The College officially introduced the Alumni Office last year, with Ms. Davina Smith appointed as the Secretary.

3 Campuses, 13 Principals, and 139 years later...

Alumni reunions, events, opportunities, accomplishments and more.

Trending:
The Alumni Newsletter is seeking a befitting title. And as our first Alumni digital engagement activity, here's something exciting. Send us your most creative suggestions, and a surprise awaits the winning entry!

The College Café is now offering an all new range of College Memorabilia and Merchandise. From t-shirts and sweatshirts to lapel pins and luggage tags, there's something for everyone. Simply walk-in to the Café or drop us an email at alumni@ststephens.edu and we shall process your requests. We are also delivering items across India.

The Alumni Cards, as promised, are now being issued. The Café is now fully digitised and the Alumni Cards will facilitate a new cashless way of spending in College.
WELCOME NOTE

Mr Philip Mathew,
President, St. Stephen’s College Alumni Association

I am delighted that St Stephen's alumni have conceived a newsletter to keep us all connected ever more closely with our beloved alma mater. The need for a newsletter was long felt, and I am happy that it has at last been met, just when the college is making resolute efforts to emerge as an institution of world class excellence. The newsletter, I am sure, will enable Stephanians of all ages to exchange ideas to stimulate the growth of the institution as well as strengthen the tendrils of affection binding all of us together.

Affection grows on memories, so let me recount a few of mine, hoping that these will nudge fellow Stephanians to unfold memorable anecdotes from their college days in the forthcoming editions of the newsletter. I joined St Stephen’s in 1966 and left it five years later, by which time I had graduated from gawky teenage to goofy adulthood. I did BA History Honours and then MA. The college nourished my body and soul, and did what it could with my intellect. I have revisited the college many times in the last fifty years, sometimes to hand over my sons, nephews and nieces to my alma mater, but more often just to look at my old classrooms and residence. Every time I make a visit, I feel something surging in my heart. It is as if I had come home, to rest my head in my mother's lap.

I had a whale of a time at St Stephen's while pursuing the degree course. I lived in D3 Allnutt South, where many of the students were from Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bhutan, Sikkim and Kerala. We forged friendships that have lasted a lifetime. I remember playing cricket in the corridors during lunchtime, occasionally breaking a tube light. In winter a few of us sneaked out at three in the morning and went duck shooting on the banks of the Yamuna. The ducks had keen eyesight and flew off at the sight of man or gun. So we covered ourselves with leaves and bushes as we sneaked upon them. We took the kill to the Tare-Pyare dhaba run by Tara Singh and Pyara Singh. They plucked the ducks and marinated the meat and roasted it later in the evening. We would eat it hot from the oven, sitting on a charpoy and gulping liquid fireballs.

The college cafe offered tasty food. Scrambled eggs, toast and mince cost only a rupee and ten paise. This was the best breakfast one could get in the vicinity, in fact anywhere in Delhi. Even so, we frequented the university cafe, which had other attractions. Birds from Miranda House used to flock there.

I was quite popular in Allnutt South because I had a scooter. All my friends took their girlfriends on long rides on my scooter. Lucky scooter, unlucky me. I had no girlfriend, and often I sat pining for one. Perhaps it is because I pined so much that Allnutt South later became a girls hostel.

The scooter, however, was faithful to me. I made many adventurous rides on it. The hills around Dehradun were a favourite destination. Once we were caught in a landslide at Mohan Pass in the Siwalik mountains. The road lay blocked with mud and rock. So we lifted the scooter upon the protective half-wall along the road and pushed it for miles till we crossed the landslide area.

