

# THE OD

The Old Dragon  
2026 · Issue 15



# Introduction

Emma Goldsmith, Head of the Dragon

The 2024/25 academic year began with flames and fanfare as our Music and Performing Arts Centre, Skipper's, flung open its doors, and it ended much the same way with Dragon families filling the sun-drenched fields for Prize-Giving and Sports Day.

It wasn't only young Dragons who found occasions to celebrate, and it's been wonderful to have been present for so many of them. From our networking evening at Chelsea Football Club through to Dragon Drinks down under, there have been so many special moments and memories shared (see p32).

Within this year's issue of *The OD* we highlight not only the latest Dragon publications but Dragons in the media, whether that be in music, television, film or podcast. **Matilda Leyser (OD 1985)** reunites with her former writing teacher **Michael Harrison (OD 1952, Staff 1969 to 1995)** in Author's Corner (see p13), and we take a step back in time with Catherine Lewis, Dragon Archivist, as she shares her research into Maurice Church and how the Dragon's much-loved museum building came to be.

With features from cheesemongers serving up the next generation of ploughman's perfection to carbon-negative pioneers reshaping the future, this issue celebrates Dragons who are framing the world with fresh perspectives, sparking change, and championing causes close to home and heart. You'll read contributions from MasterChef contenders through to Team GB world champions. Whether through food, photography or heartfelt journeys, these features brilliantly reflect the spirit and diversity of our brilliant community.

As we look back fondly on a year of reconnection and achievements, we also look ahead with excitement. In June, we were delighted to welcome Penny Cameron Watt as our new Chair of Governors (see p35) and thank Andrew Webb for his many years of dedicated service to the School, both as a governor and parent. And, with the launch of our Spirit of the Dragon campaign, we begin the exciting countdown to the School's 150th anniversary in 2027 (see p30), a milestone we can't wait to celebrate together.

It is always a joy to welcome Old Dragons back to Bardwell Road, and it was wonderful to see so many of you visit your old School stomping grounds this year, including **James Barclay (OD 1974)**, Skipper's very own great-grandson, and his family. Do be in touch with the Development Office to arrange a visit, and keep an eye out for events in Oxford, London and beyond in the year ahead. I look forward to seeing you soon.



As we look back fondly on a year of reconnection and achievements, we also look ahead with excitement.

Emma Goldsmith



# THE OD

- 04 | From Caregiver to Culinary Creator  
Lily Davies (OD 2007)
- 08 | A Race to Remember  
Albi Tufnell (OD 2015)
- 10 | ODs in the Media  
Books, Podcasts, Music, TV, Film and more ...
- 13 | Author's Corner  
Michael Harrison (OD 1952, Former Staff)  
interviews Matilda Leyser (OD 1985)
- 16 | Looking Beyond the Obvious Answers  
Luke Leslie (OD 1994, Current Parent)
- 18 | Far Beyond the Farm Gate  
Simon Jones (OD 1978)
- 22 | Framing a Life in Light  
Hubert Cecil (OD 2005)
- 28 | From Loss to Legacy  
From the Archives
- 30 | Spirit of the Dragon  
Celebrating 150 Years of Dragon School
- 32 | Events
- 36 | Sibling-Inspired Success  
Lucy Pillar (OD 2021)
- 38 | Pathway to a Bursary
- 40 | Letter to the Editor
- 42 | In Memorium
- 46 | Congratulations
- 47 | Common Entrance  
The competition returns ...



## The Old Dragon

2026 · Issue 15

Development Office +44 (0) 1865 315 416  
[development.office@dragonschool.org](mailto:development.office@dragonschool.org)  
[www.dragonschool.org](http://www.dragonschool.org)

Cover Image:  
Skeleton of a Croft  
©Hubert Cecil (OD 2005)

# From Caregiver to Culinary Creator

Lily Davies (OD 2007)

## A Recipe for Reinvention

After my incredibly happy five years at the Dragon, I moved to Teddies on an All-Rounder Scholarship for Sport & Music. Torn between sports physio and nursing, I was the first student from Teddies to apply for nursing and the first remotely medical person in my family; I was offered a place at what was then the top university in the country, King's College London, for Paediatric Nursing.

Uni was fairly relentless – 2,500 unpaid clinical hours to qualify and working night shifts while my friends enjoyed five months off a year. It paid off as I was lucky to secure my dream job at the Evelina London Children's Hospital where I trained, and worked across paediatric neurometabolic, high-dependency and intensive care, always drawn to palliative care. It was fast-paced yet hugely rewarding, but after a few years I took a belated gap year. I travelled New Zealand with fellow Old Dragon Rose Barry (OD 2007) and then solo around Australia for just shy of a year. I returned to London to work at the Children's ICU back at the Evelina but quickly felt the strain of NHS life. There was a looming longing for a lifestyle change and I kept coming back to the feeling that Australia "had it". So, within four weeks of making the decision, I quit my job and moved to Sydney with no job, no home and a handful of familiar faces. I joined Sydney Children's Hospital and, within a few months, COVID hit.



On a whim, I submitted a MasterChef Australia application. Out of a record 50,000 applicants, I was one of the 22 selected.



Australia was largely cut off from the world, so in the midst of the unknown I booked a flight back to the UK and even asked my Australian boyfriend of a few months (now husband, Nick) to empty my apartment. The flight never left so I stayed – nursing in hospital, and then at New South Wales’s only paediatric palliative care hospice – through what became three years of lockdown and separation from family. On reflection, it was hugely serendipitous; I doubt I’d still be in Australia, or married, had the flight taken off! Eventually, the borders opened and Nick hadn’t yet met my family, so we spent a Euro summer together. I felt a growing urge to steer away from nursing. Priorities had shifted, frustrations were mounting and, with the system largely unforgiving, I took the leap to apply for non-nursing roles. A daunting decision, but I eventually landed a job at a health tech start-up, in the nursing space – a perfect segue out of clinical nursing.

All was going well; I was leaning into the life at a start-up, enjoying and embracing the different challenges. Then, on a whim, I submitted a MasterChef Australia application. Out of a record 50,000 applicants, I was one of the 22 selected. I relocated to Melbourne for filming – a total whirlwind – followed by a badly timed redundancy from my tech job. It felt like the nudge I needed to scratch the itch I’d long had to work in food, having grown up with my mum, a Cordon-Bleu-trained cook. So, in the midst of the uncertainty and in the wake of MasterChef, I opened my own catering company, Pomme, with a great fellow-English friend here, Jack. I knew that now was the time or the opportunity was going to pass me by.

Pomme curates fuss-free catering experiences that feed connections and inspire conversation. The nurse in me misses the meaningful conversations and connections I used to have, so I actively bring that into my cooking. We host private parties, corporate catering, brand activations for some of Australia’s biggest brands and more. I have also been fortunate to cook at the British Consulate for the High Commissioner and Consul General, representing the UK in Australia. Taking part in these events, albeit with the extensive variety within which we operate, is such fun. We connect with people from all walks of life and make a point of being the face of our food – we’re not interested in anonymously slinging out dishes. Jack and I both believe that humans thrive on connection, so we ensure that all events we do fit within our vibe, values and love for shared food experiences.

It’s been a challenge running my own business in a country that I am unsure is “home” or not, but I’ve never regretted it – I am grabbing the opportunity with both hands. Every major decision I have made has come from a fairly whimsical “throw your hat in the ring and see” attitude. I’m incredibly grateful to have the support of my family through all the chopping and changing. I’ve always followed my gut, made sure that I am happy with what I am doing, and if I wasn’t, made changes. I truly believe these values were instilled in me by my parents – and by my early experience at the Dragon with John Baugh. Nursing also showed me, first-hand, how precious life really is. So why wait, when an opportunity like MasterChef could take your life in a direction you never even knew was possible?



Spectrum, Dragon School 2025



Lily Davies (OD 2007) in class 8JR





# A Race to Remember

Albi Tufnell (OD 2015)

My brother Carlie (OD 2012) and I (OD 2015) both made some very happy memories when we were at the Dragon together, as did my older brother, Henry (OD 2005) and sister, Eleanor (OD 2007), and it will always hold a special place in our family's heart.

Although we have now all left the School over 10 years ago, we will always carry with us what it means to be an Old Dragon, which never leaves. It was a very special moment when our old teachers and housemasters joined us at Carlie's memorial service.

More recently we spent a very moving 10 days with fellow ODs taking part in a tuk-tuk race across Sri Lanka, which raised funds for the Carlie Tufnell Charitable Trust and The TEA Project. We set up the Trust as a family after Carlie died in 2021 to continue his memory and to fight back against the mental health crisis that is affecting so many young men across the UK. We can't bring Carlie back, but we can keep his memory alive and stop others making the same fatal decision. The Trust supports participation in the arts, promotes the advancement of education for children with dyslexia and supports mental health charities.

The race was organised by a childhood friend of Carlie's, Gus Levinson, whose grandmother, Helga, was very kind to Carlie whilst he was in Sri Lanka on his gap year. It involved 61 people driving tuk-tuks in teams of three over 300 miles across Sri Lanka, starting in Anuradhapura and finishing by the beach in Weligama. We encountered charging bull elephants, police roadblocks, high-speed overtakes from buses around blind bends and many other adventures. For instance, on the way to visit a pre-school funded by The TEA Project 30 minutes outside of Kandy, many of the teams got lost in the jungle as Google Maps directed them up a dirt road which slowly disappeared into mud. Mum and Dad were only saved when Ben Collins (OD 2012) managed to push their tuk-tuk to safety.





After we eventually reached the pre-school, we were able to see first-hand the amazing work that The TEA Project is doing. Providing education and opportunities for children growing up in Sri Lanka's tea plantations, the Project is trying to break the cycle of poverty that hangs over many of Sri Lanka's tea pickers and their families. It was very empowering to see the impact that our efforts and donations would have for these families.

The race was an incredible experience and brought everyone together for two powerful causes. Dad made a speech on New Year's Eve at Helga's Folly in Kandy and he reminded all of us that "life is an incredible opportunity, and by speaking openly about our challenges and concerns we can support one another." For me and many others, that was the essence of the race: support each other and communicate. There were terrifying moments along the way, but it was the camaraderie between all the competitors joined together by these causes, and the shared memory of Carlie, that made it so special.

