

# Newsletter



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## Headmaster's Welcome

It has been lovely to welcome pupils back to School this week, albeit for a shorter week and, in the case of the First - Fourth Years, with a day of remote learning on Wednesday to facilitate the Lateral Flow tests we were required to carry out. I understand that this went smoothly for the pupils and am not surprised that they took this in their stride, as they do so often. This was the case in the last week of term when we had our end of term services outside here at School - it was a cold afternoon, and our pupils stepped up to make these a very special end to the term.

Our commitment to contributing to our local community in a variety of ways, and the opportunities available to pupils to make a difference, led to a highly successful Giving Week at the end of last term. We were delighted with the response and grateful to all who contributed - our collective contributions will have made a genuine difference as described below; thank you.

After this short week to begin the term, next week will see us return to as full and varied a programme as possible and I encourage pupils to embrace and engage the opportunities, perhaps striving to try something new this term. Those from Fourth Year and above interested in a possible future in Engineering - a discipline that a number of students leave to pursue each year - should sign up to the forthcoming careers cluster which is described below. These opportunities to expand horizons and begin to shape and develop ideas about possible careers are a valuable and worthwhile experience.

I hope readers enjoy our interview with Jonny, a Former Pupil who has gone on to a career in AI finance since leaving Yarm, and Phoebe's detailed and impressive book review, with a clear sense of her engagement with some relevant current and historical sociopolitical ideas. I wish everyone a happy and productive term ahead.

Dr Huw Williams

### Beauty and The Beast - New dates

Due to the advice and guidance available to schools and the performing arts about Covid-19 we have taken the difficult decision to postpone the show until later in the year, provisionally Wednesday 29 June to Saturday 2 July. You will be contacted by our Box Office about ticket exchanges / refunds.

## Prep School Open Morning

Our first Prep School Open Morning of the year takes place on Saturday, 15th January. Prospective pupils and their parents can visit from 9am - 12 noon. Pre-booking is essential so please [register a place online](#).

If someone you know is interested in finding out what our Prep School can offer families with children aged 3-11 years then please encourage them to come along and see what life at Prep School is like.

## Keep in Touch



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## Announcing the next Career Cluster event in Engineering!

On the evening of Wednesday 19th January we will be hosting a Career Cluster event focused around education, training and employment in engineering. This remote event will present a diverse range of guests with experience in many branches of engineering. The guests will be offering their advice and answering your questions.

The event will run from 6pm to 7:30pm and you must register in advance for this event by [following this link](#). It has been designed to target those pupils from Fourth Year to Upper Sixth.

Please do mention this to other family members and friends. The event is very much open to parents and pupils from all schools.

Mr S Edwards

The Spring 2022 Term **Tuesday/Thursday Activities Programme** is now live on the Parents' Section of the School website.

## Giving Week: Donations Delivered to Those In Need

Over the Christmas break our dedicated Heads of House ensured that all your generous Giving Week donations went to those who need them.

Cuthbert donated over 240 gifts to the Stockton Salvation Army who added them to parcels for local families; the food and toiletries donated by Bede and Aidan were delivered to Sprouts community food charity; and the Great North Air Ambulance collected over 4 cubic metres of clothes donated by Oswald!



## Politics Book Reviews

Throughout the course of the year Politics students volunteer to write book reviews of politics-related titles. Below you can see members of the L6 Politics class with their books selected from the extensive range within the Senior School Library. Below you can read the first review of the year from Phoebe Richardson.

Mr S Edwards



### *The Penguin Book of Feminist Writing* edited by Hannah Dawson

Over the Christmas period, I borrowed *The Penguin Book of Feminist Writing* from the school library in hope to expand my knowledge on feminism through reading and analysing different forms of writing within the Penguin Classic. I was initially captivated by the inclusivity within the book: assembling accounts from around the world and throughout the years to us, now readers in the 21st century experiencing both the challenges and also the triumphs of the fourth wave. The accounts sensitively capture women's struggle for liberation from 1405-2020 and also encapsulates obstacles bound within the patriarchy including class, race, capitalism and imperialism. I felt organising my review into the waves of feminism would best illustrate my findings and reflections.

