

THIS, THAT AND THE OTHER

DECEMBER 2022



REVIEWS FOR YOU

An amazing (spoiler free!)
review of 'A league of
their own' (2022)



MEETING JACQUILINE WILSON!

One of our writers, Eve
Witterick had the
amazing opportunity to
meet the famous author
Jacqueline Wilson



HERO OR BRIDGE BURNER?

Is Ronaldo the hero of Man
U or has he ruined his
chances forever?



Editor's Note

I am so excited about publishing this year's Christmas issue of **This, That and the Other**. Again, my team have worked extremely hard on their articles and have given it their absolute all. From film reviews to scary stories, from football to politics: this issue has a huge variety of articles and truly fulfils the purpose of the paper - to bring people together.

A real treat this issue...we have reprinted the winning Ghost story Chloe Keogh's horrific tale of social injustice *A Town Called Salem* on page two. Honourable mentions to the runners up, the chilling and horribly real *La Danse Macabre* by Thomas Greenwood and Eve Witterick's *I Tumbled Down* which is a powerful story love, hate and desire.

I must give special thanks to Ellis Barker, Izzy Plummer and Eve Witterick for their design and editing prowess. A final thanks to Asma Shaffi, Nicola Mejia, Claire Daley and Carrie Sargeant-Earl for letting this happen and supervising us whilst we work.

Everyone at the newspaper hopes the students and staff at Stockton Sixth Form have a wonderful holiday and a happy New Year.

Lauren Johnson, Editor.

*The views expressed in **This, That and the Other** are **not** the views of Stockton Sixth Form College (including the student body, the teaching and support staff and the Governors).*

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A huge congratulations to the winner of our Ghost Story Competition, Chloe Keogh. Her historical tale of social injustice is an intense psychological interior narrative. The story achieves the double Gothic effect: of being both incredibly moving and horrifying. Well done, Chloe. We look forward to more of your work next year.

A Town Called Salem

by Chloe Keogh

Seeds of betrayal sown into the ground over many years. This town was worn with blood and war, the grass wilted back as the smoke rose into the sky, turning it into a solemn grey. Natalee, a girl of sixteen, hiked up her long silk gown. Smiles were scrubbed from people's faces; embers stung their cheeks. Morning, noon and night, people stood vigil, their hands cupped in prayer, beads of ritual hanging between their fingers. Her father stood at the head of the crowd, his eyes bloodshot and his face covered in the darkest of soot. Murmurs and whispers bewitched the crowd as she stepped forth, her heart heavy with guilt.

"Father! Papa, please listen" she beseeched against her better judgement, there was no saving her now. "I didn't do it!" she cried, throwing herself upon her father. Her hand, dripping with red, stained his shirt. He turned away from her, his eyes a blaze with fury. This wasn't her father, the person who had showered her with pearls, had kissed her forehead and stayed while she fell into slumber. His lips were stained with the past, the softest of lullabies.

His hair was crumbled with dust and dirt: smog of the darkest kind covered the town that day, casting it under a grim black shadow. "Natalee Elizabeth Beads, you are charged with the crime of witchcraft. How do you plead?" Her father asked her, skin paler than the spirits of dead. There was a gasp from one of the nuns. Her nostrils flared with disgust as she glared at the priest's daughter, she was a woman of God no more.

Snow tainted with ash fell upon the town, and Natalee had accepted her fate. Her lips upturned into a snarl; her once brown eyes had darkened until they were almost black. She rose to the gallows; the wood was an old, splintered tree. But she caressed it with her pale frost-bitten fingers. It sat rocking back and forth under the water's strength, it seemed that the earth itself protested such a cruelty. Chains of rope held her wrists, bleeding into her skin until it was scarred with red welts that resembled burns. Pain is a thing that people go through in every walk of life, but as she felt the sticks fracture under her foot, Natalee questioned how the world could be so unforgiving. Her eyes boar onto the mountains, its peak cupped with a frail blanket of frost. The rocks tilted on their jagged edge like a children's toys as the snow evaporated, water and stream rising into the heavens.

"That's where I'll be soon," she vowed; her innocence poured from her words like honey. Salem had many trials and a dark history. People cried, shrieking and screaming. Dirt coated her dress, her hair which was once perfectly styled with such love and care, was now torn and knotted as she ran a finger through the muddy strands. Flames licked Natalee's feet as she closed her eyes for the final time.

