kick started Ashley's career, before he became the first employee of a start-up management consultancy, which grew to have a dozen Fortune 500 clients on the books within 18 months. Ashley is now a Management Consultant for KPMG. Ashley says, "My time at SGS gave me the determination, academic curiosity and passion for business, which has shaped my life after school."

MP for Blackpool

Gordon Marsden (OS 1973), went on to read Modern History at Oxford University, before becoming a Kennedy Scholar in Politics and International Relations at the Warburg Institute. Today, Gordon is MP for Blackpool South and Shadow Minister for Transport. He has also served as Public Affairs Advisor to English Heritage, a tutor for the Open University and Editor of History Today and New Socialist Magazine.

A Head Start

Claire Hamilton (OS 1990)

has been appointed to the role of Headmistress at The Ryleys School in Alderley Edge. The school was established in 1877 and she is the first female to have been appointed to the role of Head. Claire has been teaching at the school for over 17 years.

With a degree in Applied Biology and subsequently a PGCE from Hull University, she began her teaching career with a period of supply teaching in the Tameside area. This first year provided Claire with the opportunity to return to SGS to cover in the Biology Department and work with Alan Gregg, the person who inspired her to teach in the first place.

A position at Kimbolton Preparatory School in Cambridgeshire followed, where Claire taught for three years with the additional role of Geography Co-ordinator. Missing the Peaks and the Dales, Claire's next move was up to The Ryleys, as Head of Science and ICT, then Deputy Head, and finally Head.

Claire tells us: "I love my job, as no two days are the same... Something happens every day to make me proud of the children and of the teachers who work so hard." Claire has two daughters, Ruby (10) and Elizabeth (7) and their weekends are spent cycling, walking their Border Collie, baking, cooking and watching films.



La Vie Est Belle

After joining the graduate scheme at Sainsbury's, Richard McCreery (OS 1989) moved to Barclays in 1998, training as a financial advisor. Subsequently hearing of a job opportunity at an insurance brokers in Monaco, he decided to seize the opportunity and try life in France in 2000.

Working for a company which had French, Italian and English clients meant that Richard had to quickly dust off his A Level French.

Richard describes the champagne lifestyle of Monaco as "lively", including his personal highlights as the Yacht Show; *Fashion Rocks* and driving a Spyker supercar between Grand Prix races.

Richard opened his own investment advisory business in 2003 just over the border at his home in France, serving a small but wealthy British and Australian client base, advising them on their investment portfolios and carrying out research and analysis relating to investment propositions. Richard is now able to focus on the elements of the job that he most enjoys, along with the pleasures of living in a beautiful part of the world.

And, he says; "It does often live up to the dream that many people have of living in a Mediterranean country, with sunshine, mild winters, long lunches - many a weekend feels like being on holiday, even after being here nearly 15 years."

Richard's children go to the local school in their medieval village of Roquebrune Cap Martin. They are growing up bilingual in French and English, whilst also learning Italian, as the family live ten minutes from the Italian border.

Richard told us: "I left SGS with a strong impression that life is as much about the things you do outside of the classroom as it is about good exam results....I think this attitude has guided my life. My prospects for getting a lot out of life have been greatly enhanced by living in a foreign country and I'd encourage anyone else to do the same if they can."



Chloe, third from the right with fellow Old Stops at the recent London Event

Inspirational Events

Having already worked as an Events Assistant in New York and Audience Development Manager in Sydney, **Chloe Hill (OS 2006)** is now Commercial Manager at Terrapinn, an international events management company.

Chloe is currently working on The Robotics Innovation Show which showcases how robotics are being used in healthcare, agriculture, energy, utilities, transport, film, media and more. This takes place in October this year. Her next project The Space Business Show (Europe) in April 2016 will create the very first marketplace bringing together space and satellite vendors with buyers in the emerging UK market.



Treading the Boards

Congratulations to **Alex Cosgriff (OS 2014)** who was awarded the Best Actor award for his performances in the Cavendish Cancer Care Performance Festival earlier this year.

Since leaving SGS, Alex has been incredibly busy in numerous productions alongside his studies at Sheffield University. His most recent performances include the University Theatre Company's production of *Death of a Salesman*, the Performing Arts Society's musical cabaret, *The 24 Hour Musical*, which raised over £4000 for charity and performances at the National Student Drama Festival at Easter.

We look forward to seeing much more from Alex who is making an appearance in the University Theatre Company's production of *Wind in the Willows* later this year. After finishing his degree, Alex hopes to pursue a Postgraduate Diploma in Acting, before heading out "to give the terrifying industry a go."



Marianne Returns to Her Roots

In a co-production with The National Theatre, The Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester has announced that they are proud to be welcoming back Tony Award winner **Marianne Elliott (OS 1985)** to direct *Husbands and Sons* starring Anne-Marie Duff in February next year. Marianne tells us "I'm absolutely delighted to be back at the Royal Exchange, as it is the most beautiful theatre in the country. And I feel most at home when I'm directing in the round."



