

Newsletter



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Headmaster's Welcome

We often talk to pupils about the impact of dedication, hard work and motivation, and it is a real pleasure and source of pride to see our pupils put this into action in many aspects of their lives. Pupils making progress in a musical instrument, in speech and drama, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, chess, coding and innumerable other personal interests offer abundant evidence of this positive frame of mind, and should be congratulated! Will's National selection, described below, is testament to his sporting prowess and talent, of course, but there is no doubt that talent alone could not have helped him achieve this England call-up: hours of dedicated practice, skills acquisition, fitness training, understanding team dynamics and tactics have helped him achieve this and we all offer him our congratulations.

Parents and pupils might be interested in attending the forthcoming Careers Cluster on engineering, and next Monday evening sees a lecture in the Friarage Theatre at 5pm on the relationships between information, thought and action, considering suggestion and bias from members of 'Dataclan'; it should be a fascinating talk and pupils are encouraged to attend. This week has seen another visit from our local MP, who spoke to pupils whilst the political world in Westminster has been at the top of the news cycle without a break. Our pupils contributions to the newsletter are excellent once again - Kitty gives a fascinating book review, considering issues of class and inequality, politics and discrimination. There is more fantastic art in the Artist's Corner, and we hear of more sporting success for teams and individuals. The YSA's spring event will be held on March 11th (early details within), and I hope parents will save the date and join us for an entertaining evening.

Dr Huw Williams

England Hockey Honours!

We are delighted to announce that, following a lengthy and extremely challenging selection process, Will Ferguson (Fourth Year) has been selected for England Hockey U16.

This is a fantastic achievement and a result of his talent, hard work and dedication.

He will now have the honour of representing his country in a series of international matches, culminating in a European Tournament this summer.

We are all very proud of him and wish him the very best.



The Spring 2022 Term [Lunchtime & After School Activities Programme](#) is now live on the Parents' Section of the School website.

Politics Society

The Politics Society meets every Friday lunchtime and is an opportunity for students to gain a wider understanding and appreciation of issues of local, national and global significance. We meet with a diverse range of figures from the world of politics. Pupils from all years groups are welcome to attend and we mostly gather in the Friarage Theatre. Below you can read some of this half-term's guests and events.

Mr S Edwards

Week 1	7th Jan SPaCE - FT	Mr Matt Vickers Member of Parliament for Stockton South 'A life in Westminster'
Week 2	14th Jan 12:45 - 13:30	Ghafoor Hussein Humanitarian aid worker 'Travelling 2000 miles to cook for strangers'
Week 3	21st Jan 12:45 - FT	Warwick Lightfoot Conservative politician, economist, and former political adviser Head of Economics and Social Policy at Policy Exchange 'Shaping a political economy'
Week 4	27th Jan 18:00 - PAA	Holocaust Memorial Day event in association with the University of York
Week 5	4th Feb 12:45 - FT	Monica Lopez Boltadano Human Rights Defender from Nicaragua 'Going into exile: a flight from an oppressive regime'

Question Time with Matt Vickers MP



As part of the Sixth Form SPaCE programme last Friday the Upper Sixth students were joined by Stockton South MP Matt Vickers. Mr Vickers has made several visits to the school to date, both remotely and in person and was generous enough to meet with the current Lower Sixth Politics students for a meal at the start of the academic year.

This session was very much devoted to gaining a deeper understanding of the workings of Westminster and the life of a Member of Parliament. Mr Vickers began by providing an insight into a 'typical' week in Westminster, such that it exists, and was illuminating on all of the work that takes place outside of the much televised chamber of the House of Commons. Whilst acknowledging the theatricality of the likes of PM Question Time, there are more measured, well tempered conversations happening every day in the committee rooms of the House. We also learned about Mr Vickers' early involvement and appetite for politics and his background as a local councillor, and he was insistent on his belief in and encouragement of any form of volunteering, whether that be for a charity or political party - the process of engagement and understanding of the processes of the wider world are critical.

