

THE HIGH STORRIAN

A Newsletter for High Storrs Alumni - Edition 1 - Spring 2015

The Dawn of a New Era

This academic year saw the end of the High Storrs Old Centralians Association, and in turn we will be holding the last ever Centralians' reunion in April. All alumni of the school are invited to attend what we hope will be a great day of memories, stories, meeting old friends and looking to the future.

It won't be a wake, promise the organisers, rather a celebration of 122 years of Old Centralians and their annual get-together. Starting at 12 noon on Saturday 25th April and going on until 3pm, the function will encompass presentations to long serving committee members as well as a massive display of school memorabilia and documentation preserved in the Centralians Archive and now in the care of Old Boy David Madden who previously worked for the Sheffield City Libraries and Archive Service.

The function will be built around a buffet lunch, like last year's event, and it is hoped there will be performances



by the school's musicians and others as well as a tour of the school.

Following dis-association there will be no more functions under that banner but the school is likely to stage similar events in future when it is hoped that some of the more recent students will join in as well as those from the 50s, 60s and 70s.

Tickets for this year's event, priced at £8.95, can be purchased in advance from the school. Julie Mackenzie, the teaching staff's liaison officer, says "Our reception will gladly take your details – dietary requirements and dates you attended High Storrs. The more the merrier so why not dig out those old friends and colleagues?"

Those wishing to attend should telephone the school on 0114 2670000 or email j.mackenzie@highstorrs.sheffield.sch.uk.



Les Misérables® School Edition

7, 8, 9 and 10th July
Performed in High Storrs School
Main Hall
entirely by students
Tickets on sale soon

Inside this issue...

GRACE CLOUGH WORLD CHAMP!



Having left High Storrs in 2009 Grace has become a Team GB Para Rowing World Champion. Full story inside... pg 4

EDDIE IS THE LORD OF THE DANCE



Year 13 student gets dance school chance of a lifetime. Full story inside... pg 7

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WELCOME TO THE HIGH STORRIAN

By David France (ex-student from 1958 and active member of the Centralians Association who has edited this newsletter)

Phew! What a scorcher! No, that isn't a corny headline from a tabloid predicting an amazing summer. It is my summary of a very turbulent Autumn and Winter in the ether that surrounds our beloved school.

It was very sad to have to bring about the closure of the Old Centralians after 122 illustrious years. But today this first issue of *The High Storrian* marks a new beginning which could - we hope - go on for another one and a quarter centuries.

I remember very well the old school magazine *The Sheaf* and the feeling of belonging to a world of scholarship that I had when reading it. Many of the articles seemed to be designed to show an air of superiority, a sense of "clique", a kind of throwback to Tom Brown's schooldays. It was an exclusive club through whose windows we were allowed a peep at the end of term.

The Centralians newsletter, fortunately did not suffer the same affliction. It was a joy to read of memories and recollections. But, sadly, there were always too few people volunteering to

write submissions...and too few people willing to take on the burden of editing, printing, addressing and filling envelopes and posting the several hundred copies. Here I must salute my predecessors who valiantly steered the newsletter through these tricky waters.

That it could not continue is due mostly to the huge increase in postage charges that has affected us all but sooner or later we knew we must embrace change. And that change is now here.

In sending out *The High Storrian* only electronically means we take away the cost, admittedly putting it directly on the readers' shoulders, since to read it one must purchase a tablet or computer, and to print it one must have a printer etc. But it does mean we can freely use colour and modern design. We can be up to date with the news, we can give you "magic links" that will take you to other sources of news and information, and we can deliver it seamlessly all over the world.

I would very much like you to read it in conjunction with the school's own website and with the High Storrs Alumni Facebook page which gives you the ability to chat and take part in discussions as well as see and submit photographs. Do give it a try.

I hope you like the new newsletter and that, as always, you will send in your own contributions. Finally, may I add a word of praise and thanks to Abi and Rae, the school's job-share Communications & Marketing Co-ordinators, who have pledged to keep the alumni newsletter going. Now, as they say, read on...



Every year approximately 450 students leave Year 11 and Year 13 and forge new lives and friendships away from High Storrs School. However your link to High Storrs doesn't simply end when you move to the next stage of your career.

You are very welcome to continue your association with High Storrs School through being associated with the school Alumni group, visits to the school and keeping in touch with the school via the web site and social media. You may be able to offer support to our current students through your new career or by offering advice to them.

I hope you feel that you want to keep in touch or if you have been left a while that you feel confident enough to rebuild your association with a great school.

High Storrs continues to operate as a family supporting all of its members. Whether you want to offer support, just want to revisit your old stomping ground or are curious to know if Mr or Mrs such and such still teaches History in that room on the corner, we would love to hear from you.

I hope you find this alumni newsletter interesting and find the information you are looking for.

Ian Gage, Headteacher since January 2010

The decision to close down The Old Centralians Association, taken at the AGM in September 2014, was not taken lightly. In the weeks before the AGM a questionnaire was sent to all members who had at that time supplied email addresses, asking them to vote on a number of questions such as a subscription increase, a change of name and the dis-association question itself. Sadly very few responses were received, something quite in line with recent experiences such as pleas for new committee members. Crucially, however, only one vote was received against the proposition. Below are some of the emails received by the Association showing how a significant majority were in little doubt as to the reality of the situation.

"I expect to be 90 next year, and hope I make it. My father had an aunt who was at a Central school, I had an older cousin who had been at a Central School, and in 1936 I went to the Central Secondary School for Boys, but it was at High Storrs and became for most of my time the High Storrs Grammar School for Boys, of which in my last year I was very proud to be Head Prefect. I was even more proud, as I know sixth-former friends in the HSGSG were, that we brought the two halves of what became one school together a little with joint after-school debates and lunch-time ballroom dancing classes. I don't think it serves any useful purpose for the school (and that must, in my view, be our prime aim) to perpetuate the term Centralians now that it has virtually no significance." **Ted Bell (1943)**

"I have read your productions with great interest. I am 93 years old and probably, if not the oldest, certainly one of the oldest male survivors of the old Central School, being at the opening ceremony of High Storrs. I take your point completely, that the Old Students Association should drop the "Centralians" title altogether, for the obvious reason you suggest. If I am unable to attend the AGM that would be my proxy view. I hope that your efforts on behalf of the "High Storrians" come to fruition. Regards and best wishes." **Frank Yates (1932-37)**

"Thanks for drawing this to my attention. Like you I believe the alumni are important to the school and the school is important to the alumni. My concern about dissolving the Centralians is that I had thought the school and the association enjoyed a positive relationship. I owe High Storrs a great deal." **Julie Taylor (1982)**

