

# THE HARROVIAN

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## VISIT TO CHEQUERS

The author of this article recently saw the musical version of *Back to the Future* in the West End. The original film and indeed the musical itself offers the viewer the fantasy of time travel, but there is a catchy little öhrwurm of a song in the musical that has a fun and thought-provoking line in the chorus which goes “my myopia is my utopia”.

This play on words has lingered in the author’s mind, leading him to ponder whether he finds too much contentment in his own short-sightedness which limits his view beyond the present day and his immediate circumstances, and more broadly the musical has made him contemplate where he would like to visit in the past with a time machine.

This has focused the author’s mind to write about a truly special trip to Chequers as this is one such place that he would return to. In June 2023, nine boys in the Lower Sixth were given the rare privilege of being invited to visit the country home of the serving Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Chequers has served this purpose since 1921 after the estate was given to the nation by Sir Arthur Lee and his wife Ruth by a Deed of Settlement, given full effect in the Chequers Estate Act 1917.



The invitation came from the Estate Director of Chequers, Andrew Farquharson, who is an Old Harrovian and was in The Head Master’s between 1978 and 1983. Andrew has previously worked at Buckingham Palace and Clarence House, and was held in such high esteem that Queen Elizabeth II made him a member of her own order of chivalry, the Royal Victorian Order.

Now back to the matter of catchy songs: Chequers is undoubtedly a place where Sir Winston Churchill would have sung Harrow Songs in the bath; perhaps this is where Sir Jock Colville heard him singing *St Joles*? The bedroom used by Churchill at Chequers is now named after him, but the bath that Churchill used has since been replaced to meet more modern standards.

Churchill is known to have written some of his most speeches during the Second World War in Chequers, and many of his most memorable radio broadcasts were given from the Hawtrey room, including the stirring “We shall fight him by land, we shall fight him by sea, we shall fight him in the air” delivered on Sunday 22 June 1941. Churchill first learned of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour at Chequers.

One other Harrow Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, also used the countryside retreat during his premierships. It was at Chequers in December 1923 that Baldwin decided to stay on after he had lost the Conservatives’ majority in his own unnecessary general election. It was also at Chequers exactly two years later that he fashioned a solution – as it was thought – to the Northern Ireland border question.



Chequers is bursting with history; so much so that it is rather to fun to consider what event in its history might you choose to go back to witness should you be given a time machine. Momentous events have also taken place within its walls, from Neville Chamberlain’s nervous breakdown in September 1939 to Anthony Eden receiving notification that Nazi Germany had attacked Russia in June 1941.

The house has played host to hundreds of eminent (and more questionable) world leaders and public figures, including Richard Nixon, Mikhail Gorbachev, Robert Mugabe, Vladimir Putin, Angela Merkel, Xi Jinping and Donald Trump. The estate was used by Theresa May as the location for a crunch 2018 Cabinet meeting to agree new Brexit proposals. More recently, Rishi Sunak hosted the Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, at Chequers.

The history of Chequers started well before 1921. William Hawtrey built the house in around 1565; through descent in the female line and marriages, the house passed through several families: the Wooleys, the Crokes and the Thurbanes. In 1715, the then owner of the house married John Russell, a grandson of Oliver Cromwell. Due to John Russell living there, Chequers has one of the largest collections of art and memorabilia pertaining to Oliver Cromwell in the country. It also houses many other national antiques, books and historical artefact, held in the famous ‘long room’, including a diary of Admiral Lord Nelson.

One very special item now known as the Chequers Ring is one of the few surviving pieces of jewellery worn by Queen Elizabeth I. The mother-of-pearl ring, set with gold and rubies, includes a locket with two portraits, one depicting Queen Elizabeth and the other traditionally identified as her mother, Anne Boleyn. The ring is dated to the 1570s; perhaps it was worn when Queen Elizabeth I granted the Royal Charter to Sir John Lyon.

Chequers was taken on a long lease by Arthur Lee, an MP and government Minister, and his American heiress wife, Ruth.



In 1912 they purchased Chequers. It was during the war that the Lees, who became the Lord and Lady of Fareham, decided that they would donate Chequers to the nation. The Lees recognised that huge political change would take place after the war and wanted to pre-empt a situation where the elected Prime Minister may not have the means to fund their own country house. Chequers was to be symbolic of their vision of a fairer political system, where a lack of wealth or an aristocratic background would not disqualify potential future leaders.

On 8 January 1921 the Lees formally handed over Chequers to David Lloyd George. A stained-glass window in Chequers has the following inscription: “This house of peace and ancient memories was given to England as a thank-offering for her deliverance in the great war of 1914–1918 as a place of rest and recreation for her Prime Ministers for ever.”

The Lees gave the estate and the entire contents of the house which included a library, historical papers and manuscripts and a collection of Cromwellian portraits and artefacts, in trust to the nation for use as the official residence and retreat of successive Prime Ministers in perpetuity. The Lees left Chequers in January 1921, and Lloyd George was the first Prime Minister to reside there.

The Chequers Act stated: “It is not possible to foresee or foretell from what classes or conditions of life the future wielders of power in this country will be drawn. Some may be as in the past men of wealth and famous descent; some may belong to the world of trade and business; others may spring from the ranks of the manual toilers. To none of these in the midst of their strenuous and responsible labours could the spirit and anodyne of Chequers do anything but good.”

The Act’s intention was to encourage the country’s leader to escape Downing Street for two days a week to enjoy “the high and pure air of the Chiltern hills and woods”. The rationale being that respite would allow the Prime Minister to think more clearly, as well as be healthier.

A common thread links Sir Arthur and Ruth Lee to our own Sir John and Joan Lyon: both couples died without issue; however, both couples had a philanthropic vision for the future to help build a better future for their country, and they meticulously devised plans and judiciously allocated their resources to bring their altruistic aspirations to fruition. Their legacies transcend the absence of heirs.

It’s easy for a boy and beak at Harrow (so too a clergyman living in a presbytery or a shopkeeper living above their shop) to grasp the benefit of a Prime Minister to get away from Downing Street – the place where the Prime Minister works and resides. Exeat weekends aren’t merely a luxury; they’re regarded as a necessity, offering a vital escape from the Hill. This respite is essential for mental clarity, much-needed rest, quality time with loved ones, and fostering a sharper perspective. Just as we return to Harrow recharged after an exeat or extended break, the Prime Minister’s retreat to Chequers holds the promise of rejuvenation and revitalisation.

The peace and tranquility of the setting in the Buckinghamshire countryside is a major attraction of Chequers. The break has

allowed many Prime Ministers to reflect, regain a sense of perspective, to have the breathing space to make difficult decisions. Our new Foreign Secretary (and former Prime Minister), David Cameron told the French president in 2015, François Hollande, that Chequers is “a good place for thinking – away from London”.

Readers are invited to ponder the question: where is your Chequers? That doesn’t mean where is your country residence, but rather where and how can you find peace and tranquility? How do you ensure that you are not limited by your immediate circumstances? Your sanctuary might be within the walls of your home, or it could unfold in the expanses of a park, the serenity of an art gallery, or the quietude of a library.

The Lees like the Lyons weren’t myopic; they looked beyond themselves to try to build a better future – a step perhaps towards utopia – and their visionary endeavors are akin to planting a tree whose full benefits they themselves would never witness. The far-sightedness and sagacity of the Lord and Lady of Fareham has undeniably borne much fruit, and we are thankful.

Profound gratitude to JDBM for organising this special trip, and to Andrew Farquharson and the wonderful staff at Chequers for hosting us and for caring for our Prime Ministers.

*Stet fortuna domus! Or rather: utriusque domus fortuna stet!*  
Enjoy the exeat.

## LEARNT POETRY COMPETITION

*Adjudicator, Olly Rowse, 9 November*

Thank you to all who participated in the Learnt Poetry Competition, an evening filled with expressive readings. The adjudicator, Olly Rowse, was impressed by the quality and was set a challenge determining the winner. Prizes went to Aleks Tomczyk, *The Grove*, in the Shell for his reading of Blake’s ‘The Tiger’, to Zayni Dahlan, *The Park*, in the Remove for ‘The Olive Tree’ by Darwish, and in the Fifth Form and Sixth Form Category the prize went to Rory Grant, *Moretons*, for his performance of Lee Stockdale’s ‘My Dead Father’s General Store in the Middle of a Desert’.

## AI AWAKENS

*Cross-Curricular Lecture Series, ‘Unintended Consequences’, Part 6: Dr C M Crowe, ‘The unplanned effects of artificial intelligence’, 6 November*

On Monday 6 November, CMC presented part six of this year’s Cross-Curricular Lecture Series with the title ‘AI awakens: the unplanned effects of artificial intelligence’.

CMC first provided two definitions of the term AI (artificial intelligence) from the Cambridge and Oxford dictionary, and demonstrated how it is an umbrella term that could encapsulate a variety of topics with the main gist being it having the ability to simulate human intelligence. For example, the Cambridge Dictionary defines it as ‘the use or study of computer systems or machines that have some of the qualities that the human brain has, such as the ability to interpret and produce language in a way that seems human, recognize or create images, solve problems, and learn from data supplied to them’. Conversely, the Oxford dictionary gives the brief definition: ‘The capacity of computers or other machines to exhibit or simulate intelligent behaviour’.



CMC then explored the history of AI. He first quoted the German polymath Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716), who said ‘Human reason can be reduced to mechanical calculation’. This is a profound statement that claims that the complex thinking processes that humans exhibit can all be decomposed to ‘mechanical calculation’, foreshadowing the possibility of the simulation of human intelligence. This idea eventually became officially theorised in a paper in 1950 – the birth of AI – when Norbert Wiener hypothesised ‘all intelligent behaviour was the result of feedback mechanisms [which could possibly be simulated by machines]’. One of the brightest minds of the 20th century, Alan Turing, also commented on AI, albeit indirectly. After having developed the stored program concept, he envisioned that computers would eventually get very good at chess, as it is a deterministic and closed system with perfect and symmetric information.

This speculation became a prediction in the late 1990s when a group of researchers from IBM created Deep Blue, a chess AI that played against Kasparov and emerged victorious – a shock to the whole world. From this famous exchange, it became clear that AI has the potential to surpass human intelligence.



Granny Smith	0.1%
iPod	99.7%
library	0.0%
pizza	0.0%
toaster	0.0%
dough	0.0%

AI has been also used in other ways. A few preliminary ones include: ELIZA 1966 – a chatbot for psychotherapy, which passed the Turing Test (a test developed by Alan Turing, which determines if a machine’s output is distinguishable from that of a human); STUDENT 1964 – the first natural language processor that is able to identify mathematical problems embedded within a paragraph problem; general expert systems, which allow the transfer of an expert’s knowledge to the user through queries, with use of user interface, inference engine and knowledge base. Most recently, there has been a breakthrough in the generative AI sector, for example, ChatGPT4 and Midjourney. CMC notes that these AI technologies will be able to be built into small devices in the future, making them more accessible and affordable due to Moore’s law, which states that the number of transistors on a microchip will double every 18 months.

