

THE DRAXONIAN

WINTER
EDITION
2021/2022

95TH
ANNIVERSARY

Welcome President of the Draxonians Association



President's Welcome

On December 5th we were delighted to finally host the Draxonians' Winter Reunion and AGM after two very long and strange years, and it's fair to say that the event came back strong, hosting just shy of 50 attendees for the lunch. Alongside the catch ups, and great company of old friends, we were able to enjoy a beautiful 3 course lunch prepared by Wilson Vale - the school caterers - in the recently decorated school dining hall. An event like this should never be without a beverage or two though, so I would like to thank Ellie McClaren (Committee member) and her business The Escapologist for providing the bar staff to ensure the smooth running of the Bar throughout the afternoon, and to Brian Watt (Chair of Governors) for generously providing all the table wine at the lunch. Prior to the Church Service, a number of Draxonians joined us to visit the recently

reacquired Drax Primary School site. It was great to see the building in good order and to hear about the plans to move Kids Corner onto this site and free up space for the ever-growing pupil numbers at Read!

At the lunch we were lucky enough to hear from Mark Atkins who has been 'residing in the school' (just about) while he and his team have been working very hard on the front field project. Mark's presentation gave us a good understanding of the deep problems the front field had with the chafer grub and the quick reactions and timings that were actioned to get the revival of the front field underway. This would not have been possible without the generous support of many Draxonians, who collectively have managed to raise £21,000. This is an incredible achievement and especially because this level of funding ensures that the drainage, which had been tentatively planned as a phase two project, has been able to go ahead at the same time as the ground works and levelling saving a lot of money in the long run.

I'm also delighted to announce that we have appointed Beccy Suddes as Draxonian Administrator. Beccy already works in the school part time, is Treasurer to the PFA and has two children currently at Read. She knows the school from the ground up and her involvement and experience she brings from the PFA will be a huge benefit to the Draxonians' in our joint efforts in supporting the school. I don't quite know how Beccy did it, but she pulled together the organisation of the Reunion Lunch having only just taken the role on two weeks prior! Thank you Beccy for all your hard work here, and for picking up the ropes very quickly.

As for the Draxonians' Association, I believe we have exciting year(s) ahead! Not only will we hold the annual Peter Watt Memorial Cricket Match (1st July for the diaries!) and again the

Winter Reunion, but we are in the planning phase of organising a wider and more diverse range of events. This will be no mean feat, but with a larger committee and lots of input and ideas from different cohorts alongside the growing support from our members, I'm sure we will make these events a great success.

Nicola Mooney
President



Head's Report 2021 Dear Draxonians,

It was fantastic to see so many at the Draxonians' Winter Reunion lunch this week and to be able to again host this important annual event in school. In view of what we have battled through over the past two years, it was particularly memorable.

In my after-dinner Head's report, I reflected on the impact the pandemic has had on the School and not least our enforced foray into online learning which continues to serve as a valuable resource for pupils in and out of school. Being able to log into a 'live' lesson from home, download teaching resources or upload homework to the Google Classroom is certainly a quantum leap from traditional teaching and learning and is one example of how the School was able to respond constructively to the many challenges of the Covid pandemic.

So many things hitherto unheard of are now part of day-to-day routines in school: face coverings (now again required for corridors and communal areas), parents evenings on line, remote learning summaries and not forgetting the dreaded LFT test! As has been the case at so many times during Read's long history, we have simply adapted and got on with it. However, as we continue to navigate rising cases in the local and school community and the continuously changing DFE guidance, it does still feel that we are in the eye of the storm and that certainly served to make the December reunion all the more poignant.

I would like to congratulate Nicola on her historic appointment as the Association's first female President and this certainly presents a good opportunity to attract younger members and re-address the current gender imbalance in membership. Supported by Mike Dunne, Vice President, new DA Administrator, Beccy Suddes and the rest of the committee, I believe we have a veritable 'dream team' and this bodes very well for the continued reinvigoration of the society.

The Draxonian

Head of School

Head's Report

The dinner also provided the opportunity to thank David Ward for the tireless commitment he has shown to the School and to the Draxonians Association throughout the ten years of his presidency. As David prepares to celebrate his 90th birthday this week, he more than deserves to be able to pass the baton to a successor and we owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude, for his hard work in keeping the Association going. The past three years have already provided the opportunity for increased Draxonian connectivity through events such as the Peter Watt Memorial Cricket Match which has now become a firm pre- Commemoration Day fixture as well as a couple of lively lunches at Selby RUFC. The PFA Winter Ball, which will be held on December 18th at the impressive venue of Carlton Towers, has a current guest list of 220, including a good many past pupils and parents, as well as current Sixth Formers and members of the Read School community. What an opportunity this represents to fuse the past, the present and the future and I believe that it should be with great optimism that we embark on the next chapter in the long history of the Draxonians Association.

“Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose” (the more things change, the more things stay the same) is a phrase I believe sums up where we are at the end of another tumultuous year. Despite the seismic changes we have seen in the integration of technology in the classroom and the myriad of Covid adaptations in school, the essence of the School remains the same:

Read School remains as committed to its mission of providing a first-class ‘all round’ education as it was in 1967 when the governors were forced to pursue the route of independence as an alternative to closing the school. With the pupil roll now standing at 240 (an increase of 44% since 2018) and continuing to grow, we are now turning our attention to growing boarding and

again attracting international pupils back to Read. An increasing number of pupils can point to a family connection with the School and how wonderful to have pupils join the School, whose older siblings, uncles or grandfathers came here before them!

