



## **NEWSLETTER - MAY 2025**

**Conference 2025 - now open for bookings!**

### **Boarding School Survivors Support Conference**

**Saturday 1st November 2025**

**The Light Auditorium, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ**

**BOOK  
HERE**

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**BSS-Support Conference 2025 now open for bookings**

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**Call for research participants - two new studies**

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**Privileged Man Podcast - Marriage and the Ex-Boarding School Man**

**Three new books about Boarding School Harm**

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### **Former boarders get creative**

- Mummified - booking now at Brighton Fringe
- The Dreamer - a short story by Carole Inman

Dear Friends

It's that time of year, with Easter behind us, when we start finalising details of our Annual Conference in November. There's a lot to do - but we're always motivated by the strength that comes from bringing our community together, and creating a safe space where former boarders can be heard, held, and be honoured.

If you haven't been to Conference, or want a reminder of the power of the experience do check out the 2024 videos and see what others said about it [here](#).



"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples"

**Mother Teresa**

### **An even bigger, brighter space in Friends House**

Once again we've listened very carefully to what members need and want from our annual conference. This year, we have negotiated an even larger space, this time in the Light Auditorium, at [The Friends House, opposite Euston Station](#). This means we can be more creative with the afternoon break out sessions. As well as running smaller groups, with more choices, people will also have an option to see Piers Cross's film *Boarding on Insanity*.

As always, we have some terrific speakers lined up. **You can see the full conference agenda [here](#).**

### **Keeping costs down**

It is important to us that everyone gets a chance to attend the conference, regardless of their circumstances. Thanks again to our generous donors, BSS-Support (a non-profit) is able to subsidise event costs to keep ticket prices to a minimum. If you'd like to make a donation to help others less able to attend, you can do so when you [register](#).

Once again, those in need of financial assistance can click the link on the [registration form](#), and we will be in touch.

Most importantly, put the date in your diary - and [Book now to secure your place](#).

### **New Hove support group starting**

[Karen Macmillan](#) will be running a fortnightly [therapeutic support group](#) for former boarders in Hove on Wednesday evenings.

This is open to any adult who went to boarding school and who would like to understand and process their boarding experience within a supportive ongoing group.

Karen is a specialist psychotherapist, trained in working with ex-boarders and abides by the ethical standards of [NCPS](#) and [UKATA](#), of which she is a member.

**To book, or more information, please contact Karen directly via this [link](#).**

*This group is not run by BSS-Support, so we cannot take enquiries.*

### **Volunteers wanted in Salisbury**

Henry Lawson is looking for volunteers in Salisbury to raise awareness of Boarding School Harm. He wants to raise awareness of the danger to mental health from boarding, and promote the message that boarding needs to end for Under 16s.

If you could help Henry hand out leaflets, promote Nick Duffell's book, *The Making of Them*, and talk to the public, [please contact Henry directly](#).

*This activity is not run by BSS-Support, so we cannot take enquiries.*

### **Call for research participants - Southampton**

A team of researchers from the School of Psychology, University of Southampton are looking for participants who are **18 years of age or older** and **have attended a boarding school in the UK in the past** to take part in a study examining the ways in which past boarding school experiences impact current life experiences. It involves a 25 minute survey and your responses will remain entirely anonymous.

**You can find out more and sign up to take part [here](#).**

*This research is not run by BSS-Support so we cannot take enquiries.*

### **Call for research participants - Teeside**

We've been asked by Rob Glassborow, Lecturer in Criminology at Teeside University, to put out a call for research participants. Rob is looking for people who experienced the *loco parentis* care of boarding school, and his study will explore harmful behaviours that may have developed due to experiencing the boarding school system.

*This research is not run by BSS-Support so we cannot take enquiries.*

**Please register your interest for an initial contact to be made by the researcher using either [this link](#) or the QR code below.**



## Call for Participants

Are you someone who has experienced the *loco parentis* care of boarding school? I am investigating the impact of being in *loco parentis* of boarding school on adult behaviors for my MSc dissertation at Teesside University.