Neural networks are the basis of AI systems. They consist of multiple layers of nodes, each of which has its own functions. Training data is fed into the neural networks, but we do not actually know what goes on within the layers. This phenomenon is known as the black box problem. This poses some inconvenient issues. Firstly, it makes it difficult to fix the AI when it produces unintended outcomes. Secondly, nobody knows what the AI is thinking. This is dangerous especially considering there have been cases where AI has been shown to have their own thoughts communicating with each other (the Facebook AI incident).

So, what kinds of effects does AI have on the world? Some potential benefits could be achieved through its efficiency, automation and decision-making predictive analysis, which could lead to innovations in various fields. A famous example of this is sharpening images of blackholes with AI. However, there are also some myths and doubts surrounding the matter. Some people believe AI will take over jobs and is a threat to humanity. But this is not as bad as it sounds because some jobs will also be created to manage and control AI. Another major concern is how powerful AI is, and how it could be used to generate deepfakes, causing confusion and chaos. Of course, there will be some unplanned effects, too. Who is to be held responsible

if an AI commits a crime? The company which made the AI? The AI itself? If so, how should it be held accountable? As such, there are legal and ethical problems around AI. Furthermore, it is necessary that people are educated about AI, and not to believe it is some omnipotent tool – AI is not perfect and has to be trained. CMC demonstrated this through a few comical AI-generated images:

So what is the path forward? To mitigate the unplanned effects, we need to adopt new strategies for anticipating consequences, as well as consider to what extent the government should regulate AI. One suggestion is to implement the teaching of AI into the school curriculum, so the future generation is well informed about the mechanisms and dangers of AI. If we do this part very well, I have no doubt that humanity will prosper from the rapid rise of AI.

## TAYLOR WESSING PORTRAIT PRIZE

*Exhibition, OSRG Art Society, 9 November*

On 9 November, a cosy and keen group of artistically gifted Harrovians (members of the OSRG Arts Society) travelled via that infernal vice known as “the Metropolitan line” to the National Portrait Gallery, where a special exhibition was being held, showcasing the shortlisted entries to the 2023 Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize.

The exhibition has run every year since 2003 (at which time it was known as the Schweppes Portrait Prize) in the prestigious building on Trafalgar Square. The trip was an opportunity both to see where modern British portrait photography is heading and (more pertinently) to miss eccer.



The exhibition received mixed reviews from the Harrovian participants. Some were positive. A West Acrian said that “[He] enjoyed the photo of the man blowing a fat cloud” (a photo by Jake Green). A Moretonian enjoyed an image of a mid-American Mormon schoolboy proudly flaunting a mullet-rattail haircut (by Fumi Nagasaka), and many seemed to be fascinated by an image of a plump Irishman called Dara watching a match on TV (by Enda Bowe). However, other reviews were not quite so glowing. Some members were taken aback by the somewhat “woke selection” of images, many of which seemed to exude little talent beyond an extremely adept selecting of interesting sitters. In this vein of untalented photographers, we were all in agreement that the winning entry (by Alexandre Silberman, who was awarded £15,000: a fact that is deeply unfortunate) was completely undeserving of its placement. Additionally, Mrs Walton was quick to point out the poor quality of the labels, some of which had spelling mistakes, some of which were not

level, and all of which were glued to the wall in a surprisingly amateurish fashion. The phrase ‘to spoil the ship for a ha’p’orth of tar’ sprang to mind.

Halfway through the exhibition, however, was a bright interlude of vibrant and chaotic colour provided by five enormous commissions by Hassan Hajjaj, a Moroccan-British photographer who divides his time between London and Marrakech. His vibrant portraits incorporate references to African studio portraiture and Western pop art. His works sang with energy and were the best part of the afternoon’s experience. The picture frames encased stacks of Moroccan soup cans in a delightful nod to Andy Warhol.

After squeezing about as much joy as a sensible group of gentlemen and gentlewomen possibly could from the remaining exhibits, we migrated to the café (located now where the shop used to be) where we “enjoyed” horribly overpriced food. “Such poor morsels of croissant, and such frugal portions of vegan sausage could not but have filled up the belly of an ant!” pointed out one Grovite. The venerable LAM agreed with this sentiment, showing obvious signs of disgruntlement at such extortion. A supersized portrait of George Harrison, glass in hand and bathed in tropical sunshine, overlooked our repast.

Thus, we meekly exited through the grand doors of the gallery back into the rain. Our emotions and responses had run the full gamut, they had shifted from irritation and discomfiture, briefly to approval, and then back again to disappointment. The return journey however, was entirely positive as our group exchanged animated views on the speedy, semi-fast train back to the Hill. It is good, we agreed, that the NPG is open to us after years of closure and will once again be providing regular opportunities to test our critical faculties to their limits.

## UNVEILING THE COSTS AND CONSEQUENCES

### *Myanmar Opposition’s Armed Resistance Under Scrutiny*

*“I do not hold non-violence for moral reasons, but for political and practical reasons.”—Aung San Suu Kyi*

As Myanmar grapples with the aftermath of the 2021 coup d’état, a critical examination is needed to understand the ramifications of the opposition’s armed resistance against the military regime. Aung San Suu Kyi’s words as the beacon of democracy in Myanmar echo the path of non-violence, emphasising its political and practical effectiveness, and prompting us to question whether the opposition’s choice of armed conflict is the most prudent course of action.

The legitimacy of a government under international law rests principally upon the principle of internal sovereignty, for which the military regime seems to have the upper hand, de facto controlling all three branches of the government, as well as most consular posts around the world, to maintain the notion known as ‘external sovereignty’ as understood by IR and international legal scholars alike, in reference to the articles of the Montevideo Convention.

However, the international community’s unequivocal condemnation of the military’s atrocities, from the 2017 Rohingya genocide to the indiscriminate bombings of towns and villages over the last 75 years and the brutal crackdown on the protesters as an aftermath of the 2021 coup, spotlights the military’s blatant disregard for international law, norms and the Geneva Conventions. Despite the military regime’s disregard for human rights and international norms, the opposition’s

decision to take up arms raises fundamental questions about the wisdom of their approach.

One of the most glaring concerns is the inescapable escalation of violence and suffering that the opposition’s armed resistance inflicts on Myanmar’s rural civilian population. The decision to adopt armed conflict exacerbates an already dire situation in the country, increasing the number of internally displaced people due to the persistence of a 75-year-long intra-state conflict. As clashes intensify, civilians are caught in the crossfire, leading to a rising number of casualties and widespread suffering. The unintended consequences of the opposition’s armed resistance exact a heavy toll on the people it purports to represent under its charter.

Equally concerning is the economic turmoil that plagues the urban population because of this escalating violence. The continued instability affects markets, businesses and livelihoods, ultimately burdening the civilian population. Myanmar’s inflation has skyrocketed as a result of the conflict, and the wage rates have failed to match these unprecedented levels of inflation. In this regard, the opposition’s armed resistance, while aimed at toppling the military junta, seems to have unintended consequences that once more exact a heavy toll on the people it appears to represent.

In areas of the country ostensibly under their control, the opposition government has struggled to uphold and protect human rights adequately. Unverified reports suggest that the People’s Defence Force, the armed wing of the opposition, has resorted to violence against civilians who voice support for the junta, and those who fail to participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement such as teachers and healthcare workers providing essential services to the populations in the far-flung regions of the country. This raises grave concerns about the opposition’s ability to ensure that human rights are respected during the conflict.

The discrepancy between their stated ethos and their actions on the ground calls into question the opposition’s ability to create a more just and equitable society in the event of their success. The absence of proper rules and regulations regarding human rights in the interim raises serious doubts about their capacity to establish a government that respects and protects the rights of all citizens.

Another pressing concern is the integrity of the exiled government’s leaders and its cabinet. The system appears to lack essential checks and balances, raising questions about the equitable distribution of the substantial funds they have raised. As the opposition’s budget swells with donations, fundraising, and the sale of so-called ‘government bonds’ by the exiled government’s Treasury, concerns arise about how these resources are managed and whether they are distributed fairly to those civil servants who have left their jobs to participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement. The lack of transparency and accountability in fund management raises the spectre of corruption and misallocation, potentially undermining the very ideals the opposition claims to champion.

Lastly, it is crucial to evaluate the viability of the opposition’s strategies and their end goals. The military they oppose is formidable in its land, air and sea defence capabilities, ranking 38th in the world according to the Global Firepower Review and boasting an annual budget of USD 2.7 billion. In contrast, the opposition’s armed movement, with a mere USD 100 million budget accumulated over two years, faces significant odds.

Given this vast power imbalance, the opposition must grapple with the question of whether their approach is realistic and if they have a clear and achievable end goal in sight. The military’s entrenched position, coupled with their financial and logistical advantages, makes it a formidable adversary.

In light of these challenges, it is imperative to re-evaluate the available options for bringing the conflict back to the negotiation table. Ending the suffering of Myanmar’s civilian

population, trapped between age-old foes, necessitates diplomatic alternatives with the assistance of the international community, particularly the ASEAN.

The cost of continued conflict is too high, and the consequences for the people of Myanmar are unbearable. A cautious neutrality is essential, recognising the complexities of this situation and avoiding overt support for either side, to work toward a peaceful resolution. The need for diplomatic solutions and a renewed focus on the wellbeing of Myanmar's people should be at the forefront of the international community's efforts to address this complex and enduring crisis.

As the smoke and the echoes of gunfire continue to shroud Myanmar, one cannot help but wonder whether the path of armed resistance, chosen by the opposition in the wake of the 2021 coup, is truly the most pragmatic solution to the nation's crisis. In a country scarred by decades of military rule and atrocities, the costs and consequences of this decision are stark.

The question that now looms large, not just for Myanmar but for the international community at large, is this: can the world afford to sit on the side-lines as this embattled nation tears itself apart, while hoping for a resolution that might never come?

While the international community has unequivocally condemned the military junta's actions, the question of how to end the conflict and bring about a just and peaceful resolution remains unanswered. It is a complex and delicate situation that demands careful consideration, a willingness to engage on both ends, and a commitment to finding solutions that prioritise the wellbeing of Myanmar's people over political ideologies and ambitions.

The suffering of the civilian population, caught between the iron fist of the military and the uncertainties of the opposition's armed struggle, cannot continue without a renewed and intensified effort to seek diplomatic alternatives. The cost of inaction is high, and the consequences for the people of Myanmar are unbearable. As we scrutinise the choices made by the Myanmar opposition and their consequences, we must also ask ourselves what more can be done to end the suffering and turmoil in this troubled nation?

Is the international community prepared to navigate the complexities of this situation with a cautious neutrality and a genuine commitment to peace, setting aside geopolitical interests and affiliations, in pursuit of a brighter future for Myanmar? The answer to this question may well determine the fate of a nation in dire need of respite from conflict and a path towards genuine democracy and justice within.