"The time has probably come. You have my support." **Peter Garlick (1934-41)**

"Firstly, I would like to record my personal thanks to you for your valiant efforts to keep the Association alive in the face of apparently growing indifference on the part of the remaining members. I feel that the Association as I knew it has served its purpose and should be quietly 'euthanased'. There is little point in flogging a dead horse." **David Lockwood 1948-52**

"I have read your e-mails with great interest. We live in a rapidly changing world, and we must move accordingly to survive. I believe that you must change the name from "Centralians" to "High Storrians", if that would bring in present pupils etc. Everyone (sic) has a computer, or access to one, so postage and printing is eliminated. The fact that the school currently runs an effective information service to its pupils, and that you suggest that they may be willing to add-on Old High Storrian News etc, then I suggest that this would be the best way forward. I wish you the best of luck with you endeavours because it would be sad for the Association to end after all these years." **Peter Darby (1954)**

"I wish to express sincere thanks to all of the committee and members who have freely and selflessly given their time for the benefit of the members. It is sad that we have come to this situation, but the reality is that without funds, without attracting new members, without a modicum of updating, this, as any other association, will cease to exist and so I believe that it is better to constructively draw a line under the association now and to do it with dignity." **Dr Stephen H Alsop (1966)**

"I think your suggestion makes good sense. I was happy with the name 'Old Centralians' since both my parents went to

the old Central School but it really makes little sense to keep the title now, especially if it is having a negative effect on the Association. When I attended High Storrs in the 1950s I cannot recall any connection being made with the Central Schools." **Roger Barnard (1956)**

"I am certainly in favour of your proposition, and confirm my views in your questionnaire." **Justin Donn (1988)**

"It is very sad but I think you are probably right in saying this is the only practical option. I'm not generally a "committee person", though I have served on a few and may have been persuaded that this was a good cause for which I should volunteer. However, living in Shropshire, it is simply not viable. Thank you for all that you have done and do." **Phyllis Hutchison (1965)**

"Firstly, congratulations on holding the fort for so long and taking the initiative on this latest stage in the association's life. I think a good rebranding exercise is worth trying before folding the association. Old Centralians does not mean much even to new-OAPs like me! Keep up the good work." **Tim Earl (1965)**

"Although we are saddened at the probable demise of the Centralian Association, we totally understand the issues. We are indebted to those of the committee who have served so long and with so much dedication. Had we lived in the UK we would have been able to help much more. We are happy to continue our association with the school through the electronic media and hope that this will prove to be an effective solution." **Malcolm and Heather Coombs (1956)**

I was interested in your "great debate". We are a bit of a High Storrs/Central Secondary School family. My brother, John Fullard, went to High Storrs Boys' School in 1956, and our late father, Colin Fullard, was at the Central Secondary School for Boys. But he died in 2006, aged nearly 92 and if he'd lived would have been 100 in December this year! I'm sure he would have said it made more sense to use the name High Storrs now - after 80+ years! Though perhaps we should, as someone suggested, keep the name Centralians in brackets for a few more years, out of respect for the remaining Central Secondary School survivors. **Judith Smith (nee Fullard, 1954-61)**

And now another point of view...

"Our society, specifically English society, seems very keen on casting off our history and forgetting our culture. I think that it's important that if we don't know what something is for or don't know what something means, we should ask and find out. Changing the name away from Centralians is effectively deleting the history of the school. In the year when we have the centenary of the start of WW1 and the 70th anniversary of the D Day landings, I wonder whether we'll start forgetting these events when all the people who remember them are gone. In summary, I'm not against a change of name, per se, but I am against dropping the term "Centralians" from the name. I think we can bring old and new together." **Maureen Bensa (dates unknown)**



My Bid for 2016 Olympics, by Grace Clough (2007)

I spent 7 years at High Storrs School of which I still have fond memories relating to both my friends and staff. The school was central to maintaining my interest in sport and my academic development.

After I finished my A-Levels in the summer of 2009 I decided to spend a year travelling the world which broadened my experience of other countries and cultures. During this year away from education I eventually chose to study Sociology at the University of Leeds. I continued my interest in sport throughout University life, eventually becoming captain for the basketball 1st team. In the summer of 2012 during the transitional period between second and third year I became captivated by the London Olympics. Having been born with Erbs Palsy, a paralysis of the shoulder, I took a particular interest in the Paralympic Games. I was so inspired by the athletes at this event that I even utilised the Paralympics in my dissertation.

In the process of collating primary research for my dissertation I spotted an advert requesting anyone with an impairment to attend a day promoting para sports at the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield. As I have played basketball all my life to a high level, but been restricted from reaching the pinnacle of the able bodied game due to my impairment, I instantly knew I had to respond to this advert.

This was certainly the best decision of my life as I am now working my dream job as an elite athlete for the GB Rowing Team. After graduating from Leeds University with First Class Honours in June 2013, I attended the GB rowing trials. Since then things have progressed rather quickly as I was invited to train with the GB para team. I decided to make this move at the start of the new year as I thought it was an offer I would be crazy to ignore. I have had to make large sacrifices such as leaving family and friends behind in Sheffield to live and train in Caversham near Reading for the foreseeable future.

In early 2014 I made the GB Para Rowing Squad officially and went on to win Gold at the Rowing World Championships in Amsterdam within a year of taking up the sport! This is something I still can not quiet believe. I have had to work extremely hard to get to where I am now and even throughout the season things did not always go my way. But when it counted I managed to win my seat in the boat.

I am now fully funded by UK Lottery Sport to train full time with the squad. I am completely dedicated to making the Rio 2016 Paralympics and my aim is to win Gold for Great Britain. This will by no means be an easy feat but with the backing of the GB Rowing team and enough hard work I am confident I can achieve my goals.

The Importance of Communication

Older alumni may be surprised to find the school has its own Communications department.

In 2011 a new role was created at High Storrs School: Communications and Marketing Co-ordinator. At the time this was a relatively rare role in a state comprehensive school, but the leadership at High Storrs viewed it as a necessary and important job for High Storrs. In recent years we have seen more and more schools employing staff to undertake this role.

The job itself is currently operating as a job-share between Abi Merritt and Rae Booyens who work half of the week each



during term time. The purpose of the job very varied. One important function is to facilitate the marketing and promotional activity for the school;

promoting open evenings and other school events. They are also responsible for developing and maintaining the school's

electronic media, such as the school's website, social media, the alumni register, internal MLE and the relatively new television message screens around the school. They also facilitate all PR based media relations concerning the promotion of the school and the achievements of the students and staff alike.

