

# THE COLUMNS

by pupils; for pupils

HSD's Newsletter: Issue 85

Welcome back to school! While the start of a new term is always hectic, this new year brings with it many new pupils. Not only in primary one and form one but also throughout the entire school, and we wish every one of you the most incredible year. If you are new and might want to get involved with The Columns please don't hesitate to reach out. We meet every Monday lunchtime; feel free to pop along or e-mail one of the editors for more information. (McinteeR or ClarkI @highschoolofdundee.org.uk)



While the first week back has been exceptionally busy, starting new classes, meeting new friends and getting involved in the school community; it has been good to return to school. Especially since one of the best events of the year is just around the corner.

Yes, that's right. House Choir. It's a fantastic chance for all years to get involved, have a laugh and earn some house points. The first rehearsals for each house was in the first week, and they went amazingly. Don't worry if you didn't turn up this week, you will be welcomed at next week's rehearsals. We hope to see as many of you there as we can on Tuesday 12th, 6pm to 7pm. It will be a night to remember!

Editor, India

Our 23/24 session brings with it new heads of school. We would like to thank Yan, Ollie, Zara and Hannah for their contribution to the school community during their time as head people.

Moving forward, we aim to continue to strive for an inclusive HSD family. Additionally, it's important to thank all the staff that work alongside the house captains, vice house captains and head people, without which our jobs would not be possible. Equally, we would like to thank all the facilities staff, who often go under appreciated despite their vital nature to the high school of Dundee. All four of the new head people are welcoming, friendly and open minded - they are always happy to help, and active in our school community. We have an exciting year ahead!

Heads of School:

Maya McColgan  
Alexander Milnes

Deputy Heads of School:

Sara Okhai  
Aoife Stewart





# AIRLEE

HOUSE CAPTAINS:  
CALUM ANDERSON AND LILY  
CHRISTIE

VICE HOUSE CAPTAINS:  
ADE ADENIYI AND RAMIT KANODIA

NEXT HOUSE CHOIR  
REHEARSAL:  
MONDAY 4TH 13:10

# AYSTREE

HOUSE CAPTAINS:  
LIBBY FINNEGAN AND JACK FLEMING  
VICE HOUSE CAPTAINS:  
ANTHONY ADEGBESAN AND CAITLIN COWIE

NEXT HOUSE CHOIR REHEARSAL:  
TUESDAY 5TH - 13:10



# LINDORES

HOUSE CAPTAINS:  
ANISH CHAUDHURI AND SOPHIA  
DONALD

VICE HOUSE CAPTAINS:  
INDIA SIMPSON AND DANIEL  
YOUSSEF

NEXT HOUSE CHOIR  
REHEARSAL:  
THURSDAY 7TH  
13:10

# WALLACE

HOUSE CAPTAINS:  
GREGOR BYERS AND EMILY ELDER  
VICE HOUSE CAPTAINS:  
NEIL BHAT AND CHLOE D'AMBROSIO

NEXT HOUSE CHOIR REHEARSAL:  
WEDNESDAY 6TH - 13:10



# Fukushima Water Release

Jack Mitchell

In March 2011, the Tōkoku Earthquake and Tsunami struck the East coast of Japan, causing over \$200 billion worth in damage, and killing nearly 20,000 people - with thousands more missing. This, however, was not the end of the tragedy. The natural disaster caused damage to two TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Power Company – Japan's largest power provider) controlled nuclear power stations. One, the Fukushima Daiichi Plant, survived the disaster unscathed; however, its sister plant the Daiichi Plant, was severely damaged. The earthquake led to a nuclear meltdown, exposing radioactive substances. Over 100,000 people were forced to evacuate the area. An exclusion zone that still remains was set up immediately after the event.

Since the accident, TEPCO has pumped water through the plant to cool down the remains of the reactors. This has led to a large amount of radioactive wastewater. This water has been stored on land near the plant in Ōkuma in over a thousand large tanks. The Japanese Government has decided to treat and slowly release this water to make way for a new decommissioning facility. The wastewater will also be mixed with seawater, so that the already diminished radioactive substances will be further diluted. TEPCO initiated the plan on the 24th of August, despite fierce opposition from an array of environmental groups and local residents among others. Scientists seem to have a wide range of opinions; some critical and some optimistic. The move was, however, approved by the nuclear watchdog of the United Nations, so the government and TEPCO's claims have been backed up by one of the most important official bodies in this field.

