

## HEADMASTER'S WELCOME

The half term break was packed full of opportunity, with a variety of trips seeing our pupils on extended canoe treks, on various sports and cultural trips in Europe, out with the CCF for an adrenaline day and on the west coast of the USA for a joint Politics and Biology trip. I know that pupils will have gained a huge amount from these experiences, and have benefited from the dedication, enthusiasm and knowledge of the staff who organised and led these trips. Our pupils demonstrated exemplary behaviour, being excellent ambassadors for the school; well done to all involved.

Also over half term, I was delighted to welcome the Tees Valley Business Club to the PAA for an event exploring and celebrating entrepreneurship in the region, and I was thrilled that seven of our pupils were involved, with James entertaining the guests with his skills on the saxophone, and Evie, Annabel, Isaac, Alfie, Oscar and Vlad presenting their entrepreneurial projects and business ideas to an audience of business leaders in the region. I was so proud of the pupils' presentations, and they received some stellar feedback and support from the business people in attendance.

We have returned to a full and busy week, with nearly all of our Upper Sixth students involved in the mock interview programme generously supported by a wide range of staff, former staff, parents, governors, former pupils and other friends of the school who gave up time to interview our students. Thanks go to Caroline Rhodes for masterminding the event, and other staff who supported her efforts - it is a hugely valuable experience for our students who took the opportunity seriously and will have gained confidence and skills that will serve them well in the future.

Today sees our school community come together for a moving and reflective Remembrance Service, with our musicians playing a central role, and our CCF cadets will be on the High Street this Sunday representing the School and the town in the annual Remembrance Service and Parade. Current global events - and the detail in which they are covered on traditional and social media - bring home the impact and tragedy of war and the loss and grief it causes. We remember those who served in previous conflicts, and those who serve now, defending the values and freedoms that we enjoy in this country.

Dr Huw Williams



Sixth Form Students in their Mock Interviews

## 'A GOLDEN STATE OF MIND' CALIFORNIA POLITICS - BIOLOGY STUDY TOUR

One year in the making and an unusual combination of U6 Politics and Biology A Level students, the October half term saw the successful realisation of a fascinating study tour to California.

The visit was designed to demonstrate the real world synergy between science and the social sciences, set in the context of exploring ecology and environmental stewardship. The visit involved nineteen students and four members of staff. We covered around 1200 miles of road over ten days, stayed in six locations, visited four university campuses, seven research institutes, had twelve meetings with experts, had two spells of volunteering, we cycled along in LA, paddled on the San Joaquin River, peddled swan pedalos, walked through beaver ponds, had an exchange with a Sequoyah high school, hiked a wildlife preserve in Los Angeles, explored a pumpkin field in Half Moon Bay, had multiple sightings of humpback whales in the Monterey

Bay, visited the elephant seals at San Simeon, met a collection of 64,000 preserved Mexican birds at Occidental College, toured beaches, the agricultural heartlands of the Central Valley, and strolled amongst the splendour of Yosemite National Park, watched the sunset at Venice Beach, drove along Sunset Boulevard and the Hollywood Hills, we learned about sustainable tourism, the habitation habits of woodland mammals, the perils of ocean warming on marine mammals, the unknowns of deep sea oceanography, the conservation efforts along the LA River, the botanical wisdom of native communities, the politics of water in the western states, the extent of concealed oil drilling in Southern California, the evolutionary adaptations of hummingbirds, the water depleting powers of non-native

wisteria, as well as how noisy a marching band can be at a college football game.

My thanks go to all of the students for their engagement in an exhausting gallop through known and unknown aspects of California, to all of our hosts who shared so generously and with such enthusiasm around their specialisms, and especially to my colleagues, Mr Tom Newman, Miss Hannah Gamble and Mr Ian Burns for their time, thoughts, company and skills in developing and delivering this unique and most memorable of trips.

Mr S Edwards



## MOCK INTERVIEWS

In an evening of much anticipation and a little nervousness amongst the Upper Sixth students, we also witnessed an impressive level of student preparation, dedication, as well as diversity in terms of career aspirations. The event offered every member of the U6 the opportunity for a bespoke, one-on-one interview lasting half an hour.

And for those who like the stats...