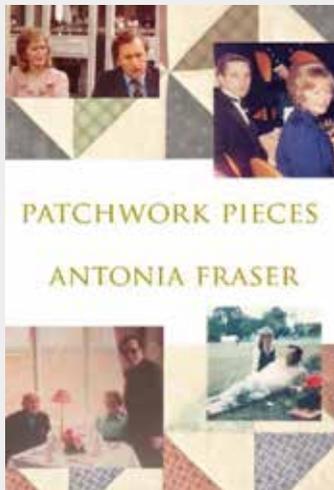


# Old Dragons in the Media

Books, Podcasts, Music, TV, Film and more...

The Dragon is proud to spotlight the creative achievements of our alumni across all forms of media, from published books and podcasts to appearances on stage and screen.

Please get in touch if you've published a book, launched a podcast or appeared in a production, be it am-dram or West End. We'd love to hear from you and include your news in future editions.



Antonia Fraser (OD 1944)

## Patchwork Pieces

Published: 10 October 2024  
ISBN: 978-1-39996-39-6

A magical collection of vignettes from the pen of Antonia Fraser.

“When I was a teenager I had a passion for patchwork. I liked the patterns, but even more than that I liked the action of creating the patchwork. There was something about pulling A to pieces, in order to create B, which I found infinitely satisfying. In a sense, this book satisfies that passion for patchwork. There is no particular order to the various pieces, and yet I hope that all together they make up a colourful picture of the history that I love, have loved and will always love.”

Why  
Personal  
Finance  
Is Broken and  
How to  
Make It Work  
for Everyone



## Fixed

John Y.  
Campbell  
and  
Tarun  
Ramadorai

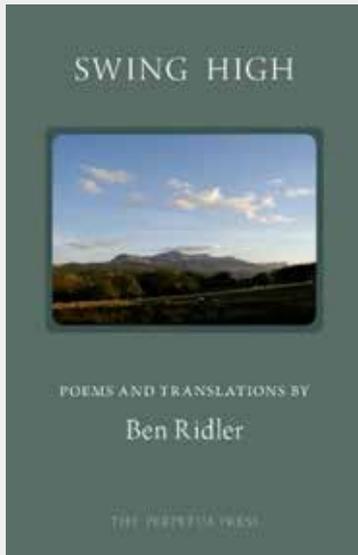


John Campbell (OD 1971)

## Fixed

Published: 21 October 2025  
ISBN: 978-0-691263-29-8

We interact with the financial system every day – taking out loans, making insurance claims, or depositing money. *Fixed* exposes how this system has been corrupted to serve financial services providers and their cleverest customers at the expense of ordinary people. John Campbell and his co-author Tarun Ramadorai diagnose the ills of personal finance markets, from saving and borrowing to retirement and insurance. They show how the system is “fixed” to benefit the wealthy and educated while encouraging financial mistakes by others. *Fixed* proposes concrete solutions using economics, government, and technology to restore fairness and trust in our broken system.



**Ben Ridler (OD 1960)**

## Swing High

Published: 7 April 2025  
ISBN: 978-1-870882-27-9

In this varied collection, two main sections – ‘Poems’ and ‘Translations’ – range from haiku and pithy rhymed verses to longer free-verse explorations, from epigrammatic couplets to ballads and sonnets. Topics encompass nature, art, history, music, travel and spiritual reflections. Locations move from Wales to Ireland, from France to Spain. Extracts from a haiku diary focus on politics and dreams as well as the more traditional seasons. Translations are from Welsh, French, German, and (especially) Spanish whereby racy tales of counts and princesses are narrated, or finely crafted love sonnets rendered from the work of Renaissance soldier-poet Garcilaso de la Vega.



**Anatole Sloan (OD 2005)**, as Creative Director and Co-founder of REN Studios, directed *The Speeches* in 2023, a compelling multimedia tribute marking 50 years of environmental advocacy by His Majesty the King, and winner of a Silver Cannes Dolphin. Released through RE:TV, the film weaves archival footage with contemporary narration from Idris Elba, Olivia Colman and Jack Harries, illuminating urgent themes of climate action, biodiversity and indigenous knowledge.

**Manus Noble (OD 2001)** returned to the Isle of Wight this summer for a captivating performance at Freshwater’s Memorial Hall, part of the celebrated Play Concert series. Known for his expressive classical guitar work and genre-crossing compositions, Manus delivered a programme that showcased both technical brilliance and emotional depth.

**Alex Le Roux (OD 2000)** has joined The BRIT School as a trustee. With alumni including Adele, Amy Winehouse, Tom Holland and FKA Twigs, BRIT has long been a launchpad for global talent across music, film and theatre. Alex is passionate about the school’s commitment to access – providing free, world-class arts education to young people from all backgrounds.

**Bea Wheeler (OD 2017)** is making waves with her debut EP *Me vs. Me* and breakout single ‘Born to Be Alive’, earning critical acclaim and a loyal fanbase, including over 1.9 million TikTok followers. Bea and Her Business blends country-pop with raw emotional storytelling, exploring themes of identity, resilience and self-discovery. From touring with The Wombats to sharing behind-the-scenes glimpses of her Australian tour, Bea’s star continues to rise, and we can’t wait to hear what’s next.

### Author’s Corner

#### Matilda Leyser (OD 1985) No Season but the Summer

Published: 13 April 2023  
ISBN: 978-1-911344-91-9

Spring and summer are my mother’s time, autumn and winter are my husband’s. What is left for me?

Long ago a deal was struck: Persephone was shared between her husband and her mother so that the earth could flourish. For 9,000 years she has done what she is told, but this year, when she climbs to earth, bringing spring, she is growing hungry for a life of her own, her mother is growing frail and now her husband wants her only for himself...



**Tom Hiddleston (OD 1994)** took to the big screen as Charles “Chuck” Krantz in *The Life of Chuck*, released in cinemas in June 2025, following its People’s Choice Award win at the 2024 Toronto International Film Festival. Adapted from Stephen King’s 2020 novella and directed by Mike Flanagan, the fantasy drama traces Chuck’s life in reverse.

**Olivia Maiden (OD 2015)** has drawn national attention with her poignant short film *To Fly or Float*, currently in post-production. Inspired by personal loss, the film explores childhood grief and Jewish identity in 1970s Birmingham, set against the backdrop of the Winter of Discontent. Olivia has written and produced several films she has created since graduating The MetFilm School. She created Dream Hive Films when she was 16, “to make and tell the stories that I feel too often go untold.”

**Ella Mills (OD 2004)** continues to lead thoughtful conversations on wellness through her podcast *Deliciously Ella*, which launched in 2018 and now boasts over 100 episodes. With guests including doctors, dietitians, psychologists, and entrepreneurs, each episode dives into topics such as nutrition, mental health, sustainability and self-care.

**Tertia Paterson (OD 2012)** has released a new single, ‘Arlo’, a heartfelt track born from a demo she first wrote during the COVID-19 lockdown. After revisiting it with fresh production skills and creative collaborators, Tertia brought the song to life with ease and authenticity. She described it as “a song for misfitz, introvertz and weirdoz alike.”

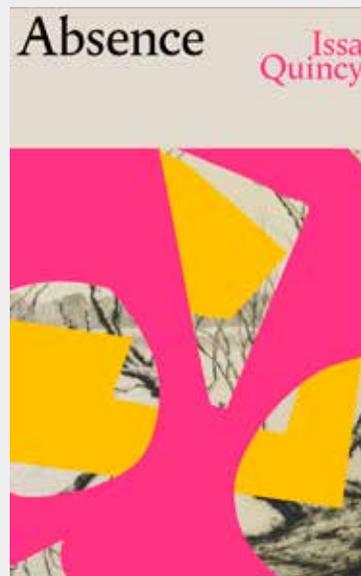
**Issa Quincy (OD 2012)**

**Absence**

Published: 8 May 2025  
ISBN: 978-1-803512-26-6

A child is beguiled by a poem read to him by his mother. The poem follows this elusive narrator like a whisper throughout his life, echoing across the years in the stories and lives of others as they are recounted to him: an enigmatic and beloved schoolteacher who leaves behind a dark secret after his death; a woman who lays the table for a son she knows will never return home; a young man shunned by his family, who finds solace and freedom in the letters from an estranged aunt; a black-and-white photograph that tells of another family, afflicted with generations of tragedy.

With fierce imagination, Issa Quincy has constructed a transcendent portrait of humanity, deftly illuminating a symphony of memories, murmurs and phantoms that add up to an ordinary human life.



Ben Lamb (OD 2002) on the set of HBO’s *The Gilded Age*, August 2025 © Kelley Curran

**Ben Lamb (OD 2002)** continues to shine on screen as part of HBO’s hit series *The Gilded Age*, now in its third season. In June 2025, he attended the show’s premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York, joining the cast and creatives to celebrate its return.

**Jack Davenport (OD 1986)** stars in the upcoming British comedy *Blueberry Inn*, which recently premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival. The film follows a group of eccentric guests at a crumbling seaside hotel, blending sharp humour with heartfelt moments. Jack plays a washed-up actor navigating the chaos.

**Paul Chahidi (OD 1982)** returned to the stage in May 2025 as part of Shakespeare for Every Day of the Year – Live! at Regent’s Park Open Air Theatre. Following a sell-out performance in 2024, the event celebrated over 90 years of Shakespeare at the venue with a star-studded cast. Paul joined fellow award-winning actors in bringing the Bard’s timeless words to life in a magical evening under the stars.



# Author's Corner

Michael Harrison (OD 1952, Former Staff) interviews Matilda Leyser (OD 1985)

**Matilda Leyser (OD 1985)** entered the Dragon when it was just beginning to become a co-ed school. She was in a class of three girls and over 20 boys. She credits this early education as the origin of both the classical themes in her work, and her feminist approach to them. Her first publication was in the School magazine in 1982, but for various reasons (read on below) it took her quite some time to publish anything else.

After reading English Literature at university, Matilda trained at Circomedia, the leading academy for circus arts in the UK. Her circus skills led to her performing at the National Theatre, Shakespeare's Globe and the Royal Opera House. In addition, she founded and is the director of a movement for creatives who hold caring roles called M/Others who Make; Matilda is also a director with Improbable, an internationally acclaimed theatre company. She has two neurodivergent children, both of whom learn from home, while she writes.

Matilda published her first novel in 2023 (*No Season but the Summer*, Scribe Publications). It is a dramatic reimagining of the Persephone–Demeter myth set in the threatened English countryside of today and is as thought-provoking as it is lyrical. Many years since their lessons together at the Dragon, she discusses her novel with her former writing teacher Michael Harrison (OD 1952, Staff 1969–1995).

**MH:** We last talked about your writing in one of the Old Hall classrooms sometime in 1984 and now here's your first novel. What took so long?

