

THE HARROVIAN

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TOUR OF US UNIVERSITIES

Chicago and the West Coast, 10–17 December 2023

Early in the morning on Sunday 10 December, 25 Harrovians accompanied by KAF, RMT and Miss Edgell arrived at Heathrow Terminal 5 in eager anticipation of the exciting trip to Chicago and then to the West Coast of the US – the location of some of the finest US universities. With a packed itinerary, leaving us just enough time to sleep to survive, we were to visit 12 universities spread across a huge nugget of the US and a few different time zones in a mere seven days. An ambitious task to accomplish, to say the least...

With a scheduled departure of 11am, the group went through check-in and security, ready to board the plane – all seemed to be going as planned. However, it was not to be. At first, the flight was delayed by one hour, but soon the delay got longer and longer, reaching almost seven hours, which we were forced to spend on the plastic chairs at the departure gate, worrying that the flight might get cancelled altogether.

Finally, as the sun was setting over London, the group boarded the plane. Nine hours later, the boys braced themselves as they walked out into the frosty Chicago air after a journey between London and Chicago that lasted 22 hours. Despite the exhaustion, not even the thought of sleeping could tempt the Harrovians away from food miraculously arranged by the beaks and Miss Edgell to be delivered to our hotel. With bellies full, the boys finally collapsed in their hotel beds to restore their energy for a day packed with university visits that had to be rescheduled as a result of the delay and another long flight at the end of the day, this time from Chicago to San Francisco.



Early the next morning, the group set off to their first university visit of the tour: UChicago, an amazing institution of higher education not just on a US scale but globally and, indeed, a popular destination for Harrow leavers. Easily enticed by a selection of delicious doughnuts and coffee, the group attentively listened to a presentation delivered by Associate Director of Admissions Mason Heller, who outlined the key information about the university and then eloquently answered countless questions. UChicago, along with many other liberal arts schools, has a core curriculum that requires students to take classes in several different areas before they select their field of specialisation. The benefits of a core curriculum are evident: students are exposed to a more diverse range of ideas, gaining knowledge and skills in a wide range of subject areas. Located in downtown Chicago and adorned with tall, neo-gothic buildings, the campus is truly breathtaking. The group then departed from UChicago with merchandise kindly provided by Mr Jim Nondorf, Vice President of Enrolment and Dean of College Admissions and Financial Aid, and headed to their next destination: Northwestern University, located on the outskirts of Chicago next to a vast expanse of water known as Lake Michigan.

In contrast to UChicago, Northwestern stands out with its integrated campus hosting six distinct schools: Communication, Music, Art, Science, Social Policy and Engineering. During the admissions process, prospective students apply to a specific school; however, once admitted, they can switch between schools relatively easily. Renowned for its dedication to experiential learning, Northwestern places a heavy emphasis on studying



abroad and engaging in impactful research. The university encourages students to broaden their horizons through global experiences, fostering a rich and diverse academic environment. After the very informative info session led by Senior Associate Director of Admission Aaron Zdawczyk, the group had time to explore the area in which Northwestern is situated before they made their way to the airport, eager to trade the Midwest chill for the warmth of sun-drenched California. Five hours later, the plane landed in San Francisco.

The group's first experience of a West Coast university began with the renowned UC Berkeley (UC standing for the University of California). Interestingly, UC Berkeley is one of the nine UC state-funded universities scattered across California, with Berkeley being one of the northernmost universities. The group were fortunate to get a tour of the campus from Will Shankland (*Druries 2015*) and then attend a very useful information session. One could immediately spot the difference between Berkeley and the Midwest universities, mainly because of the significantly warmer weather and the more vibrant atmosphere as the term was still in progress and there were more students on the campus. Students strolled around in t-shirts and shorts, soaking in the December sun before sitting their finals. In terms of academics, one distinguishing feature of Berkeley is a concept known as DeCal. DeCal allows students to teach courses and classes on something they are passionate about to other students. UC Berkeley's most popular majors include Social Sciences, Computer and Information Sciences, Engineering and Biological Sciences.

Next on the agenda was the legendary Stanford, an institution that has produced influential people who shape our modern world such as Elon Musk, Peter Thiel (Paypal), Larry Page and Sergey Brin (Google). The excitement was palpable as the group wandered through the famous grounds of the university, full of quite distinctive architecture, lush landscapes and a vibrant academic atmosphere that inspired the group. During the information session led by Senior Assistant Director of Admission Elisa O'Neal, the group were able to learn a lot about life at Stanford, the admissions process and the cherished values of the institution. The values most important to Stanford are orientation towards public service, making a positive public impact and what they call the 'Silicon Valley ethos' (innovation and a desire to make things better). During the session, it was stressed that Stanford was not a competitive environment but was more like a supportive bubble. Much like Harrow, Stanford offers significant extracurricular opportunities for students, with significant funding for students to create their own clubs. Sport-wise, Stanford is a Division I institution, meaning that they partake in sports at the highest level available to students. However, for those students who do not pursue athletics to such a high level, sports are available for everyone regardless of ability.

The next morning, as headed for the second largest city in the United States: Los Angeles, the group stopped in Claremont to visit the Claremont Colleges, including Claremont McKenna, Pomona, Harvey Mudd, Pitzer, and Scripps. The group was greeted by Senior Associate Dean of International Admission Jenn Hirsch, Assistant Dean of Admissions Doreen Thode, Vice President of Admission Thyra Briggs and Senior Associate Director of Admission David Girvan. As the admissions officers described it, studying at one of these colleges "is like a buy one get four free situation," where students have access to facilities from all five colleges, once they have been enrolled on one of them.

