

A HISTORY OF STOCKPORT GRAMMAR SCHOOL



Introduction

Stockport Grammar School has a long and distinguished history. One of the oldest independent schools in the country, it was founded by Sir Edmond Shaa in 1487. From the then rural and remote North-West of England, Shaa enjoyed a dazzling rise to national influence as the Court Jeweller to three kings of England, Prime Warden of The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths and Lord Mayor of London. Generations of local boys and girls have benefited from his legacy.

Through five centuries, the town of Stockport has undergone dramatic change but its Grammar School has remained prominent in the life of the community and the surrounding area. Shaa's foundation has developed to become one of the largest independent co-educational schools in the country with an enviable academic record and characterised by an extensive programme of activities in the arts, sport and wider community.

Its alumni are prominent in the leading professions, locally, nationally and internationally. Through the bursary scheme the Governors seek to ensure that the opportunities the School provides remain available to talented girls and boys from all sections of the local community, regardless of their family means.

The principal work of schools is in equipping young people for the future. In planning for its further development Stockport Grammar School cherishes its heritage and retains close links with The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths in the City of London. 2016 saw the centenary of the re-foundation of the School on the Hallam Site. This short brochure outlines the story so far.

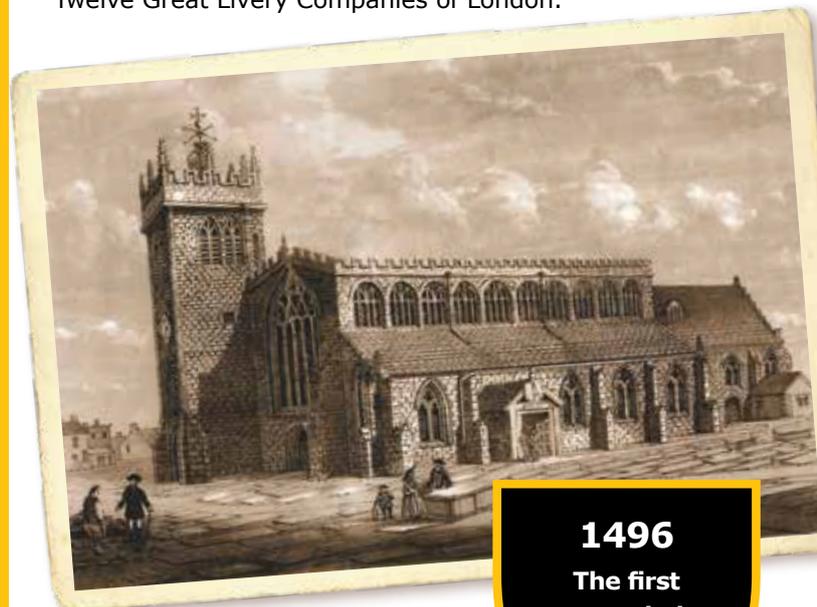
Founded in 1487 by Sir Edmond Shaa, Stockport Grammar School is one of the oldest schools in the country.

Born to parents from Dukinfield, then a hamlet in the parish of St Mary, Stockport, Sir Edmond was apprenticed in 1450 to Robert Botiller, a goldsmith in London. In 1462, under the reign of King Edward IV, he received the life grant of the office of Engraver to the Tower Mint and all other mints in England and Calais. He was a Warden of the Goldsmiths' Company, later becoming Prime Warden in 1476.

In addition to his Goldsmiths' responsibilities, Shaa served as an Alderman and in 1474 he held the office of Sheriff of London and Middlesex. He became the 200th Mayor of London in 1482-83.

Shaa lived in interesting times, his term as Mayor coincided with the death of King Edward IV on 9th April 1483, and the crowning of King Richard III, a time which proves even today to be a controversial period of English history.

Sir Edmond Shaa's will endowed the school with funds to maintain a priest who would chant masses for his soul and teach grammar. His appointment of the Goldsmiths' Company as the administrators of his bequest established the school's historic and continuing link with one of the Twelve Great Livery Companies of London.



View of the Old Parish Church of St Mary, Stockport

1496

**The first
recorded
Master was
John
Randall**

The Early Years

The first recorded Master was John Randall, when he was appointed is not known, but he is listed in the rent roll of 1496 showing a payment of £10 to him as Priest and Schoolmaster at Stockport. The trend of the era was to teach from within a church and it is thought that the school's first home was in St. Mary's Parish Church, Stockport.



