

# THE HARROVIAN

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## CLASSICS TRIP TO GREECE

*Early July, Part 1: Athens*

*Beauty is truth, truth beauty, – that is all / Ye know on earth,  
and all ye need to know.*

– John Keats, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*

Atop Acropolis Hill, Keats' beautiful lines tell us all we need to know. Both literally and metaphorically, the Acropolis (meaning 'high city' in Ancient Greek) rests at the pinnacle of Athenian culture. You cannot visit Athens without seeing the Acropolis; it rises above the painted sea of pastel-coloured buildings – a lighthouse illuminating the city, a golden mirror of the setting sun.

That warm Saturday evening, we experienced the simple, rustic delight of an Athenian supper: bread and olive oil, stewed pork with potatoes, and, most delectable of all, a verdant garden salad of tomatoes, cucumber, feta and olives (and perhaps a draught of Mythos beer too). Who could imagine that this was once the food of heroes?

The next morning, we ascended the Acropolis. Two and a half millennia ago, Socrates may have taken our very path. Therein lies the magnificence of this ancient city: there is no cranny where Clio does not dwell, no stone of which history does not tell.



The Acropolis was not only a sacred site of worship but also a flourishing centre for art and drama. On our way to the zenith of Ancient Greek civilisation, we passed the Theatre of Dionysus. Constructed in the 6th century BC, it is the oldest of Greek theatres and was the Hollywood of its day. There, the tragic trio of Sophocles, Euripides and Aeschylus first sang the eternal note of sadness, and Aristophanes laughed away his woe. In Ancient Greece, tragedians were an important aspect of education and known as *διδασκαλοι*, respected teachers of life's turbid ebb and flow. In the Theatre of Dionysus, they could teach their blood-drenched reflections of life's morals to over 16,000 gathered Athenians.

In his *Epistles*, the witty Horace eloquently wrote: '*Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes intulit agresti Latio.*' (Captured Greece made her savage victor captive and brought the arts into rustic Latium.) On the Acropolis, this is indeed the case, as the Romans built the Odeon of Herodes Atticus in

161AD to mirror the Greek Theatre of Dionysus. However, the Romans did display their own architectural flair, incorporating characteristic arches and a grand three-storey stage building into the design. Unlike its Greek predecessor, the Odeon of Herodes Atticus was reconstructed in the 1950s and is still used today in the famed Athens and Epidaurus arts festival.

Winding up dry, rocky paths, we slowly filed through the Propylaea – the grand gateway to the Acropolis. There, two majestic temples towered above gathering flocks of tourists: the Erechtheion and the Parthenon.



On that Sunday, there was not a cloud in the sky to watch the Parthenon's white marble columns gleaming in the 34-degree heat. While we were wrestling with the thirst and exhaustion of an hour's walk under the Athenian sun, these columns had stoically endured it for almost two and a half millennia. It was the great Athenian statesman Pericles who ordered the Parthenon's construction from 447 to 432 BC. A gift to Athena, the Parthenon once housed a 12-metre-tall statue of the goddess, crafted from ivory and gilded with over a tonne of gold.

Just a stone's throw away from the Parthenon stands the Erechtheion, its less famed and yet more graceful cousin. Also dedicated to Athena, the Erechtheion's name honours Athens' legendary king, Erechtheus, who is often portrayed as a father figure to Athenians in Greek literature. Compared to other temples of its age, the unique, asymmetrical design of the Erechtheion is visually stunning. As well as regular Doric columns, it also houses the Porch of the Caryatids, which is held by columns elegantly crafted as female figures – caryatids. The differing architectural styles of the Parthenon and Erechtheion simply cannot be compared. Both are elegant and beautiful.

Outside in the sun, beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes forever. Many columns, statues and friezes from the Acropolis are housed in the nearby Acropolis Museum. Opened only 15 years ago, the Museum's bright and spacious design provides the perfect habitat for imagination to roam free. During our visit, we discovered a special exhibition dedicated to Lord Byron, who is regarded as a national hero in Greece due to his selfless support for Greek independence from the Ottoman Empire.

The top floor of the museum is rotated towards the same orientation as the Parthenon – facing the rising sun in the East, giving the building an asymmetrically stacked structure. Built to the same scale of the Parthenon, it houses a majestic

reconstruction of its 92 metopes (rectangular sculptures above the outer columns of the temple), 160m frieze (which decorates the inner columns), as well as the triangular pediments at either end. They depict epic scenes of myth including the birth of Athena, the fall of Troy, and the fight between the Giants and Olympian gods. However, empty space for imagination is also a key element in this exhibition, as many of the sculptures now reside in the British Museum.



