

HEADMASTER'S WELCOME

In our assemblies this week, it has been a pleasure to hand out certificates to pupils which recognise the hard work they put in to gain qualifications in sailing, or to achieve impressive progress in ABRSM and other music exams. These represent hours of dedicated practice over many years and reflect highly on the character and determination of the pupils. I would hope and expect that they also gain a huge amount of enjoyment and pleasure out of this personal journey, and I know that many of us benefit from the fruits of their labour in concerts and performances. We heard from Sarah in the Lower School assembly this week with a beautiful performance on the flute, and next week sees the return of our Concert and Cake series, with details within for those who wish to attend.

Our pupils dedicate time to learning and performing on stage in other ways, too, with two school productions advertised within which I highly recommend, and news of our pupils' involvement in productions outside school as well. We also heard from pupils who are launching this year's 'Dovecote Magazine', with a call to their fellow pupils for contributions of opinion, poetry, artistic work, travel writing and more. Creative engagement abounds, then, and it is a pleasure to see our pupils discover and

develop these talents.

We learnt the results of the efforts of our boys U16 and U18 indoor hockey teams who - having made it to the National Finals last week - represented the school with distinction in their respective tournaments with some exceptional results. We are proud of them all, with our U18s coming 8th nationally and the U16s just missing out on a place in the final, and ending up in 3rd place nationally - fantastic! There is a detailed report within. Our pupils have recently performed magnificently on the netball courts against Woodhouse Grove - and I enjoyed my tours of the courts on Saturday to watch them play - with our cross country runners also doing the school proud with some extremely impressive results in the district competition and a number being selected from there to the next rounds. Playing sport at this level also requires hours of dedicated practice, but provides all sorts of benefits from representing the school with pride, maintaining fitness and wellbeing, building a team ethos and giving a sense of personal achievement and accomplishment.

Mrs Gratton spoke about confidence in



Congrats to the U16 boys who finished 3rd in the National Indoor Hockey Finals, alongside the U18s who finished 8th nationally!

her assembly on Wednesday, with some sage advice to pupils on how to develop and sustain this, by surrounding themselves with people who value them, recognising and challenging negative self-talk and by engaging with all manner of experiences at school to provide opportunities to gain experiences and build confidence. Using sport and House Drama as examples, she stressed the positive impact that these experiences will have had on those who took part, and the growth this will have allowed.

There is some important information for parents about forthcoming immunisations in the newsletter, and a range of other contributions including a book review and news on some activities and societies.

Dr Huw Williams

FIRST AND SECOND YEAR WINTER WALK

On Sunday 15th January a group of twelve First and Second Year pupils headed to the Lake District with the Outdoor Education Department and Miss Street with the aim of summiting a snowy peak. The mountain peak chosen was Blencathra, at 868m high.

As we set off from the minibus, the weather was warm and sunny and climbing the first steep climb of the day was very warm. Under the almost clear skies we could see the snowy summit of Blencathra and the bonus second mountain peak of

Scales Fell that we would walk over en route.

As we climbed higher and higher there was more and more snow on the ground. Making progress up the mountain was steady, we could see the summit getting closer and closer and we could also take in the magnificent views all around.

Not far from the top of the peak, the path was almost completely covered in snow and we had to get our ice axes out and use them as a walking stick to help us the last little bit. The view from the summit was very

cloudy, mostly white all around, and the warm sunny weather had disappeared to be replaced by a chilly northerly wind. A quick bite to eat in the group shelter and we descended the path which was quite steep at times, to the green fellside and then the back to the minibus after a good five hour hike in the snowy mountains.

My thanks go to Mr Roberts and Miss Street for their support for the day.

Mr A Mathers



YOUTH THEATRE ACTORS PREPARE FOR SHOW

Pupils Esther Lane (Fifth Year), Laura Burns (Fifth Year), Rose Tompkins (Fourth Year), and Erin Goh (Y5, Prep) are members of a Youth Theatre, and will be taking part in their forthcoming production of West Side Story. Participation requires a great deal of commitment and attention to detail, and the standards of acting, singing, and dancing are very high.