Head Of Cabinet

James Morrison (OS 1986) is Head of Cabinet for Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. James heads the European Council, corporate board and overall strategic coordination of the cabinet.

Lacrosse News

Honoured at the Lords



The late **Richard Griffiths (OS 1969)** was invited to attend the bi-annual dinner of the Centurion Lacrosse Club at the House of Lords where the President of the club presented him with an award in recognition of his involvement and continuing service to the game of lacrosse.

Richard was a former President of the OSA Lacrosse Club, having played lacrosse at school, Sheffield University and for the Old Stops. He followed the progress of those Stopfordian lacrosse players who

have merged into the Norbury Lacrosse Club and could be seen regularly encouraging them from the touch line.

As a founder member of the Stockport Metros Lacrosse Club, Richard was, for many years, instrumental in arranging youth lacrosse exchange visits with the Maryland Lacrosse Fraternity in the USA involving a large number of Stockport area lacrosse players. Richard acted as coach to the teams for the 1978 USA metros tour.

In 1997 Peter Griffiths, Richard's father, received a similar award from the Centurion Lacrosse Club.

I was lucky enough to see Richard receive his award accompanied by his son, **James (OS 2003)**, as pictured.

Tom Gare (OS 1957)

An obituary for Richard Griffiths can be found on p19.

CEO of The English Lacrosse Board

Mark Coups (OS 1981) is the current Chief Executive Officer of The English Lacrosse Board, which makes him responsible for the management of English Lacrosse and the delivery of the targets set out in the Whole Sport Plan. Mark has 23 years of practical experience working in sports development.

Mark's brother, **Paul Coups (OS 1984)**, is the National Education and Skills Manager for English Lacrosse. Paul has worked as a Lacrosse Development Officer, a Regional Officer and also an Area Manager.

He was the England Men's Head Coach for the Europeans in 1997, along with coaching the U19 England Men in 1999.



Championing International Lacrosse

Ben Morrell (OS 2002) champions lacrosse at every opportunity. Whilst at university, Ben set up a men's lacrosse team at the University of Warwick, and captained English Universities. In 2006, Ben (pictured left) left the UK for Australia and played in Sydney for some time with the New South Wales team, playing both field and box lacrosse.

Moving to Singapore in 2011, he set up a national team, including a Men's, Women's and Youth Academy. Mostly made up of Singaporeans, US, UK, Australian and Japanese players, the teams compete internationally, having played 17 internationals in three years. Ben is now focussing on local school and university development in Singapore, with a goal of taking them to their first World Games in Manchester in 2018. Professionally, Ben is a Senior Consultant for Brightcove.

Looking Inside

In 2014 Rebecca Coales (OS 1994) came home to Stockport to set two national freediving records, swimming four lengths of the Olympic-sized Grand Central Pool without coming up for air. Here, Rebecca shares an insight into her focus and determination to succeed.

At what age did you start to swim and did you participate in other sports competitively growing up?

I've been happy in the water from an early age, and I swam competitively for a short time around age 8, training at Avondale pool. Having a swimming pool at SGS kept me swimming regularly but my attentions had turned to the track by that age. I competed for SGS in athletics, mainly 100m sprints and long jump.

What made you decide to focus on diving?

I started scuba diving when I turned 14 as I wanted to be a marine biologist and loved my science lessons. Rather than being influenced by anyone, I felt drawn to the sea.

What did you do after leaving school?

I studied Environmental Science at Sheffield University, and then an MSc at King's College London in Aquatic Resource Management. My first jobs were with Sheffield Wildlife Trust and then the Environment Agency, where I've continued to work for almost 15 years.

I took a career break in 2006 for two years working in South Korea as an English teacher and then as a travel writer in Australia and New Zealand. When I returned I no longer wanted to live in London. I wanted to be closer to the sea but with the cultural interests of a city. I'm very happy to have chosen Bristol as it fulfils those needs and is green and friendly too.

Alongside your freediving, you practise and teach yoga. How did you get involved with this?

I started yoga to help manage stress and anxiety. I'm not a naturally calm or laid-back person, despite what you would expect a freediver to be. I've learned to use my breath and mental focus to calm myself and that has had huge benefits in my life as well as my sport. I can't help but share my experience now with others through teaching yoga.

When you are not competing, what does an 'average' week look like?

I work four days a week as a project manager at the Environment Agency; I teach two or three yoga classes and occasionally I run freediving courses. Training then takes up any remaining time which means I have a very busy life. Freediving is a small but growing sport. As there is not yet any funding available for athletes, we are completely self-funded. I train for approximately 12-15 hours a week over six days. Four days are in the pool, two days 'dry' in the gym or outside running. I enjoy my training so that makes a huge difference if I have a day where my motivation isn't 100%.

Beating the national record last summer in your home town must have felt great. How confident were you that you were going to do it?