The waves of feminism are divided into 4 eras of time, however this book includes early feminism between 1440 to 1847, a continuance of female infuriation, often disregarded and unspoken about. Proto-Feminism was largely caused by the oppression of women's rights and the absence of activism. There was a definite feeling of exhaustion as women deprived their internal dissatisfaction as they felt they couldn't confront sexist behaviour. If women were to counter attack, the tormenting would worsen, however to withstand would be equally as futile. As Jane Anger promised to help and protect others of her sex, (*Her Protection For Women* 1589) she described women during this period as embodying the "grief of man" as "we languish when they laugh, we lie sighing when they sit singing, and sit sobbing when they lie slugging and sleeping". Charlotte Bronte (*Jane Eyre* 1847) also illustrated women's frustration towards "stagnation" through Jane's feelings of imprisonment, and her desire for equality and freedom. Additionally she conveyed the extent of dissatisfaction during proto-feminism as "millions are in silent revolt



against their lot”.

The first wave of feminism (1848-1920) concentrates on opening up opportunities for women, with a focus on suffrage. Francisca Senhorinha Da Motta Diniz, however, conveyed the desire for more than just for the right to vote in her political program (Equality Of Rights 1890). With equality of freedom she believed that “we should quickly see women with more dignified aspects” and emphasised that she did not wish women to have power over men: but over themselves - often a misconception of feminism. In order to gain this freedom, there was a need for education. Sarojini Naidu (Education of Indian Women 1906) cleverly pleaded for the right to learn by explaining the irony of Indian authorities. They sought “the ultimate unity of a common national ideal” however Naidu believed education of women was essential for nation-building with “the hand that rocks the cradle being the power that rules the world”. Towards the end of the wave, birth control was one of the many debated areas that had the power to enhance feminism. Margaret Sanger devoted her life to the legalisation and access of birth control as she recognized the importance of women having control over their own body and the extent birth control would help progress the movement (Birth Control- A Parents Problem or Women? 1920).

The objectives of the second wave of feminism are hard to identify as the focus was on discrimination and equality more broadly, perhaps best described by Betty Friedan’s piece, ‘The Problem That Has No Name’ (1963). She focused her research primarily on American housewives during the second wave and identified the sense of dissatisfaction, previously hidden and masked for over 14 years. Friedan shared worrying data including the average age for marriage lowering, female college attendance dropping often to marry, birth rate overtaking India, and the shrinking clothes sizes as women were “out to fit the clothes instead of vice versa”. Women in this era seemed to have lost any identity as in some cases, “wrote proudly on the census blanket ‘Occupation: housewife’”. Friedan concluded that “when women as well as men emerge from biological living to realize their human selves, those left-over halves of life may become their years of greatest fulfilment”. Controversially, Andrea Dworkin (Our Blood 1976) tackled the distressing topic of rape, suggesting that with the stereotypical definitions of sex, “men are defined as aggressive, dominant, powerful. Women are defined as passive, submissive, powerless.”, rape is to some extent inevitable. Dworkin states that rape is “not conducted by psychopaths or deviants” but rather “by exemplars of our social norms” and so she urges for the abolition of these stereotypes. Another powerful piece, The Uses Of Anger; Women Responding To Racism (1981) written by Audre Lorde, specifically addressed other women who have a problem with the anger of black women. Using her personal experiences as a black lesbian women, she distinguishes between anger, guilt, and defensiveness whilst highlighting her concern that women fail to recognise the differences that exist within their community.

In my personal views, I see the third wave of feminism as reflection of the progression in the movement, but also a way to reclaim, and redefine the meaning of feminism, redirecting misconceptions of the ideology. Bell Hooks used this period of time to produce a concise book defining feminism and the movement in a personal way, without any inaccuracies (Feminism is for Everybody 2000). Her

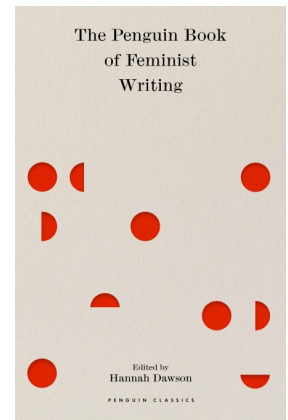
motivation prevailed as she became aware that of her three passions, questions and fascination from the public ended, when mentioning she is a feminist theorist. She used anecdotes involving her battles with depression and suicidal thoughts to illustrate how feminism gave her and will continue to give others hope. Hooks also proposed an alternate perspective on the patriarchy, exploring that men are simply afraid of the unknown

without the patriarchy so “find it easier to passively support male domination”. She ended on a note of optimism, believing in men’s capacity to change and grow, however noted that equality alone will not provide “a world of peace and possibility”, but rather additionally the abolition of racism, class elitism and imperialism.