Edmond, Mayor of London kneels to offer the crown to the Duke of Gloucester, the future King Richard III

Chestergate

In 1608, the school gained a new home in Chestergate. Located on the then outskirts of the town near Adlington Square, the area was popular with country nobles and most of the pupils were sons of the gentry.

The school remained at this location for over 200 years, while the surrounding area became increasingly industrialised. This, coupled with the building of a bear pit (today's entertainment equivalent of a football stadium) opposite, prompted the need to seek out a more appropriate location and in 1830 construction of a new building began at Greek Street.

An extract from a letter by 13-year-old pupil James Moorhouse to his grandfather in 1817 gives a flavour of the education offered at the time (opposite).

EXTRACT FROM THE WILL OF
SIR EDMOND SHAA
20th March, 1487

AND I WOLL THAT THE OTHER HONEST PREEST

be a discrete man and conning in Gramer, and be able of conning to teche Grammer. I woll that he sing his masse and say his other divyne service in the Parisshe of Stopford, in the said Countie of Chestre. And to pray specially for my soule and the soules of my fader and moder. And I woll that the said connyng Preest kepe a gram scole continually in the said Towne of Stopford and that he frely wtout any wagis or salarye asking or taking of any person, except only my salarye hereunder specified, shall teche allman persons children and other that woll com to hym to lerne, as well of the said Towne of Stopforde as of other Townes thereabout, the science of grammer as ferre as lieth in hym for to do in to the tyme that they be convenably instruct in gramer by hym after their capaciteys that God woll geve them.

Extract from Shaa's will.

Stockport's influence on SGS education

By the nineteenth century, Stockport was primarily industrial and, according to Friedrich Engels in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845), was 'renowned throughout the entire district as one of the duskiest, smokiest holes' with a large number of cellar dwellings and one of the highest death rates in the country.

Stockport relied heavily on the textiles and hatting industries which created pressure on schools to focus on a commercial rather than a classical education. Over time the school adapted according to its surroundings, with the introduction of modern languages alongside the study of classics.

"Every Monday morning I either recite a piece of prose or poetry from Enfield's Speaker, or present a letter. During the other mornings in the week I shew English exercises and repeat English Grammar with fourteen words of spelling and the meaning of each word. Then accompts engage my attention until 11 o'clock, at which time writing commences and ends at 12. Every Tuesday and Thursday afternoons I repeat Goldsmith's Geography and afterwards trace on maps, Countries, Islands, Seas and Rivers. I read Goldsmith's History of Greece, which is a very interesting book, then my attention is directed to Arithmetic which generally finishes the day's employment."



The Greek Street building

Greek Street

The Goldsmiths' surveyor, Philip Hardwick, was appointed as the architect for the new school at Greek Street. Constructed in the Tudor Gothic style, the building opened on the 30th April 1832 with 110 pupils. The curriculum continued to evolve as expectations of education changed and 1902 saw the addition of the first science laboratory and the introduction of four hours of science per week.

By 1910, the school had started to outgrow the Greek Street site and the surrounding area had become noisy due to traffic from the electric tram. Once again the search began for a new location.



The original frontage of the school

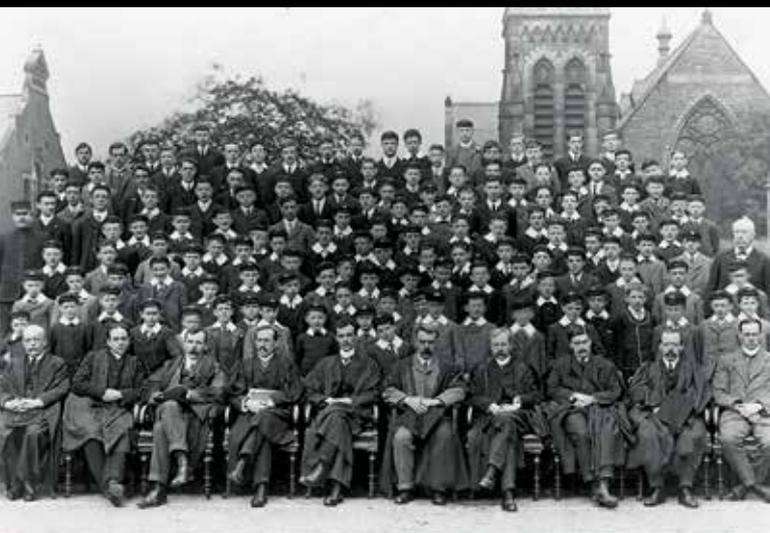
The Move to the Hallam Site

The site chosen was the Bramhall Lodge Estate at Mile End, owned by Mr Alfred Bell, a member of a well-known local brewing family.

