



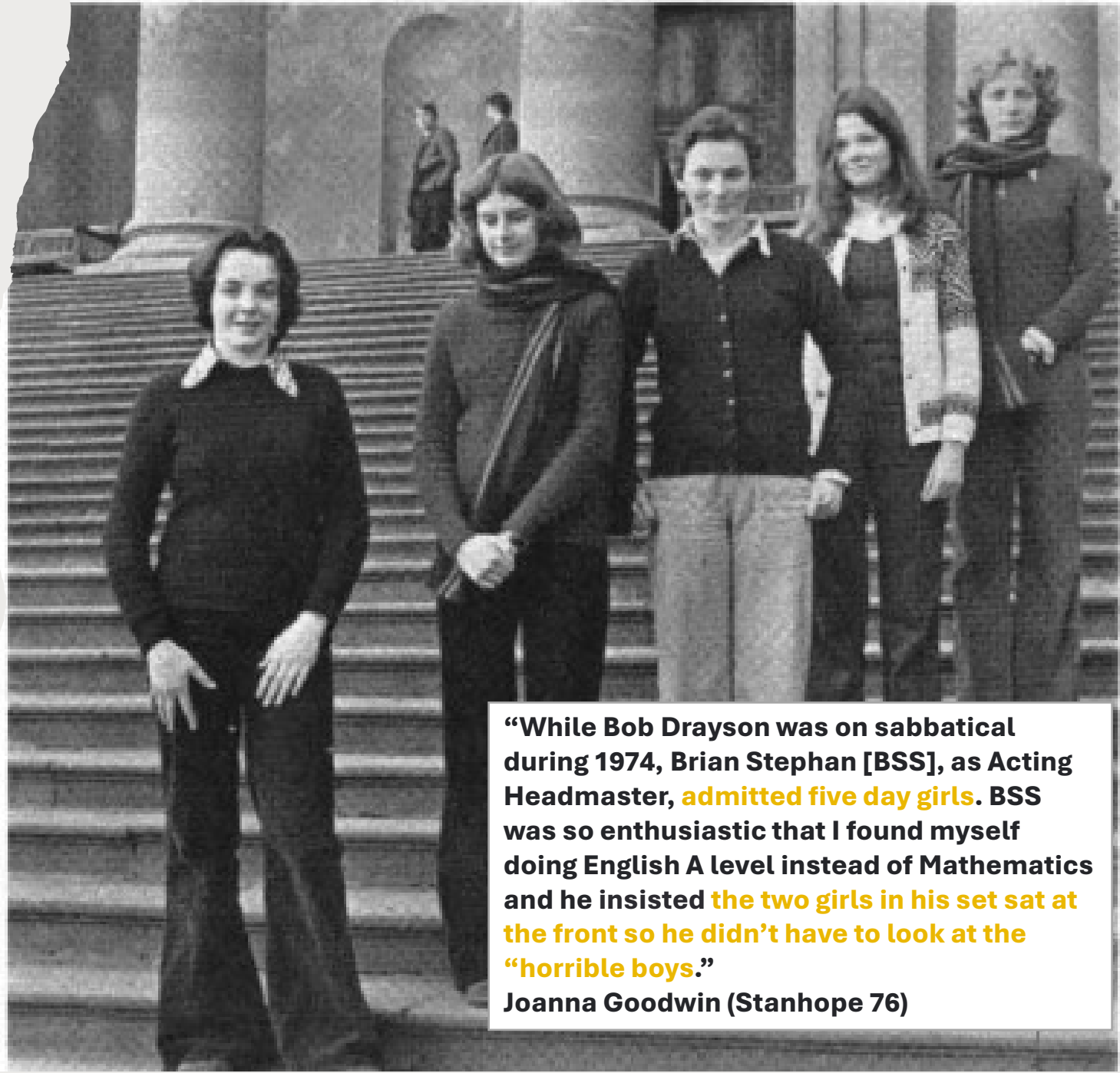
“The Stoic' tells us that 'the question of co-education has been considered for several years now and next term sees Stowe 'co-educational' with the arrival of four girls - well you have to start somewhere. They will be joining as day girls in the Lower VIth and if all goes well should be joined by several more in future years. We look forward to their arrival.”

Rory Knight Bruce (Chandos 75), *The Stoic* July 1974

1974

The first **five** girls entered the Sixth Form in September 1974.

