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BEYOND THE WALL

*German Society and Trevelyan Society, Katja Hoyer,
'East Germany 1945–90', 11 January*

“What interests me about German history is this kind of idea that it doesn’t make any sense; it comes in parts. There isn’t one continuous way of telling the history of Germany.” – Katja Hoyer.



On Thursday 4 January, the German and Trevelyan Societies warmly welcomed Katja Hoyer, an esteemed British-German historian and accomplished author. She delivered an engaging presentation in Speech Room, focusing on the intricate history of East Germany. Ms Hoyer’s talk spanned the period preceding its founding (1949) to the complexities of today, delving into her own personal life and the lives of others throughout East Germany’s evolution, to give a fascinating and stimulating lecture.

Ms Hoyer began by sharing a multitude of different aspects of German life “beyond the wall”. She revealed the roots of her deep passion for German history. She explained that growing up during a period of significant change in Germany, particularly the transformative ‘fracture’ – the transition from East Germany being an independent entity to its reunification with the FRG – instilled in her a profound curiosity about Germany and its intricacies. She was particularly interested in its change of government, when the state went from being run by a communist government to a country that was part of a democratic and federal parliamentary republic, and when she noticed the extraordinary reversal of East German ideology.

Ms Hoyer continued by examining the evolving opinions in East Germany from the days before its segregation. She explored cases of individuals attempting to escape to the Soviet Union in pursuit of the ‘communist paradise’ and how many faced persecution; ‘only a quarter of these refugees survived’ by the time of Germany’s division. This would become essential to the Soviets’ plan as they would use those recruited by Stalin from Germany to later set up a Soviet government (the GDR) after the deterioration of the Nazis.

Ms Hoyer later shifted her focus to the Berlin Wall, unravelling the Soviets’ motivations behind the construction of the barrier as well as touching on the startling story of Peter Fechter (a man who attempted to escape East Germany only to bleed to death in the death strip). She continued her explanation of East German history with the current debate about whether discussing German history could be considered as conjuring “Ostalgie”.

Overall, Ms Hoyer’s talk was nothing short of extraordinary. She covered almost all East German history with a great depth and intimacy and with a number of fascinating insights relating to today’s world. It is definitely true to say that this was a lecture packed with valuable knowledge and that it kindled a desire in the audience to delve deeper and for her to tell us more.

AUCTION HOUSES AND COMMERCIAL ART

*Summerson Society, Andrew Fletcher, Christie's,
18 January*

Andrew Fletcher gave an scintillating talk on Thursday night addressing the Summerson Society on his role as the Global Head of Old Masters at Christie’s auction house. Mr Fletcher began the lecture by summarising his prestigious career and his journey to being among the most important figures in the art world. He first gained an interest in art at Harrow, where he spent most of his time in the rather carefree art studios that were based where the Ryan Theatre now stands. While on a gap year, he fell in love with the Old Masters in Venice and went onto university to study Art History and French, before starting his career at Sotheby’s. Mr Fletcher describes how working at Sotheby’s was like a dream come true; certainly, working with actual art outmatched studying Art History at university – “Nothing beats the hands-on experience.”



The chair (Henry MacDonald, *The Park*) asked how an Old Master was valued. Fletcher’s answer was: provenance, subject matter, and most importantly, condition. We learnt that in some cases, the condition of a painting can decide 95% of its worth.

The art world has drastically changed in the 25 years that Mr Fletcher has worked in it. In fact, art trends change almost every decade, the most recent being the nascent interest in woman muses, especially female artists. They are very much in demand, the most notable of them being Artemisia Gentileschi, a painter who worked in the 1600s. Relatively obscure until quite recently, she is now one of the most “in demand” artists in the world.

Mr Fletcher said that one of the best parts of the job is connoisseurship, the art of identifying art by famous Old Masters, which few can do accurately. One example of a pundit’s keen

eye was when Rubens's *The Massacre of the Innocents* was first found. One art dealer informed the owner that the painting was most definitely by one of Rubens's followers, which is not uncommon. Another art specialist recognised it to be a genuine Rubens. This anecdote demonstrated how the opinion of an art expert can really make a difference.

The important thing to understand about the art world is the pursuit of that "golden goose" painting, as Mr Fletcher called it: a new painting that no one has ever seen before or considered. The first time such a work goes to auction, it is truly a chaotic scene as people fight for ownership. This sort of territorial feeling about paintings is truly peculiar. If that painting initially sold for 14 million dollars due to the excitement generated by the "discovery", the next year it could sell for only half. The painting would have in some sort of platonic way lost its chastity.

Mr Fletcher also gave quite a few interesting anecdotes on the topic of fakes, with one of the stories involving many millions of dollars in reparations. Nowadays, fakes of paintings are getting rarer as technology eclipses this practice. The most famous fraudulent artist was Han van Meegeren, who began his career by forging Vermeers before and during WWII.

Finally, Mr Fletcher spoke on the much-awaited topic of employment in the art world. What are these auction houses looking for? Mr Fletcher remarked that the selection process is gruelling, and he culls from hundreds of similar – and similarly impressive – CVs. He informed us that it is important to make your CV both personal and unique; furthermore, he stated that paramount importance of the interview, because auction houses are looking for a personality – to charm clients – and not just a CV.

Andrew Fletcher's passion for art was clear to see and the whole lecture was almost a "who's who" in art. Mr Fletcher closed by saying that working at an establishment like Christie's was not usually going to make you "filthy rich," but that it would be more fulfilling than most other jobs. There is clearly no regret in his choice of profession, and it is recommended to anyone interested in Art or Art History.

CHANEL AT THE V&A

OSRG Arts Society trip to 'Gabrielle Chanel: Fashion Manifesto', Victoria & Albert Museum, 18 January

Embarking on the journey to visit the exhibition at the V&A dedicated to the brilliant designer, Gabrielle Bonheur 'Coco' Chanel, was something anyone would anticipate. Born from humble beginnings, Chanel was the daughter of a small merchant, Albert Chanel, and began her career in fashion as a hat maker, a milliner. The life of Chanel is one of courage, ingenuity and elegance, reflected through her designs. At the beginning of the exhibition, we were greeted by a brief overview of Chanel's life, serving as almost a starter, tempting us with what was to come. The first exhibit displayed a delicate blouse made from fine-gauge silk jersey, designed with the purpose of being worn with a gathered skirt and suit jacket. As we were drawn deeper into the exhibition, we were met with even more wondrous sights, including the famous 'Little Black Dress' and its sister the 'Ford'. Out of these two iconic dresses, personally, the Ford was chic and had an allure to it with long sleeves and a boxy silhouette. Something that I've notice while observing the exhibits is that the shape of the dresses, coats and accessories are all geometric and simple, with occasional bold patterns, yet the designs are not overwhelming and nor are they boring. Chanel's famous perfume, Chanel No. 5, with its classic and timeless cuboid design, is still one of the top fragrances used today. The evolution of Chanel as a designer and a brand was portrayed perfectly in chronological order, enabling us to experience her growth in fame. Perhaps one of the most curious facts about Chanel, and misconceptions, was that she

worked for Nazi Germany. She had only done so due to her nephew's capture by the Germans, and thus she had to appeal to her political connections, seeking aid from Baron Hans Gunther von Dincklage. Therefore, this unfortunate series of events led to Chanel's temporary recruitment as a part of the German intelligence operations, seeking to use her connections with aristocratic British contacts to begin negotiations with prime minister Winston Churchill. Despite all this Chanel did indeed return to fashion, delivering to the public an array of suits, dresses, coats, shoes, bags and jewellery, and chief among them, the absolutely iconic tweed suit. Literally dozens were arrayed in a stunning visual *coup de theatre* in the final room. And with that came to an end to our visit to Gabrielle Bonheur 'Coco' Chanel's exhibition, with her creations bidding us farewell as we left, a part, a crucial part, of her legacy in the V&A. Thanks are due to the prescience of the Mrs Walton and Ms Payne who secured our tickets for a this sell-out event last October.