**ML:** I was sure, back in 1984, that I wanted to write. My parents, both Oxford dons, were determined to give their children a classical education and my name was down for the Dragon before I was born. Though my parents supported my creative ambitions, I nonetheless felt the draconian weight of their scholarly values, and those many Latin and Greek verbs. Which meant that on leaving university, I needed, finally, to defy the gods and forge my own fate. I did the most poetically rebellious thing the child of two Oxford academics could do: I ran away to join the circus. I became an aerial rope artist and for 10 years I barely read or wrote a word.

Then, when auditioning as an aerialist-actor for a season at Shakespeare's Globe, Mark Rylance asked me to read some lines, counselling me to think of them like a rope I was following with my hands, and I thought (but did not say), "No, you've got that quite wrong! All this time I've been following the rope as if it were a line of text."

So, I came down off the rope and took up the far more dangerous act of writing. At first, my academic training meant that I did not believe I could write anything but essays. It took my developing RSI in both arms to bring home the obvious: writing is a physical activity, involving arms, heart and breath, not only head. To do it, I could use both my classical education and my circus one. Once I had understood this, fantastical words began to emerge. But like in all good stories when someone tries to defy the fates, their destiny has a way of catching up with them; I have now used my beginnings – from that classroom in 1984 – to re-fashion a classical myth.

**MH:** Thinking of 1984, do you see the story of Persephone as a dystopia, a dystopia partly averted?

**ML:** Yes. And no. Dystopias are barely themselves anymore – not an imaginary future but simply the present times. I believe this makes the Persephone myth interesting for us. Demeter is generally figured as a utopian Mother Nature type – bountiful and green – and yet in this myth she is the cause of disastrous climate change. There are also inherent contradictions in the story's resolution: it's an origin myth for the seasons, which are, in turn, a symbol of cyclic balance and harmony. And yet this "natural order" is predicated upon a terrible deal: Persephone must be shared, commuting forever between mother and husband, living and dead, a totally unsatisfactory arrangement, and a personal dystopia. I wanted to underscore those contradictions in my novel: what "balance" might truly mean and of our agency in defining this now.

**MH:** Why are these Greeks in England?

**ML:** The crude answer is because, like many debut novels, mine is a thinly disguised memoir, and so is set where I grew up, on the outskirts of Islip. The daily drive to the Dragon is deeply rooted in my psyche and it would have been in my Classics classes at School that I first heard the myth. I felt at liberty to lift it from its Greek origins and locate it in the Oxfordshire countryside because of how I understand metaphor. It comes from the ancient Greek verb "to transfer" or "carry over" – i.e. we take something from its familiar context and transfer it to another – and we do this as a means of meaning-making. This process is fundamental to all storytelling, but myths are particularly good at it – it's what makes them mythic. Myths have been retold countless times before, carried from one context to another. Why are these Greeks in England? Being transferred from one time and place to another is a particular skill of theirs – they travel well.



**MH:** Without spoilers, can you explain why you ended the book as you did?

**ML:** This classical myth is unusual as origin myths go because it is not conclusive but iterative – winter and summer must be recreated again and again. It ends with a stuck polarity, unresolved. I wanted to conclude with the opposite: an open-ended resolution that encompasses grief and hope – the signature paradox of our times.

**MH:** You read the audio version. How keen were you that there should be one?

**ML:** At the Dragon I loved learning poems to recite, and I loved both my teachers and parents reading to me. Whenever I got into a state (often), it was one of the few things which calmed me down. Now, as a mother myself, I don't get much reading time, but I can listen while doing the domestics (opposite for this story). Also, my daughter is dyslexic, so I am aware of how many more people can access a book if it is on audio. When I write, I read the text back out loud – words, and certainly myths, were first made to be spoken.

**MH:** Has being a mother helped or hindered?

**ML:** The challenges of writing while mothering are logistical; the gains are intangible, immeasurable. Money does not necessarily make you happy, and uninterrupted time and space don't make you creative. The novel grew alongside my children – it's a love letter to motherhood.

**MH:** What's next?

**ML:** This novel's element is earth. I'm working on a watery one now – a flood myth. I have air and fire lined up too. The first took me 12 years – or 40, if you count from 1984. I'm hoping for a quicker turnaround with the next, but I have never been a fast worker. During August, completing my 'Holiday Diary' entries for the Dragon – supposedly a chronicle of my summer's activities – used to take up most of the day.

**MH:** That diary would join the great heap that landed on my desk. In 1983 Christopher Stuart-Clark and I published our anthology *Noah's Ark* so I'm hoping it won't be too much longer before I can read your version.

**ML:** My flood novel is aimed at a Dragon-aged readership, though if I get it right that means everyone – 9 to 99. I am indebted to the Dragon pool for teaching me the meaning of the word "depth". I jumped in, aged four, without armbands – fortunately, I am still here, to tell a tale of deep waters...



Like many debut novels, mine is a thinly disguised memoir, and so is set where I grew up, on the outskirts of Islip.



# Looking Beyond the Obvious Answers

Luke Leslie (OD 1994, Current Parent) CEO and Co-Founder of Key Carbon

It's been a few decades since I last walked through the gates of Dragon School as a pupil, but the sense of curiosity and purpose instilled in me there still runs deep. As both an Old Dragon and now a Dragon parent, I often reflect on how those formative years shaped my worldview and, perhaps unexpectedly, laid the groundwork for what would one day become Key Carbon.

At its heart, Key Carbon is driven by a simple but urgent ambition: to accelerate real, scalable action on climate change and biodiversity loss. Since our founding four years ago, we've financed projects that will remove and avoid 97.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, through activities such as planting 3.75 million trees, distributing 1.7 million fuel-efficient cookstoves and supporting the transition of 1 million hectares of European farmland to regenerative agriculture – some of the biggest voluntary carbon programs of their kind. Alongside the environmental benefits, these projects create tangible social and health improvements for communities around the world.

Our clean cookstoves in Africa are used by an estimated 7.5 million people, improving indoor air quality and reducing deforestation across the continent. These stoves also improve health outcomes and particularly lift the burden on the women of the household. The World Health Organisation estimates that 3.2 million people die prematurely each year from household cooking emissions. With less firewood to be sourced, school attendance has been shown to increase. In total, our 25 projects in 15 countries are designed not just to remove carbon, but to restore ecosystems, support livelihoods and strengthen communities.

One of our proudest milestones last year was being selected as the primary supplier of carbon credits to the Paris 2024 Olympic Games – a recognition of the credibility and quality we aim to bring to every project we support.

The idea for Key Carbon came from frustration and hope in equal measure. It all began while I was living in Mauritius, taking daily swims in the warm water over bleached coral reefs – one of the front lines of climate change. After years working in finance, I saw two problems: first, that many of the world's most effective climate and biodiversity solutions were stuck behind funding bottlenecks; and second, that corporate net-zero targets often lacked transparency, impact or urgency. I built Key Carbon to bridge that gap – enabling organisations to support nature-based solutions with confidence and real accountability.

We now help companies around the world meet their climate goals through verified, high-integrity projects that deliver both environmental, financial and social return. Whether that's financing mangrove restoration, regenerative farming or clean energy for low-income households, our approach is rooted in science, transparency and long-term impact.





 A photograph showing rows of young green plants in a field, likely a nursery or farm. The plants are spaced out in neat rows, and the ground appears to be a mix of soil and water.
 

“

Key Carbon enables organisations to support nature-based solutions with confidence and real accountability.

So how does a journey that began in the classrooms and fields of Bardwell Road end up here? Quite directly, in some ways. The Dragon taught me the value of asking questions, of looking beyond the obvious answers, and of thinking globally long before I understood what that meant. I remember projects that brought environmental themes into focus before “climate change” was part of everyday vocabulary and an early sense that our actions mattered beyond the School gates.

But even more powerful was the atmosphere of possibility the Dragon fosters. It’s a school where you’re encouraged to explore, to fail safely and to dream big. That kind of environment breeds entrepreneurs, activists, scientists and storytellers. And in many ways, building Key Carbon has required all four.

We are living through a decade that will define the next century. The science is clear: we need to halve global emissions by 2030 to stay within 1.5°C of warming. But what’s also clear is that people – and organisations – are hungry to be part of the solution. Our job is to give them the tools to do this with confidence, credibility and impact.

Key Carbon is just a piece of that puzzle. And I suspect that the seeds were planted at the Dragon.



Simon takes a break from rowing up grass silage

# Far Beyond the Farm Gate

Simon Jones (OD 1978)

Simon Jones (OD 1978) arrived at Dragon School in September 1973 as a farm boy from Lincolnshire. His younger brother Tim followed five years later, in 1978. Their connection to the School goes back generations: their father, **Richard**, left in 1951, and their grandfather, **Douglas**, before him in 1923. Today, both Simon and Tim run a raw milk cheesemaking business on the family farm – a direction none of them would have predicted at the time.

Ulceby Grange lies in the heart of the Lincolnshire Wolds, and the land has been in our family since 1918 through our mother's side. When her family first arrived, the 800-acre farm was entirely traditional: beef cattle, pigs, sheep and arable crops – plus just one house cow, whose milk was so rich they skimmed the cream for their tea. It was our father Richard who introduced dairy cows to the farm in the late 1960s. He believed that good soil needs rest – and that grass, rotated properly, provides that rest – while dairy cows make the most of the grass and help maintain soil health in return.



Our herd grazes in the summer



After Gordonstoun, I studied agriculture at the Royal Agricultural College in Cirencester, followed by two years of travelling. I began with a six-month solo motorbike trip through southern Africa, then continued through India and on to Australia. The exposure to different ways of farming and rural life – in places with very different climates, land and resources – gave me a broader view of what might be possible.

When I came back to the farm in the late 1980s, it was clear that things were changing – milk prices were falling sharply and small family farms like ours were under real pressure. We were producing high-quality milk from our Friesian herd, but we needed to diversify if the farm was going to have a future.

That's when I began seriously looking into cheesemaking. I travelled to Somerset and Wales to learn from producers using traditional methods and took a two-week cheesemaking course in Cheshire. Seeing what others were doing (and how they were adding value to their milk) convinced me it was something we could make work here.



HM The King's visit to the farm, 23 July 2023

Simon and Tim, after winning a gold medal at the British Cheese Awards



In 1992, we produced our first batch of Lincolnshire Poacher in a converted barn on the farm. At that stage, we were making cheese just once a week – turning 1,000 litres of milk into 100kg of cheese. The name came from the old Lincolnshire folk song – a nod to the county's independent spirit. From the beginning, we've made the cheese using raw (unpasteurised) milk from our own herd and stuck to traditional, hands-on methods. The recipe we developed sits somewhere between a mature Cheddar and an Alpine-style cheese – full-flavoured, complex and robust. Each wheel is matured for up to 24 months to allow the flavour to fully develop.

