

OLD STOPS' REVIEW

ISSUE 16 2026



STOCKPORT
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

HEAD'S WELCOME

Sarah Capewell, Head

It has been another remarkable year at SGS, marked by success, ambition and a strong sense of community across the whole school. This has been a year of significant achievement for our pupils. We are especially proud to have been named among the Top 10 independent secondary schools in the North West in The Times Parent Power Guide 2026, a recognition that reflects the dedication, talent and collective effort of our entire community.

Sporting success has once again been a highlight, with strong performances across a wide range of disciplines. From impressive rugby results and a packed cricket and athletics calendar, to outstanding achievements in football and netball competitions, our pupils have demonstrated resilience, teamwork and commitment at every level.

The creative arts continue to thrive at SGS. This year's concerts and performances have been of an exceptional standard, with groups such as our Big Band delighting audiences and showcasing the depth of musical talent within the school. Alongside this, pupils have continued to excel across academic, creative and leadership activities, reflected in the many students recognised for their outstanding contributions to school life.

Beyond the classroom, our commitment to developing well rounded individuals remains central. Educational visits, co-curricular activities and charitable initiatives have enriched our pupils' experiences, while continued investment in our facilities and long term plans, including the new sports pavilion, will ensure that SGS continues to evolve for the next generation.

What remains constant is the distinctive SGS ethos. The warmth, care and strong relationships that define our school have once again been recognised externally, and we continue to pride ourselves on being a community where every individual is known, supported and encouraged to flourish. As we build on almost 540 years of history, we remain committed to combining tradition with innovation, preparing our pupils for an ever changing world.

It has been a pleasure to hear of the continued success of our Old Stops' over the past year, whether through professional achievement, personal endeavour or contributions to society. Their stories remain a powerful reminder of the lifelong impact of an SGS education.



We were also delighted this year to launch our first ever SGS Giving Day, which proved to be a resounding success. Over the course of 36 hours, the entire school community came together in support of our Bursary Fund, raising more than £136,000 through over 300 donations. The generosity of parents, Old Stops', staff, pupils and friends of the school, alongside matched funding support, will enable us to continue transforming lives by ensuring that talented young people can benefit from an SGS education regardless of financial circumstances. The energy and enthusiasm seen across the school during the Giving Day truly captured the spirit of SGS at its very best.

Finally, my sincere thanks go to all who have supported the school this year. Whether through giving time, expertise or financial support, your contribution enables us to continue offering exceptional opportunities for current pupils and future Old Stops'.

Together, we look ahead with confidence and excitement to all that lies ahead.



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CHAIR OF GOVERNORS' MESSAGE

Paul Brearley JP DL

It is a great privilege and an honour to become Chair of Governors here at Stockport Grammar School. I welcome this opportunity to share this message with you all through the Old Stops' Review. Each time I enter the school site I am immediately struck by the feeling of belonging to a living, thriving, outward looking community as well as an ancient seat of learning. We are working hard at maintaining contact with our alumni network, alongside reconnecting with Old Stops' in this

country and across the world. Our future is very much supported by alumni who can articulate the values and ethos of the school.

The school has weathered the recent imposition of VAT on fees and the loss of business rate exemption, despite this; these are exciting times for SGS, with the start of construction work on our new Sports Pavilion, due to be completed in Summer 2027, a clear indication of optimism for the future,



where we will continue to maintain our educational excellence, coupled with the essential preparation for life of our students, underpinned by being members of the SGS community.

I wonder if Sir Edmund Shaa, could possibly have imagined that Stockport Grammar School would still be thriving almost 540 years after its creation!

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Arian Nikkhah (OS 2008)

As the Old Stopfordian President and a current SGS parent, over the past few years it has been a privilege for me to see the spirit of Stockport Grammar School thriving.

Be it at the Infants Nativity Play, the School's music concerts and carol services, hearing pupils speak movingly of their experiences during the Battlefields Tour, or simply during the morning drop-off and afternoon pickup of my son at the Junior School, it is endearing and indeed inspiring to see that the SGS of one's youth lives on through, and for, successive generations. In other words, SGS is a place where pupils from diverse socio-economic backgrounds are proactively encouraged to be kind, curious, think independently, work together and give back from the Nursery all the way through to Upper Sixth. As per the Head's remarks at the Senior School's Winter Concert, SGS aims to bring out

the best in each child, so that each pupil can find and nurture their talents in this most impressive of schools. As I fondly recall from my time as a pupil here, at SGS the opportunities are bountiful. As a parent and Old Stop I can say without hesitation that this continues to be the case and that SGS really does inspire

On the theme of inspiration, on behalf of all Old Stops', a big THANK YOU to everyone who contributed to the School's first ever Giving Day which took place earlier in the spring. The generosity of all donors to the SGS Bursary Fund, where over £136,000 was raised during a marathon of events over two days, was inspiring and will help ensure that those who might otherwise not have benefited from an SGS education, will have the opportunity to do so.

It is in this vein that we, the old and the not so old, Old Stopfordians continue

the legacy of Sir Edmond Shaa (and that of others over the centuries!). As custodians of this place, I urge all Old Stops', wherever you may be and wherever life has taken you, to use our privilege of our SGS education to be in touch with the School. To give our time to events such as the career convention, to attend the Old Stops' meet-ups around the country and reconnect with old friends and teachers at the Old Stops' Summer BBQ held annually at our School.

As Old Stops' President, it is an honour to connect with people of all walks of life – from those who attended here in the 1950s and 60s, to those Sixth Formers embarking on the next chapter of their life this summer – and to learn what Stockport Grammar School means to them.

Vincit Qui Patitur!

WOMEN *OF* STAGE *AND* SCREEN

Eilidh Pollard
(OS 2015)

Bursary Award Holder

I have so many wonderful memories of my time at SGS. Music was always my favourite subject and I have lots of fond memories of the many hours spent in the music department and Hallam Hall, whether that was playing violin in orchestra rehearsals, composing music in lessons, or booking out a practice room with my friends purely just to play and sing through some of our favourite musical theatre songs. I will never forget the incredible staff in the music department who would openly geek out about their favourite rhythmic devices (shout out to the beloved hemiola) or harmonic progressions in Christmas Carols (Hark the Herald will forever hold a special place in my heart).

Mr Dow was always a very entertaining teacher, especially in choir rehearsals, and his expressive 'Dow brows' will be forever remembered by my friends and I. It's honestly very hard to only pick a few teachers to talk about because they were all incredible, but if I had to name a few, Mrs Matthews whose combination of humour and kindness absolutely got me through A Level music. Mrs Fenton was by far the coolest teacher around with her ACDC pencil case and she made physics so exciting and fun. Mr Killey was quite a legend of the department and when he taught me in Sixth Form, our class persuaded him to start a 'cake Friday' for our Friday lessons. He really committed to this to the extent that he once baked us all some dinosaur biscuits and then showed us several photos of him baking on the projector to prove he actually made them.

When I left school I went to study music at The University of York, where I had a wonderful three years learning about a wide variety of topics within the subject and also doing lots of composing and performing. After graduating, I moved back to Manchester and began my career as a musician and performer. Spending time in creative circles, I met a lot of actors and learnt about the various acting work that isn't necessarily just stage or screen. I ended up joining an agency that specialised in medical role play, which is where you act as a pretend patient for medical students, either for their medical exams or for teaching sessions.

Meeting ever more actors while doing this work got me thinking that I really missed acting on stage. I was still working towards my music career at this point and gaining experience and contacts for that, but I wondered if I might be able to be both pursue





a music career while also seeing where the acting takes me. My main worry with this was that I hadn't been to drama school so I thought that no agents or casting directors would take me seriously, so I began attending weekly acting classes in Manchester. After about six months of attending these classes, we had a Christmas showcase in which our tutor had planned to invite several agents and casting directors for us to perform in front of. I had been actively trying to get an agent for the past few months and had no luck, so I thought I'd try emailing one of the agents that I knew was coming to this showcase. A couple of days after the showcase, I received a reply from this agent asking me to come into the office and that she would like to sign me. Since getting an agent, the auditions and jobs that I have been doing have been so exciting and honestly surreal (my first audition after being signed was for the lead in a Disney+ series!).

Alongside the acting, I have still been doing lots of work in my music career. I'm now a freelance composer, writing music for short films, events, plays, podcasts, and pretty much any form of creative content. And the 'actor/muso' label that I've given myself allows me to get roles in shows where I would need to play an instrument on stage while also being in the cast. I'm really happy that I've managed to combine my two biggest loves of acting and music into one career.

I picked up so many skills from SGS that help me in my career today. Firstly, so much of what I know about composing and performing music was taught to me by the music teachers at SGS. I really wouldn't be where I am now in my career if it wasn't for those years of music classes, and I'm sure I probably wouldn't be a composer at all if it hadn't been for the education and the encouragement of those teachers. I also learnt quite a bit about acting at school, particularly from my experience of being in the cast of *Oliver!* and *Godspell*. But mostly, my time at SGS taught me to believe in myself.

