

## HEADMASTER'S WELCOME

Third Year pupils have had a varied and exhilarating set of experiences on their Journey this week and I was delighted to join 20 adventurous pupils in a canoe (we were not all in one canoe...) at Ripon on Monday. Teamwork, resilience, technique and endurance were all tested and pupils passed with flying colours, and were rewarded with some beautiful wildlife (my favourite being the tern angrily mobbing a red kite, but buzzards, oystercatchers, lapwings, herons, swans and cygnets, chiff chaffs, reed warblers and more were on display at various points during the day). Watching the narrow boat navigate the lock at lunch was also an education for some. There was plenty of fun to be had, too, with sections of the trip along the canal and river being spent more in the water than in a canoe!

Next week sees the Second Year Adventure, and independent learning projects, and I hope all pupils take advantage of each aspect of the week. I am so grateful to my colleagues who coordinate, staff and manage the trips, offering time, patience, encouragement and expertise to enable the pupils to have such a great experience.

This week has seen our First Years taking part in our annual interfaith day, with representatives from a number of faiths coming in to speak with our pupils about their own customs and beliefs. The pupils were treated to a really fascinating day, and engaged positively and with typical inquisitiveness; I am grateful to Mrs Lodge and Mr Lyle for coordinating the day and hope that pupils came home with plenty to say about what they had learned.

Last week's Duologue competitions are described within and I was thrilled to have seen the quality entertainment on offer from all pairs taking part. Congratulations to them all, and to our winners for their hard work in preparing the performances. We look forward with relish to the various concerts to come in the final two weeks of term, beginning with the Leavers' Concert on Monday and with the Dovecote Concert next weekend.

It was lovely to see so many parents at the YSA "Glastyarmbury Ball" on Saturday. Thank you to the YSA committee and my colleagues in school who put so much work into making the event such a great success. The committee would welcome interest from anyone wishing to join them and they can be contacted at [ysa@yarmschool.org](mailto:ysa@yarmschool.org).

Dr Huw Williams



Congratulations to the winners of our Duologue competitions! Full report inside.

## SIXTH FORM STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN CIVIL RIGHTS WORKSHOP

Last week the Lower Sixth historians were invited to participate in a study session centred around civil rights. Hosted by the American Studies department at Northumbria University and led by Head of Department, Professor Brian Ward, the event sought to engage in a deep dive into the scholarship and understanding of the development of civil rights, but also the wider impact of this historical period.

Entitled The US Civil Rights Movement: Locations and Legacies,

the event refreshed a lot of current thinking on this topic, by considering issues of geography: how far was the movement based in the southern states exclusively? Was their influence and impact beyond the shores of the USA? Was the movement more urban or rural? Where was change made: in the Supreme Court, at state level, or in local communities. As a side step there was also a presentation on a little known visit that Martin Luther King made to Newcastle to receive an honorary doctorate from the

university in 1967.

Accompanying the Lower Sixth historians was Eva Speight, a Fifth Year pupil currently sitting her GCSE exams. Eva has recently come runner up in a Sixth Form essay competition organised by the British Association of American Studies, writing on the issue of voter suppression in the United States, so it was a pleasure for her to enjoy the event and to be introduced in person to Professor Brian Ward.

Mr S Edwards

## AWARDS SUCCESS FOR EVA

Huge congratulations to Eva Speight, Fifth Year, who has been successful in the prestigious British Association for American Studies Awards. Eva is one of two runners-up in the School Essay Award where she competed with students from across the country up to Sixth Form.

The awards look for essays that explore any aspect of the American experience, from the perspective of history, literature, film, politics or any other related or inter-related discipline.

Eva has a fascination with American history and politics and back in February she wrote and submitted her 1500 word essay, "The Land of the Free': how has voter suppression impacted POC's in America and how will it affect them

in the future?". She was delighted to find out she had won a runners-up prize of £50, and attended the virtual awards ceremony earlier this month, where Awards were presented for work up to PhD level.

Well done Eva and we look forward to seeing you back at Yarm to begin your A-level studies in September.



## SCHOOL UNIFORM ORDER DEADLINE APPROACHING!

Please ensure to order any uniform required from [perryuniform.co.uk](http://perryuniform.co.uk) by the 30th of June to guarantee arrival by the the start of the new school year in September.