It may appear that Athens is all about the past. Yet, modern Athenian culture is just as vibrant as its illustrious history. If you visit the Athenian markets today, you will find that the Athenians' hefty investment in the Parthenon did secure some long-term gain. Every store is filled to the brim with bottles of olive oil, pickled olives, olive paste, olive soap, and even olive chocolate! However, finding fresh water in Athens is a difficulty, since the ground is cracked with heat and constant sunshine. To solve this, the Greek government has even imposed a 50 cent price cap on bottled water. Therefore, Athena's fabled gift of the olive to Athens does seem to outcompete Poseidon's now shrivelling springs.

Another historical site that epitomises the truth and beauty of Athens is the Agora – the ancient marketplace. This was the hub of social and political life; on the Agora's weathered stones, Socrates sat to examine life and Pericles stood to address the crowds. In the Agora Museum, we saw hundreds of ostraca (inscriptions on pieces of broken pottery) demanding the ostracism and exile of Themistocles, the Greek commander at glorious Salamis, who was later deemed by the people to be holding too much power. Such was the power of the people in Athenian democracy. Yet, Athenian democracy was by no means perfect; only male Athenian citizens were allowed to vote, leaving more than 80% of the population, including women, slaves, and metics (residents from foreign cities), with no political representation.

If you travel to archaeological sites of many Ancient Greek civilisations, you will often be greeted by an underwhelming pile of very old stones lying half-buried in the ground. That is because some of the most exciting archaeological discoveries are preserved in the National Archaeological Museum, the artistic treasure vault of Athens. From the grave circles in Mycenae comes the fabled gold death mask of Agamemnon. From a shipwreck in Euboea comes the mighty Artemision Bronze. From the walls of Thera comes the vivid fresco of the Boxing Boys. We spent but an hour with the Museum's opulent walls, but in those 60 minutes we felt we had travelled through all the isles of Greece.

With scorching sunshine throughout the day, sunset is when Athenian life really begins. Cosy shops and bars glimmer with soft light, illuminating the night with their vibrant colours. Loud

folk music flows out of restaurant windows, streaming down narrow lanes laden with stalls selling traditional handicrafts. To the gentle rhythm of the moon, tides of tourists and locals alike sway through the streets. And swaying through the bustling streets, we found ourselves in what (we thought) was a Greek restaurant.



But instead of extra portions of souvlaki, we were treated to an interactive performance of traditional Greek dancing, accompanied by a live band. And by Dionysus were there fun to be had! Many Harrovians took to the stage, displaying their dazzling dance moves to the gathered diners. However, it was RKB who wowed the crowd with his impressive Greek grooves in the traditional "belly dance". And so, we departed to Delphi the next morning, still revelling in the ambiance of our Athenian adventure!

Of course, our odyssey could not have happened without the brilliant beaks, so let us give thanks *τοῖς διδασκάλοις*:

"ἡ σοφή" EMH and her extra UV-proof shades

"ὁ πολιτικός" RKB and his medieval shirts

"ὁ κωμωδός" PJE and his disappearing hat trick

"ὁ ἡγέμων" SMK and his Mythos glasses

More Classical chronicles to come in next week's instalment!

## SHAFTESBURY ENTERPRISE AND GORE SOCIETY

*'My Philosophical Journey', Peter Singer, Emeritus  
Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University  
21 June, Speech Room*

Shaftesbury Enterprise and the Gore Society joined together to welcome Professor Peter Singer to give a lecture in Speech Room on his philosophical journey and his work on effective altruism.

Peter Singer is an Australian philosopher and is one of the most – if not the most – widely known utilitarian ethicist of our time. An Emeritus Professor of Bioethics at Princeton, he focuses his work on utilitarianism, animal rights and effective altruism. It was an incredible opportunity to hear him speak in person and allow pupils the opportunity to pose questions to their intellectual heroes.

This event was originally scheduled to take place in 2020 but was cancelled due to Covid-19; a subsequent reschedule in 2023 was also cancelled due to the renovations in Speech Room. This time, thankfully, there was no obstruction in way of Professor Singer's visit to the Hill. Over 300 pupils and staff from 24 of our partner schools were in attendance, as were boys from the Shell, Remove and Lower Sixth at Harrow. Applaudably, one Fifth Form boy came back from his post-GCSE holiday especially to attend.

Singer first introduced utilitarian ethics as a form of consequentialism, which means that the right action is the one



with best consequences. This, however, leads to a second question: how do we evaluate the goodness of the consequences that result from different actions? Singer went through possible examples: maximising healthiness, reducing pain and increasing pleasure. He then refuted these and promoted wellbeing as the only consequence intrinsically important, with whatever action leading to that being the morally right, because wellbeing promotes most happiness, least pain and most pleasure.

Singer then went on to discuss how we can change the way we act, not only individually but also as a society, to improve the wellbeing of other people. He then tied this in with a frequently cited example of 'The Drowning Child in a Shallow Pond' to encourage us to consider how people should act. He developed this over six decades ago in his 1972 essay on 'Famine, Affluence, and Morality'.