The 4th and current wave of feminism has been emerging over the last decade or so and therefore it is difficult to define its specific aims. In saying this, two extracts have both focused on progression, offering solutions to modern day sexism. Chimamanda Adichie gave her perspective on feminism as an unmarried Nigerian women and believes sexism grows from childhoods and so to achieve equality we must alter the way we raise our sons and daughters and eliminate gender stereotypes (We Should All Be Feminists 2014). Adichie recognises that an overwhelming amount of time is spent teaching girls to suppress their desires, limiting their ambition and boys to be masculine leaving them with “fragile egos”. Instead of teaching boys to “be afraid of fear of weakness, off vulnerability” we should normalise suffering and instead of blaming girls for sexual assault based on what clothing they wear, we should educate boys to respect and value girls as they would to their mothers and sisters. Adichie also identifies that “the problem with gender is that it prescribes how we should be rather than recognising how we are”. Without the weight of gender expectations, it is true that for both men and women we would be much happier and freer to “be our true individual selves”. Finally Trama Di Terre, an organisation set to protect migrant women (Manifesto For A Migrant Feminism 2016) taught me of the need for recognition and protection of female asylum seekers and refugees as they undergo endless forms of male violence fueled by both racism and sexism. Current immigration laws are making women even more exploitable - gender discrimination, domestic violence, traffic for sexual exploitation, difficult access to education and social services, rape, traditional practices. They also highlighted that migrant women are affected heavily by the “institutional violence of economic and social policies” which are strengthening poverty and inequalities. Therefore they founded their group in hope for a new manifesto that takes into account the class and status difference of migrant women.

In reflection, the inclusivity of a range of texts from around the world and throughout history has certainly informed me of the variety of forms and expressions of sexism, and how each individual experience will vary from one another. It has restored hope that one day it is “possible for us to be fully self-actualized females and males...living the truth that we are all ‘created equal’”.

Phoebe Richardson (Lower Sixth)



## Former Pupil Looks To The Future With Career In Artificial Intelligence

Former pupil, Jonathan Walker, is looking to the future as he explores a career in what has been coined the greatest future technology: Artificial Intelligence.

Jonny joined Yarm on a Sixth Form Scholarship in 2012, jointly funded with the Ogden Trust, to study Physics, Mathematics, Further Mathematics and Economics at A Level before continuing his studies at the University of Bath where he read Physics. During his degree he completed a year in industry at Lloyds Bank where he gained experience in credit risk modelling.

Upon graduation, Jonny completed a Masters in Computer Science at the same university before going back to Lloyds on their Data Science Graduate Scheme which he recently completed to become one of the company's Machine Learning Engineers.

We caught up with Jonny to find out more about his motives to join Yarm School Sixth Form, his interest in science and his career decisions so far...

### **Q. Why did you apply for Yarm School Sixth Form and how did you find the transition?**

I'd always enjoyed studying the sciences – Physics in particular – so when one of my teachers advised that there was a science Scholarship available at a local sixth form with an extremely strong reputation, I didn't hesitate in applying.

I visited and interviewed for a few different colleges and sixth forms in the North East, but Yarm really stood out to

me. The passion and high standards of the staff was obvious from the get-go and of course, the beauty of the grounds was a definite selling point.

Were it not for the Scholarship, I would have never been able to consider Yarm School as an option; I am extremely grateful to have been given that chance.

The transition from St Michael's, Billingham to Yarm was both challenging and rewarding. Academically, the performance of my peers at Yarm was above what I was used to, but the teachers were tremendously supportive and helped me get up to speed quickly. The mutual respect between teachers and students was refreshing and benefited my learning.

All of the other students were extremely welcoming and helped make the transition as smooth as possible. I found it very easy to meet students with similar interests; the extra-curricular activities that were available really helped with this. I took part in squash, badminton, charity volunteering, mentoring and even represented Yarm at county level in table tennis.

Within a couple of weeks I felt right at home at Yarm, like I belonged, and by the end of the two years I didn't want to leave!

### **Q. What is your favourite memory from your time at Yarm?**

A particular highlight that sticks out to me was helping at one of Yarm's Discovery Days – an induction day for the new First Years where they take part in numerous team building exercises. They were tasked with constructing rafts from scratch and sailing from one side of the River Tees to the other, and back.

The outward journey went pretty smoothly but pieces began to come unstuck on the return leg. Everyone was wearing life jackets so they all made it back in one piece; unfortunately the same couldn't be said of the rafts! I had great fun watching this unfold whilst standing safely on terra firma.

