

# Luminary

2020 | THE MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS  
OF ST ALBANS HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

## KEEP ON RUNNING

Alumnae taking the  
sporting world by storm

## VIRTUAL REALITY

STAHS goes online

## EVERYBODY'S GOT TO LEARN

The alumna developing  
remote learning for all



St Albans High School  
— for Girls —



# A few words from OGA Chair, Ellie de Galleani



St Albans High School for Girls has weathered many storms in its 130 year plus history. Two World Wars and a depression to name a few. However, no one could have predicted the turn of events in 2020. I have been beyond impressed by the way the School community has adapted to the challenges and difficulties

of the past few months.

Although we had to cancel a number of this year's planned events, we have been delighted by the online Old Girl engagement during lockdown. I am grateful for everyone who has generously given their time to help with alumni career webinars and panel sessions. Hopefully, we can now start to plan an exciting programme for the coming year.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this year's magazine and please do keep in touch.

## OGA Committee

**President:** Amber Waite, Head  
**Vice Presidents:** Susan Riley, Barbara Elliott, Jacquelyn Pain, Rosemary Martin, Jenny Brown

**Chair:** Ellie de Galleani, 1990-1997  
**Treasurer:** Sara Hadley (Pangbourne), 1985-1996  
**Membership Secretary:** Nadine Gardner, 1970-1977  
**OWLs' Secretary:** Sheila King (Thomas), 1960-1970

### Committee members:

- Marion Allan, Former Staff (Prep), 1979-2008
- Louise Barnes (Burns), 1990-2001
- Sophie Day, 1999-2006
- Hilary Doherty, Former Staff (Prep), 1983-2005
- Jacqui Evans, 1981-1992
- Courtney Marsden, 2000-2014
- Ginny Rennie (Kettle), 1980-1991
- Emma Roberts, 1999-2008
- Anna Noack (Tombs), 1988-1999

## Don't forget to join the STAHS alumni community portal!

Our fantastic portal has now been live for a year – sign up today to:

- Read news about your fellow Old Girls and the School....
  - ....and share your news
  - Find and connect with former classmates
  - See what careers support we can offer – from our jobs board to mentoring to careers events, there's something for everyone
  - Find out how to support current pupils, whether that's speaking at an event, giving a webinar or being one of our profiles
  - Sign up to reunions and career events
- Keep in touch!

<https://alumni.stahs.org.uk/>



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# Head's letter

2020 has, so far, been a year unlike any other in memory. We regretfully closed the doors to our happy and bustling school on Friday 20 March and entered an extraordinary period of lockdown. The School very quickly adapted and offered a full programme of remote learning for all pupils in both the Prep and Senior School. The combination of live online lessons, creative co-curricular opportunities, and digital social events kept everyone in our community engaged in their learning, active, and socially connected. I could not be more proud of my staff and the girls; the manner in which they quickly changed gears, adapted to new technologies and remained positive and open to new ideas was nothing short of magnificent. They embody the values of the School, and have well and truly earned their summer holiday!

I have had many very happy times during my first year at STAHS – from experiencing Harvest Festival (I was not prepared for the elaborate pantomime production put on by the School and House Officers – it was superb!), to enjoying my first STAHS Service of Nine Lessons and Carols at the Abbey, to being thoroughly entertained by the productions of Fame and Our Day Out, events at the High School never fail to impress.

I have also had the great privilege of meeting a number of STAHS alumni this year and am so very proud to be a part of this fantastic community. I have worked in a number of schools in the UK and USA, but I have never experienced such a generous, interconnected and giving group of former students as the STAHS alumni. I have enjoyed a number of lectures, workshops, coffee mornings and career breakfasts with alumni and current pupils, and

I know how important these interactions are to the girls. STAHS alumni are more than just role models; they are mentors, friends, supporters and confidants. Our current students are so very lucky to have access to you whilst they are in school, and to be counted amongst your ranks once they leave.

Lockdown and enforced school closure brought with it a number of opportunities: the opportunity to make the most of our technology and digital infrastructure, the opportunity to connect in creative new ways and the opportunity to reflect on many of the aspects of school life we had begun to take for granted.

However, it also brought challenges – and these challenges will be impacting on the School community for possibly years to come. In particular, the financial impact of the lockdown and the current and forecasted economic downturn has already, and will inevitably continue to affect many of our families. The Governors acted quickly to put in place a Hardship Fund to provide financial assistance towards school fees when families are faced with short-term financial difficulty. In Trinity term alone, more than 30 families received hardship funding, enabling their daughters to remain at STAHS and providing a measure of stability at a very difficult time. At the same time, a number of families generously donated to the Fund – a wonderful example of the generosity of our community.

Despite the unprecedented events of recent months, I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year at STAHS, and I look forward to many more happy years as Head (although I would prefer those years to be free of pandemics!).

I hope that you and your families have remained safe and well throughout these extraordinary times, and I do hope that you will find your way back to the High School for a visit sometime soon.



Amber Waite, Head

# THE SCHOOL OFFICERS' YEAR IN REVIEW

*2019-20 has been a lively, dynamic and ever-changing year for the STAHS community. As School Officers, we experienced a jam-packed 2019, full of exciting events, celebrations and charitable endeavours, followed by a more improvised 'handover' as our time in office was unfortunately cut short due to the impact of coronavirus. However, it's been really valuable to be able to take time during lockdown to reflect on the brilliant year we had in office, leading the student body.*

*We each wanted to contribute a personal highlight from the past year, whilst also touching upon a tradition or occasion that we have missed out on. Times like these have reminded us of all the vibrant activities and events which shape our school community during 'normal' time. It has also made us appreciate how lucky we have been to play such a crucial part in lots of these special moments.*

## ELEANOR (HEAD OF SCHOOL)

**High** Running the Santa's Grotto at Christmas time, in aid of Age UK. We transformed the lost property cupboard with tinsel and fairy lights and disguised ourselves as elves, angels and a budget Father Christmas! We managed to raise over £850 for the charity, by running Christmas stalls and selling candy canes.

**Missed** Holding our annual STAHS charity week as, due to coronavirus, it had to be cancelled just the week before. We had planned to fundraise for Roald Dahl's Marvellous Children's Charity by running bake sales, raffles, creative writing contests and the iconic 'Sponge-a-teacher', all inspired by different Roald Dahl books!

## EMILY (DEPUTY)

**High** The Harvest Festival in October, which was in collaboration with the House Officers. Our Harvest Festival sketch, 'Toy(etry) Story', was centred around the search for lost toiletries which were retrieved in a series of challenges. We really enjoyed creating and acting the sketch, whilst collecting donations for The Hygiene Bank. We're pleased to say that our donations contributed to their work in tackling a wide range of issues, from poverty to domestic abuse and disability, and we're delighted to have supported such a worthy cause.

**Missed** The highlight of the musical

calendar was cancelled this year: a concert involving numerous musical groups in St John's Smith Square concert hall in London. Hopefully it will be possible to reschedule some of these events in due course!

## AVISHA (DEPUTY)

**High** Our special Christmas lunch with the House Officers and the Senior Leadership Team. It was served to perfection by our wonderful catering team and certainly put us all in the Christmas mood. Absolutely nothing could rival that yule log...

**Missed** Not having our final Founders' Day was truly saddening for me, especially since the excitement to hand over to the next generation had been building for some time. It was going to be our last time to walk down the aisle in St Albans Abbey, as the congregation sang... though memories of previous Founders' Days will always stay with me. Hopefully we can come back for next year's celebration and sing our hearts out!

## KIM (DEPUTY)

**High** As a team, we'd always look forward to taking part in School Officer assemblies and events. From making Hamilton-inspired music videos to creating a naming ceremony for our tortoise; we had so much fun rehearsing and putting together some really 'unique' shows.

**Missed** Unfortunately we weren't able to see the opening of the 'New Build' in

person! We were supposed to be able to use the new Sixth Form area for revision during exams, and we were really excited about all the new features (such as a rooftop garden!). We did get to sneak around just before school closed, but we can only imagine how impressive the building will be when it's in full swing.

## ALICE (SCHOOL SPORTS CAPTAIN)

**High** The week leading up to Christmas. From carol-singing afternoons at the Strathmore Lodge care home to enjoying Christmas lunch in the Jubilee Hall and wearing matching jumpers in the final assembly; joy and happiness really lit up the STAHS community... it was so lovely for us all to see.

**Missed** Missing out on the Sports Awards evening was particularly unfortunate after working so hard to try and top last year's! I am sure that the legacy will continue for many years to come and I can't wait to see how the event progresses in the future.

*It has been a pleasure to have served the School throughout this year and we have enjoyed every minute together as a team. We must also mention how much admiration we have for the new School Officers, who have already served as such a stabilising force for the community during these uncertain times - we have no doubt that they will continue to rise to the challenges ahead!*



L-R: Avisha, Emily, Eleanor, Kim, Alice



# STAHS NEWS



## FAME COMES TO STAHS

**The singing! The dancing! The leg-warmers!**  
All of these were out in force at this year's school play, Fame the Musical. From 28-30 November, a hugely-talented cast put on a show to rival those at the West End.  
Director and Head of Drama Holly Whymark said: 'It has been a privilege to work with such talented performers, musicians and crew, who have brought their expertise to many aspects of the show.'



## Dancing down the pitch

From next academic year the PE Department will start moving away from the traditional sport of rounders and to the hugely growing sport of cricket – which used to be played at the High School.  
The PE Department said: 'Initially, we were inspired by the high-profile success of the England women's team, who in 2017 beat India in a tense World Cup final in London. We believe that cricket offers an enjoyable, team-based atmosphere with communication and camaraderie as key elements for success. It gives those elite performers a visible pathway to play cricket at a high level, whilst giving recreational players the skills and information to play in school, at their local clubs and in their back gardens!'



When cricket used to be played at STAHS



Inside the 'Medics of the Future' zone



Enjoying some virtual reality

## STEMFest at Prep

The inaugural STAHS Children's STEM Festival, on Saturday 29 February, was enjoyed by 800 members of the local community.  
The festival featured an action-packed afternoon of STEM activities ranging from robotics, engineering and virtual reality experiences, to innovative medical technologies, mesmerising science shows and a spectacular birds of prey display.  
The day catered for all ages, with an array of hands-on fun including bubble and magnetic 'magic', and building marble racing tracks from recycled materials. Reflexes were tested on a Batak machine, and scientific detective skills put into practice during the Crime Scene Investigation activity.  
There was some serious horsepower on display in the playground in the form of an actual Formula 1 race car, with the opportunity for some high octane and fast-paced racing action on the giant scalextric inside.  
State-of-the-art technology was showcased in the 'Medics of the Future' zone, with a team of STAHS parents sharing their expertise on the amazing human body and effects of physical exercise on health.