We were then given a tour of CMC and Pomona by the OH Spencer Taylor who showed us around these lovely campuses, with an impressive mixture of both modern and classical architecture, including CMC's new state-of-the-art sports centre. After leaving Claremont and embarking upon a seven-hour coach drive, the boys arrived, exhausted, at UC

Santa Barbara, a university with a fantastic location in warm and summery Santa Barbara in mid-December. Upon arrival, we were given a briefing about the university, and then had time to explore the campus which was only 15 minutes away from a picturesque Californian beach with the pristine and blue water of the Pacific. As a conclusion to a bustling day, the group then had the opportunity to tour Loyola Marymount University (LMU), a Catholic (Jesuit) institution nestled in Los Angeles. As the early evening sun gracefully set in the sky casting a warm glow over the campus, the experience became even more enchanting.

After one night in Los Angeles, the group headed to the famed Pepperdine University, set in the scenic town of Malibu, on lusciously green hills facing into the deep blue sea, and often described as a US university with the most stunning location with which even the best world holiday resorts would struggle to compete. We enjoyed a short tour of the beautiful campus and a talk from International Recruitment Manager Scot McClamma.

Following the enchanting hills of Malibu, the group continued their journey to UCLA, a public research university in the Westwood neighbourhood of Los Angeles. It is also included in the UC group of universities and has the smallest campus yet the largest student body among its UC peers. The group also enjoyed a tour led by Dylan Winward (*Lyon's 2017*), who showed us around the beautiful, gothic-style campus, and the accommodation opportunities available that, in 2028, will house athletes competing in the Olympic Games. We saw the plethora of research facilities and opportunities available, given that UCLA is known as one of the top research institutions in the US. Following the tour, the cohort briefly walked around the campus of one of the most prestigious scientific and research institutions: California Institute of Technology (Caltech), however, there was no formal tour or information session, just a brief info talk delivered by KAF.

On the final day, the group departed the hotel and headed for the University of Southern California, the university with the second-strongest alumni network in the entire world. The group had a self-guided tour of the huge and very expensive campus followed by lunch and a talk in the blazing sun with International Admissions Officer Tyler Swartout, who talked about the opportunities offered at USC, the support for international students, sports provision and the universities magazine (*The Daily Trojan*).

With the 12th university visit completed, the boys enjoyed a tour of LA's administrative, film and shopping districts, catching a glimpse of the legendary Hollywood sign stretching over the luscious green hills. They then headed to LAX for their long flight back to London, eager to spend the rest of the Christmas holidays with family and friends.

This has been an extremely inspiring and eye-opening trip that will undoubtedly motivate the boys for the months to come ahead of GCSEs and other important exams. Following the trip, for many, the dream of a US college future has become far more real and definitely more compelling and will continue to drive their academic and super-curricular efforts going forward. It was also extremely encouraging to see how well-respected the Harrow brand has become across the pond and how many OHs have been accepted to these most prestigious schools over the last few years. This has been a testimony to the huge efforts and enthusiasm of many boys but also their beaks, in particular to our unrivalled US University Team.

A huge and heartfelt thanks go to KAF, Miss Edgell and RMT, without whose efforts this whole experience would not have been possible and who somehow managed to exercise effective control over a sizable group of Harrow boys at the end of the long and exhausting Autumn term. In addition, a special thank-you goes to TCBC, the travel company that took care of our flights, accommodation, meals and much more.

HERE WE COME A-WASSAILING

Christmas Carols, December

As one wanders through the aisles and benches of Chapel there rings the familiar echo of Christmas: songs of the angels even from Bethlehem (sung in one syllable) and praises from the wise men. At the end of last term, on two different evenings, family, friends and Harrovians gather together to sing carols and enjoy the merry time of Christmas. At the start of the two services, we were greeted by the angelic voice of two soloists with the words of *Once in Royal David's City*, our annual greetings from the manger in Bethlehem.

As the service progressed, nine lessons were offered from the distant past from the fall of Adam to the birth of Christ, a tradition linked with Old Harrovian Cardinal Charles Manning. The readings were given by a Shell, a Remove, a Fifth Former, a Sixth Former, the Head of School, a member of staff, a member of the Masters' Room, a Chaplain and the Head Master respectively. Dispersed between these lessons were familiar carols such as *O Come O Come Emmanuel*, *O Come All Ye Faithful* and many others. The Chapel Choir and Harmony Choir also performed several carols including a new commission for this year, *Refugee*, as well as other choral works.

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

*Cross-Curricular Lecture Series, Part 8:
JAPB and JPBH, 'Chaos Theory and the Butterfly Effect', Monday 20th November*

With the chaotic prospect of Trials week steadily approaching, the OSRG was filled with boys who were hoping that their revision schedule would materialise due to some strange "butterfly effect". Indeed, the puzzling powers of JAPB and JPBH's talk on 'Chaos Theory and the Butterfly Effect' were so great that boys were kept hypnotised to their seats for an hour. After ADT's usual introduction to the Cross-Curricular Lecture Series (which amusingly compared JAPB and JPBH's coalition to that between Tweedledee and Tweedledum), the two beaks argued that the talk would not come close to the length of their Cross-Curricular Lectures last year on the theme of Secrets and Secrecy (which lasted for two and a half hours combined).

In presenting the antithesis between order and chaos, JAPB mostly chose order while JPBH was converted to the dark side of chaos (just like The Park when JPBH fell asleep while on duty). First, JAPB reminded the audience that some order existed in the Universe, such as the periodicity of Halley's Comet, which you will probably see if you look upwards on a particular day in 2061 (28 July to be exact). Halley used Newton's laws of motion and gravity to calculate its orbit and correctly predicted the comet's reappearance in 1758. JAPB concluded that examples of Newtonian physics, such as a falling apple or the path of the Sun in the sky, are highly predictable, but conceded that they could be slightly complicated at times (good luck to those taking further mechanics!)

