

THE HARROVIAN

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MICHAELMAS CONCERT

Speech Room, 26 November

The Symphony Orchestra, humbled by the recent experience of playing on the stage of the Royal Albert Hall, began the concert with another rendition of Sir Edward Elgar's Fifth March from *Pomp and Circumstance*. The now more experienced musicians executed the piece successfully and lifted the atmosphere on what can only be described as a cold, damp winter's evening.



From the shores of England, we were then transported to 1880s' Russia. With Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings*, performed by the Harrow Sinfonia. The second half of the 19th century witnessed a proliferation of significant works for strings alone including *Serenades for Strings* by Dvorak (1875), and Tchaikovsky and Grieg's *Holberg Suite* (1884). The Sinfonia, led by the masterful DNB, showcased the noble and slightly melancholic theme (which provides the seed from which the entire *Serenade* develops) with style and flair.

Following the Harrow Sinfonia came Symphonic Winds, directed by Neil Palmer, and the ambience of Speech Room shifted once again. They first performed *El Capitan* by Sousa, a hallmark work for any brass band. It was then followed by one of SM's personal compositions *Tango for Band*. Symphonic Winds rounded off their programme with a crowd favourite, 'Gonna Fly Now' from the film *Rocky*, composed by Bill Conti.

Then came the Byron Consort. They produced a programme of four pieces: *And I Saw a New Heaven* by Edgar Bainton, *Verily, verily I Say unto You* and *O, Lord in Thee is all my Trust*, both by Thomas Tallis and *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence* by Edward Bairstow. This was a typically professional performance by the members of the Byron Consort, who produced a balanced sound that resonated across the walls of Speech Room.

The evening was rounded off by a performance from the Big Band. They first played *Watermelon Man* by Herbie Hancock, a jazz staple that marked the start of Hancock's remarkable career. It was followed by *Girl Talk* by Nestico and finally a performance of *My Way* by Paul Anka. Max Rugge-Price, *The Park*, sang *My Way* with passion and conviction.

All in all, the concert provided a smorgasbord of music, rounding off what can only be described a pleasant and memorable evening in our 450th year.



SHERIDAN SOCIETY

Tamim Down, The Grove, 'Expressing Oneself in 17 Syllables: A Guide, History and Overview of Haikus'
17 November

At the end of last term, the Sheridan Society welcomed Tamim Down, *The Grove*, who gave a talk entitled 'Expressing Oneself in 17 Syllables: A Guide, History and Overview of Haikus'. A haikuist of acclaim, Downe showed his passion for this genre of poetry through a sleek slideshow and excellent presentation, while still maintaining the element of information.

Downe started with a quick breakdown of haikus, a type of poetry of Japanese origin that normally consists of three lines with the *mora* pattern 5/7/5. Morae are the phonetic unit in Japanese, like syllables for us. It means 'sound' in Japanese. Traditionally, haikus would also contain a *kigo*: something that would suggest the season of the poem as the theme.

Downe subsequently delved into the history of these poems and the key figures involved. Haikus originated from *renku*, which is a type of collaborative poetry in which several poets wrote alternating stanzas of couplets and haikus. The first poet would write the first stanza, which would be of haiku-length, three lines of 5/7/5 mora. Then they would send it to the second poet who would write a couplet, 2 lines of 7/7 mora. Then they would send it to another poet or the first poet depending on how many poets were participating. This would go on for as long as the poets wished.

The first individual on the Haiku Scene was Matsuo Basho (1644-94), widely regarded as the master of haikus, or *hokku* as they were known as then. Despite this, he was regarded as a *renku* expert. He said: "Many of my followers can write *hokku* as well as I can. Where I show who I really am is in linking *haikai* verses." His family was of samurai descent, and his father was probably a landowning peasant. During his childhood, he became a servant to Todo Yoshitada. They both loved *renga*, which is what exposed Basho to poetry at such a young age, inspiring a passion and talent that lasted his whole life. He was inducted into circles of professional *haikai* writers, and by 1680 he had a full-time job teaching 20 disciples. These disciples built him a rustic hut and planted a banana tree for

him in the yard, and describing the garden he wrote:

*by my new banana plant
the first sign of something I loathe –
a miscanthus bud!*

Despite this, he slowly grew lonely. Two years later, his hut burned down, and in 1683 his mother died. In the winter of that year, his disciples made him another hut, but his spirits were still low. He went on a trip on one of the Edo Five Routes, which was very dangerous at the time. Contrary to his expectations, his mood improved massively. He made many new friends and enjoyed the scenes and changes of seasons he observed. On his return to Edo, he wrote his most famous and arguably the most famous haiku of all time:

*an ancient pond
a frog jumps in
the splash of water*

Haiku technically originated from the opening stanza of a renga, which are called hokku. Gradually, these began to be written as standalone poems, which led to the creation of haikus. It was Masaoka Shiki who renamed standalone hokkus as haikus. Shiki (1867–1902) was a major figure in the world of haiku, having written about 20,000 stanzas in his life. He was born in similar circumstances to Basho, with his family being of modest descent. His father was an alcoholic who died when Shiki was five years old, and his mother was the daughter of a Confucian scholar by the name of Ohara Kanzan. At 15, he became radical in his political views, siding with the then-waning Freedom and People's Rights movement, which believed in elected legislature, the institution of civil rights, and less centralised taxation.