I have come across several Old Stops' since leaving SGS, mostly in a friend capacity but sometimes I have also professionally collaborated with them. A few years ago, I was cast in an original musical called 'Bear Left' which was written by fellow Old Stop, Ollie Mills (OS 2012). I have actually now collaborated with Ollie on a few different projects over the past few years.

There is so much that I love about the stage and screen industries. Obviously I love performing and creating, and I love that this industry allows me to do that for a living but also, I love the excitement of travelling across the country for an audition or a job that may well lead to other exciting performance opportunities. I love being on stage or on a film set. And most of all, I love the people that you get to meet in this industry, the creatives who are so incredibly passionate about what they do and just want to connect with other humans through storytelling. I really believe that human connection through art is ultimately the most important and the most wonderful thing about this industry.

As much as I absolutely adore working in this industry, there are definitely some downsides to it. With acting, a lot of your career is down to pure luck. A lot of it is about being in the right place at the right time and meeting the right person who also happens to have a project happening at the right time and to need someone exactly like me. When I go to an audition, there are so many factors at play that I really have no control of whatsoever. I may not be the spitting image of the character they have in their head, or my voice might be slightly too high or too low, or I might be slightly too short or too tall. The list of ways that you can be not quite right for a part really is endless. Also it may be that they want to cast someone who's got several million followers on TikTok, or has been on *Love Island*, or is the niece of the executive producer. It's sometimes difficult to stay positive in this industry when you're not even sure what various odds might be stacked against you, but I handle it by reminding myself that I'm a great performer who works hard and the right role for me might just be right around the corner.

When I first joined the school, I was incredibly shy and quiet. I loved music and acting and performing but I really didn't have any confidence in myself at all. I'm now often described by new people I meet as 'bubbly' and 'confident' and my friends and family will say that I 'can talk for hours to absolutely anyone'. I will be forever grateful for the confidence that SGS gave me to follow my dreams and be unapologetically myself.

Sarah Clarke (OS 1993)

When Sarah Clarke (OS 1993) reflects on her journey from the school corridors of Stockport Grammar to the executive floors of ITV, she does so with warmth, gratitude, and a deep appreciation for the experiences that shaped her. Now Chief Operating Officer of ITV's Media & Entertainment Division, Sarah oversees one of the most influential and fast-moving parts of the UK's broadcasting landscape, but she still traces much of her story back to her school days.



A Bigger World Opens

Arriving at Stockport Grammar from a small primary school in Buxton, Sarah remembers feeling immediately overwhelmed, but in the best possible way. The school felt enormous, full of opportunity, buzzing with activities she had never tried before.

"I'd never picked up an instrument, never been in a choir, never really played much sport," she recalls. "And suddenly, everything was possible. It was amazing."

That sense of possibility carried her through years of sport, music, house activities, long bus and train journeys with friends, and a house identity she still remembers fondly as a proud Nicholson House student. Some memories remain particularly vivid; house assemblies every week in the gym; rehearsing for the house music competition an annual highlight.

Lessons That Last

Looking back, Sarah recognises that Stockport Grammar didn't just offer academic rigour, it has laid the groundwork for the "soft skills" that she now sees as essential to modern working life.

"How do you actively listen? How do you engage with people? How do you respect differences? How do you communicate meaningfully?" she says. "Those things have become absolutely fundamental."

Leading multidisciplinary teams through big industry shifts, where it is essential to provide clarity of purpose and

shared goals and an environment where everyone can be the best version of themselves, in an era where hybrid work is the norm, Sarah finds herself relying more than ever on skills she first gained at school; presenting, performing, collaborating, and stepping bravely into uncomfortable spaces, whether that meant standing up at House Music or playing a recorder in first year.

"It's all those experiences I had whilst at school, even the uncomfortable ones, that help build my confidence. It helped me to understand how you show up for things, the way you present yourself to others, can really influence the way people respond and react, which is vital in a working environment."

A Career Built on Curiosity and Adaptability

After leaving SGS, Sarah studied Law at Leeds University, including a fascinating Erasmus year in Strasbourg. That international experience, along with a subsequent legal training contract in a London city firm which gave her exposure to working in a thriving media law department, nudged her toward the entertainment industry.

By 2000, she had qualified as a solicitor and spent a decade in private practice specialising in media, principally film finance and production for UK independent film makers as well as some of the big US Studios (including the first Harry Potter films and Mamma Mia! to name a few). But eventually she craved a new kind of challenge, one inside the industry itself. She joined ITV as a business affairs lawyer, supporting teams behind some of the biggest entertainment shows in the UK.

Her early responsibilities were nothing short of iconic: negotiating deals and contracts for The X Factor, Britain's Got Talent, I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here! and even Downton Abbey. Talent deals for Ant & Dec and Simon Cowell - She handled those too.

"I was using the legal discipline I'd spent years developing," she explains, "but working hand in glove with some of the best creative and editorial people in the business in a way that was all about making things happen to move things forwards, finding solutions, ways through negotiations. I loved that."

Leading Through Transformation

Four years ago, ITV reorganised and created two clearer divisions, ITV Studios and the Media & Entertainment Division. Sarah was asked to step into a newly defined role as Chief Operating Officer for the Media & Entertainment Division, supporting the Managing Director and overseeing operations, strategy, transformation, and delivery of all the UK consumer facing products, business and services of ITV.

It was and still is, in her words, *"a huge amount of learning"*, from satellites and playout systems to the challenges, opportunities and realities of competing with global streaming giants.

The launch of ITVX, ITV's streaming service that launched in 2022 is the fastest growing major UK streaming service in the UK and a major strategic success for ITV, has been a centrepiece of her recent work. Steering a legacy broadcaster through seismic shifts

in audience behaviour is complex, but Sarah and the rest of ITV's leadership team's work to transform ITV's business across its content, viewer experience, commercial strategy, and operational delivery has been instrumental in ensuring ITV remains competitive, creative, and relevant, to continue to thrive into the future.

A Lifelong SGS Connection

Sarah remains closely tied to her school community, from alumni reunions to staying in touch with former classmates. She is still in regular contact with some of her closest schools friends – 'We may only get together once or twice a year, but within half an hour, it's like we've never been apart!' She speaks proudly of her parents, both teachers, whose belief in education shaped her path and now influences her own children's schooling. She has also recently worked with several schools in an advisory capacity to provide an employer's perspective on future skills.

"I had such a great time at school," she says. "It's lovely to be able to give even a little bit back."

Today, what Sarah loves most about her role is simple:

"I get to work with fantastic people from all kinds of backgrounds, with amazing skills and perspectives. We're all really proud to be part of ITV – each of us playing our part in entertaining and delighting millions of people every day, delivering trusted and impartial news to audiences across the UK and making impactful programmes that not only reflect culture, but can also shape it. Every day is different. It's also a lot of fun."

"It's all those experiences I had whilst at school, even the uncomfortable ones, that help build my confidence. It helped me to understand how you show up for things, the way you present yourself to others, can really influence the way people respond and react, which is vital in a working environment."

Sarah Clarke



Vicki Hill (OS 2007)

Vicki joined SGS at age 16 and quickly became embroiled in the 2006 school musical of *Guys and Dolls*. Finding her place backstage by supporting the technical delivery of the show, Vicki unlocked her dream career path!

Over the past 20 years Vicki has toured the world as a live show audio technician, supporting productions such as *Shrek the Musical*, *Evita*, *Mrs Doubtfire the Musical* and the world-renowned *Cirque du Soleil*. Currently working in business development for d&b audiotechnik, Vicki moved from the live delivery arm to supporting venues with their audio equipment needs.

Vicki's qualifications in Audio Technology from the University of Birmingham and Stage Management and Technical Theatre from LAMDA have provided her with an all-rounded ability not only to deliver to quality shows but also to train and champion the next generations of audio technicians.

As the Deputy Chair of the Association for Sound Design and Production, she is passionate about giving back to the community she has worked alongside since leaving SGS in 2007.

Sarah Stone

(OS 2004)

For Sarah, her years at Stockport Grammar School were more than just an education they were the foundation of a lifelong passion for communication, performance, and confidence that would ultimately carry her into the fast-paced world of sports media.

Having attended the school from the age of four through to eighteen, Sarah describes herself as an “OG” of her cohort, deeply rooted in the fabric of school life. Her memories remain vivid; the smell of the library, the polished dark wood of the maths classrooms, the excited anticipation before concerts, and the small but meaningful rituals of daily life like searching for her bag or eagerly awaiting team selections on the games board. Those moments, she reflects, formed not only a happy childhood at Stockport Grammar School, but a sense of belonging that has endured well into adulthood, with friendships from her school days still strong more than two decades later.