Then JPBH reminded everyone that not everything was perfect with his chaotic game of Howzat?!, and explained the randomness of a cricket game. Each shot in cricket is determined by multiple factors such as the condition of the ball, the moisture of the ground and the psychological decision of the batsman, so it is almost impossible to predict.

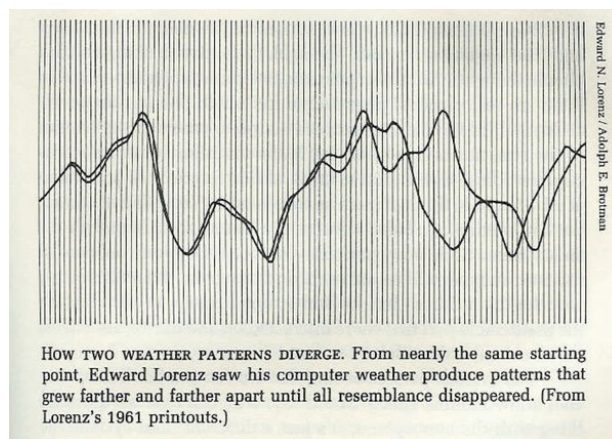
Of course, nothing is more notoriously unpredictable than the Great British Weather, so it was no surprise that JAPB introduced the American meteorologist and mathematician Edward Lorenz, who coined the term 'butterfly effect'. One day in 1961, Lorenz was trying to predict the (American) weather using the Newtonian laws of fluid motion. When Lorenz lazily truncated 0.000127 from his input value, he realised that the

predicted weather pattern turned out to be completely different. As shown in the graph below, the two graphs are very similar at first, but soon diverge chaotically. Intrigued by the significant impact of a seemingly insignificant change in an initial condition, Lorenz published a paper in 1972 about this phenomenon, entitled 'Predictability: Does the Flap of a Butterfly's Wings in Brazil set off a Tornado in Texas?', hence, we now hear of the 'butterfly effect' thanks to Edward Lorenz.

Lorenz's diverging weather patterns

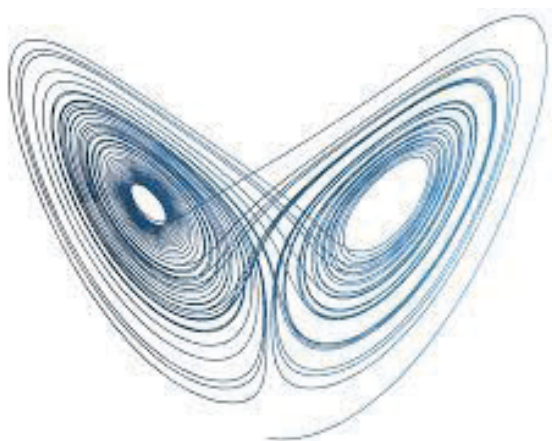
In 1975, mathematicians Tien Yien-Li and James A. Yorke first developed the mathematical term 'chaos', in a paper entitled 'Period 3 Implies Chaos'. (If they had studied at Harrow, then Period 5 would have been a better choice.) JAPB then introduced several examples of 'chaotic systems', which all have a sensitive dependence on initial conditions like Lorenz's weather patterns. Though some systems are highly predictable (e.g. simple pendulums and the gravitational two-body problem), a great number more are not. From a deceptively simple double pendulum to a three-body gravitational interaction, there are countless chaotic systems that cannot be predicted in the long term.

To explain the distinction between order and chaos, JAPB introduced Lyapunov time, which estimates the time for which a system can be predictable. While we can accurately predict the solar system for five million years, 1cm³ of argon is only predictable for four-hundred billionths of a second! Therefore, chaotic systems can never be absolutely predictable, but we can make accurate predictions from the distribution of probabilities. JAPB concluded with an explanation of the Lorenz Attractor, the familiar butterfly-shaped model that we associate with chaos theory and the butterfly effect. It is derived from a system of three differential equations which Lorenz uses to describe atmospheric convection. Amazingly, none of the lines intersect each other or retrace their paths. Moreover, just as in most chaotic models, a small change in the starting parameters results in a completely different model.



Lorenz's Butterfly Model

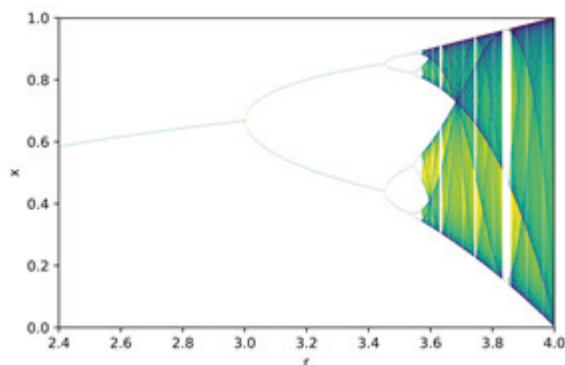
With the audience stumped by the inexplicable metamorphosis of Lorenz's differential equations into a butterfly, JPBH came prepared with his mathematical medkit to rescue the Shells. It turns out that Lorenz's model is a result of bifurcation – a "simple", iterative system where each term is dependent on the previous one. JPBH "EXCELLED" in his explanation, by using the simple bifurcation $x_{n+1} = rx_n(1 - x_n)$, where $0 < x < 1$, and r was the parameter. After some EXCELLING wizardry, the audience was convinced that this bifurcation always gave a certain result dependent on the value of r used (and as n tended to a very large number). For example, when $r = 1.5$, the outcome is $\frac{1}{2}$ no matter what value of x you enter (provided that $0 < x < 1$). Try it yourself! This outcome is the system's "attractor", which is what x_n tends to when n becomes a large number.



