

FOUNDED IN 1888

STOCKPORT SCHOOL

ALPHA 55
SPECIAL EDITION

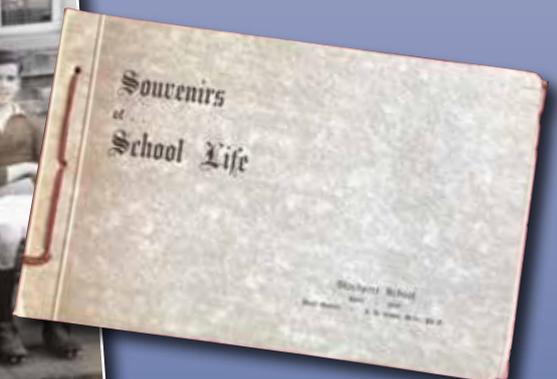
WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL TO THE ALPHA 55 VETERANS!

In October 2019, we welcomed Martin Francis, Tony Marsh, David Allerton, Barrie McDonald, Denis Downham, David Harris and Tony Want AKA Alpha 55, back to the school that they attended from 1950 to 1955!

Some parts of the school had changed dramatically and some had not really changed at all! The biggest difference was between the education system now and then.

It was so interesting for staff and students to consider how different the school was in the 1950s that we asked them to write a bit for us about their school days and what Stockport School had led to them doing in their later lives.

Thank you for coming back and also for your time! Thanks also to Fiona Shaw for organising the visit and being their tour guide!



April 1955

WHEN THINKING ABOUT THE LAST 60 PLUS YEARS, IT'S DIFFICULT TO CONDENSE SO MUCH INTO ONLY A FEW WORDS.

My older brother, Warren, now approaching 86, was at Stockport School before me. He left in the Summer of 1950, with extremely good School Certificate results; he did his National Service in the Army, and later qualified as a Chartered Surveyor. Thus, I followed him into the School in the Autumn of 1950, and I believe that we were the first intake to embark on the newly introduced GCE system.

I don't think I was destined to be a brilliant student and felt constantly out of my depth throughout. Early in 1952 my mother died from cancer and, shortly after that, my brother went off for his 2 years in the Army. I found it very hard at home and became a 'difficult pupil' and soon became familiar with the interior of Dr. Shave's Study.

As I was in the 'younger stream' of my contemporaries, my father was asked to give permission for me to stay on at the School for an extra year. I think this was also prompted by my poor GCE Mock results. My father agreed, but I still recall the dressing-down I received from him, and the warning that he would take me out of School at the first hint that I wasn't "pulling my weight"! I duly took my place in "5 Upper Alpha" in the Autumn of 1955 and, during that final year, I was greatly encouraged by Mr. Colclough, and by Mr. Wake, who taught Woodwork, but became very much of a mentor for me. Sadly, my GCE Results were not improved as a result of that extra year, but I was better equipped to venture into the adult world.

I started work in September 1956, at an Engineering Company in Adswold, Stockport, C.H.Johnson & Co., as an Indentured Apprentice. At that time, only the larger Companies had their own Training Schools,

and the normal routine was for the Apprentices to be passed through all Departments and learn the skills on the way. I completed a City and Guilds Certificate in Machine Shop Engineering, and became involved in Mentoring younger apprentices during their work experience in the Machine Shop.

I had numerous jobs over the years, mostly within light engineering, and transferred my skills into Jig and Tool design and development. The last 14 years of my employment were spent with British Aerospace at the Woodford factory in Cheshire, employed as a Detail Fitter. Whilst employed there, I joined the Avro Gliding Club and learned to fly solo; this nicely complemented my life-long involvement in building and flying model aircraft.

I have 2 sons from my first marriage; the younger one, Ian, also entered Stockport School (about 1982?) and, in the fullness of time(!!) his three children, Jessica, Zechariah and Scarlet were all pupils there! - all part of life's rich tapestry...I have several interests, and plans and projects which keep me busy, and I've not yet made up my mind what I'll do when I retire! Anyway, it has been fun!