“One is in Middle Sixth, and the others are in the Lower Sixth. They have become **an integral part of school life** and are involved in various societies and other activities such as music and drama. **We hope their numbers will be increased next year.**”



“While Bob Drayson was on sabbatical during 1974, Brian Stephan [BSS], as Acting Headmaster, **admitted five day girls**. BSS was so enthusiastic that I found myself doing English A level instead of Mathematics and he insisted **the two girls in his set sat at the front so he didn't have to look at the 'horrible boys.'**”

Joanna Goodwin (Stanhope 76)

1975

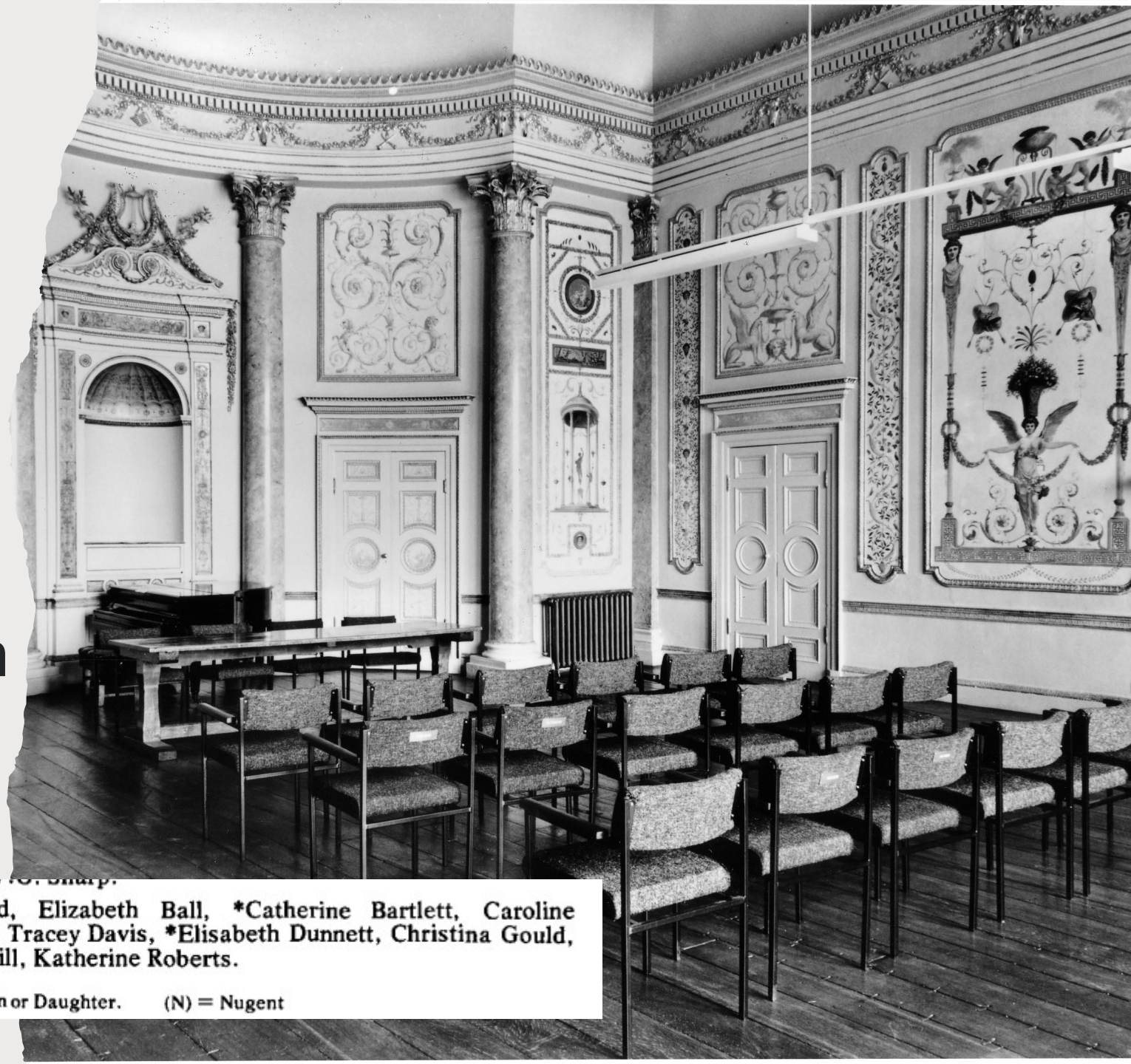
Miss Barber, hailing from New Zealand, became **Stowe's first full-time Mistress**

July 1975 - Prize awarded to **Vivien Slyfield** - The Burroughs Prize for Church History

11 new girls arrived in September 1975

Stanhope: (Autumn) Amanda Aykroyd, Elizabeth Ball, *Catherine Bartlett, Caroline Bridgwood, Caroline Cowper, Tracey Davis, *Elisabeth Dunnett, Christina Gould, Fiona Greenwood, Caroline Hill, Katherine Roberts.