In this hypothetical situation, while you are perambulating to some sort of function, you see a commotion in a pond. Upon further examination, lo and behold, a small child is splashing and drowning in a deep pond. The depth of the pond will pose no danger to you and you are perfectly capable of jumping in and saving the child. However, it will spoil your best clothes, and you are about to go somewhere particularly important. You could say that this is not your child, you did not push it in, and therefore have no responsibility and can just forget about it and run away. One would think, of course, that is epitome of wrongness. So much good is gained and so little bad is done by saving the child.

However, it is unlikely you will ever face this type of extreme situation in your life. But similar situations can present themselves: having only a modest cost to you, without much risk, with an incredible amount of good as a consequence, such as saving children in extreme poverty.

He then shared some depressing examples. For example, in 2022, there were 249 million malaria cases globally that led to 608,000 deaths in total. Of these deaths, 76 percent were children under five years of age. This translates into a daily toll of over one thousand children under the age of five. However, these deaths are entirely preventable, with solutions such as bed nets or vaccinations that have not reached the vulnerable in remote areas.

Singer stressed that many deaths every year are preventable. These deaths exceed in number those caused by terrorist attacks and those of the wars in Ukraine and Gaza combined.

This is where effective altruism comes in as a remedy for this problem. The idea behind effective utilitarianism lies in using resources most effectively. Effective altruism is a philosophical and social movement that advocates using evidence and reason to impartially calculate benefits and prioritise causes to provide the greatest good. Singer contended that even those who don't consider themselves as utilitarians should endorse effective altruism. He used a hypothetical scenario: if you want to replace a phone, you would be assessing what might be the best deal for the amount you have to spend. However, many people – who

have the best intentions – do not put their money to the best use, and this is usually due to the lack of research. Singer used a real-world example: Toby Ord, another philosopher, posed the question "How much good can I do by living modestly and giving the surplus to the most effective charity?" Ord calculated he could provide the funding for the training of guide dogs for 50 people. This is undeniably a worthy use of his surplus income!

However, Ord had a second option: preventing blindness through treating trachoma in impoverished countries. Trachoma is a bacterium that invades and blurs the eyes of children and can cause them to become blind in their 40s. The bacteria can be killed by using eyewash, hence, with the same money, he could save 80,000 people from blindness. Singer asserts that this is why research is important. It does not matter if one is utilitarian or aligned with any other ethical theory: everyone should believe that this more effective way of using the same resource is morally better.

Singer then spoke about the issue of animal rights, an area in which he is renowned. The ethics of animal treatment lie in us being kind and avoiding cruelty to the animals in question. This means that one should prevent unwanted and unnecessary cruelty to an animal such as for dogfighting. However, our we generally believe that animal interests may be overridden by human interest, such as using them for food or for research. Singer chose to focus more on the food aspect of this issue, as a thousand times more animals are used in food than research. Singer stated that we can flourish without animal products, and have no need for them. This is unwanted and unneeded cruelty. He boldly claimed "where's the ethics stating that we can raise animals cheaply for food, even though it causes suffering?"

We condemn racism and sexism as a society, but not discrimination against animals. Yet these behaviours are thematically similar, a dominant group using a minority for their benefit, such a slavery and the historical suppression of women, through removing their freedoms. Thus, speciesism (discrimination against animals) is also a situation where a dominant group uses a minority for benefits, where death and suffering occur.

Although some may argue that eating meat is not like racism and sexism as humans are rational, autonomous and self-aware, which these animals are not, Singer refuted this by stating that the answer was given more than 200 years ago by Jeremy Bentham, who wrote in a footnote, 'The question is not, can they reason?, nor, can they talk?, but, can they suffer?' Singer makes his point here. We should give equal consideration to similar interests – based on suffering – irrespective of species or ability to reason. After all, we all have an interest in not feeling suffering.

Singer gave an example of sow stalls, where female pigs are used as breeding machines, birthing and feeding piglets that are then taken away from them. This was how it was done until 1975. After much lobbying, sow stalls were then banned in many countries and are evidence that progress can be made. This is similar to how chickens are raised in small narrow cages with no space to move or stretch their wings. This serves as "The single most severe, systematic example of man's inhumanity to another sentient animal", according to Professor John Webster at the University of Bristol. Why is it the most severe? Because of its extremely large scale: 50 billion chickens are produced this way, growing in extremely crowded conditions. They are bred in order to grow fast and are too immature in terms of bodily structure to carry their own weight. They are in considerable pain just by standing up. They cannot even sit to alleviate their pain because their caustic droppings are everywhere and will chemically burn the chickens when wet. They can neither sit nor stand due to pain.