Although he was mainly known for writing haikus, he wrote in many contexts from different genres of poetry to short prose essays. When he was a young adult, the haiku form of poetry was dwindling. He published a serialised work advocating for haiku reform and was later offered a position in a renowned haiku magazine, *Nippon*, which he retained a long-term relationship with. Later in his life, he took up writing *tanka*, which follows the pattern of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables, until his death four years later.

Downe then explored the introduction of haikus into the western world. R H Blyth was an Englishman who lived in Japan. He produced a series of works on Zen, haiku, *senryū*, and on other forms of Japanese and Asian literature. In 1949, with the publication in Japan of the first volume of haiku, which was a four-volume work by Blyth, haiku were introduced to the post-war English-speaking world. This four-volume series described haiku from the pre-modern period up to and including Shiki. Blyth's *History of Haiku*, in two volumes, is regarded as a classical study of haiku. Today Blyth is best known as a major interpreter of haiku to English speakers. His works have stimulated the writing of haiku in English.

Downe concluded his talk with other types of haiku, touching on *haibun*, which is a combination of prose and haiku, and *haiga*, a style of Japanese painting usually including a haiku. Today, haiga artists combine haiku with things like paintings, photographs and other art. After rapturous applause, the floor was opened for questions, which were followed by an engaging discussion that involved the whole audience. Many thanks to Downe for delivering such an impressive talk.

SCHOLARS' SYMPOSIUM

With Notting Hill and Ealing High School

Over the Autumn term, the Remove Academic Scholars were as busy as bees with the annual symposium event with Notting Hill and Ealing High School. This year, the focus was on bees (as you may have guessed). The symposium began on Tuesday 13 September, with a presentation (on 'To bee or not to bee') in the OH Room. The Removes were divided into eight groups

based on their subject interests. Each group was to research a specific question, ranging from the elongated rhombic semi-dodecahedral shape of the internal beehive to the musical semiotics of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumblebee*.

It was a lovely mid-September afternoon, and the Removes eagerly anticipated a three-hour research session in the Vaughan Library, which followed the introductory presentation (though missing rug-bee for bee research may have been more appealing for some). It is a hard decision to make: wouldn't you prefer the enrichment of the mind over physical exercise? Nevertheless, the lengthy library session was enjoyable and productive for all; everybody was sporting bee-ming smiles in the group photo at the end of the day.

The symposium had two main objectives: firstly, all groups would submit a 1000-word article on their research topic; additionally, each group would make a five-minute presentation. Over two months, there were five collaborative online meetings, usually held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. These were extremely helpful and productive, thanks to the mentorship of CNHS, HRF, JDC, TMB and the NHEHS teachers who supported each group's progress.

The deadline for the article was Monday 7 November, the week following half-term. Most groups had finished writing their articles before half-term, but there was a noticeable hive of activity on Sunday evening. Whether it be inserting references, formatting the text, or even writing the article, there was a frantic buzz to garnish the papers with some finishing touches. The Removes' diligent (and delightful) work was duly rewarded with many "outstanding" articles (as described by JDC). The full journal of articles is currently bee-ing compiled and published. There will surely be a buzz to get it, so do put your pre-orders in soon!

After completing the article, the groups had one final meeting to prepare for the presentations evening on Tuesday 17 November. That cold Tuesday afternoon, the Removes journeyed excitedly to NHEHS. There was a warm welcome event, followed by an hour to rehearse the presentations. At 4pm, the event began, watched by almost a hundred parents and guests.

Before the presentations began, there was a mesmerising flute performance of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumblebee*. The first presentation was on the captivating musical semiotics of this piece of the work. They explained how Rimsky-Korsakov recreated the sound of a flying bee with chromatics and microtones. Group 2 delivered a fascinating talk on Classical Greek science and explored the accuracy of Aristotle's observations about bees. Though Aristotle pioneered scientific method, his work was also influenced by gender stereotypes, thinking that female worker bees should not have "weapons" to defend the hive. Perhaps BeeBee guns were not invented then.

Group 3 gave an absorbing presentation on the historical symbolism of bees, spanning from the Ancient Egyptian worship of bees to Greek myth and, ultimately, to the modern symbolism of the "Manchester Bee". Group 4 enthrallingly explored the methods of communication used by bees. Though bees have sophisticated communication techniques (such as the "waggle dance"), their method of "speaking" lacks syntax and cannot be classified as a language. After an hour of gripping presentations, everyone welcomed a short interval for biscuits and drinks.