[Due to popular demand, the sold-out exhibition Gabrielle Chanel. Fashion Manifesto has been extended until Sunday 10 March. This is an exhibition not to miss so book tickets as soon as possible for the extended run! -Eds

ROCK 'N' ROLL'

Slavonic Society trip to Hampstead Theatre, 20 January

On 20 January, the Slavonic Society embarked upon a theatre outing to Hampstead Theatre to watch a performance of Tom Stoppard's 2006 play *Rock 'n' Roll*. Before the play began, KAF and the group of seven boys enjoyed a quick meal at KFC and drinks in the theatre lobby. As we entered the auditorium, we were greeted by The Beatles' *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*, and an impressively intimate theatre space, guaranteeing tension and connection with the actors.

Like most Stoppard's plays, *Rock 'n' Roll* dealt with its themes of culture and freedom in Czechoslovakia after the Soviet invasion of 1968 abstractly: an interview with Stoppard in the programme brochure showed that he did not believe people needed to know the context to appreciate the play. I would like to note that we were nonetheless grateful for the information that KAF sent out on background events a few days before the outing. Instead, Stoppard combined a multitude of historical references with sweeping overviews of politico-philosophical tensions, evoking the haunting Havel v Kundera debate in the wake of the Prague Spring. This was further interspersed with classical interludes to Sappho, and mammoth time jumps delineating the fall of Soviet Communism and shifting socialist fronts in England, creating an overwhelming sense of humanity and unity despite the odds.

Indeed, this sense of humanity was deeply evoked by the actors, especially the leads Jacob Fortune-Lloyd as Jan (the character's name references Jan Palach, a protestor who set his own body alight as an act of protest against Soviet occupation) and Nathaniel Parker as Max, whose tense intellectual debates on Marxism and censorship were tied together by threads of mutual respect and care, despite dramatic episodes of fighting. Poignant, therefore, it seems that a play so based on suffering and turmoil would end with a dinner gathering, an epilogue of sorts to the 'madness of the world', reminding the audience that at heart, these were all human beings at play.



Perhaps the play's greatest aspect was its seamless and intrinsic reference to popular music of the time, namely rock'n'roll but with many names such as Madonna's involved. Andy Warhol's Velvet Underground created a firm undercurrent to the play (their track *Venus in Furs* was the first record played on Jan's turntable), while their illegal Czech counterparts, The Plastic People of the Universe, demonstrated how different views on popular music were across the Iron Curtain. Certainly, tunes both recognisable and perhaps foreign to the audience provided the play with a strong rhythm, as musical motifs set the mood and told the story in a fabulously abstract way. Coming out of the show, we felt somehow invigorated despite the time, filled with ideas and passion for human strife through life; perhaps the true moral was that music would always continue to define eras and bring about social change, just as Viktor Tsoi and Kino would during the Gorbachev era of *perestroika*...

HAMLET AND THE DEVIL

Sheridan Society, Max Rugge-Price, The Park, 18 January

Max Rugge-Price, *The Park*, delivered a lecture on *Hamlet*, a Shakespearean literary classic. He explored the idea of the presence of the devil in *Hamlet*, as well as the effects and consequences of the association of the devil with many of the characters. In doing so, he was able to weave in critical analysis from well-respected Shakespearean critics while maintaining a raw sense of originality. So the question remains, is there a 'devil' in *Hamlet*? Through a Cluedo-style elimination game, all the characters in *Hamlet* were analysed, reflected upon and then absolved: until there was one. And then there were none. The common consensus from Rugge-Price and his audience was that there was simply no devil in *Hamlet*. There was certainly evil, but no devil. As explained at the start of the lecture, the seven deadly sins are lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy and pride. While numerous characters embody these traits, they fail to culminate in one man (or woman). Arguably, this is due our pejorative perspective on certain characters as we subconsciously villainise them. This was followed by intense conversation from the audience, with everybody eventually

agreeing to disagree. Rugge-Price's topic of choice was an intriguing and relatable one, especially seeing as *Hamlet* is a play studied for English Literature A-level. This lecture was provided us with alternative perspectives and an engaging insight into other people's views.

MICROCHIP WAR

Pigou Society, Feo Mishin, Elmfield, 'Green energy – China's secret plan to win the microchip war', 18 January

Feo Mishin, *Elmfield*, spoke to the Pigou Society on 'Green energy – China's secret plan to win the microchip war'. The talk started with Mishin stating that China aims to be self-sufficient in the microchip industry. This microchip war between China and other highly developed countries is what Mishin called a 'silent war'. However, China's plan faces numerous problems. As they do not want China to make technological advances at a fast rate, the US and NATO countries have imposed sanctions on China's imports. It is also worth noting that Taiwan is an important part of microchip industry. While some suggest that China wants to recapture Taiwan, Mishin suggested that perhaps this planned invasion is not purely because China wants to reclaim its old land, but rather a tactical plan that benefits them economically.

Mishin then introduced the audience to the 'malicious cycle'. Backed by data, he stated that the GDP growth of China has slowed in recent decades. He suggested that the main reason for this is the one-child policy that was enacted in 1980. As China is a rather conservative country, parents would prefer boys over girls, therefore, in extreme cases, some chose to abort child if it were a girl, creating a significant gender imbalance. Furthermore, because of this one-child policy, one third of Chinese people will be over 60 by 2050. As technology in the medical field grows, life expectancy in China will increase. Coupled with the fact that there is slower population growth, citizens of China can no longer fill in all the jobs that are available, creating job vacancies.

Lastly, Mishin explained that China aims to switch to green energy. He reported that China produces 30% of the world's carbon emissions. However, in the last few years, China has been producing 1.2 terawatt hours of power annually through solar and wind power. Furthermore, in 2003, China constructed the Gorges Dam. This hydroelectric gravity dam produces a record 100 terawatts per hour, and China is expected to decrease coal production by 39 million tons. Furthermore, China also produces 75% of the world's polysilicon, which is main component in making solar panels. China's fusion programme, valued at 1 trillion USD, can also produce temperatures five times as hot as the sun. By being able to reach these temperatures, scientists have taken a small yet significant step closer to the creation of a source of near-unlimited clean energy.

GEOGRAPHY AND EMPIRES

Junior Laborde Society, Dario Holland, The Park, and Henry Barker, The Park, 'How geography affects empires', 16 January

In their talk, Dario Holland, *The Park*, and Henry Barker, *The Park*, gave an overview of four different, unique empires, explaining how they rose to power, evaded invasions, communicated effectively, and eventually collapsed – all in relation to their geography.

The first empire discussed was that of Rome, which was key as it was a central point in the Mediterranean, with trade ports, and two mountain ranges, the Alps and the Apennines. The Romans' success was partially because of its rich agricultural soil, as well as a high immigrant population – adding to the workforce and army. Initially, the Romans had slow, ineffective communication, leading them to build roads and construct ships. However, the main causes for the empire's collapse were overexpansion and overuse of natural resources, which they believed 'would never run out' because they were supplied by the gods.

The second empire analysed was the Persian Empire, which saw the rule of 12 king. The Persian Empire was located favourably between the Mediterranean and the Indian subcontinent, and during its peak encompassed India and Greece. Its major asset was the sea, which the Persians used for trade, as well as creating farmable land from it. The surrounding mountain ranges provided refuge from attack. It was, however, a citizen's revolt in response to high taxes, that caused its downfall, and it was captured by Alexander the Great.

Thirdly, our very own British Empire was studied. The key to the British Empire's success was the Navy, which famously fought the Spanish and Portuguese fleets. Our isles were last successfully invaded in 1066. One of the weapons of the British Empire was its use of colonisation, such as that of India and Australia, which allowed it to trade cheaply. At its peak, the Empire covered one quarter of the globe. A combination of motivation, people and money eventually brought about the empire's transformation into the Commonwealth, to develop democracy and peace.

Finally, the Mongol Empire was discussed. The Mongol Empire consisted of 15 countries split into four regions, and was founded by Genghis Khan. It profited from a strong army of horses and archers, and its effective use of the Silk Road, which ran from Moscow to China, as a channel of communication. A combination of problems with the supply of food because of the cold climate, a citizens' revolt due to internal governance issues, an outbreak of bubonic plague, and natural disasters such as droughts, famines and floods, eventually led to its disintegration.

HANS WOYDA

Having won their group last term, the Maths team has qualified for the knockout section of the Hans Woyda Cup – the prestigious London-wide competition involving a number of the Capital's top schools. In the round of 16, they travelled for an away fixture against Mill Hill International School.