Martin Francis



I ATTENDED SCHOOL 1950 TO 1955. STARTED QUITE WELL BUT SADLY MADE BAD PROGRESS IN THE LATER YEARS. I MANAGED TO GET ONLY 3 O LEVELS.

After leaving, I got a job as Lab assistant in the biology department at The Manchester Grammar School. It was 6th form level and pupils mainly went on to be doctors or dentists. Many went to Oxford or Cambridge.

At age 19, I had to do national service in the army. I trained in Caterick in the Royal Signals and was sent to Cyprus during the emergency there. I worked in the RHQ office of the Cyprus District Signal Regiment. I eventually was promoted to full corporal. After 19 months there, I came home via a troop ship, left the army and returned to my job at the grammar school. I was made Chief Technician in the Biology Dept. I applied for a technician job at Stockport College where I worked in the physics area of the science dept. The college was expanding and running degree courses.

I remained at the college for the rest of my working life. I was promoted to what they chose to call principal technician. This rated higher pay scale than the previous Chief Technician. Unfortunately, the college started to run into financial difficulties.

When I got to age 59, I began to suffer from depression and my doctor advised me to stay off work. I never went back to work but had to go and see the college doctor several times for assessment. Redundancies were being sought so when I was offered double redundancy pay I accepted and effectively took early retirement at age 61. I have now enjoyed 20 years of retirement.

While at the college, I met my wife. We produced 3 daughters, (2 dentists and 1 nurse). I am now the grandfather of 2 girls, one 5 years and one 2 months old.

David Allerton

MY FINAL YEAR AT STOCKPORT SCHOOL WAS 1955. ON MY FATHER'S ADVICE, HE SUGGESTED I LOOK FOR A CAREER IN CIVIL ENGINEERING.

I actually went to work for a small firm of structural engineers who took one boy a year to train. I started by being taught draftsmanship. This was followed by the design of structural elements for the construction industry. We had one day a week from work to go to college and also had night school to attend.

Eventually, I sat the professional exams for membership and on passing I became a Member of the Institute of Structural Engineers i.e. M. I. Structural E. of which I was a member for over 40 years.

David C Harris JP, BSc, BEd, Diploma in advanced studies in Education. I left school in 1959 and, after taking a degree at Bangor University, taught mathematics. I eventually became head of a mathematics

department. From there, I moved to a college of higher education where I taught mathematics education and a mathematics degree course. In 1975, I became an Education Inspector with responsibility for mathematics and subsequently an Ofsted Inspector, retiring in 1997.

Denis Downham.



April 1955

ATTENDED THE SCHOOL FROM 1951 TO 1956, AFTER WHICH I JOINED THE FOREIGN OFFICE.

On completion of National Service from 1957-59, I rejoined the F.O. and, from 1960 to 1969, I served in Indonesia, Poland, Sweden and Hungary. In 1970, I joined Peugeot as a Business Manager followed by BMW in the same position as Area Manager.

Finishing off what I wanted to be in my working life, five years were spent as Finance Director of the Green Room Theatre in Manchester. Locally, I was elected as a Knutsford Councillor and subsequently became Mayor. I am also a member of the Confrerie Saint-Etienne Alsace. Until recently, I was treasurer of the Lions Club, and remain Treasurer of the local Branch of the Royal British Legion.

Tony Want (Leonard Anthony Want)



We all enjoyed immensely our visit to the old school which invoked many memories. For myself, after an apprenticeship in Engineering, I worked my way up the ladder and, by retirement, I was the European Human resource Director for an American Company.

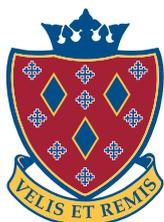
Tony Marsh



Barrie McDonald 1951-1955. Studied Metallurgy at Manchester College of Science and Technology.A.M.C.S.T. (Associate of the Manchester College of Science and Technology) L.I.M. Licentiate of the Institute of Metallurgist.



May 1951



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