

Newsletter



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Headmaster's Welcome

The echoes and harmonies of our preparations for Christmas are to be heard in all sorts of places around school and it has been lovely to see and hear the pupils collaborating on these projects, the fruits of which are described below by Mrs Staggs. We hope you will enjoy them, when they come and I'm grateful to all staff and pupils involved. As ever, reading through the newsletter reminds us how much is going on in school, with contributions from former pupils offering their time to help our pupils, news from societies, book reviews, more information on reading projects and a request for overdue books to be sought out and returned where possible. We are once again transported to far flung places with Mr Webb! There has now been some further clarification from the Government about public examinations this year and I recorded messages for the Upper Sixth and Fifth Year, encouraging them to dig deep and renew their motivation now that they have greater certainty that exams will run, albeit with some modifications designed to support all candidates. We await the more detailed information due in the new year with interest.

It is fantastic to see that the Fifth Year involved in Mr Craig's play have overcome the challenges posed by Covid and have finished their project. I am grateful to Mr Craig, Mr Brookes and all the staff involved, and am looking forward to settling down to watch this over the weekend. Finally, there is a 'canny Christmas' challenge described within to enable all, on behalf of their House, to support our chosen charities; thank you in advance for supporting this.

Dr Huw Williams

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas

Christmas is going to be a little different for us all this year but we hope to be able to bring some festive cheer to as many people in our local community as we can through a collection of magical, musical gifts.

We are busy creating a seasonal calendar to celebrate the final 12 days of the Christmas term. Each day, from 7th-18th December, there will be a musical treat behind each day's window, consisting of festive music and some highlights from the past few months. Please keep an eye out on social media for this calendar...



pupils. The service will also include a series of readings recounting the Christmas story. Our hope is that people who are unable to attend services this year will be able to make use of our carol service and heartily join in the singing of the Christmas carols!

Finally, we are planning an end of term festive showcase with music and dance. This includes bubble ensembles, dancers from Prep and Senior School, virtual performances and a very special massed performance of the Snowman for which we are hoping all our instrumentalists will participate. Please do encourage your children to get involved (parents could contribute too but the turnaround is tight)!

Music matters and we hope that all these offerings will bring pleasure to all. With heartfelt thanks to all our performers, the whole Music Department, our dance teacher Miss Ivison, Mr Brookes, Luke James and Tom Milton for all their hard work in supporting these projects.

Mrs K Staggs

Christmas Jumper Day 2020

This year's Christmas Jumper Day will be held on Friday, 11th December to coincide with the national Save the Children campaign. Next week, tutors will be collecting donations during tutorial time from those that wish to take part. All the money donated will be split between the Save the Children fund and our local food bank and charity, Little Sprouts.

Our School Houses and the Community Action Group are also currently organising a variety of activities in the run up to Christmas to help raise money and support charities, organisations and other groups within our local community.



Whilst we can't all come together for a traditional 9 Lessons and Carols Service, we can still come together virtually. All of our vocal bubbles will be involved in this project via outdoor, socially distanced whole choir singing alongside a few exciting virtual choral items involving past and present

An Audience at the Debating Matters Competition

This week, the Yarm School Debating Society joined an external debating competition as audience members. The Debating Matters Competition is one we have attended with some success in the past and will be entering again in spring; therefore, we were invited to attend one of the opening rounds via Zoom this week. We jumped at the chance to witness and experience the debating standards of other schools. Barnard Castle School and The Burgate School were debating the topic of "social egg freezing empowers women." Barnard Castle was the proposition and argued from a socio-economic perspective, positing that the ability for women to choose when to start their families was a fundamental force for good in empowering women. The opposition countered that there is deeper structural change required in society to empower women and that the extortionate cost of egg freezing ruled it out as an option for the majority of society. Yarm students Mia and Himank posed convincing questions from the floor, putting both teams on the spot. The debate was close initially however, the opposition became muddled over the concept of what was "natural", with the proposition and the judges exploiting this hole in their argument, and victory was thus awarded to Barnard Castle.

Having observed this debate, our YSDS members are more keen than ever to get stuck in and we have entered two competitions for the spring term - one with Debating Matters and one with the Oxford Union. Watch this space!

Mr A Bridges

Former Pupil Gives Talk on Behavioural Economics

Last Thursday, the Economics Society was lucky enough to host its first external speaker via Google Meet. We welcomed former pupil Naman Garg - who studied Economics and Management at Oxford, and is now a graduate trainee at Barclays - to talk about behavioural economics. Given the current circumstances, we're having separate meetings for Upper and Lower Sixth Form students and numbers are limited; however, a small group of enthusiastic economists were treated to an insightful presentation, acting as a recap for the behavioural economic theory we have already covered on the A Level specification, whilst also offering a glimpse into degree level theory on this influential and forward thinking area of Economics. The talk concluded with Naman explaining how Barclays put behavioural economics to use in shaping the decisions made by their customers, particularly through marketing which encourages users to save more of their income. Looking ahead, we have more external speakers planned: Austin Ridley, a former pupil now studying for a Masters in Economics, will deliver the final presentation of the term on Thursday, 17th December on the use of Economic policy when facing an ageing population. Next term, there will be a virtual welcome for Dr Gary Abrahams from the University of Exeter, timetables permitting, to give further insight into

behavioural economics.

