

THE OD

A Recipe for Resilience

Sam Way (OD 2012)

A Journey of
Education, Passion
and Purpose

Annabel Chivers (OD 2001)

and much more...



The Old Dragon

2025 · Issue 14

Girl with a Rose

Artist Sebastian Volak (OD 2010)



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Throughout the year, it has been a joy to connect with so many of you at various gatherings and events.

Introduction

Skipper's Opening September 2024

Tom Hiddleston (OD 1994) and
Emma Goldsmith, Head of the Dragon.

by Emma Goldsmith

The publication of *The OD* magazine provides a timely moment to reflect on another busy and dynamic year for Dragon School. Our newest ODs continue to exceed expectations, with more than 70 scholarships and awards received by our A Block leavers, while our ODs have achieved success in diverse career paths. This edition of *The OD* tells a few of those stories, showcasing a vibrant community that includes entrepreneurs, authors, academics and explorers.

To mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day, we have delved into the archives to commemorate ODs who were involved in this pivotal moment in history (page 26). The ever-popular OD Bookshelf highlights the latest publications from Dragons, reflecting their intellectual and creative contributions to the world. This year, the stories span a wide array of genres and subjects, underscoring the diverse talents nurtured at the Dragon School. Dr Henry Disney (OD 1953), who has published multiple poetry books, features in this year's Author's Corner. Dr Disney shares his experiences at the Dragon, his research in entomology and his passion for nature and poems (page 23).

Throughout the year, it has been a joy to connect with so many of you at various gatherings and events, both on Bardwell Road and further afield. These events help keep alive the enduring connections which are at the heart of the Dragon community. From our Women's Reunion to our inaugural in-person Arduus ad Solem event, you can read all about our vibrant events programme on page 30.

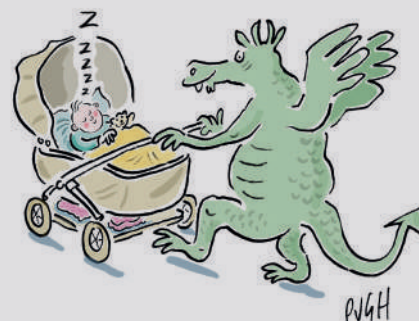
This year, the generosity of our ODs has been greatly appreciated, particularly in support of our new Music and Performing Arts Centre, to be known as Skipper's. Your contributions have been instrumental in bringing this project to fruition, and they will leave a lasting impact on the Dragon community for years to come. Our vision was to create a space to nurture talent and provide opportunities for all abilities. This doesn't just benefit our young Dragons; it will also enable us to welcome more pupils from our partner schools across Oxfordshire who participate in our programme of outreach and social impact activities. You can read more about Skipper's on page 4, as well as an overview of our social impact activities.

2025 promises to be another exciting year for the Dragon and we look forward to sharing it with you. ODs are always welcome at Bardwell Road, so do contact the Development Office if you'd like to visit, and keep an eye out for events in Oxford, London and beyond. And if you have any thoughts or comments on *The OD* or our activities more generally, please don't hesitate to be in touch – we always love to hear from you.



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The Impact of Your Support

Undoubtedly, the high point of 2024 was the opening of Skipper's, our new Music and Performing Arts Centre. After more than two decades of planning under four Heads, Skipper's opened at the beginning of the new term, to the joy of young Dragons and teaching staff alike.

Skipper's was named for the Dragon's first Head, Skipper Lynam, who did so much to put the performing arts at the centre of Dragon life. The Dragon community, both parents and ODs, has been recognised on lockers and rooms across the building, as well as on our musical note donor board running up the building's main staircase. It is thanks to our donors that we see Skipper's in full use by our young Dragons, and we are excited to welcome our partner schools to make use of these facilities.

Our Transformational Bursary Programme continues to attract generous support from our Dragon community. Once again, the annual Donate Your Deposit Campaign attracted broad support, with 25 parents choosing to donate their deposit to support Transformational Bursaries. The support generated by this campaign in 2023/24 will cover one year's full bursary for a boarder. We also welcomed the first Dragon to come through the Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation, with the second child joining us at the start of the 2024/25 academic year. Both of the current SpringBoard bursaries have been fully funded by donations, and we are grateful to the two donors that have supported this scheme, as well as the many ODs who support bursaries on a regular basis.

During the 2023/24 academic year, our young Dragons once again contributed to a vibrant programme of social impact activities. D Block kicked things off with the annual Colour Run, which has become a staple of the Dragon calendar, and the year concluded with events for all levels of the school, from the Reception Jog Along to the A Block Revue. These combined efforts raised valuable funds for our three School Charities of the Year: Asylum Welcome, FareShare and World Land Trust. We welcomed over 300 children from local primary schools to learn alongside Dragon pupils, and our Music Outreach Programme received a generous donation, allowing us to maintain and enhance our provision. And, of course, the Dragon Sale returned for its 80th outing, raising just under £150,000.



Thank you to everyone who has supported the Dragon or its chosen charities this year. We hope you enjoy reading more about our Social Impact Programme in the accompanying publication, also available to read online by scanning the QR code.





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Skipper's was named for the Dragon's first Head, Skipper Lynam, who did so much to put the performing arts at the centre of Dragon life.



D Block annual Colour Run



Gamelan Workshop,
Skipper's Opening

Entrepreneurs are Made, not Born

Chris Morton (OD 1995) serves as the Royal Society Entrepreneur-in-Residence at Oxford University. Previously, he was the CEO and founder of Lyst, a leading fashion technology platform with over 200 million global users. In this article, Chris talks about his time at the Dragon and his experiences of running Lyst, and offers his advice to aspiring entrepreneurs.

Late one afternoon in the winter of 2011, our small team was huddled around the boardroom table – a battered dining table we'd rescued from a skip a few weeks earlier – to figure out how we'd keep the fashion technology company we'd founded the previous year from folding. Our office, a shed on a building site in Shoreditch, had no heating so we'd taken to wearing every item of clothing we owned to keep warm. So, looking oddly overweight, each of us laid out every idea we had, passionately debating all the pros and cons, before finally choosing one to go ahead with our final roll of the dice to keep the company alive.

Earlier I'd seen that my university housemates, who were keen online shoppers, typically had dozens of tabs open when they were trying to find particular items of clothing, and very often they were unsuccessful in their search. So, our idea was simple: build a single online destination, with millions of items of clothing pulled in from thousands of shops and designers around the world, so our customers could easily find the fashion they were looking for.

Ten years later we were huddled again, in a slightly nicer office, this time to celebrate a new milestone: helping 200 million customers through the app that we'd gone on to create. In that time, our business had also supported the fashion industry – from leading brands to emerging new designers – with over £1 billion in sales.

In my 12 years as founder/CEO of Lyst, I made every mistake possible and a few more to boot. However, I wouldn't change it for the world. It's been a hugely fun and rewarding journey, which I've had the great joy of sharing with many brilliant people.





The best founders fall in
love with problems rather
than with solutions.



Knowing that the Dragon is a hotbed of potential entrepreneurs (in my year alone we had **Ed Cooke**, founder of Memrise, and **Chow Mezger**, co-CEO of Jude's Ice Cream), I wanted to share some of the little I've learnt along the way...

1

Entrepreneurs are made, not born

Too often we believe that founders are simply odd people who knew from an early age this is what they wanted to do – but most of the founders I've come across stumbled into it by accident, sometimes later in life, or were inspired by friends who started something and then realised the barriers were not as high as they thought; that they could do it too. However, a passion for creating or changing something is a prerequisite because it's that passion that brings the energy and hustle needed to make things happen. If you're passionate, you can be a founder.

2

Get comfortable with failure

Founders are always testing new ideas to see what will work – failure is a key part of this process. If you're not failing, you risk not learning quickly enough. Failure also comes naturally when you're trying to do lots of hard things. Roger Federer only won 54% of all the points he played throughout his illustrious tennis career – that's a lot of failure for the GOAT. As he advocates, each point has to be treated with utmost importance, but then pushed out of mind once it's over in preparation for the next one. It's the same with failures.

3

Don't get married to your solution

Often the idea you start with is not the one you end up building. The best founders fall in love with problems rather than with solutions. The first thing they try to address the problem rarely works. The important thing is that, rather than waiting for the perfect idea to hit, founders get on with the process of trying, failing, learning, and iterating their ideas, until they come across something that starts to work.

4

Networks are central to a founders' success

Start-ups are unlikely, so founders can tip the balance in their favour by surrounding themselves with a community of supporters. Very early on, when Lyst was looking for its first funding, I remember reading an article in the *FT* about Nick Wheeler, founder of shirtmaker Charles Tyrwhitt, so I sent him an email out of the blue, asking if he'd back us. Little did I know he was an OD (1978)! He kindly put me in touch with Mark Esiri (OD 1978), who became our first investor. Start-up ecosystems are full of people keen to help, if you only ask.

5

Building together is often better than going solo

I was fortunate to have a fantastic co-founder, Sebastjan, to build Lyst with me. Helpfully, he had very different skills from me, so we made a good team. But perhaps more importantly, sharing the rollercoaster experience with him made a huge difference with the emotional highs as well as the lows. As a founder, you also get the tremendous privilege of setting the company culture and choosing the people you work with. The relationships forged in a start-up are one of their greatest gifts.



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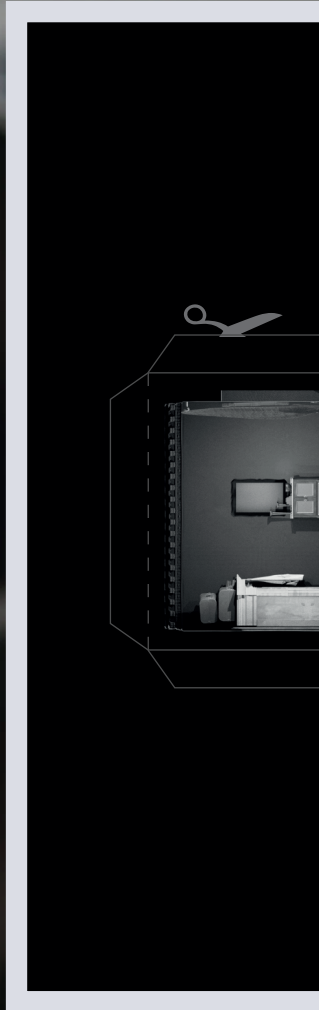
Looking back, my time at the Dragon helped sow the seeds of entrepreneurship; not least at the school sand pit, with its own bustling start-up ecosystem where students would build vast trading empires from sandcastles encrusted with marbles. On the more creative side, I remember spending most of A Block hidden in the squash courts with the rest of UIA writing our own musical – a paean to our brilliant teachers (including MooCow, Ma Da, and Robin Frith among others) – which, albeit with gentle censorship, we were allowed to perform for the rest of the school. The Dragon was an environment where we could freely explore and create, which in turn encouraged us to find our passions and confidently develop them. This is essential to the entrepreneur's journey because, as I said above, passion is the main requirement to start a company.

Now, having left Lyst 18 months ago to work on new projects, I'm still very much focused on my love of entrepreneurship. Today I get to spend time helping climate scientists at Oxford University start their next companies, so their ideas can move from the lab into the real world, where they can have the most impact. It's refreshing after fashion to be exploring a new space: "I want to build a company that mines volcanoes for rare earth metals!" exclaimed the professor opposite me at lunch the other day. Proof that founders, and their start-ups, come in all shapes and sizes, and their passion is often infectious.



Felix's Room

Professor in the Department of Media Arts, Royal Holloway, University of London, **Adam Ganz (OD 1971)** is active as a professional screenwriter and director for radio, film and television. In this article, Adam provides insights about 'Felix's Room', which he wrote and co-directed in collaboration with ScanLab Projects in June 2023.



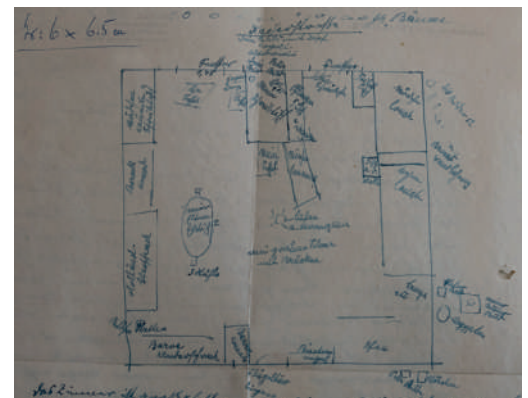
This innovative piece of spatial storytelling was presented in partnership with the Komische Oper Berlin and supported by the Kulturstiftung des Bundes as part of the SpielRäume! initiative. The work explores the story of Adam's great-grandfather, Felix Ganz, and his second wife Erna, set in their room within a Jewish house on Kaiserstraße in Mainz.

The sketch in pale blue ink on onion-skin paper shows the room where my great-grandfather Felix lived with his wife Erna. The "Jewish house" in the Kaiserstrasse in Mainz was their final living quarters before they were deported to Theresienstadt ghetto in 1942 and then to Auschwitz.

Felix's daughter Annemarie, safe across the border in Switzerland, would have recognised everything from his terse descriptions. "The table from the hall." "Your picture with the plait." The picture of Felix's grandson Peter, my father. Among the images of Felix's family, the places he loved, and a few treasured objects, were carpets and textiles. He was a successful carpet merchant with shops thriving across Germany and offices from Constantinople to Iran.

The single room where Felix and Erna were now confined was 4 square meters in which to cook, eat and sleep. It was both refuge and prison. Everything they'd chosen to bring from the mansion by the Rhine where he'd been living for 20 years meant something special. After they were deported, it was all looted. Just one object survived: a chest of drawers discovered in the Landesmuseum in Mainz in 2019.

I'd been searching for the right way to tell Felix's story for years when I encountered ScanLAB Projects through my role as Professor of Screenwriting at Royal Holloway, University of London. I realized I could use their technology to breathe life into Felix's sketch and use it as a portal to explore not just his time in that room but his entire life. Combining the ethereal traces of the room with the real object that



Letter / Sketch ©Ganz Family Photo ©Kunal Lodhia (ScanLAB Projects)



©ScanLAB Projects

had been there had something powerful about it.