My interest is in harmful behaviours that may have developed because of experiencing the boarding school system by asking:

***'To what extent has your boarding school experience influenced you to adopt a mindset that has led to unlawful or harmful behaviors to others?'***

I would be interested in hearing from you if you consider that the boarding school experience has influenced harmful or unlawful behaviour in later life and that you meet the following criteria:

- You are over 18 and experienced boarding school for a significant portion of your childhood (Minimum 2 years)
- You identify that the experience of boarding school has led to harmful or unlawful behaviours in adult life.
- You are comfortable to share your experience and are currently not undergoing significant psychological distress or trauma.

Behaviours can include, but are not limited to:

Physical	<i>Violence, abuse, neglect of self and impacts on families or relationships</i>
Financial	<i>Financial irresponsibility, financial exploitation or activities that may cause harm for person gain</i>
Emotional	<i>Psychological abuse, bullying, or discrimination to others, social exclusion, difficulties with healthy relationships</i>
Unlawful	<i>Practices that may have been unlawful in personal or occupational spheres and for which you have been convicted for, or willing to disclose.</i>

Your participation will involve a semi structured conversation either in person or on Teams with the researcher. All data collected will be treated in the strictest confidence and will pseudonymised so that it cannot be directly related to the source.

**The ethical approval reference for this research is: 2025 Mar 28282.**

**Please register your interest for an initial contact to be made by the researcher using either the link below, or the QR Code.**

<https://forms.office.com/e/sHbqM0JDNy>



Readers might be interested in [this recent article from The Psychologist](#) (April 2025) by Thurstine Basset.

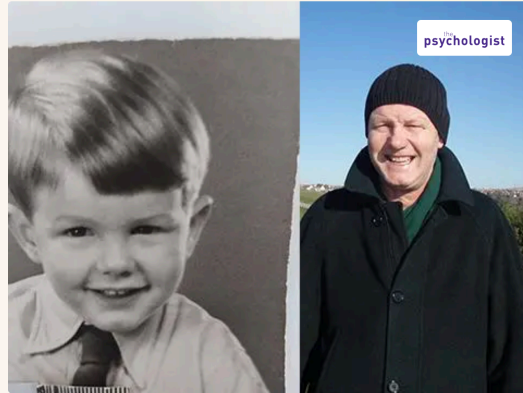
In the article, Thurstine reflects on his own boarding school experiences, and what remains missing from psychologists.

Education, Mental health, Violence and trauma

## ‘The 8-year-old me was frozen in time, deep within my body and soul, ready to emerge later’

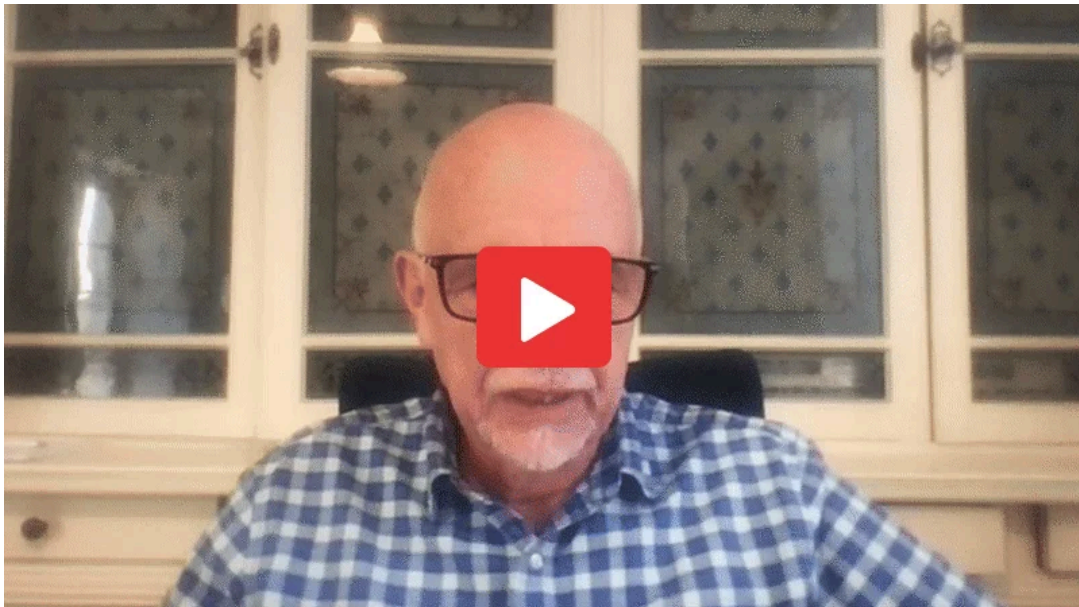
Thurstine Basset reflects on his own boarding school experiences, and what remains missing from psychologists; plus, he reviews two new books on the topic.