There is also an aspect of the job which relates to internal communication, such as producing weekly staff bulletins and staff and student planners. The school sends out termly parental newsletters which are also produced by the ladies in Communications and Marketing, as well as putting together the very newsletter you are reading now. Promotional materials for the school are also produced by Abi and Rae, such as prospectuses, banners, posters and yearbooks.

The idea behind having such a position in school is to pull together all of the promotional and communications based work to one role which means there is consistency and professionalism throughout the work that is produced. It also gives the school the opportunity to shout about the successes of the school and its former students which in a school without this role may not have the resources to deal with it.

What Alumni Mean to the School

By Claire Pender, Assistant Headteacher



Last year I delivered assemblies to all students at High Storrs about the school's history. I was aware that most students didn't know that the school was opened in 1933 when the Central School in Sheffield (based in Leopold Square) relocated to High Storrs playing fields to accommodate the growing population of pupils.

Current students were astonished that the opening ceremony was performed by the Lord Mayor of London on 28th June 1933 and hardly any knew that the school was still called the Central School and was only renamed High Storrs Grammar school in 1940. I talked about our heritage and the role that the 'Centralians' played in keeping the history of the school alive. I also introduced the term 'High Storrians' which is what our current students will be known as when they leave one day. The students also took delight in seeing old photographs from the school's archives.

Since then we have worked hard to develop our database of alumni. We try to capture our students before they leave in

Year 11 and 13 to ensure that we have their contact details on file, and our database is growing on a daily basis with the help of our social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook.

In October 2014 we invited a group of ex-students back to school for the day. They spoke to our sixth formers about life since High Storrs and their different career paths. Each presentation was well received and we hope to do the same on an annual basis, ensuring that our current students have role models to inspire them. In December we welcomed back last year's Y13s for their 'Celebration of Success' event. Certificates and awards were presented on the evening. It is always great to hear about tales from University, travels or the world of work. Our guest speaker this year was an ex-student who now has a successful career in the fashion industry. If you'd like to

share your story at a future prize giving event, please contact us.

Schooldays are an important and formative time for us all. It is lovely to hear everyone's different memories and anecdotes about High Storrs. We hope that you will enjoy this newsletter and use it to keep in touch with your old friends and to be kept up to date with what is happening in

school. Please keep in touch with us; you are always welcome to come back to your old school. The people may be different, the building may have changed but our core purpose remains the same; to educate and prepare our students for the wider world and to equip them with values to make them excellent citizens. Our Centralians and High Storrians make us feel very proud.



ALUMNI OR ALUMNAE?

Since we dropped the term Centralians for our former pupils and adopted High Storrians as our descriptive name for group members, there has been some confusion over when members are alumni, alumnus, alumna or alumnae. Well here is a definitive view from the website of The Grammarist:

"Alumni is a plural noun referring to either a group of male graduates or to a group of both male and female graduates. The singular alumnus refers to one male graduate, alumna refers to one female graduate, and the plural alumnae refers to a group of female graduates. These Latin loanwords preserve their original plural forms, and incorrect use of the words abounds because many speakers of English are understandably unfamiliar with the genders and plurals of Latin nouns."

We hope this helps clear up any argument!

HIGH STORRS IN 2015 - KEY FACTS

- ⇒ 75% of our Sixth Form entrants were at High Storrs lower school
- ⇒ 40% of our students are from non-white ethnic backgrounds
- ⇒ 4 students this year are going on to Oxbridge Universities
- ⇒ In 2014, 19 of our Y13 leavers achieved 3 A* A grades at A2 Level
- ⇒ In 2014, the Y13s achieved A*-B in 58% of the A Levels they sat - our best ever results
- ⇒ This year there are 1676 students on roll, with 1207 in lower school and 469 in Sixth Form
- ⇒ In 2014, 70% of Y11s gained 5 A*-C GCSE grades inc Maths & English
- ⇒ In 2014, every Y11 student in school achieved at least one qualification

Do You Hear the People Sing?

High Storrs School's annual production this year will be Les Misérables School Edition, which this year will be performed in our very own school. Les Misérables is undisputedly one of the world's most popular musicals and the door was opened to schools in 2001 when Cameron Mackintosh released the school edition. It's an epic production and a huge undertaking for any school, but we have the talent at High Storrs to take on this challenge and we have decided that 2015 is the year to do it!

The timeless story of Les Misérables is so evocative and has such a resonance with people. The film production in 2012 made it even more popular and everyone knows those rousing songs such as 'One Day More' and 'Do You Hear the People Sing'.

The school edition cannot be performed in a large professional venue so this year we are breaking with tradition and

performing it on home ground instead of the Crucible. We are making the production as inclusive as possible and everyone who auditioned (all 165 of them) have been offered a chance to



perform, either as the main cast and ensemble or as a choir.

The production will take place on 7-10th July at 7pm and tickets will be available from school soon. Rehearsals are well on their way and we have a fantastic team of staff and students who are part of the production team. It promises to be another very special High Storrs production. There will be no empty chairs...

Claire Pender, Assistant Headteacher and Co-Director of Les Misérables School Edition.

36 Years in the Classrooms of High Storrs

Eileen Hetherington is our longest serving member of staff, and an inspirational teacher.

Are you lucky enough to have been taught by her?

- ◆ Started in 1979
- ◆ Has taught approximately 15,000 students
- ◆ Started as a PE teacher, then became a year tutor, then head of year. When the house system was put in place, she moved on to working in Learning Support and these days teaches PHSCE (Personal, Health, Social, Citizenship Education)
- ◆ Over the years has taught many now well-known Alumni, including Jack Lester, Kyle Walker, Jessica Ransom, Tom Ellis and Nick Matthew, to name a few.
- ◆ She has taken part in over 20 years of Venture Week
- ◆ Has worked for five Heads: Tim Mardell, Cheryl Berry, Liz Talmadge, Mike Chapman and Ian Gage.



She says *"I'm still trying to change the world"*

Pictured with one of her many girls' hockey teams.

Making a House a Home

Students these days at High Storrs are organised into four houses, each comprising of student groups from Year 7 to Year 11. This provides 'a community within a community', as each House contains only 300 students, and makes it possible for students to get to know and support each other, regardless of their age. We have been following this system since 2008 and it has proved to be highly successful.

The houses are named after Sheffield theatres to tie in with the school's Arts specialism: Crucible, Montgomery, Merlin and Lyceum.

Assemblies are run on a House basis, and older students who receive prizes and awards act as role models for younger students, helping raise aspirations.