It was a privilege to swim at Grand Central pools last year and set two National Records there. It makes for a great story that I 'came home' to achieve my best, and this generated a lot of media interest as a result. When making a record attempt, I always try that distance once or twice beforehand in training to give me confidence. So I knew I'd be able to set the record on the day, but my main challenge was to stay calm to avoid getting in my own way.

So what is your next freediving goal?

I'm currently training for the World Championships in Belgrade in June. I have a wild card entry, having ranked fourth in the world last year, so I have a good chance at winning a medal. I have my sights on setting a new World Record too.

How do you prepare mentally when you are competing?

Freediving is quite different from other sports where you fire yourself up before an event. We want the exact opposite. I do some yoga and meditation the day of an event. Then in the hour leading up to a competition I'll try to keep my mind quiet and untroubled, which means having a routine and being prepared. I also use positive affirmations to help keep any self-doubt at bay.

What goes through your head when you are diving?

During a dive I have quite a methodical mindset - I follow the black line and remind myself of the stages of the dive as I swim. The first length feels easy and you're at one with the water. The second length is mainly when the urge to breathe is strongest. After the second turn I tell myself the dive starts here, as my legs and arms begin to tire. Close to the end of the dive I don't have a strong urge to breathe but I do feel weary so I give myself little encouragements to keep going.

Where is the most interesting place that the sport has taken you?

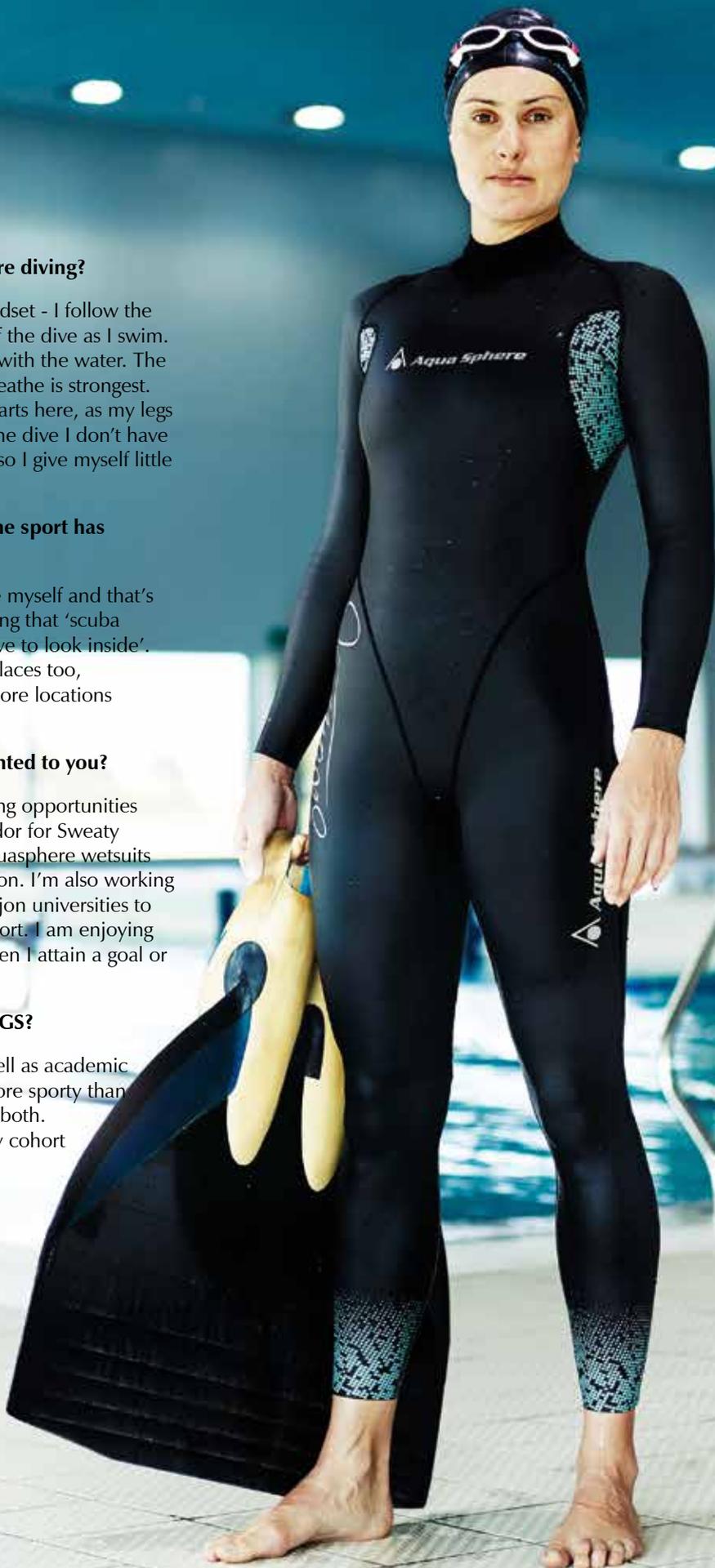
To be honest, freediving has taken me inside myself and that's been a very interesting place! There is a saying that 'scuba divers dive to look around, but freedivers dive to look inside'. I have dived in some of the most beautiful places too, especially in Australia and there are many more locations on my bucket list.