Esther, Laura, Rose and Erin took part in auditions in September 2022, and following the casting process have attended 3-hour rehearsals, three times a week. The pupils have also worked to build their skills and experience in Performing Arts through speech and drama, singing, and

dance lessons and activities at Yarm. If anyone would like to support them by coming to watch, the Crash Bang Wallop production is 8th-11th February at the Forum Theatre, Northallerton. Laura is starring as Anybodys, Esther and Rose as Jets gang members Snowboy and Tiger, and Erin as Shark member Nibbles.

Good luck with the show!



CLUSTER CLUB

Grill Club has retired for a few weeks only for Cluster Club to emerge, almost like a phoenix from its ashes. A massive thank you to all the supremely enthusiastic Upper Sixth Economists for their committed support of our first week. It is a chance to share ideas and learn from each other every Tuesday lunchtime.

Miss C E Rhodes

PEER SUPPORT CLINIC

Thanks to the truly committed trio of Michael, Eizad and Zach who every week share their passion and enthusiasm for Economics with the year below them through the Peer Support Clinic they have instigated, moulded and run.

If any Lower Sixth Economists want steer or clarification in a calm and friendly setting please head for B1 at 1.10pm on a Wednesday.

Miss C E Rhodes

CONCERT AND CAKE

Our early evening concerts are back!

Join us for a relaxed, small concert in the Recital Room with (the clue is in the title) ... cake!

Tuesday 24th January at 5pm

Tickets are £3 and available on the door, at the box office on 01642 792587, or [online here](#).

Concert and Cake

Series 2023

(1st Year/Upper 6th Performers & Clarinet Ensemble)



TUESDAY 24TH JANUARY 2023, 5PM

Tickets are £3.00 and are available on the door/
at the Box office Tel: 01642 792587 or online at thepaaonline.org

THIS HOUSE BELIEVES THAT ADULTHOOD STARTS AT 18

Last Thursday, Senior Debating Society returned for 2023.

Maintaining the same team structure as last term, and with a host of new members, we jumped straight into our first debate of the term, which was 'This house believes that adulthood starts at 18'.

Arguably the Best and Vici took the proposition while Ultimate Shannerz and Agree to Disagree took the opposition.

With Luke chairing, and our society co-presidents Jodie and Caroline, accompanied by Rishika, judging, the debate quickly began after very brief team discussions. Ollie from Arguably the Best opened for the proposition, arguing that adulthood is an arbitrary concept and as we already have a globally accepted standard that 18 is the start of adulthood, why should it be changed? He further supported his argument by highlighting that in the UK, you stop gaining additional responsibilities at 18, such as the ability to vote and purchase alcohol. Using the UK's regulations requiring everyone up until 18 to be in full-time education, he further argued that 18 is the age that adulthood begins as it is inappropriate for pupils to be adults.

Transferring to the opposition, where Freddie from the Ultimate Shannerz opened, the fact that 18 is not a global standard was quickly

rebutted. He specifically highlighted the drinking age in the USA as being 21 as a point to disprove Ollie's prior statement. As well as stating that his side did not believe that there should be a specific age for adulthood to begin due to it being too general of a concept, he also further investigated UK laws such as being able to give birth at 16 and have a job from 14, stating that these are not things that children should be able to do.

Closing for the proposition was Valerie from Vici. To begin, she worked to confirm the credibility of the proposition's use of UK laws as part of their argument, by discussing how each law is thoroughly debated and is only made with expert scientific input. As the UK considers adulthood as beginning at 18, she used this to justify that it was the scientific standpoint as well. At the end of her speech, she began to rebut the opposition's points about being able to get different responsibilities at different ages in the UK, highlighting some different laws such as being able to go to jail from age 10 while further reiterating Ollie's point that you get all the responsibilities at 18 and hence that is when adulthood starts. Unfortunately, Valerie was cut off by the chair, Luke, due to her running out of her two minute speech time.

Finally, Abi from Agree to Disagree

closed for the opposition's argument, first stating that the proposition were rebutting their own argument by highlighting the many different ages at which different laws applied. She further questioned 18 being a global standard, labeling the proposition as having a western bias, choosing to highlight examples in Asia where ages of responsibility differ. She also went on to argue that the legal ambiguity in the legal age of adulthood stems from the scientific ambiguity in the matter, choosing to specifically highlight that the prefrontal cortex of the brain is not fully developed until age 25.

