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STAMFORD

THE MAGAZINE FOR SES ALUMNI & PARENTS

2021 ISSUE



TELLING TALES

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documentary maker
Sara McCourt (OS 92)



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SES ALUMNI AND PARENTS - 2021

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL



It is – somehow – nearly a full year since the last edition of *Stamford* magazine. That last issue was produced in lockdown, in strange, uncertain times, when, despite an unrelenting Stamfordian spirit, the future felt daunting for many of us.

But what a difference a year makes. Our Schools, our students and staff, haven't just risen to the challenge of Covid – we have come out of it stronger. We have learned new skills, learned to cope when times are difficult, and learned that we can rely on each other for support.

Although we are not – yet – through this crisis, we can once again allow ourselves to feel excited about the future. And at Stamford, that is where our gaze is firmly fixed: our new sports development on the Kettering Road [page 12] is just the first project of many that will be creating even more opportunities for our Stamfordians in the next few years. I look forward to sharing those with you in due course.

Above all, I look forward to once again being able to come together as a community. Welcoming our students back on the 8th of March was a revitalising experience. Being able, in the coming months, to welcome parents back to sports fixtures and concerts, and our Old Stamfordians back for reunions and visits, will complete our community once again. We cannot wait to have you back at Stamford with us. Here's to keeping the Stamfordian spirit alive together!

MR W PHELAN
Principal, Stamford Endowed Schools

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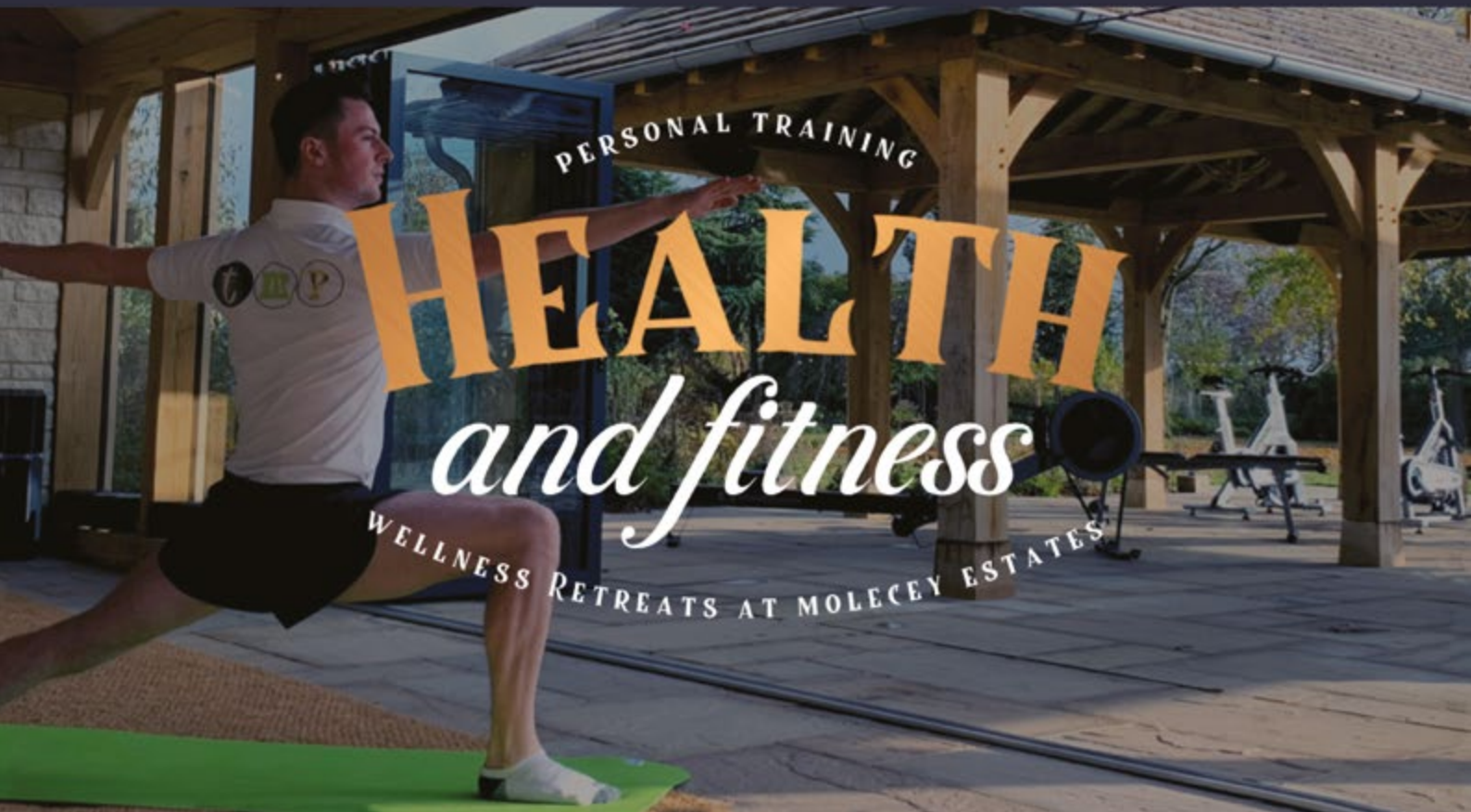


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UP TO SPEDE

NEWS FROM AROUND THE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

A star in the making

SHS Year 11 student **Brooke Fleming** has been stargazing for a new TV documentary series for children.



Year 11 student Brooke Fleming began presenting a new show unravelling the mysteries of space, and released an accompanying book series, this year.

Brooke began filming for the science series 'Explorer' with Cinalight Studios, who believe she is 'the next young Professor Brian Cox'. This series follows Brooke's debut with Cinalight in their sci-fi adventure series, 'Luna Squad', filmed in 2019.

Explorer is a factual show looking at space and science, and some of the big questions of our universe, and is available on Amazon Video.

Brooke said: "When Cinalight asked if I would be interested in creating a new show, exploring space and science, I jumped at the chance. It was different to filming The Luna Squad as there were always a lot of us on set (being a bit silly behind the scenes!) With Explorer it was just me and the crew, but we still had a lot of fun!

"Filming was a great experience as it is different to the acting roles I have had before: there isn't always a script to learn, sometimes there is just a message to get across – so that took a bit of getting used to.

"At other times there have been long and factual sections to learn, and as I am interested in space and science it has just been like exploring a hobby and sharing it with others."

The production company has also encouraged Brooke to



write a series of books on some of the topics discussed in Explorer, and in formats for younger children and teens.

Brooke wrote her first three 'Did You Know...' books, *The Sun*, *The Moon*, and *The Earth*, in the autumn term of 2020, when Covid-19 restrictions kept her at home.

Discussing her book series, Brooke said: "These are full of fun facts and lovely images and are available as iBooks to download. Later in 2021 I am having another book published, *The Periodic Table*, which looks at each of the elements and explains some of the terminology.

"Although I think that this last year has been incredibly challenging with Covid restrictions, it has given me additional time at home to focus on Explorer and my books."



David Beadman awarded engineering medal

Old Stamfordian David Beadman (OS 75) has been recognised for his pioneering work in engineering.

He was awarded the prestigious John Mitchell Medal for his role in the geotechnical engineering community. The John Mitchell Medal award celebrates the careers of individuals in the field and is presented annually by the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE).

David said he was 'delighted and honoured' to receive the medal: "It is always nice to receive recognition for one's efforts, particularly when it comes from one's peers."

David attended Stamford School from 1966-75, enjoying maths and physics, Latin and Greek.

"I knew I wanted to do something related to construction, so maths and physics were the obvious choices. The most important thing that Stamford gave me is that love of maths. Mr ('Jock') McKenzie taught in the Sixth Form and I enjoyed his lessons and weekly tests," he added.



Buddy scheme at SHS

The latest new cohort of Prefects at Stamford High School have been paired with new Year 12 students in a 'buddy' scheme to help them settle into life at Stamford.

Year 13 buddies shared their thoughts on the scheme. Lillie B said: "I have enjoyed talking to Emily, my buddy, about how she is settling into school and her new subjects (which are identical to mine!). It's nice to have a new face to smile at in the corridors!"

Kate S added: "Both myself and my new student are boarders, so we had already met, previous to our first organised meeting. It's very easy for me to check in with her to make sure that everything is settling in okay and if there is any help needed for her subjects."



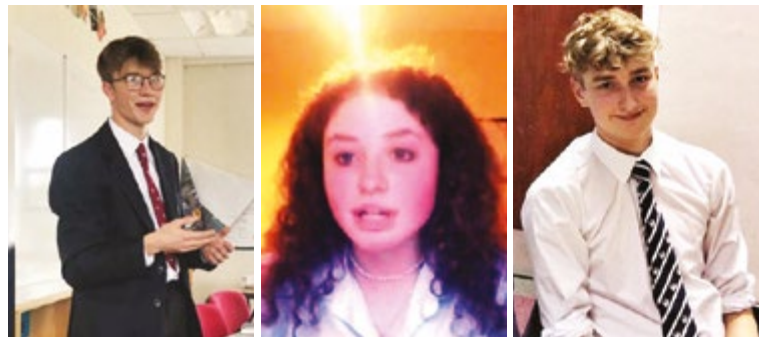
SES pitches flags in Antarctica

Flags designed by Year 7 students from Stamford School and Stamford High School have travelled to Antarctica.

They were entered into a competition organised by the British Antarctic Survey to design a flag for the continent, with Lola Butler selected as overall winner at SHS, and Sam Wright winning at SS.

Mr Smith, Head of Geography at Stamford High School, said: "The competition is designed to create awareness of why it is important for us to protect one of the Earth's last natural wildernesses.

"I was blown away by the calibre of entries. It was clear that the students had really thought about the brief given to them, the importance of the Antarctic Treaty, as well as portraying the importance of geography, science and flora and fauna. Penguins were a popular animal, but also the flags of the nations who have signed the treaty as well."



No debate: SES Sixth Form among country's best speakers

Stamford's Sixth Form Debating Team have been confirmed as one of the top 12 debating teams in the country, following success at the East Midlands regional round of the English-Speaking Union Schools' Debating Mace.

Stamford's team, comprising Oliver Fraser and Harry Laventure (Year 13), and Kitty Henderson (Year 12), beat five local schools in the first round of the competition before taking part in the East Midlands Regional Championship, winning against Oundle, Loughborough Grammar School and Brookfield Community School.

Karen Leetch, Stamford's Debating Coach, said: "It's great to see the first ever SES team in the top 12 nationally."

Harry Laventure, First Speaker in the team, commented: "It's a pleasure and a privilege to reach the Mace Finals. Having fallen at the last hurdle before it last year, there's a shared pride in the group at our improvement."

Kitty Henderson added: "The standard of the debates were so high. I am very much looking forward to the final."



Images: Benedict Tufnell/Row360

Megan Stoker rows for Oxford in the Boat Race

Old Stamfordian Megan Stoker (OS 16) raced in the Women's Boat Race for Oxford in April.

Megan said: "On the day I was feeling nervous, as you would expect, with all the cameras on us and knowing this is the one chance we have; however, at the same time we were all very excited to show everyone what we are made of.

"It was not the result we wanted but it was an extremely hard fought race, full of tenacity, which I could not be more proud of.

"I feel extremely lucky to be part of a team with such strong and inspiring women and I cannot wait to try again next year to get the win we came here for.

"It has all been a bit surreal. I remember watching the race on TV when I was younger and that's what got me into rowing, looking up to athletes thinking how amazing it would be to get there, and now I am here having interviews; I think I'm still in a daydream!

"My family have strong ties with Oxford, as my dad went there, and so we have always supported the dark blues and loved the city.

"It can be hard. Rowing is a skill that takes a lot of practice and you might not get it the first time, but if you commit to training, you get a lot out of the sport and can do amazing things with it. I have met amazing people and been a part of the most amazing teams with really inspiring other women. It is worth the hard work at the end of the day; it gives you skills you can use in all walks of life."

Alongside physical training, Megan emphasised how training for the race

mentally has been equally important: "A lot of our training was about visualising being in the race; before we went out, thinking about what our opposition were doing and what we could do better, planning strategies and planning everything we could do on the day.

"We had access to a sports psychologist who helped, giving advice on how to deal with the pressure. Five out of eight of the team were 'returners' who have competed in the race before and knew how it worked; everyone in the team has been really supportive."

Megan attended the Stamford Endowed Schools from 2009-2016 and studied maths, chemistry, physics and biology at A Level, completing an Extended Project Qualification in rowing during her time here.

She was part of the Stamford indoor rowing team from Year 9, where the team won gold at national indoor level.



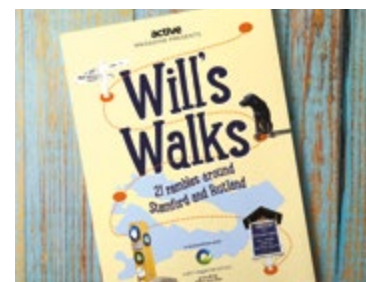
Remembering Libby Craig

A headstone has been placed to commemorate the life of former Head of Stamford Junior School, Libby Craig, who passed away peacefully in 2017.

Libby worked at the Schools for 39 years, spending 20 of those as Head, in which time she led huge advances in teaching, curriculum development, sports and early years' provision, including the planning and building of the original Stamford Nursery School.

Libby knew every student, recognising the individual personalities of every child in her care, and worked tirelessly and with compassion in the fostering of good relationships across the Schools' community.

If you would like to visit Libby's grave and pay your respects, she is buried in King's Cliffe Cemetery, Northamptonshire.



Walk with Will

Will Hetherington (OS 95) has written a guide to 21 of his favourite walks in the Stamford and Rutland area.

Having written a monthly walking feature in Active magazine for a decade, Will has definitely done his homework and he said: "I was a boarder for eight years in Northfolds and Byard, and in that time I fell in love with Stamford. I still live here and over the years I have walked most of the glorious footpaths in Rutland and the Stamford area, so it's good to share these wonderful routes with readers."

The book is available from theactivemag.com or from local stockists, including Walkers.



DofE explorers achieve awards despite Covid

Despite restrictions throughout the year, students from across the Schools have completed their Duke of Edinburgh Awards; 74 students receiving bronze and 46 receiving silver certificates in a virtual awards ceremony.

Completing DofE expeditions became all the more creative this year, needing to adapt to fit Covid-19 regulations. Students took walking and canoeing expeditions, and completed bushcrafting workshops to learn to light fires, make whistles and cook outdoors.

Axe and knife throwing tutorials, as well as night navigation in Fineshade Woods and volunteering at the Langdyke Countryside Trust, also proved popular.



Ana sums up her maths challenge

Year 12 student Ana Isaia achieved a distinction in the British Mathematical Olympiad, placing her in the top 25% of students in the country.

Ana participated in the two-and-a-half hour British Mathematical Olympiad (BMO1), coming in the top 250 participating students in the country, and achieving full marks for one of the questions.

More than 1,000 students across the country are invited to participate in the annual BMO1, following qualification through the 'Senior Mathematical Challenge' or nomination from their school.

Ana's maths teacher, Mrs Manning, said: "Ana showed an incredible performance, and this is a very well-deserved success!"

Reflecting on her experience, Ana said: "The challenge involves less maths, and more logic; less applying formulas, and more trying different approaches to see what works. I was quite happy with how much I was able to complete!"

Chasing success on the tennis court

Chase Burgess, a Year 9 at Stamford School, has been ranked first in Lincolnshire by the Lawn Tennis Association and 75th in the country in his age group.

His most recent achievements have included coming second in the U16 Central and East Country Tour and winning the U14 Midlands Country Tour.

His continued success has also meant that global tennis brand, Head, is sponsoring Chase for a fourth consecutive year.



Chloe shortlisted for BBC prize

Chloe Tinton (pictured on the right), in Year 13 at Stamford High School, has been shortlisted in the BBC Young Journalist of the Year competition.

Candidates were required to write a piece focusing on one of three themes: 'Me, myself and I', 'The world around me' or 'Coronavirus'.

Chloe chose 'The world around me' and wrote an article on the social media platform TikTok, discussing how it could shape future social media use.

After submitting her piece in October 2020, and following a telephone interview, Chloe was subsequently shortlisted as one of the top 10%-15% of all entries in the 16-18 age category.

Chloe said: "We shouldn't underestimate ourselves. I didn't have any confidence but threw myself into this competition, regardless, and realised that actually my abilities were higher than I credited myself for! It has been a hugely rewarding experience."