## STAHS CELEBRATES SUCCESSFUL ISI INSPECTION

The school was delighted with the outcome of its Regulatory Compliance inspection by the Independent Schools Inspectorate service in November 2019, meeting all parts of the Independent Schools Standards, with no further action required.  
Amber Waite, Head at STAHS, commented: 'The unembellished report belies an enormous amount of work behind the scenes to ensure that our pupils are happy and safe, working in an inspiring environment, provided with an outstanding education which encourages them to think and act independently and for the greater good, and in receipt of excellent pastoral care.'

## Stellar GCSE and A level results in 2019

*The School saw more excellent results in the 2019 exams.*

### GCSEs

Over 90% of GCSEs were at grades 9–7 (equivalent to A\* and A). In STEM subjects (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Computer Science and Mathematics) 97% of grades were 9–7. 67 pupils achieved nine or more grades 9–7 and four girls achieved grade 9s in all of their subjects.

### A levels

90% of pupils achieved grades A\*–B and 97% grades A\*–C. 24% of girls gained two or more A\* grades, while 13% gained at least three A\* grades.

## UNIVERSITY DESTINATIONS FOR THE CLASS OF 2019

University Destination	Number of pupils attending
Bath	1
Birmingham	5
Bristol	5
British & Irish Modern Music Institute	1
Cambridge	4
Dundee	1
Durham	5
Exeter	3
Glasgow	1
King's College London	4
Keele	1
Leeds	3
Liverpool	2
Loughborough	1
Newcastle	4
Nottingham	6
Oxford	4
Royal Veterinary College	1
St Andrews	1
UCL	3
Warwick	2
York	2
Gap year/ 2020 start	4



STAHS NEWS (CONTINUED...)

TEACHERS SUPPORT THE NHS THROUGH VISOR INNOVATION

It is widely known that STAHS has an outstanding team in the Design and Technology department. However, through the coronavirus crisis the dedication, innovation and expertise of the team has shone through.

Four members of staff – Thomas Walland, Tim Parker, Dan Fitzgibbons and Wendy Emes – have not only produced close to 800 visors based on the specification sent by NHS Harrow Clinical Commissioning Group, but have redesigned the process to reduce production time from four and a half hours to about 50 minutes.

Wendy Emes, Head of Design and Technology at STAHS said: 'Without the creativity of my colleagues we would not have been able to produce as many visors. They have cut down production time to around 50 minutes each on the 3D printer and two minutes each on the laser cutter, thus significantly increasing production. Not satisfied with that, the team are constantly reviewing and amending the design to perfect the fit, ease the assembly of them and reduce material costs.'

By early May, the team had produced 620 visors for NHS Harrow using a mixture of 3D printed and laser cut designs and another 85 visors using the 3D printed designs which were delivered to Lister Hospital. In addition, 235 3D printed and laser cut visors were delivered to Watford Hospital, with an extra 200 visors in production.

Wendy added: 'It has been an extremely rewarding experience to help support our NHS and has highlighted the importance of design and engineering within modern society. We will continue to do whatever we can, albeit a small contribution, to assist them.'

'As teachers, it is rare that we get to spend this much time working on a single project with such focus. We're very grateful to the High School for supporting us and allowing us to show our students what they can achieve within the realm of

### STAHS' RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN NUMBERS

Even though the School site was closed, in March and April STAHS was busy sourcing resources to help the NHS. This included donations of:



300 pairs of goggles



500 plastic aprons



50 sets of disposable coveralls



4,000 pairs of nitrile gloves



Over 100kg of food from the school kitchens donated to Open Door – a local homeless charity

Many students and staff volunteered in various roles to assist the NHS, on top of their study and work commitments.

Amber Waite, Head, said: 'None of us knows exactly what the coming weeks and months will bring, but we are all doing our best to adapt to a changing landscape. I am so proud of our community, and I know our collective efforts will ease the burden placed on those who continue to work hard so that we are all able to stay safe and well.'

Design and Technology at St Albans High School for Girls.'

Amber Waite, Head, said: 'Through their expertise, innovation and sheer hard work the Design and Technology team are having a real impact supporting the

NHS. They have worked tirelessly in the Easter holidays and now in term time, in addition to their teaching duties, and I am immensely proud and grateful to them for enabling STAHS to make this contribution to support those at the front line.'



Prep pupils enjoying a chilly virtual form time!

It's learning... but not as we know it

The announcement, when it came, was expected. However, that didn't make the news – that from Friday 20 March 2020 all schools in the UK would close for the foreseeable future – any easier.

Even though STAHS had been preparing behind the scenes, it still meant that over the course of a weekend learning would need to shift online. And whilst the technical capabilities were there, it was a Herculean task to implement – not least because so much of the value in teaching and education is the face-to-face interaction, both with teachers and fellow pupils.

'We had been preparing for the likelihood that schools would close for weeks' said Drew Thomson, Deputy Head Academic, 'but it was a huge undertaking, not only to translate lesson plans into a format that could be delivered remotely and online, but also to ensure that pupils were still able to learn and be interactive with each other.'

In the Senior School, STAHS managed it through building a custom student

portal, which was used alongside video conferencing technologies Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom and Zoom to deliver lessons and provide virtual classroom spaces. On here each year group and subject had a specific area, as well as additional areas for co-curricular activities, allowing pupils to still enjoy music, sport and even weekly challenges – which ranged from baking to playwriting – from their own homes. The platforms worked so well because as well as facilitating learning, they also provided a hub where students could be with each other, ask questions and interact with the teacher and the rest of the class – just like they would in an actual classroom.

This portal also allowed for some of that all-important face-to-face time, incorporating form time within the wider pastoral care programme. In addition to this, half of all Senior School lessons also included a live teaching element allowing pupils to see and speak to their teachers and each other.

Drew added: 'The situation was incredibly fast moving, and we quickly recognised the added value in providing

remote education to children between 11 and 18, who are largely self-sufficient and motivated, is very different to providing online learning to children as young as four.

In the Prep the task of providing remote learning needed to serve two purposes: to bring the children's learning forward and to provide childcare support within busy households. To this end the Prep team set about rewriting the timetable to focus on girls' core needs – developing numeracy and literacy skills and remaining physically and mentally healthy.

The girls had a morning assembly daily with pre-recorded films from the Head of Prep, Chaplain and Pastoral Deputy, followed by form time, and Maths and English sessions taught face-to-face through Zoom. Judy Rowe, Head of Prep, said: 'This allowed us to teach new material with active participation from the girls. It also meant that the students could have fun together through competitions, quizzes, and other activities. Staying connected was really important for us.'

Mid-morning the whole school had a half-hour exercise period to keep them physically active. Throughout the afternoon the girls had lessons in all their other subjects, some live on Zoom and some prerecorded.

At 3.15pm the girls all reconvened for a form period on Zoom where they could show their learning to the rest of the class. This provided an audience for their efforts and helped to keep them motivated. As Judy commented: 'This has been a steep learning curve for teachers, parents and pupils but we have been really happy that, despite the difficult climate, the girls have been supported and have made excellent progress, learning within their families.'



Assistant Head Co-Curricular Laura Hicks recording her part of the @STAHSMusic 'Field of Gold' piece in her kitchen.

face-to-face interactions. Teachers adapted to the new technologies and different working from home arrangements to deliver excellent remote lessons. Students attended Whole School and House Assemblies and took part in a structured and engaging tutor time throughout the week: mimicking what would have been our traditional school life.'



# TEACHER NEWS

## Artist in Residence

In October 2019, the Art Department was joined by abstract artist Douglas Snedden whose work is rooted in the spontaneity of Abstract Expressionism. Focusing on the interaction of colour, tone and texture, which slowly evolve to create a definite mood, Douglas' evocative paintings hold visual memories and reactions to places or events in his life. With no conscious point of reference, no identifiable starting point, Douglas enjoys the physical act of painting, improvisation and the uncertainty of this working method.

The willingness to take risks and to be receptive to the process of creating a piece of art is central to the philosophy of the Art Department at STAHS. Head of Art, Sarah Brown said: 'This was a wonderful opportunity for our students in Year 10 to Year 13 to work with Douglas, to be challenged to 'have a go'. Hearing about his career and the artists who have influenced his work was as valuable to the girls as the enjoyment that they got experimenting with screen printing.'

## Teacher selected for prestigious leadership programme

STAHS Head of Drama, Holly Whymark, beat tough competition to be selected for the Royal Opera House Leaders for Impact programme.

Mrs Whymark is one of just 15 senior school leaders who was chosen across Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Essex and Kent to take part in the programme, which aims to celebrate culture and promote the arts in schools.

Holly said: 'This was a wonderful opportunity to meet passionate leaders with the same belief in the power of the arts to impact positively on the education and wellbeing of students. Together we worked on a group project and have established a strong network and are looking forward to future partnership work.'

Throughout the year, Holly has pursued a tailored programme of knowledge and practice-based learning. The programme included group workshops and training, inspiration sessions and a group leadership challenge, as well as mentoring and coaching with carefully selected professionals, including national leaders from the cultural sector.



# Obituaries



## Barbara Tudor Jones Head of Junior House, 1959 – 1984

Miss Tudor Jones positively contributed to an incredible number of lives – pupils, parents, staff, friends and family, at school and church (a classic Venn diagram comes to mind!).

She was ahead of her time, from a teaching post in New Zealand long before regular foreign travel was undertaken, to

leading her staff during her considerable teaching career with a modern professionalism and kindness. She was frequently approached by parents and girls, whom she remembered with astonishing accuracy given the numerous families she had contact with. During her marvellously long retirement, all such meetings gave her great pleasure, rekindling the pride and affection she felt for all her girls and staff.

Yet whilst she was also my Headteacher, it was as Barbara, my Godmother; I knew her best, a much-loved member of my family who lived opposite us for years. As a child it did not occur to me how strange that must have been for my friends who visited –

their Headteacher popping in for a chat, or a one-time birthday party for me at her house. I am not sure many of us realised teachers had a first name and a life outside school!

To me, Barbara was as a grandmother; one who would fetch me to see a hedgehog on her drive, cook vats of marmalade or pick apples from her garden. Later she would take me out for lazy pub lunches, occasionally do the long University 'run' and always take pride in my son's achievements, with the ever-listening ear of a confidante over endless hot drinks and a bottomless biscuit tin.

