

Chairman's Report 2024

Over the past year the Salopian Club has maintained a high level of activity and sought to involve as wide a range of Old Salopians as possible through events, sports, activities and online engagement.

Socially, our regular drinks parties in London, Birmingham and Shrewsbury and the Young Old Salopian London Summer Party have been supplemented with some special and new events.

2024 started with one of the biggest gatherings of Old Salopians at School in recent years when more than 200 people attended Dr David Gee's 90th birthday celebrations.

In October, we held the first ever Old Salopian girls' event. Around 70 women attended. Almost all the housemistresses (and one housemaster) of the girls' houses travelled from Shrewsbury for the evening, which made for a particularly joyful reunion.

Last week we held our first Salopians In Property networking event with the Futures Department. It is hoped that this will be the first of a number of professional interest groups who will meet socially, offer careers advice to young Old Salopians and communicate using dedicated groups on Salopian Connect.

A survey of OS in the West Midlands revealed an appetite for more informal events and there was a convivial dinner at Côte Brasserie in Birmingham in the spring.

Old Salopian Day was an occasion for a number of celebrations and commemorations. The Old Salopian Football Club matches were played on the same day for the first time in five years which coincided appropriately with Robin Trimby's 90th birthday. Robin was the guest of honour at the dinner and many of the 1st XI footballers he had coached in the 1960s and '70s travelled to be with him. There was a flag raising ceremony in honour of Ken Spiby and Robin Mouldsdale. The Club funded the reinstatement of the flag poles on the fives courts to commemorate their significant contribution to the sporting life of the School. There was also the unveiling of a restored war memorial in Churchill's and of a new portrait of Peter Gladstone which Sabrina Club members from the USA and Belgium travelled to attend.

Next year we will change the criteria for the Reunion Dinner to focus on a five-year cohort from 1985-90. We intend to carry out detailed research to establish contact with key figures from each year group to increase the prospect of reuniting Old Salopians with their direct contemporaries.

The University tour continues to be very well supported. We have entertained undergraduates in Bristol, Oxford, Durham and Edinburgh. Next year, in response to demand, we will host an event in Newcastle and we are hoping that students will take part in a proposed Manchester gathering in the Spring.

Sports-wise, hundreds of Old Salopians are involved in OS sport every week. Highlights include The Old Salopian footballers finishing third in the First Division of the Arthurian League and the Old Salopian Hunt team finishing a close second after their victory last year in the annual Alumni Race on Wimbledon Common. Next year is the Saracens' centenary with a dinner planned for March.

The number of Old Salopian men and women playing sport together is increasing. There is now an Old Salopian Eton Fives Club Girls Secretary and strong representation from the girls in the OS fives team. A number of women are also playing OS Squash and padel.

It has been a particularly strong year for arts events, starting with the Epiphany Service in January which was followed by the Open Mic night in February. In April, there were two very special events, a cultural day out in Oxford culminating in an outstanding concert conducted by John Moore, and a trip to Evensong and a private tour of St George's Chapel in Windsor facilitated by Richard Eteson (G 1989-93).

The Salopian Drivers Club dinner in February was oversubscribed and members enjoyed a lively talk by Old Salopian Sir John Stuttard (SH 1958-63) about the Peking to Paris Rally in 1997.

Overseas gatherings have taken place in Dubai, Singapore and Bangkok and links have been strengthened between Shrewsbury International School in Bangkok with a visit from the Alumni Relations Marketing Manager in February.

Relationships have also been strengthened with the Parents Association including two joint events at Pitchford Hall and Saulton Hall in Shropshire and co-operation on the restoration of the brass war memorial in Churchill's.

The Salopian Club continues to work closely with the School Futures Team. Last year 74 Old Salopian visited School to share careers advice. There are now almost 3,000 members signed up to Salopian Connect including current parents. We have encouraging anecdotal evidence of young OS using the platform to contact older alumni informally for careers advice and mentoring.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Holly Fitzgerald and Christine Stephens for all their hard work running the Salopian Club and all the volunteers who support the Club's numerous activities. My Executive Committee consisting of Hugh Ramsbottom, Tony Barker, Richard Hudson and Holly Fitzgerald should be mentioned by name and thanked for their great contribution. The Club's General Committee members also deserve great thanks, as do all those who run the Club's sporting clubs and organise our rich arts and cultural programme. Thank you all very much for your efforts, without which the Old Salopian Club would cease to function.

Miles Preston

Chairman