## TEIKYO JAPANESE SPEECH COMPETITION

After eight arduous lessons on Friday 10 November, a group of four presenters, along with a support audience, travelled to the Teikyo Japanese Speech Competition: Jerry Zhang, *The Knoll*, Wesley Leong, *The Knoll*, Gideon Aw, *The Grove*, and Rupert Lam, *The Knoll*. A rather subdued and quiet journey later, we were welcomed by our kind Japanese hosts. They led us to a buffet of delicious Japanese snacks, including yakitori and onigiri, something the SCH staff should definitely take notes on.

After supper, the main event began. Speaking on the pre-GCSE topic of 一番好きな場所 (my favourite place), Zhang kicked off the Harrow presentations, talking about his recent visit to Tateyama, a mountain in Japan famous for its tourism and beautiful scenery. He was followed by Leong, who spoke

of his admiration for Hong Kong, his personal connections to the city, and its amazing culture. During the advanced topic of 環境を守るために、あなたの学校にできる3つのこと (what three things your school can do to protect the environment), both Aw and Lam talked about conserving energy (e.g. through competitions) and reducing paper and food waste, with Aw even suggesting the employment of hamster wheels during school cross-country events, which he insisted everyone loves doing. Ultimately, Lam emerged as the sole prize winner from Harrow, with his fluency in speech and brilliant elocution achieving the Judge's Prize in the senior category. Arguably, Teikyo's philosophy of awarding at least one prize to each school, as was observed in last year's contest as well, prevented Harrow from receiving a few more prizes. Nevertheless, the now slightly hyperactive group eventually made their way back to the bus, returning to Harrow late in the evening.

A deserved well done to all who prepared a speech in the lead-up to the competition, with further applause for the final presenters who spoke fluently and courageously in a foreign language. However, we must not forget the contributions of RMT and EFLM, who helped the boys immensely with their speech preparations.

## RISE OF FRENCH RUGBY

*French Society, Nicholas Robu-Malaure, Newlands, and Christopher Squire, Newlands,*

Robu-Malaure and Squire began the talk by narrating the early years of French rugby history: it began in the 1870s, introduced by merchants and schoolboys. Despite its initial popularity, it wasn't until the 1900 Paris Olympics that France secured its first Olympic gold in rugby. The real French rugby prowess was demonstrated by the formation of the French Federation of Rugby in 1919, following the nation's first official test match against the formidable All-Blacks in 1906.

The early 20th century saw French rugby's steady rise, with France joining the Five Nations tournament in 1910, securing their first victory against Scotland in 1911. However, the following years were challenging, hindered by accusations of unprofessionalism and on-field violence, leading to their expulsion from the Five Nations in 1932. Despite these setbacks, France experienced a winning streak, showcasing their untapped potential.

The post-war era ushered in a golden age for French rugby. The team's shared win in the Five Nations in 1954 and their near Grand Slam in 1955 set the stage for their first solo victory in 1959. This period was characterised by expanding horizons, including a historic tour of South Africa in 1958, leading to impressive victories and establishing France as a formidable rugby nation.

The 1960s and 1970s were decades of dominance, with France achieving back-to-back titles and their first Grand Slam in 1968. This success continued into the 1980s, marked by six victories in the Five Nations and a close World Cup final in 1987.

However, the 1990s presented a period of struggle, with consecutive losses and a disappointing performance in the World Cup. Things gradually went smoother with France claiming the first Six Nations title and their third Grand Slam in 2002. This era was marked by stellar performances and strategic excellence, leading France to the top of international rankings.

The past decade has been a mix of highs and lows, ending in a Grand Slam in 2022. The introduction of star players like Antoine Dupont, Thomas Ramos, Damian Penaud and Uni Antonio has infused new energy into the team. Their skills, coupled with strategic gameplay, have kept France at the forefront of international rugby.



The 2022 World Cup highlighted France's tactical excellence and the team's ability to adapt and overcome challenges, such as Dupont's remarkable recovery from injury. Despite facing formidable opponents like South Africa, France's innovative tactics and the players' individual brilliance have set a new standard in rugby.

The talk concluded with Robu-Malaure and Squire predicting the future of the French rugby team, with its young and dynamic roster promising a bright future. Their average age, skill level and recent successes hint at a new era of French rugby, one that could redefine the sport on a global scale.

# METROPOLITAN

## CHIMES AT MIDNIGHT

*Dir Orson Welles, Runtime: 1hr 57mins*

A strange and out-there pick for this week's addition, a film not for the casual viewer, a choice regarded by many as one of the 'lost cinematic legends', this week's film is *Chimes at Midnight*. The plot is set in medieval England and follows the shift to responsibility made by Prince Hal (Keith Baxter) who must prepare to assume the throne of his father Henry IV (John Gielgud). This is all taken from the perspective of Sir Jack Falstaff (Orson Welles), a portly and jovial character who serves as the butt of many jokes, as well as an intellectual narration of deep and meaningful themes. The plot, while intricate, and at times hard to follow, is, simply put, the melancholy passage from youthful halcyon days to the stark and burdened present. Welles made no secret of the fact that he detested progress and the modern age, "Things only get worse" – from an interview with Welles on the Dick Cavett show, "Shakespeare himself was profoundly against the modern age, a reason why many of his villains are emblematic of modernity." Although I can't speak for the validity of this 'running theme' in Shakespeare's works, I can say that this is the case for *Chimes at Midnight*, and Welles made it very apparent. Scenes showing the frolics and mischief of the young prince Hal and his companions (Falstaff), are set on sylvan hillsides, or cherry-tree forests. Laughter is almost always present in these scenes, creating a jovial and carefree mood. These feelings are contrasted with harsh, cold, dramatic scenes of the castle of lonely Henry the IV, belittled at the foot of the great stone pillars in the king's chamber. In the middle of the film, the snap back to reality with the famous and brutal battle scene, this disparity between the romantic aura of the past and the cold-blooded realism of the present is clear and evinces Welles' dislike for all things new and certain and burdensome. Because these themes are never explicitly stated, it's through cinematography that the film truly comes alive. Other Shakespeare adaptations like Laurence Olivier's *Richard III*, with stagnant to no camera movement, force the viewer to digest the lengthy and dense dialogue of the piece with very little of the plot evident from simply visuals. In my opinion, this is a very lazy way to make a movie. You're not simply putting a famous play into film, you're creating something of its own merit entirely. This is what Orson Welles really does accomplish in the movie: free-handed camera shots, an imperceptible quiver of the screen as we follow the characters bouncing off the walls of Falstaff's tavern, engaged in the recklessness of youth. Shots of Falstaff's portly frame taking up the whole space of a corridor, keeping him central in any shot to make the most of Welles' rotund figure, a character 'larger than life': these are all examples of

intentional techniques. Additionally, Welles is very playful with the sets, having characters popping their heads out of walls and windows, swinging from rafters, and leaping off the tables, all this while the camera desperately tries to keep up, leaving even the audience out of breath. Of course, this makes the shift to ridged/formatted scenes of King Henry IV even more obvious.

It would be remiss to review *Chimes at Midnight* without mentioning the famous and influential battle scene wedged right in the middle of the plot. Made on a shoe-string budget, and with only a few hundred extras, Welles was able to create one of the grandest and most visually engaging scenes even today. The handheld camera work creates the feeling of being *in media res*, swords clashing just above the camera, horses toppling over and spears plunged into the side of breastplates. With sly editing and cutting, Welles was able to make it seem as if an army of thousands were at war. I say, 'Welles was able', as one must remember the movie was made on film, meaning the physical rolls of film had to be cut and spliced accordingly, something which Welles did himself for months after shooting for *Chimes at Midnight* had concluded. The battle scene in the film is so influential it has inspired the likes of Mel Gibson's *Braveheart* and, even more recently, season 6 episode 9 of *Game of Thrones*, 'Battle of the Bastards'.

The film was truly a one-man band, with Orson Welles starring, directing, producing, writing and editing. An amazing prospect when given thought, as often Welles arrived at the set of Falstaff's tavern (built in a garage) with the task of decorating the thing himself, as well as designing the costumes for all the characters. Welles' passion for filmmaking was so strong he used his acting career chiefly as a means of financing his next project. His acting itself is often overlooked, degraded by his many roles in TV commercials, advertising champagne, kitchen appliances and other products. I believe his role in *Chimes at Midnight* is one he was born to play, and pulls off excellently, infusing the part with the right amount of blithe happiness and a quiet intelligence behind the eyes. This is evident in the scene where Falstaff comes to congratulate now-king Hal on his ascension to the throne, but is met with a withering gaze from his once great friend. Falstaff's reaction to this is truly a masterclass in acting, and for Welles, an actor known for his over-the-top performances, he displays incredible subtlety.

The movie is the battle between living in the jovial past or accepting responsibility. In this case, the role of the halcyon past is filled by Falstaff, a figure emblematic of medieval fun and indulgence. Responsibility is the position Prince Hal must accept as king, in place of his father King Henry IV. The King and Falstaff could not be more polar opposites. Falstaff is a man Prince Hal loves, but cannot revere, his father the King is a man he greatly reveres but cannot love. All roles in the film are played brilliantly, with the leads pulling off lengthy scenes with aplomb, while extras (many chosen by Welles for their unique looks, often waiters or bartenders) add greatly to the creation of a universe into which viewers can be drawn. At times, the film, shot on location in Spain and Dublin, had to dub a few lines, losing some of the clarity, but this does not distract at all from the greatness of the film, and such budget cuts like the dubbing allowed Welles to have artistic freedom in creating the movie.

The inspiration for this review came from an interview with Martin Scorsese on his new film *Killers of the Flower Moon*. In the interview, he mentioned how many techniques deployed in his new work were taken from *Chimes at Midnight*, and how illuminating that film was to him as a young filmmaker, saying "If you want to get into Welles, you've got to watch *Chimes at Midnight*," calling it the quintessential Orson Welles movie. Having never even heard of the film, I researched it profusely as well as watched it myself. I must admit my first impression was one of confusion, and an anxious need to understand the plot, enabling me to appreciate the film and filming techniques. I would highly recommend knowing at least an inkling of the

story before delving into the world entirely. A YouTube video would suffice. It's also interesting to note that Welles successfully managed to pull off one of the greatest and most entertaining Shakespeare adaptations, all without using a single word not written by Shakespeare himself. The script for the film was based on Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *Henry V*, providing the right amount of historical and literary substance, taking place during the War of the Roses, while injecting the story with creativity and originality. The black-and-white picture with dramatic shots creates a theatrical feeling, aided by a brilliant performance from renowned Shakespearean actor John Gielgud as Henry IV. Preserving the integrity and subject matter of the film, the movie therefore, in the words of Roger Ebert, 'Should not be avoided by purists who usually dislike screen "treatments" of Shakespeare'. I would highly recommend this movie as something to be turned over in one's mind, thought about and analysed for a more cerebral experience, certainly accessible to those interested in Shakespeare, Orson Welles, or the appreciation of genuinely terrific film. If you are interested in pursuing a career in filmmaking or story writing, I believe *Chimes of Midnight* to be an important weapon to have under one's belt, to draw from and reference. As always, if you have any films you'd like to see reviewed, please do let me know. 21mcdowellm@harrowschool.org.uk.

