

## Welcome!

We are excited to launch the very first edition of our school newsletter written by a dedicated team of students for the enjoyment of fellow students as well as families and friends of the school.

*The Blue Coat Times* is our new space to celebrate achievements, share important updates, and highlight the creativity and spirit of our community.

This newsletter is more than just information—it's a reflection of our school's vibrant life. We hope it inspires you, keeps you connected, and gives everyone a chance to shine. If you have great news to share, why not contact our fantastic team via Ms Fitzgerald (Geography Department) and get your name in the newsletter?

We're always on the lookout for fresh talent!

Thank you for being part of this journey. Here's to many more editions filled with stories worth sharing!

Georgia M, Connor R and team

In this edition we include:

- Book review
- House Captains interviews
- Festive recipe
- Trips Update

And plenty more!

***#Proud To Be Blue Coat***



A beautiful illustration of Vinnie, TBCS therapy dog by Ella Year 7.

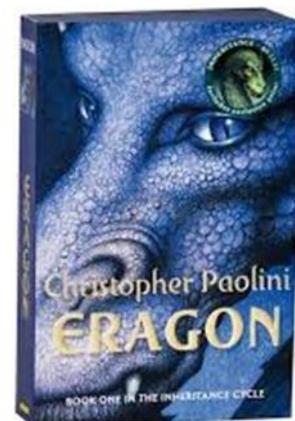
## Book Review: Eragon by Christopher Paolini

### Suitable For what Ages?

Eragon, the first book in the Inheritance Cycle by Christopher Paolini, is a captivating fantasy novel suitable for young adults and above. It is recommended for readers aged twelve and up, due to its complex themes, elements of fantasy and intricate storylines. However, enthusiastic readers slightly younger who enjoy epic adventures might also find it engaging, provided they have a proficient reading comprehension level.

### Description

Eragon introduces readers to a richly detailed fantasy world where dragons and magic intertwine with the fate of a young farm boy named Eragon. Set in the land of Alagaësia, the story begins when Eragon discovers a mysterious blue stone that turns out to be a dragon egg. This discovery thrusts him into a world of destiny, danger, and the realization of his own potential as a Dragon Rider.



The novel explores Eragon's journey as he learns about his newfound powers and responsibilities. Guided by his dragon, Saphira, and his mentor Brom, Eragon faces the tyrannical rule of King Galbatorix and the dark forces that threaten to destroy everything he holds dear. The book is filled with thrilling battles, mystical creatures, and a deep dive into the lore of Alagaësia, making it a gripping read for fans of epic fantasy.

Paolini's world-building is commendable, bringing to life a universe filled with rich history, diverse cultures, and a complex political landscape. The narrative is woven with themes of friendship, courage, and the classic battle between good and evil, resonating with readers who enjoy stories of personal growth and heroism.

### Rating

Out of ten, I would rate Eragon an eight. Its engaging plot, imaginative setting, and relatable protagonist make it a compelling read. While some may argue that it follows familiar fantasy tropes, Paolini's storytelling and the depth of the world he creates are impressive, especially considering he began writing it as a teenager. The book's appeal lies in its ability to transport readers to a fantastical realm, making it a delightful and memorable journey for those who venture into its pages.

Review by Edward F

## **The Boy Who Read 1,000 Books Celebrated - An interview with Edward F, Year 9**

Edward F an avid book reader, reached the milestone of 1,000 books at TBCS, after his just first two years here! We interviewed this speedreading bookworm about his amazing feat and check out what he said! So, Edward, how are you today? *"I'm good, thanks. How are you?"* We're good, too. So, you want to get started? *"Sure, fire away!"*

### **What is your favourite book genre?**

*"My favourite is fantasy as I love to explore the range of themes and characters the author creates!"*

### **How many books do you read per week?**

*"Fifteen, overall! Around six every weekend and the rest after school or at breaktime."*

### **Who is your favourite author?**

*"I really enjoy reading Terry Pratchett as I love the mix of comedy and fantasy that he perfects in many of his books."*

### **What is the best book you have ever read?**

*"Although there are so many fantastic options, the first one that comes to mind is Maskerade, a Terry Pratchett novel that combines murder mystery with his signature satirical fantasy technique to create a thrilling page-turner that anybody can enjoy!"*

### **If you had to guess, how many books have you ever read?**

*"Probably getting on for around 10,000 now, though I am not sure!"*

### **What is your target for the end of year 11?**

*"I am going to aim for 2,500 by the end of year 11!"*

### **Thank you, Edward! That was inspiring, to say the least!**

*"I had a lot of fun, too! Great talking to you guys!"*

You can usually find Edward in the library, if you ever have any more questions about books! But he will also be putting book reviews in our school newspaper, so be sure to look out for them! And don't forget to congratulate our milestone-achiever when you see him around the corner!

Interview conducted by Ethan C, Year 8, and Joel P, Year 9

## Hello from Houses Kites, Osprey, Merlin and Harriers

One of the most exciting recent initiatives in TBCS is the House System. Every student belongs to a house, creating smaller communities within our larger school family. Whether it's earning points for achievements, cheering on teammates, or taking part in spirited competitions, the house system helps everyone feel included and inspired.