Eighteen months later we had been selected from over 300 applicants to perform 'Felix's Room' on the iconic stage of the Berliner Ensemble, the theatre company founded by Bertolt Brecht and his wife, Helen Weigel, in the heart of Berlin. My father was Professor of German at Oxford University; he loved Brecht's poetry and taught it to me, so to tell this story at Brecht's own theatre was very special. The actual chest of drawers Felix and Erna used every day, on loan from the Landesmuseum, was surrounded by a virtual room projected in 3D, scanned and recreated exactly from Felix's sketch. ScanLAB had painstakingly built it from virtual LiDAR scans, reproducing all the objects in the sketch: the tiled stove, the chairs and tables and desk, and the pictures of people he loved. The first time I saw my father's face projected on fine gauze I caught my breath. So present and vivid, he seemed to be conjured out of thin air.

The technology transported us into Felix's world of memory: the bazaar in Constantinople where he traded carpets, the mansion overlooking the Rhine where he threw legendary parties, the lights of 1920s Berlin where he did his wheeler-dealing with his powerful friends in the Weimar government.

The technology also showed us the traces and memories of that room where two people lived in hope and fear 80 years ago. Sound design brought the terror of a Gestapo raid on the house. The room shook and shrank as the bombs fell on Mainz like rain in August 1942. It froze in the depths of winter. It was filled with colour and warmth when they celebrated Christmas.

I crafted the script from letters Felix wrote to his relative Heinrich in Freiburg. He pleads for a visit, carefully written with an eye to the Gestapo who read every letter. He is always looking for a way out. When he describes the aftermath of the bombing, he writes: "80% of the city is rubble... Rheinstrasse, Kaiserstrasse, and the inner city are all burnt out. It's impossible to imagine how life can go on." He adds, "My wife is inexpressibly loving." What survived of them was love.

We had no letters from Erna and just one photograph, so we gave her a voice through music. The couple danced together in their room to a rewritten 1920's hit, a romantic waltz, and became surrounded by ghostly dancers as the room morphs into the ballroom in Felix's stately home. Erna sang a most beautiful Lieder – Mendelssohn setting of Heine's poem, 'On Wings of Song' – showing how music can take you to far-off lands, the room transforms into the bazaar in Constantinople in all its vivid colour.

Felix was magnificently played by Veit Schubert from the Berliner Ensemble and Erna was thrillingly sung by Alma Sade from the Komische Oper. One of the most extraordinary musical interventions was a duet written by composer Tonia Ko, a duet between Erna and the last surviving inhabitant of the room, the chest of drawers. The opening and closing of the drawers, the clinking of the handles, her hand tapping a rhythm on the gleaming walnut veneer – she laments a whole world lost.

Felix's final letter describes their plans to leave for Theresienstadt and we see the room gradually stripped bare as they prepare for the desperate journey. Felix and Erna survived another two years. They were on the last transport from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz, where they were murdered in 1944.

Old Dragons of my generation will remember the printed class lists in *The Draconian* magazine – our names ranked in order of where we came in exams, with our addresses printed opposite. The Oxford addresses of us day boys jostled with British embassies and Welsh castles. I had no idea where I came from. My father was a refugee, my English mother was orphaned in the Blitz. Both of their stories were far too painful to share with me.

That's why it meant so much to tell Felix's story and to give him back his addresses. The show sold out every night and we had fantastic reviews, but after ten days the room went dark. Now I'm working to bring 'Felix's Room' to Britain so his story can be told in the country that gave shelter to his family, where his grandchildren made a new life and where I was born.

Find out more about Felix's Room.

www.berliner-ensemble.de/en/production/felixs-room

From Student To Teacher

We were delighted to welcome back several ODs to the Dragon for work experience this academic year. Peter Parker (OD 2021) and Kitty Hacking (OD 2021) wrote about their week as teachers at the Dragon.



Hello, my name is **Peter Parker (OD 2021)**, I was a young Dragon from 2017–2021. I am now at Rugby School, in my Sixth Form years.

My time at the Dragon was one that sparked many different interests at heart. It was a place that motivated me to thrive and strive to be better. My last couple of years there were spent during the COVID-19 pandemic, which meant that education was slightly different from the usual experience. However, my time was still enjoyable, from the online sports classes to my attempts at reciting the Amo pattern in Latin.

Throughout my time as a student, I learned the value of hard work and how you can still have fun while doing it. Not every moment at the Dragon was all lullabies and dreams — especially around the sports pitches and during the end-of-term tests, which often felt like life or death at the time. But I loved every second of it. There wasn't a moment that didn't bring a smile to my face (except algebra — that always made me sweat).

I returned to the Dragon for a week of work experience, which was an incredible amount of fun. Working with the teachers and assistant teachers, I gained insight into the other side of the fence. I chose to return because I wanted to revive that spark of Dragon life. I learnt a lot from working there, including the realisation that being a teacher is anything but easy. In hindsight, I should have perhaps been a bit easier on them while I was there. Being back recreated the spark that I felt throughout my time there.

My future is yet to unfold, but hopefully something in the line of property management or public relations would kindle that Dragon flame once more. The Dragon was my home for five years of my life and I couldn't have asked for a better experience. For that, I am forever indebted to the school. It never failed to put a smile on anyone's face. Thank you, for everything.



Kitty Hacking and Peter Parker (OD 2021)



My name is Kitty Hacking (OD 2021) and I am currently attending St Edward's School Oxford, now in Sixth Form. Immediately joining Teddies at 13, I have been fully immersed into a welcoming and action-packed environment that I enjoy every day.

I had the opportunity to be at the Dragon for nine years, from Reception through to Year 8. Thus, I felt very strongly that revisiting the Dragon for a week of work experience was an opportunity that couldn't be missed.

During my time at the Dragon, I was fortunate to engage in a variety of activities that sparked my curiosity. Whether it was weekly sporting events/fixtures, or getting the chance to attend nationals for hurdles, to the lessons in the library with an endless variety of books, including music, drama and dance... The highlight for me being part of the three-day Sports Day each year, spent with family and friends, which was never not a laugh. Furthermore, the Dragon helped secure my Sports Scholarship that I received from Teddies, for which I am very grateful.

The Dragon had the ability to make lessons an enjoyable time, where collaborations were regularly allowed to keep them as fun

as they could be. They helped nurture my liking for learning and helped shape my intellectual growth.

Transitioning to secondary school, my time has been both challenging and rewarding. Delving deeper into more select subjects that I have a greater passion for, as well as co-curricular activities that have expanded my horizon, I am also continuing my passion for sports.

Returning to the Dragon was a decision I made wanting so much to give back to the community that gave me a lot too. Over the week I have enjoyed coming back as a member of staff with a role and authority rather than just as a pupil! It has been both nostalgic and enjoyable, seeing the familiar faces of teachers, while reminiscing on the countless amazing memories I have made.

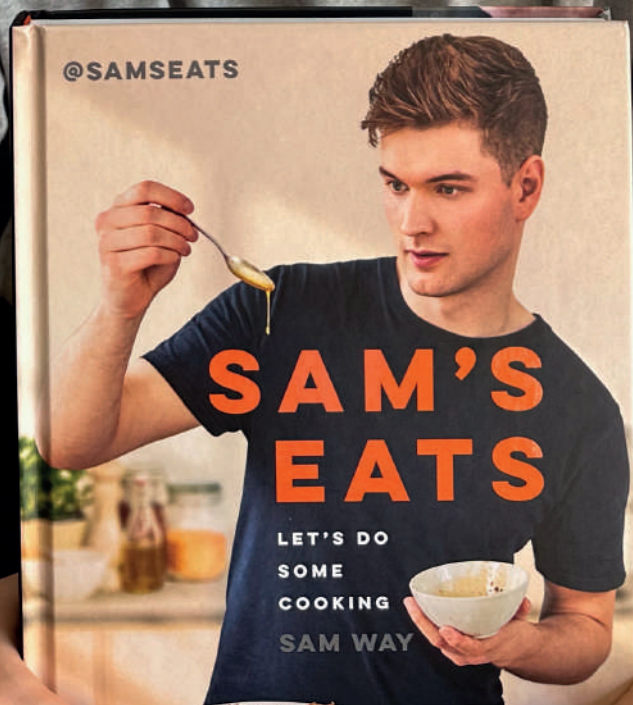
To sum up, I am full of excitement for what the future has to offer. This work experience has been a great chance to reflect on my education and time here but has also been a time to inspire and support the pupils in the next generation. I look forward to continuing my passions further into the Sixth Form, equipped with the knowledge and experiences gained from Lynams, the Dragon and St Edward's.

I am also so grateful for being so warmly welcomed back, making my time highly enjoyable!

A Recipe for Resilience

Sam Way (OD 2012)

Being asked to write an article for *The OD* has very much been a full circle moment for Sam. He remembers clearly the early days after leaving the Dragon, receiving his first OD magazine in the post, and reading about the amazing and successful careers that so many Dragons had gone on to have.





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The nuances of creativity that I found across different hobbies at the Dragon ended up shaping me into the person I am today.

I remember my time at the Dragon with very fond memories, whether it was running around the playing fields, being coached by Mr Jones in rugby or Mr Faulkner in athletics, warming up for a concert with the Big Band led by Mr Smith or adding the finishing touches to a piece of art with the help of Mr Osmond. The sheer variety of opportunities and activities that were on offer was the one thing that helped me find my path later in life. The nuances of creativity that I found across different hobbies at the Dragon ended up shaping me into the person I am today.

Life after the Dragon was not a straightforward journey for me. After leaving in 2012 with big dreams, I was more eager than ever to make these come true. At the time, I was into sport and spent hours running around the athletics track in the hope of making it to the very top. Before achieving this, I got injured, albeit playing rugby, which put me out of school for months. My life was turned upside down. After struggling at school as a result, I later left before completing any A Levels and missed out on the chance of going to university too. I was thrown into the real world of being an adult and felt incredibly intimidated and daunted after having left that structured bubble of education. For a few years after leaving school, I bounced around between jobs, tried to set up my own business and spent some time travelling. However, despite all of this, I never felt truly settled. When figuring out what brought me happiness, I realised the direction I needed to go in.

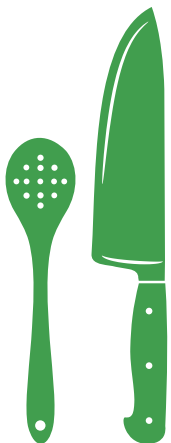
Food had always been my passion. Having cooked a lot from a young age at home and having used it as a form of mindfulness for myself throughout the hard times, it was a no-brainer that I needed to throw myself into this world. Working in something that you love is the dream, right? With these things in mind, I set up a portfolio of my cooking on social media to show restaurants or food-and-drink start-ups what I could do and how much I loved it. The beautiful way of social media meant that more people than I realised started watching and enjoying my videos, giving me the opportunity to turn this into a full-time business: Sam's Eats.

Fast-forward to now and I'm sure that a lot of you are curious as to what I do from day to day and how exactly it works as a business. The bread and butter of my work is to create cooking videos online, to entertain and educate while inspiring people of all ages to get into the kitchen. What started off as fun, fast-paced, engaging videos, highlighting a variety of dishes through the sounds and visuals of cooking, quickly led to so much more.

In 2023, I was fortunate enough to publish my first cookbook *Sam's Eats: Let's Do Some Cooking*. This was a huge moment for me. As I never had that satisfaction of finishing school, being able to complete something so monumental gave me that sense of achievement and completion that I always wanted. The aim of the book was to do exactly what I set out to do with my videos: inspire people to get in the kitchen and find love in the process of cooking. The book highlights a range of dishes, of different difficulties, for a variety of occasions, including a selection of cuisines from around the world. One of my favourite dishes is the slow-cooked beef short rib ragu – a delicious comfort food that is my go-to when I want to entertain and impress guests. Another delicious recipe that I often find myself making is the pea and mint rigatoni*. This is the perfect weeknight meal after a long day at work – an easy pasta dish with a rich silky sauce.

Alongside the book, I have been fortunate enough to have many other incredible opportunities and experiences, from doing a live cooking segment on NBC's *TODAY* show in the US, appearing as a guest judge on BBC's *Young MasterChef*, travelling around the world for research and development, to working in my studio with some amazing brands in the UK. However, it's not always glamorous. On a day-to-day basis, I am typically planning recipes, testing, filming and editing. The variety is what makes me love this job every single day.

My final few words to all of you out there, whether you are just leaving school or finding yourself lost and in need of a new career path, is to just find what makes you happy. I remember saying this to all of the pupils when I opened the Dragon Sale in 2023 – don't feel pressured to be the most intelligent, most sporty, most artistic person around. All too often there is this underlying pressure that so many of us feel, whether it is to follow a particular career path or to be a certain person. Find what makes you truly happy and stick with it. Whatever hobby or activity that may be, there is always a way to make it into a career. The happier you are in your work life, the more sustainable that will be, in turn making you the most successful and healthiest version of yourself. In addition to this, I do want to say that however hard a situation you find yourself in, or have been in, clouds really do have silver linings! Having lived up to that saying myself, I strongly believe that no matter how tough times can be, it is those times that make you who you are, being that unique individual that nobody else can be.





Find what makes
you truly happy
and stick with it.



Pea & Mint Pasta

Recipe: Serves 4

300g fresh pasta (pappardelle goes best with this)

650ml vegetable stock

530g frozen peas

150g ricotta

2 big pinches of salt (or to taste)

Big squeeze of lemon juice

Bunch of mint (about 20g of mint leaves)

160ml of the braising liquid from peas

25g cold butter

1. Tip the warm stock into a pan, add the peas and bring to a boil. Simmer for 4 minutes until the peas have softened and cooked through. Strain the peas, reserving the braising liquid.
2. Add the peas into a blender, with the ricotta, salt, lemon juice, mint and 160ml of the braising liquid. Blitz it together for a few minutes until smooth. Add in the cold butter and blitz again until all of it has been incorporated and emulsified.
3. Cook your fresh pasta in salted boiling water for 2 minutes (undercooked on purpose) then place it into a frying pan. Tip over the pea and mint sauce, add a small ladle of pasta water (starchiness helps the sauce cling to the pasta) and cook over a medium heat for another 3–5 minutes until the pasta has finished cooking through.
4. Serve with some toasted breadcrumbs. Enjoy!