The foundation stone was laid on the 4th April 1914 by Chairman of Governors Walter Bright Hodgkinson, with the work completed in little over twenty months, on schedule and on budget; an impressive achievement given the difficulties posed by World War I.

The move to Buxton Road took place during the Christmas holiday 1915, with a formal opening ceremony on Saturday 29th January 1916 by Colonel George Dixon, Chairman of Cheshire County Council. A guard of honour was formed by the school detachment of the Stockport Battalion of the Cheshire Volunteer Regiment.

The new buildings were designed for 250 pupils with ten classrooms grouped in a two-storey block on one side of a quadrangle; on another was the hall, named after one of the main benefactors of the build, the Ephraim Hallam Trust.



School photo taken around 1910



Class photo from 1916

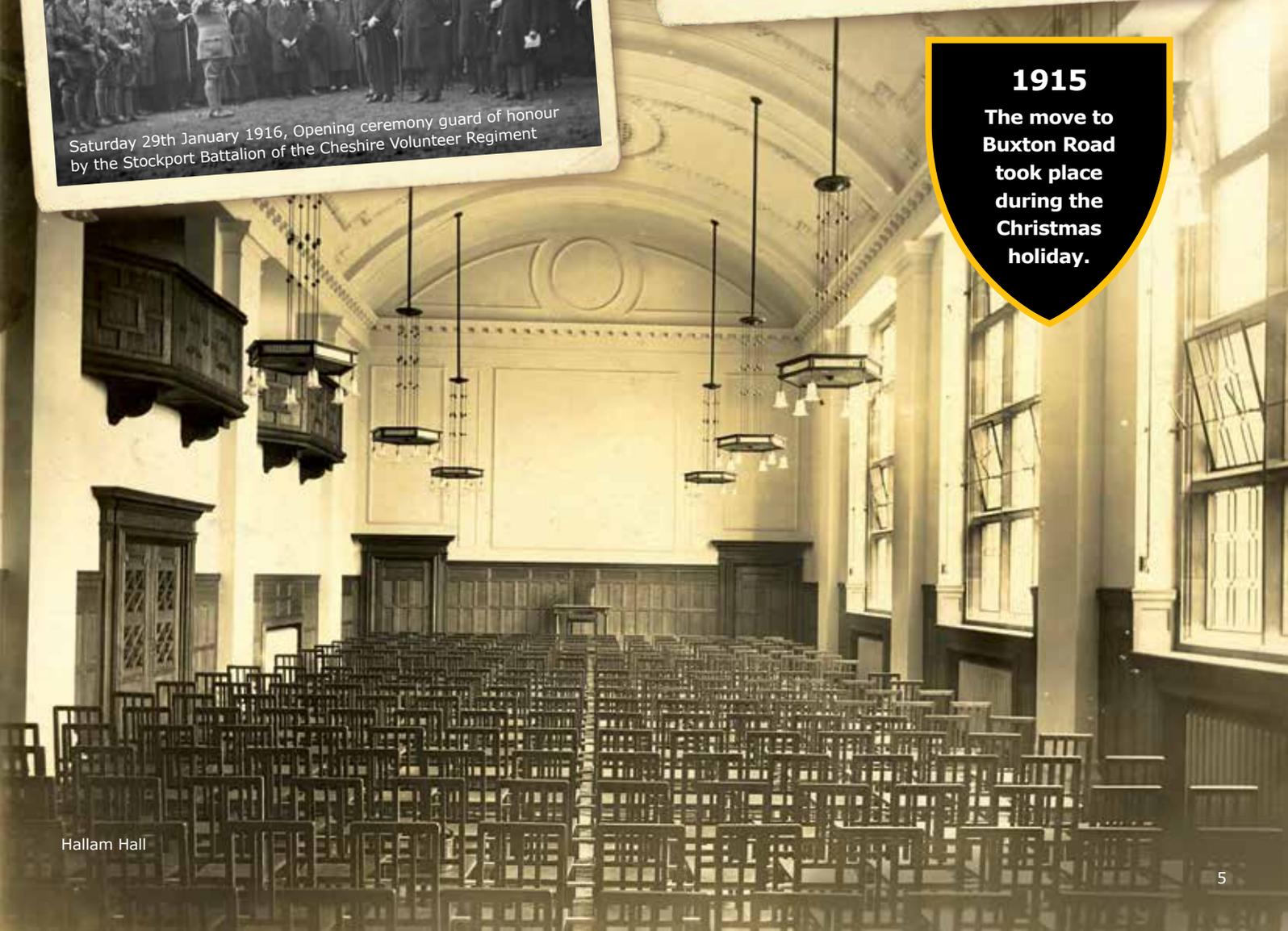


Sykes Lecture Theatre



Saturday 29th January 1916, Opening ceremony guard of honour by the Stockport Battalion of the Cheshire Volunteer Regiment

1915
The move to Buxton Road took place during the Christmas holiday.



Hallam Hall

SGS in War Time

World War I brought about considerable change to the running and atmosphere of the school. With the absence of many men serving in the Forces, a number of lady teachers were to join the staff for the first time. In keeping with the times, however, the ladies were strictly segregated and used the rooms on each side of the front door.