### **Q. When did you first consider applying for Physics at university and why?**

I remember visiting a planetarium and observatory on a school trip in primary school and at one point, the constellations were projected onto the ceiling and their origins were explained to us. I think that's what sparked my fascination with Physics and astronomy specifically.

I thoroughly enjoyed studying physics at GCSE and A Level and undertook a placement at Durham University studying speckle phenomena during my time at Yarm. I found A Level Physics particularly engaging and thought provoking and soon realised it was the field in which I most wanted to further my understanding.

### **Q. Do you have any advice for anyone looking to study Physics at university?**

My advice would be not to worry about how employable a Physics degree makes you, or whether it would limit you to a career in academia. I know a lot of people, with varying different backgrounds, in a wide range of careers who would gladly claim that studying physics equipped them with most, if not all, of the skills they needed to achieve their goals.

Studying Physics can help to build up your critical thinking,





reasoning, writing, presenting skills and much more. It also offers a greater understanding of the inner workings of the Universe – how can you turn that down?

Finally, if you are ever given the option to study Relativity, definitely take it!

**Q. When did you first consider computer science and why?**

The course that I enjoyed most at university was called Computational Physics, in which we modelled physical systems using code. During this course, I used the coding skills I'd developed to take up several personal computing projects. For example, I programmed my Hue lightbulbs to flash red whenever Middlesbrough FC scored a goal (they don't tend to flash very often). I decided that I wanted to pursue coding as a career and spent a brilliant year studying computer science in order to make that a reality.

**Q. Why did you choose to apply for a graduate scheme and what do you think the benefits of this are?**

My favourite component of my Masters was the Artificial Intelligence (AI) modules, specifically the semester I spent training a wall-following-robot by the name of Lil' John. As a result, I became interested in a career in data science. I knew that Lloyds were a great employer from my industrial placement and so I applied for their Data Science Graduate Scheme.

Personally, I benefited from being able to move regularly between roles, projects and teams. It provided a great breadth of experiences and kept me well informed when it came to choosing a career path. It also allowed for useful networking opportunities.

Graduate Schemes are more of an investment in an individual by a company than it is a job, therefore the priority is for the graduate to learn as much as possible and develop the skills needed after the scheme. I think this enables quick progression and prioritises both professional and personal growth.

I would advise students interested in graduate schemes to look at it as an extension of your education – except you're being paid to learn. Take every opportunity to ask questions, shadow more experienced colleagues, and try to build a community with your fellow graduates. Whichever scheme you're on, the first priority is to prepare you for the career you want, everything else is secondary.

**Q. Please explain your current role at Lloyds Bank...**

I am currently a Machine Learning Engineer at Lloyds Bank which involves identifying problems that can be solved using data science and developing solutions to these problems.

My last project saw me building a model to identify

customers at risk of falling into financial difficulty so we could provide them with the support they needed before their situation deteriorates. This involved investigating how we can determine the sentiment (positive or negative outcome) of a phone call between a customer and a colleague using a process called Natural Language Processing.

**Q. Do you have any advice for anyone looking to go into machine learning / AI?**

AI, and programming generally, can be intimidating, but with the right teacher and/or course, they can quickly become straightforward and enjoyable.

Plus, remember it's never too late to start learning. I didn't write a line of code until I was 19 years old and 6 years on, it's my day job and one that I thoroughly enjoy.

**Q. Have there been any challenges or tough moments in your career so far?**

The most challenging aspect of my job also happens to be one of my favourite things about it...

The fields of AI and Big Data are extremely fast moving and the cutting edge modelling techniques and technologies that we rely on change on a regular basis, therefore it's imperative that I'm learning continually. Whilst the quickly changing landscape can be tough to keep up with, it also means that every day comes with a new challenge which keeps the work interesting.

**Q. What are your immediate plans and how do you see your career developing?**

Lloyds Bank is beginning to deploy a number of Google Cloud services which brings with it a whole host of new opportunities. One of my current goals is to become certified in Google Cloud Platform (GCP) and to contribute in moving the 250 year old bank into the future.

This September marks the on-boarding of a new cohort of Data Science Graduates. I take great enjoyment in mentoring and teaching others, partially because I was so grateful to have had incredible mentors when I first joined the team. I look forward to helping the new cohort to settle in and learn about what it means to work in the world of ML, and specifically in the context of a financial institution.

I chose to study neural networks for the dissertations of both of my degrees. For my Bachelors I studied central pattern generators (the sorts of networks that control rhythmic movements such as walking and breathing). For my Masters I studied NEAT, which is a way of training neural networks using an evolutionary model. I found both of these extremely interesting, and so in the long term, I would love to complete a PhD on a similar topic.