**99 U6 students interviewed**

**43 interviewers**

**39 subject/career areas**

Our thanks go to the many members of the ever widening Yarm School community who gave up their time, to prepare the interviews in advance, and then to devote an evening to interviewing, guiding and advising the students. A significant number of members of staff were also involved, as were a number of Upper Sixth students offering their organisational and guiding services on the evening. But a huge vote of thanks is due to Miss Rhodes who built, delivered and drove the whole evening with characteristic enthusiasm, purpose and professionalism. We hope that all of the students involved will have much to reflect on as they head into their future interviews be they for university places, apprenticeships, internships or eventual job applications.

Mr S Edwards

## REFLECTIONS ON THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR



Recent calamitous events globally, from the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and latterly Israel and Gaza, have overshadowed the previously dominating landscape of the civil war in Syria. This week the news in the Middle East suggests a spilling of the conflict into the wider region, even now as far as Syria. And so, it seemed pertinent for the Politics Society to invite Dr Haian Dukhan, an expert of Syrian politics, to explain the causes and current impact of the civil war.

Dr Haian, as well as having worked with the United Nations, is now an established researcher of Middle Eastern relations and conflict dynamics in the region, having held previous research positions at Central European University in Austria and Roskilde University in Denmark. We were taken through an intensive and incisive overview of the geography, history and demographics of Syria, and in particular the growth of sectarianism. From the period of colonial rule through to the regimes of Hafez al-Assad and his son and

current president, Bashar al-Assad and the growth of the Alawite minority faction in Syria. This authoritarianism, combined with a deterioration in the economics of the country led to the movement for change, which brutal suppression turned into an armed resistance. But in the complexity of the power vacuum came the extremism of Islamic State and the international proxy war, arguably focused on the terror group threat whilst neglecting addressing the issue of corrupt authoritarianism. Syria's current position remains fragmented and precarious, and prone to further disruption and manipulation. Equally the impact on the UK of the conflict has been considerable; a refugee crisis, counter-terrorism concerns, a humanitarian crisis, economic impact and a deterioration of relations with Russia. Dr Dukhan dissected the complexities of this crisis with deep insight and knowledge, allowing us to more meaningfully revisit this theatre of conflict and better recognise its potential for future further impact regionally and internationally. .

Mr S Edwards

## CCF ACTIVITY DAY - ADRENALIN

On Saturday the 4th of November 10 cadets took part in paintballing and running an obstacle course at the outdoor activity centre Adrenalin in North Yorkshire. Despite the weather being grim we were all so enthusiastic to get going. With the first match being used to get used to the conditions and the equipment everyone was raring to go. The first two matches were to get the gas jug to the tank and one team had to

defend it. It was full of quick and action packed battles. Following a short break we played in a new location with more buildings. The game plan there was to poison the village with one team defending. The action did not stop with everyone getting stuck in. Following paintballing we embarked on the obstacle course. Unfortunately, the weather didn't treat us nicely but that didn't break our spirits. We

jumped over walls, crawling through the mud and falling into a ditches full of freezing water. This really was a showcase of camaraderie and teamwork that our CCF group had to offer. This experience was really amazing and we have to thank Mr Mist and Mr Taylor for running the day.

Shlok Arcot, Fourth Year



## 1ST YEAR CAVING TRIP

Ten lucky first year pupils woke up early on Sunday morning to go on a fun caving adventure! The first big obstacle we found was a very narrow space that we had to crawl through. A lot of us didn't think we could get through it, but we all did in the end. Directly after that, we crouched through a wet part as the cave got wider. Then, we got to a fork, and the first path had a small ledge we had to shuffle down carefully, then we squeezed through something called "The Cheese Press" which was even

narrower than the first crawl and we didn't think we could fit! We then abseiled down a small wall, and came back around to the ledge. We found climbing back up it to be one of the hardest things we did that day, and when we were all up, we walked back to the fork.

The other tunnel was a lot like ghyll scrambling but underground, because a big and deep stream flowed through it. There were lots of deep pools we had to go around, but it was very fun. We were wading through the tunnel when suddenly

our guide stopped and pointed at a tiny gap on the wall. "Who's going first?" We were all shocked but it turned out we could all fit! It looped round to the back of where we were and then we got to a big cavern that had a massive waterfall! After admiring it for a bit, we crawled behind it, not really making an effort to stay dry! All in all, it was an amazing day, and everyone had loads of fun! A massive thank you to Mr Mathers for giving us this amazing opportunity!