The college had some oddballs. One of them was a compounder called Kapur Singh. He was a gyp who preened about like a doctor. He sat massaging his beard and checked the temperature of everyone who went to him, no matter what the ailment. He had an uncanny ability to pull up his trousers with his elbows! Of just the opposite disposition was Robert Saab, the college secretary. He was a man of unblemished character and totally dedicated to the institution. He knew each and every student by name. If you needed to get anything done, you only had to ask Robert Saab. He was so committed to his job that he did not take leave even on the day he got married--he came to the college straight from the wedding reception!
My tutor, the reverend Ian Shankland, was an extremely nice man, but he got very angry if anyone walked across the lawns. He had an old Austin car, which he parked at Allnutt South from morning till evening every Sunday. He loved it more than his wife, who was active in theatre. I can never forget him. He was the one who sought me out and informed me that I had qualified for History Honours, having managed a first class in the first year BA Pass examination.

Our principal was the legendary S.C. Sircar. The dean, William Rajpal, who succeeded him had an asthmatic daughter. After my graduation, I enrolled for MA History but failed to get residence. So I met Rajpal and told him that dust on Delhi roads was aggravating my asthma. I wheezed for effect. He immediately allotted me V 14 Mukarji West.

The most fascinating teacher was Mohammad Amin Saab, who taught mediaeval Indian History. He wore sherwani and pyjamas, and as he lectured he kept one foot on the table, looking regal like a Mughal emperor. He later became vice chancellor of Hamdard University.

These were wonderful teachers, but it was the barfi man Sukhiya who introduced me to the mysteries of accountancy. He sat under a tree with his mouthwatering merchandise. Whenever I went to him, he would open his account book and claim that I owed him money. I revisited him two years after leaving college. Unfailingly, Sukhiya opened his account book and asked me to pay up an imaginary debt of twenty-five rupees. His son Rohtas inherited the business and ran it until his death three years ago. The tree is still there, but no barfi man. Hopefully, the Principal, Professor John Varghese, will heed my request to find a relative of Sukhiya to fill the vacuum.

The Principal is a man of mettle who is making systematic efforts to burnish the image of the college and striving hard to elevate it as a premium institution. I have no doubt that he will succeed in his lofty mission. He has inspired the faculty and introduced farsighted initiatives, besides constituting the Alumni Association to tap the intellectual and other resources of old students' network. I thank him for his resolute persistence and admirable dedication.

The launch of St Stephen's Centre for Advanced Learning was one of his laudable initiatives earlier this year, and a Chair in Public Policy was established at the centre, thanks to a generous endowment made by Mr Reji Abraham, Managing Director of ABAN. The Chair will guide the college, as well as the centre, to run courses in policy, governance and international relations. Let me express the heartfelt gratitude of all the alumni to Mr Reji Abraham.

I am happy to note that the Core Committee of the Alumni Association is assisting the Principal wholeheartedly in his efforts to take the institution to new heights. I wish to thank each and every member of the Core Committee. I am proud to mention their names as they are all eminent achievers - Mr Bishwajit Bhattacharyya, Dr Sudipto Mundle, Mr Raman Sidhu, Mr Rajesh Kumar, Prof Mukesh Williams, Mr Akash Mohapatra, Mr Sanjeev Meston, Dr Shachi Gurumayum and Dr Priya Ranjan. This is a brilliant constellation, no less!

I am immensely grateful to Ms Davina Smith, secretary of the Alumni Office, who has been the moving force behind the newsletter. The newsletter would not have seen the light of day but for her unflagging enthusiasm, creative energy and unceasing hard work. This bright young Stephanian, who graduated in 2014 with English Honours and took an MSc in HR Management and Work Psychology from the University of Sheffield, has seized the moment to make a difference. Thank you, Davina.

The newsletter will energise all of us to strive towards pre-eminence of our alma mater in the world of education.

Ad Dei Gloriam!

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REINVENTING THE ALUMNI

Who says that life doesn’t offer second chances? With the Alumni Office now in place, we wish to offer each and every member of the familia the opportunity to reconnect with and experience the College not just once, but over and over again.

As I inch towards completing a year in office as the Secretary of the Alumni Office, the most arduous task that I have carried out so far, without an iota of doubt, is that of the “Mince Manager”!