The environment at Stockport Grammar was shaped just as much by its people as its traditions. Sarah speaks warmly of teachers who left a lasting impression not just academically, but personally. From the kindness and humour of her first-year tutor, Mrs Kelly, to the wisdom and distinct character of Mr Howson, who could inspire students with Shakespeare beneath a Buffy the Vampire Slayer poster, these educators brought learning to life. Others stood out for their compassion, particularly in difficult moments. When Sarah lost her father during her school years, small acts of kindness from staff became deeply meaningful, reinforcing how much the school cared for its students as individuals.

These relationships, combined with the wide-ranging opportunities available, helped shape Sarah into a confident and well-rounded young woman. She embraced school life fully academically, creatively, and athletically. Whether captaining sports teams, performing in plays, playing clarinet in the orchestra, or competing in academic events, she made the most of every opportunity. Her involvement extended to leadership as well, serving as House Captain in her final year. This willingness to participate, lead, and perform would later become invaluable in her broadcasting career.

After leaving school, Sarah studied Law with German at the University of Nottingham, spending a year living abroad in Germany. It was during this time that she tried football for the first time, discovering a love of the game that would become central to her professional life. Although her degree initially pointed her towards law, she quickly realised that her strengths lay elsewhere particularly in her love of sport and her ability to communicate with people.

That realisation led her to pursue a career in sports journalism. Starting from scratch, she demonstrated resilience and determination, reaching out for opportunities until one came through with Boston United as a press officer. From there, her career gathered momentum. She went on to become one of the main female presenters on Manchester

United TV, later working with major broadcasters including Al Jazeera Sport, BBC Sport, and BeIN Sport.

Along the way, she shared screens with figures such as Gary Lineker and interviewed global icons like Manny Pacquiao and Novak Djokovic.



Sarah's journey is a powerful example of women making their mark in the media industry an environment that is exciting but also demanding and competitive. Live broadcasting, she explains, requires quick thinking, adaptability, and composure under pressure. The stakes are high, and the pace relentless, but the rewards are equally significant. The thrill of live sport, the energy of the studio, and the opportunity to engage with inspiring individuals make it an incredibly fulfilling career.

At the heart of her success, Sarah credits the values she developed at Stockport Grammar School. Discipline, confidence, and the ability to communicate effectively have all been essential tools in her professional life. Perhaps most importantly, the school instilled in her a belief in herself a willingness to back herself even in the face of uncertainty or rejection.

Her story also reflects the importance of resilience, particularly for women entering media. Success rarely comes without setbacks, and Sarah is candid about the rejection she faced along the way. Rather than discouraging her, it strengthened her determination. She encourages aspiring media professionals to seek out experience wherever possible, remain reliable and approachable, and not to be disheartened by the inevitable challenges.

In many ways, Sarah's career embodies the impact that a supportive and opportunity rich education can have. Stockport Grammar School did more than prepare her academically it gave her the confidence to step into the spotlight, the skills to thrive under pressure, and the belief that she could succeed in a competitive and evolving industry.

Today, even as she balances her career with family life, her journey stands as an inspiring example for young women considering a future in media. It is a reminder that success is not just about talent, but about the environment that nurtures it and the courage to pursue it.



STOCKPORT GRAMMAR SCHOOL GIVING DAY

Giving Day 2026: a remarkable success, thanks to you

On 18–19 March, the SGS community came together for our first Giving Day, demonstrating the extraordinary power of collective generosity. Over the course of 36 hours, 307 donors, including you, gave an incredible £136,364.

To all those who contributed to our Giving Day, please accept our sincere thanks for your generous gift. Your generosity ensure that SGS remains a place where every pupil, regardless of background, has the chance to thrive. Whether this was your first time giving or one of many, your support is making a lasting impact, helping to ensure talent, ambition and curiosity should shape a child's journey – not financial circumstance.

We are so grateful to the Old Stopfordians and to the Stockport Parents' Association who provided matched funding.

On Wednesday 18th March, Senior School pupils competed in their Houses to find out which House was the fastest through a 100ft inflatable obstacle course. Congratulations to Vernon who won ice cream for their entire house. The Junior School learned to play quidditch on Thursday with House Arden (Ravenclaw) winning the House Cup.

But, if you ask the pupils and likely most of the staff watching, the most exciting aspect of the Giving Day was the first ever Head to Head Challenge. Mrs Capewell, Head of the Senior School, came out victorious against Mr

Copping, Head of the Junior School, at the inflatable joust. We are grateful to our undercard staff members who also took part: Mr Allen, Mr Crowther, Mr Shingler, Mr Shaw, Mr Heyes, Mr Philips, Mr Talbot and Mr Dixon.

Beyond the numbers, your heartfelt messages on the Giving Day Donor Wall made our first Giving Day even more special. It's clear that Giving Day is about more than just fundraising; it is about a shared belief in the power of an SGS education.

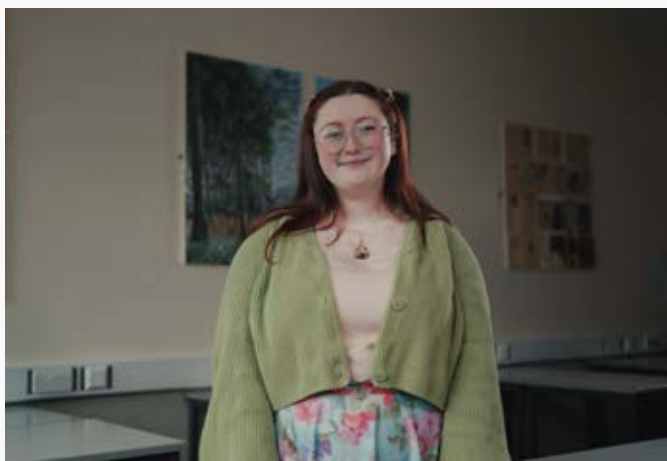
We are deeply grateful for your continued support and a special thank you Old Stopfordians and the Stockport Parents' Association who provided the matched funding. Every gift makes SGS a more accessible and enriching environment in which our pupils are challenged and supported to realise their full potential. Furthermore, every bursary strengthens our community, both inside and outside of the gates by bringing together different experiences, perspectives and talents.

We look forward to celebrating with you again at our next Giving Day. Until then, thank you for believing in the transformative power of bursaries, investing in our pupils futures, and being part of something truly special.



“My son is on a bursary at SGS and we are so grateful for this. We absolutely love the school.”

(Anonymous)



"It's really hard to express just how transformational the bursary was. SGS gave me stability at a really difficult moment in my life. It gave me a sense that I belonged and was valued. There is no way I would have done what I have done with my life, had I not experienced everything that Stockport Grammar had to give."

Alison Jones (OS 1987)



"The Bursary opened so many doors in terms of my love of academia and learning. I got such a wonderful education from some really wonderful teachers and I am so grateful."

Molly Royle (OS 2017)



"Receiving the bursary meant everything. It meant that I was able to go to Stockport Grammar School and that quite simply would not have been possible without it."

Eilidh Pollard (OS 2015)



"My time at Stockport Grammar School profoundly shaped me. I will be forever grateful for the financial support that allowed me to attend."

Everything I have gained – my confidence, ambition and intellectual curiosity – was shaped within these buildings, and it will stay with me for a lifetime."

Eddie Griffiths (OS 2025)



MEMORIES OF THE PAVILION

Looking back as we build forward

For generations of Old Stops', the cricket pavilion has been far more than a functional building on the edge of the playing fields. Built in the early 1960s, it has stood quietly at the heart of school sport for over half a century. It has been a place of gathering, anticipation, camaraderie, and countless in between moments that have shaped school life. At time of reading, the familiar structure will have made way for a new pavilion, marking the end of an era while opening the door to the next chapter.

The pavilion many will remember sits against the expansive green outfield, facing the train line, its red brick exterior blending naturally with the surrounding school buildings behind it. Its design has always been practical rather than imposing. A simple covered veranda stretched along the front, offering shelter from both bright summer afternoons and the more familiar Stockport rain. Beneath it, wooden benches worn smooth through decades of use have seen generations of players pad up, spectators gather, and teams quietly prepare. These benches will continue their tenure with the new structure, for many more years to come. The scoreboard and clock were mounted on the exterior had long

anchored the rhythm of match days. Overs ticked by, innings built or collapsed, and time itself seemed somehow steadier when measured against that weathered façade.