Following this, the judges first questioned the proposition. When asked, if adulthood is arbitrary, why give it a number and why accept 18 just because it's the standard, they repeated their previous line of argument about 18 being the point where you stopped gaining new responsibilities. The judges then questioned the opposition, asking how they would define adulthood starting if not at 18. They replied stating that it was too broad a process, and as everyone is different, a binary value could not be applied to it. They were also asked whether they thought being an adult was an important legal distinction, to which they said they did not. They argued that if the law was to be

THIS HOUSE BELIEVES... (cont.)

lenient to teenagers, then it should be lenient to pensioners as they start to undevelop as they get older.

The judges then took leave to deliberate the decision before announcing the opposition as the winner. Well done to all of this week's debaters, judges and the chair!

James Waine, Lower Sixth

IMMUNISATIONS

The School Aged Immunisation Service are planning to come into School on Wednesday 8th March to deliver the 3 in 1 teenage booster (Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio) as well as the Meningitis ACWY vaccine to children in the Third Year. If you would like your child to receive this immunisation in school, please use the link below and complete the online consent form.

www.hdftsais.co.uk

School Code: HD111769

Many thanks for your continued support with the School Aged Immunisation Programme.

Mrs L Wheatley

KEEPING IT REAL

Another week and another packed Working Lunch! We were absolutely delighted to welcome back former pupil Finlay Gilrairie (Class of 2022) who after studying A levels in both Economics and Business, competing in the Yarm Apprentice and himself enjoying his time in EconBus Soc, Cluster Club and Working Lunches at Yarm, was keen to enlighten the current Sixth Form cohort on the value of careers in FAME.

Currently enrolled on a PwC degree apprenticeship Finlay is living and working in Belfast. He spends 4 days a week employed in investigating Financial Crime whilst he studies 1 day a week at Ulster University towards a degree in Business Management. He is also completing professional qualifications and all this is funded by PwC.

During a fascinating talk Finlay enthused the Sixth Form audience about financial services apprenticeships. He explained the

Application Process, gave advice on the Insight weeks in summer, discussed life in Belfast, work life balance, whether a typical working day with PwC exists, and discussed the opportunities created by completing a PwC degree. Finlay is clearly thoroughly enjoying his work and study, and gave a well supported argument for the path he has pursued. Finlay was only too happy to answer a plethora of questions from the audience and from Miss Rhodes!

It was wonderful to catch up with Finlay and we are really grateful to him for not only giving such insight into PwC and apprenticeships but also for all the support he has given our apprenticeship applicants this year, we really value his support of the department. We wish him well with his career and know he will be in regular contact.