Mill Hill started strongly, and the scores were neck and neck after the first two rounds. However, Harrow's superior mental arithmetic enabled them to open up a decent lead, which they never relinquished. Despite Kevin Zhu's, *Bradlys*, attempts to sabotage the result by inadvertently giving his opponent the answers, Harrow emerged comfortable winners by 42 points to 27 to go through to the quarter-finals.

JUNIOR INTER-HOUSE DEBATING

'This house believes that Britain should give more money to the military', first semi-final, 16 January

On 16 January, the first semi-final of the Junior Inter-House Debating Competition took place, with West Acre (Jonathan

Ford and Arthur Yang) facing reigning champions The Head Master's (Diederek Brouwers and Meer Veluvali). The motion was: 'This house believes that Britain should give more money to the military', proposed by The Head Master's and opposed by West Acre.

The Head Master's had a spectacular turnout, with many House members filling one half of the room. Unfortunately, West Acre must have just been hit by a meteorite, for only a Grovite, a Moretonian and the writer of this particular segment turned up in support. However, West Acre were not deterred and gave two very convincing and passionate speeches, believing firmly that the UK has enough spending, and just needs to shift it around. On the other hand, The Head Master's believed that spending ought to increase because of growing tensions around the globe.

Fr James described the floor discussion as one of the most intellectual and fascinating that he had ever witnessed, with interesting questions and points being raised by both sides. West Acre won.

'This house backs the Western military action against the Houthis' second semi-final, 23 January

The second semi-final saw Elmfield (Arjun Kular and Mac McDowell) arguing against The Park (Ethan McCullough and William Martin-Jenkins). The motion was: 'This house backs the Western military action against the Houthis', proposed by The Park and opposed by Elmfield.

The Park believed that Western military action was the only correct course of action because it would be swift. Elmfield argued that diplomacy should be tried first, out of fear of escalation, and if that failed an international military taskforce should be sent in to deal with the Houthis. Turnout was not quite as spectacular as the previous semi-final, but a strong number of Fifth Formers from each House turned up to support, and they provided some insightful questions on both sides (with rigorous questioning of the proposition from Nick Arnison, *Moretons*), and Fr James was once again so impressed by this display of intellectual curiosity that he was moved to speak. Elmfield won.

These results mean that on 20 February, the OH Room will witness West Acre v Elmfield in the greatest Junior Inter-House Debating showdown of the past 450 years.

SLAVONIC SOCIETY

George Maia, Druries, 'The Great Depression and the forgotten American emigrants to the USSR', 11 January

George Maia, *Druries*, addressed the Slavonic Society on 'The Great Depression and the forgotten American emigrants to the USSR'. In his talk, based on Tim Tzouliadis' book *The Forsaken: An American Tragedy in Stalin's Russia*, Maia discussed the migration of over 15,000 Americans and Canadians to the Soviet Union in the 1930s, seeking to escape the Great Depression and attracted by the promise of jobs and a socialist utopia. An example of someone who believed this was John Scott, an African American man who was desperate to leave racial discrimination and economic hardship behind in the US. Although he was one of many, Maia explored Scott's story more deeply.

The realities of life in the Soviet Union under Stalin's rule often clashed with the emigrants' ideals and expectations. They experienced various hardships: deplorable living conditions that contrasted with propaganda about modern factories with workers' accommodation and other amenities, language barrier, difficulties integrating, lack of political freedoms and censorship that suppressed open discourse, and fear and suspicion fuelled by Stalin's Great Purge, where accusations could lead to arrest,

torture, the Gulag or execution. They also suffered from clashes between individuality and personal expression versus the collectivism and loyalty demanded by the Stalinist state – an extensive bureaucratic system and surveillance apparatus that discouraged open discussion to avoid drawing suspicion. Above all, the Soviet government confiscated the emigrants' American passports, making it impossible for them to return to the USA if they wanted to. Any attempt to approach the entrance to the US Embassy in Moscow usually led to an instant arrest and deportation to the Gulag.



In summary, the dream of a socialist utopia promoted in propaganda did not match the oppressive reality of life for emigrants in Stalin's Soviet Union. What started as a search for better economic opportunities and a role in building a new society was met with political repression and death in many of the camps spread all over the USSR at that time.

The society thanks Maia for educating us on this little-known topic, to KAF for suggesting some excellent further reading, non-fiction and fiction, on the subject.

CHESS

ECF Schools Blitz Tournament, 21 January

Last Sunday, Harrow hosted the ECF Schools' Blitz tournament for the first time. Almost 100 pupils from 11 schools came to the Hill to play a 12-round tournament. This was fast-paced stuff, with each player having only three minutes for all their moves.

There were very highly rated individuals, including some of the country's top junior players with ratings in excess of 2000. Harrow was one of only a couple of schools who were able to bring two teams to the event.

JPBH got the team warmed up by making them carry chess sets, clocks and other detritus up the Butler Centre stairs, then insisting that the furniture needed to be rearranged to get the playing hall ready. It seemed to work, since both teams performed well.

The A team was unlucky to miss out on a podium finish by a mere half a point, but nonetheless produced a performance that exceeded expectations, given the other teams' average ratings. Henry Romantsov, *Druries*, impressed by beating the highest-rated player in the tournament – he was in fact the only player to do so – but it was Jeff Hu, *Elmfield*, who was the highest-placed Harrovian, at joint sixth. The B team finished a very respectable ninth of 13 teams, beating some A teams along the way. Shell Moroti Akisanya, *Newlands*, outscored half of the A team.

Indeed, the number of junior players involved, with more than half of Harrow's players in the Fifth Form or below, is hugely encouraging for the future.

DICTATORS AND TOTALITARIANS

Trevelyan Society, 'The rise and fall of power, Rishaad Bhushan, The Grove, 18 January

On 18 January, the Trevelyan Society welcomed Rishaad Bhushan, *The Grove*, to discuss the topic of dictators and totalitarian regimes. Bhushan opened by clearly defining what a dictatorship is, that being 'any regime where little or no turnover of executive power has occurred'. Subsequently, he discussed the different forms that a dictatorship can take. Firstly, an absolute monarchy or single-party regime, such as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) or the Saudi Arabian aristocracy. The ruling Al Saud family of Saudi Arabia has dominated the government since 1932 and power has descended through the family since. On the other hand, the CCP established itself as a party in China during 1949 and has ruled China as a 'people's democratic' dictatorship since. The CCP has thus changed its leaders as time has gone by, yet they have maintained control for nearly 80 years. Following Chairman Mao's death in 1976, the CCP underwent significant reforms under Deng Xiaoping, moving towards a free-market-oriented economy while maintaining a firm grip on political control. In a similar fashion, the People's Action Party (PAP) has dominated Singaporean politics consistently through the 20th and 21st centuries – winning the majority of seats in parliamentary elections. Its policies have focused on economic development, social stability and multiculturalism. It has remained the ruling party through various general elections, with its leaders, including Lee Kuan Yew and subsequent prime ministers, maintaining a strong influence on the country's direction. However, the PAP has seen much scrutiny, specifically from younger generations in Singapore. Due to a lack of transparency in governance, their habit of attempting to silence opposition with personal attacks and financial ruin, as well as their myopic strategies of reliance on foreign labour, the "Zoomer" generation has criticised the party.

The second form of dictatorship discussed was the military regime, as sometimes seen in South America. These dictatorships are often short lived and often remove civilian leaders from government. The centralisation of authority is a defining feature, with power concentrated in the hands of military leadership, whether it be a single officer or a junta comprising high-ranking officials. This concentration of power allows the military to take control of civilian institutions, restructuring or replacing them to align with military priorities. The suppression of political opposition is a common strategy, involving the restriction or elimination of political parties and the arrest or exile of opposition leaders. Political pluralism is limited, and elections, if held, may be manipulated to ensure continued military dominance. Authoritarian rule prevails, characterised by centralised decision-making, restrictions on civil liberties, and the imposition of martial law to maintain control. Military regimes often justify their rule by emphasising national security concerns and may prioritise stability over democratic ideals, impacting the political, economic and social fabric of the affected nation.