* = O.S. Son or Daughter. (N) = Nugent





Summer 1975

Stowe girls began to make their mark within the various clubs and societies at Stowe

LA SOCIÉTÉ GASTRONOMIQUE

So far this term the Société has only been able to meet on one occasion, in view of the academic work of the members. The meeting took place at Mr and Mrs Rawcliffe's house and the cooks were Stephen Fraser and Charles Rolls. Their hors d'oeuvres was L'ananas Gervais which was extremely good. The second course was Moussaka which was quite delicious, and was followed by Gâteau du Raisin. With the meal we had Mouton-Cadet 1970. The whole meal was well balanced and liberal portions were served to our host and hostess, Mr Suttle, who is now President of the Société and all the members present. It was a most enjoyable evening, and the two members who cooked upheld the high standard of the Société.

VIVIEN SLYFIELD

110

Vivien became Stowe's first Head Girl in 1975-1976

1976

The first female School Governor was appointed: **Mrs Bannister**.

Our credibility in the School has hopefully been raised by the appointment of a **Head of House and two monitors**'. Also, 'the girls now have a serious team for Hockey'.



“The number of girls has increased by 15 to 28 and '**our number has been considered large enough to form a House**'. It is hoped that the original owner of the name of the House, the famous and eccentric **Lady Hester Stanhope**, is not a model for the behaviour of the girls.”

Francesca Kay (Stanhope 77)

1977

“One cannot help feeling, however, that the **awkwardness** and the **obstacles** of those first years were a large part of **the charm of being a girl at Stowe**, and that the **survival skills** we learnt then have been invaluable since.

One of our number remembered walking into the State Dining Room and placing her tray on the nearest table, only for the **two boys already there to pick theirs up and decamp to another and more congenial company.**”

Mrs Maria Carnegie (née Alexander, Stanhope 77): one of Stowe’s first ever female full boarders

