RUGBY SCHOOL

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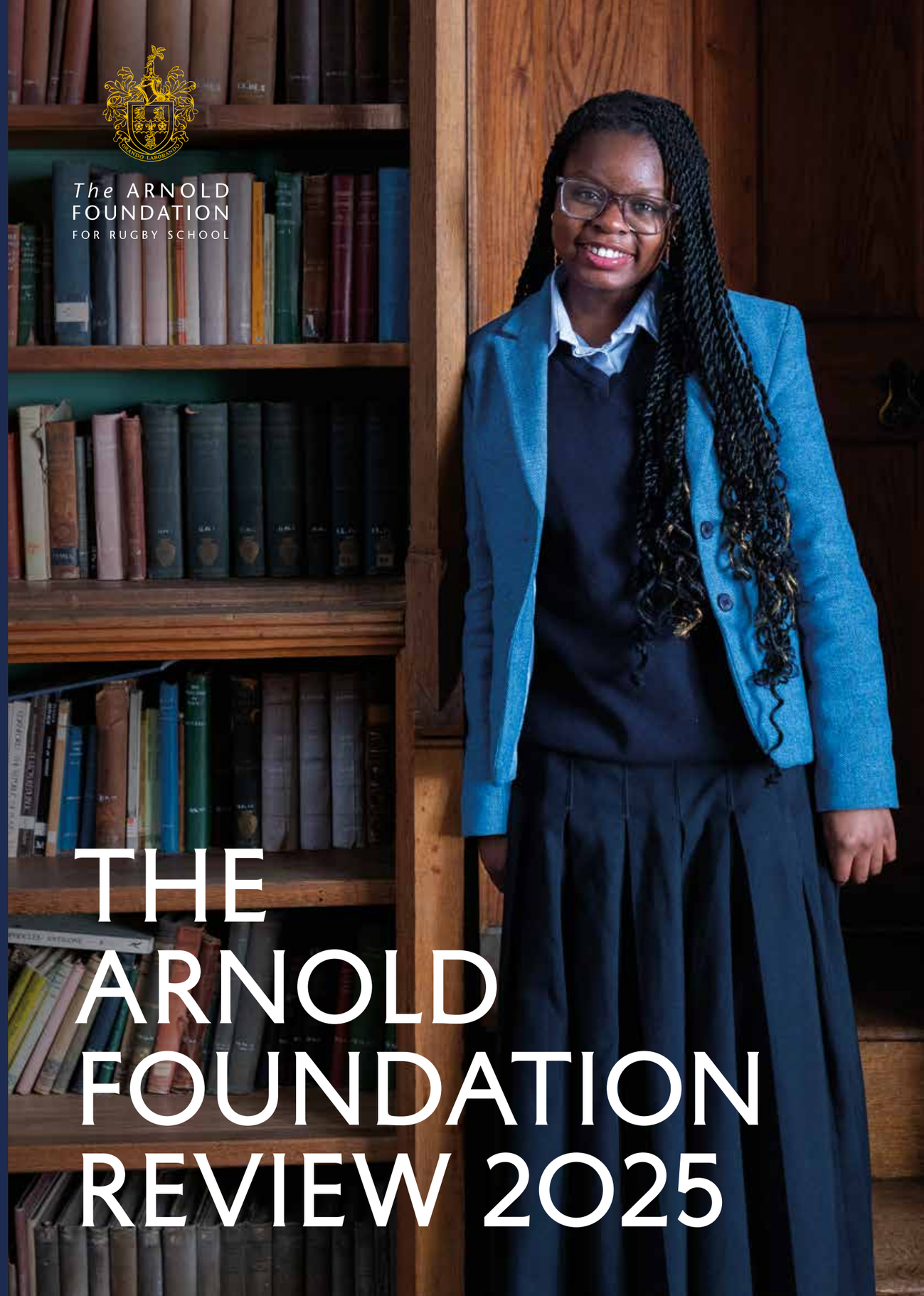


The ARNOLD FOUNDATION
FOR RUGBY SCHOOL

THE ARNOLD FOUNDATION REVIEW 2025

WELCOME

Helen and Trevor Strain, Co-Chairs of Trustees for The Arnold Foundation

We feel incredibly grateful for the warm welcome we have received and the many meaningful connections we've formed within the Rugby School community. As parents of students in Kilbracken and Bradley, we have always appreciated the unique spirit of Rugby School – but being involved with The Arnold Foundation over the past year has given us an even deeper understanding of its remarkable impact.

This year we welcome Tim Day and Natalie Pretsell into their new roles and have been working together on a long-term fundraising strategy with the objective of enabling the funding of 40 students in perpetuity. Helping to shape this vision has been both motivating and inspiring, and we are constantly reminded of how deeply our community cares about opening doors for talented young people.

One of the highlights of the year for us has been the wonderful conversations we've had with former students. It has been a privilege to hear about their journeys – how their time at Rugby shaped their lives, the opportunities it unlocked, and the confidence it instilled. Their stories are a powerful reminder of the Foundation's lasting impact. Equally, seeing current students thrive and take full advantage of everything Rugby School has to offer reaffirms why this work matters so deeply.

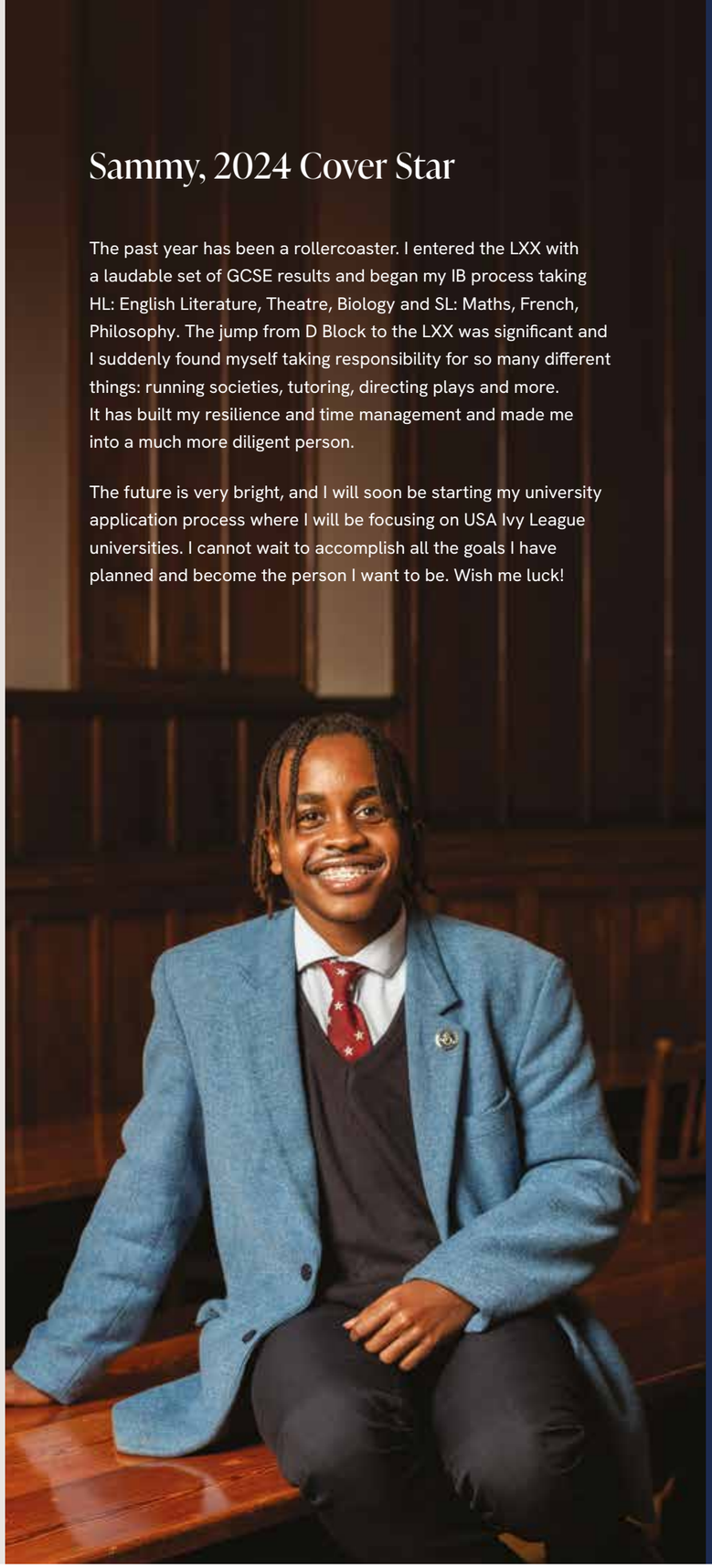
We would also like to thank the incredible staff who work tirelessly to support The Arnold Foundation and to ensure that each student's journey is as fulfilling as possible. Their dedication, care, and commitment – from academic guidance to pastoral support – play a vital role in transforming potential into possibility. We are truly grateful for everything they do.