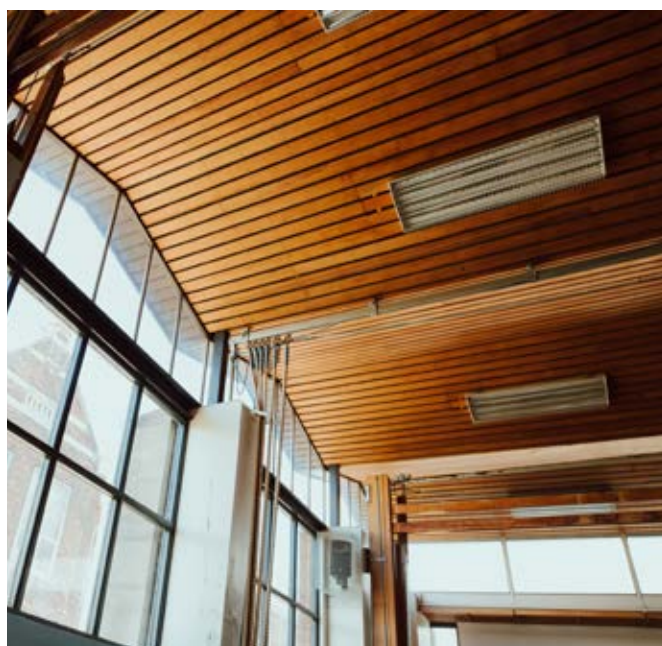
Inside, the pavilion told its own story. The changing rooms were unmistakably of their time, with long wooden benches running along the walls and rows of hooks above for blazers, shirts, kit bags and coffins. Sunlight filtered through the windows, falling in bright rectangles across the floor, illuminating scuffed surfaces that spoke to years of use. The rooms carried the echoes of pre match nerves, half time team talks, and post match reflections.





One small but poignant detail now adds a further layer to the pavilion's story. Among the marks left behind over the years, a piece of graffiti reads "bye Miss W", a quiet tribute to Sharon Withington, who also retires from teaching at SGS this year. Whilst the school would never condone graffiti, Miss Withington herself said the sentiment it was written with, holds a special place in her heart.

Beyond the changing areas, the pavilion's multi use hall reveals another side of its character. A high timber lined ceiling angles overhead, intersected by strip lighting, while high windows let in soft daylight. Basketball hoops fixed to the walls reflect the building's adaptability. Though closely associated with cricket, it has always served as a broader hub for sport and school life, accommodating a range of



activities over the decades, including years and years worth of examinations.

As much as it has been valued, the reality is that time has caught up with the building. Its facilities, once deemed fit for purpose, no longer meet modern expectations. Accessibility, space, and the demands of contemporary school sport all point to the need for renewal. The decision to replace the pavilion has not been taken lightly, particularly given its place in the memory of so many Old Stops'.



For those who passed through it, the pavilion was never just a structure. It was where friendships were formed, where victories were celebrated, and where disappointments were shared and overcome. It provided a constant presence through the changing years of school life.

The new pavilion aims to honour that legacy while providing a space suited to the needs of future generations. Improved facilities, greater accessibility, and enhanced communal areas

will ensure that today's pupils have the same opportunities to form lasting memories.

As we say farewell, it is worth recognising everything the old pavilion has given. From the quiet focus of a team talk to the simple pleasure of watching a match unfold from beneath the veranda, it has been a central part of the school's sporting story.

OUR LEGACY.





Badge – £5.00



Tie Pin – £5.00



Water Bottle – £8.00

Umbrella – £20.00



Tote Bag – £8.00

Foam Hand – £8.00

Tie – £20.00



Bow Tie – £15.00

Drawstring Bag – £5.00

More can be found online





ADVENTURE AWARD – *FIRST YEAR SUCCESS*

Established in 2024 by two Old Stops' to honour their lifelong passion for the outdoors, climbing, and mountaineering which began whilst they were current pupils has seen a successful first tranche of Adventurers.

The Adventure Award gives senior school pupils the opportunity to participate in a transformative experience relating to co-curricular activities in outdoors and adventure which they are already active in and would benefit from financial assistance to take their passion to the next level.

Among the first awardees was Dylan Cort, OS 2025, Bursary Award Holder, who received a six-month membership to a climbing wall.

"I am really enjoying climbing. Having a membership allowed me to bring along someone who's never climbed before for free, which was lovely! It's been such a relief to not have to worry

about paying every time I go climbing and I could not be more grateful to the School for providing me the opportunity to do this."

Current Lower Sixth pupil Harriet was also awarded financial assistance to support her regular training sessions.

"Whilst being super beneficial, training and coaching is costly and so it was amazing to be able to receive six months of funding for this and I am very thankful. Since, my climbing has improved massively on both indoor lead and bouldering, and I am very much looking forward to the upcoming competition season."





Lastly the Adventure Awards granted two awards for pupils to take part in the International School of Mountaineering Student Alpine Week.

Caitlin Hill, OS 2026 said:

"This summer, having received the Adventure Award, we stayed a week at 2,800 metres in the Swiss Alps. Over the course of the week, we learnt key glacier skills such as using crampons for walking up and down steep ice, using pulley systems for crevasse rescue and walking across ice in pairs roped together in case one of us fell down a crevasse! On the first day, before we walked up to the mountain hut, we did some slab climbing and the guide taught us the knots we needed to know for the coming days. On one of the first days up in the mountains, we got up at 4:30am and hiked up to 3,500 metres, arriving there before 9:00am to see the beautiful view in the morning sun. On another day, we did multi-pitch climbing and then descended a boulder slope back to the refuge in time to eat a quick lunch before heading back to the van. We were done by about 1pm most days so we had the time to sit and drink free tea and enjoy the views from the refuge.

I am very grateful to have had this experience!"

Current Upper Sixth pupil, Ella, joined Caitlin on the same ISM course.

"This opportunity truly helped me realise who much perseverance and capability

I really have – although proving to be a challenge, I had a fun time and was able to expand my prior knowledge on climbing and particularly outdoor mountaineering, which I haven't done much of before. My favourite part of this trip was staying in the mountain hut for 3 nights, where I saw gorgeous scenery and made great memories I still think about now. I am so grateful to have had these experiences!"

The second round of Adventure Awards will see another three pupils take part in the ISM Student Alpine Week. Other smaller awards have been made to further support pupils with their climbing and mountain biking. Caitlin Hill has also been awarded a secondary Adventure Award.

"Having really enjoyed the ISM course last year, I would love to do the Lead Climb Developer course to extend my mountaineering skills.

From First Year, the School has really encouraged my passion for the outdoors, and I have taken part in numerous mountain biking and climbing trips including the Spanish climbing trips. I have enjoyed volunteering on Fridays to help younger people develop their climbing skills and it has enabled me to pass on my passion for the sport."

The school offers a wide range of outdoor activities including hiking excursions, skiing, mountain biking and kayaking. Alongside this, the school is a Direct Licensed Organisation of

the Duke of Edinburgh Award – with many pupils taking part in the scheme during their time at school, from Bronze through to Gold Level. Of course, we can't forget to mention the Peter Boardman Climbing Wall which hosts the climbing club multiple times a week. Donated in memory of Old Stopfordian Peter Boardman (OS 1968) who was an explorer and mountaineer, the wall is perhaps the first opportunity for the school to inspire a sense of adventure in pupils.

Speaking about their experiences, the Old Stops' said: "Our time at the school was more than just a formal education.

What we learned from going to Wasdale or participating in the climbing club or camping trips was so much more. We hope this award will also push pupils further and gain confidence that they can take forward in all aspects of their lives."

"I am very grateful to have had this experience!"

(Caitlin Hill)



Carol Service at St George's Church

OLD STOP COMMUNITY

California Old Stops' meet up

During the summer holidays, the Head, Sarah Capewell, travelled the 5,000 miles from Stockport to California. While she was there, Sarah met up with a number of Old Stops' who are based stateside.

Pictured are Richard Blackburn (OS 1985) and Phil Harper (OS 1965), who have both been based over in the USA for a number of years, but also hope to return to Stockport and re-visit the area in the future.



Annual Remembrance Service and Lunch

On Tuesday 11 November, we welcomed back 70 Old Stopfordians, dignitaries, and their guests to our Remembrance Day Service and Lunch, in remembrance of those in the SGS community who lost their lives during both World Wars, and subsequent conflicts. Our annual Remembrance commemorations provide an opportunity to remember the members of our school community who lost their lives during both World Wars, and subsequent conflicts. Several of the schools musicians supported the service



including Deputy Head, Sophia Horne (Class of 2026), who played the Last Post at the Middle School Assembly and then represented the school beautifully at Stepping Hill Hospital's service of Remembrance.

Following the service, Old Stops' were invited to lunch, where they were treated to performances by Dan Wood (OS 2026) on flute and vocal performances from Emily (current pupil) and Abigail Sullivan (OS 2026) as well as a talk about the recent third year trip to the battlefields of Europe.

Careers Convention 2025: Beyond inspired. Into inspiring.



This biennial event that saw 500+ visitors fill the Dining Hall, with the opportunity to ask careers mentors anything about their chosen vocation. There was a real buzz in the Hall as pupils chatted to alumni, parents and business contacts of the school about a variety of careers.

There were representatives from a wide range of

industries including law, architecture, engineering, science, consultancy, PR and 16 different universities. Visitors could also attend presentations on Medicine and Psychology as well as a talk on Business, Marketing and Finance.

Class of 2025 return to school for Christmas Drinks

The evening featured warm conversations, holiday music, and plenty of reminiscing about shared memories of time spent at Stockport Grammar School. Many attendees expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to revisit the place where they spent their formative years.