This was her goodbye; the injustice would be written into the history books of the town, like her ancestor Rebecca Nurse. All because of a simple thing: her appearance. She rubbed a hand on her face, the tears were concealed behind the smoke. A mole, the mark of the devil, remained; taunting her with its imperfection. Chants of *burn the witch* were heard from the crowd, even from those she had considered friends jeered at her. They were but broken whispers in Natalee's hazy memory.

And the town called Salem stood for evermore. Natalee's grave was covered in the most angelic white of lilies for days to come. People kept coming in hoards, putting their hands upon the headstone. Some people say that the warmth could still be felt from Natalee's pure heart, her story was told many times to people's grandchildren. The tragedy and darkened depths of Salem would never be repeated!

After all, beneath all the dark times there was still light to be had in such a small town. Salem was as beautiful as a flower and as dark as starry night. But, memories and stories could never be broken. They remained untouched and the purity of justice would be served, eventually...

Tis the season to be jolly! by Codie Kemp



We all know that Christmas is a heart-warming festival featuring Santa Claus(!) and Presents (!!)

 but many of us have no clue about its origins.

Christmas is traditionally a Christian festival, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. It was closely associated to, and indeed, came to eventually replace, the pagan festival of Yule, the feast of the Winter Solstice. The Roman Church began celebrating Christmas on the 25th December in the 4th century during the reign of Constantine.

Since the early 20th century Christmas has become more secular. In modern times, there are many people who do not observe the religious aspect, and the holiday is now mainly known for gift-giving.

The figure of Santa Claus, the main gift-giver, came to be associated with the holiday. Santa Claus is probably a derivation of the name of the real-life Saint Nicholas, who was admired for his kindness and was rumoured to have given away all his wealth to help others. His gift-giving became so famous that it still lives on now, through the tradition of presents from 'Santa' or Father Christmas.

A lot of traditions that we celebrate at Christmas do not have any religious links and most of them are quite recent in origin. Take the Christmas tree, for example. Decorating trees with apples for the holiday was first

recorded in Germany in 1605. The first use of candles on such trees is recorded by a Silesian duchess in 1611. One of the most recent customs is the Advent calendar, which is well loved by children everywhere. The calendar was created in Munich by a housewife who was frankly sick of having to answer the question "How many days 'till Christmas?" from her over-excited children. The first commercial calendars were printed in Germany in 1851.



One of the biggest criticisms of Christmas is that it has become too commercialised and centred around presents, not family. In the last 50 years, the commercialisation of Christmas has blurred the lines between the traditional, liturgical Christmas and the secular family holiday celebrated by many. But however you celebrate, why ever you celebrate... Enjoy the holiday!

Here's Merry Christmas from around the world...

Christmas Mubarak کرسمس مبارک - Afghanistan; Krismasi Njema / Heri ya Krismasi – Swahili (Tanzania, Kenya, DR Congo, Uganda); Ruhus Beal Lidet – Ethiopia and Eritreia; Eku odun, e ku iye'dun – Yoruba; Feliz Navidad – Spanish; 聖誕快樂 – Mandarin; Joyeux Noël – French; عيد ميلاد مجيد – Arabic; Frohe Weihnachten – German; Buon Natale – Italian; Prettige Kerstdagen – Dutch; Feliz Natal – Portuguese; メリークリスマス – Japanese; щасливого Різдва – Ukrainian.

Black Lives Matter

by Aishat Sunmonu



Why does Black Lives Matter exist?

Black Lives Matter was born out of a response to cases of police brutality in the United States, particularly towards black people. It is a slogan and a social movement in response to racism and violence perpetuated against Black people, both historically and in the modern era.

In recent years many people of colour have died at the hands of the U.S police, including George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and Tamir Rice (who was just 12 years old). There are countless other examples, and many decided that enough was enough; that they were going to do something about this injustice. Peaceful protests (often dubbed as riots by some right-wing media pundits) took place all over the US, calling for punishment and reform to the US police system. This movement spread quickly throughout the globe, reaching the UK in record time. In each country the movement came to reflect and protest the local issues that informed their debate around race and ethnicity.

What is police brutality?