If you want to know any more about the Economics Society, or are interested in heading a presentation or suggesting a speaker, please speak to or email Jamie Pender or Miss Rhodes.

Jamie Pender
Chair of Economics Society

Making (your mind up)...

On Tuesday, the Yarm Apprentices faced the latest Lord Sugar, Mr Boddy who tasked them with creating and filming a tutorial lasting no more than seven minutes, showing 7-11 year olds how to make a craft. Rules include:

- The safety of the children must be considered
- Whilst minimal adult help must be needed, adult supervision must be advised where appropriate
- The craft must be made from items easily found around the home, recycled materials and/or natural (outside) resources

- It must not be uploaded for general public viewing prior to the Boardroom

They will face Lord Sugar in the Board Room on Tuesday, 12th January and will need to present their tutorial, after a concise one minute justification of their idea. There is very little difference in points, so it is all still to play for....

The teams hope that if they 'take a chance... it'll turn out right.;

Good luck teams and remember to 'trust your inner vision!' Miss C E Rhodes

Reviews & Recommendations

"The best moments in reading are when you come across something - a thought, a feeling, a way of looking at things - which you had thought special and particular to you. Now here it is, set down by someone else, a person you have never met, someone even who is long dead. And it is as if a hand has come out and taken yours." - Alan Bennett

Following on from Mrs Mason's article last week on the benefits of reading and the incredible resources available via our new library ePlatform, I have decided to ask pupils and staff, teaching and non-teaching, to submit book reviews to be published ad hoc in the newsletter. [These reviews can also be found on Accessit.](#)

The reviews should be added to Accessit. They can be for fiction or non-fiction and do not have to be of any certain length, nor do the books have to be in our library.

"Reading is the complex cognitive process of decoding symbols to derive meaning. It is a means for language acquisition, communication and a sharing of information and ideas. Like all languages, it is a complex interaction between text and reader, shaped by prior knowledge, experiences, attitude and the language community - which is culturally and socially situated. Readers may use context clues to identify the meaning of unknown words."

A really interesting lecture, given by the late Jonathan Sacks, can be found on YouTube titled "The World We Make with Words."

"Sawbones by Catherine Johnson is a modern day Holmes and Watson. It is a mystery which takes Ezra and Loveday, from the operating theatre at St Bart's to the damp vaults of Newgate Prison. Set in Georgian London, with a diverse cast, there are moments that encourage reflection, especially in right/wrong in pursuit of science and the 'bigger picture.'"

Ms C Dixon-Barker

Overdue Library Books: A Little History & a Plea for Help

The world's most overdue library book was returned at least 287 years late. The book, 'Scriptores rerum Germanicarum septentrionalium, vicinorumque populorum diversi' (Various historians of the Northern Germans and of neighbouring peoples) was borrowed by Colonel Robert Walpole (father of Sir Robert Walpole, regarded as the first Prime Minister of Great Britain) when he was an undergraduate at Trinity College. Whilst the exact date he borrowed the book is uncertain, it is thought to be around 1667-8; it was not returned until the 16th January 1956, having been discovered in the library at his ancestral home by his biographer.

Possibly the most overdue school library book was returned 120 years late. The book, 'The Microscope and its Revelations' by Dr William B Carpenter, was borrowed from the library of the Hereford Cathedral School between 1886 and 1894 by former pupil Professor Arthur Boycott. It was eventually discovered and returned by his granddaughter. The school promised to waive any fines which, based on the rate at Hereford Library of 17p a day, would have amounted to £7,446!

Thankfully, none of the books from our school library are this overdue (and please don't see the above information as a challenge!), however we currently have one that is nearly three years late! Whilst we don't charge fines, eventually, if a book hasn't been returned, we do ask for it to be paid for or replaced. The news of the imminent lockdown in March meant that a lot of our stock went out on loan and whilst much of this has been returned, there are still plenty of books that need to come back. Please would you all have a good look in your homes for school library books and send them back to us? There is a book returns box just outside the library as well as a trolley just inside the library entrance. Many thanks for your help with this!

Mrs Mason, School Librarian (pm)

Another Thank You!

We delivered a van full of books to Darlington Rotary Club and in support of Just Be a Child, thanks to all of you and your generous donations. Thank you again for all your help. We will continue to collect any unwanted books that you would like to donate in the future.