And what other opportunities has it presented to you?

Being an athlete has opened up some exciting opportunities for me in the last year. I'm now an ambassador for Sweaty Betty activewear, Dive Sangha divewear, Aquasphere wetsuits and swimwear and NuZest non-dairy nutrition. I'm also working with Bath, Leeds Beckett and Plymouth Marjon universities to understand more about my body and the sport. I am enjoying the journey as an athlete just as much as when I attain a goal or prize.

What are your memories of your time at SGS?

I'm grateful that SGS encouraged sport as well as academic development as I came into school being more sporty than bright, but came out being well balanced in both. I'm still in touch with school friends from my cohort via social media.



You can connect with Rebecca at www.facebook.com/beccafreediver or [@om_diver](https://twitter.com/om_diver) on twitter.
Follow Rebecca's progress on her website www.omdiver.co.uk

Design for Living



Stuart Helm met up with former pupil Mark Brearley (OS 1981) for a fascinating insight into his prolific architecture career, notably his significant role in London's architectural developments.

Presently Guest Professor and Head of Cass Cities at the Sir John Cass Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture at London Metropolitan University, Mark is also course leader on the MA in Spatial Planning and Urban Design. He has lectured widely in the UK, Europe and beyond and has collaborated on special projects and workshops in many of the major cities of Europe.

He worked for the Mayor of London for twelve years; firstly with world renowned architect Richard Rogers in the Architecture and Urbanism Unit, and latterly with Design for London where he became Head of Design. He also served for several years on the Mayor's Design Advisory Panel.

Mark is currently working on a collaboration with the V&A Museum, building an archive of contemporary urban design. His work and ideas have been widely disseminated and he has co-ordinated many publications.

Starting out

After leaving SGS, Mark read architecture at Manchester University and then Cambridge. It was there that Mark first began to be interested in the theme that would form a major part of his professional work. Influenced by two tutors in particular, he was encouraged to look at landscape and buildings in a much more instinctive, grounded reality rather than follow the prevailing doctrine of the rather formal and kitsch style of 1980's Post Modernism. Mark was particularly influenced by the importance attached to first-hand experience recorded through drawing. He describes one of his tutors as having a "hands on, touchy feely approach producing amazing drawings with strong ideals about place and how you understand and engage and respond to situations in design." It was perhaps no coincidence that at school the sensitivity of Mark's drawing and analysis of form and shape was very evident.

While teaching in London, Mark began to further develop his interest in urban planning, the use of public green space and those 'brown field' spaces that had been left when industry had moved out. He started to realise the untapped potential importance of these spaces to adjacent communities and the natural world and the possibilities for connecting them up in a more coherent network.

Mark spent time mapping areas, recording through drawing, photographing, documenting and talking to local people, particularly in the area of East London. In those early days, alongside his part-time university teaching, Mark was consciously building a portfolio of work exploring the city, particularly the edges of the city where there is always the possibility of change.

Setting up a practice

After a number of years this work led to an involvement with the regeneration partnerships created by John Major's government. Mark acted as a consultant to the Chief Executives when they were pitching for major contracts. Emboldened by this and similar experiences Mark, together with a colleague, set up their architecture practice East in 1994.

Their first large scale project, River Places, was a bold plan for a pleasure garden on both sides of the lower Thames at Rainham and Dartford which connected with local people and where local industries were seen as a positive contribution. It is a tribute to their commitment that they remain closely involved with these places, notably with Rainham and the adjoining marshes. The success of the project enabled East to attract Millennium funding and subsequently Heritage Lottery funding and to begin dialogues with authorities such as Counties and Boroughs, the Ministry of Defence and the Port of London Authority. In this respect East was beginning to develop strategies and schemes that today are seen as an essential aspect of planning consideration.

Working for the Mayor of London and the Olympics

In 2001 Mark left East to join Ken Livingstone's newly created Architecture and Urbanism Unit which was a conscious attempt to promote an agenda which until then had been addressed in a somewhat ad hoc manner. Mark saw his role at that time as being to emphasise the green element to planning.

In 2006 the Architecture and Urbanism Unit became Design for London, with a philosophy increasingly promoted by Mark to develop large schemes and implement them through small achievable steps. By contrast however, Mark's team was also heavily involved in the work leading up to the bidding process for the Olympic Games in respect of the location and opportunities provided by the Olympic Park. This was planning on a huge scale, embodying all Mark's ideas for the integration of space, communities and resources on a site that called out for regeneration. The politics of the whole enterprise were not without interest, with particular schemes being accepted in order that another in quite a different sphere altogether might be agreed. He now sits on an advisory panel helping to shape the future of the Park.