When police use too much force or violence on a suspected offender, this is known as police brutality. There have

been countless occasions in America and the UK where the police have used too much force on people in their custody and they have died. An example of this is George Floyd, where bodycam footage shows officers Derek Chauvin, Tou Thao, J. Alexander Kueng and Thomas Lane holding Floyd down for over nine minutes whilst Chauvin knelt on his neck.

In the UK, statistics seem to show that black people are also treated differently by police officers because of the colour of their skin. Between April 2020 and March 2021, there were 7.5 stop and searches for every 1,000 white people but 52.6 for every 1,000 black people*. Many people view the police response over the deaths of say Stephen Lawrence or Olaseni Lewis or Shukri Abdi (I could go on) as evidence of institutional racism at the heart of the British police. People have decided to protest, raise awareness, and demand change.

How can I support Black Lives Matter?

You can support the Black Lives Matter Movement by being an ally and actively supporting anti-racist movements. Choose to speak up for your rights and the rights of others: with your friends and family; at school, college or work; offline and online.

To do this you could choose to go to a peaceful protest; learn about systemic racism; use #BlackLivesMatter on social media; participate in protests on social media or write a letter to your MP asking what they are doing to fight against racism.

*<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/crime-justice-and-the-law/policing/stop-and-search/latest>

Is *A League of Their Own* the Queer Show of the Year?

by Lauren Johnson



Amazon Prime's reboot of the 1992 film *A League of Their Own* intertwines gentle stories of queerness with the fast-paced nature of baseball games and it does so perfectly.

Following the story of the 1940's All-American Girl's Baseball League (AAGBL), *A League of Their Own* is, in my opinion, the series of the year. It has an excellent range of diverse characters: one of the best (if not *the* best) I've ever seen in mainstream media with a range of plus-size, Black, Jewish, Latina, Butch and Femme characters taking charge and commanding the series.

The show follows the story of the Rockford Peaches, one of the original AAGBL teams, in their inaugural season. It is set amid World War Two and follows the perspective of heroines, Carson Shaw (Abbi Jacobson) and Maxine 'Max' Chapman (Chanté Adams), whose stories are dramatically juxtaposed. Where [white] Carson's is a story of success, [black] Max's is one of struggle. Carson makes the team, playing the catcher for the Peaches, but Max isn't even allowed to try out.

Max is banned from competing in the AAGBL because "this isn't a Colored League" and her subsequent storyline follows her attempts to break into the white world of professional baseball as well as her growth as a young woman.

Where Carson immediately finds her place in the world of baseball, Max must work for it. Yet both characters face judgement from their own families (Max's household and Carson's team) and so they meet up during 'night-catches' to have searching conversations of self-discovery. The taboos of revelations about sexuality and gender combined with the awkwardness and the anger of culture wars make for delicious late night angsting. During one of these conversations, Max finally calls Carson out for her inherent prejudices in her playing – "I didn't see you do anything when they kicked me out"- and Carson apologizes.



However, not all the focus is on the main characters. One of the most prominent secondary storylines revolves around the trio of Lupe Garcia (Roberta Colindrez), Jess McCready (Kelly McCormack) and Esti Gonzalez (Priscilla Delgado). The trio's family-like dynamic is shown throughout the show by their ability to communicate despite the language barriers that might otherwise split them. Lupe (who is Mexican) acts as a translator for Esti (who is Cuban) so she can communicate with Jess who speaks almost no Spanish. Their scenes serve a comedic purpose, as we continuously see their misunderstandings play out throughout the series, but they also serve as a poignant reminder that all barriers can be challenged as we see Jess beginning to learn Spanish

towards the end of the series, clearly signaling her intention to communicate better with both Esti and Lupe.



Even though Jess makes the effort to communicate with them, Esti and Lupe have constantly been placed on the outside by most of the team. It is so heart-warming to see someone begin to form a relationship with these two characters who have been *othered* since the beginning. And we really feel it as an audience.

Lupe is branded the “Spanish Striker” by the League’s commentators (using the excuse that “Spanish sits better than Mexican”) and is nicknamed the “Fiery Troublemaker” by her own teammates, reflecting the period-typical attitudes of white American citizens towards Latinos at the time. Esti’s struggle is, on one level, like Lupe’s, as they both come to America from foreign countries, their only goal to play baseball. But it is also worlds apart...