In the brief period of peace following the end of World War I, the school's first Sixth Form cohort began their studies in three full subjects for the new Higher School Certificate; Pure Mathematics, Applied Mathematics and Physics.

With the outbreak of World War II, other changes to the school and the everyday life of its pupils were unavoidable. Electric lighting was installed in the cellars which soon served as air-raid shelters and it became a necessity for everyone to carry a gas mask at all times. Despite bombing in the surrounding area, the school miraculously escaped harm.

Evacuees from inner city schools took the school roll to over 400. Stockport Grammar also played host to a flock of sheep whose services were enlisted on the front field to keep the grass in check in times of rationing instead of a motor mower. The field's visitors probably did not matter too much to the pupils as games had already been suspended due to the telegraph poles and other obstacles laid and dug into the fields to thwart landings by German gliders and paratroopers.

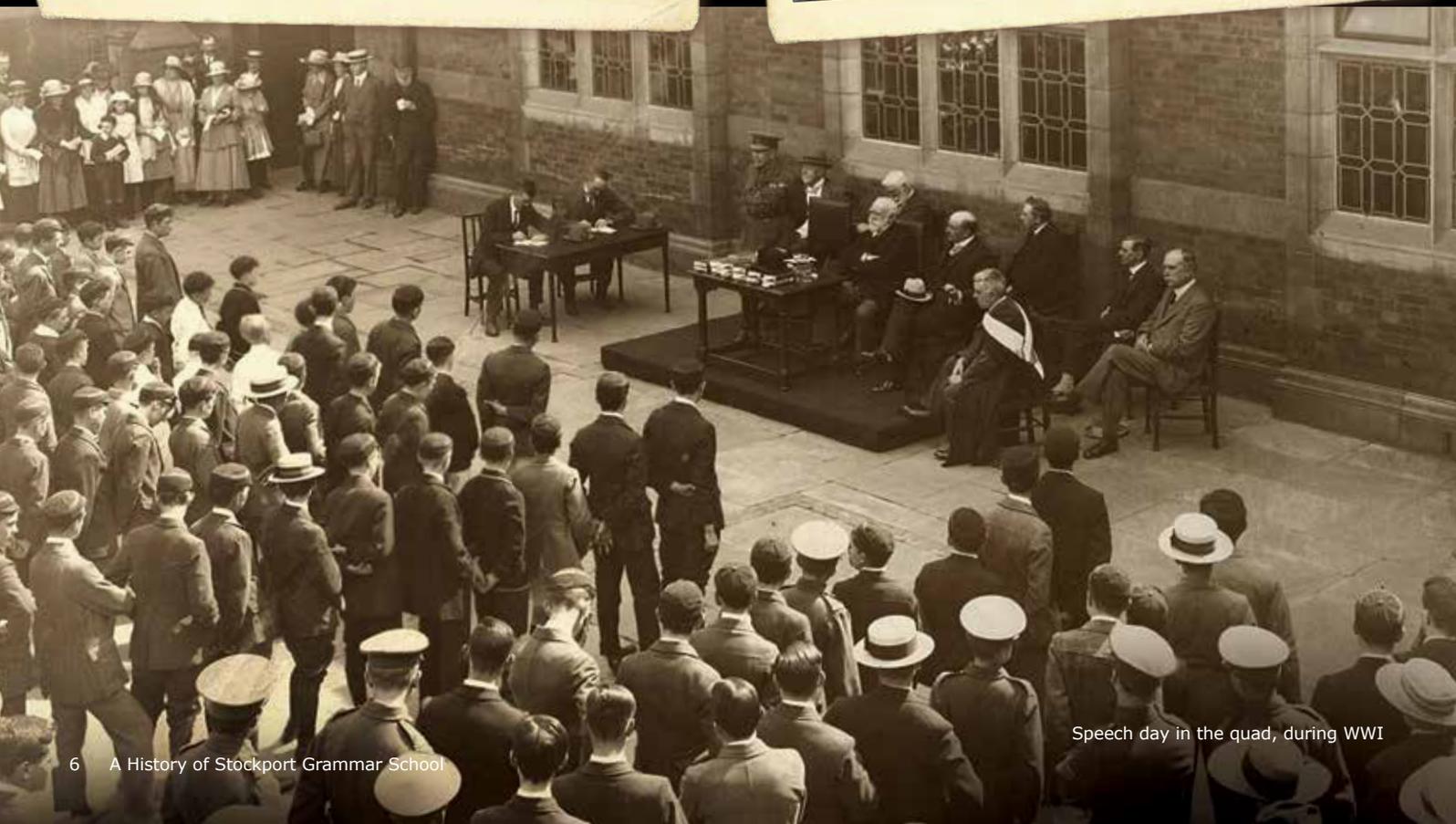
One hundred and sixty Old Stopfordians had volunteered to fight in the First World War before conscription was introduced and many more joined the Forces after. The 52 who died in the First World War and the further 60 who by the end of the Second World War had lost their lives in combat are recorded on the school's War Memorial in Hallam Hall, along with Flying Officer Charles Hyde, RAFVR the only member of staff killed during the wars. Sadly, over time, further names have been added to the wall as a result of subsequent conflicts.