**“It was a golden, difficult time;
I would not have missed it for the world.”**



1978

First girl to be confirmed in Stowe Chapel

THE CHAPEL AND LABORATORIES, STOWE SCHOOL, BUCKINGHAM

H/339

1979

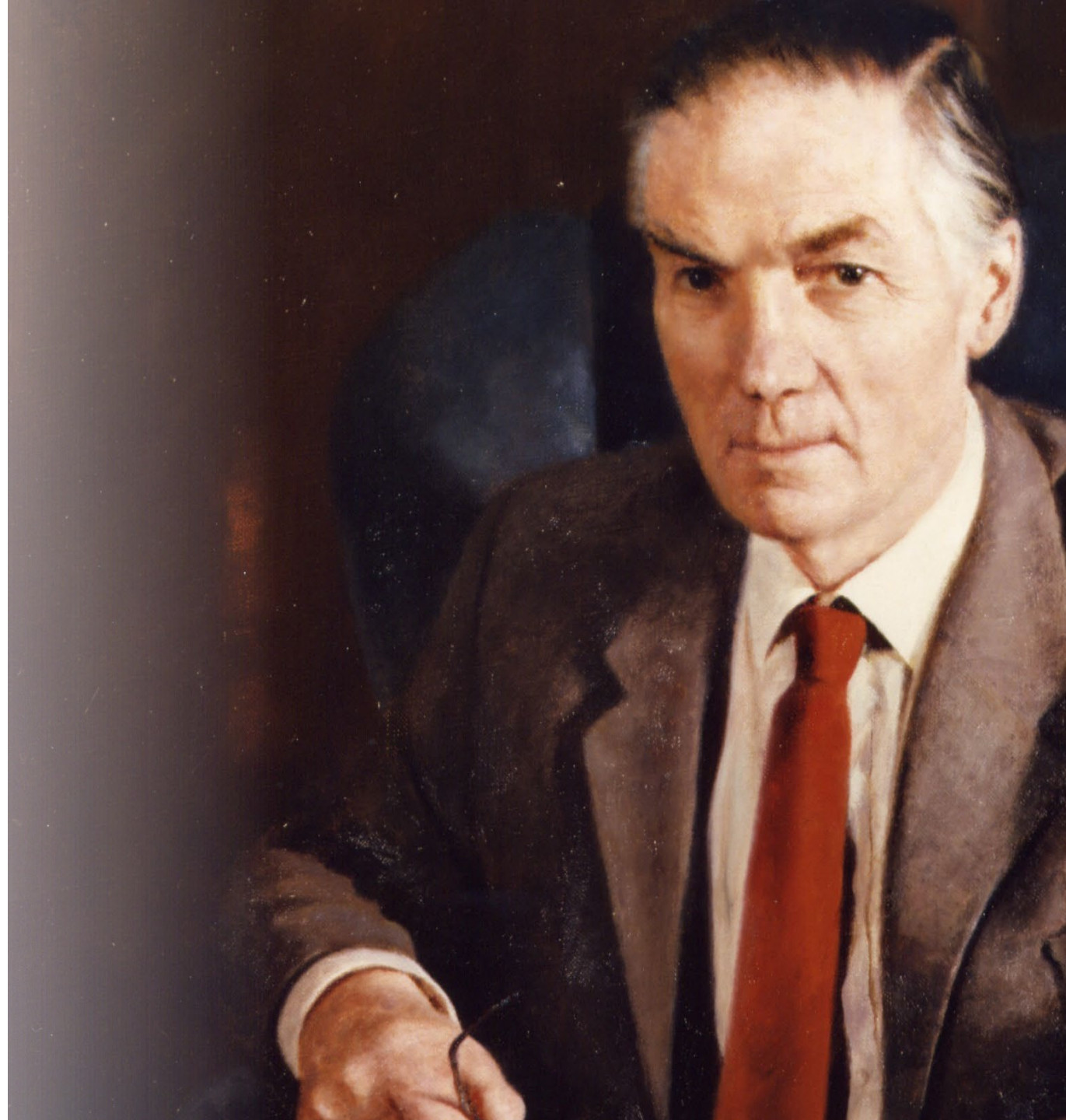
Caroline Bridgwood (Exhibition in English, St Edmund Hall, Oxford) and **Christina Gould** (T. W. Fowles Scholarship in Mod. Langs., St Hugh's, Oxford) gained places at **Oxbridge**



1980

“I would like to emphasise the **great contribution** the girls are making to the School’s ethos and to say how much **I applaud the success** with which they are being integrated into the School community”

Christopher Turner (Former Headmaster)



1983

To cope with the **extra number** of girls entering Stowe this year, Stanhope has acquired some badly needed space in **Nugent**, which has in the meantime ceased to take in boys

Stanhope and **Nugent** are to become two entirely separate Houses with their own individuality



1984

Extract from an interview with author,
Gay Longworth (Nugent 86)

‘One good thing about Stowe was that it taught her to stand on her own two feet and to be an individual. Something she needed not only at Birmingham University but also in her first job as a trainee oil trader.’



She felt that after Stowe she was well prepared for being the only girl amongst 15 men.



“A staff discussion day on co-education was held at the start of Michaelmas term 1984. To a man, the staff said yes. Little did we know it would be more than 20 years before Stowe would become fully co-ed.”