The second presentation session commenced with Group 5's mesmerising presentation on the mathematics of the beehive. With the aid of many diagrams, they successfully convinced the audience that the optimal interior structure of a beehive is an elongated rhombic semi-dodecahedron. Group 6 compellingly argued how honey production could become a significant driver of the Nigerian economy; the temperate climate is perfect for bees, and beekeeping would reduce foreign influence on the Nigerian economy. Next, Group 7 presented a well-researched and entertaining talk about the antimicrobial properties of honey. They explained that honey kills pathogens with its low water potential, high acidity, hydrogen peroxide release and free

radicals. Finally, Group 8 delivered a spellbinding presentation on the symbolism of bees in Shakespeare's history plays. They explored how bees became a symbol of human hierarchy, from Virgil's *Georgics* to Shakespeare's *Henry V*.

The presentations were certainly successful, judging by the rapturous applause of the guests and beaks who were present. Most presentations were concise and precise, and none of the speakers were "mumble-bees" or droned on about a drowsy topic. This was particularly impressive as the Removes only had a week to prepare for their presentations, and some groups had to implement "Plan Bee" due to technical problems with the PowerPoint. From the depth and diversity shown in these presentations, it was clear that everyone had bee-come experts on their topics of research.

However, no symposium can finish without a banquet. Following the presentations, drinks (both fermented and unfermented grape juice) were served in the atrium. Everyone was in a jubilant mood, and one or two verses of *Stet Fortuna Domus* were even heard to be floating around the room. Then all the presenters and beaks were treated to a delicious buffet. Akin to the original Platonic tradition of symposia, there were many interesting conversations among the boys, girls and beaks too. Finally, after a long, tiring, yet fulfilling day, the Removes returned to Harrow, just in time for prep! Many thanks must be given to JDC for organising this wonderful event.

ST IVES

Last term, Fifth Form artists, with HRF and DRJB, went to St Ives in Cornwall, which is a place practically glowing due to the way the light interacts with water, the community's interaction with art, and the radon gas interaction with our lungs.

Before we arrived, our long journey was interrupted with the intrigue of the Eden Project, which is an attempt to recapture the famous garden in climate-controlled bubbles. The modern beauty of the bubbles was overshadowed by what was within. Nature's beauty won over that of our creation as Harrovians entered a rainforest. You could genuinely believe the surroundings to be a South American rainforest, if it weren't for the snow-globe-like roof. Straight from the forest one moved into Californian heat, mirroring a very Mediterranean life.



Next, we arrived at a castle. This would be our lodging. Even the pickiest of Harrovians, who turned out to be my roommate, had to admit that the castle was up to standard. On the first official day, we walked through the grounds of our homely fortress and made our way to St Ives' famous coastline. The first activity would be visiting The Tate's branch in St Ives, proving it to be just as important artistically speaking as London or Liverpool. With the cold image of Liverpool out of our minds, we saw many a modern works of art that stretched further into the past than one would think. This 'modern' art came in many forms and styles, influenced by artists such as Picasso and Barbara Hepworth, whose home we then visited. Although she died there, fortunately she wasn't still around to

haunt it, but some of her unfinished works remained, along with many of her most famous pieces. After strolling around her sculpture garden, we were given a rare period of freedom as we were told to explore the town, 'trying' to look at some galleries and museums on the way. So, after a hearty snack and stroll, we returned to the castle.

The next day, we visited the other pride of Cornwall, the tin mines. Cast back in time, we observed the heavy tools and muddy clothes that men our age would carry into small metal boxes that plunged into the Earth. Even the Romans mined Cornish tin, though this mine was more modern as, among the 20th-century machinery, were former miners who recalled their time in the armpit of the Earth. The highlight was the response to one boy's question about the importance of Labour to the leader of the miners' union, which was along the lines of 'I was disappointed with Labour – they were useless, However, the Conservatives were better than people like to say'. After that pleasant treat, and a trip into the dark tunnels, the arguably more pleasant treat of a Cornish pasty fell into our hungry hands. Then, we refocused on art, meeting two professional artists from the local area who specialised in very different styles. We both explored the abstract relationships between colour, and accurate sketches of our surroundings, which was both enjoyable and particularly educational.



'Mount St Michael' is not just an English misspelling of 'Mont St Michel'; it is, in fact, an English copy brought to us by the monks responsible for the original. This coastal island has changed owners a couple times more than the original, and now lies in the hands of a wealthy family, who allow hundreds of visitors when the tide goes out. Our pilgrimage included exploring the museum, stables, gallery, grounds, chapel, chambers and, crucially, the gift shops and cafes. The gothic style provided an excellent frame to view all of Cornwall, and the endless sea. There was even mythology surrounding the island as a heart-shaped stone lies in the ground, supposedly cut from a giant. After that reminder of the past, we, yet again, saw more modern incarnations of art in a grand sculpture garden. It was evident that it was run by artists, as the map was cleverly laid out in an artistic display of visual treasures – not to mention the failure to number each sculpture correctly. Some highlights included a white room with one hole in the ceiling to appreciate the beauty of clouds, and a sofa-chair made of brick which, even when up close, looked deceptively soft. We then quickly visited many craft studios around St Ives, including pottery, ancient copper bashing, and painting. While these were short visits, they showed the actual careers of artists, which made boys think about their future careers. More fascinating still was, in the last studio, my earlier mentioned roommate's clumsiness which, when distracted by the *Dune* soundtrack and 'spiritual incense', led to knocking over a shelf of DVDs and a painting, luckily nothing, not even feelings, was harmed.