Relations with Boris Johnson were more formal, but if the Mayor liked the concept presented it was likely to be given the go-ahead, with one example of this being Johnson's acceptance of Mark's proposals for housing design standards for interior and exterior space throughout London. Mark considers this to be his most significant achievement and it is likely that these will become national standards.

Making things happen

When questioned whether problems of scale and complexity in a city the size of London are enough to dent the enthusiasm of even the most committed and optimistic planner (there are over 600 high streets with associated communities), Mark suggests that the solution is to endorse smaller schemes which overall make a contribution to a wider picture.

Mark's latest enterprise, alongside his other work, is as the proprietor of a small engineering business producing classic design metal trays and trolleys. He is currently working on a project with Heal's (the furniture store) and he collaborates with graduate students from the Royal College of Art on their product design proposals.

Mark is an incurable optimist, a philosopher, a visionary and an excellent communicator. He has a talent for making things happen.

SGS Highlights

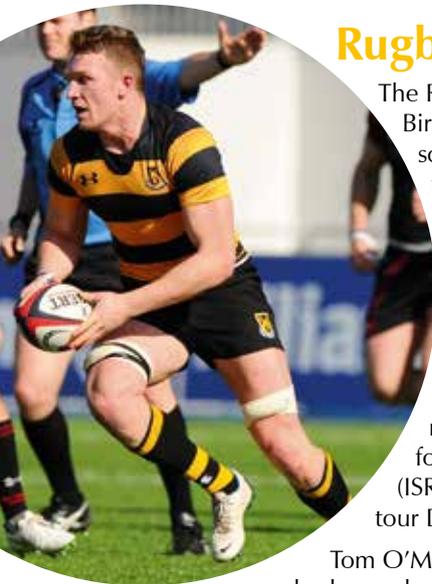


National Hockey Champions

The First XI hockey team won the National Schools Hockey Championships for Girls after a 1-0 win against Cranleigh in the Final at London's Olympic Park.

Lauren Hunt scored the only goal of the game after two minutes, and a brilliant team performance in a tense match saw the girls win the title for the first time in the school's history.

Head of Hockey Miss Sharon Withington was thrilled: "Having not seen the trophy in the north for over 20 years it is an absolute delight to be crowned national champions." A number of the squad are currently representing England U18s and U21s as well as county and regional teams.



Rugby News

The Rugby U13s added the Birkenhead Sevens shield to the school trophy cabinet when the boys beat Calday Grange Grammar 22-5 in the Final, having defeated St Anselm's College in the Quarters and local rivals Cheadle Hulme in the Semi-Finals. Players Max Gilbert and Seb Walker have also received national recognition after being selected for the Independent Schools RFC (ISRFC) representative squad to tour Dublin.

Tom O'Mahony from the First XV has also been playing for an ISRFC squad this year after progressing through the North and combined North and Midlands U18s sides.

The First XV also got to the Semi Final of the Natwest Vase at Allianz Park. Head of Rugby, Hugo Corbett said: "The boys have worked so hard this year that they deserved the opportunity to cap off what has been one of the most successful seasons for an SGS First XV. They have scored more points and tries than any other Stockport Grammar team on record."

Choral Collaboration

Singers in the Chorus and Chamber Choir joined professional soloists Chorale along with Cheshire Sinfonia for an evening of choral music at SGS.

Conducted by Peter Stallworthy and school Director of Music Mr Michael Dow, the concert gave pupils the invaluable opportunity to work with professional performers and the audience the privilege of hearing them together.

Mr Dow was delighted with the occasion: "The concert was a great celebration of choral singing at Stockport Grammar School. It was a pleasure to collaborate with musicians from across the Greater Manchester area to put together such an exciting, varied and challenging programme."



Let's Dance!

Dancers from across the Senior School showcased a series of brilliant performances at the school's inaugural Dance Show. Over 60 performers took part in an evening showcasing the diverse range of dance pupils take part in both in and out of school, ranging from contemporary ballet to hip-hop.

While some of the routines were choreographed by school dance teacher Mrs Abi Downing, some pupils also devised their own. Upper Sixth Former Faye Holleworth loved taking part: "There's a lot of talent here and I'm looking forward to coming back as an Old Stop and watching more performances in the coming years!"



Twilight

The solar eclipse brought the whole school together as nursery children through to GCSE astronomers watched the rare phenomenon.

Specially commissioned SGS Solar glasses were given out across the school, and GCSE astronomers used specialist equipment to observe the phases of the eclipse.



OSA Dinner

Old Stops gathered for an evening of food, conversation and memories of the past at the OSA Dinner on Founder's Day in the Hallam Hall. Organised annually by the OSA Committee, the dinner always provides an excellent opportunity to catch up with old friends.