Finally, there are personal dictatorships, such as those seen in North Korea and in the former Soviet Union. This form often means absolute power and a dominating government. In contrast to military regimes in which collective power is held by the military, personal dictatorships concentrate power in the hands of one person beyond pure military power. Moreover, these dictatorships are characterised by violence, often used for terror tactics. Personal dictators frequently cultivate a cult of personality, employing propaganda to craft an image of the leader as a strong and indispensable figure. This may involve glorifying the leader's achievements and virtues while stifling any form of criticism.

Yet, this begs the question of how these dictators come to power. Although this does vary in context, it is usually when democratic institutions are weak, and thus it is far easier for a

dictator to concentrate power. Therefore, by exploiting crises, whether real or manufactured, dictators promise stability and solutions to societal problems, resonating with populations seeking reassurance during uncertain times. This allows for total social and political control.

As an end-note, Bhushan highlighted the different ways in which a dictator may step aside from power. These included death, jail, exile, or simple retirement; such as Julius Nyerere.

The talk was then opened up to the floor. Bhushan discussed how social media can now be both a weapon and a hindrance for dictators. On the one hand, propaganda can be pushed on social media such as Instagram to sway political ideologies. On the other hand, access to social media can also be used to hinder a dictator's regime through the encouragement of free speech and scrutiny. Furthermore, Bhushan showed that there have been cases that one could argue were good dictatorships, such as that of the PAP, which has played a pivotal role in Singapore's growth and development since 1954. Policies put forward by figures such as Lee Kuan Yew turned the nation into a global economic powerhouse. However, there are far more cases, such as Nazi Germany, which were not ideal and led to the stripping down of human rights and dignity. Moreover, Bhushan highlighted the difference between regimes from the 20th century and those from the 21st. Dictatorships in the 20th century relied on traditional communication and faced less scrutiny than those today. In the 21st, technology plays a far greater part in advancement, with social media enabling global control.

MEDICAL SOCIETY

*'Xenotransplantation: Pigs can save your bacon',
Harry Winward, Lyon's, 15 January*

Pigs may be saving your bacon sometime soon.

The frontiers of organ transplantation have extended further than ever before. Recently, doctors have taken organs from genetically engineered pigs and transplanted them into humans. Pigs have become our go-to donor for organs. Who'd have known that pigs were like humans, with a 98% DNA match and a comparable anatomy of size and function?

In 2022, Dr Griffith and Dr Mohiuddin successfully edited the genes of a pig, removed its heart and transferred it to their patient, David Bennett, a 57-year-old who was suffering from end-stage heart failure. For Bennett, it was "either die or do this transplant." Despite a tricky operation, there was no rapid rejection of the heart. It stayed pink and beating. A month later, there were no signs of heart rejection. Unfortunately, the success was short lived. Forty-nine days after the transplant, the pig's heart began flailing. Sixty days later, Bennett died.

The cause of death is open to debate. Bennett was frail before the operation from an abdominal infection, and a new heart would probably not have saved him. Alternatively, it could all be a matter of anatomy. Despite being a very close fit, pig hearts pump at much higher pressures, straining the human vascular system. However, the University of Maryland team considers the xenotransplantation a success since the heart showed no signs of rejection. For the first time, a genetically modified animal heart functioned like a human heart without rejection by the body. So how does it all work?

Rejection, facilitated by the immune system's recognition of donor organs as "foreign", is the most frequent reason for transplant failure. Xenotransplantation solves the problem of cross-species transplant rejection by modifying the genes' coding for non-human antigens in pig hearts.

Scientists sourced Bennett's heart from a specially designed "10-gene pig". A 10-gene pig undergoes several tweaks in

its genetic makeup. Alterations prevent pig heart response to human growth hormones, remove pig alpha-gal antigens, and add six human alpha-gal to camouflage the alien organ from the immune system.

Xenotransplantation is emerging as the next potential solution to organ shortages, along with cell scaffolding and 3D printing. We may expect to see pig-human hybrids in our lifetime.

VIDEO GAME SOCIETY

*'TAS: defying human limits',
John Ye, Elmfield, 22 January*

John Ye, Elmfield, presented a lecture to the Video Game Society entitled 'TAS: defying human limits'. Video-game speedruns involve the completion of a certain level or objective as quickly as possible. Ye explained that TAS (tool-assisted speedruns) are achieved by programmers who encode specific and precise inputs with the help of tools such as video-game emulators to produce a perfect speedrun close to the absolute limit of human capability. This could involve moving in a certain direction for a set time, placing objects, attacking mobs etc.

Emulators create an enhanced platform for players to use, just like playing console games on the PC can improve graphic and sound quality and reduce jagged edges, making images more realistic. Emulation is the main tool used for TAS, where pre-entered inputs are converted into instructions given to the in-game character at specified time intervals to produce a highly time-efficient speedrun. Save states can be used as checkpoints for each set of instructions to save progress. Ye introduced a concept called TPS (ticks per second), where each tick is when a device records the player's inputted actions and displays these changes onscreen. This is crucial in creating a (near) perfect speedrun, as each fraction of a second has the potential to be utilised fully to save as much time as possible.

A memory watch can also be used for RNG manipulation to be the most favourable for the speedrun. The typical TAS run has five steps, starting when a console is powered on. The game file is selected and opened, and the emulator takes over the controls. Input continues, and the game is beaten before the final input. Ye ended by showing us videos of TAS speedruns of Minecraft under in 30 seconds, and a Trackmania in under a minute. The presentation was very informative and interesting, another "banger" from our secretary (we just needed the mash).

CRAWLEY SOCIETY

'Working in the American Senate', RKB, 15 January

The Crawley Society met for the first time in 2024 on an icy Monday in the Old Speech Room Gallery. Our Master-in-Charge, RKB, delivered a brilliantly insightful talk on his time working in the United States' Senate, leaving all the attendees very satisfied.

RKB started by explaining how he got this job in the first place. It turns out that he was trying for work at the British Embassy when he got a call from Orrin Hatch's office. This was a complete shock and surprise as everyone knew that Hatch's office was the dream internship. The job came with the best pay and, due to Hatch's seniority (the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, which means that he was the second-highest-ranking official of the United States' Senate, after the Vice President), there were unique opportunities. It transpired that RKB actually got the job after being recommended to Hatch's

team by someone he didn't even realise existed – a learning assistant on whom he'd obviously made a big impression.

RKB quickly set the scene – it was during the last two years of President Obama's time in office. This gave us a valuable insight into the biggest issues of the day. His role involved extensive research and crafting witty responses to constituents. Notably, he humorously recounted drafting legislation for a 'National Space Day' in response to a big donor's request, highlighting the lighter side of his responsibilities. His focus on environmental, road and veteran affairs, as well as his interactions with important figures, shed light on the diverse nature of his work.

RKB's friendship with the cafeteria's 'dinner lady', Gloria, initially motivated by his yearning for gossip, evolved into quite a close bond over time, albeit accompanied by a humorous acknowledgment of the weight gained from spending significant time in the canteen. His lighthearted yet honest portrayal of working alongside Republicans, including the challenging dynamics with individuals like Ted Cruz, offered us a glimpse into the complexities of Senate interactions.

The lecture also touched on the intricate hierarchy within the office he worked in and across the Senate, providing a fascinating and nuanced understanding of the internal dynamics. We were also all treated to an impromptu 30-second impression of Marine Le Pen, which added some levity to the discussion. After fielding some more questions, the event concluded. We are very grateful to RKB for this truly enlightening talk.

The Crawley Society meets regularly, usually on a Monday evening, to discuss current events and affairs. This term we have a fascinating and diverse group of lectures, notably two external speakers: Mr Dominic Goodall speaking on 'The role of the Church of England in Modern British society and politics', and The Rev. Canon Dr Nigel Biggar speaking on 'Decolonisation, What it means, and why it Should be opposed'.

METROPOLITAN

FIRST GENERATION FORD

A Mustang Buying Guide, by Jonathan Ford, West Acre

American icons have an ungainly habit: give them enough time, and they will probably grow fatter, more embarrassing. Like Elvis, the Ford Mustang lost its way in the 1970s: how could Lee Iacocca, the mastermind behind the masterful original, get it so wrong with the Mustang II as America entered the energy crisis?