@samseats





Farming Dragons

Tim Chamberlain (OD 1996) returned to his family farm in 2011 after establishing a career as a landscape architect. With a passion for agriculture, he pursued a Post Graduate Diploma in Agriculture at the Royal Agricultural University.

Under their leadership, Crowmarsh Battle Farms has grown significantly, managing 760 hectares of owned and tenanted land, and an additional 680 hectares under whole-farm contracts. Beyond traditional crops like wheat, barley and oats, they have diversified into growing poppies, soya, and even cricket bat willows. In this article, Tim shares his experiences at the Dragon, offering a glimpse into his formative years and the values that shaped his journey.

I have great memories of my time at the Dragon School: Bun Break, “goals”, school trips and sports. It was an exciting and fun place to be, where learning seemed to happen without you knowing, both inside and outside of the classroom. Although, looking back 30 years later, it is hard to pinpoint exactly how the Dragon experience influenced my future, it surely played a large part in becoming the person I am, decisions made and paths followed.

Having left the Dragon in 1996, I went to Dean Close School in Cheltenham for GCSEs and A Levels. After completing A Levels in Geography, Biology and Design and Technology, I went on to study Landscape Architecture and Ecology at the University of Sheffield for five years. This then led to a short career in private practice, working mainly in master planning and wider landscape assessments.

Although I never knowingly had an interest in the family farm, when you are born and raised in a farming environment it seems to rub off on you. After five years as a landscape architect, I moved back to the farm in 2011, with some further education at the Royal Agricultural University. The farm is now run by me and my brother Charlie (OD 1998), while Dad is enjoying retirement, as much as a farmer can.

In 1894 my great-grandad, Frederick, moved to Crowmarsh Battle Farms, in Benson, South Oxfordshire, and the Chamberlain family are still farming four generations and 130 years later. The farm is now a diversified business, farming its own land as well as contract farming. We also have a grade-II-listed barn complex that was converted into rural offices in the late 90s, and we are landlords to a green waste compost and anaerobic digestion site, along with a few other smaller enterprises.



Since 1909, Crowmarsh Battle Farms has been an all-arable farm, although we do have a couple of visiting pig herds that rent ground from us. We try to work around a six-year rotation of wheat, wheat/barley, oilseed rape, wheat, wheat/barley, followed by another break crop (beans, maize, poppies or grass). In place of livestock in the system, we use green waste compost and digestate, both from the on-farm plant, and pig muck from a neighbouring farm to help preserve, improve and put nutrients back into our soils.

Technology and innovation play a large part in our farming system, from choosing the latest crop varieties that are most suitable to our farming system, soil and markets through to satellite-guided machines and variable rate applications of seed and fertiliser. Precision in the way we farm is so important with regards to both our costs and returns but also to our environment and the nature in and around the farm.

Since 1996 the farm has been a LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) demonstration farm. These are working farms committed to delivering and promoting sustainable farming practices. With this in mind, we often host farm visits by students and other interested parties to discuss farming practices and the environmental work we have carried out. Some of these include planting winter bird seed plots, wildflower margins and corners, traditional hedge laying, and hedge planting to provide habitats for wildlife around the farm. We are also members of a farm cluster group, taking these projects to a wider scale across farms to try and enhance the benefits.

Lots of English people are obsessed by the weather – we are controlled by it. Everything we do on the farm is governed by the elements, from what we can grow, when we can carry out work through to the yields and quality of what we grow; it is all out of our control. Over the time I have been working on the farm the change in the weather has become more apparent to me, where the traditional seasons seem to have become confused and predictability impossible. For Harvest 2022, we started combining on 11 July and we cut every day for five weeks until we finished. Harvest 2023, on the other hand, lasted for 11 weeks and three days due to the wet summer. Autumn, winter and spring 2023/24 were wet. The impact was that many crops didn't get planted at the right time, or in good conditions, and that protection of the crops in the spring couldn't be carried out at the correct time. We are now seeing the impact of that at harvest, where yields are typically down due to late drilled crops, many of which suffered from large weed and disease pressure. Last week, during harvest, we had 36mm of rain in 20 minutes, which brought harvesting to an abrupt halt and stopped cutting for several days.

Due to the changing weather patterns, and shorter windows in which to carry out farm operations, the way we farm is going to have to adapt. Practices such as cover crops and direct drilling can help with soil structure and condition, meaning that machinery can potentially travel in the fields for longer. Ensuring a good range of crops being grown, both winter- and spring-planted, helps to spread the risk of wet winters and dry springs. Making sure that machinery is suitable and well-maintained helps to reduce downtime and ensure high output when the conditions are good. Diversifying outside of the traditional growing of crops helps to spread risk and brings in a more stable and known income to the business throughout the year.

Despite the challenges of farming, it is an important industry that I am proud to be part of, and I believe that, as a nation, we do well. I hope that we can leave the farm in a good state so that maybe the fifth generation of the family will be able to carry on the tradition, if they like.

“

Although I never knowingly had an interest in the family farm, when you are born and raised in a farming environment it seems to rub off on you.



Bookshelf



Henry Disney (OD 1953)

Swansong

Published: 10 March 2023
ISBN: 978-1-7822-8499-4

Author's Corner

The final collection of poems by a scientist and poet near the end of an extraordinary life.

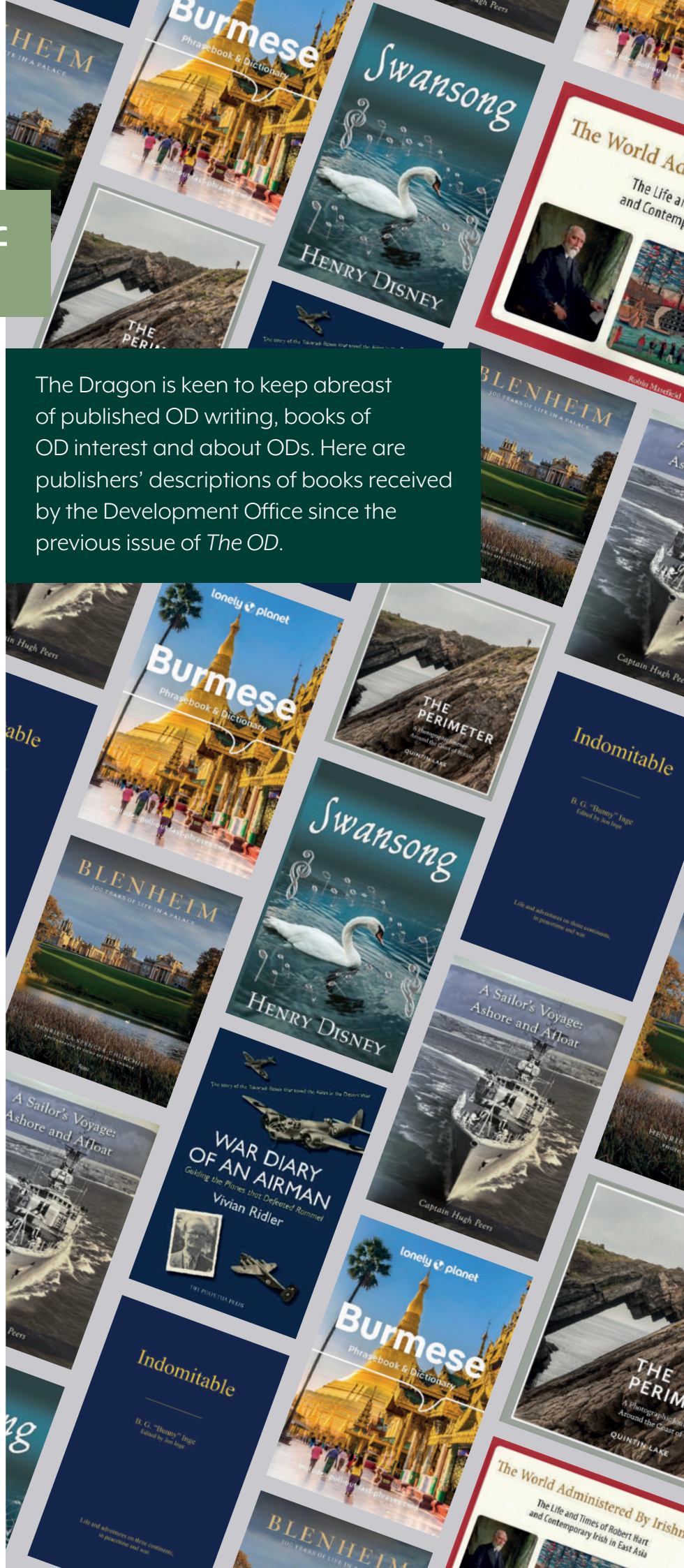
They reflect on unusual incidents in his life and comment on contemporary concerns of life today. Comments covering politics, current conflicts across the world, impacts of climate change, and other concerns are treated with clarity and insight. Some may challenge the reader. Others may reflect concerns shared by the reader. The narrative style of the poems makes them accessible to a wide range of people who have not read poetry since school.

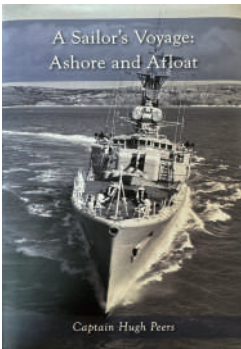
The poems comment on life today in the context of someone whose father worked in provincial administration in the Sudan and who had an extraordinary life in his childhood and youth, including active service during his national service. With a degree in Natural Sciences from Cambridge, he worked in a field centre, then as a medical entomologist working in tropical forests in Belize and Cameroon, then in charge of a field centre and nature reserve in Yorkshire, and then as a Research Fellow based in the Department of Zoology University of Cambridge, researching the extraordinary habits of scuttle flies across the world. Several poems indicate that his wife, of a working-class background, was the gifted support throughout, along with their three children.

Concern for the environment, the impact of climate change, wars worldwide and bureaucratic nonsense gave rise to several poems whose insights and comments may surprise. These impacts on ordinary people link these concerns to our everyday lives.

Henry Disney has been writing poems since his youth, with his first collection being published in 1963.

The Dragon is keen to keep abreast of published OD writing, books of OD interest and about ODs. Here are publishers' descriptions of books received by the Development Office since the previous issue of *The OD*.





Hugh Peers (OD 1950)

A Sailor's Voyage: Ashore and Afloat

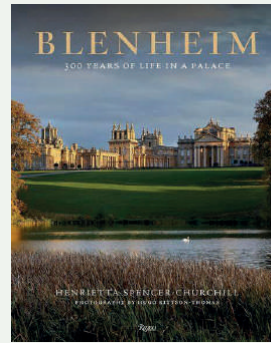
Published: 21 December 2021

Born in Hong Kong in 1936 into a naval family, I spent the Second World War avoiding bombing, the imminent threat of invasion, father away at sea and following elder brothers at the Dragon. From

September 1945 I enjoyed, benefitted and contributed to the rich variety of school activities, with particular success in all sports, as well as singing the lead parts in the G&S operas, 'Pirates of Penzance' and 'Iolanthe'.

Four years at Charterhouse followed, and choice of a naval career was made easy as national service was compulsory, and we were surrounded by a huge fleet in Portsmouth. Like many, my naval career was varied and richly rewarding. Onboard the British flagship at Suez in 1956 (with the American fleet just over the horizon!), then a survey ship off the cold east coast of the UK, before appointment to the newly built Royal Yacht Britannia. Our second trip to the Caribbean took Princess Margaret on her honeymoon! Sailing from the pool of London in May 1960, it seemed that the whole population of London was out waving and cheering, hanging out of windows, balancing on yachts and applauding the Queen's sister as she sailed away, out of touch with the real world for 10 days! It was an historic and memorable event, followed by visits to many attractive and quiet beaches and Caribbean ports.

Later in the year, with The Queen embarked, we visited Cowes for sailing, Cardiff for the Eisteddfod and the Western Isles, a particular favourite of the royal family. There I contributed to the ships concert by singing the 'Lord Chancellor's Nightmare Song' learnt and performed at the Dragon 12 years earlier! Prince Charles, aged 11 commented, "Was that meant to be funny?" and Princess Alexandra, aged 23 asked, "Did you make it all up?" Not everyone sings to their Queen! A full seagoing career followed throughout the 1960s, with frigates in the Far East, the ice patrol ship in the Falklands and Antarctica, witnessing "the six days war" from the Persian Gulf in 1967, and celebrating the bicentenary of Captain Cook's arrival in Sydney in 1970. And finally, the highlight of my career, command of HMS *Whitby*, a frigate with a crew of 220 which I commissioned and sailed to join the much-reduced Far East Fleet in 1971/2. There followed a string of shore jobs, planning at the MOD, training new entry schools of officers and ratings, as well as enjoying my own happy married life. My reward was to be our man in the Caribbean, based in Nassau, Bahamas, for nearly five years! There I visited all the islands, encouraging and liaising with the French, Dutch and American Navies, witnessed the American invasion of Grenada and accompanied Princess Margaret as she granted independence to Belize, Antigua and St Kitts. It had been a full, varied and very rewarding naval career.



Henrietta Spencer-Churchill

Photographs taken by Hugo Rittson-Thomas (OD 1970)

Blenheim: 300 Years of Life in a Palace

Published: 14 March 2012
ISBN: 978-0-8478-3350-4

The most important, most visited and most renowned of all of Britain's stately homes, Blenheim has been home to

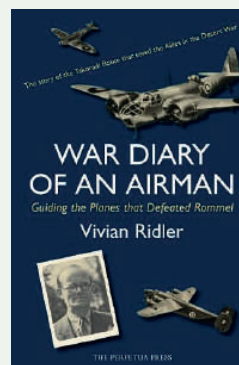
the Churchill family for more than 300 years.

Regarded as perhaps the greatest of the stately homes and the finest example of baroque architecture in Great Britain, Blenheim is a treasure of English heritage. In this stunning volume, Lady Henrietta Spencer-Churchill, the 12th generation of the family, takes us on a privileged tour of the palace.

Designed by John Vanbrugh and Nicholas Hawksmoor (a protégé of Christopher Wren) in the early 1700s – with stonework, furniture, and tapestries crafted by the best talents of the age – and art and statuary by such notable artists as John Singer Sargent and Joshua Reynolds – Blenheim is filled with artistic commissions that provide a window into the history of England.