To everyone who has encouraged us, shared their insights, and supported the Foundation over the past year – thank you. Your generosity and belief in this work continues to change lives in extraordinary ways.

Sammy, 2024 Cover Star

The past year has been a rollercoaster. I entered the LXX with a laudable set of GCSE results and began my IB process taking HL: English Literature, Theatre, Biology and SL: Maths, French, Philosophy. The jump from D Block to the LXX was significant and I suddenly found myself taking responsibility for so many different things: running societies, tutoring, directing plays and more. It has built my resilience and time management and made me into a much more diligent person.

The future is very bright, and I will soon be starting my university application process where I will be focusing on USA Ivy League universities. I cannot wait to accomplish all the goals I have planned and become the person I want to be. Wish me luck!



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Tim Day, Director of Development & Alumni and Natalie Pretsell, Assistant Director of Development & Alumni

We are delighted to welcome Tim Day, Director of Development & Alumni (Homefield/Bilton Grange (74-83) and Rugby (T 83-88)) and Natalie Pretsell, Assistant Director, to the Rugby School Development Team from September and June 2025 respectively.

Continuing to build on the vision of former Head Master, Patrick Derham, and his inspiring sector-leading bursary programme, Tim and Natalie are spending time with our donors, nationwide charity partners, alumni and wider community sharing the work and impact of The Arnold Foundation, Earle Fund and more.

"We are privileged to see firsthand the transformational effect of such bursaries on young people. The opportunity to work with charity partnerships nationwide in identifying children from disadvantaged backgrounds with academic talent and potential, with co-curricular and character strengths, and a genuine need to board is truly an honour.

We are so very grateful for all of the donations received to the School, be that for capital projects or supporting the bursary programme. This generosity really does change lives for now and generations to come."

It is a personal privilege for Tim to have served the transformational bursary mission not only as teacher, ambassador and donor, but also as Housemaster, Admissions Registrar and now as Development Director; the opportunity offered to him by the School is one that he was only too delighted to 'take in his arms and run with'.

If you would like to have a conversation with Tim and Natalie about how you can join us in transforming the lives of young people today, please do contact us via development@rugbyschool.net

Gareth Parker-Jones, Head Master

Rugby is a school of opportunity where special moments are commonplace. I was fortunate to witness one such moment in London recently. Twelve of our Arnold Foundation students had been invited by Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation, one of the organisations with whom we have strong connections, to meet their Patron, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal. Two Rugbeians confidently made their way to the front of the auditorium to hear Princess Anne speak and were rewarded by being the first people to whom Her Royal Highness spoke after concluding her presentation. Seeing our students engage with such enthusiasm and good humour in conversation with the Princess was an uplifting moment and one of which I think that all supporters of The Arnold Foundation can be very proud.

The UK's largest bursary charity, SpringBoard was originally inspired by The Arnold Foundation at Rugby, helping children from some of the UK's most deprived communities to attend leading boarding schools on full bursaries. Head Master at the time, Patrick Derham, and Chair of Governors, Robert Swannell, alongside many others, recognised that The Arnold Foundation was transforming lives at Rugby School and wanted to create a national organisation in order that similar bursary programmes could be established throughout the country for helping disadvantaged and vulnerable children who would benefit most from a boarding education. They widen access to the opportunities available in state boarding and independent schools for young people with care experience and those facing barriers to opportunity who have the most need. This collaborative working in long-term, committed school and community partnerships helps to make a lasting difference to social mobility and has helped to find places for nearly 1000 students in independent boarding schools throughout the country.

The Arnold Foundation continues to be the sector-leading boarding bursary programme and we are fast closing in on welcoming our 200th Arnold Foundationer. We continue to be ambitious for the Foundation and are determined to build our endowment so that we are able to support 40 students in perpetuity.

Each of the personal stories and experiences you will read about in this edition of The Arnold Foundation Review may have taken very different paths had it not been for the availability of our renowned bursary programme and the support of our donors in making this happen.

Thanks to the generosity of many Rugbeians and parents, we have taken significant strides towards that goal, but there is still much to do, and I am deeply grateful for any support you are able to continue to give to The Arnold Foundation. It is a programme which produces many special moments which amount collectively to lives transformed.

Thank you for your support.

50 YEARS OF GIRLS AT RUGBY SCHOOL

A Half-Century of Heritage

In 1823, William Webb Ellis showed a “fine disregard for the rules” and changed the world of sport for ever. In 1975, Rugby School showed a similar spirit of evolution by welcoming its first female students. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of this milestone, we reflect on how a bold experiment in the Sixth Form grew into the vibrant, fully co-educational community we see today and where “Whole Person, Whole Point” truly applies to everyone.

The journey began with a forward-thinking paper written by Jim Woodhouse (Head Master, 1967-1981) for the Governing Body and on Speech Day 1975, the historic announcement was made: Rugby would admit the daughters of masters and sisters of day boys into the Sixth Form. That September, three pioneers walked through the gates: Jill Ball (née Rogers) (Cr & St 75-77), the late Alison White (née Parker) (St 75-76), and the late Alison Welford (née Miller) (St 1975). While they were the only three that year, they were quickly followed by ten more in 1976, and by 1989, the presence of girls had become a fundamental part of school life, with 100 young women enrolled in the Sixth Form. Fast forward to today, and Rugby School has nearly 400 girls on the School roll, seven dedicated girls’ Houses, and 50 years of shared history. Academically, students enjoy a joint education with integration at the heart, and are respectful, supportive and encouraging of one another.