On the last day, travelling back to Harrow, we visited more professional artists in a studio complex. We saw photographers, designers, sculptors and more. The most impressive was an artist who worked with clay, who was, unsurprisingly, related to a

Harrovian. Indeed, she had a grasp of what we wanted to know, and how we should learn. The only slip-up was mislabelling Druries as the best House, rather than The Grove.

This concluded our trip, which every boy would agree was a glowing success, which is evident as it shall be repeated again next year – with even higher stakes, further away, in New York. The thanks, of course, goes to DRJB and CRM (who had organised the trip three times due to rampant plagues).

MEDICAL SOCIETY

Atticus Malley, The Head Master's, 'Henrietta Lacks and the first immortalized cell line'

Last term, the Medical Society was lucky enough to host Atticus Malley, *The Head Master's*, who spoke about Henrietta Lacks and the first immortalized cell line. He began by explaining that Henrietta was an African-American tobacco farmer who lived in Roanoke, Virginia. She visited the John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore when she felt a knot in her womb. Unfortunately, later that day she was diagnosed with cervical cancer, so a sample of her tumour was taken and given to Dr George Otto Gey without Henrietta's consent. What was surprising was that these cells did not die but reproduced indefinitely and created the cell line known as HeLa which is still used for medical research and from which many pharmaceutical companies have benefited. HeLa has been used to develop polio, Covid-19 and HPV vaccines. It has also been used to study mumps, measles, HIV, Ebola, leukaemia, AIDS and cancer. Malley explained that there are thousands of scientific papers that talk about HeLa cells. He spoke about HeLa cell's genome and its DNA. HeLa cells have 70–90 chromosomes, more than 20 of which are highly mutated. There are more than 20 translocations, with some being more complex. It also shares some genetic sequences with Henrietta's genome. If the correct conditions are given, then the HeLa cells could reproduce and live indefinitely. Malley then spoke about how Henrietta's cells work, explaining that all cells have a structure at the end of their chromosomes called telomeres which protects the chromosomes from damage, and they wear out over the lifetime of a cell. HeLa cells and most cancer cells have telomerase, which is an enzyme that produces telomeres, allowing cells to live and reproduce indefinitely, so HeLa cells do not perform apoptosis, by which a series of molecular steps in a cell leads to its death. There were some problems when they took the cells from Henrietta as, at that time, they took the cells without her consent and without providing compensation. Henrietta was only informed 24 years later that the cells had been taken. Companies use these cells because they have characteristics of human cells that can emulate viruses like polio to make new vaccines. It is safe to say that everyone enjoyed the talk and left having their knowledge expanded.

PEEL SOCIETY

Hans Patel, Newlands, 'The collapse of civilisation: derailed democracies, 22 November'

Last Tuesday, as on all Tuesdays, the Peel Society gathered in JM's St Andrew's Throne Room, of sorts, to listen to Hans Patel, *Newlands*, give a talk entitled 'The collapse of civilisation: derailed democracies'. Suffice to say, the topic is incredibly multi-faceted, and an endless number of possibilities left the audience on the edge of their seats. Patel, after briefly discussing the state of the world (even suggesting some, perhaps, soon-to-be-derailed democracies, and just generally highlighting the interesting time in which we find ourselves), announced that the focus of the talk was two democracies

that dismantled themselves in the 20th century: Chile and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Firstly, Chile. In the late 1960s, Chile was a democratic and flourishing nation, even if it did have its political difficulties. In 1970, however, left-leaning President Salvador Allende Gossens was elected. Nonetheless, under Allende, Chile flourished. Wages broadly shot up and, under the socialist government, Chile could export better quality goods. Despite the success of socialism in Chile, there was much scepticism from abroad, specifically America. The CIA wished to go about ending the career of Allende (whom they saw as a potential bastion of Marxism on the American continent) and they employed General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte (who was already a popular prominent character in Chilean fascism) and his goons to start a coup d'état.

Skipping a few details, on 11 September 1973, the country's armed forces, led by General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, went into action to overthrow the democratically elected government of President Salvador Allende Gossens. They were backed by America and a large and well-equipped militia force. Allende committed suicide in the same month, refusing to leave his office. Still today, he is seen as a hero of democratic socialism, with a statue erected in 2002 outside La Moneda in Concepcion. The fascists killed approximately 3,000, but some 28,000 people were arrested, imprisoned or tortured. During the Pinochet reign of terror (which lasted 40 years) potentially hundreds of thousands of people died.