Mr Vickers answered a diverse range of questions from the audience, ranging from the expected quizzing over the 'Christmas parties', through to inspirational or admired Members of Parliament, the current atmosphere of the House, the pressures of the job, issues concerning local regeneration, as well as a number of key pieces of legislation that Mr Vickers has himself been instrumental in steering through Parliament, notably Harper's Law, and legislation to afford greater protection from abuse and violence for retail and transport workers.

It was an illuminating session in which Mr Vickers spoke candidly and openly, sharing his views unambiguously in front of an engaged audience curious to explore current issues. We very much look forward to future involvement of Mr Vickers and Yarm School.

Mr S Edwards

Reminder: Virtual Career Cluster Event on Engineering

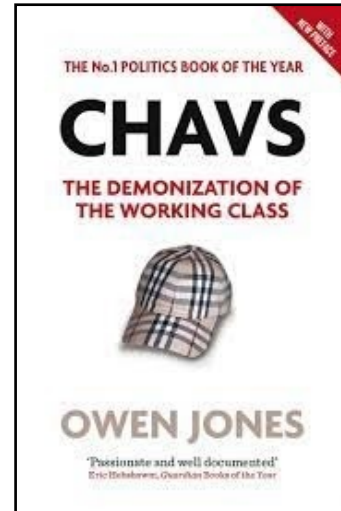
On Wednesday 19th January, 6pm - 7.30pm, we are hosting a Career Cluster event focused around education, training and employment in **engineering**.

The event 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.

Registration is essential - [please register here](#).

Book Review

Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class by Owen Jones



Over the Christmas period I chose to read *Chavs* by Owen Jones in order to broaden my political knowledge and understanding of issues faced in everyday scenarios. I chose this specific book as it is very relevant and current in today's social-political climate, and at the time of publishing the book sparked conversations and controversy which interested me.

Jones' book *Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class* is a political book exploring the stereotypes and mockery of the British working class and working class as a whole. As the title would imply Jones looks at what it means to be categorised as a chav in the UK and how there is a socially acceptable prejudice embedded in a classist society. The book not only talks about what it takes and doesn't take to be a chav but also the wider picture of taking away pride from the working class and viewing upper/middle class to be 'the norm'. The book is critical of former prime ministers' ideologies and society as a whole. For example, Jones explores the government under Thatcher and how she made council estates and help from the public sector something to be feared rather than something to be grateful for. Jones very bluntly put it as "Thatcher's assumption of power in 1979 marked the beginning of an all-out assault on the pillars of working class Britain". Jones talks harshly of all politicians on how they made stories of unemployed and lazy people committing crimes rather than the big businessmen in suits in which they protected and praised. It's this image of criminalisation of the working class which brought such weight onto the diminishing term "chav" that is so commonly heard and used today to talk about people less economically wealthy than one another.

It is a very thought provoking book and makes me reflect on my own view of a stereotypical "chav" and the working class in comparison into what I think a "normal" British person is. It made me think about the invisible class bubble we put ourselves in despite being a supposedly "classless society"; it's this class identity and terms to belittle those not in the same position that creates the class wars that seem to never go away.

From studying Politics it has come to my attention how much class will get ignored within discussion in Parliament and it is avoided by all too often all too privileged politicians as they are scared to say anything controversial yet put in place laws and taxations that do not take into consideration the majority of the country - the working class. Jones has brought it to my attention that we are demolishing the acceptance of racism, homophobia and sexism yet the at times apparent 'hatred' of the working class remains socially acceptable and embedded in our culture and language. We are often and easily guilty of fearing and criminalising chavs, presuming that the working class are going to be aggressive and rowdy, but I wondered if that might be from the working class' lack of pride, and that they want their voices to be heard and recognized by the wealthy and more privileged, as all pride and dignity was stripped from them by the very people we elect to run our country.

I am glad to have read 'Chavs'; it was so powerfully written and so relevant and down to earth that it let me reflect on not just blaming the communities but holding my own thoughts and perspective on class and the term chav accountable.