Carol Service at St George's Church

More than 70 Old Stops', Governors and their guests joined the Class of 2025 as the evening featured readings from our pupils and performances from our talented choirs. Reverend Liz Leaver led the congregation for the last time, after 26 years at Stockport Grammar School. Reverend Leaver moved to Norwich Cathedral earlier this year.



Lucy Hope (OS 2004) receives Women in Innovation Award

Lucy Hope (OS 2004) returned to school to see the plaque unveiled after she was announced as a recipient of the Women in Innovation Award from Innovate UK, which helps UK businesses innovate, scale and bring new ideas to market.



Through her company, The Daughters of Mars, Lucy is transforming the menstrual care industry. After discovering that many traditional products, such as tampons and pads, contain harmful chemicals, she set out to create safer, healthier alternatives — redefining standards and driving change in the process.

Now, Lucy is part of a network of more than 200 Innovate UK Women in Innovation Award winners who are developing inspiring solutions to pressing societal, environmental and economic challenges.

Lucy said: "It is a point of great pride to receive such a prestigious award, and to have my purple plaque installed at the place where it all started for me is a real full-circle moment."



Shaa Lunch and Founders Day celebrations

On Friday 20 March SGS Senior School pupils and staff were joined by donors, legators, Governors, and the Mayor and Mayoress of Stockport for the annual Founders Day celebrations. Stockport Grammar School was founded, from the generosity of Sir Edmond Shaa, Prime Warden of the Goldsmiths' Company and Mayor of London, in 1487. Founders Day celebrates philanthropy, and gives thanks to those who have supported the school over the past year.

The Founders Day service was led by the Bishop of Lancaster, Right Reverend Dr Jill Duff, and began with candles being lit to remember former pupils that have died during the past year.

Class of 1975 Reunion

Old Stops' from the Class of 1975 gathered for lunch in the Governors' Room and a tour of the School, in celebration of their 50th anniversary year.



Higher Education Conference

The Higher Education Conference is a two-day event, designed to support pupils as they prepare for life beyond Stockport Grammar School, whether that involves applying to university, pursuing higher or degree-level apprenticeships, planning a gap year, or entering the world of work through other pathways.

Guest speakers from Manchester, Lancaster, and Manchester Metropolitan universities provided valuable guidance on key topics such as student finance, enhancing employability, and preparing for university interviews.

Reflecting on the conference, Mr Stone commented: "There are many important factors for pupils and parents to consider when thinking about life after school. While this can feel daunting for some, it is also an exciting time, and it is perfectly normal for pupils to be uncertain about their next steps.

"The Higher Education Conference, along with the parents' evening, forms an important part of how we support pupils and their families in navigating these decisions, ensuring they are well prepared to make confident and informed choices about their futures."

Thank you to the 12 Old Stops' who came back in.





Summer Reunion BBQ

On Saturday 27th June, over 300 Old Stops' and their families returned to school for the 2026 Summer Reunion BBQ. Old Stops' in attendance ranged from members of the Class of 1957 to our newest cohort, the Class of 2026.

Attendees travelled from as far as Tasmania to catch up with former classmates, teachers and fellow alumni, and say goodbye to the Pavilion.

Players and spectators gathered for the BBQ, where conversations continued long into the afternoon. Old photographs and shared memories helped create a true reunion atmosphere, reminding everyone of the special bonds formed during their time at SGS.

Martin Argument Cup

Match Score:

Cavaliers 157 all out

Old Stops' 141 all out

Cavaliers won by 16 runs

Saturday 27th June 2026 was school barbecue day and saw the 4th instalment of The Martin Argument Cup.

Martin (OS 1988) sadly died in 2020 and the Cup is played between Old Stops' (mainly the Class of 1988) and The Cavaliers, a team Martin played for that was based at Woodbank Park in Offerton.

The first team pitch at school had been perfectly prepared and the sun was shining as the teams took to the field. Cavaliers won the toss and chose to bat. They set off at a great pace and scored a decent 157 off their 25 overs.

The Old Stops' came in hoping for a quick start but some tight bowling meant they were always behind the run rate. Despite excellent batting from **Dominic Huxley (OS 1988)**, **Ian Millner (OS 1988)**, **Ravi Patel (OS 1988)**, **John Mellor (OS 1988)** and **Colin Nevett (OS 1988)** and a man of the match effort from **Graham Warburton (OS 1988)** they fell tantalisingly short of their target and The Cavaliers took the glory.



The series score is now excitingly poised at 2-2.

Many thanks to all who turned up and for school for letting us play and providing the most delicious of barbecues!! Oh and a special mention to our guest umpire, the sharp eyed **Ian Hall (OS 1983)**.

Other Old Stops' on the team included **John Ward (OS 1988)**, **Matthew Birt (OS 1988)**, **Andrew Whitehead (OS 1988)**, **Krishan Mehta (OS 1985)**.

Written by **James Stewart (OS 1988)**





MORE THAN *JUST* MEALS; *CELEBRATING MRS KATHY GOSLING*

The end of the 2025/2026 school year saw the retirement of SGS's long serving Catering Manager. For almost four remarkable decades, Mrs Kathy Gosling has been at the heart of daily life at Stockport Grammar School. Since joining the catering team in 1988, Kathy has played an extraordinary role in shaping not only the meals served, but also the welcoming, inclusive environment that defines the school's dining experience today.

Kathy's journey spans generations of pupils, staff, and families. Over the years, she has become a familiar and reassuring presence in the school community, someone who has quite literally helped fuel the day to day lives of thousands of students. Her commitment and pride in her work have ensured that mealtimes are not just about food, but about care, consistency, and community.

Starting at SGS as a cook, Kathy then accepted the role of Catering Manager in 2013. Under her guidance, the team has consistently delivered high quality meals in an environment where the whole school community comes together each day to enjoy a freshly prepared lunch, a distinctive and valued part of life at Stockport Grammar School. Kathy was an integral part of a major milestone in the school's history: the development of the new refectory and kitchens. This transformation helped modernise the school's catering facilities, enabling the preparation of a wider range of freshly cooked meals for a growing pupil body. Over the years, she has seen a significant evolution in dietary needs and expectations. From accommodating allergies to supporting a wide range of cultural and lifestyle diets, Kathy has always ensured that every pupil feels included and looked after. Her responsiveness and attention to detail have helped maintain a catering service that is both inclusive and forward thinking.

For her, some of the most rewarding moments have come through the conversations she's shared with pupils over the

years. Many stop to chat, ask questions and even request recipes. One dish stands above all others as the school's most-loved meal: the famous meatballs. "The meatballs are definitely the most requested," she says. "We make our own tomato sauce from scratch and most things here are homemade." The school's devotion to the recipe became something of a mission when their original supplier stopped producing the meatballs they had used for years. "I actually ended up contacting the manufacturer in The Netherlands to find out who else they supplied as the alternatives were getting the thumbs down from the pupils," she says. "Luckily we've now found a new supplier and everyone loves them again."

Kathy's contribution reaches far beyond the daily lunch service. She has been an essential part of countless school events, helping to make each occasion special. Whether it is welcoming prospective families on Open Days, preparing for the annual Shaa Society Lunch, contributing to the formalities of Speech Day, or bringing a sense of celebration to the Summer BBQ, Kathy and her team have always delivered with care and professionalism.

On behalf of the entire school community, past and present, we celebrate Kathy's incredible contribution and thank her for 38 years of exceptional service to SGS!

SHINING *THE* SPOTLIGHT ON...

If you would like to return to school and deliver a Spotlight on talk, please do get in touch with the Development and Alumni Relations department for more information.



Eris Elsby (OS 2025) returned to SGS in October 2025 to present *'The neuroscience behind emotion'* to current pupils. Eris presented a fascinating and well researched talk exploring the complex interactions that occur in the brain which result in the experience of emotions.



Lola Gurton (OS 2022) visited SGS in June 2026 to shine a Spotlight on... *Taking a Different Path*. After leaving SGS with A Levels in Maths, Chemistry and Psychology, Lola chose to take a gap year and joined Camp America, spending three seasons at Camp Chinqueka

in Connecticut, USA, where she gained valuable skills, qualifications and lifelong friendships. Lola shared how her travels across the USA, Australia and New Zealand helped her develop independence, resilience and strong financial management skills while working multiple jobs to fund her adventures. She also spoke about her unconditional offer to study Children's Nursing at the University of Bristol, where she was due to begin her degree in September 2026.



Niraj Arora (OS 2023) visited SGS during National Apprenticeship Week in February 2026 to shine a Spotlight on... *Apprenticeships at the BBC*. Having applied in October 2024, Niraj started his apprenticeship in September 2025 and is thriving in his role as a

Chartered Management Degree Apprentice working in BBC Research and Development.

SPORT OLD STOPS' GOLF SOCIETY

The Old Stopfordians Golf Society has enjoyed a positive and sociable start to the 2026 golfing calendar, continuing to provide an excellent way for former pupils to stay connected through the game.