Before these years of depression, the first-generation Mustang delivered more variants than perhaps popular memory provides. From the biting, angular '64 ½¹ model to the curved, swept fastbacks of the late '60s, or even the under-appreciated convertibles, one is perhaps spoilt for choice when it comes to owning a legendary 'Stang; this buying guide seeks to advise Harrow boys (in reality, parents) on which model would be appropriate for their classical motoring tastes.

It must first be stated that all types of first-generation Mustang make good purchases: all have quintessentially American V8 power, a guzzling hunger for the road and rakish looks to match. Please note that Shelby editions, due to existing almost as an entirely separate brand, will be addressed in a separate paragraph near the end of this guide. With this said, let us get into gear and charge down the turnpikes to yesteryear.

The '64 ½ to '66 Mustangs share near-identical styling. While iconic and legendary, it must be noted that the edges of the

vehicle were more squared at this point and do not feature the prowling stance of later, more famous Mustangs such as the one in *Bullitt*. The rear end is where this is most prominent: slightly too flat for my personal preference, it nonetheless remains tasteful and gets the job done. The vehicles are certainly powerful, but one must note that racing performance was not part of Iacocca's initial plan for America's favourite.² Potential drawbacks aside, the very first Mustangs remain fabulously engaging to drive (despite slight delay in gear-change on some automatic models), and offer universal appeal in notchback, fastback and convertible form. Notchbacks generally demand lower prices, with hardcore enthusiasts preferring the speed-hungry looks of the sweeping fastback. When buying, look out for a rusty chassis, drainage issues around the windscreen and for rust in the engine bay; the common rust in the rear wings is generally a surface problem. Unlike later 'Stang models, these vehicles have no pretension: acting more as grand tourers, they do not push the driver to speed or to show off; instead, they allow one to sit back, relax, and let the automatic gearbox take one where it leads...



The '67 to '69 Mustangs succeed visually for they take the core of the original Mustang to its logical conclusion: streamlining front lines, recessing rear lights in a stylish concave arrangement and pulling back headlights, these vehicles epitomised 'big-cat' styling, evoking the predatory stances of jaguars and cheetahs while remaining true to the masculine Americana of the Mustang brand. These subtle styling updates were backed up by big shifts under the bonnet and in the car frame for the model years: now equipped with a more powerful V8, the Mustang finally grasped its combined masculine and feminine appeal, appearing as a fascinatingly androgynous example of motoring legend. This is the Mustang that featured in *that* 10-minute car chase in Steve McQueen's *Bullitt* (the shot was so demanding that one of the vehicles used was so badly damaged it was scrapped...), creating a moment of car lore as iconic as the 007 trip is to Aston fans, or the *Italian Job* to Mini Cooper adorers. The ultimate specification for this Mustang is, unsurprisingly, the 390 GT which starred in *Bullitt*, featuring a 302 cu in motor with Edelbrock alloy heads that punches out 340 bhp. It is powerful when launching at a green light. However, it must be noted that this specification is rare: cheaper options include GT convertibles and, of course, the underrated notchback. The Boss 302 is another option for one desiring pure power, being the Mustang's response to Chevrolet's hot Camaro Z/28. Note that gear-change challenges were fully solved by '67, and that the potential for performance upgrades is wide here: a Griffin radiator will help trim about 60lb over the front wheels and will improve chassis balance; Wilwood disc brakes and callipers are a worthy investment if one desires to speed; wishbones can be raised by about an inch to lower the front (known as the 'Shelby drop'); stiffer springs and dampers will undoubtedly boost handling precision. Nevertheless, these are mostly cosmetic: the car is highly refined in its original

state, and excess changes beyond simple mechanical effects listed above may damage enjoyment and the monetary value of the vehicle. Look out, again, for rust in the chassis; once more, rust in the rear wings should just be a surface problem but should be dealt with as with all rust.

The '70 to '73 Mustangs are perhaps more of a sentimental purchase for car enthusiasts. Indeed, they represent a final swansong to '60s American muscle before the original pony car itself descended into Malaise-era chaos. Stylistically, note optional headlamps placed on the radiator grille and fake intakes exaggerating the 'Stang's sleek profile. These vehicles are fascinating when compared to the first Mustangs: ballooning 8in in length, 12in in width and 600lb in weight, they betray original 'pony' sensibilities, but are in no way bloated. The ideal investment would clearly be the Mach 1, famed for its 007 cameo (driven by Tiffany Case in *Diamond's are Forever*) and as the star car in Halicki's '74 classic, *Gone in 60 Seconds*. When purchasing, one must be aware that not all '70s Mustangs have the power which they are associated with: the 351 bhp motors from Cleveland began to lose big-block options around this time as political pressure tightened its grip on the muscle-car era. Nevertheless, performance enhancers exist, such as a four-barrel or turbo-chargers. Independent suspension as factory standard aids handling significantly. These Mustangs are perhaps best-suited for extreme enthusiasts, or those who seek a definitively masculine approach to motoring, who will certainly be seduced by the vehicles' lean stance and black-leather interiors. Please do note that rust in the chassis remains something to look out for. Rust in the rear wings was intriguingly mostly dealt with by this stage, but would resurface with the second-generation Mustang...

Finally, the Shelby Mustangs are in many ways a breed of their own. In terms of styling cues, they are entirely faithful to the standard Mustangs in their respective model years, save for exotic 'Cobra' badges and racing lines that rake across the vehicle. The optimum Shelbys are undoubtedly the '65 GT350 and '67 GT500. These vehicles offered 0-60mph in 6.5 seconds,³ and featured 7-litre V8 engines, epitomising an era of sheer power and dominance of the road. The birth of the Shelby Mustang is rather fascinating: Carol Shelby is obviously known for the Cobra and for his other Ford collaboration, the Ferrari-beating GT; the Mustang was conceived in a bout of jealousy within Ford's management team for arch-rival Chevrolet's recent track success with the Corvette. As a result, Shelby was commissioned to upgrade the Mustang from 289 to 350 bhp (hence the name 350GT) and to introduce sharper handling. The result was a stunning vehicle which was swift to respond to driver controls but retained a sense of uninhibited wilderness. One must be aware of the rallying nature of this vehicle: the brakes are heavy; the steering is heavy; and the car is rough-and-ready; it is also exhilarating to drive. As a passenger in my father's '67 GT500, I can certainly attest to literally feeling the seatback pound into me as the car accelerates. *Car and Driver* harshly declared it to be a "brand-new clapped-out race car"; they were not wrong, but that is its key appeal. Later Shelbys attempted to dodge this brute force, becoming more like Thunderbirds or, dare I say, Buick Rivas, by embracing luxury and a wallowing sense of softness. One must be wary of this and note that '68 and '69 models certainly do not handle as one would expect a Shelby to; by betraying the Shelby DNA, these vehicles are inoffensive as cars, but disregard the legendary label which they carry. This is also carried forward in the investment value of the vehicles. '65 to '67 Shelbys are the main commotion here, especially lucrative if in fastback form; '68 and '69 vehicles are nice but do not carry the financial cache. Rust is generally not a problem here; the perennial issue of the rear wings is once again, generally surface-level.

I suppose this leaves us with one of the biggest questions: should one convert to Right-Hand-Drive, given so few Mustangs were ever made to drive on the correct side of the road? I am

cautious when answering this question, no doubt since my family's Mustang was kit-built in Australia and was therefore RHD originally due to legal restrictions. However, these are few and far between – 16 were built in '67 (when our 'Stang was built.) Instead of providing a "yes / no" answer, I shall endeavour to offer pros and cons on both sides: clearly, the RHD conversion allows for significantly-improved driver visibility and, hence, far greater safety. Nevertheless, if one does not to overtake often, or has a passenger whom one trusts, a LHD vehicle is not unsafe and retains the structural integrity of the original vehicle. Furthermore, if one seeks to get a professional conversion (they really cannot be done DIY), it will cost between £15,000 and £20,000, half the value of some Mustangs themselves. This is a question which I think holds a different answer for each individual owner.

No matter what first-generation Mustang you decide to purchase, I wish you all happy motoring and happy collecting! Until next time...

P. S. Attached are a few images of the Ford family '67 Shelby GT500, which may aid in illustrating some points.

¹ Note that the customary '1/2' in the first Mustang's dating system owes to its peculiar April release date, placing it approximately halfway through the model year (which, in the 1960s, began in November).