A mentoring scheme is also in place, with older students supporting the younger ones.

Even when students move up to Sixth Form, there is still a scheme in place to provide Sixth Form liaison teams for the younger students.



I Just Want to Dance!

17 year-old Eddie H in Year 13 has recently been accepted in full-time further education at the London Contemporary Dance School (aka The Place) once he leaves school this year.

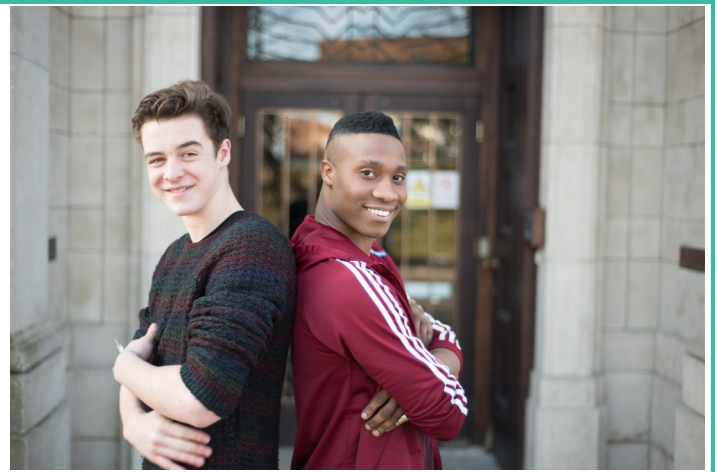
'The Place' is a world-class dance conservatoire, offering vocational training to the highest technical and artistic standards. Each year around 50 new dance students are chosen for the course from over 1500 applicants from all over Europe. 'The Place' is considered to be the RADA of dance, and the fact that they have chosen someone so young from Sheffield, let alone our school, for their dance programme is huge.

Eddie has been at High Storrs since he started in Y7, when he was first inspired to start dancing. An academically bright student, Eddie has excelled throughout school in whatever he has pursued.

At GCSE age, Eddie took the decision to study dance and in Y11 he applied for the Northern School of Contemporary Dance (NSCD), which he started attending in his own time from 2013. Eddie says "this was the point when everything changed for me. Before this I enjoyed dance in my spare time, but was more focused on Maths and Physics which seemed to be my natural

talent. However, when I was accepted to the NSCD, I just felt dance came even more naturally to me, so decided to pursue this route."

Dance quickly became Eddie's life, with him finding a love of performing and being in front of an audience. He got involved in as many dance-related



activities as possible, including the annual school production, dance show-cases and open evening performances. "I dance about 18 hours a week", Eddie admits. "I just look forward to the days I have dance on my timetable and find it such a stress-relief!"

Eddie has since studied Dance, Maths and Physics at A Level. Dancing at this level has helped him so much in developing problem-solving and team-building skills, as well as giving him a massive confidence boost.

When asked what advice he has for any younger students wishing to follow in his footsteps he said "Just go for it. I know it can be intimidating performing, but you won't know until you've tried it. High Storrs offers so many opportunities in all areas of performing arts, so just give it a go."

Like many of our students, this articulate, intelligent and talented young man makes this school so proud. A model student; he is ambitious and hard-working, and we hope that this determination will lead him to the future career he so wants. "I just want to gain as much experience dancing as I can, in a company and on stage. Eventually I'd love to be on the West End on stage productions, and even become a choreographer" says Eddie. Wise words for someone so young, Eddie knows what's important in life: "You only have one life; be as physically and mentally able as possible."



The school's growing reputation as a source of talent in the Performing Arts continues, with recent graduate Sam Henderson flying the flag as he studies Drama at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA).

Sam's band, JATO, have performed dozens of gigs around Sheffield, and this month are appearing at a club in London to showcase their talents for agents and producers. You can hear their music by going to www.soundcloud.com/jatoband

Sam left school in 2014 and in his final year of school played *Danny* in our production of *Grease* performed at the Crucible theatre in July 2014.



Recollections of High Storrs published in a book



Former Grammar School boy Roger Gordon, who lives on Prince Edward Island in Newfoundland, has sent this story of his rise through the classrooms of High Storrs, now embodied in his autobiography "Starting to Frame".

I attended High Storrs Grammar School for Boys from 1954 to 1961. I went on to complete my B.Sc. and Ph.D in Zoology at Sheffield University, immigrated to Canada in 1969, where I fashioned a career as a postdoctoral fellow then became University Professor at three Universities: Simon Fraser, Memorial Univ. Newfoundland, then University of Prince Edward Island. I was Dean of Science at UPEI. My speciality was entomology/parasitology, with a focus on biological control of insect pests. Now retired (in PEI), I have had opportunity to reflect upon my childhood and have just published my memoir www.startingtoframe.com. My High Storrs years receive a fair amount of coverage in my book because, in truth, they provided light relief from what developed into a troublesome domestic scene.

I was not a model student at HSGSB, though I performed well academically. I was a frequent visitor to George Mack's office and his caning stool. On one occasion, I was given 6 of the best

for defacing my school cap so that it looked like that of a WW1 aircraft pilot, complete with ear flaps, then of all things, I committed the almighty sin of using my dinner money to buy fish and chips. What was wrong with that? According to George, it was the demeaning image of eating the national dish out of newspaper in the street. I was even part of the entourage that, on the last day of school in 1958, marched along Ringinglow Rd, heading toward Silverdale Secondary School - to do what, I wasn't sure. I enjoyed my years at HSGSB. Most teachers applied the strict disciplinary code then extant and largely accepted by society fairly. Among my favourite teachers were: Tom Haller, Joe Collier, Alf Ridler, "Pole" Robinson, and Sid Hoffman. In the following excerpt from my book, I summarise my feelings for the old place:

"...High Storrs provided a first-rate education, the likes of which one would have to pay for today. Alongside its strict code of behaviour, it evinced a no-nonsense approach to its curriculum. Rigour, thoroughness, knowledgeable teachers and above all, good study habits were the hallmarks of what High Storrs had in abundance. Homework, which from the fourth form up amounted to as much as three hours per night, weekends included, was compulsory. Note taking in class was simply expected. A student staring into space would be brought to task. Science laboratories were carried out with meticulous attention to detail and we were taught how to write essays. Not only did we learn mathematical concepts, but also how to calculate. The nearest things we had to a calculator back then were a slide rule and a book of log tables and algebraic functions..." **Roger Gordon (1954-61)**

Inspiring Today's High Storrs Students



As part of the school's recent efforts to try and re-connect with our previous students, we were very happy to welcome back to school a group of High Storrians to give a selection of talks about their lives and careers since leaving school.