Miguel Ramos Moreno, First Year



## AN ENGAGING ECONBUS SOC SESSION

This week Maddie and Harriet built on material Maddie has researched for her EPQ and presented their findings on the Economic impact of Scientology to our EconBus Soc. Referencing the positive multiplier effects but also the tax implications for the economy and the financial costs for supporters, as well as the gains for the founder, the presentation was interesting and eye-opening. We are grateful to Maddie and Harriet for being generous with their time.

Miss C E Rhodes



## FROM OUR SCHOOL FT AMBASSADORS

Reading the Financial Times can be incredibly advantageous. It provides valuable insights into the intricate world of global economics, business, and financial markets. Developing financial literacy skills early empowers young individuals to make informed decisions about personal finance, investments, and career choices. The knowledge gained from articles, analyses, and expert opinions in the Financial Times can shape a solid foundation for future financial success. Understanding economic trends, market dynamics, and international affairs not only helps develop young adults financial knowledge but also helps developing a broader perspective on the world.

James Muir and Sam Page, Lower Sixth

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## FAME - MOVING ON UP...

The last WL before the Half Term Holidays saw us welcome back Ben Bradley (Class of 2012). After leaving Yarm School (with A Levels in Business, Maths and RS) Ben went on to study Business leadership and Corporate Management at Northumbria university. His degree was a 3-year course which included a 2-year work placement. His degree enabled him to demonstrate his skills in the workplace at GSK, and they saw his ability and potential which meant he was offered a permanent job seven months into his placement. Ben has been promoted several times within GSK, with increasing responsibility, and he has transitioned from working on a manufacturing site to a central role that is across multiple manufacturing sites and markets. Currently he is leading the implementation of a multi million pound planning system across 28

manufacturing sites and all the markets across the globe.

Ben detailed his career progression, as well as describing GSK as an organisation. We heard about his personal drive and self motivation to secure additional qualifications (he extolled the value of lifelong learning and curiosity), as well as learning about his career plans and, after a plethora of questions regarding career entry, apprenticeships and work life balance, the Sixth Form were keen to absorb Ben's "Words of Wisdom" to his 16/17 year old self.

We are extremely grateful to Ben for his continued and ongoing support of the EconBus department and for his generosity in taking time from his very busy schedule to enthuse those pursuing FAME paths.

Miss C E Rhodes



## STARS AND GOLDEN NUGGETS AKA ADVICE ON PREPARING FOR MOCK INTERVIEWS

With just over two weeks until the vast majority of the Upper Sixth had Mock Interviews in readiness for University, Apprenticeships or Employment, they had a valuable SPACE lesson to help them prepare.

First they received detailed advice from Naomi Woods from Maoni Consulting, which included recommending them to reflect and ready themselves to describe "Situation, Task, Action and Result" for multiple situations, (making use of golden nuggets!) to help support their applications. Then Dr Williams shared his own experiences of interviews culminating in a really honest list of "Do's and Don'ts".

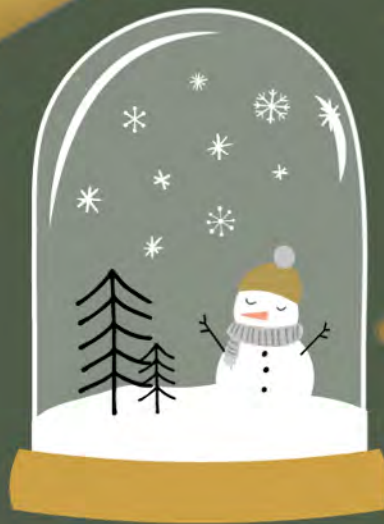
We are very grateful to both Ms Woods and Dr Williams for their generosity in sharing their wisdom, and we all looked forward to the evening of Tuesday 7th November when 44 interviewers conducted in excess of 100 interviews!

Miss C E Rhodes



YARM SCHOOL  
EDUCATING FOR LIFE

Rudolph Rodeo  
Children's Games,  
Santa's Grotto!