² The first Mustangs were envisioned as a competitor for the ill-fated Chevrolet Corvair; they were so successful that they created their own genre of motoring and would soon receive technical upgrades to supercharge them to muscle car status.

³ This was industry-leading at the time.

THE GREAT ONE OF THE EAST

The great Romantic poet of Warring-State China, Qu Yuan (340-278BC), was from the state of Chu. His magnum opus is a compilation of 11 poems used in sacrificial ceremonies, refined to form a poetic masterpiece known as the 'Nine Songs'. There are many theories as to why it is called the 'Nine Songs', despite having 11 poems; the interpretation I believe is that the first and last poems are purposed to welcome and send off the god of the people of Chu, while the nine songs in the middle are simply stories of other deities designed to entertain their Lord. Here is the first of these 11 poems.

The Great One of the East
(trans. A. Yang, *West Acre*)

Sacred hour oh! of fortunate day!
Awed, we entertain our Lord.
His gemmed pendants oh! and jaded sword
Do like bells ring and in the wind sway.

Carpet of thyme, oh! laden with delight,
Lilies and bundles of tulips bright.
Meat wrapped in orchids oh! and fragrant sage,
Cassia wine of peppered age.

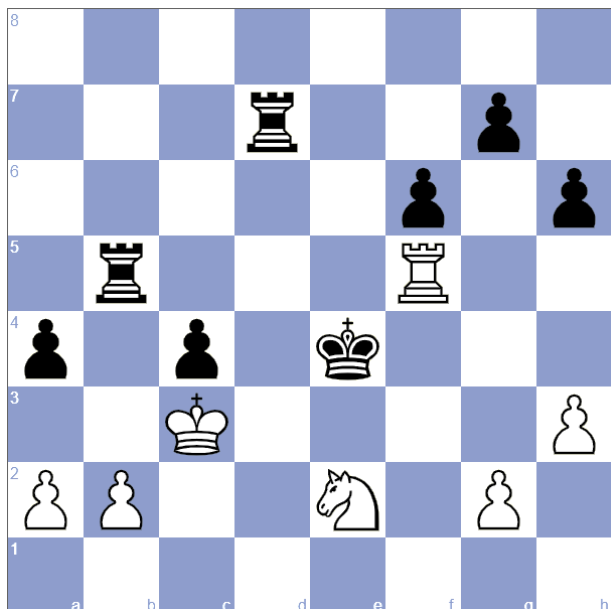
We wield the rod oh! to strike the drum,
To peaceful pulse oh! sing hymns of praise,
With pipes and flutes oh! do we chant and hum.
Fragrance fills oh! like mist and haze,
The five notes weave oh! and charms our eyes,
The priests dance, oh! in robes they rise,
This prayer, oh! to thine health we raise!

OPINION

CHESS

This week's chess puzzle comes from a 2023 game between Poles Wojciech Krawczyk (white) WFM Maria Siekanska (black). White to play and mate in 2 moves.

Submit your answers to JPBH by email to enter the termly competition.



Last week's answer: 1... **Rd1**+ 2. Qxd1 Qa2+ 3. Kc1 Ba3+ 4. Bb2 Qxb2#.

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

HELP WANTED

TO THE DISTINGUISHED READERS OF THE HARROVIAN:

Mainly due to excess consumption during Christmas and general laziness, I am found in a situation where a personal carer will be desirable in my life. Duties will include:

Helping me out of bed in the morning (you will be fined if I am late)

Transferring me in and out of showers

Dressing me up (fine if I get Custos)

Transferring me to breakfast and between lessons

Cutting the queue for me during meals

Waking me up in lessons if I fall asleep

Attending eccer for me

Doing my prep (fine if I get skew)

You will be expected to conduct this every day. I live in West Acre so you will be able to enjoy Dave's visits while transferring me. Pay will be separately discussed but will vary between £300–500 per week, depending on how well you do. The day will start and end as whenever required by the daily commitments and how quickly you finish your work. Please get in contact for interviews at 21yangx@harrowschool.org.uk.

CANCELLED OR ENLIGHTENED?

Exploring the Cancel Culture Phenomenon
Oliver Mak, Newlands

We live in a rapidly advancing digital era, and some of us will be increasingly aware of an age-old phenomenon with a modern name: cancel culture. Cancel culture is the digital, modern counterpart to the practice of witch-hunting: a collective persecution of someone who opposes and offends the mainstream mob. Is cancel culture really the people's justice? Or is it really just an outlet for undirected wrath?

Cancel culture has been plaguing humanity for years, long before the internet. Men and women have been burned at the stake for 'witchcraft' when in reality, they were practising 'science'. In a world where the ability to speak one's mind can lead to complete ostracisation and suppression, the human right of free speech may be infringed. The main objective of cancel culture is to dish out punishment where the legal system is unable, to suppress an unwanted message, or perhaps even to change someone's opinion. By spending enough time on the internet, we know that cancel culture rarely achieves all three objectives. While cancel culture can succeed in suppressing hateful and outright racist messages to the wider public, it rarely ever achieves its goal of changing the other group's opinions. In his 'cancellation', Andrew Tate has received more attention than ever with his devout audience becoming more and more zealous. In Donald Trump's 'cancellation', his followers have become increasingly blind to any other opinion. Why is this? Echo chambers. People with opposing opinions, upon receiving slews of hate without the opportunity to defend themselves, will often turn to sites that only accept their opinions. It is within these echo chambers that extremist ideologies perpetuate. People who were only slightly interested in Andrew Tate have become zealots through websites such as Kick. Similarly, with Donald Trump, his supporters have been increasingly active in Trump's very own echo chamber: Truth.

Cancel culture can be useful in circumstances like battling racism and 'dangerous' ideas where the law can't persecute them. It is also worth noting that cancel culture is also an extension of freedom of speech. The most harmful aspect of cancel culture is the very thing that gives it fangs: mob mentality. Peaceful protests can achieve monumental changes in the political, economic and social sectors of the world, however, riots often only succeed in encouraging tighter laws, tariffs and oppression. Such is the case with cancel culture. A more effective approach when encountering extremist views would be a 'call-out-culture' where the offender is called out for their views rather than completely suppressed. A constructive approach is almost always more successful than a destructive approach in changing someone's opinions. Time magazine has cited psychological research stating the first three things one should worry about when trying to change someone's mind are: go in calm, practice empathy and find common ground. Cancel culture does the opposite: it exists only to vent anger and demolish, and it rarely succeeds in demolishing the opposing opinions. Complete suppression can only succeed in breeding more hate and evil.

With its aggressive, unstoppable and indisputable approach with the backing of millions of people who may be misinformed, perhaps cancel culture is just an outlet for our collective anger. Perhaps cancel culture is just an excuse to get on our moral high horse, become a blind detractor and crusade against fellow misguided keyboard warriors to cancel for the sake of cancelling.

SPORT

RACKETS

1st Pair away v Tonbridge School, Lost, 13 January

A spirited effort from Gus Stanhope, *Moretons*, and Charlie Hope, *Rendalls*, who competed well in all three games despite a 0-3 loss.

2nd Pair away v Tonbridge School, Won

Some exciting and dynamic play in a 3-1 win, full of attacking rackets from Charlie Nelson, *Bradlys*, and Mostyn Fulford, *The Knoll*.

3rd Pair away v Tonbridge School, Lost

A game of hard-hitting rackets where Henry Porter, *Moretons*, and Tom Campbell-Johnson, *Druries*, played well in patches but were not consistent enough and lost 1-3.

Colts 1st Pair away v Tonbridge School, Won

Ben Hufford-Hall, *Moretons*, and Jack Nelson, *Bradlys*, played some excellent, attacking, rackets, after a patchy second game, to win 3-1.

Junior Colts 1st Pair away v Tonbridge School

Arjan Lai, *West Acre*, and Ned Steel, *Druries*, played two best of three matches. Against Tonbridge A, they lost 1-2 in a good match.

Against Tonbridge B, Lai and Steel played at their best and managed to save three match points to win 2-1 by the narrowest of margins, 18-17, in the final game.