However, when the value of $r = 3.2$, something strange happens: there are suddenly 2 attractors (approximately 0.5123 and 0.7995) which are cycled. When $r = 3.5$, there are 4 attractors (approximately 0.3828, 0.8269, 0.5009, and 0.8750). We discover that for some values of r , there is only one attractor; for others, there are many. By plotting a graph of the attractor(s) against the value of r , we observe a wonderful pattern just as chaotic as Lorenz's butterfly. Indeed, the butterfly model is also plotted using the bifurcation of Lorenz's equations.

Graph showing the bifurcation of $x_{n+1} = rx_n(1 - x_n)$

Finally, JPBH concluded with the mysterious and fascinating bifurcation $z_{n+1} = z_n^2 + c$, which produces the famous Mandelbrot set when plotted. Being a fantastic fractal, the Mandelbrot set has a defined area but an infinite perimeter and is plotted using complex numbers. With a final flourish, JPBH and JAPB revealed their masterplan to take over the Hill: hypnotising the audience with a video zooming into the Mandelbrot Set for five minutes. (It is highly recommended for reducing stress, eliminating distractions and erasing your memory...)



This summed up an absolutely fascinating and mystifying evening for all those in attendance. We can only hope that JAPB and JPBH will make another appearance next year!

BRITISH MATHEMATICAL OLYMPIAD

December 2023

The results of the first round of the British Mathematical Olympiad, released in December, include some impressive performances from Harrovians. Twenty-six boys sat the paper, for which simply qualifying is an achievement, placing boys in the top thousand candidates nationally. Eleven boys achieved

certificates of merit and a further seven earned distinctions; the highest certificate awarded.

In addition, three boys were awarded medals for coming in the top 100. Oscar Wickham, *The Head Master's*, and Andy Law, *West Acre*, both earned bronze medals, while Andy Li, *Moretons*, earned a gold, having achieved 11th place in the country. Andy was also invited to the International Olympiad training camp in Hungary over the Christmas break.

Hans Woyda Mathematics Competition

Last term, the Maths team won all three of their matches to make it through the group stages of the Hans Woyda Mathematics Competition as one of the highest-scoring teams. They face Mill Hill International School in the first knockout round later this month.

METROPOLITAN

WULF AND EADWACER

An amateur translation of a 10th century Anglo-Saxon Elegy

Lēodum is mīnum swylce him mon lāc gife;
willað hȳ hine āþecgan gif hē on þrēat cymeð.
Ungelīc is ūs.

Wulf is on īege, ic on ōþerre.
Fæst is þæt ēglond, fenne biworpen.

Sindon wælrēowe weras þær on īege;
willað hȳ hine āþecgan gif hē on þrēat cymeð.
Ungelīce is ūs.

Wulfes ic mīnes wīdlāstum wēnum hogode,
þonne hit wæs rēnig weder ond ic rēotugu sæt,
þonne mec se beaducāfa bōgum bilegde,
wæs mē wyn tō þon, wæs mē hwæpre ēac lāð.

Wulf, mīn Wulf! wēna mē þīne
sēoce gedydon, þīne seldcymas,
murnende mōd, nales metelīste.
Gehȳrest þū, Eadwacer? Uncerne eargne hwelp
bireð wulf tō wuda.
Þæt mon ēaþe tōslīteð þætte nāfre gesomnad wæs,
uncer giedd geador.

My translation:

It is as though my people had received a gift.
They will chew him up if he comes back,
We're one no longer.

Wulf is on one island, I on another.
Fast is Wulf's isle set, engulfed by the Fenland.
Murder-wanting are the folk who on that island dwell.
They will chew him up if he comes back,
We're one no longer.

I once, wailing, followed Wulf's fading tracks,
And when it rained, I sat, soaking, mournful-sad.
Then that battle-bold warrior laid his arms about me;
I felt pleasure then, loathing also.

Oh Wulf, my Wulf! I long for thee,
This longing shall soon bring death to me;
Your seldom-visits, my mourning soul,
It's not because of hunger.

Do you hear me, Eadwacer! May our miserable whelp
Be bourne on strong wolf-back through the woods to you.
Oh! how easily things come apart, that were never truly together:
The song we made as one.

Notes on Translation:

Considering that only around 30,000 lines of poetry have survived in the Anglo-Saxon language, this bizarre and brilliant little 10th-century poem is surprisingly obscure in common study. In terms of history, it was found in the Exeter Book, in which it appears very abruptly. Some scholars believe that it may have been part of a much larger and commonly known story (potentially a skewed mish-mash between the story of the mythical heroine Signy, and the infamous rivalry between Theodoric the Great, represented by Wulf, and Oadacer, represented by Eadwacer).

Although there's no definite explanation for its confused nature, there are a few suggestions which can be found in the original Anglo-Saxon. Firstly, it is obviously the voice of a woman, as the person to whom she calls Wulf, probably her husband, has a masculine name. These female lamentations about really very dreadful husbands are common in Anglo-Saxon poetry and stand out for many as icons of feminism. Beyond that, the piece is very confusing, and the modern reader's mind is free to roam. The most enigmatic theory, (as presented by Anne L. Klinck, *The Old English Elegies: A Critical Edition and Genre Study*) is that the narrator character has been captured by a man named Eadwacer and imprisoned on his island, and that she has been raped and impregnated by him there (the baby is ironically mentioned in L.1 as a 'Gift', 'lāc', and the conception is oddly described in line 11) causing her much trauma, and that her husband is far away, probably having forgotten about his kidnapped wife or assuming that she has already died. The capturing of wives to become thralls for victorious kings was a common form of looting in both Anglo-Saxon mythology and reality, and this would make sense. This also puts into context the line 'They will consume him, if he and his army come' (willað h̥ hine āþecgan gif h̥ on þrēat cymeð.), which is a reference to the duality of her existential longing: wanting her husband to save her, but fully aware that he will never come due to the risk. This paints the image of a forgotten lover who is dying of grief – 'And soon shall this Longing put me to death' (sēoce gedydon, þīne seldcymas), which refers to a literal illness, as opposed to a rather poor simile) and who shall never be happy again.