Throughout this year, we have celebrated 50 years of Girls at Rugby School by showcasing the talent and journeys of our wonderful staff and students in all they have achieved during their time with us. From Sport to Science, History and Chaplaincy, the opportunities Rugby School provides to all who attend and start their journey with us, truly are transformational.

We also enjoyed hosting an event at the prestigious Christie’s in London! Undeniably a success, the evening was a powerful testament to the transformative impact of co-education and the outstanding achievements of female students at Rugby School. More than 180 guests joined Head Master, Gareth Parker-Jones, in viewing an exhibition of work by Rugbeian artists and hearing the musical talent of the School’s choristers whose harmonies filled the venue, instantly establishing a sophisticated and reverent ambience for the proceedings.

The evening concluded with a thought-provoking and inspiring panel discussion with Rugbeians: Abisola Barber (St 08-10), Fleur Westaway (Ma + RB & S 00-06), Rachel Chudley (D 99-04), and Isabel Wolff (Cr 76-78) under the chairmanship of Sally Rosser (Staff 92-22). This was a very special occasion marking this milestone in Rugby’s history. The event provided a high-profile platform to honour these beginnings and the subsequent generations of female students who have contributed to the School’s evolution.

As Rugby School looks ahead, the success of the past five decades serves as both a proud legacy and a clear mandate: to continue fostering an environment where every girl is empowered to lead, innovate, and define her own remarkable future.

To hear more about our partnerships, please email us at development@rugbyschool.net

PARTNERSHIPS

A Shared Vision for Success: How Rugby School and Partners Are Changing Lives

A long line of children waits patiently and expectantly outside Bignold Hall, London E7. It is 8.50am on a Saturday morning, and the atmosphere is relaxed yet purposeful.

Soon enough, they are ushered in, greeted warmly, and the activities for the day begin with expressions of gratitude, an open discussion of current affairs – these young people are manifestly well-informed – and a setting out of the learning agenda for the day. These children are ambitious, and they are brimful of potential. I am privileged to be observing the routine work of Eastside Young Leaders' Academy, and what I witness is inspiring.

It is well-known that EYLA is one of our earliest partnerships, and as Assistant Housemaster in Whitelaw and Housemaster in Michell, I lived with many 'young leaders', but it is only by viewing the full context of the operations of this extraordinary mission in the East End of London that one understands fully the foundation whence some of our Arnold Foundationers have come.

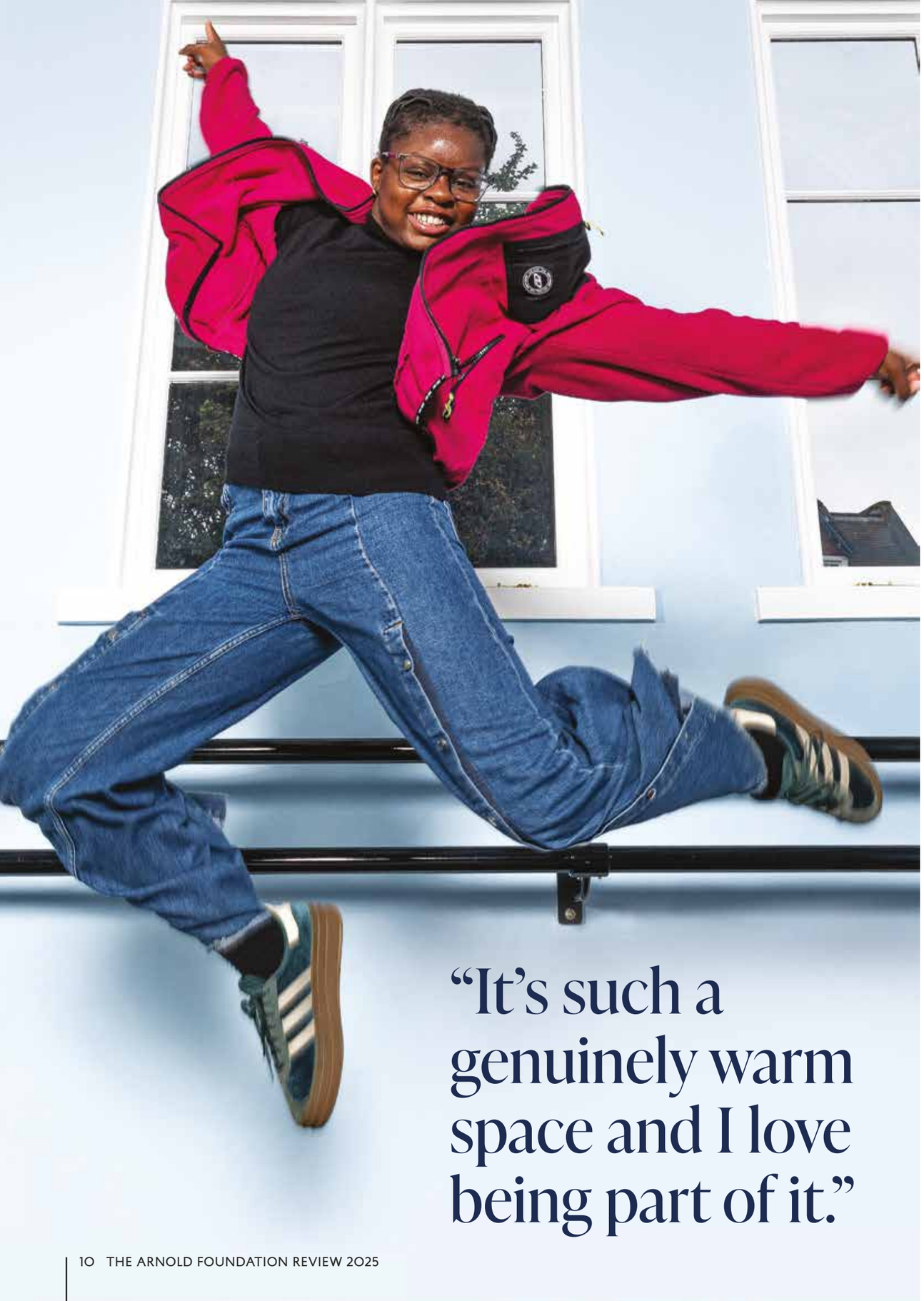
Ray Lewis, the founder, was a leader himself, an irresistible force, and his loss in 2024 was keenly felt. His legacy is apparent, however – these boys and girls address each other as leaders; they expect to lead, and they will. Every visit I have made to EYLA has opened my eyes further, and the enduring relationship between the organisation and Rugby School is one to be celebrated.

The Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation has become our preeminent partner, and EYLA and other long-standing partners now operate under their auspices with regard to accessing bursaries at independent senior schools. We have been delighted to maintain our strong partnership, with our Head Master now a member of the Advisory Board. One notes with humility that The Arnold Foundation is merely one component of a national picture of transformational support for children and families. Similarly, other partners such as IntoUniversity and the Hope Opportunity Trust liaise closely with SpringBoard.