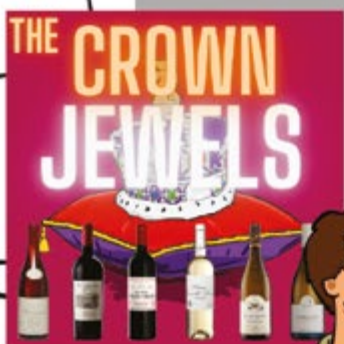
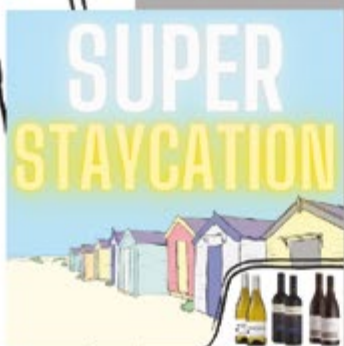


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Developing opportunity for everyone

The Stamford Endowed Schools invest heavily in philanthropy and improvement of facilities, as Head of Development, **Jo Peck**, explains.

Philanthropy has been at the heart of the Stamford Endowed Schools since Stamford School was founded in 1532.

The Schools were then re-endowed by Browne's Hospital during the 1870s and, as would be expected, this endowment has been reducing steadily over many decades, with the final lump sum of approximately £20,000 received in the academic year 2019/20.

The Alumni Relations and Development Team at the Schools work hard to ensure sustainable giving to the Schools in the medium to long term; raising money to support fee assistance and to fund development of the facilities and resources – and hence the opportunities and future outcomes – that our students deserve.

Income from fees alone cannot sustain development of the Schools in the long term; 75% of our fee income is allocated to payroll and the remaining 25% is used for the ongoing maintenance and enhancement across the estate, as well as to cover utilities. We remain committed to keeping our fees as low as possible to ensure accessibility: our parent body works

hard to send their children here and any significant increase in fees is likely to result in a narrowing of the social diversity we wish to maintain.

This year alone, the Schools have awarded means-tested bursaries to 316 students, with a combined value of £2.3m (2019: 347 pupils, £2.4m) and five students have had their fees covered by 100% bursaries (2019: 7). Numbers are slightly lower this year due to fee reductions offered during the Covid pandemic.

Capital projects within the last decade have enabled our students to experience an ever-expanding number of opportunities.

A broader range of different sporting activities, both indoors and outside, have been made available to our students, which means that each individual is able to find the type of physical activity that works best for them within their own lifestyle. Professional coaching has also been introduced across a wide range of sports so that every individual is able to reach the standard to which they aspire.

We currently offer more than 30 different forms of physical activity across the Schools, with more than 85% of our students being proactively involved.

A stand-alone classroom block has been developed to help our Year 6 pupils prepare for more independent learning when they enter secondary school in Year 7. Approximately 80 pupils benefit from this each year.

Our boarding facilities have been enhanced to accommodate flexi-boarding so that students can stay with us whenever it is best for them with the various commitments they have with the Schools. 163 students



currently benefit from these facilities, with approximately 50% taking advantage of the more flexible option.

Interactive classrooms have been developed across all three sites to encourage active participation in all classroom learning and to encourage intellectual curiosity.

The Llowarch Performing Arts Centre, named after its key benefactor, has been built to enable our drama students and scholars to make full use of their creative flair. This facility has further enabled students to complete their GCSE in drama, complete their A Levels and pursue a theatrical career. The focus remains on providing opportunities for all our students and to ensure parity across all sites.

Donations can be made via our website or by contacting the Development Office on 01780 750032.

“THIS YEAR ALONE, THE SCHOOLS HAVE AWARDED MEANS-TESTED BURSARIES TO 316 PUPILS, WITH A COMBINED VALUE OF £2.3M.”

SPORTING AMBITION AT NEW KETTERING ROAD FACILITY

The sports facilities on the Kettering Road site are set to be redeveloped, increasing both capacity and opportunity for our students, as well as increasing local community access.

Announcing the project, Principal Will Phelan said: “Sport at Stamford is going from strength to strength. The range of sports that we offer, and the opportunities to keep fit and active, are growing all the time.

“Our students are achieving local, regional and national recognition for their success in all kinds of different sports.

“But more importantly than anything, more and more of our students are taking part in physical activities for the sheer joy of it, which we all know is a crucial part of any happy, healthy life.

“We want all of that enthusiasm, that commitment, and that growing passion to be matched by the facilities that our students can learn and train in.”

For more information, visit:

www.stamfordschools.org.uk/support-us/



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Our Business Directory launches

The Alumni Relations and Development Team are delighted to be able to share a new initiative with you: the Stamford Endowed Schools Business Directory.

We would like to be able to support our alumni and parents, many of whom have founded their own businesses, and showcasing them in our directory is one way of forging links and helping our community.

The directory is available to all on the School's website and promoted through our social media platforms. For more information, email Natalie Pretsell, Community Engagement Manager, on community@ses.lincs.sch.uk



To sign up your business to the directory, use this QR code.



Stamford donates over 450 Easter eggs to local charities

Students and staff from across the Stamford Schools donated over 450 Easter eggs to local communities in the run up to Easter.

The Easter eggs were intended to cheer up members of the local community who have been most isolated throughout the pandemic.

Eggs were donated to Mindspace Stamford, Tixover Care Home, Second Helpings and the Evergreen Care Trust.

Mrs Chew, Charity Co-ordinator at Stamford School, said: "We would like to express our thanks to all students, staff and parents who contributed to the donation. It is fantastic to see that people have been so generous in supporting our local community."

Half a tonne of supplies sent to the Stamford Foodbank

Students from across the Stamford Schools donated nearly half a tonne of food (495kg) to the Stamford Foodbank, by collecting more than 17 boxes full of food and home supplies.

Charity Prefect, Sofia Welch, said: "Crates were placed in form rooms and in the common rooms, and lists of the vital items needed were put up on surrounding noticeboards.

"We are passionate about giving back to the community in any way we can, and we are really proud of how much our students have managed to donate."



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Stamford sign the Armed Forces Covenant



The Stamford Schools have formally pledged their commitment to supporting current and former members of the Armed Forces.

Principal Will Phelan has signed the Armed Forces Covenant, which demonstrates the Schools' commitment to fair treatment for those who serve, or have served, in the Armed Forces.

The covenant supports serving personnel, service leavers, veterans, and their families, and ensures that they are treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy, and society that they serve.

The signing of the covenant marks recognition of the long-standing

relationship between the Stamford Schools and the Armed Forces. Forces families make up a third of the boarding community at Stamford, with Forces' parents serving across the UK and internationally, including a large number from nearby RAF bases Wittering, Waddington, Molesworth and Alconbury.

The Schools' Combined Cadet Force (CCF) started in 1916 and is one of the largest voluntary contingents in the UK, with almost 250 students from Years 10 to 13 enrolled across Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force sections.

Mr Phelan, said: "I am delighted to have signed the Armed Forces Covenant. We have always been wholly committed to supporting our forces in every way that we can, and the covenant is a fitting way to demonstrate that commitment."



Pastoral Pup joins Stamford

The Stamford Schools have welcomed their new 'Pastoral Pup', cocker spaniel Wilson, who forms part of the evolving pastoral programme.

Wilson lives with his staff handlers, and as a wellbeing dog, will support students pastorally: extensive research has shown that wellbeing dogs have a positive effect on student mental health.

Dogs have been shown to have a soothing presence within a school environment, and to provide an uplifting experience, which helps all of the Schools' community feel more relaxed, confident and able to cope and adapt to challenges.



CCF turns over ponchos to New Leaf Triangle

The CCF has donated its surplus ponchos to New Leaf Triangle, a charity providing natural learning environments for children and adults.

New Leaf Triangle's mission is to use the outdoors and animals to help people to learn and combat personal challenges through fun motivational activities, and to overcome difficulties such as ADHD, social, emotional and behavioural issues and a wide range of mental health conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder and dementia.

Operations and Teaching Support Staff recognised through Commendations and Long Service Recognition Awards

Eighteen members of Operations, Teaching Support and Professional Services staff received Commendation Awards, which were presented in individual socially distanced ceremonies in December 2020.

In addition to the current 25 year long-service awards, the Schools have given additional recognition to Operations and Teaching Support Staff reaching ten, 15 and 20 years' service. Eight members of staff received ten years' service awards, four have reached 15 and one hit the two decade milestone.

Head of Human Resources, Ms Rainsby, said: "We have been running the Commendation Awards for over three years now and it's not about the certificate or the event itself, it's about the words and hearing that their contribution is noticed and appreciated.

"To quote someone at a recent presentation: 'This has given me such a lift to know that what I give is so appreciated by my manager and team. I love working here and what I do and this just makes it all the more special.'"





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ROBIN LILLEY (OS 88)

From trenches to training

A global leader in the learning and development sector, Robin Lilley (OS 88) talks about what it takes to be successful in business and leadership.

By **Natalie Pretsell**.

The world of leadership, learning and development is forever evolving. Much like education in schools, the corporate machine continues to strive to embed professional growth and dynamism in the workforce and for The Coca-Cola Company, this has Old Stamfordian Robin Lilley front and centre in delivering this vision. Currently its Global Director for Leadership, Learning and Development and with over 15 years experience, it is Robin's responsibility to identify and develop leaders, building on individuals' capabilities across the organisation.

While at Stamford, Robin developed a love for all things history – general and ancient – as well as sport, with tennis and fencing taking his interest.

"I look back and am amazed at what we got access to through our education at Stamford and how we managed to find the time to cram everything in," he says.

Robin spoke of the best friendships by far having been forged at Stamford and attributed this to the encouragement and ethos of the Schools in developing their life skills: "There was a real sense of hard work, conscientiousness around putting the effort into things, whether that was sport or academic pursuits, you were able to see for yourself the positive results."

This was where Robin first saw what learning and development could do and how formative it was in his career. He is a big believer in people's potential being realised through their hard work.

"You don't realise at the time how fortunate you are to be exposed to such inspirational characters and the benefits of being in a high-performance environment to encourage the best from you," he says.

Reminiscing about the fun times at School (the times he could go on record and talk to us about!) Robin spoke of having a classroom with a trapdoor looking down into the Master's common room which they would peek through, the competitive House singing competitions that developed camaraderie, and of the freezing temperature of the School swimming pool which would likely raise health and safety concerns these days.

A keen member of the SES Combined Cadet Force, Robin was amazed at how much, as students, they were able to experience at such a young age: experiences which taught them to manage risk, problem-solve and embrace novel situations.

"For the first time, you had a sense of something bigger than yourself, you were there as part of a class and a team and you had to be committed which was just inspiring," he says. These are values taken by Robin throughout his career and personal life which help to drive his sense of ambition.

Robin's journey after SES took him initially to Durham University to study Archaeology before going to Sandhurst to become an infantry officer.

He spent five years in the military before moving into the corporate world as a consultant.



“The Army gave me a perspective on good leadership and the importance of development,” he says. “It’s about how you have to work your way up and invest in your people. You can’t just have someone come in from the ‘outside’ and take a senior position. It wouldn’t work.”

Prior to joining Coca-Cola, Robin spent five years at BP, just after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. He was brought in to head up their leadership and development programme, as following this catastrophic incident the company wanted to change their approach to culture and wellbeing in the workforce; an opportunity he was willing to embrace.

Discussing what drew him to a career in development, Robin says: “It is quite self-indulgent; you spend a lot of time learning how to improve yourself in order to help others. The best investment you can make is investing in your own skills. I really enjoy seeing people thrive in any area of work. Even in the army you get a great satisfaction from watching people grow.”

Robin is particularly interested in the ‘knowing/doing gap’ within workforces.

“There are things that you intrinsically know you should do but don’t, and so how can we bridge this gap and do things well?” he asks. “Intellectually this is a really interesting and stimulating area to work in as it incorporates aspects of behavioural science and psychology alongside the economics and functioning of industries.”

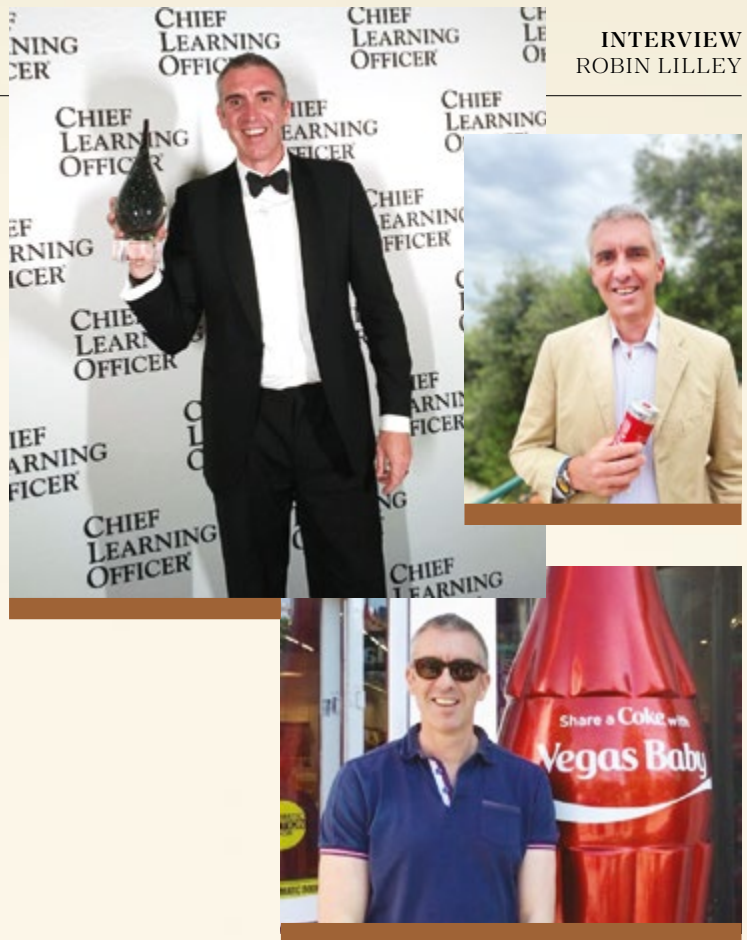
Starting in his current post in February 2020, Robin’s plan was to deliver a new strategy and empower the teams to work effectively with speed and through innovative working rather than the dated, hierarchical system that was previously in place. Although Covid threw a spanner in the works, Robin reframed the experience to magnify the issues that needed addressing, using it as a natural disrupter to the status quo, and an enabler for change. This resulted in permission to make significant changes quickly and progress was swift.

One of the first reviews was how they would support a move to home working. Moving over 15,000 staff in three months to an online learning platform allowed for social learning, co-creation and collaboration that may never have been possible before.

“You make the impossible possible when you have a focus and it led us to wonder what else we could achieve, the organisation suddenly became more curious,” he says.

There was also the importance of employee’s mental health, resilience, energy management and the psychology attached to working from home unplanned for sustained periods of time.

**“You make
the impossible
possible when
you have a focus.”**



“Where previously many had kept their personal and work lives separate, we had to manage the impact of how we as an organisation were now entering people’s homes and private spaces,” he explains. “This caused leaders to become more authentic and caring, adapting their leadership styles to the benefit of the team whilst also holding a lens over those who maybe were struggling and needed some support.”

“With these waves of disruption, we were able to throw the rule book out of the window and try new things”.

Robin’s role would quite often take him on the road and out of the UK. However, with pandemic restrictions in place, along with the rest of the world he has had to learn to readjust to new home working environments: “When you travel you always have variability, whereas when you are home everything is planned and could be monotonous.”

ROBIN’S ADVICE

If you were to read just one book then make sure it is *How to win friends and influence people* by Dale Carnegie.

“Follow this and you can be very successful. It talks you through how the real art in any business is about getting on with people and the impact you have on others.”

“‘Getting on with people’ is a seemingly basic skill, but in the world of leadership and learning it is hugely valuable,” Robin says.

When mentoring employees, he uses the ‘PIE Model’, developed by Harvey Coleman in the 1990s, to work with people on their performance, the impact they

have, and their exposure to different opportunities.

“Also, are you that person that volunteers for the difficult projects, who gets yourself out there and known to people, leans into discomfort and gravitates towards those jobs that people are scared of?” he asks them.

Having seen through the project at Coca-Cola, Robin is starting a new role with the Kone Corporation, leaders in the elevator and escalator industry, a company based in Finland with a global workforce of 60,000. His expertise in giving people a lift may have more than one meaning this time...



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Behind the scenes of Stamford going global



Stamford's international reputation is going from strength to strength with dozens of families sending their children to our Schools every year. We spoke to International Registrar, **Meg Oswald**, to find out more.



When I speak about my job I find I am quite often asked: "What does an International Registrar do?" It's an unusual job title, but the job itself is interesting and diverse.

As International Registrar, I am responsible for promoting Stamford to our growing community of international agents, who work with families overseas to place children in British boarding schools. I also manage the admissions process for all our international applicants, from the initial enquiry right through to the starting date of a new pupil.

The UK is an extremely popular place for international students to study in, especially during their GCSE and A Level years. There are 30,000 international students in independent schools in the UK. Although a large proportion come from China and Hong Kong, dozens of countries send children to the UK every year, with Spain, Russia, Germany and Nigeria all being major players.