However, this is not certain, and my own translation often contradicts this, as in the line 'I once, wailing, followed Wulf's fading tracks (Wulfes ic mīnes wīdlāstum wēnum hogode), which I have translated as the wife literally following her husband's tracks, which suggests freedom of movement, whereas some translate it as a mental journey, which doesn't contradict the idea of physical imprisonment. Therefore, I encourage the reader to make of it what they will.

BANG & OLUFSEN BEOGRAM

In 1972, Jacob Jensen designed the Beogram 4000 turntable for Bang & Olufsen. Within months, it transcended its status as a mere 'record player'; celebrated in the MoMA design collection, it became a defining icon of enduring style. Bang & Olufsen had this to write about the designing process:

The successful engineer – whatever his speciality – must first consider the primary purpose, the ultimate use, of the product he is designing. (...) The objective was to devise

the best and easiest way to play a record rather than to design a new record player. "Best" in terms of technical finesse. And "easiest" in terms of operation. (...) And when functions are optimized (...) the results are bound to be aesthetically pleasing, because "form follows function".

This distinctly Bauhaus approach to design was not foreign to Bang & Olufsen. 1934's Hyperbo 5 RG Steel, among the first pieces of sound-as-furniture, was based on Peter Bang's desk chair, designed by Bauhaus legend Marcel Breuer. Yet, it was the Beogram that seemed to finally affirm Bang & Olufsen's chokehold on modern design aesthetic and consumption, aligning functionality and style with uncompromised sound.

Bang & Olufsen's fixation with not designing "a new record player" must not be confused with a rejection of innovation or modernity; rather, the company sought to develop through an organic method, returning to the traditions of old craftsmen in producing a product that redefined through boundary-pushing refinement. This was perhaps best seen in the turntable's tone arm, which was radically redesigned to move tangentially, pioneering a method that reproduced sound in the exact way it was recorded. This unique arrangement further absorbed all vibrations and discrepancies in vinyl pressing, significantly reducing the chance of scratching the vinyl and stylus.

Indeed, the Beogram's aesthetics appear to have evolved alongside its mechanical precision: far from an attempted disguise of the turntable's true use (a trope to which Bang & Olufsen has fallen victim in its quest for style), the player's clean-cut lines visually demonstrate cleanliness in sound and representation, where angular, modernist form harkens both to the past and to the future. The only natural way to describe Jensen's work is 'timeless'.

I am writing this not to appear affected or flatulent (or as if I have been sponsored by Bang & Olufsen). Instead, I seek to communicate sincerity in my appreciation of an object that has defined modern design and sound for decades. Indeed, I am writing this while a 1991 Beogram 7000 sits by my side, while Suffjan Stevens whispers something biblically homoerotic to me in his indie drawl. The 7000's design is a mere continuation of Jensen's vision, the only differences being a slight slimming afforded by technological advancement and a chic, all-black trim. From personal experience, I can certainly testify that sound quality and ease of operation are both optimal and that the tangential tonearm is audibly superior to a diagonal arm.¹

This leaves a burning question: what is the purpose of this aesthetic and mechanical refinement beyond personal vanity? I suppose it is partial to the human drive for pursuit of excellence and the attainment of the ever-elusive ideal of perfection. From an artistic perspective, its merging of high design with everyday utility is spectacular and ageless. In similar ways to the higher-rated books in the reviews I wrote in this column last term, the Beogram succeeds at contributing significantly to discourses and advancements in the worlds of art, finally offering not just a compromise between design and technology but a triumph in both fields.

¹ This is fascinatingly despite my lack of a pre-amplifier or multi-speaker system due to Harrow space restrictions.

FILM REVIEW

About Time, Dir: Richard Curtis, Run time: 2hr 3min

We've all recently celebrated the coming of a new year and with it the deep sense of confusion about where exactly all that time went. Rated no 4 in most influential figures in British pop culture, famous Rendallian and brilliant movie maker, Richard Curtis gives us *About Time* (2013). Filmed mainly in London and Cornwall, *About Time* chronicles the events that

follow after barrister Tim, (Domhnall Gleeson) discovers he has the ability to travel through time. A wild fantasy made relatable as Tim uses his newfound superpower... to fall in love (underwhelming). The film stars Rachel McAdams as Tim's wife Mary, Bill Nighy as Tim's father, Margot Robbie as Tim's early love interest Charlotte, and Tom Hollander as Tim's neurotic playwright friend. Movies written and directed by Curtis such as *Love Actually*, (2003) *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994) and *Notting Hill* (1999) all have a tangible comforting style to them. It's Curtis's penchant for sticking with the same-ish cast of actors like Hugh Grant, Hugh Bonneville, Rowan Atkinson and Colin Firth that helps to create a warm feeling of familiarity both through Curtis's direction and inclusion of faces we've known well for decades. Although *About Time* doesn't strictly follow suit, it's Curtis's unique style that puts us at ease, accustomed to the predictable, romance-centric storylines, and confident that nothing will be frightening, depressing or (inordinately) uncomfortable, the viewer may relax and enjoy the movie. In saying that, I really don't mean it as a criticism and actually believe Hollywood needs to slow the production of (now old hat) indie films, and produce a solid, reliable, feelgood film once in a while without preaching. Both Rachel McAdams and Domhnall Gleeson give great performances in their respective roles, but I think the real shining star in this film is Bill Nighy. Behind wry remarks, weak smiles and signature cavalier style, Nighy portrays a tragic character unable to share much of his life experience due to a secret that none could understand. The tension melting away between father and son as they grow closer through a shared burden is expertly depicted as the two of them must keep the lives of their families intact by painstaking curation through time travel.