The main critic of the plan has been China - Japan's biggest buyer of seafood - who has imposed an outright ban on the food type. This could be a major knock to Japan's economy as a whole, and certainly will be for individuals who rely on this kind of trade. In addition to this, many Japanese nationals living in China have been harassed and abused, showing how important this issue is to those living in and nearby Japan. South Korea, has, however, supported the water release, going against popular opinion in the country.

This is clearly a very controversial solution to a problem that many critics argue doesn't need to be tackled so soon after the accident. It will be interesting to see if Japan backs down in order to save local economies nationwide from potentially damaging sanctions.





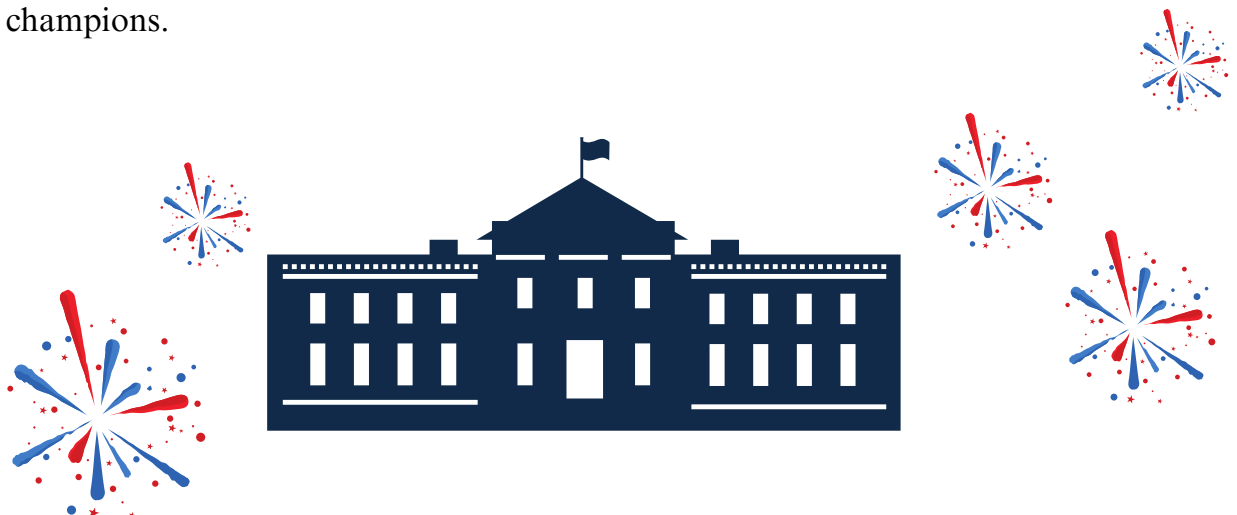
# THE NBA: A CASE STUDY IN AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

Noah Lyles, the world champion in the 100-metre, 200-metre and 4x100-metre relay race, going 3-for-3 at the world championships, is a certifiable wonder boy and the undeniable ‘Usain Bolt’ of his generation. Noah Lyles is a six-time world champion. With his impressive track accomplishments it is no wonder the spotlight is on him. Surprising, however, is the backlash he is currently facing from media and sports organisations in the United States. After his performance in Budapest at the World Athletics Championships, the sprinter criticised the National Basketball Association (NBA) for dubbing the winners of their championship “world champions”. Lyles asked “World champion of what? The United States?”.

He wasn’t in any way critiquing the United States, quickly adding “Don’t get me wrong. I love the US at times- but that ain’t the world.” Responses to Lyles's statement were quick. NBA star Kevin Durant commented “Somebody help this brother” on Instagram. Daymond Green, the four-time NBA champion also weighed in, saying “When being smart goes wrong (facepalm emoji)”. CNN claimed the US printer “pokes fun” at the NBA through his comments. The Daily Mail claims he “mocked” the NBA.

At this point, you might be wondering: what’s so bad about calling a national championship a national championship?

Personally, I believe the issue is rooted in the concept of American exceptionalism. The ideology gained speed in the 1970s, with Reagan reaching mass popularity and claiming that America, “is the shining city upon a hill.” American exceptionalism presumes that America is exceptional and better than all other counterparts. This can be seen in the way American students are taught about values, political systems and history. In particular, Ron DeSantis’ new curriculum for social studies in Florida is a perpetrator of this type of easily-disproven messaging. But Ron DeSantis has been criticised for this. The NBA hasn’t, until Noah Lyles. While his comment was not intended to cause any harm and was rather a mere statement of fact, it pointed out an interesting issue plaguing sports in the United States - the rampant American exceptionalism that allows national leagues to declare themselves international champions.