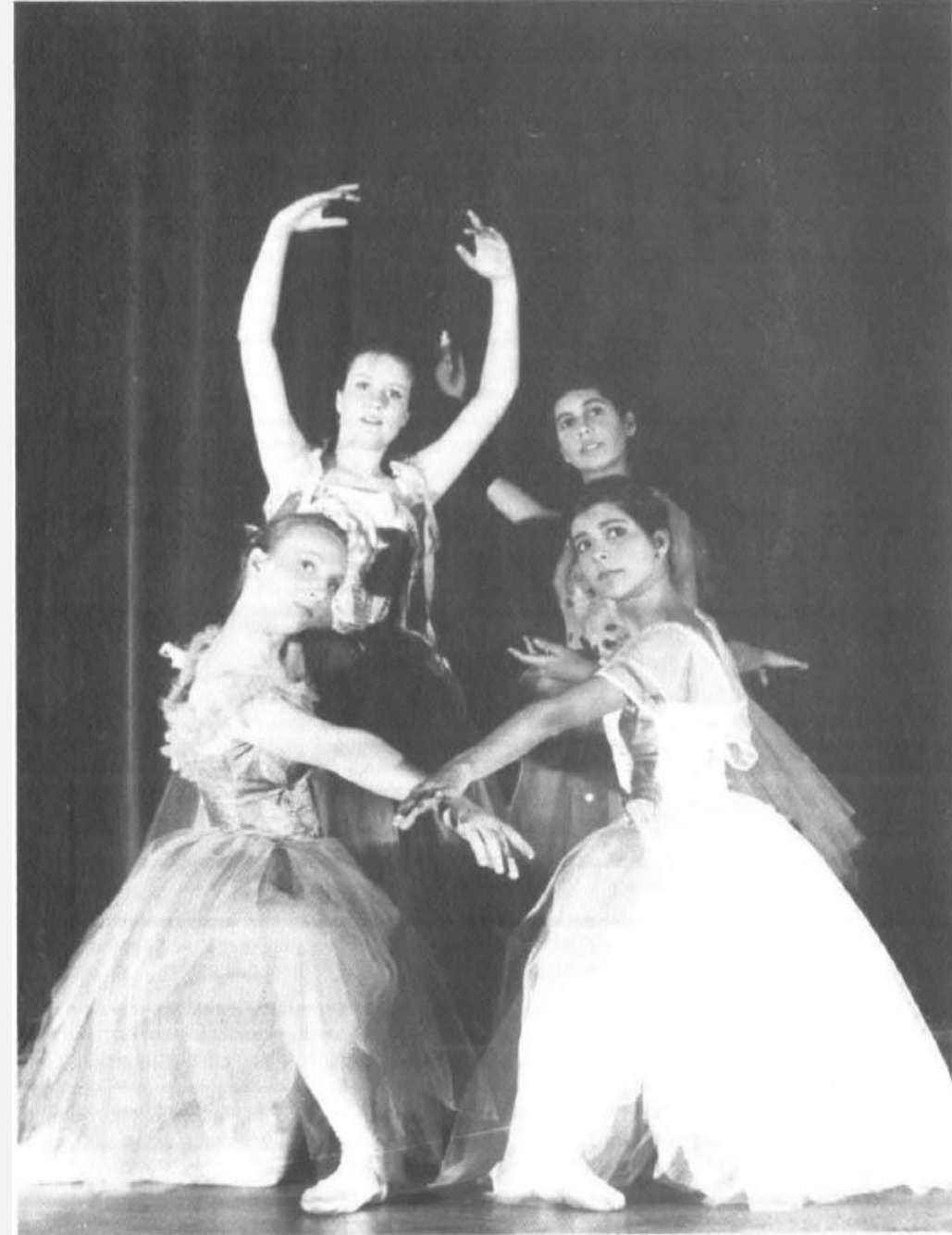
Ro Masters (Former Staff, 1986-2009)

1985

Turner announced at Speech Day that Nugent was to become the 'first proper residential House for our Sixth Form girls.

“I still do not know how Miss Nixon has coped with the management of nearly 60 girls boarded out in about twenty-five households in an area of about fifteen square miles.”

Today Nugent is home to 68 Stoics



Left to right at back: Stephanie Smithers, Khursheed Khurody
Left to right at front: Kate Burditt, Shenaiya Khurody

Photo by Allen Green

1987

“At the end of my first half-term I came back two hours early because I couldn’t wait to get back!”

Kate Gordon-Watson (née Reardon, Nugent 87)



We began talking inevitably, about Stowe. She had taken Art, English and Design at A-level (2 Bs and a C) and said she had loved every minute it. “At the end of my first half-term I came back two hours early because I couldn’t wait to get back!” She had been at Cheltenham Ladies College and after a school of 800 girls she thought a school with 600 boys and 60 girls heaven! “I had a boy friend in the 1st XV. I mean, life didn’t really get much better than that!” The teachers “treated you like a human being”. She particularly remembered William Dady and Guy Scott in the Art School.

1990

“Our last Headmaster used to say that **Stowe is the place for the individual. Perhaps – but this is not quite the case in the girls’ Houses. Boys tend to accept each other regardless of individual idiosyncrasies. For girls it is much harder.**”

Julia Kerr (née Moore, Nugent 90)

A GIRL’S LIFE:

A Middle Sixth Point of View:

It may not seem like it but there is a great gap between LVI and MVI female attitudes at Stowe.

465

Stowe fades quietly into the background: there is life after Stowe; whereas in the LVI life is Stowe. If people were honest with themselves, they would know that the group of friends they have now are not going to be their life-long buddies — with few exceptions.



“A shared Matron, much poorer sports provision and the need to remind everyone constantly that girls existed, were made up for by access for girls to a Stowe education, the development of self confidence and a lively social scene.”