Singer moved on to issues in bioethics, which he had spent 25 years on as a Princeton professor. Speaking about euthanasia,

he states that having a choice in dying such as in euthanasia is extremely important. This is something that should be thought about, especially by the older generations. For example, when one is terminally ill with something like cancer, and also in considerable pain which cannot be relieved, one's quality of life drastically decreases. This is especially so in cases where there is no possible treatment and it is highly probable that the patient will die. This is where medically assisted dying comes in. We have seen it being legalised in some countries, although not many. Many would say it is always wrong to take an innocent human life, but take, for example, as pointed out by Singer through a rather off-putting photo, babies with anencephaly, a birth defect. They have no head; the cortex is missing. They are not brain dead because they have a brain stem; they just are not conscious. Doctors cannot end these babies' lives in the UK, even though their experience in terms of consciousness is below non-human animals.



Singer then posed his final question: how should we think about life? He first referenced the Myth of Sisyphus, rolling a boulder up a hill to gain relief and happiness, yet every time he is on the cusp of pushing the boulder to the top, it rolls back down and starts all over again. He likens it to our modern consumer lifestyle, refuting the idea that being able to buy luxury products makes for a successful life. Singer diagnosed this as a hedonic treadmill. One earns money in order to purchase luxury and gain a temporary satisfaction, and then yearns for this satisfaction after it goes.

Singer then gave two short examples of how some people find worthwhile lives. Charlie Bresler, who was already a highly successful businessman, founded the charity The Life You Can Save to help people in extreme poverty, using the principles of effective altruism. Inspired by Singer's book of a same name, he discovered that life has much more meaning than working to the top of a men's clothing chain. His other example was of Henry Spira, who phoned Singer one day to say he had incurable cancer. Singer claimed that he was one of the most effective animal activists and stated that "I guess basically one wants to feel that one's life has amounted to more than just consuming products and generating garbage. One likes to look back and think that one's done the best one can to make this a better place for others... It's not a sense of duty, but rather this is what I want to do. I feel best when I'm doing it well." With this in mind, Singer closed his lecture.

Overall, Singer presented an enlightening lecture that recapped the pillars of his philosophical work in an engaging and substantial way. His lecture challenged us to think deeply about our moral responsibilities and the broader implications of our choices, and helped us to approach some of the world's issues in a new light.

Thank you JDBM and TMD for working so hard to organise Peter Singer's visit to Harrow, and for inviting our partner schools to this lecture. If you would like to learn more about the Shaftesbury Enterprise or the Gore Society, please contact the beaks above.

Our gratitude goes to Coutts & Co., Harrow families and

the Harrow Development Trust for sponsoring this lecture. Professor Singer very generously donated this money to The Life You Can Save charity. This organisation has formed an evaluation framework and put together a list of high-impact charities working across all dimensions of poverty, and this will enable them to make the most effective interventions which have the greatest impact.

## HERE AND THERE

The annual C3L6 exam took place at the end of last term. Boys involved deserve congratulations for taking on the challenge, the paper includes tough questions in an unfamiliar context. Spencer Chan, *The Knoll*, and Cary Zhang, *Bradlys*, are commended for achieving the highest scores in the School. Overall, Harrovians achieved an excellent 15 Golds and 22 Silver certificates. It is even more impressive that these results include entries from seven Fifth Form and four Remove boys. Three Fifth Form achieved Gold (Tony Shi, *The Grove*, Jerry Zhang, *The Knoll*, and Richard Zhao, *Rendalls*). Well done to those boys!

Many congratulations to Harry Winward, *Lyon's*, on his exceptional presentation on Rembrandt's *Return of the Prodigal Son*, winning the ARTiculation Junior competition.

The sporting achievement that gilded so much of last academic year was sustained through the holidays. Tito Odunaike, *Elmfield*, won gold in the Under-17 triple jump at the English Schools National Track and Field Championships in Birmingham. His winning distance of 14.53m (new School record) now ranks him first in the United Kingdom. Sam Winters, *Elmfield*, represented the England Under-18 rugby team in a three-match tour of South Africa, playing against Georgia, South Africa and Ireland. The swimming team have been working exceptionally hard over the summer: Alex Moore, *Lyon's*, Max Stafford Davies, *Lyon's*, and Eric Lesesne, *West Acre*, competed at British and English swimming national competition, all swimming best times in their events. Nick Finch, *Newlands*, represented Great Britain at the European Junior Championships in June, winning two golds. Max Warner, *The Head Master's*, a Shell, was active throughout the summer on the real tennis courts and achieved the outstandingly to become World Junior (up to Under-18 level) champion.