Every market has different needs – for example, some place a higher value on co-curricular activities, some on the style of learning, and some on academic results and university destinations. Understanding every market, and making sure we promote Stamford so that it will have the broadest possible appeal, is an ongoing challenge.

As I communicate with people from all across the world, many of whom are in different time zones, the time my day starts often varies. For example, I will always have an earlier start if I am scheduled for a meeting with an agent or prospective family in China or Hong Kong. They are eight hours ahead of the UK, so they are finishing their working day as we are starting ours.

In international recruitment, the process from enquiry to acceptance has virtually always been carried out remotely and via digital means, using technology to interview and assess pupils, and to provide virtual tours. Due to Covid-19, digital communication quickly became the new normal, and a lot of the work we had been doing with our international agents and families was suddenly relevant to how we interacted with families much closer to home.

Good communication skills are vital in this role, as I liaise with both external and internal stakeholders, at all levels, every day – and often with agents and families who have English as a second or third language. It is also essential to be extremely organised.

A typical day might include handling and processing enquiries and applications, arranging and invigilating online testing, gathering documentation to support each student's visa application, sending out offers, arranging airport transfers for students flying into the UK, writing newsletters and updates for the agents that we work with, and attending online recruitment fairs to help spread the word about Stamford.

The most rewarding part of my job is definitely meeting the new students when they arrive in September. Typically, they do not travel to meet us during the admissions process and so it is the first time I am able to meet them and put a face to the name.

We have a wonderful international boarding community at Stamford, and it is truly fulfilling to be a part of so many talented children's academic journeys, and to witness them settle in and thrive in their home away from home.

"WE HAVE A WONDERFUL INTERNATIONAL BOARDING COMMUNITY AT STAMFORD, AND IT IS FULFILLING TO BE A PART OF SO MANY TALENTED CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC JOURNEYS."



'Sensing the Unseen' exhibition @ the National Gallery, London

EMMA MCFARLAND (OS 88)

SEEING ART FROM A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Emma McFarland (OS 88) is currently heading up the Innovation Programme for the National Gallery. It's a hugely creative role bringing together all her experience in the arts, she tells **Natalie Pretsell**.

Art features in our everyday life, whether we are consciously aware of it or not, whether it has a small impact or a more prominent position, and Emma McFarland is passionate about connecting people from all walks of life using the power of art.

From a young age, Emma's interest started in music and dance: "I used to dance all the time and was obsessed with music. It was like an escape."

During her time at Stamford, Emma attended the Body Focus class run by the Welland School of Dancing, which she saw as her first real opportunity to channel this love and see where it could go. Subsequently, she then set up a dance club after school for younger students and was encouraged by the School: "If you had an idea, you were supported to make it happen."

This love for dance continued into Sixth Form where Emma recalls staying after lessons to go to classes and enter festivals, and of finding co-curricular activities such as Young Enterprise and the Duke of Edinburgh Award to be useful ways into different opportunities and exposure to new experiences.



She describes a mixed academic career which supported her in getting to her current role with the National Gallery. While diligent with her studies, Emma was torn between

her parents' wish for her to explore the sciences, and her own desire to pursue the arts. Emma chose chemistry, biology and economics for A Levels, inspired by teacher of economics Mrs Devaney, who she described as inspiring and offering much-needed, different, political perspectives.



“YOU HAVE TO BE COURAGEOUS IN YOUR WORK AND HUGELY CREATIVE. I HOPE IT GETS PEOPLE TO SEE PAINTINGS IN A WHOLE NEW WAY.”

Emma looks back at Stamford and says she feels now that it was a place where lots of people were driven by excellence and expectation. At the time though, many of the girls found Miss Tennison terrifying. But what she appreciates now is “how Miss Tennison really believed in the girls, and so she pushed us to achieve things”.

“The School reinforced this. I don’t think I understood the power of this at the time. I wish I’d had had the confidence to take more advantage of the opportunities at the School. They gave us amazing opportunities and instilled a sense of ambition,” she adds.

Emma studied economics at Liverpool Polytechnic while also joining the Everyman Youth Theatre and volunteering at the Unity Theatre. In the recession of the early ‘90s, with intense competition for jobs, it was challenging to break into the arts with an Economics degree, so Emma worked for an investment bank for several years. Her passion for the arts was not lost though, and she went on to secure a role at PLATFORM, a political arts group working across disciplines.

She then went on to co-direct the Greenwich Millennium Film Festival in 2000, but financial need sent her into roles in the wider not for profit sector, leading the development of a digital learning platform in the advice sector, and Programme Director for a charity working on social inclusion policy and projects. The pull of the arts remained strong though, and her next step took Emma to Trinity Laban, completing a postgraduate qualification in contemporary dance before working there as a Project Manager in the learning and participation team.

Next we head to Wales, where Emma started freelancing, primarily working with dance organisations but also libraries, charities and museums: “I love the freedom self-employment gives you. I’m lucky I’ve been able to be so entrepreneurial and creative in my work. I’m always excited by diving into unknown territory.”

2014 was a time of austerity in the arts industry with the need to think ahead and be creative to keep culture alive. Having enjoyed working in film and the digital world, Emma chose to attend Hyper Island, a Swedish digital creative business school where she achieved a distinction in her Masters degree.

Emma’s passion was now to work with artists and arts organisations to provide a different experience of the arts; one that was more audience-centered and used the latest digital technologies alongside new kinds of design processes to create meaningful, inspiring, interactive experiences. It was a bold and brave move as her practice challenged many ‘established norms’ in the arts.

Her work took her to Studio Wayne McGregor where she established the QuestLab digital transformation programme for choreographers, before she began her role at the National Gallery heading up the Innovation Programme.

Aware that the National Gallery is a traditional institution, Emma knew this would offer an exciting new be a challenge; digital innovation requires bringing new mindsets, new ways of working, new kinds of diverse collaborators and new relationships with the public – all so crucial for digital innovation - into an institution with such a strong and successful heritage.

Emma wants to connect people from diverse backgrounds with the artworks and put visitors’ needs at the centre of what they do, and she has embraced the opportunities to deliver transformation and renewal. She says: “You have to be courageous in this work and hugely creative. You also need to be curious and happy to embrace unknowns.”

Her latest project, the digital exhibition ‘Sensing the Unseen’ explored Gossaert’s painting ‘The Adoration of the Kings’ through sound, poetry, hi-res digital imagery and gestural interaction. It closed this June after receiving great reviews from critics and visitors alike.

“It was an intense year of development during a pandemic, with a hugely talented collaborative team and co-designing it with 75 of our visitors, and I’m so proud of what we achieved. We wanted people to see the painting in a new way and engage new audiences with the artwork, and we achieved that,” she says.

For this industry, Emma’s experience certainly shows that hard work, passion and determination are key.

“Never give up, you have to be really resilient to work in this field, constantly network and seek opportunities wherever you can – be brave!” she says.

“Keep hold of why you are doing something and the passion you have at the heart of it. And be open minded to some interesting diversions along the way – they will almost certainly prove useful in the end.”



Design workshop for ‘Sensing the Unseen’ © the National Gallery, London



Social climbing

Comedic sketches have gained Year 13 student Megan Bolton nearly two million followers on TikTok. By Rebecca Taylor.

Joining the social media giants of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, TikTok took to the main stage in 2020. Available in 150 countries, with more than one billion users, the short-form video platform has been downloaded over 2.6 billion times worldwide.

TikTok, however, is uniquely placed through its user demographic; 70% 'Gen-Z' (the under 24s), one of whom being Stamford Sixth Form's Megan Bolton. With a channel started as a "joke and a laugh" she has now amassed a following of 2 million, with over 134 million likes on her comical 'different types of people' inspired videos.

"When lockdown started in March 2020, I thought it could be a good platform to help build my acting profile,

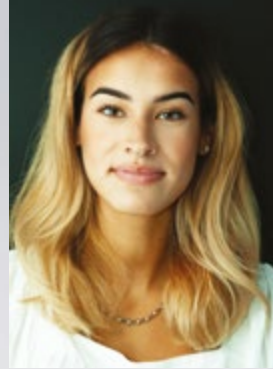
In character, ready to post on TikTok



Advice from Megan

"You have to stop caring about what people think and how people may perceive you for doing something. If I cared about what others thought, I never would have started TikTok and so never gained any of the experience that came with it.

"Keep your content original and to who you are, as it's the individual and unique personalities that get noticed on social media."



and so I started using my acting skills to create comedic and relatable videos for people my age on TikTok. I started the channel as a laugh, as most people do at my age," Megan said.

"I get inspiration for my videos purely through observing people in certain situations that occur in everyday life, whether it be at school or in my home environment. As a person, I tend to be more of a listener and observer, and so in certain situations at school, for example, when doing a test, I'll observe and remember certain people's reactions to the situation. For my 'mum vs dad' sketches I just use everyday situations that I've witnessed or been a part of growing up. I focus on situations that most people have been through to make my sketches more relatable."

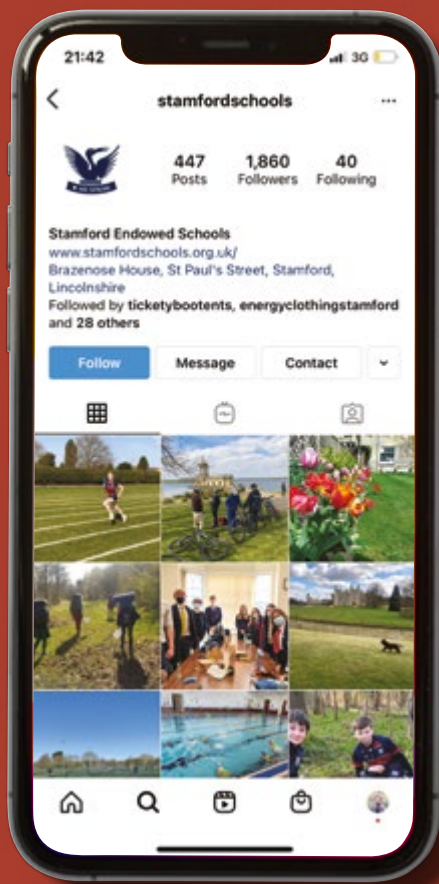
TikTok fame has certainly opened doors for Megan; the opportunity to work with global clothes and beauty brands including L'Oréal and Shein, Amazon Prime, and Disney+ too. She has spoken on BBC Radio 5 and BBC Radio Lincolnshire, been interviewed by *The Stage* and *Evening Standard*, and was invited to self-tape for film casting directors from Netflix and 'Hollyoaks'.

Megan is currently studying English, geography and drama A Levels, and afterwards intends to take a year out to focus on social media.

"I'm excited to continue this as a full-time job, where I can fully commit to all my social media platforms, including YouTube, which I can't do currently due to my focus on schooling. I hope to collaborate with other influencers, as well as actors and I'll continue to audition and self-tape for films and TV shows," Megan said.

"I am so overwhelmed with the amount of support I have received from fans as well as friends and family, but I don't think I will ever fully come to terms with the massive growth that has occurred over my social media platforms in such a short amount of time. I feel like, due to focusing on school, my attention and mentality is divided and so I am not wholly focusing on TikTok and therefore I do not have time to appreciate and enjoy the social media journey completely."

"I get inspiration by observing people in situations that occur in everyday life."



OS ONLINE

Charles McLaren, Year 11, volunteered with the Alumni Relations and Development Team as part of his DoFE Award. He got to see the impact social media has had for many Old Stamfordians.

Throughout lockdown, the use of social media has been prominent in helping people stay and feel connected with the Schools, and each other. Relationships old and new have been re-energised and things that may seem small, like a photo on Facebook, have helped to create a sense of nostalgia for our Old Stamfordians (OS).

The OS social media platforms post photos from the SES Archive throughout the week, as well as news from the Schools and upcoming events for Old Stamfordians.

These pages have grown significantly over the last year, with the Instagram page accumulating more than 500 new followers. No doubt this increase has been bolstered by the fact that we have all been spending much more time at home, with use of social media increasing over lockdown for 67% of people.

However, there is another reason, with the emergence of a younger community of Stamfordians: those who are still studying at the School. The creation of an Instagram page, a platform many teenagers are familiar with, has piqued their interest in those students who came before them.

As the Archive is digitised and posted online, it is bringing together the entire Stamford community, wherever in the world they happen to be, and whatever age they are.

With many spaces closing and events cancelled, we have spent the last year, for the most part, in our houses, foregoing much interaction. Save for the odd Zoom quiz, social media has come to our aid, allowing us to connect and support

each other when we need it most. This was seen with the celebration of the 2020 leavers. People were quick to engage with them, and our Old Stamfordians supported those joining their ranks at a time of uncertainty, demonstrating once again the caring nature of the Stamford community.

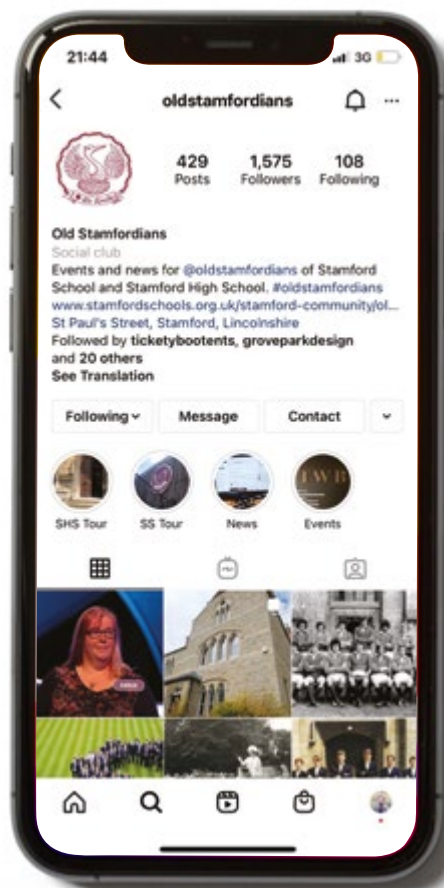
Posts which prove again and again to be very popular are those featuring members of staff, where we ask you to share anecdotes and memories about them, from your time at the Schools.

This has created some wonderful interactions in the comments, with people coming together to tell stories of their teachers, and in some cases, the teachers might even reply themselves! Two of the most poignant posts of the year have involved members of staff that sadly passed away: Mr John Hale and Miss Pam Halsey. The memories and stories shared about these two much-loved teachers remind us of the impact that our school days can have on us.

The most popular post across the Schools at present is Wilson, the new 'Pastoral Pup', who has now garnered more than 2,000 likes across the OS social media pages. Getting ready to work with students in September, he has already thoroughly stolen the show, and his presence has reminded many Old Stamfordians, especially those from the High School, of pets that were previously brought in by staff.

We have heard so many fond memories of Miss Bland's golden retriever Laura, and Toby the poodle from Miss Tennison and it is a reminder that, despite all the changes in the world over the years, there are ties that bind Stamfordians together through the ages.

At a time where human contact has been so desperately lacking, social media has helped keep our Old Stamfordians' spirits up by bringing people together, and looking forward to the future while reflecting on the past.



A life in ballet

Lee Armstrong has spent a career creating the marketing for Birmingham Royal Ballet.

By **Rebecca Taylor.**

Lee Armstrong (OS 97) has worked at Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB) his entire career, following his graduation from the University of Birmingham in 2000. He's now the Senior Design Executive, and responsible for the company's marketing materials and imagery.

"I work in a nine-person Communications and Marketing Team and, together with my manager, I have been largely responsible for the look and constancy of style within BRB's advertising materials. Day-to-day, I design posters, leaflets, programmes and web imagery, plan and run photoshoots, managing the photo library, writing or ghost-writing articles and programme notes as well as creating online content for our social media channels," he says.

"I fell into my job at BRB and next September marks my 20th year here. I'm on my fourth or fifth job title! Things have changed a lot over the last 20 years. When I first started, BRB brought in graduates like myself and trained us up. Now, however, we hire people from all walks of life, but what is a requirement is prior experience in the job applied for. Newer employees have increasingly relevant experience from outside of the arts, too."

Lee speculates that efficiency is the marker of this change: "Money is a lot tighter than it was in 2001 when I began this career, and so it's vital that all companies are run efficiently and in a much more business-like manner. A lot of it is public money, after all, and so we need to be very responsible about how we spend it."

Throughout his time at Birmingham Royal Ballet, Lee worked under Sir David Bintley, who he describes as 'an inspirational and very talented man', leading to one of the most rewarding projects of his career.

"I worked on a book for David Bintley's departure, which was a privilege as well as being fascinating. Trying to write about and research photographs from a 43-year career as a



Lee conducting 'Asklepios', 2019. Image: Colin Butterworth

dancer and choreographer, all without him finding out, was brilliant, and I'm hugely proud of the results."

Sir David was the Director of BRB until mid-2019, when he was succeeded by Carlos Acosta, having choreographed at least ten full-length and twelve one-act ballets for BRB in his time there.