There are other successful and long-standing pathways too, including from Wales via Ysgol Penrhyn Dewi in St Davids. Rugby School has been able to provide for the needs of a large number of gifted and talented young people from the west of Wales, whether via The Arnold Foundation or via other specific scholarship and bursary awards.

To be at the front end of The Arnold Foundation's relationship with our charity partners is an ongoing privilege and a pleasure for me, and I thank them for their invaluable work. We look forward to engaging our partners further during 2026 and beyond, as we plan our events in London and a visit to the North West to include a return to Holly Lodge with one of our alumnae, and liaison with other professionals and community partnerships in the area. It is our stated ambition to maintain and strengthen current relationships but also to explore new ones. These are exciting times!

Tim Day,
Director of Development & Alumni



“It’s such a genuinely warm space and I love being part of it.”

COVER STORY

Esther (D) came to Rugby School in 2023 via SieveMK, an organisation in Milton Keynes that provides access to higher education and scholarship support.

I loved Rugby at first sight on my visit and had no other school on my mind after that. The atmosphere was so nice and everyone was so kind. I was excited about becoming a boarder – I felt ready for it and I settled in quickly.

Dean is the best House for me as it’s so near to the Music, Drama and Dance departments. The number of opportunities in these areas was such a surprise. I learned drums at my previous school but at Rugby I play the piano too – and the euphonium! My favourite subjects are Music and Biology. I’m also doing Classical Civilisation, Geography and French. I plan to go into medicine because I like talking to people and helping them and the human body is fascinating – how it works and how it fixes itself.

The classes here are a lot smaller than at my previous school and I like the way we work in groups, can pick who we work with, and the amount of clinics and support. It’s great that we all have tutors we can talk to in our House if we are worried about exams or want to celebrate achievements or are feeling down. They, and the Houses, are a special part of Rugby.

Dance is still being pioneered at Rugby and is now a sport option. At the end of my first year, I suggested the idea of having a hip hop dance group and the Head of Dance was keen. So three of us started it and now there are about 10 in the group. The performing arts provision at Rugby is massively different from my previous school – there are so many options and we have so much fun at open mic nights and competitions. I regret not choosing to do Drama at GCSE but I have volunteered to direct a Scholar’s play next year.

I love being in the choir. There is a massive range of pieces we sing, not just hymns, and as part of my Rugby 360 I am on the ‘See it! Sing it!’ programme which teaches primary school children how to sing. It’s so rewarding to see how much they enjoy it and sweet to hear them.

I also love creative writing and producing stories, lyrics and poetry. I am a member of the Creative Writing Society and went on the Arvon writing trip – one of the best school trips. I’m certainly better at creative writing than producing an analytical essay!

My parents were worried that when I came to Rugby I might not keep up academically but I hope I have proved I can handle it when my mock GCSEs went well. I hate not being busy and need to have a full schedule!

The Arnold Foundation feels like a family to me. Mrs O’Mahoney comes to our Houses for lunch regularly to check up on us and just have a chat, and most of us are all friends with each other. It’s such a genuinely warm space and I love being part of it.

To learn more about how to support students like Esther, please scan here or visit rugbyschool.news/coverstory

PERSONAL STORIES

Matthew (SH) came to Rugby in 2023 for Year 9.

I was living in North London and going to a state school when my aunty suggested to my mother that I should apply for a bursary to attend Notting Hill Prep which is an independent school. I was successful and attended NHP for a couple of years. One of my teachers there advised me to apply for bursaries for senior education at an independent school – I did the test and interview for Rugby School and got a place via The Arnold Foundation.

I remember my first visit to Rugby with my dad and my aunty and being amazed at how big it was and how nice everyone was. The buildings and the statues and the Collingwood Centre were all amazing to me and the rooms were so modern and spacious.

I didn't know anything about boarding schools but I knew this was going to be a good school for me, with lots of opportunities and a good education.

I hadn't played rugby but I took it up, became a sports Scholar and have just got into Northampton Saints. The coaches have been so encouraging. My mum thinks it's too rough a sport but I love the game. I remember being amazed at the size of The Close and how soft the grass was!

I hadn't played an instrument before I came to Rugby but I took up the piano.

As an extra to school, I'm on the Movember Club committee and the 'Learn to Lead' programme and am a member of the Afro-Caribbean Society.

There is certainly a load of academic work but the curriculum is balanced and it's good to learn how to fit everything in to prepare for later life. I've just done my mock GCSEs and am determined to nail them so that I can concentrate on Maths, Economics and a Science and go to Oxbridge. I'd like a career in Business Management.

The tutor system here is excellent. It gives students a chance to talk to someone reliable about academic work, sport, music, anything. The opportunity to create connections with teachers is really important.

I am from Ethiopia which has deep roots in Christianity so Chapel is important to me. We go four times a week and I remember how astonished I was when I heard the choir for the first time.

I like meeting the other Arnold Foundation students for supper every term so that we can get to know each other and share our experiences. I like that our Head Master is so supportive of The Arnold Foundation – that's very uplifting and motivational for the AF students.

The Arnold Foundation is reliant on the generosity of our community in contining to support these transformational opportunities.

To join us and make a donation, scan the QR code above.

"The opportunity to create connections with teachers is really important."

Georgina (D) came to Rugby in 2021 and is in Year 13.

I had been at Godstowe, a girls' prep boarding school, for two years. There was a senior school convention at the end of the summer term with presentations from several independent schools. Rugby stood out for me because it was co-ed and because of The Arnold Foundation offer of 100% boarding bursaries.

I enjoy the balance between academic work and co-curricular activities. It's a busy life but I think this sets you up well for university and there is limited spare time so you grow to appreciate it.

The IB was not an option for me as there were too many subjects. I wanted to choose the subjects I enjoyed most so chose Maths, Economics and History and hope to go to university to take an Economics, Politics and History course.

The tutor system is really helpful. My tutor is like my personal therapist! She helps me to navigate the system and choose the best routes for me through all the opportunities there are here.

It's certainly hard to get out of sport at Rugby – I play basketball which is a bit rogue for me but there are so many sports on offer I thought I'd try something new. I love watching the performances in the Macready Theatre but I don't have any involvement in performing arts. I studied piano for two years but gave it up because I was so busy with my work and the societies I had joined – Hydra (History), Ostrom (Economics) and debating.

I really enjoy the collaborative nature of teaching here and the way the School encourages students to express their views. Hearing other people's opinions helps you to examine your own and to build better answers and see the bigger picture.

I enjoy helping primary school students who come here for after-school clubs as part of the Rugby 360 programme. I helped with maths for the last three years but now I'm teaching simple engineering.

Dean was a great choice of House for me. There are a lot of great people in my year. I have made good friends across the School, but the girls in my House are like sisters.

One of the best things about Rugby for me is the level of independence students have. It's the biggest thing I'll be taking away with me. Coming here has been a real turning point in my life and I've become a better and more organised version of myself.