Each speaker gave a one hour talk to a group of up to 25 Y12 students which proved to be very popular and worthwhile.

The ex-students came from very different backgrounds, with

differing ages and experiences. Amongst the group was a solicitor, a journalist, an on-line blogger, an engineer, a music composer and a PhD student, to name just a few. We are very lucky to have such a lively alumni group who are willing to give up their own time for the good of the school they loved so much.

This is to become an annual event, so if you'd like to be involved next academic year, please get in touch with the school's communications team via email communications@highstorrs.sheffield.sch.uk or by telephone 0114 2670000.



High Storrs During the War

Written by Richard Barrand (1945)

I went to High Storrs in the summer of 1940 after War had been declared in September 1939. My first Form was 1A with Mr Hattersley. Most of the teachers were 'elderly' and had possibly been kept on because the younger ones had gone off to War and those that hadn't were about to do so. One of these was Mr Griffin, our French teacher initially, who went off soon after to be replaced by Miss Varah.

There were two 'Blitz' air raids on Sheffield in early December 1940 and for a short time after we had Home Service. That meant we had lessons in the houses of pupils who lived relatively close to where one lived. There was no differentiation of age so I was with a small group of boys who were older than me. One of them was Max Roseby who went on to build a national chain of shops selling curtains and home furnishing. His father had started with a stall in the Sheffield Market. We did not have many lessons and were soon back at school.

Because of the risk from Air Raids, a large Air Raid Shelter was built on the edge of the playing fields in front of the School. This

was done by constructing a number of linked corridors with bench seating either side about 6 feet, or more, underground. Entry was by about 12 holes in the ground with steps down. The whole School, boys and girls, had practice runs from time to time to ensure that in the event of an Air Raid during the day we could all be evacuated safely and quickly. I think the pupils

treated these as great fun although no doubt the teachers were much more aware of the serious nature of them.

Later on when I was in the 6th Form we had Air Raid Shelter duty which meant we had to regularly visit to ensure the lights worked and the reserve drinking water was refreshed and the place was clean. The girls' school was, of course, run completely separately so the senior girls also had similar duties. Strange how sometimes we always seemed to be doing our duties at the same time!

Because the school had a large playing field it was soon taken over, in most part, by the military. At one stage we had a dummy Radar Station which comprised a large wooden Hut on stilts and a big area covered horizontally at a height of about five feet with wire netting. At the time we did not know what it was supposed to be. We also had an anti-aircraft gun site for a time

and I seem to remember we also had Barrage Balloons as well at the bottom end of the fields near where there were what we called 'The Roughs'. An area of waste land before the allotments.

A unit of the Air Training Corps was also based on the school, which I joined once I was 15, and they met in what was the cycle shed in the evening. We also had a band, in which I played drums there were parades around Bents Green as well as doing other training such as aircraft recognition. On one occasion we visited an Aerodrome and I went in to a Halifax Bomber. Unfortunately, the weather was too poor to allow a flight. I continued in the ATC after I left school as well.

Another benefit of being at school during the war was that we were able to have school dinners. Food Rationing was, of course, quite strict and being able to get a good lunch every day without using up our rations was a considerable benefit. The Dining Rooms were at either side of the hall and not mixed. The teachers had a table in the centre of the room and boys had tables of 14. Food was brought out from the kitchens and those at the end of the table served it out. Needless to say, those at the end were the senior boys and First Year's were at the

bottom end. Sometimes the portions were not always equal although as one progressed through the school one ended up at the top of the table as a server.

Some boys, either for religious, or family reasons, brought a packed lunch and they had a couple of tables together at one end of the Dining Room.

The rest of school life must have been pretty much as normal. We still had after school activity groups, stamp collecting was one in which I was interested, and others for Music or Science. Eventually when we were in the 5th and 6th form we were able to meet up with the girls in the hall and we had lessons on ballroom dancing and some of us tried to get a small Jazz Band together with little success.

One final thought about those years. There was still a religious segregation and morning assembly, held first thing most days and was a Christian event which meant that the small number of Jewish and Catholic boys did not take part and had to wait in the corridor outside. I am sure this would not happen now.

Those of you wishing to identify the students in the photo can do so by looking at the Memoirs page [here](#).



Award Winning Alumna with Success at her Feet



One former High Storrian who has made a name for herself in international competition can thank her fourteen legs and feet for her success. Kath Hardman, who was Kathryn Allen at school from 1964 to 69, competes in Heelwork to Music, a demanding form of dog obedience and dog agility, and last year took part in the Open European Championships in Stuttgart. Their reward for making up HTM Team GBR, was a Silver Trophy and a scrapbook of photos and memories.

Kath, the Team Manager, took her dogs Spice, Amber and Denby for the gruelling trip to Germany and was up against teams from fifteen other countries but their thrilling routine set on a James Bond movie theme won the judges' high praise. Kath, who now lives in Derbyshire, would love to hear from former classmates.



Thanks to Sylvia Langan (Brears) who recently sent us some lovely photographs of her and her former classmates at High Storrs from the 1960s. If you would like to see more of these, as well as the names of all those pictured, please go to the school's website by clicking [here](#).

Our 2015 Oxbridge students

The school is very proud that four of our Y13s have been accepted to Oxbridge Universities this year. Congratulations to:

Jacob H - English at Cambridge (current Head Boy)

Chloe Y - English at Cambridge

Alistair M - Physics at Oxford

Shain H - Politics, Philosophy & Economics



Class of 2014 - Celebrating Success

Every year the school celebrates the successes of our previous year's Sixth Form leavers by holding a Celebration of Success event to give our certificates, awards and prizes.

Just before Christmas we welcomed back to school many of our 2014 leavers and their families to catch up with old friends and remind them of how much they've achieved in their school careers and beyond.

Guest of honour was previous High Storrs student Kavita Donkersley-Khan who, in the few years since leaving school, has built up a very successful business of her own virtually entirely on-line. Having only left school in 2010, Kavita was a great example of what High Storrs students can achieve if they work hard and really put their mind to it.

As well as being officially presented with their A Level certificates, students were given awards and prizes to some of the highest achievers. We have some very substantial prizes which are given out every year which come from funds set up by, in many cases, Alumni of the school. Each subject also celebrates one or more students with an award for special effort in their subject.



High Storrs School in 2015

In 2011 High Storrs School's multi-million pound refurbishment project under Building Schools for the Future (BSF) completed and gave us a beautifully refurbished original building, with two new builds on the North and South sides, a public art installation, as well as removing all temporary buildings and other extensions. We now have state of the art facilities in all classrooms, as well as wonderful new practical spaces such as Dance and Drama studios, Art & Design rooms and a bright and airy library. If you would like to see more photos, click [here](#).