Barbara Tudor Jones had a wonderfully well lived and long life (I remember interviewing her for a school project on her time in the Land Army – living history!). She was a part of every significant moment in my life and a part of so many others' lives. I suspect we share in feeling her absence deeply.  
*Julia Moreton (Southon, 1978 – 1988)*

## Kim Janes School nurse, 2013 – 2020

Kim was a well-known and well-loved face at school for both staff and pupils, who sadly passed away in January 2020. Kim's nursing career took her to a range of settings across Hertfordshire but when she landed at STAHS, she instantly became an irreplaceable

## Jo Houston Junior House teacher, 1990 - 2008

Our mother Mrs Jo Houston sadly passed away at home with her family on Wednesday 27 May 2020.

We are so proud to have had a mum who was such a warm, kind and talented person. It has been lovely hearing messages of comfort and reflections about her. The common theme was that she warm, friendly, fun loving and kind. She was an amazing mum and Granny to her grandchildren - she was always down at children's level playing games, cooking with them and showing them to do things. We know that this same care and understanding of children was reflected in her teaching.

She was a talented musician, singing with the London Bach Choir and London Symphony Chorus in concerts in the UK and all over the world for over 40 years yet managing to fit in rehearsals around teaching and being a mother – a good role model as a working mum juggling everything!

One of Mum's friends and colleagues Marion Allan described her as 'a dedicated teacher who closely identified with all her pupils delivering inspirational, well-prepared material designed to engage young minds. So talented with her musical ability and creative skills - a wonderful teacher'.

She will be sorely missed by friends, family and those she worked with. Our beautiful mum – inside and outside.  
*Louise Saunders (Houston, 1987 - 1994) and Fiona Walden (Houston, 1987 - 1998)*



member of the High School family. To everyone she was an angel in disguise, a true friend, a cheeky side-kick and an unflappable partner. She was unfailingly kind, calm and comfortable, drank huge amounts of tea and had an endless supply of patience. A wonderful mum, step-mother; wife, daughter; sister; friend and colleague, Kim loved her job, the buzz, and was always there for every one of the girls.

## Jonathan Benjamin Teacher of English, 2016 – 2020

Jonathan tragically passed away in April 2020 after a short battle with COVID-19. Having joined STAHS as a maternity cover teacher, before staying on as a supply teacher, he returned to the English department in 2019 and was welcomed back with open arms.

When his colleagues have spoken about him, the same words repeat time and again: he was warm, funny, charming and deeply intelligent, full of energy and humility, gracious and always with a twinkle in his eye. He adored being a teacher, and loved his family, music, opera, ballet, scripture and God: a devout Orthodox Jewish believer. He loved life and all who had the honour to work with him acknowledge what a privilege it was.



‘Women have sat indoors all these millions of years, so that by this time the very walls are permeated by their creative force, which has, indeed, so overcharged the capacity of bricks and mortar that it must needs harness itself to pens and brushes and business and politics.’  
*Virginia Woolf, A Room of One’s Own*

Work began on the new Dining Hall and Sixth Form centre in 2018, and less than two years later both buildings are finished and unrecognisable from the old spaces.

The old Dining Hall and kitchen, which were originally built in 1963, were demolished and completely rebuilt. The new spaces are light, modern, open and welcoming. There is a variety of seating, including benches, high stools and booths, making it an inviting space even outside of lunchtime. The decking outside is accessed via bi-fold doors, allowing pupils and staff to make the most of nice weather during the warmer months.

Students in Sixth Form are given greater freedoms than lower down in the School, encouraging them to become more independent and allowing them to view their A level years as a real bridge between school and further study or work. This has been reflected in the design of the new Sixth Form block, which has a real university feel.

In contrast, the common room spaces are cosy, with lots of areas to relax and sit in smaller groups, as well as a gorgeous kitchen area creating a real ‘home from home’ feeling. There is also a separate Sixth Form library, providing access to resources and expert support for independent study and research, away from the busy common room.

Not every space is brand new though – even though it’s been repainted, the spiral staircase will be very familiar! At the top of the steps are individual ‘monk cells’, providing a quiet space for individual study.

The new classrooms that sit above the Dining Hall are for all year groups; the design was influenced by a desire for collaborative thinking and innovative teaching, and this is evident in the large, open forum space that is ringed by light, bright classrooms. This area provides a place for flexible working and networking, where pupils in lessons can break out into smaller discussion groups and those in frees or breaks can either work or sit with friends.



The open forum break-out space.



The new spaces have a range of seating options, suiting private work, quiet conversations and collaborative discussions.



New seating in the kitchen area of the Sixth Form common room.



A familiar spiral staircase!





# Meet the Head

**Amber Waite has now been Head of STAHS for almost a year – and what a year it's been. As well as the usual day-to-day leadership of the school, Amber has had an ISI inspection in her first term, the unprecedented closure of schools in her second, and started her third term with all pupils being taught remotely. We catch up with the new Head, as she pauses for breath before getting into her second year at STAHS.**

## How did you get into teaching?

My first degree was in Mathematics, and my first job out of university was as a statistician working on 'big data' (before that term was widely used!) gathered from

dozens of remotely-operated chemical analysers stationed in oceans around the world. From this, I became interested in the equipment that was used to collect the data, and re-trained as an engineer.

I spent the next decade or so building

and testing in situ auto-analysers that used a variety of chemical techniques to analyse seawater, and early on I began to specialise in electrochemical analysis of the environment around deep sea volcanoes (hydrothermal vents). I found this work

## QUICK FIRE QUESTIONS

**Place of birth** Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas

**School/university** Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science (High School); Texas A&M University (BSc, Maths); Rutgers University (BSc, Chemistry and Chemical Biology and Geological Science); University of Delaware (I started a PhD in Chemical Physics, but never sat my viva as I moved into a career in education); Oxford (MSc Science Education)

**UK or US?** Can I say both? I love living in the UK, and don't plan to move back to the US. However, I love visiting the US as often as possible, and I am very proud of my background. (I do tend to identify more as a Texan than an American!)

**City or country?** Village! I love my village life. I've lived in big cities (Dallas, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Washington DC), but there's nothing like UK village life!

**Facebook or Twitter?** I'm fairly uninterested in social media. It doesn't hold my attention. But I do follow a few fun people on Twitter, so I suppose I'd choose that.

**If you could have a superpower, what would it be?** I'd be able to pause time – I'm always searching for that 25th hour in a day!

**What do you wish you could have invented or discovered?** I don't really think like that – I'm proud of the advances I made in science, but there's nothing I wish I had done. I do, however, have a special place in my heart for instruments that are just right for the job. Can I turn this question into 'what technical equipment could you not do without'? I would be devastated if I lost my set of Vernier calipers and micrometers. There is nothing that can adequately replace a good set of calipers when you need them!

fascinating, not only because I loved the engineering challenge of developing equipment and techniques that can be used in extreme environments, but also because I loved the adventure of travelling the world and spending several months of the year on research vessels (including deep sea submersibles) out at sea. Working from Fiji was certainly no hardship!

I also completed undergraduate and post-graduate degrees in Chemistry and Chemical Biology and Geological Sciences along the way. I met my husband whilst working as an oceanographer – between the two of us, we represented about 50% of the world's expertise in electrochemical analysis in extreme environments. This caused two problems: exceptionally dull dinner party conversations and the fact that we were competing with each other for research grants and posts at research institutions. I was also beginning to wonder how two oceanographers could ever have a 'normal' family life whilst spending the requisite weeks and months at sea each year.

I knew that science and maths teachers were difficult to recruit in my area (coastal Delaware, USA), so I approached a

local school and asked how to get into teaching. I always enjoyed working with undergraduates, and had volunteered at schools during science weeks in the past, so I thought I might enjoy teaching. I found that I could train 'on the job', and put in an application. I was soon teaching science – and loving it! Eventually, I became interested in education policy and left teaching to work for the Civil Service, but I missed the pace and excitement of the classroom, and returned to teaching after a few years. I've been teaching in UK independent schools since then.

## What made you want to work at STAHS?

There were a number of factors that drew me to STAHS. I love that STAHS is unashamedly academic. I wanted to work in a school where it is 'cool' to be clever, and where I would be challenged in the classroom.

I feel strongly about supporting and educating the next generation of female engineers, scientists, technologists and mathematicians. Although I attended an academically selective school specialising in Maths and Science, I was never

encouraged to explore engineering, robotics or geosciences. I was gently pushed towards Maths and Medicine, along with the other girls, whilst my male classmates were out learning how to use surveying equipment and machining precision moving parts for engines. If I had different encouragement and access to women in engineering and geosciences as role models, my career would have been advanced by at least five years.

I love working with so many bright, inquisitive young women at STAHS – and I love sitting in on alumnae talks, meeting some incredible women blazing a wealth of different trails for our current students to follow. The atmosphere at STAHS is alive with possibility, and I felt that the moment I stepped foot on the site.

## What is your vision for the school?

I want the young people who leave STAHS at the end of their A level studies to have the knowledge, confidence and initiative to go forth into the world intent on making a difference. A STAHS education should prepare students to 'lead lives of consequence' – to be community-minded, to be adventurous and resilient, and to never settle for 'good enough' for themselves or others.

## What part of school life do you enjoy the most?

I love working with students; whether in the classroom or meeting with my School Officer team, it's the daily interaction with young people that I enjoy the most. I love that my office is on the main corridor, so I can always hear the buzz of laughter and conversation between lessons – it makes working at my computer much less dreary!

## What are you most proud of?

I am proud of the STAHS community. I have never worked in a school where there is such a supportive, tightly-knit, and expansive network of students, alumni, supporters and friends. We are so lucky to be part of such an inspiring group – when I meet children and parents who are entering the Prep School, I can't help feeling a little overwhelmed at what they are stepping into. From the moment you join STAHS, as a student, a parent or a member of staff, you become part of something so much greater.





Alumna Cllr Nesil Caliskhan (2007) talking to Sixth Form students about local government and her role as Leader of Enfield Council

## Paying it forward

STAHs Old Girls have always been great at supporting current pupils – and this has been an incredible year for alumnae coming in to speak to students about their careers, university choices and life experiences.

This year we have been delighted to welcome back over 50 alumnae, who have spoken to over 400 pupils from a range of year groups.

Alumnae have talked about their roles and careers across a wide range of sectors and companies including Innocent Drinks, The Daily Telegraph, Shell, Tommy's, Roche,

the NHS, Accenture, ITN, Intermision Film, UH Arts, Deloitte, Michael Page, The Spectator and RBS.