Lee says the variety and dynamic nature of a career marketing creative arts is what has kept him drawn to it for so long.

"A few years ago, we did the most fantastic photography and filming in the grounds of a stunning, still lived-in, stately home called Madresfield Court. It was hard work, but enormous fun and very rewarding!" he says.

"Something else I'll never forget was 'Ballet Hoo! Ballet Changed My Life'. It was a huge, Channel 4-filmed project that culminated in 2006. Working with various youth charities, the company took some 200 young people from genuinely difficult backgrounds and worked with them over two years, leading up to an adapted performance of Kenneth MacMillan's 'Romeo and Juliet' at Birmingham Hippodrome, with 60 of them and a few BRB dancers. It was one of the most emotional evenings that I have ever spent in the theatre."

Lee studied at Stamford from 1990 to 1997, and as well as working towards his A Levels in maths, French and music, he enjoyed participating in the orchestras and played for the badminton team.

Commenting on his time at Stamford, Lee said: "My undoubted highlight of SES was all the music: the orchestras, choirs, musicals, space to play chamber music with friends, and the talent and passion of the staff was amazing.

"Above all, I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Karen Bentley (or Miss Underwood as she was when I started), my cello teacher. I didn't even really know what a cello was when I, rather randomly, decided I wanted to take up the offer of free group lessons. Her belief in me and her teaching have quite literally influenced every aspect of my life since."

Lee went on to study music at Birmingham, and describes himself as an arranger and orchestrator, semi-professional conductor and (slightly lapsed) cellist.

"Almost all my many friends and acquaintances and, indeed, my job, are related to music and the arts. I have Karen Bentley to thank for that being, as she was, the single most important influence on my early musical life."

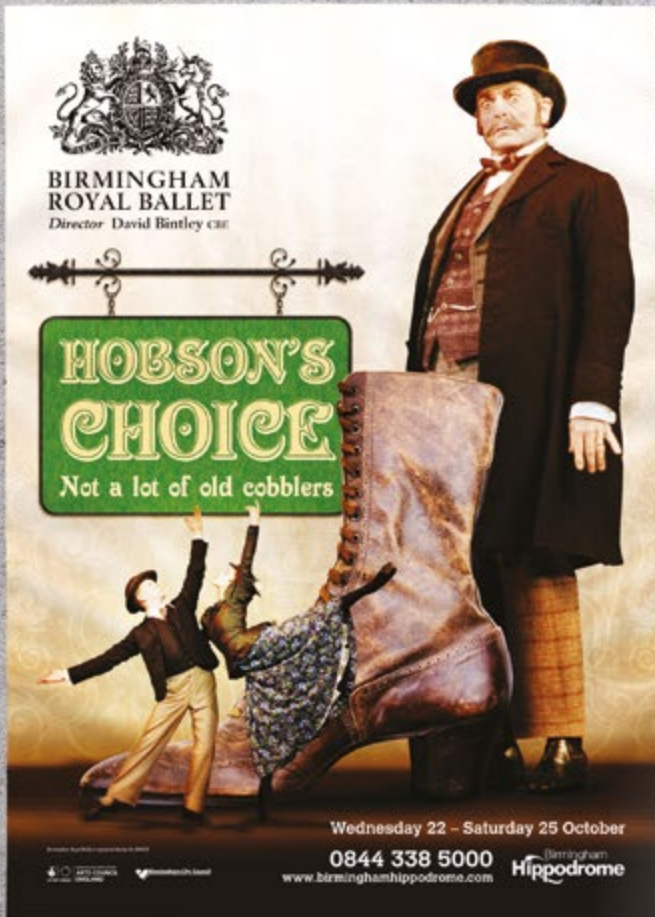
Lee in a photoshoot for David's 'Still Life' at the Penguin Café. Image: Sarah Battye



"MY HIGHLIGHT OF SES WAS THE MUSIC: THE ORCHESTRAS, CHOIRS, MUSICALS, THE SPACE TO PLAY CHAMBER MUSIC WITH FRIENDS, AND THE TALENTED AND PASSIONATE STAFF WERE AMAZING."

Autumn Glory poster, 2010 My first 'completely-my-own' poster design for BRB, for the triple bill in Autumn 2010. Original image: Bill Cooper

↓ Subsidiary marketing artwork for a bill of 1930s ballets



↑ **The Dancing Times, 2016** Lee's artwork on the cover ahead of the premiere of David Bintley's 'The Tempest'. Original Image: Richard Battye

← **Hobson's Choice poster, 2012** My favourite poster I have designed. This is just a fantastic ballet, my favourite of David's many works, and the grumpy old man in the background is Desmond Kelly, slightly scary former Assistant Director, one-time partner to Margot Fonteyn and the creator of the role of Henry Hobson. Original images: Bill Cooper

Games theory

Sport at Stamford has played a crucial role over the past year, at home and on the games fields. **Louise Warren**, SES Sports Department Administrator, explains how.

During the demands of this unprecedented year, it has been a pleasure to be a part of the Stamford Endowed Schools' sports department and bear witness to the resilience of staff and students during such a testing time.

Sport is an integral aspect of life across the Schools. Through sport, the staff aim to foster and promote healthy attitudes to physical activity throughout a student's school career and, more importantly, their life beyond their education.

As we all know, releasing endorphins during physical activity triggers a positive effect on our mental health. During the various lockdowns and restrictions, sports staff have had to adapt their approach and be creative to ensure these benefits can be realised within all their students.

They have been instrumental in delivering stimulating live workouts, creating a plethora of coaching videos, and encouraging time away from the now-too-familiar screen with challenges and competitions, as well as keeping the sporting fires burning through motivational speeches and webinars with sporting professionals.

In turn, empowered students have demonstrated their own tenacity: reflecting the attitudes of their mentors, setting and achieving their own personal goals and encouraging others through their own coaching videos. They have created new ways to stay physically active and most importantly students are enjoying doing so. The result has been the

emergence of highly motivated individuals, inspired by our creative staff to continually strive to reap the benefits of exercise.

The benefits of sport, often viewed as something co-curricular supplementing academic studies, can be truly recognised through Stamford's 'Sport for All' philosophy.

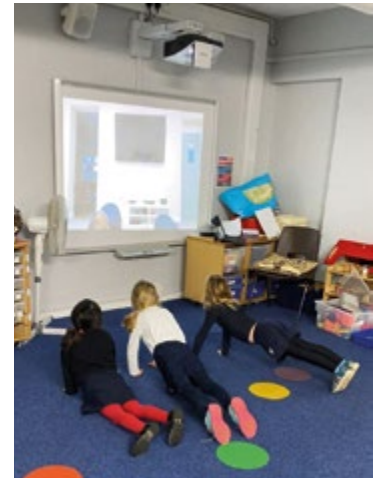
All students can find enjoyment through participation. Everyone can enjoy physical activity in some way or another, whether it be cricket or croquet, basketball or breakdancing, rugby or rhythmic gymnastics, hockey or hide and seek...

The list of games and sports at Stamford, we are proud to say, is not only considerably long but hopefully all-encompassing.

During their time on court and pitch, in arena or pool, students are assimilating lifelong skills which have the potential to place them higher up the employability ladder. These include teamwork and camaraderie, emotional control through dealing with setbacks, negotiation and conflict management, leadership and time awareness – while at the same time honing more

Dion Di Cataldo showing that day's A to Z of exercises.

Matty Newman and Simone Compton live for 'Morning Moves with Matty', below.



academic skills in mathematical reasoning, memory, oracy and metacognitive skills.

Through the resilience to adapt, other benefits of a well-developed sporting programme have been revealed, focussing more on individual techniques and skills through coaching videos. Understanding and learning more about game sense through watching professionals play and working through theoretical game play exercises have been invaluable.

Then there is feeling the benefits of mental well-being through daily exercise, fostering reflectiveness through goal setting, respect and patience for others online, planning and organisation, flexibility, sustained attention, discipline, adaptability and reliability.

Amid the global pandemic our sports staff have shown amazing grit, rising to the challenge of continuing to deliver an exciting and motivating physical programme in a constantly changing environment, while also ensuring children are safe and engaged to enjoy sporting moments whenever and wherever they can.

The opportunity for our staff to pause, reflect on, adapt and hone the way sport is delivered should not be underestimated and as we move 'back to normal', students will be better equipped in so many ways, having had the opportunity to focus and learn so many additional skills.



“STUDENTS HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR OWN TENACITY, SETTING AND ACHIEVING THEIR OWN PERSONAL GOALS.”

The Value of Boarding

Charlie Esson, teacher of physical education and Assistant Housemaster, tells us about how boarding helps to develop independence, self-motivation and life-long friendships.

Someone once asked me what it is like to work in boarding. It was a good question, one which I am always mindful in my answer that there is a good proportion of the population out there who have limited or no knowledge of boarding life. This can, at times, lead to a false representation and perception of this type of educational experience. So, when I get the opportunity to share what it is like, I can speak with pride and passion.

Firstly, boarding is not a substitute for parenting; boarding is far from parenting. I would describe it more as an extension of one's education in a home away from home environment. House families are there to continue to nurture individuals and develop their life skills and values whilst they are away from home. Providing this safe space in which to learn and grow is so important in these crucial stages of a child and young person's development. We should be honoured to be a part of this time in their life.

Being a part of this family allows boarders to learn to share and cooperate, much as professionals do in a workplace. I recall a boy in boarding who was great with technology. He regularly helped people with their computers and phones. On one occasion, he was playing for the 4th XI cricket team and did not have a bat. One of his boarding peers was the 1st XI captain who initially intended to lend him an old bat. However, he ended up giving it to him to keep. They were not close friends, but they understood the power of community, cooperation and sharing.

Independence is greatly developed, which is natural under such circumstances, and for our boarders it is done at a measured rate. For example, they gradually learn to be self-motivated and independent in their approach to prep. The youngest pupils will be supervised during prep, then

“ONE OF HIS BOARDING PEERS WAS THE 1ST XI CAPTAIN WHO INITIALLY INTENDED TO LEND HIM AN OLD BAT. HOWEVER, HE ENDED UP GIVING IT TO HIM TO KEEP.”

they progress to partial supervision before becoming fully independent. Of course, those who require any additional support can have access to this, to ensure the balance is right.

Students who board at their schools often learn to make choices independently. Again, these are key skills in life that when nurtured correctly, can stand them in good stead for the future. For example, they choose what activities they do after school and each evening. House staff are always on hand to ensure they have a balanced lifestyle that is stimulating for the mind, body and soul, something which is taken very seriously here at the Stamford Endowed Schools.

Our boarding houses are very sociable and kind places where boarders help each other with homework, cook for one another and play games together. The sense of community is really present and life long friendships are certainly built through these years.

The term 'sent to boarding school' now seems archaic. Gone are the days when young children would board a train with their trunk and tuck box, not returning home until the holidays, communicating only by letters. Nowadays, with twenty-first century communication and developments in technology, parents of boarders continue to be parents during term and most will communicate daily with their child through text, email, phone call or video call. This can help ease the transition from home to school for some, and keep them connected particularly where there are long distances.

This level of communication is also key in the triadic relationship between parents, housemaster and child. It helps to ensure that a child's academic and pastoral needs are being met, individuals feel well connected and we are able to foster a positive experience whilst at the Schools.

Whilst we appreciate boarding is not for everyone, for those that do choose to board with us, we work hard to foster a supportive, empowering and active home as a powerful and enriching extension of education.





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Ms. [Name]	13 pm
Ms. [Name]	14 pm
Ms. [Name]	15 pm
Ms. [Name]	17 pm
Ms. [Name]	18 pm



← SHS magazine from 1972

↓ Stamford High School Library postcard



PAGES FROM HISTORY



Generations of the Baxter family attended Stamford High School, and they have amassed an impressive archive. **James Buckman**, SES Archivist, speaks to Jean (OS 43) and Jane (OS 75).

Jean Baxter (née Ackland) attended SHS from 1937-43. One of four sisters, Jean is the younger sister of Hilda (OS 25) and Mary (OS 34). During her schooldays, Jean was School Prefect and Head of St Andrew's House. Her daughter, Jane, followed in her mother's footsteps and attended SHS from 1969-74. She says: "Following in my mother's footsteps was hard as she won a prize every year and I only got the needlework prize – once. I think she helped with that too!"

As a family, the Baxters have kept, and maintained, years of archive material: school photos, school records, exercise books, form prizes, Old Girl's magazines. In fact they have gathered enough to give the Schools' archives some serious competition!

How did you come to attend Stamford High School?

Jane - Stamford High School is in the family. My mother's two elder sisters went to the High School so there was no question about where she would go when it was her time. Hilda (20 years older than Jean, now deceased) won a scholarship, and went to school in Grantham, but the train journey was too long. Even after moving to SHS, Hilda still had to walk from West Deeping to Tallington, then catch a train to Essendine and onwards to Stamford.

What memories do you have of your Headmistresses?

Jane - Miss Medcalf. The red lipstick and the gown.

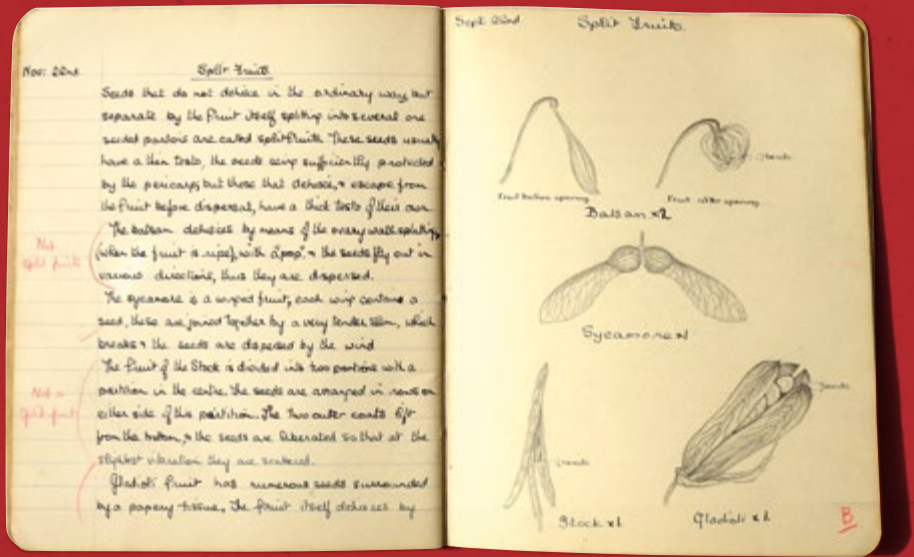
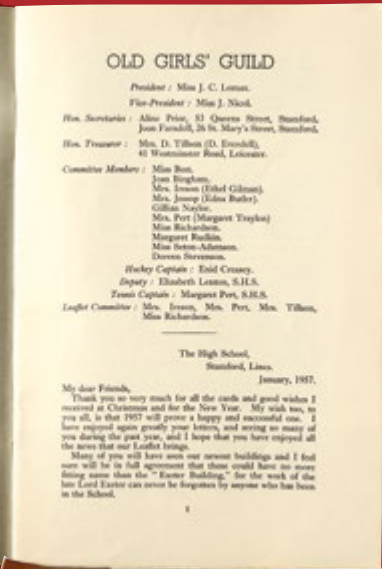
Jean - Miss Nicol was a very stern but fair lady. She had a motherly appearance. In my opinion, a very good Headmistress.

Are there any other staff you have particular memories of?

Jean - There are many: Miss Baton (English), Miss McIntosh (history), Miss Platt (art) and Miss Richardson (Latin). Miss Best was a favourite. I remember we called her 'Popsky'. I'm not sure where this came from! At the end of term, the teachers would say goodbye and shake hands with each of the students. I said: "Goodbye Miss Popsky" to Miss Best and my friends were in fits of giggles that I had said this to her face.

Jane - Mrs Cutting, Deputy Headmistress, was firm but fair. Miss Racklyeft (chemistry), Mr Scott (science), Miss Lilford (biology), and Miss Halsey and Miss Midgley (Latin). Miss Slater and Mrs Shields (scripture), and Mrs Gatward (art). In my era we did not take history or geography at O Level (regretfully) and only had one hour of each per week with Mrs Gosling and Miss Hill. Mr Baines and Miss Roughton taught English. Miss Roughton would come into the classroom and find us sitting on the radiators. She would say: "Girls, girls, please do not sit on the radiator because you will get piles". I don't think we knew what piles were!





Stamford High School, 1924

Diagrams from Jean Baxter's botany notebook



What do you remember of SHS during the Second World War?

Jean - The quad was sandbagged on open sides, windows were criss-crossed with white sticky tape and we had to carry gas masks with us from room to room. There were regular air raid drills and we all had to go and sit on shoe boxes in the cloakrooms. The School staff always had to know where you were, and pupils were not allowed out of the gates without written permission.