A quote from a 1928 Draxonian magazine for me summarises what a Read education is all about. ‘The aim of the School ..is to give a thoroughly sound and practical education of an all-round nature. The work of the School is not subservient to the mere passing of examinations’ (E Watkins, Read School Headmaster 1917-1934).

So while results in public examinations are one measure of success and indeed this year’s GCSE and A-level results were again outstanding, the School still aims to give our pupils a lot more than just grades: Sport, CCF, Music, Drama, Creative Arts and the Duke of Edinburgh programme continue to thrive at Read School and the ‘invisible suitcase’ of life experiences and lessons that cannot be learned from a text book accompanies every Read School leaver as they walk out of the door just as much as it ever did! Last year the School opened a new Leiths Food & Wine academy and Mandarin Chinese has now been added to the impressive list of languages taught in school. Computer Science sits alongside Latin as a GCSE option while in the Sixth Form our traditional A-level programme has been diversified to include vocational B-Tech qualifications.

To fully appreciate the vibrancy of Read School daily life it has to be witnessed first-hand and I would like to warmly invite all Draxonians to come and visit us in school at some point during the coming year. A tour of Read School, led by one of our fine Sixth Form students, is a real treat and whether it is the lively lessons, engagement of teaching staff who eagerly chat with visitors or the politeness of pupils who

still observe the courtesy of standing up when an adult enters the room, it is very impressive.

Keeping Draxonians connected with the School as it is today, as well as nurturing the connections and memories of the past is, for me, the essence of the work of the Association and I personally aim to step up communication with the DA community in the coming year. This will include sending all Draxonian Association members a copy of the School’s weekly newsletter and encouraging further attendance at our many events in school. A reminder of the School’s social media links is below and do follow us to see the vibrant array of academic, sports and enrichment activities taking place on a daily basis in school. We are extremely proud of our pupils and everything they accomplish on a daily basis, inside and outside the classroom as well as the manner in which they do it and I think you will be too!

‘Every day is a school day’ and this year the overriding lesson has been the value of being part of a great team: including pupils, staff, governors, parents as well as Draxonians and friends of the School. Much has been accomplished in the past months with the return of Drax Primary School, a refurbished school library and boarders’ common room, a new ceiling in Moloney Hall and the latest exciting and ambitious venture: the renovation and restoration to its former glory of the front playing fields. A fitting final toast at the dinner was therefore to ‘Team Read’ and to all who have contributed to these milestone projects which will set the school up for many years to come.

Wishing all Draxonians a happy and healthy festive season and let us count our blessings for our small school with its rich history and the anchorage and inspiration it offers us all. Please come and visit soon!

Best wishes,



Ruth Ainley
Head

Follow Read School on:
School website: www.readschool.co.uk

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/ReadSchool

Instagram:
www.instagram.com/read_school1667/

Twitter: @Read_School

The Draxonian

The Draxonian

Drax Primary School



The Draxonian

The Draxonian

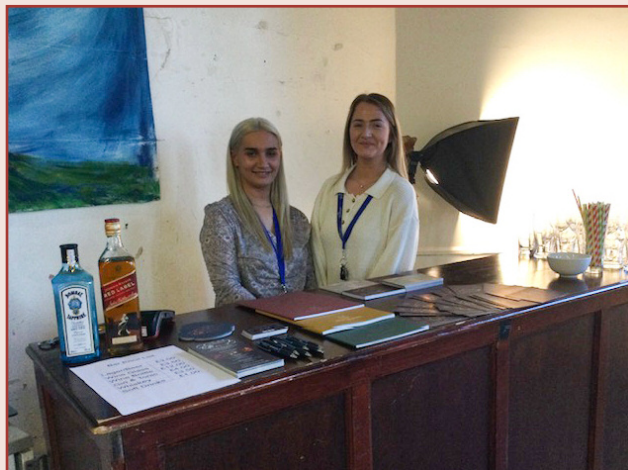
St Peter and St Paul Service



The Draxonian

The Draxonian

Annual General Meeting



The Draxonian

The Draxonian

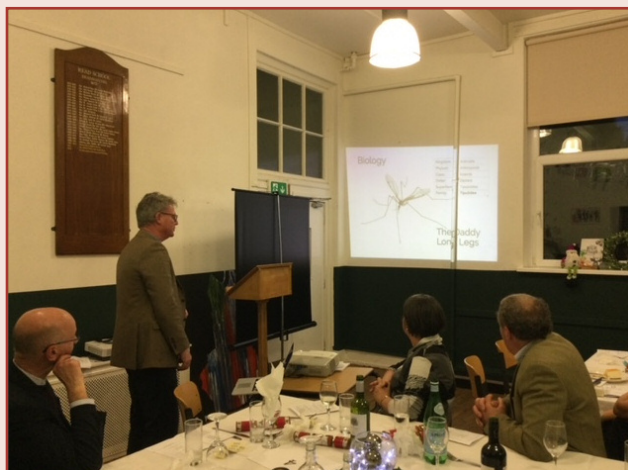
Winter Reunion Luncheon



The Draxonian

The Draxonian

Speakers and Guests



The Draxonian

Ten Acre Field

Grading/Levelling



The Draxonian

Ten Acre Field

After The Big Day



The Draxonian

Ten Acre Field

D Day - The Main Drain



The Draxonian



THE DRAXONIANS

A S S O C I A T I O N

REVIVED 1926

Drax, Selby, North Yorkshire, YO8 8NL, UK.

Telephone: 01757 618248 | Email: odaadmin@readschool.co.uk
www.readschool.co.uk