Curtis has made clear in interviews, "I've never catered films to the American market, I make films about the way things are at home and if they enjoy them across the pond then all the better." It's this distinctly British feel that's so addictive in all his films, particularly this one. I will say, it's always tedious to create plots that centre around 'time bending' and other elusive concepts, as so often the story becomes an exercise in adhering to these annoying plot points. Refreshingly, the use of time is (mostly) used to help the rest of the plot and act as a sort of magnifying glass placed in the sun, under which the flaming intensity of time can be expressed. It's for this reason the film rests in a different bracket from other 'time travelling' films such as *Timeline* (2003), *Star Trek Generations* (1994) or *Austin Powers* (all movies). Had it been a gimmick-centric film, the climax of the movie would be some time-battle, reversal, butterfly-effect nonsense, and would take place towards the end of the movie. Instead, the concept of time travelling is introduced early on, casually in conversation, the father (clearly very bored with the whole idea of it) reveals time travel matter of factly to both the audience and his son Tim, playing on the fact that the whole idea of time travelling has become very old-hat and boring to both the father and the wider cinema zeitgeist. It's a movie about

examining the sadness, joy and mercurial nature of life, only, this time living out our own dreams, getting the chance to go back and live the perfect life, actually changing the past. Filmed in the beautiful Cornwell house of Tim's parents, I got the feeling that I was looking through Tim's very own memories throughout the film, even when we are brought back into the 'present'. The movie is so time-obsessed it seems to be presented as a memory itself.

One thing often disputed about the film is its length. Perhaps my tolerance of long movies has grown from years of watching grossly over-budget Marvel movies and Scorsese films that never seem to throw in the towel. I think it is because of this that I had no problem with the length per se, but there's an undertone of repetition I was not alone in noticing. Ben Mankiewicz (host of Turner Classic Movies) says the movie drags on, "a cute concept that's easy to grasp in the beginning, turned repetitive after a while and makes for a movie that only works if you're completely besotted with the idea of time and travel". I'd agree with the statement had I switched off the film halfway: 'another love story' was my first thought when watching it (considering Richard Curtis' track record it's not a bad guess).

In the second half, the film makes a subtle transformation from documenting the trials and tribulations of Tim working hard to perfect the world around him for everyone he loves, into a sweet and poignant story of love between a father and son. It's this transformation that draws the viewer back into the trance of entertainment and elevates the film (for me) into a whole different bracket. The only bits I got caught up on were the areas where the time travelling influenced the baby's traits, only if you travelled back to before the baby was conceived. It's here where I think Curtis may have become 'caught up in the weeds' and perhaps should have stuck with the line given by Bill Nighy at the beginning of the film where he says "Oh that whole butterfly effect thing? Well it hasn't bothered us yet." Having heard this line, a wave of relief washed over me believing I could watch the film in peace, but alas not.

I recommend this film to anyone yearning to look inwards, be entertained, or even watch a visually satisfying work of art. As always, please do send in any recommendations for films you'd like to see reviewed. That's all. 21mcdowellm@harrowschool.org.uk

UNSUNG HEROES

Annie Katchinska

What is your name and occupation

My name is Annie, and I am the School Counsellor

How did you come to Harrow School?

I studied Classics at university but it took me a bit of time after that to figure out what I wanted to do and what kind of work I wanted to be doing. It took me a few years of doing slightly random jobs before I figured out that I wanted to be a counsellor. After that I did my counselling training, which took me three and a half years. While I was doing that I was working in a few different schools and moving around.

I arrived at Harrow during the pandemic and I wrote my first application during that first lockdown. I remember that when I was applying for the job at Harrow, I had been looking for a new counselling job for an extremely long time and I'd sent off loads and loads of applications, but it wasn't getting anywhere. By the time this job came along, I'd sort of given up, so I sent the application off half an hour before the deadline thinking that there was no way I was going to get this job, and then I got it! I see that as a bit of a life lesson for me to just keep trying.



Other than seeing the boys, what does your job entail?

Every day varies for me, but generally I spend my day having counselling sessions with different boys. Some boys I might see quite regularly, like once a week, and other boys might be a one off, it just depends. The rest of the time I do lots of different things. I might meet with other staff, or with House Masters, but only if the boys I'm meeting with are happy for me to do that: if they don't want me to, I won't.

Also, after a boy leaves a session, I don't just completely forget about him. I spend some time thinking about the session that we've had and mull over some of the stuff that's come up. I might consider, how do I feel about what's just been shared? What can I do to help? What can we think about together in our next session that might be helpful? A lot of thinking and reflecting really.

How can boys make use of the counselling service at Harrow?

try and tailor what I do to every boy, depending on what they need. I always say to boys that they can ask for counselling for any problem, whether it feels like it's a really, really big problem or if it's something that feels like a small problem. I actually think that some boys tend to worry that they're facing a problem that is too small. It's not. If it's a problem that's bothering you then it's good to come and talk about it and I'm here to listen. I'm always happy to help with whatever it is.

Once I meet with a boy, we might then decide that maybe it would be good to keep meeting once a week and take the time to work on stuff. For other boys, it might feel easier to just come for that one session, and that's absolutely fine. Some boys might come for one session and then they might come back a few weeks later, or we might schedule another session for next term or something, depending on what they need. There's no one-size-fits-all counselling service. It really is just about what each boy needs at that point in time.

Who else do you interact with on a day-to-day basis?

I work quite closely with Claire, who is the School's Clinical Psychologist and also meets with boys. I also talk to House Masters or the Medical Centre team when I need to and when a boy is happy for me to do that. To be honest, those are the people I work with the most. I sometimes get involved in PSHE. I help Mr Mayhew with some of the lessons and give talks to different year groups.