[Perry Back to School Order Info PDF](#)

[Perry Website Guide PDF](#)

If you need any help or advice please contact:

**The Uniform Showroom**

Tel: 01642 792588

Email:

[uniformshop@yarmschool.org](mailto:uniformshop@yarmschool.org)

**Perry Customer Service**

Tel: 0113 2389520

Email: [info@perryuniform.co.uk](mailto:info@perryuniform.co.uk)

## DUOLOGUE COMPETITIONS

We enjoyed two great nights of theatre last week in the PAA, with our Junior, Intermediate and Senior Duologue Competitions.

Firstly I think it takes a lot of courage for two people to get up on that big stage and perform in front of people. Regardless of dramatic content and line learning, just being involved and engaged should be applauded.

Secondly, to put in the work to choose the scene, learn the lines, work out the blocking, develop the characters and think about set and lights is a fantastic achievement! All our pairs did themselves proud, with great performances and a real dedication to the contest, and I want

to thank them for this, and also for being a lovely group of students to work with!

We had a great range of duologues in our Junior Competition on Tuesday 13th June, with twelve pairs competing. We enjoyed excerpts from Mean Girls, Two Ronnies, Lion King, Friends, Basket Case and Trousers. All these couples performed well and entertained their audience.

The sketches from Miranda and Houdini's House had some great performances in them, with some lovely delivery.

The Boro Mafia sketch was self written, and was funny and engaging.



## DUOLOGUE COMPETITIONS (CONT.)

What Does IT Mean and UP were really well put together and staged with some great acting performances in them, and both came close to lifting the trophy.

Our winners in 2023 though, were, Hatim Khan and Hira Rauf with an excerpt from Disney's Aladdin. This piece had stacks of energy and character in it, and the performers were fully invested in their characters from start to finish.

On Friday we were treated to our Intermediate and Senior Duologue performances., with five couples in the Intermediate category and only one senior entry this year.

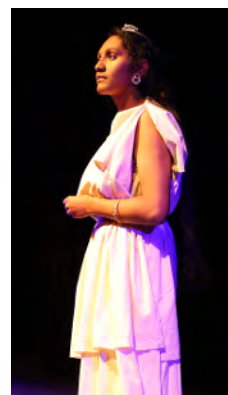
We opened with a pacey and energetic performance of a Seinfeld sketch. This was well delivered and engaging. Next we had a Key and Peele sketch. This was very cleverly staged and put together. The characters were well played and the piece was interesting and amusing. This was a contender for the win. Thirdly we had a well staged excerpt from The Princess Bride; a wordy and complicated script was well executed by the performers. Then we enjoyed the writing of The Two Ronnies and their Mastermind Sketch. Sometimes older writing can be a bit clunky for young performers, but that was not the case. The pace was good and the lines really well delivered, another strong contender to win.

Our winners however, were Ajay Selvan and Avanish Batra with an unnerving performance of a scene from the new Joker movie. Both performers played their characters brilliantly, they were fully engaged and believable.

Finally came our only Senior entry, but what a good piece of theatre it was. Jenifer Umashankar and Jennifer Chan performed a wonder piece from Andromache by Euripides. Their command of pace and presence was excellent, as well as their clear characterisations. A worthy winner despite the single entry.

I always finish by making this point, and it is important. Although this is by title a competition, the real winners were the audience who were treated to eighteen varied, engaging and entertaining pieces of drama this week. It is great to see students getting involved in drama this way, and it is such a useful skill for later life! Well done to you all! You are all winners for getting up and getting involved.

Mr D Brookes



## DANCE SHOWCASE

180 pupils from Year Three to Upper Sixth took to the stage to perform in 'Hollywood Walk of Fame' Dance Showcase 2023. It was an evening of entertainment as Yarm School dancers danced their way down the legendary Hollywood Walk of Fame to iconic music from Destiny's Child to Stevie Wonder to Disney soundtracks.

The evening was a celebration of the hard work, enthusiasm and commitment of Yarm School dancers throughout the year. It was full of magic, energy and feel good fun! Well done to everyone involved!