It has been fantastic to have alumnae coming in for lunchtime careers talks, as well as being involved in Sixth Form interview practice, the Year 11 alumnae breakfast, MedVet interview support, the Sixth Form careers evening, a Geography stretch event and the Oxbridge conference.

Alumnae have also talked about their own journeys in the Sixth Form lecture series and Perspectives sessions.

And the ways that they have supported pupils has been varied too, including talks, face-to-face advice, webinars and profiles. During lockdown we were delighted to host five careers webinars and three panel sessions, looking at apprenticeships, studying English at university and combining university study with elite sports.

If you would be interested in speaking to students next academic year, either in person or through a webinar, please let us know by emailing [alumnae@stahs.org.uk](mailto:alumnae@stahs.org.uk).

### AND THERE'S ALSO PLENTY OF CAREERS SUPPORT FOR ALUMNAE

We are continuing to run careers events for Old Girls – details about events that ran this year are on page 33 and future planned events are on page 31 or on the alumni portal: <https://alumni.stahs.org.uk>.

As well as this, we have our jobs board on the alumni portal and we are getting ready to launch our alumna-alumna mentoring scheme. Details will be released in September, so keep an eye out if you're interested in being a future mentor or getting advice and support as a mentee!



Alumnae panel at the Year 9 STEM day.  
L-R: Professor Claire Horwell (1992), now Professor of Geohealth at the University of Durham / Emma Ryan (2003), now Group Head of Safety Data Acquisition in Pharma Development Safety at Roche Products Limited / Reema Patel (2005), now Head of Public Engagement at the Ada Lovelace Institute



Alumna Sophie Everard (2004)

## Sporting super STAHs

We all know that it's important to keep fit and healthy – even if we don't necessarily enjoy it or see ourselves as sporty. This has been emphasised by the Coronavirus lockdown, with health and medical professionals keen to stress the value of exercise and sports: for physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Many of us might not be natural athletes – and all of us will be somewhere on the (rather wide) 'love it' or 'loathe it' lacrosse scale. Alumna Louise Barnes (Burns, 2001) spoke to four incredible alumnae who show that sport can be so much more than the chore of a weekly workout. Exercise, fitness and wellbeing all form a key part of their lives and in very different ways. So whether you were on a sports team or not, whether you enjoy exercise or are a self-proclaimed couch potato, read on to be inspired, enthused and encouraged....



## Mad about the girl

Vitality, health and positivity seem to seep out of every pore of Sophie Everard (2004). Not that I've met her face-to-face, but after spending some time scrolling through her Instagram feed – @sophiemadtolive – which documents her life and brand, you get a real appreciation for her energy, drive and passion.

It is these qualities which led her to found Mad To Live – a digital platform that highlights the mental and physical benefits of adventure, travel and sports. Alongside this, her brand also runs retreats, which Sophie calls 'the true physical manifestation of the brand': adventures for women of all ages in settings across Europe, South America, Asia and Africa.

In many ways Sophie's life looks like something out of fiction: incredible shots from around the world, as she embarks on ways to encourage us into an active and healthy lifestyle. She's also had impressive collaborations with some of the UK's leading fitness brands, including the likes of Roxy and Sweaty Betty. 'At the beginning, launching the brand was reliant predominantly through me being its public-facing spokesperson, utilising content, and collaborating with other brands, for example Roxy, for whom I became an Ambassador for the UK.'

As the business has grown, so has the focus shifted – away from Sophie and towards the women who have been on her retreats and seen a change in their outlooks and lifestyles. Putting them in the forefront is deliberate, to highlight a passion of Sophie's: 'I want to show how these sports are for everyone, and to tell a wider story of the positive impacts this lifestyle has on a kaleidoscope of backgrounds, professions, ethnicities and personality types.'

And this highlights a central premise of Mad To Live – that of female empowerment and support. 'The message of female empowerment is truly the heart and soul of what my brand is about. I have been lucky to see first-hand the positive ramifications of enabling and exposing girls and women to not just sport or trying a new sport, but living fearlessly, of daring to do things that may scare you, of connecting with people you might not normally, and pursuing what sets your soul on fire.'

Yet, as someone who is so prevalent on social media and was also the face of Sweaty Betty's 2019 Spring Summer campaign, she is acutely aware of body image, and in particular its effect on young people. 'I definitely feel responsibility in terms of the audience I speak to and critically, the message I want to project, especially to younger girls. I'd like to show younger girls, women, anybody, that pursuing your hobbies and passions, even if they seem slightly out the ordinary, and sticking with your instincts can be incredibly fulfilling.'

Sophie's own journey reflects this, as her business is direct product of her own hobbies and interests. Although she is keen to stress that she 'wasn't the top athlete at school', Sophie says: 'I was into sport at school and on quite a few teams. I especially loved swimming, and having amazing memories of the galas and training in our pool. My love of swimming and the water definitely led to me picking up surfing, and feeling confident and able in the ocean.'

And it was directly after leaving STAHS in 2004 that Sophie's love of swimming began to direct her path. 'After I left school I took a gap year, excited to get into the world before my studies at Leeds University. I was living in Portugal during that first summer, beginning to fall in love with surfing and the lifestyle surrounding it. I then went on to the French Alps to spend the winter snowboarding. During my gap year, I had a few jobs and internships working for sports companies and brands, which ignited a passion early on for these exciting and energetic industries, specifically, on the women's arms of the businesses.'

After completing her degree in French and Politics, she moved into this field – working at a range of leading action sports marketing agencies and brands, covering marketing, events management, advertising, PR and editorial work.

Alongside this, Sophie always had other projects on the go. 'I have freelanced throughout my career as a writer focusing on women's sport, travel and adventure, and had a book published a few years ago on the history and biomechanics of snowboarding, which I co-authored with the then UK Head Coach. I guess I always knew I wouldn't do something "by the book", as I am energised by my passions and beliefs and wanted to be able to incorporate them into my career.'

These passions finally coalesced and she founded her business, whilst also working full-time and working as a personal trainer in the evenings. 'When I was living in London, my interest and passion for sport was really escalating, thanks to spending so much time snowboarding, surfing, cycling and enjoying other sports through my job and travels. As I let myself really come into my own, through feeling physically and mentally stronger by leading an active lifestyle, I also noted how other women also felt coming into contact with sport, and its positive mental ramifications.'

'I wanted to create something that enabled more women to essentially feel stronger, happier, to enjoy sport, make new friends, and feel how nourishing the lifestyle around a lot of these sports is. The surfing, climbing, running, any sport really, communities are incredibly welcoming, and a place for anybody, no matter their background, age or beliefs.'

The nourishment that sports provides has also informed the philanthropic work that Sophie does – working as an ambassador for not-for-profit charity The Wave Project, alongside her friend and Olympic medal winner Victoria Pendleton. 'The Wave Project offers NHS backed "prescription surf" therapy courses to children and adolescents suffering from anxiety, depression, and other mental, physical and emotional disabilities and limitations.'

'The results are staggering and thousands of children have benefited from The Wave Project's surf therapy. I have taught at clubs, acted as a spokesperson, compered their annual fundraiser, and raised funds for over 100 kids to benefit from the programme.'

Alongside this, she has also used her global retreats to help with projects outside of the UK. In Costa Rica she works with a local tree planting charity and in Morocco sponsors the women and girls' arm of a local charity that enables local women, who predominantly live below the poverty line, to enjoy both fitness, including hikes, skate, surf and yoga classes, and educational programmes, which cover topics ranging from the environment through to digital marketing.

With all of this, it's amazing that Sophie has the time to squeeze in every part of her lifestyle and brand. 'It's hard to say which element I enjoy the most of my business, but fortunately the different arms of the business all lead to the overarching ethos and message, so it's great to have that at the forefront as guidance. I've always loved to write since school (I won't forget Mrs Pyett's witty discussions on Chaucer!!) and content creation working for companies like the English Tourist Board, GoPro, Tag Heuer and more allows me to really be able to flex my creativity. It's been an amazing experience and last year I was interviewed by Forbes, an unanticipated and humbling experience.'

Even though the interview might have been humbling, it seems to have been truly well-earned. And I, for one, can't wait to see where Sophie's journey leads next.



### SOPHIE'S VOICE

**On starting a business:** 'Exercise tenacity and be resilient, but also prepare well, speak to others – use your network for guidance, and others' knowledge. Understand it is a tumultuous ride with fantastic highs and lows.'

**On sport:** 'You don't have to be the next Serena Williams to love sport, to give it a go, and to feel strong and powerful in your own, individual, special way.'

**On the value of fitness:** 'If work is slow or difficult (which it can be, being a freelancer and business owner), fitness and wellbeing are the nucleus of everything. At times when things are hard, just taking the time to train, go for a surf, walk around a park, remind me of the powerful joy I have from doing these sports and enjoying a healthy lifestyle.'



# She’s got the power

Powerlifting. The word alone conjures up images of huge, muscled men lifting enormous weights. But, as alumna Ajanta Hilton (Vinayagamoorthy, 1996) can testify, this isn't the case at all.

'There are so many preconceived ideas that lifting weights will make you look like the Hulk. It's just not true, but you can expect to get more toned and lose a bit of that stubborn fat. Powerlifting is a sport that focuses on three main lifts – the squat, bench press and deadlift. These are heavy lifts that are great for building all over strength and making you feel strong! When competing in the sport you are placed in your respective weight and age categories.'

She continues: 'I am 41 and as we get older, building strength is even more important to prevent losing muscle mass and bone density. Many people worry about injuries but with good technique you actually lower your risk of injury and improve your posture.'

Ajanta certainly knows what she's talking about, having represented England at the Commonwealth Championships in Canada in September 2019 and going on to win the bronze medal. A fantastic achievement in itself, but even more so when put into context, as Ajanta only began competing in 2018.

'I began competing two years ago when I entered a regional competition in Milton Keynes. I had been focused on training for a few months running up to it, but I was so nervous, didn't know anyone and was terrified of breaking a rule or embarrassing myself. However, it all worked out and I managed personal bests on all my lifts. The atmosphere was brilliant – so much support and encouragement for everyone, however much they were lifting. I was hooked!

'My last competition in September 2019 was a huge highlight – representing England at the Commonwealth Powerlifting Championships in Canada. There were 88 other England athletes plus competitors from all the other Commonwealth nations, all staying in the same hotel where we were competing. The atmosphere was incredible. In the end, I amazed myself by winning



Alumna  
Ajanta with  
her husband

a bronze medal! This was a bit unexpected as I was ranked fifth going into the competition, but I managed PBs in all the events.'