Ro Masters (Former Staff, 1986-2009)

1993

Lyttelton House was reopened as a House for girls, under the leadership of Mrs Taylor 'who moved with Simon and new canine Chloe from Stanhope House, the 'temporary' House in the Sanatorium block which was threatening to become permanent'

Kate Finch-Knightley came **top of the A-Level results** nationally for Design

Today Lyttelton is home to 53 Stoics



1994

Rachel Beer top candidate
nationally in Economics and
Business.



Chamber Choir perform at the Rotunda, 1994

1995

The first time that the Junior Congreve included **Lower Sixth girls in the cast list for *Bugsy Malone*.**

Jennifer Ridge was in the **top 5 nationwide** for her A-Level examination result



Bugsy Malone Cast

1995 Girls Sport

GIRLS U19 BASKETBALL. Back row: Frances Newbery, Camilla Benoy, Jodie Ives, IM.
Front row: Caroline Hillyard, Juliet Jarvis, Philippa Gordon-Duff, Amelia Reed, Sarah Bruce.



GIRLS' HOCKEY



1995

Emma Brown has over the past two years given much pleasure with her singing, in various styles. Here she is pictured at the **open-air rock concert on the North Front** at the end of the Summer Term.





Editors of The Stoic, 1996



1996

‘Girls’ Hockey at Stowe has truly entered a new arena and achieved a previously uncharted dimension, with six wins and two draws from eight matches.’

Stowe girls regularly played the Lower School
in mixed sports matches



Girls v Yearlings

1998

GIRLS AT STOWE

Since 1975 Stowe has accepted the female race into its community to be educated with its boys. Things have progressed a great deal since then. The girls house, Stanhope, had no boarding facilities. Girls therefore lived with masters on site or in nearby villages, segregating the girls from the community. The school returned to a virtually single sex environment in the evenings after the boys had waved the bus to Buckingham off. What is now the European Centre though was a place for socialising in the day for the girls of Stanhope, one imagines much like the house rooms of Nugent and Lyttelton today, though unexciting it must have been before 'Home and Away' and 'Neighbours' started.

Not having their own studies, the girls had a prep room where the Career Centre is now. It was simply a large room with desks around its walls, like the third and forth form house rooms of today. This meant that little peace or quiet was gained by anyone. But things did change, and girls gained slightly more comfort in portacabins in the quadrangle of grass between Stanhope and the Sanatorium. Nowadays things are quite different with girls enjoying the same privileges as the boys. All girls having twin or single studies for their whole time at Stowe, in official boarding houses on site.

This article is not just about the changing living conditions of the girls at Stowe, it is also about the School's attitude towards them and the girls struggle for integration and acceptance into such a tight community. When I asked Lord Annan, an Old Stoic, and author of 'Roxburgh of Stowe', what Roxburgh would have thought about having girls in his school, his reply was simple, "My dear girl! he would never

have even thought about it!" So for a school based with its feet firmly on masculine ground, it was a very bold step for those first girls who braved the oestrogen free environment!

Indeed, girls found it hard to be taken seriously in those pioneering years of the female community. Exam results were not as good as they are today. Girls' sport was certainly not taken as seriously by the school, and because of this by the girls too. Although today's girls achieve better exam results than the boys at Stowe there is still a battle on the sports side. Games, an area which brings pride to the school and is taken seriously by all those involved is still most definitely male dominated. How many people turn out to watch the girls' 1st XI on a Saturday afternoon compared to those who watch the boys' 1st XV? Even when there is no rugby match to watch and the girls' hockey is at home there is still never more than a handful of parents on the sideline along with the first team reserves. This could be down to the laziness of all Stoics in their reluctance to walk to the Bourbon, yet when the hockey is on the grass pitch on the North Front not much more of an audience gather.

When BLM was at Stowe (she is now a classics teacher here) between 1982 and 1984, she recalls things being rather different during the term time here. She is definitely an exception to the rule that girls' results were worse than they are now as she gained four A-grades (and went on to Clare College, Cambridge). When she was here, there were just over forty girls in the sixth form, including the Upper Sixth who stayed on an extra term, as she did, to take Oxbridge entrance exams. She recalls boys' attitudes towards them as if they were "something from another planet". With only one

"Girls here though still have a long way to go until equal standards are achieved. Until there are equal amounts of female teachers to male, until the girls' 1st XI have team breakfasts."

or two girls in many of the sixth form classes it is hardly surprising that they were regarded as aliens! There was no official uniform or dress regulations as such for the girls other than "...a vague idea about it being below your knees". Rather than this being a privilege it simply seemed to alienate them more from the community. One only has to look at an old school photograph to see this, as BLM said herself "we stuck out like complete sore thumbs!" With our uniform, although one hears many a complaint about them being tent-like, at least we do not look out of place. However the picture of life as a Stowe Girl that I paint is rather a grey one. It was definitely not a life of complete segregation and unhappiness. There were, as there are today, great friendships

forged between both girls and boys even though we are now lucky in having a greater opportunity to do so. As BLM politely informed me "There were some pleasant boys – I mean in the love stakes!"