You can find out more about the charity and their latest initiatives [here](#) to get a sense of the incredible work they are doing to support children and communities in Kenya.



The Library's New ePlatform



Pupils and staff can read or listen to a collection of over 2,200 books on Wheeler's ePlatform using their Chromebooks, or download an app on their phones, tablets and other devices. You can reach the platform via the Yarm School website using the library button in the top right corner or [via this link](#).

If pupils need any help with this, or would like more information about the library, please contact me: deborah@yarmschool.org

Mrs Mason, School Librarian (pm)

Book Review

Human Kind: A Hopeful History, Rutger Bregman

In this ambitious book, Rutger Bregman questions the assumption that throughout history mankind's progress and motivation is based entirely on self-interest. In contrast to this brutally selfish vision of human nature, he suggests that cooperation and kindness is a more coherent and authentic indicator of human behaviour. He compares the philosophies of Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau which characterise these opposing positions. Hobbes believed that mankind was essentially evil and selfish and his destructive desires could only be constrained by society. Rousseau felt that mankind was essentially good and the evils perpetrated throughout history were due to societal organisation and coercion. Bregman examines the literary examples and 'scientific' experiments which support the Hobbesian view of human nature, and compares the novel 'Lord of the Flies' – the story of a group of public school boys shipwrecked on an island who swiftly descend into murder and cannibalism – with the real story of stranded children who did the opposite and organised a stable and cooperative society. He then deconstructs in an impressive way all the supposed experiments and myths which underpin the uncontested 'proof' of mankind's base nature, and suggests they were all flawed, rigged or cynically fabricated. All in all this is a persuasive book which looks at mankind through an optimistic lens, and proposes how an altruistic view of human nature offers us all a positive, encouraging future.



Gracie BurrIDGE
(Upper Sixth Politics student)

Time After Time...

Due to COVID-19, our Economics and Business Society is currently split, with the Upper Sixth on Thursday and the Lower Sixth on Friday. We also can't have our usual Working Lunches which see an array of visitors joining us in the Meeting Room. However, I am pleased to report that all of the students are just as enthusiastic as ever. The Lower Sixth have spent recent Friday lunchtimes discussing topics including 'the economic implications of COVID' (thank you to Abhinav for leading this) and 'a cashless society' (thanks to Olivia D for suggesting and leading this session). Last week however, we were delighted to welcome our first external speaker of the term.

Former pupil, Laura Marriott is currently working for KPMG as an Audit Manager in their Newcastle Office. Laura left Yarm in 2014 and completed KPMG's 5 year school leaver programme which involved gaining a degree in Accounting from the University of Exeter, as well as qualifying as a Chartered Accountant, all of which was done whilst working in the Audit Department of KPMG. She has now been out of her training contract for one year but has continued to work for KPMG and has recently been promoted. Laura spoke to a full room of interested Lower Sixth students and answered a plethora of varied questions.

Thank you to Laura for sparing the time to share her experiences and expertise with us and we hope to invite her back to school in person in the not too distant future. I hope to have another Google Meet speaker very soon, but in the meantime if any student would like to volunteer to lead a Friday session, please speak to or email me.

Miss C E Rhodes

job VERY well done and thank you for your hard work and involvement. I'd also like to thank Mr Craig for coordinating the Fifth Year production, as normal, to his usual very high standard. Many thanks too to Luke James for filming and editing the pieces, he's worked really hard on it.

Now's your chance to enjoy their hard work, we hope you like it! [Watch the full performance here.](#)

[You can see the full gallery here.](#)

Mr D Brookes



That's a Wrap...

We have spent most of November (on and off) filming this year's Fifth Year Production! On and off because just as we got going our Fifth Years had to go into isolation and so, along with other activities, the production had to be 'shelved' for two weeks. We picked it back up where they left it upon their return and they have produced six excellent pieces. All six impress for different reasons: character, physical theatre, outstanding individual performances, great partner work, good delivery, stagecraft and superb direction. Our directorial team is headed up by Mr Craig and comprises five Upper Sixth Form students, Miss Ivison and Mr Edwards.

It has been a very different production this year due to the obvious constraints COVID-19 puts on staging a show, however it has provided an opportunity for the pupils and staff to work in a very different way and has created some fantastic results. When you film a show you can 'point' the audience towards things they might miss in the live show in a theatre. You can also, through close ups, see in much more detail the facial expressions and emotions of the characters. Film also shows up the smallest of discrepancies, things you can get away with in a live show, so the performers have worked extremely hard on lines and characterisation and it has really paid off.

Congratulations to all of our performers and directors on a

Yarm School's "Canny" Christmas!!!