Class photo from 1919



1923 Sixth Form



Speech day in the quad, during WWI



1980
Girls
join SGS

1980 New pupils who joined the Sixth Form

Convent House and Co-education

1980 brought a dramatic landscape change with the news that the adjacent Convent School was to close. Seeing the opportunity to expand the facilities available to pupils and to move to co-education, the Governors made the decision to purchase the site.

In September, 83 boys and 66 girls entered the school at age 11; 25 girls joined the Junior School and 22 into the Sixth Form. The novelty of girls on the premises was duly reported in the local press at the beginning of term but the hype was soon forgotten and the girls settled in quickly.



1980 Temporary footpath connecting SGS with the recently acquired Convent School.



1984, SGS win a RML 390Z microcomputer in the Department of Industry's Schools Computer Competition.



THEN and NOW

2015 Speech Day at the Plaza, Stockport



1980 Convent House



1987 Royal visit to Junior School class

Stockport Grammar Junior School

The 8th June 1944 welcomed the addition of the Junior School in a converted house in Davenport Park. The buoyancy of numbers in the new venture by 1949 prompted the Governors to officially set up a Preparatory Department, so that boys could join the school at the age of 5. The Junior School expanded in 1975 with the construction of a new building which was extended further throughout the 1980s and 1990s.



1944-45 Junior School class

1944

**8th June
Junior
School
Opened**



Woodsmoor Building

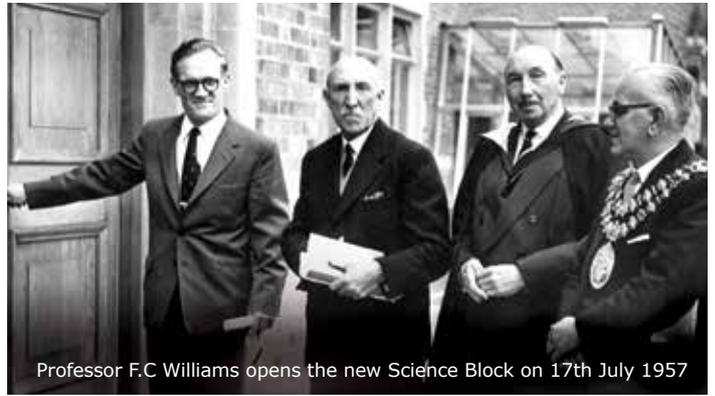


Library and Physics block

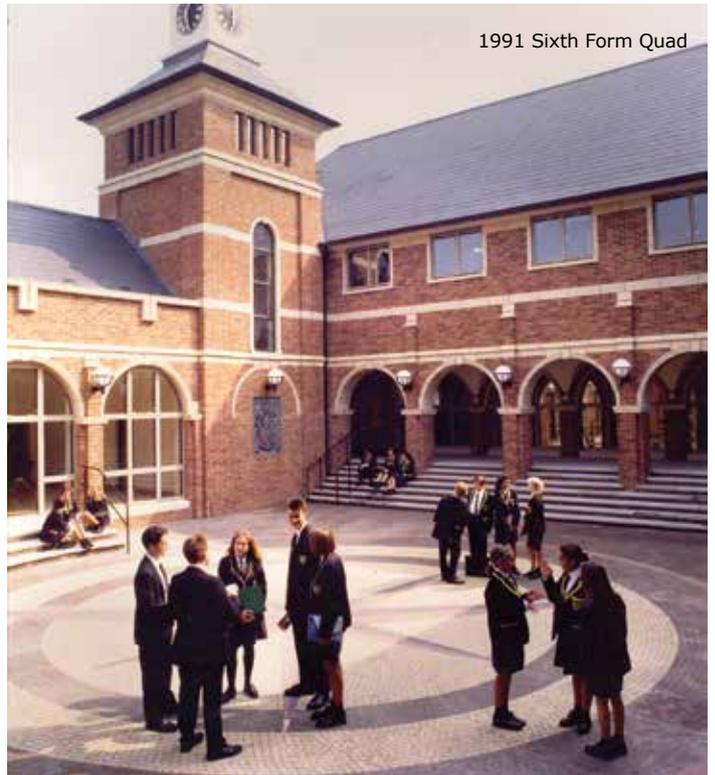
Junior School 2015



Sports Hall



Professor F.C Williams opens the new Science Block on 17th July 1957