In May, six members travelled to Knutsford Golf Club for the annual fixture against the Old Maxonians, competing for the Worth Trophy. Representing the society were **Andy Roberts, Garry Cash, Nick Woodall, James Stewart (OS 1998), Ian Hall (OS 1983), and Roger Coleman (OS 1976)**.

The match was played in excellent conditions, with both the weather and the course at Knutsford in fine order. While the standard of golf may not have quite matched the surroundings, the afternoon was thoroughly enjoyable and played in great spirit throughout. The Old Stopfordians were, on this occasion, second best, with the Worth Trophy going to the Old Maxonians.

Looking ahead, the society's calendar continues with further opportunities to get involved, including participation in inter-former pupils events held at local clubs. These occasions combine friendly competition with the chance to catch up

socially, making them a key part of the society's appeal.

One such event this summer takes place at Bramhall Golf Club, which has recently undergone significant redevelopment, including the addition of new holes at the 11th, 12th and 13th. Early impressions suggest the changes have enhanced the course and provide an enjoyable and interesting challenge for players.

The Old Stopfordians Golf Society remains an active and welcoming group, open to players of all standards. Its programme of fixtures offers regular opportunities throughout the year for old classmates to reconnect, enjoy competitive golf, and maintain links with the wider Old Stopfordian community.

Written by **Roger Coleman (OS 1976)**





REMEMBERING THE LIBRARY

For many Old Stops', the Stockport Grammar School Library was far more than a room full of books. It was a place of quiet productiveness, responsibility, friendship, and gradual transformation, one that evolved alongside the School itself. Few people are as well placed to tell that story as Bill Ball (OS 1968), whose memories chart the Library's journey across six decades.



The Library in Room 8 (1961–1967)

When I arrived at SGS in September 1961, the School was still a compact institution clustered tightly around the quadrangle. The Library, then, occupied Room 8. It was a modest but well used space, overseen with care and pride.

Administrative responsibility lay with Mr A. P. Smith, the Business Manager (later Head of German), while Mr W. S. Johnston, Second Master and Head of English, took a deep personal interest in the Library and its standards. New books were ordered from Mr Hewitt's shop on Underbank, an astonishingly productive little emporium remembered fondly by generations of staff.

What distinguished the Library in those days was the extent to which pupils themselves ran it. A team of around six Sixth Formers undertook the detailed work of preparing new books. Each volume had to be backed or sleeved, stamped, classified

by the Dewey Decimal System, indexed on author and subject cards, and recorded in the large Acquisitions Register. Borrowing involved a carefully managed card system that now seems almost ceremonial in retrospect.

A Head Librarian was appointed annually from the Upper Sixth. When I joined the Sixth Form in 1966, I volunteered as a junior librarian under Gordon Pickering, later administrator of the Ephraim Hallam Trust.

Change and the Norris Gymnasium Move

By the mid 1960s the Fives Courts were demolished, and replaced by the new gymnasium, prompting a chain reaction of repurposing across the site.

The old Norris Gymnasium was designated as a temporary home for the Library, with Room 8 destined to become a Geography classroom. During the summer holidays of 1967, the gym was stripped of its apparatus, ropes, beams and bars removed, the floor sanded and polished, walls repainted and lighting renewed.

The pupils, once again, did the heavy lifting. During the final week of the holidays, a small band of Sixth Form librarians returned voluntarily to prepare the new space. Using Mrs O'Donnell's tea trolley, countless armfuls, and four days of effort, we transferred over 6,000 books from Room 8 to the gymnasium. The books were laid out in broadly Dewey classified centuries across long tables, awaiting their new shelving.

Those shelves, custom built and funded by the Sir Alan Sykes Trust, arrived shortly afterwards, and by the beginning of October the Library was fully operational.

Life in the "Temporary" Library

What began as a temporary move lasted longer than expected. The Library in the former gymnasium developed its own routines and character. Sixth Formers had access from 8.00 am throughout the day, while younger pupils could use it at lunchtime and after school. It closed around 5.00 pm, except on Debating and Literary Society evenings.

The new Library office occupied two rooms: a freezing former changing room and a warmer inner sanctum once used by the gym master. Many items now preserved in the School Archives, old copies of *The Stopfordian*, rare books, historic documents, were stored there at the time.

The Hallam Library and Professionalisation

By spring 1973, the long-awaited move took place and the Library finally became the Hallam Library, with a professional librarian, Mrs E. M. Pegg, appointed. In September 1974, my brother Jim Ball became Head Librarian, following me into the role before leaving for Cambridge in 1976. By then, professional oversight had become the norm, though the pupil tradition lingered.

A New Century, A New Library

Fast forward to November 2003, when I received an invitation from Mrs D. E. Sutton, then Librarian, to attend a preview evening for the New Library, hosted by Headmaster Mr I. Mellor in January 2004. The vision presented that evening was impressive, forward looking, generous in space and ambition.

That "New" Library has now reached its twentieth anniversary. For those of us who remember Room 8, the Norris Gymnasium, index cards, tea trolleys and freezing offices, the continuity is striking. The setting has changed repeatedly, but the Library's spirit has endured.

The 1915 Architects' Plan, with the ground floor rooms as used and numbered in 1961. The proposed Swimming Bath was not, in fact, ever built.



OLD STOPS' WORKING TOGETHER



Camp Kaizen



When George Chatterton (OS 2017) envisioned Camp Kaizen, an innovative outdoor hybrid training camp designed to combine physical fitness with mental resilience, he knew it would take more than just ambition to bring the idea to life. What he didn't anticipate was the incredible support from fellow Old Stopfordians, proving that the bonds formed at SGS can last a lifetime, and even spark new ventures.

Camp Kaizen is more than a business; it's a movement towards holistic wellbeing, blending outdoor adventure, endurance training and personal development in the heart of the Lake District. Behind its rapid success is a team of former SGS students who rallied together to help George turn his dream into reality.

Since launching, Camp Kaizen has grown at an impressive pace. In summer 2026 alone, the team delivered four training camps and introduced the Kaizen Mountain Hybrid Race, a unique fitness event combining trail running, rowing, cycling, skiing and strength challenges.

Set against the dramatic backdrop of the Lake District, Camp Kaizen challenges participants both physically and mentally. Long mountain hikes, trail running, recovery sessions and team-based activities are designed to build resilience, confidence and community. Attendees have described the experience as "the perfect mix of hard training, great people, unforgettable moments and breath-taking scenery," while another said, "I will remember the four days for the rest of my life."

The future looks equally promising. Most of the 2026 programme sold out quickly, including specialist executive camps and partnerships with professional and university rugby teams. Looking ahead to 2027, George plans to expand from 11 camps to more than 20, grow Camp Kaizen into a nationally recognised fitness brand and continue developing opportunities for athletes across the UK.

The story of Camp Kaizen is a reminder that success often starts with a strong network. For these Old Stopfordians, collaboration didn't end at graduation; it evolved into a shared mission to create something meaningful. As Camp Kaizen continues to grow, George remains grateful for the loyalty, encouragement and practical support of their SGS peers. Together, they have built more than a business – they have created a thriving community founded on teamwork, resilience and a commitment to helping others achieve more than he thought possible.

Below are a few of the Old Stops' who have supported George on his journey:

Jack Ronnie (OS 2015)

Jack supported George by leveraging his connections at Kukri Sports to ensure the team had high-quality branded clothing for the camps. His contribution gave Camp Kaizen a professional edge right from the start.

Patrick Chatterton (OS 2018)

George's brother and trusted partner, Patrick is not only an equity shareholder but also George's "right-hand man." From strategic planning to day-to-day operations, Patrick has been instrumental in shaping the business.

Olly Finch (OS 2017)

Olly attended one of the first camps in 2025, offering valuable feedback and unwavering friendship. His early support helped validate the concept and inspire future growth.

The Working Parent Equation

A decade apart but united by a love of literature, two Old Stops' have turned their shared love of books and entrepreneurial spirit into a thriving partnership for 2026.

It will come as no surprise to the Old Stops' community that brilliant people with black-and-yellow roots consistently find each other as they seek to do extraordinary things. As Georgie Rudd, née Hodgson, (OS 1997) searched for a publisher for her business book idea, she was delighted to discover that the "best in the business" (the person everyone pointed to) was Alison Jones (OS 1987). They'd never met before but immediately bonded over shared gratitude and respect for the SGS English teachers, such as Anne Moriarty and David Howson, who inspired them to pursue literature at university and beyond. Alison went on to read English Literature and Language at Edinburgh and Georgie went on to read English Literature at Durham University.

Alison has enjoyed a successful career in publishing, working with Chambers Harrap, Oxford University Press and Palgrave Macmillan before going on to found her own publishing house, Practical Inspiration Publishing, specialising in award-winning business and self-development books. Since 2014 the company has published hundreds of brilliant titles aimed at making life and work better for leaders and entrepreneurs.