The Shaa Society Lunch

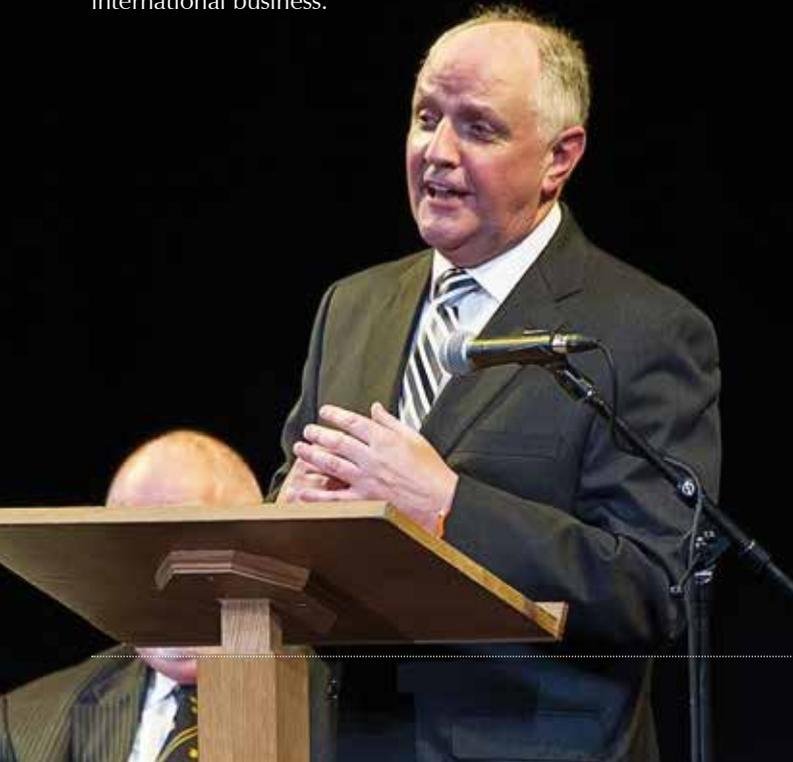
The tradition of the Shaa Lunch for legators and current donors brought supporters of the school together in the Hallam Hall for a beautiful lunch on the 12th March. Donors and legators are also invited each May to an exclusive evening reception and tour of the annual Art exhibitions.

For information on ways to support the Bursary Scheme and help able children from all backgrounds attend SGS, please contact Rachel Horsford, Director of External Relations on 0161 419 2408.

Inspiration and Prizegiving

Old Stopfordian, former Royal Marine commando and a major force in *Harry Potter's* journey from books to blockbuster movies, **Bruce Marshall (OS1974)** was the guest of honour at the annual Speech Day ceremony at The Plaza. Using tales from his dynamic and varied career, he urged pupils to seize every opportunity that comes their way.

Bruce talked about a fascinating career that has seen him introduce Marks & Spencer to the former Eastern Bloc, "make loyal life time friends and lose a few too" in the Royal Marines, help bring the likes of *Harry Potter*, *Batman* and *The Matrix* to the screen as Senior Vice President of Warner Brothers Inc and, in his current role develop American fashion retailer Express's international business.



Stopping By...

A Decade On

Ten years on, and the leavers of 2004 were keen to catch up on friendships and revisit their old school, the scene of so many shared memories. A phone call from former Head Girl Samantha Mundy to the External Relations office set the ball rolling and the event was set for the end of June.

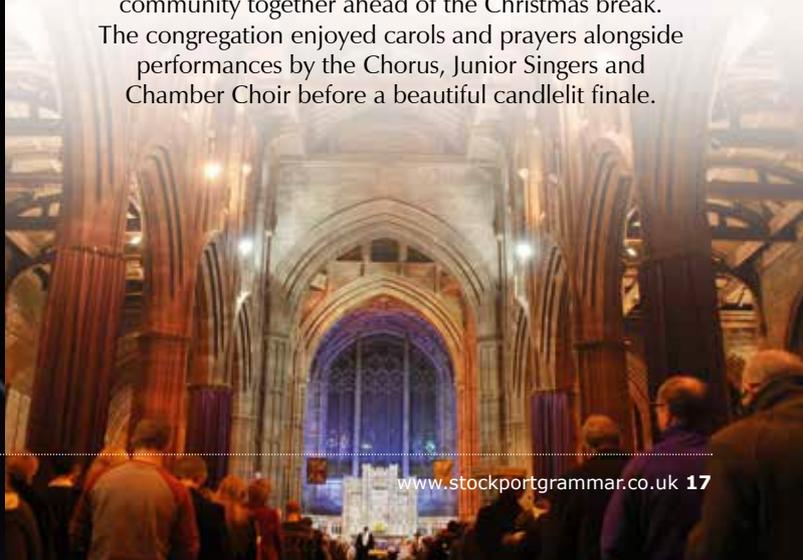
Barbecue lit, photographs displayed and bouncy castle waiting (strictly for the under 12s!), the big question was whether the rain would hold off. Thankfully it did and over a 100 visitors enjoyed the chance to reminisce and tour old haunts. 2004 leavers mingled with Old Stops from other year groups for whom the reunion date provided a happy opportunity to return to SGS.



Carols by Candlelight

Dozens of Old Stops attended the Senior School Carol Service at St George's Church, which brought the school community together ahead of the Christmas break.