Since then, the business has grown steadily but our core principles haven't changed. Tim and I have always worked closely together; I look after the farming and cheesemaking, while he leads on sales and marketing. Our herd now numbers around 250 milking cows (a mix of Friesians, Montbéliardes and Swedish Reds), selected for the quality of milk they produce. Most of their feed is grown on the farm, and our clover-rich, unfertilised pastures help produce milk with real depth and complexity – the foundation of a great cheese.

We now make cheese seven days a week, using all the milk we produce (around 6,000 litres a day) and turn out roughly 180 tonnes a year. It's still a small operation by industry standards, but scale was never the point. We've always remained committed to using only our own milk, and keeping control of the process from grass to cheese.

Thanks to the longstanding support of Neal's Yard Dairy in London, who've sold and championed our cheese worldwide for over 25 years, Lincolnshire Poacher has travelled far beyond the farm gate. It's reached kitchens and cheesemongers across the UK, and as far afield as the United States, Australia and even a cheese shop in Lima, Peru.



At the same time, we've stayed firmly rooted in local life. We've been selling directly to our customers since the early 2000s and still do around 500 farmers' markets a year. That face-to-face connection, standing behind a stall, talking about the cheese, and hearing what people think, has always been a part of how we work.

What started as a way to make better use of our milk has quietly grown into something much more – and it's still rooted in the same fields, the same cows and the same care.

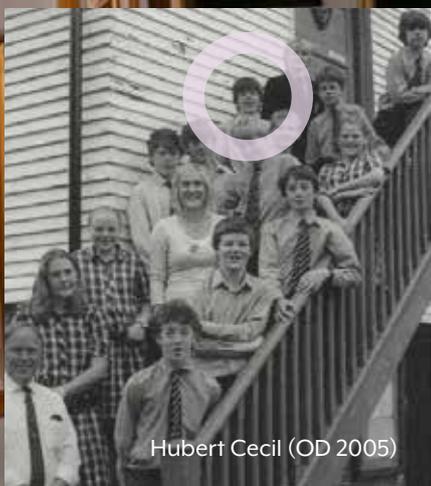
Richard, our cheesemaker of 25 years, turning and resting the curd



Tim Jones (OD 1983)



Simon Jones (OD 1978)



Hubert Cecil (OD 2005)



After that, there was nothing for it but to never turn down a job, to be reliable and, come what may, to cling to the dream as hard as to life itself.

# Framing a Life in Light

Hubert Cecil (OD 2005)

For Hubert Cecil (OD 2005), it all began with a Sony digital camera, gifted for passing Common Entrance, and a childhood spent poring over his mother's '80s modelling slides like they were portals to another world. Now an accomplished photographer with credits in *Vogue*, *Tatler*, and campaigns for Armani and the BBC, Hubert reflects on the journey, one rung at a time.

Given my memories of Dragons and their prodigious wisdom, I would be grateful if you would consider this as "a word to the wise". I will relate the process of how I came to be a photographer, one key rung at a time. You may glean what you wish.

Whether these things are hereditary remains a mystery but what I do know is that my parents were, by example and influence, an enormous reason why I felt I could choose the path that I have. My father was a war journalist in his day and when I exhibited my fledgling passion, he seized on it by validating it and feeding my efforts with praise. Also, crucially, the timely present of a Sony digital camera came as a reward for passing Common Entrance.

My mother was a model and kept reams of slides from shoots she had been part of in the '80s. I vaguely remember spending hours poring over these windows into a distant, abstract world that I had no concept of – simultaneously immediate yet buried in the past. It felt to me like a form of magic.

Parallel to that and maybe as a direct result, I have always been fascinated by images, image making and have long been addicted to the dopamine hit and associated inner warmth that I have always felt after taking a "good" picture. After a successful job, I still feel spiritually richer and have an abiding sense of pride.

Something I once read in Susan Sontag's *On Photography* that has always stayed with me argues (anecdotally) that the impetus to record the present is, for many photographers, born of having been subject to an early and radical change of environment, lest it be torn away again. I can't speak for anyone else but, in my case, spending the first six years of my life in the vivid tumult of Kenya, followed by the sharp contrast of rural Hertfordshire, her argument chimed with me.

With a germinating seed planted deep in my psychological soil and the root beginning to take form, an almost monomaniacal preoccupation with capturing the world around me began to flourish. My beloved Great Aunt Anne died and left me £800. I went 50/50 on my first DSLR with my old friend Will Pelham. If one of us was going on an interesting holiday, he would take the camera. Our friendly rivalry drove us to improve, and we ended up jointly running the photography society at Eton.





## Images:

Page 22: Parisian Grace | Lara Cosima Henckel von Donnersmarck

Above: Loch of Heaven

Page 26: Lalibela Monk

Page 27: Frankie revelling in her Midsummer Night's Dream | Frankie Fox, Newlywed Duke and Duchess of Westminster (OD 2006), The Cruise Missile | Tom Cruise and Julia Leal Hartogs



I tried to absorb as much as possible of everything I saw.



By this stage, I was certain that I wanted to be a photographer and, oozing keenness from every pore, I had the incredibly good fortune to be introduced to Mario Testino's office when he was at the crest of the cultural zeitgeist. It was an exceptionally thrilling experience to be a member of his court at this moment, albeit a lowly one.

The majority of the other interns that flowed through his office from places like Paris and LA were predominantly social and had only a passing interest in photography. This worked in my favour because my enthusiasm stood out and I completed the tasks they set me more quickly and effectively than most. Eventually, I ended up digitising and categorising Mario's analogue archive during my university holidays.

It didn't matter in the slightest that I spent cumulative weeks and months in a subterranean archive in west London because I saw Mario's shoots through his eyes, frame by frame and relived what must have been one of the most glamorous points of view in the world. Crucially, I tried to absorb as much as possible of everything I saw.



This was by no means a panacea for a career as a photographer, but it felt like a feather in my cap, as well as being immensely eye-opening. I wouldn't have necessarily recommended three years in Manchester and, in fact, after I'd left, I suggested a younger photographer drop out during his first term and he has gone from strength to strength since. As germane as a degree in Art History and Visual Studies may sound for a young lensman, time is as precious as any and is best spent away from opportunities for jaded stagnation.

The dynamic and charismatic Alex Bramall had been Head of Books and Exhibitions for Mario for nearly a decade by the time he decided to strike out on his own and, when all had been said and done up north, I joined him in his Shepherd's Bush flat as second lighting assistant and general factotum. I learned what I know about studio lighting during this illuminating time.

After that, there was nothing for it but to never turn down a job, to be reliable and, come what may, to cling to the dream as hard as to life itself. In the case of brevity, I will only say that I took the rough with the smooth, tried to remain Socratic and, even when I was living on air and doing the hard yards, I visualised the streets as one day being paved with gold.

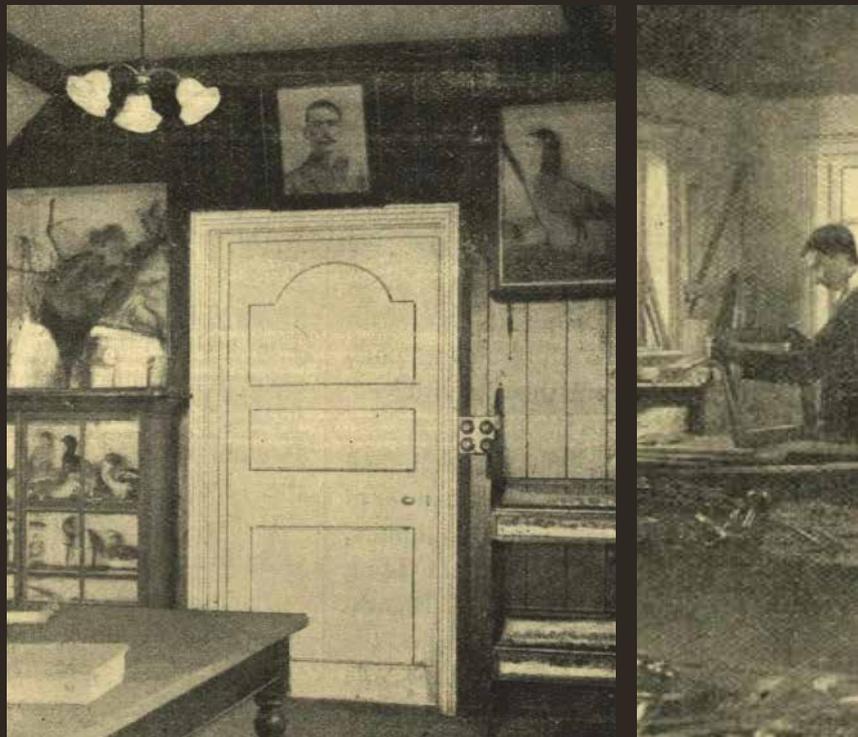
Though I am only at the end of the beginning of my career and therefore a mere stripling yet, it so far seems to me that faith, relentless persistence and a sprinkling of good luck will take you more or less where you choose to go.



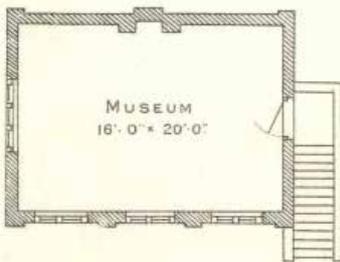
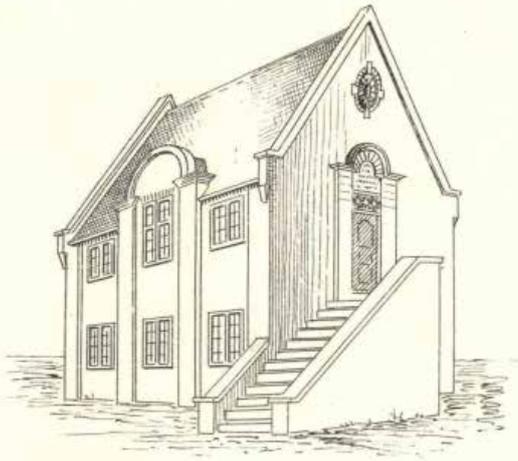
# From Loss to Legacy

Maurice Church and the Dragon School Museum

Catherine Lewis, Dragon Archivist



PROPOSED MEMORIAL TO M. R. CHURCH TO BE ERECTED  
TO THE S.E. OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING.