Miss C E Rhodes





GAS STATION ANGEL

ED THOMAS

Wednesday 1st to Friday 3rd February
7pm

Studio Theatre

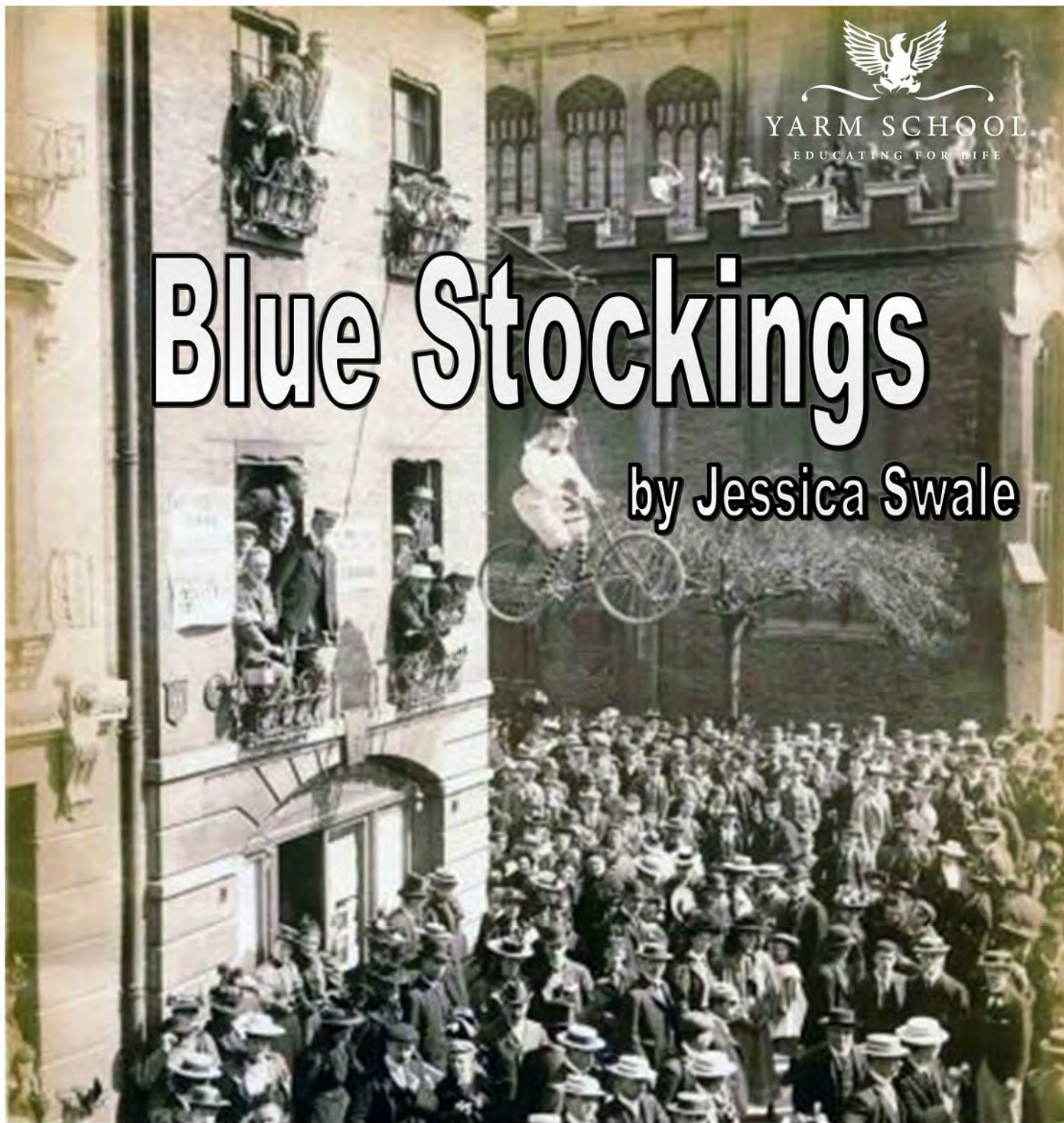
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YARM SCHOOL
EDUCATING FOR LIFE

Blue Stockings

by Jessica Swale



Tuesday 7th to Thursday 9th February

7pm

Studio Theatre

www.thepaaonline.org

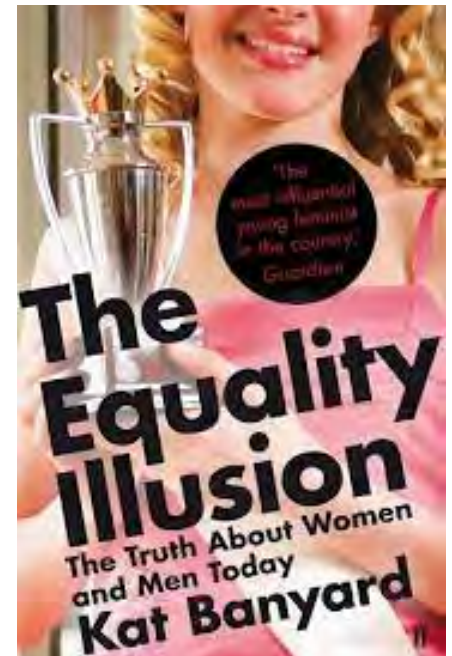
POLITICS BOOK REVIEW: 'THE EQUALITY ILLUSION' BY KAT BANYARD

This book studies the issues that women still face today. It discusses how important feminism is, and how it appears to many that men and women are now equal, when this most definitely is not the case in many ways. It looks at the subtleties of inequality but when pieced together they can show the harsh reality of the world we live in and that inequality between men and women is so embedded into our society.