# 'Good Omens' Book Review

Izzy Clark

As many people may tell you, I read a lot. I think that anyone with a passion for reading – or who even simply reads from time-to-time will admit that they have a book or series they keep coming back to over and over again. For me, it's Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman's 1990 fantasy novel 'Good Omens'. It is my all-time favourite book. Ever. I read it multiple times a year, and, even though I know the plot and rather a lot of the dialogue - almost by heart by now - it never ceases to have the same magic as it did when I first read it in 2018. The TV series, too, is excellent; however, it is the book which has a very special place in my heart. To quote it, the love I feel for "Good Omens" is "ineffable" - too great to be properly put into words.

"Good Omens" (or, to use the book's full name: 'Good Omens: The Nice And Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch') is an urban fantasy novel about a lot of things: angels, demons, witches, conspiracy theories, the antichrist, and the almost-end of the world. It's got at least four separate plotlines which all interweave seamlessly at the novel's climax, but which don't (in my view) become difficult to understand and tie together. This makes it a relatively easy read. It's certainly not simple, however; the book's characters being a phenomenal reflection of this. Pratchett and Gaiman's combined writing styles lend themselves particularly well to creating memorable, amusing and likeable characters who make a strong impact on the reader, right from their introductions. For a book with so many plot lines in so many different places, the novel's cast of eclectic characters - not all of them human - manage to each be uniquely intriguing and funny, and each have distinct personalities which all stand out as much as each other. Notable highlights include dual main characters Aziraphale (an angel and bookshop owner) and Crowley ("a demon who did not fall so much as saunter vaguely downwards"), as well as the uniquely-named Anathema Device (a modern-day witch with a book of prophecies).

First and foremost, "Good Omens" is a comedy. Both of its authors are incredibly funny, and have a clear gift for snarky, sarcastic, quintessentially British humour. But it shares many other elements - urban fantasy (it's got angels and demons living in London), mystery, romance, and action - which help to make it so exciting. But what's it actually about? As I said previously: a lot. Primarily, the novel centres around the aforementioned almost-end of the world - the arrival of the antichrist to Earth - and the efforts of an angel and a demon (both of whom are pretty bad at their jobs), a witch, a witchhunter and a group of eleven year-olds to try and stop it.

Then what's the long title supposed to be about? In fact, by time of the events of the main narrative, Agnes Nutter has been dead for centuries, and the book is framed around her prophecies, all of which are "nice and accurate" ("nice" having a different archaic meaning to how we might understand it now), and describe the events leading up to what very nearly could be Armageddon. It's not a super-serious book, though, which is likely why it has such a special place in so many people's hearts. Moments of intense drama and tension are punctuated by lighter scenes, which help to balance the tone and pace of the novel into something more comfortable and approachable. Whilst particular moments definitely pack quite the emotional punch, the gentler scenes do just as much to establish characters and plot points. The novel's themes also serve to reflect this balance, as ideas of destiny, free will, and nature vs. nurture run throughout the text. And these are cleverly levelled out by the much more palatable themes of friendship, family and freedom.

"Good Omens" as, previously mentioned, is my favourite book of all time. I would recommend it to just about anyone. I think that anyone could find enjoyment in its characters, plot, and themes. The novel's emphases on being able to choose your own destiny and the value of companionship ring true, and it stands as a testament to the importance of being yourself, not who people want you to be, and finding people who accept you for that.

# Burger King; In hot water?

The Whopper - Burger King's iconic food item. It helped them turn an annual revenue of £211.2 million in the United Kingdom alone in 2022. With 537 Burger King restaurants in the United Kingdom, and more set to open, Burger King appears too big to fail. Perhaps that is why the news that Burger King is facing a class action lawsuit for misleading customers quickly became a front- page headline. It is alleged they made the Whopper look 35% larger and contain double the meat that it does, among other deceptive tactics, to make their burger more appealing to the general public. It's not the first food franchise to be grilled on marketing tactics. Taco Bell got in hot water, for allegedly selling wraps that contained only half of the filling advertised. McDonalds and Wendy's also allegedly distort images of their products, making them up to 15% larger-than-life.

From my anecdotal experience, I would agree with the plaintiffs. The burgers produced by Burger King, McDonalds and Wendy's always seem smaller, and frankly, grosser, than how they were supposed to be, according to advertisements.

