

THE COLUMNS

by pupils; for pupils

HSD's Newsletter: Issue 88

As early application UCAS deadlines approach and other school-related obligations pile up, it's important to slow down and to take a small breather. While things may seem stressful now, there are many ways the school community can help you. Remember to reach out to friends and guidance teachers, take part in fun co-curricular activities, exercise and drink water. While schedules may be busy (particularly for those sitting five Highers this year), it's always good to take a mental health break. This week, it's also important to thank all those who helped out at opening morning. From Jazz Band players and teachers who gave up their Saturday, to tour guides and senior prefects who represented the student body, the school community is grateful to all who contributed.



Editor, Ruby

The Story of Nagorno-Karabakh

Jack Mitchell

Since late February of last year, the world's attention has been firmly fixated on the ongoing war in Ukraine. To an extent, this has been a good thing, but we must be wary of the fact that there are still other ongoing conflicts that arguably deserve the same treatment. One of these conflicts is taking place in Azerbaijan and Armenia. It is over a 4,000 square kilometre territory called Nagorno-Karabakh. The global consensus is that the land is part of Azerbaijan, and that is what is depicted on nearly every map we see. Azerbaijan only recently gained control over the area recently, with most of the land being ceded to them after the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War of 2020, which lasted six weeks.

The area has a history of tension. Over a century ago, following the end of the First World War and the dissolution of the Russian Empire (to which the area belonged), there were two confrontations. These were part of the Armenian-Azerbaijani war of 1918-1920, which claimed the lives of up to 12,000. This garnered the attention of the League of Nations, a precursor to the United Nations. Bolshevik intervention resulted in the end of the war. Then came the Soviet Union. This took control of the countries – which had only had independence for two years. The Soviets gave Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan, despite the fact that over 90% of the population were ethnic Armenians. To avert conflict, Nagorno-Karabakh was given its own political autonomy while part of Azerbaijan. The region was called the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO). Then, following the fall of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, Armenia and Azerbaijan regained their independence. Not long after, another war was started – the First Nagorno-Karabakh War. This ended in 1994, and resulted in the deaths of 30,000. Following this, the de facto government of the Republic of Artsakh was formed and put in place. This really is just a puppet state of Armenia.

In 2020, as mentioned before, a six-week long war took place, in which thousands died.

Azerbaijan now controls most of Nagorno-Karabakh, with the Republic of Artsakh controlling the rest. The war was significant – not only in the territorial shifts and the countries themselves, but their supporters. Azerbaijan, who won the war, was supported by Turkey. Surprisingly, the supporter of losing Armenia was Russia. However, they only joined later once it was clear just how powerful Azerbaijan had become. Russia kept peacekeeping troops in the area after it was instrumental in negotiating a ceasefire. As part of the deal, Armenia agreed to let Azerbaijan pass freely through the Zangezur Corridor so that it could reach its exclave of Nakhchivan. However, Armenia has kept troops in the Zangezur Corridor, to the anger of Azerbaijan. To try and scare its neighbour into removing them, Azerbaijan fired shots at soldiers and even shelled into Armenia last September. This was done immediately after the Russian counteroffensive in Ukraine, because Azerbaijan figured that Armenia's traditional protector would be too busy fighting its own war. And they were right. Hostilities are ongoing.

Since the corridor dispute, Azerbaijan has started blockading the only roads connecting Nagorno- Karabakh to Armenia, where most inhabitants come from. The over 100,000 strong population have therefore faced shortages of basic commodities including food, clothes and medical supplies. Recently, Azerbaijani armed forces have been deployed on all borders with Armenia. Some media outlets have speculated that this could be the start of an invasion and have drawn parallels with the way Russia acted before going to war with Ukraine. However, the move is more likely part of the same plan that includes the border force skirmishes and blockades which is an attempt to coerce Armenia into just giving the territory to Azerbaijan. Although troops of both countries have not been aggressive, dozens of people have still died, and the Crisis Group and the Council on Foreign Relations have both put the conflict on their 10 Conflicts to Watch and Ongoing Conflicts lists respectively. We will have to wait to see how aggressive Azerbaijan will be, and who could stop them.