The book is divided into several different chapters, covering topics such as body image, ideals of beauty/male gaze and eating disorders; sexism in education; sexism in the workplace; domestic violence; and reproductive rights. Each chapter begins with the true story of a real girl or woman affected by these issues, which gives the book a more human and immediate feel. Reading these women's stories allows you to feel how each person would feel and lets you reflect on how suppressing the world can be. "Hands up for a gendered education", a chapter which covers sexual harassment in schools and the institutional indifference, was one of the most striking, and it provides a good example of how The Equality Illusion exists in our lives at even such a young age. When I read The Equality Illusion I was struck with the powerful and brave stories of

women who have experienced such prejudice but I was also saddened by how much girls my age can relate and understand some of the chapters in the book, I felt as though I knew that this was just going to be a part of women's life as it was just entrenched into our society, which shouldn't be the case.

The Equality Illusion is an excellent introduction to all sorts of gender issues, complete with references and statistics that make the facts plain to see. This brings a clear sense of reality into this book, yet it does not read like an academic, researched piece. It reads as stories that when put together feel like you are having a conversation with Kat Banyard about her research while going through day to day life as a woman experiencing sexism. When reading this book I felt disheartened that sexism is a part of women's lives and that it has such a high impact on our day to day lives, however the final chapter "A New Day", shows a different tone. It looks at how feminism and incredible women/movements globally are making a difference and that inequality does not have to be experienced by generations to come. Banyard is realistic in her writing and she knows it will not be an easy road but she writes a chapter titled "What To Do?", in which she gives readers several suggestions for involvement and grassroots



activism.

This book is related to my A Level subjects such as Politics as it touches on how 'only 22% of MPs are women' and how a male dominated workplace may affect decision making. But also in Economics, where the topic of gender pay gap explores the fact that workers in female-dominated roles and professions are paid and valued less than workers in male-dominated roles and professions – even when the jobs demand the same level of skill, training, physical and mental effort and decision-making. When this takes place within the same organisation it is deemed illegal in the UK under the Sex Discrimination Act – violating the right to equal pay for equal value – but across the economy as a whole this takes place daily.

I would really recommend this book

BOOK REVIEW (CONT.)

to everyone, especially if you want something of a 'starter book' for feminism. Banyard always manages to keep things interesting, readable and well structured. It's a fairly powerful read but I definitely would still recommend it to teenagers as it is empowering and necessary to have an understanding of inequality. It can also give young girls a place to reflect and relate with other women's stories and I hope it would encourage young girls to stand against inequality and sexism and realise that there is plenty of change needed to be done. I do not only recommend this read to girls/women I believe that this book is also an important read for men/boys, as this book gives a great reality into their friends/peers lives which they may not see otherwise. I am aware that not many males would necessarily call themselves a feminist but If you're hesitant to call yourself a feminist I highly recommend the book so you can see how it's not a dirty term and is still very relevant today. Also I think this is an important read for males as they too play such a huge role in solving the problem of equality and it cannot be achieved without action from both genders.

Kitty Foden, Upper Sixth

LEADING POLITICAL PUNDIT DISCUSSES THE STATE OF THE NATION WITH THE POLITICS SOCIETY

As we launched into the spring calendar of Politics Society events it was a pleasure to welcome Professor Tim Bale to explore a diverse range of topics. Tim is currently Professor of Politics at Queen Mary, University of London, as well as the Deputy Director of The UK in a Changing Europe. Positioned as he is in researching contemporary issues within the political landscape he is frequently called upon by the likes of the BBC to address emergent issues. He was a significant voice in the analyses of the recent general elections and changes of leadership within the Conservative Party. A good deal of Tim's research is centred on the machinations of the British Conservative Party, as well as comparative studies with centre-right parties in Europe, and to a lesser extent in the USA.

In a fast paced Friday session in the lecture theatre we raced through a barrage of questions exploring such topics as the attitude for pro-European sympathies and candidates in the Conservative Party, the impact of Brexit as played out through other centre-right parties in Europe, the degree to which 'culture wars' in the UK are more or less aligned to those



conversations happening in Europe or the United States. Students also posed questions around the capacity of the Conservative Party to regain ground before the next election, the ability of the Party to better connect with the younger demographic, as well as some intriguing insights being shared over the nature of the Red Wall/Blue Wall realignment of politics in England.