We may be in different houses; we are all part of one community. We took the opportunity to meet up with our four House Captains to find out what their hopes and dreams are for their houses. First up,

### Miss Seymour, Head of House Kites

#### What are you most proud of in Kites?

*I'm proud of our community. Everyone supports each other, works together and shows amazing team spirit. Winning is great, but the spirit of Kites is what makes it so special.*

#### How do you motivate your house?

*I try to motivate everyone with encouragement, positivity, and praise. I think it's important to reward effort, not just results, and to celebrate the small achievements as well. I also use fun, creative activities to keep everyone involved and inspired.*

#### Why did you want to be a House Leader?

*I wanted to be a House Leader because I want to make a difference. I have lots of energy, enthusiasm, and creativity, and I want to use that to inspire others. I want to create an environment where everyone feels confident, supported, and has the chance to succeed.*

#### If you could give your house anything, what would it be?

*I would give Kites more opportunities to shine—whether through competitions, events, or chances to develop new skills. I'd also make sure we celebrate every success, big or small, so that everyone feels valued and motivated.*



### Mrs van Jaarsveld, Head of House Ospreys

#### How do you motivate your students?

*I like to motivate the students by teaching them how strong we are as a team, how they fit into the team and how they can make a positive change to the team.*



**What made you want to lead ospreys?**

*I have always had a soft spot for Ospreys because I love the colour green. I really liked their motto/slogan, learning today, leading tomorrow. We are essentially lifelong learners and without learning you can't lead.*

**What excites you most about sports day?**

*I absolutely love sports day. This was part of my traditions growing up in South Africa. I am and have always been a competitive person. It shows another side of a student, and we also get to interact with students outside a classroom. Ospreys are ready for this Sports-day and all you are going to see is THE BIG MEAN GREEN MACHINE!!!!*

**What's best about ospreys?**

Ospreys have special spines on their feet and will hold the fish headfirst to limit air resistance and help with flight. Just like the bird we as students and teachers in Ospreys have 'special adaptations' to make sure we get the job done

**And finally, what's some advice you would like to leave your house?**

*No matter who you are or what you do, you are a part of our TEAM. I am proud to be an OSPREY!!!*

**Mr. Harris, Head of House Merlin**

**How do you motivate your house?**

*I like to positively motivate and encourage my house. I give students' certificates, awards and I try to relate with them and get to their level. I also try to boost their confidence and encourage them to take part in house competitions.*

**Why did you choose to be a house leader?**

*I love inspiring people and giving students who do not take part in events a chance to be included and join in.*

**What are you most proud and what is your highlight of being a head of house?**

*My highlight would be beating all the other houses, but I am most proud of all my house coming together and winning and the amount of people who joined in with house events and showed resilience even in defeat. If you could tell your house one thing, what would it be?*

**If you could tell your house one thing, what would it be?**

*I really do not want to be cliché, but I would like to tell them that all their hard work eventually proud off. Also, think of my world famous saying, "Think of not what your house can do for you, but what you can do for your house."*



**Mr Shutt, Head of House Harriers**

**How do you motivate students to participate in House Competitions?**

*I motivate students to participate in house competitions through either channelling their inner-competitiveness and willingness to win which may stem from their own sporting backgrounds, or I will encourage their participation proudly represent their house.*



**Why did you want to be a house leader?**

*To encourage a sense of belonging and appropriate competitive spirit. While at school, my school had an established house system which worked really well, and I wanted to help to recreate this at the school when we brought the House system in a few years ago.*

**What are you most proud of whilst being Head of House?**

I am most proud of helping to develop the sense of belonging and pride in being part of Harriers house that several of our students feel.

**What is your highlight of being Head of House?**

My highlight is the numerous sporting competitions we have run, and the success we have had with those competitions.

**If you could tell your house one thing, what would it be?**

I would tell my house to get more achievement points from their lessons!

Interviews conducted by Ethan C, Year 8, Joel P, Year 9, Maite, Year 8, Georgia, Year 10.

## Introducing TBCS' Head Boy and Girl

On 17<sup>th</sup> November, we caught up with Marcus N, the Head Boy of TBCS, to learn about his ambitions for TBCS.

### Why did you apply for the position of Head Boy?

It was important to me for my CV and applying for college places after my GCSEs. I also wanted to give something back to the school that I have been a part of since age 11. I want to help TBCS become a better place for students.

### What are your ambitions for the school?

I would love to see the school develop a work experience programme to give students the opportunity to see what life would be like after they leave school. It would help students get an understanding of what careers they might like to pursue after they turn 18.



Jessica and Marcus with Miss Halsey, attending Remembrance Day Parade in Basingstoke

I would like the school to organise more charity events which we did when I was in years 7 to year 9. Non-school uniform days, bake sales were always very popular. The charity events could help raise awareness around cancer, homelessness etc. The charity events are a great break to a long term and something students look forward to.