We had to walk to Burghley Park to play hockey as it was too dangerous to use the games field, but by the time we had walked there, had a boisterous game of hockey, walked back to School and then walked to town and boarded the bus, we were totally shattered.

No co-curricular activities or societies were allowed during these times due to the danger. In 1939, there was a school play performed at Easter, 'Quality Street' by JM Barrie, and Speech Days were always attended by the Marquess of Exeter.

SHS was used by pupils evacuated from the Mundella School in Nottingham and later those from Camden High School. They came with their own teachers, so we did not join together for lessons. The Camden Girls were known locally as 'The Greenflies' due to the colour of their uniforms.

Did you participate in any co-curricular activities?

Jane - I took drama lessons from the age of eight or nine. I went to Mrs Harley who started the Stamford Shakespeare Company. The very first production, 'Midsummer Night's Dream', was performed in The George Hotel's Monastery

Garden. My parents were so concerned about me being involved on a school night, Mrs Harley wrote a special part for me! My appearance was before the start of the play so I could then rush home, go to bed and be ready for school the next day.

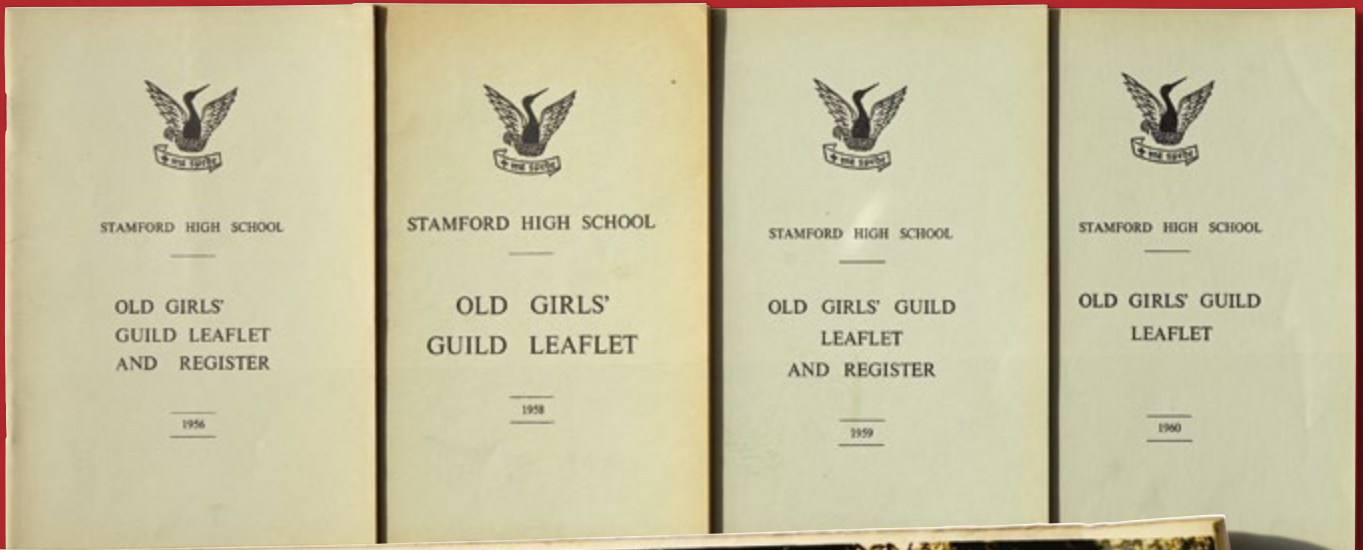
What other memories do you have of your time at the School?

Jane - Misbehaving! We used to fill lunchboxes with water, balance them on top of the door, and the next girl in would get wet. But one day, to our horror, Mrs Cutting caught us, and we were in so much trouble!

Jean - I got an order mark for whistling in the dinner queue. On another occasion, I got a detention on a Saturday morning for deceiving a teacher during a prep period into allowing me to do a sum on the blackboard as an 'example', when it was actually a part of the homework. Of course, I had to tell my parents the reason I had to be in on a Saturday!

School dinners were memorable. There were two separate menus: the 5d (pennies) Menu, which comprised hot mashed potatoes and pudding and the 11d (pennies) Menu, which was a main course and pudding. I had the 5d dinner, taking sandwiches to eat with the potatoes, which were ghastly. I used to try slipping the potatoes into my lunch tin, to avoid eating them, but if caught, they had to be retrieved and I had to stay at the table until I had eaten them. Eventually my parents agreed to me having the 11d Menu, which I enjoyed.

Specialties were steamed treacle pudding and custard, and chocolate pudding with chocolate sauce. With the mid-morning milk, you could have a sticky bun for a half penny.



What memories do you have of music?

Jane - In Welland House, music lessons were taken in The Hut with Mrs Rissik. We also studied the violin and Mr Johnstone would come over from Stamford School to teach us. The Music School was built in 1970, and Mrs Rissik and Miss Chant presided over it. We practised hymns and songs. The entire form would learn a song that we performed in the annual School singing competition. We did not take this very seriously at all.

What did you do after School?

Jane - After SHS, I embarked on a two-year Hotel and Catering OND course. That secured me a job with Hilton Hotels, followed by EMI Hotels. I completed EMI Hotels' graduate training scheme and then specialised in personnel

and training. Training was what I loved, and I moved to Rank Organisation where a training management role allowed me to move from the Hotels' division, to the Holiday division (Butlins and Haven) and subsequently to the IT division, serving Rank Hotels & Holidays. In 1985 I went to Turkey where I was involved in the holiday business until five years ago.

Jean - My sisters had trained to be teachers but I preferred an administrative role. I went to work at the National Farmers' Union in St Mary's Place where I learnt about the farming business. I then moved to Central Wool Growers where I was Company Secretary until I retired at the age of 65.

What does it mean to you to be an Old Stamfordian?

Jean - Very proud, especially that so many generations of our family have attended SHS, including my daughter-in-law Judith Baxter (née Richardson) and grand-daughters Victoria and Celia Baxter.

Jane - I am still very much in touch with all my school friends. We meet up for mini reunions from time-to-time, and we all make the effort to be there for the organised reunions at the School.

If you would like to see more of the SES archives, head to our website: www.stamfordschoolsarchive.co.uk

We are also always welcoming of new additions to our physical and digital collection. If you would like to share or donate any items, please get in contact with our Archivist, James Buckman: archives@ses.lincs.sch.uk

“WE MEET UP FOR MINI REUNIONS FROM TIME-TO-TIME AND WE ALL MAKE THE EFFORT TO BE THERE FOR THE ORGANISED REUNIONS AT THE SCHOOL.”





SARA McCOURT (OS 92)

TELLING STORIES OF TELLING EVENTS

Sara McCourt, née Evans, (OS 92) is an award-winning television producer. She talked to us about her early days at Stamford, and a career that has taken her around the world.

By **Hannah Hamilton.**



Despite being recognised by some of television's most respected awards bodies – including twice being nominated for a BAFTA – it's the stories about people that producer and director Sara McCourt (OS 92) tells through her TV work that mean the most to her.

She talks with passion about a recent project she has been involved with: “Hospital Special - Fighting Covid 19’ felt like a really important series to work on. We were allowed access to the Royal Free Hospital in North London from the first day of lockdown in March 2020.

“We were really privileged to be allowed to be in the hospital at such a pressured time, and incredibly fortunate to meet some wonderful families who were brave enough to let us tell their stories, even when some were hugely sad.”

Sara credits Stamford with helping her to develop skills that have been fundamental in pursuing her career: “I gained a lot of confidence and self belief – and made some incredible friends who I am still very close to, to this day.”

Much of what she enjoyed about her time at Stamford will strike a chord with Old Stamfordians of all ages. She has fond memories of playing clarinet and tenor saxophone in the beautiful old Music School, and talks about how much she loved DofE trips to the Lake District, on her way to completion of her Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. Being a member of the swimming team provided useful early training in determination and resilience, with morning training taking place before school in the outdoor unheated swimming pool down by the Meadows – “it was freezing, so you swam fast just to stay warm!”

As a boarder between the ages of 9 and 14, in both Nuns and Welland, boarding life took some getting used to.

“When I first arrived I thought it meant I had to be completely independent”, says Sara. “I remember being collected for a birthday party by someone’s parents which I hadn’t told the teachers I was going to, and getting a good telling off when they realised where I had been!”

Sara started her career doing work experience at Anglia Television in Norwich and was selected for a year-long trainee researcher programme, which gave her time in various departments and was an opportunity to learn from experienced cameramen and sound recordists across a whole raft of different programmes.

From there she worked her way up to assistant producer, and then to producer/director. Sara told us: “My generation were some of the first to become self-shooting PDs [producers/directors who also do the filming themselves] – we started on quite small cameras which gradually got a lot bigger and heavier.”

Sara worked on location, first as a Series Producer and then Executive Producer. Today, she is working as Executive Producer on an exciting new series for Channel 4, although the details are still under wraps.

“Every day is different – one minute you might be filming in hospital, another day filming abroad,” says Sara. “It’s often very busy, and it’s frequently stressful, but it’s also hugely creative and satisfying.”

The job of a television producer isn’t widely understood, and Sara explains that, after all of the work of planning and filming a series, a key stage is working with an editor to sift through hours and hours of footage to create finished programmes. After having her children, she spent some time working solely as an Edit Producer, which involves working on other people’s footage, rather than your own.

“I love the creativity of the edit – it involves a lot of problem solving; you often don’t have all the shots or interview bits that you would want, so you have to think of ways to tell the story without them” she explains.

“It’s easier if you have beautiful footage and powerful stories, but sometimes the fun is in the challenge of working with less good material and finding creative ways to make it good. It can be frustrating cutting other people’s material, because you think you might have shot it differently, or asked different questions if you were there. But I really love the experience of working collaboratively with one other person in the edit.

“On location, you have a completely different set of challenges. There are usually big teams and hundreds of things to think about at the same time – which is exciting but can also be exhausting.”

For the students and young Stamfordians who are considering a career in television, Sara has some valuable advice: “You need to be really hard-working and flexible. You learn a lot on the job so you should always be willing to listen to people who have more experience than you. Most people in the industry are freelancers which mean that you are only employed for the duration of the job. It’s quite a small industry and lots of people know each other - no one will want to hire you if you have been moany, rude or unpleasant. The people who get ahead work hard, have good ideas and are fun to be with.

“TV is a very social industry. It helps if you are good with people because you are often in people’s homes or places of work and you need to get on really well with people to build up trust. You also need to be honest: they are trusting you to tell their story.”

For those that end up in front of Sara’s camera, it seems they can trust one of the best in the business to tell their story.

AWARDS AND NOMINATIONS

RTS Awards: Nominated for ‘Hospital: Fighting Covid 19’ (2020)

Grierson British Documentary Awards: Nominated for ‘Hospital: Fighting Covid 19’ (2020)

Edinburgh TV Special Awards: Winner, Creativity in Crisis category, for ‘Hospital: Fighting Covid 19’ (2020)

BAFTA: Nominated for ‘Hospital’ (2018)

BAFTA: Nominated for ‘Celebrity Hunted’ (2018)

RTS Awards: Winner, Best Documentary series for ‘Hospital’ (2018)

Broadcast Awards: Highly Commended, Best Documentary Series for ‘Hospital’ (2018)

Grierson British Documentary Awards: Winner, Best Entertaining Documentary for ‘Celebrity Hunted’ (2018)



“I GAINED A LOT OF
SELF-CONFIDENCE AND
BELIEF, AND MADE SOME
INCREDIBLE FRIENDS
WHO I AM STILL CLOSE
TO, TO THIS DAY.”



Thoroughly modern Sophie

Year 12 DofE volunteer, **Kasia Middleton**, read Thomas Sandall's memoirs to uncover the story of his remarkable daughter, Sophie.

Images supplied by: Karen Meadows, www.waterfurlonggardens.com

Charlotte Sophia 'Sophie' Sandall was the fourth child and only daughter of Thomas Sandall and Constance Boémé. Born on June 8, 1878, her baptism took place at St Michael's, Stamford, and she was named after her two grandmothers.

Her father was a respectable pillar of the Stamfordian community. He attended Stamford School, as did all his sons, and was the manager of what is today the High Street branch of Lloyds Bank. He was also borough treasurer for a significant length of time, and his philanthropic and community deeds are recorded in his personal memoirs from 1858 to his death in 1922. In this diary, Sophie appears many times.

She led a privileged existence, and travelled extensively with her family, enjoying summers on the continent, in Wales, Scotland and the Isle of Wight.

Despite there being limited coverage of Sophie's Stamford career recorded in her father's diary, he shows a lot of interest in the Schools' community. He was a founding member of

the "Old Stamfordians' Club" in 1889 and advocated for a revival of the Stamfordian magazine at a club dinner in 1898.

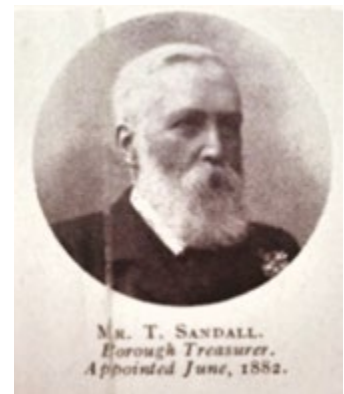
Much later, Thomas Sandall became a supporter of the conversion of St Paul's Church into the school chapel we know today, as a memorial for all the Stamfordians who lost their lives in the Great War, and was a patron of this transformation. This is evidenced in a 1917 newspaper cutting, which also mentions a new name: the 'Stamford Endowed Schools'.

Sophie and her father lived together until he died in 1922, so one imagines that Sophie's connection to the School endured with her father's. She appears in SHS magazines several times up until her death in 1967, chairing meetings of Old Stamfordians and presenting awards for swimming competitions.

Aside from her holidaying in her father's diary, we know very little about Sophie's childhood except that she attended SHS from 1887 to 1895 and showed a great aptitude for languages.



Sophie and Thomas at tea, 1917





Sophie and Thomas at the Elizabethan Pageant, 1912



“WE KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT SOPHIE’S CHILDHOOD EXCEPT THAT SHE ATTENDED SHS FROM 1887 TO 1895 AND SHOWED A GREAT APTITUDE FOR LANGUAGES.”

Her travels after she left school began in 1896, when she took a trip to Hannover. A year later, she travelled to Germany again in July, and remained there for the rest of the year. Her adventures didn’t end there, and included Germany (again), a two month stay in Paris in 1903, 1905 and 1907 trips to Norway, and excursions to Switzerland in 1908 and 1909. She also visited South Africa and the Canary Islands, with a friend called Emily English, another woman from Stamford who enjoyed travelling as much as she did.

Clearly a modern woman, Sophie’s gift for linguistics also meant she got a job, teaching French and German at Stamford Technical Institution for the winter of 1901-2 and then for a second term in the winter of 1902-3.



The dresses Sophie made for this fête are worn by the girls

Sophie’s aptitude for languages also introduced her to extraordinary people. Having come back from Germany with a taste for music, she asked Henry Sargent for lessons on the organ. In return, she taught German to his young son, Malcolm Sargent, reading fairy tales with him and nurturing his interest in German operatic works such as ‘Der Erlkönig’.

The relationship between the Sandalls and Sargents continued, when in 1912, Thomas Sandall raised money for Malcolm to have lessons from Dr Keetan, organist at Peterborough Cathedral. When Sandall died at the ripe old age of 83, Sargent played at his funeral.

Alongside travel, music was a love of Sophie’s life. She was a founding member of the Stamford Amateur Operatic Society, which led her also into amateur dramatics. In 1912, a Stamford fête commemorating the visit of Elizabeth I took place, and Sophie played Mistress Godfrey Dawson, wife of the Stamford alderman in 1565, with Malcolm Sargent conducting the music.

Earlier in Sophie’s life, in 1904, there was a more poignant episode when music made an appearance. As her mother, Constance, lay dying, Sophie sang her ‘Hark the Herald Angels Sing’. In 1905, a memorial window was dedicated to her in St John’s, made by Heaton, Butler and Bayne.

Sophie’s other hobbies included tennis, golf and hockey. She was captain of the Stamford Ladies’ Hockey Club during the winter of 1902-3, when the team played many games in Burghley Park.

After her father died, there is less written about her, but there are newspaper cuttings inserted into his diary posthumously, presumably by Sophie. By 1939 she had moved to 14 Rutland Terrace, Stamford, and was living with a paid companion, Selina Wetherill. She never married.

Sophie continued her community work, organising a 1926 guard of honour for when Princess Mary opened a new wing of the Stamford Infirmary and shortly before her death donated her father’s diary and documents to the Phillips Collection, the reason we understand the history of the Sandall family today.