Girls here though still have a long way to go until equal standards are achieved. Until there are equal amounts of female teachers to male, until the girls' 1st XI have team breakfasts. The fact is that girls at Stowe have far more opportunities now than they ever have done. Future generations should look out for these stoic girls, who along with brains and versatility are well adjusted in a society where male domination is fast fading away!

FAY DAVIES

"Future generations should look out for these Stoic girls, who along with brains and versatility are well adjusted into a society where male domination is fast fading away."

Fay Stewart (née Davies, Lyttelton 98)

"Since 1974 Stowe has accepted the female race into its community to be educated with its boys."



Junior Debate: Thursday 17 June 1998

This House believes Stowe School should become fully co-educational

The first speaker was Tom Kemble who put forward the argument that the school female population needs increasing, that the Choir and Junior Congreve would benefit from the presence of more girls. He ended with a question: "Is Stowe a traditionalist school that fears change or a school that accepts it?"

Bolu Akindoyin of the opposition argued that the tradition of Stowe having boys only until the Sixth Form should not be broken and that girls would be a distraction to boys' work, meaning that Stowe would go down in the league tables. The opposition's second speaker disagreed and said that girls would boost the school's funds and increase its position in the league tables. He gave us an example of a school that had gone co-educational – The Dragon – and he explained that girls had done it no harm. Harry Trelawny concluded that if Stowe went fully "co-ed" then it would offer a fully rounded education.



“Is Stowe a traditionalist school that fears change or a school that accepts it?”

“If Stowe went fully ‘co-ed’ then it would offer a fully rounded education.”

1999 Coldstream Cup: Of particular note was the performance of the two girls' teams. It is clear that they now compete at the same standard as the boys. Indeed, Nugent came second overall and Lyttelton were clear winners of the drill and turnout section.



“It will not be long before a girls’ team wins the overall trophy.”



Amelia Jackson-Gray and
Samia Brahimi prove there is no
sex discrimination in the Stowe CCF



1999

Junior Congreve

With Lower Sixth **girls now a traditional part** of the Junior Congreve package the school is surely right to be ambitious for it.

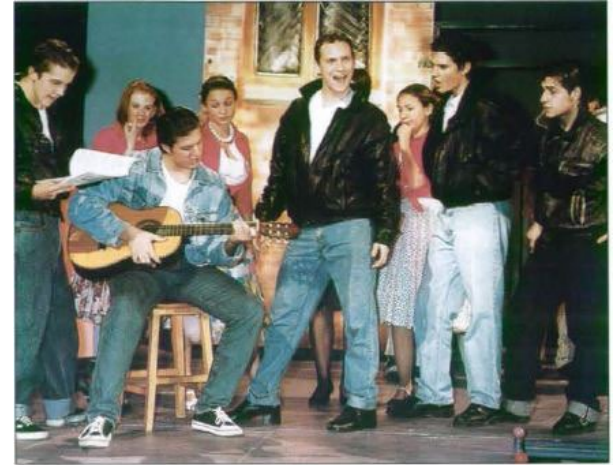
‘The passage down to the underworld was the most moving visually, with a sense of eerie wonder and uncertainty. Charon (Harry Beamish) was a commanding but motionless ferryman, soon overshadowed by the brief **appearances of the false chorus of Frogs with their marvellous costumes.**’



2000



Lower Sixth Girls 1st VI
Hattie Rickards, Alexa Clark, Willow
Corbett-Winder, Rebecca Cheetham,
Kit Keyser and Sophie Bonham



Nathan Witts sings (centre), surrounded by his gang:
Ricky White, Darcy Terry, Henry Cavill and Alex Wilson



2001



Charity Fashion Show





Senior Congreve perform Camelot



2002

2003

Coldstream Cup

‘It has become **customary for the girls to win the turnout and drill.** It is mostly because they put in **more effort** than the boys at this particular part of the competition.’