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UP TO D8: ISSUE 87 ANSWERS



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1. Ant and Dec
2. 'Guts'
3. C – Cretaceous Period
4. Pandas
5. Coco Gauff
6. The Pumas
7. 5 million
8. Professor Sam Eljamel.

Health Blog:

Does Physical Activity have a role to play in the treatment of mental health disorders?

Maya McColgan

Why is this important?

According to an article in the British Journal of Sports medicine, almost one in every eight people (970 million) worldwide experienced a mental health disorder in 2019. Furthermore, the article states that nearly half of us will experience a mental health disorder at some point in our life.

Depression and anxiety are the most common types of mental health disorder. But, following the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been increased rates of psychological distress, with 35% to 38% of people affected worldwide.

Clearly, there is a need to address these mental health disorders using the best therapeutic interventions.

Does physical activity have a role to play as a treatment for mental health?

Numerous research trials have investigated the potential benefits of physical activity for depression, anxiety and distress. The results have been positive, yet physical activity has not been widely adopted as a treatment for mental health disorders, largely due to issues with compliance.

However, a recent analysis published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine found that physical activity had beneficial effects on depression, anxiety and psychological distress compared to usual care strategies. The researchers found that higher intensity physical activity was associated with greater improvements in symptoms and this was similar to and slightly more effective than the benefits of medications and psychotherapy.

Summary:

The findings from this study highlights the significant potential for physical activity to improve mental health outcomes and supports the integration of physical activity interventions in mental health treatment.

“Boys Will Be Boys”

Izzy Clark

With the recent and unprecedented rise in misogyny on social media, we are seeing a new era of digital influencers choosing to target younger audiences. Over the last few years, alt-right personalities have gained massive traction on platforms like Tiktok, Twitter and Instagram: getting millions of views and imposing their controversial views onto impressionable young people. People like Andrew Tate have gained huge audiences thanks to their controversial and extremist viewpoints, which often focus heavily on misogynistic, racist, homophobic and transphobic rhetoric written to damage and misrepresent already-marginalised groups.

It's these kind of celebrities whom we can thank for the growth of prejudiced thinking and actions among teenagers today. Particularly amongst teenage boys, more and more people are acknowledging that social media has forced dangerous and harmful narratives onto especially vulnerable minds, leading to the normalisation of behaviours like cat-calling, casual sexual harassment, the use of slurs and spread of misinformation. The echo-chamber of this behaviour is exemplified in the circle of social media platforms, influencers and communities known collectively as “the Manosphere”, which promotes misogyny, white supremacy and hyper-masculinity.

The most common kind of defence for all of this behaviour, especially among young men, is the time-old, infuriating sentiment that “boys will be boys”.

Every time I see this phrase, a little part of myself dies inside.

Because it tries to justify the kind of appalling, revolting behaviour that makes women, people of colour and LGBT people feel afraid to do ordinary things. It tries to excuse repulsive behaviour, like harassment, bigotry and bullying, under the guise of “banter” and having a joke. It fails to hold the perpetrators of repeated, systemic abuse accountable, and blames the victims for “taking things too seriously” and “not being able to take a joke”.

This kind of mentality - the mentality which makes me paranoid in public and angry at the world - not only hurts the victims, but also the speakers. “Boys will be boys” implies that men don't need to take accountability for their actions, as well as pushing this aforementioned hyper-masculine ideal onto them; implying that they'll only be happy if they belittle, mock and abuse those around them. All who “boys will be boys” benefits are the already wealthy influencers profiting off of the insecurity of impressionable young men and boys.

So what can you do to help stop this narrative? The obvious thing is to use common sense - don't make unprompted comments about people's bodies, don't treat other people like objects, and respect the opinions of those around you. But stopping this counterculture doesn't stop with just regulating your own actions. If you want the women, people of colour and LGBT people around you to be able to feel safe, you need to hold others around you accountable for their actions. Only by reminding others that their behaviour has consequences can we make the world a safer place.