Endearingly, we still have a 1959 note from Sophie, relating to a historical piece of cloth tucked into his father’s diary. It expresses her wish that the cloth isn’t attacked by moths. In the years since, it has been, but only slightly! Sophie Sandall long outlived her family, passing away aged 89, on July 25, 1967. Her funeral took place at St John’s, and she was buried alongside her parents.

When donating her father’s memoirs, Sophie recalled how he would sometimes look up at her from writing it and say, “I wonder if someone will read all this one day?”

I can testify that indeed, someone has, and they are captivating. His daughter was an inspiring woman, a Stamfordian through and through, right to the end.



DR PHILIP COX (OS 04)

A sporting chance

Dr Philip Cox (OS 04) started his medical career in elite sport, and now works as a GP. He spoke to SES Archivist, **James Buckman**, about his career and the impact of Covid-19.



“IF YOU HAVE THE SKILLS AND ARE PREPARED TO WORK HARD YOU CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING YOU WANT TO.”

Despite a self-proclaimed lack of talent on the pitch, sport has been a major influence for Dr Philip Cox. His description of his years at Stamford, and of the teachers who taught him, are of a “fantastically supportive” community, which gave him opportunities to explore everything that caught his eye – whether biology, chemistry, English, history or art or, outside lessons, playing chess or completing the DofE, in which he achieved Gold. But it is, repeatedly, sport that he returns to when he talks about his school days.

Hockey, tennis, rugby and water polo were all favourites, but visits to the outdoor swimming pool, playing volleyball and basketball with his House, and, one memorable lunchtime, learning how to throw javelin with Mr Mitchell “until I became reasonable at it” demonstrate just how big a feature sport was in Philip’s school days.

“I do not think I realised until I spoke to people who went to other schools what an emphasis Stamford School places on sport,” said Philip. “I am not an athlete, but I enjoy sports. It is fantastic that I can get involved with anything that anybody plays. I can be a squad player, and this has helped me with making friends. I have moved around a lot with work but can always join a sport thing. I speak to people from other schools who didn’t have the volume of opportunity we had.”

It was natural that Philip’s love of sport would continue to be central to his life after he left Stamford. As part of studying for his degree at Leeds Medical School, he spent several months in Australia working with the Queensland Reds rugby union squad.

After graduating, he lived in Newcastle and worked with the Sunderland AFC, Newcastle Eagles basketball team and Gateshead FC as match day medical cover, then completed an MSc in Sports and Exercise Medicine at the University of Nottingham. He then worked with the Northern Ireland women’s and men’s football teams, and as doctor for the Welsh U19s.

Now a GP in Neath Port Talbot, South Wales, the last year dealing with Covid-19 marked a dramatic change in Philip’s daily life. From seeing 40 patients a day, it was the norm to see just two or three, and for everything else to be done on the phone. The practice also had to be creative in how it used additional staff to handle enquiries and make the best use of the doctors’ time during the pandemic.

“Hospitals were not doing any outpatient work, so we had to manage this in the surgery,” says Philip. “People were scared to see a doctor and so were sitting on problems for longer than necessary. But as a doctor it has been a fascinating time: every day, I went home to read journals and papers on things that may change my practice for the next day. Medical practice advanced 20 years in the space of a few months.”

And, like the rest of us, Philip’s personal life was affected too. “I had not seen my parents or my pregnant sister since Christmas, or my friends since March 2020; it is tough on a personal level. I know a lot of GPs who were not living at home if their family had to shield. It was a challenging time for the health care profession.”

The importance of talking to people when you’re struggling, and seeking support when you need it, is something that Philip learned at school. Looking back on his school days, he pays tribute to the teachers who got him through when he was in danger of missing out on the grades he needed to get into medicine.

“Mr Porteus, my Housemaster, was particularly instrumental to my career as he gave me not only academic support, but gave me the confidence to believe that I could achieve anything I wanted to,” he says.

“From extra coaching before my medical school interviews to advice on which of the many co-curricular activities Stamford School offered that would be most beneficial to my applications, he gave me the self-belief that through hard work and the right support, I could smash the ceiling of expectations I had. It took a great deal of hard work to get where I am today, but that would not have counted for anything if I didn’t have the belief in myself that I could achieve my dream career.”





All that glitters is not good

The SJS Reception team has cut its environmental impact by reducing materials usage, and the children have been at the forefront of the project, as LSA **Sarah Chase** explains.

Less is never more for a four-year-old, meaning the creations of our youngest Stamford Junior School pupils have often begun to shed sparkles before they're out of the door and, while the results are gorgeous, the environmental impact of our crafting ventures began to concern the staff in the Reception classes.

"One of our roles as teachers is to model positive behaviours," says Sarah Wade, who has taught the Reception class for 13 of her 16 years at SJS.

"We began to question how we could improve our own approach to sustainability and environmental responsibility and, in doing so, help the children to form good habits that they can take forward in life."

As we began to look at our craft cupboards, it became clear that glitter was just a small part of a much bigger problem.

"Sellotape, PVA glue, Pritt sticks, sequins, synthetic pompoms, even 'good work' stickers - all these materials are environmentally unsound," Tracey Worthington, Reception teacher and Assistant Head Academic for KS1 says.

"Much of our creative work involves cardboard boxes which, when painted, are rendered unsuitable for recycling - so it's been quite a challenge!"

There's also the element of excess to consider: without guidance, children will use as much Sellotape as they deem necessary to stick their project together (typically, four to five rolls...). They will draw on a piece of paper, then reach for the next without a second thought.

I was brought up by post-war parents for whom the idea of wastefulness was anathema and, although this current generation has access to embarrassing riches in the form of resources, I wince even now at the sight of a piece of paper with a large hole cut out of the middle.

"We can still use that," I'll think, and squirrel the paper away for use in a future collage.

Whether it's the craft product itself or the plastic packaging in which it is delivered, once you start looking for environmental no-no's you find them everywhere. Felt-tip pens are encased in plastic, name labels are laminated and Pritt Sticks are popular precisely because their plastic container helps to avoid sticky hands.

There are few things the intrepid Reception team (teachers Sarah Wade, Tracey Worthington and Rachel Riley, supported by LSAs Kate Chaloner and myself) like more than a challenge, though, so we have not been deterred by the enormity of the task ahead.

Talking to the children has been the first step. After all, without them on board we'll struggle to move forward. Fortunately, a chap called Sir David Attenborough has done

a lot of the groundwork for us, and conversations about plastic in our oceans are familiar to even our smallest pupils.

Class discussions, in which big topics have been approached in an appropriately gentle fashion, have helped the children to come on the journey with us and have laid the foundations for the changes they'll begin to see in their classrooms in the coming months and years.

"The mantra of 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' is a useful place to begin," says Kate Chaloner, LSA and creative mastermind in the Reception class's Art Studio. "If we can encourage the children to start respecting the resources and to use them considerably, we can potentially cut down on a lot of unnecessary wastage in the first place.

"We've always done our best to reuse supplies, whether they be egg boxes or Nativity costumes, but now we talk to the children about this, too, pointing out that we're not throwing things away and explaining why."

Nurturing and developing our children's creative and problem-solving minds is one of the key elements in teaching Reception and it's precisely their imaginations that allow the children to thrive in these new ways of creating.

"Instead of plastic-based Sellotape we've introduced paper-based masking and packing tapes," says Sarah. "We've encouraged the children to make their own 'stickers' and decorations by cutting out stamped shapes from old paintings and paper offcuts and we've experimented with alternative ways to attach paper together using reusable items such as split pins and paperclips."

As current stocks of glue and paint run out we're sourcing plant-based replacements, with an eye to using these new materials wisely.

"This isn't about saying 'no' to our children," says Tracey, "but about helping them to find inventive ways to express themselves that don't hurt the world around them."

Of course, what is wonderful about children is their adaptability - and we should never underestimate their innate desire to do good.

They've not been fazed by the removal of glitter, sequins and pompoms from their Studio. Instead, they have embraced the role they have been given as saviours of our Blue Planet.

"AS WE BEGAN TO LOOK AT OUR CRAFT CUPBOARDS, IT BECAME CLEAR GLITTER WAS A SMALL PART OF THE PROBLEM..."





Image: Matt Tarrant

EMMA FEMMINILE (OS 86)



**S T A M F O R D
T O
S I N G A P O R E ,
A N D H O M E**



Emma Femminile (née Philby) has travelled the world working in finance and fashion. She has eventually found her way back home to Stamford, and set up shop in the town - alongside her online business based in Singapore. She tells *Stamford* her story...

Sitting in the needlework room overlooking Park Lane as a young teenager, never could I have imagined becoming a fashion designer. Yet here I am (36 years later!) sitting in Stamford opposite The George, just a few doors away from where it all began, in my little clothing store.

It has been an unpredictable journey to where I sit now, and looking back has made me realise how so many of life's paths are forged unwittingly by experiences at school.

A French exchange at the tender age of 12 led to studying French at Newcastle followed by a job in Brussels at the European Commission. Then the pull of my dear SHS friends in London drew me back to work in finance in the City for most of my twenties.

It was only in my early forties, with children in full time education and while living in Singapore that I fell into the world of fashion. Being close to manufacturing opportunities in Asia and suddenly with a little more time on my hands, I started designing sleepwear and loungewear. With the strap line 'For all your barefoot moments...' I named the brand Barefoot Lucy. There were so many lovely Lucys at SHS in the early 80s, it was always my favourite name!

Increasingly frustrated with my everyday clothing in Singapore, I began designing simple tops and dresses for myself which were not easily available in the shops which offered either expensive designer or run-of-the-mill high street brands.



Interest from friends soon grew and the factory started making larger orders. I soon realised the demand was not so much for sleepwear but for daywear, and so began White Ginger in 2011.

White Ginger is the name of a highly fragrant lily, native to South-East Asia. With the clothing factory in Bali, a core theme of the brand has been vibrant colours and prints from Asia.

In the first few years, sales were through pop-ups and fairs and then in 2015 we opened our first store in Singapore. Two years later we expanded and took the neighbouring unit and then in 2020 we opened our first stand-alone store in the UK in Stamford, following our relocation home.

Having begun at the Junior School at the age of seven, the Spede Bird is very much in my blood. My two sons and both step-daughters followed in my footsteps, with the girls carrying on to the High School.

The growth of White Ginger has only been possible through sheer hard work and determination, two traits instilled in me at school from a very early age.

Running a business through the pandemic was not for the faint-hearted! I take my hat off to all our fellow small business owners who have survived intact. We pivoted to focus on online sales and fortunately were able to divert orders to our Singapore store, but we are so excited to open our doors again. I am very lucky to be blessed with a hugely positive assistant who is also an old SHS girl (Isabelle Luke OS 17).

For me the number one characteristic that leads to a successful business is confidence. You can seek help in most areas, but no-one can give you confidence. I thank my school days for giving me this quality and I hope all you reading appreciate the power within your hands and even if it takes a few decades - you can always fulfil your dream!

“FOR ME THE NUMBER ONE CHARACTERISTIC THAT LEADS TO A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS IS CONFIDENCE.”







THE BUSINESS CLASS

Stamford has produced many successful entrepreneurs, running their own businesses locally and further afield. **Rebecca Taylor** talks to young and upcoming businessmen and women about their work, time at Stamford and advice for those thinking of starting up.

Libby Summers (OS 92) **Stamford Strings**

I retrained as a violin maker, which is the perfect combination of my love for art, craft and music. Because of my background as a teacher of violin, I am really passionate about helping young people find the right instrument for them.

There was no particular reason for me to have known at age 18 what I wanted to do. I was always good at art and music at school, and I couldn't choose between them, so chose neither to study at university, and did an anthropology degree. It's funny how you will end up doing what you were 'meant to be', even without the degree, as I've had a career as a violin teacher, and also a career as a knitwear designer in my 30s! I don't regret the different things I've done, I've just taken a journey to get here.

Time at Stamford:

At Stamford I developed a belief in myself. Miss Bland was the Headmistress, and Miss Tennison was the Deputy, but in my opinion, she was the stronger character! A disciplinarian, everyone was terrified of her, but she did such a good job at being a role model for us all as women and was able to give us the belief that we could do anything.

Advice from Libby:

I didn't study music A Level, as I would have been the only person in the class, but I've managed to create a career in music without it. I studied art with art history, French, and history for my A Levels, but also loved English literature.

Often younger students won't know what they'd like to do, and it's important to remember that you can go on to a career in a field, even if you haven't studied it. Especially in music, if you have strong performance skills, you don't necessarily need the qualifications.

Alex Jordan (OS 07)

The Skateparks Project

I have founded several businesses and a non-profit called The Skateparks Project which helps councils and communities in the UK build skateparks. I am also Chair of Skateboard GB, the governing body responsible for sending a team to the Olympics, developing grassroots facilities and implementing a coaching and progression pipeline for athletes.

Running a business involves navigating daily challenges. I ran a digital agency for eight years and experienced customers who didn't pay, fraud, litigation, changing legislation, cashflow shortages, office moves, rejection, hiring and firing, poor work-life balance, prospecting urgency and, on multiple occasions, realising that ideas I'd put everything into for months weren't going to work... but as you meet other entrepreneurs you realise you are not alone and that the successes make it all worthwhile.

Time at Stamford:

I developed an early discovery and understanding of supply and demand after the vending machine at school broke. It prompted me to set up a 'black-market' tuckshop, much to the admiration and annoyance of the headmaster Mr Fraser, who both commended me and firmly put a stop to proceedings! By the time I left Stamford I was running an e-commerce website and importing from the United States, China and Taiwan.

Advice from Alex:

It comes down to having a go. It's important to have a plan, but the reality is most start-ups fail and if you learn, expand your network and persevere then you'll find opportunities that you'd never have considered will present themselves.





Adam Rimmer (OS 06)

FloodFlash

I'm the Co-founder and CEO of FloodFlash; an insurance technology start-up that provides 'parametric' insurance, where policies are settled based on the measurement of a physical parameter (in our case, depth of flood water) instead of a traditional loss-assessment process. In January this year during Storm Christoph, we settled a property flood claim in 9hrs 44mins – a process that typically takes months.

FloodFlash is the fastest catastrophe insurance provider in the world, meaning that businesses holding FloodFlash policies are more likely to survive.

I'm often asked if I enjoy my job, but I don't know if 'enjoy' is the correct word. I don't have kids yet, but my co-founder Ian does, and often makes the comparison: it's super stressful, I'm awake all night, and sometimes I ask myself what possessed us to begin this journey in the first place – but at the same time, I love it and there is nothing else I would rather be doing.

I love that my team and I are doing something that nobody else on this planet is doing. I love that we started with a blank piece of paper and are expanding into the unknown. I love that we are building, making, creating something that I am proud of having tried whether it is ultimately a billion-dollar success or a withering failure.

Every day, month and year the challenges are new. Four years ago, we were deciding whether to work around my kitchen table or my co-founder's. Today I am deciding which country to expand into. I have experienced almost every emotion in the four years since starting FloodFlash – but never, ever, boredom.

“IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO SOMETHING THAT YOU LOVE, NOT SOMETHING THAT YOU LIKE.”

Time at Stamford:

On top of academic qualifications, my seven years at Stamford taught me many soft skills that continue to be super-important to me today.

I learned to make personal connections quickly with people from a variety of backgrounds – or to 'network' – as the business world might dispassionately call it. I built friendships that I still rely on for support to this day: I'm in regular contact (daily, with WhatsApp) with the same friends I was in classrooms with and playing rugby with at school.

I learned to not be afraid of trying new things. My attempts in the Choral Society demonstrated that a lack of talent is certainly no reason to hold yourself back.

Most of all, perhaps, Stamford made me confident. In myself, my ideas, and to go outside my comfort zone.

Adam's Advice:

Any career path, in any industry, can ultimately lead to entrepreneurship if that's what you want to do. It's also important to recognise that entrepreneurship has infinite flavours: from 'going solo' in your trade to raising venture capital to fuel major business expansion.

Get expertise. Though I'd always thought about starting a business, I was 28 when I left full-time employment to actually do it. There will always be 'Zuckerbergs' who drop out of college to build something amazing with zero experience, but they are a true rarity. I have a lot of contact with founders of London technology companies, and almost all built up industry experience before going out on their own.

Having experience and expertise means that you are more likely to build a product that people will pay for, and investors are more likely back you to do it. My co-founder and I raised several million pounds of investment on the basis of the collective years we had spent understanding insurance and catastrophe modelling. Would we have been able to do that if we'd pitched exactly the same idea fresh out of university? No chance.

It is important to do something that you love, not something that you like. And those aren't more or less extreme versions of the same emotion: they are fundamentally different things. There's always something that I'd like to be doing more than, say, sending the next email: playing sport, having a drink, sitting on a beach.

But the enjoyment of those things fades if you do them for too long and I am learning that, for me, longer-term fulfilment comes from building, from creating, from starting with a blank sheet of paper and doing something totally new. Perhaps it will work; perhaps it won't. But I love it.