Whether the Miami federal court will agree is a different matter. Most adverts are acts of deception. Ploys to gain customers and turn revenue, unbound by "the truth". Cereal companies use glue rather than milk, Haribo gummies unlock the "inner child" through gummy bears, and all companies use lighting, angles and more to get a better consumer buy-in. These are all lies, or at the very least, a distorted and manipulated version of reality. Your food will never look as good as the ad. Haribos will never unleash your inner child. A McDonalds burger will not be as large as their photos.

This is why the Whopper case is interesting, it could set a new legal precedent around marketing. It would make such schemes harder to carry out. I am fully in favour. Any step to curb our consumerist culture should be taken.





# SESSION 23/24 BEGINS



# Creative Writing with Christopher Hill

Maisey Lafollette

This summer I had a unique and inspirational experience, as my uncles organised for me to have a private creative writing course via Zoom with Christopher William Hill. Chris is an award-winning children's author and playwright. A couple of the books he's written are "Osbert the Avenger" and "What Manor of Murder". I would say his writing style is similar to Roald Dahl's.

Some takeaways from the lessons were: differentiating between character voices in dialogue - no two people speak the same way, and neither should characters. The way a character speaks can show how old they are, the time period the book is set, and where they're from, without the writer having to say it.

Do not create a character and forget about them. If you create it they should be important to the story. A character can be anything from a person, animal, house or object. Devising a good villain is just as important as a good hero. There are no set rules to a good villain so long as they make sense to the story. Some examples of famous villains are Luke Castellan from Percy Jackson (the tragic backstory), Skellator from He-Man (Just evil), Bellatrix from Harry Potter (the crazy villain) and Disney's Maleficent (the power-hungry.)

It was such an honour to speak to a published author and have him give me personal tips on my own stories - it was an experience I won't soon forget.





# EUROVISION

Izzy Clark

While the 4th, 5th and 6th years were all on study leave - meaning no Columns editions were being published - global audiences were treated to an international spectacle right from the UK: Eurovision 2023, held in Liverpool. During the 21st century, Great Britain has not had an excellent track record on Eurovision. We've placed last five times in the last 20 years, and, until 2022, we hadn't placed in the top 10 since 2009, let alone won (last time we did that, it was 1997's Katrina And The Waves).

All of that, however, changed in 2022, with the announcement that Sam Ryder would be representing us in Turin. We did really, really well; all the way to the dizzying heights of 2nd place - 2nd! Ahead of the UK, by an extraordinary margin of 165 points, was, of course, Ukraine, represented by Kalush Orchestra. As per Eurovision tradition, this meant that Ukraine, as the winning nation, would host the event in 2023. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing war across Ukraine, they were unable to do so, meaning that the honour was passed down to second place - the UK.

Beginning on May 10th, Liverpool was the site of not just the UK's Eurovision, but also Ukraine's. The event's hosts were a mixture of British icons: singer Alesha Dixon, actress Hannah Waddingham, and UK Eurovision commentator Graham Norton - and Ukrainian stars, in the form of rock singer Julia Sanina. The interval acts in the semi-finals on May 10th and 11th, too, combined music from the UK and Ukraine, reflecting the event's slogan, "United By Music".

But of course, the biggest event wasn't the interval acts, or the hosts, or even the montages of European cities displayed throughout the event. It was the performances. A total of 37 entries from countries across Europe (including Israel and Australia, for whatever reason) participated, with 26 of them making it to the Grand Final on Saturday, May 13th. Among them was the UK's Mae Muller, facing tough competition from other fan favourites, such as Sweden's Loreen, who won back in 2012, and Finland's Käärijä, who certainly proves that you don't go into Eurovision wanting to be taken entirely seriously.

Some particularly stand-out moments from this year's competition include Czechia (formerly known as the Czech Republic), whose six-member, all-female, four-nation group Vesna sung in four languages (English, Bulgarian, Czech and Ukrainian) about female freedom. As well as Australian rock band Voyager, who were a surprisingly popular candidate (especially in my household), and the incredible staging of the entries from Spain, Serbia, Ukraine and France.

Overall, at the end of the night, after the tense jury voting and announcement of the global televotes, there was a clear winner: Sweden's Loreen, soaring ahead of the rest of the competition with 583 points, 57 points ahead of Finland. This means that next year's event will be held in Sweden, on the 50th anniversary of ABBA's own Eurovision win for Sweden, back in 1973. The rest of the top 10 was rounded out by Finland, Israel, Italy, Norway, Ukraine, Belgium, Estonia, Australia and Czechia.