The School v St Paul's, 18 January

1st Pair away v St Paul's School, Lost

Charlie Hope, *Rendalls*, and Mostyn Fulford, *The Knoll*, demonstrated great skill and courage despite a 0-3 reversal. They found their best form in the last game to narrowly lose it 18-13, having been 13-11 up.

Colts 1st Pair v St Paul's School, Lost

A very high-standard match in which both Ben Hufford-Hall, *Moretons*, and Jack Nelson, *Bradlys*, produced an excellent performance, conceding a very narrow 2-3 defeat against a strong pair on an away court.

Junior Colts 1st Pair v St Paul's School, Won

Ned Steel, *Druries*, and Arjan Lai, *West Acre*, won 3-1 with a strong final game. Both boys showed good progression and application in their play.

HOCKEY

1st v St Albans School, Lost 2-5, 13 January

The 1st XI game against St Alban's was a tough first-weekend opener for a team mixed with new players and different positions. Going into half-time, 3-0 down, the XI started the second half with an excellent first ten minutes. Will Stabb, *The Head Master's*, scored two goals with a beautiful aerial ball down the entire pitch from James Basslian, *Rendalls*, closing the gap to 3-2. Fitness levels and fatigue then set in, and the opposition scored two more goals from short corners for a final score of 5-2. Man of the match was Sam Phillips, *Moretons*, for his excellent strength in defence.

2nd v St Albans School Colts A, Lost 0-4

Harrow were impressive in the first half, with multiple attacking opportunities, accurate passing and defensive short corners. However, St Albans returned fighting and scored four goals in a fantastic second half. Harrow showed great determination and sportsmanship and is looking forward to the next game of the season.

Junior Colts A away v St Albans School, Lost 0-10

Yearlings A away v St Albans School, Lost 0-9

In their first outing as a team, the Yearlings A were eager to dominate in what has become a notoriously difficult match in the Harrow School calendar. With seasoned players mixed with boys new to the sport, it was obvious that the game would not be plain sailing. Employing the lessons learnt in drills across the week and a short but sweet look at penalties moments before the whistle, the boys started confidently in their gameplay. At half-time, Harrow had only conceded two goals, with special mention to Cayden Debrah, *Moretons*, for holding the back line throughout and Rex Wickham, *The Head Master's*, for tirelessly defending the goal. Sadly, exhausted and deflated from the lack of shots on goal, the boys conceded seven more goals, bringing the total to a 9-0 loss. The Yearlings A has learnt key lessons from the outing, and there is much to work on as the season progresses.

The School v Aldenham School, 20 January

1st away v Aldenham School, Won 5-0, 20 January

An excellent week of cold training and video analysis led to the 1st XI executing new formations, keeping the pitch wide and moving the play down new channels when a forward pass wasn't an option. Harrow dominated possession throughout the first half, with many goal attempts, but only one short corner from James Basslian, *Rendalls*, hit the back net. After a half-time talk, Harrow scored two goals in five minutes, one from Freddie Emery, *Moretons*, and Guy Manley, *West Acre*. Another short corner flick from Basslian took the result to 4-0. The final goal was an excellent cross from man of the match Jack Scott, *The Park*, to Kalan Niyarepola, *The Head Master's*, who swept in the ball. It was a much stronger week for the 1st XI, and the whole team performed well.

Yearlings A v Aldenham School, Lost 0-8

It was another tough week for the squad as fierce competition from Aldenham School resulted in an 8-0 loss. Despite a very strong performance from Brin Uthaisang, *Newlands*, who stepped up and moved from the defence to attack in light of injuries, the team sadly lacked the psychic unity needed to read the game effectively and predict where the opposition was heading to make their attacks. Over the next few weeks, as the boys bond as a team and become more in tune with each other's approach to play, greater match success should be on the horizon.

FENCING

On 13 January, the School fencing team travelled to Westminster for the annual triangular fixture against Tonbridge and Westminster. All three blades were represented in a pooled format where all the Harrow fencers fenced all the Tonbridge and Westminster fencers in their respective disciplines. First was Epee, which consisted of Jonny Cullinane, *Newlands*, Arthur Cullinane, *The Head Master's*, and Cyrus Chang, *Druries*. Harrow won seven of their matches, beating Westminster, who won three, and losing to Tonbridge, who won seventeen. There was a determined performance from Jonny Cullinane, who won four of his six matches. Next was Foil, which consisted of Edward Shek,

Druries, Oliver Mak, *Newlands*, and Wilfred Kent, *Newlands*. Against very strong sides, Harrow won five of their matches, compared to Westminster and Tonbridge, who both won 11. There was a strong performance from Oliver Mak, *Newlands*, who won three of his six matches. Lastly, it was Sabre, which consisted of Luke Pain, *The Head Master's*, Aiden Lee, *The Head Master's*, and Brian Chang, *Druries*.

CROSS-COUNTRY

Harrow School XC away Knole Run, 13 January

Facing chilly conditions on 13 January, the cross-country team took on the hilly and gruelling 9.8km course for the 49th annual Knole Run. In what was, as always, an incredibly impressive field, the boys rose to the challenge, competing fantastically against the strong opposition amongst the winds and mud. Michael Cattini, *Moretons*, and Otis Farrer-Brown, *Newlands*, produced astounding performances, both finishing in the top ten. Exceptionally strong performances from Henry Barker, *The Park*, Cameron Elliott, *West Acre*, Zach Elliott, *West Acre*, and Jonathan Ford, *West Acre*, put Harrow towards the top of the standings to take bronze in the overall team competition. Harry Jodrell, *Elmfield*, was the first Shell home in what was a fantastic debut in the Knole Run. The boys demonstrated exceptional courage and are looking forward to the rest of the season.



FOOTBALL

The School v Tonbridge, 20 January

NB. Several matches were cancelled due to icy weather.

1st XI v Tonbridge School, Won 2-1

The beauty of football in many respects is that it's not always things that look the most pretty that can win you a match – 'there's more than one way to skin a cat', so to speak, and while it is satisfying to see intricate passages of passing, there's also great appreciation in seeing a team battle really hard for each other. This league thriller versus last year's league winners, Tonbridge, typified this spirit – the 1st XI having to dig deep and play some gritty, defensive football to get a win with the most minimal of possession.

The sub-zero temperatures throughout the week had forced the game from our regular home on the Sunley to the Astro. Ill-suited to the team's strengths, the boys weren't thrilled about the prospect of playing on the narrow pitch against a Tonbridge team that looked a foot taller and miles fitter than each of our team on average. So it was really touching to see some familiar faces at the start of the game, to give the team boost – recent 1st XI players Walid Nsouli, Kyan Simpson and last year's captain Elliott Taylor as well as a host of OHs coming to support the team certainly buoyed the spirits.

Knowing that the Tonbridge team have pedigree, winning the league and cup last year, and how potentially pivotal this result could be made it understandable for some pre-match nerves still and this did seem to stifle Harrow early on. Unable

to get into their flow against Tonbridge's formidable 3-6-1 block formation meant Harrow could hardly get out of their own half in the opening 20 minutes and they were grateful to have Caspar Baker, *Moretons*, between the sticks to keep the scorelines level, with Baker performing several saves, one of which was genuinely first class.

As the half wore on and Harrow's resilience defensively started to shine through, the 1st XI grew in confidence and began turn the game on its head. Terrific work from their three midfield musketeers, Ralph Collier-Wright, *Rendalls*, Teddy Tarbotton, *West Acre*, and Charles Edu, *Lyon's*, gave Harrow a foothold, and as the rest of the team could see their star men gritting things out, so the confidence in possession and chances started to come. The first really clear-cut chance for either side came as a great ball forwards from Eli Dewotor, *The Head Master's*, was brilliantly taken down by Max Baygual Nespatti, *Elmfield*. Baygual Nespatti's first touch was perfection enabling him to drive forwards from his right wing and take it expertly around the Tonbridge keeper before tapping home. Delight all round. Jubilation outside the metal cage. But the offside flag was raised.

A quirk of modern schoolboy football and the live-streaming of matches means that anyone (and especially the Harrow subs) were straight on their phones to check instant replays, and the Harrow bench were incredulous after realising Baygual Nespatti was actually comfortably onside when the ball was played. The chance had given the boys hope, even if the outcome left them feeling a little short-changed. Harrow now knew they were on top, and there was a further gilt-edged chance before the end of the first half. A brilliant through-ball from Collier-Wright put the effervescent Peter Ballingal, *Moretons*, through on goal but his outside-of-the-foot strike went narrowly over the bar.