Besides raising the sales of the quintessential Mince and Scrambled on normal days, the last six months, especially, have seen a significant rise in the footfall of alumni members visiting College. We have hosted a variety of events, from musical evenings to Golden and Silver Jubilee reunions, society engagements, and the Annual Alumni Lunch, which was a roaring success. Moreover, we have done some serious fundraising in these past few months, which has inspired many more Stephanians to give back to College in some form or the other.

Through the Alumni Office, we aim to reach out to the Global Stephanian Fraternity not only for reunions and get-togethers, but for some value adding engagements, mentorship programmes, lecture series, and networking events to name a few. We also seek to initiate and empower the interaction between the Alumni Members and the current Junior Members of College.

So far, in order to rekindle the connections, I’ve been trying to create a social media presence for the College. We are now officially active on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram. At this point, I would like to seek your suggestions, expectations, and also welcome recommendations for the kind of activities you would like to see the College conduct to engage with its alumni. We look forward to strengthening this tradition as we strive towards creating a robust alumni association.

-Davina Smith

IN COLLEGE: RINGING IN THE 140TH YEAR

1st February 2020 - College Day.

As the institution enters its 140th year, there’s a plethora of things to be thankful for, to ponder upon, to strive towards, and to initiate. Here we enlist one of each.

From a humble beginning in Katra Kaushal Rai in Chandni Chowk with 5 pupils in 1881, we are now at some 1200 Junior Members walking the hallowed corridors each year. Although, what might seem as a meagre number to most people outside the four walls of College, Stephanians consider it to be a lot! Ask any of the "old boys" and they would categorise this number as a “crowd”. And more so, one with a lot of "screaming women!"

Over the years, or may be decades, no wait... century, no change has been as significant as that of making St. Stephen's College co-ed (AGAIN) in 1975. And if the truth be told, that’s the best thing to have happened to College. They say the future is female, but we would like to believe that the College has attained greater heights with the combined efforts of men and women. After all, we are #1 in the country as per India Today! That’s one thing we are definitely thankful for.

In the last 139 years, while we may have shifted campuses and grown in numbers, what we haven’t done is increased the number of courses offered. Minimalism is good, but not in this sense. We still remain an institution offering a selection of total 10 courses only, when we have the potential to do much more. That’s what we ponder upon and aim to strive towards spreading our reach and resources. While we may not be able to do so instantly, but baby steps towards the goal cannot harm anyone.

Earlier this year, the College launched its newest centre of Excellence, the St. Stephen’s Centre for Advanced Learning (SCAL) which hosted its flagship programme in Public Policy and International Relations. This 6-week programme not only saw a massive interest amongst the applicants, but also saw a host of alumni members returning to college as participants, and more importantly as lecturers and facilitators. This initiative was something that was conjured up as a simple idea by Mr Blesson Mathew (batch of 2013), but was implemented under the guidance of Principal John Varghese, and with assistance from Ms Davina Smith (batch of 2014) and Ms Joanna David (batch of 2018). If four people can bring an idea into fruition, imagine what an army of Stephanians together can do to take their alma mater to newer heights in realms yet to be explored by the institution.

So SCAL is a prelude and we hope that the 140th year will help College become increasingly relevant to the world.
1st Nov 2019: The Graduating Batch of 1969 celebrated their Golden Jubilee in College. A special lunch in the Dining Hall was followed by a short presentation by current Junior Members in the Dining Hall Lawns. Most of the guests who attended the re-union returned to college after 49 years, but mentioned that the College still looked the same after half a century! It was a refreshing afternoon of reliving the ‘golden’ years.

4th Nov 2019: The Freshman Physics Batch of 1969 organised a get together to commemorate 50 years of their joining the College. The batch as a token of gratitude presented a plaque to the Principal. Café hog which featured Mince and Scrambled was the highlight, along with a tour of the Science Block that did not exist during their time. This was followed by an interactive session with the current Third Year Physics students. This exercise was very much appreciated by the current Junior Members as they got to interact with the Alumni directly.