# ART THERAPY

MEAGAN BECKHAM

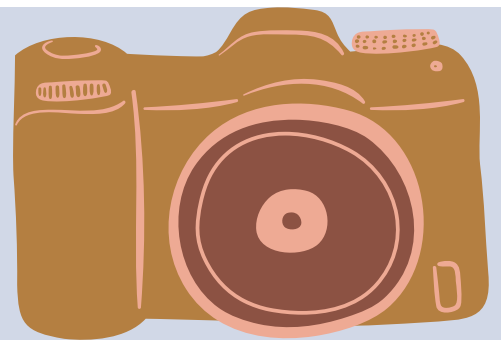
Art therapies have been proven to be beneficial, but not enough people know about the benefits.

When people think of therapy, what usually first comes to mind is what's called "talking therapy", where a person speaks to and works with a qualified therapist, communicating through words. With mental health becoming a more and more important issue, and with more awareness and recognition about the importance of it in recent times, it's easily forgotten that talking therapy isn't beneficial to everyone. With the increasing awareness of mental health, so many are still unaware of the other therapies out there that can be just as effective, and sometimes even more beneficial to some, than talking therapy.

Art therapy is a concept that has been around for a long time. The constant evolving of ideas about psychology, how the human brain processes things, and understanding subconsciousness, led to the introduction of art, music, drama and other alternative therapies, that work just as well as traditional talking therapy. The official phrase, coined in 1942 by Adrian Hill, a British artist, author and later art therapist, who discovered that creating art often would calm and relieve stress of patients dealing with both physical pain and mental health difficulties, by observing the effects that creating art had on people recovering from tuberculosis at the time, but also through his own experience of drawing while recovering from illness, and wanted to further explore the idea of art as a soother.

Contrary to belief, art therapies and other alternative do not require skill. It's about being able express yourself in a way that is most comfortable for you. Alternative therapies can be creating art and music, but it also can be observing, listening to, the flexibility is almost endless.

Talking therapy does not always work for everyone. Alternative therapies are not only more flexible to fit the preferences of a person, but also offer a non-verbal way for people to engage, and an alternative form of expression. Just being able to describe your personal feelings and emotions to someone can be quite difficult, daunting, and can create more stress, than do good. It is very natural for trauma and exhaustion to be very hard to communicate verbally. art and music therapies opens up so many more doors and ways to be able to express yourself, protecting people from feeling overwhelmed and hopeless.



# Fantasy football; is it just a dream?

ELIDIH ACKFORD

English football is back! Three weeks ago, the world's most famous football league returned to our screens. Fantasy football teams were formed, and thousands across the country sat eagerly in front of their tv, anxiously awaiting the final scores to start to roll in.

Fantasy football is a game where people are encouraged to manage their “dream team”, within a budget of course, and whoever gains the largest amount of points over the course of the season wins. It is used mostly for American football but there is a “Fantasy Premier League” edition as well, which is extremely popular across the country.

Many people have chosen to place the Premier League’s top scorers, such as Haaland and Salah in their teams, but it is in fact usually the underdogs from much lower-ranked teams that tend to do better. Ideally, one would build their team around a strong striker and goalkeeper, and construct a team from there, however, it is easy to fall into the trap of overspending on strikers who tend to be very hit-or-miss. The exception, of course, being “the Manchester robot”, Haaland, but even he is prone to a second-rate performance. Many also tend to be blindsided by bias to their team, and refuse to acknowledge that there are better players within other teams. Therefore, most of the time, a large proportion of fantasy teams are mathematically never going to be the highest-possible scorers and for most who participate in small leagues or the overall league, their money is falling into a very large well.

At the end of the day, fantasy football is just another form of gambling, however it gives people the opportunity to manage a team and adds just another thrill into the already-exhilarating game. Perhaps there is more risk than reward in the game, but for the small price of £2 to feel that adrenaline rush every time the ball is enveloped by the net, I’d say it’s well worth it.





# Introduction to Your New Editors



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CLARKI@HSD



**EDITOR, AOIFE**  
STEWARTAO@HSD



**SENIOR EDITOR, RUBY**  
MCINTEER@HSD



## EDITORS NOTE

Ruby and Izzy here! We are the senior editors for the new and improved Columns. This year, along with editors Aoife and India, our aim is to connect the wider school community through The Columns. A massive thank you to the previous editors, Sahar and Zara. As always, we are eager (begging) for submissions. Whether an article on the economic and social state of the world or a recipe for cookies; all submissions will be appreciated. Once again, a massive thank you to all our contributors this week, and to Mrs Tevendale for ensuring that we get something published weekly, without fail. We hope you've all had a good week, and are looking forward to another new school year, with our weekly commentary beside you.

*Have a fab weekend!*

THE COLUMNS TEAM