Unlike Lupe, Esti does not have the luxury of English and, as such, she is completely isolated by the team whilst she tries to scale the language barrier. During the series, the team go on outings without her which results in frustration from Esti as we see her frantically pouring over a Spanish-English dictionary, desperate to communicate her feelings. Despite this barrier, Esti still manages to make friends in her team due to her cheery disposition and funny personality.

A League of Their Own does a brilliant job of reflecting the attitudes towards race in the 40's but the show doesn't just focus on this.

Alongside these hard-hitting race-based storylines, we have wonderful queer overtones and storylines as the seven LGBTQ+ players explore their sexuality.

Characters like Carson Shaw and Max Chapman are seen dancing around the rules of society and staying hidden from the authorities as they commit to their own queerness.

Carson manages to have her own steamy romance with fellow player Greta Gill (played by D’Arcy Carden) whilst Max struggles with compulsory heterosexuality and her own identity. Max and Carson explicitly discuss these issues in the show, opening discourse around period-typical queer prejudices.

One of these conversations features Carson talking about the differences between her husband and Greta and the different ways she loves them - “It’s not bad! With him it’s like warm bread, it’s nice and homely. But with her [Greta] it’s... have you ever had pizza?”



Queerness intertwines naturally with the stories; the way these complex characters interact with their own queerness is one of the most beautiful representations of lesbianism in media I have ever seen.

A League of Their Own is free to watch on Amazon Prime.

Meeting Dame Jaqueline Wilson

by Eve Witterick



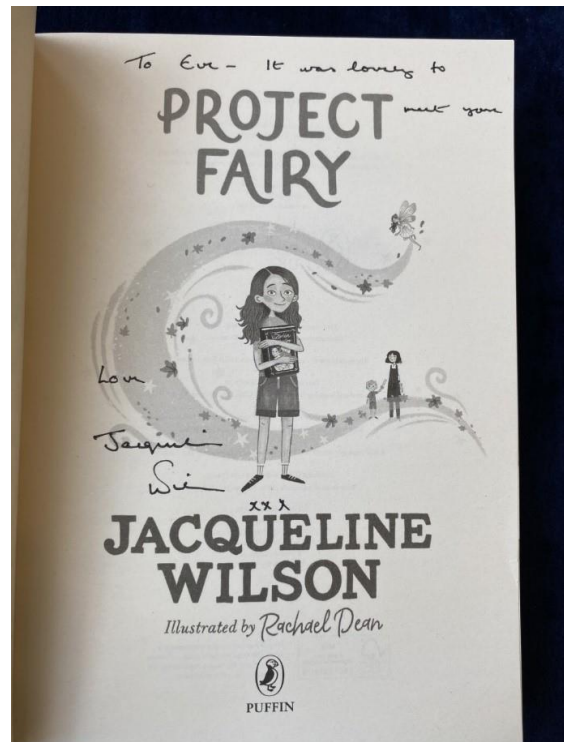
People warn you - “never meet your idols, you will be disappointed”- because your idol may be rude or unkind, or your expectations of them were too high. Well, I am here to prove that years- old statement wrong.

From a young girl, I was obsessed with reading, and I always had my nose in a book. I would think I was being sneaky when staying up late past my bedtime to read (my parents were one hundred percent aware I was awake). I loved school book fairs, buying secondhand books and seeing all the tiny doodles or drawings on the pages which I thought added character.

I remember buying “Glubbslyme” by Jaqueline Wilson at a school-book fair one year and since then, I became obsessed with her work. Any book she released I would beg for and, no matter how many pages, it would be read within the day. So inspired by her books, I turned into an aspiring author who would write down little stories in my notebook.

I even wrote to her when I was eight.

I remember being so obsessed over my handwriting, making sure I’d crossed all my t’s and dotted my i’s. I must’ve written it out at least five times before I deemed it okay to post. (After all, I had to make an impression). I never expected to receive a reply; I knew she must receive hundreds of letters a day on top of writing stories – she is a remarkably busy woman.



I doubted she would ever have the time to reply to little, insignificant eight-year-old me so when I received an envelope addressed with my name on in the post, I was, to coin a phrase from the time, gob-smacked. I had never received post before and it made me feel so special. I was so careful when I opened the envelope, fearing I would damage its contents. When I realized it was a postcard from Jaqueline Wilson I cried! Oh yes, I did. I was so happy and felt so significant. I felt SEEN. She knew who I was, and I quickly decided I was going to cherish her reply and keep it safe till the day I die.