The St. Stephen’s College Alumni Association hosted two Musical Evenings in College. Mr Bishwajit Bhattacharyya (left) [batch of 1971, 73], former Additional Solicitor General of India, performed golden melodies of the yesteryears, earlier in October 2019. And later, in February 2020, a Leap Day musical performance was put up by Dr Charu Kapoor (right) [batch of 1988, 91], Associate Professor, Physics DU, in the College Hall, who also sang the greatest hits accompanied with piano. While both the events were a success, we’d like to mention that both our guests took great pains and incurred considerable financial expenses for their performances. Hence, we’d like to encourage our alumni to further support such efforts with greater attendance.
7th Dec 2019: In memory of our founder principal Rev. Samuel Scott Allnutt, The Founder's Day Ceremony took place in the College Hall, and our very own and beloved Dr. David E. U. Baker was the Chief Guest.

Dr Baker joined College in 1969 and, as every Stephanian who has graduated in the last fifty years would agree, is a living legend. He has influenced the lives of a myriad of young people who've walked the corridors of the College, and especially of those Junior Members who've had the privilege of having him as their Block Tutor.

Be it the alumni, his former colleagues or the current Senior Members of College, each and every Stephanian has a treasure trove of memories of conversations held with “Baker Sahab” over his famous “Teas”, examples of his disciplinarian routine, anecdotes of his unbeatable spirit, and above everything else, his humility. It was the Principal’s conscious decision to have Dr Baker as our Chief Guest, thereby making the Founder's Day 2019 a very special and memorable one.

7th Dec 2019: The batch of 1994 celebrated their 25th year of graduation with the quintessential Cafe Hog session, followed by a closed event in the College Hall which featured a throwback video, performances by some of the batchmates, and sharing of their best memories in College. They also did a massive fundraising drive for the College and on 6th February 2020 presented a cheque of INR 50,00,000/- to the Principal, Prof John Varghese.

This very initiative has been one of a kind and has inspired the upcoming batches to do the same. The amount received will be put to a specific use in College which shall be shared with the Stephanian Community very soon.

8th Dec 2019: The year 2019 ended on a high note for the Alumni of College, when the Annual Alumni Reunion and Lunch saw a record turnout in the recent history. Over 300 members joined in and made the event a roaring success. Based on the pre-event confirmations, we had to change the venue at the last minute, from the Dining Hall Lawns to the Allnutt Court! We had over 25 College Societies put up stalls, and many of them secured funding from the Alumni for their upcoming events and annual fests. It was an afternoon to remember, and we look forward to a much larger gathering in 2020! Link to all photographs: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1mAmbMuFmNNOdhcP0CqovApp_PEl_gZIf?usp=sharing
All throughout December 2019, Stephanian Alumni Chapters across the world were super active. Stephanians in the UAE, Singapore, Rajasthan, Lucknow, and the Southern Stephanian Society hosted their independent reunion events locally.

Here photographed are the Stephanians in the UAE (top), Stephanians in Rajasthan (middle), and the Southern Stephanian Society [based out of Bangalore] (bottom).

The Batch of 1980 hosted an independent closed event at the Delhi Golf Club, wherein the College Café had put up a Merchandise Stall.

In January 2020, another Stephanians' Lunch hosted by Mr Amardeep Singh Ahluwalia (Batch of 1986) and Mr Parul Soni (Batch of 1996) was organised at the India International Centre, Delhi which also witnessed a huge turnout.

Lastly, the Mumbai Chapter organised their reunion also in January 2020. And, upon prior notification to us, the Café had arranged for select merchandise to be couriered to Mumbai.

JANUARY - MARCH 2020

A first in 30 years - The Junior members of College boycotted classes in support of JMI & JNU, and to oppose the CAA-NRC. The students went around the campus and read the Preamble amidst heavy rains. The last time such protests happened in College were during the Mandal Commission in the 1990s. This very initiative had been widely applauded by the Alumni members of College on Social Media.