**Q. If you could have your time at Yarm again, would you do anything differently?**

When I first joined Yarm I had a minor case of imposter syndrome. I felt like I hadn't earned my place and I didn't feel nearly as confident as other students academically or socially. As a result, I began my journey at Yarm a little closed off. In hindsight, I had nothing to worry about; the reality was that I was surrounded by incredibly welcoming and supportive staff and students.

If I were to have my time at Yarm again, I would be sure to jump straight into school life from the get-go and make the most of my time there from day one.

## Sport Weeks Ahead

The weeks ahead are now available online.

You can [view them here](#).



## What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# FORTNITE

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First released in 2017, Fortnite has become one of the most popular games in the world. It currently has around 350 million registered players. Developed by Epic Games, it began life exclusively as a 'battle royale' contest, where up to 100 online player characters would fight – with weaponry including rifles, handguns and rocket launchers – to be the last one standing. Today, it features multiple modes which each offer something different (although some modes, such as 'Save the World', are only available on certain platforms).

### IN-APP PURCHASES

Not all of Fortnite is free. Save the World mode, for example, can become quite costly. An in-game currency called V-Bucks is used to buy items such as cosmetics, which are not a necessity to play the game. It can feel like buying them is essential, however – even for adult players. Making sure no payment methods are linked to the game's store is a good idea when children are playing Fortnite.

### REPEAT SUBSCRIPTIONS

Fortnite now offers a monthly repeat subscription which costs £9.99 (or equivalent). This package offers different non-essential benefits every month – including fancy cosmetics, rare weapons, V-Bucks and special bonuses. Signing up, therefore, can be tempting for dedicated players. However, subscriptions cannot be paid for with V-Bucks earned in the game, only with real-world money.

### COMPETITIVE COMMUNITY

Fortnite isn't purely a competitive experience (some modes prioritise cooperation), but the rivalry aspect remains central. Battle Royale is an especially ruthless mode, where the last player or squad left standing wins. Games can become heated, and players' desire to win can often cause excessively aggressive or 'toxic' behaviour towards others – via the game's audio chat, for instance.

### POSSIBILITY OF SCAMS

Popular games like Fortnite are often targeted by unscrupulous individuals trying to trick or exploit genuine fans. In Fortnite, scammers have been known to offer children free V-Bucks or vast amounts of V-Bucks in exchange for rare items – often asking the player to click a particular link. These scammers are seeking access to your child's account, personal information and payment details.

### USER-CONTROLLED CONTENT

Some elements of online video games can't be rated for age appropriateness because the developer doesn't have control over them. In Fortnite, for instance, things like voice or text chat, usernames, trades and other player-generated content may not always be suitable for children. It also means that the makers aren't liable for anything a stranger might say to young Fortnite players online.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### STAY AWARE OF SPENDING

Free-to-play games (that is, ones without up-front costs) can still be big financial drains. In Fortnite, for example, the Battle Pass – a set of rewards to improve players' experience in the game – can be either earned through playing or bought with real money (with additional incentives for the latter). With supervision however, this can be a great lesson in money management for children.

### ENCOURAGE BREAKS

Gaming sessions can reach marathon lengths, especially when your child is on a winning streak and doesn't want to stop. Sitting in the same position for hours, of course, isn't healthy but it's an easy habit to form. Encouraging young ones to break regularly for drinks and so on will help them stay hydrated, rest their eyes and release some of the tension from competitive gameplay.

### Meet Our Expert

Clare Gaden (aka a Lunawolf) has worked as an editor and journalist in the gaming industry since 2005, providing websites with event coverage, reviews and gaming guides. She is the owner of Lunawolf Gaming and is currently working on various gaming-related projects including game development and writing non-fiction books.



### TALK ABOUT TALKING

Communication is key in the squad-based Fortnite modes, and children will quickly realise that talking with team-mates online helps to increase their win rate. It's a good idea, therefore, to chat with your child first about speaking to strangers online, trading, scammers and other potential risks. Remind them that they can always come to you for help if they run into problems online.

### DISCUSS OTHER APPS

Games like Fortnite can lead on to third-party apps (Discord, for example) where players can join a voice, text or – in some cases – video chat about the game. Certain add-ons also let children talk with other players from their local area, which clearly presents a potential risk. When discussing Fortnite with your child, you might also want to ask them about other apps they use while playing.



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