Powerlifting isn't a well-known sport and Ajanta was new to weights, having focused on cardio to help stay fit.

'My husband took me in the weights room a few years ago and was amazed at how much I could lift with no training. I then joined CrossFit St Albans where you do a mixture of fitness, gymnastics and weight lifting, taught in small classes and focusing on good technique. How you perform is tracked and I found myself loving and excelling in the powerlifts. I checked the qualifying totals on the British powerlifting site and found that I could qualify for a national powerlifting competition with just a bit more training... so I did!'

From here, Ajanta started working with a powerlifting coach who designed a bespoke training programme, comprising of four training sessions a week. 'My training focuses on the three main lifts, but also includes additional stability, core and accessory exercises to complement the heavy weights.'

Given these regular sessions, it's fair to say that Ajanta doesn't escape 'the juggle' and balances her training alongside work and family life. 'We have three children and two dogs, and all of us do various sports. We just about manage to juggle it all, but I have to be organised to fit in eight hours of training a week.'

'I originally qualified as a chartered accountant working in the big four, and then industry. However, it was very difficult to manage everything, so I am lucky to have been able to change paths. Now I work as a trustee and UK director for a charity in Sri Lanka, the Rainbow Centre, who provide support and education for the most vulnerable children in the southeast region, formed after the tsunami. I visit Sri Lanka a few times a year, but the majority of my work can be done from home.'

Being involved in powerlifting and competing at Commonwealth level has definitely changed how Ajanta views her body and its capabilities. 'I no longer worry about losing weight or aesthetics. For me now it's more about eating well and healthily and allowing my body to be as strong as I can be.'

'I now see training as a sport and genuinely enjoy it, as opposed to how I used to see the gym as a means to an end, like many women do. It's a great feeling when you get a personal best and you've worked hard to achieve it.'

But, surely, to get to this level Ajanta must have always been sporty? 'Funnily enough, no! Sport really didn't appeal to me at school and I really regret not taking the opportunities to do more. However, it just goes to show that there's hope for us all, that even if you weren't in the school A-team you can still end up representing your country!'



Powerlifting  
in action



Alumna  
Fiona Scott



Fiona training Loughborough  
Lightning player Sam May

## Focus: Strength and Conditioning

*We all know that we need to be exercising more, and for many of us this probably involves either a high-intensity workout that gets our heart pumping or something with body-mind benefits, like yoga. But, as alumna Fiona Scott (2004) – Head of Physical Performance at the University of Hertfordshire – highlights, strength and conditioning is a key part of any exercise regime, particularly for professional athletes.*

### What is Strength and Conditioning training?

Strength and Conditioning (S&C) is the practical application of sports science to enhance athletic performance. It involves an S&C coach having a thorough understanding of the biomechanical, physiological and injury analysis of each sport and how to help an athlete be resilient to those demands. This allows the coach to test, plan, design, deliver, coach and review the athlete's training programme, aligned to specific performance outcomes and maximising technical training opportunities.

### Why is it so important?

Strength and Conditioning is more than lifting weights – it encompasses the entire physical development of the athlete and what is required for them to be the best physical version of themselves. We train a range of athletes from grass roots and youth development through to world-class level. There's a wide remit of training including injury prevention, rehabilitation, endurance, fundamental movement patterns and motor control.

### What do you do on a day to day basis?

My role is a nice mixture of S&C coaching, lecturing, coach development and business management.

The groups and athletes that I train include Saracen's Mavericks, England Squash, England Regional Golf, Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) Athletes, University Performance Sports and Scholars, and a handful of individual athletes aiming for Tokyo 2020 (now 2021!) and the 2022 Commonwealth Games, so that involves communication with coaches, testing, planning, programming and coaching.

I have a team of three staff, ten coaches, a university placement student and ten interns working towards their UK S&C accreditation, as well as overseeing the S&C and physio provision at Arsenal Women's FC Academy through the TASS pathway. So,

as you can imagine, a lot of my week is comprised of staff and coach development.

I lecture at both undergraduate and postgraduate level for the sports science, sports therapy and physiotherapy degree programmes. This has been a great way to keep up to date with the latest research and bring an applied aspect to the theory within the modules. One area of research that I have a particular interest in is training the female athlete, and how more needs to be understood about how the hormonal system affects training and performance.

Lastly, I am part of the Senior Management Team at Hertfordshire Sports Village, where my main role is to run the S&C department and oversee the commercial health and fitness side of the business, as well as provide a link between the sports village and academic departments at the University.

### How did you get into your current role?

I loved all sports growing up and enjoyed science at school, so when choosing a degree, sport and exercise science seemed like a sensible path. I studied my BSc at Birmingham University and upon graduating completed a Personal Training (PT) course before working at a Virgin Active Health Club. After training the general population for two years, I missed the sports side and undertook a Masters in S&C at Middlesex University.

During this time, I relocated back to Hertfordshire, set up my own PT business and applied for voluntary experience within S&C to bolster my MSc learning. The University of Hertfordshire took me on for eight hours a week working primarily with youth tennis players, but over the years this has grown into a full-time role working across multiple sports.

In 2015 I took over the management of the department, adding lecturing to our business and focusing on growing the business' outreach, staffing and furthering myself as a practitioner.

**Which sporting teams and individuals would you love to work with in the future?**

I've been extremely lucky to have trained some amazing athletes, and even more lucky to now call many of them my friends. I very much enjoy working across multiple sports and levels, but sometimes would like to delve more deeply into one sport and see a team through a full World Cup or Olympic cycle.



Alumna Dr Rimla  
Akhtar MBE



## A sporting soul

For many people, sport is an inexorable part of their life, a key part of their identity. This is certainly true of alumna Rimla Akhtar (2001) who, in 2015, was awarded an MBE for her contribution to equality and diversity in sport: a fitting tribute to the amount of work she has done to date supporting grassroots organisations and making sure that anyone – regardless of gender, background, religion, ability or disability – can be part of a team.

She certainly has the track-record to prove that she knows what she's talking about. Rimla was the first Asian woman and the first Muslim woman on the Football Association (FA) Council, Chair of the Muslim Women's Sport Foundation, an independent trustee of Kick It Out – campaigning against racism in football – and in 2018 Forbes ranked her 14th in their Most Powerful Women in Sports list. As of October 2019, Rimla is also a Board member of the Rugby Football League (RFL).

But this success – and confidence – is all born out of her

experiences in sports.

'For me, sport was a leveller; it was a place where no one seemed to care about the colour of my skin, that I was a girl or about the piece of cloth that I wear around my head – it was just about my ability on the field of play.

'Sport was a space where I felt safe, accepted and included. Whereas in the rest of society, growing up in the 1980s and 1990s, it was very difficult to be Asian and visibly Muslim as all aspects of my identity were challenged. But I was lucky – I happened to be good and I never felt judged on a sports field for anything other than my ability.'

Early exposure to sport is something that Rimla is clearly passionate about, saying, 'I find with young children that if their mothers are into sport then they are too, and I think that's massive.'

And nowhere is this truer than with her own family and

experiences. 'I guess sport runs in the family with us – I have two older brothers and I am the only girl so I did what they did, they were my heroes!

'I started playing football, cricket with them, just whatever sports they were into I would join in with. Plus my mother played sports back in Pakistan, where she grew up, and was her school's sports president. Her mum played basketball and her father was a hockey referee at the district level, so there was a huge amount that my family was involved with. So playing sport was normal and natural for me.'

Even though Rimla herself is clearly very passionate about sport, she is equally eloquent about its benefits to everyone – regardless of experience or talent.

'I think [sport] can play a huge role in a positive way, in terms of helping people find themselves – and it helped me ground myself and find confidence, and that confidence is something I carry with me today.

'On top of that we know that even if you don't make the school team – or any other levels of teams – you are developing as an individual through sport, such as losing and winning, picking yourself up, being part of team, playing to everyone's strengths and weaknesses and developing yourself.'

It is also clear that she sees the value of sport in overcoming divisions and its role in bringing communities together; being a force for positive change.

'We've done projects over the years where we've brought women together for tournaments who would have never met each other – and the views that they formed of each other; the respect they form, the positivity and cohesion that develops silently from playing together and against each other speaks volumes.

'I remember years ago the Faith in Football group at the FA bringing primary school age children together from different faith schools who had never met anyone from another faith, but

they came together over their shared love of athletes and that created conversation and understanding, that we have so much in common. There are so many ways around the world that sport is being used for education, health and cohesion – there are endless possibilities, which makes sport quite unique in that respect.'

Rimla began her career in accounting, but has now moved into sports consultancy after founding her company RimJhim Consulting in 2016. Through this she truly practices what she preaches – helping to advise businesses, both in and outside of the sporting industry, on good diversity, inclusivity and community development practices, as well as mentoring and supporting future leaders.

So, given everything she's achieved so far – and all the successes yet to come – what would she like to be known for?

'I don't really want to be known for anything – I just want to get on with what I can do and where I can change and influence positively! I guess though it's just that general drive towards breaking and knocking down those barriers that prevent people from different backgrounds engaging with sport, whether that's as a player, coach, referee, fan, administrator. That's what I've been doing all these years and it's what I'll continue doing.

'The "Get on Board" programme that we're currently delivering at RimJhim Consulting, which is about getting more ethnic minority women onto sports boards – that's the stuff I want to do where we're doing something tangible and we're seeing the results, not just in terms of representation but also positively in the organisations as they're more representative.

'I'd love to keep doing this – where I'm influencing at the top, where I'm helping to change organisations for the better strategically and through a policy perspective, so that the industry becomes more open – as open and flexible as it can be: an agile industry that really focuses on the future.'

Words of hope from an inspirational woman.

Alumna Rosie  
Alterman (R) with  
her colleague  
Charlie (L)



### From the sea to scrubs...

We were due to also write about Rosie Alterman (2009) and her planned entry into the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge (TWAC) as one half of the Emergensea Girls – and her training regime as she prepared to row 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean from La Gomera in the Canary Islands to Antigua.

However, Rosie and her team mate are both A&E doctors and – having had all of their leave cancelled – they are likely to postpone their race entry until 2021. We wish Rosie all the best with her training and also want to say a huge thank you to her for putting her own life on hold to help save the lives of others.





Kate on set for her  
Frankenstein lessons

# The *State* of Education

I knew I went to a 'good school'. Not everyone can still, enthusiastically, quote their History teacher, or gets chills remembering the circular narrative in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. A place of limitless expectation and ambition, where I would genuinely console a friend for achieving an A instead of an A\*.

Yes, school was lovely and, I thought, teaching, that will be lovely too.