1991 Sixth Form Quad

Development over the years

The school has continued to grow and prosper with a school roll in 2016 of over 1400 pupils from the ages of 3 to 18. The buildings and grounds at the Hallam site have seen almost continuous transformation and addition to provide first class facilities to support the school's commitment to the provision of an outstanding education. The school's 525th anniversary was marked by the opening of the new Woodsmoor Building, providing 22 new classrooms. As Stockport Grammar celebrates its 100th year at Hallam, there is every intention that this dedication to investment and commitment to excellence which has served its pupils and the town of Stockport so well will continue long into the future.



The foundation stone for the new hall was laid on Founder's Day 1969 by Alderman W.C. Knight, Mayor of Stockport and Old Stopfordian.



Construction of the Main Hall



1987 New Dining Hall and Bursary



Hockey 1st XI are National Hockey Champions 2015



SGS is an independent operating authority for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme



The Peter Boardman (OS 1968) climbing wall inspires a new generation of climbers



HRH Princess Anne visits SGS as part of the Quincentenary celebration in 1987



1987 Baffin Island expedition for the Quincentenary



Model United Nations delegates debate nationally and internationally



Musicians delight audiences in Italy



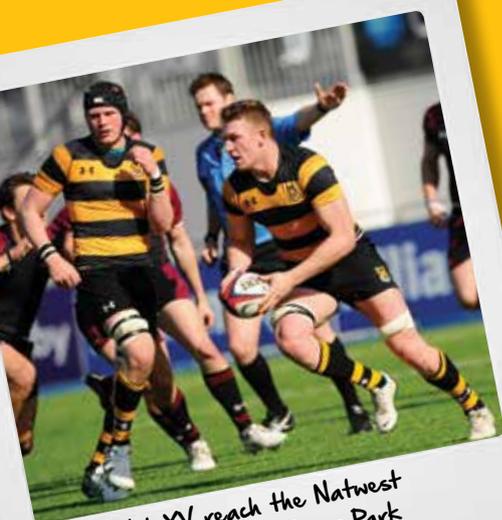
Wasdale Camp 1996



Woodwork Mid 1960s



Technology 2015



Rugby 1st XV reach the Natwest Vase Semi Final at Allianz Park 2015



HRH Prince Edward visits SGS in 2010 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of D of E and the achievement of the 1000th award