Mr Harsh Vardhan Shringla (Batch of 1982) took over as the 33rd Foreign Secretary of India. Here pictured with and welcomed by Dr S. Jaishankar (Batch of 1976) the current Minister of External Affairs.

Amb Taranjit Singh Sandhu (Batch of 1982) replaces his batchmate Mr Harsh Vardhan Shringla as the Indian Ambassador to the United States of America. Here pictured with and welcomed by President Donald Trump.
Mr Sanjeev Bikhchandani (Batch of 1984) Co-founder of Info Edge (naukri.com, jeevansathi.com, 99acres.com, shiksha.com, naukrigulf.com) awarded the Padma Shri - India’s fourth-highest civilian honour.

Ms Atishi Marlena (Batch of 2001) gets elected as a Member of the Delhi Legislative Assembly after winning the constituency of Kalkaji by a difference of over 10000 votes.

Amb Rakesh Sood (Batch of 1972) conferred the Commander of the National Order of Merit, France for helping shape the steadfast Indo-French bilateral relations into a distinct strategic partnership. We had the pleasure of hosting Amb Sood and his batchmates in College as part of the Freshman Physics Batch of 1969’s 50 years of joining College reunion.

Dr Shashi Tharoor (Batch of 1975), Member of Parliament - Thiruvananthapuram, won the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award 2019 (Category: Creative non-fiction in English language) for his book An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India.

Dr Malvika Iyer (Batch of 2009), a bomb blast survivor, a motivational speaker, a disability rights activist, and a model striving to make fashion accessible to all, was one of the seven women achievers who took over PM Narendra Modi’s Twitter Handle on Women’s Day 2020.
The College Launched its newest Centre of Excellence - St. Stephen's Centre for Advanced Learning (SCAL) which offered the flagship 6-week executive programme in Public Policy and International Relations. The first cohort ran from 11th January 2020 to 23rd February 2020.

The programme received over 400 applications, out of which 80 candidates were shortlisted and invited for interviews (in true Stephanian style!). The interviews were conducted by Prof John Varghese, Principal, Dr Ajay Dua (Batch of 1967, 69), Former Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GoI; Mr Deepak Mukarji (Batch of 1983) Former Director & Country Head - Corporate Affairs at Shell, India, and Mr Blesson Mathew (Batch of 2013) Chevening Scholar and Director - International Partnerships & Development, Project DEFY. A total of 35 candidates from backgrounds as diverse as banking, corporate, law, and government were selected for the programme.

The inaugural ceremony saw the launch of the Centre and the establishment of a Chair in Public Policy through a generous endowment by Mr Reji Abraham, MD, ABAN. The inaugural lecture was delivered by Dr Shashi Tharoor, and the subsequent lectures saw a host of eminent and experienced Stephanian policy practitioners, government officials, and civil servants. Below are the members who lectured, in the order of their sessions delivered:

- Mr Sanjay Sahay (Batch of 1985, 87), ADGP Karnataka Police; Dr Alwyn Didar Singh (Batch of 1972, 74), Former Secretary General - FICCI, and Former Secretary, GoI; Dr Jaimini Bhagwati (Batch of 1972), Former Indian High Commissioner to the UK; Mr Swashpawan Singh (Batch of 1969), Former Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations; Mr Mani Shankar Aiyar (Batch of 1961), Former MP Rajya Sabha & Lok Sabha and Diplomat; Mr J.K. Dadoo (Batch of 1978), Former Additional Secretary & Financial Advisor, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GoI; Dr Ajay Dua (Batch of 1967, 69), Former Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GoI; Mr Mohan Menon (Batch of 1968, 70), Former Additional Secretary, GoI; Mr Ajay Singha (Batch of 1979), Former ED - American Chambers of Commerce in India (AmCham); Mr Ajay Bisaria (Batch of 1983), High Commissioner of India to Canada; Justice Manmohan Sarin (Batch of 1966), Former Chief Justice, High Court, J&K and Former Lokayukta, Delhi; Mr Rajesh Kumar, IRS (Batch of 1994), Senior Joint Director of Customs and Central Excise at National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics (NACIN); Dr K.P. Krishnan (Batch of 1979), Former Secretary, Ministry of Skills Development and Entrepreneurship; Dr Sudipto Mundle (Batch of 1969), Former Director, Policy and Strategy, Asian Development Bank. The final lecture was delivered by Mr Amitabh Kant (Batch of 1976), CEO - NITI Aayog. To make this initiative memorable for our distinguished speakers, they received a special memento as a token of gratitude on behalf of College.