Last year 57% of students in state-funded education did not get a Grade 5 – a C in old money – or higher in Maths and English. That is over 300,000 young people who were, quite literally, failed by the system. Of course, the recent school closures have exacerbated this issue further.

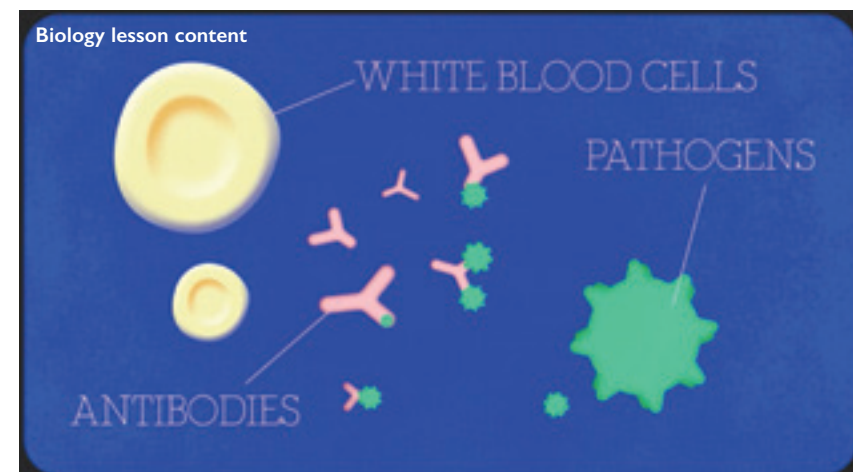
We live in a country with the fifth largest economy on the planet and yet half of young people leave our state schools

system without acceptable marks in core GCSEs. In case you were wondering, that percentage drops from 57% to 0% if you send your child to STAHS.

The reality of my students' school days in a nearby airport town was quite different to my own. Yet, surely, your ability to afford private education shouldn't be the only prerequisite to success in 2019.

But why are state schools failing to get even a 50% pass rate? Is it as simple as needing more money? Certainly, that would help. But the crux of it comes down to resources, and how those resources are being deployed.

The greatest resource available for any child in education is their classroom teacher. When people talk about a teacher retention crisis, they really mean it. Quality teachers are hard to find and harder to keep. I, myself, was employed to teach countless GCSE English students without any relevant qualification, teacher training or even an English A-level. At the time I believed I must have been exceptional at interview (there goes that STAHS, 'we can



School closures have shown us how technology can aid learning. Throughout the pandemic there have been constant reports in the press that the gap between state and independent schools is growing at a rapid pace. Your Favourite Teacher ([www.yourfavouriteteacher.com](http://www.yourfavouriteteacher.com)) is trying to turn the tide on this gap and is working with independent and state schools across the country. Our exciting summer school project will see students across the UK bridge that gap. YFT is now delivering an online curriculum to thousands of learners across the country – from the most disadvantaged children to those living overseas attending independent schools.

achieve anything attitude'). In reality they were desperate.

If you don't have enough capable staff what can you do? Increase your class sizes, so they have a wider reach? Draw teachers from other areas? If you've got your best staff teaching exam groups, how off track will your younger year groups become? When Einstein said, 'The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result', he was talking to teachers. So how do you break the cycle?

One way to lessen the burden is with technology.

Educational-Technology, or Ed-Tech, might be the answer. A textbook or a revision guide is useful in the right hands, but there is no way of measuring impact or usage. Once the physical object is lost or, let's face it, graffitied in, meaningful learning stops.

By creating online digital content, you can achieve the impossible and be in 50 places at once. Personally, I first did this by creating a podcast. It was a compromise for not wanting to lead weekend revision classes, but also desperately wanting my students to have every opportunity to learn. By recording a lesson once, it can be delivered as many times as necessary



Kate and her team  
as a Finalist for Start  
Up of the Year



and to as many people that need it. Soon, a resource first intended for my Year 11 groups, had over 100,000 listens internationally. All from young people wanting to learn, in a way that suited them.

And so, at the end of five wonderful, yet gruelling, years in the state system, I set about to make some changes on a greater level and start building a virtual classroom. I took each of the struggles and frustrations I saw from my time in the state sector and thought about how best to improve things for both teachers and students.

First, I gathered a team of like-minded teachers. We then turned what would be a scheme of work into a collection of films, interactive quizzes and downloadable extensions. Teachers can then direct learners to whatever they need support with, rather than revisiting subject matter time and time again.

Traditional homework setting and gathering up paper worksheets to be marked can be a thing of the past. Self-marking quizzing tools free up precious time – and may even allow for a work/life balance. – Kate Meeks

Kate is a 'class of 2008' founder of an online learning platform aimed at raising achievement in disadvantaged learners. She taught English and Philosophy for a number of years in Luton, where she made Head of Department as an NQT. She left her school at the end of 2017 to search for an alternative solution for struggling students, raising money through angel investors; in 2018 her company was launched and is now used to aid learning and improve GCSE results across the country.



1960s



**Dr Alison Baxter**  
1961 – 1968

During the coronavirus lockdown I took the opportunity to sort my bookshelves and was reminded of my early reputation as a girlie swot. In my copy of Emma, a bookplate signed by Miss Gent reads 'IVA Form Prize 1962', while Walter Scott's Redgauntlet is inscribed 'Middle School Latin Prize 1963'. But despite this promising start, I was the last in my year group to get my PhD, 51 years after we left the High School.

While others pursued careers that ranged from archaeologist to doctor, biochemist to university lecturer, I set off to see the world.

I worked in snowy Quebec and the tropical South Pacific, teaching English as a foreign language – my only marketable skill. Eventually I settled in Cambridge as an editor with the university press, later moving to Oxford and then, in another change of direction, from publishing into the charitable sector.

All the time that I was editing other people's words I had wondered if I could write a book myself, and as I approached retirement age I decided it was time to find out.

To my amazement and delight, I was awarded a place at the University of East Anglia on their renowned MA in Creative Writing. They had called my bluff! I embarked on a new life as a full-time student, commuting weekly between my home in Oxford and Norwich, where I found that I was not the only mature learner taking advantage of retirement to reinvent myself.

I soon realised that I wanted to write history, but was unsure if it should be fiction or nonfiction. The academic year was over all too quickly and I was left with no definitive answer so I applied to Oxford Brookes to do a PhD that would explore the porous boundary between the two. I told my supervisor I wanted to complete it before I turned 70 and in December 2019, eleven months ahead of my self-imposed deadline and six months after the birth of my first grandchild, I passed my viva examination.

My thesis includes both a section of my book and a critical commentary on the process of writing it. It is the story of a Cornish seafaring family in the age of Victoria, a nonfiction narrative that I have brought to life with fictional scenes. I still need to find a publisher but I know that, even at this advanced age, all things are possible.

1950s

**Jane Reddish**  
1947 – 1955

10 grandchildren, ranging from 28 to two, the eldest one to be married this year (2019).

1960s

**Dr Vicki Vivienne Rhona Harris**  
1958 – 1961

Retired from the Civil Service in 2003. Last post was as Head of the Private Sector Policy Department in the Department for International Development. Since then have had a portfolio of appointments including member of the Bar Standards Board, Chair of the Taxation Disciplinary Board, Lay Chair at the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service. Now blessed with three children and 12 grandchildren.

1980s

**Barbara Corcoran**  
1974 – 1981

After 25 years in Bristol, my husband and I have moved to beautiful Lymington, Hampshire, where we are enjoying being on the coast and also on the edge of the New Forest. All three of our married 'children' already have family connections in the area, and as we are now proud grandparents to delightful one-year-old Rosie, living in nearby Romsey, the time and location for a move felt right. I have been working as lead Practice Nurse at a surgery in Bristol for the past sixteen years. I have recently become passionate about Functional Medicine and Nutritional Therapy, finding the root cause of illness rather than focusing on treating symptoms, and would love to find work in this exciting field, once we have settled in. I meet up with Ali Monk (Farmbrough) regularly, and exchange news with Elizabeth Preston (Jacques) at Christmas.

2000s

**Juliet James**  
2014 – 2016

Summer 2019 – just completed a 14-month placement with WSP and am returning to uni to complete the final year of my studies on a scholarship from the company. Hoping to return to WSP post-graduation.

1960s

**Mrs Hilary Mayne (Potts)**  
1954 – 1962

I'm an Elder at Redland Quaker Meeting and have been training to support prisoners as they leave Horfield Prison to stop reoffending. Here are some photos of Sixth Form in 1962.



End of Trinity Term 1962. Some of us not considered able to take A levels in the 'General' Sixth Form, including me. This included another year of English Lit and poetry with Miss Derrit-Smith: Browning's poetry, Mary Webb novels (e.g. Precious Bane), RE I expect too! Also more lacrosse and netball with Miss Meiklejohn.



Summer 1962: Holiday with Miss Rickinson and Miss Pearson on a Geography expedition. We are just about to go down a pothole in the Mendips. We visited Miss Meiklejohn who lived in Churchill and she gave us all much sherry and anchovied eggs (ugh) and we had a jolly time with her and her two sisters. L-R Suzette Light, Jenny Vestey and me.

1980s

**Katharine Goddard**  
1977 – 1988

Katharine Goddard completed her second degree this year; retraining in Garden Design and Plantsmanship at the Royal Agricultural University of Cirencester. Using her experience, she has worked on a main avenue garden at RHS Chelsea Flower Show and two show gardens at RHS Hampton Court. Katharine recently designed the living pond area as part of the Game Fair at Hatfield House. She is currently setting up a bespoke garden design business, Goddard Garden Design, in St Albans, and looks forward to working with new clients in the Home Counties and London area.





# Obituaries

## 1960s

**Anne Munroe (Widger)**  
1949 - 1962

Anne passed away in October 2019 in Mull.

## 1970s

**Susan Wilkins (Ferguson)**  
1964 – 1971

It is with great sadness that I wish to announce the sad and sudden death of my sister Susan Wilkins (Ferguson) in July 2018 aged 65. She leaves a husband and three children and five grandchildren.  
*Gillian Shenoy (Ferguson)*

**Hilary Jane Knowles (Knowles-Brown)**  
1967 – 1974

With great sadness I inform her fellow alumni of Hilary's passing after an heroic fight with cancer.

Following her time at St Albans, Hilary went on to read History at King's where she also attained an AKC (Associateship of King's College London). At King's she was also involved in archaeological digs in France. Later, in pursuit of her love for the fine arts, she worked with the Arts Council, London. A period in Australia followed, returning to the Arts Council and subsequently into private Bond Street galleries. It was here she met her partner, eventually moving to West Cornwall, an area she loved. In Cornwall she worked as an archivist to a geo-thermal consultancy.