Secondly, in less but still ample depth, the DRC. Patrice Lumumba, the first legally elected president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was assassinated 61 years ago, on 17 January 1961. This heinous crime was a culmination of two inter-related assassination plots by the American and Belgian governments, which used Congolese accomplices and a Belgian execution squad to carry out the deed.

He was, largely, a popular figure within the DRC. However, his death led to a long series of civil wars in the DRC, which, ultimately, have led its basically completely undemocratic state today, with José Eduardo dos Santos being in office for a 40 years until his death last year.

This was a very interesting and in-depth talk to round off the year, despite Patel's poetry recital that started at 9.45pm. The Mighty Peel Society's talks for 2022 thus concluded, and we await next year with excitement and slight fear. Do come!

SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY

Benjamin Wu, The Head Master's, 'Are we alone in the Universe?', 15 November'

On 15 November 2022, the Scientific Society welcomed Benjamin Wu, *The Head Master's*, who gave a talk titled 'Are we alone in the Universe?'

The talk began with Wu discussing Giordano Bruno, who lived in the 16th century. He was an iconoclast and stated that 'There are countless suns, and countless earths all rotating around their suns in exactly the same way as the planets of our system'. Wu later mentioned that a modern way of saying this is there are a hundred billion stars in our galaxy alone and at least 10% have exoplanets.

Wu continued by explaining what a transit is and what the Kepler's graph is. A transit is a shadow cast by a planet onto another planet when the first planet is between the second planet and a star, and this is how we discover exoplanets (a planet that is outside the solar system). Kepler's graph has three surprises. The first surprise is that there are exoplanets that are the same size as Jupiter but have much shorter orbital cycles. The second surprise is that there are exoplanets between the size of Earth and Neptune, of which there are none in our solar system. The third surprise is that the Sun is not actually a typical star.

A typical star is a red dwarf that is rather dimmer and has a lower temperature than the Sun. Wu continued by showing an example of a red dwarf sun called Trappist 1. Trappist 1 has planets around same size as the Earth orbiting it and the planet's orbital cycles are very close. Despite this, it is still possible that there is water on the surfaces of the planets.

Wu continued by stating that we would need look at the atmosphere of the exoplanets to determine if there is water. Among the thousands the exoplanets discovered, only a few of them are close enough to allow us to check the atmospheres. Wu went on to explain how it is hard to examine the planets because they are light years away. To examine them, we use telescopes, such as the recently launched James Webb telescope and the well-known Hubble telescope.

Wu the explained biosignatures. Biosignatures are used to find life on a planet by identifying gases that are uniquely associated with life and gather in large amounts in the atmosphere. However, there is a chance of producing a false positive biosignature. This happens because many gases produced by life forms can also be produced by rocks.

To round off the lecture, Wu talked about how we can use water to predict if there are life forms on these exoplanets. He explained that water is critical for life because of its unique properties such as being a solvent. Because of these properties, we can look for a blue planet in outer space using telescope such as the James Webb telescope. It was believed that life started in the oceans, as they have an abundance of minerals. Wu also suggested that simple forms of life were already present on Earth a billion years ago and it is only in about the last 500 million years that more complex life forms have existed here. Indeed, humans have only been on Earth for 200,000 years. From this, we understand that life may be easy, but complex life is likely to be hard.

METROPOLITAN

ITE, MISSA EST

The uncertain shuffling of feet begins. The polished shoes flicker in angst. The hands tightly flex and crease. The eyes are heavy upon his skin. They wildly contour his fragile skeletal figure projected through the green cloth that binds his body. "Well" he says. His brittle skin spasms like plunging into bitter water. The cold patent eyes on which all life has been projected now desperately fiddle at his covered flesh. When the cloak drapes on his scrawny sinews every eye throngs about his body and arbours at this very suggestion of his bald membrane.

His raw arms swing upwards like a heavily dolled heiress walking down her grand staircase to embrace guests. A wave of anxiety inundates the suits and heads. Eyes flutter, hearts pound and arms sweep in fatigue, grandly presenting nothing to no-one. His hand bloom as he absorbs the warm glow that emits from his worshipers. "Ite missa est" he modestly speaks. "The mass has ended".

Silence is kept. Father Seal begins his walk. Hands pull to sides. Faces practice smiles. He clasps his pockmarked hands. His bible rest behind them. Where he walks the people smile. They peel their dry, sponge-like faces mockingly into a grimace and crawl their chins far from their necks. He passes. Jaws clench. Scorn and dissatisfaction blend his incense aroma wake. Sulphurous glares coat his back. Each rattling bone of his spine, each slim strand of thin muscle is doused in mild hatred, bred in boredom. He does not plan to linger by the door.

Slow Bach oozes out of the organ. Each note is indistinct. The noise is a syrup without textural definition. Each bite is sickly sweet; it stings the throat and acidifies the tongue. Seal is gone. There is a dense clog of feet as, like stodgy strawberry jam, the prayers swarm the aisle. Still damp shoeshine is swiped under foot. Trouser cuffs crease. The organ drear is inaudible and its meaning since lost. Already discussion has pounced onto the subject of dinner. The gaggle streams out to return in one week, when their eyes shall once again fawn and idealise; brawl and corrupt.