Language Lab 1981



1947 Hamlet, Albert Johnston's plays inspired a generation of SGS thespians

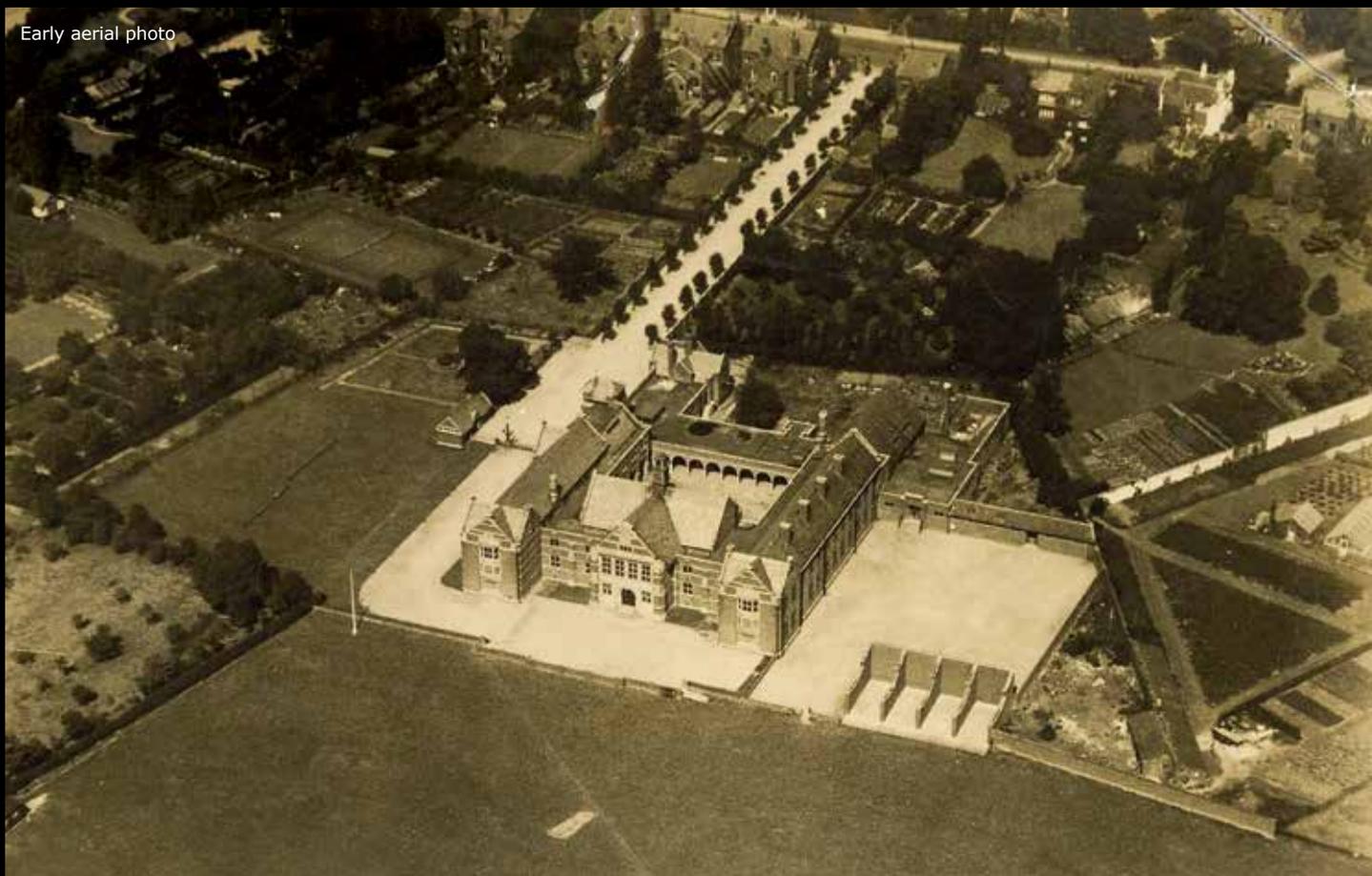


Whole school drama productions entertain, pictured 2015 'Down the Rabbit Hole'



Language Lab 2015

Early aerial photo



Aerial photo 2013



STOCKPORT GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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