After many years of happiness Hilary fell extremely ill, marrying her partner, Stuart, in hospital in August 2018. Sadly, Hilary passed away the following month in September 2018. We enjoyed 28 years in the Cornwall she loved.

Hilary touched many hearts and is sorely missed by Stuart and all who knew her.  
*Stuart Knowles*

## 1990s

**Lucy Pegg (Baines)**  
1986 – 1997

Tragically, Lucy died on 27 December 2019 after battling with Neuroendocrine Tumour

cancer. Below are extracts from the eulogy read at her funeral remembering her full life and wonderful personality.

Lucy came into the world on a snowy day in March 1979 at the QEII hospital, a sister to older brothers Julian and John and daughter to Peter and Sue Baines.

When she was eight she started at the High School, where she remained right through to A levels. She was very happy there and made many life-long friends. She learnt the violin, and as she progressed she enjoyed playing duets with her Dad at home – she on the violin, he on the piano. Lucy also sang in the school choir and had a beautiful singing voice.

She loved Drama and English, though was always hopeless at Geography. Lucy was very competitive – being in such a rugby family with two much older brothers she had to be really! But drama and singing were her passions: she was in several school plays and did Drama A level along with English and RE.

Lucy took a gap year when she left school in 1997 and during this travelled round the world with her school friend Gemma visiting Hong Kong, India, and SE Asia amongst other places. After her travels, Lucy started her English degree at Sheffield Hallam University. These were three great years and Lucy, as she always did, made many friends, including her husband Steve who she met in the halls of residence in their first year.

Lucy graduated in 2001, staying in Sheffield for a year before returning to Hertfordshire and working at the Education Development Centre in Wheathampstead and then Hodder's publishing firm in London. After moving in with Steve, who was training to be a teacher, Lucy realised this would be a good career for her too and qualified as a primary school teacher in 2006.

She got a job at Cunningham Hill Junior School that September and never looked back – staying there for the rest of her career. Lucy was made for the classroom and absolutely thrived in the school

'HER POSITIVITY  
HELPED FRIENDS  
AND FAMILY ALIKE,  
AND HER COURAGE  
TOWARDS THE END  
WAS INSPIRATIONAL.'

environment: an inspiration to pupils, parents and staff alike.

Members of Cunningham Hill staff gave this tribute: 'Lucy had a huge influence at Cunningham Hill for over 13 years on pupils, parents and staff alike, both as a class teacher, SENCO, Assistant Head and colleague. She has seen nearly 800 pupils through our doors. She was always kind, patient and caring, taking time to listen, and as a result she was highly thought of. She was always there to lend a listening ear to whoever needed it. Lucy was an amazing person who made everybody's smile a little wider when they spent time with her.'

Lucy and Steve were married in the



Alumna Lucy Pegg

Lady Chapel of the Cathedral on 19 August 2007, during her first summer holiday as a teacher. Joe was born in September 2009 and Lottie came along four years later, with Lucy returning to work part-time at Cunningham Hill after each child. Lucy absolutely adored being a mum and couldn't do enough for Joe and Lottie whom she loved so, so much. She was fiercely protective of them both and extremely proud of who they were.

In 2016, quite out of the blue and out of character, Lucy took up running, completing the Herts 10k. Ironically it was at this fittest time in her life that she became ill with the cancer that eventually

took her life.

In the last year and a half of her illness Lucy remained extraordinarily positive, honest and practical. Her own health was put on hold initially as she threw herself into caring for her father Peter; when he was ill with cancer in 2018. But through all the treatment and consultations Lucy remained determined and positive. Her positivity helped friends and family alike, and her courage towards the end was inspirational.

Lucy loved to bake, becoming a proficient cake decorator; she loved cooking, Harry Potter and Star Wars, and was a fabulous aunt, sister and daughter

– a real family person who loved her wider family so much. We will remember her fabulous smile, her kind, supportive encouragement and love to so many people, her sense of fun and humour; her passion for teaching and to help other people, and her absolute devotion to Steve, Joe, Lottie and her wider family.

## 2000s

**John Thomson**

John was a loyal STAHS Governor since 2011. A former STAHS parent, he passed away in April 2020 from COVID-19.



# ALUMNAE BOOKSHELF

It's been another busy year for our alumnae authors! We hope you enjoy reading about what they've been writing, spanning Anne Boleyn, a dystopian post-Brexit UK and northern Cameroon in the 1970s.



### Anne Boleyn

Anne Boleyn is one of the most divisive figures in British history. Her marriage to Henry VIII and her subsequent execution after only three years of marriage have made her the subject of heated debate and speculation. Was she a scheming, ambitious strumpet, or the tragic and innocent victim of court politics? Can Anne Boleyn be regarded as one of the most highly-educated and forward-thinking of English queens, with a passion for the new learning and reform of the sixteenth century? Or was she only interested in enjoying court life? This objective and informative book brings clarity to our view of Anne Boleyn: perhaps the most influential and important queen consort England has ever had.

#### Dr Valerie Shrimplin (1961 – 1968)

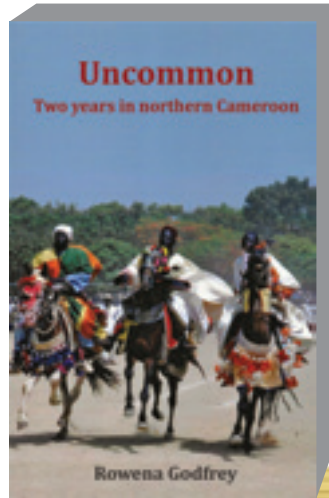
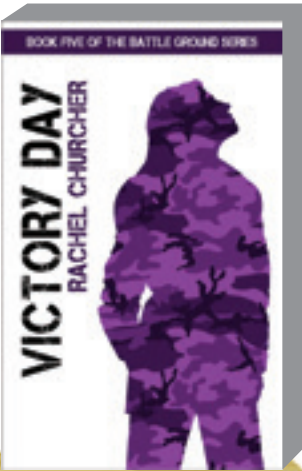
Valerie Shrimplin is an art historian, researcher and author, who was awarded her PhD for her research entitled 'Sun, Symbolism and Cosmology in Michelangelo's 'Last Judgment''. She has subsequently produced a number of academic publications focusing on the influence of astronomy and cosmology on art and architecture, particularly of the Byzantine, medieval and Renaissance periods. Her previously published books have been on Michelangelo and Sir Thomas Gresham.

### Victory Day

Victory Day is the concluding book of the five-part Battle Ground series. Published on January 9 2020, by Taller Books, it continues to follow Bex Eilman and Ketty Smith as war rages around them. What will happen after victory is declared? The Young Adult dystopia novels are set in a near-future UK after Brexit and Scottish independence, alongside a tie-in novella, Making Trouble, which is available as a free download from [freebook.tallerbooks.com](https://freebook.tallerbooks.com).

#### Rachel Churcher (1982 – 1993)

In her teens, Rachel discovered dystopian fiction – and has been a fan ever since. In an effort to find out what she wanted to do with her life, she collected degrees and other qualifications in Geography, Science Fiction Studies, Architectural Technology, Childminding, and Writing. She has worked as a magazine editor, I.T. trainer and now as a freelance writer and artist. Her first published short story came out in 2014 and the Battle Ground series is her first long-form work.



### Uncommon: Two years in northern Cameroon

In the mid-1970s, Rowena Godfrey worked as a teacher in a small mission school in Mokolo in northern Cameroon. With her students, colleagues and friends, she explored the surrounding Mandara Mountains and learnt about the Mafa people and their culture. She travelled widely in Cameroon and also visited parts of Chad and northern Nigeria. This memoir of her experiences gives a snapshot of a beautiful country at a peaceful time in its history – most of the areas she visited are now virtually war zones, and westerners are strongly advised not to go there.

#### Rowena Godfrey (1960 – 1969)

Rowena has been involved with books and journals since her return from Cameroon, working as a picture librarian, an editor and a librarian. Uncommon is the first book she has written and published completely on her own: choosing appropriate colour illustrations and dealing with a cartographer, a typesetter and the printers proved challenging at times, and advertising and marketing are totally new ventures. To purchase a copy of her book, please go to <https://rowenagodfrey.com/>.

# DIARY DATES

Here are some of the upcoming events and reunions planned for 2020/21. We are hoping to put more events on, dependent upon Government advice around social gatherings and events may be adapted. Please keep an eye on our web portal, as well as Facebook and LinkedIn, for further updates! For more information or to book your place, please visit <https://alumni.stahs.org.uk>.

## REUNIONS

### OGA ANNUAL REUNION

26 September 2020, Senior School, Townsend Avenue

We're trying a different format this year and look forward to welcoming you back to school on Saturday 26 September, between 11am and 2.30pm. You'll be treated to a glass of fizz on arrival whilst you catch up with old friends, take a look at the archive exhibition and have tours of the school – both the more familiar rooms and the wonderful new Dining Hall and Sixth Form centre. In addition, we'll put on a buffet lunch and you'll have the chance to meet the Head, Amber Waite. All leavers are welcome, but we especially invite those from the classes of 2010, 2000, 1990, 1980, 1970, 1960 and 1950.

### CLASS OF 2020 CHRISTMAS DRINKS

14 December 2020, Slug and Lettuce, St Albans

A great chance for our most recent leavers to catch up again after their first term away from STAHS.



### OWLS LUNCH

Date TBC – March 2021, Senior School, Townsend Avenue

The annual 'Older and Wiser Ladies' (OWLS) reunion lunch for those Old Girls aged over 55, and former members of staff. It's a great chance to see the High School in action during a working day and catch up with old friends over a delightful lunch.

### ALUMNAE MUMS' COFFEE MORNINGS

Dates to be confirmed

We hope to bring back our alumnae mums' coffee mornings in 2021! These will either be held at the Senior School or Prep School, and will have our usual selection of cake, coffee and colouring! It's a great opportunity to meet up with alumnae mums in the local area, and we welcome bumps, babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers.

## CAREERS

### GENDER EQUALITY SYMPOSIUM

6 March 2021, Senior School, Townsend Avenue

Featuring a range of insightful speakers, the inaugural STAHS gender equality symposium will look at the topic from a range of different perspectives. Incorporating workshops, debates and talks, attendees will leave with increased knowledge, a sense of purpose and ideas about what they could do to incite change. Details of speakers and sessions to be published on the alumni portal shortly.