Do you remember this face?

Everyone remembers at least one teacher from their time at school. That special person who stood out for whatever reason! Well you may be pleased to hear that we still have a number of teachers who have worked at High Storrs for over 20 years, so have a look - see if you remember any of them!



Mr J Williamson

Sociology & Politics



Mr M Bennehan

Physical Education



Ms C Pender

Drama



Mr T Pace

History



Mr S McClure

Geography



Mrs L Raven

Special Needs Support



Mrs E Hetherington

PE/PHSCE



Mr M Joy

Maths



Mrs G Johnson

Latin/Classics



Mr M Fahidi

Maths



Mr M Akram

Urdu

Desert farming in Haiti

by Dr David Machin (1962-64)

I came to High Storrs in 1962 to do my A levels. I was interviewed by George Mack, the famous ex Headmaster. Since I wanted to have a career in Natural Resources he suggested that I do A levels in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. I was keen at sports so soon settled in and had a wonderful 2 years at a great school. At the end I went to Aberdeen University to do a Degree in Agricultural Zoology. Luckily for me most of my expenses were paid by the government, including the train fares to and from Aberdeen.

On graduating from Aberdeen and doing an MSc I managed to get a job as Assistant Lecturer at the University of Swaziland in Africa, where I became aware of the problems that arid countries have around the world. I later worked for the British Governments Natural Resource Institute who sent me to many countries to advise them on ways of coping with agricultural and environmental problems. As a result I ended up becoming an expert on desert farming and am still asked to advise on ways of solving such problems.

Over many years I developed a new approach using the Sisal plant, which grows in deserts and is used for making ropes, carpets and now bank notes and even tea bags etc. One of the problems with this crop is that only 4% of the plant can be used and 96% was wasted. I worked to

develop a way of using this waste. Having also become an Animal Nutritionist I developed a very simple system of sun drying the waste to make an excellent feed for livestock or to be used as a substrate for bio fuels. At the same time we found that the Sisal plant is very good at restoring desert lands and helps water harvesting. So we now have a multipurpose crop which meets the needs of many of the poorest drought-ravaged countries in the world.

In the last 10 years I have been developing the desert farming concept in countries such as Eritrea, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Somaliland, Burma and Haiti.

My most recent visit has been to Haiti in the Caribbean, which is very poor and has lots of arid areas. There I am

working with a team from Concern/Irish Aid who are being funded by the EU to apply these ideas. I go out every 6 months and work with the local team and farmers to develop Sisal farms, which will give them a cash crop from the sale of fibre, plus animal feed for their underfed animals and help to restore their arid degraded lands. These farmers haven't raised a crop for at least 3 years,

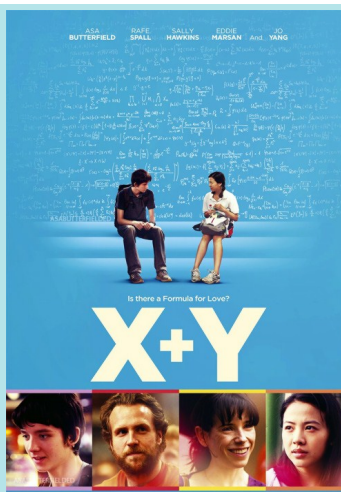


but can be sure the Sisal will do the job.

Last year I visited one of the projects I was involved with earlier in Tanzania. Although it was a drought the farmer I met was smiling. All the cash crops had died but the Sisal was fine; he would be able to buy food and pay the bills and he called the Sisal his "insurance". He is now earning more than \$7000 a year from the Sisal; at the beginning he and his family were living on less than \$1 a day.

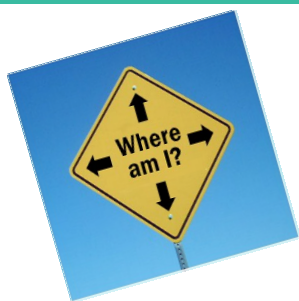
High Storrs on the Silver Screen

It seems such a long time since the school was used as a location for the filming of British movie X+Y back in the summer of 2013. Not only did the producers want to use our impressive 1930s building, but they also saw potential in our talented students and staff who were cast as extras for the filming at both High Storrs and King Edwards schools.



The film stars Asa Butterfield (*The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, *Hugo*, *Merlin*), Rafe Spall (*Life of Pi*) and Golden Globe Winner Sally Hawkins as well as many other well known faces. It tells the story of a teenage English Mathematics prodigy (Butterfield) who has difficulty understanding people, but finds comfort in numbers.

X+Y opened at the cinemas on Friday 13th March, as we're pleased to announce we made the cut!



Where I Am Now

We will be using this space in each issue to enable alumni to contact each other, but **for security reasons we will not be publishing email addresses or personal data**. If you wish to contact any of the contributors, then please email us via communications@highstorrs.sheffield.sch.uk and state clearly if you are happy to take telephone calls and if so, a telephone number. We will contact the contributors and make them aware of your request.

I'm 40 years old so it must've been some time around 1992 that I left. I joined the second year at High Storrs from Nether Green Middle School and stayed for my GCSEs and A-levels. At A-level I studied Biology, History, English Literature and General Studies achieving 3 As and a B. I also played for the school football team.

I had a couple of years out, one going to school and the second following my degree. On both occasions I worked in pretty menial jobs in the UK followed by 6 months employment in Australia.

I studied Law at Nottingham University and obtained it 2.1. I also studied the legal practice course at Nottingham Trent University and achieved a distinction. I then joined a law firm called Gordons but left part way through my training contract to join a much bigger firm called Eversheds. I finished my training contract and worked my way through the ranks to become a partner and I still hold this position.

However my life has taken a slight twist in that I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease two years ago so I'm not currently working. *(We all send our hopes and best wishes in this respect, John, Ed.)*

I live in Harrogate and married. We have twin boys who are 20 months old. My dad was a school Governor at High Storrs (Rod Sewell) and I am a school Governor in Harrogate at a primary school. **John Sewell (1992)**

I left High Storrs in 1950 with a School Certificate, age 16, and went to train as a metallurgical chemist at Brown Bayley Steels Ltd. The firm sent me to the Outward Bound Mountain School in Eskdale, then Cumberland, in 1952. It was their 22nd Course! For an extract from my OBMS diary of that month in The Lakes see Michael Fisher OBMS via Google.