Annabel Britton (OS 13)

All Good Market

In 2020 I opened the All Good Market, providing a more sustainable and ethical way to shop for the local Stamford community; zero waste with a local taste.

I came home from lockdown after living in Paris, and my parents were using local butchers and the Tallington Farm Shop to avoid shopping in the supermarkets, but there was nowhere to get all the things for the pantry. On top of this, the supermarket shops frustrated me with how much plastic they use. I thought, 'I'm going to do this' and wanted to set up a business to solve this problem. Then was the tricky bit, finding a premises, as rents in Stamford are quite something!

Plastic reduction is important but there were so many different things to also consider, such as biodiversity, soil health, food miles and CO2 emissions, so I have tried to take quite a holistic approach. This is why lots of things in the All Good Market are organic, packaging free and local.

What have I enjoyed most about starting up my business? I love that I don't have to consult anyone when I want to do something; whether it's to stock a new product, change the window displays or create a new baking kit – I can turn my ideas into reality as soon as I want!

Image: Matt Tarrant

Time at Stamford:

At Stamford, I certainly learned determination, and that when your back is against the wall you can achieve much more than you think. Maths A Level was quite the mountain to climb for me. At one point it looked like certain failure was on the cards, but some serious tutelage and patience from Mrs Manning, Mrs Steven, and Mr Chadwick saved the day and got me into uni!

A word of advice:

If you want to set up your own business, it's well worth doing a few different jobs first and learning as much as you can. It doesn't need to be high flying – it could be a pot wash job in the local pub – but soak up as much as you can from those experiences!

“WHEN YOUR BACK IS AGAINST THE WALL YOU CAN ACHIEVE MUCH MORE THAN YOU THINK.”





Tom Helliwell (OS 10) & Iain Downer (OS 10)

Class Q

We met at Stamford School in Year 7 and have been friends ever since. And now we are business partners too, running a rapidly expanding planning and architecture practice in Stamford, Class Q, that has found itself a niche: helping rural landowners develop redundant buildings and space on their land.

Although we work nationally, it's a specialism that is especially pertinent locally. There are so many farmers and landowners around Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Rutland with old buildings they no longer use and small areas of land that can be developed. We help them turn those old barns, grain stores and cattle sheds into houses and offices, and it often surprises our clients how many of these old agricultural buildings can be converted. Of course, having gone to Stamford, many of our local clients did too, so it's great to be working with Old Stamfordians on some of these projects.

Class Q offers to take property through the planning stages with no cost risk to the landowner, and because of the specialist nature of planning for agricultural buildings it is very streamlined and fast: only 56 days for a decision. Knowing this particular sector inside out, we boast a phenomenal success rate.

We really understand what is likely to be approved and what isn't. As a result, we've become busier and busier and so we've expanded the business, bringing in new people to cover not only planning and development, but the architecture and design of projects too, whether it's converting a barn to a home or developing a piece of land for multiple residential units.

If you've ever thought about land diversification, you may have wondered whether planning permission presents a viable means of adding value to your assets. Our planning Eligibility Checker from Class Q allows you to assess the development potential of your land and buildings within minutes.

By providing the location of a site and answering a few basic questions, our Eligibility Checker assesses land and buildings against national policy constraints, land designations, permitted development legislation and more. Not only is feedback instant, but the service is completely free.

Time at Stamford:

We just loved every day we were at the School. Everything you did was just set up so well, whether it was in the classroom or elsewhere. Things like rugby tours abroad will be remembered forever, because they're the sort of trip that are so special when you're a teenager. We've met friends for life at Stamford, and we wouldn't be where we are now without it.

Advice from Tom & Iain:

Starting a new business was a daunting experience and it took perseverance, dedication and hard work to overcome some challenging early hurdles. Don't be afraid to take a jump into the unknown; entrepreneurship is all about calculated risks.

**“WE MET AT STAMFORD
SCHOOL IN YEAR 7 AND HAVE
BEEN FRIENDS EVER SINCE.”**



Image: sunnyhoyle.com

Sophie Jamieson, née Wilcox-Smith (OS 98)

Rutland Surveyors

I am a Chartered Surveyor and run Rutland Surveyors alongside a team carrying out surveys ranging from mortgage valuations and home buyers to full structural reports in the areas around Oakham, Stamford and Market Harborough.

I love the variety on a day-to-day basis surveying offers. In the morning I could be at a mid-terrace house in the centre of a town and in the afternoon, I could be walking the boundaries of a large country property.

During the day I am rarely at my desk; I am on inspections for most of it and when I return home it's time to write the reports. My car is my travelling office, always packed with ladders, laser measure, damp meter and marketing material – you never know who you might meet.

I started my career at Jones Lang LaSalle in Birmingham. After graduating from Oxford Brookes I had to do two years of practical experience before sitting the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) which I passed in 2004. I commuted a long distance for most of this time, often leaving at 5.30am and not returning home before 8pm but it was well worth it to gain such good grounding on their graduate programme.

Time at Stamford:

I left Stamford High School in 1998 with a strong work ethic, independence and, most importantly, I think, communication skills. Surveyors are in general an extremely social bunch. Within each sector and region most surveyors will know each other and work is often gained by referrals from old colleagues and recommendations. I really enjoy meeting new clients, agents and others in the profession, so networking is a huge part of the job.

Advice from Sophie:

Network. It's never too early to start! There are a number of Old Stamfordian groups set up and property, I believe, is one of the largest. We've all been through the same so we are always more than happy to help with introductions, work experience or advice on the best way forward.

Oliver Roberts (OS 00)

Oskar Illustration

I'm the founder of Oskar Illustration, an illustration and animation agency representing nine contemporary artists. I act as their agent by winning, overseeing and delivering artistic brand communications.

No client brief is ever the same and working with talented artists, creative directors and exciting brands from all over the world is really rewarding; some of our past clients have included Apple, the *Financial Times* and Condé Nast.

There have been lots of challenges along the way. Finding the time to launch a new business was tough with a newborn, and a full-time job! I had to keep the self-belief that I could compete and ultimately stand out from the crowd, by providing a unique artistic offering, as well as going the extra mile to ensure each client was looked after from start to finish.

Time at Stamford:

At Stamford, there was a healthy competition to succeed, both on the sports fields and in the classroom. Teachers, but more importantly peers, encouraged you to achieve. The dry humour that ran through the Schools also made it all feel light-hearted and fun! For me it was a great balance of work and play. I'm still as close to my Stamford friends now as I was 20 years ago.

Oli's Advice:

I worked for over 10 years in the creative industry, culminating in me now owning and running my own agency. There are so many different roles and skill sets in this world, that I had no idea existed until my late twenties. If you like to write and storytell, you could become a copywriter. If you're a doodler, you could become an illustrator or designer. Like how people's behaviours and minds work? Become a strategist. Whatever you enjoy doing, follow that interest, be prepared to work hard and you're much more likely to succeed. The money will follow.



Image: Matt Tarrant

Putting on a play requires a lot of creativity, and this year more than ever innovation and imagination was needed as students went online to perform. By Head of Performance, **Carrie Hill**.

Play on!



In ever changing and uncertain times, the Drama Department at the Stamford Schools were proud to launch the 'The Show Must Go On(line)' series.

Rehearsing in our Sixth Form bubble, we staged Timberlake Wertenbaker's transformative work 'Our Country's Good'. Perhaps never more had a piece about the power of theatre, and its place as an essential part of humanity, been more appropriate.

We had hoped to be able to perform to a socially-distanced audience of Sixth Form peers, but last-minute Tier 4 Covid restrictions moved our performance online. Thus, our leap into a virtual world began.

Alongside this, our stellar group of Drama Scholars were working on their first 'challenge' of the year, inspired by the words of Oscar Wilde: "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery...".

They chose a range of works from film, TV, and theatre that they had been inspired by, and performed extracts, designed sets, re-imagined posters, or critically evaluated the successes of these inspirational pieces of art.

Our annual Showcase of Dance continued to rehearse through lockdown, with students from Years 7-13 devising choreography and fine-tuning technique 'together' through the magic of Microsoft Teams. The showcase comprised an eclectic mix of dance styles, ranging from contemporary, hip hop, musical theatre and ballet, and was filmed and streamed upon our return to school.

Throughout 2021, a company of SES students from Years 7-9 have worked to devise, and remotely record, 'Saturn Base Nova'. On the sixth planet from our sun, a crew of astronauts are sent to explore the harsh and desolate environment of Saturn. The team of Saturn Base Nova are isolated and alone

and, after many months of experiments, they find nothing. However, when critical systems begin to break down, it soon becomes clear that they aren't alone after all.

At Stamford High School, a company of students in Years 10-11 worked towards a performance of 'The Marvellous Mellow Melodrama of the Marriage of the Mislaid Minor'. Set out to destroy his nemesis Major Kerslake, moustache-twirling villain, Dirk Dastardly, concocts a devilish plot to marry the major's daughter, Penelope. When things don't quite go his way, he kidnaps her and, with the help of his brainless sidekicks, plans to tie her to the railway lines.

Across the River Welland, a company of Year 10-11 students at Stamford School have embarked on a creative adaptation of Agatha Christie's *The Murder on the Orient Express*. Complete with blustering British officer, innocent ingénue, enigmatic seductress and, of course, a dead body, the performance parodies the archetypal murder mystery.

As I write, we look forward once more to the buzz of backstage, the anticipation of the dimming of the lights, and that magical shared experience between the artists and the audience, but, until then, we are extremely proud of all of the students who joined us on our journey of creativity and imagination as The Show Must Go On(line).



The Year 6 Spotlight production 'Pantastic!' was filmed at Stamford School, edited and released at a red-carpet premiere

PUTTING ON A PLAY IN THE MIDDLE OF A PANDEMIC

CHARLIE WEAVERS-WRIGHT, Y13
Second Lieutenant Ralph Clark

"Where do I even start!? 'Our Country's Good' was by far my best experience of 2020. Drama has always been the best part of my school life and this year it has meant a whole lot more.

"Not only was it a great production, but it was also my last, along with many of my peers in Year 13. I can't begin to tell you how amazing it is to have been able to play the main part, in what was such a memorable final performance.

"Even rehearsals (which were unbelievably insane and hectic at times!) were appreciated that little bit more, making the whole experience just incredible. The process felt completely different this year; I genuinely looked forward to each and every rehearsal as they provided the biggest distraction from the chaos going on around us.

"I honestly can't begin to say how thankful I am to Miss Davies and Mr Rushton, as well as the rest of the drama staff and those involved backstage. They were amazing throughout the entire process, and if it weren't for them, we wouldn't have been able to create what was such a great last show, and one that I definitely won't forget."

CHLOE TINTON, Y13
Mary Brenham

"'Our Country's Good' provided me with the best thing that I could have asked for during these crazy times; it gave me a distraction.

"It was my last production at school, but I did not feel cheated or like I was missing out on the full extravaganza experience that is SES drama. If anything, it was my favourite of all six plays that I have taken part in, because it made me appreciate every rehearsal that much more, as opposed to just remembering the shows.

"The rehearsal process itself didn't feel like a heavy commitment anymore; it seemed to be the only part of school life that remained relatively familiar to 'pre-Covid' times! Mr Rushton kept saying 'Make every rehearsal count, because it may be the last' and I really did embrace that attitude.

"As much as I would have loved there to be a big audience, to watch all of our efforts up close, I was just happy that we were able to perform the entire show costumed, let alone being able to actually perform to a small audience! We devoted all of our energy for those few precious months into this huge, positive bubble of pure enjoyment!

"Unfortunately, it meant that the post show blues hit that much harder, but it was worth it."

ELOISE QUETGLAS-PEACH, Y13
Duckling Smith

"We were told that every performance should be performed as if it was our last, however, although I didn't know it then, this would be my last ever show at Stamford.

"I was absolutely devastated that I had to start isolating the day after the dress rehearsal, which meant that I wouldn't be able to perform in the last show, just two days later. We had got this far, so to not be able to get to the performance broke my heart.

"However, the support was unreal. A special mention goes to Angharad Jones who was a lifesaver and a true friend. She coped with all of this information, of having to perform as Duckling Smith so well, and despite it being very last minute she performed incredibly.

"In the words of Lieutenant Ralph Clark: 'The theatre is like a small republic; it requires private sacrifices for the good of the whole.'

"This line highlights that the small things done for others will never go unnoticed within the community of a play. Helping someone learn lines, reminding someone when they go on stage, or even just a gentle yet reassuring pat on the back, means so much, especially when nerves are high."

ANGHARAD JONES, Y12
Understudy/Duckling Smith

"As an understudy, the night before the show I was contacted and asked to step into the role of Duckling in place of Eloise, who had to self-isolate. This was very unexpected, and quite bitter-sweet with this being Eloise's last show, but after months of watching her brilliant characterisation in rehearsals, a night of last-minute line learning, and some emergency rehearsals on the day, I did the show script-free and had so much fun!

"It was the craziest 48 hours ever, but one that I will never forget, and which I couldn't have managed without the support and encouragement of the whole cast and crew."

"To be able to rehearse, perform and spend time around the Year 13s, who I think many of the younger drama students like me look up to, as they performed their last show at Stamford, was amazing. They are all such brilliant actors, and great people."

"As much as I would have loved there to be a big audience, I was just happy we were able to perform the entire show costumed."





MOON SHOTS AND SCIENCE

Students **Grace Kendall** and **Loren Trstenjak**, along with **Dr Patchett** (Head of Science SHS), spoke to TV presenter and scientist Dr Kevin Fong after his Stamford Lecture on the Moon landings to find out more about the Apollo programme.

Portrait: Copyright - Anthony Cullen



Dr Kevin Fong, one of the most popular speakers ever to feature in the Stamford Lectures series, returned in January to deliver a record-breaking lecture exploring the first ever Moon landing – and how close it came to failure. 500 households signed up to watch the lecture live online.

Grace: You talked about the average age of the flight control team being just 27, which sounds very young. How do you think that might be different today? Do you think young people are trusted less?

Good question! NASA deliberately chose young staff for Apollo because they were using new technology, and found that older people had trouble shaking off old ideas to embrace new tech. Although we take it for granted, this was the first major exploration digitally and it needed a new way of working.

Experience needs to be in the area of expertise. For example, you could be an expert in medicine and have experience, but if the task at hand needs a different kind of expertise then it wouldn't be relevant. For those involved in Apollo, they were learning about a new set of digital systems, and this young team became the experts in their fields.

In the modern era, we give younger people less responsibility, and we have all fallen into that way of working.

Grace: What do you think about the gender imbalance in the mission control room at the time? How do you think this would be different today?

Only one woman was in the mission control room when Apollo 11 launched. No people of colour were part of the team, there were one or two Hispanic, but really it was dominated by white men mostly.

However, it is worth remembering how different the world was in the 1960s – there was turmoil in the US at the time; political and social unrest, lack of equality and opportunities for people of colour and women. The future will be better and we can be hopeful for this. We understand what was acceptable then is not acceptable now.

Loren: You spoke about how close the landing came to failure, which isn't necessarily widely understood. Why is it important to share the bad, along with the good?

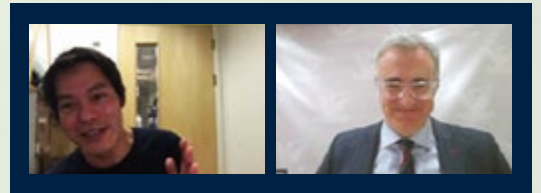
It is always useful for us to understand how difficult things are to achieve. There is often a misunderstanding about how hard it is to achieve everything, especially in society today. People ask why we haven't gone back to the Moon, because they don't understand how difficult and risky it was to get there in the first place.

We need to understand challenges better, including the risks that are presented, otherwise we have a false understanding of the basis on which we set our future goals and how they will be achieved.

Dr P: Space flights are costly and risky. Given improvements in robotics and AI, where is the motivation for humans to be involved in space flight?

Are robots capable of everything that humans can do? Even

“People ask why we haven't gone back to the Moon, because they don't understand how difficult it was to get there in the first place.”



Kevin Fong speaking to Mr W Phelan during his lecture

the most capable rovers with wonderful telepresence still don't rival what you can do with a human team in situ. Humans are the ultimate platform for exploration because of their adaptability and ability to recognise patterns.

It is possible at some point that robots will be as capable as human beings at making judgements about what they are seeing, and making intuitive leaps to drive exploration. However, when we reach that point, we will have bigger things to worry about than exploring space! Robots and humans should work in partnership, and complement each other's abilities.

Loren: You are a science communicator. How important do you think science education and communication is compared to actual research, which is how we tend to imagine science?

In 2011 the Wellcome Trust gave £600 million to fund research - but nothing on engaging with the public on what they were doing, or why they were doing it.