### LONDON DRINKS RECEPTION AT THE LANSDOWNE CLUB

29 April 2021, Lansdowne Club, London

Rescheduled from June 2020, this is a great opportunity to catch up with old friends, network with fellow alumnae and hear about our new mentoring and careers offering. In the gorgeous Shelburne Room at the Lansdowne Club, located in Mayfair, you'll enjoy drinks and canapés and have the chance to hear from STAHS Head, Amber Waite.



# RECENT REUNIONS AND EVENTS

Sadly many of this year's reunions had to be cancelled, including the annual OWLs lunch, although we were lucky to be able to hold about half of the planned events. As well as those featured, we also had two alumnae mums' coffee mornings, the annual OGA reunion in September 2019 and our Class of 2019 Christmas reunion drinks, which was attended by over half of the year group.



L-R Zoe Cartright, Penny Sandford, Alex Page, Petrina Warwick, Fiona Kennedy, Katie Laing, Caroline Rolfe, Sue Tetely, Gussie Thompson (in green), Katie Shrimplin, Barbara Cooper, Penny Lockhart, Sarah Moor, Cathy Brooks (in blue/pink/orange dress), Annabel Chetwyn-Talbot, Ann Forbes, Jo Pitkin, Anne Hutchins, Sian Kemp, Lissie Bretherton, Sally Imber, Suzie Tolley, Hilary Jarrett

## Class of 1979 40th reunion

Two years of emails flying across the world, WhatsApp groups being created and the 'lost' being 'found' and our 40th school reunion was upon us.

Saturday 21 September 2019: 40 years on and around 28 of us met at the Rotunda at school to reacquaint ourselves with old friends. Nerves abounded but as soon as we arrived, they dissolved and we were happily catching up on the last four decades. We may have changed – smaller, bigger, blonder, darker; 40 years' worth of 'character' lines but the atmosphere was electric and the constant sound of chitter-chatter reverberated around the classrooms.

Laura Lord very kindly showed us around the school, many of the areas unrecognisable. It was like herding cats!!!

We then congregated at Gussie's house for a sumptuous lunch.

Everyone kindly brought delicious offerings, alcohol flowed, the sun shone, memories were recounted, friendships rekindled and a wonderful time was had by all.

It was such a success that another reunion is being planned for 2024. For those that were there, thank you all so much for a simply fabulous time, for those who were unable to attend, we have your contact details and hope to see you for our 45th reunion, and for those reading this who we have been unable to contact, please, we would love you to join us in 2024. Please email [alumnae@stahs.org.uk](mailto:alumnae@stahs.org.uk) to be put into contact with us.

An enormous thank you must go to Gussie for opening up her house and making the lunch so relaxed and informal. A truly wonderful hostess.

*Ann Forbes (Barrett), Gussie Thompson, Sian Gregory (Kemp)*



Alumna  
Harriet Kelsall

## STARTING A CREATIVE BUSINESS

Creative business is a huge sector in the UK economy – and within the STAHs community. We were delighted to be joined by some of those alumnae on 8 October for our 'Starting a creative business event', which was also open to Sixth Formers, staff and current parents. A fantastic keynote was provided by alumna, award-winning jeweller and entrepreneur Harriet Kelsall, who told the story of her journey growing a kitchen table creative start-up into a vibrant 40-strong team, before passing on her tips around starting and growing a business. This was followed by a brilliant panel session with entrepreneurial alumnae Jane Gomez (Try Time, bubbleHUB), Sarah Jones (Wilderness PR) and Kate Margolis (RDD Design), who shared their stories and answered questions from the audience.

## Lean In Supper Club

The latest STAHs Lean In Supper Club took place on 15 October with alumna Louise Lamb, now a Partner at global law firm Hogan Lovells. Louise spoke eloquently about how the practice of law has changed over the past 20 years, and considered what changes law firms might see in the future. It was a fantastic evening in the Parlour at the Bleeding Heart restaurant, with great conversation and excellent food!

## Changing career

**"I DREW ON EVERYTHING I HAD LEARNT AT STAHs WHEN STARTING MY BUSINESS – TEAMWORK, COMMITMENT, DEDICATION AND ALWAYS TO TRY MY BEST." ALEXANDRA HOWLETT (NEWTON, 1995)**

On 27 February we held the third in our careers event series for alumnae and parents offering career advice, expertise sharing and networking opportunities within our alumnae and parent community. A panel of alumnae shared their personal journeys of a major change in career and took questions from those interested in making a similar change.

Our panellists were honest and candid about their experiences, and the challenges and successes it brought. Common themes for motivating the change were seeking a better work-life balance, experiencing burn-out due to unsociable hours, and a lack of motivation in their existing career: Susie Andrews (How, 2005) admitted: 'I looked at the solicitors who were more senior in my firm and felt little ambition to follow the same career path. I wanted to find something I felt passionately about.'

All our panellists acknowledged the change had at times been hugely challenging, citing financial concerns and a feeling of setting out on the unachievable as just some of the obstacles they faced.

The reward was worth it though, with Shabana Jiwaji (Kapadia, 2000) summing up: 'I have been lucky enough to find something I now absolutely love', and Henrietta Nurney (Sargent, 1991) agreeing: 'It's been a brilliant change - I love that I never know what my day is going to bring.'



Alumnae panellists (L-R)  
Susie Andrews (How), 2007: Solicitor to Science Teacher  
Shabana Jiwaji (Kapadia), 2000: Telecoms Service Delivery Manager to Lifestyle Documentary Photographer  
Henrietta Nurney (Sargent), 1991: City Solicitor to Psychotherapist  
Alexandra Howlett (Newton), 1995: Detective in the Met Police to Co-founder and Director of Howlett Brown, a people intelligence company



# Partnerships UPDATE



Year 5 artwork using tonal blending

The School was involved with a range of activities in its partnership programme this year, even though sadly many that were planned for the second half of the year had to be cancelled or postponed.

One relationship that has gone from strength to strength is with Windermere Primary School in St Albans. Our schools have had a partnership for many years, and two years ago an art partnership began following a discussion of ideas with Windermere’s Head.

The partnership focuses on delivering specialised workshops to pupils in Years 3 and 5 to support their primary curriculum. STAHS Year 12 students work together to plan subject-specific workshops, which they deliver to 30 students at a time and which last for about two hours each.

In 2019-20, three of these workshops were delivered. Year 3 pupils enjoyed two workshops: ‘Font Friday’, looking at stencil art created in response to the artist Ben Eine, and ‘The Prehistoric Word’, charcoal and chalk pastel drawings in response to Cave Paintings. The Year 5 workshop focused on surrealism, specifically paintings created in response to Rene Magritte.

In addition to this, Ruth Marsh, the lead art teacher from STAHS, also ran a clay and pottery CPD session with Windermere staff, to help provide teachers with increased confidence and the skills to use both as a medium for 3D art.

“We would very much like to continue this programme,” said the Windermere Primary Head.

The STAHS pupils said: ‘I really enjoy spending time with the students, they have so much fun with the activities’ and “they learn so much by the end of the day’.

# Development UPDATE

## Bursaries and hardship

The past few months have been unlike any other time in recent memory. Everyone within the STAHS community has experienced unprecedented changes to the ways we teach, learn and live.

In response to the unexpected circumstances that many families found themselves in, the School established a dedicated Coronavirus Hardship Fund. This enabled the School to support a number of STAHS families who experienced significant financial difficulty due to the pandemic, enabling their daughters to continue their education at the School without interruption.

Governors marked funds for this to be set aside to help families, and many parents also supported the Fund through one-off donations and by paying full fees – donating the difference between those and the term’s fee reduction.

Alongside this, our bursary programme is at the heart of our charitable support and we are committed to extending it over the coming years. We want to be able to provide as many full bursary awards as possible, ensuring that bright, talented individuals, for whom independent education would otherwise be impossible, can benefit from the wonderful opportunities that a STAHS education can provide.

At the moment, STAHS provides nearly 10% of pupils with some form of bursary support, but we want to offer more.

We are absolutely committed to offering more bursaries to bright and talented individuals, covering up to 100% of their tuition fees. Our comprehensive bursary support also goes further and can help with uniform, transport and lunch costs.

But this is really about the individual. The girls who apply for bursaries with us are academically excellent and would do well at any school. But with us they could soar.

Information about the School’s bursary programme is available online, but for further details of how you could support please email [alumnae@stahs.org.uk](mailto:alumnae@stahs.org.uk).



## PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

**Reduce – Reuse – Recycle – the Parents’ Association (PA) likes to do its bit to help the environment!**

Apart from running social events, the PA also operates the incredibly popular second-hand uniform shop, affectionately known as the 2HUS, so parents can re-use perfectly decent school uniform no longer required by other parents.

In a typical school year we sell about 1,500 – 2,000 items for a value of around £17,000. As the items sold are generally about a quarter to a third of the price of new uniform, that’s a saving to parents collectively of over £50,000! Since parents can receive 80% of the value of uniform they hand in for resale, they also benefit from about £10,000 a year in credits to school bills.

With around 30% of items wholly donated to the PA, plus the 20% surplus from parent sales, this leaves a healthy return of around £7,000 per year for the PA charity fund.

But have you ever wondered what happens to all the old-style uniform when there is a uniform update? After the new PE storm jackets and trousers were introduced at the start of the 2018/19 school year, around 800, old-style waterproof tops and bottoms were handed into the uniform shop from leavers over the subsequent two years. Last year the hoodie was replaced with a new mid-layer top - so we collected hundreds of hoodies too.

Not wanting to send any of this to landfill or fabric recycling, the PA asked parents to nominate special charities they worked with abroad that might be able to make good use of these. In October 2018 the PA funded the transport of half of the PE kit to a state school in Zimbabwe, and the following year the rest was shipped to the Kadect Schools for the Deaf which operate in the Gambia and Kashmir. All of the worn out items are sent to fabric recycling through the Oxfam charity clothing banks.

The 2HUS has been getting bigger and better year on year and the PA would like to say a huge thank you to the volunteers who help run it and all the parents who both buy and sell uniform through us.

*Dixie Stafford, PA Chair*





WE'VE BEEN TAKING A LOOK THROUGH OUR PHOTO ARCHIVES RECENTLY AND HAVE CREATED A GREAT ONLINE PHOTO ALBUM ON THE ALUMNI PORTAL. HERE'S A TASTER OF SOME OF THE PICTURES - SEE THE FULL COLLECTION AT [HTTPS://ALUMNI.STAHS.ORG.UK/GALLERIES/VIEW](https://alumni.stahs.org.uk/galleries/view).