29 April 2025



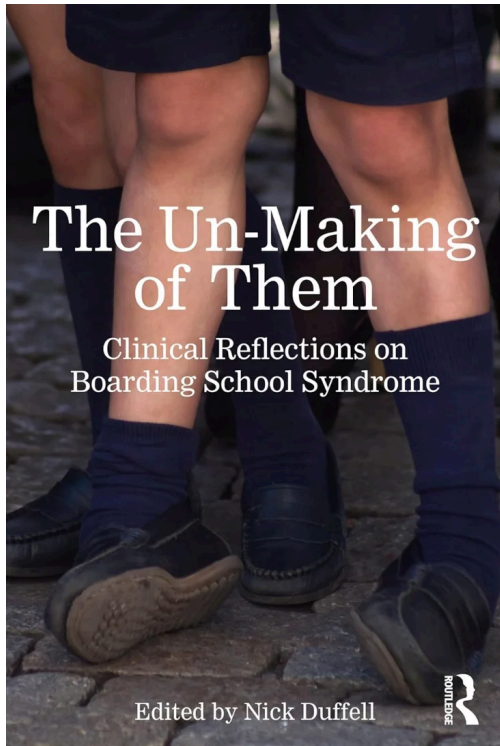
### Understanding Ex-Boarding School Men's Marriages

Readers might also be interested in listening to this powerful episode of The Privileged Man Podcast. Pete Hunt sits down with Nick Duffell to explore why so many high-achieving men with the 'privileged background' of boarding school feel emotionally stuck, the hidden impact of early survival strategies, and how intimacy becomes one of life's greatest challenges. A raw and essential listen for men navigating midlife, relationships, and identity - or those trying to understand them.



### Three new books about boarding school harm

This month, we are pleased to see the publication of a trio of boarding school-related books - testimony, perhaps to the growing interest in boarding school survivors as a distinct therapy group, and the mounting evidence base for the long-term harms of boarding school. There are more detailed write-ups on our website.



# The Un-Making of Them

## Clinical Reflections on Boarding School Syndrome

Edited by Nick Duffell

[Review and link here](#)

This groundbreaking collection - due for release in late April - shares insights and reflections on clinical work with ex-boarders in different settings and circumstances with the aim of expanding the body of knowledge for therapeutic work with clients who are former boarders.

The chapter headings read like a 'Who's Who' of the Boarding School Survivor space, with each chapter sharing the experience and insights of some 16 different clinicians from a wide range of theoretical backgrounds - psychodynamic, Jungian, transactional analysis and 'energy psychology' - with many of the contributors being ex-boarders themselves.

The contributors reveal that the fall-out from boarding is much wider than previously thought and share innovative treatment methods that

may help therapists address these consequences with ex-boarders in treatment.



## Worlds Away from Home

### Exploring Boarding School Challenges for Women & Third Culture Kids

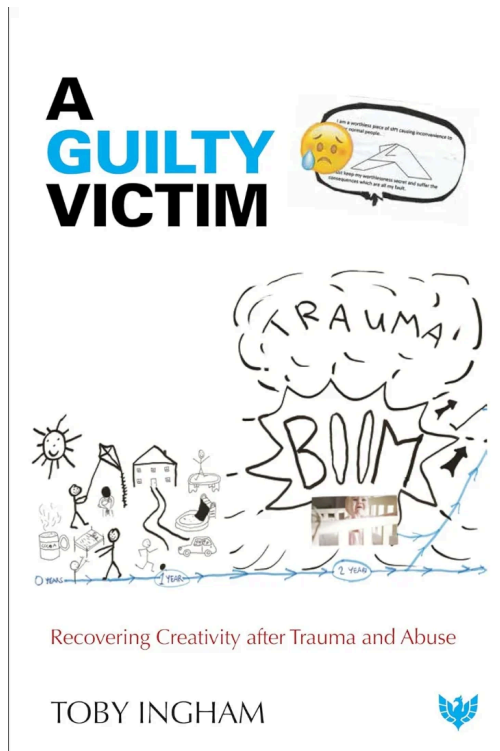
Nicky Moxey & Linda Devereux

[Review and link here](#)

This book uses powerful personal testimonies to offer insights into the boarding school experiences of women and Third Culture Kids (TCKs), examining the particular challenges for those who are sent away from their families, and all that is familiar, to board in a country that feels worlds away from home.