HIGHER STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

by St John Smith, Newlands

There are many different views on how one could achieve a higher state of consciousness. I, however, would like stress that this 'essay' will mainly outline scientific indicators as to how/whether a higher state of consciousness is reachable, focusing on the effects of psychedelics on the brain/consciousness and how it compares to its 'awake' state.

In the study 'First evidence for a higher state of consciousness', neuroscientists observed a steady increase in the variety of brain signals of people under the influence of psychedelic drugs compared to when they were in a normal 'awake and aware' state. This measure of the complexity of brain activity – called neural signal diversity – provides an index of the level of one's consciousness. Scientists have shown that awake people have more diverse neural activity using this scale than those who are asleep. Previous studies have focused on lowered states of consciousness, such as when people sleep, are under anaesthesia, or are in a 'vegetative' state. 'People often say they experience insight under these drugs – and when this occurs in a therapeutic context, it can predict positive outcomes. The present findings may help us understand how this can happen', writes Dr Robin Carhart-Harris, the study's author.

Obviously, the scientific world cannot conclude such a profound question with a) a small sample of evidence and b) because consciousness is an extremely complex and sophisticated topic that takes a lifetime to understand. Nonetheless, science cautiously waits, excited for another compelling theory on the higher states of consciousness.

Professor Anil Seth, Co-director of the Sackler Centre for Consciousness Science at the University of Sussex, states that the findings of the comparative study between the 'awake/active state' of the brain 'show that the brain-on-psychedelics behaves very differently from normal.' Furthermore, 'during the psychedelic state, the electrical activity of the brain is less predictable and less "integrated" than during normal conscious wakefulness – as measured by global signal diversity.' The correlation between psychedelics and brain integration created questions. How conscious can one be? To what extent is one conscious?

Personally, I find this quite interesting as consciousness is predominantly associated with connectivity in the brain, whereas this study highlights that the brain, while under the influence of psychedelics, is perhaps 'less integrated'. This unpredictable nature of the brain could prompt a higher state of consciousness – but science does not have the evidence yet to prove or disprove this assertion (I note that the psychedelics used in this specific study were psilocybin and LSD). Interestingly, a group of scientists using brain imaging technology measured the minuscule magnetic fields produced in the brain and found that, across both drugs, the neural signal diversity was reliably higher. However, this does not answer questions relating to consciousness; it merely emphasises that a psychedelic

brain state is 'distinctive and can be related to other global changes in conscious level'.

The idea that a brain under psychedelics transforms itself into another realm excites the scientific world. It is a question for the ages – can a higher state of consciousness be achieved? If so, how? And what has happened to trigger such an event? Research on the effects of psychedelics promises to deliver discoveries that can be used for medicine and human development, a prodigious advancement in civilisation.

In the final analysis, the ideas surrounding consciousness are endless and complex. There are an infinite number of ways to approach this topic, and while I only explored the effects of psychedelics on consciousness, I believe it is plausible to say that there is another achievable state – whether it is necessarily "higher" we do not know, but I can write with confidence that there is another state of consciousness that could be attained. We just do not know how it can be acquired – I am positive psychedelics is not the only possible route.



HARROW SCHOOL
SHORT
COURSES

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WINSTON CHURCHILL ESSAY COMPETITION

Blue for a boy? Should boys and girls be raised differently?

The 2022 Winston Churchill Essay Competition asked entrants to reflect on whether children should be brought up differently, depending on their gender. This encouraged consideration of gender stereotypes, biological differences and changes, the impact of gendered toys and games during childhood, and gender roles later in life. Lower School boys responded to two articles that expressed different views on this topic, while Sixth Form boys were welcome to respond in any way they wished, focusing on any aspect of the question that interested them.

The results

Shells

Winner: Paul Olusegun, *Druries*

Highly commended: Sean Tiernan, *Newlands*, and Timi Aiyeola, *The Grove*

Removes

Winner: Ben Shailer, *Rendalls*

Highly commended: Jonathan Ford, *West Acre* and Toni Shi, *The Grove*

Fifth Form

Winner: Arturo Saville, *Rendalls*

Highly commended: Seun Doherty, *The Head Master's*, and Rohan Ragoowansi, *Elmfield*

Sixth Form

Winner: Hadrian Ho, *The Head Master's*,

Highly commended: Jack He, *West Acre*

HERE AND THERE

Twenty-two boys sat the first round of the British Mathematical Olympiad last term. Collectively they performed very well, with 12 earning certificates of Merit and a further six certificates of Distinction. Particular congratulations to Andy Li, *Moretons*, who produced the standout individual performance, earning the highest mark in the School.