1ST FLOOR PLAN (MUSEUM AND DRAWING SCHOOL).

THE GROUND FLOOR WILL BE USED AS A CARPENTER'S SHOP. THE EXPENSE OF THIS WILL NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE MEMORIAL FUND.

E. FISHER, ARCHITECT.



In the very early hours of a bitterly cold morning, in February 1900, a crowd lined St. Giles' to watch a stream of mounted men move through half a foot of snow.

A torchlight procession, led by the Volunteer Band, escorted them to the railway station. Shortly before 6 am, a group of Dragons made their way through the crowd, onto the Great Western Platform, to one of the train's compartments where they were able to shake the hand of their friend, Maurice Church. Moments later the train, with its long tail of horse-boxes, steamed out of the station, with the 1000 strong crowd singing 'Auld Lang Syne' in its wake. Maurice, an OD boy and Master, was making his way to South Africa, to fight in the Second Boer War.

Through issues of *The Draconian*, we learn that after Maurice had left the Dragon around 1885, he went on to Lansing College and then Keble College, Oxford. He was a keen sportsman, participating in a cricket match between the School and Old Boys at Winchester as well as being a member of the Draconian Athletic Club. By 1893, he was Secretary of Keble College Cricket Club and had been elected Captain of Keble College Association Football Club.

His ties with the Dragon were strong and he often attended OD dinners as well as being the Skipper's highly regarded bosun on the *Blue Dragon*. By February of 1898, Maurice has joined the staff where he remained for two years before leaving for South Africa. His departure was a loss felt by many in the School:

“ His teaching of history and geography was most stimulating... he was popular with masters and boys alike... the Lodge will miss its indefatigable and clever volunteer gardener, and the boys will miss an admirable 'coach' at football, hockey and cricket. Still, we cannot grudge our Queen so excellent a man in the hour of need. ”

Sadly, Maurice was never to return to the Dragon as he was killed in action at Hartbeestefontein on February 18, 1901, while serving under Lord Methuen as a trooper in the 40th Co. Imperial Yeomanry. At Prize-Giving that year, Skipper said:

“ No words can express the grief that we feel at the loss of our dear friend Maurice Church. We looked eagerly forward to the thought of having him back amongst us, but it was not to be. He lies with the comrades who fell by his side in the far away village of Klerksdorp. ”

A memorial was to be built to honour Maurice's memory, and the decision was made that this would take the form of a museum, with a carpenter's shop below. E. M. P. Fisher, an architect and OD, kindly gave his services in drawing plans for the building and superintended its construction.

The memorial appeal was met with great enthusiasm and by December 1901 the building was complete and even had electric lights. Its collections have sparked curiosity and wonder in generations of Dragons. That, surely, is the finest kind of legacy: one that educates, delights and inspires young minds. The building endures to this day, as one of the School's most beloved and recognisable structures.



The past lives on through the stories we share. If the museum stirs a memory, or there is a corner of Dragon history you would like explored, please reach out to our archivist, Catherine Lewis, at [catherine.lewis@dragonschool.org](mailto:catherine.lewis@dragonschool.org). She would be delighted to hear from you.

# Spirit of the Dragon: Celebrating 150 Years of Dragon School

Frances Wheare, Director of Development and Social Impact

What comes to mind when you think of the spirit of the Dragon? A teaching environment that is collegiate rather than didactic and based on mutual respect. A celebration of individuality and independence that is rooted in inclusivity. A shirt untucked. A spirit of adventure. Above all, a combination of playfulness and purpose.



2027 marks 150 years since 14 children gathered in Balliol Hall for their first lessons with A. E. Clarke. The Oxford Little Boys' School, as it was then known, quickly became the Oxford Preparatory School, until the children chose a dragon as the symbol for their rugby team and the Dragon School was born. Skipper Lynam, who succeeded Revd Clarke as Headteacher, set the tone for the future ethos of the School in his famous speech of 1909:

“... [W]e have failed, unless we have helped the boy to develop his mind and his capacities in his own way, unless we have given him full scope for all of imagination and originality that is in him, unless we have let him know the causes of the sin and suffering in the world, unless we have made his heart beat with the heart of mankind ...”

Our School is powered by a community of Dragons, old and new, all of whom play a vital part in keeping Skipper's vision alive. From much-loved teachers who shaped a child's future to the lifelong friendships born at the School gates, the Dragon would be nothing without its people. And so, in 2027, we will be inviting all Old Dragons to help us preserve our past, celebrate our community and forge our future. Please share your Dragon memories and send in any items that you might wish to donate to the archive. Let us know how the Spirit of the Dragon has continued to guide you after your School days by sending in your news and updates. And we hope you will consider investing in our future by making a donation to the Spirit of the Dragon Campaign. Thanks to the generosity of our community, we are able to offer a fee remission to 25 children each year. With your help, we can secure our Transformational Bursary Programme in perpetuity.

Throughout 2027 we will be hosting celebratory events, sharing archival treasures, and spotlighting Old Dragons who embody the spirit of the School. Alongside these moments of celebration, we will publish a commemorative book marking 150 years of the Dragon through essays, photographs and reflections. Bridging generations, from Lady Antonia Fraser CH, DBE, FRSL (OD 1944), to the Class of 2027, our contributors span a rich tapestry of Dragon voices including teachers, Heads and Dragons past and present. Pre-orders are now open, so scan the QR code or return the order form to secure your copy.

Whether you support the Spirit of the Dragon campaign, attend a sesquicentennial event, or simply share your story, we hope you will join us in marking this milestone in the Dragon's journey.

# Spirit of the Dragon



# Events

Imelia Taylor (OD 2012), Community Communications and Events Officer



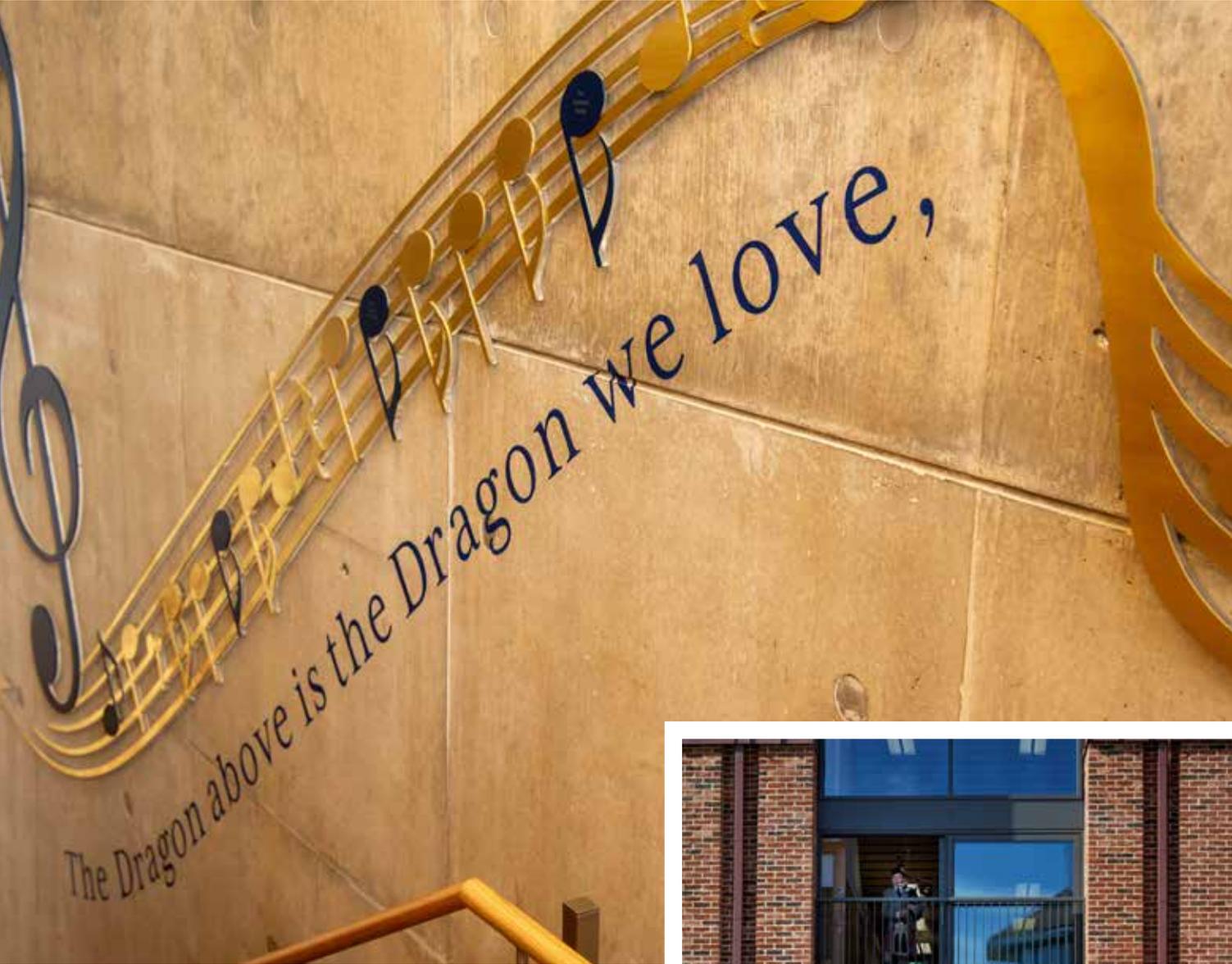
The 2024/25 events season was nothing short of extraordinary, bursting with energy, celebration and a deep sense of community.



Kicking off the School calendar was the much-anticipated grand opening of our new Music and Performing Arts Centre, Skipper's. The grounds came alive with a festival-like atmosphere with music echoing far beyond Bardwell Road. Opened by special guest Tom Hiddleston (OD 1994), joined by Emma Goldsmith, Roger Trafford and John Baugh, there were pyrotechnics and a very big pair of scissors. The event was a roaring celebration of Dragon Spirit, showcasing the creativity, collaboration and pride that define our School community.

Performances included a re-imagined Big Band with current pupils and ODs, Lulu sang 'Relight My Fire' with some talented Dragon back-up dancers, alongside workshops from generous members of our community, such as Lucy Evans (OD 2001) and Jonny Race (Head of Guitar and Music Technology).

Watching young Dragons and colleagues come together to unveil this vibrant new hub encapsulated the true feeling of what it means to be a Dragon.