Mrs J Dunkley

*"That was absolutely magical. Well done"*

*"Indeed! An awesome effort. A real celebration of talent, grit, hard work and creativity. To have that many dancers on stage delivering such a varied range of styles was incredible."*

*"Each year we think it can't be topped and then the following year it is!!"*

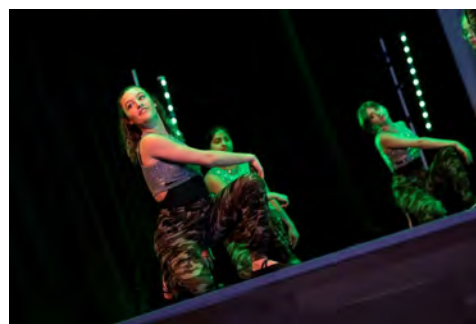
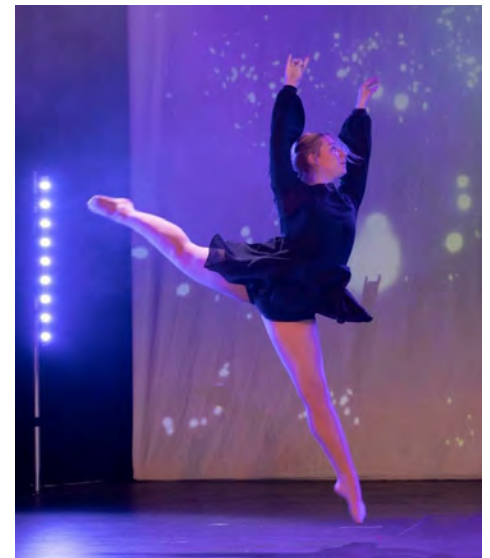
*"Dance Showcase on Friday was amazing, love watching everyone perform"*

*"What an amazing show it was on Friday night, you always create such*

*a spectacle!"*

*"The children were so confident and happy. It was an absolute pleasure to watch."*

*"It was absolutely staggeringly fantastic!"*



## WILL SECURES CIVIL SERVICE JOB

Congratulations to Will, Upper Sixth, who has secured a year-long position with the Civil Service as a Programme Management Officer. He will work providing support for Nick Matthews, the Head of Technology Portfolio for HM Treasury, and will be based at the Darlington Economic Campus.

Will has studied Politics, Geography and German at A-level and did not intend to take a gap year until he

became aware of this fantastic opportunity! He connected with Nick at the Career Convention this Spring and that initial meeting led to further interviews and a job offer.

Will now hopes to continue his studies in September 2024 reading Politics at Warwick, and aspires to a career in the Civil Service or Government Relations.

Well done Will and good luck in your new role!



## THE HEAT IS ON... THE PRESSURE'S HIGH... TUE LUNCHTIME... IN B1, WHY???

Intrigued Lower Sixth students assembled, ready to be stretched and challenged, as GRILL CLUB rose once more from the ashes....

"So what if the base rate rises again?"

"Are the negative consequences of inflation averted if wages rise too?"

"Does a floating exchange rate mean that a trade deficit can self correct?"

"How should businesses react if there is a recession?"

Can you think on your feet, stay cool under pressure, demonstrate analytical, methodical thinking and are you genuinely interested in the real world??

If you can't stand the heat..... stay out of B1 on Tuesdays at 1pm!!

Miss C E Rhodes

## OLLIE OFFERED LAW APPRENTICESHIP

Congratulations to Upper Sixth student, Ollie, who has recently been offered a place on a Law Apprenticeship with Jacksons Law Firm, starting in September.

While in Lower Sixth Ollie began to consider taking the Apprenticeship route into Law. He says that it appeals to him to enter the paid workforce while still training as it allows him to gain experience working from the outset.

Jacksons Law Firm is one of the

longest-established law firms in the North East of England offering business and personal legal solutions. Ollie's Law Apprenticeship with Jacksons is for six years, and includes spending one day per week studying with a North East University, and the other four days in the office environment. The selection process is highly competitive and involved an application early in the year, followed by an interview in June.

Ollie's advice for anyone interested in this route to employment, is to spend as much time as possible researching the firms you are interested in before you make your application or go for your interview.

Good luck in your new role Ollie - we look forward to hearing how you are doing!



## DISSECTING THE POLITICS OF ZIMBABWE

On Friday the Politics Society along with a pleasing number of younger students gathered to listen to and converse with a guest speaker, Thandekile Moyo from Zimbabwe.