In addition to the gilded staterooms and acres of landscaped gardens, Spencer-Churchill shows us the family's private apartments, with their secret corridors and history of illustrious guests, as well as the "downstairs" staff area with its iconic bell system.

With beautiful photography of the magnificent interiors and priceless collections, and Spencer-Churchill's fascinating text, this volume illuminates Blenheim as it's never been seen before.



Vivian Ridler (Former Parent) to Colin Ridler (OD 1965)

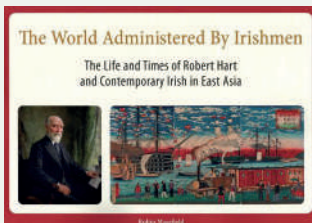
War Diary of an Airman: Guiding the Planes that Defeated Rommel

Published: January 2021
ISBN: 978-1-8708-8226-2

Vivian Ridler, destined to become a distinguished printer to the University at Oxford (1958–78), as a young man spent the war serving in the RAF: first

in Orkney, then at the height of the conflict in Nigeria, before a period post-war as an intelligence officer in Germany. But why Nigeria, seemingly so far from the battle fronts? It transpires, as this previously unpublished 1943 war diary reveals, that his two Nigerian locations (Ijeja, near Lagos, and Kano) formed key links in the so-called Takoradi Route. This remarkable network of airbases, running from Takoradi in what is now Ghana all the way across Africa and up to Cairo, conveyed from 1940 to 1943 a crucial 5,360 aircraft to British forces in North Africa. Without them the Allies would have lost the Desert War, and quite possibly World War II itself. The Desert War was fought for supremacy in the Middle East, a source of vital oil supplies. For nearly two years Rommel with his Afrikakorps consistently outwitted his opponents, until

defeat came in November 1942 at the battle of El Alamein – where Allied success depended hugely on Takoradi-supplied air superiority. Vivian Ridler's war diary conveys vividly the challenges of working in the tropical heat of West Africa. As an RAF wireless operator, he guides hundreds of planes in and out of Ijeja and Kano airfields. Inexperienced pilots often crash or are blinded by intense sandstorms. Debilitating malaria dogs the ground staff. The fog of war leads to constantly changing diktats from on high. Meanwhile Vivian's closest friend David Bland – navigator in a Pathfinder bomber – is shot down over Berlin and incarcerated in Stalag Luft III. An appendix tells his story. An extensive epilogue also publishes extracts from the diary of the children's novelist Violet Bradby, chronicling the war's closing stages from the Home Front as Vivian, her son-in-law, arrives back just before D-Day. Richly illustrated with photographs, propaganda posters and informative maps, *War Diary of an Airman* gives a fresh perspective on a world-shattering conflict.

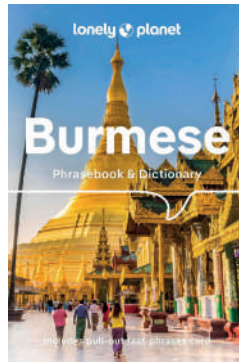


Robin Masefield (OD 1965)

The World Administered by Irishmen: The Life and Times of Robert Hart and Contemporary Irish in East Asia

Published: 1 January 2024
ISBN: 978-0-9955-8862-2

This widely researched book is published by Special Collections & Archives, Queen's University Belfast. While the initial focus is on the Chinese Maritime Customs Service, and the Ulsterman Sir Robert Hart who led it for 45 years, it brings together a treasure trove of other Irish people in East Asia – men from Ulster working in the Customs Service: a nurse from Roscommon, a doctor from Cork, a diplomat from Meath, Hong Kong governors from Dublin, and many more. Using first-hand accounts where possible, the book vividly brings to life the special contribution that Irish men and women made to developing relations with China, Japan and Korea in the 19th century. "I cannot commend this book highly enough," from the Foreword by a former British Consul General in Hong Kong. Richly illustrated with many historic images, the book will appeal widely to academics and all those with an interest in East Asia. The author lived in Hong Kong for three years and has published a number of historical books.



Vicky Bowman (OD 1979)

Lonely Planet Burmese Phrasebook & Dictionary

Published: 6 June 2023
ISBN: 978-1786570925

Lonely Planet's *Burmese Phrasebook & Dictionary* is your handy passport to culturally enriching travels with the most relevant and useful Burmese phrases and vocabulary for all your travel needs. Ask directions to Myanmar's many temples, bargain for fruit at a market and order tea at a local tea shop, all with your trusted travel companion.



Quintin Lake (OD 1988)

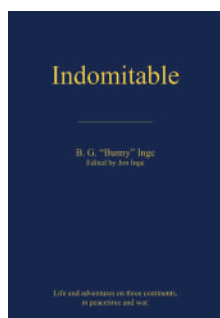
The Perimeter

Published: 15 May 2025
ISBN: 978-1-5291-5445-0

Rediscover Britain in this vivid and intimate full-colour account of one man's pilgrimage along its rugged shores.

On Friday 17 April 2015, photographer Quintin Lake set off from the steps of St Paul's Cathedral on a five-year journey that would take him around the entire coastline of mainland Britain. Armed with 20 kilos of hiking and photography gear, he walked 11,000 kilometres in 454 days with one goal in mind: to produce a body of photographic work that gets under the surface of the island nation that we call home.

Carefully curated with over 1,200 photos and interspersed with stories of Quintin's adventures, this book is an immersive visual experience that showcases Britain as you've never seen it before. Filled with striking photos that capture the glorious and often surprising world between land and sea, *The Perimeter* is a celebration of Britain – a small island with a vast coastline.



Bernard "Bunny" Inge (Former Teacher) edited by Jon Inge

Indomitable

Published: 31 March 2024
ISBN: 979-8-8692-7645-2

Bernard "Bunny" Inge lived a full and adventurous life.

Whether as a teenage laborer on a farm in Canada, a teacher in England, or Headmaster at St. Giles British School in Tsingtao, China, under Japanese

occupation, he always forged ahead with an indomitable spirit, focusing on the positive, getting done what needed to be done and keeping others' spirits high.

His 1941 voyage home on a freighter in wartime was a four-month odyssey marked with dangers, delays and extraordinary good luck. On returning to England he married, took up a teaching position at the Dragon School while serving in the Home Guard and earned his university degree, all at the same time. He then became Headmaster of the 300-year-old Reading Blue Coat School in Sonning, a position he held with great distinction for 22 years until his retirement.

Here are his personal reminiscences, expanded and annotated by his son.

Author's Corner

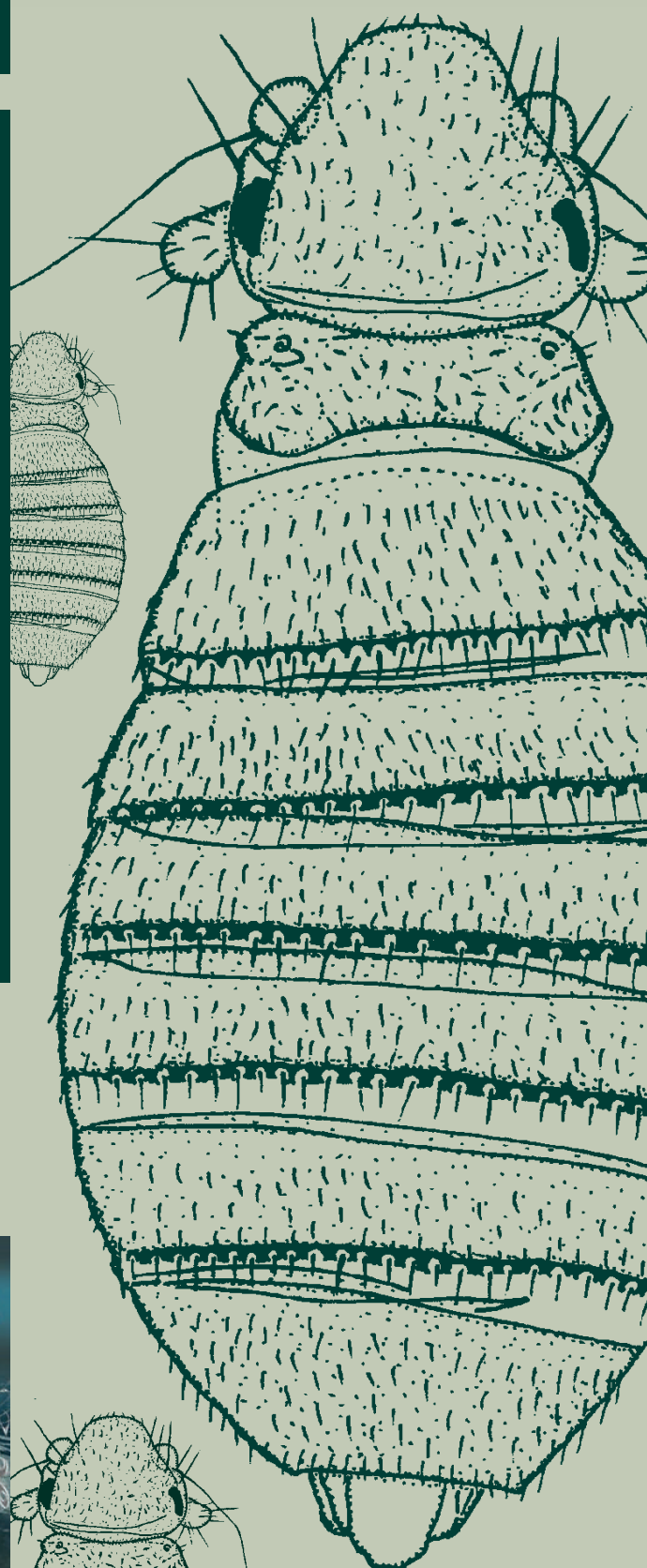
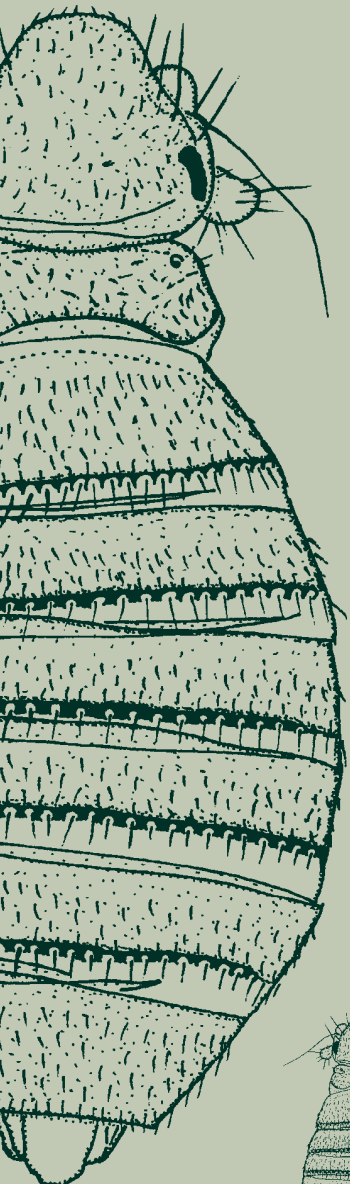
Dr Henry Disney (OD 1953) is a Zoology Research Fellow at the University of Cambridge Museum of Zoology. He has had a lifelong interest in flies, midges and gnats, known as Diptera, with a particular focus on their interactions with other organisms.

Formerly a medical entomologist in Belize and Cameroon, he later developed a keen interest in British Diptera, with a special focus on meniscus midges and trickle midges, leading to a profound fascination with scuttle flies. As an ecologist who transitioned into taxonomy, he now utilizes taxonomy to publish novel data on the natural history of scuttle flies. His primary focus is on the natural histories of the Phoridae family worldwide, with special emphasis on those associated with social insects.



One needs
nine lives
to be an
entomologist,
but one is
never bored!

Swansong



Q: Your books highlight your childhood as a time of curiosity and connection with nature. Could you share a pivotal moment from your time at the Dragon that significantly shaped your passion for entomology or the natural sciences?

My father worked in the Sudan. During the war, my two sisters and I became separated from our parents. On one occasion, I could not be found and panic ensued. Eventually, I was discovered sitting among the cabbages watching the caterpillars chewing away. I kept collecting specimens – snail shells, odd stones, fir cones, etc. – so our carer emptied one of the cupboards on the landing and designated it my museum!

At the Dragon School, I started reading poems and natural history became an ever more important interest. Indeed, I was eventually nominated as the boy curator of the little natural history museum in the school. I also took on a small patch of garden and won a prize for the result.

Q: Reflecting on your education at the Dragon, how did the community and environment there support your interests in both science and poetry? Were there specific instances or projects that encouraged you to explore and integrate these seemingly different passions?

At my secondary school I started writing poems, encouraged by a teacher, and I became obsessed with natural history and archaeology.

In the Christmas holiday of 1954, in the Sudan, early in January I joined a trip organised by the museum in Khartoum, to excavate the Coptic church and monastic buildings, dating from around 900 AD, at Ghazali. Instead of following the River Nile where it sweeps in a great loop to the east, we drove straight across in a straight line heading north to Merowe. We camped halfway on folding camp beds open to the night sky. From the heat of the desert by day, the temperature dropped many degrees to give a decidedly chilly night. However, never before or since have I experienced such a wonderful display of the stars, planets and meteors away from any light pollution on Earth, as I later recollected in the poem 'Awesome Night'.

Q: Can you elaborate on your interest in meniscus midges, trickle midges, and particularly scuttle flies? What makes these groups of flies so fascinating to you?

My interest in meniscus midges (Dixidae) and trickle midges (Thaumaleidae) resulted from constantly encountering their larvae when teaching students at the Malham Tarn Field Centre in Yorkshire. Furthermore, they are excellent indicators of the lack of surfactant pollution such as detergents.

My interest in scuttle flies (Phoridae) developed in Yorkshire when I discovered the natural histories of some species that contradicted the assertions in textbooks that they only developed in decaying materials.