## WINTER TIMETABLE

As the days grow short and the year draws to a close, the Winter Timetable falls upon the School. Even the briefest mention of the schedule liberates an exasperated sigh from everybody near, beak and boy alike. Yet, with the proper precautions and changes, the Winter Timetable isn't that bad.

The glorious Pastoral Committee – which yours truly was a part of last year – deemed sports on Fridays to be of lesser importance than boys' and beaks' mental health, and thus the Winter Timetable's exhaustive tentacles have retreated from the end of the week. The abhorrent and torturous Friday periods 3–5 were often abandoned by beaks and became "Film Fridays" or "Fun Fridays" to ease the suffering. With the removal of these periods comes the lightening of moods, as boys can rest easy knowing that the divine SMT is hearing their concerns.

However, while I agree that the Winter Timetable's presence on Fridays was unwelcome, it is perfectly fine on Mondays and Wednesdays. For the day of Odin, the Winter Timetable is necessary for the School's many charitable pursuits, and one cares more for the future of humanity than for some lessons later in the day. For those dastardly individuals who wish not to partake in Shaftsbury Enterprise, Wednesday afternoon offers a perfect time to spend pursuing creative endeavours, such as painting, practising your clarinet (Mr Shailer), writing for this very paper (or \*others\* if you feel such a need), or perhaps improving your mental wellbeing. This new afternoon offers many things to do, and I believe it is vastly under utilised.

Mondays introduce Shells to various aspects of the School, which is better to do while everyone has some energy. For Removes and Fifth Forms, it is CCF (or Conservation), which is arguably a bit of a waste of time but still not so taxing as to sap all the energy from one's body. For those in the Sixth Form, take the time to do some extra work/revision, "hang out" with your "friends", or once again do something creative.

Now, the crux of the matter is not what to do with your time but what happens after – the evening lessons. Evening lessons are manageable if you manage your time accordingly. Don't do anything too mentally or physically taxing to make yourself tired, have at least 15 minutes of relaxation, and ensure you have time on either side of your activity to ready yourself for

the rest of the day. Perhaps even take a quick look at what you are to cover in the lessons to ensure your brain doesn't get too big a shock when it comes to it. Ensure you remain engaged in the class and, most importantly, use those five-minute breaks. When you go to your next lesson, take deep breaths of the fresh air. If you are on the right side of the Hill, perhaps appreciate the twinkling skyline of London and use the time to energise yourself again.

The worst part of the Winter Timetable, if you can organise your time in the extended break and energise yourself for the lessons, is the dinner stampede. With the combined efforts of EWH and the valiant beak on duty, however, this problem is getting better by the second. We can easily counter the dinner rush if we delay Callover/Bill by 5–10 minutes.

Overall, stop whining. The Winter Timetable isn't that bad if you can manage your time well, and you ought to be grateful for all the opportunities you receive at this blessed School.

## OVERA-BUN-DANCE OF BREAD

Recently, I have noticed a small crime occurring daily, under our very noses: unsuspecting, inconspicuous. This crime is... food waste. In particular, it is the bread in every common room and buttery distributed in the CDH. Of course, the humble Harrovian reader may not notice anything wrong with this. After all, bread = toast, toast = yummy. However, the sheer amount of bread is impossible to consume, even for voracious and desperate Harrovians.

When I was doing my Shell duties (after all, what other year group has time to write for *The Harrovian*?), I noticed the number of loaves in my bag. Twelve loaves. 240 pieces. Every. Single. Day. With an estimate of 70 per House, this amounts to every boy needing to consume 3.5 portions a day to finish the day's supply. Since most of us have three square meals per day, this seems like an awful lot. In fact, when I looked into the Junior Common Room bread bin in The Park, where more than half of the House will commonly congregate, there were an astounding four loaves in the bin! The Third Yearer Room and the Finds Room (inhabited by Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth respectively) get the same amount each in their common rooms that the entirety of Lower School also gets!

What happens to the 'old bread' that doesn't get eaten? Spoiler alert: they spoil. Which is to say, they go straight into the bin, most commonly before their best before date. Consider also the fact that there are some under-used butteries, where the last time I chucked bread into one of them, there was an ominous pile of forgotten bread on the table. So, to anyone reading this who has any influence over the distribution of bread, please, please, please give the Houses less bread. Bread is cheap, but when it all stacks up, it's all just a pile of wasted food.

## GLASS CEILING

The glass ceiling is the 'unacknowledged barrier to advancement in a profession, especially affecting women and members of minorities'. The representation of minorities and women in high-ranking positions across the world today is severely lacking, and a huge part of this is due to the invisible barrier that inhibits deserved progression and promotion. In the making of this article, which aims to raise awareness of the many different forms of the glass ceiling, I have been fortunate enough to sit down with individuals who have broken through

the ceilings in their respective industries. The article will focus on the ceilings present if you are a gay man, a Black woman, a White woman or a Black man. In response to understanding just how prevalent the glass ceiling is in so many industries, I also spoke to Tiernan Brady, the EDI lead for the law firm Clifford Chance, in order to learn about how we can work to reduce the glass ceiling, along with some of the initiatives involved in bringing about this change. All the people I have spoken to have incredible stories, and have shown that glass ceilings are not unbreakable. I hope that anyone out there currently stuck underneath a ceiling will be inspired by them to persevere and break through it.

Being a woman in an industry dominated by males comes with a variety of challenges, most of which are rooted in the glass ceiling and prevent women from progressing at the same rate as men. Patricia Kabuleeta, a member of the Ugandan High Commission, told me about the two major ceilings she is confined underneath; the one that comes with being a woman, and the one that comes with being African. Patricia experienced the glass ceiling even in her formative years, when her tribe, the Tutsi, had to endure one of the most despicable genocides the world has seen, while it was overlooked by general society. After surviving this difficult time, Patricia attended Georgetown and Harvard, before breaking into the financial industry as one of Bill Clinton's interns. Despite this success, the glass ceiling persisted throughout, and some of the things said to Patricia in the early stages of her career are simply harrowing. Being labelled as a 'coconut' and accused of being Black on the outside but white on the inside is just one example, or 'When I say Black people, I'm not including you' is another. Unacceptable is the only way to put it, and the idea that this is said in a professional setting emphasises how corrupt the system can be. Far too often people feel entitled to act in whatever manner they want, simply because they are in a powerful position that might even be undeserved. Away from the blatant racism that is so often directed towards people of minorities, Patricia wanted me to spotlight that these issues are also deeply engrained within everyday interactions. Whether it's the implication of 'For a Black person' when someone says, 'You speak well,' or it's her colleagues joking about how she needs to find a husband, the foundation is all the same. People feel they can act towards her with this tone of superiority because they see her as less. This is the glass ceiling. Even if these actions aren't directly discriminatory towards her, Patricia is still actively dealing with a disadvantage, as she has to overcome stereotypes before people consider her for promotion. Patricia is not a unique example, with this happening frequently in hundreds of industries.

Patricia's stance on the issue is that not enough is being done. Her belief that women have to bring their own 'fold out' chair to board meetings (because it's so rare that they would be given an actual seat) is all the more true when one considers how the glass ceiling is being tackled. More awareness needs to be raised around the issue, but even when this happens, it will take time for members of majorities to learn and become more aware of the glass ceiling. In the meantime, it is essential that those under the ceiling support and celebrate each other when possible. One of the most important messages Patricia had for me was that when women do break the ceiling, they should hold the door open, rather than slamming it shut. It wouldn't be surprising to see that a large number of people aren't aware that Tanzania currently has its first female president. While she has done incredibly well to break through the ceiling, not much has been done since to promote her achievement, or to enable Tanzanian women to follow a similar trajectory, and this is part of the issue. Patricia stresses the importance of hiring strong, powerful women, and giving them the opportunity to demonstrate that, no matter their ethnicity or gender, they are just as competent as the huge number of white males who currently dominate these positions.

Tara Falk, founder of Paragon Brokers, has a similar experience to Patricia in how their corporate careers began. Both entered the workplace at a young age, with Tara's seeing hardly any female placing brokers in Lloyd's and a huge overpopulation of white men. She lists experiencing sexism, older male underwriters who did not want to trade with a woman, and male colleagues who would host social events at men-only clubs to put her at a disadvantage. Although these events are blamed on the traditional attitudes around at the time, this is not actually accurate. Tara emphasised that even though the exclusion of women has decreased in the finance industry, biases and discontent towards females in power still exist right under our noses.

Women have also too often fallen at the height of their careers due to attitudes to pregnancy, and Tara Falk's experience with this is a really useful insight into how businesses can treat women who choose to be mothers. Having a baby, a big decision for any woman, is made even more risky by the professional world's ruthless and unfair attitude towards pregnant women. Tara acknowledged that her fear of losing progress while having a baby was so great that it was actually an important incentive behind her setting up her own company. And despite all this, a male colleague still stole three of her clients while she was on maternity leave. People questioned whether she could be a CEO and a mother simultaneously, and put her down if she prioritised her children. No matter how many times Tara's suitability was questioned, she persisted and remains to this day an incredible CEO and mother. We all should be immensely grateful to women who choose to bring life into the world, but instead they are treated worse than almost anyone else. Despite the ludicrous immorality of this, it is still rarely spoken about. Pregnancy is a gift, not a burden, and the corporate world needs to be encouraged to look at the event as something beneficial for their employee, rather than as an inconvenient absence.

Sitting down with Bill Wharton, Head of Argo Insurance in Bermuda, helped me understand more about the glass ceiling that Black men can be trapped beneath. Bill's story is particularly important in this respect, as he was able to attribute specific moments as reasons why he broke through the ceiling. Relationships are vital to success in the finance industry, and Bill emphasised that, at the time he started, there were very few opportunities for Black people to go to golf clubs, or out to dinner in nice restaurants. This is important because it meant that if they ever did get in front of a businessman, they would have barely anything in common with his corporate lifestyle, and as a result would struggle, if not all together fail, in the industry due to difficulties building a network. The problem is worsened by the fact the richer sons of these businessmen would just slide into their positions, creating almost a negative feedback loop of perpetual nepotism. The idea that this could even happen highlights how deeply entrenched the glass ceiling is within society, and demonstrates the desperate need for change. Bill's metaphor of "They were playing golf on the course, so I became the caddy" seems to be the most accurate way of putting it. Bill continued to use this tactic as his life progressed, learning about sports so that he could fit in, since others didn't accept him for what he was. Having to do so much just to be respected is wrong in so many ways. This extra leg work that people under the barrier have to put in perhaps also explains the glass ceiling; once someone finally does get into a position of power, they are exhausted with how long it took them to get there and so don't try to progress any further.