One of the things I am going to miss most is Chapel. It's such a positive start to the day.

In my previous school, being a bursary student was something you kept to yourself. Here, being an Arnold Foundation student gives you confidence and you feel like it's a family.

"One of the best things about Rugby for me is the level of independence students have."

Mollie Winder (St 19–21) came to Rugby for Sixth Form via the Hope Opportunity Trust having previously attended Holly Lodge Girls' College, Liverpool.

I studied Geography, Politics and English Literature at Rugby and then went to the University of Manchester to study Geography (a four-year course including a one-year job placement), where I achieved a 2:1, including a First on my dissertation.

The Head Teacher at Holly Lodge was a Geography teacher but the school didn't offer Geography A level as not enough students wanted to take it. He urged me to take up The Arnold Foundation offer to go to Rugby and I am very grateful to him for his encouragement.

I felt very blessed to join a school with its own fully formed bursary programme. It felt ingrained within Rugby's identity and I'm pleased that The Arnold Foundation continues to work with Holly Lodge in sharing these opportunities.

Since graduating in July 2025, I have become an Assistant Planning Officer within the policy team at a local authority in Greater Manchester whilst also studying for a Masters degree through a graduate scheme called Pathways to Planning. It's a fully-funded Government scheme because we don't have enough planners in this country and is very competitive. I went through four or five rounds of interviews, assessment centres and online situational tests. I fit the studying in before and after my day at work. Fortunately, Rugby was very helpful in teaching me time management. By the time I finish the Masters I will have been at Manchester University for six years!

I was 16 when I arrived at Rugby to Stanley House and I had no confidence. I was awkward, and worried that my Liverpool accent might hinder me, but I received support from The Arnold Foundation and tutors who were all lovely. Without it, I could easily have floundered. I was encouraged to 'stand strong' and learned how to carry myself. I mastered public speaking and the confidence I gained helped with all the interviews and presentations I have done since I left school.

I was quite political at Rugby and I still am. I always wanted to work in a political landscape. Politics impacts on how I do my job every day as we look for funding to improve social housing and schools and build recreation centres. I could have gone into the private sector but it wasn't right for me.

Stanley House was a very supportive environment. Most of my friendships came from here. Rugby changed me in a very positive way. I have been very lucky.

Emma Hardie (née East) (St 06–08).

I knew when I stepped off the train, aged 16, on my way to be interviewed by Rugby's Head Master, that this was my chance to start a new life. He knew about my difficult childhood but I felt I had to do a good job in selling myself. It was an opportunity I was desperate to be given.

I was brought up in a tiny, one-bedroom flat in central London. My mum was a catering manager and often worked evenings. My father suffered with alcoholism and our relationship was volatile at times. Between the ages of 10 and 15, we had multiple visits from Social Services that culminated in me entering into an informal fostering arrangement with a teacher.

I had always been bright and inquisitive and managed to pass my GCSEs but lessons were constantly interrupted by rowdy students and I was not making the progress I should have been. Due to my living situation, I was likely going to be homeless at 16 and have to leave education. Stephanie, my foster carer, and a woman in Westminster Council's education department, tried to find an alternative school for me that would change my living situation too, and they discovered The Arnold Foundation.

In 2006 I arrived at Stanley House. One of my good friends, Nina, and I met on our first day at Rugby School and within minutes decided to share a room. She is now the godmother of my 15-year-old daughter. I made friends for life in my boarding house. Some students felt uncomfortable sharing that they were Foundation or scholarship recipients, but it has always been something I am very proud to tell people.

I guess some kids would have been daunted but I can only remember being very excited. I was starting a new life. Stanley House felt like a home: warm and cosy and surrounded by many girls my age. I took A levels in English Language, Politics, Theatre Studies and Photography and received top marks.

I started a BA in Linguistics at UCL when both my parents became seriously ill. We were reconciled by then and I was living back home, but tragically my mum passed away within a few weeks of me starting and I decided to postpone university to care for my dad.

Initially I worked in film as a film extra, moving on to body doubling and stunt work. Eventually settling down and working in a school, I now work as a Youth Programmes Delivery Manager at Said Business School, University of Oxford, and am also studying for a BA in English Literature and Creative Writing with the Open University, now in my final year. I am married with three daughters.

The Arnold Foundation is a fantastic programme. I was lucky that it recognised my interest in learning and gave me a home in which I felt safe and confident. I knew if I worked hard, there was no reason I couldn't have a great future.

Colette O'Mahoney, Lead for The Arnold Foundation students at Rugby School.

I have been both proud and excited to move to a new bespoke post created at Rugby this academic year to focus uniquely on the care, strength and growth of The Arnold Foundation.

I started working at Rugby School – teaching French and Spanish – in 1993, the year the School became co-educational in the F Block. Within the boarding context, I gravitated naturally towards pastoral work, becoming Assistant Housemistress in Dean House and then in Stanley before becoming Housemistress of Rupert Brooke, a position which I enjoyed for 14 years.

I became the Senior Tutor for The Arnold Foundation students in 2016. The job comprised being on the panel that interviewed prospective students and, once they had joined, overseeing their all-round care, both academic and pastoral, for the duration of their time at Rugby.

The human dynamic of establishing The Arnold Foundation at Rugby was very important: interviewing the students; getting to know their individual situations; meeting their parents; keeping in touch with them during their time at Rugby, and afterwards. This remains part of The Arnold Foundation's approach.

The first cohort of students was only three; this year there are 28 and all our (13) boarding Houses have at least one Arnold Foundation student. We have a New Students' Day at the end of June for the next year's cohort, at the end of which the Head Master hosts an informal gathering for new Arnold Foundation students and their families in School House garden. He makes it clear that the students have earned their places and that the School is a better place for them being there. It is a moving occasion and aims to set the tone for a fruitful time in the School.

They are all, of course, different, and so are their circumstances. Some of them have come from urban schools with a high incidence of violence; some have challenging family situations; some come from rural areas where Sixth Form provision is patchy, or they attend secondary schools with a limited provision of subjects post-GCSE. Likewise, they come via different routes. Partner organisations remain vital, but some families learn about The Arnold Foundation from other families; some potential students find out about it from former or current students via social media and make their own applications.

During the year I am in communication with the students' families about all aspects of School life which can range from practical things such as buying uniform and sports kit, which the School supplies, to how the students are settling in and how they are getting on academically. It's important that the students feel safe and happy so I work closely with the House, academic staff and our Deputy Head Pastoral, and make sure I meet every student at least twice a term.

The creation of this new role bears witness to Rugby's commitment to The Arnold Foundation, and to our desire to continue to seek to grow our numbers and enrich our community in doing so.

The Arnold Foundation students have supper together once a term which is a lovely and energising occasion as they talk about their experiences and achievements, and building friendships which endure beyond their time at Rugby.

"The Head Master makes it clear that the students have earned their places."

The Arnold Foundation – A Perspective from Lucinda Holmes

The Arnold Foundation is at the heart and soul of Rugby School. It was launched in 2003 on the very principles that the School was founded on some 436 years earlier – namely, the right to a good education available to all.