Harrovians have secured 16 excellent early offers from US universities, including nine offers from five of the eight Ivy League schools: Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, UPenn and Brown. This is the highest number of early offers secured by Harrow boys in the past five years. Taking into account the lower than 5% admissions rate at some of these institutions, this is an incredible achievement. Among the remaining early offers were also offers from such excellent schools as UChicago and Vanderbilt University. Overall, nine of the 16 early offers came from US universities ranked among the top 15 globally.

THINGS DO GET BETTER

it's moments like these that make me really feel happy, because out of all the chaos and noise in the world around us, things that are happening overseas, things that are happening right next to us;

all that information coming in

it's moments like these where you realise that the world actually

moves really slow

you know what these moments are. they are special to you most of my problems right now are centered around trying to find myself, i feel kind of lost and that's okay. it's okay to feel lost from time to time, but there's a moment where i felt like i had everything i needed and i was happy. i had great things to look forward to in the future, but now it feels like something has changed. i don't know what

but it's different now

there's more to the world than in your city, the people at school, more than you could possibly imagine. there's so much to experience and to be a part of, so much that we have the potential to see, and it feels like if we die without experiencing all of these things, do we really know what it was like to be human?

but i do know that right now i feel calm for the first time in a long time.

everything happens for a reason, think about all the possibilities that led you to being in this moment, really think about it

maybe what i'm saying sounds ridiculous but everything happens for a reason. if something bad happens to you in the moment, don't automatically assume that it's the worst

life might be hard, and you might feel really lost right now, but its okay to feel lost. remember that despite everything that is going on, there are people who love and value you and you have things that you value. that is what home is. not where your family are, not where your friends are. home is where

the people who value you are. be they beaks, boys, parents. they are part of your home.

i know that someone out there needs to hear this: it will get better. it's okay to feel lost or hurt, everything happens for a reason, it is all up to how you react. i promise that nothing can take on you, you are invincible, you are an amazing human being and i'm so filled with love for you

maybe life isn't so bad after all
think about that.

OPINION

WHY YOU SHOULD READ

Why should you read? Reading is boring. It takes up your precious time and isn't even useful. Fiction is the worst, for it has no purpose. All you do is just spend an hour moving your eyes and understanding words. Watchable content can deliver all the content in less time and with less work.

So, what is the point? If reading is so boring and so easily replaced, what is its purpose?

This isn't going to be some long spiel on why reading is so amazing or how reading improves your grammar. This is just a summary of how reading can benefit you.

To start with, if you aren't already reading for enjoyment, have you considered why? Was it because of those dreaded book reports and book diaries you had to produce? At my prep school, a small and stout woman would stand just outside the main entrance; her e job appeared to consist only of asking if we had our book diaries. It was this that, as I am sure was the case for you, discouraged me from reading when I was younger. It felt like a chore.

This is not how reading should feel. Reading should be something you enjoy, and if you aren't reading then you simply haven't found the right book. It really doesn't matter if you are reading *Heartstopper* by Alice Oseman, a book in the loosest sense of the word, or the Daily Telegraph. Anything goes, as long as you are enjoying it.

This 'style' of reading is called free voluntary reading (or FVR). Stephen D. Krashen raves about it in his insightful book *The Power of Reading*.

Now that we know why you aren't reading, let's take a look at why you should be. Reading, as you know, improves spelling, grammar and punctuation. Reading brings your writing standard up, so if you struggle writing those history essays, reading will help your writing.

Are you having trouble sleeping? Have you got too much going on? Reading can help with that. Studies have shown that while reading before bed, awareness increases (compared to doing a dot-to-dot and other such activities), and relaxation increases after reading (compared to other activities). So reading can help you sleep and also help you write your essays better. Win-win.

But wait, there's more! If you have a reading-heavy GCSE or A-level and you are struggling, reading books you enjoy, such as light fiction, can complement the heavy books very well, making reading those heavy books much easier.

The most obvious benefit of reading is increasing your knowledge. People who read more, know more. Good thinkers also read more. If you find yourself in an environment or situation where a lot of thinking and rational thought is required, a school perhaps, reading is beneficial. Non-fiction can fill you with knowledge, but opinion books and newspapers will make you think about what is happening.

To summarise the extensive list of benefits of reading: reading dramatically improves spelling, grammar and punctuation,

essential for GCSE and A-level English; reading decreases apprehensiveness about writing and can even improve writing quality, a double benefit essential for GCSE and a-Level History, Geography, T&P, Economics, Politics etc. Reading is enjoyable if you find the right book, which the School Librarians would happily help you with I'm sure, and it can put you at rest, essential for existing.

You are at one of the best schools in the world, with an extensive library and incredibly helpful Librarians who can help you find the books you could love. Take advantage of this opportunity. Take advantage of reading and all its benefits. Remember, if you aren't enjoying the book, choose another one.