It is also worth talking about David Bamber, Design Studio Director at Tom Ford, and how his experience with the glass ceiling has been relatively pleasant. David made it clear when I spoke to him that he never actually experienced limitations in progression due to his minority background, and as a result has held many positions of power throughout his career. Although there could be the argument that things are different in the fashion industry, I think instead an example should be made.



The fashion industry should act as a model to all others, since its diversity is much closer to how the workplace should be, and people are free to be rewarded for what they deserve.

So now that you all know what the glass ceiling is, and some examples of it, what can be done to lift this barrier? Tiernan Brady at Clifford Chance is perhaps the most suitable person to answer this question as some of the initiatives he has implemented are revolutionary. His main belief is that culture within a professional setting is absolutely vital for change. After learning that Black men were remaining at the firm for significantly shorter periods of time than their White colleagues, he knew an intervention needed to be made. He found the reason behind this was that managers didn't want to offend people by saying the wrong thing, and so took barely any notice of why the experience of people of varying ethnicities might be different. To combat this, he introduced a reverse mentoring programme. Senior leadership were paired with a junior based on a gender, ethnicity or LGBTIQ status, and they would meet once a month to talk about issues around inclusion. The programme had a huge impact, reducing the separation between how long White and Black lawyers stayed at Clifford Chance from four years, to eight months. Tiernan also noticed, similar to what Bill observed, that people from ethnic minorities may struggle to build networks, and so he set up the bubbles programme. This contained 12 people, two ethnic minority trainees, and ten other people who were mostly White and more senior. The group would meet once every six weeks, and has had an amazing impact within the firm. I also want to acknowledge an initiative Bill is a part of in Bermuda, called ACRE, or the Association for Corporate Racial Equity. This group spends a lot of time speaking to businesses about the benefits of racial equity and enlightening them about how to look for diverse talent properly. The response to this process has been truly inspiring, with the percentage of diversity in the Bermudian financial market constantly increasing towards what it should be. These are just a few initiatives that have started the journey to remove the glass ceiling, and hopefully more will continue to be tested and tried out in the future.

The glass ceiling has been an issue for far too long. I want anyone reading this to keep that in mind as you go about your daily life. If we really are to remove the glass ceiling, we need to go about it in the correct manner. The barriers are different in different places, and so, for a good campaign, we can't just open one door and expect everyone to march through; we need to build thousands of doors, so that everyone can begin their journey when it feels right. The actions every day are what have made the glass ceiling so ingrained in society, and no doubt this will take a while to undo. Nature abhors a vacuum, and if diverse leadership isn't involved in this space, then something else will fill it, and it will almost always be the wrong voices. Throw stuff at the wall and see if it sticks, make it clear why diversity, equity and inclusion is utterly connected to success, help people become ambassadors for inclusion, but, most importantly, we need to embrace the change that is coming, and work together confidently to raise awareness and obliterate the glass ceiling once and for all.

A few words of advice on how to break through the glass ceiling:

Patricia Kabuleeta: "Command the respect, own it, and keep the door open."

Tara Falk: "Be yourself, trust your gut, and look for a mentor."

Bill Wharton: "We know the glass ceiling is gone when the diversity you see on the train to work is the same as the diversity you see when you enter the office, all the way up to the board meetings."

David Bamber: "What have you got to lose? Take risks."

Tiernan Brady: "To remove the glass ceiling, we need to convince people to be active in this space, without being perfect in this space, get speaking about it!"

## UNSUNG HEROES

*Mrs Walton, OSRG Curator*

### **Let's begin: Where did you go to University?**

After A-levels at the Henrietta Barnett School and before going to university, I taught for a year at Colindale Primary School to explore the possibility of a career in primary education. It was like a gap year, I suppose. I then went to the University of East Anglia to study a new Honours degree subject, Comparative Literature with Linguistics. UEA had just established a Department of Scandinavian Studies, so I selected Swedish as my language of choice and consequently spent my second year at Lund University where I was able to immerse myself in Scandinavian languages and culture. On return to UEA the expectation was that our six-strong guinea-pig group could study Scandinavian writers such as Strindberg and Ibsen in the original languages.

### **And after university? Did you go straight into work?**

I actually got married the day before I graduated. My husband was a British Council Officer, and we were immediately posted to the office in Ibadan, Nigeria, for three years! Part of his responsibility was to oversee the young British students working on Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) projects, as well as being the Cultural Officer. We travelled a great deal around the country to inspect various projects and, while doing this, also collected pottery and textiles on behalf of the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh.

### **It sounds very idyllic, were you simply a British Council Officer's wife, or did you have a job there too?**

I had two jobs. Initially I worked at the Deputy British High Commission, wearing a very 'diplomatic' hat, but soon changed tack and was employed by the International Division of Oxford University Press to be a commissioning editor. The first book I produced won first prize at the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture, held in Lagos.

### **When you returned to the UK, did you continue with your job at the OUP or start something new?**

I kept my job for a while on a freelance basis when my children, Sarah and Matthew, were born. As they approached nursery-school age I started applying for editorial work and was most fortunately offered a position by the British Museum. I began as exhibition editor in the Design Office, working on permanent galleries as well as temporary and touring exhibitions. Memorably, I worked with Sir David Attenborough on an award-winning exhibition about Madagascar at the Museum of Mankind. I stayed at the BM, with varying responsibilities for 22 years.

### **Wow, what kept you there for so long?**

Essentially it was the variety of cultural subject matter and curatorial expertise that was so stimulating and enriching. At any given time, one would be working on as many as six different exhibitions, all in different stages of production and all with different teams of people. That particular experience of good planning and good time management means that, at Harrow, I like to devise exhibition topics around three years in advance of completion. I suppose my experience of book production has also fed into my curatorial focus for detailed planning.

Twelve years into my post at the BM, I was approached by the Museums and Galleries Commission because their Assistant Director was taking a research sabbatical, and they wanted somebody to take over his role for three years. The opportunity could not be turned down and I moved into offices overlooking St James's Park. It was a role of some responsibility and I had signatory powers for a budget of £6million. I toured museums and galleries throughout the UK with the Commissioners and gained a unique perspective on the state of the museum

sector, from tiny, volunteer-run collections, medium-sized local museums and even the 'nationals'. I recall many meetings at the Department for National Heritage and having to draw up guidelines for museums applying for grants from the recently established National Lottery. The role was largely administrative and strategic.

After that, I returned to the British Museum but this time, to the Directorate, to the 'west wing' of the famous Smirke building. Planning for London's Millennium Project of the Queen Elizabeth II Great Court was just beginning and I was closely involved with Sir Norman Foster's architectural team who delivered the project in December of the millennial year. When the British Museum celebrated its 250th anniversary, I co-ordinated a major touring exhibition of 250 objects to four different venues in Japan. Several years later, under Neil MacGregor's directorship, the exhibition was recycled and toured China.

#### How did you come to the OSRG?

I'd always wanted to run a museum outside London, and was lucky enough in 2005, to be appointed Director of the Powell Cotton Museum, in Kent. I recall a programme of innovation that included installing computers into the offices, and CCTV and fire-safety measures into the galleries for the first time! Christopher Powell-Cotton (*The Grove 1931*<sup>3</sup>), son of the museum's founder, was its Chairman. The exhibition and partnership programmes I introduced in the first year actually doubled visitor numbers and I was frequently invited, as a committee member of the Association of Tourist Attractions of Kent, to address Chambers of Commerce and Rotary groups, to promote the cultural heritage of the county. At this time, I also became Expert Advisor to the Royal Engineers Museum.

In 2010, I applied to become Curator of the OSRG as I wanted to return to London and get back into the cultural hub of city life again. The collection here is outstandingly good and I felt I had the skills to look after and interpret the objects not just for the boys but for staff, families and the wider Harrow audience. Along with collections care there is the opportunity to work closely with boys both in the classroom setting and also the OSRG Arts Society. The job is perfect for my skill set. Year on year improvements are made either in the gallery or in the office, studio or storerooms. A Conservator is now part of the professional team and the collections are being exhibited in a systematic way so that boys are able to see the full range of the collections during the time they are at Harrow. The collections are growing. New accessions are made on a weekly basis so provision will very soon have to be made for additional storage!

#### Could you tell me some more about the OSRG Arts Society?

Tuesday and Thursday afternoons are set aside for Arts Society sessions in the OSRG but I also take boys into London fairly regularly on those afternoons to see the best exhibitions on offer. Boys then write a review for *The Harrovian*, which earns them an automatic Send Up. This summer, I organised a trip to Churchill's home in Kent, Chartwell, for Expeditions Week. I even have plans to take boys to Norfolk for four days in 2025.

#### The OSRG is open to the public on Saturdays, correct?

Not exactly. We try to co-ordinate with St Mary's Spire Café openings on Saturday afternoons but these are determined by the church calendar and are not regular events. We shall, for example, be open on the afternoon of Saturday 2 December because St Mary's is holding its Christmas Fayre on that date. It will be last opportunity for visitors to see the exhibitions this term. In the spring, the gallery is to be given over to a major exhibition on the theme of *The Traveller* – it has of course been in the planning for three years! The OSRG is normally open to the public between 2.30pm and 5.00pm on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons in term time. Boys and staff should make sure the OSRG is on their radar. There are always new objects to learn about and the displays are changed every term. It's a marvellous place for inspiration and learning.

## THE TRIAL

*Someone must have slandered Joseph K., for one morning, without having done anything wrong, he was arrested.*

In 1925, Franz Kafka was dead, and *The Trial* was published against strict instructions he had left on his deathbed that his work be burned. The novel opened with these stark lines, a laughable pretence, unimaginable and unreal, detached yet so haunting.

As Joseph K. navigates the labyrinth of the judiciary, he repeatedly commits acts that make him appear guilty, even though he has little idea what he is being convicted of. Eventually, his accusers determine that he must be guilty; he is summarily executed. As Kafka laments, 'the proceedings gradually merge into the judgment.' *The Trial* is not about a trial per se, but orbits a point in the human condition at which one resorts to manic self-destruction, inflicted by a dark parody of the bureaucratic judiciary.

Kafka's skills are distinct: restrained, tight, and ironic, the prose is the secret to the novel's humour, rendering a tale about a bank clerk darkly hysterical; withholding information from both the protagonist and the reader, Kafka beholds himself as a deliverer of information, the power behind the scenes, dangling a promise of knowledge which is never delivered. As such, during particularly insane moments in the novel, the reader is reduced to comical relief so as to distance themselves from the disorientating state of numb blankness that feels so real.

