

## Chairman's Report 2023

This time last year Holly Fitzgerald had just been appointed as the new Director of the Salopian Club. A three-month handover followed with Nick Jenkins who retired at the end of February after nine years in post. Nick has our profuse thanks for all he did for the Club and we wish him a long and happy retirement. Holly has (assuming it is not inappropriate to say so in these woke times) taken to her role like a duck to water. She took over the baton from Nick and has already become an integral part of the Club and it's 8,500 members.

Socially, in addition to our traditional drinks parties in London, Birmingham and Shrewsbury, there have been a regional dinner in Birmingham, overseas gatherings in Dubai, Singapore and Hong Kong, a London summer party on a particularly glorious sunny evening, two lunches at Henley and a very busy Old Salopian Day in September.

In sport, the Old Salopian Hunt team won a historic victory in the annual Alumni Race on Wimbledon Common. They beat 37 teams to take the trophy for the first time since the event's inception in 1953. The OS Fives Club has also enjoyed notable success. They retained three titles and trophies, won back one title and reached the final of two further cups. In every team competition they entered, they either won or reached the final.

The tennis and golf matches against the School, which hadn't been played since before the pandemic, were revived, as was the joint Sabrina Club and Old Salopian Golf Society match on the eve of Henley Regatta.

There have been successful tours to Scotland (golf), Devon (cricket) and the Czech Republic (football)

Sporting social events have included Hunt, Fives, Rugby and Football Dinners, while Sabrina Club returned to the Blue Anchor for the Schools' Head of the River Race as well as organising a lunch for crews who were at school between 1963 and 1973 over the weekend of Shrewsbury Regatta.

In the arts, there was another wonderful Epiphany Service at St Mary-le-Bow and a fascinating talk on The Silk Roads by Nicholas Barber at the British Museum, which was oversubscribed. There have been two popular music events organised by Joe Bell; an Open Mic Night in February and a concert to celebrate the life of the much-loved member of staff Huw Peach in October. Both showcased the incredible young talent among the young OS community. A large number of Old Salopians also supported the School Choir singing Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral and enjoyed a joint reception with parents afterwards.

In June, there was a special arts event to coincide with the Presidency of Desmond Shawe-Taylor. A large group of Old Salopians were treated to a private view at Dulwich Picture Gallery, where Desmond was the Director between 1996 and 2005, followed by cocktails and supper on the lawn.

The Salopian Drivers' Club continues to go from strength to strength. The Club celebrated its fifth anniversary this year and its programme featured a dinner in London, tours of Yorkshire and Kent and East Sussex, a joint event with the Bentley Drivers Club in Shropshire and a visit to the home of collector Jack Henley in addition to its biggest ever car rally on Central on Old Salopian Day and a visit to Sleaf Aerodrome on the Sunday.

Young Old Salopians continue to feature prominently. University gatherings took place in Edinburgh, Durham and Oxford although unseasonable snow in March meant that the Bristol and Exeter gatherings had to be cancelled.

The Salopian Club continues to work closely with the School Futures Team. Old Salopians have acted as speakers, mentors and advisers at a number of School careers events and remain absolutely key to the success of the department, which was a finalist again this year in the Independent School of the Year awards. We continue to work hard to develop this area of our work particularly using our online platform Salopian Connect which now has more than two thousand members.

Previously called OS Connect, it has been relaunched this term and parents have been invited to join to increase the networking opportunities for the whole community.

Our links with the alumni organisation of Shrewsbury International School, Bangkok have been strengthened with reciprocal invitations to events in the UK and Thailand. Some former SISB students will be joining us for the drinks this evening after the AGM.

The Club is now also active on social media, with lively groups on Instagram, Facebook, X and LinkedIn.

My thanks go to this year's President, Desmond Shawe-Taylor (I 1968-73), to our executive and main committees and the army of volunteers in all the Club's activities for their hard work and dedication, and to Holly Fitzgerald and Christine Stephens at the Salopian Club office for so enthusiastically and successfully co-ordinating a very busy Club programme.

Miles Preston

Chairman