Craft Stalls,  
Gift Ideas,  
Food & Drink

*Yarm School Association*

# CHRISTMAS INDOOR MARKET

Saturday 18th November 2023

10am - 4pm, Yarm School



## PUPILS PERFORM WITH GERARDO RODRIGUES

Our String Ensemble will be performing with international pianist and composer Gerardo Rodrigues in his concert in the PAA on Saturday 11th November.

The ensemble will be accompanying Gerardo in his suite of pieces called Estado de Alma. What a fantastic opportunity for our young musicians!

Tickets are available [here](#).

Mrs K Staggs

# Gerardo Rodrigues



## Saturday 11th November, 7pm

[WWW.THEPAAONLINE.ORG](http://WWW.THEPAAONLINE.ORG)

01642 792587

 PRINCESS ALEXANDRA  
AUDITORIUM

## BARCELONA JUNIOR BOYS SPORTS TOUR 2023



What an amazing week- 50 boys from 2nd and 3rd year travelled to Barcelona for the October Half Term break to compete in hockey and rugby fixtures, explore the city and experience some of the major attractions in and around Barcelona including a Champions League football game at the Olympic Stadium.

The boys were a real credit to the school and competed in their sports with enthusiasm- they also looked the part thanks to the generous sponsorship of Queensway Dental & Orthodontist and Maxwell Stephens Recruitment.

The hotel was very close to the beach, the food was great and after a top breakfast on the opening morning we travelled to Camp Nou and did the Barca Immersive Tour- we saw the hundreds of trophies, displays and a 360 degrees amphitheatre video of Barca past and present. Back to the hotel for food then rugby training on the

beach Top Gun style. We then played our first hockey- fixtures : a touring French Team from Bordeaux and local Spanish team, Iluro- the French team were a little older so we lost the U14A game despite a good performance. The 14b and 13s drew their games 2-2. Back to the hotel for dinner- it was a Happy Birthday to Freddie Briston-Smith and Tom Booth!

The second day provided another busy one which was to set the tone for the tour. We took a bus and walk tour of the city and then another rugby session on the beach. We then travelled to the Athletic Terrassa Hockey Club for our 2nd hockey fixture- two tough but enjoyable games at an amazing facility- the boys did amazingly well keeping up with everything (better than the staff anyway).

The third day was arguably the most exciting! We started off with a tour of the Olympic Museum which was amazing- this was swiftly followed

with our own version of the Champions League- a surprise win for Hartlepool United! The boys then tested their bartering skills at La Ramblas before going to the Olympic Stadium to see Barcelona beat Shakhtar Donetsk 2-1 in the Champions League. What a day!

The final day brought a visit to Portaventura Theme Park followed by our rugby fixtures. The 2nd years drew 17 all in a really exciting affair- unfortunately the 3rd year opposition looked a bit older and produced some slick moves however we were really proud of the Yarm Boys for sticking with it. The whole tour was a blur from start to finish- it was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

A big thanks to Mr Shanahan, Mr Skirving, Mr Ivey and Mr Lyle for giving up their time during the half term break to staff the tour. We all think Barcelona is a brilliant tour destination and it is hoped the trip will be repeated in future years.

Mr G Ferguson

## ANDRE RIEU'S WHITE CHRISTMAS

For many, Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year. This year it will come early with André Rieu's cinema special White Christmas—a celebration you will never forget. From the first jingled bell, you will be immersed in the incomparable Christmas atmosphere of André's winter wonderland.

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

**Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd December, 3pm**

[Book Online Here](#)



## ROH LIVE - THE NUTCRACKER

Join Clara at a delightful Christmas Eve party that becomes a magical adventure once everyone else is tucked up in bed. Marvel at the brilliance of Tchaikovsky's score, as Clara and her enchanted Nutcracker fight the Mouse King and visit the Sugar Plum Fairy in the glittering Kingdom of Sweets.

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

**Tuesday 12th December, 7.15pm**

**Sunday 17th December, 2pm**

[Book Online Here](#)



## CINDERELLA PANTO

Don't miss the most magical pantomime of them all CINDERELLA. Starring Benidorm singing sensation Asa Elliott as Prince Charming, Yarm regular Tom Rolfe as Buttons and a full supporting cast for the PAA's biggest festive family panto ever, cram packed with all the usual fun and chaos with one or two surprises thrown in for good measure!