Skipper's Opening, September 2024

In February, we swapped the Dragon fields for the grounds of Stamford Bridge, as Chelsea Football Club hosted our community and careers networking event, with many thanks to **Dominic Rosso (OD 2011)** for his connection and kindness. A Dragon Community panel, made up of **Frances Houghton (OD 1993)**, **Tom George (OD 2008)**, **Mark McQuillan (Current Parent)**, **Basil Tuma (OD 2018)**, **Jonathan Turner**, Director of Sport, and our Head **Emma Goldsmith**, took the floor to advise and discuss a life in sport and the role education plays in those careers. There was a great deal for our ODs to consider, and many discussions were had post-panel as our community enjoyed access to the grounds and a chance to network among peers. For anyone carving out a career in sport, this really was the golden ticket.

Spring saw the return of over 100 ODs back to Bardwell Road with our pre-1970s Reunion, with generations spanning 30 years of the Dragon reunited to reminisce. It was an afternoon filled with nostalgia, great conversation and brilliant company celebrating the Dragon above, whom we all love so dearly. **Catherine Lewis**, Dragon Archivist, put on a never-seen-before display in **Sadler Hall, Skipper's**, displaying uniform, photos – even **Joc's shaving set** made an appearance! The display was much enjoyed by all who attended.

Our Australian Reunion was a powerful reminder that while Dragons may roam great distances, the spirit of our community knows no bounds. Old Dragons, former staff and past parents gathered from across the continent to reconnect, share stories and relive cherished memories. Closing out the year in style, our 1970s Reunion brought together ODs marking five decades since their time at the School. The black-tie dinner was a joyful celebration, filled with heartfelt speeches, shared memories and plenty of laughter. Old friends reconnected over fine food and wine, stories that stood the test of time were retold with warmth and wit. Looking back over the year it is clear that our community thrives on connection, and we have so enjoyed making so many reunions possible. Here's to many more moments like these, where past, present and future come together so perfectly.





1970s Reunion, Dragon School, October 2025



Arduus ad Solem x Dragon Drinks, February 2025

# Chair of Governors

Penny Cameron Watt (OD Parent)

I am very pleased to step into the role of Chair of Governors at the Dragon and honoured to be the first woman to hold this post. The Dragon flourished under Andrew Webb's leadership alongside the talented, dedicated and motivated colleagues across the School. As a former Dragon parent I know first-hand the importance of the strong foundations that the Dragon provides for a child's future. Against the challenging global environment, I believe the School will continue to provide and develop an inspiring education, equipping pupils for the future. I am already enjoying being part of that journey and I am looking forward to meeting more of you within the Dragon community in the near future.

## Dates for your Diary

Arduus ad Solem | OD Networking

26 February at 6.30 pm

JOD Reunion

28 March at 12 pm

Pre-Prep 30th Birthday Party

9 May at 12 pm

2010s Reunion

11 June at 6.30 pm

Remembrance

Sunday

8 November

Dragon Sale

19 December





# Sibling-Inspired Success

Lucy Pillar (OD 2021)





River Cherwell

From cheering on the Cherwell to rowing for Great Britain, Lucy's journey to gold at the Under 19 Rowing World Championships was shaped by grit and training, grounded in the legacy of her siblings. Inspired by **Amelia (OD 2018)** and **William (OD 2019)**, whose dedication to rowing lit the path ahead, and supported by younger brother **JonJon (OD 2025)**, Lucy followed a powerful example that laid the foundation for her rise from rowing novice to Great Britain champion.

I was so grateful to have an amazing opportunity over the summer to compete in the Under 19 Rowing World Championships. It was a real honour to be selected to represent Great Britain in the UI9 VIII after a year of trials and training with my team at school.

My first introduction to rowing was when my older sister, Amelia (OD 2018), took it up after starting at her senior school, quickly followed by my older brother, William (OD 2019). Watching them both train, race and push through challenges showed me what resilience and perseverance really look like. My younger brother, JonJon (OD 2025) started rowing at Dragon, initially coached by Amelia who was volunteering at the time. It was a very fun introduction to rowing!

Going straight from a successful Henley Royal campaign with the Headington VIII to GB Final trials a few days later was a real physical, emotional and mental challenge. Crew selection can be a fairly brutal process with numerous seat races in order to select a strong boat. Having trialled for the Munich International Regatta earlier in the year, I was already a little bit prepared for the experience.

Once crews were announced, we were home for two days then straight into the most intensive training I've experienced.

The first period of training was based at the Leander Club in Henley and then we moved to the GB centre in Reading – both a great privilege. Once we flew to Lithuania a few days before the competition we were thankfully beginning to taper our training a little in preparation for racing – one heat followed by the Final three days later. By the time we travelled we were a tightly bonded crew, having spent the past three weeks living together.

In the Final we faced Australia, Germany, Romania, the USA and Italy. After a strong start from Australia, and with the USA coming through hard, we took the lead at 750m and were very happy to cross the line first. To be on the podium to receive gold alongside the teams from the USA (silver) and Romania (bronze) was a wonderful experience.



I'm very thankful to be part of such an amazing program at Headington School with fantastic coaches and great teammates. The values that I learnt at the Dragon laid an excellent foundation for persevering through the ups and downs of competitive sport.



Left to right: JonJon, Amelia, Lucy and William

# Pathway to a Bursary

Frances Wheare, Director of Development and Social Impact



It's been a joy to see our daughter develop from quite a shy girl hiding in books to a sociable, confident and resilient young woman who is a buzzing part of School life.



Since its launch in 2002, the Transformational Bursary Programme has reached over 110 children, offering a supportive and nurturing environment in which to explore their potential. The spirit of the scheme dates back to the earliest days of the Dragon, when Skipper Lynam encouraged families to pay what they could, ensuring that promise, not privilege, was the true currency of admission.

Today, around 25 bursary holders are part of the School community at any one time, receiving an average 85% fee remission; some are supported up to 110% to cover additional costs. For these children, just like their peers, the Dragon is a place to build confidence, discover talents and forge lifelong friendships. Some go on to win scholarships to leading senior schools while others shine onstage or on the sports field, and all participate in those moments of discovery and play that shape the School's culture.

All young Dragons are treated equally, regardless of whether or not they have received financial support. But there is no doubt that the Transformational Bursary Programme enriches our School and contributes in many ways to the diverse Dragon community.

## The Journey to the Dragon

Families discover the Transformational Bursary Programme in a number of ways. Whether having spotted an advertisement in local media or experienced the Dragon through community partnerships, or simply by contacting the School directly, we welcome applications when children are coming to the end of Year 2 or beginning Year 3.

Applications and school reports are reviewed by the Bursary Committee and, at this stage, an initial family financial assessment is carried out. Children are invited to an assessment morning where they're given the chance to explore the School, meet teachers, and take part in English and Maths activities, in the same way as any other applicant. Being shortlisted is not dependent solely on academic aptitude; many other factors are considered, including curiosity, kindness, creativity and the desire to dive into everything the Dragon has to offer.

Following this assessment morning, applicants are shortlisted for the second round. A further assessment is undertaken by an independent company to verify household income and financial capacity, and children and their families are invited back to the Dragon for a second visit, a chance to experience School life in full flow. Children explore classrooms and meet future teachers; prospective boarders spend the night in a boarding house. Meanwhile, parents talk to the Head about their motivations for joining the Dragon community. Behind the scenes, the Bursary Committee carefully considers each child's strengths and circumstances; and finally, awards are set and places offered.

## Finding Dragon Wings

Every Dragon is unique and every journey is different. One recent bursary holder was able to indulge their love for music through subsidised lessons and the opportunity to join ensembles, and consequently won a music scholarship to senior school. Another found their stride on the Dragon fields, captaining the first XI football team and secured a sports scholarship to their senior school.

In common with many children, some bursary holders take time to settle in. With gentle and tailored pastoral support, they grow in confidence and begin to thrive. Some face academic challenges, but by accessing the same encouragement and support as their peers, they make sure and steady progress; many go on to achieve top marks at Common Entrance.

“ The Dragon offered much more than an education, providing me with core experiences to grow and develop my personality. Whether it was in the classroom, on the pitch, or spending time with new friends, I always felt supported and encouraged to be a part of the community, something I learnt to appreciate given my move to the UK not long before. ”

## Beyond Bardwell Road

When the final Sports Day races are run, a new chapter begins. Many bursary holders go on to receive scholarships to leading senior schools where they continue to thrive. Their journey continues to be shaped by the choices they made at the Dragon, alongside newly discovered talents and passions.

Now part of the Old Dragon community, these young people carry with them the confidence and friendships they built at Bardwell Road. Whatever path they take, their strong foundation and a sense of belonging lasts a lifetime.

The Transformational Bursary Programme is powered by our community. Whether through donations, mentorship or sharing stories about the impact of a Dragon education, you are part of this legacy and your support helps ensure that the doors of opportunity remain open to all.

Thank you.



Bursary stories

# Letters to the Editor



## Celebrating Dick Sargent (OD 1938)

Dick Sargent (OD 1938) would have reached his 100th birthday on 22 March 2025. To celebrate his centenary, his son Simon (OD 1966) organised a family reunion which took place on that day at The Swan Inn, Swinbrook. This was a very happy occasion that was attended by Simon and his sisters Sally and Vicky (OD 1970), Dick's stepsons Fred, Laurence and Nick Campbell (all ODs) and several other members of the extended family. The picture shows Fred, Laurence and Nick (L to R) putting in some practice at The Old Bookbinders in Jericho the day before the party.



Fred Campbell (OD 1963)

## Carmen Draconiense!

Hello OD Magazine.

Whilst the old grey cells aren't quite what they used to be, the little that's left of my memory suggests that it goes something like this:

"Long ago there were creatures that ranged through the forest in hides of tough armour.

But some are extinct and some changed and the forests are tilled by the farmer.

Yet a weathercock glistens on high and upon it a dragon is seated.

And the words on that tin mean "Go in and win for the Dragon is rarely defeated."

"There are Dragons in worlds far apart where July is a cold as December,

Yet within they've a warmth in the heart and a something that makes them remember ..."

Whoops – the fog has descended and that's about as far as I can get!! Something about "the Dragon afar on the banks of the Cher"!

Anyway – my congratulations on your splendid publication, particularly the very fitting tributes to 'PJ' and Antonya.