Georgie spent over 15 years leading global teams at Lloyds Banking Group and Baringa Partners before founding Rudd Coaching Ltd. She is an executive coach, working parent coach and now author of a book based on her experience as a trusted coach to hundreds of leaders across multiple sectors and as a mum to two daughters. *"The Working Parent Equation: Balancing small humans and big careers"* is now available at all good book stores!

As Georgie notes, it's a noisy world of opinion and expectation for working parents. Friends, family and social media all offer advice that seems credible, but can be contradictory, outdated or unhelpful. Plus there's that shrill inner voice telling you you're failing on all fronts...

Finding your own way to balance the equation of loving your children and your career without losing yourself along the way has never been more important. The book puts the power of coaching into the hands of all working parents.



In a nutshell, it offers:

- Practical easy-to-use diagnostic tools.
- Deep, pragmatic understanding of the real world of corporate work.
- Honest stories highlighting what every parent finds hard and what to do about it.

Whilst a fair few years have passed since Georgie and Alison were studying in the Hallam Library, the values which formed the bedrock of life at SGS and which have served them well far beyond school-life are as true today as they ever were.

"Preparation for life beyond SGS" is a defining feature of the modern school and has long been one of the school's core strengths. In their work, Georgie and Alison reflect that SGS's focus on character and values is very much at the heart of their endeavours: enthusiasm for new challenges, perseverance through adversity, serving others and curiosity and asking great questions. Alison and Georgie also call out the self-belief that their time at school fostered. These two female entrepreneurs forging successful careers doing what they love are quick to acknowledge that this ambition, skill and confidence is in no small way attributable to the brilliant and rounded education they enjoyed at SGS.



UK Health & Care Research

This year's National R&D Forum Conference (RDF26) provided a powerful demonstration of the impact Old Stops' continue to make, both individually and collectively, across the UK's health and care research landscape.

RDF26 was a record-breaking event, bringing together over 900 attendees, more than 20 exhibitors, and a wide range of research posters, reflecting its growing importance to professionals across the sector. The conference buzzed with energy throughout: inspiring keynote speakers, engaging breakout sessions, live demonstrations, and invaluable opportunities to connect, collaborate, and

share best practice. There is, quite simply, nothing quite like the momentum this annual gathering creates for research management in health and care.

Opening the conference was John Amaechi OBE (OS 1989), whose keynote session set both the tone and the challenge for the days ahead. His compelling talk on leadership pushed delegates to think differently about their roles within the NHS, encouraging many to step outside their comfort zones. As ever, John's ability to combine insight, honesty, and challenge made for a memorable start, one widely praised by attendees and a reminder of the influence Old Stops' continue to have at the highest levels.

Behind the scenes, another Old Stop played a key role in bringing the event to life, Dr Philippa Brice (OS 1993) Associate Director for Research and Impact at the NHS. Pippa is responsible for leading the Strategic Research Office for the NHS Central East Integrated Care Board, covering Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, and Hertfordshire.

Among the conference speakers was Dr Louisa Wood (OS 1997), Chief Operating Officer at Mereside Medical and Co Director of the NIHR Greater Cambridge and Suffolk Primary

Care Commercial Research Delivery Centre, an initiative supported by that same Strategic Research Office.

The theme of working together ran throughout the conference, from strategic discussions to informal networking moments. For the SGS community, it also took on an additional dimension, a reminder that wherever Old Stops' go, the connections forged at school continue to surface in meaningful and often unexpected ways. It emerged only after more than a year of working together that both colleagues shared not only a professional alignment, but a common educational heritage at Stockport Grammar School, as well as at the University of Cambridge.

These connections are more than coincidence. They highlight the enduring value of an SGS education, fostering curiosity, confidence, and a commitment to making a difference. At RDF26, that shared foundation translated into real world collaboration, with Old Stops' contributing to national conversations about leadership, research delivery, and the future of healthcare.

Dr Pippa Brice (OS 1993) – Associate director for research and impact, NHS.

Louisa Wood (OS 1997) – Chief operating officer – Mereside Medical & Co-Director, NIHR Greater Cambridge & Suffolk commercial research delivery centre for primary care, National institute for health and care research.

John Amaechi (OS 1989) – Speaker, Bestselling Author, Psychologist, Professor of Leadership at the University of Exeter, Founder of APS Intelligence Ltd, Chartered Psychologist & Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society.



Property Sector

A friendship that began in the classroom over 25 years ago has come full circle, with former schoolmates **Rhiannon Durston née Radcliffe (OS 2008)** and **Shiro Rauniar (OS 2009)** now working together professionally in Manchester's thriving property sector.



Stockport South FC

Old Stopfordian **Arjun Takiar (OS 2016)** continues to play football alongside fellow former pupils after leaving Stockport Grammar School ten years ago. Along with classmate **Koye Lijadu (OS 2016)**, they organise regular games for their Old Stops' team down in London, showing how SGS connections continue, even after moving away from Stockport. Arjun and Koye, both of whom were SGS Football 1st XI players in their time, channelled their shared background into building a 5-a-side team, proudly naming it "Stockport South." Based in South-West London, the team brings together a group of Old Stops' and friends, becoming a weekly fixture that combines competitive football with the familiarity of school-day friendships.

Stockport South FC recently became champions of the Thursday 5-a-side Kennington League for the third season in a row, beating off the competition to take the trophy home each time! Other Old Stops' involved include **Louis Jones (OS 2016)**, **Tom Travis (OS 2017)** and **Arvin Araghi (OS 2017)**.

Arjun & Koye are also part of Limehouse Tigres, a Sunday 11-a-side team with strong Old Stopfordian roots. Set up by former pupils now based in the capital, the team continues to attract a number of Old Stops' who meet week after week to play. It is not just about results, it reflects how connections built at Stockport Grammar School continue to translate

into shared activities and networks later in life. That being said, the team have managed to achieve 5 promotions in 4 seasons, including an incredible recent double-promotion to the Hackney & Leyton 1st Division following another league triumph. Managed by Old Stop **Adam Cawthorn (OS 2015)**, the Tigres have become a fantastic hub for old friends to reconnect – with people even travelling from far and wide to watch them play!

Other Old Stops' involved include **Will Hanson (OS 2015)**, **Luke Jones (OS 2015)**, **Alex Provan (OS 2015)** and **Patrick Duffy (OS 2015)**.

Rhiannon and Shiro attended Stockport Grammar Junior school together from Year 1 through to Year 6, before Shiro left the school in 2000 at the end of Year 6. Rhiannon remained at the school until 2006, leaving in Year 10. Despite taking different paths, the pair stayed in touch over the years and both eventually settled in South Manchester.

Shiro went on to establish SATIS Group, a successful property development business, while Rhiannon built her career in residential property and is Sales & Marketing Director at Reside Manchester.

Around five years ago, the pair unexpectedly bumped into each other in Manchester. At the time, Shiro was looking for an agency to market one of SATIS Group's forthcoming

developments. Their long-standing friendship naturally led to conversations about working together, laying the foundations for a professional partnership.

Today, that partnership has become a reality, with Reside Manchester appointed to launch one of SATIS Group's latest residential developments in Manchester.

What started as a friendship in the classroom has evolved into a successful business relationship, demonstrating how lasting connections can come full circle. Twenty-five years after leaving school together, Rhiannon and Shiro are now combining their expertise to bring a new development to the Manchester property market.

HEADS *OF* SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

Toby | Head of School

My highlight from this year at school was the 1st XV rugby trip to the Basque region in the south of France. It was a unique opportunity to experience a new culture and way of living which built connections between us as players and the staff.

We couldn't have asked for better weather, partnered with a well-balanced combination of sightseeing, watching and playing rugby alongside a variety of activities such as surfing and learning 'pelota' – a local tennis-like sport. It was a brilliant opportunity to bond and enjoy ourselves together in a different environment on and off the pitch. We all made memories that we will remember for a lifetime and we will be able to laugh and joke about when we join the Old Stops' community together.



Finn | Deputy Head of School

My highlight from this past year was when Professor Danielle George MBE, radio-frequency engineer, professor at the University of Manchester and award-winning science communicator, visited school to give an informative talk to the Sixth Form physicists. She delivered a fascinating presentation in which she detailed her work at Jodrell Bank, providing insight into the engineering behind the UK's largest radio telescope. It was also valuable to hear about the many pathways into engineering and STEM careers, as well as the opportunities to explore different specialisms and industries within these fields.



Cara | Head of School

For me, an experience that really stood out this year was performing in my final school production – Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. I've loved being a part of the drama community since First Year, so it was bittersweet taking my final bow with friends I've acted alongside for 7 years, as well as watching younger pupils relish the chance to play leading roles for the first time. I hope to return to see future productions as an Old Stopfordian in years to come.