I gained a HND in Metallurgy through night school then left industry to train as a youth worker at Leicester in 1964. I became a County Adviser to Lancashire Education Committee's Youth Service in 1972 and in 1974 a Youth Officer with Salford City Council responsible for Training. I was awarded a BA Hons, 1st class and an MA (with Distinction) University of Lancaster and retired in 1991 aged 56. Meanwhile I qualified as a Senior Instructor (Dinghies, Rescue and Power Craft) by 1972 and later as a Yachtmaster Instructor Offshore and Ocean and taught in several venues after 1991. In 1996 when 62 years of age I rode a mountain bike solo to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, through the mountains of the Picos de Europa, camping and living rough and raised £20,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support and £10,000 for the Multiple Sclerosis Society through my slide assisted lectures based on that and other pilgrimages. I finally retired in 2008 and now enjoy the mountains, hills and dales of the UK, my first love! **Michael Fisher (1950)**

I entered High Storrs Grammar School for Boys in 1961. I was in forms 1C, 2B, 3B, 4B and 5A. I took O levels in 1966 and A levels in 1968. I went to University College London to study History and graduated in 1971. I have lived in the US since 1989.

I thought you might be interested to know that Andrew Cook and Phil White were also in my class. Andrew also went to UCL to study Law and Phil attended Leeds University to study Business and Accounting. Andrew still lives and works in the area (William Cook) and Phil lives in North Yorkshire.

All three of us became CEO's of UK public companies and all three have been honoured by the Queen (Andrew and Phil receiving the CBE and myself the OBE). Quite a record for a class of 30 in a northern Grammar School! **John Hancock (1968)**

I'm a research scientist at NASA's Ames Research Center in the San Francisco Bay Area. I work on discovering new planets with the Kepler spacecraft. My goal is the detection of Earth-like planets that orbit other stars. Some of my achievements include the discovery of the 5 planets including the smallest known planet. **Tom Barclay (2002)**

For the record I attended High Storrs from Sep 51 to July 52 then I was "seconded" to Harrogate Grammar School (HGS) for 2 years. The reason for the 2 year gap was because my father, a Sheffield Police Sergeant, died in Dec 51, money was then very scarce for my mother to supply the family. Accordingly my brother and I were transferred to the Northern Police Orphanage in Harrogate for two years, during which I walked down Otley Road to attend HGS. My brother attended the local primary school in Harrogate and on his return to Sheffield at the age of 9 he went to Greenhill County School then Nether Edge (Abbeylea) Grammar School

I returned to HS in the 4th Form where my form teacher was Tickner and subsequently stayed on into the 6th Form at HS and passed Chemistry, Physics, & Maths "A" Level in Jul 58.

After working in Sheffield for 3 years doing chemical analysis of steels and firebricks at Yorkshire Testing Works (part of the J&J Dyson Group) on Scotland Street, I went to Leeds University and studied Chemistry, gaining a BSC in 65. I then married, emigrated to Canada and did a year in the Paints industry in Toronto before embarking on a PhD course at The University of Alberta in Edmonton.

Arrived back in England on decimal day (Feb 71) and after 3 years postdoctoral at Univs of Sussex then Sheffield, I joined Unilever at Port Sunlight, Wirral, retiring from there at the end of Dec 95. My wife and I frequently visit Sheffield (I'm a Season Ticket holder at Sheff Wed) and various parts of Derbyshire. **Leslie F Ball (1958)**

A Favourite Teacher Remembered

"I felt I had lost something valuable when I heard from David France that the Old Centralians had been disbanded and the Newsletter finished," writes John Bailey. "When I started at High Storrs and toiled up the hills from homely Sharrow to forbidding Bents Green in 1949, many of my new teachers had been born in Victorian England, some still looked warily at us scholarship boys, memories of the Central School were fresh and the prefects already looked Brideshead.

News of the Old Centralians, collected by Bryn Baker, was an important part of the School Magazine; it was easy to feel part of a bit of Sheffield history, a sense consolidated as news of OCs continued to arrive over the ensuing 65 years.

"It is good to think that a slot on the school's website, Alumni News, has been reserved and although contemporary social networking has put paid to the old ways, it is still possible, if we old 'uns make use of it, to communicate with our contemporaries and learn about the current life of the school to our mutual benefit. Indeed, my mind was immediately flooded with memories, and, for once, all good ones.

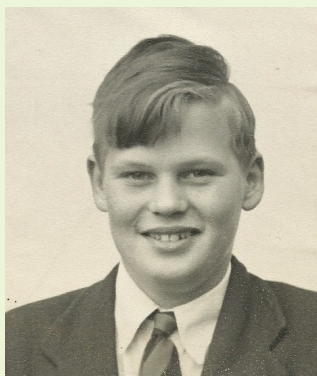
"Surely my Sixth Form teachers were equal if not better than my Oxford tutors: Messrs Hamilton, Billington, Tickner, Hoffman and Coulson comprised a wonderful team and Peter Coulson changed the course of my life. He took seriously the quality of his students' writing, attending to weaknesses, suggesting improvements, praising strengths; he illuminated texts and demonstrated how to write critically about them; how to structure essays, how to seek the right word, how to use commentaries.

"I see now the long stride into the classroom and remember the vari-speed lesson: discussion, challenge and reflection and, in a high-speed conclusion, the gold dust of notes on the board - bullet points, we'd call them now. So there was something for everybody. I can recall to this day observations on essays and personal encouragement outside lessons - books to read, choices to make: the world became wider and learning with him a joy.

"Many years later, when interviewing headteachers, I noticed that one candidate had been at the City of London School. I knew that after High Storrs, Peter had taught at Dover College and then, for nearly a quarter of a century had been Head of English at

CLS. In the preliminary chat, I asked the candidate if he knew Peter; of course he did, we were of the same opinion of Peter's qualities. The interviewing Head on the panel spoke up; her son, still at the school, was always talking about him; for a few minutes, we rejoiced. On his retirement, CLS named a studio after him in recognition of his contribution to the lives of his pupils and the school.

"Pupils from the first 7 years of Peter's career will be delighted to know that he is still writing, still challenging the loose remark, still wishing you well. I tell him that although the grandees from the City of London School garlanded him at the conclusion of his career, we spotted him first."



