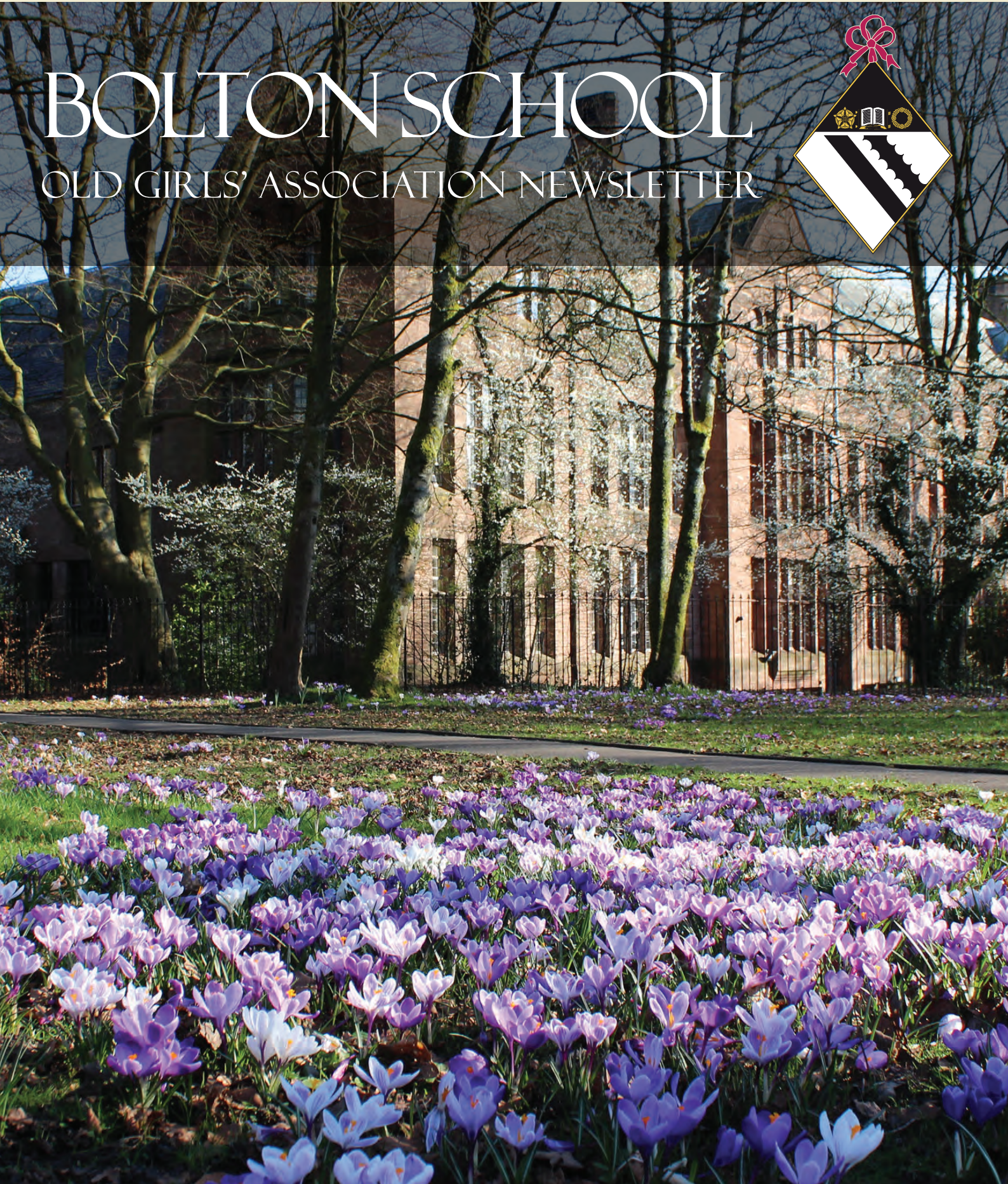


SHARED MEMORIES AND CONTINUED SUPPORT

BOLTON SCHOOL

OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Spring 2026

Issue Number 44

CONTENTS

2	STAY CONNECTED
2	STAY IN TOUCH
2	BOLTON SCHOOL MERCHANDISE
3	WELCOME MESSAGES
4	FOUNDATION NEWS
4	BOLTON ALUMNI NETWORK
5	CONTINUING SUPPORT
6	SCHOOL NEWS
8	EVENTS
14	INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION:
14	Sixth Form Entrepreneurship Scheme
14	Careers Carousels
15	Women of Work
15	International Women's Day
15	Steps to Success Mentoring Scheme
16	Alumni of the Year Awards: Francesca Harding
17	LADIES' FOOTBALL
18	ALUMNAE IN THE AI REVOLUTION
20	STORY OF A GOWN
21	OLD GIRLS GO GLOBAL
22	WHO NEEDS THE EUROSTAR ANYWAY? Emily Varley's Channel Swim
23	ASHWINI ANSWERS THE QUESTIONS: Ashwini Kamath Appears on TV Quiz Shows
24	NEWS OF OLD GIRLS
26	Destinations of Leavers 2025
28	Mini Reunions
29	ALUMNI AUTHORS
30	FROM THE ARCHIVES
30	Ask the Archivist: How was Bolton School Linked to MV Greystoke Castle?
31	Looking Back
32	Memories
34	LIVES REMEMBERED
35	IN MEMORIAM



Bolton School Merchandise

A range of three Bolton School branded umbrellas is now available from the School's online merchandise store. The clear golf (£25 plus P&P) is perfect for the side-lines, the black auto golf (£20 plus P&P) offers great coverage for two and the black folding (auto open and close) (£18 plus P&P) is a great size for all. Each umbrella has the Bolton School crest, so makes the perfect gift for students, parents, Alumni or Friends.

Please use the QR code to see the full range of Bolton School merchandise and details of how to order.



Development Team

Rebecca Brayshaw
Head of Development

Laura Firth
Director of Development,
Alumni Relations and Marketing

Lisa Hilton
Development Assistant

Frances Johnson
Development Officer

Emma Metcalfe
Development Manager

Stay Connected

We hope you enjoy being kept up-to-date with what is happening at School and within the Old Girl community as much as we value the opportunity to stay connected with you. If your contact details have changed, or if you have not yet let us know your communication preferences and wish to continue hearing from School, then please contact the Development Office as soon as possible, or complete the Alumni Communications Update form found in the 'Alumni and Giving Back' section of the School website, www.boltonschool.org or by scanning the QR code below.

Stay In Touch

	www.boltonalumninetwork.com
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	Bolton School Alumni
	Old Boys and Old Girls (Official)
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	bsalumni/albums
	www.boltonschool.org



Scan Me

WELCOME

From the Chair of the Old Girls' Association

Since the Autumn Newsletter was published I have had the huge privilege of attending a number of School and Alumni events on behalf of the Old Girls' Association. I would particularly like to mention the two Alumni dinners: one at Pembroke College, Oxford and the other at St Catharine's College, Cambridge. They were two of the most cheerfully noisy events I've ever attended, with happy conversations spinning all evening between recent leavers and older members of the two Associations.

I loved giving the grace for the Cambridge dinner in Latin (and in English afterwards because, honestly, who can translate it at speed in their heads?). It was something of a test of everyone's best manners, but, happily for me, the diners took it in their stride and it stimulated some lovely chats with younger Alumni who had gone on from School to study Classics. I think they were tickled that I still remember Mrs Tate's Latin lessons so fondly even though I targeted a career in Civil Engineering many years ago, where ancient languages added no obvious value.

Through Alumni events like these, I am finding out more than I thought possible of the ways Old Girls' lives have developed and matured since we all left School. We had the same basic ingredients of committed family support and enquiring minds. Then, for however long we were at School, we were fed on the same diet of lessons, spiced by characterful teachers in a beautiful, well-equipped building with high-quality facilities. Many of us also knew the outdoor joys accessed through the School's houses previously at Cautley and Robin Cottage, and now Patterdale. Yet we have scattered like a supernova across careers and places we had never heard of as students, many

of which hadn't been invented when we left School. Between us we continue trying to be kind, competent, caring and clever everywhere we go in our jobs, in our home lives and in our communities. I think it's absolutely okay to feel proud of our School heritage when it brings so much good to others. I hope you enjoy reading the articles in this *Newsletter* which tell us something of the wonderful time that current students are having – do wish them all the best as they move out into the real world in their turn.

The Development Office has another sparkling menu of Alumni events for us throughout the year, with lunches at School in Bolton, dinners in diverse cities across the nation, Fireside Chats in prestigious corporate offices in London and Manchester, and Zoom meetings for Alumni based across the continents. Keep your eye out for joining details in emails and on the School website, and do try something that might be interesting (non-School guests are usually welcome too): I can confidently reassure you that it will be fascinating in ways you might not even imagine.

Rachel Crompton (née Allen, Class of 1983)
Chair of the Old Girls' Association



From the Head of Girls' Division

Welcome to the Spring edition of the *Old Girls' Association Newsletter*.

As always, within these pages you will find a rich collection of reports and reflections from events held over the past year. It has been a particular pleasure to see our Alumni dinners grow steadily in popularity, and a growing contingent of more recent leavers.

There is something very heartening about seeing different generations of Old Girls reconnecting with one another and with the School, strengthening the sense of community that has long been such a defining feature of Bolton School.

In a world where securing that crucial first step on the career ladder is becoming ever more competitive, it is more important than ever that we do all we can to support both our current pupils and our recent Alumnae. This newsletter reflects that commitment clearly. Whether through Women of Work, Steps to Success or the Entrepreneurship Scheme, we are determined to ensure that our students are well prepared, well advised and well supported as they move beyond school. Many of our

recent leavers have benefited enormously from the guidance of Old Girls who have given their time to mentor and advise. Our sincere thanks go to all those who support the work of the Futures Department in any capacity – your generosity makes a tangible difference.

You will also notice from both the Destinations list (page 26) and the news article on page 7 that degree apprenticeships continue to grow in popularity. We congratulate those students who have secured places; it is encouraging to see such a diverse range of pathways being embraced with confidence and ambition.

Elsewhere, the *Newsletter* celebrates the extraordinary breadth of achievements among our Old Girls: from swimming the Channel to writing novels and travelling the world. It is always a joy to read how fondly so many of you look back on your time at School. One comment in particular caught my eye – "I loved every minute of my time at Bolton School" (see page 33) – and we continue to do our utmost to ensure that current pupils' memories will, in time, be just as positive.

Finally, do take a moment to look at the Events Calendar on page 13. We would be delighted if you could join us at one of our forthcoming gatherings, and I hope to see you soon.

Lynne Kyle
Head of Girls' Division



FOUNDATION NEWS



A Message from the Head of Foundation

The great joy of working in a school is the sense of energy, optimism and future. This week we have had many costumes, events and competitions for World Book Day. It is possible to be envious of young people finding the great books for the first time that we enjoyed and still do. We have had county netball success for the Year 7 team in Girls' Division and we had a gripping penalty shootout in an ISFA Trophy semi-final that sees the First XI in Boys' Division heading to the national final at the end of March.

Meanwhile the University and degree apprenticeship offers for Year 13 come in and Year 11 ready themselves for GCSEs this Summer. The work we do on 'Futures' (careers and next steps beyond School) is very significantly supported by our Alumni – my thanks for all so many of you do in that regard, from one-to-one mentoring, to talks at School and, I am quite sure, much informal support School will never know about, but which you offer to one another because of a shared starting point at School.

This year sees the 50th anniversary of our Open Door philanthropic bursary campaign. The original campaign was characterised by the idea that many people, regularly giving a little, can achieve a great deal. One Alumnus has now given for 30

of those 50 years and slowly and steadily has donated more than £10,000 to the School. 150 Alumni giving £25 a month would, within a year, fund four full Sixth Form bursaries. The cumulative impact can make a tangible difference to how our School feels in the future and what it stands for. To celebrate the 50th year we wish to increase the number of regular donors by 50 from 200 to 250.

I very much enjoy working with the Old Boys' and Old Girls' Associations. Conversations, whether about the issues of the day or School life in the past, are always stimulating. Our events have larger attendances this year than ever before and we are bucking the trend in that way. This is linked to the detailed organisation from the Development Office, but also the sense of community which Rebecca Brayshaw and her team have built. The Associations also rely on Old Boys and Old Girls to volunteer. It was an enormous pleasure to present Distinguished Service Awards to Margaret Allen, Maureen Jones and David Shaw at the recent lunch. Thank you to them for all they have done and I look forward to meeting many more of you in future.

Philip Britton MBE DL
Head of Foundation

Join the Bolton School Alumni Network



CONNECT

Explore ways to connect



LEARN & GROW

Develop relationships



VOLUNTEER

Offer your time and experience



ATTEND AN EVENT

Keep up to date with events



KEEP IN TOUCH

Share your contact details



Scan Me

DID YOU KNOW



The **FREE** Business Directory offers self-employed Alumni the opportunity to promote their business and services and presents a networking community which spans the globe.

3,113

Registered users, spanning the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada, the Asia and Europe – offering a truly global community of Old Boys and Old Girls across a wide variety of sectors

1,653

Are willing to offer advice

1,266

Have offered to help review CVs

68%

Are willing to help

1,810

Are willing to answer industry specific questions

1,509

Are willing to introduce other Alumni to their connections

Alumni Business Directory

The free Bolton Alumni Business Directory allows self-employed Old Girls and Old Boys to promote their businesses and services to a global network of over 3,000 members, while also offering opportunities for networking, recruitment, mentorship and sharing career resources within the Alumni community. Over the previous six months 35% of those who have visited the Business Directory page, have gone on to click on the offer page, while 19% of those have gone on to interact with the offer.

Roger Milne (Class of 1976), Director of Independent Merchant Services Ltd, the UK's leading reference point for card processing,

has taken the opportunity to feature his business on the Bolton Alumni Network.

He says: "The UK's unique and free service helps businesses minimise their card processing costs, whilst upgrading their payment technology, reporting, and the consumer payment experience.

"Since 2012 we have been giving free guidance and advice to thousands of businesses (including Bolton School) about the best routes to take when choosing your next card payments provider."



CONTINUING SUPPORT

Throughout the past half-century, Bolton School's continued success has been made possible thanks to the collective generosity of many hundreds of Old Girls and Old Boys. In turn, their generosity has benefited the many thousands of students who, generation after generation, pass through the School before heading off into the wider world.

Last year was no different: during the 2024-25 academic year, the School community gave donations totalling £2.28 million to support the School and its pupils.

This tremendous total included £1.77m given to safeguard the future growth of the bursary scheme, £91,500 given to provide hardship funding for fee-paying families experiencing financial difficulties and £420,838 donated to support a wide range of other projects and activities benefiting the School and its Alumni.

Every gift we receive makes a difference to our pupils. Last year, your support made it possible for the School to:

- **Spend £3.7m on means-tested bursary funding**, enabling 379 children – one in five students in the two Senior Schools – who would otherwise have been unable to join us to study here;

- **Make 113 extracurricular funding grants to bursary students**, enabling them to take part in trips and activities alongside their classmates;
- **Grant hardship funding to 22 fee-paying pupils**, alleviating financial pressures upon their families during challenging times;
- **Award 25 young Alumni a university scholarship** to support their studies; and
- **Present 117 Girls' and Boys' Division pupils with 171 separate prizes**, recognising their academic performance and commitment to the wider life of the School.

We are grateful to each of our donors for the support that they offered last year: Thank You.

50 Years of Support – from Open Doors to Open Futures

2026 marks the 50th anniversary of the Open Door Appeal – launched by the Governors in 1976 in response to the Labour Government's withdrawal of the Direct Grant scheme.



The Open Door Appeal was the School's first formal, public fundraising campaign.

Borne out of necessity, it received a warm response from Old Girls, Old Boys, Parents, Governors and others – who all shared the School's belief that its doors should remain open and offered their support to ensure that might be so.

Reflecting on that response, David Buxton, a Parent and Governor who served as the Chairman of the Appeal Committee, wrote:

"The door to equal opportunity at Bolton School is ajar – we hope that it will be opened wider year by year."

That hope continues today – and the door to equal opportunity remains ajar. The ambition of the Open Door Appeal mirrors exactly that of the Open Futures Campaign, which was launched by the School last May to bring back into view the expansion of the bursary scheme to support one in three pupils at the School.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Open Door Appeal, this year our goal for the Open Futures Campaign is to increase the number of regular donors supporting the bursary scheme by at least 50.

A regular donation of any value – through a Direct Debit or Standing Order – is a way in which everyone can play a part in widening access to the School. As Philip Britton notes in his Head of Foundation message on page 4, the combined impact of many people regularly donating a small amount can be transformative.

If every Old Girl and Old Boy with whom the School is in contact were to commit to donating £25 a month, with Gift Aid, within seven years our goal to begin supporting one in three senior school pupils would be achieved.

Since it was first founded, the Bolton School ethos – that we should be accessible to all children who would thrive here – has endured. Philanthropy, particularly from Alumni, has always been at its heart. By helping us mark this special milestone, you will play your part in widening access to Bolton School for another 50 years and more.

If you believe in the positive impact of a Bolton School education and have not yet offered your support to the bursary scheme, please consider doing so now. That support has never been more vital.

Every gift, of every size, makes a difference:

- By making a **one-off donation**, you can demonstrate your belief in the School's ambition to widen access to one in three pupils;
- By setting up a **regular donation**, you can provide a reliable source of funding for bursary places for deserving children; or
- By **remembering the School in your will**, you can ensure the School's social mobility ethos continues to benefit future generations: a lasting legacy.



To learn more about supporting the Open Futures Campaign for Bursaries, simply scan the QR code on the right. If you would like to discuss your intentions in more detail, or would like to learn about other projects which you might support, please contact Laura Firth, Director of Development, Alumni Relations and Marketing, by calling **01204 434718** or by emailing development@boltonschool.org.

However you choose to offer your support – thank you. You will be making a real difference to the lives of each bright child who will be granted the opportunities a bursary places provides.

Correction

In the Autumn 2025 edition we published an incorrect caption for this photograph (right) taken at the Year 13 Farewell Event.

The correct caption should read: *Mia Walters, Freya Wood, Sallie Kendall, Erin Turner, Alexia Howarth, Zahara Muhammad*

We apologise to **Sallie Kendall (Class of 2025)** who was incorrectly identified in the previous Newsletter.



SCHOOL NEWS

The Glorious Chickmans

December saw a special Joint Production of *The Glorious Chickmans*, a newly commissioned play created as part of the 'Write the Girl' initiative, founded by Sophie Torrent. This initiative tackles the lack of strong female roles in school drama by commissioning new plays from established writers and connecting students with industry professionals.

Joining the programme in 2024, Bolton School commissioned playwright Ben Cain, a long-standing collaborator with Bolton students. The comedy is set in a whimsical faraway land, where sisters Aldawig and Brinda Chickman challenge tradition by selling eggs, learning important lessons about ambition, capitalism and community. The production involved 55 students from Years 7 to 13 across performance and technical roles and was a resounding success, enjoyed by large and supportive audiences.



Sports Dome



Computer images of the proposed sports dome

Bolton School has submitted a planning application to Bolton Council for a multi-use indoor sports dome at the south end of the Levels.

If approved, the 722m² facility will include retractable sides and a connecting pavilion with classrooms and storage. It will expand indoor provision for curriculum PE and extracurricular activities, including tennis, basketball, badminton and netball, for pupils from Primary Division to Sixth Form.

Construction is planned for the 2027–28 academic year. The project, long prioritised by Governors, was launched following two generous Old Boy legacies dedicated to future sports facilities.

Sustained Success in Social Mobility

Bolton School is proud to be featured in *The Social Mobility List 2026*, organised by social mobility charity *Making The Leap*. The School has been recognised for its longstanding commitment to ensuring financial circumstances never limit access to an exceptional education.

This follows two awards in 2025: 'School/College of the Year' at the UK Social Mobility Awards and 'Independent School of the Year for Contribution to Social Mobility' at the Independent School Parent magazine's awards.

Partnerships with OnSide Youth Zones and The Bursary Foundation are helping to identify and support bursary candidates, while the Open Futures Bursary Campaign aims to increase support from one in five to one in three pupils.



Scan here to find out more about the Open Futures Bursary Campaign

Festival of Colours

In March, Bolton School held its first celebration of Holi, the Hindu Festival of Colours, to mark the beginning of Spring.

Pupils from both Divisions joined tie-dye workshops, creating colourful T-shirts before enjoying Indian food in the Dining Halls.

After School, Senior School and Sixth Form students gathered for a Colour Run around the Levels. Despite drizzle, spirits were high as students wore white T-shirts, sunglasses and bandanas. A short speech

explained Holi's meaning in Hindu culture before the run began. Volunteers at colour stations showered runners with bright powders during four laps, leaving T-shirts rainbow-coloured and everyone smiling after a joyful cultural celebration.



Celebrating National Apprenticeship Week

During National Apprenticeship Week in February Bolton School celebrated the positive impact of apprenticeships on current students and recent leavers.

Degree Apprenticeships offer an alternative to traditional university study: the opportunity to 'earn while you learn' and gain both practical skills and professional experience while at the same time earning a full honours degree. Recent years have seen more and more Sixth Formers choosing to apply for Degree Apprenticeships and the School has developed strong support for those ambitious students choosing to take this path.

The Futures Department helps students to make informed decisions about their future, providing one-to-one support at every stage of the process, including assistance with applications to showcase students' skills, qualifications and personal strengths, and valuable interview preparation. Alumni connections also help students to gain real insight into different industries as well as allowing them to start building their future professional networks.

So far this year, six Sixth Form students have been successful in their Degree Apprenticeship applications. Two have received offers for Engineering apprenticeships and four have received offers for Finance apprenticeships.



Mr Deane Lamb, Bolton School's Degree Apprenticeship Lead, said: "I am delighted by the hard work and resilience our students show when applying for these highly competitive Degree Apprenticeship placements ... it is always a privilege to see how the students develop into young people who will make a positive difference in the world."

Welcome to Lisa!

In January the Development Office welcomed a new team member, Lisa Hilton, following her appointment as Development Assistant.

Lisa joins School following an extensive career across the financial sector and will be responsible for the maintenance of the team's fundraising records.



The School's Partnership Team

Partnerships

The Independent Schools Council (ISC)'s Partnerships Week in November provided a super opportunity for Bolton School to celebrate its wide-reaching impact on the local community.

Over the past year, the School has supported 83 schools, colleges and youth programmes, delivering workshops in Music, STEM, Classics, Maths, Theatre and the Arts, benefiting 3,050 young people. 2,250 pupils visited Bolton School for events including STEM Day, Football Festivals and the Bolton Children's Fiction Award. The School's outreach bursary scheme and equitable admissions work earned it School/College of the Year at the SOMO Awards and Independent School of the Year for Contribution to Social Mobility, highlighting its commitment to nurturing potential from all backgrounds.

Jane Mees (née Davies, Class of 1987), Bolton School's Bursary Support and Outreach Manager, says: "We recognise how important it is to identify, nurture and encourage potential candidates from all backgrounds. Our teachers play a vital role in delivering inspiring Saturday morning sessions as part of our outreach programmes, to help young people believe in themselves and see that they can truly thrive here."



Scan the QR code to read more at Bolton School's new Partnerships page.

Farewell ... but Not Goodbye

In March Development Assistant Lorraine Dewhurst took up a new position as School Administrator in the Girls' Division.

Lorraine joined the Development Office in September 2023 and has since been a valued member of the team. Over the past few years, she has been a welcoming and supportive presence for many of our Alumni and the wider community. Her professionalism, warmth and readiness to assist have been greatly appreciated.

Although she will be much missed within the Development Office, we are pleased that she is not going far! We wish Lorraine every success in her new role.



EVENTS



Alumni Oxford Dinner Pembroke College, Friday 21st November 2025

A record number of Old Girls and Old Boys attended this year's Oxford Dinner, including many new faces, and an impressive range of year groups were represented.

It was wonderful to see our Alumni community come together in such a beautiful setting and the warm, lively atmosphere reflected just how strong and vibrant the Bolton School network continues to be.



1. Gary Battersby (1976), Helen Battersby, Jonathan Battersby (1982), Wendy Johns (née Battersby, 1974), Michael Johns, Nick Battersby (1978), Joanne Battersby, Elisabetta Battersby 2. Khadijah Ali, Millie Wood (both 2019) 3. Vivienne Hall (2025), Rishi Narla (2023), Tom Boardman (2023), Laurence Britton (2023), Ramez Ailo (2025), Hannah McKee (2023) 4. Roger Smith (1979), Sian Kilner (1977), Fiona Clough (1978) 5. Charlotte Bird, Marcus Crompton (2020), Rachel Crompton (née Allen, 1983; OGA Chair, 2025-26), Ernest Ryder (1976) 6. David Griffiths (2009), Erik Johnston, Amy Robinson, David Robinson (2008), Duncan Leary, Alex Hopkinson (2016), Lucy Nolan (2010) 7. George Kingston, Nicola Cain (1986), Averell Kingston (née Wainwright, 1966) 8. Peter Knowles, Roger Smith, Rosemary Claxton (née Lunn), Anne Galloway, Janet Griffiths, Elizabeth Newton (née Whyatt), Janice Leech, Catherine Kneafsey, Barry Nightingale, Judith Peel (née Dean), Gwithian Doswell (all 1979) 9. Barry Nightingale (1979; OBA President, 2025-26), Rachel Crompton 10. Jeremy Newton, Chris Hopkinson, Amanda Valentine (1983), Alex Hopkinson, Ursula Newton (née Farrell, 1983), Charlotte Rumney, Jack Toner, James Hopkinson (2022)

Alumni Cambridge Dinner



St Catharine's College, Friday 6th February 2026

This year's Cambridge Dinner was a sell-out! A record number of guests attended this event, including several first-time attendees. We hope it's the start of a new tradition in your calendar!

We are already looking ahead to next February at Jesus College, Cambridge – all Alumni are very welcome.



1. Angela Corbett (née Cheetham, 2005), Alan and Gail Cheetham 2. Ann Bailey (née Fisher, 1981), Mia Langtree (2022) 3. Krishnan Ajit (2020), Ines Marcal 4. Ananya Ajit,(2023), Giri Nandekumar (2016), Rohit Bagewadi (2017), Anchit Chandran (2016), Krishnan Ajit, Ines Marcal, Neha Bagewadi (2020) 5. Ingrid Murray (1989), Martin Brelsford 6. Alex Smith, Adam Hall (2018), Nancy Craven (née Gaskell, 1983, John Craven (1982), Barry Nightingale, 1979) 7. Neha Bagewadi (2020), Rohit Bagewadi (2017), Ella Worsley (2023) 8. Rachel Crompton (née Allen, 1983), Martin Brelsford 9. Suzanna Simmonite (2024), Isaac Simmonite (2022) 10. Yaqeen Alkaabi (2023), Ananya Ajit,(2023), Ella Worsley (2023)

Joint Old Girls' and Old Boys' Lunch

Bolton School, Friday 13th February 2026

Seventy-five guests attended the annual Joint Old Girls' and Old Boys' Lunch, which brought former pupils together and featured Head of Foundation Philip Britton presenting this year's Distinguished Service Awards for service to the Old Girls' and Old Boltonians' Associations.



Margaret Allen (née Brookes, Class of 1957) received the 2026 award in recognition of six decades of devoted service to the Old Girls' Association and her family's longstanding, multi-generational connection to Bolton School. On being presented with her award Margaret said: "Bolton School has been my life, from my first steps – which I believe I took on the boys' Levels on speech day – to marrying another Scoutmaster. There has also been an aunt, two brothers, a cousin, children, grandchildren, all attending Bolton School, and long-time friendships, at least two whom who are here today, going back with connections to 1919. So how can I accept this for myself? Thank you, from the family."

Maureen Jones (née Wardle, Class of 1958) was recognised for decades of outstanding service to the OGA and Bolton School, including roles as committee member, Honorary Secretary, Newsletter Editor, and 32 years as Secretary to the Headmaster of the Boys' Division, where she also led IT developments and contributed to the School's marketing. Maureen was unable to attend the lunch to accept her award, but she said: "Thank you, I am honoured to receive this award. I gave 40 years of my life to the School and I love the sticks and stones of the place. I am unable to attend the lunch myself, but I am very pleased to receive what is a fitting tribute towards the end of my life and I am very grateful."

This year's Distinguished Service Award for service to the Old Boltonians' Association was presented to **David Shaw (Boys' Division Staff, 1964-2002)** in recognition of his six decades of service to the School and the Association.



1. Margaret Smith (née Leather), Margaret Allen (née Brookes) (both Class of 1957)
2. Gwynneth Nightingale (née Kirk, 1953), Margaret Allen, Dorothy Gatenby (née Taylor, 1956)
3. Sue Harding (1977), Angela Ghadery (née Moorcroft, 1974), Janice Drake (1977)
4. Carol Forshaw (née Rigby, 1972), Philip Rothwell (1971), Ann Rothwell (née Bradshaw, 1972)
5. Rachael Redgate (2008), Louise Relp (née Collins), Catherine Springett (née Redgate), Steve Capstick, Karen Diggie, Victoria Richardson (née Hannon), Pamela Capstick (née Bibby) (all 1976)
6. Rachel Crompton, Margaret Allen, Georgina Crompton (2016)
7. Julie Falsner (née Dobson (1975), Anne Lucy (née Armstrong, 1975), Carole Collins (née Stones, 1966), Janet Hathaway (1966), Vicki Fritzsche-Hurst (née Hurst, 1975), Catherine Berry (née Mawson, 1966), Carol Haslam (née Bonser, 1966)
8. Margaret with trophy
9. Maureen receiving her trophy from Philip Britton

Alumni London Dinner

HMS Belfast, Friday 6th March 2026



Old Girls and Old Boys across the ages enjoyed a wonderful evening of reconnecting and celebration aboard HMS Belfast.



1. Jack (2021), Karen (1976) and Harry (2021) Diggle 2. Stephen Garrett, Hilary Fenton (née Thompson, 1975) 3. Helen Battersby, Michael John, Wendy Johns (née Battersby, 1974), Gary Battersby (1976) 4. Nadine Ng, Ingrid Murray, Catherine Mason, Kathy Brophy (née Marsden) (all 1984) 5. Neil Handley, Scott Hamer, Sarah Scales (née Boardman), Rachel Parsons (née Fielding), Gary Bent (all 1991) 6. Tristan Highes (2025), Jake Mayor (2025), Julian Gregory-Judd, Yaqeen Alkabi (2023) 7. Alison Woolcock, Tessa Ingram (née Blackwood), Sarah Cowley (née Kernohan), Janet Kirby (née Singleton) (all 1985) 8. Winni Lam (2004), Dami Dauda 9. William Chambers, Ann Chambers (GD Staff, 1978-1983) 10. Millie Camm (2014), Maisie Camm (2018), Christian Stapleton (2022), Morgan Camm (2022), Tom Yates (2022)

Bolton School Connect

The SE Bolton School Connect event series continued in January with a thought-provoking networking evening in London. **Charlotte Morley (née Maddrell, Class of 1999)**, founder and CEO of circular clothing company *thelittleloop*, shared insights into her work within the sustainable economy.

During the 'fireside chat' with Charlotte, which was hosted by **Elizabeth Newton (née Whyatt, Class of 1979)**, she demonstrated how the golden thread of the Girls' Division prayer – to go into the world and do good – runs through everything she does. Her career exemplifies values-led leadership, showing that integrity and impact belong at the heart of professional practice.

The event took place at the offices of Goldman Sachs, courtesy of **Adam Crook (Class of 1992)**.

1. Charlotte (left) and Elizabeth
2. Elizabeth interviewed Charlotte about her career in the sustainable economy



Roger Draper (Class of 1988) was the guest speaker at the latest NW Bolton School Connect event. Now a global business advisor he was previously the Chief Executive of Sport England and the Lawn Tennis Association.

Roger shared his passion for both business and sport. Drawing on his extensive experience, he spoke about the five principles of competitive sport that shape his approach to business and leadership: Vision, Planning, Focus, Seeking Opportunity and Execution. He also reflected on his guiding values — staying true to yourself, following passion over pay and embracing the importance of learning to fail and to fail fast.

Old Boy and Governor **Stewart McGuffie (Class of 1986)** hosted the chat with Roger which was held at the offices of Clyde & Co thanks to **Stephen Lintott (Class of 1989)**.

1. Roger (left) chatted to Stewart about his passions for business and sport
2. L-R: Roger, Stephen and Stewart



Historical Association

Early medieval historian **Fiona Edmonds (Class of 1998)** delivered a fascinating lecture on the links between Brittany and Britain in the pre-1066 era at the February meeting of the Bolton Branch of the Historical Association.

Amongst the audience were **Julia Head (née Holt, Class of 1971; Girls' Division Staff, 1988-2015)**, Branch President for the Historical Association in Bolton, and **Amy Munslow (Class of 2016)** – Amy is now a Police Officer, but maintains her interest in History having studied it at A Level.

The Association meets monthly in the Girls' Division from September to March, with lectures on a wide variety of topics offering historical enrichment to a wide variety of people in the local community. For further details please contact Branch Secretary Melissa Wright (mwright@boltonschool.org.uk) or Girls' Division Head of History Craig Owen (cowen@boltonschool.org.uk).



Alumni Events Calendar

To reserve your place at any of our Alumni events, please call the Development Office on **01204 434718**, email development@boltonschool.org or scan the QR code to visit the 'Alumni and Giving Back' section of the School website (www.boltonschool.org) where you can book online.



2026

Tuesday 28th April	May Serenade	Girls' Division Great Hall, 7.30pm
Friday 1st May	Old Boys' and Old Girls' Scottish Dinner	University of Edinburgh, 7pm
Tuesday 5th May	Hulton Lecture	Girls' Division Great Hall, 5pm-6pm
Friday 15th May	Alumni Northern Dinner	Science and Industry Museum, Manchester, 6.30pm
Tuesday 9th June	Middle East Zoom	4-5pm UK, 7-8pm GST, 8.30-9.30pm UST, 8pm-9pm PKT
Friday 12th June	Alumni Cumbria Lunch	Lindeth Howe Hotel, 12 noon
Thursday 18th June	Old Girls' Lunch and AGM	Arts Centre; AGM 11am, lunch 12 noon
Monday 22nd June	Recent Leavers' Reunion: Class of 2025	Bolton School, 2.30pm-5pm
Friday 26th June	Foundation Former Staff Lunch	Bolton School, 12 noon
Saturday 19th September	'6' Class Reunion	Bolton School, 11am-4.30pm

Zoom In for a Catch-Up!

We are enjoying our overseas Zoom events and the ability to engage with Alumni from all corners of the world!

Zoom calls will be held annually for Alumni in Australasia and Oceania (October), the USA (January), Europe (March) and the Middle East (June). All Old Boys and Old Girls across the time zones are welcome to join, regardless of where they live, so look out for further details!

'6' Class Reunion

Did you leave Bolton School in a '6' year (1946, 1956, 1966, 1976, 1986, 1996, 2006, 2016)? If so, please join us for your decade School reunion to be held at Bolton School on **Saturday 19th September 2026** for these year groups. Former Staff are also very welcome to attend, as are Alumni from other years, and partners and families are welcome too.

If you have not received an invitation, but would like to attend, please scan the QR code at the top of this page to book online.

We hope to see as many of you as possible, so please get in touch with your classmates and make sure you all have this date in your diaries!

Alumni Northern Dinner

There are still some places available at the inaugural Bolton School Northern Dinner which will be held at the Science and Industry Museum, Manchester on **Friday 15th May 2026**.

Tickets cost £80 (£50 for Undergraduates and Alumni under 25) for a three-course dinner with wine and coffee – to book please scan the QR code at the top of this page.

May Serenade

The annual Girls' Division May Serenade will take place on **Tuesday 28th April** in the Girls' Division Great Hall. All Old Girls are welcome to attend this traditional School event which will, as usual, feature a broad variety of music from soloists, choirs, orchestras and ensembles, showcasing the range and depth of musical talent in the School.

Bolton School Opens Doors to Business Sponsorships

Bolton School is inviting local businesses to step into the spotlight with a range of dynamic sponsorship opportunities designed to boost visibility and community impact.

Whether you're looking to make a bold statement or support meaningful events, there's a package to suit every brand:

- **Banner Sponsorship:** Get noticed with on-site advertising that puts your name front and centre.
- **Event Sponsorship:** Become the headline sponsor at one of three major School-wide fundraising events.

- **Welcome Drinks:** Add sparkle to School gatherings by sponsoring a drinks reception.
- **Ticket Subsidy:** Champion inclusivity by funding event tickets for Alumni under 25.

If you are interested in connecting with a vibrant school community and making a lasting impression please email rbayshaw@boltonschool.org for further details.

Inspiring the Next Generation



Students with, L-R, Juhi, Shweta, Pram, Rob and Rob at the pitching event

Sixth Form Entrepreneurship Scheme

Last academic year, Year 12 pupils from both Divisions were invited to take part in the Sixth Form Entrepreneurship Scheme established by Old Boy **Rob Dobson (Class of 1982)**.

The scheme looks to develop the business and entrepreneurial skills of students through mentorship from Alumni, with skills-based and founder experience presentations to shape the trajectory of the pupils' research, culminating in a Dragon's Den-style pitching event.

After hearing from some mentors at the 'Meet the Founder' sessions, the pupils who wished to progress to 1-2-1 mentoring submitted their applications, before being matched with mentors

Rob, Pran Arya (Class of 2011), Juhi Gore (Class of 1993), Shweta Sharma (Class of 2001), Rik Thwaites (Class of 1977) and Rob White (Class of 1992). Once matched, the students worked with their mentor to develop their business plan: building a model and exploring ideas that had been discussed at the group sessions to bring improvement or opportunities to their passions.

We are immensely grateful for the time that the six mentors have given to the scheme and students this year.

Careers Carousels

Year 8 pupils in both Divisions had an opportunity to learn about a variety of careers from inspiring Old Girls and Old Boys who each led a fun-based activity relating to their field of expertise, providing plenty of food for thought!

Sara Hatia (Class of 2024)

Sara is a Solicitor Apprentice, working full-time at law firm Weightmans LLP while studying one day a week at university towards her law and legal practice degree. She chose this route because it offers an incredible opportunity to gain a degree without student debt while building valuable experience in a professional working environment.



Katy Schofield (née Jackson, Class of 2008)

After ten years teaching Chemistry, Katy transitioned to project management, joining DAY PM as an Assistant Project Manager in 2022. She supports all stages of construction projects, including contract administration, quality tracking and key administration. Katy is commencing project management qualifications to become a chartered member of the Association of Project Management.



Susie Barnes (née Fernside, Class of 1995)

Susie has worked at Warburtons since leaving university, joining the business after studying International Business with French. She has worked in a number of roles and is currently Head of Innovation, responsible for developing Warburtons' Innovation plans and for managing the team which launches new products.



Thank You and Farewell

We extend our sincere thanks to **Ann Evans (née Littlejohn, Class of 1968)**, **Katy Morley (née Holt, Class of 1963)** and **Barbara Wild (née Lockwood, Class of 1966)**, who are stepping down from the Old Girls' Association Committee.

Each has given valuable time and commitment to the Association, helping to support its work and activities. Their contribution has been greatly appreciated.

Women of Work



The Women of Work talks aim to introduce pupils to the variety of career opportunities available to them and to a range of inspiring Old Girls. These short Zoom sessions take place during Form time and incorporate a brief presentation followed by a Q&A session.

Fatimah Amla

(Class of 2015)

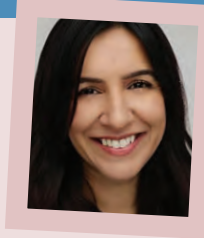
Fatimah attended Bolton School until Year 9 before relocating to New York City, where she completed high school and earned a BSc in Computer Science from Fordham University. She returned to the UK to complete an MSc in Artificial Intelligence at Royal Holloway, University of London. After three years as a fintech data scientist, she began a PhD at Queen Mary University of London, focusing on explainable AI for high-stakes clinical decision-making.



Saira Haque

(Class of 1995)

Saira is a Consultant Paediatric Radiologist at King's College Hospital. She trained in general paediatrics, gaining her MRCPCH, before completing radiology training on the Manchester scheme. She undertook a Paediatric Radiology Fellowship at Great Ormond Street Hospital and a placement at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. A consultant at King's College Hospital since 2013, her interests include body MR, respiratory and musculoskeletal imaging. She publishes widely and contributes to European radiology committees.



Sophie Taylor

(née Brookes, Class of 2011)

Sophie studied Business at Sheffield Hallam University, discovering a passion for supply chain during her placement year. She spent six years at AO.com across various roles before moving into senior leadership at companies including Gousto. She is now Head of Planning at Spectrum, overseeing supply chain operations across Europe and Australia.



Ultra-Marathon Champion Inspires on International Women's Day

Bolton School celebrated International Women's Day by welcoming back **Victoria Connelly (née Bayley, Class of 2000)**, who shared her remarkable journey from pupil to global leader and ultra-marathon champion. Now a Senior Director in Global Procurement at AstraZeneca and the first British woman to win the Racing the Planet 4 Deserts Ultra Marathon Women's Champion title, Victoria inspired students with her message of resilience, courage and embracing challenges. An interview with Victoria will be featured in the Autumn edition of this Newsletter.



Steps to Success

Established in 2022, the Steps to Success scheme has already supported over 30 Alumnae to navigate the world of work.



Mentees have sought the support of Old Girls from a range of sectors, who have walked the same path and are able to offer impartial guidance on transitioning from education to employment or advice on climbing the career ladder. Each mentee has received tailored assistance, with the mentors drawing on their own network of professional contacts to provide value-added insights.

Kathryn Austin

(Class of 2019)

"I was eager to take part in the Steps to Success scheme after completing my Master's degree in Publishing, looking to build my experience and search for a role within a competitive industry.

"After university, it's easy to feel a little lost and alone, and so I wished to connect with someone who could give me some advice.

"My mentor, **Deborah Lyon (née Done, Class of 1989)**, instantly knew the type of support I needed, and she is an inspiration to me. I find her guidance to be honest, refreshing and a huge comfort. She has been there for me when I have felt at a crossroads, needed to understand my worth and feel confident in my decisions.

"I now have a placement within communications and know that Deb's support remains a constant. The scheme is a perfect example of feeling like a lifelong member of the Bolton School community, and I feel very grateful."

The Steps to Success scheme welcomes applications from young Old Girls considering their next steps, who will benefit from the breadth of experience the mentors have to offer. Please email development@boltonschool.org to find out more.

Thank You!

We are very grateful to all Old Girls who have given their time to support current pupils through a variety of careers and enrichment events and opportunities.

Jane Crompton (Class of 1988) and **Fiza Ahmed (Class of 2020)** both hosted a station at the mock MMI event for dentistry and medical school applicants alongside staff and current and former parents.

Hannah Bentley (Class of 2014) delivered a talk to Textiles students about her career in knitwear design.

Nicole Holliday (Class of 2013) participated in a recent Women of Work session.

Alumni of the Year Awards

The Alumni of the Year Awards recognise Old Girls and Old Boys who embody the School's ethos of producing people who go out into the world and make a difference for good.

The 2025 nominees came from a huge range of careers, with broad interests and experiences, but what links them all is their sense of dedication, passion, determination and willingness to work hard for something. Pupils in the Girls' Division, Boys' Division and Junior Schools had read about the achievements of all of those nominated for the Awards ahead of casting their votes for the winners.

The 2025 winners were **Francesca Harding** and **Rob O'Kane**, coincidentally both from the Class of 1994. Francesca and Rob were invited to a special assembly where they received their awards and delivered passionate and heartfelt speeches reflecting on their time at Bolton School. They spoke about how the leadership skills and commitment they developed at Bolton School became the foundations for their later accomplishments. Their stories offered pupils a clear message about the lasting influence of hard work, resilience and taking advantage of the experiences available to them.



Francesca Harding

(née Johnson, Class of 1994)



For the past 22 years, Francesca has built up her own animal care establishment in the North East, transforming it from a run-down site into the largest and most successful in the region. She now employs 25 staff and trains apprentices and vet students, ensuring both they and the animals in her care thrive, for which she has been recognised nationally with an award from the Kennel Club in London and the accolade of Best Pet Boarding and Daycare Services in Europe 2025.

Alongside her business, Francesca is a tireless advocate for women's and girls' rugby. She has established and chaired female sections at two clubs, sits on the Women's and Girls' committee of Durham County Rugby and developed the England Rugby Pathway for U16 girls programme which is so effective the RFU has considered rolling it out nationally.

Francesca also co-founded and chairs the North East Senior Women's XV, a bid to help women in the region playing towards premiership rugby since the North East has no Premiership team for aspiring

players, and has raised tens of thousands of pounds through charity matches at Newcastle Falcons' stadium for causes such as Military vs Cancer. For these efforts, she received the Region's Mitsubishi Volunteer of the Year Award at Twickenham.

Francesca supports disadvantaged young players and those struggling with mental health and social issues and provides safe environments for young people through rugby. She is referred to by many as their 'Rugby Mum'.

"Allowing other women to stand on your shoulders and shine does not dim your light; it amplifies it. In both my work and my volunteer endeavours, I have given my best, championed others and myself and created teams that developed positive spaces for others to flourish. In turn I was empowered, supported and encouraged. It is essential at a time where we as women have so much to prove; that we connect, support, care and believe in ourselves and those around us."

Runners-up for the Old Girl of the Year award were:

Beth Allen (Class of 1986), a singer, songwriter and vocal specialist who champions the creative, therapeutic and social power of the human voice through performance, collaboration and inclusive community projects.

Val Marshall (Class of 1974), a dedicated community volunteer whose work spans neighbourhood safety, charity fundraising, animal welfare and bringing people together through music, events, and creative initiatives.

Gill Moss (Class of 1984), a nurse and healthcare leader who, over a 40-year NHS career, has advanced from clinical practice to directing nursing and midwifery for genomics across the North of England, shaping the future of rare disease treatment and genomic care.

Old Boy of the year **Rob O'Kane** is a Royal Navy Captain with 27 years' service, specialising in Fleet Air Arm operations and Search and Rescue, and has also led Royal Navy rugby as Director of Rugby. His lifelong passion for rugby led him to win his first Royal Navy Rugby Union cap in 2000, before eventually being appointed Director of Rugby for the Royal Navy in 2020.

The other nominees for Old Boy of the Year were: **Michael Ainsworth (Class of 1977)**, **Andrew Jameson (Class of 1970)** and **Thomas Relph (Class of 2005)**.

The Alumni of the Year Awards at Bolton School were launched in 2022 to celebrate the many varied contributions that Old Boys and Old Girls make to society. Their achievements are a source of continued pride within the school, and an inspiration to the current generation of students.



Rob and Francesca were delighted to accept their awards

“When Your Light Shines, Pass It On”



During Francesca’s visit to School Year 12 students **Elizabeth McGuinness** and **Anashe Chuma** took the opportunity to interview her to find out more about her work and how Bolton School has influenced her life choices.

This year’s Bolton School Old Girl of the Year was Francesca Harding who left Bolton School in 1994. Her passion for animal care as well as for supporting young people and women in rugby inspired the pupils of Bolton School to vote for Francesca.

Francesca would like to share that during her time at Bolton School she was “fortunate to be surrounded by remarkable and inspiring women”, setting the foundation for her experiences later in life with her care for animals and help for young girls in rugby.

When asked about how Bolton School helped influence her later life, Francesca replied “I would say that Bolton School influenced me more as a person rather than in career path. It gave me a work ethic. It taught me that strong female role models could shape the world for others and forged in me a desire to achieve my best and to work as diligently as possible.”

Francesca has spent over 22 years in animal care; she decided to follow her passion for animals and open a boarding kennels and doggy care centre with a focus on canine rehabilitation, named Centre Barks. She shared that one of the biggest challenges of setting up her company was finding ways to have a healthy work balance with enough time to look after her children.

She has created a multi award-winning home-from-home for thousands of dogs and cats each year. Through her efforts, Francesca was awarded and recognised nationally with the Kennel Club London’s ‘Dog-Friendly Boarding and Daycare Venue’ and ‘Top 100 Boarding and Daycare in Europe’ awards in 2025.

Another of Francesca’s passions is rugby, where she has pushed for mental health awareness and female representation. She especially expressed passion for having ‘a backbone, not a wishbone’, in reference to working hard rather than relying on nepotism. She regularly uses her platform to talk about mental health and the importance of reaching out for help. She promotes events such as mental health walks to raise money for several charities as well as for individuals.

Additionally, Francesca’s charitable contributions cannot be overlooked. She organised charity matches in Newcastle which resulted in tens of thousands to be raised for charities such as

Military vs Cancer. These contributions led to her receiving the regions Mitsubishi Award for ‘Volunteer of the Year’ at Twickenham.

Due to her rugby work, many even call her their ‘rugby mum’ as she supports disadvantaged young people and aims to provide a safe environment for young players. Francesca wants to share that she is “a rugby mum to hundreds of players” and says: “Nothing makes me prouder than hearing someone say ‘rugby mum’.”

Currently, Francesca sits on the Women’s and Girls’ committee of Durham County Rugby with the aim to support people who struggle with their mental health and to promote equality in the sport.

To support her desire for equality, she set up an England Rugby Pathway programme for girls under 16 in Durham County and the Rugby Football Union (RFU) have emulated this programme nationally. Her passion for rugby led her to chair and co-found the Northeast Women’s XV, which aims to help women in the North East as they aspire towards premiership rugby.

Francesca claims that going to a girls’ school sparked “a passion to ensure that women were treated equally, fairly and given an opportunity to excel, just the same as any man” to try to remove the generational bias from a male-dominated game.

Francesca feels that while she has been honoured and impacted by many of the nominations and awards that she has been given, she says “I actually believe the greatest achievement is knowing that my staff, who are 75% female, are educated, developed, supported and happy.”

Francesca chose to give some advice to students, sharing that: “You will find strength within yourself that you never thought was there. If you have a dream, if you have an idea or a passion, at any time in your life: back yourself, take a risk, accept the challenge and drive forward.”

In her speech to Bolton School, Francesca left us all with an important message – “When your light shines, pass it on” – and encouraged others to think of who they could pass their light on to, and what impact they could make to others’ lives. Francesca has been an inspirational and wonderful speaker for Bolton School this year; we are thrilled to have had the opportunity for her to speak for us.

Boltonians Ladies Football

The hoped-for change of focus highlighted in the Autumn report seems to have proved a success.

At the time of writing, with only a month or so remaining, the Boltonians Ladies are having an outstanding season. The mix of the team’s established players and the new arrivals is proving unstoppable in the Lancashire Women’s County South/East Division. The team’s only defeat was that against the higher ranked Blackpool FC side in the County Cup early in the season. Their current league record shows: played 10, won 10, and they are predictably top of their division. In addition, they have won through to the semi-final of the League’s Challenge Cup and are also in the quarter-finals of the Manchester FA’s Women’s Challenge Cup. It’s going to be an interesting end to the season!

We are relatively unusual in being a single team club in a league where most clubs have more than one side, and that brings its own challenges. We need a big enough group of players to be able to cope with injuries and other commitments, but we also

want to give everyone the chance to play as often as possible. It’s a credit to both the management of the team and the attitude of the players that they have coped so well with the need to ‘rotate’ the squad on occasions, but still maintain their enthusiasm and their winning ways. Having said that, if the season ends as we hope, we would love to welcome new players to help the team progress to a higher level in the League system next year. Congratulations are due to the manager, Zane Wells, for all the work he does, and to Michelle Ryan and Emma Pilling for their leadership on the pitch.

We exist to help our players enjoy the game for its own sake and to fit with work and family commitments. After a short break at the season end, the Ladies will return to training throughout the Summer on Tuesday evenings at Ladybridge FC and at our home ground in Turton on Sundays as the team builds towards the new season – do come and join us! Any new players or helpers are welcome – please contact David Lee at davidjlee@live.co.uk or visit www.oldbolts.co.uk.

Alumnae in the AI Revolution

With AI becoming evermore prominent in our daily lives, four Old Girls who work in the tech industry reflect on their journeys into the world of artificial intelligence, sharing insights, challenges and the innovations they are helping to shape.

Sue Turner

(née Boyd, Class of 1985)

Sue was the first in her family to go to university when she left Bolton to study law at Bristol University in 1985. Now she runs a leading AI governance consultancy and works at the forefront of one of the most transformative technologies in human history. The path between those two points has been anything but predictable, and that's precisely why she finds this field so exciting.



Today, as Founder of AI Governance Limited and Professor in Practice for AI and Digital Technology at the University of Bristol Business School, Sue is on a mission to help leaders understand not just what artificial intelligence can do but what it should do. The questions she grapples with daily are as much about people as they are about technology: Who benefits from this system? Whose voices are missing? What happens when things go wrong?

Sue writes "These questions matter because AI is not neutral. The data used to train AI systems reflects the world as it is, including its biases. We've seen recruitment tools that penalise women's CVs, facial recognition systems that struggle to identify darker skin tones and healthcare algorithms that deprioritise certain patient groups. Responsible AI and good governance are not optional extras; they are essential to building technology that works for everyone.

Who is in the room building the tools and overseeing their use matters, which is a great opportunity for young women today. The AI sector needs diverse perspectives and people who can think critically, communicate clearly and challenge assumptions. It needs ethicists alongside engineers, storytellers alongside statisticians. The skills that Bolton School nurtures so well, including rigorous thinking, curiosity and confidence, are more in demand than ever."

Sue is particularly passionate about AI literacy for all, saying: "You do not need to be a coder to shape the future of AI. You do not need to be a coder to shape the future of AI. Understanding broadly how these systems work, where their limitations lie and how to govern them responsibly is becoming as fundamental as financial literacy or digital skills. Every sector, from healthcare and education to law and the creative industries, needs people who are curious and can ask the right questions of this technology."

Sue is delighted to be returning to Bolton School at the end of March to give the Platt Fisher Lecture on this very subject, sharing more about the extraordinary opportunities ahead and encouraging the next generation of women to step into this space with confidence.

Anushka Patchava

(Class of 2004)

"Artificial intelligence has moved from being a futuristic concept to something that quietly shapes our daily lives. In my own life, AI has become a practical tool for productivity, learning and wellbeing. From AI assistants that summarise information and brainstorm ideas, to fitness and sleep apps offering personalised insights, these technologies help me make better decisions and manage time effectively. Even simple tools such as recommendation engines for music, travel and budgeting rely on predictive algorithms that learn from patterns of behaviour, offering tailored suggestions that make you feel known and understood in today's digital age.



"My interest in AI, however, did not begin with technology itself. It started with studying Psychology at A Level at Bolton School with Mrs Bell and Mrs Sanders, whose teaching sparked my curiosity about cognitive neuroscience and how the human mind processes information.

"Exploring psychological models of perception, decision-making and behaviour raised an important question: if we can understand how humans think, can we design machines that learn and adapt in similar ways?

"This connection between Psychology and AI remains central to my perspective today. Many AI algorithms draw inspiration from cognitive processes such as pattern recognition, reinforcement learning and predictive modelling. Psychological frameworks including behavioural conditioning and memory models provide valuable insights into how systems can be trained, how users engage with technology and how trust can be built. Psychology provides the human context that enables AI to be designed responsibly and effectively.

"Professionally, I am deeply involved in applying AI in health insurance, where predictive analytics is transforming prevention and care. Traditionally, insurance focused on reacting to illness, but AI enables a shift toward prediction by identifying risk factors earlier through data, wearables and behavioural signals. This allows insurers and employers to support proactive interventions – mental health support, lifestyle coaching and early screening – improving outcomes while reducing costs.

"As an Expert Advisor at the United Nations, I focus on AI policy in healthcare, emphasising governance, ethics and equity in innovation. Discussions centre on transparency, bias mitigation and data privacy, ensuring predictive models improve access rather than widen disparities. We are developing international frameworks for the safe adoption of AI-driven diagnostics, decision-support tools and population health modelling.

"Ultimately, AI has the potential to reshape healthcare by making prevention the default rather than the exception. Its success, however, depends on uniting technological capability with deep human understanding and ethical design. I always say we shouldn't fear AI – especially augmented intelligence, which frees humans from repetitive tasks, and assisted intelligence, which deepens understanding. Who doesn't want to work less and know more?"



Rachel Slack

(née Watts, Class of 2008)

Rachel is a Lead UX Copywriter with Sky.

“There is a growing trend to rely on AI to deliver things faster or more easily, to give it tasks that feel more menial. I could have asked AI to help write this, outlining my key points and conclusion, but I didn’t, as I take pride and enjoyment in crafting written communication myself. Some may argue that I shouldn’t be a copywriter if that wasn’t the case. Then comes the other consideration; if I did ask AI to write this on my behalf, I’d, of course, meticulously proofread it before submission. When this is only one article – easy, no problem, but when it’s in the hundreds, has AI really saved you that much time?”

“I can share an example I recently encountered at work when collaborating with the editorial team (I work in Global Product and Tech Development). We were discussing movie recommendations and synopses, and how they could be more personal to a customer using a mix of AI and algorithms. We started to test how AI could pull suggestions and highlight the important themes in the synopsis for customers. As a test we decided to create a persona who enjoyed dramas and rail travel or trains and asked AI to create their list. The first few seemed to work well: The Bridge on the River Kwai, Brief Encounter, Unstoppable, Murder on the Orient Express – although we still cross-referenced with our synopsis catalogue to make sure this was accurate. We then asked for more, and kept on asking until AI hit its limit and started to do something known as hallucinating. This is where a generative AI model confidently produces false, nonsensical or fabricated information that seems plausible. One of the reasons it can do this is that it believes you are looking for a particular piece of information, or in this case movie synopsis, that it hasn’t found or learned about yet, so it just makes up what it thinks you might want to hear. Some of the things it creates can still be true in varying degrees, but the presentation of the information chases the meaning quite substantially.

“Here is one of my favourite hallucinations from this experiment:

Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone (AI) A group of children fall through a portal in King’s Cross Station and are transported on a magical train to a thrilling but dangerous world of witchcraft and wizardry.

(IMDB) An orphaned boy enrolls in a school of wizardry, where he learns the truth about himself, his family and the terrible evil that haunts the magical world.

Trainspotting

(AI) To combat feelings of post-breakup depression, a young man convinces his friends to join him on a hike from a remote train station. When this is deemed as a failure, he relents and joins them in a life of addiction.

(IMDB) Renton, deeply immersed in the Edinburgh drug scene, tries to clean up and get out despite the allure of drugs and the influence of friends.

“Did these events happen in the films – mostly, yes, but they weren’t the key points or events in the plot. So, this experiment is flawed and can’t be used reliably? Actually, far from it: it just means we need intelligent humans to refine and engineer the prompts that we use for AI to do what we need it to, and someone to check on its output, for now anyway. We’re not giving up, but we’re not giving it free rein either. Especially not when you need to maintain a level of trust and credibility.”



Victoria Hermann

(née Southern, Class of 2008)

Victoria is a Senior Partner Development Manager with Microsoft, based near Frankfurt in Germany.

“Artificial intelligence is often talked about in extremes: either as a miracle solution or something to be feared. My own experience sits somewhere in the middle. AI has become a practical part of my daily working life, but it’s also something I approach with curiosity, caution, and a strong sense of responsibility. I am an AI optimist and believe this technology will reshape our lives in a positive way, as long as we remain intentional and proactive in our approach.

“I use AI in very human ways. It helps me organise my thoughts, draft first versions of documents, summarise long pieces of information, and explore ideas from new angles. In many ways, it acts like a thoughtful assistant; speeding up routine tasks and freeing up time for the work that really matters: decision making, creativity, and building relationships. For someone working across multiple countries and business partners, that time saving is invaluable.”

“But AI is not perfect, and it shouldn’t be treated as a replacement for human judgement. It can be confidently wrong, reflect bias in the data it was trained on, or oversimplify complex situations. I’ve learned that AI works best when it’s challenged, questioned, and guided, and not blindly trusted.

“Today, my role at Microsoft focuses on driving Hybrid AI across the EMEA (Europe, Middle East & Africa) region. That sounds technical, but the idea is simple: enabling AI to run securely and efficiently on devices themselves, rather than relying entirely on the cloud. This matters because it supports better privacy, faster responses, and more reliable experiences, especially in environments like healthcare, manufacturing or transportation. For me, the most exciting part of AI isn’t novelty; it’s usefulness in the real world.

“Generative AI platforms, including OpenAI’s ChatGPT and Google Gemini, are currently (rightfully) attracting significant attention. As AI evolves, its next stage will most likely be more subtle and focus on automating tasks and boosting workflow efficiency. Jobs will likely adjust and new jobs will be created. The key to thriving in this changing environment lies in developing adaptability and strong critical thinking skills. My time at Bolton School helped shaped this perspective: the emphasis on curiosity, critical thinking, and questioning assumptions laid a foundation that still guides me today. AI evolves quickly, but those core skills (learning how to learn, and how to think independently) remain essential.

“AI is not something happening to us; it’s something we are actively shaping. If we stay thoughtful, curious, and grounded, it can be a powerful force for good, and support our creativity and productivity, rather than replace us.”

Story of a Gown

The Prefects' gowns are one of the enduring symbols of the Girls' Division, and the Gowning of the Prefects, held in the Great Hall each May, has become one of its most special traditions. Here Janet Gilding (née Briddon, Class of 1981) and Beth Marwick (Class of 2010) describe wearing their gowns with pride.



What was your favourite moment whilst wearing your gown?

Janet: It's hard to believe that it's almost 45 years since I wore this gown! I have so many happy memories of proudly showing new girls and their parents around School, the Prefects' Panto, the wonderful Ceremony of Carols and so much more.

My favourite memory has to be the excitement of processing into the Great Hall for morning assemblies. I'm not sure why we always 'walked' down the central aisle at such great speed (to the sound of rousing organ music!) as I was always worried that I might slip or fall into the girls in front of me. Prefects falling like a row of dominoes, with the whole School watching, would have been very amusing, but not a good look!



Janet in her Prefect's gown, 1981



Beth and Mrs Furey during the Prefects' Panto!

Beth: My favourite gown moment was probably the Carol Service, which was always so magical, especially during *Three Kings*. But my best Prefect memory was definitely performing in the Prefects' Panto in December 2009. I played my absolute favourite teacher, Mrs Furey (sorry again, Mrs F), complete with red clip in

hair extensions. She even lent me her necklace and earrings for the performance!

What were your hopes and plans for the future as you passed on your gown?

Janet: From an early age my ambition was one day to become a Maths teacher. I loved working with numbers far more than anything involving extended writing. My year as a Prefect had flown by and as I passed on my gown I was excited about the future, my ambitions and going to uni, but it all felt rather daunting too!

Beth: I remember feeling absolutely terrified at the thought of leaving School and going into the world as I didn't really know what I wanted to do! My hopes at that point were mostly to do as well as I could in my A Levels and get into uni (which, thankfully, I did).

What did you do after leaving School?

Janet: I went to Newcastle University, began my career as a Maths teacher in Northumberland, and moved back to Lancashire when my husband's job relocated to the North West. It's strange where life takes you; I'd never have imagined that my life would come full circle and that I'd end up teaching Maths back at Bolton School! Both my children have attended the School, and it felt very special to revisit all the traditional events as they experienced them as pupils.

Beth: I studied Physiology at the University of Liverpool which I absolutely loved. After graduating in 2013 I spent a year or so travelling with my sister and then another year working in a boarding house at a school in Oxford. I finally took the plunge and decided to go into teaching, graduating from my PGCE in 2016.

What are you doing now?

Janet: I'm enjoying my retirement now! It's great to have the freedom to travel and enjoy holidays at any time of the year! Life still feels busy, but there's time to meet with friends more often, and enjoy so many activities, such as theatre productions, concerts, visiting National Trust properties, dining out and just relaxing!



Janet is now enjoying her retirement



Beth on her wedding day

Beth: I've been teaching secondary science now since 2016, including biology up to A level, which is my favourite part of the job. Teaching is hard work, but is very rewarding. I

still live in Liverpool, and I married my husband Josh here in August. We are enjoying seeing as much of world the as we can in school holidays!

What one piece of advice would you give to this year's Year 13 pupils?

Janet: Enjoy working to achieve your goals and ambitions, but don't be disheartened if things don't always go to plan. It might feel like one door has closed, but another will open to offer you new and exciting opportunities.

Beth: My main piece of advice to Year 13 would be not to panic about the future. I tell my current Sixth Form students all the time that it's OK not to have everything figured out. If they do their best in everything they do and grab all the opportunities that come their way, everything will turn out OK.

Are you still in touch with friends from School?

Janet: Yes, it's lovely that there are some of us who are still in touch. I met my wonderful friend, Elizabeth Harrison (née Eccleston), on our first day at School way back in 1974!

We headed off to different universities and followed different careers, but always kept in touch (no mobiles or social media back then, so we wrote letters!). We were bridesmaids for each other, shared experiences as our children grew up, and made time to meet up for weekends away to catch up properly. We're both retired now and have very fond memories of our school days together and of our 52 (and counting) years of friendship!

It's also been a privilege to make so many wonderful friends whilst teaching at Bolton School and to now be part of a large group of retired colleagues who meet up regularly. The value of great friends can't be overstated!

Beth: I'm so lucky to still be in touch with lots of School friends whom I see regularly. I think it's quite unusual to have so many close friends from School, but I wouldn't change it for the world! They have all done amazing things, from being doctors and paramedics to museum curators and musicians, and now some of them are mums too! I'm so proud of them all.

Old Girls Go Global

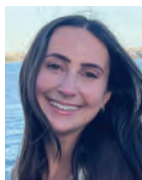


The Old Girls' Association has over 5,700 members living and working not just in the UK, but across the globe. Here we catch up with four Old Girls who have relocated overseas, find out what motivated them to move abroad, what they enjoy about their lives there ... and what they still miss about the UK!

Anastasia Reynolds

(Class of 2014)

"I'm now living in Sydney, based in Coogee, just a stone's throw from the beach. After ten years in London, it's been a real change of pace, and after just over a year here it already feels like home. I love the outdoor lifestyle: an after-work swim in the ocean has become a regular occurrence, often followed by watching the sunset on my patio. I love the sunshine and wildlife here – watching whales and dolphins on a coastal walk is hard to beat.



"I relocated with my firm, Nuveen, as part of its expansion of the real estate private equity business in Australia. I now work with Australian pension funds and insurers, and have really enjoyed the new challenge that comes with building relationships in a different market.

"Outside work, I'm enjoying exploring Sydney's food scene, particularly its South East Asian influence, as well as travelling more widely across Australia during my holidays. Despite having been here for over a year, I still get excited by koalas and kangaroos.

"Whilst I do miss family and friends back home, I've already been back once with work and will be returning soon for the wedding of fellow old girl Emily Bodger (Class of 2014). I'll be a bridesmaid alongside Old Girls Beth Horry and Peaches Stanforth (both Class of 2014) – testament to the fact that once a Bolton School girl, always a Bolton School girl!"

Mariko Phillips

(née James, Class of 2003)

"I was seconded to Tokyo from London in 2022 by my company and have been here ever since. I work in reinsurance (insurance for insurance companies) and we have a number of clients based in Japan, so moving felt like the right step at that point in my career.



"I have Japanese heritage and speak the language, so for personal reasons I also felt the pull of living in Japan, but having never lived outside either the North or London, it really was a huge move for me, my husband and our daughter, who was only two at the time. I was really lucky in that my husband was 100% behind our move and could transfer to the Japanese operation of his company as well.

"We're now well settled in Tokyo with our daughter starting a British primary school last year. The intensive Japanese working culture certainly lives up to its reputation, but we do make an effort during our off time to enjoy all of the great parts of Tokyo and Japanese culture. It's clean, safe and orderly, with respectful people, punctual trains and wonderful food.

"Happily, I'm now physically closer to my Japanese family, although of course the UK is far away and I often feel pangs of sadness when I see or hear anything from home. And having mentioned the good food in Japan, the pie and pasty scene is sadly somewhat lacking (gravy is non-existent), and I'm often spending a fortune on imported goodies like Hobnobs and *Hello!* magazine for a taste of home. But totally worth every penny!"

Sheena Martinisi

(née Ninan, Class of 1999)

"Having graduated in 2004 from Leeds University School of Medicine, I completed GP training in 2009 and then practised as a GP in West Yorkshire.



"My husband, Alessandro, had a wonderful job opportunity in 2022, as a University Professor in Lugano, located in Ticino (the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland), where there is the unique combination of the sun-splashed Mediterranean climate, stunning lake and mountain views, Swiss precision and proximity to the Italian border.

"I have passed my C1 (degree level) Italian exam (I knew Latin GCSE would come in handy, thank you Mrs Partington!) and registered with the Swiss Medical Board, in preparation to practise Medicine here. Taking advantage of other local language learning opportunities, and inspired by learning French at Bolton School (thanks to Mrs Taylor and Mrs Kolot from the Modern Languages Department), I've also learned German at beginner level so far.

"I am grateful for the flexibility opportuned by the NHS as a Locum GP, and NHSE Appraiser. The short two-hour flight home facilitates regular trips back to the UK for work.

"The main plus points (obviously apart from Swiss chocolate!) are the ease for travelling in the heart of Europe and the mountain and lakeside scenery. However, I do miss proper cups of tea, my mum's home cooking and seeing family and friends in the UK."

Cate O'Kane

(Class of 1992)

"The first epic journeys of my life were not glamorous. They were taken on a coach between Wigan and Bolton, back and forth, every day. Even then, something in me knew I was happiest in motion.



"At 18, before gap years became a rite of passage, I boarded a plane to southern China. I cycled beside misty lakes, learned to drink tea without milk, and tried to untangle English grammar for endlessly patient students. Somewhere between classroom and countryside, I discovered the quiet thrill of being a foreigner: the humility, the stretch, the expansion.

"London after university was energising, but the itch to move never left. In 2005, with a few years in advertising behind me, I returned to China. Four years there cracked everything open. Work carried me to Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and Singapore – boardrooms one week, production shoots the next. The world felt porous. Possible.

"Then came a sharper pivot. I left the private sector for social impact, moving to Botswana to work on HIV/AIDS development projects. Travel shifted from novelty to perspective – Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa and across East Africa. That path led to Washington, DC, and further still: time in South Sudan, India and Malawi. Each place widened the lens.

"For more than 20 years, movement has been my through-line – not escape, but education; not restlessness, but curiosity.

"Today, home is a small island near Seattle, shared with my husband and our dog. And yet, as I write this, I'm back in Wigan – where it all began."



The pub where channel swimmers write their names on the walls



We did it! Emily is second right (France in the background)

Who needs the Eurostar anyway? It only takes 12 hours to swim there!

Emily Varley (Class of 2012) has featured in previous editions of the Old Girls' Newsletter, writing about her experiences of competing internationally in triathlon and doing an Ironman. Her passion for silly sports persists, and in August last year she swam the Channel as part of a relay team – Team Matriarsea, comprising sport-loving friends from university. Emily writes:

It turns out it is quite a complex process to be able to swim the channel. You have to:

- register your intent and your team
- do a qualifying swim in cold water and have that signed off
- do a medical examination
- book your 'support boat'/pilot that leads the way to France
- book a slot in the very complicated queuing system

There are only seven registered pilots and a lot of people in the queue. When you register you are given a window of when your swim may take place, but if you can go is entirely dependent on the weather and tide conditions, and what the pilot believes to be safe.

Training for swimming the Channel was tougher than the actual swim – I already do quite a lot of swimming, but this challenge meant that I had to get used to cold water which was deeply unpleasant.

"For the Channel swim you aren't allowed to wear a wetsuit – just a swimming costume, hat and goggles – so you have to be able to tolerate the cold!"

This is so all the results are comparable, and you don't get any benefit from the buoyancy of a wetsuit.

Our initial date to swim was in June. Arriving in Dover we very quickly realised that a crossing was unlikely. The queue had been backed up for a few days due to very high winds and strong currents. Whilst we waited we swam the equivalent distance in the harbour, and visited the famous pub where many of the Channel crossers have written their names on the wall. Unfortunately, our window in the queue ended before the weather improved; however, our pilot had one space left in August so we rebooked!

By August the weather had improved and the sea had warmed up. We headed down to Dover on 24th August. It was gloriously sunny, the sea was reasonably flat, and we were keen to *allons-y*.

We began our swim at 2am so we would get taken out by the tide. Swimming in the sea at 2am is nothing short of an experience akin to purgatory. It was a combination of complete sensory deprivation because you couldn't see ANYTHING except the light on the boat you were following, and you had no concept of how much time had passed. However, it was also complete sensory overload because the

water was cold, you were getting hit by the waves, your hand might sometimes bob a jelly fish or a bit of flotsam, plus you were working hard to swim!

After what felt like an eternity of 'following the light' I got my reprieve and one of the other team members took over. The rules are that you each must swim for an hour and take it in turns in the same order each time.

"The darkness may have been hellish, but when the sun rose across the sea; with England behind us, and France visible and ahead of us, it was nothing short of celestial. The golden and pink glow was all around us, reflecting between the sky and the sea for miles."

The day went on and we carried on taking our turns, it was hot and sunny, and swimming was a fantastic way to be spending the day! The current was quite strong and at one point I had to fight against a 4km/h current to keep us going in the right direction; another team mate got stuck in an eddy for 40 minutes basically barely moving! We also had to swim through a few shoals of jelly fish, and the tidal waves produced by the ferries and the shipping freight.

"France slowly became more tangible; we could see sheep on the hills, and people on the beach."

We got to France in 12 hours and 53 minutes. Admittedly, this is slower than the ferry and the Eurostar, but the visceral experience was second to none!

Unfortunately, you are not allowed to hang around in France and enjoy the fruits of your labour drinking champagne and eating baguette. You simply touch France, then get back in the boat and head back to Dover. Luckily, we had planned for this eventuality! Back to Blyth we sped with crisps, wine – and an immense sense of achievement.

We raised over £5,000 for four marine charities which help to keep our seas and beaches clean, and we also had an amazing time. In 2026 I am planning on swimming from Asia to Europe, and probably some other daft long-distance triathlons. Feel free to drop me a message if you want to connect about swimming, sport, or anything else at emilyjvarley@hotmail.co.uk.



Ashwini enjoyed meeting Victoria Coren Mitchell



Ashwini Answers the Questions

Keen quizzer **Ashwini Kamath (Class of 1998)** has recently appeared in not one, but two popular BBC shows – she shares her experiences of having her knowledge tested in front of the TV cameras! She writes:

I've always loved puzzles, games and quizzes, but never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that I would end up quizzing on prime time TV ... if my time at Bolton School taught me anything, though, it is never say never, and to take opportunities as they arise.

My 'TV journey' started in 2022; due to some changes in my personal circumstances I was making the most out of my situation by embarking on new challenges and blogging about my experiences, which included hurtling through the air above a quarry at nearly 120mph, doing a life drawing class (as an artist, not a model!), and even taking a flying lesson. My friend, Rich, was inspired by my exploits and asked if I would join him in applying to appear on *Pointless*. Whilst I was aware of *Pointless* as a programme, it wasn't something I actually watched; however not being one to turn down a challenge, I of course said 'Yes'.

When it came to writing my application, I wrote it as if I was having a conversation with the producers, peppering it with humour and whimsy. Within a couple of hours of pressing submit, the producer called me to tell me how much she enjoyed reading my application! I had to do a mini quiz over the phone, and from there we were invited to a Zoom audition with other potential candidates and the producers. We scored well and were invited to film three episodes in November 2022, and whilst we didn't get to own the coveted *Pointless* trophy, it was a lot of fun; our episodes aired in August 2023.

As it happened, in around April 2022 I had started going to my local pub quiz with Lee, who, unbeknownst to me had also applied to appear on *Pointless*; we ended up filming about two weeks apart and his episode aired before mine (episode in the singular, because, of course, he won on his first attempt!).

Lee and I continued to quiz regularly and, perhaps buoyed by our experiences from *Pointless*, decided to apply for *Only Connect*, together with our other quiz teammate, Gareth Cottiss (incidentally an Old Boy from Class of 2010!). We had the advantage of already quizzing together and knowing our respective strengths; Lee and Gareth are both very knowledgeable on sport, Lee is a whizz with anything related to film and TV, Gareth is strong on history and geography and I brought languages, Ancient Greek mythology and an extensive knowledge of the Kardashians!

Once again, our application was written in a way that allowed our personalities and humour to shine through and we were invited to

a Zoom audition with a team of five producers, where we played a mini game of *Only Connect* so that they could assess our knowledge, skill level and our team dynamic. Clearly, we impressed them as not long afterwards we received an invitation to film in Cardiff. I have since learned that getting onto the programme is not as easy as our experience led us to believe, as the first team we played in the competition had been through four previous applications before finally getting through. So, my tip for anyone thinking about applying for a TV quiz show is not to take yourself too seriously and let your personality come out.

We needed to come up with a team name that united the three of us; I didn't share the boys' love of sports, and Gareth and I both sing in a choir but Lee doesn't. In the end, we decided to go with our shared love of craft ale and settled on The Hopsters.

We filmed in May and June 2024, and our episodes aired in August, October and December 2024; although we lost our first episode, we were able to reflect on our strategy and aced our second episode with a winning score of 29. With our third episode, we were leading up until the last round, where our opponents pipped us to the post on the Missing Vowels round, but to be honest, we were just delighted to have been part of the show.

Fast forward to June 2025, when I got a call from one of the producers, inviting us to film a special episode; I was told that the theme was going to be different to the norm, and that for them to go ahead relied on us saying yes. Of course, there was no hesitation from the three of us, and in September 2025 we travelled back down to Cardiff to film the *Only Connect Pub Quiz* special, which aired in December 2025. What made our episode different to the other specials was that all contestants were allowed to drink real beer on set; it apparently took going back and forth to the BBC about six times before permission was given! Also, true to the pub quiz theme, instead of using our buzzers, we had to write our answers down with pen and paper.

Once again, we were leading up until the very last round where our opponents beat us on the Missing Vowels! Still, the joy of being back on set, of being described by Victoria Coren Mitchell as 'a one-woman symbol of changing times' and just the sheer kudos of participating in an objectively challenging quiz show means I wouldn't change any of it for the world!"

OLD GIRLS' NEWS

Class of 1950-1959

Eva Marshall

(née Leach, Class of 1953)

Eva recalls passing the entrance exam for the Girls' Division and also receiving a scholarship for a state grammar school in the centre of Bolton. However, her father was very keen for her to attend Bolton School. She later discovered that he had been awarded a free place at the Boys' Division, but his mother would not allow him to take it. She received a very good education – although it was not expected that girls of her working-class background would proceed to the Sixth Form.

After School Eva took a secretarial course and worked for two local solicitors. Widowed at a young age, she later remarried and had a son, now an eminent Professor at the University of Sheffield.

Discovering Adult Education, she went on to study A Level Psychology and completed courses with the Open University and the Adult Residential Colleges Association. She firmly believes that these achievements are due to her Bolton School background.

Gwynneth Nightingale

(née Kirk, Class of 1953)



Gold medal winner Huw celebrating with family members in Milano Cortina

Gwynneth was thrilled to watch her grandson, **Huw Nightingale (Class of 2020)**, win gold for Team GB at the 2026 Winter Olympics.

Huw, alongside teammate Charlotte Bankes, claimed victory in the mixed team snowboard cross, the pair becoming Great Britain's first ever Olympic gold-medal winners on snow following a stunning performance in the final.

Huw is an Old Boy of Bolton School, having attended Beech House before a family relocation. The Nightingales have multi-generational connections to the School, including Gwynneth's brother, **Roger Kirk (Class of 1949, Boys' Division Staff, 1958-1992)**, her daughters **Alison Nightingale (Class of 1978)**, **Rebecca Rotherham (née Nightingale, Class of 1984)** and **Zandra Puddephat (née Nightingale, Class of 1987)**, sons **Clive – Huw's father – (Class of 1983)** and **Barry (Class of 1979; President of the Old Boys' Association)**, and grandchildren **Bethany, Millie, Isabel,**

Doug and Angus.

Everyone at Bolton School shares Gwynneth's pride in Huw's achievement and the inspiration he brings to our community.

Dorothy Gatenby

(née Taylor, Class of 1956) and

Margaret Allen

(née Brookes, Class of 1957)



Margaret (left) and Dorothy at their recent degree ceremony

Sometimes you need to wait over 60 years for your degree! Dorothy and Margaret finally received their Honorary BEds from the University of Gloucester,

having completed their Teaching courses at St Mary's College, Cheltenham in the late 1950s!

Class of 1960-1969

Sheila Carter

(né Whalley, Class of 1967)

After leaving Bolton School Sheila studied at the Royal Academy of Music and then taught music in schools until she retired in 2011.

Piano was always important to her and she now gives charity recitals in various venues in North London as well as in her garden in the Summer!

Sheila is now also a published composer, having had both oboe and clarinet sonatinas published and some arrangements of Irish folk songs for woodwind. It shows that it's never too late to aim for publication – this has all happened in her seventies!

Class of 1970-1979

Caroline Taylor

(Class of 1970)



Caroline (top) and Jayne at their ceremony in 2005

Caroline and her wife, Jayne, celebrated the 20th anniversary of their Civil Partnership on 21st December 2025. They were the first couple in Cardiff to undertake the ceremony at the Cardiff Register Office, converting their partnership to a marriage on the first day it was possible to do this in 2015. Jayne says they were 'fated' as opposed to 'doomed' to be together

and the couple are celebrating 30 years together this year.

Caroline recalls that being 'gay' in the late 1960s was not much fun and that being toilet and cloakroom Prefect, which entailed spending chunks of break time outside the toilets, was an absolute nightmare – she will always be grateful for her gown which gave a semblance of authority!

Thanks to an article in this *Newsletter* Caroline has reconnected with Linda Britten (née Parker) and Sue Harland (née Nuttall) (both also Class of 1970) and they are in fairly regular contact despite the distance: Cardiff, Essex and New Zealand respectively, including a visit by Sue and Linda to Cardiff in 2024.

Suzanne Senior

(Class of 1979)



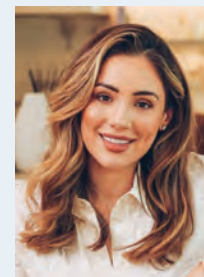
Last Christmas Suzanne was fortunate to be cast as the baddy, Evilena, in her theatre company's panto, *Sinbad – the Eighth*

Adventure. It was quite a learning curve, but great fun, nonetheless. Here she is with her wand and mystical globe, performing unspeakable magic! Suzanne's Bolton School precedent for the part was playing the Witch in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* when she was in the Third Form!

Class of 2000-2009

Chloe Ainscough

(née Milne, Class of 2008)



Congratulations to Chloe who was honoured to be named as one of the CITB *Top 100 Most Influential Women in Construction* in the UK, recognised within the SME/Trade Leader category.

Since leaving School, Chloe has built a career in accounting, then in the construction and site welfare sector and now serves as Managing Director of a specialist site accommodation business. Her role focuses on driving operational transformation, modernising welfare standards across construction sites and championing greater representation of women in what remains a traditionally male-dominated industry.

Being recognised alongside so many accomplished women across the sector was a proud moment both personally and professionally, and highlights the breadth



of career opportunities available to future generations of students.

Class of 2010-2019

Thorrhun Govind

(Class of 2010)



Pharmacist, lawyer and broadcaster Thorrhun Govind was named both Lawyer of the Year and Health and Wellbeing Champion at the Made in Manchester

Awards 2026. She was subsequently awarded the prestigious Chairman's Rising Star Award, recognising the overall standout winner across all categories. The award marks her out as a future leader, as identified by Pro-Manchester, the leading business development organisation for Greater Manchester.

Chloe Wynne

(Class of 2013)



Congratulations to Chloe who qualified as a solicitor at the end of 2025 following successful completion of her training at the London office of Manchester firm JMW Solicitors LLP. Chloe

specialises in criminal law and regulatory misconduct, both privately prosecuting and defending. She formerly worked for Rape Crisis as a triage worker before making the transition into law.

Taylor Jones

(Class of 2019)



Congratulations to Taylor who welcomed a baby boy named Alexander in August! Taylor is now engaged to her partner, Nikita, whom she met in Madrid when they were both working

together in a restaurant. After a spell in Korea they moved to Ireland in 2023 and are getting married this September. They recently bought their first home in the Irish countryside and are enjoying settling into rural life as a growing family.

Class of 2020 onwards

Sana Dalal

(Class of 2021)



Sana (left) speaking on Sunday Morning Live

Sana recently appeared on BBC One's *Sunday Morning Live* to speak about skiing and snowboarding, particularly her experiences as a Muslim woman in winter sports. The segment addressed barriers to participation and encouraged confidence and inclusivity in spaces where minorities are underrepresented.

Sana's skiing journey began during the Year 5 School ski trip to Claviere in Italy,

which sparked a love for the mountains. She was introduced to snowboarding in Year 7 through after-school sessions led by Mr Bradley. Although she initially struggled and considered giving up, Miss Wadey, who also snowboarded, encouraged her to persevere, which proved to be a turning point, and her passion for winter sports grew steadily over the years.

This love of sport grew from the opportunities at Bolton School and the encouragement to try new things and persevere. These experiences, along with staff support, shaped Sana's determination on and off the slopes.

Building on these foundations, she is now a co-founder of the 37 Club, organising sports and wellbeing events for women in Manchester. These include a weekly run club, pilates and padel events, all designed to make sport feel more accessible and less intimidating for women who may be trying it for the first time.

Sana has also helped lead a group of 35 women to the Marrakech International Marathon for the second year running—an event she will also run—aiming to build supportive communities and encourage underrepresented women to participate in sport with confidence.



Alumni Ambassadors

Are you an Old Girl with a passion for staying connected to School and engaging with others?

Our Alumni Ambassador role is perfect for those who want to volunteer to make a difference without a regular time commitment. From time to time you will be asked to make contact with your classmates and peers and to encourage them to attend our wide range of engagement activities, thus ensuring that our vibrant Alumni community remains strong and connected.

If you would like to get involved, please contact the Development Office.

Friends' Choir Returns

The Friends of Bolton School are considering reviving the Friends' Choir and would like to gauge enthusiasm.

It is envisaged that the choir will run for one term per academic year, with weekly evening rehearsals leading up to a concert at the end, either alongside School choirs at an existing School event or at a standalone concert in aid of a local charity.

To join the mailing list please email Friends@boltonschool.org. You must be able to read music, but you will not be required to audition! Please also indicate which part you sing (soprano, alto, tenor, bass). Anyone connected to Bolton School (parents, former parents, staff, former staff, and Alumni) is welcome, so please spread the word!



Destinations of Leavers 2025

Faaizah Afinwala	University of Manchester	Politics and Arabic
Rabia Ahmed	University of Liverpool	Architecture
Fatima Ali	Gap Year	Gap Year
Hamnah Ali	Keele University	Psychology
Zaynab Ali	University of Salford	Diagnostic Radiography
Emma Arnison	Nottingham Trent University	Sport Science and Management
Zaynah Atcha	Liverpool John Moores University	Accounting and Finance
Harriet Atherton	Degree Apprenticeship	
Alisa Azimeh	University of Salford	Nursing
Elena Bartalotta	University of Manchester	English Literature and American Studies
Clarity Brabin	Liverpool John Moores University	Policing, Psychology and Investigations
Anna Brennand	Degree Apprenticeship	
Freya Brogan	Royal Holloway, University of London	Management and Marketing
Anya Brohi	University of Glasgow	Psychology
Annika Bullen	Gap Year	
Ella Chandra	University of Warwick	Politics and International Studies
Anna Clarke	Manchester Metropolitan University	Healthcare Science (Physiological Sciences)
Georgina Cooke	University of Leeds	Graphic and Communication Design
Verity Cooke-Scott	Lancaster University	Marketing Management
Amelia Cowin	University of Kent	Psychology with Clinical Psychology
Sophie Cutler	University of Manchester	Philosophy and Politics
Natalie Dalugoda	Gap Year	
Olivia Dance	University of Liverpool	Psychology
Hannah Davidge	Manchester Metropolitan University	Computer Science
Imogen Ferrier	University of Leeds	International Business
Megan Fung	University of Salford	Fashion Design
Amira Gettins	Lancaster University	Mathematics
Gabriella Giambattista-Hunt	University of Leeds	Modern Languages and International Relations
Bethany Green	University of Leeds	Graphic and Communication Design
Elizabeth Green	Runshaw College	Art Foundation Course
Molly Grimshaw	London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London	History and Politics
Maya Guhathakurta	Sheffield Hallam University	Product Design
Maleehah Hafejji	Lancaster University	Law
Adifah Hafejji	University of Leeds	Accounting and Finance
Vivienne Hall	University of Oxford	Politics, Philosophy and Economics
Charlotte Harris	Leeds Beckett University	Sports and Exercise Therapy
Yumna Hashmi	University of Birmingham	Psychology
Ella Hilton	Degree Apprenticeship	
Naomi Hitchin	University of York	Accounting and Finance
Alexia Howarth	University of Liverpool	Dentistry
Charlotte Howarth-Sinney	Lancaster University	Accounting and Finance
Caitlin Hurt	Degree Apprenticeship	
Laura Hussein	University of Liverpool	Medicine
Martha Johnson	Gap Year	
Olivia Jones	Manchester Metropolitan University	Drama and Contemporary Performance
Zara Kadva	Degree Apprenticeship	
Tavleen Kaur	Gap Year	
Sallie Kendall	University of Nottingham	Pharmacy



Fatima Khan	Gap Year	
Safeeya Khan	Gap Year	
Ananya Khisty	University of Leeds	Chemical Engineering (Industrial)
Jessica Knott	University of Leeds	Fashion Marketing
Gabriella Koussa	Durham University	Archaeology
Karishma Ladha	Cardiff University	Biomedical Sciences
Ayesha Lakhi	Gap Year	
Lok Ma	University of Bath	Architecture
Uzaina Malik	University of Edinburgh	Mechanical Engineering
Mia Maron	Durham University	Classics
Aisling McCabe	University of Edinburgh	Philosophy and Politics
Olivia Melling	University of Liverpool	Business Economics
Zubaidha Maryam Mohamed Rifath	Keele University	Medicine
Fatimah Mohammed	Degree Apprenticeship	
Jacequine Mok	University of East Anglia	Medicine
Zahara Muhammed	Degree Apprenticeship	
Nawal Nauman	University of Salford	Geography
Emilia Nuttall	Canisius University, Buffalo, USA	Science
Pip Nuttall	Nottingham Trent University	Graphic Design
Nadiya Parker	University of Manchester	Medicine
Ammarah Patel	Gap Year	
Farah Patel	Gap Year	
Maaria Patel	University of Cumbria	Health and Social Care
Parveen Patel	Manchester Metropolitan University	Animation
Nyah Pomian	University of Leeds	Medicine
Du'a Qedwai	University of Manchester	Computer Science
Maryam Rahumathulla	Gap Year	
Gabriella Read	Leeds Beckett University	Sport Marketing
Shanelle Royle	Royal Holloway, University of London	Modern Languages and Management
Anoushka Sharma	University of Sheffield	Biological Sciences
Ishaani Singh	University of Bristol	Chemistry
Caitlin Smith	Liverpool John Moores University	Law
Rhea Sudhakar	University of Leeds	Medicine
Sophie Swift	University of Manchester	Fashion Marketing
Alicia Taylor	University of Salford	Architectural Design and Technology
Emma Taylor-Beardsworth	Manchester Metropolitan University	English and Film
Shreya Tol	University of York	Law
Erin Turner	University of Reading	Pharmacy
Aisha Ughradar	University of Huddersfield	Science
Ogechukwu Umeadi	Plovdiv Medical University, Bulgaria	Dentistry
Zainab Uswa	University of Manchester	Biosciences
Olivia Walker	University of Liverpool	History and Politics
Mia Walters	Northumbria University, Newcastle	Product Design
Bing Yu Wang	University of Manchester	Chemical Engineering
Tilly Watkinson	University of Salford	Film Production
Freya Wood	University of Dundee	Biological and Biomedical Sciences
Isabelle Worth	University of Manchester	English Language and German
Catherine Xi	Durham University	Mathematics
Tehreem Zafar	Lancaster University	Biomedicine

Mini Reunions



L-R: Richard Williams, Stephen Lintott (Class of 1989), Sarah and Roger Draper



Sarah (left) and Keely enjoying the après ski in St Anton



Jolly January

A group from the Class of 1987 recently enjoyed one of their regular get-togethers. **Viki Edmondson (née Anderson)** writes:

"We're a very jolly year group and have a regular get-together on the last weekend of January as a minimum each year. The location rotates between various houses and we all contribute food and – 'ahem' – alcohol galore.

"Not everyone can come each time, but the date is set in stone for as much planning ahead as possible. This time we met up at Lynda's house in Ribchester and spent another fabulous day of sharing memories and news, along with discussing the world and generally putting it to rights.

"A really lovely spin off is that Heather's eldest daughter, Bel, is now a vet student at Edinburgh. Heather and her family live in Somerset, we are in Scotland – so Bel has become a shared child and decamps to us on a regular basis to learn all about farm life and expand her veterinary experience outside the normal syllabus!

Viki Edmondson (née Anderson), Amanda Joynt, Lynda Jubb (née Jones), Heather Sharrock, Mel Bray (née Gladman), Sybra Edwards (née Stuart), Susanne Heald (née Hood), Kath Robinson (née Partington), Kalpana Kaushal and Sarah Rea – with Viki's terrier Biggles who is their little unofficial mascot.

Keystone Colleagues

There is a strong showing of Bolton School Alumni at Keystone Law, where at least four Old Girls and Old Boys now practise as solicitors: **Sarah Thompson (née Burn, Class of 1989)**, **Richard Williams (Class of 1990)**, **Keely Guite (née Rushmore, Class of 1994)** and **Elaine Chan (Class of 1995)**.

The group meets up regularly through firm events and recently came together for the annual work ski trip to St Anton.

There was a further opportunity to catch up at the recent Bolton School Connect event in Manchester, with guest speaker **Roger Draper (Class of 1988)**.



70th Birthday Gathering

On 7th March (half way through the academic year to accommodate all birthdays), 34 leavers from the Class of 1974 met up to mark their seven decades.

An impressive 16 of them braved a trek up Rivington Pike, with some exploring the restored Terraced Gardens and Pigeon Tower, before joining the others for lunch at The Blundell Arms and a long afternoon of exchanges. Tales of old School memories, catch-ups on the lives they have lived and diverse experiences led to some fascinating conversations and great reconections to be maintained going forward.

Christmas Catch-Up

Six former pupils reunited over the Christmas break, each having taken a different path since leaving School. **Victoria Cook (Class of 2022)** is now halfway through medical school, while **Alfred Norse (Class of 2025)** is studying AI and Data Science at MMU alongside building his own rocketry business. **Alexander Cook (Class of 2025)** is in his first year of an Engineering degree, and **Tristan Hughes (Class of 2025)** has begun an apprenticeship with MBDA. **Glory Steer (Class of 2022)** is in her final year of an Accounting degree and **Gabriella Cook (Class of 2027)**, currently at college, is exploring her options for life after A Levels.

The group enjoyed a lovely evening catching up at a local pub – and took advantage of the Development Team's offer to contribute to University Drinks! (see page 25)

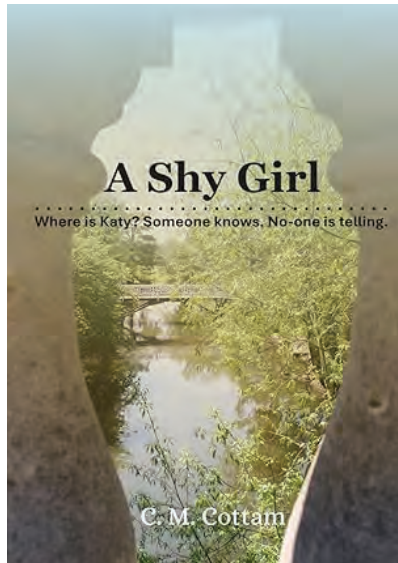
L-R: Victoria, Alfred, Alexander, Tristan, Glory and Gabriella



A Shy Girl

by Christine Cottam (Class of 1967)

A northern grammar school girl at Oxford is missing one night after attending a party in a local men's college.



As the author herself puts it in the foreword: "If the Victim had died, this would be a Murder mystery." It is more an account of the background to and aftermath of the evening's events. Plus, an evaluation of the protagonist's character. The book handles issues such as stalking and sexual harassment. Therefore, it may seem topical to a modern reader despite the 1960s setting.

Katy is a 'shy girl' from the North who was accepted to a girls' college in Oxford. Having studied there myself in the late 1990s, I was

familiar with the Oxford-specific expressions: Exeats, Collections, College Parents, 'going up', etc. Although Katy is described as shy, she holds many strong and progressive views about vegetarianism, animal and human rights which she debates with her friends. They also discuss matters more specific to the era such as the Troubles, the ending of Empire and protest singers. Katy is interested in 'male-dominated' subjects such as geology, which brings her into contact with a group of boys from another college.

Much of the book documents conversations between Katy's girl friends, and interviews with people who knew her or had seen her shortly before she went missing. A professor confronts his students at the college where the party took place. The police question the tutors and pastoral staff at Katy's college - who in turn grill the girl who took her out that night. We get a view of Katy's character and circumstances from a variety of perspectives.

In the 1960s, the age of majority was 21. Therefore, your average undergraduate at Oxford was classed as a child, and reference is made to this several times in the novel. Who, exactly, was responsible for keeping an eye on Katy? Her actual College Mother in the year above? Rosie, the girl who took her under her wing? The staff at her college or at the one she visited? The boys who she spent the night with? And what about herself?

I found this book very relatable. The preoccupations of university students seem to be similar down the generations. I nodded my head at the inevitable stereotyping of Northerners! The novel addresses 'consent' at a time long before the concept was around. The author keeps you guessing until the finish. A satisfying and thought-provoking read.

Waheeda Hales (née Mughal, Class of 1996)

Timewaif and the Roman Road

by Deborah Lyon (née Done, Class of 1989)

Timewaif and the Roman Road is a delightful time-travel novel with adventure and history all rolled into one.



Tim Wainwright isn't finding the present much fun. His mum's lost in grief after the loss of his dad and grandad, and his bullies just won't give him a break. Even his best friend, Annie, can't lift his gloom for more than a little while.

So in some ways it's a relief when he stumbles into a mysterious cave and finds himself almost two thousand years in the past.

It's clear to the residents of third century Britain, both Britons and Romans, that there's something special about Tim, and he soon finds himself a trusted member of the local Praetor's household.

To his surprise, in Roman Britain Tim is valued, and feels like he really belongs for the first time in his life.

He knows he needs to get back to the 21st century, his friends and his mum - but can he work out how? And more than that, does he really want to?

This is a pretty hefty novel for middle grade, which is no surprise given the wealth of detail packed in about life in Roman Britain. The author is evidently expert in this field, and both kids and adults are likely to learn a huge amount over the course of the book.

It's particularly pleasing that the events of the novel are tied to real Roman forts - I found myself taking a Google maps tour of Roman Cumbria as I read, tracing Tim's journey across the mountains.

Deborah Lyon doesn't shy away from tackling weighty subjects, with Tim's mum's struggle with grief standing out. The responsibility falling on Tim's young shoulders reflects that of many real children, and is handled with Jacqueline Wilson-esque realism and compassion.

It's entirely understandable that Tim is tempted to stay in Roman Britain - although it can hardly be said that he shirks responsibility in the past! He adopts the roles of teacher, project-manager, spy and bodyguard over the course of the novel, all of which help to equip him to resolve his real-life troubles.

This book would be a marvellous teaching tool for classes learning about Roman Britain, or just for parents whose children have shown an interest in the ancient past.

If this book is to be just the first of a series, I'm looking forward to seeing where (and when) Tim ends up next!

Stephanie Sorrell (née Artley (Class of 2009)

Stephanie is well-placed to review *Timewaif*, being a published children's author herself. Her debut novel, *Dandy the Highway Lion*, was reviewed in the Spring 2023 edition of the Newsletter

Calling All Bookworms!

If you enjoy reading and would like to review books for future editions of the Newsletter, please contact the Development Office.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

How was Bolton School linked to *MV Greystoke Castle*?

How many girls realise that Girls' Division adopted the motor vessel (MV) *Greystoke Castle* (*Greystoke*) in the 1930s? The decision to do so was announced at Speech Day 1936 by Miss Meade (Headmistress, 1919-1938).

The idea of the adoption of cargo boats had first been promoted by a London shipping company in 1934 and, since that time, the British Ship Adoption Society had been formed. Its Secretary was Sir Edgar Britten, Captain of *RMS Queen Mary*, and the School had become a member.

The object of the Society was to make schoolchildren more familiar with the work of cargo ships and Miss Meade encouraged the Prefects to write to Captain Edwards asking him questions about life on board and the route taken. This proved particularly frustrating to Olive Ince (later Mrs Steele-Turnbull, 1927-1939) who, albeit not a Prefect, had arguably the greatest interest of all the girls in understanding more about the ship.

Greystoke had been built by Cammell Laird and launched at Birkenhead in December 1927. She was a twin-screw vessel with a speed of 14½ knots which was quite exceptional at that time. The engines and accommodation were situated at the rear of the ship with the bridge superstructure midships. The chances of the girls ever seeing the ship or meeting the crew were considered remote as the ship did not have a UK port. She spent her time sailing from New York to China and Japan via the Panama Canal and thence back to New York via the East Indies and the Cape of Good Hope. The crew of 51 was composed of 19 British officers, with the men being of Chinese origin from Hong Kong.

Because Olive was not allowed to write to Captain Edwards she had to satisfy herself by following all the correspondence and photos received by the School which were displayed on the walls of the Geography Room. Letters were also received from the Navigation Officer, Mr McClure, and in December 1937 he visited School, having returned to England to take his Captain's ticket. Olive so impressed Mr McClure with a question she posed him that he put her in touch with his Senior Apprentice, J R Blake, and they began exchanging letters on a regular basis.

1938 proved to be an eventful year for *Greystoke*. Severe winds led to her colliding firstly with two junks in Wakamatsu, Japan and then later hitting two rocks during a storm in the Philippines. Two blades of the port propeller were stripped and the rudder bent beyond recognition. Temporary repairs were effected in the Philippines before she returned to Hong Kong over Christmas to become seaworthy again in early 1939 after two months in dry dock.

All contact was then lost with the ship on the outbreak of the Second World War. Olive was concerned for Cadet Blake and wrote to his father for information. He replied that his son's ship had been seized by the Japanese and that, to the best of his knowledge, his son and the rest of the crew were working as forced labour. Olive assumed this ship must have been *Greystoke* until, nearly 50 years later, it occurred to her that Cadet Blake might have been transferred to another ship while *Greystoke* was in dry dock in Hong Kong.

It transpired that *Greystoke* had actually survived the war. She had been sold to the Elder Dempster Lines Ltd of Liverpool in 1943 and in 1946 her name was changed to *Freetown*. She continued in service for a further 12 years until she made her last voyage in 1958. Although the Germans had failed to sink her during the war, it was, perhaps ironically, a German company who got her in the end, having paid the then large sum of £42,500 for the privilege of breaking her up. All this information would not have been available had Olive not continued her research and she detailed the results of her efforts in a long letter to Mrs Plant, Deputy Headmistress, in 1988.



Meet the Archivist

Eric Fairweather

If you have a question about the School's history or would like to donate to the Archive any photographs or artefacts from your time at School, Eric would love to hear from you.

E: development@boltonschool.org.



The Day Kim Phuc came to School

One of the most iconic photographs of the 20th Century was that of a terrified nine-year-old Kim Phuc running naked down a road in Trang Bang after being severely burned on her back by an aerial South Vietnamese napalm attack, during the Vietnam War. It was June 1972 and Kim had fled from a temple where many were sheltering. Her brothers, who could

run faster than her, managed to miss the fire from the bomb. Kim may have escaped too, but for the fact that she stopped to help her three-year-old cousin. He did not survive, but because Kim slowed down she felt the full blast of the bomb and her clothes

were burned off. In the first year alone she had 16 skin transplant operations, and further operations ensued over the next 12 years. How then to respond to this horror? She felt she faced a stark choice: "either die of hatred or change my life." She chose the latter, forgave her enemies and, through the Kim Phuc Foundation, began to work tirelessly for peace and for the care of all children who are victims of war.

Kim visited Bolton School in March 2010. 250 Sixth Form students from across the North West attended the event and listened to Kim's message of peace and forgiveness. The School was privileged to host this event, which was only the second time Kim had visited the UK.

Kim now lives in Canada with her husband and is a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for the Culture of Peace.



Looking Back

*A nostalgic trip down Chorley New Road
- photographs from across the decades.*



1&2	Many thanks to the family of Mary Mahoney (see obituary on page 34) for these two photographs: (1) shows Prefects, 1946 – Mary is third left on the back row, and (2) shows Form Remove, 1937 – Mary is on the right-hand side of the middle row
3	Prefects 1973-74; photo courtesy of Charmaine Eckersley (née Gratrix, 1974)
4	Netball, 1987
5	Alumni Dinner, 2006
6	'3' Class Reunion, 2013
7	GCSE Results Day, 2006

Memories

Skiing Stories

Charmaine Eckersley (née Gratrix, Class of 1974) recently came across this photo from her first skiing trip in 1971 when she was in Mrs Billington's Lower Fifth form.

"Skiing trips were organised jointly with the Boys' Division and led by Miss Johnson. I wanted to go because my older sister, Cherrill Lee (née Gratrix, Class of 1970), had had a fantastic time four years earlier."

"If I remember correctly, we took the train to London from Manchester Piccadilly and then south to the cross-Channel ferries – they were called the boat train. Once in France we caught another SNCF train all the way to Innsbruck. At the border guards came on the train to check the passports which Miss Johnson had collected. It was a corridor train with six couchettes in each compartment – a bit like being in a submarine!

"I can remember how exciting it was to wake in the morning after very little sleep (too much night-time talking) to see the mountains and alpine scenery – I had never been abroad before."

"After 28 hours on the train walking was quite wobbly for a few minutes. We took a coach to Neiderau and our hotel. Breakfast consisted of five-segmented Kaiser rolls. We soon learned to get



L-R: Patrick (ski instructor), Charmaine, [unknown], Nora Willman (1971), Graham Ward, Chris [Carley?]

down to breakfast early to test the rolls for freshness. Fresh ones sounded hollow when tapped whereas old ones had a dull thud. For lunch we got a hard-boiled egg and two of the Kaiser rolls, one with cheese and the other with a very smelly (garlic) salami, and a blood orange. Swapping a salami roll for a cheese one was the first mission of the day. In the evening we had a three-course meal consisting of a clear soup with a few strands of cabbage or egg or noodles in it. I think this was followed by some sort of meat course and a vegetable. I can't remember what the desserts were.

"Ski classes were mixed and based on ability and skiing experience which is how we got to know some of the boys."

"Within a few days we were sitting at mixed tables and we made friends with our male companions. On the way home we were chatting together in mixed compartments. The following term until leaving School, a few of us girls would walk round to the Boys' Dobson Road exit to meet up with our skiing friends. Instead of catching the bus along Chorley New Road as we had done previously, we walked together through Queen's Park to Moor Lane bus station to catch our different buses home."

Aspiring Journalists, Unpublished Scoop

Christine Cottam and Jennifer Kennedy (née Ainsworth) (both Class of 1967) recall their endeavours to invigorate the *Girls' Division Magazine*.

"In the early 1960s, the Mag was an austere document."

"Half A4 size, monochromatic on white, woolly paper, it consisted mostly of lists: Form and School Prize-winners, Public Examination Grades, College, University or Vocational Training acceptances, Sports Reports and Awards for Reading Aloud or Deportment.

"Items by girls had titles like *Our Holiday in Kirkcudbrightshire* or *A Walk by Moonlight* (one of Christine's was called *In Our Wood*). The 1967 'Summer of Love' changed all that. Peaceniks were going to San Francisco with flowers in their hair. So, Jen suggested going to USAF Burtonwood to interview its Commanding Officer. She wrote to him and, amazingly, he arranged for us to meet their Liaison Officer.

"The practicality never crossed our minds."

"Hypothetically, the airbase was on a bus route. Actually, the bus stop was in the middle of nowhere. We arrived bedraggled

and exhausted, following a long, hot walk up a country dusty lane. Making matters worse, the guard on duty looked like a film star, as did everyone else there. It was like stumbling onto a glamorous Hollywood film set.

"We were so late that the Liaison Officer had left for the weekend. Still, we were treated to soft drinks in a sort of big bird hide on stilts, with a nice view of the runways and planes: a kind thought for the return journey. All we can picture of it is endless hawthorn hedges. Jen lost a contact lens; running for the bus in Bolton, she broke a shoe heel; and after all that the 'scoop' was not published.

"This being our initial foray as newshawks, we hadn't thought to liaise with the Magazine Committee, and School was awash with scribblers as the Age of Aquarius dawned."

"'Alternative' School Mags were passed around, with names like *Reflections* and psychedelic covers. Even the real thing was rebranded as *Candida*. True, those were more innocent days – but how did that fly under the radar?"



Cautley Calling

Marion Dunn (Class of 1981) has fond memories of trips to the Old Vicarage at St Mark's, Cautley, near Sedbergh in the Yorkshire Dales. The building was purchased by Bolton School in 1968 and was converted to a residential outdoor centre, which pupils knew and loved as 'Cautley'.

"As a long tradition we used to climb a local mountain, Great Dummacks, stand on our heads and sing the *School Song*. Does anyone else remember this? I do remember that it was a very steep climb, and that I did not have much breath left for singing when I finally got to the top! My visits to Cautley sparked an interest in potholing and geology and a love of the Yorkshire Dales, where I decided to live (and still do). I went on to read Geology at Oxford University and to make a career in geology and environmental science, also potholing abroad on several expeditions. I believe that those visits to Cautley and St Mark's are still having a positive influence on many of our lives today.

"I recently visited Cautley (I understand that this is now

run as private accommodation known as 'St Mark's Stays') and the

small Church nearby, St Mark's, which generations of Old Girls and Bolton school staff used to attend on a Sunday. I must confess that I used to visit St Mark's sometimes during trips to Cautley, just to get a bit of peace and solitude. It is a very small rural church and like many others is always in need of funds to keep it going – if Old Girls and staff who enjoyed their stays at Cautley would like to support it, please visit www.westerndales.org.uk/st-marks-cautley."



Education, Languages and a Life Well Travelled

Lilian Flitcroft (née Griffiths, Class of 1951) is proud to have been a Bolton School pupil. Here she recalls her schooldays and how learning languages proved very useful later on in life.

"I was born in Tyldesley in 1933. My father was a coal miner and I attended the local schools until the age of 11. In 1944, I won a Governors' scholarship for Bolton School. I used to take three buses, leaving home at 7:30am to get to School for registration at 8:50am. Occasionally I left my lacrosse stick on the bus, with shouts of 'Eh luv, you've left your fishing rod!' from other passengers.

"In the Thirds we had to give speeches about our hobbies. The stories beginning 'My dog ...' frequently aroused groans, but it was good training for later public speaking. We also danced eurythmics in our green slips on the parquet floor at the back of the hall.

"I loved every minute of my time at Bolton School."

"I left at the age of 18 with three A Levels to go and study honours French with German at the University of Manchester University. After graduating with a 2:1, I went to teach French and Latin at Darwen Grammar School for two years. I also taught needlework, and played the role of Miss Gossage in *The Happiest Days of your Life* – 'Call me Sausage!'

"In the early post-war years I married John Flitcroft, a dentist, who was first commissioned as Flying Officer (Dentist) to Wunstorf near Hanover in West Germany. Because there was limited accommodation for officers we lived very happily with a German couple, Walter and Karla, which gave us a good insight into how these nice Germans went on through the war.

"During that time we had special permission as armed forces personnel to travel across the uncultivated area, a two-hour journey into East Germany/Russian territory – but were warned not to stop or break our journey as you could easily be detained by Russian forces.

"On arrival in Berlin we drove through Checkpoint Charlie into East Berlin and it was essential that John wore his British Services officer uniform. East Berlin was in utter chaos, with only a few shops, but these were merely façades and the rest was rubble. Fear and stark poverty were obvious wherever we went. As we approached the Autobahn on our return to Wunstorf we were stopped by an official for the Russian army and challenged for speeding. He issued us a fine and we responded that we were not allowed to

pay (as we had been told by our government that we were not to recognise Russian law in East Germany).

"He stood his ground, but what luck I spoke German! I told him in a trembling voice that this car has a mileometer and asked is this the same as kilometres?"

"I held my breath; eventually he said 'Gute Reise' – phew, he had wished us a good journey and let us on our way.

"After three years commission in the air force we returned to the UK and chose Chester as our new home where John was accepted as a partner in a city centre dental practice. Our sons Ian (1961) and Andrew (1964) arrived – both were educated at the King's School Chester where I also taught French and German from 1971 to 1993.

"We had a number of exciting holidays in some unusual places: Tunisia, Kenya, South Africa, the Caribbean and Turkey to name just a few. While in South Africa we visited Johannesburg, Durban and the gold mines. Can you believe that in the gold mines they had an enormous safe to store the gold bars and it was made in Bolton? We watched as molten gold was formed into bars which quickly cooled. The challenge was that if you could pick up a bar which was the size of a brick you could keep it – unfortunately we all failed and left goldless!

"During our retirement John and I travelled extensively, including Canada, Australia and New Zealand, northern Thailand, China, and trips to many European and east European countries. We enjoyed river cruises in Europe and cruises in The Caribbean, Hawai'i and Norway.

"During this time Ian emigrated to Australia and we often spent the winter months in a small property on the beach in Adelaide.

"When retired I took up painting again and still now enjoy it: mostly landscapes and flowers for my own enjoyment, which are selling well.

"Very sadly John passed away in February 2019 at the ripe old age of 87 years.

"At the age of 92, I am still relatively fit and healthy with all my own joints and teeth, playing bridge with my friends, painting and enjoying plenty of other social activities."

LIVES REMEMBERED

Sandra Bloch

(née Wilkinson, Class of 1958)

Sandra died at home in Kidlington just outside Oxford on 29th August 2025 after a series of lengthy illnesses.



Sandy won a scholarship to Bolton School from Devonshire Road Primary School in 1951. Despite her undoubted cleverness, she was mainly preoccupied with her artistic interests – initially her focus was ballet and tap dancing and then, after she suffered an accidental injury to her foot in the gym, she developed her drawing and design abilities. Sandy grew increasingly impatient with more academic subjects as her artistic talents flourished and after O Levels she left Bolton School and went to Bolton School of Art – now part of the University of Greater Manchester.

Sandy was perhaps too much a free spirit to gain the most from the Bolton School of the early 1950s. A school contemporary and later a colleague, Judith Ernsting, remembers her getting into trouble with the authorities for performing handstands in the corridor. Nevertheless, she remained grateful to the School and appreciative of its current mission and made regular donations to the bursary fund.

At Bolton School of Art, Sandy specialised in textile design, but was eventually disappointed to discover that the openings for young professional designers in the shrinking textile industry were limited. She therefore changed course and went off to Sheffield University to gain an Art Teaching Diploma. She then embarked on a career in secondary education, first at a school in Blackrod and then Peers School Littlemore, a comprehensive school on the edge of Oxford. She threw herself into teaching with great enthusiasm and success with her blonde hair, mini-skirts and red Mini car. She personified 1960s cool.



Over the years, Sandy's art room became a refuge and creative hub for many awkward and 'difficult' teenagers, whom she genuinely liked; in return they blossomed. Sandy's colleagues report that she was an exceptionally gifted, inspirational

teacher. Several of her pupils grew into lifelong friends and some went onto enjoy successful careers in the arts. It was common in Oxford for Sandy to be hailed from a passing bus or truck with loud greetings of "Hello, Miss!".

Sandy's last teaching position was Head of Art at D'Overbroecks, an Oxford private school, where the students found that her unconventional approach chimed with their youthful mindsets and many went onto achieve exceptionally high A Level results.

In 1968, Sandy married Danby Bloch, publisher and financial adviser, who survives her.

Sandy also leaves a son, Adam, who leads a conservation charity, and a daughter, Hester, who is a management consultant in the advertising and marketing industry, as well as three grandchildren.



Gladys Davies

(née Unsworth, Class of 1956)

Gladys came from a modest background, entering Bolton School after passing the 11+ and the entrance exam. She was the first in the family to study at an independent school and was incredibly proud of her achievement. She loved maths and languages and went on to work in finance.



She kept in touch with the School via the *Newsletter* and attended reunions for Class of 1956 for the 40th anniversary in 1996 and 60th birthday in 2000. The School remained an

important part of her life history, and she regularly talked about her time there with great fondness.

Gladys met Roger at a dance, and they married in October 1965. They went on to welcome two daughters, Julie and Andrea. In 1997 Roger was cycling to work when he was knocked down by a coach, suffering serious head injuries, and their lives changed. Both had to give up work and together concentrate on Roger's rehabilitation. By this time, grandchildren had started to arrive and, as a positive from their forced retirement, they were able to take an active part in their granddaughters' lives. In retirement, Gladys and Roger took to cruising at least once a year, enabling them to visit many places in Europe and

North America, making many friends along the way.

After 20 happy years in their home near family, Gladys and Roger moved to a retirement apartment nearby. There they fully embraced the community and social events, with Gladys leading weekly Talking Tables, being ruthless in quizzes and becoming a valued friend.



Family was the most important thing to Gladys, and she was very close to her daughters and four granddaughters. Above all she will be forever cherished as a wife, mother and grandmother.

Julie Davies-Brown (née Davies)

(Isobel) Fiona Haslam

(née Bowyer, Class of 1949)

Fiona passed away peacefully at home in Cartmel on 7th March 2026, aged 94.



She was born in Bolton in 1931, educated at Bolton School and Lowther College and qualified as a doctor in 1955 from Glasgow University.

Fiona met her husband, Brian Haslam (Boys' Division, Class of 1949), whilst in the Sixth Form at Bolton School; they became engaged on New Year's Eve 1953 and married when Fiona qualified in 1955. They were happily married for 54 years until his death in 2009. They had three sons together, all also attending Bolton School: Andrew (Class of 1975), John (Class of 1978) and David (Class of 1980). She subsequently became grandmother to six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Fiona worked for many years in medical practice, particularly in antenatal clinics and specialising in genetic counselling at the end of her professional career. Whilst still working she began to research into the relationship between medicine and art which resulted in her being awarded a doctorate from the University of St Andrews in 1986. Dr Fiona Haslam wrote several articles on medicine and art for specialist journals. After retirement she continued her research with a particular interest into 'the art of medicine' of the eighteenth century, its social, medical, historical and political context. Her studies focused on the works of artists such as William Hogarth and Thomas Rowlandson.



They produced art, from a lay view, of contemporary attitudes held towards members of the medical profession combined with a knowledge of the lives of the artists. In



1996 she used this extensive knowledge in writing her first book, *From Hogarth to Rowlandson: Medicine in Art in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Liverpool University Press). Following on from this she and her son, Dr David Haslam (then Chair and Clinical Director of the National Obesity Forum, a GP and Physician in Obesity Management at Luton and Dunstable Hospital and visiting lecturer at Chester University) wrote, as co-authors, a second book, *Fat, Gluttony and Sloth, Obesity in Literature, Art and Medicine* (Liverpool University Press) published in 2009. This book set out to put the current obesity crisis in its true historical perspective through an innovative and enlightening exploration of obesity in art, literature and the history of medicine. Fiona and David continued their interest in this field up to David's death in 2022 and further writings remained unfinished.

Andrew and John Haslam

Mary Mahoney

(née Young, Class of 1946)

Mary Mahoney passed away quietly on 25th November 2025, in Toronto, a month shy of her 98th birthday.



She was born Elizabeth Mary Young in Bolton England on 26th December 1927. She was a proud Alumna of Bolton School, and studied Chemistry at the University of St

Andrews, where she met her husband, John Mahoney. Together, they emigrated to Canada and raised four children.

Mary led a long, rich and engaging life. She enjoyed camping in the Northern Ontario bush, producing little theatre and raising her family. She was an avid reader, and later in life she collected a second university degree in library science. A Lancashire girl, Mary loved literature and could recite at cheerful length the English poetry of her childhood. She also had a great memory for music hall songs and in later years she was apt to break into a Harry Lauder tune at any time of day or night.

Mary was prudent and modest, resourceful,



curious and brave. She moved to a retirement home while in her nineties, where she met her good friend, Ina; together they had countless hours of joy, walking in High Park, taking tea, attending concerts and having dinner together. Mary had a hearty appetite; she liked a good gravy with the Christmas turkey. A baker's daughter, she also enjoyed a slice of parkin; above all, she liked a nice cup of tea in the morning and a nice cup of tea with her tea.

She is survived by her daughter, Susan (Joe); daughter, Alison (Ted); son, Andrew (Deb); and son, Edward (Katherine); as well as seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Published on 7th December 2025 in the Toronto Star

Judith Dorothy Noon

(née Coupe, Class of 1956)

Judith was raised along with three brothers in Heaton, and attended Bolton School, just as her brother, (Alfred) David Coupe (Class of 1948) and their mother Dorothy Coupe (née Jobson) had done before her.



She cherished her time there, making life-long friends. After leaving School, she attended Bolton Technical College, completing the Senior Secretarial Course in 1958. She began work

at the Barclays Bank Foreign Branch in Manchester, at which time her love of dancing also flourished.

Judith later wanted to spread her wings and work abroad. She moved to Kenya, working for agricultural company Dalgety & Co for five years, where she met her future husband, Kenneth, an agricultural engineer. This time in Africa



broadened her perspective, and her sense of justice. Further work there saw Judith and Ken spending two happy years in Sudan.

They later returned to England, eventually settling in Much Wenlock. This began Judith's long association with Lloyds Bank, working in senior secretarial roles, developing interests in investment, and pursuing her love of gliding, which appealed to her adventurous spirit.

In retirement, Judith moved to Chorley, close to her roots and lifelong friends, where she maintained longstanding interests in walking, literature and music, and travelling widely. In later years, she returned to Shropshire to be closer to family, spending a happy period in a nursing home until her passing in November.

Judith had a true compassion for others, reflected in her support for charities like Derian House Children's Hospice and the Royal British Legion. She will be lovingly missed and remembered.

Alfred David Coupe and family

Audrey Rostron

(née Clarke, formerly Barben, Class of 1953)

Audrey passed away on 14th January 2026 after a short illness. Having completed her education in the Girls' Division, she worked during the 1950s at Lorival in a number of roles.

After raising her family, she retrained and lectured at Bury College, later earning a joint honours degree in History and Literature. With her husband, Steve, she played and helped run Bolton Bridge Club, travelled widely, and built lifelong friendships.

Audrey will be remembered for her warmth, resilience, humour, and devotion to family.

John Barben (Boys' Division, Class of 1981)

In Memoriam

Margaret Fearnley (née Hulme, Class of 1967) - Died 25th February 2026

Wendy Glover (née Davies, Class of 1948) - Died 23rd February 2026

Samantha Palmer (née Valentine, Class of 1993) - Died 29th December 2024

Marjorie Rothera (née Clegg, Class of 1948) - Died 25th January 2026

Elizabeth (Betty) Speak (née Standing, Class of 1951) - Died 30th September 2025

Betty Swyer (née Redgate, Girls' Division Staff, 1952-53) - Died 27th February 2026

Celia Sykes (née Walkden, Class of 1950) - Died November 2025

Old Girls' Association Spring Newsletter 2026

To make best use of resources while keeping you connected with School and informed about Alumni activities, we aim to contact you by email wherever possible. The Old Girls' Newsletter, however, may still be sent in hard copy even if you choose to receive other communications electronically.



If you would like to update your communication preferences to express that choice, please scan the QR code. Alternatively, you can speak to a member of the team by calling the Development Office on **01204 434718** or emailing development@boltonschool.org.



L-R: Alexandra Clarke-Cornwell (née Cornwell), Lynsey Leaver, Bryony Midgley (née Wolstenholme), Catherine Sanderson (née Swindlehurst)
(all Class of 1995) at the '5' Class Reunion, September 2025