In 1925, Tokuchi Shiraki had briefly described some of these aberrant, flightless, female scuttle flies from the fungus gardens of termites in Formosa (in today's Taiwan). He said he would provide fuller descriptions in another paper but never did. The problem was that he had assigned all but one of the species to a genus we now know is restricted to Africa. I had tried to borrow his specimens from the museum in Taiwan, but after a lengthy correspondence, it transpired that they had been destroyed in the Second World War when the Japanese had bombed the museum.

So, in 1995, my wife Audrey and I based ourselves in the Chinese University in the New Territories of Hong Kong. We then travelled by train to Guangzhou, in the Guangdong Province of mainland China, where we were guests of the Entomological Institute adjacent to the University. Dr Gui-Xiang Li at the Institute was the leading specialist on termites in China and I greatly benefitted from his expertise with regard to their taxonomy and the recognition of their nests in the field.

Unlike many relatives elsewhere that construct conspicuous above-ground mounds (some taller than a person), the nests of the Chinese species I was interested in are entirely underground. Dr Li showed me how to recognize the sealed entrances that are only opened for the nuptial flights of the brief emergence of the flying stages of the adult termites. We excavated termite nests in the upper reaches of the Pearl River. We found the first specimens of one of Shiraki's species, after digging down a little more than a metre to reach the fungus gardens of the termites. Audrey

“

At my secondary school I started writing poems, encouraged by a teacher, and I became obsessed with natural history and archaeology.



reacted by expressing great surprise that we had come all the way to China to collect such tiny flies!

After returning to Hong Kong, we proceeded to Taiwan. There we not only procured further specimens of Shiraki's problem species but also related new species and new genera. One of the new species became the third species of fly that I named after Audrey! In Taiwan, we were guests of the Forestry Research Institute in Taipei. The whole trip was extremely productive and culminated in a monographic revision of the oriental species of *Termitoxeniinae*.

Q: In your books, you explain that you collaborate with field workers around the world. Can you share a memorable experience or discovery that resulted from one of these collaborations?

A memorable experience was the reception of the publication of an extraordinary species from Malaysia: 'A fly's ultimate con', *Nature*, London 378 (6553): 137. However, as *Nature* has a severe limit on the number of pages for a paper, the prime purpose of this note was to direct readers to the detailed description in a Californian journal. It is worth noting that the note in *Nature* gave rise to articles across the world, me being interviewed on a BBC Radio 4 science programme, and the fly ending up in the *Guinness Book of Records*!

Q: What are some of the major challenges you face in your entomological research, particularly in taxonomy and fieldwork?

Major challenges included spending six months on active service at the height of the troubles in Cyprus, during my National Service. This was relieved by the amazing wildlife observed when on patrol in the Troodos Mountains. During my years in medical entomology and parasitology in Belize (then British Honduras) and Cameroon in the 1960s I learned to cope with working in tropical rainforests.



At the Dragon School, I started reading poems and natural history became an ever more important interest.

From the Archives

D-Day

Throughout 2024, commemorations took place for the 80th anniversary of the Normandy landings. The Dragon community gathered, as it does every year, to make a personal tribute to *all* ODs who have fought and been killed in combat, but we especially remembered those who took part in these events.

This operation, commencing with D-Day on 6 June 1944, was a defining and pivotal moment in World War II, ultimately convincing the German high command that defeat was inevitable.

On that day, allied forces launched the largest amphibious invasion in the history of warfare. Codenamed Operation Overlord, the allied landings on the beaches of Normandy marked the start of a long and costly campaign to liberate North-West Europe from Nazi occupation. On the morning of D-Day, ground troops landed across five assault beaches and, by the end of the day, the allies had established themselves onshore and could begin the advance into France. More than 2 million troops from over 12 countries were prepared for this invasion and several ODs can be counted amongst that number. Through our archives, we can gain insight into the boys they were at the Dragon and the men they were to become.

Old Dragons Patrick Gordon Bulford (1920–1944), Donald Charles William MacInnes (1923–1944), Thomas Douglas Rose (1919–1944) and Trevor Hamilton Seaward (1925–1944) were all present on that momentous day in 1944.

Trevor was born in 1925 and, after a year in the Baby School, he entered the Big School in September 1933. He was well known for his acting and made a striking appearance as the boy in 'Henry V'; he was said to have given the part the right quality of "pert cynicism", becoming one of the major successes of the production.

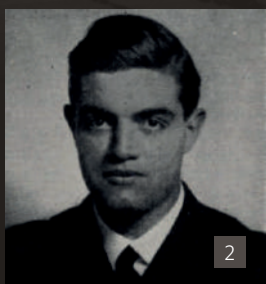
In December 1942, Trevor joined the Navy. He became a midshipman in April 1944, where he was posted to 1st Flotilla L. B. V. Just two months later, Trevor was engaged in the landing operations on D-Day and lost his life when the landing barge of which he was in charge foundered in the high sea.



Arromanches beach -
Wreckage from D-Day



1



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3



4

- 1 Patrick Gordon Bulford
- 2 Donald Charles William MacInnes
- 3 Thomas Douglas Rose
- 4 Trevor Hamilton Seaward

After his death, a friend said, "When I think of Trevor ... I find that the quality in him which I rate highest was his loyalty... loyalty to family, friends and country seems to me a high virtue in anyone at any time".

Donald was at the Dragon School from 1934-36 and is said to have left "his mark upon every side of school life". He performed in 'The Mikado', 'Iolanthe' and 'The Merchant of Venice', and was gifted with a "naturally clear and true voice".

Donald went on to Rugby and then to Oxford, where he was reading for a Law degree before he left to join the war effort, volunteering in the Navy. Donald became Gunnery Control Officer in a destroyer and his ship played an important role in June 1944. About three weeks after D-Day the destroyer struck a mine in the Channel and was lost. Donald was the only officer to go down with his ship.

The Provost of Queen's College, Oxford, wrote these words to his parents:

"Our Roll of Honour is now grievously long: but your son's death is one of those that cuts the deepest. He was such a splendid leader of men, always cheerful, always full of a sense of duty... it is a bitter loss for us..."

Patrick Gordon Bulford (Pat), the eldest of three Dragon brothers, joined the school in May 1929 and, despite his "slight" stature, he did well in many sports.

In October 1940, he joined the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and in December 1942, his battalion was incorporated into the Airborne 52nd LI, and Pat became a member of the reconnaissance platoon.

Airborne troops played a large part in landings on D-Day and Pat's glider was one of the first three in the great air armada. The next day he was wounded and returned to England for a short stay in hospital. He returned to France on 24 June, and he died whilst leading a section against an enemy machine-gun position near Manneville on 26 August 1944.

One of his fellow officers said, "In Pat I have lost a friend... I shall always remember him for his honesty, courage, and his devotion to the care and welfare of his men."

Thomas Douglas Rose was at the Dragon from 1928 to 1933 and was well remembered for his constantly cheerful and friendly personality. When war broke out, he joined the Bedfordshire Yeomanry (Royal Field Artillery) and after training, he went with his regiment to France, taking part in the evacuation of Dunkirk in May 1940.

His division went to France on D-Day and Tom, now promoted to Captain, went through the fighting from Caen to Falaise and the crossing of the Seine. He moved through France and Belgium to The Netherlands.

“

Throughout the whole of the operation Capt. Rose showed outstanding gallantry and devotion to duty.

He was there when the Airborne division landed at Arnhem and he lost his life in the operations that were covering its withdrawal. He was reported to have died of his wounds in a German military hospital soon after 26 September 1944.

Tom was given an immediate award of the Military Cross and the following citation shows how deserved this was:

"Throughout the whole of the operation Capt. Rose showed outstanding gallantry and devotion to duty, and notwithstanding his wound and with complete disregard for his own safety he continued at his post and materially assisted in the successful evacuation of the Airborne Division".

Robert Massy Birch (1924–1944) and John "Jack" Herbert Cooper (1914–1944) both reached the Battle of Caen. The initial plan by the allied forces had been that the liberation of the city of Caen would occur on the evening of 6 June, thus many of those who landed were equipped with foldable bicycles to move more quickly! However, this did not go to plan due to the onslaught that the troops faced as they landed on the beaches.

Robert, known always as "Robin", was six years old when he entered the Baby School in May 1930 and he made the most of his time at school. He won diary prizes, appeared in Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Patience' in 1936 and he was also a good athlete.

In October 1942, Robin became a rifleman and in August 1943, he was commissioned to the Rifle Brigade and posted to the 1st Battalion in May 1944, going with them to France in July. Shortly after his arrival, on 28 July, whilst participating in the Battle for Caen, he was killed by a shell splinter.

The Rifle Brigade Chronicle confirm the loss that was felt by those who knew Robin: "It was a sad day indeed for Robin's many friends when they heard that he had been killed. It would be hard to find a more charming and likeable person. His men trusted and respected him, and he never abused that trust and respect... his quiet ways and charming personality leave a gap hard to fill."

John Herbert Cooper, known as Jack, came to the Big School in September 1922 and became known as a great sportsman at the Dragon. In 1928 he left for Bradfield, after which he entered his father's business.

He joined the Territorial Army in May 1939 and, after considerable service, including a period in Iceland, went to France soon after D-Day. Not long afterwards, on 6 July, he was killed in action in the Battle of Caen.

Frederick Cardwell Livesey (1914–1944) leaves little trace of himself in our archives but we do know that he joined the Baby School in 1919, at five years old.

As soon as war broke out, he volunteered at once with the 10th Battalion, Durham Light Infantry. He went to Normandy in June 1944 and, in August, he was killed in action.

Each one of these Old Dragons contributed towards the success of this operation, which led to the eventual liberation of Paris and the defeat of Nazi Germany. For their valour and leadership, we remember them all. Their participation in the Normandy landings exemplifies the courage and dedication of those who fought to preserve freedom during one of history's darkest times. Their stories serve as a poignant reminder of the cost of war and the enduring spirit of those who rise to meet its challenges. As we commemorate the Normandy landings, we honour the legacy of heroes like Robin, Pat, Jack, Freddie, Donald, Tom and Trevor, once boys at the Dragon School, whose later actions helped shape the course of history.

Robert Massy Birch (Robin) 5

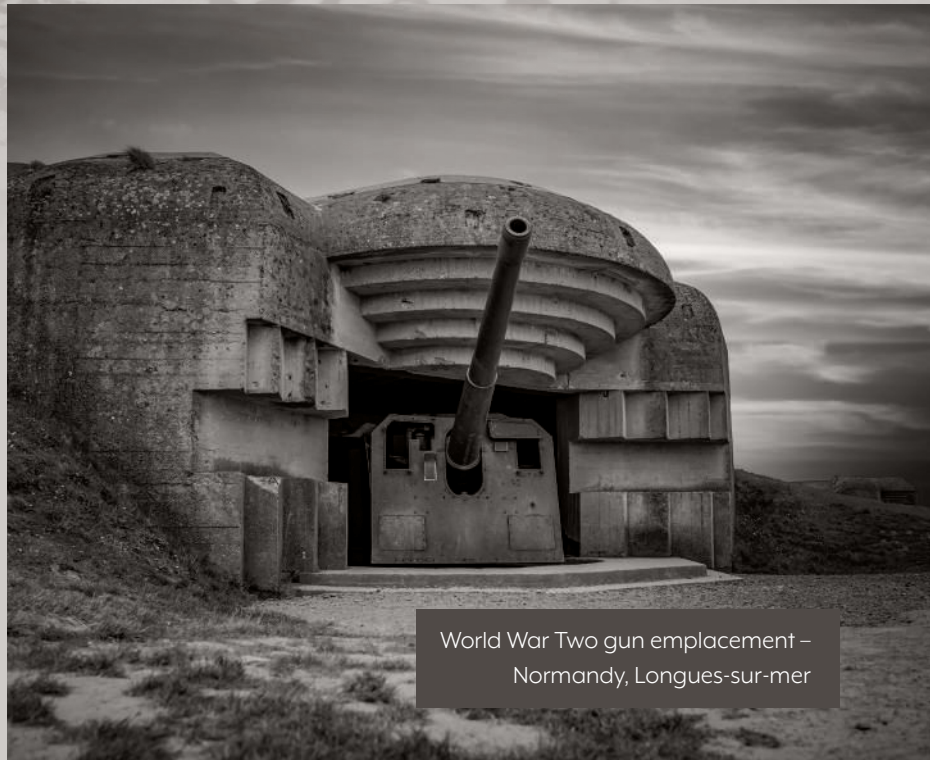
John Herbert Cooper (Jack) 6

Frederick Cardwell Livesey 7

“

Their stories serve as a poignant reminder of the cost of war and the enduring spirit of those who rise to meet its challenges.





World War Two gun emplacement –
Normandy, Longues-sur-mer



D-Day Landings

Events

We've had another fantastic run of events and this summary highlights the key moments from our calendar. These are just a few of the highlights we've hosted, with more to come as we continue to build on this momentum.

We kicked off the academic year with the Dragon Women's Reunion, welcoming three wonderful speakers from different OD cohorts: Cressida Dick (OD 1974), Lady Antonia Fraser (OD 1944) and Poppy Kettlewell (OD 2011), as well as over 60 guests ranging from the 1940s through to 2016. The day was spent in Bardwell Road with guests enjoying a delicious lunch, fond memories from our speakers and tours across the site to reignite the Dragon spirit, some of whom hadn't returned for 50 years.

Over 200 Junior Old Dragons then returned to Bardwell Road along with their parents for our biennial JOD Day, reuniting with their peers and former teachers. It was great to catch up with many JODs and hear about their journeys after the Dragon. The next JOD Day will take place in 2026, so please keep an eye on your inbox for details.

The newest event in our 2024 calendar was the inaugural in-person Arduus Ad Solem networking evening, which took place at Le Bab, Battersea Power Station, owned by Ed Brunet (OD 2002) and focused on those within the creative industries. Following the success of our online Arduus ad Solem series, this was a great opportunity for creative ODs to meet and expand their pool of contacts whilst enjoying delicious canapés. Over 60 ODs attended, many of whom were able to guide our budding creatives in how to be successful in their desired field. Thank you to those who took the time out of their evenings to share valuable experiences with other Old Dragons.



Biennial JOD Day



It was great to catch up with many JODs and hear about their journeys after the Dragon.



“

It is true that the Dragon
will always be a part
of each and every one
of our metaphorical
battery packs.