JARRING HISTORICAL FACTS

India Simpson

The last execution by guillotine in France happened after the first Star Wars movie

Nintendo® was formed the same year as “Starry Night” was painted

Nintendo® was formed whilst Jack the Ripper was still loose.

The fall of the Roman Empire (1453) was only 40 years before America was ‘discovered’ (1492)

In 1861, Italy became a unified country, in 1886 Coca-Cola was invented

Rosa Parks and Harriet Tubman were alive during the same time (RP born feb, 1913, HT died Mar, 1913)

1686 - Isacc Newton came up with the three laws of motion, in 1692 the Salem Witch Trials started

Leonardo da Vinci was a year younger than Christopher Columbus

Stalin, Freud, Tito, Trotsky and Hitler all lived in Vienna in 1913

Aristotle tutored Alexander the Great

Abraham Lincoln was twelve when Napoleon Bonaparte died

Confucius, lao Tze, the Buddha and Socrates were all alive in 5C BC

Pharaohs and mammoths existed at the same time

Pocahontas and William Shakespeare died, in the same country less than a year apart from each other.

Oxford University is older than the Aztec Empire (by hundreds of years!)

Marilyn Monroe and Queen Elizabeth II were born in the same year

Woolly mammoths were still alive whilst the Egyptians were building the pyramids

Cleopatra was closer to the moon landing than the pyramids being built

George Washington died (1799), before the first dinosaur fossil was discovered (1824) - he never knew dinosaurs existed!

Anne Frank and Martin Luther King Jr were born in the same year.

You could've taken the London Underground to the last public hanging in the UK (1868) Princess Diana and Mother Teresa died only days apart (1997)

Prisoners arrived at Auschwitz days after McDonalds was founded (1940)

The Illegal drug ecstasy was invented the same year the Titanic sank (1912)

Microsoft was founded whilst Spain was still a fascist dictatorship

Salvador Dali died the same year Daniel Radcliffe was born (1989)

Stonehenge would've already been ruins when Jesus walked the earth

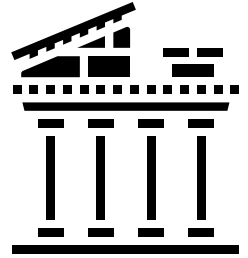
THIS WEEK IN PICTURES





Open Morning

Maisey Lafollette



Last Saturday, the school had our open morning, where members of the public came to tour our school. I had the pleasure of touring a family around, and this is when I reflected how much I would have liked to have toured when I was applying, but the first time I saw the school was my first day due to the pandemic and living overseas.

Some highlights the High School has to offer are the Classical Studies trips to Italy and Greece, the Geography trip to Iceland, many theatre trips with the English department, the Berlin trip with History, Isle of Canna with outdoor activities, ski trips and many more. All of these allow us to make memories with our friends and learn about another culture, whether it be in Pompeii or at a theatre in Edinburgh.

We have many sport opportunities, whether it be hockey, rugby, netball, fencing, cricket, hillwalking, football and athletics. There is of course also house competitions and who could forget about the exciting and colourful Festival of Sport?

For the musically-gifted, some attend lessons during school, either for singing or playing an instrument. The school also boasts a champion pipe band - there's nothing like the sound of bagpipes!

Let's not forget about the English department, with their Burns poetry competition, the public speaking competition, debate club, the creative writing club and of course The Columns!

There are numerous clubs and extracurriculars such as the CCF, board games club, Minecraft club, Duke of Edinburgh, Eco Committee, Reading Schools, book club, philosophy club, classics club and too many more to mention.

At the High School of Dundee, we have so many opportunities on offer! whether your interests lie in music, languages, sports, science, volunteering, or something in between. There's definitely something that would interest you. We're very thankful to have teachers that offer some of these to us and we're very grateful to our parents for giving us the opportunity to attend The High School of Dundee.

Extreme Fear Can Neither Fight Nor Fly

Lavinia Ismail

Fears. Everyone has them - some more than others - nevertheless everyone does. It's something I've always been interested to know about someone. Fears don't reflect who we are, but instead reflect what protects us. I say this, but in contrast I do think, and have always thought fears were quite embarrassing to reveal.