I started my Rugby School life in 1978. Not quite the first cohort of girls but still just a scattering in the LXX. I had come from an all girls' day school, and my parents had let me decide where to apply for from a carefully curated list of three of the traditional great public schools.

Aged 16, Rugby School was truly amazing to me in every way. Its history, the buildings and the opportunities, both academic and co-curricular, would have been unimaginable in my previous school. But what struck me most then – and still inspires me now – were the people. Rugbeians are welcoming, friendly and unpretentious.

Forty-eight years later I can call myself an old (very!) Rugbeian, a past parent, a retired Governor, a former Chairman (2014 – 2020), and a retired Trustee of The Arnold Foundation. All of those roles have brought pride and, almost always, pleasure, and I have formed deep and lasting friendships in each of those positions – some of which have endured across them all.

When we chose Rugby School for our four children, The Arnold Foundation and its ethos and importance within the School played a major part in our decision making. It comes back to the people and their collective sense of community, unpretentiousness and inclusiveness.

I am very proud of the impact that The Arnold Foundation has had, not only on the School but also on the individual recipients of the bursaries (now numbering more than 185), and the ripple effect that many of them have had within their own communities. Nothing worth doing is ever entirely plain sailing but the efforts put in by the whole Rugbeian community have been both immense and heart-warming, and I'm so delighted to see that The Arnold Foundation is thriving.

This is now particularly important as the entire education sector is buffeted by political and economic headwinds, and in a world where privilege is often seen as a badge of dishonour. Community, inclusivity and diversity are such an important part of today's values, and these things are already deeply embedded in the Rugbeian ethos and the education provided to our students.

Great care is taken in the selection of Arnold Foundation students, and then in nurturing them throughout their school careers. Rugby works with partner organisations across the country and seeks out students who will benefit from everything that a boarding school education can give them. Their bursary awards cover everything they need to thrive in the School community, and there are dedicated pastoral tutors and mentors to ensure that they are settled and happy in the School community.

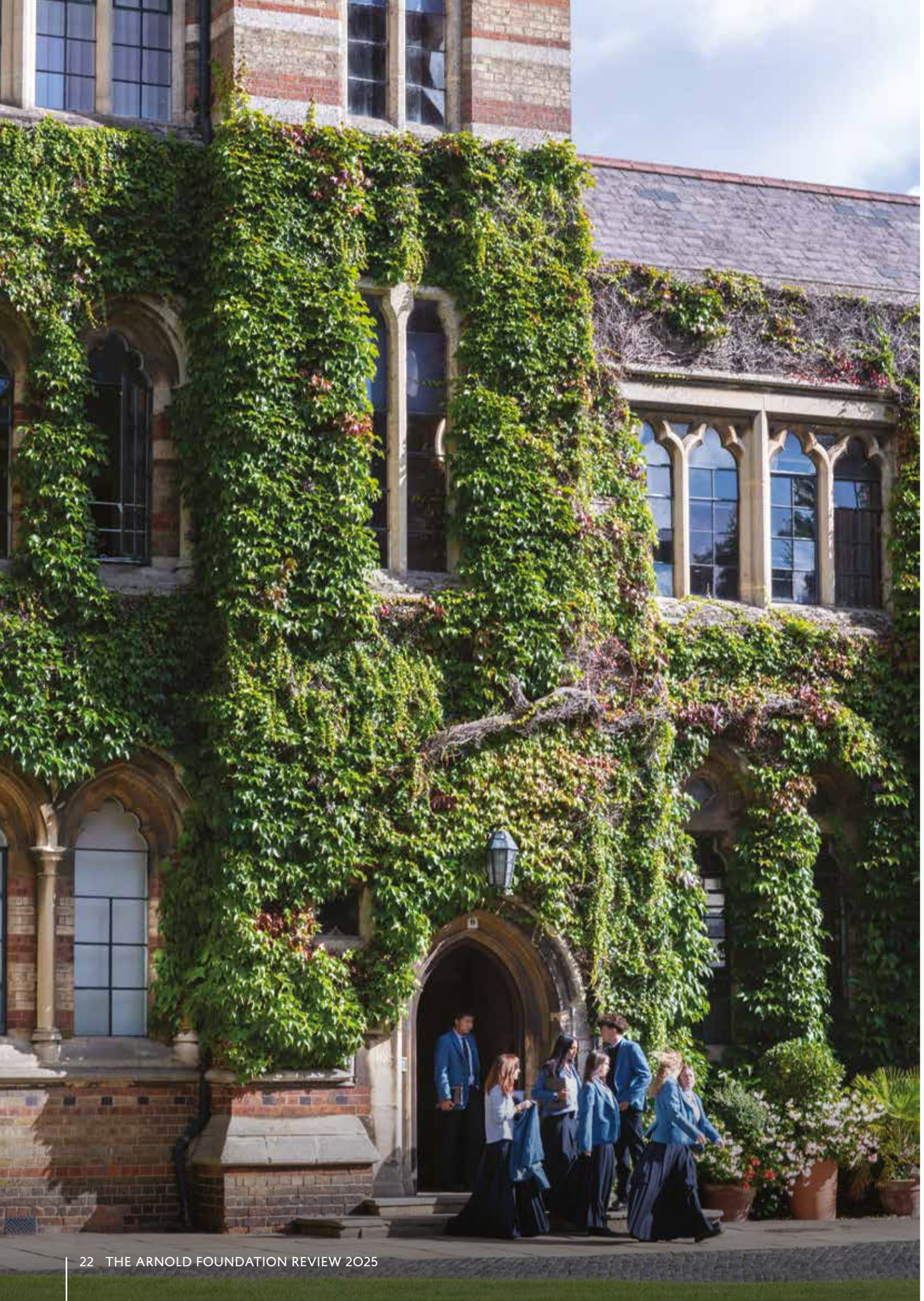
The Arnold Foundation has been groundbreaking in its impact, and many other schools have modelled their own bursary programmes on its proven success.

Determined to spread its ethos beyond Rugby School, the Governing Body partnered with McKinsey, resulting in Springboard (now Royal National SpringBoard Foundation) being created with other partner schools in 2012, with the mission of widening access to the opportunities available in state as well as independent boarding schools to a great education.

The greatest testament to the work of The Arnold Foundation comes from the students themselves. They come back to the School, they mentor current students and they speak very openly about the positive impact that their education has had on their lives.

So, wearing any of my various Rugbeian hats, I am very proud of Rugby School and the way it has developed its 16th-century foundations into a school open and inclusive to all, and offering a whole person education.

"I'm very proud of the impact The Arnold Foundation has had."



CLASS OF 2026 GIFT

The 'Class of' Gift Campaign continues to be a tremendous success, raising funds to support future generations of students attending Rugby School. This remarkable achievement is a testament to the generosity and support of the Rugby School community, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to the many families who, as part of this campaign, choose to donate their deposits to The Arnold Foundation.

Your kindness is helping to transform lives by enabling talented students to benefit from a Rugby School education, regardless of their financial background. We are particularly grateful to those families who choose to go above and beyond, providing an additional level of support to the campaign.