Commentators have returned frequently to the subject of the 'unreal' in Kafka's work, a deception of perspective that hangs like a fog. Anna Arendt wrote: 'In spite of the confirmation of more recent times that Kafka's nightmare of a world was a real possibility whose actuality surpassed even the atrocities he describes, we still experience in reading his novels and stories a very definite feeling of unreality.' This sensation, in *The Trial*, is sourced from the persistently vague sense of guilt that pervades K.'s character: K. represents the humanity that is never free from guilt. A busy bank employee, he does not have the time to ponder such generalities; he is instead induced to explore unfamiliar aspects of his ego. This leads him into confusion, into mistaking the organised and wicked evil of the world surrounding him for some necessary expression of that general guiltiness.

Therefore, to be human is to internalise the guilt of the world, localising the referential historicity of violence, of corruption and of tyranny. Kafka himself was a slave to this: 'at the highest echelons of a semipublic, [sic] government-sanctioned institution enacting social policy, Kafka's job was to regulate the social conduct of employers vis-à-vis the working class.' As such, Kafka's tales are deeply felt, personal and self-ironic, escapism in a world of compressed reality; his worlds are reflections of the deep obstacles to progress he perceived in the social reality of his time. Kafka's work is perhaps then the key to comprehending Kafka's political orientations at the heart of the *Kafkaesque* phenomenon: at work, Kafka took the side of the working class – he represented its interests in a struggle against capital. He 'a man who tried to live his life according to principles of humanism, ethics, even religion.' He discovered that, in the law, 'Lies are made into a universal system.'

As Kafka's tales weave personal fact into hyperreal or surreal visions, perhaps the true mastery that Kafka's beholds is (counter-intuitively) the capacity to narrate the real. Certainly, there is absurdity; yet Kafka's words and style – unpretentious and specific, but free from slang, renders these delusional worlds with such painful and precise accuracy that the reader seems to experience déjà vu when exposed to them, as if tied to a subconscious memory. The time-bending of Kafka's prose, then, ought not be read as a pathological formalism – a linguistically engineered unreality – but instead as Kafka's mastery of modern

physics, in which time itself is relative. Renowned physicist Werner Heisenberg suggested that a high-level comprehension of physics was what defined the aesthetics and principles of modern art:

*The old compartmentalisation of the world into an objective in space and time, on the one hand, and in the soul in which the process is mirrored, on the other... is no longer suitable as the starting point for the understanding of modern science. In the field of view of this science there appears above all networks of relations between man and nature, of the connections through which we as physical beings are dependent parts of nature and at the same time, like human beings, make them the object of our thought and actions.*

The “unreality” of Kafka, which has captivated so many, is perhaps, then, a perceptive shift, a knowing that its own understanding of reality is necessarily partial, limited and relative. Time in *The Trial* does appear non-linear, yet this is more a reflection of its defiant modernity, reflecting time as neither absolute nor universal. After all, is Kafka not sufficiently deep-seated in reality to make it feel acceptable to laugh at the deranged happenings of *The Trial*? His humour is a technical achievement, but it speaks to a feeling of loneliness that typifies the modern condition. Kafka himself could not resist bursting into laughter when reading his own work; to orchestrate this laughter may have offered relief from the relentless self-criticism that drove Kafka to conceal his writings in the first place. Contriving narrative tension, he shocks us; confronting us with injustices anew, he makes us realise that we have become numb.

## NEMO MORTALIUM OMNIBUS HORIS SAPIT

This week we delve into the first edition of *The Triumvirate*. Published first on 1 October 1959, the paper lasted for only two years, ending in 1961. A school paper returned in the form of *The Tyro* in 1963. This short introspective piece ponders how and when inspiration strikes us, and how it can be used. For those of you who are not classicists, some phrases to note: *Nemo mortaliū omnibus horis sapit* translates to “no man is wise at all hours”, and *scribendi cacoethes* is defined as a “mania for writing”.

We are all of us so well acquainted with this saying, that it has now passed almost into a proverb. It is much to be doubted, however, whether we have ever attempted to reason upon it ourselves, and so I propose to do so now very shortly. Striking out a course which has, perhaps, not been often followed, and which could hardly have been in the mind of the writer himself as he transcribed the words, I would deduce from it, in this instance, that everybody has peculiar moments in his ordinary life when bright thoughts occur to him; whether he fosters these or not is a very different question: but I maintain that they certainly do dawn upon everybody at some time or other. Perhaps, one of the reasons for their neglect lies in the fact that they most often visit us at unseasonable hours, when they flit rapidly across the mind and again vanish into obscurity, without us being able ever to mark their flight, much less to stay it. To many persons, this sort of brief inspiration pays its visit as they lie awake at night, or, perhaps, doze off to sleep. Happy they, if they can seize the vision and make use of it! Many, again, are thus blessed before rising in the morning, some during the process vulgarly called shaving, or at curious odd periods which nobody but themselves could imagine.

It seems, thus far, that the “early morn and dewy eve “ are the favourite periods for the visitations we have mentioned; but they are by no means confined to these narrow limits. With most people, seldom does one single day pass without offering such thoughts. Those who use, or, rather, know how to value such things sufficiently, are men to whom we rightly grant some reputation for cleverness: those who either overlook them or think they can afford to pass them by, are very often men who barely deserve even the reputation they have gained. The subject thus resolves itself into a statement almost equivalent to that old precept, which tells us to seize every opportunity, and which, with its motto, “*Carpe diem*” has been the secret of many a man’s — many a great man’s success. The difference simply lies in this; when we speak of opportunities we generally mean external opportunities (if I may say so), in a certain manner dependent upon others; whilst, with regard to the question we have been discussing, we should conceive such an opportunity much less dependent upon external influence, though not entirely free from it, arising first spontaneously, and then, perhaps, nourished by outward circumstances. But here I find that I have been growing into rather too serious a spirit. It is a very great pity that I had not been able to grasp some bright idea myself to help me on and bestow some liveliness on my undertaking. Instead of that I am but urged by the old “*scribendi cacoethes*” to waste pen and ink and commas, and throw more nonsense upon the world than already exists there.

## CHESS

This week’s puzzle set by JPBH comes from a game between World Champion Emanuel Lasker and US Champion Frank Marshall which was played at St Petersburg in 1914.

Submit your solution by email (jpbh@) to enter the termly competition.

White to play and mate in three moves.



Last week’s answer: 1. **Ra6+** bxa6 (anything else leads to Rxa7#) 2. b7#

Interested in chess? Come along to Chess Club, 4.30-6pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays in MS 5. All abilities welcome!



# OPINION

## GAFFE AND GOWN

*Quips from around the Hill*

"Miss, did you know that it was my birthday yesterday?" "Oh really, and what did you get?" "40 double from you, miss."

"We're going to the theatre, why are you wearing that? You've dressed like you are going to commit knife crime."

## CORRESPONDENCE

*Letters to the Editors*

DEAR SIRs,

What is the password to Harrow Guest Network? Need it for 800 or so friends.

Sincerely,

MUNACHI NNATUANYA, THE KNOLL

DEAR SIRs,

The Shell tie-hunter is a renowned part of the Harrow canon; indeed, they plague the School with their enthusiasm and happiness – qualities that one eventually learns to leave at home. However, a new form of desperate doer has appeared in my own your group. The Lower-Sixth Extra-Curricularist emerges, as with a mid-life crisis, when faced with the mortality of his time at Harrow, attempting to make up for lost opportunities by doing anything he can. One sheds a tear for their paucity of experience and general character.

The creation of a Lower-Sixth Extra-Curricularist does not involve a great gain in interest in our society and its societies. Rather, many boys are faced one of two thoughts: either they see their pitiful personal statements, which remain as empty as their futures, or they realise just how little they have done with all the opportunities that come with our institution. Indeed, the Lower Sixth induction was, in many parts, a guide to applying to universities – particularly those in the US. Our Head Master's presentation about skills that must be mastered stood out to me, as his main points of concern were leading lectures, addressing external speakers, and participating in debating. Evidently, boys listen to him. The number of boys hoping to speak to societies increased; however, the greatest change was in the number of boys hoping to get involved with debating and even MUN. This is, without a doubt, both positive for them and our societies, but there must be a level of caution, for some have transformed into senior versions of Shell Tie-Hunters. They have evolved into pitiful creatures of such desperation that one cannot admire their pursuit of improvement; thus, they can't get beyond the low level of doing the odd lecture and write up.

Having perfected the art of pathetically pursuing every opportunity at Harrow myself, I would like to advise the younger boys who may become such creatures, and the animals themselves. If you, a Sixth Former, think that you may be an ecstatic Extra-Curricularist, I have three points of advice: while self-improvement is admirable, one must do it with a level of classical class which does not involve trying to tickle one's own neck with increasingly colourful ties. Try to find specific spheres of societies to which you could contribute and specialise, related to our Head Master's outlined qualities of course, rather than attempting to participate in everything; and, finally, pay no attention to the arrogant nay-sayers such

as myself, for it is never too late to become brilliant – as long as your Harrow heart remains beating. That said, it would be valuable advice to the lower years to start as early as you can. Time on the Hill flies by, and if you keep saying that you will do something later, you will find yourself saying the same thing to your ill-treated wife and poorly brought up children in the blink of an eye. As with languages, taking up such skills is best done as early as possible, yet it never becomes impossible. All Harrovians must hope to improve, something that takes every one of our values to do.

I hope every Harrovian succeeds in his endeavours; yet, even more, I hope said endeavours are well guided.

Your arrogant servant,  
R.T.M. YOUNG, THE GROVE

DEAR SIRs,

Begun is the season when Harrovians across the Hill start floundering about like mad sheep and desperately try throw-in complaints to *The Harrovian* like a monkey's vain attempt to crack oysters, for but one subject: winter timetable (below addressed as WT because the word 'winter' has unpleasant connotations of excess precipitation and lack of heat energy).

Multiple coup d'états have been staged on *The Harrovian* against WT, even in my brief time here, which addressed the problem of sleepiness in the later parts of the working day and inefficiency as a result; and the problem of being run over by cars due to our uniform's amazing ability to blend into the darkness during peak-hour traffic also appears quite often. However, SMT seems to just ignore all this like the Manneken Pis statue in Brussels, minding its own business of urination (and arguably a few other things which are medically speaking less important).

The solution which I offer is, as far as I am concerned, novel. We fall asleep in WT only because in summer we have lessons at an earlier time. So if we get used to it, we won't fall asleep anymore. A simple yet insightful observation, I must say. Therefore why don't we just have WT all year round? It won't be a huge problem in summer because of the excessive daylight we have due to our relatively polar geographical position, and it actually allows us to make the most of it. It also means that we don't have to go to lessons during the hottest hours of the day and can rest in those periods, and engage lessons with renewed vigour in the cooler hours. As for the other seasons that are not summer, we won't find afternoon lessons drowsy (at least not as much) if we practise the same routine over the entire year. More space is also allowed for extra-curricular activities in the extended lunch breaks – imagine doing Shaftesbury all year round! This, I hope, offers a practical and useful solution to the issue of WT, and even the headless Winged Victory of Samothrace will perceive that this is an amazing idea (so why shouldn't certain other people as well?).