With best regards,

Garth Lewis (OD 1960)

## Dragon School Facebook Post

### Hockey Tour Memories of 1997

Pretty sure this was the FIRST girls hockey tour to Holland. I remember being hosted in a family with Mr Eddie Newton and not knowing how to contain the excitement of having chocolate sprinkles on toast for breakfast.... I found a mix tape I made for that trip in a skip at my parents' house a few weeks ago... an eclectic mix including Blue Boy's 'Remember Me', Spice Girls, Counting Crows' 'Mr Jones' and the beloved local Oxford band The Nicotines' 'Mary Wana' ... immediately transported to staring out through the condensation of the minibus windows as the windmills floated by ...

Gemma Kingsbury (OD 1997)



The School has progressed wonderfully, though amazingly, not unrecognisably.

Dear Catherine and all your team,

Thank you for our most enjoyable Reunion lunch at the Dragon on last Saturday, 24 May.

It was the first time that I have re-visited the School since leaving and was surprisingly anxious that I would be the only person that I recognised as everyone would be unrecognisably, 60 years older – except me of course!

Thank you for the lovely organisation that made it easy to find friends, the excellent seating arrangements and the wonderful lunch that was perfect.

We all had so much conversation and wonderful stories of recollection. The School has progressed wonderfully, though amazingly, not unrecognisably.

I thoroughly enjoyed myself as I know all others did.

Thank you ALL so very much.

Kind regards,

Frederick Giles Alden (OD 1966)



Facebook Post

### Baby School 1981

That's my year in Baby School – 1st big intake of girls. I think that's Theo Harold, Henrietta Brooks, Bethany Parsons, Kristy Farr, Vicky Young, Heidi Parks, Ailie Piggott, Matilda Leyser, Emmy Skinner, Olivia Wilson and me (Sarah Witt). Brings back memories – I remember when that was taken! A couple of Rubik's Cubes in there too!

Sarah Witt (OD 1987)

### Holiday Diary of an Old Dragon

Woke up at 8:30 feeling hot and the sun was up. Deliberated about whether to trail across to the showers or whether to take a dip instead, knowing how cold the water is. Just felt I had to choose the latter to be in the spirit of being here and so donned my cosi and swam a hasty circle in the water and hastily got out. There was a cold outside shower I could use which felt much warmer than the Baltic. So now I'm wide awake and thinking about breakfast. The campsite is quiet with just a few people drifting about and I am beginning to hear some children chirpily chatting to their sleepy parents. Today we decided to go to Inio, which is a small island reached by two FinFerries, the first being quite a long hop on a larger vessel than normal but still painted yellow so free...

“My regret is that I never made [a Holiday Diary] when I was at the Dragon.”

Charlie Meecham (OD 1964)



# In Memoriam



Dr Michael Loewe (OD 1931)

on 1 January 2025

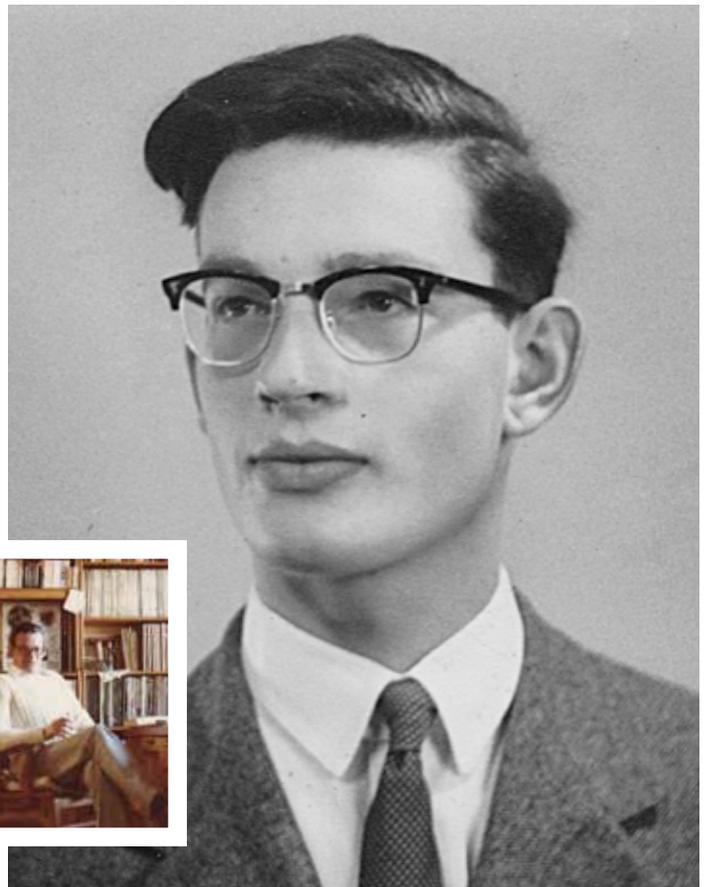
Dr Michael Loewe, esteemed Emeritus Fellow and Honorary Fellow of Clare Hall, passed away on 1 January 2025 at the age of 102. He was a China scholar who at Bletchley Park helped to crack Japanese naval codes. In the 1950s he turned to Chinese codes and ciphers at GCHQ and later became a leading expert on the Han Dynasty.

Anthony (Tony) Royse (Former Staff)

on 20 February 2025

Tony Royse was a man of many talents, the most notable of which was his musical abilities. With his perfect pitch and sight-reading skill, he got away with passing his piano exams as a child with very little practice! His love of music started young, and he was always surrounded by music and as schoolboy, even meeting the composer Vaughn Williams. When asked about it, he said that Williams had visited his school and having seen Tony in the hallway, asked in a very loud voice, "Boy, where are the toilets?" Perhaps not the inspirational moment it could have been. Having reached the height of 6 feet by age 12, music was a safer option than sports and it was clear he had a natural talent for it. Tony was Director of Music at the Dragon from 1967 until 1972 when he and his family emigrated to Canada.

Tony leaves behind his wife of 61 years, Andrea, and their two daughters, Julia and Susie, as well as all the people whose lives were impacted by Tony. He was an extraordinary person who lived an incredibly full life, with great spirit and presence, but most of all with love for and from his family and friends.



## Stephen Jessel (OD 1956)

on 7 March 2025

“Incandescent with rage” was a recurring self-description by Stephen Jessel, the former BBC foreign correspondent, as he encountered the uncooperative in the far corners of the earth and back at Broadcasting House. This was, however, the cover not the book. Stephen tempered his worldview with a warm heart, a self-deprecating sense of humour and a sly way of turning a critical piece on its head.

Stephen, who has died aged 81, was one of the finest exponents of *From Our Own Correspondent*, that weekly showcase of five-minute overseas essays on BBC Radio 4 and the World Service, in which the correspondent has a chance to breathe, freed from the shackles of attempted impartiality, live broadcasting and “Who, what, where, when, why?” FOOC best traces his story, from Paris to Beijing to Brussels and back to Paris in the last quarter of the 20th century.

He was a master of appearing to tell the listener one thing, but registering another.

Born in Burnham, Buckinghamshire, Stephen was the son of Robert Jessel, Defence Correspondent of the *Times*, and Penelope (nee Blackwell), of the renowned Oxford publisher-bookshop family, a lecturer in social administration at Plater College, Oxford, and active in national Liberal party politics.

Stephen attended the Dragon School in Oxford, then Shrewsbury School, and Balliol College, Oxford (1961–65), where he studied Classics. He then went to the *Times*, where he was a general news reporter then education correspondent. It was there that he met Jane Marshall; they married in 1970. He moved to the BBC in Broadcasting House in 1972 as a radio reporter and presenter of *Newsdesk* and *The World Tonight*, and was education correspondent during Margaret Thatcher’s 1970–74 spell as Education Minister.

Stephen loved travel, and he and Jane kept it up, especially to east Asia, until a traffic accident in Turkey in 2013, after which his health deteriorated.

He is survived by Jane and Miranda, by his two grandchildren, Eleanor and Franklin, and by his brother David.

Stephen Jessel obituary | Radio 4 | The Guardian

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2025/mar/20/stephen-jessel-obituary>



## Andrew Francis Peter Schryver 1939–2024 (OD 1953)

on 15 November 2024

Andrew was a keen member of the Science Club at the Dragon and, after Cheltenham College, studied Electrical Engineering at University College London. After graduation he joined Elliott Automation where he met Hector Brown, with whom he started Lynwood Scientific Developments, an electronics and computer company. After selling this company he started Farringdon Instruments Ltd, supplying motorsport gauges, data logging equipment and specialist steering wheels to the motor-racing fraternity. He was a keen historic motor racer, and with his son James (OD 1975–1980) raced a Chevron B8 and B21/23 and B26. He also enjoyed skiing and snowboarding in France and dinghy sailing. He leaves a widow Gilly, son James and daughters Louise and Amy.

## Jeanne Lynam (OD Parent, Former Staff)

on 1 October 2025

Jeanne was born in February 1933 in South Molton, Devon. She was educated at Stella Maris Convent in Bideford and then later at the Convent of Our Lady in St Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex. When her school days were completed, she decided on a career in nursing and moved to London where she trained at Westminster Hospital.

A short while later, she met her future husband John 'Harry' Lynam and together they joined the Dragon School. They started out life living in rented accommodation in Park Town, but with a first baby imminent, they moved into 5 Charlbury Road. Then, when the opportunity arose a year later to run a boarding house, they crossed the road to live at 28 Bardwell. From 1961-1975, Jeanne, or 'Ma Lynam' as she was called, supported John in his role as housemaster and skilfully applied her mothering skills to look after 20 new Dragons each year. It was a happy and caring house where she was determined to give each child the best of starts to Dragon life.

In 1975, with her own children (Joss, Justin and Jo) now in their teens, Jeanne and John gave up running the house and decamped to Summertown. At the same time, Jeanne took a break from school life, and went back to nursing, working for BUPA. However, it was not long before she was tempted to return to the Dragon, this time taking up the post of the School Sister. For several years she worked alongside 'Ma Parkinson' and Dr Alastair Smith to provide medical care for day and boarding children alike. It was often noted that Jeanne was very astute at identifying the genuinely ill from those who were trying to avoid their Latin vocabulary test!

When Jeanne finally left the Dragon for a second time, she took up the post of 'Sister' at two of the Oxford Colleges, Brasenose and Lincoln, where occasionally she would bump into unsuspecting Old Dragons who were now undergraduates!

In 2023, with her health in decline, Jeanne moved with John to a care home in Andover to be closer to family. She died after a short illness in Winchester Hospital on 1 October 2025.