Thandekile works as a journalist publishing widely in the South African press, as well as operating as a human rights defender in her native country. Visiting the UK for a brief respite from her efforts, it was a privilege to learn much about the current situation in Zimbabwe.

Thandekile outlined the challenges of engrained privilege in her country and the extent to which a political regime used patronage to maintain its hold on power, whilst deliberately excluding so many from participation. This extends to the exclusion of certain ethnic groups from gaining mortgages for property. The structures for this developed during the policy of 'divide and rule' under colonial rule, a pattern seen to this day across the continent from

Rwanda to Uganda. Thandekile's position in her country is precarious, requiring considerable skill and effort to avoid persecution. It was unsettling to hear that the mask of patriotism has led to students and teachers being prevented from discussing any issues that might be seen to be critical of the state, and this is compounded by a blurring of government and state, given the dominance of the ZANU-PF party. And yet, Thandekile refused to seek asylum, to voluntarily criminalise herself by going into exile. She insists on struggling to build the life she desires. She presented being a human rights defender as something active rather than a position or a job. In this she expected that we would all



be involved in defending human rights. It was an inspiring session, led by someone who whilst driven by deep values and principles recognised the need for and importance of practical solutions that allow us all to flourish. We wish her all the very best in her ongoing endeavours in Zimbabwe.

Mr S Edwards

## LIVING IN A MATERIAL WORLD



The Economics and Business Department were delighted to once again welcome Mrs

Kelly Heward (the School's Finance Manager) into two of our Lower Sixth Business lessons this week,

where she gave fascinating talks and answered a plethora of questions relating to Accounting Concepts such as materiality, accruals and prudence. Mrs Heward really brought the topic area to life with her multiple examples relating to chrome books, minibuses, the Snack Shack, school lunches, the bank base

rate and covid, and she certainly engaged the interest of the audience. We are really grateful to her for taking the time from her very busy schedule to support our department and enthuse our students in their Financial and Accounting studies.

Miss C E Rhodes

UPPER 6TH LEAVERS' CONCERT

June 26th 7pm

PAST PRESENT FUTURE

YARM SCHOOL

Tickets are £5 and are available online at [www.thepaaonline.org](http://www.thepaaonline.org) or calling the PAA box office on (01642) 792587

YARM SCHOOL  
EDUCATING FOR LIFE

DOVECOTE CONCERT  
SUNDAY 2nd JULY 2023, 6PM

Tickets are free and must be "bought" from [the www.thepaaonline.org](http://www.thepaaonline.org)

There will be a **BAR** for cool refreshing drinks and a delicious BBQ. These areas will be open from 5.15pm

Tickets for the **Legendary Sodexo BBQ** are available from [www.thepaaonline.org](http://www.thepaaonline.org) at a cost of £6.00pp



## ROH LIVE: DAS RHEINGOLD

Antonio Pappano conducts Barrie Kosky's bold new imagining of Wagner's Das Rheingold – which marks the start of a new Ring cycle for The Royal Opera – with an outstanding cast including Christopher Maltman (Wotan) and Christopher Purves (Alberich).

PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A LIVE STREAMED PRODUCTION AND IS NOT PERFORMED LIVE AT THE AUDITORIUM.

**Wednesday 20th September 2023, 7:15pm**

[Book Online Here](#)



## AN EVENING WITH MICHAEL PORTILLO

Michael Portillo makes a welcome appearance in Yarm to talk about his life and career. This special event will see Michael talk with flair and humour about his political recollections punctuated with hilarious anecdotes, will discuss today's politics and behind the scenes glimpses into the filming of his popular railway journeys, which have now covered 5 different continents over 11 years.

Audience questions are an important part of the event, so come prepared. A lively and fascinating event not to be missed!

**Friday 27th October 2023, 7:30pm**

[Book Online Here](#)



## THE LIGHTBULB PRINCESS

A delightful new show full of sparkle and song, for everyone aged 4 and up. Can you help a very unusual princess solve an unexpected problem? Without the twinkle of fairy lights, the holiday season could be cancelled! It's up to our intrepid explorer, her pals and YOU to illuminate the world again.

Featuring catchy original songs from Ziad Jabero and electrifying storytelling, The Lightbulb Princess will light up children's imaginations and inspire them to learn more about the world around them.