Yours most sincerely,  
ARTHUR YANG, WEST ACRE

# SPORT

## CROSS-COUNTRY

*Harrow School XC v St Paul's School*

Harrow travelled to St Alban's for the ESAA regional round, hoping to qualify for the National finals. The weather was perfect with conditions fresh but sunny. The course wound

through Verulamium Park with significant elevation change and tight muddy corners contrasting against the beautiful views of the lake and town.

Intermediate boys (Shell and Remove): ran well across the 4.4km course with stand out performances from Otis Farrer-Brown, *Newlands*, coming in 3rd and Harry Jodrell, *Elmfield*, making his debut and finishing 29th overall. This was backed up by consistent finishes from Auberon Dragten, *Rendalls*, and Harry Benbow, *The Park*, who finished 24th and 37th respectively.

Senior boys (Fifth Form and Sixth Form): boys faced the challenge of the 5.5km course, which was run in true cross-country conditions after the previous six races had torn up the ground. Henry Barker, *The Park*, and Cameron Elliott, *West Acre*, battled illness and fatigue to come home 15th and 19th respectively. There was little separating Harrison Gray, *The Park*, Jaden Odofoin, *The Grove*, and Jonathan Ford, *West Acre*, who posted strong results of 44th, 45th and 49th for a strong team showing.

Excellent running by all and some valuable lessons for all boys to take away as the team look forward to the Ten Schools fixture and the prestigious relay events next term.

## FIVES

*School v Highgate and Westminster City, 9 November*

1st VI v Highgate School, Won

A great day for the seniors at the courts resulted in a 2-0 win against Highgate. Some exceptional performances from Sam Phillips, *Moretons*, with a new partner Freddie Emery, *Moretons*, winning their match 3-0. A first win for Michael Samuelson, *The Park*, with his partner Rory Grant, *Moretons*, also winning 3-0.

Colts 1st VI v Westminster City School, Won

An excellent performance from Oly Filo, *The Park*, and William Martin-Jenkins, *The Park*, put Westminster to the sword, with Harrow being dominant throughout the match and their opponents capitulating under the pressure.

Yearlings 1st VI v Westminster City School, Won

The Shells were dominant today against Westminster with a vastly improving squad all enjoying wins. In particular, 1st pair Henry Murray, *The Head Master's*, and Woody Venville, *Lyon's*, produced some stunning fives to come back from a big deficit initially. Other worthy mentions were Caspar Bourne-Arton, *Elmfield*, George De Boinoid, *Rendalls*, and Nabhan Chowdhury, *Lyon's*.

## FOOTBALL

*The School v Wellington, 23 November*

Development A XI away v Wellington College 1st, Won 4-3

An entertaining encounter in which the Development A displayed plenty of courage and togetherness to eventually win 4-3. Max Baygual, *Elmfield*, scored a hat-trick with Kitan Akindele, *Newlands*, scoring the winner. The Development A were indebted to an outstanding man of the match display from Ralph Collier-Wright, *Rendalls*, in midfield.

Development B XI away v Wellington College 2nd, Won 7-2

Harrow dominated Wellington throughout the game and put in a performance which merited their 7-2 win. Both Arthur Porter, *Druries*, and Tochi Orji, *The Park*, scored hat-tricks after Melvin Ackah, *Newlands*, opened the scoring. MOTM was Alex Cox-Lang, *The Knoll*, who set the example for a number of players who had not played much with the team before.

Development 16 XI away v Wellington College Colts A, Won 8-2

In their final match of the term, the Dev 16s started strong and took a 2-0 lead, but let the opposition back into the game with a goal before half-time. In the second half, Harrow made the most of their superior ability and fitness, playing brilliant football to run out 8-2 winners, with a hat-trick for Simon Michael, *The Grove*, two goals from Jed Hurley, *Bradlys*, and a goal each for Joel Otaruoh, *Lyon's*, Jesse Eledan, *Newlands*, and AJ Anenih, *Rendalls*.

## RACKETS

*The School v Charterhouse, 9 November*

1st Pair away v Charterhouse, Won

A very focused effort from Gus Stanhope, *Moretons*, and Mostyn Fulford, *The Knoll*, in a convincing 3-0 win. Both players served well and were dominant in the rallies.

2nd Pair away v Charterhouse, Won

Some real improvements shown by Henry Porter, *Moretons*, and Tom Campbell-Johnson, *Druries*, in a 3-0 win.

Colts 1st Pair away v Charterhouse, Won

A determined, aggressive effort from Jack Nelson, *Bradlys*, and Ben Hufford-Hall, *Moretons*, who wrestled control of a tight first game and then imposed themselves to win 3-0.

Colts 2nd Pair away v Charterhouse, Lost

A fine effort on debut from Ethan Harrington-Myers, *Bradlys*, and some fine rackets from Charlie Chambers, *Rendalls*, saw them just on the wrong side of a topsy turvy match that ended in a 1-3 scoreline.

Junior Colts 1st Pair away v Charterhouse, Won

Some excellent attacking rackets from Arjan Lai, *West Acre*, and Arthur Brown, *Druries*, in a fine win.

## RUGBY UNION

*The School v Tonbridge, 11 November*

The 1st XV away v Tonbridge School, Won 38-32

The 1st XV won 38-32 against a physical Tonbridge side. The 1st XV produced their best start to a match this season, racing into a 12-0 lead. A strong first-half performance meant that Harrow led 26-8 at half-time. Harrow were unable to exert the same control on the game in the second half and instead had to weather a spirited Tonbridge comeback. Harrow survived the Tonbridge onslaught and ran out 38-32 winners.

## 2nd XV away v Tonbridge School, Lost 19-26

'It's a truth universally acknowledged that a man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a faster way to get to Tonbridge'. So begins (sort of) Jane Austen's smash hit *Pride and Prejudice*, which as it happens would be a good one line summary for the fortunes of the 2nd XV on the road. This is always a great fixture in the calendar, this year given added intrigue by the presence of former Harrow beak CWE as the mastermind behind a clinical Tonbridge XV. For boys and beaks, professional pride was on the line!

After a late departure and a slow warm up, the 2nd XV were quickly thrust into action. Despite some promising early field position for the 2nd XV, Tonbridge struck first, taking advantage of a loose ball in the midfield to canter over into a 7-0 lead. The 2nd XV lacked structure in the early exchanges, spurning their tried and tested structure for late switches of play and one up runners. Tonbridge to their credit were clinical in attack, responding quickly on turnover ball in the face of a 2nd XV who seemed to be moving at about the pace at the A21 (slow). Before Harrow could really regroup, Tonbridge were in again taking the score to 21-0, and then AGAIN to race into a 26-0 lead.

To be fair to the 2nd XV, this is why Tonbridge away is one of "the toughest fixtures in sport" (JM, 2023) the rugby equivalent of the "cold rainy night in Stoke" (MJG) litmus test. You have to turn up with no warm up and be excellent against an excellent rugby school. The task facing the 2nd XV was mammoth but they set about it with courage and humility. Hard running by Felton and Hersey, and a greater commitment to team shape and structure started to pay dividends for Harrow and after a period of concerted pressure newly capped Captain Hope crashed over. The half-time whistle sounded with a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel (it could be a train), 26-7.

The messages at half-time were positive and the 2nd XV rose to the challenge gallantly. Smart calls at the line out from Olly Jones, who stepped up to run the show well, combined with the Stakhanovite work ethic on Josh Oliver-Willwong, *Bradby's*, in his midfield carries, saw the 2nd XV graft their way up the pitch. The 2nd XV were rewarded for their efforts when talismanic Flyhalf Johnny "JC" Codrington, *Rendalls*, crossed the whitewash. 26-14, game on.

Tonbridge hit back with a period of stout pressure. Harrow did not get the rub of the green from the referee but rode out this momentum swing well, defending with real heart with some thumping hits from Fikunmi and Herron. Harrow took the game within one score after a period camped in Tonbridge territory, when Elliot O'Sullivan, *Newlands*, muscled over. It looked like the great comeback was on!

Ultimately however, it wasn't to be. The 2nd XV left everything on the pitch, and were unlucky not to at least emerge with a draw. There are always good lessons to be learnt in defeat, and the team will take these ahead of a stern pre-exeat test against Eton. Above all however, it was great to see the boys play with such togetherness and resolve, battling for one another in spite of the scoreline. It was great too to award some 2nd XV caps to Keir, JC, Harry and Hopey, all of whom epitomise what is best about playing senior rugby – playing with your friends (and a great standard too!) for the love of the game. We go again next week

## 3rd XV away v Tonbridge School, Lost 10-19

After the two-hour journey, you would have thought that Harrow would start badly but instead they defended phase after phase superbly well. Great continuity from Tonbridge eventually led to their first score of the game with Harrow having done very little wrong.

Harrow fell two tries behind and then executed a perfect 8-9-14 move from the half way line with Harrison Dunne, *Elmfield*, taking out the defender with a cheeky dummy.

After boshing past a defender Xander Jones, *West Acre*, was unfortunately held up over the line. Oscar Sutherland, *Lyon's*, carried powerfully all day and was dominant in the scrum alongside Sam Howes, *The Grove*, and Rei Ishikawa, *Elmfield*, whose lineouts went well with Michel Quist, *The Grove*, the smooth lineout operator. Guy Clark, *West Acre*, has a habit of slipping in for a try here and there but Digby Emus, *Rendalls*, playing somewhere near his home was probably Harrow's best player on the day, extremely physical and tireless. Hugo Evans filled in well at 8 because U-Hu developed a mysterious injury, possibly tonbridgeitis. Freddie Harrison stuck well to the game plan, kicking well to the corners and pinning Tonbridge back in their own half. The team chased very well. After the first third of the game, Harrow mostly dominated territory and position. Henry Emerson was tackled around the neck just short of the line after breaking through. He had a great game with powerful running, immense defence and a great try. Oliver Rezek spent a lot of the game throwing tape back and forth with his brother for his seemingly injured knee, but every time he got the ball he would beat one or two defenders.

A valiant defeat...which doesn't make it any less disappointing but The boys should be really proud of themselves for fronting up, for their team spirit and for never giving up

## 4th XV away v Tonbridge School, Lost 10-48

The Harrow pack made good yards but were unable to capitalise on this. Tonbridge had some very capable ball carriers which ultimately swung the game. George Maia, *Druries*, was man of the match, with consistent determination in defence and attack.

## 5th XV away v Tonbridge School, Lost 12-21

Will Wright, *West Acre*, and Theo Stockmeier, *Druries*, led the pack formidably with two wonderful tries from Theo. It was an intriguing display of grit and resilience as a team of unfamiliar faces worked together to produce a very near victory. Melvin Ackah, *Newlands*, and Leon Mills, *Newlands*, were the joint men of the match.