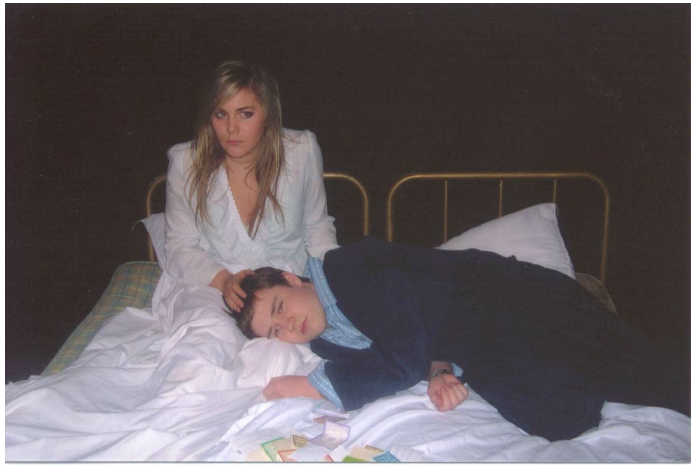


2004

The first two Stowe Third Form girls arrived in Lyttelton House in September 2004, Nathalie and Charlotte.



Stowe Drama 2004





HipArt 2004

2005

“In a few months’ time we will be welcoming a new cohort of **22 thirteen-year-old girls into Lyttelton** to join Natalie and Charlotte who have blazed the trail for full **co-education**.”

Dr Anthony Wallersteiner (Head)



2006

22 Third Form girls arrived in Lyttelton

The Junior Girls took to the field for the first time ever in Stowe School's history. Their opponents were Uppingham. **Lucy Beaty made history** by being the first Junior Girl to score a goal for Stowe and shortly after Lillie Ziegler-Pounds was the second to score.

For the **first time in Stowe history**, Stowe has had **girls in every year group** and what a difference it has made to the atmosphere of the House and the whole School.



"Coeducation fosters an environment where boys and girls learn to collaborate, respect each other's perspectives, and develop the social skills necessary for success in a diverse world. By creating a balanced, inclusive learning community, we prepare all our pupils to face real-world challenges with confidence and character."

Dr Anthony Wallersteiner, Head



Les Mis 2006







2007





2008

Queen's House opened Spring 2008
Today Queen's is home to 73 Stoics

Our beginnings in our **temporary home in Stanhope** were rather humble – L6th found themselves in dorms of 4 rather than the smart single ensuite that they had been anticipating and the 3rds dorms were more 1950s than cutting edge.

We finally moved into our new home at the beginning of the Spring Term and **the girls settled quickly into their new surroundings.**

2009

Stanhope re-opened as a girls' House in 2009 in a **wonderful new building**, next door to Queen's

The House was formally opened on 6 March 2009 by Sir Nicholas Winton (Grenville 27)

Today Stanhope is home to 62 Stoics



“The School has gone through something of a **transition of late...And the School needed it. As the first female Head of School said, “**they didn’t think we girls would have the balls to do it...**” But we did, and we believe we’ve done a fine job of **paving the way for future Stowe girls.**”**

Laura Hunter (née Grossick, Lyttelton 09)



“When pupils enter Stowe now, they enter a very different school than the one we entered. One that can only be described as a fully co-educational, integrated and successful place of learning.”

Laura Hunter (née Grossick, Lyttelton 09)





**“I hope it is nowadays
difficult to think of Stowe as
anything other than a co-
educational school.”**

Ro Masters (Former Staff, 1986-2009)

2014

West House opened in September 2014 as the **only co-educational Sixth Form House** at Stowe, with girls and boys in house together.

West was officially opened in October 2014 by **Viscount Cobham**, the direct descendant of the last Duke of Buckingham to inhabit Stowe in its heyday as a private residence.







Today West is home to 51 Stoics



2018

**West '5' opened to allow
West to increase space
and become a girls
House**





In September 2019 two new day Houses opened at Stowe: Winton for Day boys and Cheshire Day girls.

Today Cheshire is home to 73 Stoics







“Let us be proud to be Stoics, continue to celebrate it’s diversity and most of all, let us cherish the wonderful community to which we belong.”

Laura Hunter (née Grossick, Lyttelton 09)



Bruce will re-open as a Girls Boarding House in September 2025 and a new girls house will open, bringing Stowe to 50-50 boy-girl parity by 2029

"Coeducation fosters an environment where boys and girls learn to collaborate, respect each other's perspectives, and develop the social skills necessary for success in a diverse world. By creating a balanced, inclusive learning community, we prepare all our pupils to face real-world challenges with confidence and character."

Dr Anthony Wallersteiner, Head