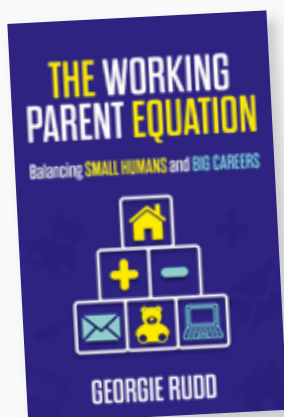
Sophia | Deputy Head of School

'The Classics department trip to Greece was my highlight of this academic year. To see the beautiful sights of Olympia and feel the sense of history on the Acropolis was a special experience and one I won't take for granted. The site of Delphi was breath-taking! We had great fun and I have such happy memories of the trip. It really consolidated my love of Classics which I hope to study next year.'



FROM *THE* BOOKSHELF

Georgie Rudd (OS 1997) – “The Working Parent Equation: balancing small humans and big careers”.

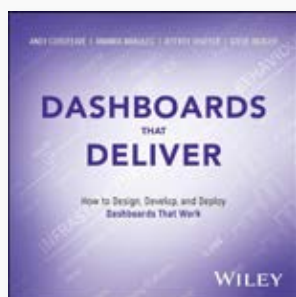


For working parents, it's a noisy world of opinion and expectation. Plus there's that shrill inner voice telling you you're failing on all fronts. Finding your own way to balance the equation of loving your family and your career without losing yourself along the way has never been more important. In this Amazon #1 bestselling guide, accredited executive coach Georgie Rudd brings practical tools, real-life examples and professional insight to all working parents. Whether you're making the pivotal

return to work or your challenging teen is making you doubt yourself, whether you're talking yourself out of a promotion you really want to pursue or you're trying to protect your non-negotiables at home, this book has your back.

Andy Cotgreave (OS 1990) – Dashboards That Deliver: How to Design, Develop, and Deploy Dashboards That Work

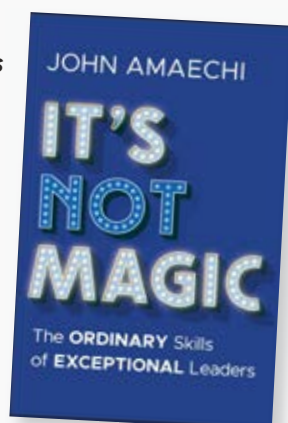
Dashboards That Deliver is a clear, accessible guide to making data applications that people actually use. It's a follow-up to the best-selling Big Book of Dashboards and explains what goes on when data is turned into something useful, understandable, and actionable. The book walks readers through a journey, from the first idea to launching a dashboard and keeping it relevant over time. Using real examples from healthcare, transport, finance, and more, it shows how different audiences need different approaches. Andy is one of the co-authors, bringing over



20 years of experience in the data industry to help all people communicate insights with data.

John Amaechi (OS 1989) – It's Not Magic: The Ordinary Skills of Exceptional Leaders

Leaders aren't failing because they lack charisma. They fail because they believe leadership requires magic. In *It's Not Magic*, psychologist and leadership expert Professor John Amaechi OBE dismantles the myths and reveals the everyday, repeatable skills that create extraordinary leaders. His message is urgent: in an era of mistrust, turbulence and change, real leadership is about clarity, consistency and courage.



Laura Hall (OS 1997) – The Year I Lay My Head In Water

Living in Copenhagen had been a dream for Laura Hall and it was working out – until it wasn't. She discovered that the trials of life will follow you anywhere, as she felt herself disintegrating into stress and burn out. She decided to spend a year swimming the cold seas of Scandinavia in search of answers. She swam in iceberg-filled seas in Greenland, Viking spas in Iceland, and beaches and piers all over Norway, Denmark and Sweden. A love letter to the sea and the people of Scandinavia, this book is also a clarion call for anybody stuck in a rut who needs to rekindle their lust for life. It's time to reconnect with the natural world. It's time to lay your head in the water.

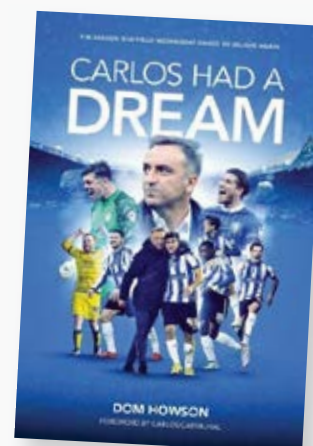


Dominick Howson (OS 2005) – Carlos had a dream



Carlos Had a Dream tells the inside story of Sheffield Wednesday's rise under Carlos Carvalhal – the first foreign head coach in the club's history.

The book features exclusive insight from the players and staff who shaped that era, celebrating a team, a manager and a fanbase that dared to dream. It's been a privilege to write and I'm proud to share it with the Old Stops' community.



Roger Newton (OS 1967)

Fasten Seatbelts is a non-fiction book which traces the history of British Civil Aviation through a series of stories presenting key events. *Airline Games* is a short novel with a background of the British airline business as it was in the late 1980s. The main character is Sir John Cresswell who is based on Lord King, the former Chairman of British Airways, with whom Roger worked during that period.





IN PARTNERSHIP

A Partnership Built on Opportunity

SAS Daniels and Sport at Stockport Grammar School

Stockport Grammar School has long believed that education extends far beyond the classroom. Generations of pupils and alumni will recall the formative role that sport, teamwork and wider co-curricular life played in shaping confidence, character and lifelong friendships. It is within this spirit that the school is pleased to announce a new and significant partnership with SAS Daniels LLP, a collaboration that will support a broad range of activities at SGS.

Introducing SAS Daniels

SAS Daniels is a leading Cheshire based law firm, founded in 2006 and now firmly established as a trusted adviser to both individuals and businesses across the region and beyond. While SAS Daniels is known for legal excellence and a highly personal approach to client care, much like SGS, the firm is equally proud of its roots in the local community.

Activities for all

While the partnership will encompass support for a wide range of activities over the years, sport is a central focus. SAS Daniels' funding will play a key role in supporting SGS to enhance sporting opportunities for both our own pupils and for pupils from neighbouring schools. SGS pitches, courts and facilities will be transformed into a hub of inter school competition and collaboration.

Going beyond

This partnership is a reminder that the school continues to evolve while remaining true to its values, fostering collaboration, ambition and opportunity across generations. The school values of courage, community and curiosity remain at the heart of everything at SGS.

We are grateful to SAS Daniels for their generosity, vision and commitment to Stockport Grammar School. Their support will leave a legacy, enriching school life and strengthening the links between SGS and its wider community.

Get involved

If any alumni would be interested in exploring partnership opportunities with Stockport Grammar School, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Please contact oldstops@stockportgrammar.co.uk to begin the conversation.

OLD STOP EVENTS

18th September 2026

Class of 1976 reunion

29th October 2026

Durham meet up

11th November 2026

Remembrance Day

25th November 2026

London meet up

16th December 2026

Class of 2026 Drinks

16th December 2026

Carols Service

12th March 2027

Founders Day Service

12th March 2027

Shaa Society Lunch

TBC 2027

Higher Education Conference

26th June 2027

Summer Reunion BBQ

STAFF LEAVERS

Val Anderton

Kerstin Christmann

Martin Cooke

Kathy Gosling

Anton Hanson

Linda Hanson

Andy Kershaw

Lois King

Liz Leaver

Carol Marshall

Helen Roberts

Jamie Swann

Katrina Wilkinson

Sharon Withington

Fran Yates

IN MEMORY

Major Joseph Barnes, OS 1946) (1928 - 2026)

Peter John Clarke, OS 1967 (1949 - 2025)

Colin Telford Davis, OS 1972 (1953 - 2026)

Mark Stephen Charles Fuller, OS 1979 (1960 - 2025)

Brian Peter Garner, OS 1966 (1947 - 2025)

John Houlton, OS 1965 (1947 - 2025)

Keith Howard Leigh, OS 1956 (1938 - 2026)

Anthony (Tony) Thomas Meaden, OS 1955 (1939 - 2025)

Barney Joseph Moorhouse, OS 2015 (1997 - 2025)

Alan Taylor, OS 1958 (1940 - 2025)

Brian Taylor, OS 1953 (1936 - 2025)

LEAVE A LEGACY

Founded in 1487 through the exceptional generosity of Sir Edmond Shaa, Prime Warden of the Goldsmiths' Company and Mayor of London, Stockport Grammar School has been shaped for more than five centuries through a tradition of philanthropy and a commitment to widening educational opportunities to the children of Stockport. Join the Shaa Society by leaving a gift in your will.

You can help a bright young person to have the same experiences you enjoyed at Stockport Grammar School by leaving a gift to the School in your will.

Whether your sports team became your SGS family, a Direct Grant, Assisted Place or Bursary made it possible for you to come to School, you met your spouse at a ball or riding the bus to and from School together – a gift in your will can give the next generation those same transformational opportunities.



If you would like more information about leaving a gift in your will, please contact Aria Johnston (Head of Development) on +44 (0) 161 419 2408 or johnstona@stockportgrammar.co.uk

Stockport Grammar School is a registered charity in England and Wales no. 1120199.





STOCKPORT

GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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