Kitty Foden, L6 Politics student

Save the Date!

YSA Spring Evening Event on Friday 11th March

The YSA are planning an evening of fun with live music, entertainment and food, featuring saxophonist Lady V.

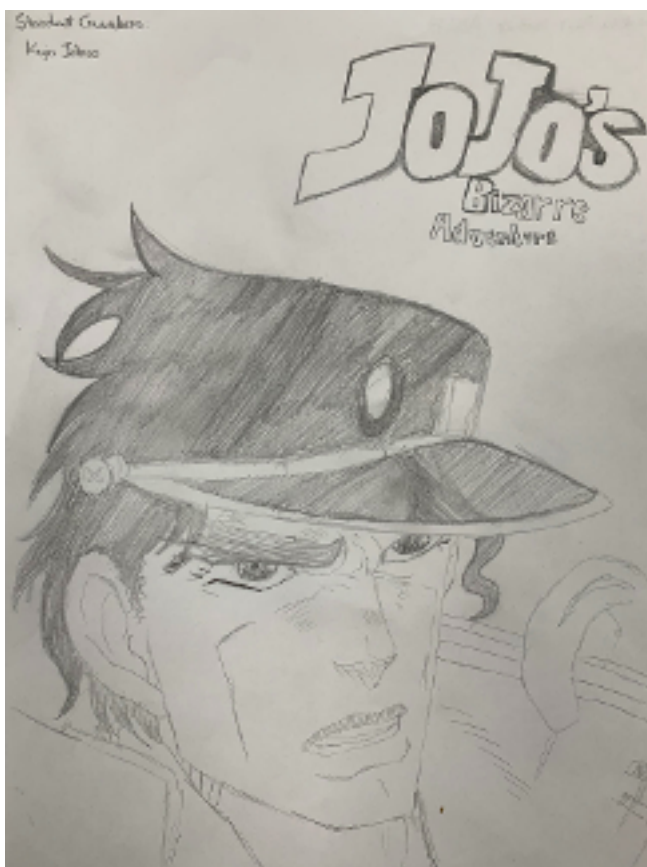
Look out in the newsletter and on social media for more information coming soon.

Artists' Corner

Gracie Rhodes-Hildreth has painted these beautiful, abstract paintings (below) and I love the tones and colours she's used.

Minakshi Palat-Meethale has produced another gorgeously detailed drawing of Kujo Jotaro! Well done!

Jessica Jenyns, Visiting Artist



Tosca

Into the romantic world of an idealistic painter Cavaradossi and his sensuous lover Tosca comes the malevolence of Baron Scarpia, Chief of Police, with fatal results.

Elena Stikina, Bryan Hymeland Alexey Markovbring to life one of the best loved operas in The Royal Opera repertoire: Puccini's Tosca.

From the demonic chords with which it famously begins to the violent twist of the opera's shock ending, the tension never lets up for a moment.

Love and evil come –thrillingly –face to face in Jonathan Kent's intense production.

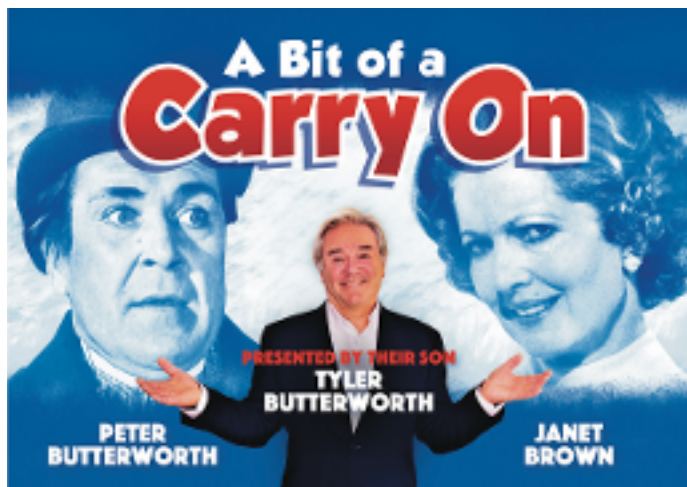
Tosca is a Live Stream event at the Friarage Theatre.