Tim had just that day published a new article which he was able to share with the group. It was a lively and dynamic session and we are most appreciative of Professor Bale for his time and thoughts.

Mr S Edwards

A GREAT END TO THE BOYS HOCKEY INDOOR SEASON AT LONDON NATIONAL FINALS

U16 finish 3rd and U18 8th Nationally!

Yarm School produced some excellent performances at the Indoor Hockey National Finals on the 12th and 13th January held at Whitgift School.

The U16's were first up and went into the tournament with high hopes- this optimism was well justified as the group achieved wins in their first 2 games against The Perse School (3-0) with goals from Timmy Foley, Jake Leader and Will Ferguson and a 2-0 win against Sir William Borlase's Grammar School with further goals from Foley and Ferguson. It was a great feeling to walk into the last group game with a place in the semi-final as group winners already confirmed.

However, the boys stepped off the gas as they went down 3-2 to Katharine Lady Berkeley's School by

3 goals to 2 with some very sloppy defending despite further goals from Ferguson and Foley.

The full squad contributed throughout the tournament but notable performances came from captain Max Mowbray and left back Oscar Thomas who did not come off the pitch for the full duration.

Goalkeeper James Muir deserves special mention as he went up through the levels to make some outstanding saves throughout. In fact, everyone stepped up including Finn Davie, James McGee, Marcus Walters, Harry Jackson and Zach Parker in addition to those already mentioned.

The semi-final (which is the furthest any Yarm School team has reached) pitted us against a really strong Caterham School and we had high hopes we could reach the final. Unfortunately, Caterham took an early lead through a short corner

which rattled Yarm and the score was quickly doubled. However, those watching commented how matched both teams were and it was only through the work of an outstanding Caterham defender and keeper who prevented Yarm from scoring. Caterham scored another before half-time which was frustrating because it didn't reflect the game.

Yarm went for it in the second half and threw the kitchen sink at Caterham but other than a Will Ferguson consolation goal, they could not get back into the game fully. Finishing the tournament in 3rd place with the team thinking about what could have been but still an outstanding effort!

The U18 squad were equal in their performance levels and character and were great representatives for Yarm School. It was a tough start as the boys played St George's School and went down 4-0. The squad was a



LONDON NATIONAL FINALS (cont.)

mix of 8 Sixth Form and 4 Fourth Year players who were getting some very valuable experience of playing at this level. The lack of depth of older boys generally cost the team as legs got tired whilst other teams could sub regularly and remain fresh.

The 2nd game was the highlight, Yarm took an early lead against the well fancied Ipswich (who took the eventual winners to flicks in the semi-final) through a well taken Toby Simpson finish. A few moments later, the score was 2-0 as captain Dan Walters scored the goal of the tournament as he spun out of contact taking 3 players out of the game. He played a wall pass off the boards against the next defender before faking a pass to the left forward, unbalancing the right back and then cut inside to drive the ball past the oncoming keeper- Amazing!

However, the lack of legs were Yarms' downfall again as Ipswich came out all guns blazing to score 5 unanswered goals in spite of some excellent defensive work from keeper Alex McGee, the outstanding Joe Roberts and Myles Brown and the unwavering Jacob Rutter.

The final group game was against a very strong Altrincham School who would have felt rightly upset that they hadn't progressed to the semi-finals with such a talented bunch of players- Yarm went down 5-0. The final game was against Katharine Lady Berkeley's School in the 7th/8th place play-off, an opportunity to play some of the bench players including Tom Graham, Ammar Soni, Oscar Shaw, Sam Arnold, Dhruv Wadehra and Cameron Morrison who would have all benefited from such an

experience. It was great to see Joe Roberts score a short corner and another goal from Toby Simpson in a very respectable 4-2 defeat.

The boys are a real credit to the school and should be very proud of the fight and determination they displayed throughout the tournament. A big thanks to Mr Alexander, Mr Glen, Mr O'Connor and Mr Ferguson for staffing and coaching the teams.

Finally, a very important thank you to Mrs McGee and her company 'Lisa McGee Education' for the very generous kit sponsorship and also thanks for contributions from Mr Soni and Mr Roberts. The squad looked very smart in their playing shirts, quarter zips and tracksuit bottoms and were very grateful.