Ten years later, after getting a job at a small bookshop on Stockton's High Street, I stumbled upon the chance of a lifetime. The opportunity to meet Jacqueline Wilson in the flesh! I couldn't believe it; I was finally meeting my idol and my inner child was in pure shock.

I felt sick the whole day before and I barely slept at all. *What if I made myself look stupid? What if she didn't like me? What do I say to her? How do I greet her?* There were so many questions racing through my head at one million miles per hour I thought my brain would explode.

When I finally met her in the lobby of Stockton's ARC (she was there for her tour to promote her new book "Project Fairy") all my anxiety washed away. She simply smiled at me and said, "It's lovely to meet you, Eve!" She was just a normal person, after all, having a normal conversation with normal me. But... despite her normality, she was still this extraordinary woman who I adored so much.

We were led backstage to relax before the show so Jacqueline could sign some books for her fans. We talked about her life and career in writing as well as her books and where she was touring next. We also talked about her two dogs: Jackson, who is an eight-year-old terrier and Molly, who is an eight-month Cavapoo (a cross between the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and Poodle) who she cannot get cross with because Molly is so adorable. (By this time, I felt like I was an old friend, catching up with her over a coffee!)

On writing: Jacqueline stated she "knew from age six" she wanted to be a writer and was obsessed with stationery. It reminded me of how I would beg my mam to buy the prettiest notebooks I could see. (Yet, I wouldn't actually write in them. Oh no, I always thought they were too beautiful to be tainted with my writing.)

On other childish follies: she always "dreamed of getting a study" but now she hardly uses it because she finds she writes better when tucked away in bed where she can slide into her own imaginary world and let the words flow onto the page while the real world drifts away.

If you want to read more about what Jacqueline's getting up to, you can find more on her official Penguin Books author page. (<https://www.penguin.co.uk/puffin/jacqueline-wilson>)



Ronaldo: Bridges Burnt? by Ellis Barker



On the 13th November 2022, Piers Morgan announced his interview with Cristiano Ronaldo: an iconic interview that would shake Manchester United to its core.

Ronaldo, 37, had promised his season to Man United, after failing to secure a move to a Champions League club in the summer. But as the season got underway, Ronaldo saw almost no game time and when he did, it ended in a loss. One of the only times he captained resulted in a 3-1 loss to Aston Villa at Villa Park.

Consequently, Ronaldo decided to air his grievances to Piers Morgan about his experience at Old Trafford on Morgan's new talk show *Talk TV*. In the interview there were claims that the Glazers: "Do not care about Manchester United" and a message from Ronaldo about the parlous state of the Old Trafford estate - "nothing has changed, the pool, the jacuzzi, even the chef".

This comment made many a United fan bristle. Despite there being a sizeable and vociferous group of fans who have criticised the Glazers and their business-style approach to the game and the club since they bought the club in 2005, many other criticised the interview as "propaganda" for the *Glazers Out* campaign.

But what REALLY garnered righteous anger from the fans was Ronaldo's petty insults towards former teammates, Wayne Rooney and Gary Neville. The player called them "the rats", probably referring to the backlash he received from them (and others) after he was seen storming out of Old Trafford during a match.

Tweets from high profile fans started pouring in on the subject. Mark Goldbridge said: "Piers and Ronaldo had never heard of Rangnick says more about their football knowledge than Rangnick being useless". Whilst Ronaldo criticised Rangnick, he also discussed the new manager of Manchester United, Erik Ten Hag, being open about his dislike for the Dutch coach, saying: "He doesn't respect me, and I do not respect him". This was the final straw for the club. Reports immediately after the interview claimed that Manchester United were seeking legal advice.

It was a week before an official club statement broke. Posted on Ronaldo's social media, it said: "Following conversations with Manchester United we have mutually agreed to end our contract early." Not only was Ronaldo made a free agent by the Glazers, but the Manchester United owners have since put the club up for sale with a £7 billion asking price.

Since his chaotic exit from the club, his place in the national team also seems tentative. Benched or only played in the second half for most of Portugal's world cup outings, Ronaldo no longer seems or is treated like the all-conquering national hero. Portuguese fans have begun to rely on their newer, younger stars to do the business.