## JUNIOR PIGOU SOCIETY

Abraham Babalola, *Druries*, 'The Craze of Investopedia', 20 June

On 20 June, Abraham Babalola, *Druries*, delivered a lecture entitled 'The Craze of Investopedia' to the Junior Pigou Society. In his talk, he discussed the evolution and benefits of Investopedia, a crucial resource in finance. He began by recounting how Investopedia was established in 1999 by Cory Wagner and Cory Janseen, who shared a passion for business. A significant milestone came in 2007 when Forbes acquired Investopedia, expanding its reach to 2.5 million monthly users. This growth continued, leading Forbes to sell Investopedia to Value Click in 2010 for \$42 million.

Abraham then highlighted several advantages of Investopedia for both novice and experienced investors. He noted that it provides extensive information on cryptocurrency, wealth management, retirement plans, tax strategies and budgeting. Importantly, Investopedia simplifies complex financial

terminology, making it accessible to a broader audience. Indeed, its mobile-friendly design further allows users to stay updated on stock market trends and financial news on the go.

Midway through his talk, Abraham's clear and engaging delivery captivated the audience, making the intricate details of financial education both intriguing and understandable. One of the most engaging parts of the talk was about Investopedia's investing simulator. Abraham described it as an invaluable tool for beginners, offering a risk-free way to practise trading stocks. He cautioned that, while it can be addictive, it provides a realistic view of trading, where gains and losses are modest, emphasising careful analysis and realistic expectations. He explained that trading strategies vary, with some preferring long-term investments and others day trading, and mentioned monitoring consistently falling stocks as a potential strategy.

Overall, Abraham advocated for Investopedia as an essential resource for anyone interested in finance and investing. He emphasised that the platform offers a comprehensive understanding of financial topics and practical tools like the investing simulator, allowing users to gain experience without risking real money. He assured the audience that, despite scepticism, many people have successfully made significant profits, with Investopedia demonstrating the potential of informed and strategic investing.

# METROPOLITAN

## I, CHILD

*The Call for Interdependence: A Reflection on the Environment"*

I am just a child. What can I do? I've felt helpless for a long time, constantly knowing that change is necessary without ever knowing how to bring it about. Nobody would listen to the little high-pitched shouts of ten-year-old me about the environment and how intrinsic it is to human life.

In all honesty, I'm not sure I fully comprehended the vast importance of the natural world to us. When I was younger, all the fears of sea-level rises and the impact climate change would have on my future, on humanity, were the driving factors for my concern. So fixated on how the man-made climate change would lead to our own extinction that I couldn't even stop to think of the rest of the planet. We have already – directly or indirectly – caused the extinction of whole species. Our actions have led to the degradation and destruction of the natural world for the sake of profit.

Like all matters that I care deeply about, this all started from a book, *The Clan of One-Breasted Women*, by Terry Tempest Williams. Williams is an American writer and activist who writes passionately and beautifully. She articulates her thoughts in a far more elegant and eloquent manner than I could ever hope to achieve. Within those pages, I was inspired; I realised that it isn't enough to care about the environment only from a human-centred point of view, but one must fully understand how all things are related, how human beings are within the natural world, not outside it. In doing so, it becomes clear that, in order to ensure the wellbeing of our own selves, we must first look to ensure the wellbeing of every living thing on this planet.

And it is with that thought in mind that I begin this, an environmental journal of sorts. Through this small column in these yellow pages I hope to provide a space for others also to articulate these thoughts. At the end of her book, Williams writes: 'The eyes of the future are looking back at us and they

are praying for us to see beyond our own time'. The moment is now to come to the realisation that only through embracing the natural world can we truly begin to understand how connected all things are.

I know I sound like a somewhat insane person, preaching about how all things are connected and that salvation can only be found through nature. But, in all reality, this is true. The concept of interdependence is vital to all life on Earth, including ours. This is something I may discuss in a future entry, but for now I invite all boys, beaks and other staff to bring in their own thoughts, write into the journal. Bring in scientific points of view, spiritual points of view, your own experiences. Williams writes: 'question, stand, speak, act'. Now is the time for questioning..

## AN OPEN LETTER OF ADVICE TO THE HITHERTO DYSFUNCTIONAL NEW HARROVIANS

*(That is, perhaps to say, the Shells)*

DEAR UNFORTUNATE NEW MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL,

Was it not that most terrifying of writers, Virginia Woolf, who invoked a generation of barely employed, society-hindering, 'starving artists', by jotting down that whiny and unhelpful phrase, 'Oh, to be a painter!?' Well, similarly, I must say: oh, to be a Shell! Although I don't particularly wish to become a blinking blue dot on a map of the local neighbourhood until I am at least middle-aged, I cannot help but admit that I spend much of my time closely observing Shells with some amusement. Indeed, I believe, there is something quite funny about seeing green, relatively diminutive humans try their utmost not necessarily to appear bigger or better than they are, but merely to survive. I believe that it is for this same reason that I enjoy birdwatching; the small-brained, but well-meaning, creatures hop about amusingly for hours on end and this makes for fantastic viewing.