The stereotype of expatriate families is of glamorous lives lived in exotic locations with access to wealth and privilege. However, many of these families feel pressure to send their children 'home' to boarding school in their passport country without understanding the long-term implications of this choice.

This user-friendly, accessible volume lays out an accessible theoretical framework to explore these long-term effects, and will appeal to professionals working with transcultural boarders, ex-boarders, or those who are considering sending their children to boarding school.



# A Guilty Victim

## Recovering Creativity after Trauma & Abuse

Toby Ingham

[Review and link here](#)

The complex nature of grooming and abuse is often simplified by those who do not understand it and are left wondering why the victim 'allowed it to happen'. A Guilty Victim challenges that misconception and explains how and why abuse continues and the impact it leaves on the victim's life. It explains that we remain trapped in situations not because there is something wrong with us - but because of things that have happened to us.

It is unusual to have permission to be able to illustrate the process of psychotherapy in action. William Smith bravely suggested his story be told to help at-risk children by showing adults how to recognise the warning signs in children's behaviour.

William's long journey to recovery is an inspiration to others struggling to come to terms with childhood trauma. This very human story will appeal to anyone with an interest in understanding trauma, psychotherapy, wellness and mental health and is especially relevant to people with responsibility for safeguarding children and vulnerable people.



# Mummified

**Boarder Control  
at Brighton Fringe**

**16th / 17th May 2025, 7.30pm**

**Booking now:**

[tickets £10 / £8 conc](#)

BSS-Support is **delighted to sponsor this brave play**, by Boarder Patrol, about an ex-boarder questioning why his mother sent him away.

In the late 1960s, an eight-year-old boy is sent away for a ten-year stretch at an all-boy boarding school in the distant district of the peaks.

What prompted **Mother** to abandon the child she dotes on into the care of people she knows nothing about?

Mummified by the experience, he careens through life causing havoc and damage to those who care for him, and equally to himself.

Sobering up is just the beginning, and the yearned-for journey back home is long, arduous and not guaranteed.

Only providence - in the shape of winged allies - can set him free.

*Will the birds come?*

## The Dreamer - a short story by Carole Inman

And finally, we thought our readers would also enjoy this short story, based on a performance given by **Caroline Inman** at **Tell Tales** in Falmouth in early 2024, an event where people shared their stories and poems on "Looking Forwards - Looking Backwards".

The Dreamer - Caroline tells us - is for those of us who are finding our voice through dreaming ...

### The Dreamer

*For those of us who are finding our voice through dreaming...*

The little boy was lost. That wasn't unusual. He was often out exploring and getting lost in the sand dunes, or in the woods that seemed to stretch for miles, or amongst the tiny pebbled streets with alley ways and hidden opes. Always he had found his way home, well, that was until today.

He woke from his day dream and sat very still. He had been told not to move or he would be shut in the cupboard until break time. That, he didn't like and could see absolutely no need for! All he was doing was day dreaming --- and turning the clock on 40 years, that is what he would be. Not only a dreamer but also an analyst of dreams, helping others discern for themselves the messages in their night dreams, and the meanings of their day dreams. But that was another 40 years in the future and he didn't know that now. At this moment he was sitting very very still lest the dark cupboard beckoned.

He had been a child of dreams since birth when he had lain in his cradle and gurgled, never crying – unless he had been forgotten and needed changing or feeding. Never needing entertainment. He used to watch the clouds from his cot, and later as he toddled around the old farmhouse he would peer at the chickens through the cat flap or sit for hours on the dark red sofa watching the kittens climb the dusty velvet curtains playing tag with one another as he followed the dust balls floating in the air. As he grew older and was allowed outside to play on his own, he would lie under the apple tree and see the blossoms grow full in the May sunshine. He was a happy boy where all his needs were met.

And then, just as he had learned to climb the apple trees and see his world from a different vantage point, he was whipped away. Put in grey flannel ironed shorts, throttled and gagged by a blue and red striped tie tied so tight that he could hardly breathe, ripped away from his home, his cats and his chickens and his beloved trees ---- but he could dream, he could always dream. And so he wore the blazer and shoes as he left his home in the polished old Morris Traveler. His trunk had been sent on ahead, though he knew nothing of this. Ignorant of the drama going on around him, measurements had been made and sent off to London and soon new clothes had arrived.