This Christmas the Heads of House hope to see all pupils and staff doing a good many of you will be collecting at home the spare bits and bobs for food - something that not all members of our local community can expect. Instead of being a gift for each other this year, we want to see you bring in a strong, non-perishable, canned goods for donation to local foodbanks. In addition, Little Sprouts and the Yarm School & Academy Facebook. We would like to organise this as a competition between houses with the possibility of prizes for the most generous donor group.

Things that we do not include:	Things that we do want:
Vegetables	Instant noodle
Fruit	Washing up liquid
Canned meat	Tea, coffee & hot chocolate
Alcohol & drugs	Cake & biscuits

Every year our school community is able to donate and receive a lot of useful items from our local foodbanks. We would like to see you all doing a good many of you will be collecting at home the spare bits and bobs for food - something that not all members of our local community can expect. Instead of being a gift for each other this year, we want to see you bring in a strong, non-perishable, canned goods for donation to local foodbanks. In addition, Little Sprouts and the Yarm School & Academy Facebook. We would like to organise this as a competition between houses with the possibility of prizes for the most generous donor group.

little Sprouts
Yarm School & Academy
foodbank

[Click here to find out more about our Canny Christmas challenge and how you can help local foodbanks.](#)

MEMORIES FROM A RUGBY TOUR

This week we're taking a look back at our 2011 tour to Australia featuring Mr Ste Ruggling and Bill Posters (who will be prosecuted)...



It really is the people that make the tours what they are and I have been lucky enough to travel the world with some great staff and pupils over the years. This tour was another chance to experience some awesome times with my friends; Messers Hardy, Thomas and Foggett, with whom I went on five tours. Mr Sellers (the musician) was once again a great staff tourist and Former Pupil Jamie Muncer joined us on the staff having toured with us in 2006 as a student.

All of my top memories from Australia 2011 are down to the people I was with... One of my favourite moments is seeing all the boys, post match, form a huge huddle to sing a tour song at the top of their voices, all led by the irrepressible Tom Conroy. That's one of the great things about taking repeat tourists away: they set the perfect tone for the rest of the boys to follow and help in bringing the whole group together. Australia 2011 saw Josh Hall (he's asked me to mention

him) captain the 1st XV for the first time; a very proud moment for him and something he still treasures. He remains a part of our community to this day, coming to watch current Yarm



teams play whenever he can. During our first few days in Sydney, former 2006 tourist and Yarm 1st team captain, Will Macaulay joined us at our game against St Ignatius College. Will was in Australia playing rugby and jumped at the chance to see some of his successors in action. That night I was also able to catch up with a former team mate of mine whom I hadn't seen for over ten years.

We deliberately left Zach Kibirige, who was 16 at the time, out there when we flew back home as he stayed to meet up with the England U18 side who were playing internationals in Australia. As mentioned in the 2008 report, his older brother, Isaac, completed a remarkable Yarm rugby journey; in 2008 he made his 1st XV debut at All Saints and in 2011 he was selected to start for the 1st team for the last time at Yarm. In the three years between, he played every single 1st team game and every single 1st VII match; a brilliant achievement. He was one of many awesome lads who left school after this tour (several of whom I am pleased to still be in contact with) and so it was a privilege to witness and be a part of the special moment they all shared on the pitch, all together, for one last time. The final group of memorable

people on this tour are all those who were starting their senior rugby journey and went on to play a huge part in the 2013 Daily Mail victory at Twickenham.

The rugby was again a highlight of this tour. Both teams played attacking rugby and scored a boat-load of tries with the firm grounds suiting our ball-in-hand running game (even the flat track at Ipswich Grammar). The ambition and freedom the boys played with was great to watch and between both teams, Yarm managed to win all but a couple of games. The opposition were all competitive and evenly matched and every game was fiercely contested in a great spirit and the post match interaction between all the players was superb to see!

Once again, the photos show just how amazing and varied the experiences were. From the harbour, to the bush, to the city, to the surf, to the outback; we did it all. [You can view all of the photos by clicking here.](#)

For me, there were two major highlights I will never forget. The first is white water rafting down the Tully River and the simply brilliant

adrenaline rush we all experienced. The rapids were fantastic and we spent most of the day on the river, rafting down a huge part of it and stopping off on the river bank for lunch before



continuing our journey to jump off high rocks into the deep water (apologies for the push, Muncer!). It is amazing I can actually remember it after the repeat head blows courtesy of CT's paddle!

The second has to be the Great Barrier Reef which was, once again, a surreal experience. This time we made our way there via Cairns and I managed to tick something off my bucket list: scuba diving at the reef. It was breathtaking. I'm sure all the boys will recall standing in the shallows of a beach far out in the reef, surrounded by nothing but clear aqua blue water, and a 6 foot reef shark swimming among and between them all. A real once-in-a-lifetime moment! Next time; 2013 South Africa and Botswana.

Mr C Webb



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