## Michael Temple (Former Staff)

on 10 April 2025

Mike Temple was a wonderfully quiet and calm man who managed to keep the School tidy for decades – no mean feat considering Dragons! The esteem his team of cleaners held him in was clearly illustrated by the attendance of many past and present members of his team at his funeral. Mike led them with a quiet grace but wasn't afraid to put his shoulder to the wheel when needed, and always with such good humour. He exemplified what it meant to be a true gentleman. I feel very fortunate to have met, and worked alongside, Mike for what became the last few years of his life. Mike made new joiners feel so welcome. He was so knowledgeable about the history of the Dragon, and the very successful business that he had set up and successfully ran for decades alongside his daughter, Lisa. Mike was a pleasure to spend time with, from discussions about his life experiences to discussions about electric vehicles, which he was most definitely a trendsetter in. A residing memory will be the times he would gently mention in passing, "There may have been a small gathering last night..." His lovely way of saying he'd already tidied it up, but please could colleagues be reminded not to leave a mess behind! The Dragon wouldn't be what it is today without Mike Temple.

Jermaine Sharpe and Hugo McNeile

For a full list of available  
2024/2025 obituaries  
please visit  
[www.dragonschool.org/  
obituaries](http://www.dragonschool.org/obituaries)



## Geoffrey Somerset, 6th Baron Raglan (OD 1946, OD Parent)

on 9 September 2025

Trusting Hitler's pledge not to bomb Oxford, Geoffrey's parents sent him to the Dragon in 1943 where his older sister kept an eye on him from St Hugh's.

He was assigned to Gunga Din, which was run by the sports master 'Ouf' Wiley under the watchful eye of the School's Headmaster, Hum, assisted by his son, Joc. Geoffrey thrived on the School's free-thinking culture and made lifelong friends. His late son, Arthur, was a pupil between 1969 and 1973, and in the 70s Geoffrey volunteered on the Centenary Committee with Inky and Gov. Only in May 2025, he hosted a lunch for local ODs of all generations with the School's Development Officer, Mark White (OD 1978), which was followed a week later by attending the pre-1970s reunion where he was unsurprisingly one of the oldest guests.

Geoffrey was born at Cefn Tilla Court near Usk in Monmouthshire and was second son of the 4th Baron Raglan. After the Dragon, he attended Westminster School and then Cirencester before he was commissioned into the Grenadier Guards as a National Service officer in May 1953. He served with the 2nd Battalion, joining it in London just before the Coronation and then in the Canal Zone.

His subsequent career spanned three distinct sectors: satisfying his passion for cars, he became a trainee with Rootes Group and then an instructor at Standard Motor Company, joining Lambourn Engineering Group as Head of Sales and Marketing in Berkshire. Ten years on, his keen interest in wine motivated him to set up as an independent wine importer. Twenty-three years later and having sold his company, he qualified as an insurance broker, which he enjoyed until he retired. Actively involved in local politics, he served on the County Councils for Berkshire and later Oxfordshire when the family moved over the border from Lambourn to Stanford in the Vale in 1980.

He was Vice-President of the Oxfordshire Branch of the Grenadier Guards Association and a liveryman at the Worshipful Company of Skinners. As a true countryman, he served as Chair of the CPRE's White Horse District for four years and remained a committee member until he died. In 2010, Geoffrey succeeded his childless elder brother to the title.

A loving husband, father, and grandfather, he died peacefully at home, having recently celebrated his 93rd birthday with close friends and family. He is survived by his two daughters, Belinda and Lucy, and six grandchildren. His wife, Caroline, and son, Arthur (OD 1973), sadly pre-deceased him.

## 2024

Sally McEwen (OD Parent)  
David Woods (OD 1944) on 2 March 2024  
Andrew Gregg on 6 March 2024  
Struan Dunn (OD 1956) on 21 April 2024  
Thomas Ligertwood (OD 1995) on 6 May 2024  
Clive Johnstone (OD 1977) on 12 May 2024  
John Eliot (OD 1959) on 16 May 2024  
Nitza Pauleau (OD 1945) on 20 May 2024  
John Hunter (OD 1942, OD Parent) on 29 May 2024  
Michael Bretherton (OD 1945) on June 2024  
Jimmy Chatterton (OD 1950) on 10 August 2024  
Elizabeth Groves (OD 1956) on 26 September 2024  
Martin Eagle (OD 1957) on 20 October 2024  
Andrew Schryver (OD 1953) on on 15 November 2024  
Elizabeth Eden (OD 1939) on December 2024  
Edward 'Ted' Galloway (OD 1943) on 21 December 2024  
James Wyllie (OD 1950) on 26 December 2024

## 2025

Michael Loewe (OD 1931) on 1 January 2025  
Lord Quentin Davies (OD 1957) on 13 January 2025  
Peter Westwood (OD 1947) on 19 January 2025  
Richard Wilson (OD 1956) on 7 February 2025  
Anthony Royse (Former Staff) on 20 February 2025  
Peter Fowler (OD Parent) on 25 February 2025  
Denise Hodgson (OD 1940) in 2025  
Stephen Jessel (OD 1956) on 7 March 2025  
Roly Machin (OD 1959) on 7 March 2025  
Eddie Jordan (OD Parent) on 20 March 2025  
Celia Sisam (OD 1939) on 26 March 2025  
Chris Pearce (OD Parent) on 9 April 2025  
Michael 'Mike' Temple (Former Staff) on 10 April 2025  
John Edwards (OD 1958) on May 2025  
Antony Collieu (OD 1954) on 10 May 2025  
Michael Righton (Former Staff) on 18 May 2025  
Nicholas Clements (OD Parent) on 21 May 2025  
Robert Yeatman (OD 1946) on 2 June 2025  
Rachel Griffiths (OD 1955) on 2 June 2025  
Michael Mollet (OD 1957) on 12 June 2025  
Sir Roger Norrington (OD 1947) on 18 July 2025  
John Campbell Broadhurst (OD 1956) on 22 July 2025  
Robert Hunt-Grubbe (OD Parent and Grandparent) on 15 August 2025  
Michael Thomas (OD 1950) on 21 August 2025  
Geoffrey Somerset, 6th Baron Raglan (OD 1946, OD Parent) on 9 September 2025  
James Seddon (OD 1951) on 11 September 2025  
Jeanne Lynam (OD Parent, Former Staff) on 1 October 2025  
Howard Wilson (OD Parent) on 15 October 2025  
Jonathan Bruce (OD 1958) on 20 November 2025

# Congratulations

Quintin Lake (OD 1988) whose illustrative book *The Perimeter* has been longlisted for The Wainwright Prize!

Alex Le Roux (OD 2000), whose business, for the first time, has been added as an entertainment partner at the prestigious Victoria & Albert Museum in London.

Ed East (OD 2000) on being awarded three Cannes Lions – one gold, one silver, one bronze.

**1** Jamie Jay (OD 2005) and Victoria Granville (OD 2005) on their marriage on 29 August 2023 (They got together over 20 years ago in A Block (16 December, 2004)!

Gregory Chilson (OD 2007) on accepting an offer of pupillage with G37 Chambers.

Anna Boden (OD 2008) on placing joint-1st place in the Mongol Derby.

Lucy Touche (OD 2010) on being selected for a Putnam Appreciates Award for her recent contributions to a case at Putnam.

Maia Bouchier (OD 2012) on becoming the new Honorary President of Capital Kids Cricket, taking over from former England captain Nasser Hussain.

Mariela Joseph (OD 2012) on becoming engaged to Gurinder Singh on 23 January 2025.

Bea Wheeler (OD 2017) on being nominated for an Ivor Novello Award.

Lucy Pillar (OD 2021) on her incredible victory in the Women's Eight (JW8+) final at the U19 World Rowing Championships.

Nick and Rebecca Moore (Current Staff) on the birth of their baby on 19 May 2025.

**2** Olivia Maiden (OD 2015) fulfilled a long-held promise in August 2024, successfully summiting Mount Kilimanjaro alongside her father in memory of her sister, Florence. First featured in *The OD* 2016 for her courageous attempt as one of the youngest climbers, 13-year-old Olivia trekked 50 miles in six days through extreme temperatures, from +25°C at the base to -25°C near the peak, before being forced to turn back due to gasping for breath. Her triumphant return eight years later is a testament to her resilience, determination and courage. Congratulations, Olivia, what an extraordinary achievement!



1



2

# 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 who wrote in.

Congratulations to Mark White (OD 1978) who wrote in and submitted the correct answers.

This year's question has been set by Mr Hitchings, teacher of Classics, and was taken from a recent Eton King's Scholar exam paper. For your chance to win a limited-edition bag of Dragon marbles, submit the correct answer to the question below:

## Competition Question

The grammar-checking tools supplied with word-processing software are notoriously poor, even though they now rely on neural network technology. Consider the following phrases that all risk wiggly underlinings when you type them into a computer.

1. **he have**
2. **should can**
3. **that than**
4. **I is**
5. **that that**
6. **will will**

For each phrase above, write a single grammatical sentence featuring the words as they appear (i.e. consecutively and without adding punctuation or capital letters).

To enter the competition, submit your FULL NAME and ANSWERS to [development.office@dragonschool.org](mailto: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 be sent 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!

## The OD 2025 Answers

### Part A:

1. Looks like a list of body parts but also means "Mr (Michael) Foot takes the top role in a military organisation".
2. Not clear whether a former monarch is being hurt or a ship with her name is being cleaned.
3. Did British soldiers leave their breakfast behind or is a left-wing political party talking nonsense about foreign policy?

### Part B:

Some sentences are ambiguous because of the meaning of individual words (semantic ambiguity): 5, 6, 7, 8  
Some sentences are ambiguous depending on how words are taken as connected with each other (syntactic ambiguity): 1, 2, 3, 4

### Part C:

- i. The alpaca bites but we are not told whom/what.
- ii. We are not told that anyone actually scratches.
- iii. The boy thinks the alpaca loves scratches.



The Dragon Sale raised £129,000 for local and international charities.

15,830

Over 30,000 kWh of energy has been produced by the Skipper solar panels, reducing our CO<sup>2</sup> output by 15,830.

129,000

30

We celebrated 30 years of the Pre-Prep.

250

Over 250 children from 10 local primary schools took part in a range of events including musical theatre and orchestral workshops, STEM days and much more.

Young Dragons took part in 1247 sport fixtures across the 2024/25 academic year.

1247



6227

6,227 is the total number of ski passes bought by Davos Dragon Ski Trippers [1962 – 2025].

68

A Block achieved an incredible 68 Scholarships and Awards.

30

We celebrated 30 years of girls boarding at the Dragon.

147

147 Old Dragons registered for their pre-1970s Reunion.

53

53 cricket teams played 270 matches.