Cressida Dick (OD 1974).
Dragon Women's Reunion



Inaugural in-person
Arduus Ad Solem
networking evening.



Our summer concluded with our annual Dragon Drinks at the Arboretum, Charing Cross, London. Our guests updated us with their new ventures, whilst different generations shared their experiences of time at school with one another. It was wonderful to see that, whilst many things have changed over the years, the overarching Dragon spirit lives on – as well as some core Dragon classics like marbles and Sing Song. Attendees concluded the evening with a confident rendition of the closing chorus of the school song, 'Carmen Draconiensis'. (Email development.office@dragonschool.org with the lyrics and we'll award you a small prize!). For those of you who were unable to attend, we look forward to welcoming you at the next one in June 2025.

From the 1940s through to the 2020s we were delighted to have welcomed you all to OD events throughout this year, with special thanks to our current and former Dragon colleagues for taking the time to attend.

"It is true that the Dragon will always be a part of each and every one of our metaphorical battery packs."
Cressida Dick, OD 1974. We look forward to another year of reminiscing and memory-making with you in 2025.

Imelia Taylor (OD 2012)
Alumni Relations and Events Officer



Dragon Drinks at the Arboretum,
Charing Cross, London



Would you like to provide feedback on our events? Is there an event you'd love to see us include in future years – would you like to host it? What could we do to improve? Please do let us know by emailing development.office@dragonschool.org, or write to the school c/o Imelia Taylor, Alumni Relations and Events Officer, Dragon School, Bardwell Road, OX2 6SS.

Calendar 2025

Arduus ad Solem (Networking)
Thursday 6 Feb

January

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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April

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Pre-1970s Reunion
Saturday 24 May

July

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August

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September

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Dragon Sale
Saturday 13 December

October

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Remembrance Sunday
Sunday 9 November

November

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December

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A Journey of Education, Passion and Purpose

We are delighted to feature **Annabel Chivers (OD 2001)**, an esteemed paediatric sleep coach whose journey has been deeply influenced by her time at the Dragon. The nurturing environment, supportive community, and extensive opportunities for personal and academic growth at our school has played a critical role in shaping her future career. In this article, Annabel reflects on her transformative experiences at the Dragon.

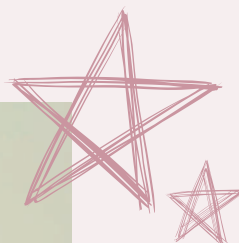
Back in 1998 my family returned from Rome, Italy, where we had been living for four wonderful years and I joined the Dragon in September that same year at the age of 10. I started as a full boarder, in Cherwell House, with the amazing Ma Taylor who welcomed me with open arms and helped me through those first few teary weeks of homesickness. Having been at a significantly smaller day school in Rome, as you can imagine it was quite a shock to the system for me joining the lively and bustling school that is the Dragon. Due to its nurturing and friendly environment it did not take me long to settle and form many close friendships, one of whom (Lucy Pollock née McClelland) is godmother to my daughter Nancy. Some of my fondest memories of my time at the Dragon were the epic Sports Days, Christmas Sales (I returned to many of these even in the years after I left), school trips to the Cévennes in France and the post-Common Entrance trip to Devon – the opportunities were endless, and we were very lucky children having all these experiences in our young lives already. I will always be eternally grateful to my parents for being able to send me to this awe-inspiring school.

Education is the cornerstone of our lives, shaping our paths, igniting our passions, and guiding us towards our purpose and I can firmly say that the three years I spent in this incredible school did just this. For many, the journey through school is a transformative experience, one that



Witnessing first-hand the impact of sleep deprivation on students' cognitive abilities, mood regulation and overall health, I felt compelled to delve deeper into the area of paediatric sleep health.





I set out to empower parents with the knowledge and tools to help their children achieve restful and rejuvenating sleep.

moulds not just our careers but also our identities, and I will never forget the many inspiring teachers who were always there to support me in whatever interests I had. It was a pivotal time for me in developing my passion for education and thus culminated in the founding of Marlow Sleep Coach, a company dedicated to improving the sleep health of children and, ultimately, their families.

On leaving the Dragon, I continued my education at Headington School, Oxford, and then I embarked on an undergraduate degree at Edinburgh University, where I pursued a degree in Biology, specialising in pharmacology. Armed with a solid scientific background, I ventured into the realm of education, driven by a desire to inspire young minds and impart knowledge. As a teacher at Queen Anne's School in Reading, I found fulfilment in sharing my passion for science with students, igniting in them a curiosity for the world around them and nurturing their scientific inquiry. Through my teaching experiences, I realised the critical importance of sleep in the overall well-being and academic success of children. Witnessing first-hand the impact of sleep deprivation on students' cognitive abilities, mood regulation and overall health, I felt compelled to delve deeper into the area of paediatric sleep health.

I now live in Marlow, Buckinghamshire, with my husband Ben and our two wonderful children, Frederick and Nancy. In 2017 I gave birth to my first child, a beautiful little boy, and although fully immersed in the magical newborn bubble, it wasn't until then that I realised how debilitating sleep deprivation could be and how much it adversely affected both my mental and physical health. It took such a huge toll on my day-to-day life with my family and although it doesn't always affect everyone in this way, it affects far more people than you may initially believe. For many it is not just those first few weeks and months: it can go on for the first four-to-five years of their child's life, sometimes longer if they have not felt supported in seeking help from the beginning. Sleep is vital to our children's health and development, and creating healthy sleep habits from the beginning is of paramount importance for them as they grow and thrive in those early years. Having sought help myself upon the arrival of my second child, Nancy, I felt instantly compelled to impart all this knowledge to other new parents so that they could enjoy those early years, rather than just muddling through in a zombie-like state.

Motivated by a desire to make a tangible difference in the lives of children and families both locally and further afield, I embarked on a new chapter in my career journey by founding the Marlow Sleep Coach back in September 2023. Drawing upon my background in



biology, education and a deep-seated passion for promoting healthy sleep habits, I set out to empower parents with the knowledge and tools to help their children achieve restful and rejuvenating sleep. Marlow Sleep Coach stands as a beacon of hope for families struggling with sleep-related challenges, offering personalised sleep coaching services tailored to the unique needs of each child and their family. Through evidence-based strategies, compassionate guidance and ongoing support, I always aim to transform children's sleep habits using holistic and fully responsive approaches, fostering not just better sleep but also improved overall well-being and academic performance growing up.

Since launching last year, the Marlow Sleep Coach has garnered acclaim for its innovative approach to paediatric sleep health, touching the lives of many families with young children. By combining scientific expertise with a deep understanding of child development and sleep physiology, I am a trusted authority in the field of paediatric sleep coaching, helping families navigate the challenges of sleep deprivation with confidence and empathy. Looking ahead, I envision expanding the reach of Marlow Sleep Coach, helping more families in need of support and guidance on their journey to better sleep. Through continued research, I am committed to fostering a culture of healthy sleep practices and empowering families to prioritise sleep as a basis of their overall mental and physical well-being.

In conclusion, my remarkable journey from the Dragon School through to being a science teacher, and ultimately to the founding of Marlow Sleep Coach, exemplifies the transformative power of education, passion and purpose. I will leave you with this wonderful quote from the Royal Foundation Centre of Early Childhood's Shaping Us campaign: "Sleep is the golden chain that ties health and our bodies together."

www.marlowsleepcoach.com



Through continued research, I am committed to fostering a culture of healthy sleep practices.



Richard, sporting a Dragon towel! Also with three other Old Dragons: (left to right) Andrew Burchardt (OD 1948) seated, Sonia Lindsay (OD 1946) and Richard Salter (OD 1957).

Letters to the Editor



The school orchestra in 1970 and you can see how few were involved – I think the clarinets outnumber the strings!

Clarinets Outnumber the Strings

Jeremy Gough (OD 1971)

You may be interested to know that I was given the opportunity to learn the trombone at the Dragon aged 12 and managed to obtain a Music Exhibition at Marlborough College. From there I went to the Royal College of Music and have been a professional trombone player ever since! Your current Director of Music, William Morris, was previously at Shrewsbury House Prep School where I have been a visiting Brass teacher for 25 years, so I know him well.

I truly know the value of what the new Music and Performing Arts Centre will bring to future Dragons and how especially important it is considering the way the arts are constantly under threat with funding cuts. It is so encouraging that the school recognises the value that arts and music provide to the development of a child.

Dragons in the Atlas Mountains

Patrick Hearne (OD 1969)

My wife and I were recently in the Atlas Mountains and were pleasantly surprised to find that the owner of the lodge in which we were staying was an OD, Stephen Skinner (OD 1977). We had a very convivial evening reminiscing about our time at the Dragon and his time at Eton where he was in the same Classics class as Boris. Moreover, it transpired that his eldest sister is connected to my wife's family through marriage. His lodge, Kasbah Bab Ourika, perches majestically on a hilltop at the apex of the Ourika Valley, guarding the gateway to the snow-capped Atlas Mountains – yet it is only 45-minutes from Marrakech's international airport.

With 360-degree panoramic views, this innovative hotel receives warm sunlight all day, ending in spectacular sunsets. From its unique eyrie-like position, it offers a bird's eye view of the Atlas Mountains, traditional Berber villages, National Forest and the lush river valley below. It is well worth a visit and Stephen will look after you royally!



Celebrating 90 Years

Sophie Massey-Cook (Former Parent)

Professor Sir Richard Sorabji (OD 1948) celebrated his upcoming 90th birthday in September 2024. Richard speaks with great fondness of his time as a pupil and later a gap year teacher at the Dragon, in the early 1950s. It was at the Dragon, when both were "stooges", that he began his long friendship with my father, Alick Barratt. Richard turned 90 on 8 November 2024.

In Memoriam

Peter "PJ" Wilson (Former Parent, Former Staff)

on 22 March 2024

While there have been many great teachers who have made a lasting impression at the Dragon, it was PJ, with over 55 years of service, who stands out to so many of us: a modest man with a fine intellect, a dazzling athletic pedigree and a generous spirit. To my young Dragon eyes back in the 70s, PJ was that role model who "reached for the sun" in every aspect of his life. It was his great friend from Oxford, George "Boggy" Marsh, who introduced PJ to the Dragon and – thanks to Inky's quick thinking, creative and cordial interview technique – PJ was snapped up as a member of teaching staff at the Dragon when he graduated in 1966. Any prep or senior school would have been blessed to have PJ in their common room but enjoying the relaxed rigour the Dragon offered – noted by the permanent smile he wore – it was here that he spent the whole of his professional life until retirement from the Science prep room in 2021. While PJ was perhaps best known beyond the school for his outstanding sporting talents – with his four Blues and numerous international caps in both hockey and squash – it was in the classroom, teaching (mainly Science, with some Latin) where his love of the academic and education shone through. Whatever the pupil's level of ability, PJ found a way to explain, encourage and inspire his subject. The perfectly executed dramatic demonstration or the well-planned class practical, he knew how Dragons learnt best: with positivity, enthusiasm and challenge. Many ODs will also remember his boundless energy on the games field, where PJ helped kindle and develop a love of hockey, tennis and many other sports. When PJ decided to step back from the classroom and into the prep room, his encyclopedic knowledge and experience continued to kindly guide and enthuse a new generation of science teachers and helped ensure that the subject remained one of the school's greatest strengths. Whilst the Dragon may have been PJ's professional life and his astonishing sporting prowess provided so many pinnacles, it was his love and pride for his family which outstripped all else, and it is to them that our thoughts and prayers have been directed since his sudden death in March.

Thank you, PJ, from everyone who was lucky enough to have known, taught or played alongside you – you made all the difference.

Ed Phelps, Dragon Dean (OD 1978)



A modest man with a fine intellect, a dazzling athletic pedigree and a generous spirit.



To read the full obituary by Bruce Millar (OD 1970) published in *The Times* on April 23, along with a recording of PJ's Memorial Service, please visit www.dragonschool.org/peterwilson

His Honour Richard Raymond Buxton Cole DL (OD 1950, Former Chair of Governors)

on 10 October 2024

Richard was born in Oxford on 11 June 1937 to Bunny and Edith Cole, brother to Rose, Peter and John. He was educated at the Dragon School, Oxford, and St Edward's School, Oxford. He enjoyed a happy childhood in and around Oxford, even during the troubled times brought about by World War II.

Richard was admitted as a solicitor in 1960 and became a partner in the family firm of solicitors, Cole & Cole in 1962, where he worked until 1984.



In 1962 he married Sheila Rumbold, and they recently celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary. They had two children, James and Alison, and four grandchildren, Tom, Gabrielle, George and Molly. To his family, he was their rock, the foundation upon which many wonderful memories were built. His laughter was infectious, his guidance invaluable and his love unconditional.

Alongside his father and brother, John, he was a member of the Frewen Club, Oxford. In the early 1960s he was responsible for persuading the membership to purchase the freehold of the Club's premises, which is of permanent benefit to the Club. Richard became President in 1972. Having been a student at the Dragon he was delighted to be asked back to sit on the Governing Board of the school in 1975, latterly as Chairman from 1986 to 1992. Whilst living in Burford, Oxfordshire, he undertook the role of Chairman of Burford Parish Council from 1976 to 1979; and became the first Mayor of Burford in 1979.

Richard was appointed a Deputy Circuit Judge in 1975 for the Midland and Oxford Circuit, and later appointed a Recorder. When appointed to the full-time role of Circuit Judge in late 1984, one of very few solicitors to be given this role, the family moved to Warwickshire. He became the Resident and Liaison Judge at Coventry Crown Court in 1992 and the Resident and Liaison Judge at Warwick Crown Court in 1997. In 1999, he was made an Honorary Recorder of the City of Coventry.

He also held the role of President of the Warwickshire Magistrates' Association, before becoming a lifetime Honorary Vice President. In 2001 he had the honour to serve as President of Her Majesty's Council of Circuit Judges and was a Member of the Warwickshire Probation Board. He was also a member of the Mental Health Review Tribunal, from which he retired in 2009.