Wednesday 19th January 2022, 7:15pm

[Book Online Here](#)

A Bit of a Carry On



Darling Buds of May actor Tyler Butterworth tells the funny, moving and unashamedly nostalgic story of his much-loved parents, the nation's first female TV impressionist Janet Brown, and the inimitable Carry On star Peter Butterworth.

From heroic wartime escapades at POW camp Stalag Luft III, to a night at Chequers with Mrs Thatcher, A Bit of a Carry On is a warm and uplifting journey from wartime to showtime, taking us deep into the golden age of British TV & film comedy – just how did a girl from Glasgow and a lad from Manchester become the first married couple to both feature as subjects on This Is Your Life?

With classic film and TV clips, rare photographs and a Q&A with Tyler, A Bit of a Carry On is your chance to really get to know two of British comedy's brightest stars, who lived to make us laugh.

Saturday 22nd January 2022, 7:30pm

[Book Online Here](#)

The Magic of the Beatles

Come together right now and join us for a night like no other as we celebrate the music of one of the greatest bands of our lives!

Our sensational cast not only look and sound like John, Paul, George, and Ringo, they also generate the same incredible excitement and unique sense of humor too.

Bringing you all the hits you know and love including She Loves You, A hard day's night, Help, I Feel Fine, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, Hey Jude, Here comes the sun, get back and so many more.

The Magic of the Beatles will show you Love is all you need. So let it be and get your tickets now!

Saturday 12th February 2022, 7:30pm

[Book Online Here](#)



A Solid Start to the Boys Hockey Season

Yarm 1st XI 5 v 1 Stockton Hockey Club

This was a solid start to the season for a mixed senior squad against Stockton Hockey Club 3rd team. Many of the boys looked a bit raw as they stepped back on to a hockey pitch but it didn't take them long to get into their stride after a great deflected finish from Tom Crack off a Toby Simpson through ball. This was quickly followed by a nice reverse shot from Crack to make the score 2-0.

The home team should have pushed on from there but stepped off the gas and allowed Fourth Year James McGee (who was playing for Stockton) too much space and he finished against his brother Alex who was playing in goal.

After a constructive half time team talk - from lead coach Mr Alexander - the boys stepped it up in the 2nd half and played some more expansive hockey. Tom Howard looked impressive in the centre of the pitch and 2nd team captain Louis Robinson made a welcome return to hockey with some excellent skills on the left wing.

Further goals from Toby Simpson, Crack and captain James Beck led to a comfortable win and with several returning 5th years who are sitting their mocks at the moment- things are looking good for the season.

Swimming Success

Congratulations to Sam Buxton who won three medals at the Billingham New Year Meet last weekend. Sam competed in 11 events and came away with a silver and two bronze medals. A fantastic achievement given that Sam only started swimming competitively about 2 years ago.

He has also been selected for the Northumberland and Durham County Training Camp at the end of January. The camp will focus on refining techniques.

Sam is competing again in Sunderland later this month - good luck!

Sport Weeks Ahead

The weeks ahead are now available online.

You can [view them here](#).



U13 Boys Hockey

QEGS Wakefield 2 v 5 Yarm

(Round 1 Independent Schools National Cup)

As the game started the lads pressed the ball straight away and made the opponents panic, allowing the ball to be won in midfield, and Olly Carr scored with a great goal through a strong open stick hit. The opponents were still keen to get back into the game as they scored from a short corner.

The game went on and the lads kept the goals coming and by half time the score was 3-1. The half time chat was serious as we talked about keeping the wingers close and wide to the defender opening up a gap to get the ball through to the forward.