I hope that the reader will forgive my rudeness as, indeed, I was once an odious, pernicious, ground-sniffing little brat myself. Indeed, as I certainly remember, being a Shell is no cakewalk through the park, it must be said. I, with many others, struggled to settle in post-partum. As a baggage-laden, camel-esque Lower Sixth, I still find myself in a cacophony of thoughts; about what I might I have done differently, what I should have perused or what I might have tried a bit harder at, were I a little Shell once more.

However, recently, I have begun to investigate a strain of Norse philosophy. Specifically, it is the belief that one's life is already woven into one of the many thousands of beautiful, intricate and ancient tapestries on the walls of Valhalla. That the Gods have, many thousands of times, admired your life, your achievements and your untimely death with omnipotent eyes, many millennia even before you were born. Life, indeed, is but one work of art: amusing, deviously tricky and ontologically meaningless. It is prescribed, dreamt up and written down by some grand inquisitor: pendulous and untethered for their own amusement. Indeed, I like to think of it as a single piece of music. Some are tragic, like the many thousands of flimsy Requiem masses, or Britten's tedious but haunting *Peter Grimes*. Some are passionate, like Beethoven's *Eroica*. And some dwindle down a country lane, amused by every little living thing, like Mozart's various and glorious operatic overtures.

This is all to say, of course, that, on reflection, if I were a Shell again, I would have done everything the same, despite its troubles. Besides, it seems a shame to betray the will of those muses who have glared so meticulously over my childhood hitherto, by going back in time.



As a result of my three years in Harrow, I have got a few, but very true, friends, some slight sense of academic disappointment and not anywhere near as much “fulfilment” and “readiness for the real world” as the School website claims. But I am struggling through life, as we all do, by trying as hard as I can to chase what I want to chase. This, when executed reasonably and with consideration of the society that puts us all in unpayable debt, is perhaps a better, truer way to live a life and I hope that I am taking only my first step in the pursuit of not myself, my chances or my vengeance; but a kinder, more genuine race.

So, dearest struggling Shell, know three things. Firstly, things get better: much better, if you stay true to yourself.

Secondly, there is no need to worry for the future or present. You and I both have descended little into the valley of years, and Harrow is but five of them. You needn't worry too much about your future: what you will do in your life, and what life in Harrow will do for it. Most people who are successful had success thrown upon them, so don't sweat it: you can't control chance. Besides, we live in a wealthy nation, with a good societal net and flushing toilets. Right now, no matter the poverty of the situation, just try to appreciate those around you, and things which you enjoy (other than, for instance, marijuana or crack cocaine) like music or sport (“One must”, as a French man once said, “cultivate a garden”) and, if you are as hideously antisocial as me, make a few more sacrifices for the sake of your social health: most people are not as bad as they seem, and demeaning oneself even with the filth of our capitalist society is, unfortunately, necessary for one's wellbeing.

Finally, if it is at all possible, try to think of life as a comedy. It was Graham Greene who first introduced me to this concept in his otherwise dubious book *The Comedians* when he wrote these words:

‘When I was a boy, I believed in the Christian God. Life under his shadow was a very serious affair; I saw Him incarnated in every tragedy. He belonged to *lacrimae rerum* like a gigantic figure looming through a Scottish mist. Now that I approached the end of life it was only my sense of humour that enabled me sometimes to believe in him. Life was a comedy, not the tragedy for which I had been prepared, and it seemed to me that we were all, on this boat, (...) towards the extreme point of comedy.’

When one adopts a more humorous approach to life; by appreciating one's own insignificance in the context of all the innumerable accidental comedians around you; by realising that your own faults are insignificant compared to everyone else's, life is much more fun. When one really, like a Martian descending to Earth, sees through people's attempts at this or that, and observes everyone very closely to see their true, impious, childish and clumsy interior, everything is more manageable, and everything that is genuinely good is more genuinely presented to you. After all, everyone at Harrow is truly, deeply, humorously pathetic in their own special way. I thought I was going crazy when I realised this, but I believe now that I am really one of the perfectly sane ones. And, indeed, my life is not perfect as a result of my self-assurance. But I believe that life is now easier to manage, that I can be approached and approach with no unneeded anger, and can accept my inadequacies, which are many, with forgiveness and humility.

Otherwise, unless you go to prison, contract a warty disease or have an accidental child, don't sweat it: try your best, and save the drama for later.