John Bailey (1949 – 56)



Former English Master Mr Peter Coulson

Thank you, John, for this wonderful contribution. Please allow me to share your adulation of Peter Coulson who was my form master in 1c and also taught English Language and Literature. I can't say I enjoyed the interminable exploits of Prester John which he thrust upon us, nor the freezing cold sessions on the field when he attempted to instil the rudiments of Rugger on someone who had hand-me-down boots with prominent stud nails and blister-inducing hardened leather uppers. As soon as I could I switched to Cross Country Running which Mr Coulson also had a hand in. But my favourite memory, and I know it's one shared by Colin Billington who was in the same class, is of his outings into the Peak District on Saturday mornings. I am thrilled to hear of his continued good health and wish that we could meet up so that I could express my personal thanks, for without him I might not have been able to enjoy the career as journalist and broadcaster I have enjoyed these last forty years.

David France

Rules and Regulations from a By-Gone Era

Some of you might remember these rules being enforced in your time at High Storrs. Others from both earlier and later High Storrs era might have had a very different experience all together!

You can see the documents on our [website](#), but here are some highlights from a document recently resurrected by a previous student on the 'High Storrs Survivors' Facebook page entitled "Rules and Regulations" from High Storrs Grammar School for Boys in the 1960s:

Prohibitions: Boys are forbidden...

To smoke, except in private houses.

To have in their possession on the School premises smoking materials or such things as pistols, catapults, fireworks or mouthorgans.

To whistle or make undue noise in or near the School

To attend evening classes without the Headmaster's knowledge or permission

To play cards

Instructions:

Boys are to be particularly careful not to cause inconvenience in queuing for trains or buses.

All boys should remember that they are members of a good School in a great city and should conduct themselves accordingly. *(This one still applies to both girls and boys!)*

Obituaries

Graham White - 1958 to 1965. He attended H.S.G.S. at the same time as me, writes Roger Humphrey, and notably suffered a very serious accident on the school field whilst participating in outdoor P.T. discus, javelin and shot put. He recovered and pursued a career in Banking, mostly abroad in the Far East. He died on 28th October 2011, leaving a widow Jean and four adult children. At school he was an effective and strong centre forward for 'Normans', and for many years up to his death an accomplished musician, music teacher and jazz saxophonist.

Roger Pitchfork (1953-58) I was saddened to hear from Roger's older brother Air Commodore Graham Pitchfork, MBE, FRAeS, RAF (retd.), a distinguished Old Centralian, that Roger, who was in my form for much of my time at High Storrs, passed away at the young age of 68 suffering from leukaemia. The Pitchfork family were celebrated in Sheffield as the owners of a sweet factory famous for its mint rock, which in the lean post war years, was frequently the only inexpensive form of sweets on sale. They later bought out the Maxons Mint Rock business. Graham tells me that Roger ran the business until his retirement. I remember him for his glowing cheeks and unceasing smile. Ed.

In the recent round of telephone calls to all members of Centralians it was sadly discovered that the following members have passed away:

Mr Philip Blakeley. 1930-37, (b.1919), Wallingford

Mr Francis Percy Leggett, 1930-37, Bournemouth

Mr Robert Miler Liddle, 1965-72, (b 1954), Bishop Stortford

Mr Neil McNab, ? – 1953, Derby

Lt Col Charles Donald Stokes, b. 1923, Croydon

Dr. Barry Sutton, 1945-53, Watford

Mr Barry Udall, 1947-54 (b.1936), Walton on Thames

If you hear of or know of the passing of one of our former pupils, please let us know at communications@highstorrs.sheffield.sch.uk



For Sale

This stunning print of the school was made by ex-member of staff Steve Owen who also produces prints featuring other famous landmarks in Sheffield.

He sells the prints framed in A4 (£25) and A3 (£30).

Contact him directly should you wish to purchase one.

Phone: 07843 239660 or

Email: stevenowen@hotmail.com

We would really value your feedback on what has been the first Alumni newsletter produced by High Storrs.

There may have been something you feel was missing, or too much of something else? Good or bad, please do let us know what you think and we promise to consider all suggestions.

Email: communications@highstorrs.sheffield.sch.uk

THE LAST WORD

So that's it...Edition Number One hot off the electronic keyboards. Our thanks to all who have contributed and also a special word of thanks to Marie Gilman (1953-58) who spent several days telephoning a couple of hundred people on the Centralians database but with limited success. Sadly many of the former Centralians are now lost to the cause because their contact details were found to be out of date and we can not communicate with them. If you know of someone who WAS a member and does not know of the changes please tell them to get in touch as soon as possible, bearing in mind there will be NO further contacts by post. The next issue of The High Storrian will be coming during the next academic year, so please let us have your thoughts and reactions, your news and your memories from ALL the years of High Storrs and Central Schools.

FURTHER READING

We are very grateful to all ex-students who have taken the time to send some very interesting articles for this newsletter, as well as some extensive memoirs and stories, and photographs of times gone by.

Due to limited space, it was simply not possible to accommodate all of the submissions, however we have uploaded some of the weightier articles to the school's website. These include articles from **Kathryn Dodd (Jones) 1960s, Maureen Pollard (Askew) 1940s/1950s, Michael Edwards 1950s/1960s, Richard Barrand 1940s and Sylvia Langan (Brears) 1960s.**

Should you wish to read them, then click [here](#) to be taken to the website.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

25th Apr	Alumni Reunion
7-10th July	Les Misérables School Edition
16th July	Strictly High Storrs
Sept/Oct	Alumni talks in school

High Storrs PTA

Car Boot & Plant Sale

Sunday 10th May
10am - 1pm

With Food & Craft Stalls



Booking Form & More Information
from www.highstorrs.co.uk @highstorrs

How to stay in touch...

www.highstorrs.co.uk/our-school/alumni

www.facebook.co.uk/HighStorrsSchool

[@hstorrsalumni](https://twitter.com/hstorrsalumni)

communications@highstorrs.sheffield.sch.uk

0114 2670000



How to get involved...

As a lifetime member of the High Storrs family, you are always welcome back to your old school, no matter when you left us.

If you'd be interested in getting involved a little with High Storrs, here are a few suggestions:

- ⇒ Come along to one of our many events at school. We hold regular evening and daytime events which attract much community support. To find out what's on, keep an eye on the website, Facebook and Twitter.
- ⇒ If you feel you've got something to 'give back', then come in and give a talk! We hold an annual career-focused day for Year 12 students, so if you feel you've had an inspiring career and want to 'pay it forward' then let us know.
- ⇒ We have regular prize-givings and award ceremonies for our students, so if you feel able to, then perhaps you could consider donating a prize?
- ⇒ Like what you've read? Desperate to get back in touch with long-lost friends? Have some interesting news to share? Then why not contribute to our future editions of *The High Storrian*?
- ⇒ Spread the word! Help us grow this new alumni register by telling your friends and family who went to High Storrs. They can register to be on the database by going to www.highstorrs.co.uk/our-school/alumni