At the start of the second half we pressed their defence and they stumbled again leading to an early goal making it 4-1. The opponents struck back by scoring another short corner (Yarm needed to focus on their defending short corners) making this 4-2. Soon after this with 5 minutes left Yarm scored another goal making it 5-2 with Paddy Key running around their defence from the right and slipping it past the keeper for a simple Oliver Mowbray tap in.

Paddy Key: 1 assist

Ollie Mowbray: 3 assists 1 goal

Olly Carr: 4 goals



Good Luck to Our Indoor Teams!

The U16 and U18 boys indoor hockey teams have travelled to Whitgift School in London this week to compete in the National Indoor Hockey Finals.

This qualification is as a result of beating Hallcross School Doncaster in the North East Finals before Christmas.

We wish the boys well- a full report will follow in next week's newsletter!



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

REPLIKA

AGE RATING
UK & EUROPE: RATED 'MATURE'
17+

Replika is an artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot companion that its developers claim users can form an actual emotional connection with. Once users have created an account and chosen a 3D avatar, they select the type of relationship they want with the chatbot: friend, mentor or romantic partner. Using a neural network to hold an ongoing one-on-one conversation, Replika gradually becomes more like the user as it gathers data from their responses. It isn't the only AI chatbot app available, but Replika pushes the boundaries of the concept to offer a highly realistic conversational experience.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

18

As its age rating suggests, Replika includes content that isn't suitable for children, such as flirtatious messaging and sexual role-play. While the developer has recently updated the app to ensure this can only be accessed by adults who select 'romantic relationship', there are numerous accounts online of sexual content being seen by younger users of the app.

NO SELF-AWARENESS

Replika is designed to seem very human, but it's important to remember that it's still an AI-powered chatbot that has no self-awareness. This means (as numerous users have highlighted online) that the chatbot sometimes fails to filter out inappropriate content: one user reports, for example, that Replika shared upsetting videos of vicious dogs.

NOT MEDICALLY CERTIFIED

Replika claims to be able to improve users' emotional wellbeing by easing feelings of anxiety and loneliness. However, its disclaimer states "we are not a healthcare or medical device provider – nor should our services be considered medical care, mental health services or other professional help services." There is no guarantee that Replika can help with mental health issues – it could, in fact, have the opposite effect.

POTENTIAL ADDICTION

Like many apps, Replika is addictive by nature. It encourages the user to provide more information so it can learn about them and become better at conversation. Not only does this mean your child could end up spending a long time on an app where they might share sensitive information, but also that they could find themselves forming an emotional attachment to the human-like chatbot.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Replika is free to download, but its developers do offer in-app purchases. Users can pay to upgrade to a 'Pro' version of the app, which unlocks extra content such as additional activities, conversation topics and the ability to hold voice calls with their AI 'companion'. Users can also spend real-world money on the 'gems' used to buy new outfits or different personality traits for their avatar.

Advice for Parents & Carers

SET UP PARENTAL CONTROLS

Replika doesn't feature its own in-game parental controls, but most mobile devices come with these controls built in. On iOS devices, for instance, you can set content and privacy restrictions – so if you don't want your child to be using 17+ rated apps like Replika, you can adjust the settings to prevent these from being downloaded.

TALK ABOUT THE DANGERS

If your child is determined to use Replika and you're happy for them to download it, then it's vital you talk to them first about the possible dangers of this type of app. For example, it's key that they understand not to give out any information which is personal or could be used to identify them – and it would be prudent to warn them about the potential of being exposed to mature content on the app.

WATCH FOR WARNING SIGNS

If you're concerned that your child is spending too much time on Replika and might be forming an unhealthy emotional connection with their chatbot, it's important to look out for the warning signs. They may be giving increasing priority to the app ahead of more important everyday activities (such as doing homework or eating meals), or could be showing signs of irritability and a lack of concentration.

SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

If your child is suggesting that they should use Replika for mental health reasons – because they're lonely or having feelings of anxiety, for example – it would be sensible to recommend other options to them. Replika's developers freely admit that they are not a certified mental health service, so if your child needs help it would unquestionably be best to consult a qualified professional instead.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid The Inquirer, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



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