Yours humbly,

NICK ARNISON (AN EDITOR AND PROSPECTIVE CAPTAIN OF 1ST XI)

*P.S. I suggest this, a small extract of my philosophy, humbly, in the hope that my unwise reflections and observation might help to console any similarly hopeless amongst you, but I do not promise that this product contains no trace amount of barminess, if that is something to which you are allergic.*

## TRANQUILITY BASE HOTEL + CASINO

*Review by Henry Barker, The Park*

The Arctic Monkeys' sixth studio album strays away from their classic rock roots and shifts the focus onto a methodically thought-out concept album dealing with an existential crisis on the Moon (whilst keeping the classic Monkey charm). This review is a personal journey through my discovery of this album.

At first, I hated TBH+C. I thought it was boring, slow and lacking any edge that their previous projects had. It took me about three attempts to finish the first track, ‘Star Treatment’—an admittedly indulgent track that lasts over five minutes. But I persevered and decided that I wanted to listen to the whole album, considering the Arctic Monkeys are my favourite band of all time. So, I downloaded it before a long train journey with the sole intent of finishing it.



On that train, I experienced an epiphany once the beautifully produced track ‘One Point Perspective’ (which has a singular note being played in the background throughout) seamlessly merged into ‘American Sports’. This transition won me over, and I couldn't resist the rest of the album. I listened, and then I listened again, and after two weeks, I was still listening! This was the album that made me start listening to entire albums in one go, which I had never really done before.

The album has been continuously in my rotation for over a year now; I found that the fundamental appeal that kept bringing me back to it was the sci-fi imagery that was created in my mind while listening. Originally, the album was paired with my reading of *Consider Phlebas* (a sci-fi novel) at the time, and the two became interconnected in my mind, creating an emotional connection that can't quite be explained with words.

I would like to quickly highlight two of my favourite songs on the album. First is the eponymous track, which contains lyrics such as ‘kiss me underneath the moon's side boob’ and ‘Jesus in the day spa filling out the information form’. This track delves deep into the location the album is based around, the Hotel and Casino in Tranquility Base on the Moon. Alluding to the fact that humanity has become so technologically advanced that they have near God-like power by placing Jesus in such a mundane situation. This is then brought in the lyrics ‘I've been on a bender back to that prophetic esplanade’ further insinuating the closeness of these two realms as the singer can explore some kind of holy area while completely intoxicated. All backed up

by dreamy synths and beautifully dynamic electric guitars to create one of the best tracks on the album.

The other song I wanted to highlight, titled 'Science Fiction', produced one of my favourite lyrics of all Arctic Monkey songs 'I wanna stay with you, my love / The way some science fiction does', followed by an almost orgasmic rush of notes to set you in for the rest of the song. The song is also a meta commentary on the album itself, ending with the line 'the whole thing may well just end up too clever for its own good'. This shows Alex Turner acknowledging the possibility of misinterpretation of the whole album and the purpose of its lyrics while still giving hope that the listener will understand the key message.

What is the key message, you may ask? The point Turner is making is about the overabundance of technology in everyday life, specifically social media. This is quite clearly made in the lyric, 'Have I told you all about the time that I got sucked into a hole through a handheld device?' from a song late in the album's run time. This recontextualises the entire album when listening to it again, picking up on subtle hints of Alex's distaste for the modern world. Overall, I really, really love this album, and for anyone who has read this far, I truly implore you to listen to it yourself to gain your own understanding, as well as to enjoy some layered and beautiful tracks.

## OPINION

DEAR SIRs,

In the summer of 1976, Dirk's clothesline went on forever.

He never actually brought all of his designer washing in, but knew that if he was ever to do so, the last little bits would be the driest little bits he'd ever unpegged.

The really crazy thing about this clothesline was the fact that it hung along a garden path that measured no more than forty feet in length.

Dirk would be out there for days. Sometimes he believed that he must surely be bringing in the washing of others, but seemed to recognise the items as his own.

Sandwiches, a supply of juice and a small tent were necessary when Dirk began one of his extended excursions.

Dirk used to wonder about all of the other people as he slowly recovered from his clothesline labours, seated bolt upright in his very best chair, situated in his very best vest and his second best downstairs room.

How did couples manage? How did families keep all of their clothes washed, dried and aired with one or possibly two or three children, all contributing to the pile? Dirk lived alone and could barely manage to bring in what he estimated to be around eighty percent of his washing load.

Dirk regularly sent away for self help books that he was convinced were helping him to deal with his clothesline issues directly, but with titles that included *Coping with an impossibly long hedgehog* and *My sunflower doesn't like me and won't grow*, progress was slow.

Many times over the years, Dirk had considered running away from it all or at least taking a holiday. Ultimately though, abandoning his home never truly appealed. Where would he go at his time of life and as for a holiday, well, he always claimed he had nothing suitable to wear and what he did have was caught up in that pesky twenty percent of the clothesline that he never quite managed to get to.