Previously, contributions have made it possible to fund a full Sixth Form place for an Arnold Foundation student. This incredible gift ensures that deserving young people will have the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of your children and experience the exceptional education, character-building opportunities, and lifelong connections that Rugby School offers.

The Arnold Foundation plays a critical role in advancing social mobility, and the generosity shown by the former parents and families exemplifies the spirit of giving. Together, we are making a lasting impact on the lives of bright, motivated students, opening doors to a brighter future. Thank you once again for your commitment and support in making this possible.

Building on the momentum of last year's leavers' gifts, we invite you to join a cherished tradition, a final collective act of the parent body to mark this milestone by donating your school deposit to The Arnold Foundation. We have established a 'Class of 2026 Gift' fund allowing contributions to The Earle Fund and The Arnold Foundation to be passed on to a new generation of students who join us in September. We are delighted to accept a gift of any amount and aim to raise another £100,000 from the Class of 2026, which will fully fund an Earle Fund and Arnold Foundation student otherwise unable to experience a boarding education.

Thank you for joining us on this meaningful mission.

Scan here for more information and to donate to The Arnold Foundation.

BILTON GRANGE

Earle Fund 2025

For more than 150 years, Bilton Grange has kept the spirit of boarding at its core, evolving with confidence as society has changed. Since joining the Rugby School Group in 2020, a time when prep school boarding was declining overall, that spirit has remained as strong as ever. We have recognised that schools which deliver it exceptionally well will continue to attract families. And instead of seeing the decline, we have seen an opportunity – a chance to reimagine what boarding can and should provide in the modern era. Because for boarding to flourish, schools cannot remain passive; we have to commit to it wholeheartedly and without hesitation.

That is why we have created Earle House, a prep boarding facility unlike any other. Separate from the main building it feels like a home – warm, characterful and far from anything institutional or bolted-on. Earle House provides both calmness and joy. Its open, light-filled spaces and the infamous slides remind everyone that fun and learning work best when they go hand in hand.

Most importantly, the culture has blossomed. Successful boarding is built on successful relationships and our wonderful Houseparents have quickly established routines and created a warm and compassionate atmosphere. Earle House is also helping to reshape the wider School too. The overall flow of daily life feels more dynamic and integrated: areas that were once quiet now buzz with energy, while places previously hectic have become more serene.

At a time when technology permeates every moment of a child's life, boarding offers something increasingly rare: a pause. It gives children space to be present, to build friendships face-to-face and to rediscover the simple pleasures of play, collaboration and shared responsibility.

And this is why we have worked so hard to promote boarding generally, and the Earle Fund in particular, for the impact it can have on young people's lives.

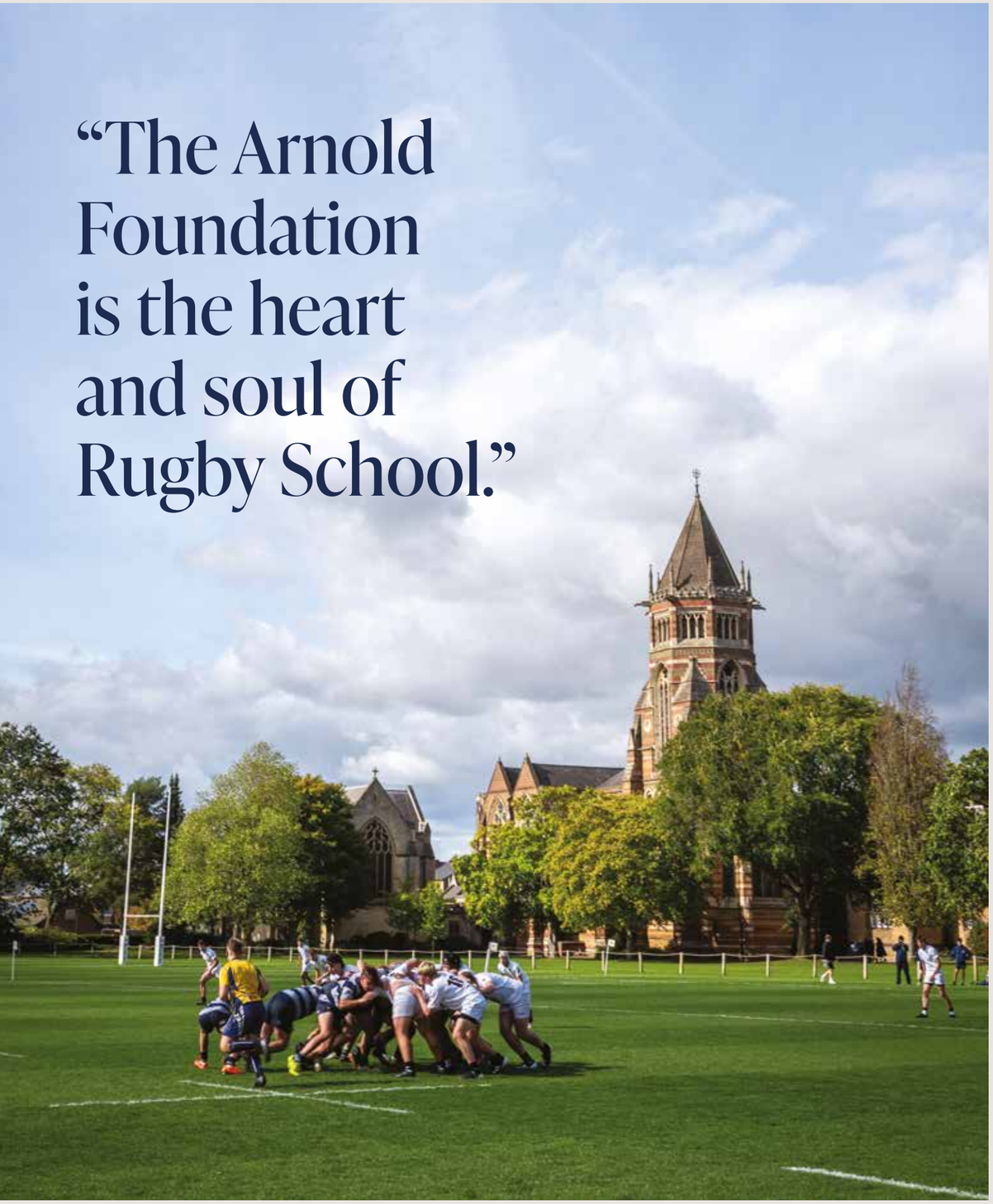
We officially opened Earle House on Friday 17 October 2025 and on this day we welcomed back many former boarders who had not seen the School for some years. They were amazed at the positive developments. Then, on Tuesday 18 November, we held a special concert and dinner to celebrate both the performing arts and boarding at Bilton Grange.

Our Advent Concert was re-branded 'An Evening with Gilbert & Sullivan' and featured Old Biltonians singing and playing alongside current pupils. So many of our alumni mention their memories of performing in G&S productions that we felt we had to honour the tradition and what better way to do it than in the newly opened Earle House.