**Tuesday 31st October 2023, 2:00pm**

[Book Online Here](#)

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about AI VIRTUAL FRIENDS

Artificial intelligence – particularly in terms of how it generates natural language – has seen significant development over the last six months, with companies releasing new AI-based software or adding an AI element to existing apps (such as Snapchat, for example). One form of AI to become especially popular has been the ‘AI friend’ or chatbot, as children eagerly experiment with these new-found computer-generated companions. There are now numerous apps available with this ‘virtual friend’ functionality, with the likelihood of it being added to other successful platforms soon.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### CONTENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

AI chatbots may not always be able to recognise when content is age inappropriate or harmful and should be filtered out. So there's a possibility that children could be exposed to offensive language or explicit material while conversing with their virtual friend. The companies producing such AI solutions are also unlikely to take responsibility for any content that their algorithms generate.

### REDUCED SOCIAL CONTACT

An excessive reliance on chatbots for social interaction could potentially cause a child to begin reducing the amount of face-to-face communication they have, leading to social isolation. If young people become dependent on chatbots to provide companionship, it could very likely hinder the development of their real-life social skills.

### LACK OF SENSITIVITY

Chatbot software isn't always sophisticated enough to pick up on subtle emotional cues or recognise signs of distress in children, as most humans would. It might therefore fail to respond appropriately. AI misinterpreting what it's being told or replying insensitively to a young user who's already struggling could potentially impact a child's emotional wellbeing or exacerbate any existing emotional issues.

### UNINTENTIONAL BIAS

AI companions are only as reliable as the information they've been programmed with. The algorithms they use, therefore, may unintentionally promote bias, stereotypes or discriminatory behaviour (as many originate from the USA or the UK, for instance, they can display a distinctly western-centric worldview). This could lead to children developing skewed attitudes and behaviours.

### COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS

Although many are now undeniably advanced, AI-powered chatbots still have limitations in terms of understanding complex concepts, context and nuance. Depending heavily on chatbots to help with learning or solving problems may stunt the development of a child's own powers of critical thinking, creativity and ability to engage in open-ended discussions with other people.

### PRNACY CONCERNS

Chatbots typically collect data about users, including personal information and conversations. This is ostensibly to improve their performance as they gradually learn about our behaviour – but many experts are warning that there may be significant risks associated with how this information is stored and used (the possibility of potential breaches or misuse by third parties, for instance).

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### CHAT ABOUT CHATBOTS

If your child is already expressing an interest in AI apps, a relaxed, natural chat should help you to discover which ones they're aware of and how they're using them (or are planning to). Discuss those options with your child and perhaps do your own research to ensure you think they're suitable. Once you're totally happy, you could sit with your young one and begin exploring AI chatbots together.

### CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

If your child is keen to engage with AI chatbots, encourage them to do so in a safe environment: ideally in a shared space at home, so you can easily keep an eye and ear on their progress. Set up appropriate content filtering measures in advance – and gently remind them that you'll be close by and ready to help with any questions or concerns that may arise.

### FIND A BALANCE

Work alongside your child to establish the right balance in terms of how they might use AI-powered chatbots – and when it's appropriate. It's important to make sure that children are still getting plenty of opportunities to learn to solve problems for themselves, as well as building their interpersonal skills through face-to-face conversations with friends, family members and teachers.

### TAKE CONTROL

As with any form of app or game, when it comes to AI chatbots we'd strongly recommend that you consider employing parental controls (either on the device being used or within the software itself) to manage which apps your child can download and use. This is particularly important for younger children, who may be more at risk of being upset or frightened by inappropriate content.

### RECOGNISE THE RISKS

It's unlikely that most children will have even considered the potential risks attached to having a virtual companion. So it's probably wise to explain some of the possible hazards and challenges of AI chatbots to your child. In particular, emphasise that AI isn't a real person (however much it might sound like one) and may occasionally tell them something that isn't entirely impartial or accurate.

### Meet Our Expert

A Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), Gary Henderson is the Director of IT at a large boarding school in the UK, having previously taught in schools and colleges in Britain and the Middle East. With a particular interest in digital citizenship and cyber security, he believes it is essential that we become more aware of the risks around technology, as well as the benefits.