I'm not sure why I've always gotten embarrassed when I've been caught feeling scared, it's natural, but there's something a bit intimate about it. I tell myself that I don't fear much because I believe fear grows with time and avoidance, yet still I catch myself feeling my lungs shrink and my heart rate going up to my throat.

Heights, animals, death, disease, people. The list could go as long as a lifetime - everyone's fears can vary. The one fear most people have is death; bringing morality up seriously in conversation is rare and makes us uncomfortable coming to terms with the fact that the only thing promised in life is death (Edit: I did not mean to quote Kanye, I swear). When you think about it, this is not a good habit: avoiding the topic, especially if you fear it, what benefit will it bring you?

Writer Robert Greene states that "By becoming deeply aware of our morality, we intensify our experience of every aspect of life." I like that. It makes sense though even I myself find it hard to grasp the simple concept of dying. The concept of becoming nothing. I was nothing before I was born - perfectly fine with it - but now my shoulders become tense. I do realise, and am starting to learn, that worrying about the end date only ruins the trip we get to experience and enjoy.

I'm going to move on from talking about living life to the fullest, to discuss something more intriguing and less me feeling too overwhelmed to write. Alzheimers. Memory loss. The fear of forgetting. My list of fears consist of holes, heights, metal sonic, that guy from Gerald's game, and, just at the top of the list, below the title, in all caps... is memory loss. I'm not worried about aging. I would love to be a teenage girl forever, but I'm not worried about aging. Dementia is a fear that the more you learn about it the more you fear it, I can't ever see myself not becoming bonkers thinking about it. It's unavoidable, unstoppable and uncontrollable. It's like a weed growing in your brain, wrecking each memory as time grows.

Dr. Oliver Sacks, an author of neurology used to work at a hospital - one where he would be admitted to later as a result of his Alzheimers. Sometimes he would walk the halls, check patients records, play his old job as if it was still his. When he saw his chart and his own name beside the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, he too would go ballistic. He would wail and sob, begging for the nurses to let him die. This story is horrifying to me. I would always choose dying at 70 with my memory intact than be on the verge of dying at 100 with no memory of the life I lived. Dementia kills you physically, too, after stealing memories and making your family mourn you when you were "alive", you forget how your body works: from urinating and eating, to forgetting to breathe. This is my single greatest fear. Nothing will ever compare.

Pipe Band Wrap-Up

Megan Dailly

Every new Pipe Band season brings change. For the last year, HSD's pipe band has been working away in the background with not one but two bands. After the success of 2022, the World Champion band moved up a grade to Novice Juvenile A and debuted a new band to Novice Juvenile B.

Throughout the season the Novice A band placed in every competition, placing third at their first competition at George Watson. At the European Championships, the band's drum corps became the Champion of Champion Drum Corps for the second year in a row! When asked about the band's performance throughout the season, Drumming Teacher Mr Graham says "The Novice A band did really well. They progressed and got much better throughout the season." After a great performance throughout the season, the Novice A Band concluded their season with a 5th at the World Championships.

The Novice B band debut at Dollar Academy's competition in May. The band placed at both the Dollar and Lochore minor competitions and attended Band Camp over the summer to compete at the World Championships in August. The band gave it their all, but unfortunately did not make it to the finals. After being asked about the Novice B band's season, Pipe Major Mr Wilton said "They soaked up as much as they could, and they just dealt with every situation that was thrown at them."

The bands have not only competed this year, they have also done many performances. The band played at both the Winter and Spring concerts, A Night to November and Armistice Day with the school. But with their successful season behind them they were also asked to perform at a remembrance concert in the Caird Hall (the second biggest in Britain) and be the act for the opening of the V&A's new tartan exhibit.

Lead Tip Emily Hough puts it best when she says, "It is important to remember that what you see doesn't just happen overnight there is so much work put in. Learning the tunes, memorising them and finally performing them to a standard that is professional, skilful and entertaining. I also think that all the support that Mr Graham, Mr Wilton and Mr Semple provide, is one of main reasons to the band's success and future successes."



"TUMBLR 2014 IS BACK FROM THE GRAVE AND BIGGER THAN EVER."