Now for some quick-fire questions:

Favourite colour? Blue, no question about it.

What is your dream holiday destination?

I've never been to the US, I've just never got round to it. I would like to do a road trip around the US, but I can't actually drive, so somebody else would have to deal with the driving.

If you had the power to change one thing about the world, what would it be?

This is such a difficult one. Obviously, I would like all the war and conflict in the world to end and for everyone to be able to live peacefully. But that is the obvious answer. Other than that, I'd like people to be just a bit kinder to each other and also chill out a bit more and not put themselves under so much pressure. I think we all tend to work really hard and try and achieve great things and push ourselves all the time, and that's great, but I also think we would all be a bit happier if we were a bit kinder to ourselves sometimes.

What is your favourite thing about Harrow?

Okay, this might sound a bit cheesy, but the boys are my favourite part of Harrow School. I completely mean that. I know that it can take a lot of courage to come and see me, and I never, ever take that for granted, and I always value every boy who comes to see me for a session. Honestly, throughout my time here, I have met so many boys who are just incredible people, boys

who are brave and kind and who have had a really strong impact on me. I feel really lucky and really grateful that I get to meet all these people and that I do this work. That's an easy one.

What was your least favourite subject when you were at school?

It was physics. I found physics really difficult. I didn't understand anything, and I remember I revised for my GCSE by just memorising sentences in the textbook. And then in the exam I just copied down the sentences word for word and sort of hoped for the best.

Did it work?

Yes, I did okay but I wouldn't recommend that as a revision strategy.

What book are you currently reading/most recent book you have read?

The book I'm currently reading is actually kind of rubbish, and I'm not going to tell you. I recently read a book called *Educated* by Tara Westover. I like reading memoirs and autobiographies; I like reading about people's lives. So that's the kind of book I tend to read.

What is your Harry Potter house?

Oh I did that quiz years ago; I think I got Ravenclaw. Same.

OPINION

CORRESPONDENCE

Letters to the Editors

DEAR SIRs,

I am writing to address a growing issue facing our Hill: capping, or rather the unfortunate absence of the practice.

Capping is one of the great, long-standing traditions of this school. It creates an environment where boys recognise and respect their beaks on the High Street, a culture where connections between Masters and boys are synthesised and encouraged through social convention. Capping is just one of the many things that makes Harrow different, and special. Being compelled to engage in differing behaviour when on the Hill, as opposed to off of it, compels boys into being more respectful of the educational space, more receptive to learning.

However, in my infrequent travels away from Leaf Schools and The Copse, I have noticed that the tradition has all but died out. Nobody is capping their beaks anymore. In fact, after speaking to some new members of staff, some are not even aware that the practice even exists. This is very unfortunate, and I hope that the School will further emphasise this custom in Harrow life. However, in the meantime, if you are a Harrow boy, particularly in younger years, please cap your beaks.

Capping may be a small part of the many traditions that set Harrow apart, but it is one of my favourites, and I think we would all like to preserve it.

Yours signing off with optimism,
ARTURO SAVILLE, RENDALLS

DEAR SIRs,

I reached my 80th birthday last year and the problems of old age have become more apparent. My knees buckle but my belt wont. My back goes out more than I do. I sink my teeth into a steak and they stay there. My address book contains only doctors. I feel like the morning after but I haven't been anywhere. I tell stories over and over. I always smile but I

haven't heard what you are saying. I'm so cared for, eye care, dental care, long term care. I'm walking more – to the bathroom. I'm good at opening childproof caps – with a hammer. I can't recall words..... like.....er.

But I bring good tidings for Harrovians. Harrow Songs are the gift which keeps on giving. After you leave the School, you will to some extent be a trained singer, at the very first time in the history of the world that a rich and gigantic array of wonderful songs from many centuries are available to you at no cost – on the net.

You can sing – and dance – along, with or without eternity's best songsters, because a gazillion songs are available free on video – Adele, Amy Winehouse, Madonna, Verdi, Robbie Williams, Michael Buble, Pavarotti, Mozart, Mc Cartney, Gilbert and Sullivan, Farmer, Bellini, Beethoven, Bing Crosby, Piaf, Bob Dylan, Anna Netrebko, Elvis, Taylor Swift, SZA, Billie Eilish, Blur, and many, many more.

I sung the New Boys' solo, 500 Faces, in 1957 and have been sharing my voice with grateful friends ever since. I was recently (December) marching along the tube tunnel network at Finsbury Park when I noted that the high ceiling might encourage echoes. So I sang fortissimo the Romanian National Anthem – Desteapta-te, romane, din somnul cel de moarte, Triumfator in lupte, il nome de Trajan

A Romanian gentleman came up to shake my hand and congratulate me on his National Day! As did another traveller!!

But suppose you are a croaker? Tone deaf? You mangle 40 Years On to sound like custard and plum? Never fear. For the essence of song is its frailty, its naked spirituality and diversity in a materialistic and robotic world. Everyone can be

A wandering minstrel I, a thing of shreds and tatters,
Of ballads, songs and snatches, and dreamy lullaby.

Of course, singing is good for your voice, your well-being, and your memory. I can also assure you that women will find you especially attractive if you sing with passion, however badly, in the bath, or on the street, in Newmarket stables, or on the Underground, on an aircraft, under the sea, in Burger King, or in the crypt of St Paul's. Thus the horrors of old age are mitigated, and you will remain forever young at heart, comme moi.

Yours sincerely
MIKE STONE, MORETONS 1957²

DEAR SIRs,

I can't seem to see my timetable on Firefly, so I presume all lessons have been cancelled.