Mr G Ferguson

WILL SIGNS FOR BORO

Huge congratulations to Will McPartland, Fourth Year, who has recently been offered a scholarship at Middlesbrough FC!

After his selection for the England U15 camp in August, Will has been going from strength to strength and, with some of the best stats in the club, is playing for Middlesbrough U16's.

Will starts his two year scholarship at the end of June 2024, after

completing his GCSEs.

Well done Will!



SPORT WEEK AHEAD

The weeks ahead are now available online.

You can

[view them here.](#)

NETBALL

The first block fixture of the year saw us host Woodhouse Grove on Saturday, they are historically a strong school at netball and we were set for some competitive games across the year groups.

The girls performed brilliantly and the results really show how far Yarm netball has come with 7 wins out of 8 compared to 1 out of 8 just 5 years ago.

We are all looking forward to the rest of the netball season with these hard working talented teams!



CROSS COUNTRY

After our stellar performance at the School Cross Country Competition in December where we won every age group we had 10 girls and 8 boys travel to Stewart Park to compete for Stockton in the District Championships.

The boys ran really well with everyone finishing in the top 40 and Atsushi, Harvey, Jake and Yusuf qualifying for the County round in Sunderland. The stand out

performance was Yusuf who finished 4th, great effort!

The girls were also fantastic with all 10 girls finishing in the top 14 with Rosie C, Lucy O, Sienna H, Sabie A, Sophie H, Megan H and Alice W qualifying for the County round in February. The stand out performances were Rosie C who finished 4th and Alice W and Lucy O who finished 5th, great effort girls!



INDOOR HOCKEY

The U14 and U15 have been playing really well in the Durham Women's Indoor League. The U15s are currently second in the league after wins against Stockton and Hartlepool Ladies.

The U14s are currently 4th after good wins against Danby and Redcar Ladies. This is a great learning experience for the team and they are improving every week.



THE SOUND OF SPRINGSTEEN

The Sound of Springsteen are back for 2023!

With a passion for the work of "The Boss", the 8 piece tribute "The Sound Of Springsteen" brings their years of live performances and recording to rock you with Bruce Springsteen's greatest hits and deep cuts.

With songs like Born In The USA, Glory Days, Streets of Philadelphia and many more, this is a night of passion for Springsteen.



Saturday 18th February 2023, 7:30pm

[Book Online Here](#)

TWO FAMILY SHOWS IN FEBRUARY HALF-TERM!

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD - FOR AGES 3-8

A wolf in granny's clothing knows all about what fun dressing-up can be and in Little Red Riding Hood our magical wardrobe opens its doors to a fantastic display of gorgeous garments. We will take you down the path into the snowy wild wood where you'll hear catchy songs on the wind and spot hilarious puppets between the trees.

For ages 3-8. Running time 50 mins.

Sunday 19th February 2023, 2:00pm

[Book Online Here](#)



MINISTRY OF SCIENCE - FAMILY SHOW

Join our presenters as they dive deep into the world of science and look at how science shapes the modern world we live in with a few loud bangs along the way!

Expect 20ft LIQUID NITROGEN clouds, exploding OXYGEN & HYDROGEN balloons, FIRE TORNADOS, HYDROGEN bottle rockets, ignited METHANE and even a self-built Hovercraft!

Tuesday 21st February 2023, 2:00pm

[Book Online Here](#)



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about TWITTER

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Twitter is a social media network which allows users to post short messages (tweets) of up to 280 characters. Tweets can consist of text, photos, videos, audio, links, polls and GIFs – often linked by hashtags if they share a common theme or message. Hashtags receiving high levels of interest are said to be 'trending'. Twitter users can engage with other people's posts by liking, retweeting (sharing) or tweeting back (commenting on). Since the entrepreneur Elon Musk acquired Twitter in October 2022 for \$44 billion, he has implemented several major changes to the platform.

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

INTERACTION WITH STRANGERS

Tweets are public by default, meaning that anyone can view and interact with posts, follow someone and send direct messages. The concern here is that young people may therefore connect and communicate with strangers. Some individuals may follow a young person's Twitter account simply because they have similar interests; however, others may turn out to have more sinister intentions.