The congregation enjoyed carols and prayers alongside performances by the Chorus, Junior Singers and Chamber Choir before a beautiful candlelit finale.



London Media Evening

Old Stops, staff and friends gathered at The Grand Connaught Rooms in London in March for an exclusive insight into the media world with a panel of three high-profile guests:

Lucy Cotter (OS 1998) Media, Arts & Entertainment Correspondent for Sky News;

Di Dougherty (née Stewart) (OS 1997) Co-Presenter on Sky Sports' Saturday morning show *Game Changers*;

Clare Francis (OS 1994) Editor-in-Chief at MoneySuperMarket

In conversation with Senior Deputy Headmaster Mr David Howson, the panel revealed some entertaining behind-the-scenes tales, talked about career progression, and all three discussed balancing family life with demanding work schedules. For Lucy, the event followed an intense day of interviews and coverage on the Jeremy Clarkson story. David also took the panel on a trip down memory lane reminiscing over school plays and teachers. Speaking about her SGS days Di recalled: "One of the reasons I do what I do now is because of school; I loved sport and I was a House Captain. I look back on my years there and think I was incredibly lucky."

When questioned about how they came from "the rainclouds of the A6 to the bright lights of the media," Lucy recalled starting out at local radio stations and patiently covering eight hour news stories about cats stuck in trees, whilst Di remembered touting for a job in a pub car park in Twickenham and Clare spoke about her placement in the money news editorial team at The Times.

Questions from the audience covered everything from tips on getting into the industry, ageism on TV, non-biased news coverage and the future of investigative journalism. Clare encouraged those just starting out in the media to take full advantage of the opportunities now available online.

Following the interview, guests gathered for drinks and a catch up in the bar. The evening was one of a series of annual events held in London and we look forward to welcoming plenty more Old Stops at future events in the city.



Back After 50 Years

The Class of 1964, many accompanied by their wives, met up to mark 50 years since leaving school. Most had not seen each other for many years and some had not even been back to SGS since leaving.

With everyone instantly swapping stories and reminiscences, it was a while before the guests even tucked in to the buffet lunch and drinks provided by the school.

Returning from their tour of the school, many were impressed by the way SGS had developed since the days of 1A and 1B classrooms, Eddie Bromley's woodwork room and the blue lagoon swimming pool.

In the evening everyone met up at the Alma Lodge Hotel for a very enjoyable dinner and drinks. Messages were read out from people who were unable to get there.

And finally, the group met up once more on the Saturday morning for a walk through the leafy lanes and fields of Cheshire, stopping off for a pub lunch.

Organised by OS 1964 Harvey Locke and Stuart Helm, this was an extremely successful reunion and potentially serves as a model for other groups who wish to reconnect with old friends as well as revisiting the school.

Could it be your turn next?

If you wish to organise something please email tabernerr@stockportgrammar.co.uk



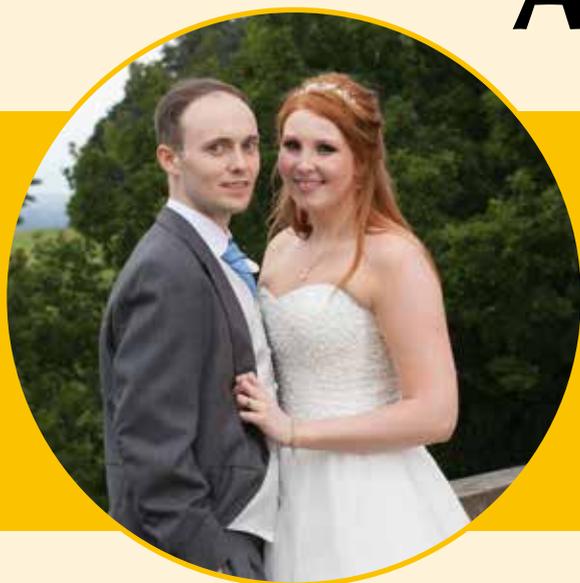
Remembrance Reunion

Old Stops who left the school between 1930 and 1960 attended the annual SGS Remembrance Service and afterwards enjoyed a reunion lunch in the recently refurbished Hallam Hall, where they were also introduced to the newly-restored war memorial boards, funded by the OSA.

School chaplain the Rev Liz Leaver read a prayer of dedication before our Third and Fourth Year pupils who had visited the French and Belgian battlefields of WWI over Half Term, spoke about their trip.



Announcements



Marriages

Jenna Burt (OS 2009) to Callum Rees on 28th June 2014 at St. George's Church, Stockport. (Pictured)

Robert Thorpe (OS 2001) to Sarah Woods on 8th November 2014 at Morpeth Town Hall, Northumberland.

Best men: Alex Howson (OS 2001) & Ben Howson (OS 2004)

Births

Sara Turner (née Margolis) (OS 1998) and Charlie Turner have a daughter Charlotte Rose, born 22nd April 2015.