Some would argue his tantrums are symptoms of a greater malaise and the Portuguese manager was right to put new players ahead of him. Other fans have been raging that it was precisely Ronaldo's benching that led to their national team's quarter final exit. Either way it would be fair to say neither his heart nor his mind seems fully in the game right now.

Football Academy: An Interview with Sara Janakova

By Matthew Birtles



Stockton Sixth Form and Stockton Town's Football Academy has added a Women's full football team this year. With only five players last year, they had to train with the men. This shows a great step in the right direction with football becoming much more inclusive. I spoke with 2nd year student Sara Janakova about her thoughts on this subject and women's football more generally.

It shows how popular the women's game is becoming as more women are wanting to play football every day. Sara recognised that, "Over the last couple of years football has become a more inclusive game and with younger girls joining in, it really shows how big women's football is getting. Especially after England's Euros victory." Sara believes because of the Euro win; it has increased the popularity of the woman's game. This is borne out by the huge jump in media recognition over the last few months for nearly all members of the national team and the sport more widely. This comes as Sky

Sports has put the Women's Super League on their channel.

On the Academy: Sara praises the coaches and their style which is both professional and welcoming. "They are the funniest people in the Academy, making all the girls feel comfortable. It's an enjoyable environment which helps the players to get better every day". She recognises how important and influential a good coach can be: "they will help them [the girls] progress into the adult game".

As Sara points out: "With the Football Academy offering opportunities for all students this year, the girls feel like it is great for them because they can bond, making them a great team." Sara will admit she enjoys playing with the boys due to the fast tempo of the game which she acknowledges has helped her to get better in physically harder circumstances, but, she says, "it still isn't as good as playing with the girls!"



Stockton Sixth Form vs Bede Sixth Form Match Report

by **Matthew Birtles**

Even before the game started, the crowd knew it was going to be a close one. Stockton hadn't managed to snag a win all season, and we were desperate for one. However Bede were also aching for glory.

The importance of the match was visible in the turnout. The stands were packed with spectators from both colleges and before kick-off, you could cut the tension with a knife.

The game started with Stockton dominating. Within the first ten minutes, we had had several shots on target. Stockton striker Sam Pitts really made Bede's goalie sweat. It looked like Stockton's tactic was to kick the ball long to the wingers who would cross it into the box.

Midway through the first half, the game's pace slowed, both teams waiting for the opportune moment to score. Bede's centre back saw an opportunity and flicked the ball straight over the top of Stockton's defence, leaving an easy ball for their striker to tap past Stockton goalie, Tom Cross, and into the net. After that, Bede quickly took control of the match, dominating the rest of the first half with shot after shot on our goal. A free kick from 25 yards out nearly made it 2-0 before the end of the half, but was saved miraculously by Cross, tipping it over the crossbar. Bede were in top form, creating many chances that Stockton's defence were just unable to deal with.

The score at half time was 1-0 to Bede Sixth Form, with Stockton lagging behind.

With the home crowd disappointed by Stockton's performance, morale in the stands was at an all-time low. It was looking as if they were going to lose this nail-biter derby in significant fashion.

The game kicked off again with neither team pushing for an attack. Stockton made three substitutions at half-time that had quickly proved to be effective. A new fullback immediately tightened the backline, and the two new midfielders raised the spirits of those upfront.

Both teams had a couple of chances early on, making it quite even but the defence from both teams was sound. Midway through the second half Stockton managed to win a corner. Substitute Joe Simpson nonchalantly knocked the ball into the net.

67 mins: 1-1 tie

With about 15 minutes to go, Stockton had the momentum, having brought on another impactful substitute into midfield, making all the difference in defence. The two midfield substitutes brought on this half (Joe Simpson and Sam Simpson) made easy work of stopping Bede's captain from getting the ball or having time on it to make a direct pass.

Further pressure from both Simpsons forced the Bede goalkeeper to relinquish control to Sam who played the ball into the box, making Bede concede an own goal in the dying minutes of the match.

The match ended 2-1, with a win to Stockton Sixth Form on home soil.

The eventful match serves as proof of the enjoyable rivalry between the two teams.

Well done, Bede! Even better done, Stockton!