FIXATION ON VIEW COUNT

Twitter has recently introduced a 'view count' feature – telling users how many people have seen their tweet (even if they haven't reacted to it). Previous research has found that unfavourable comparisons with other social media users can cause young people to experience feelings of insecurity, jealousy and low self-esteem – leading to an obsession with increasing their numbers.

TROLLS AND BULLYING

The anonymity offered by fake profiles encourages some users to send tweets designed to provoke a reaction; to disrupt conversations; to spark an argument; or to harass the recipient. Such trolling and bullying can impact the mental wellbeing of both the target and anyone who witnesses it. Encourage your child to come to you if they experience such behaviour on Twitter, or if they see it taking place.

PAID-FOR VERIFICATION

Previously, if a Twitter profile displayed a blue tick icon, it meant that the owner – usually a celebrity or a major organisation – had been verified as genuine. Now, however, anyone can pay for a Twitter Blue subscription to receive the tick, with the platform carrying out limited checks on the account's authenticity. This could easily lead to more fake accounts impersonating real people or companies.

CONTENT MODERATION CHANGES

In late 2022, Twitter stated that their 'policy enforcement will rely more heavily on de-amplification of violative content: freedom of speech, but not freedom of reach'. No policies have changed yet, but this wording suggests they may limit who can see posts rather than removing them. While supporting free speech, this could encourage an environment where some toxic content remains online.

HIJACKED HASHTAGS

The hashtag (#) is one of Twitter's most recognisable facets, allowing users to find specific trends or topics. But the sheer volume of tweets each hour can rapidly distort a hashtag's meaning: an initially innocent search term can quickly end up returning inappropriate results. This is common with 'trending' hashtags, as people know that using them will get their tweet seen by a larger audience.

Advice for Parents & Carers

SET ACCOUNTS TO PRIVATE

To reduce some of the fear of your child's tweets being seen and shared by anyone, you can always make their account protected. This means that your child has to give approval for another user to view their posts. You can change Twitter's privacy settings so that your child can't be messaged directly by other people on the platform and their geographical location won't be shared.

FOSTER CRITICAL THINKING

It can be difficult for anyone to ascertain if something online is real or false, but particularly for young people. Encourage your child to check several reputable sources to determine if a story they've seen is true; remind them to watch out for scams and think about the message's possible motive. Emphasise that it's not a good idea to retweet something if they aren't sure it's correct.

ENGAGE SAFETY MODE

When Safety Mode is activated, Twitter checks for abusive or spammy behaviour such as hurtful language or repeated negative replies. The platform then flags these suspect accounts and blocks them from responding to your child's tweets. The autoblock function then prevents these accounts from interacting with your child's again for seven days.

EXPLORE THE NEW SETTINGS

Previously, any user could reply to anyone else's tweets. However, the new conversation settings let your child determine who can reply to their posts – either by selecting everyone (the default option), people they follow or only people they mention (using the @ symbol). This improvement has given users extra control, providing them with more protection from trolls and online abuse.

PAUSE BEFORE POSTING

It's important that young people think about what they're about to post and whether they might regret it later. Twitter has developed 'nudges': little prompts which appear if someone is about to tweet using harmful or offensive language. These nudges promote more positive online behaviour by giving users an opportunity to pause and consider their words before they post something.

BLOCK, REPORT OR MUTE

If someone is upsetting your child on Twitter, you can block and report them. Blocking stops them from messaging or following your child, while reporting an account alerts Twitter to investigate possible misuse. The 'mute' feature, meanwhile, keeps tweets from a specific account (or which include certain words) out of your child's timeline. The other user won't know that they've been muted.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



National Online Safety

#WakeUpWednesday

BE CAREFUL WHO TO FOLLOW

As accounts are no longer being as rigorously verified under the 'blue tick' system, it's essential that young Twitter users understand what this means. In terms of people not necessarily being who they claim. Anyone who your child only knows online is still a stranger, regardless of how long they've been communicating for. Remind your child never to disclose personal information on social media.

Source: <https://blog.twitter.com/common-thread/en/topics/stories/2022/how-twitter-is-nudging-users-healthier-conversations> | https://blog.twitter.com/en_us/topics/product/2022/twitter-blue-update
https://blog.twitter.com/en_us/topics/company/2022/twitter-2-0-our-continued-commitment-to-the-public-conversation | <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2131&context=etd>



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