In recognition of his outstanding service to Warwickshire, he was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant for the county in 2001. When he retired from the judiciary in 2007, aged 70, he immediately set out to write a family history based around his father Bunny, *Bunny Cole, an Oxford Man*, which is a valuable memento for the family and close friends. His real passion as a young man was farming and gardening, and although he never became a farmer, he spent many hours in and around the farming community. He loved his garden, tending lawns and growing vegetables. He became President of the Kenilworth and District Agricultural Society in 1992/93. Richard loved all sport, but it was cricket and horse racing that were his real passions, rarely missing an important race meeting or a test match.

Richard was a keen liveryman, holding the Freeman of the City of London as a member of the Worshipful Company of Upholders. He joined in 1974 and was admitted to the Court in 1984, ultimately following in his father's footsteps by becoming Master of the Company in 1992. He was latterly made Honorary President of the National Association of Master Upholsterers and Soft Furnishers in 1993 and, in 2016, obtained an honorary fellowship.

His desire to help others never abated and he became Chairman of the Medical Research Fund in 2011, based at Warwick University. He also became a trustee and committee member of the Medical & Life Sciences Research Fund. His work at Warwick University was recognised by the Chancellor in 2011, and Richard received the Chancellor's Medal. He will be remembered as a loyal and loving family man, a kind and generous individual that took each challenge seriously with calmness and wisdom.

Ian Senior (OD 1951)

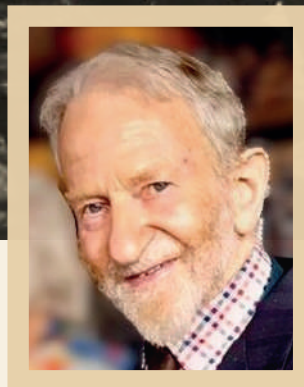
on 24 July 2024

Ian Senior was the son of Eleanor (Ma Senior), who taught piano and clarinet at the Dragon School for 35 years. He entered Lower 7 in 1946 and moved through classes taught by Jacko (Chris Jaques), Tix (Teddy Hicks), Yatto (Ronnie Yates) and Law (Alan Wilding). He started the flute, taught by Piccolo Pete (A.E. Smith), and went to Sedbergh with a minor scholarship. His highlights at the Dragon were to perform in Bruno's G&S plays. He was in the chorus for 'Patience and Pirates' followed by Iolanthe in 'Iolanthe' and Pitti Sing in 'The Mikado'. While at Sedbergh, he joined the National Youth Orchestra and played flute and piccolo with them for three years under the inspired leadership of Dame Ruth Railton. He also came second in Sedbergh's renowned Ten Mile cross-country race. He started national service with the Oxford and Bucks LI and after Eaton Hall was seconded to the 23rd Battalion of the King's African Rifles in Kenya. He was a minor scholar at Trinity College, Oxford, and after a year of teaching French at Hotchiss School, Connecticut, he entered Post Office HQ, then part of the Civil Service. He took an MSc (Economics) at UCL and, having left Post Office HQ, he worked with the Economist Intelligence Unit and various economic consultancies. He published several papers and articles on postal and pharmaceutical matters. He also co-wrote several performed musicals and enjoyed entertaining gatherings with his songs and guitar. In 1961 he married Jenny Hicks, with whom he had two sons, Richard and Mark. They divorced in 1993 but remained close friends. As a member of the Skipper Society, Ian enjoyed returning to the Dragon and over several years he gave the school various musical instruments. He is survived by Richard and Mark.

Alexander Innes Hett (Sandy) (OD 1942)

on 28 March 2024

Alexander Innes Hett of Ardingly, West Sussex, known as Sandy, passed away peacefully at Compton House Christian Nursing Home in Lindfield, Sussex, on 28th March aged 94. Part of a dynastic line of Old Dragons, during his own school career he secured a full deck of rugby, cricket, soccer and hockey colours. He trod the boards in several Gilbert & Sullivan and Shakespeare productions (often in the same cast as his younger sibling Priscilla and once with his elder brother Stewart), won frequent prizes for his holiday diaries, was an award-winning violinist in the school orchestra, a prize-winning public speaker, both a long jump as well as hop, skip and jump record holder (14 ft and 30 ft respectively), a science exhibitioner, a school librarian, a Sunday service lesson reader ("Lector"), a member of the choir, a school prefect and ultimately a Classics scholar to his public school Clifton College. Following a national service commission in the Royal Artillery and several years of study at both the Chelsea College of Art and the Slade School of Art, he rejoined the Dragon in the 1960s as a member of staff to teach Art and Geography to the E Block. Sandy enjoyed a lifetime of charitable endeavour, routinely supporting over two dozen worthy causes, with blindness being one particularly close to his heart after his cousin Elaine lost her eyesight as a two-year-old. He is survived by 10 adoring nephews and nieces, and 20 *great* nephews and nieces, who amidst their number include three ODs: Ian (1973), Neil (1975) and Alexander (1978) Thompson, and one former Dragon matron, Fiona Thompson (1977).



Bobby Burn (front) with Jon Stallworthy (OD 1949) on a Dragon cruise on the Norfolk Broads in September 1947.

R.P. Burn (OD 1948)

on 23 February 2024

Bob Burn, known at the Dragon as Bobby, died in Exeter on 23 February 2024. He was 89 and had been a mathematician and Anglican priest. His mathematical legacy is primarily three university-level textbooks in number theory, geometry and analysis published by Cambridge University Press. These present an unconventional approach to learning the subject. Each chapter asks the reader a series of questions, which leads to the discovery of a fundamental theorem. It is an inductive approach to the subject rather than the traditional deductive method. An investigation at Warwick University showed that students who used his books raised their degrees by a full class.

He had developed his technique in 1961–71 when he was sent to south India with his young family by the Church Mission Society to work in the Mathematics department of St John's College, Palayamkottai. His PhD (1968), completed in two years back in London, was the basis for the college to establish its own postgraduate program and an important asset when he began teaching at Homerton College, Cambridge, upon the family's return to England. He was head of the department at Homerton from 1974–88.

He had been ordained as a deacon in the ecumenical Church of South India in 1963 and in 1981 was made priest in the parish church of Foxton, just south of Cambridge, where he served as non-stipendiary priest-in-charge for seven years. He brought his ecumenical outlook to a joint confirmation class with the Methodist congregation that led to the candidates being admitted to both denominations at an unconventional service in the village church.

From 1988 he worked for nine years at Exeter University and then for three at Agder College in Kristiansand, Norway, before retiring back to Exeter. He had met Isabel Bennett in 1956 when they were both undergraduates at Cambridge, she a classicist, and in retirement they worked together on the Latin correspondence of seventeenth-century mathematicians, entertained numerous visitors and loved their friends in the central Exeter parish. They were very happily married for over 65 years. He leaves her, their four children and eight grandchildren.

Christopher Burn (OD 1972)

Antonya Cooper (Former Parent)

on 6 July 2024

Antonya was born in the spring of 1947 and grew up in Oxford, the eldest daughter of four girls. Her own school years were lively – her sister Rosie declared her “not inclined to classroom strictures” but thoughtful and full of humour – and her young adulthood adventurous, working in Cheltenham and modelling in Vienna, her mother’s home city.

In 1970 she married Alastair Cooper (OD 1959) from a family of Old Dragons. Their first child Hamish started Baby School in 1981, beginning two decades as Dragon parents. Tabitha, Cassandra, Matilda (Tilly), Jemima and Barnaby all followed, through a period that saw an increasing number of girls joining as pupils and the first girls’ boarding house (much to Antonya’s delight – she fiercely believed there was nothing boys could do that girls could not).



Antonya was a memorable Dragon parent, perhaps even unforgettable... Dubbed “Kisser Cooper” in the staff room for her enthusiastic greetings, she was a fixture on countless games touchlines. She would arrive at Sports Day hours early (much to her children’s embarrassment) to “bagsy” her favourite spot on the fields and from there accost teachers, parents and classmates with her trademark smiles and hugs. She would often appear on quieter days too – one of her children’s friends reported he always knew when she had been on school grounds due to telltale whiffs of Estée Lauder and Rothmans.

Antonya was a force of nature. Hamish died of neuroblastoma, a rare childhood cancer, in 1981, and Antonya gave out the prize for the Hamish Cooper Science and Nature Competition almost every year since to the lucky Baby School/Lynams winner. Her achievements away from the Dragon include co-founding and chairing what is now Neuroblastoma UK, being a devoted wife to Alastair, writing a book about their experiences as bereaved parents, caring for her five other children and later her parents, volunteering as a custody visitor and tending a beautiful garden.

Antonya survived breast cancer twice, but in late 2023 was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and found a characteristically graceful balance between defiance and acceptance. She died on 6th July 2024, peacefully, at home, with her husband of 54 years by her side and all her children nearby. Her family are all extremely proud of her and will miss her terribly; they have been greatly moved by the wonderful memories and messages of condolence shared by those who knew her.

Antonya was not herself an OD (and woe betide anyone calling her an old dragon...) but she embodied the spirit of the school, supporting its staff and its causes, and celebrating its successes. In every aspect of her life, Antonya exemplified warmth, aspiration and grit. The world is too quiet without her, but all the better for having had her in it.

Andrew Beer (OD 1953)

on 15 February 2024

Andrew Beer was born in Oxfordshire in August 1939, days before the outbreak of World War II. His father was a doctor and surgeon, primarily at the John Radcliffe Hospital, and the family lived in Thame. He started as a boarder at the Dragon in 1948. He always spoke very warmly indeed of his time at the Dragon. From the Dragon School he followed in his father’s footsteps, joining Shrewsbury School in 1953. He was, in his own words, not the most academic or sporting of students.

His father had a patient who was a senior partner in a London law firm. He offered Andrew work experience and Andrew’s legal career went from there. He was a partner at Wilde Sapte (now Dentons) for over 25 years, specialising in real estate and restructuring law, before spending the end of his career working as a consultant for law firms in Dublin and in the Shires.

He lived a very varied life outside work. He loved gardening. He kept bees for over 70 years, teaching beekeeping to many beginners, lecturing around the country on beekeeping law in retirement and contributing to a beekeeping magazine, as well as visiting beekeepers in Chile and Ghana with the charity Bees Abroad. Even in his last months he was trying to draft a short book of beekeeping law. He did a considerable amount for Dragon School beekeeping, being one of the main instigators of beekeeping at the school in his retirement (the bees having excellent flowers along the sides of the River Cherwell to help the honey taste).

He renovated with local builders a late-Tudor, long-derelect farmhouse over 33 years while living there (initially uncomfortably). He was heavily involved in the Law Society Rugby Football Club in the 1980s and 1990s and loved watching England internationals also. He quite keenly supported Bolton Wanderers Football Club.



He had an old 20/25 hp Rolls-Royce for decades. He cared greatly for the village of Stewkley and was a key part of the community in many village projects.

He was also chairperson of the Philbeach Society in the 1960s, an amateur singing group of largely Gilbert & Sullivan shows in London. An attractive young lady started to come to the rehearsals. Her name was Elizabeth Dawes. They were married for 53 years until his death. They had two children, Rachel and Peter. Peter also went to the Dragon (1986–1991).

His two children benefitted from his unfailing support, whatever life threw at them. Amongst many other things, he taught them about the importance of perseverance and hope. Andrew had a dependent brother and sister. He took his promise to his parents to look after them seriously and they were, and are, well cared for.

His health sadly deteriorated in his final couple of years through a multitude of illnesses. He passed away peacefully at home in Stewkley on 15 February 2024, aged 84 with his son and his daughter by his side.

Andrew’s wife Elizabeth, son Peter and daughter Rachel

Guy Prichard (OD 1966)

on 17 June 2024

Guy started in the Baby School and left with an exhibition to Marlborough. Leaving Marlborough after A Levels, he took his Oxford Entrance from St Edward's School, where his father was a housemaster, gaining an exhibition to Oriel College to read Classics which, after Mods, he changed to Philosophy and Religion. But all the time his deep love was music – American country and folk.

After Oriel he remained in Oxford, as a gigging musician, sometimes touring abroad, once as a support act to Julie Felix, sometimes working as a milkman or a laundry delivery man. He wrote original songs, had an encyclopaedic memory, sang solos and harmonies, and could play just about any song on-demand. A collection of guitars, banjos and harmonicas followed him throughout his life.

His music took him to London where he played as a professional act in pubs and clubs. No longer a milkman but now a housemate and live-in builder, he helped his brother, Rupert (OD 1962–68), renovate a house. He was supremely skilled and careful, but gloriously unqualified. As an electrician he got work. He was a page ahead in the manual when doing a major rewiring job. The client, Helena, was very pleased with it. They married.

Whilst he never lost his passion for music, he needed to pay the bills. He completed a law conversion course in London and was called to the Bar in 1986, moving to Bristol. He was a member of a chambers, specialising in commercial, employment and discrimination, and published three books on technical aspects of the law, with two still in circulation. At the same time, he was a founding member of a very successful band, The Shrinks, still going strong and on Spotify. Appointed the legal member of the Mental Health Review Tribunal, he became a part-time Chair of Employment Tribunals before becoming a salaried employment judge in 2002, working first in Cardiff and Shrewsbury, then London. He was revered for his ability to dictate judgements without delay after hearings, save for a roll-up outside, with little need to check the chronology or page numbers of documents, using only plain English, and producing something so precise, complete and fluent. That took real ability. He cared about people and justice. He would then ditch the suit and tie, don the shorts, or perhaps his hand-dyed orange and red Zimbabwean trousers, Birkenstocks, beret (black or yellow) and cycle home.

When the pandemic came, the start of which coincided for Guy with recovering from a serious heart operation, the move of his profession online was a door closing for him. Without the face-to-face and the social aspect of the job, he didn't want to return to work, reincarnated as a virtual judge. He retired in 2020. He enjoyed a busy retirement of travel, museums, galleries, theatre, walking and cycling across London, and plenty of live music, big acts and small. He adored the London life of Highbury with the views across the city from his balcony. Musicians like a drink, a cigarette and meals late into the night. Never quick food for Guy, only proper meals cooked with culinary flair and pride, whatever the hour.

Guy died unexpectedly on 17 June, a week shy of his 71st birthday. He was knocked off his bicycle and, after returning from hospital casualty to his flat, collapsed. He was divorced but remained close to Helena, with whom he had two daughters, Jo and Laura.