Through both the building and the concert BG has shown it embraces the traditions of the past but delivers them in a way that is fitting for both now and the future. We believe in boarding and the confidence-building benefits it has for young people. And we believe in the performing arts too, and why the ability of young people to express themselves creatively is so important. So we will continue to uphold the virtues of a traditional education while mixing it with forward-thinking ideas that support and inspire our children to be confident and independent as they step towards the future. And if we can extend that to children through the Earle Fund, then so much the better!

Gareth Jones,
Head, Bilton Grange

Scan here for more information and to donate to the Earle Fund.



"The Arnold Foundation is the heart and soul of Rugby School."

RECOGNISING YOUR GENEROSITY

Societies

Significant contributions to The Arnold Foundation are recognised through our Giving Societies. Named after significant donors or members of staff throughout the years at the School, we are delighted to share with you the details of how you can join.

The James Society recognises those who have given more than £10,000 to The Arnold Foundation or Rugby School.

The Tait Society recognises those who have given more than £25,000 to The Arnold Foundation or Rugby School.

The Percival Society recognises those who have given more than £50,000 to The Arnold Foundation or Rugby School.

1567 Society

We are proud to launch our 1567 Society. Many members of the Rugby School community often ask how they can get involved in reaching our vision of having 40 Arnold Foundation students on the School roll in perpetuity but may not have the funds to make a large donation in one go. This has led to our creation of the '1567 Society', named after the year of the School's founding by Lawrence Sheriff.

When you join the 1567 Society you may opt to donate, on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis, £15.67, or £156.70, or £1567, or as much as you wish. A £15.67 monthly donation would accrue £940.20 over five years. If one includes Gift Aid, this figure would rise to £1175.25. And if 100 people joined our 1567 Society, this could become £117,525.

Membership of the 1567 Society means joining other members of our Rugby School community to widen access to a Rugby School education, ensuring that the boarding experience is available to all talented students.

To start your donation today, please visit **rugbeiancommunity.com/pages/1567-society**

Legacies

In 1567 Lawrence Sheriff took the first steps towards creating history. He left a bequest in his Will to establish a school to educate the boys of Rugby and Brownsover. That is how Rugby School began, with a gift of £50 and an orchard in Bloomsbury. 450 years on, the orchard is now a charming and independent-spirited area of London centred on Lamb's Conduit Street, known and managed as the Rugby Estate. Lawrence Sheriff's original investment continues to generate income which is used to fund bursaries at Rugby School for day students.

Today, your legacy gift can have a lasting impact on future generations at Bilton Grange or Rugby School by helping to build a new endowment for The Arnold Foundation and the Earle Fund to provide bursaries for boarding students at Rugby School and Bilton Grange.

Chudé Chidi-Ofong (Sh 85-90) is the President of the Charles Shorto Society which now has over 440 members who have pledged a gift in their Will. The Society embodies a shared commitment to shaping the future of Rugby School and its students. Since the establishment of The Arnold Foundation, legacies have contributed over £4 million to providing opportunities and support that leave an enduring impact. In recognition of this generosity, we installed a plaque on The Close, bearing the names of those who have pledged or left a gift in their Will. These 'Legacy Trees' stand as a lasting tribute to the vision and kindness of our supporters.

The impact of these gifts, small or large, cannot be understated, as the annual income provides surety to the programme throughout, meaning we can continue to be ambitious in our recruitment targets for the life-changing boarding bursaries that The Arnold Foundation provides.

For further information, please contact Tim Day or Natalie Pretsell at development@rugbyschool.net, call 01788 556139 or scan here.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

There are various ways in which you can support the mission of Rugby School. The work of The Arnold Foundation and Earle Fund is funded solely through charitable donations. Access to the exceptional educational experience at Rugby School and Bilton Grange is only made possible because of the contributions made by members of our community in personal gifts, pledges, legacies, and grants.

It's easier than ever to make a gift online! Simply go to our website to set up a direct debit or make a one-off gift at **rugbyschool.news/Gift**

Include a gift in your Will to Rugby School or Bilton Grange – even 1% of your estate can be a significant gift and it is tax free too. Contact Tim Day or Natalie Pretsell for more information: **development@rugbyschool.net**

Become a fundraiser! If you want to take on a sponsored challenge to raise funds for The Arnold Foundation or The Earle Fund, head to our listing on the JustGiving website

Send a cheque made out to The Arnold Foundation for Rugby School to the address on the back of this brochure

Make a gift from the USA – tax receipts are available for gifts made via **www.BSUF.org**

To discuss other ways of making your own contribution or joining one of our giving societies, please contact Tim Day or Natalie Pretsell at **development@rugbyschool.net**

The Earle Fund is an integral part of The Arnold Foundation and shares the same UK charity registration number, 1095856.

FUNDRAISING

446 legacy pledges

191 students benefitted to date

30 current Arnold Foundation and Earle Fund students

28 Arnold Foundation members of Levée

8 Arnold Foundation Heads of House

£30.8m income for the Arnold Foundation since 2003

£17.4m endowment fund

3758 donors

2425 contacted for our Telethon in 2025

THANK YOU

Forging futures at Rugby School

On behalf of the entire community at Rugby School and the beneficiaries of The Arnold Foundation, we extend our deepest gratitude for your profound generosity.

Your commitment to The Arnold Foundation is a testament to a shared belief in the transformative power of education, and your donations are far more than financial contributions – they are investments in human potential and the future leadership of generations to come.

The Arnold Foundation, named in honour of Rugby's most revered Head Master, Thomas Arnold, was established to uphold and amplify the School's intrinsic ethos of widening access. This sector-leading programme ensures that talented, deserving young people, who would otherwise be unable to consider a boarding school education, are given a truly life-changing opportunity. Thanks to your support, these students gain a fully-funded place at Rugby School, enriching our halls not just with their presence, but with their diverse perspectives, academic ability, and vibrant energy. Over 180 young people have already benefitted from this experience, and every single one of those lives has been touched, expanded, and fundamentally improved because of our donors.

The impact of your donation ripples far beyond the time a student spends within our historic grounds. You are not just funding a school place; you are cultivating future generations of confident, well-rounded leaders. Students who have benefited from the Foundation consistently demonstrate raised aspirations, improved academic outcomes, and a newfound sense of confidence and independence. They seize the wide-ranging co-curricular and sporting opportunities on offer, develop enhanced social and leadership skills, and leave Rugby prepared to thrive at top universities across the globe and embark on substantial careers. These students go on to become powerful role models, carrying the spirit of opportunity and hard work back into their families and home communities, creating a virtuous circle of positive change. As one parent noted, their child "flourished and became a very confident and full young man," a life-affirming experience made possible by your kindness.

Your continued support is essential to ensuring this vital work endures. We are deeply grateful for your partnership in breaking down financial barriers and creating a more inclusive and dynamic community at Rugby School. By focusing on people, not just buildings, you are helping to build a powerful endowment that will secure this opportunity for generations to come, allowing the legacy of The Arnold Foundation to impact lives well into the next century. Every donation, regardless of size, plays a crucial role in enabling a young person to realise their maximum potential. Thank you for making this vision a reality.

Tim Day and Natalie Pretsell, Development & Alumni Office