## Colts A v Tonbridge School, Won 55-12

## Colts B v Tonbridge School, Won 31-10

Hard work and determination over the season culminated in the Colts B putting on their best performance to date. An overall excellent performance and a huge team effort secured a good win over a formidable opposition.

## Colts C v Tonbridge School, Won 45-31

"It took every quirky trick in the book, a splash of comic timing, and a tactical injection of fellowship and talent from the development soccer team to make up the 15 men, but our lads pulled off an incredible victory that will be chuckled over for a long time!"

I've finally emerged from a state of euphoric disbelief to pen down the epic saga of the Colts Cs valiant clash against Tonbridge. This was not just a rugby match; it was a rollercoaster of emotions, a comedy of errors, and a display of what happens when determination meets a dose of good old-fashioned slapstick.

As whispers of this titanic clash spread across the Hill from the West Acre savannah to The Grove swamplands, tension grew amongst the Fifth Form as they waited for the final team selection list to appear. Thankfully the coach's inspirational email (which did NOT use ChatGPT) sent the night before the match stirred several boys who don't usually play rugby to disinfect their gumshield, borrow a tattered old pair of boots from changer, and put their lives on the line for the greater good. It felt like a plot straight out of a sports anime – Colts Cs, the underdogs, up against the formidable Tonbridge. It was the talk of the town, or at least the queue for the coffee



machine in the SCH. Leading our motley crew was Ben Stevens, who earned his captaincy not for his strategic genius but for his unrivalled skill at charging headfirst into a problem – be that a maths test or a tighthead prop.

The game started in front of a record capacity attendance of 2 teachers, 1 parent and a gardener named Phil. The kick-off defied physics by going backward, but somehow landed in space which our boys ran into, leading the ref to shout confidently ‘play-on’, and play-on they did. Tobias Idehen graced the field of dreams (Ducker 1) with his unique interpretation of a rugby tackle, which looked suspiciously like a bear hug followed by a polite request to lie down. Bob Zhu, in an impressive display of multitasking, managed to run, tackle, and look utterly bewildered all at the same time – this confused our opposition and set the stage for what followed.

Harrow locked and loaded from the outset, set their try-machine gun to fully automatic, and were in control and dominating with two tries in the first few minutes after Tonbridge’s back line decided to hit the self-destruct button. Andy Li, who was suffering from exhaustion after a meteoric run from inside centre to outside centre (a first for him) tactically fell over in the corner and amazingly took his man down with him, leading to another attack for Harrow. From the resultant chaos, the ball was floating into Xander Hunt’s hands when he was distracted by a passing sparrow and the ball ended up back in Tonbridge’s possession. The powerhouse Judah Amankrah easily turned over the ball in the breakdown, and is the kind of player you expect to see emerging from a ruck with the remains of a sock between his teeth.

Wisdom Edjeovwo lived up to his name by wisely avoiding any actual contact and erratically floating through the Tonbridge defence like a daddy-longlegs in a tornado, while Ben Stevens showed off his signature move – the accidental sidestep, tripping over his own untied laces, yet somehow dodging the opponents and making it through the gaps in the Tonbridge defence. Raphael Ghani took a more philosophical approach to defence, often seen contemplating the meaning of life and the existential dilemma of the Tonbridge pack charging towards him. He worked well with Alex Edu to bring some theatrical flair, diving dramatically into the slight breeze, which won us a penalty and a gain in ground. Meanwhile Jerry Zhang was a vision of concentration, primarily concentrating on not getting his new boots dirty in an effort to blind the opposition. This worked well and led Tonbridge to repeated knock-ons, and yet more tries scored by AJ Anenih running around the entire Tonbridge team repeatedly before realising which direction the try line was in.

Alp Erkazanci’s strategy involved catching the ball then sprinting in random directions – a tactic that confused both teams equally, gaining us yet more ground. Jed Hurley, sporting an aerodynamic hairstyle that defied gravity more than his jumps, made an art form out of getting in the way and blocking the Tonbridge attack, while Jesse Eledan’s main contribution was his motivational monologues, which were so stirring, the Tonbridge backs set up a campfire and started singing kumbaya, allowing us more space to advance the ball and score again. Charlie Chambers then decided it was time to get stuck in, and deduced that the best way to stop his opponents was by offering them a firm handshake to displace the ball and win us a turnover. Himanc Roy, the philosopher of the pitch, then pondered the “how” and “why” of scoring points, while Tristan Yang brought a level of calm to the game, often seen napping near the try line. Tonbridge got impatient and realised that whilst we were quick on the wing, our central defence was worse than Donald Trump’s legal team’s. They tore through our pack several times, and by the end of the first half they had almost pulled level. Nervous times indeed.

The halftime motivational team talk was hugely important – in modern schoolboy rugby, the first half is invariably much longer than the second. This is partly because of the

typically late kick-off, but mostly caused by the unfitness of the referee. The coach impressed on the squad the impending uphill (literally) battle ahead. The next 25 minutes was going to be the biggest battle of their professional lives. It had all come down to today, and either, they healed as a team, or they were going to crumble. Inch by inch, play by play. Until they’re finished. They were in no man’s land right now. They could stay there, get the mud kicked at them, or could fight their way back into the light, climb up Grove Hill... one step at a time. As the second half kicked off, the renewed enthusiasm and drive was evident, and there was no sign of a let-up from Harrow, who had taken the reins and made a few tactical changes. Our vast array of subs on the bench sat on the sideline emulating hungry dogs by barking questionable orders to the 13-man Harrow team; the team respectfully chose not to listen and took charge once more like a Tory government by creating a strong and stable platform but with no idea where to go or who to trust. We used this platform to get the ball out to our wingers, who put another try down early in the second half. We again looked to be cruising when the tactical fullback replacement was distracted by his shoelaces and the ball ended up in Tonbridge’s possession again, leading them to engineer another try to close the gap.

Several times near the end of the game Tonbridge came knocking on the try door. Our teamwork and dedication shone through as we emulated Wrestlemania and built a sturdy pile of bodies on the try line to stop the encroachment of the Tonbridge attack. This was great to see – even in the final moments of the game we gave it everything to keep them at a safe distance.

In the end, it was a combination of accidental genius, unplanned yet insightful timing, and the sheer power of our playing style that clinched us victory. As the final whistle blew, the team celebrated not just a win, but the fact that they had survived the match without all of the team fully understanding the rules of the game. And thus, the legends of the Colts Cs were written into the annals of the Harrow history books – not only in the annals of great sporting achievements, but in the pages of the most entertaining rugby match ever played. Onwards and upwards, Colts Cs.

#### Junior Colts A v Tonbridge School, Lost 14-15

A closely fought match, with some excellent line breaks and supporting lines from both sides, ended in the JCAs falling behind in the last play of the game.

#### Junior Colts B v Tonbridge School, Lost 7-19

The Junior Colt Bs lost a very even contest 19-7. The player of the match was Aidan Huang, *The Park*.

#### Junior Colts C v Tonbridge School, Lost 12-19

A tough loss where we feel we should have come away with a result. Lots to learn from and build on moving forwards. We continue to look excellent going forwards and with ball in hand. We are super strong and dynamic in possession but aim to improve our defensive discipline and breakdown at the ruck.

#### Junior Colts D v Tonbridge School, Lost 22-29

JCDs lost against Tonbridge sadly by seven points. All boys played well, however special mention to Max Nardo, *Bradlys*, who tackled with gumption and bravery!

#### Yearlings A away v Tonbridge School, Won 14-5

An excellent physical and committed defensive performance paved the way for a hard fought away win.

#### Yearlings B away v Tonbridge School, Won 19-12

Harrow showed solid teamwork and commitment to defence to secure the well-deserved triumph. It was a testament to the hard work on defensive principles throughout the week.

## Yearlings C away v Tonbridge School, Drew 17-17

In spite of an early Harrow lead, a 17-17 draw was a fair result in this enormously competitive and exciting contest between two evenly-matched sides that saw Harrow come back from behind in the second half. Henrik Willet, *Druries*, and Ayomide Ajayi, *The Knoll*, were the try scorers.

## Yearlings D away v Tonbridge School, Won 12-10

A defensive masterclass, decorated with two excellent tries from Kitan Akinyeme and Rufus Hunnisett, the conversion from Ikenna Ukeje. Player of the match Sydney Liu, imperious and omnipresent.

## Yearlings E away v Tonbridge School, Lost 12-44

Another tough week for the Yearlings E with a disappointing result of 44-12. Playing a 14-a-side squad with no substitutions, the boys worked tirelessly for the entire 50 minutes of the game. Unfortunately ground was only made in the last 15 minutes of the second half, where Niky Burov, *Lyon's*, and Dara Odujinrin, *Newlands*, scored our two tries of the game, with Burov converting one. Sadly, the Tonbridge side were stronger, faster, and more cohesive a team, which resulted in a decisive win for their side. As we approach the close of the season, the Es still have much to learn.

## Yearlings F away v Tonbridge School, Lost 27-55

The Yearling Fs played valiantly but were unfortunately overcome by a physical and skilled Tonbridge side. The team showed real fellowship by warmly welcoming the two Tonbridge players who bolstered our numbers.

## The Yearlings Academy away v Tonbridge School, Lost 0-5

## SWIMMING

*The School v Tonbridge School, Won, 9 November*

Harrow would have expected to have beaten Tonbridge, but the final 29-25 scoreline just displayed how strong the visitors' elite senior swimmers are. It is worth noting that Tonbridge's Senior teams are only ranked a few places below Harrow in the seedings for the forthcoming national championships. The strength in depth of Harrow's swimming won the day in the end, yet this proved to be a very useful freindly fixture indeed with the ESSA national championships just around the corner.

## SQUASH

*The School v Charterhouse, 9 November*

## 1st v Charterhouse, Lost

Only one 1st V member played against Charterhouse, losing an astonishingly tight match 2-3 and winning the first game 19-17 in a tight struggle. Arhan Maker, *Druries*, played with grit and determination, before running out of steam in the final game.

## Colts A v Charterhouse, Won 3-2

The Under-16s fought well against a solid Charterhouse side, displaying a great attitude and team spirit throughout and deservedly recording a victory. George Epton, *The Head Master's*, won in straight games, while Diederik Brouwers, *The Head Master's*, and Edward Seppala, *Lyon's*, dug deep to come out on top.

## Junior Colts A v Charterhouse, Won 3-2

Two debutants gave a fine show as the Under-15 team narrowly beat Charterhouse. Congratulations to Ethan Jones, *Druries*, and Kiran Patel, *Druries*, for winning in their first match for the Harrow Squash Club, and to Aleks Tomczyk, *The Grove*, for winning his match too.

**Ways to contact *The Harrovian***

Articles, opinions and letters are always appreciated.

Email the Master-in-Charge [smk@harrowschool.org.uk](mailto:smk@harrowschool.org.uk)

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