**From Thursday 14th December - Sunday 24th December, various times.**

**Limited tickets for some shows.**

[Book Online Here](#)



# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about MICROTRANSACTIONS

Microtransactions (often abbreviated as "MTX") are digital purchases made within an app or game to unlock extra features or additional content such as new levels. A popular sub-set of these are loot boxes, which contain a selection (usually random) of virtual items: from character skins to game-changing equipment like better weapons. Microtransactions (and loot boxes in particular) are now widespread in apps and games, but concerns persist that they normalise gambling and can foster addictive behaviours – especially among younger players.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### GATEWAY TO GAMBLING?

Microtransactions have been criticised for promoting gambling-adjacent behaviour in children. Research has also suggested that exposure to the loot box system could affect the likelihood of a young person suffering gambling harms later in life: children who purchased or used loot boxes in the last 12 months were found to be more likely to have gambled during the same period, as well.

### ADDICTIVE NATURE

Microtransactions (and loot boxes especially) could lead to young people displaying compulsive behaviours. Loot boxes are designed to be addictive, and the sought-after prizes they contain are dispensed at random. This means that young gamers might not get what they want straight away, causing them to spend more money as well as additional time gaming.

### PAYING TO WIN

In many popular games (the FIFA series being a notable example), microtransactions make it far easier to succeed – which is a concern because children can often find it difficult to keep track of their spending. Once a child starts making in-game purchases, they may continue buying to keep up with their friends and other players – sometimes without recognising the mounting real-world cost.

## EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

### DATA COLLECTION

To allow a young person to complete microtransactions, many app and game developers collect personal data such as their name, address, email, geolocation information, photos, payment details and so on. Even if this data remains secure (which is by no means guaranteed), there's always the chance that it will be used – and possibly sold on to third parties – for marketing purposes.

### AFFECTING DAILY ROUTINE

Online games tend to revolve around repeated loops of activity that can affect purchasing decisions and potentially influence children's spending patterns. This could lead to your child not only handing over more money but also adjusting their daily routine to match the game's schedule – potentially impacting more important elements of their day, such as homework and family time.

### SATELLITE SPENDING

If you've linked a payment method like a debit card or a PayPal account to your child's game or app, it's wise to keep a close eye on their microtransactions to ensure they aren't racking up a large bill. Letting a child have access to your card (if they're still too young to have their own) or other means of payment could also lead to them spending beyond the apps and games they normally use.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### DO YOUR RESEARCH

It's important to have a serviceable idea of whether the games your child plays use the loot box system (even if it goes by a different name) or include the option of buying items, equipment and so forth. If so, it's crucial to help your child understand that this costs actual money, and that they shouldn't feel pressured into making any purchases.

### CHAT ABOUT 'CHANCE'

It may help to explain to your child that many microtransactions involve an element of chance: they could pay money and still not get what they want in return. Emphasise that – while not usually costing much individually – these in-app and in-game purchases can soon add up. Talk to your child about how spending their money in a game or app means they have less to use in the real world.

### (GIFT) CARDS ON THE TABLE

Investing in an in-game currency gift card can be a useful way of helping your child get to grips with budgeting. If you buy, say, a £10 V-bucks Fortnite gift card, monitor how long it takes them to spend it. When they come to you asking for more, you could make it the starting point for a conversation about how quickly that money went and how they could earn their next gift card.

### STOP SPENDING AT SOURCE

You might decide that the wisest strategy is to remove the potential for spending money on microtransactions. If so, most games, apps and devices have options in their settings to help you manage what your child can spend – or to disable that function altogether, preventing them from buying additional items for their games or boosted functionality for certain apps.

### WATCH FOR THE SIGNS

If you're worried that your child's passion for a particular game or app may tempt them into habitual spending on microtransactions, it's important to remember the indicators of addictive behaviour. Irritability, a lack of concentration and prioritising recreational screen time ahead of homework or mealtimes could all be signs that you need to have a conversation about a more balanced routine.

## 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.