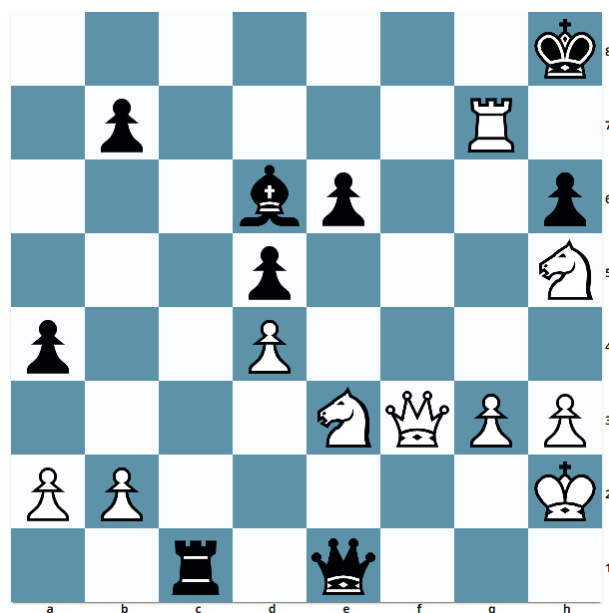
Yours tardily,
ARJUN KULAR, ELMFIELD

CHESS

Congratulations to the winners of the puzzle solving competition from last term – John Ye (Elmfield), who solved the most puzzles throughout the term, and Charlie Cao (The Knoll), whose name was drawn from the list of those who had solved at least one puzzle.

This term's competition starts with a game from 1994 between Romanian WGM Corina Peptan and Croatian WGM Vlasta Maček. Maček is threatening mate in 1 on g1 but white can force the win first.

White to play and mate in 3 moves.



Send your answers to JPBH by email to enter the termly competition and prize draw.

Last week's answer: 1. Qa7+ Kc8 2. Qa8+ Bb8 3. Qa6#

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

SPORT

SWIMMING

In December, the Harrow swimmers were exceptionally busy. Nick Finch, *Newlands*, represented the Great Britain junior team in Canada, where he was in top form and part of a junior world-record breaking 4x50m freestyle team. Finch also broke the School record in the 100m freestyle, becoming the first Harrovian to break the 49 second barrier, swimming 48.96. On top of this, he managed to swim a 22:15 in the 50m freestyle, once again breaking the School record and earning a silver medal. He also broke the School record, swimming 23.7 in the 50m butterfly and winning a bronze medal.

On the domestic front, Harrow had a record number of swimmers qualify for Winter Nationals: Mark Zeng, *Elmfield*, Adam Wong, *The Park*, Kevin Cao, *The Grove*, Alex Moore, *Lyon's*, Joseph Li, *The Grove*, MJ Stafford Davies, *Lyon's*, Eric Lesesne, *West Acre*, and Thomas Williams, *The Head Master's*.

All swimmers swam amazing times to get to this position – many congratulations to Finch and all of the swim team.

Ways to contact *The Harrovian*

Articles, opinions and letters are always appreciated.

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

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

CANADA SKI TRIP

In a stellar showcase of prowess and perseverance, Harrow's ski team left an enduring mark on the Canada Cup this year.

The men's open giant slalom (GS) event witnessed an impressive podium sweep, with Ulrico Zampa, *The Head Master's*, gaining gold, Viktor Van Den Berghe, *The Grove*, securing silver, and Freddie Williams, *Moretons*, banking bronze.

In the Under-16 competition, Ferdinand Klitzsch, *The Grove*, added to the glory with a gold medal in the GS category, while Ethan Jones, *Druries*, showcased his talent with a bronze in the Under-14 GS event. The men's open slalom displayed the team's versatility, as Zampa continued his winning streak with another gold, Timmy de Hemptinne, *Bradlys*, gaining the silver, and Van Den Berghe bringing in bronze. Max Nardo, *Bradlys*, shone in the Under-16 slalom, grasping the gold for Harrow.

The team's overall accomplishments were nothing short of spectacular, with the Under-16 GS team, comprised of Ferdinand Klitzsch, *The Grove*, George Behan-Windeler, *The Head Master's*, and Min Choi, *Bradlys*, getting a gold medal. The men's open GS team, featuring Zampa, Van Den Berghe, and Williams, replicated this success by earning gold.

The grand finale of the Canada Cup showcased Harrow as the overall victors, a testament to the team's exceptional talent, strategic co-ordination, and unwavering commitment to excellence.



Harrow faced stiff competition from 12 other UK schools, and three schools from the USA.

FENCING

On 9 November, the fencing team hosted their penultimate match of the season, against Abingdon. The team went into the match with high hopes of replicating their victory last year, but it seemed as though the Abingdon squad was back for revenge and put up a very high-quality display of swordplay. We opened with the Epee A squad consisting of captain Jonny Cullinane, *Newlands*, Henry Barker, *The Park*, and, Nathan Goff, *Lyon's*. We put up a good fight, but unfortunately ceded to their more aggressive and skilled bladework, giving all Harrovians involved a good bruise to show off. Next was the Epee B who were represented by Arthur Cullinane, *The Head Master's*, Cyrus Chang, *Druries*, and, Hing So, *Newlands*. They put up a strong fight but were eventually just beaten 45-40, with So showing off his experience. Then there was the Foil B who were made up of novice fencers Sudeep Miller, *Lyon's*, Cato Pang, *Lyon's*, and Edward Shek, *Druries*. This was their first match for Harrow, and they did the best they could, but unfortunately their lack of experience pushed this match in favour of Abingdon, leaving the final score 45-24. Finally, there was the saving grace of the Foil A squad made up of Oliver Mak, *Newlands*, Brian Chang, *Druries*, and Nathan Goff, *Lyon's*. They exhibited tremendous skill with their weapons and each boy won every bout, with Mak gaining a +10 hit score. Overall, though losing 134 blades to 155, we put up a brave challenge that showed much courage throughout and, like Abingdon, for the next match we will be working hard to beat them next season.