In Memory of Richard John Griffiths OS 1969

It is with great sadness that we have to record the death of Richard Griffiths on 31st January 2015. After gaining a first class honours degree in German at Sheffield University, Richard taught for four years. He then joined the family business, JT Griffiths and Co, supplying mattress ticking to the bed manufacturing industry, developing links with Italy, South Africa, Turkey and China.

He also took time to found Peak Sports with Bob Cooke in 1981. From 1997 to 2005 he was a Magistrate for Tameside.

He was married in September 1983 to Karen and their sons James, Matthew, Mark and Robert were born between 1985 and 1992.

Richard was a tireless advocate for the school and the Old Stopfordians' Association which he joined in 1988. He was President in 1996 and Secretary from 2005. He was also a Governor of the school (nominated by the OSA) from 1999 to 2005. Richard was meticulous in everything that he did and once he had committed to a project one could be sure that every aspect and detail was given his closest attention.

It is perhaps for his love of, and involvement with, Lacrosse that many will most remember him. From an early age his goal keeping skills developed rapidly and not only did he eventually play on the school First Team, but also on the OS First Team while still at school. International selection for England followed and then several years playing and coaching in the north west. In 1997 he returned to play for Old Stops and occupied the goal keeping position on the First Team for many years thereafter. His last team appearance was in March 2013 at age 61.

Richard held many administrative and coaching posts and was instrumental two years ago in the amalgamation of the Stopfordian Lacrosse Club with the Norbury Club. Last year he was awarded a prestigious national award, a Centurian Award for his dedication to lacrosse over so many years.

Richard's untimely death will leave a huge gap in the lives of his many friends and family for whom he cared deeply, in particular his sons and Jay who had been an important part of Richard's life for a number of years.

By Stuart Helm - from Larry Fairclough and John Partt's eulogies

In Memory:

Richard Mellor Willcock (OS 1941)
30th June 2014

Ronald Denys Boyle (OS 1946)
17th August 2014

Rupert Gurney (OS 1934)
15th September 2014

John Hardy Price (OS 1947)
1st October 2014

John Brookes (OS 1955)
19th October 2014

Jessie Thompson (former teacher)
4th January 2015

Robert Neville Hankinson (OS 1949)
10th January 2015

Richard John Griffiths (OS 1969)
31st January 2015

Anthony Boyd (OS 1959)
7th February 2015

Geoffrey Booth (OS 1951)
26th February 2015

Donald Smith (OS 1952)
7th April 2015

Kathy Gregg (former Junior School teacher)
19th April 2015

An up to date list, along with some obituaries can be found at www.stockportgrammar.co.uk/osa/notices

Dates for your Diary

Summer Reunion

27th June 2015, 12-3pm

On Saturday 27th June we are delighted to invite Old Stops from any year group back to school, to celebrate the retirements of John Bird, Shelley Braude, Ray Howarth, Mary Lowe, David Martin and Roger Wallington. 2005 leavers are also warmly invited to attend for their 10 year reunion, as are 1992 leavers who have called for a 30 year reunion of their First Year.

We very much look forward to welcoming you back – it is a fantastic opportunity to meet up with old friends, take a trip down memory lane and also see all the changes which have taken place at SGS since you left.

There is no charge for this event and we would be very pleased to welcome spouses, partners and children. There will be welcome drinks, a barbecue and an optional tour of the school.

To request your tickets, please email tabernerr@stockportgrammar.co.uk

Golf Day

Thursday 18th June 2015

This popular annual Bursary Appeal Fundraiser takes place at Stockport Golf Club. The cost for a team of four is £400 and includes lunch, dinner and a full colour advert in the programme. There are many other ways that you can support the event even if you are unable to attend – from sponsoring a hole to advertising in the programme or donating a raffle prize. If you would like to get involved, please call Hannah Atenyam on 0161 419 2408 as soon as possible.

Ad Hoc Reunions

Over recent years we have hosted a number of smaller groups who have wanted to visit the school. If you would like to pop back – for a tour, a gathering, to meet up with old friends or teachers, please get in touch and we will endeavour to arrange something for you.



We regularly help Old Stops to re-find old friends and we are always pleased to arrange visits for you to look around school or the archives.

Keep in Touch

There are lots of ways you can keep in touch with old classmates and teachers as well as seeing what is going on at SGS now...

 To share your memories and connect with fellow Old Stops, Like our Old Stopfordians page. To keep up to date with current SGS news, Like our Stockport Grammar School page.

 Follow us @stockportgs

 You can also join the Stockport Grammar School Alumni group

 Or email your news to: externalrelations@stockportgrammar.co.uk

Celebrating the Centenary
2016 marks 100 years since the school moved to the current site. Keep an eye out for celebratory events taking place during the anniversary year.

If you no longer wish to receive a copy of Old Stops' Review, please let us know by emailing: externalrelations@stockportgrammar.co.uk

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Old Stops Review is edited by Tamara Shneck, PR and Communications Officer.