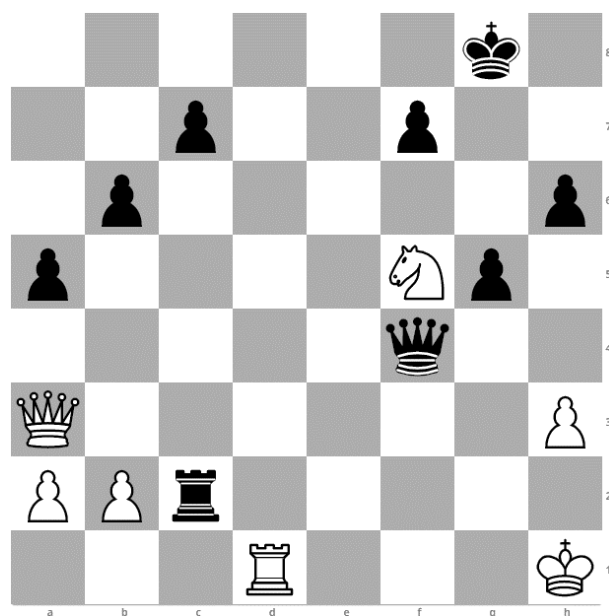
CHESS

After a brief hiatus, *The Harrovian* weekly chess puzzles are back!

Send your solution to JPBH (Master-in-Charge of Chess) each week. The best solver throughout the term wins a book prize.

This week, it's white to play and checkmate in two moves.

The solution will be provided with next week's puzzle.



If you'd like to play some chess, come to Chess Club, 4.30–6pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays in MS 5 – players of all abilities are welcome. If you cannot make those times but are interested, email JPBH.

RESOLUTIONS

Readers. New Year has come. Perhaps you have made your New Year's resolutions with apprehension and dread?

We all know how the story goes. You make these resolutions and say you will commit to them, but never really do. Well, courtesy of the Cortex podcast, I have found a solution to the never-ending rodeo of shame that we go on every year. It is called Yearly Themes.

Instead of setting a specific goal this year, think of an overarching theme that includes all your aims. This year my theme was Year of Routine. I felt like I was losing my routines and struggling to maintain a regular sleep schedule. Getting up and ready in the mornings was difficult for me, and so was getting things organised and in order. I hoped to be able to improve on this throughout the year.

That may sound like a resolution, but it is different as there is not one set goal. It's not "I want to lose five kilograms." it is "This is my year of mental health, I want to lose weight and get in a more positive mental space". This way, even if you do

not lose as much weight as you had hoped, you still achieved some of your theme. You don't feel quite as disappointed or annoyed at yourself when you miss a day of dieting or forget to go to the gym one afternoon.

I followed my year of routine, and it was great. The year wasn't entirely routine. Everything wasn't scheduled to the letter. There were some days when I woke up late or some days when I broke my streak of getting up and getting everything ready in the mornings, but it didn't matter. What mattered was that I managed to maintain the schedule. I could maintain the routine over a greater period. I am quite confident in saying that I am a more routinised person as a result of this theme. I still feel really good, even though I didn't achieve every single one of my goals, like my goal of getting a proper sleep schedule. But I still achieved part of my goal and I feel fantastic.

I strongly encourage Yearly Themes and I think they are a fantastic way of creating goals that you can just feel good about. They don't have to be yearly either. CGP Grey, YouTuber and podcaster, recommends seasonal themes instead; maybe you feel like you can't handle a theme for a full year, but a Spring Theme could go quite well, a Season of Wellbeing. Spring is a wonderful time to go outside and have a nice long walk in the fresh air, especially after a cold and long winter.

So I encourage you to consider this idea and to tackle next year head-on and with confidence.

became very close and, with the score tied at 14-14, it was in the balance. Rossiter won another point to get within two points of outright victory. Under extreme pressure, Sotir showed heart, and a level head, to square the match at two games all with a 17-15 score line in the fourth game.



In the final game Rossiter shot out of the blocks to lead 8-0. Sotir fought hard to get a foothold and the score was levelled at 11-11. Sotir then kept himself together to close out at 15-11 in front of a gallery of about 200 people. His athleticism, co-ordination, passion and sheer guts were outstanding. Having heard Sotir's name seemingly weekly in Speech Room, to have him come home from the premier championship competition with this win was a delight and very inspiring.

SPORT

RACKETS

National Schools Rackets Championships at Queen's, Christmas Holidays

Stephan Baranov, *Moretons*, won the Renny Cup in a dominant display of control and consistency to win 3-0. After just 15 months of rackets, this is a remarkable achievement and a great testament to the focus and ability to make dramatic improvements. To progress through six rounds to win a tournament with 70 competitors is a tribute also to Baranov's calmness under pressure.



In the Foster Cup, containing the top 16 boys in the country, after three conclusive wins, Tarquin Sotir, *Druries*, faced the number 1 seed James Rossiter from St Paul's in the final. After winning a tight first game, Sotir was unable to stop the Pauline winning the second and third games. The fourth game

Ways to contact *The Harrovian*

Articles, opinions and letters are always appreciated.

Email the Master-in-Charge smk@harrowschool.org.uk

Read the latest issues of The Harrovian online at harrowschool.org.uk/Harrovian



CELEBRATING OUR PAST
REFOUNDING OUR FUTURE