All our candidates received a Certificate of Merit upon successful completion of the programme. The College hopes to conduct this programme thrice a year.
In these times of uncertainty, when everyone is being advised to practice self-isolation, let’s pick up all those hobbies and interests that we let go of, a long time ago.

At least to solve the 'what to read' conundrum, we are recommending here some of the latest and recent works published by fellow Stephanians. And we would like to start with the 2019 Sahitya Akademi Award winning work.

1. An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India - Shashi Tharoor
2. The Greatest Ode to Lord Ram: Tulsidas’s Ramcharitmanas; Selections & Commentaries - Pavan K Varma
3. The Emperor Who Never Was: Dara Shukoh in Mughal India - Supriya Gandhi
4. Plassey: The Battle that Changed the Course of Indian History - Sudeep Chakravarti
5. Gun Island - Amitav Ghosh
7. Kali’s Daughter - Raghav Chandra
9. Coming Out as Dalit - Yashica Dutt
10. The Nine Chambered Heart - Janice Pariat

Of course, a list of Stephanian recommended reads can never be complete without the mention of certain authors. Hence, here are some all-time must reads.

1. Train to Pakistan - Khuswant Singh
2. India After Gandhi: The History of the World’s Largest Democracy - Ramchandra Guha
3. English, August: An Indian Story - Upamanyu Chatterjee

Dr Sudipto Mundle (batch of 1969), Former Director at Asian Development Bank, has been regularly sharing with us his latest published articles. Readers are invited to check out his, as well as other alumni members’ articles on the alumni website: https://alumni.ststephens.edu/articles

We hope all our readers and the near and dear ones of the greater Stephanian family are safe and healthy in these times that we are living in. Proper care, hygiene, and self-isolation are the best things we can practice. Let’s all stay safe, not panic, and be cautious at all times.
I would like to begin by putting on record that my return to my alma mater has been nothing short of extraordinary, and I feel blessed to be in the position that I am today.

This newsletter would not have been possible if the Principal, Prof John Varghese would not have given me the opportunity to come back to College as the Alumni Office Secretary. No amount of thanks would ever be enough for the support and guidance that he has provided me for every task that I have undertaken and at every step of the way.

I would also like to extend my thanks to Mr Philip Mathew and the Core Committee for being so hands on with the Alumni Association and for driving the Regional Chapters’ involvement and engagement with the College. I would especially like to thank Mr Mathew for sharing such a heartwarming message for our readers.

And lastly, a huge thank you is in order to each and every one of our Alumni member and the greater Stephanian family for tirelessly working towards upholding the spirit of Stephania, and for the greater welfare of the people and societies they serve. They are the ones who not just raise the bar, but also are the constant source of inspiration for all the Stephanian generations that follow.

Once again, I most humbly request all our Alumni Members to make this initiative a success by touching base with College in whichever way is suitable to them. Please share your stories, contributions, and ideas with us, as we look forward to making this newsletter as engaging and interactive as possible. That will be all for this issue. We plan on making this a quarterly publication. We’ll be back, soon!

**CONNECT WITH US**

For all inquiries, suggestions, event updates, publication requests, and everything else, please write to:

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Please also visit the official Social Media pages for more updates: St. Stephen’s College, Delhi -

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