Emma Turton

Pov: it's 2014 and you are currently applying smudged eyeliner to your soundtrack of: The 1975, Halsey, Lorde, Arctic Monkeys, Taylor swift etc. You flick through your closet of band tees, tennis skirts and plaid shirts for something to throw on with your doc martens. Your biggest inspirations being Alexa Chung, Sky Ferreira and Effy Stoneham. Ah yes, one of the shortest cultural shifts ever.

2014 Tumblr.

You may ask why a near decade-old trend has revived?

Well, for starters, popular faces of 2014 Tumblr are making a reappearance on social media, such as Kate Moss, Chloë Sevigny, Effy Stoneham and of course Alexa Chung, their images are often seen on TikTok. Also the 'lore' of famous relationships such as Matty Healy and Halsey with her hit song 'Colors', and Alex Turner's iconic love letter to Alexa Chung during their chaotic relationship, which are now often being brought up.

Another reason for this is the return of another era similar to that of 2014 tumblr. Indie Sleaze. This was a huge phase that began in 2005 which included: American apparel, neon colors, MySpace, hipster etc. On a viral TikTok trend, analyst Mandy Lee said: "I think of indie sleaze as tumblr girl's debaucherous older sister" she explained to Vogue magazine. Indie Sleaze was popularized through MySpace and Tumblr girl through Tumblr of course, the main topics discussed were alternative music and hipster style clothing. Now both styles are being revisited by millennial fashion and content creators, but also Gen-Z who have put a twist on the trend.

Another reason may be our current music industry, referring back to earlier when I mentioned: Taylor Swift, The 1975, Arctic Monkeys etc. This year, many of these artists have now released new albums e.g 'Being funny in a foreign language' by The 1975, 'Midnights' by Taylor Swift and 'The Car' by Arctic Monkeys', which are resurfacing across social media. Not to fail to mention the re-recording of Taylor Swifts masterpiece '1989' an album which encapsulated the 2014 aesthetic when released.

It may also be argued that people are reviving this phase for a wave of nostalgia for when life seemed simpler. In the past five years alone we have went through many life altering changes; Covid epidemic, climate change, racial justice, abortion laws ...

Not all changes are awful or terribly life-determining, but they do make us yearn for when life was easier and not being constantly worried of getting cancelled or fearing for being judged.

No quote sums up this era better than:

"I've never felt so alone, it feels so scary getting old"
-Ribs (Lorde)

Suicide Prevention Month

Tegan McNiell-Gibson

September is known for many things; the beginning of Autumn, Hispanic Heritage month, and harvest month. But there is another thing that September is known for. And no, it's not 'No Simp September.' It's Suicide Prevention Month. All month, mental health advocates, prevention organisers, survivors, allies, and community members unite to promote suicide prevention awareness. 'In 2021 there were 6,319 deaths registered in Great Britain where the cause was recorded as suicide.' Source: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7749/>. This topic is incredibly important to me, as people I have been close to - in both the past and present - have either considered suicide or attempted suicide in the last 2-3 years.

I remember one of my friends in England going through an extremely rough patch due to harassment from members of the student population at my old school. She struggled with body image and she had mental health issues, which enhanced her suicidal tendencies. We finished school the day before her attempt, and everything seemed completely normal, for her anyways, and I didn't realise anything was up. We even talked a bit over text about the physics homework. When I had to go, I said 'cya tomorrow.' She replied with 'yeah...' I didn't see the signs; blind to her intentions and the meaning behind her uncertain 'yeah'. I went to sleep as normal, dreaming the night away, and went to school the next day as usual.

But that morning, I noticed she wasn't there. Now concerned, I asked a friend where she was. He told me she had attempted the night before, and was in hospital, but that she was okay. The shock I first felt was overwhelming, then the remorse I felt for not realising earlier overpowered all other emotions. Why didn't she tell me something was wrong? Why didn't I realise earlier? What would have happened if I had noticed, if I had known? But she was okay. Relief washed over me; knowing that I would have been absolutely devastated had I lost her that terrible night. When she came back to school, 3 days later, the first thing I did was hug her and ask her why? