

# Resplendens

*Bringing the community together across generations*

*Shining Back*

ISSUE #9



## DESIGN FOR LIFE

*Meet the innovative architects and designers who are making their mark across the landscape*

## PLUS

### *Expanding Horizons*

Building oracy into the everyday

### *Towering Achievements*

Torchbearers from across the community

### *Looking Back*

Reflections on the past as we look to the future



*‘South Hampstead’s space, characterised by a predominance of light cascading through glass, is a visual metaphor for our school motto ‘mehr licht’ and we live and breathe the inspiration that this gives us through our focus on providing an illuminating education and creating an environment where sisterhood is a dominant note.’*

MRS ANNA PAUL  
— Head, South Hampstead High School

**Cover photo:**  
Sally Friend (1957) in conversation with our new pupil bursary ambassador, Sahar (2026)



The LinkTree QR code at the start of each section takes you to a list of more detailed stories and longer articles relating to this edition of the magazine. Just hover your phone camera over it and then search the directory for the story which interests you.

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# Resplendens 2025

*Welcome to our latest issue of Resplendens, which focuses on architecture, design, and the influence that the spaces around us have on our lives.*

I’ve had many reasons lately to reflect on the metaphorical meaning of space – not least because we are in the process of finalising the details of two building projects, which we hope to complete for our 150th anniversary year. These projects are founded on wellbeing, as we seek to create an environment that further supports the mental and physical health of our pupils and staff. Our Sixth Formers have been involved at every stage of the design process, and you can read about their experiences on page 20. We look forward to sharing the plans with everyone over the coming months.

During the project planning process, my central reflection has been that the nature of spaces within girls’ schools carry powerful symbolism. Sports pitches, performance halls, theatres, public speaking venues, art galleries, nooks for chats and catch-ups with friends, study spaces interwoven with areas for relaxation, gardens (and, in our case, our indoor oasis on the seventh floor)... they all speak to a vital message: we want to make our school a place where our students can fulfil their potential and thrive.

The Senior School building is characterised by an abundance of light cascading through glass – a visual metaphor for our school motto, *Mehr Licht*. It is a place where we strive to offer an illuminating education, in every sense, and to create a warm community where many facets of brilliance can shine.

Our *Resplendens* magazine celebrates these aims. In this edition, we introduce some of the many members of our community who are making waves in the world of architecture and design; we share some of the design inspiration behind our own spaces; and – for those of you who remember the school in a very different guise – we track the history of our buildings as they have evolved over time.

As well as sharing news and views from across the community, we also highlight our forward-thinking approach to academic enrichment and how we encourage our learners to take an active role in forging their own intellectual paths. Given our commitment to lifelong learning, we hope you can find something in this latest issue which expands your horizons too.

*Mehr Licht!*



MRS ANNA PAUL  
Head, South Hampstead High School





A PHONE FREE SCHOOL



PERFORMING IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE



EXPLORING DIFFERENT CULTURES



INSPIRING A LOVE OF READING

#### A YEAR OF YONDR, AS SOUTH HAMPSTEAD GOES PHONE-FREE!

- Empowering pupils to be more mindful and self-disciplined with smartphones
- Empowering parents to set boundaries around phone use

#### LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

- Expanding horizons through hands-on opportunities
- Embracing emerging technologies with our Coder in Residence
- Encouraging independent thinking and problem-solving
- Promoting entrepreneurship, teamwork and career-related experiences
- Developing practical skills, from engineering to self-defence
- Discovering different cultures and performing in different languages
- Inspiring a love of reading

#### A FOCUS ON WELLBEING

- A buzzing schedule of co-curricular activities
- Embracing new interests and building inter-year links through diverse clubs and societies

## South Hampstead Wrapped

*We concluded the academic year with a celebration of everything that has taken place across the school. South Hampstead Wrapped aims to capture the energy, dynamism and variety of the last 12 months.*

*Alongside performances and prize-giving, this year we introduced an academic exhibition to highlight outstanding learning and achievements across all subjects.*



EXPANDING HORIZONS



LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM



EMBRACING EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES



DEVELOPING PRACTICAL SKILLS



A BUZZING CO-CURRICULUM





PRIZE-WINNING SINGING



OUTSTANDING ANTIGONE



LES MISÉRABLES

#### FOSTERING INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY, ORACY AND CRITICAL THINKING

- Promoting scholarship through enrichment sessions and lectures
- Numerous prizes for poetry, essay-writing, design, translation and more
- National and international success in Science, Maths, computational thinking and cybersecurity challenges
- Our second-ever all-girls' school team to reach the national quiz finals
- Debating triumphs, including a double selection for the England squad

#### MELODIOUS MUSIC-MAKING

- Prize-winning singing, with performances at Birmingham Symphony Hall and Southwark Cathedral
- Numerous ambitious concerts and recitals – rock, pop, jazz and more
- A special farewell concert for Dr Collisson

#### HIGH DRAMA

- Professional workshops and outstanding productions
- Les Misérables, Antigone, The Edinburgh Fringe, and a hint of Snow White



ROCK, POP AND JAZZ



PROMOTING SCHOLARSHIP



SPORTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL



FUN-FILLED SPORTS DAYS



UPLIFTING SHOWS



ENRICHMENT SESSIONS

#### SPORTING SUCCESS

- Dozens of fixtures and sports opportunities for all
- Top performances, including national cricket, ski and county netball champions
- Uplifting gym and dance shows
- Two sunny Sports Days, with seven new Senior School records on track and field

#### THOUGHT-PROVOKING GUEST SPEAKERS

- Specialists in diverse fields – including parents and alumnae – sharing their expertise and experiences

#### FUN-FILLED HOUSE ACTIVITIES

- A showcase of competitive camaraderie: quizzes, spelling bees, bake-offs, dodgeball, fashion contests, lip syncing, staff netball and more



**A FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY**

- An indoor garden oasis, as we introduce more biophilic spaces
- Gardening on site and at the sports ground
- Sustainable design programmes and insights into green career opportunities

**A COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL ACTION**

- Thousands of pounds raised and hours volunteered to support a range of charities

**ADVENTUROUS TRIPS**

- Bonding adventures at the start of Senior School and Sixth Form
- STEM discovery in South Korea, trekking in Transylvania, art in Venice, classicists in Greece, geographers in Iceland, music in Austria and Barcelona, sports tours in Spain and Canada
- Duke of Edinburgh expeditions and Junior School adventures on the Isle of Wight
- Language learning in Europe through homestays and exchanges

**AND AWARDS GALORE...**

- 'Best of the Best' in the UK for pupil voice
- Highly commended for 'Giving Something Back'
- 'London School of the Year' finalist
- Named as one of Tatler's top UK schools
- Shortlisted for 'Outstanding Educational Partnerships'

*That's South Hampstead Wrapped 2024-25*

VOLUNTEERING



GARDENING AT THE SPORTS GROUND



GEOGRAPHY FIELDTRIPS



LANGUAGE LEARNING IN EUROPE

*"South Hampstead is thriving...  
the warm atmosphere is palpable from  
the moment you walk through the door  
to meet its bubbly, driven girls."*

TATLER SCHOOLS' GUIDE

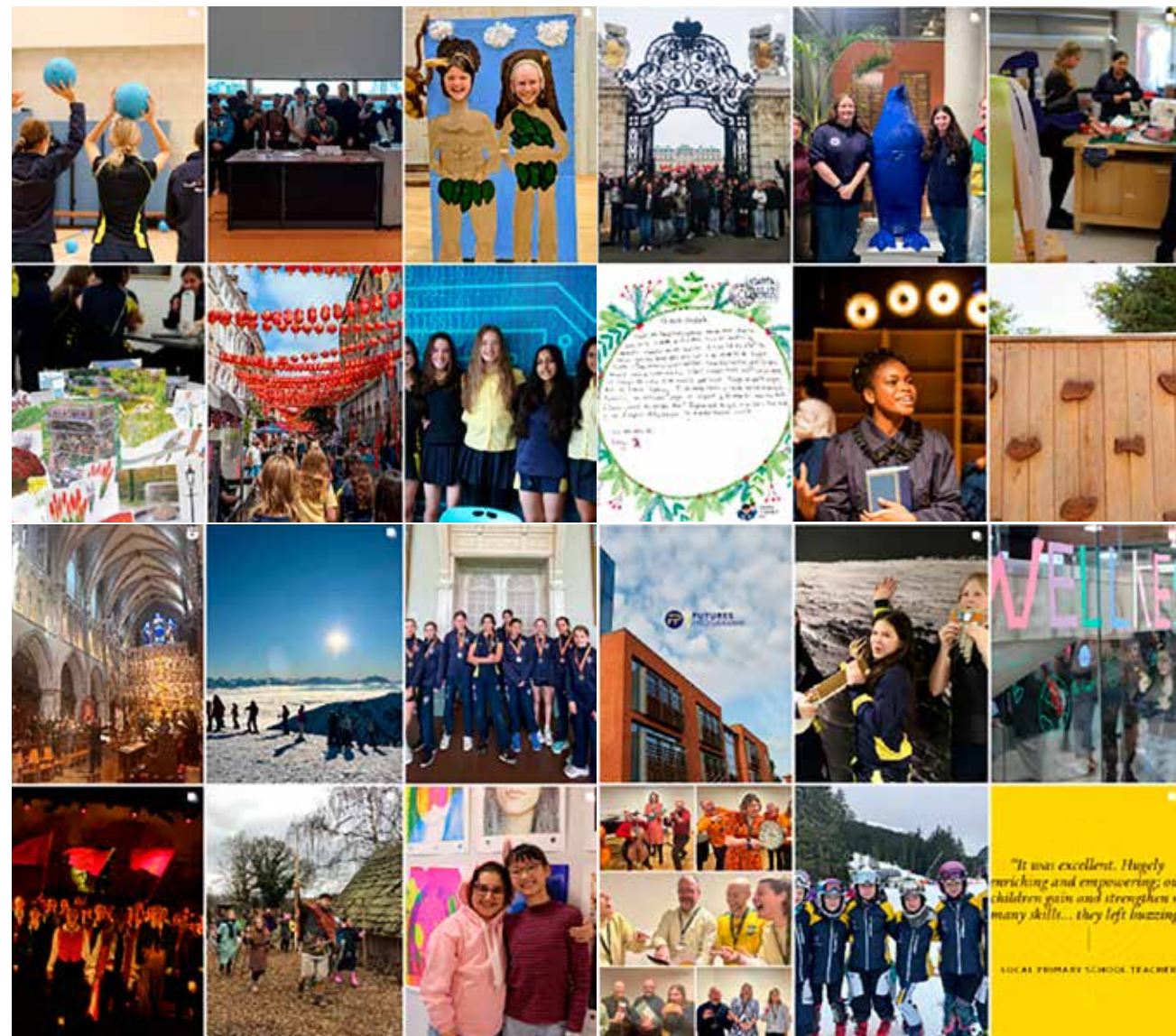


CANADIAN SKI TRIP



MUSIC TOUR TO BARCELONA





**Follow us**  
to get a feel for  
**just how much goes on**  
at South Hampstead.



# Design for Life

At South Hampstead High School, we're committed to fostering sustainable, inclusive, and community-driven spaces where everyone has the opportunity to thrive – no matter their background or circumstances. In this section, we shine a spotlight on inspiring members of our school community who are championing these values through their careers in architecture, engineering, and urban design, and share some of the design thinking behind our own indoor garden and roof terrace projects.

SCAN  
to find out  
more...





# Building a Brighter Future

*South Hampstead is lucky to have so many trailblazing young alumnae forging paths in the world of Architecture and Design. We sat down with one such alumna – Saaya Perera – who is currently a Master of Architecture Fellow at Princeton University – to chat about her career journey, her experience studying abroad, and her passion for a human-focused approach to architectural design.*



**SAAYA PERERA**

*Class of 2020*

**After leaving school, you studied Architecture at the University of Cambridge. How did you discover that you had a passion for design?**

When I was about six, I sketched my dream house and I remember during my Year 3 entrance exam, I was asked what I wanted to be when I grew up. I didn't yet know the word 'architect,' so I simply said 'builder' – I'm surprised they let me in! Art and Maths were my favourite subjects, which are ideal for architecture. My art teachers were incredibly supportive, helping me to refine my practical skills as well as develop more conceptual projects.

**What did you enjoy most about your course, and what was the most valuable thing that you learned?**

The breadth of the course at Cambridge allowed me to bounce between writing essays for history and theory, engaging with practical structural calculations, and exercising creative freedom in design studios. From the very beginning, we were exposed to real client briefs related to sites that we could visit – my favourite being designing a sustainable community space for a local farm. The theory felt real from day one. It was incredibly motivating to see how design decisions I make could have such a direct social and spatial impact.

Outside of the studio, I loved throwing myself into the Cambridge experience. Despite starting in the midst of COVID-19, which cut short my final year at South Hampstead, I was still able to join multiple clubs and take up rowing to meet new people outdoors. One of my highlights is definitely rowing in May Bumps for my college, Queens', in my final year where my crew won 'blades'.

**You recently won a three-year fellowship to study for an MA in Architecture at Princeton University. What are the biggest differences between studying architecture in the UK versus the US?**

It was definitely a culture shock at first! As one of only two international students in my year, I faced a steep learning curve adjusting to the differing design philosophies in the US. This exposure to different perspectives has been valuable – not only for broadening my architectural knowledge, but for placing me in an environment where I can challenge ideas, defend my thinking, and figure out what my personal values are as an architect.

I have found that sustainability is not nearly as central in the US as it has been previously in my education – both at Cambridge and at South Hampstead where my role on the Head Girl Team focused on Estates and Environment. I am using this as an opportunity to drive sustainable design to the core of my projects at Princeton, through specifying regenerative materials and timber frames in a culture with a far greater reliance on steel and concrete – even for small-scale projects.



**You've had an incredible career so far; what are your goals for the future?**

There tend to be two primary paths after an architectural education: to teach or to practice. I've always known that I want to practice. I was lucky that my first job after graduating was at Caruso St John, a RIBA Stirling Prize winning firm. I had long admired their commitment to adaptive reuse and craftsmanship. My time there reinforced what truly motivates me: attention to material details that shape the human experience when interacting with a building, at ground level, in everyday life. I want to create spaces that serve real social needs – community hubs, public housing, places that foster collective experience and connection.

One day, I want to start my own practice and be able to make design choices that translate directly into brick and mortar! My dream is to witness my ideas take shape in the physical landscape and improve people's quality of life.

**If you could adapt anything at the school site, what would you do?**

I remember spending the entirety of Year 7 in portacabins on Lymington Road while the current school building was under construction – so to me, it will always feel especially grand in contrast to the temporary chaos of classrooms with holes in the walls! One thing I did appreciate about our makeshift school on the sports ground was the expanse of space to sit outdoors. Therefore, I'd want to expand the roof garden and perhaps repurpose the MUGA into a shallow amphitheatre that merges into the atrium, library, and art/DT spaces on warm days. It might finally give us a proper space to tempt teachers into holding lessons outside when the sun comes out!

So many of my memories from school happened outside the classroom. I'd want to make more room for informal exchanges between friends by creating places that invite pause and conversation, rather than simply routes from class to class. Oh, and with everything our teachers do, I'd make sure to give them a bit more space to look after themselves!

*Take a look at our 150th Anniversary plans on page 58 to see what we are actually planning to change at South Hampstead!*



# Community Builders

*From sketchbooks to skylines, the journey into architecture is as varied and layered as the buildings it produces. In this feature, we spotlight a selection of alumnae, parents, and students whose paths into the world of architecture and design reflect a shared commitment to thoughtful, human-centred spaces.*



**DEBORAH SHER (1992)**

*Sher & White Architects*

*'My work is a vocation and a pleasure, much more than a job.'*

"I studied art at A-Level and really fell in love with the subject, particularly its linear and graphic elements. I found that I was drawing a lot of buildings and staircases, and my final project incorporated many of these elements. I was also inspired by the school trips to Venice, Florence, and Rome, and fell in love with the buildings in Italy. I was encouraged to do a lot of sketching and became even more interested in art and architecture while on these trips. My other main A-Level was maths, which I also enjoyed, and was surprised to find that it complemented my art A-Level.

There were no architects in my family, and it was my teachers who helped me choose architecture at university. Through the school, I was able to get crucial work experience in the office of the well-known architect Terry Farrell, whose daughters were at the school, and this confirmed my desire to study architecture.

I now run my own small practice with a colleague, focused on residential and office work. While we can take on multiple

small projects, when we have a big project – as now – we just focus on one client at a time. Being a small practice, I have to take on everything: from client presentations, client meetings, drawings, CAD sketching, and searching for materials. We do the whole design from start to finish.

Running my own business, I have had to combine both creative and administrative skills. Since the Grenfell fire, there is much more risk involved, and the health and safety requirements are huge. As architects, we are much more responsible for these than we used to be, and we are technically responsible for this aspect.

Even so, I have never done a project I haven't loved. One of my favourites was working on an installation in all 31 windows of Selfridges while I was still training. In a three-month timescale (most projects take a year), I helped to create a project where passers-by could theoretically be taken into the windows with the use of intelligent materials and time-delayed cameras. Essentially, the viewer became part of the interactive project.

I think the main skill required as an architect is to be a brilliant and creative problem-solver. The client comes with a vague idea of what they want, and I derive huge satisfaction from giving the client what they want in a clever and beautiful way. It is wonderful to suggest something that they may not have expected but which they immediately love. Architecture is a career which brings huge pride and joy. For me, it is a vocation and a pleasure, much more than a job."

DESIGNED BY SHER AND WHITE ARCHITECTS



**TOM BENTHAM**

*Current Parent – Director of MEP Engineering*

*'The interplay between building physics and MEP systems can create elegant buildings that tread lightly on the planet.'*

Tom is the Director of an engineering group that focuses on creating environmentally friendly building designs using innovative MEP (mechanical, electrical, and public health) systems to save energy and move buildings away from using fossil fuels. Some of the projects he has worked on include the Tate Modern Blavatnik Building and the Magdalene College New Library at the University of Cambridge – the latter of which won the RIBA Stirling Prize in 2022.



**MADELEINE KESSLER (2005)**

*Madeleine Kessler Architecture*

*'We place community, craft, and placemaking at the heart of our design.'*

Madeleine Kessler set up her own practice dedicated to designing joyful, people-centred places that contribute positively to the planet. The practice, called Unscene Architecture, works with urban sites to place community at the heart of design. Projects she has worked on include the winning design for the British Pavilion at the 2021 Venice Biennale, and a nature installation for the Museum of Architecture. Madeleine received the Rising Star Award from the RIBA in 2019, and in 2020 was named by Architects' Journal as one of the '40 under 40' architecture pioneers. Most recently, Madeleine was interviewed on the BBC, where she spoke about how we can work together to create more accessible, democratic, and inclusive urban public spaces.





**MICHAEL SCHIENKE***Current Parent – Vorbild Architecture*

*“The most valuable insights come from the things that are left unsaid. It’s in that space that good design begins to take shape.”*

“I came to architecture through a slightly unconventional route. My early interests were in psychology and computer science – two areas that, at first glance, might seem far removed from architecture, but in practice, they’ve become an integral part of how I approach design. Psychology taught me to consider how people feel and behave in different spaces – often unconsciously – and how architecture can quietly support or challenge those behaviours. Computer science, meanwhile, gave me a lasting interest in systems thinking, structure, and emerging technologies, which I continue to explore in both the design process and the way projects are delivered.

I now run a small practice based here in London, with a focus on private residential work – extensions, internal reconfigurations, and full refurbishments. Much of our work takes place within the kinds of homes that have evolved over decades, if not centuries, and the task is often to reimagine how

they can serve contemporary life without losing their character. We’ve worked on everything from compact apartments to larger houses across London, as well as a few projects overseas, but the common thread is a close, collaborative relationship with each client.

One thing I’ve learned is that listening is more important than talking. When meeting clients for the first time, I try not to focus on selling an idea or a vision straight away. Instead, it’s about observing – how people speak about their home, what they prioritise, what they avoid mentioning. Often, the most valuable insights come from the things that are left unsaid. It’s in that space that good design begins to take shape.

My approach isn’t driven by a particular style or aesthetic. I’m interested in clarity – how to make a space feel resolved, effortless, and aligned with the way people actually live. That might involve subtle interventions, a shift in layout, or sometimes just knowing when to leave something alone. I’m also deeply interested in how we can create homes that are more adaptable, resilient, and comfortable – not just visually pleasing but also meaningful and lasting.

Ultimately, design is a conversation. It requires patience, honesty, and a willingness to revise ideas until something essential and enduring emerges. That’s what I try to bring to every project.”

**ANASTASIA***Year 7 Student*

*“Modern architecture blends old and new styles and creates sustainable and contemporary designs in doing so.”*

Each year, some of our current Academic Scholars contribute essays on various subjects to our school academic journal, Pilot Light. The theme for this year’s journal was

‘Connections’, and Year 7 student Anastasia decided to pursue her interest in architecture to write an essay on the connections between past and present in building design. In her article, she stresses that new buildings always take inspiration from history, how it “never leaves the past behind.” In this way, she brings up important questions about how we can continue to approach architectural design in a sustainable and climate-conscious way, so as to preserve and protect our buildings for future generations.

You can read Anastasia’s full article in the 2025 edition of Pilot Light.







# Going Green

*It's ten years since we embarked on the major redevelopment of our senior school at Maresfield Gardens. A decade on, the building continues to provide a wonderful environment in which to educate our pupils. We are now evolving the facilities with a greater emphasis on creating healthier, more comfortable, and productive spaces, while minimising harm to the surrounding environment.*

*Thanks to support from the GDST and our community, we have been able to develop a number of new green spaces focused on wellbeing and biodiversity. These include the extensive refurbishment of our Junior School playgrounds, the transformation of the Sixth Form garden at Oakwood, and gardening at both the Junior and Senior Schools.*

*This year, we opened our ground-breaking indoor oasis garden. We spoke to one of the garden's designers, landscape architect Guillaume Baltz, about the philosophy and inspiration behind this unique space.*

"Recent scientific studies have shown that humans have a natural, deep-rooted connection to nature. This idea is known as biophilia, which literally means 'love of life.' It suggests that we are biologically drawn to interact with plants, animals, and natural environments. Cultures like Japan have embraced this for centuries, with practices such as forest bathing – the mindful experience of being surrounded by trees to boost wellbeing.

I have always felt this connection strongly. Growing up in an apartment in Paris without access to a garden, I craved nature. So, I filled my bedroom with tropical plants, clustering them together to recreate the feeling of a small rainforest. I found great joy – and a sense of pride – in caring for them, even successfully growing delicate orchids by learning their specific needs.

When I was invited to work with Walters & Cohen Architects on this project for your school, those happy childhood memories came rushing back. In fact, some of the same types of plants I grew then now thrive on the seventh floor of your school's atrium.

This bright corner felt perfect for creating an indoor oasis – a place to pause, relax, chat with friends, or simply sit and reflect. The natural light and occasional fresh breeze (when the automatic vents open) create a perfect environment for the plants and visitors alike.

The first step was to think about the 'ground.' We selected large terracotta pots for their strength and beauty. Each pot

is handmade from natural clays, with their warm colours coming directly from the earth. These pots feel timeless and comforting, but they also give the plants enough of the rich soil they need to grow well.

When choosing the plants, I thought carefully about their natural layers, as seen in real tropical rainforests. On the forest floor, I placed sturdy, shade-loving plants with bold leaves. From this base, medium-sized plants rise up with contrasting shapes and colours, and within each group, we planted one or two taller specimens – like a small tree, palm, or Strelitzia (which is a relative of the banana) – to create a sense of height and enclosure, evoking the towering canopies of the rainforest.

Above all these plants are the beautiful floating steel structures designed by Walters & Cohen. They mirror the role of high canopy trees and provide the perfect frame for large tropical climbers to grow freely. These vines are already exploring their new home and will grow even more spectacular over time.

One of the most magical moments for me in this environment is simply to look up – whether sitting or even lying on the floor – and see the sunlight glowing through the colourful leaves, creating a peaceful, uplifting scene. I hope that you too will cherish it for many years to come."

**Our indoor garden has already become a haven of peace and quiet for all our students as we seek to 'bring the outside in' to our daily lives.**



*"I love the regeneration of the 'oasis of calm'. The sofas and beanbags are a great place to relax with my friends, and the plants add to the sense of tranquillity."*





# Learning by Design

*Pupil-led innovation blossoms on the roof terrace*

*As we prepare to celebrate our 150th anniversary, we are excited to launch a series of forward-thinking projects that focus on improving the wellbeing of pupils and staff. One of the most inspiring of these is the transformation of the roof terrace – a unique initiative proposed and developed by our pupils from the outset.*

## A PUPIL'S PERSPECTIVE



*Sophia (2026) Deputy Head Girl for Environment & Estates, shares what working on the project has meant to her:*

“The roof garden project has been an exciting and rewarding experience, and it has been extremely fulfilling to see the Eco Committee’s ideas taking shape in the architectural plans.

Biodiversity is one of our major focuses: we’ve learned so much about pollinator plants and diverse planting – from researching the Camden Beeline to talking with Jim Carter, an experienced gardener who shared some brilliant suggestions.

Presenting our vision to Hines, a major property developer, was a wonderful challenge. It gave us professional insight and helped build our confidence and presentation skills.

A particular highlight for me has been seeing the most recent designs, with features the Eco Committee suggested – like deeper planting beds and seating areas encircled by plants – included.

Although I’ll have left South Hampstead by the time the project is completed, I hope the new roof garden will become a cherished space that promotes wellbeing and teaches future pupils the importance of biodiversity and being outdoors.”



**MARCH 2024**

The Eco Committee presents an ambitious proposal to redevelop the 7th Floor roof terrace, with a focus on wellbeing and biodiversity.



**MAY 2024**

Sixth Form pupils survey peers and teachers to gather feedback.



**JUNE 2024**

They collaborate with a parent architect to refine their project brief, incorporating ideas for shade and communal seating.



**SEPTEMBER 2024**

FOSH donate funds for pupils to commission an architect to develop initial concepts.



**JANUARY 2025**

Walters & Cohen Architects – who previously designed our indoor garden – are approached to take the project forward.



**FEBRUARY 2025**

The Eco Committee delivers a formal pitch to property developers at Hines UK, gaining valuable industry insight.



**MARCH 2025**

Pupils collect stakeholder feedback and work closely with the architects to refine their vision.



**MAY 2025**

A second design iteration is revealed and planning applications are submitted.



**JUNE 2025**

Pupils begin sharing their vision with the wider school community to garner support. (See page 58)



**SEPTEMBER 2025**

Pupils start to raise funds and seek support from the community to help delivery the project!



# Beyond South Hampstead

*As we look to prepare and support members of our community beyond the school, scholarship through speech is becoming a key component of our education.*

*In this section, we explore how oracy has been embedded in our culture – through our enrichment curriculum, partnership initiatives, and the wider community's involvement in our careers, speaking, and debating programmes.*

SCAN  
to find out  
more...



## Expanding Horizons: The Vital Role of Academic Enrichment

*Our Assistant Head of Enrichment, Dr Kate Etheridge, shares the philosophy around our academic enrichment programme and how intellectual rigour at South Hampstead has dovetailed with our expanding oracy provision. The aim is to ensure that all our students are supported to be confident, curious, and thoughtful communicators well prepared for the world ahead.*



**DR KATE ETHERIDGE**

*Assistant Head of Enrichment*

**'But is this going to be in the exam?'**

**A**s any teacher will know, those nine little words have the power to deflate even the most enthusiastic subject specialist mid-explanation. This question's popular cousin elicits a similar sinking feeling: 'But do students need more algebra, the Tudors, or poetry for their future careers?'

With students facing a highly competitive job market, and with the uncertain implications of the rise of AI looming large, this way of thinking about education seems to be increasingly prevalent in our wider culture. In its narrowness, it is often self-defeating.

It is certainly true that schools must address the challenges facing young people with energy and pragmatism. To deny this is to abnegate our responsibilities. However, it is also

*"Each session is run with passion and genuine intellectual enthusiasm for the topic, and because of this, I've never failed to come away with more interest in the subject."*

IZZY, YEAR 12







*"I've loved being introduced to the intricacies of new topics I would have never otherwise discovered. Often, we're placed under a label of 'humanities/STEM/languages student', but the enrichment sessions have helped me realise that I enjoy academic exploration in many different areas, not only the subjects I take at school."*

MARINA, YEAR 10

incumbent on us to resist overly simplistic solutions to complex problems, and to think seriously about what best serves our students. At South Hampstead, we have long recognised that academic enrichment beyond the syllabus is fundamental to a good education: it helps to develop critical thinking skills and inquisitiveness; it encourages expansive interdisciplinary connections; it empowers students to engage proactively with the world around them. This holistic approach to learning has also led us to become leaders in the evolving national conversation about speaking and listening (oracy) in education – our award-winning Debate Hub programme has played a notable part in this.

Recently, our focus on intellectual rigour has dovetailed with our expanding oracy provision in exciting ways. Since 2023, a key aspect of this has been our monthly student-led Academic Symposia and, since 2024, fortnightly teacher-led Cross-Curricular Enrichment Programme (CCEP) sessions. While Academic Scholars, as ambassadors and role models, are encouraged to attend

a certain number of these events, no limits are imposed on who can present a session or attend. These events are open to all because serious academic engagement should be open to all. With this underpinning ethos, every student is given frequent opportunities to explore topics not covered in the curriculum and, crucially, our learners are prompted to take an active role in forging their own intellectual paths.

*We have long recognised that academic enrichment beyond the syllabus is fundamental to a good education*

Over the past year alone, students have delivered interactive, stimulating Academic Symposia on concepts ranging from dark matter to Proto-Indo-European languages, to the role of women

in Mao Zedong's China. These have been entirely self-directed. Having taught at South Hampstead High School for nine years, I am always struck by how much of a thirst for knowledge there is among the students in our community. In an era where it sometimes seems as though easy – even reductive – answers are only a short click away, it is cheering to witness this persistent desire to explore new concepts in depth, to follow an intriguing idea down an intellectual rabbit hole, and to ask searching questions.

In our Cross-Curricular Enrichment Programme sessions, our staff have inspired this kind of scholarly exploration by challenging the fallacy that academic subjects exist in rigid, impermeable silos. We have enjoyed sessions examining scientific and poetic innovations in ancient Alexandria, as well as the mathematics of waves in music, the effect of the discovery of radium on literature, and many more. Each session has reinforced the principle that a flexible, open-minded approach to knowledge widens our understanding of the world and strengthens our

approach to problems. In their first year, these sessions have attracted over 140 different attendees from all year groups, as well as from our staff body. In doing so, they have been a welcome reminder of how much we have to learn from those in the community beyond our timetabled classes, and of the value of exchanging ideas.

In fact, academic enrichment at South Hampstead High School is not just about intellectual enquiry – it's also about facilitating contexts in which students can explore and present complex ideas out loud. This might not always resemble formal debating or public speaking, a great deal of which happens elsewhere in the school, but rather a subtler form of oracy that has profoundly beneficial impacts. For some, this has translated into the development of impressive presentation skills or the ability to chair and manage seminar-style discussions. (Indeed, a core requirement of our Symposia is that students do not read from a script when they present.) For others, it has meant finding the courage, at the age of twelve, to contribute to an

extremely high-level discussion of avant-garde French poetry in the presence of numerous Sixth Formers and teachers. In cases like these, the skills of speaking and listening, which we proudly champion, are fostered organically in conjunction with a real love of learning.

*Success is about equipping girls with the independence, intellectual creativity, and critical thinking skills to substantiate whatever it is they wish to say.*

Another new event that showcased this interplay was the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) Presentation Afternoon, during which 32 Lower Sixth students presented their Extended Project Qualification research to Years 9–10. This required them to consider how to frame often complex subject

matter in an accessible way. They rose to the challenge magnificently, having benefited from a series of Thinking Skills sessions this year that, among other topics, covered the art of a good explanation. One presenter, Chiara, then adapted her presentation for South Hampstead Wrapped, handling not only a sizeable audience of staff, students, and parents, but also the challenges of a live Q&A with aplomb.

In a rapidly changing world, the question of which skills and attitudes schools should inculcate in students is becoming ever more salient. In this context, the concept of success cannot be confined to good GCSE and A Level results – wonderful though they are. Success is not even just about girls feeling empowered to use their voices. It is also about equipping them with the independence, intellectual creativity, and critical thinking skills to substantiate whatever it is they wish to say. Although much about tomorrow's world seems uncertain, one thing is for sure: our confident, curious, and thoughtful communicators will be more than ready to meet it.





## Opening Doors

*Our Deputy Head (Co-curricular, Community & Careers) Chris Dearmer reflects on the success of the school's Debate Hub – the cornerstone of the school's partnership programme – and the importance of oracy education in schools.*



**CHRIS DEARMER**

*Deputy Head (Co-Curricular, Community & Careers)*

At South Hampstead we have an outstanding track record in debating and public speaking; two of our students were selected for Debate England's 2024/25 squad, hoping to compete on the world stage in Panama next year, and we were recently recognised as the UK's best school for pupil voice in The Week's Independent Schools Guide. From the earliest years at school, pupils are encouraged to speak up and speak out, supported by a staff body committed to embedding oracy across and beyond the curriculum. Fundamental to the school's success is our award-winning Debate

Hub – a programme established in 2019 to promote a culture of oracy not just amongst our own pupils, but in the wider community too.

Over the years, South Hampstead's Debate Hub has provided specialist coaching and competitive debating opportunities to develop the confidence, oracy and argumentation skills of thousands of pupils at well over 100 schools nationwide. As well as providing online resources, video guides, lesson plans, podcasts, debate topics, games packs and workshops, Debate Hub has

a team of expert coaches who train and host events – all free of charge for state schools. We run the UK's largest competition for state primary school pupils and 'mix and match' format events, where independent and state school debaters compete together on the same team, facilitating meaningful communication, exchange of ideas and integration. Last year, we had 1,500 entries across all competitions – offering a variety of formats for different ages and abilities – with roughly two-thirds coming from state schools.



*'You have really revolutionised the debating scene – this has the power to change lives'*

PARTNER SCHOOL

*"It was a great experience for our children to do something completely different – to learn new skills and communicate with pupils from very different backgrounds to their own. The atmosphere was buzzing and was a real celebration of all you gain from having different viewpoints and ideas."*

FEEDBACK FROM A STATE SCHOOL TEACHER

We also run a Saturday Sparks programme which offers fun, free weekend booster sessions for local primary school pupils in Maths, English and coding. This academic year, we extended the programme to offer a five-week debating programme for older state school pupils in Years 7 to 9, with an experienced coach who help pupils progress and prepare for regional and national competitions.

Some of our experienced Sixth Form debaters visit local primary schools each week to deliver oracy sessions – a mutually beneficial partnership which enables our students to develop their coaching and leadership skills, whilst providing invaluable resources for schools who lack oracy provision. Some of our other debaters are charged with judging and chairing the primary school competitions we host, helping to build their confidence and experience. Local state partner school

pupils are also invited to join our Speaker Series evening events to hear from – and put their questions to – high-profile orators from different backgrounds such as Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe discussing justice; Mishal Husain on challenging inequality; feminist science writer Angela Saini on unconscious bias; and David Baddiel on antisemitism.

*"Formal education in oracy is uniquely placed to counter the prevalence of echo-chamber thinking, equipping young people with the requisite skills to listen to and challenge other viewpoints, and to express themselves with clarity, eloquence and conviction. Debating encourages pupils to respond with respect, curiosity and an openness of spirit which welcomes diversity of opinion and thought."*

DEBATE HUB DIRECTOR  
MICHAEL HEPBURN

Oracy education also gives young people the opportunity to discuss complex, topical issues in safe, constructive ways, empowering them to feel part of wider societal discussions. One local state school pupil who attended our Debate Hub sessions subsequently joined our Sixth Form on a fully funded bursary. Following a boroughwide election, she was recently elected as Camden's Youth

MP and now represents the interests of young Londoners, shaping local decision-making and helping to tackle the key issues they face to make positive changes for the borough's future – a shining example of the power of oracy in shaping morally responsible citizens of the future.

By working in partnership with schools across the UK, we can achieve so much more to help the next generation to think critically, to work collaboratively, to consider other points of view, and to develop the confidence to stand up for what they believe in. We are proud to play a part in that at South Hampstead and see the positive impact that debating and public speaking can have.

Our Debate Hub is supported entirely by funding from donors and proceeds from corporate training sessions, delivered by the school's expert debate coaches. Huge thanks goes to the Rangoonwala Foundation for their cornerstone funding of this award-winning programme. For more information, visit [www.debatehub.co.uk](http://www.debatehub.co.uk)





CLASS OF 2022

## Reaching Beyond

Many of our parents and alumnae offer opportunities for pupils to get work experience in different sectors. Since 2022, we have worked in partnership with the global asset management firm Lazard who offer South Hampstead Sixth Form students the opportunity to join a week's work experience programme in the summer of Upper Sixth. One of the key elements of the application process is a verbal presentation and our students continually shine in this area.



FLORENCE HADDAD

Class of 2022

**F**lorence was one of the first students to take part in this programme. However, this was not to be the end of their partnership; after completing a full summer internship whilst she was studying at Cambridge, Florence was offered a full-time position as an Equity Analyst at the company and will start her new position this September.

'My journey with Lazard began during my time at South Hampstead High School, where I had the opportunity to take part in a one-week work experience scheme. At the time, I was curious about the world of finance but unsure where my future career interests lay. That short placement proved pivotal: it not only introduced me to the fundamentals of asset management – and to some inspiring people – but also sparked

a genuine interest in the industry. I had the chance to sit in on meetings, shadow team members, and gain a real insight into how a firm like Lazard operates.

That initial exposure gave me the impetus and confidence to pursue further opportunities, eventually leading to my acceptance onto Lazard's summer internship programme last year. Over several weeks, I engaged in a wide range of tasks, from participating in a mock "Dragons' Den" challenge, to delivering a sales pitch, and culminating in a full stock pitch presentation. The stock pitch was particularly memorable. I built a financial model in Excel from scratch, spoke with sell-side analysts and company management, and then presented my investment thesis to senior analysts at the firm.

Looking back, I can clearly see how the foundations laid during that early school work experience scheme helped shape my future direction. South Hampstead gave me access to opportunities I might not otherwise have had, and, crucially, encouraged me to explore them.

I'm incredibly grateful to both the school and Lazard for the support and encouragement that helped me turn an early interest into a real and exciting career path.'

**The work experience programme will continue this summer, with three more South Hampstead students set to step into Lazard's Marylebone offices and explore the opportunities of a career in finance.**

## Thank you

We would like to thank everyone who has given their time over the past year to continue to enrich the lives of our school community – whether that is giving careers talks, participating in concerts and events, or sharing their post-South Hampstead journeys.



### ASSEMBLIES, PANELS, AND TALKS

Jim Carter and Leonard Dunne  
1876 Society Speakers  
Solange Azagury-Partidge  
Entrepreneur Speaker Series  
Illana Kaye (2006)

### FUTURES FAIR SPEAKERS

Charlotte Beecham (2007)

Clare Routh  
Hattie Buxton  
Jens Vanbrabant  
Caroline Tuck  
Rossana Shokrian  
Reena Tanna  
Emma Gourdie  
Sarah Mook  
June Choi  
Geetika Rai  
Shelley-Anne Salisbury  
Helen Tugenhat  
Sam Gordon  
Helen Chang  
Liam Topham  
Erin McAuley  
Leo Wyndham  
Bridget Walsh  
Karla Du Toit  
Shrikant Padmanabhan  
Tori Peck

Hermione Burghart  
Lara Berkowitz  
Shoshannah Moss  
Karima Harris  
Nehal Doshi  
Sara Huish  
Lauren Taylor  
Jessica Rajwan (2003)  
Maria Ouarova (2012)  
Claudia Evans (2012)  
Davina Katz (1998)  
Dani Serlin (1996)  
Jessica Egerton (2004)  
Sonia Kenawy Contranos (2006)  
Eva Xenios (2019)

### ALUMNAE CONCERT PERFORMERS

Mia Abrams (2021)  
Isabel Benson (2021)  
Ella Bolland (2022)  
Ines Braddell (2017)  
Kate Caspari (2020)  
Keira Chakraborty (2024)  
Alexia Chan (2023)  
Martha Charles (2023)  
Jess Chorley (2012)  
Maya De Souza (2022)  
Alison Erridge (2015)  
Lauren Fass (2021)  
Giulia Fraenkel (2018)  
Iris Ganyushin (2022)

Zoe Guttenplan (2014)  
Genie Harrison (2017)  
Isabel Herschmann (2014)  
Abby Jackson (2017)  
Josephine Jolliffe (2024)  
Kaja Laight (2026)  
Yasmine Lingemann (2017)  
Scarlett McDonald (2024)  
Rosie Mennis (2019)  
Thea Nesbitt (2020)  
Miri Newman Kemp (2024)  
Phoebe O'Riordan (2023)  
Tamara Redmond (2023)  
Gemma Rosefield (1999)  
Maia Rynehart (2026)  
Kaelyn Soh (2024)  
Lillian Sparks (2023)  
Katie Stoyale (2016)  
Lulu Streets (2017)  
Ella Tarczy (2022)  
Amelie Todd (2021)  
Rebecca Weber (2022)  
Astrid Winstanley (2020)  
Maisie Young (2022)  
Sharon Zhou (2023)

### CHORAL SOCIETY PERFORMERS

Charlotte Bolland  
Pippa Bowden  
Abi Carole  
Veronica Caporalini

Sarah Chase  
Melanie Essex  
Victoria Ferguson  
Clare Fuller  
Judy Geller  
Jeremy Hargreaves  
Les Hearn  
Andrew Henshaw  
Derralynn Hughes  
Arwen Johnson  
Gemma Knight  
Juliet Lazarus  
Alice Levinson  
Clemy McAvoy  
Beatrix McIntyre  
Richard Milestone  
Leonie Morel  
Siobhan Murphy  
Harriet Nowell-Smith  
Christine Ogdar  
Claire O'Neill  
Cindy Owens  
Cynthia Prieto  
Delphine Rech  
Simon Redmond  
Aude Thibaut  
Naomi Weber  
Amanda Williams  
Marie-Christine Willis  
Patrizia Zogolovitch  
George Cook  
Matthew Duncan  
Will Ellis  
Kieran Jones  
Rupert Lougee  
Patrick Keefe  
Will Kilvington-Shaw  
Tom Law  
Peter Norris  
Chris Parnell  
Isobel Parnell  
Ben Reason  
Tim Round  
Will Rowland  
Chris Beecroft  
Gill Cracknell  
Eleanor Hunt  
Sophie Ellis  
Rod Fogg  
Emma Jones  
Paul Larochelle  
Laura Lougee  
Marino Onissi  
Danny Thomas  
Sophie Warwick





## Giving Back

*We've been lucky to have so many South Hampstead alumnae come into the school this year. These are just some of our visitors who have made a contribution to our education this year:*

### ▲ SPEAKER SERIES

Zeinab Chaudhary (2007), a Diversity and Inclusion expert and Change Management specialist joined a panel of guest experts to discuss issues around 'Raising Resilient Girls'. The panel was chaired by Jenny Kleeman (1997), a journalist and presenter for the BBC.

### SPORTS ASSEMBLY

Sophie Penney (2013), a sports journalist and podcast producer, joined us for an assembly as part of Sports Week to chat to the girls about her career and her life-long passion for sport.

### MOTIVATIONAL MONDAY

Fiona Campbell (1992) Sasha Haco (2011), Carole Joseph (1970), Victoria Jossel Nurtman (2000), Sally Friend (1957) and Emily Kasriel all shared their experience for our Motivational Monday series.

### ASPIRATIONAL FUTURES FAIR

Members from across the community came to speak to pupils from Year 9 upwards about an array of different career pathways. The girls spoke to experts working in consultancy, finance, healthcare, law, music and technology, as well as attending talks about pursuing careers in entrepreneurship, sustainability, fashion, as well as media and public sectors.

### WORLD BOOK DAY ASSEMBLY

Matilda Wnek (2010) sat down for a conversation with our Deputy Head Girl (Academic), Katie, for a morning assembly to talk about her career as a writer for television and how her love of reading, instilled during her school days, helped to shape her career.



### FREE THINKING FRIDAYS

Alisha O'Brien Coker (2019) spoke to our Sixth Form History students about her burgeoning career as an arts curator, having worked with the Wallace Collection and the National Portrait Gallery.



### ENTREPRENEUR SPEAKER SERIES

Our Head Girl Arya spoke to a range of inspiring business leaders including the co-founder of Lola's Cupcakes Victoria Jossel Nurtman (2000)

### SCIENCE ALLIANCE

Ada Liebenau (2016) returned to give a lecture on her academic journey from A Levels to becoming a PhD student in Biochemical research. This was part of our Science Alliance series of lectures which brings together A level students from South Hampstead and UCL Academy.

### BREAKFAST CONVERSATION

Nina Sandelson (2015), who is the Non-Fiction Commissioning Editor at Weidenfeld and Nicolson, joined the current editorial committee of South Hampstead's student magazine, The Penguin, for a breakfast conversation in the school library about the world of book publishing.



### ALUMNA OF THE YEAR

Our GDST Alumna of the Year finalist, Nadia Odunayo (2010) spoke at a whole-school assembly about her startup tech platform The StoryGraph, and her career as an entrepreneur.

## Get Involved

There are a range of ways to participate within our *Mehr Licht* community.

### SHARING EXPERIENCE

Our monthly 'Motivational Monday' blog series spotlights the achievements and career journeys of our alumnae, and allows them to share their advice and insights to inspire the next generation.

### NETWORKING EVENTS AND CAREERS TALKS

Each year, we offer a range of talks and events for our current students, just like those mentioned above. We rely on the generosity of our network to come in to share their valuable experience and advice to the girls just starting out on their career journey.

### LINKEDIN



The GDST and South Hampstead High School alumnae pages on LinkedIn are the beating heart of our alumnae community, and allows all of us to share news, career wins, friendly advice, and opportunities for connection.

To find out more and to get involved, follow us on LinkedIn here.







*The Mehr Licht Community brings together the many strands of our annual programme of events, lectures, concerts, workshops, careers information and courses which are open to parents, pupils, alumnae and friends.*

SCAN  
to find out  
more...



# *Towards 150*

## *Reception and Concert*



*Our annual Towards 150 reception brings together members of our community who have supported our initiatives across the school, as we share the impact of their generosity.*

This year, we celebrated the opening of our beautiful new indoor garden – funded entirely by our community – which aims to bring the outdoors in and offers a calming, biophilic retreat whatever the weather (see page 18).

The evening continued with the latest in our professional musician series, as we were honoured to welcome world-renowned pianist Steven Kovacevich to perform in Waterlow Hall. Guests were treated to a spectacular programme featuring works by Beethoven and Schubert – an unforgettable celebration of music and your continued support.

CHERYL GIOVANNONI (CEO OF THE GDST)  
CUTS THE RIBBON TO OPEN THE GARDEN







CLASS OF 1995



THE MAGIC OF AI



STANDING FOR THE SCHOOL SONG



## ALUMNAE

# Reunion Tea 2025

In March, we welcomed over 180 alumnae back to South Hampstead to reconnect with friends, teachers and the school. The gathering included those from the '5' Classes – 1965, 1975, 1985, 1995, 2005, as well as a 25-year Silver Reunion group for the Class of 2000. Our hall was filled with the sound of boisterous chatter and catch-ups between old friends over tea and sweet treats, a rousing rendition of the school song, and even the voices of a few familiar Headmistresses from days past, thanks to the wonders of AI!



1960S REUNION



CLASS OF 2000





# Magical Musical Memories



*This summer, our legendary Director of Music, Dr Steve Collisson, retired from teaching. During his 12-year tenure, there have been hundreds of memorable concerts, musicals and productions – but perhaps none more so than this year's Spring and Summer Concerts.*

## COMMITMENT AND COMMUNITY

For his final concert, Dr Collisson conducted the Symphony Orchestra and Senior Choir, who were joined by our Choral Society, alumnae musicians, and members of the music staff. With an assembled cast of more than 150 performers, this was truly a community event – mothers played with daughters, sisters sang side by side, professional stars partnered current pupils – and families came together to perform Gabriel Fauré's Requiem, as well as perhaps the most challenging and largest orchestral work our talented musicians have tackled: Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5.

The whole evening paid tribute to Dr Collisson's ambition, commitment, and contribution to South Hampstead's outstanding musical reputation. It reflected how much respect and love there have for him throughout his time at the school.

## A FAREWELL FANFARE

As he handed over his baton to our new Director of Music, Miss Sophie Ellis, Dr Collisson took up position in the bassoon section of the orchestra – unaware that the final piece in the Summer Concert had been commissioned especially for him.

Fanfare and Celebration, composed by James Redwood, weaves together ideas from pupils, staff, and Dr Collisson's own musical passions. His beloved bassoon is heavily featured in the wind band movement; his first instrumental love, the cello, is beautifully highlighted in the string quartet movement; and the choir sang in German – a language Dr Collisson speaks fluently and also teaches. The composer also included musical quotations from some of Dr Collisson's favourite pieces: Beethoven's string quartets, Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5, and Les Misérables – as well as tone rows and cryptograms in a fitting tribute to someone who wrote their PhD thesis on Schoenberg.

The result was a moving and heartfelt finale, a fitting tribute to someone who has left an indelible mark on the musical life of the school.

*"What an impact he has made on us all; what memories and opportunities he has forged for so many people; what warmth and integrity he radiates – how fortunate we have been to be part of his magic!"*





## Ladies' Lunch

*This year we held our very first Ladies Lunch for alumnae from the Class of 1960 and before. Hosted by Head Anna Paul, our senior alumnae met and chatted with some current Year 7 pupils, and were treated to stories from the archive presented by Jo Coates. It was of course also a wonderful reunion of friends, some of whom hadn't seen each other for over 65 years!*



To read more about the lunch, as well as some of the stories of the school's history that our archivist Jo Coates told in her presentation at the lunch, follow the QR code link.



## Friendship & Community

*A strong school community makes for an even stronger school experience. That's why FOSH (Friends of South Hampstead) and the Junior School PTA – both entirely run by parent volunteers – play such an important role. These groups work tirelessly to bring families together, support school initiatives, and raise vital funds that enrich every girl's education.*



### FRIENDS OF SOUTH HAMPSTEAD (FOSH)

It's been a record-breaking year for FOSH! Thanks to the incredible generosity and involvement of our parent community, we raised over £30,000 – all of which goes directly back into the school. From funding the Speaker Series and supporting the 105th Anniversary projects, to responding to departmental funding bids, your contributions are making a meaningful impact.

Our events calendar has been buzzing:

A festive Wine Tasting evening with Laithwaites

The ever-popular Quiz Night

Fun-filled Year 7 and 8 Discos, a social highlight for students

Second-Hand Uniform Sales promoting sustainability while raising funds.

### JUNIOR SCHOOL PTA

The Junior School PTA has also had a vibrant year, filled with events that brought joy to girls and their families alike. Highlights included:

A magical Christmas Fun Day (with our new snow machine!)

Lively Bake Sales and a Parents' Quiz Night

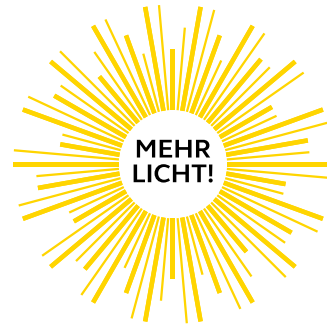
A colourful Spring Street Party featuring a unicycling entertainer

A bustling Summer Fair and Sports Day

An inspiring Parent Speaker Series

The funds raised helped support a wide range of school initiatives and also supported important charitable causes – collecting shoes for Shoe Aid, pyjamas for Little Village, and fundraising for The Starlight Foundation, our school's chosen charity. The Summer Fair even featured stalls for the 150th Anniversary Campaign, the Year 7 Norway expedition, and a hair-braiding booth run by Year 10 girls!





*A look at just a few of the other opportunities we have had to welcome members of our community to the school this year:*

## Welcome Evenings

We kicked off a new autumn term at South Hampstead with welcome evenings for all parents – a chance for them to learn more about the upcoming year, as well as to meet fellow parents and members of the community.



## Honorary Alumnae Coffee Morning

Our annual Coffee Morning has become a popular autumn fixture, as Honorary Alumnae Liaison, Doris Hugh, hosted a mid-week meet-up for all our former members of staff.



## Consultations

Mrs Anna Paul hosted consultation meetings with parents, alumnae, and friends of the school – a vital way for us to hear directly from the community and an opportunity to discuss the exciting plans for the School's 150th Anniversary Campaign.



## Winter Carol Concerts

Junior and Senior School families came together in St John's Parish Church – a sonorous Carol Service on a chilly night and an uplifting end to the calendar year.

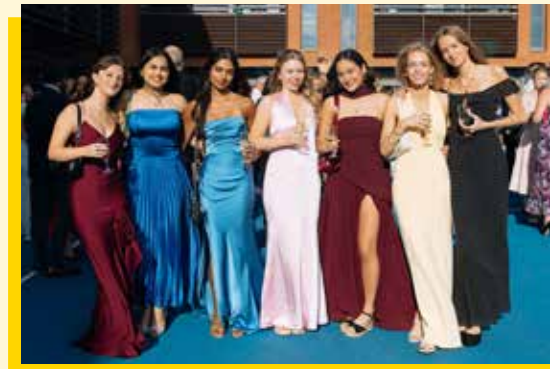


## 1876 Society Meeting

The 1876 Society recognises all those who have made a regular contribution of £1,876 or more to our bursary programme. Our annual meeting this year was held at the sports ground pavilion with our special guest actor Jim Carter OBE, 'in conversation' with Len Dunne.

## Speaker Series: 'Raising Resilient Girls'

Everyone was invited to our spring term Speaker Series to hear from a panel of pastoral experts about the importance of resilience, hosted by the journalist and alumna Jenny Kleeman.



## Valedictory Ceremonies

We bid au revoir and paid tribute to our pupils as our Year 6 pupils were welcomed into the Senior School and our Class of 2025 were welcomed to the Alumnae Community.

## South Hampstead Wrapped

We hosted parents and pupils at our second ever whole-school 'South Hampstead Wrapped' event as we rounded off the 2024-2025 year at the Senior School in style.



## In Conversation

We were delighted to host An Evening with Eliza Manningham Buller on behalf of the GDST as the former Director General of MI5 reflected on what she has learned from her career, on leadership, working under pressure, navigating uncertainty and ambiguity and remaining resilient.

## Join Us

To find out what we have in store for the coming year, follow us on LinkedIn and visit the Mehr Licht Community pages on our website.



# Looking Back

*History plays a vital role in shaping a school's identity and values. It connects past generations with the present, offering a sense of belonging and continuity. This year, we were proud to honour our alumnae through the installation of our Rings of Recognition (see page 57). As we look back in this section, we highlight some of the inspiring discoveries we've made and reflect on the rich architectural heritage that continues to shape our community.*

SCAN  
to find out  
more...



## Trailblazers

*Our alumnae community is full of inspirational women, and this year we've discovered even more trailblazers – whether through delving into our archive collection or thanks to members of our community contacting us. You can read about some of our many Inspirational Alumnae on our website; here we highlight four historic women who came to our attention this year.*



*Anne Mary Wilkes (1868-1941)*

We discovered both Anne and her sister Julia when Julia's great-grandson contacted us about our archive. Here he details the lives of these two extraordinary women:

"Anne enrolled as one of the first cohorts of students South Hampstead High School in the 1880s. She subsequently became a prolific and prizewinning illustrator and artist known for life drawings and landscape compositions; she exhibited her artwork at such institutions as The Royal Academy, London Salon, The Royal Society of British Artists, and the Paris Salon."



*Julia Katherine Wilkes (1871-1942)*

Julia was, like her sister, schooled at South Hampstead in the 1880s. After leaving school, Julia married Daniel Steele and relocated to Greece, where she collected rare artworks and antiquities. She became a prominent curator and collector, who donated many of her items to the Ure Museum at the University of Reading, where they are still held.



*Clara Kirchberger (1889-1960)*

We were approached by the University of Manitoba this year to find out about Clara Kirchberger who attended South Hampstead in the early 1900s. Clara graduated from Somerville College, Oxford in 1912 – the only woman to obtain a first class in Modern Languages that year. She became an Anglican nun, medievalist scholar and librarian, and was known for her translation of several works of Christian mysticism including the adaptation to modern English of *The Mirror of Simple Souls*. We managed to find a photograph of Clara taken at the school in 1902.



*Janet Watson (1923-1985)*

Janet Vida Watson was an acclaimed British geologist. After leaving South Hampstead, Janet attended Reading University where she studied General Science. She spent the war years working for the National Institute for Research in Dairying, before deciding to specialise in Geology. She worked at Imperial College, becoming a Professor there in 1974 – she was the first woman to hold the post of Professor of Geology, and also became the Royal Society's first ever female president from 1982-4.

Do you know of an Inspirational Alumna who you'd like to see featured on our website and within the school on our Rings of Recognition honours board? Get in touch with our alumnae team at [alumnae@shhs.gdst.net](mailto:alumnae@shhs.gdst.net).



1899

In the early days, the Junior School students did not wear uniforms, but instead wore their own clothes with straw boater hats.



1902

Girls still wore their own clothes at the turn of the century – students are seen here in frilly dresses and three-quarter length skirts.



1990s

For sports, they could wear a navy blue sweatshirt with the Mehr Licht logo and SHHS embroidered in large letters.



2009

In summer, the girls wore a blue and white striped summer dress with a white collar.



## SCHOOL UNIFORMS, PAST AND PRESENT

### Through the Years

*This year, we have commissioned six very special dolls for our Early Years department at the Junior School. Each doll will be dressed in a variation of the South Hampstead High School uniform – summer and winter, past and present, sports and everyday.*

*Jo Coates (Honorary Alumna) has been digging through our archives to find out what Juniors have been wearing since 1876...*



1926

In the 1920s, school uniform became compulsory. The girls wore a navy blue tunic over a white blouse and a gold tie.



1950s

The iconic yellow shirts were introduced to replace the white blouse and as you can see from this piece donated to our archive collection, the girls wore a smart hat with a yellow and blue headband, which they had to wear to and from school.



1990s

By the 1990s, some items had changed. The girls still wore a navy blue tunic and yellow blouse, but now without a tie. The girls also wore a navy blue jumper with gold at the collar and cuffs.

### Present Day

These days, the girls still wear the yellow shirt with either a navy-blue tunic or skirt and blue jumper with yellow trim in winter, and checked dresses in the summer. They can choose to add a yellow ribbon in their hair. They also have the option to wear trousers and on the days they are doing sport, they are allowed to come into the school in sports kit.





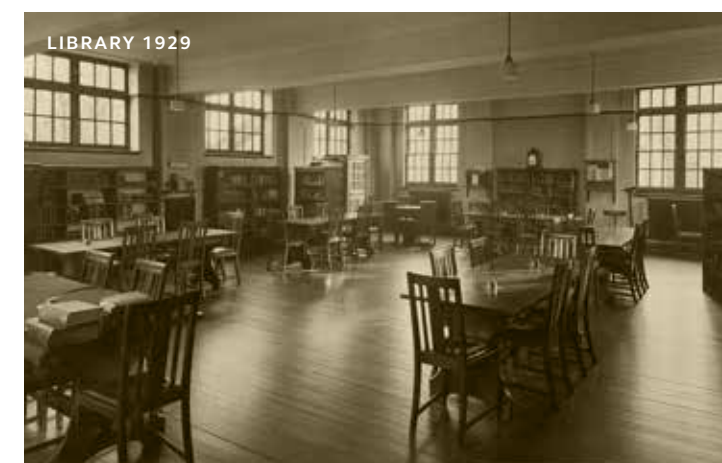
# A Building Through Time

*Our Senior School has seen immense transformation since opening its doors in 1876. Our archivist, Jo Coates, pieces together some of the changes that have taken place using material from our archives collected over the years.*

South Hampstead High School, then known as St. John's Wood High School, opened in 1876 on a site in Winchester Road, South Hampstead. Unfortunately the building was not exactly fit for purpose – it was damp and dark, with an insect infestation in the walls. There was no assembly hall, and three classes shared one room separated only by curtains. When the number of girls attending the school reached the 300 mark, it became clear that new premises were urgently needed; South Hampstead then moved to the present site at 3, Maresfield Gardens. The father of one of the girls, Mr. E.C. Robins, designed the school, and the building was formally opened by Princess Louise in 1882. Yet the school was so new

that students moved in before the plaster had even dried out – which gave some girls a nasty cold!

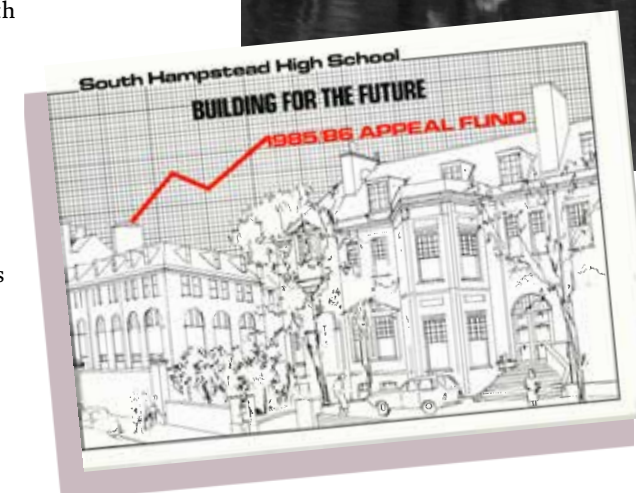
The new building at Maresfield Gardens was still not ideal. Conditions were still very cramped, and the facilities were often faulty; in March 1890, for example, we found record of the boiler exploding, leaving the premises without heating. Slowly new additions were made as two laboratories and two music rooms were added. There was just space for two fives courts built in 1890, but no further expansion took place until the school's 50th birthday in 1926 when a large gymnasium, a library, a chemistry lab and a geography room were added.



In 1921, the school was fortunate to acquire the next-door house which, at the time, was the home of the artist Sir Ernest Waterlow. From 1921-1957, Waterlow House was used for the Junior School which freed up further space in the main building. The Art department was able to use Sir Ernest's studio. Finally in 1957, the Junior School were able to acquire 12 Netherhall Gardens, and Waterlow became the centre for 6th form lessons.

An important addition to the school came in 1971 when the Science Block was built. Parents and the GDPST contributed generously to buy up the newly available land for the site. The block was opened by the eminent scientist and Nobel Prize Winner, Professor Dorothy Hodgkin.

However, there were still limitations to the original Waterlow Building. In 1985-6, parents and alumnae raised funds for a new building project. Under the Headmistress, Averil Burgess, the original Waterlow House was pulled down and a new one built. With the purchase of Martin's Garage next door and after a struggle with Camden Council, it was finally finished in 1988, where it was officially opened by the Duchess of Gloucester. The Head Girl, Gabrielle Jourdan, wrote: 'Meeting Royalty is not an everyday occurrence. We could enjoy the ceremony until the nerve-racking event of actually meeting an HRH. Much to our surprise, we discovered that she was actually as shy as us and we got along fine'.







OAKWOOD HOUSE



MARESFIELD GARDENS 2015



WATERLOW HALL 2020

Since the 1980s, a new dining room, kitchens and a small theatre were built in the basement, along with a revamped assembly hall and gym on the ground floor, and classrooms on the floors above for Modern Languages, Geography and Art. In 1991, the school was able to acquire Oakwood, a listed building, which today houses our Sixth Form.

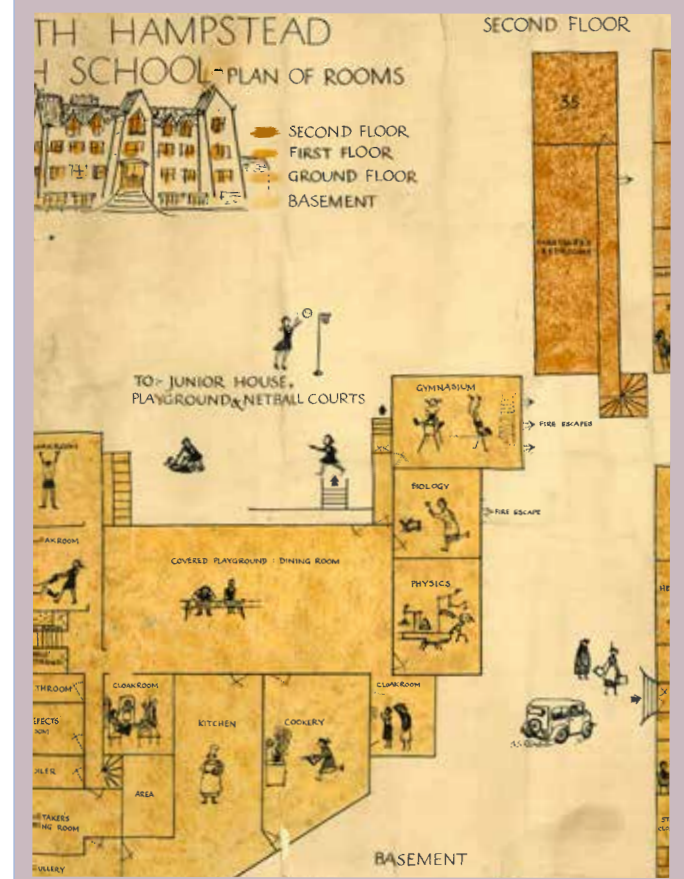
In the 2010s, it became clear that the main school building was no longer fit for purpose for the thriving school. With major investment from the GDST and contributions from the AKO and Howard Foundations, the Chair of Governors, John Rosefield, and Headmistress, Jenny Stephen, oversaw the complex process of obtaining planning, relocating the Senior School to temporary home, and the build of the current state-of-the-art campus. The new building, complete with grand glass atrium, new classrooms, and gym facilities, was finally completed under Headmistress Helen Pike and was opened in January 2015.

The last part of our building's story so far was the creation of our extraordinary new theatre and concert space, named Waterlow Hall after the School's original Waterlow House building. The South Hampstead community joined together to raise over £3.2 million for the project, and the hall was officially opened by GDST alumnae Helen Bonham Carter and Olivia Colman in January 2020.

*Of course this is by no means the end of the story. Transformation, improvement, and expansion have been part of our school site's history since the very beginning, and we're looking forward to the exciting plans currently in development as we look towards our next 150 years – read more on page 58.*

#### FROM THE ARCHIVE...

In our school archive we found some hand-drawn blueprints of the school building made by our students.





# Opening Doors, Hearts & Minds

*As we start to make plans for our 150th anniversary year, we take a moment to reflect on the impact of your support this year, celebrate the difference your contribution has made and share our exciting plans for our 150th Anniversary Campaign.*

SCAN  
to find out  
more...



## BREADTH & ACCESSIBILITY

### *Towards & Beyond our 150th Anniversary*

*Head, Anna Paul reflects on the remarkable impact of your support over the past year.*

Each year, we compile a Philanthropy Review to evaluate and celebrate the difference your generosity has made over the past 12 months. South Hampstead has a long history of community support and involvement; our 150th Anniversary Ring of Recognition is littered with references to Jubilee and Centenary Appeals, bursary initiatives and futures campaigns dating back to the early 1900s. There is hardly an area in the school which has not been touched by the generosity of those who came before and I have been humbled by how strong the culture of philanthropy is in our community and how many people have supported us this year.

Thanks to you, we've continued to broaden opportunities, enrich every student's experience, and deepen our shared sense of purpose. From the classroom to the concert hall, through our bursary programme and outreach initiatives, your philanthropy has created meaningful and lasting change.

This year alone, more than fifty young women have been able to join or continue their education at South Hampstead through our *Opening Doors* Bursary scheme. This is not just a financial achievement – it's a powerful affirmation of your belief in the potential of future generations. Our growing network of bursary mentors, pupil ambassadors, and alumnae champions shows just how deeply support and solidarity are now woven into the fabric of our community.

Your involvement has opened doors to transformative experiences. You've enabled pupils to explore, create, debate, discover, and flourish – and helped build a vibrant, inclusive school community which is redefining the hallmarks of truly innovative education for girls.

Looking ahead, we're excited to share plans for our anniversary campaign which will take us into the next chapter. With a focus on expanding access through bursaries and developing key areas of the Senior School, our aim is to honour our heritage while strengthening our vision for the future.

To everyone who has contributed time, energy, expertise, or funding – thank you. Your commitment helps ensure South Hampstead remains a truly special place where young women thrive. I look forward to continuing this journey with you.





***Piper** got busy writing in Python with the help of our Coder in Residence.*



***Cordelia** climbed mountains thanks to her bursary travel grant.*



***George** learned to speak out with thousands of other state school pupils at Debate Hub events.*



# The Philanthropic Year

You committed over £750,000 to a whole host of mind expanding opportunities – bursary awards, partnership work, Debate Hub, expert teachers, garden projects, speakers.

***Mitchel** mastered maths at our Saturday Sparks enrichment camp.*



***Sara** found a serene, quiet moment in our garden oasis.*



***Ruby** added her name to our Rings of Recognition by joining her Class of Bursary.*



***Bernice** was able to bang her own drum thanks to her music lesson award.*



***Hester** explored Homer with our Latin outreach teachers.*



Your support across all our Towards 150 initiatives this year has had far reaching benefits.

For the difference you have made to all pupils, both at and beyond South Hampstead

## Thank you





## BREADTH &amp; ACCESSIBILITY



*Since 2018, we have more than doubled the number of bursary awards we can offer each year. This September, fifty young women will be taking new opportunities at South Hampstead thanks to our Opening Doors Bursary scheme. This achievement has only been possible thanks to the generous support of our community.*

*Financial contributions are of course vital, but the involvement of volunteers who work as ambassadors, advocates, role models, and mentors to our pupils is of equal importance.*

## Listening

### OUR BURSARY MENTORS

Each year, we invite current bursary award holders to meet up with some of our alumnae who have also benefited from financial support.

Our Bursary Mentors provide wonderful role models for our current pupils and are brilliant examples of the impact a South Hampstead education can have. This year, pupils met a trio of former bursary award holders: Datshiane, a broadcast journalist; Nadia, the founder of The Storygraph; and Lola, a university lecturer and writer.

In an informal discussion, pupils – past and present – were able to share their own experiences of life at South Hampstead and discuss some of the challenges of joining the School from different backgrounds and cultures. Our mentors remarked on how important it is to hold informal

events such as these, where pupils feel empowered to speak their mind, and are supported by their peers.

These sessions form part of our overall Bursary Mentoring Scheme, which aims to create a supportive pastoral environment for award holders throughout their time at South Hampstead and beyond. Before our Year 7 pupils join us each year, we visit each of them at their primary school to learn more about how best to help them settle in. We continue to support all our award holders throughout their educational experience; when they leave us after the Sixth Form, many become Bursary Ambassadors themselves, assisting the next generation of trailblazing young women to make the most of the opportunities on offer.

## Sharing the Conversation

### SOUTH HAMPSTEAD IN THE SPOTLIGHT

We are proud to be part of the GDST mission to offer educational opportunities to all bright young women regardless of means; and to be part of a nationwide movement to widen access to independent schools.

This year, we have shared our experience at the International Development Professionals in Education (IDPE) conference where we spoke about engaging bursary students and alumnae to support the programme; we have spoken at the Girls School Association conference about the importance of creating a whole school mission around bursaries; and shared a panel with Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation to talk about transformative educational opportunities.

We are also part of the London Fees Assistance Consortium alongside other leading independent schools.

## Speaking Up

### OUR BURSARY AMBASSADORS

Last year, we appointed our first pupil bursary ambassador to help to explain and promote the benefits of the scheme to community.

Zarin (2025) joined South Hampstead for the Sixth Form and has been a brilliant contributor to the School, and a passionate advocate for bursaries. We wish her the very best as she moves on to university in September and we are delighted to welcome our new pupil Bursary Ambassador, Sahar (2026).



Sahar is studying Chemistry, Maths and Physics for A-Level. She will act as a role model and mentor to some of the younger pupils and speak about the impact of our bursary awards to supporters. We asked her to reflect on her experience so far.



*'Before joining South Hampstead, my life was very different. The prospect of attending a school as welcoming, accepting, encouraging and prestigious as this one was just a dream and reaching out to get a bursary felt impossible. But, I can honestly say that joining this school was one of the best decisions I have ever made. The teachers truly care about your well-being, your peers are bright and always supportive, and the pastoral care is phenomenal. I will always be grateful to the school for helping me to get back on my feet, encouraging me to seize new opportunities and teaching me to value my own worth as a student who belongs here. I have gone from just existing to flourishing. I can say with full confidence that my experience at South Hampstead has changed me for the better and I really look forward to helping ensure more girls can benefit from the scheme.'*



## Speaking Out



GIULIETTA (2024)



AADYA (2024)



JESS (2024)

### THE 2025 TELEPHONE CAMPAIGN

*In July, three South Hampstead graduates, Aadya, Giulietta and Jess, took to the phones to speak to alumnae as part of the GDST telephone campaign.*

*As they connected virtually with women from across the generations, they uncovered a rich network of inspiring stories, bold career changes, and a shared sense of curiosity and connection. They also linked up with fellow alumnae callers from GDST schools across the country, supporting and encouraging one another throughout the campaign.*

**We caught up with Jess to hear more about what the experience meant to her.**

#### What motivated you to take part in the alumnae telethon?

I thought it would be a lovely way to connect with other South Hampstead alumnae – and it really was! Hearing what everyone's been up to, both in their careers and during their time at South Hampstead, was so rewarding. Some of the conversations were long and friendly, and I ended up making genuine connections that turned into valuable networking opportunities.

#### Were there any stories that really stood out to you?

Absolutely. I found it especially inspiring to hear from alumnae who've made big career changes. It reminded me that it's totally okay to shift direction in life as your interests evolve. One story that really stuck with me was about a woman who had been a full-time creative for years. She had no political background at all, but she became so frustrated with the state of the world that she decided to join a political party – and ended up being incredibly successful. It just goes to show how powerful it is to care deeply about what you do.

#### What did you learn about the school itself through these conversations?

I joined the Junior School in 2010, so it was fascinating to hear what South Hampstead was like before that – how class sizes,

buildings, and even the daily routine have changed. But what really struck me was how many alumnae, no matter when they attended, spoke about the same things: high-quality teaching and close friendships. It's clear that while the school has evolved over its 150 years, its core values have stayed strong.

#### How has this experience impacted you personally?

I've definitely improved my communication skills. Speaking to so many new people helped me get better at starting interesting conversations and really listening. More than that, I've started thinking differently about my own future. A lot of alumnae said their best piece of advice was to follow your interests and try lots of different things – and that really resonated with me. I've also come away with great contacts I can reach out to for advice or work experience. It's something I'll carry with me, and I'll definitely be taking more opportunities to connect with the alumnae community in the future.

**Thank you to everyone who gave up their time to talk to Jess, Aadya and Giulietta and for your generous support of our bursary scheme. As a result of this campaign, we are able to fund another young woman through her education at South Hampstead this year, and we look forward to adding your names to our Bursary Ring of Recognition.**

You can find out more about the transformative impact of bursaries and how you can get involved on our website.



## Reflections on Recognition

*At the alumnae reunion in March we inaugurated our Rings of Recognition – a new installation celebrating the legacy and contribution of our alumnae to South Hampstead.*

Situated on the seventh floor, the installations face the beautiful honours boards that proudly record the achievements of previous generations of pupils. Crafted from wood and shaped like tree rings, they embody themes of longevity, strength, and growth. Each ring tells its own story – together, they represent the deep roots and wide-reaching branches of our alumnae community.

### A LIVING TIMELINE

The first ring commemorates key milestones in the school's rich history, beginning in 1876 and winding its way toward our 150th anniversary in 2026–2027. A few spaces remain, reserved for upcoming moments that will shape the next chapter of South Hampstead's story.

### INSPIRATIONAL ALUMNAE

Our alumnae community is filled with trailblazing women who have forged new paths across countless fields. The second ring celebrates just a few of these inspirational figures – torchbearers whose achievements you can explore in the Looking Back section of this magazine, or by visiting the Inspirational Alumnae pages on our website.

### SUPPORTERS OF OPPORTUNITY

The final ring honours those who have generously supported opportunities for future generations by contributing to their Class of Bursary and funding transformative awards. Currently, 120 alumnae are named here – and next year, they'll be joined by supporters from the Telephone and the Class of 2025 Leavers' campaign who together have funded a full Sixth Form Award for a new pupil starting in September.

### A SWEET CELEBRATION

To mark the inauguration of the rings, we held a ceremony, complete with three beautiful cakes baked and donated by current parent Mrs Grochola. Her daughter, Frances (2029), is one of our current award holders and alongside Chair of Governors Amanda Dewinter (1982) and School Archivist Jo Coates, she helped cut the cakes to officially welcome the rings into South Hampstead life.

It was a moment to pause and reflect on the strength and generosity of the South Hampstead family. From millennium bricks lining the Sixth Form garden, to named seats in the concert hall, to the sparkling stars and the musical notes at the entrance to Waterlow Hall – signs of gratitude and recognition are woven throughout the school. They are lasting reminders of the belief, trust, and support that have helped shape South Hampstead into what it is today.







## CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT



## Opportunity

*“When we create bursaries, we offer life chances to individuals and an education to all.”*

Lynn Frank  
Honorary Alumna & Bursary Board Member

Means-tested bursary awards change lives. Our aim is to support at least 1 in 10 of our Senior School pupils through our *Opening Doors* bursary programme.



To find out how you can support our 150th Anniversary Campaign, contact [development@shhs.gdst.net](mailto:development@shhs.gdst.net)



South Hampstead  
High School

*In 2026/27, we will mark South Hampstead’s sesquicentennial anniversary. As we prepare for this milestone, we’ve been engaging with our wider community to understand what our priorities should be to help shape a new strategic plan for the years leading up to – and beyond – our 150th year.*

Thank you to everyone who has taken part in our consultations through surveys, meetings, telephone interviews, and conversations. We are excited to share some of our plans for the future, based on your feedback.

### OPPORTUNITY

Since its foundation in 1876, South Hampstead has been committed to empowering young women through education, regardless of background or means. That founding mission is more relevant than ever, and your feedback has made it clear that broadening access and increasing diversity must remain a central focus for the school and the wider GDST community.

Supporting bursary awards through the South Hampstead Opening Doors Bursary campaign creates life chances for the

An outdoor classroom with a flexible layout for teaching and gathering

Biodiverse planting aligned with Camden’s Beeline initiative and the school’s sustainability goals

Sensory features such as water elements and tactile planting

Shade to protect existing classrooms and create quiet areas for reflection and emotional regulation



pupils who receive the awards and enhances the education of all at the school. This will remain a key priority and, by our anniversary year, we hope to be able to offer at least 5 new means-tested awards through your continued support.

### WELLBEING

Alongside access, you have championed a renewed emphasis on wellbeing – both physical and emotional. We know that the academic success of our pupils is closely tied to health and happiness. Enhancing our facilities to support holistic development, mental health, and the inclusion of all pupils will be a vital part of our future.

You can read more about how pupils from across the school have contributed to developing these plans on page 20. Thanks to their input, we are now finalising designs that could transform the Senior School building, from top to bottom.

### REIMAGINING THE ROOF GARDEN

Situated at the very top of the school, this outdoor space has the potential to become a vibrant learning area and a haven of peace for pupils and staff. Our plans aim to bring nature into the everyday rhythm of school life, creating new spaces for outdoor learning, sensory exploration, relaxation, and creative connection.



## Wellbeing

*“Green space and exercise have so many benefits for physical and mental health.”*

Ms Hardy  
Director of PE & Sport

Our aim is to re-purpose spaces at the top and bottom of the Senior School to enhance biodiversity and wellbeing.



To find out how you can support our 150th Anniversary Campaign, contact [development@shhs.gdst.net](mailto:development@shhs.gdst.net)



South Hampstead  
High School



Equipment for individual exercise and fitness

A studio space for yoga, Pilates, dance, and mindfulness sessions

A calming environment to help manage stress, especially during exam periods

Wellbeing resources for both pupils and staff



#### REPURPOSING FOR A GYM AND STUDIO

On the lower levels of the school, underused changing rooms are set to be transformed into a modern gym and wellness studio. These new facilities will support physical activity beyond traditional sports, offering flexible and accessible options for all students.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

This autumn we will share our new strategic plan and begin preparations to deliver these initiatives around opportunity and wellbeing.

We hope to reach out to our whole community through a 150th Anniversary Campaign and seek your support for these transformational projects so that together, we can bring them to life in time to mark our 150th anniversary year in 2026/27.

As the countdown begins, the 150th Anniversary Campaign will offer more than a chance to honour South Hampstead's past – it will encourage commitment to a future where every girl has the opportunity and the space to become a torchbearer for the future.

As we prepare to write the next chapter in South Hampstead's story, we hope everyone in our community will join us in ensuring that our mission for the next 150 years is every bit as powerful as it has been for the last.

If you would like to learn more about our 150th Anniversary Campaign projects or explore how you can support opportunity and wellbeing at South Hampstead, please contact: [development@shhs.gdst.net](mailto:development@shhs.gdst.net)



## Thank You

*Our community supports us in so many meaningful ways: by volunteering with our partnership programmes, organising events, sharing their career journeys, supporting pupil initiatives, and donating to our Towards 150 campaign. We are deeply grateful for your generosity and engagement.*

#### THE 1876 SOCIETY



Named after our founding year, the 1876 Society honours those who make a significant philanthropic commitment to bursaries. Members pledge an annual gift of £1,876 or more, or donate the equivalent of a full-fee bursary place. Each year, the Head hosts an event to thank our 1876 Society members, whose names are also recorded in the 1876 Society book. This summer, we welcomed our members to a summer supper at the sports ground, with special guest speaker Jim Carter OBE.

#### CLASS OF BURSARIES

The *Class of Bursaries* initiative brings together alumnae from the same year group to support our *Opening Doors* Bursary Campaign. Every year, we invite our departing families to contribute and thanks to the generosity of the Class of 2025, we have been able to fund a full Sixth Form bursary.

Donors giving or pledging £500 or more are recognised on our Bursary Ring of Recognition – one of the many ways we celebrate our community's impact.

#### THE SIR NAIM DANGOOR AWARDS



Named in honour of the late businessman and philanthropist Sir Naim Dangoor, a passionate advocate for education, these awards represent a significant step in widening access. We are delighted to welcome our first award holder in September 2025, made possible through the generous support of the Elixarch's Foundation.

#### THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY CAMPAIGN

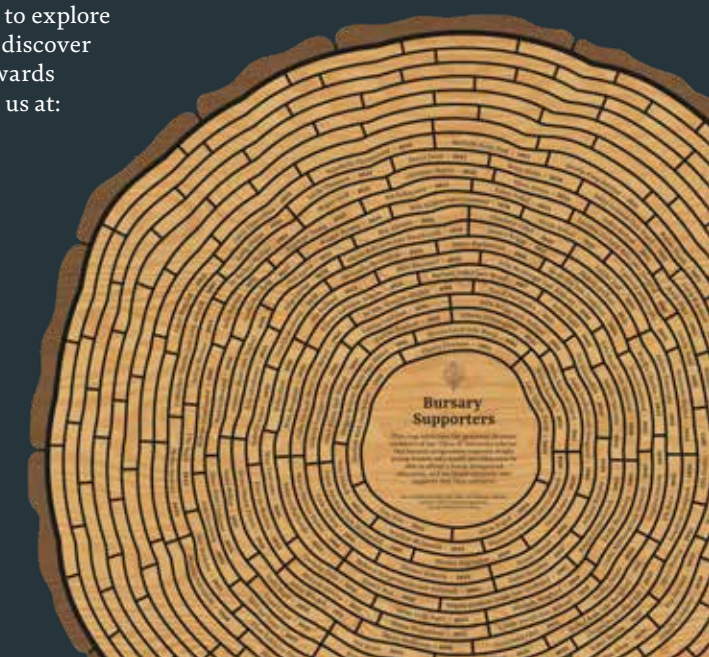
As we look ahead to future projects, we invite you to be part of our continued story. If you'd like to explore recognition opportunities or discover how you can support our Towards 150 campaign, please contact us at: [development@shhs.gdst.net](mailto:development@shhs.gdst.net)

#### DEBATE HUB SUPPORTERS



We are immensely grateful to the Rangoonwala Foundation, which has supported our Debate Hub programme for the past four years. Their funding has enabled us to expand this award-winning initiative to thousands of pupils in schools beyond our own.

This summer, we were pleased to award the Rangoonwala Debating Prizes at our state school only Bingham Debating Competition, a celebration of young voices and critical thinking.





# News

*Our community’s achievements spread far and wide. Whether it be outstanding performances on the silver screen, or winning local elections, we are proud to share them with you.*

SCAN  
to find out  
more...



## GDST Alumna of the Year

*The GDST’s annual Alumna of the Year Awards celebrate some of the remarkable members of our community who are breaking barriers, driving change, and inspiring the next generation.*

*This year, South Hampstead were honoured to have two alumnae finalists, Professor Mina Ryten (1995) and Lilah Fear (2019), who were recognised for their contributions to Science and Sport.*

### PROFESSOR MINA RYTEN

*Class of 1995*



Having had a life-long interest in the human brain, Professor Mina Ryten has dedicated her career to unravelling its mysteries. After leaving South Hampstead in 1995, Mina studied at the University of Cambridge and subsequently completed her PhD at UCL, where she focused on purinergic signalling in skeletal muscle development. After taking further training in Bioinformatics, Mina moved into the field of clinical genetics. In 2017, she set up her own research lab at the UCL Institute of Neurology, which focused on using innovative data methods to better understand the genetic basis of degenerative diseases such as Dementia. At the same time, Mina gave her time as an Honorary Consultant at the Great Ormond Street Children’s Hospital and Guy’s Hospital in London, where she used her expertise to help individuals and families affected by such diseases to get proper diagnosis and treatment.

The institute, named the Ryten Lab, moved to the University of Cambridge in 2024, where Mina was appointed as the Director of the UK Dementia Research Institute (UK DRI) the same year. Mina’s innovative research has advanced the use of long-read RNA sequencing and spatial transcriptomics to map disease pathways and identify potential therapeutic targets. Her ongoing research aims to identify how specific genes might have a relationship to these kinds of neurodegenerative diseases, and ultimately form a better understanding of how we can diagnose, treat, or even prevent the life-changing impacts of these conditions.

### LILAH FEAR

*Class of 2019*

Lilah caught the skating bug very young; having moved to London from Connecticut aged only a year old, her Canadian parents instilled her with a love of skating by enrolling her in lessons at a local Ice Rink in Queen’s Park. Lilah began competing in international competitions whilst still at school, teaming up with partner Lewis Gibson in 2016 to win their first British title.

The pair quickly became well-known to fans for their fun, disco-inspired dance routines, making them not only reliable medal-winners but also entertainers with a popular following on the international circuit.

Lilah has completed at, and won medal in, the world’s most prestigious sporting competitions, including winning Bronze at the 2019 Grand Prix in Canada, Seventh place in the 2021 World Championships, Tenth place in the Beijing Winter Olympics in 2022, and Bronze and the European Finals in 2025.

Lilah’s athletic career only continues to go from strength to strength. at the 2025 World Championships in March, Lilah and Lewis won a Bronze medal for Team GB – a remarkable result that saw the British team score their first podium place at the competition since Torvill and Dean in 1984.

### TRAILBLAZER OF THE YEAR FINALIST





# Alumnae Authors

Many members of our community are well known as writers and academics and the list of published alumnae continues to grow. In this edition, we turn the spotlight on two who have recently released new books.



AUTHOR

## Emily Kasriel

*“The encouragement to question, explore, and think deeply at South Hampstead has opened possibilities I never imagined, and for that I am profoundly grateful.”*

Emily Kasriel’s career journey is one marked by curiosity, the exploration of new ideas, and an interest in facilitating human connection. Emily joined South Hampstead on a bursary award, giving her the opportunity to engage with a community that valued intellectual curiosity. She developed a love for analysis at school and was particularly inspired by the twentieth century contemporary O Level History course. School clubs run by older students offered creative freedom, and music lessons with her supportive piano teacher, Miss Noble, were joyful despite what she says is her limited musical talent. She fondly recalls Miss Noble playing ‘English Country Garden’ and the Sixth Formers throwing sweets from the Waterlow Hall balcony at the end of term – small moments of tradition that stayed with her.

Emily went on to read Geography at Oxford, followed by a Rotary Scholarship to Syracuse University to do a master’s in international relations. She then worked in television in New York and reported from South Africa before securing a job with the BBC’s Africa service as a broadcast journalist. Her BBC career grew into a leadership role, producing ambitious, cross-disciplinary programmes featuring Nobel

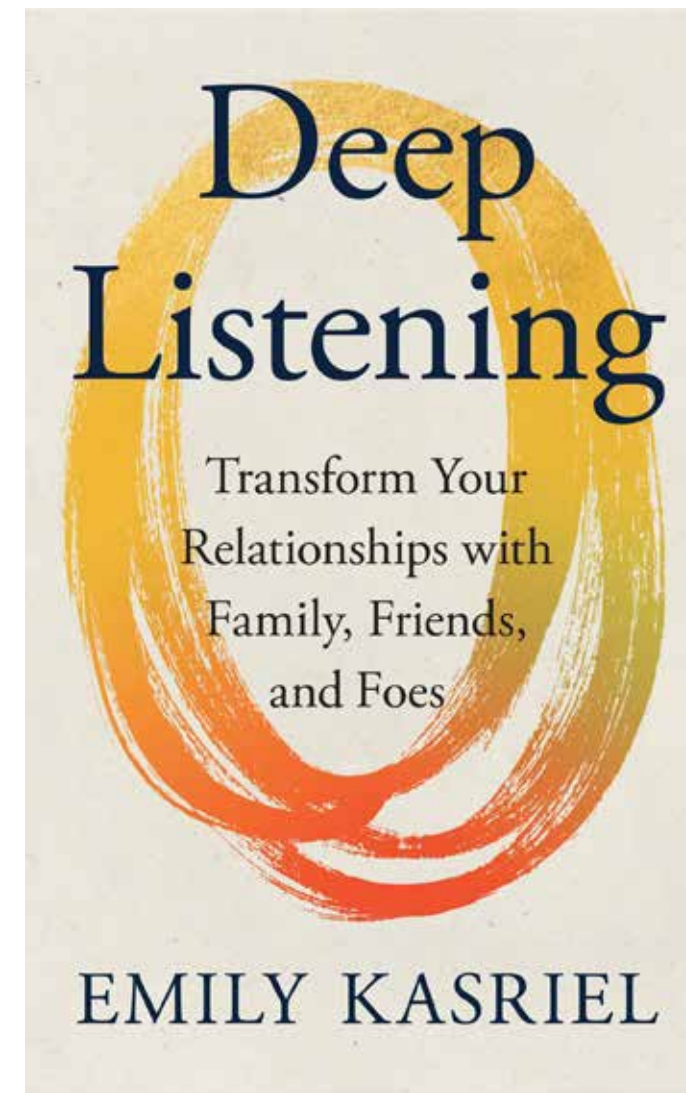
Prize winners and thought leaders, and running the arts and religion departments at the BBC World Service. She is based in London, where she raised her two children; her daughter Maya, another South Hampstead alumna, is now an expert on biodiversity for an energy company in Germany.

Emily spoke of the warm friendships at South Hampstead, in particular with fellow bursary student Lara Fielden. Their friendship continued from school through the decades, attending Oxford University together, both landing jobs at the BBC (albeit in very different departments), and through the experience of motherhood, until Lara’s untimely passing a few years ago. This tragic loss of a dear friend and wonderful listener has informed Emily’s new book, Deep Listening.

Emily has always been passionate about bridging divides – telling stories of negotiating conflicts across divides of race, class, religion and nationality, leading the BBC Crossing Divides season – which ultimately led her to her pioneering work, Deep Listening. Her research included leading a wide-reaching Deep Listening project with 1000 participants in 100 countries, while a Practitioner in Residence at the London School of Economics and then as a Senior Visiting Fellow at King’s College, exploring how we can truly hear one another despite differences. In the book, she argues that the practice of Deep Listening enables people to become more open, to sit with challenging ideas, and to build authentic trust within our relationships as parents, partners, colleagues and citizens.

As a researcher and author, a mother of two, and an advocate for lifelong learning, Emily encourages today’s students to explore, experiment, and remain open to new possibilities: ‘We are all in the process of becoming’, she argues, ‘not limited to be the person we were last year, last month or even last week’.

**Deep Listening by Emily Kasriel was published by HarperCollins in May 2025 in the UK and June 2025 in the US.**

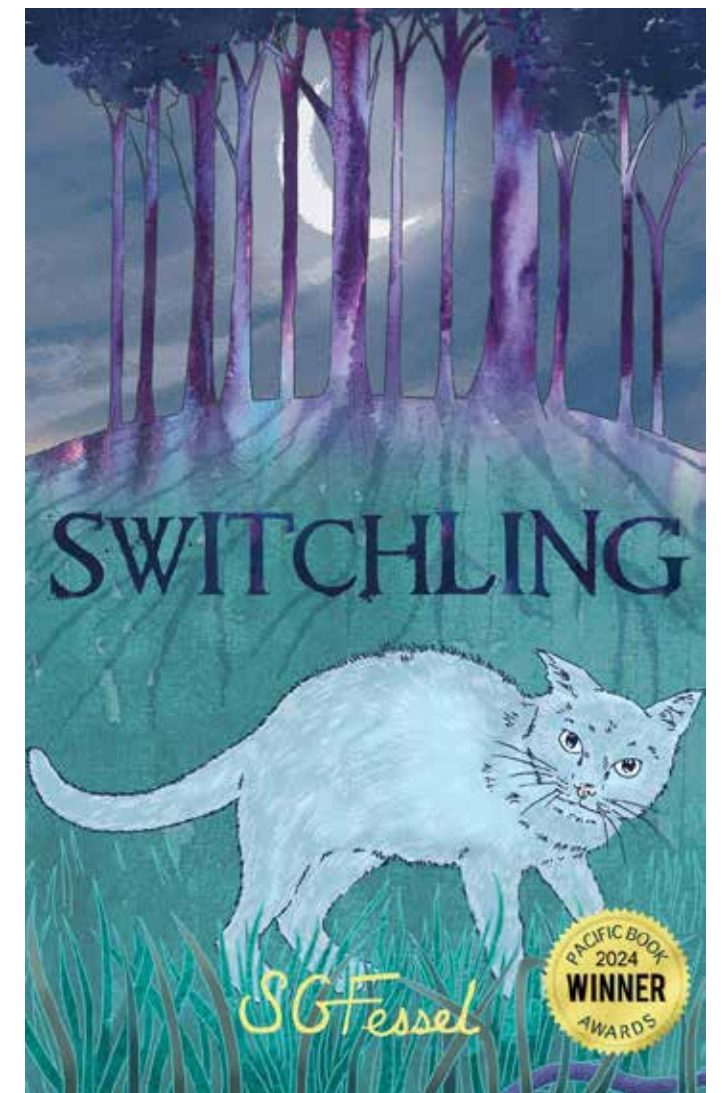


AUTHOR

## Sarah Fessel (Née Mars)

*“The English teachers at South Hamstead were excellent – they were constructively critical and really encouraged imaginative freedom.”*

Sarah Mars (1988) has just released her first children’s novel Switchling under the pen name ‘SG Fessel’, a richly atmospheric story set in a fictional English village inspired by the one where she spent some of her childhood. The book took shape over many years, written during evenings and weekends while Sarah balanced full-time roles as an academic researcher and parent. She began writing



Switchling after moving to San Francisco, driven by a sense of homesickness and nostalgia for England.

With a PhD in the History of Medicine, Sarah’s academic work focuses on the history of health policy and the US opioid epidemic. But her creative roots trace back to South Hampstead, where the English teaching left a lasting impact. She recalls the imaginative freedom encouraged by her teachers – from writing poems to crafting a one-act play about the Mary Celeste – providing her with creative skills that she still finds helpful in her writing today.

Switchling by SG Fessel was published by Nibjib Publishing in September 2024. It has won numerous awards including: ‘Best New Fiction’ at the Pacific Book Awards, First Place Winner at the International Firebird Book Awards, and was a Finalist in the Page Turner Awards.



# In the News

*Our round-up of all your exciting news and updates from across the year.*



**Claudia Kenyatta (1992)**  
Was awarded a CBE in January 2025 in recognition of her contributions to the UK's cultural heritage sector.

**Mathilde Milwidsky (2013)**

Was appointed the position of Professor of Violin at the Royal College of Music in London, becoming the College's youngest ever Professor of Strings.



**Sarah Sackman (2003)**  
Was appointed as Minister of State for Courts and Legal Services in December 2024.

**Cleo Carney (2024)**

Introduced her father Mark Carney on stage during his inauguration as the new Prime Minister of Canada.



**Charlotte Beecham (2007)**

Launched a new collection from her fashion brand Charlotte Simone, whose jacket designs have been spotted this year on the likes of Lila Moss, Gigi Hadid, and Taylor Swift.

**Cordelia Drax (2022)**

Co-founded Lync Events, an events company designed to help girls studying abroad in Madrid to connect and find community.



**Madeleine Kessler**

Was interviewed on BBC Radio 4's PM Show by Caroline Wyatt, where she discussed Brutalist architecture.

**Katya Adler (1990)**

Hosted the BBC series The Balkans: Europe's Forgotten Frontier in February 2025.



**Lilah Fear (2019)**

Won the Gold Medal at the Figure Skating World Championships in Boston alongside partner Lewis Gibson – the first time that Team GB has won Gold in this competition since Torvill and Dean in 1984. This year, she was nominated as the GDST Trailblazer of the Year – read more about her story on page 63.

**Iona Luke (2021)**

Was featured on the cover of the arts section of The Sun newspaper in a story spotlighting young up-and-coming music artists. Along with her band, she was also crowned the winner of the University of Cambridge's Take it to the Bridge music competition in 2025.



**Olivia Carp (2025)**

Won the GDST's prestigious Minerva Award this year, in recognition of her academic and extra-curricular achievements and for her embodiment of the GDST spirit and ethos.

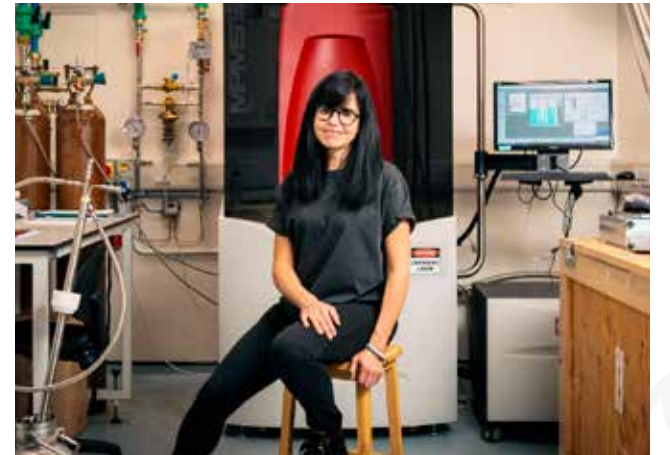


**Datshiane Navanayagam (2005)**

Hosted two episodes of Woman's Hour this year for BBC Radio 4 and was named Broadcast Hot Shot 2025 in News and Current Affairs.

**Dr Jess Wade (2007)**

Was the Royal Society Rosalind Franklin Award and Lecture winner in 2024, recognised for her work supporting early career women scientists in materials science.



**Ella Bright (2025)**

Star of Malory Towers and The Crown, has been cast as the lead in the upcoming Netflix series Off Campus.



**Fiona Campbell (1992)**

Has been honoured with a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in recognition of her services to Scottish tourism.



Don't see your news in our round-up? Get in touch to share your latest achievements and updates at [alumnae@shhs.gdst.net](mailto:alumnae@shhs.gdst.net)



# Valete

*This year we said farewell to some key members of our South Hampstead community.*

## Cecilia Ezike JOINED 1988

South Hampstead's longest-serving staff member, Cecilia Ezike, retired this year after working as our chemistry lab technician for over 36 years. She joined the school in 1988 when the science department was still spread across two buildings, and she has seen many improvements and changes for the better since then. Cecilia leaves us having made a lasting impact on all the staff she has worked with as well as on the pupils. She remembers the girls as 'the best I have ever come across' and they remember her for her warmth, energy and enthusiasm.

To read our 2023 interview with Cecilia, follow the QR code link.



## Robert Jones JOINED 2020

During his five years as Director of Finance & Operations at South Hampstead, Robert made a remarkable impact on the school. Known for his dedication, meticulousness, and kindness, he earned deep respect across the community. Whether leading with precision or lighting up a party with his DJ skills, Robert brought both professionalism and warmth to every aspect of school life.

Robert had an incredible ability to make things happen – always with a smile and a touch of magic. He delivered the Waterlow Hall development within six months of his arrival at the school and transformed the

Junior School's facilities. He never balked at unusual requests, even accommodating some enormous plants for the new indoor garden on the seventh floor; he actively listened to the girls too, making cookies 14% bigger and reinstating grated cheese after a Dragon's Den-style plea from the pupils post-Covid. Robert's involvement went far beyond his job. His involvement in concerts, staff choir, quizzes – and, of course, wine tasting – were all part of his day-to-day commitment and made him known and loved throughout the whole school.



## Amanda Dewinter JOINED 2019

Amanda joined the Governing Board in June 2019 and, from the outset, made her mark with incisive questions, clear thinking, and steadfast support. She was a strong advocate for the School during key moments and was always keen to ask how Governors could best support the leadership team.

Appointed Chair of Governors in September 2021 – the first alumna to hold the post – she brought a depth of knowledge and understanding about the School and was

passionate about extending opportunities for pupils and staff alike. She played a pivotal role in guiding the School through an outstanding inspection and overseeing the transition during a change in leadership. Throughout, she has been a trusted sounding board and a source of calm strength.

We are enormously grateful for her dedicated leadership, poise, and compassion. As she steps down as Chair of Governors, we look forward to her continued involvement with the alumnae community.



## Dr Steve Collisson JOINED 2013

In his 12 years as Director of Music at South Hampstead, Dr Collisson has transformed the music department. The orchestra has nearly doubled in size; there are dozens of music ensemble groups, from Jazz bands to ukulele groups; and the pupils perform close to 50 incredible concerts each year.

From the very start, Dr Collisson was determined that the school should have a suitable setting to showcase the pupils' musical talents and he was instrumental in driving the ambition and vision for the development of Waterlow Hall into the beautiful performance space it is today.

Steve has always chosen a very challenging repertoire and been ambitious for the

pupils, but his success stems from his huge enthusiasm and ability to make music a real joy. He has always had brilliant relationships with his colleagues, but it was his focus on the girls that set him apart.

In his own words: "The existence of music is one of the most extraordinary creations of humanity. To have been part of the musical education of South Hampstead's talented performers has been immensely rewarding... hard work and dedication can yield some of the most positive, life-fulfilling benefits that they will ever experience. This belief is ultimately encapsulated in my own, much-used, philosophical mantra: This is not about me, nor about them... it's about the music."





*Ann Kirk BEM*

1928 – 2025

An inspirational and beloved member of the South Hampstead community, who dedicated her life to Holocaust education and remembrance

As a young Jewish girl brought up in Germany in the 1930s, Ann witnessed first-hand the widespread fear and destruction that the rise of Nazism brought, including witnessing the devastating events of the Kystallnacht in 1938. For her own safety, Ann's family were forced to send her away and in 1939, aged only 10 years old, Ann was sent to London as one of the Kindertransport passengers. She was enrolled at South Hampstead High School and took her A Levels here, determined to excel academically and establish herself in a good career in order to look after her family once she was reunited with them. While she did excel – she earned a place at secretarial school before embarking on a career as an editorial assistant – she never saw her family again. Both of her parents were killed in Auschwitz in 1943.

Together with her husband Bob, another Kindertransport refugee, Ann spent the rest of her life doing educational outreach across the UK, sharing her own experience, and her family's bravery, in order to honour and remember those who lost their lives in the Holocaust. For their services to the community, both Ann and her husband received a BEM honour from Queen Elizabeth II in 2019.

Ann remained closely connected to South Hampstead High School, through educational visits to speak with the girls – such as her visit in 2018 – and through her support as a bursary donor. She was fiercely vocal about the life-changing experience of an education for young girls, and was involved in bursary programmes in the School such as the Ukrainian refugee placement programme in 2022.



*Professor Halla Beloff*

1930 – 2025

A distinguished social psychologist and former President of the British Psychological Society.

Born Halla Proskauer in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1930, she was the only child of secular Jewish parents. The rise of Nazism forced her family to flee to England in 1938, a harrowing experience later recounted in her daughter Zoe Beloff's illustrated memoir, *Reminiscences of a Refugee Childhood*.

Upon moving to the UK, Halla studied at South Hampstead in the 1940s, graduating with the Class of 1948. She went on to study Psychology at the University of London, where she met fellow student John Beloff. They married in 1952 and embarked on a shared academic path, studying in Illinois and earning PhDs from Queen's University Belfast. In 1962, both joined the University of Edinburgh's Psychology Department, where Halla became a respected educator and researcher. She authored

multiple books – including the seminal work *Camera Culture* in 1985, which offered a critical analysis of photography's role in shaping modern identity.

In 1983, Halla became President of the British Psychological Society, one of the first women to hold the position. She was also a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences and a Chartered Psychologist, advocating for the integration of psychological insights into public discourse and policy.

Halla was known for her warmth, wit, and unwavering commitment to social justice. She and John raised two children, including Zoe, who became an internationally recognised artist and writer, and who authored a memoir about her mother's extraordinary life.







# South Hampstead

## *High School*

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