Historically science was something we did to, and should have done with, the people. There are limits, of course, but history is full of examples where we have not engaged well and have caused injury in the process. What I do these days is more engagement, not just with the public but across the boundaries between disciplines of science. Public engagement presupposes all scientists engage well with each other, and I don't think they do, as we are seeing at times with the pandemic. Without engagement, research is taking place in a vacuum, without context.

Grace: We are at the age where we are choosing our universities and courses and potentially thinking ahead to our careers. When you were our age did you have any idea of your career path? Did you think you would end up where you are now?

My parents were keen for me to take education seriously. My dad was not at school and worked in a shop with his parents, mum had some education but not a lot. As immigrants to this country they felt they had to help me be better equipped through education.

I remember sitting in front of the television when I was five and watched one of the last space missions. I still remember this as a special day. I had woken up to watch it downstairs on an old television set. My parents used space exploration to drive my curiosity about the world. They were not technical people, but they knew these ideas were big enough for us to talk about around the dinner table and help drive curiosity through conversations.

Now I work in multiple fields, but I don't have a favourite; they all overlap. If I had to restart my career I don't know how I would recreate it - I have been lucky to have had so many opportunities. My day job is medicine, but it is great to have a break and make a documentary like '13 Minutes to the Moon'. It was great to go back to America and work on the space programme.

I have two degrees. One is in astrophysics; that was a joy of learning for the sake of learning and was a huge privilege. Then my degree in medicine was vocational, a different pursuit of learning. I like to still be able to do both things I enjoy. Science is about curiosity, medicine is a vocation.



Standing the test of time

The mass testing programme proved that the Stamford community is uniquely close-knit, with parents, pupils and staff all volunteering to help, as **Natalie Pretsell** explains.

When the call for Covid-19 mass testing of students and staff came, we welcomed the challenge with open arms. Led by the Director of Operations, Stewart Dorey, a team of willing volunteers were pulled together from various roles across the Schools.

Over 100 man hours were counted in the setting up, training and implementation of the project. It soon became apparent that in addition to the volunteer staff, we would need extra support. We were overwhelmed with the response from our call to action with more than 100 SES parents stepping up and taking the hours of Government training to be a part of the testing team. This level of support alongside many of them managing home learning too was remarkable, and we will be forever thankful.

Two testing sites were established, one at the Sports Centre for students of Stamford School, the other in the gym of Stamford High School. A temporary pop-up site was also used for two sessions at the Stamford Junior School to support staff working through the pandemic and ultimately support our parents to continue to work in those key roles.

Testing first started in the new year with on-site staff, children of key workers and students who were boarding, to be tested twice weekly in preparation for the launch of the student mass testing programme. We were amazed with how well everyone participating managed to settle quickly into the testing routine, with a smile on their face each time.

We even started to take requests for music which worked its way through the decades from the '60s through to the '80s, with the '70s certainly being the most popular. Some of our pedometers reached record highs of 18,000 steps – most of which were through the dancing that got us through the day!

We then hit the road for Hollywood in producing a video for those needing to take a test so that they knew what to expect: lights, camera, swabbing! At times like these it is so encouraging to see people lean out of their comfort zones and try something new for the benefit of the students at the Schools.

Since the testing began on-site in the new year, we have as a School completed 5,034 tests, none of which could have been possible without the role of the volunteers. By the end of the project, we were running like a well-oiled machine, and I for one have enjoyed working with people I may never have crossed paths with and being part of a great team.

It might not look like a traditional 'alumni relations and development' activity, but it has been a fantastic opportunity to build relationships with staff and families. It has also been invaluable for us to work alongside our students' parents, providing an insight behind the scenes of the Schools and building relationships, as well as a great example of creativity and agility in responding to circumstances. While some schools may be reluctant to involve their parent body in such activities, I am proud to embrace our parent community and welcome them into our ranks.

As Stewart said: "You have all been amazing and without you all we truly would not have reached the end of our testing journey (we hope). It has been a pleasure to get to know each and every one of you better and I can honestly say that I could not have asked for a better team to work with on this very unique project."

For all those reading who have volunteered in any capacity with the Schools – thank you! For all who have read this and have been inspired to volunteer, we welcome you to contact us through community@ses.lincs.sch.uk

TESTING STAMFORD, BY NUMBERS



5,034 tests completed



2 test sites (SS and SHS)



4 positives



1 temporary pop-up testing site (SJS)



21 strong testing team



15 parent volunteers



11 admin staff



1 video guide made of the testing process

EVENTS

A YEAR AT SES



Dining for tradition

While we have not been able to welcome our Old Stamfordian community on site for events in person, the pandemic has enabled us to think outside the box about how we can bring entertainment to your door. With online reunions and quizzes, to a single attendee at the London Dinner to continue the tradition, we have been working hard backstage to deliver a programme of events to include the old and the new.

LONDON DINNER

Usually a key calendar event for those who attended Stamford School, the 182nd annual meeting and dinner of the London Old Stamfordian Club took on a slightly different format for the year of 2020.

Due to lockdown restrictions in place in England at that time, the 182nd 'meeting' was held on November 11 in Woodford Green, with Ian Brassington, Club Chairman, as the sole attendee. Upholding annual appropriate

formalities including making an entry to the register, holding the Loyal and Silent Toasts, as well as toasting Stamford School, Mr Brassington ensured the tradition was not forgotten.

Throughout the year, the London OS Committee planned to host the dinner in various formats permitted throughout the developing Covid-19 restrictions, including an event for 30 members, a virtual event, and an outdoor dinner for the six committee members. Faced with new restrictions in November, with the dinner due to be held on Armistice Day, the most appropriate format of an in-person dinner with a sole attendee was settled upon.

Usually hosted in the RAF Club on Piccadilly, the evening generally starts with drinks, the convening of an AGM and then a dinner in the Ball Room. Speeches are then delivered and enjoyed before socialising continues well into the evening with a friendly and relaxed atmosphere throughout; good times are shared, stories swapped and many laughs had.



Will Hetherington (OS 95) wrote in the last issue of *Stamford* about how the evening encourages a multi-generational environment, bringing together OS from across the years, all with a common experience of their time at Stamford School. This is so valued in the ethos of what it means to be an Old Stamfordian, that you can be strangers with one thing in common that can spark hours of conversation!

We are looking forward to being able to welcome everyone back to the RAF Club for the 183rd meeting and dinner, all being well, and for the tradition to continue long into the future and for the Loving Cup to be shared once more.

THE STAMFORD LECTURES

Early October saw the Schools' Stamford Lecture series go online for the first time as we were honoured to welcome BBC News presenter Ben Thompson to share his insight into the big political issues affecting the world in 2020.

As with many things during the global pandemic, the Schools have taken a creative approach to keeping the renowned lecture series going. They have long been welcomed as an opportunity for the Stamford community to join together with the town, students and teachers from other schools, to enjoy the entertaining and insightful topics that invited speakers choose to share.

Taking the series virtual has opened the doors to viewers from across the world. Throughout the evening over 130 families 'logged in' from countries including Cyprus, Belgium, Portugal and the USA to hear about the key political battlegrounds and what to watch out for as the race for the White House reached its final days. Comments posted to social media following the lecture illustrated how Ben captured the interest of his audience. If you were in the room you would have been able to hear a pin drop as he spoke, sharing the honesties of this job; the good, the bad and the ugly, giving true insight into what was happening in the world and his feelings of privilege in being able to report on them, even, as he commented, if it does sometimes require him to get up at four in the morning to film his news pieces!

Ben currently presents for BBC Breakfast, covering news and business for the programme, having previously anchored BBC World's flagship daily business programme, Business Live. Having spent three years as the BBC's Middle East Business Correspondent, he drew on this and of his time reporting from countries including Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon. This then paved the way for his discussion on the American elections, with him having previously reported from New York and Washington when serving as North America Business Correspondent. Ben used this knowledge and experience to share his thoughts on the current circumstances and shaping of American politics today.

Viewers watching from the comfort of their own homes told us how interesting they found Ben's comments regarding the noticeable differences between the key issues in openly debated politics today. They also enjoyed the way he brought together the impact on the economic state of the world and the influences this has had on decision-making, social and environmental priorities.

With the light at the end of the tunnel now approaching, we look forward to being able to combine our newly-established digital lectures with our lectures delivered in person, in order to reach our ever-growing audience.

BBC News presenter Ben Thompson spoke to over 130 families 'virtually'



OS QUIZZES

Early March saw our third virtual Old Stamfordian pub quiz take place with the OSC and OGG joining together for a light-hearted evening of general knowledge and reminiscence. We have welcomed some old and new faces in attendance to put their knowledge to the test. Rounds from across the quizzes have included sport, Stamford through time, The Arts, science and technology, catch phrases and even a picture round, which provided much debate. The evenings have been enjoyed by all with the OGG taking the lead in winning two out of three quizzes to date!

Participants have dialled in from the UK, Germany and Spain to take part and our Quiz Masters have been our very own Old Stamfordians too. It has been a great opportunity for OS to meet from across the Schools with participants ranging from those who left more than 70 years ago to those having only finished at the Schools in 2020!

The popularity of the quiz has now established it as a quarterly evening of entertainment for all.



Dates for your diary

TERM DATES:

Stamford Term Dates For 2021-2022

2021 AUTUMN TERM

Boarders return	Sunday 5 September
Term begins	Monday 6 September
Half term	Friday 15 October (end of school day) to Sunday 31 October (inclusive)
Term ends	Friday 10 December (end of school day)

2022 SPRING TERM

Boarders return	Monday 3 January
Term begins	Tuesday 4 January
Half term	Thursday 10 February (end of school day) to Sunday 20 February (inclusive)
Term ends	Friday 1 April (end of school day)

2022 SUMMER TERM

Boarders return	Tuesday 19 April
Term begins	Wednesday 20 April
May Bank Holiday	Monday 2 May
Half term	Friday 27 May (end of school day) to Sunday 5 June (inclusive)
Term ends	Friday 8 July (end of school day)
Year 13 Leavers' Day	Friday 1 July

ALUMNI EVENTS:

Heritage Open Days	September 11, 12, 18, 19
OS Boston Lunch	September 18
London OSC Dinner	November 10
Autumn Get-Together	November 20
Reunion Weekend	June 10, 11, 12 (2022)

Stamford Lecture Series:

Christo Brand, 'Lessons from a Warder and his Prisoner' - live from South Africa

Thursday 10 June - Online lecture: recording now available. Please contact us.

In 1978, at the age of 19, Christo Brand was given his first posting to Robben Island as a prison warder. It was here that he first met Nelson Mandela, aged 60, and they formed a close friendship built on trust and mutual respect for each other during such a difficult apartheid era.

Future Stamford Lectures will be advertised on our website.



ADMISSIONS DATES

Looking for a place at one of the Stamford Schools? We would love to hear from you, and the Heads welcome meetings with families for a personal visit and individual tours of the Schools. Contact Admissions to book the below dates on 01780 750311 or email: admissions@ses.lincs.sch.uk

AUTUMN TERM 2021

Saturday 2 October	Open Day at Stamford High School and Stamford School
Wednesday 6 October	Sixth Form Open Evening
Saturday 9 October	Open Day at Stamford Junior School

SPRING TERM 2022

Saturday 8 January	Year 7 Entrance Examination Day
Tuesday 8 March	Discovery Morning: Stamford Junior School
Wednesday 16 March	Discovery Morning: Stamford High School
Thursday 17 March	Discovery Morning: Stamford School

SUMMER TERM 2022

Tuesday 10 May	Discovery Morning: Stamford Junior School
Wednesday 18 May	Discovery Morning: Stamford High School
Thursday 19 May	Discovery Morning: Stamford School

All events may be subject to change or cancellation, dependent on circumstances.
For full details, please check the SES website, termly and monthly e-newsletters and social media.

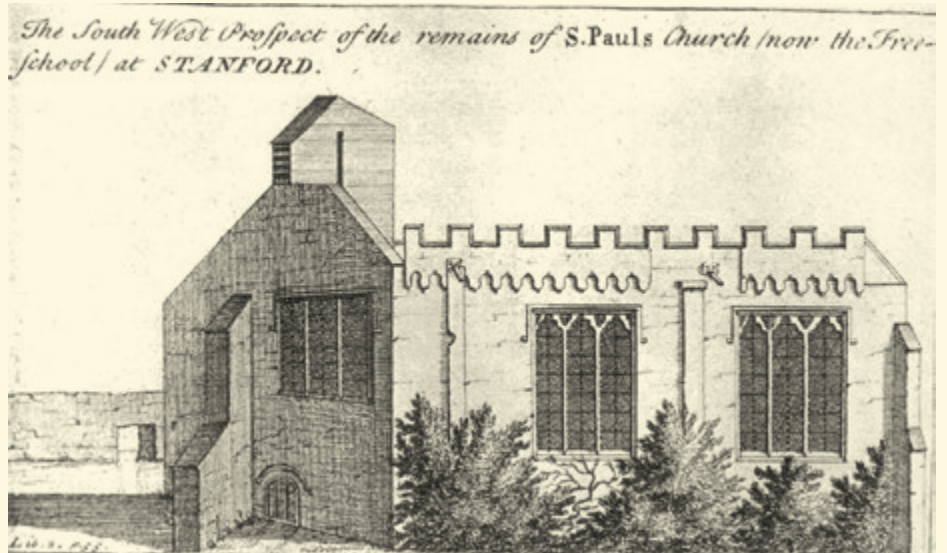
A puritan streak...

Stamford's most contentious Headmaster was Robert Browne, who was arrested 32 times on religious grounds. By **James Buckman**.

Robert Browne was born at Tolethorpe Hall in 1550. He was the third of seven children born to Anthony and Dorothy Browne. He came from a very prominent background: a descendant of William Browne, the 15th century alderman who had founded the Browne's Hospital in Stamford and a distant relative of the Cecil family. This gave him a connection to Lord Burghley, who was Secretary of State throughout most of Robert's childhood.

Very little is known about Browne's upbringing other than his attendance at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He obtained a BA in 1567 and an MA in 1572. It was during his university days that Robert embraced the views of a puritan theologian by the name of Thomas Cartwright and befriended Robert Harrison. Following their university days, both men took up teaching careers: Harrison became Master of Aylsham School until his dissident views cost him his job, while Browne is reputed to have been a Master at Oundle School.

In 1578, he returned to Cambridge for further studying and came under the influence of another puritan, Richard Greenham. It was possibly through him that Browne became a lecturer at St Benet's Church, adjacent to Corpus Christi College, but he did not stay there for long. He became 'an incessant and lawless preacher' in and around Cambridge, criticising the established Church. He was jailed, but



released through the intervention of Lord Burghley.

After his first internment, Browne travelled to Norwich where he was reunited with Robert Harrison. With help from his friend, he became Master of the Great Hospital at Norwich until 1582. They were also able to set up their own Separatist congregation, as the city had a major Dutch population which held the same principles.

Many came to hear Browne, but his unlicensed preaching did not go unnoticed. By order of Bishop Freake of Norwich, Browne was arrested, only to be promptly released again. He was due to appear before the Archbishop of Canterbury in London, but never went.

In 1582, Robert, along with Harrison and most of their congregation, relocated to Middelburg in Zeeland, Holland. Thomas Cartwright had established his own congregation there, which may have influenced Browne's decision to go. It was here that he took up writing his own religious writings - but a proclamation in England declared it illegal to buy, sell or be in possession of such works.

In 1583, Robert sailed for Scotland hoping to establish himself in Edinburgh. He was soon arrested by the Church, but the civil authorities intervened and he was released. Robert's religious message was not taken in well by the Scots, and he was compelled to return to England where

he continued to preach without a licence, and was excommunicated by the Bishop of Peterborough. This was a terrible punishment to be imposed upon an individual, and it seemed to break Robert, who agreed to reconcile with the Church.

In return for his recantation, he was appointed Headmaster of St Olave's Grammar School in Southwark, and two years later, returned to Lincolnshire to assume the same position at Stamford School. At that time, the School was only 50 years old. There was only one schoolroom (which was converted into the School Chapel four hundred years later), as there would have been only a handful of boys under his watch. According to Basil Deed, Browne's most notable pupil was a boy named Thomas Wilson, who later became Her Majesty's Keeper of Records.

Fortunately, Robert did not appear to cause any trouble during his time at Stamford School. In 1591, he was ordained a Deacon and then made a Priest at Peterborough Cathedral. He became the Rector of Achurch, Northamptonshire, and held this position for 40 years.

In all, Robert was imprisoned 32 times throughout his life. The last occasion was for assaulting a Parish Constable who demanded a rate payment. He was confined to Northampton Gaol where he died in 1633 at the age of 83

For nearly three centuries thereafter, Robert's final resting place at St Giles' Church, Northampton, remained unknown. A memorial to him was unveiled there in 1924. At Stamford School, a boarding house named Browne perpetuates his connection with this establishment.

“Fortunately, Robert did not appear to cause any trouble during his time as Headmaster at Stamford School.”

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