Quite out of the blue, Dirk remembered that he had a cat. The last time Dirk remembered having any thoughts on said cat was around early spring about two years earlier when he was

on his knees in the kitchen, attempting to soak up some oxtail soup he had just knocked over. Hilda the cat loved cold oxtail soup, so Dirk rang out his dishcloth into her bowl in readiness.

Dirk hoped she was safe and well somewhere, being cared for by some extremely old lady in a terribly sweet village in the late 1800's. Dirk in reality thought it was much more likely that Hilda would be found at the end of the clothesline, the final one percent of the infuriating thing, shaking her head and tutting.

Some serious consideration had recently been given to simply leaving the wretched clothesline alone and letting couture take its course. But in the end, this clothesline had become the reason Dirk rose from his bed every morning, taking his otherwise amorphous existence and giving it a touch of Donatello magic.

Dirk took to his garden path once again. Happy, after a fashion.

Yours sincerely,

NEIL PORTER

DEAR SIRs,

This is a plaintive cry to the IT department, who in their infinite knowledge and wisdom have blocked blogs of all kinds and sorts.

I encountered this blockage when searching up information to aid my lecture-writing quest, and, lo and behold, I found the perfect website. The search engine gods had blessed me. It was everything I needed, wanted, and more.

I triumphantly clicked the link, only for the commanding turquoise lettering of the Smoothwall logo to punish my academic curiosity and endeavour. How else am I supposed to get by without violating Existing Customs and installing a VPN? This then leads me to ask: who even uses blogs for social media purposes anymore?

The internet is a place where trends come and go in the blink of an eye, and sadly it seems that blogs are part of the sad detritus left behind. The only people who use blogs nowadays are using it for academic purposes and their small businesses. Therefore, blocking blogs not only seems to be redundant, but also seems harmful to our education and enrichment itself.

So please, remove your blanket ban on blogs. They are barely used as a form of social media anymore and it prevents a lot of us from doing our research, or even just reading my own House blog.

Very demurely, very mindfully,

ISAAC WONG, *THE PARK*

## SPORT

### CRICKET UNDER-15 NATIONAL T20 CUP

After a superb regular season and long summer break, the Junior Colts A cricket side arrived at Arundel Castle CC for the Under-15 National T20 Cup Finals day. Only Harrow, Shrewsbury, Scarborough and King's Taunton remained from the 950 schools that initially entered at the start of the summer term, with Harrow facing King's College Taunton in their semi-final.

Harrow were asked to bat first by King's Taunton, and Luke Attfield, *Druries*, (62) and Louis Nicholson, *The Park*, (38) wasted no time in building a very solid opening foundation, with Harrow concluding their 20 overs on 161-4. Aditya Singh, *Moretons*, set the tone brilliantly with the ball as Harrow reduced King's to 45-6, with Aditya Singh taking four wickets (including a hat-trick!). James Hyatt, *Elmfield*, also took a

couple of crucial and difficult chances behind the stumps. The high quality King's batters kept coming and a strong sixth-wicket partnership suggested that the match might end in a tight finish, before Nicholson's off spin forced three wickets to leave Harrow the victors by 45 runs.



Scarborough College had comfortably defeated Shrewsbury in the opening semi-final and would provide a tough test for Harrow in the final. Harrow captain, Rishya Rawal, *Rendalls*, won the toss and elected to bat first and it was the Harrow top four batters that fired once again, with Rishya Rawal (44) and Edward Stabb, *The Head Master's*, (48) putting on a very impressive partnership to push Harrow well past 150. Some lofty blows from Aaryan Basu, *Druries*, Arjan Lai, *West Acre*, and Alf Beresford-Peirce, *Elmfield*, propelled Harrow up to 195 from their 20 overs, a very commanding total! Harrow knew that early wickets would once again be crucial for victory and Aditya Singh and Kavish Mehta, *The Grove*, got Harrow off the perfect start in the final, both taking two wickets in the

opening powerplay to leave Harrow in control. Harrow fielded well as a unit and continued to take their catches throughout the Scarborough innings, with Neel Gupta, *Elmfield*, (two wickets) and Alexander Storer, *West Acre*, (two wickets) regularly breaking partnerships to move Harrow closer to victory. A super piece of fielding by Stabb led to a run-out of the final pair of Scarborough batters to leave Harrow Junior Colts A the winners of the National Cup final by 63 runs. The boys can all be incredibly proud of how they've performed throughout the entire season as they bring the trophy to Harrow for the first time in the School's history.

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All Harrow boys from the Shells through to the Sixth Form are encouraged submit humorous writing, satire, pen portraits and creative writing, poetry, essays, cartoons or serious articles of any length which touch upon the life here at Harrow. If you are interested in writing for *The Harrovian*, or have something that you would like to submit, please speak to or email any of the Editors.

#### Ways to contact *The Harrovian*

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