### The Aspire Fund sounds exciting, what would you like to spend the £1,000 on?

It would be wonderful to use the fund to help generate extra money for a charity or charities the students are particularly interested in. It is up to the students to decide how to use the fund and we look forward to opening the online student survey early in the new year.

On Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> November, we caught up with Jessica B, the Head Girl of TBCS, to learn about her journey, responsibilities, and vision for the school community.

### What does being Head Girl mean to you?

*Being Head Girl is more than just a title—it's a responsibility. It means being a role model, supporting students, and working closely with teachers to make sure TBCS is a positive and inclusive place for everyone.*

### How did you feel when you were selected for this position?

*Honestly, I was overjoyed with happiness and gratitude. It felt like all the hard work and dedication paid off. At the same time, I knew it was a big responsibility, so I am determined to give it my best.*

### What inspired you to apply for this role?

*From a very young age I wanted to be Head Girl. I wanted to contribute to the school community, help students feel heard, and create opportunities for everyone to shine.*

### What are your main responsibilities as Head Girl?

*My duties include representing the student body, organizing events, supporting the senior student team, and acting as a bridge between students and teachers. I also make sure our school values are upheld in everything we do.*

**How do you balance academics and leadership duties?**

*It's all about time management. I plan my week carefully, prioritize tasks, and sometimes sacrifice leisure time. But I also make sure to take breaks and stay focused on my studies.*

**What changes or initiatives do you hope to bring to the school?**

*I hope to create a platform where students can share ideas and concerns openly. As part of the Senior Student Team we have been given responsibility to manage the Aspire Fund which is a £1,000 grant provided by the school to spend on a project or projects to enrich the students' time in TBCS.*

**The Aspire Fund sounds exciting, what would you like to spend the £1,000 on?**

*During my last year in Kempshott Primary School, I was involved in running a week of summer activities to raise money for charity. Maybe some of the £1,000 fund could go towards running a summer fete and raising money for a charity or charities nominated by students? The Senior Student Team is planning to conduct a student online survey to determine how to spend the £1,000 Aspire Fund. We plan to survey all students before Christmas to gather their opinions.*

**What advice would you give to someone aspiring to be Head Girl?**

*Be confident, approachable, and willing to serve others. Leadership isn't about power—it's about responsibility and teamwork. Always lead by example.*

It was great to catch up with Jessica and Marcus. We look forward to hearing more about the upcoming online student survey on how best to spend the Aspire Fund of £1,000.



Jessica and Marcus on Open Evening

## Leah's Recipe Corner

### Cinnamon Cake

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 50 minutes

Makes: one cake

**Allergen warning: Contains nuts, dairy, and gluten.**

Preserving: Stays good for 2-3 days on your dining table, although it will be gone by then, so find a better hiding place!

### Ingredients

- 1½ cups wholewheat flour
- One cup of brown sugar
- Pinch of salt (anymore, and it tastes awful - I learned this the hard way!)
- 1½ teaspoons baking soda.
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- 1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
- Almond flakes
- A handful of chopped walnuts
- A couple drops of pure vanilla extract
- ½ cup of whole milk
- ¼ cup of tepid water
- ¼ cup of full-fat yogurt
- ⅓ cup of vegetable oil

### Method

Preheat your oven to 180°C/360°F and line a cake tin. If you are fancy, or just have more time, spread butter around the edges and dust with flour. Bonus points if you can narrate dramatically while doing it.

Mix all your “wet” ingredients (everything after the vanilla extract). Add the sugar and combine until it is well-dissolved. Sift all the dry ingredients in a separate mixing bowl. Slowly, pour in your wet ingredients, little at a time.

Pour into your tin and decorate with the nuts and bake for about 50 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean. Remove from oven and allow to cool on a wire tray before serving.



## Cheddar Gorge – Year 8 school Geography School Trip

On the 6th of October 2025, a group of 50 Year 8 students departed in a coach for Cheddar Gorge in Somerset.

After a two-hour drive along winding country roads and a wordsearch competition between Ms Fitzgerald and Ethan, and an 'obligatory Stonehenge photo' as we passed it, we arrived.

After a quick stop, the two groups separated. Group A went into the largest of Cheddar Gorge's two cave systems, Gough's Cave, named for its discoverer, Richard Gough. Our tour guide whisked us around, from the Diamond Chamber, full of glittering calcite crystals, to the lone stalactite hanging over the pool and everyone cheering on the person ferrying the cheese to be matured in the cave back and forth.

After lunch, a group of overconfident students, fresh from the water pools and talking blobs of Cox's Cave, laboriously climbed up the 274 steps of Jacob's Ladder. All I will say, is that going down was easier. After a visit to the gift shop and ice cream shop in the Gorge, we headed home.

We arrived back at school at about 5 o'clock and our parents picked us all up. Everyone agreed that it had been a grand day out!

We would like to thank Mrs Jarman, Head of Geography Department for organising this educational trip. Ear 8

Article written by Ethan, Year 8.



Interior of Cheddar Gorge



Stonehenge in the distance

We do hope you enjoyed this first edition of *The Blue Coat Times*. We look forward to working on the next edition, to be published in Easter 2026.

Thank you all for reading.

Have a merry Christmas!