"It'll be good for you" his parents had said.

He opened the door to a new client, offering the woman coffee and a comfortable chair or sofa. Her choice. This was no ordinary room – it was cosy and warm, safe and welcoming.

When his parents had refused to remove him from school and had returned him at the end of each half term and at the beginning of each new term, he had shut down further into his own dream world. His own strategic survival strategy. And looking back he had survived that awful cruelty – as well as the food – and at last he was doing what he really wanted to do.

Of course, it hadn't been easy. He had followed in his father's footsteps to his old public school and university, though he probably wouldn't have got in without the introduction. And then, being a dreamer who didn't really know what to do with himself, he had taken a position in the old family firm. But none of this was really him. He had hated the autocratic school system where he had been totally hopeless at anything geometry or algebra and even sports where the boys made fun of his stumpy legs and inability to run fast.

He had survived only through checking out emotionally, hiding the physical and mental abuse deep down in his psyche through his dreaming. He hadn't wanted to go to university but felt there was no choice for him. He was a dreamer, not a mathematician or a businessman or even very social. But he'd gone and stayed the course, dreaming his way through lectures and walking quietly along the riverbanks in his free time.

He managed the work by keeping the past hidden. He hadn't needed a social life, he had his dreamers.

So, he had done it. Studied and worked and done what was expected for 30 years until one day he crashed. Full blown breakdown. An ambulance had had to be called to the office, the sirens sounding along the high street. He was rushed away and for a while he lived in a happy oblivion on whatever heavy medication the doctors gave him. He was glad of it and blamed no-one. At last he was free of the push and pull of life and well, he could just ... dream!

It was an art therapist who pulled him out of himself. Working with clay he had moulded himself as a child, free as a bird or a kitten chasing another kitten. And he realised he wanted that again. He needed it. And so, as he worked the wet clay between his hands, he shaped out his life at school and before, the carefree dreamer child he had been in that faraway time, and there he found himself. He found what he wanted to do. He found what he was. He found what he wanted to be.

And so, surprisingly to his family and few friends (no-one from school, he had had to cut his whole school life off totally on his last day), he had studied psychiatry and read every book in the world on dream theories. Living very simply now in his city bedsit he survived (after all he was used to surviving). His mother now gone and buried in the family plot. His father didn't care any more and had married again and long since given up on him. At last he was free actually to be and do what he wanted. The breakdown had been a breakthrough!

And so here he was 40 years on from that terrible day when he had been dropped at school. A little boy of eight, one minute lying under the apple blossoming in bare feet and almost naked, and the next ... straight jacketed into ironed shorts, a blazer and tie, and those uncomfortably stiff brown lace up leather shoes!

He smiled to himself and began a gentle chat to the woman now curled in a ball on the cosy sofa.

"What can I do for you?" he said softly.

"Well, it's about my dreams" she said.

"Yes."

"I've been wondering if there's something in them, something coming up from my past, maybe something that needs to come out and express itself."

"Ah ..... " "You see ..... " He nodded

And as he listened and nudged the telling of her story he knew she'd be OK, just like him and so many others – as they too nudged themselves forward, step by tiny step – through that mud and mire, letting their dreams tell their stories and releasing that old pain of the past.

They would continue to dream and use their dreams, night and day, to find their voice and dream themselves into their future.

*From a performance at: Tell Tales 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024  
Looking forward – Looking back. Carole Inman*

## **If you need help with your own boarding school recovery**

This newsletter has been sent by BSS-Support, a not-for-profit Limited Company, whose aim is to guide and support former boarders on their healing journey.

If you need support or direction on your boarding school recovery journey, you are invited to write in confidence to BSS-Support.

A member of our team will respond personally, and guide you towards the resources that are right for you.

With warmest wishes from the BSS-Support Directors:

Allison, Caroline, Mike, Paul, Pippa, Tim and Sam.

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## **Boarding School Survivors - Support**

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Any income, whether from events, sale of books or donations, is used for the sole purpose of staging our annual conference, providing individual bursaries for therapies and participation, or financial support to organisations that share our agenda and aims.

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