Just a fortnight before he had been in Paddock Wood, Kent, and spoke for the family in celebrating the 80th Anniversary of D-Day at the birthplace of his maternal grandfather, Lieutenant General Sir Frederick Morgan, the architect of Operation Overlord. On parade as such, he gave a masterful and moving tribute without notes, and yes, in his shorts and Birkenstocks!

Rupert Prichard, August 2024



He was a founding member of a very successful band, The Shrinks, still going strong and on Spotify.

Adrian Peter Rossiter Noble (OD 1949)

on 8 September 2024

Adrian was born in Miri, Sarawak, where his father, Arthur Noble, was a geologist with Shell. His parents retired to the Devon/Dorset border shortly afterwards.

He attended the Dragon School in Oxford, then Westminster with freedom to visit art galleries and a street-side view of Queen Elizabeth's coronation. He never enjoyed games but was a good shot. The corps travelled by Tube to the range with guns and ammunition!

At Queens' College, Cambridge, Adrian read Modern Languages but changed to Law after one year. He rowed for his college, as had his father; trophy oar blades are still on show at home. After brief employment in his uncle's insurance brokers, he became courier with Swan's Tours, escorting groups by boat and train across Europe.

Adrian taught in various schools, before and after training with a teaching practice term at King's Worcester. The happiest years were teaching at a Catholic Seminary in Blois. The headmaster remained a close friend and prayer companion. Among pupils was Jean-Christophe, martyred in Algeria – see the film *Of Gods and Men*. After years at King's Canterbury, Adrian was Head of Languages at Bishop Wand School in Sunbury-on-Thames – a pioneer church comprehensive. He met Louise, his wife, when he interviewed her to join the department. Thence to Matlock in Derbyshire as County Adviser for Modern Languages, including oversight of Urdu teaching and the hosting of Chinese teachers. In 1988 he visited China, touring schools there.

He moved to Tewkesbury in December 1999, worshipping and being involved in various ways at the Abbey. He first met Franciscan Friars in Cambridge, became a Companion and later Tertiary, serving at local and national level as Formation Guardian.

Adrian read widely, had an eclectic taste in music, rejoiced in his garden and loved his cats. He valued good craftsmanship (antiques) but supported contemporary artists. He was proud of his children and their achievements – Maggie, Richard and Liz – and grandchildren, Eben and Bede, Maggie's boys in NZ, Dylan and Rosa, and Richard's family near Hull. The family were together for the Golden Wedding in April.



For a full list of available 2023/2024 obituaries please visit
www.dragonschool.org/obituaries

2023

Tim Senior (Former Parent) on 11 February 2023
Corin Bourne (Current Parent) on 5 March 2023
Winfried Bischoff (Former Parent) on 25 April 2023
James Saumarez (OD 1950) on 28 May 2023
Harold Elletson (OD 1974) on 23 June 2023
Juliet Godson (OD 1951) on 27 August 2023
Michael Linnell (OD 1952) on 31 August 2023
Philip Douglas (OD 1946) on 15 October 2023
Tristram Pye (OD 1943) on 22 October 2023

2024

Corinna Wiltshire (née Blackwell) (OD 1936) on 13 January 2024
Lord Saye Fiennes (Former Parent, Former Grandparent) on 20 January 2024
Stephen Mitchell (OD 1961) on 29 January 2024
Andrew Beer (OD 1953) on 15 February 2024
Bob Burn (OD 1948) on 23 February 2024
Peter "PJ" Wilson (Former Parent, Former Staff) on 22 March 2024
Alexander Hett (OD 1946) on 28 March 2024
Jonathan Meads (OD 1953) on 14 April 2024
Mark Riley (Former Parent, Former Staff) on 15 April 2024
John Beale (Current Parent, Former Governor) on 23 April 2024
Andrew Gregg (OD 1957) on 3 June 2024
Guy Prichard (OD 1966) in July 2024
Antonya Cooper (Former Parent) on 6 July 2024
Ralph Alford (OD 1952) on 20 July 2024
Ian Senior (OD 1951) on 24 July 2024
Adrian Noble (OD 1949) on 8 September 2024
Peter Jay (OD 1950, Former Parent) on 22 September 2024
Richard Raymond Buxton Cole (OD 1950, Former Governor) on 10 October 2024
Bill Andrewes (Former Parent, Former Grandparent) on 2 November 2024
Evie Watkin (OD 2021) on 18 November 2024
Sally McEwen (Former Parent, Former Grandparent, Former Staff) in 2024



Valete

Roger Midwinter

Pre-Prep Maintenance Operative

It's hard to believe this is my last week, after spending something like 18 years of my working life at the Dragon School. There have been ups and odd downs, but I can honestly say that it has been a predominantly happy time for me.

I have seen four Heads, two bursars and several estates bursars over the years. I feel that I have enjoyed good relationships with academic and support staff alike.

Although carpentry is my trade, I have turned my hand to a wide variety of tasks over the years, from unblocking toilets to building scenery and props for school plays. As I retire, I like to think that I am leaving behind some of my work that will exist for years to come, such as the curved windows at School House and the windows at the Pre-Prep, which were manufactured and fitted by yours truly.

Finally, I would like to say thanks to all for your friendship and support.



Avete

Sezin St John-Heath

Database and Insights Officer

Prior to becoming a database professional in education, my career was in the automotive industry: international sales development, corporate identity and change management for improving customer services. I enjoyed meeting clients at extraordinary venues such as the Isle of Man TT races or in the salt mines of Kraków. I grew up in Bavaria and popped over to Oxford to improve my English but ended up completing my teacher training here. My graduation coincided with foreign languages becoming non-compulsory in the UK, which reflected negatively on MFL German. Speed-learning Spanish and French wasn't in my comfort zone of German, Turkish and Italian. I had no time to grumble, as new jobs at BMW Mini and Harley-Davidson Europe were lined up. I recently re-entered the world of education and I'm most pleased, as I love to be involved in all areas of school life, not only in packing my little Dragon's games bag but also in helping with minor backstage work for the Dragon's fantastic drama productions. I highly appreciate that my current role in the Development Office provides endless opportunities to meet amazing ODs, and to learn about their versatile careers and worthy contributions to the wider community.





Milly Taylor (OD 2012)

Alumni Relations and Events Officer

After a much cherished five years boarding at the Dragon, I knew for sure that one day I wanted to come back and be a part of the team. When the Alumni Relations and Events role became available, I knew instantly that it was the role for me. My experiences as an OD pay great dividends in the position and allow me to really develop and connect with our community base. So far, I have really enjoyed fostering cross-generational relationships with you, our ODs, organising reunions and coordinating interesting events for our Dragon Community. I feel really privileged to be able to provide that extra layer of understanding when it comes to being a Dragon and I really look forward to connecting with more of you throughout the next year.

It is very true when we say, "Once a Dragon, Always a Dragon."



Frances Wheare

Director of Development and Social Impact

There is a myth in my family. Like every myth, how much resemblance it bears to the truth is contested, but it's a good story nonetheless. Back in the 1950s, my grandmother decided that my father, Tom, should go to the Dragon. There was just one problem: the school was full. Undeterred – and my grandmother was never one for being deterred – she bought him the uniform, dropped him off at the beginning of the school day, and continued to do so until the school had no choice but to accept him. So began many happy years of connection with the school, as a pupil, OD (1958), and finally Governor.

My own journey to the Dragon was a little more conventional, but I have a feeling that my time here will be no less happy. I joined in June 2024 following ten years at the University of Oxford, where most recently I was Director of Development and Fellow at Hertford College. In my role as the Dragon School's Director of Development and Social Impact, my team and I work on three key areas: the continuing relationship with you, our ODs and parents through a vibrant programme of communications and events; a fundraising strategy that supports the school's ambitions; and a broad range of social impact activities. I'm grateful for the warm welcome I have received and look forward to meeting many more ODs as time goes on.

I'm sure readers will join me in thanking my predecessor, Saira Uppal, recognising everything she has achieved for the school during her time in post. Saira was the driving force behind the fundraising campaign for Skipper's, our new Music and Performing Arts Centre, and raised vital funds for our Transformational Bursary Programme. I am fortunate to have such strong foundations to build upon.

Congratulations

Andrew Rugg-Gunn (OD 1952) was awarded the International Association for Dental Research Gold Medal in 2023. This is the Association's highest award.

Iona Rizzo (OD 2004) and husband Dominic informed of the birth of their son, Joseph Rizzo, born in June 2023.

Alex Watson (OD 2006) on being elected to conduct this year's Piliers of Chablis ceremony.

Max Hembrow (OD 2008) on the ING Discerning Eye Purchase Prize 2024 for his painting, *The Author*.

Annabelle Hoy (OD 2013) on becoming engaged to her boyfriend, JC Stewart.

Sebastian Croft (OD 2015) on his starring role in the 2024 Amazon Prime original film, *How to Date Billy Walsh*.

Ji-Hyo Sun (OD 2027) on being a BBC Young Chorister of the Year 2024 Finalist.

Mariella Green (OD 2012) on becoming engaged to her boyfriend, Ben Weaver, on 10 February 2024.



Emily Dawes (OD 2012) on becoming engaged to her boyfriend, Freddie Rothwell.

Portrait of Isobel



Girl with a Rose



Sebastian Volak's (OD 2010) *Portrait of Isobel in Oil* was selected to appear in the Oxford Art Society exhibition held at St John's College, Oxford.

Common Entrance

Those dreaded two words are back... We loved receiving your responses to the previous issue's question, thank you so much to those that wrote in.

See below for this year's question set by Simon Hitchings (Teacher of Classics), taken from this year's Eton King's Scholarship General I paper.

Competition Question:

If you have not finished this question after 30 minutes, you are strongly advised to leave it and go on to the other.

- (a) The compressed nature of newspaper headlines can give rise to ambiguity. That ambiguity can in turn generate humour. Explain why the following real headlines are both ambiguous and amusing. Credit will be awarded for the clarity and concision of your explanation.
1. Foot Heads Arms Body
 2. Queen Mary Has Bottom Scraped
 3. British Left Waffles on Falkland Islands [8]
- (b) Consider the following headlines. They can be split into groups according to their respective sources of ambiguity.
1. Enraged Cow Injures Farmer with Axe
 2. Black Cab Drivers Banned from City Centre
 3. Squad Helps Dog Bite Victim
 4. Hospitals Sued by Seven Foot Doctors
 5. Blind Bishop Appointed to See
 6. Bar Trying to Help Alcoholic Lawyers
 7. Belgian Ships Head to Libya
- (i) Without explaining each sentence, describe with concision how you might categorise these headlines into two equally sized but distinct groups based on their ambiguity and indicate which headlines you would place in which group. [5]
- (ii) Suggest a different way you might categorise these headlines into two groups. [2]
- (c) The following sentence is grammatically correct. In each case give the simplest possible answer.
- That alpaca that boy that strokes that llama thinks loves scratches bites.
- (i) Who/what bites whom/what? [2]
 - (ii) Who/what scratches whom/what? [2]
 - (iii) Who/what thinks what? [2]

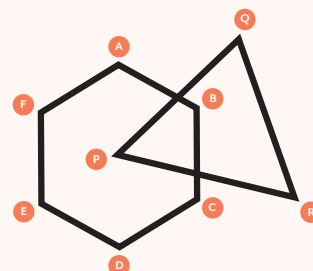
The OD 2024 Answer:

Congratulations to William George Inge (OD 1973), Patrick Hearne (OD 1969), Richard Stephen John Bolter (OD 1975), Henry Bottomley (OD 1976), Simon Smith (OD 1988), Dr Christopher Poynton (OD 1962), Hubert Samuel Frost (OD 1966), Tom Leslie (OD 1982) and Philip Vickers (OD 1997) who wrote in with the correct answer (printed below).

The triangle covers one-sixth of the hexagon, in other words an equilateral triangle with a base of 3.

So, the area should be

$$\frac{1}{2} \times 3 \times \frac{3\sqrt{3}}{2} = \frac{9\sqrt{3}}{4} \approx \mathbf{3.90 \text{ units}}$$



To enter the competition, submit your FULL NAME and ANSWERS to development.office@dragonschool.org. Alternatively, you can send your answers, along with your FULL NAME, POSTAL ADDRESS and PHONE NUMBER, in an envelope to FREEPOST Dragon Development, Dragon School, Bardwell Road, OX2 6SS.

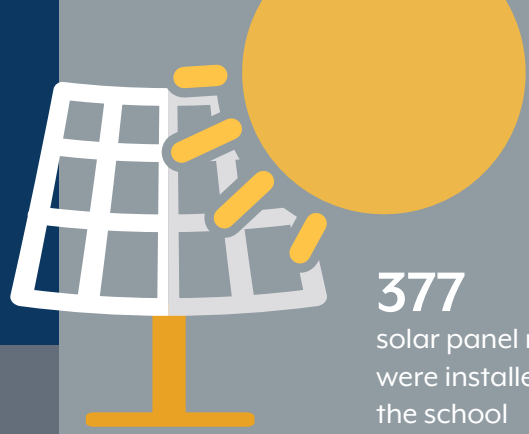
The first five correct answers received will each receive a limited-edition bag of Dragon marbles. The correct answer, and winner's name(s), will be published within our Spring Term *Community News*, on our socials and within next year's issue of *The OD*. Good luck!



There are **244**
boarding Dragons

Our Dragon
bees generated
400 jars
of Dragon Honey

11b/454g jars



377
solar panel modules
were installed across
the school



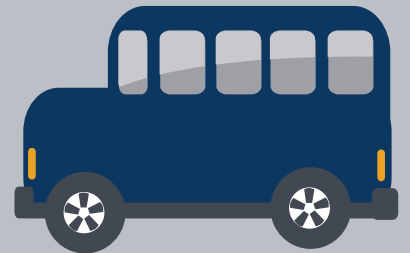
We welcomed Old
Dragons from **1944 – 2020**
to this year's OD events



8,391
items logged in the
Dragon Archives ...
and counting!

Over 1,200
members of our dragon
community attended
the opening of Skipper's

20%
of all our pupils use our
new Dragon Bus Service
in part or full



Our social impact
activities and
events raised over
£10,000
for our Charities of
the Year



The Dragon respects the environment.
This magazine has been printed on carbon-offset paper.

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Company no. (England & Wales) 524331 Charity no. 309676