Harrow had the momentum and took this into the second half with some greater conviction in front of goal. Tobi Amusan, *Moretons*, had come in at half-time and showed some great energy and physicality to get the ball moving quicker in the Harrow front line. He was heavily involved as Harrow went in front – a Harrow throw-in going deep into the box, with Amusan bustling the ball across to Kitan Akindele, *Newlands*, who did what he does best – reacting to a loose ball before firing home powerfully.

Harrow then went further ahead with a delightful team goal. Mubarak Tinubu, *The Knoll*, showcased a lot of what the team has worked on earlier this year by maximising our space out wide on an overlap. A great switch from Amusan released Tinubu, who interchanged passes with Ballingal and Akindele. Tinubu then drove forwards from the overlap and his cross was met in the box by Ballingal who curled a wonderful strike into the bottom left corner with his left foot.

Harrow should then have composed and controlled things but the tight pitch meant there were always going to be chances. Nerves were fully put on edge when a cleverly worked set-piece routine got Tonbridge right back in the game at 2-1 and with credit to Tonbridge, the final 20 minutes then turned a little like a scene from the Alamo. Tonbridge relentlessly attacked, Harrow stayed resilient and stood up to the test. The backbone of Talal Nsouli, *The Knoll*, Dewotor, Zane Khan, *Moretons*, and Tinubu simply refused to give in while Caspar Baker organised expertly and batted away several strikes. There were two particular chances that Nsouli and Dewotor managed to scramble clear that any Premier League defender would have been proud of. Henry Snow, *Rendalls*, and Edu added to their efforts by acting like a shield in front of the defence that became impenetrable. For those final 20 minutes, hearts were in mouths on the touchline but there was a subtle confidence amongst the Harrow side and the boys on the pitch seemed perfectly content that they had this one under control, managing the game expertly. It was a genuine joy to see everyone working so hard to prevent an equaliser and there were a number of injuries and exhausted players at full-time.

After the final whistle, the boys had rarely seen Father Nic so joyous – fist-pumping every person in sight. It was the style of the victory that pleased the coaching staff so much – it has been rare in the past to see a Harrow 1st XI win this way – to see the boys fighting so hard for each other and ‘pulling their tripe out’. Let’s hope that the next outing, against a strong Haileybury side, will see the same effort and commitment but, at least to ease the heart rates more than anything, with a little more control, passing and possession.

2nd XI v Tonbridge School, Drew 0-0

The 2nd XI took to the Astro for a late kick-off against a Tonbridge side that looked strong but nothing we couldn’t handle. Play started out very well, with beautiful passing play around the back and pivotal manoeuvres from the likes of Edward Swanson, *Druries*, and Jack Young, *Newlands*. Dangerous runs from Akachi Anyanwu, *The Grove*, and Bradley Leong, *The Knoll*, down the wings struck fear into the Tonbridge defence. Unfortunately, the 2nds struggled to put the ball in the back of the net, with the score 0-0 at half time.

The second half started with Leo Polese, *The Head Master’s*, making his long-awaited return at the back, keeping Tonbridge’s relentless attacks at bay, alongside Cameron Childs, *Newlands*, Teddy Barnett, *Rendalls*, and Young after a position swap. After a stellar through ball from Max Bloomfield, *Elmfield*, Anyanwu buried the ball into the back of the net. 1-0. Or was it? Disallowed for offside, the score remained unchanged, but this boosted the 2nd’s morale. After a slip up at the back we gifted the Tonbridge striker an open goal, which he somehow missed, much to our relief. Following that, incredible saves from Henry Macdonald, *The Park*, prevented Tonbridge from scoring, in order to keep the game at a tie. 0-0 was the final score, but a positive performance with clear improvement from last week.

3rd XI away v Tonbridge School, Lost 0-3 Southern Independents

An absolutely valiant effort from the 3rd XI, travelling at late notice to Tonbridge to make this league fixture happen. Some students were playing in unfamiliar positions and worked well for each other throughout a very physical game. Some excellent defensive press work from Oliver Rezek, *Druries*, James Amihyia-Marsden, *West Acre*, and Tochi Orji, *The Park*, won the ball back time and again. We created some good opportunities to score but just failed with the final touch. Tonbridge scored two quick goals in the first half. As we were still warming up to the game, the team did well to stop their flow of possession. By the end of the game Tonbridge won 3-0.

Colts A away v Tonbridge School, Won 1-0

Harrow dominated a game in which Tonbridge did their best to frustrate the visitors. Harrow finally broke through with a penalty from Lase Akindele, *Newlands*, late in the second half to win 1-0.

Colts B away v Tonbridge School, Won 4-3

Colts C away v Tonbridge School, Drew 0-0

Junior Colts A away v Tonbridge School, Drew 1-1

The JCAs conceded an injury-time own goal to draw against a strong Tonbridge side. Lucian Spencer, *Elmfield*, scored at both ends; Rish Rawal, *Rendalls*, was player of the match with a commanding performance in goal. The JCA’s best moments came in the first half, with Mika Magomedov, *Rendalls*, linking

well with Joel Otaruoh, *Lyon’s*, and the latter showing some moments of direct and skilful play. Harrow’s goal came from the right hand side after good work from the lively Tito Odanaike, *Elmfield*. A scramble in the box ultimately led to the ball falling to Spencer to finish into an open net. The Harrow team should be commended for its resolute second-half display, which nearly brought the win. However, Tonbridge probed throughout with intelligent passing and impressive ball retention, without creating too much in the way of clear opportunities. Their goal arrived from a close range free kick, where Harrow’s deep defensive line made the slightest contact impossible for the keeper to repel. Frustrating, for sure, yet hard to argue that Tonbridge didn’t deserve the draw (at the very least)! The performance leaves much to ponder and improve, but the boys certainly showed that they have the heart for the fight!

Junior Colts B away v Tonbridge School, Won 3-2

A late arrival put the characteristically short away-match warm up straight on the table. However, with no coach in sight on arriving at the pitch, the Harrow boys were forced to beg, borrow and steal any inflatable objects that could stand up to a lacklustre rondo. Thankfully, several flat footballs were gathered, and with no time for a dynamic passing drill, were immediately sent over the bar in an attempt to warm up the keeper. A brief discussion with the referee later and the boys were ready.

The first half was dominated by passing inaccuracy and a lack of composure on the ball from both sides. Ultimately, this meant that any attacking threat was limited to long, hopeful through balls that were more often than not gathered by grateful keepers. Happily, a clean sheet at half-time meant that Harrow were still in with a chance. A formation change and highly repetitive team talk clearly hit the mark as the Harrow team, buoyed with enthusiasm, conceded two goals in the opening few minutes of the second half.

Nevertheless, a composed finish from the fridge-freezer playing up front for Tonbridge evidently pushed the Harrow boys over the edge. An invigorated attack from the kick off saw Rufus Young, *Newlands*, make determined progress up the right wing before some impressive footwork saw him square the ball for Manny Oppong, *Rendalls*, who calmly guided the ball into the top corner. A much-needed boost that saw momentum begin to swing in our favour.

Tails were up and Tonbridge struggled to exit their own third for much of the remainder. A speculative effort from distance soon followed and was parried into a dangerous position. Toby Woolf, *Elmfield*, had no right to beat the defender to it but a determined run saw him smash the ball home with his weak foot to level proceedings and utterly vindicate his demand to play up top.

The match was all square with 20 minutes remaining, but the momentum in our favour was palpable. With an air of inevitability, a butchered clearance fell to Seb Sasegbon’s, *Moretons*, feet and he finished with aplomb to put us ahead for the first time. The remaining time slipped by with Harrow decidedly on top and looking the likeliest to score next. Enter, Colville Wood, *Elmfield*. Not content with a thrilling 3-2 comeback, he had onlookers with hearts in their mouths with an uncanny ability to seek out trouble. Happily, his trademark acrobatic saves and fearless nature meant he was able to save any blushes before the whistle sounded for the final time.

Junior Colts C away v Tonbridge School, Won 2-1

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Articles, opinions and letters are always appreciated.

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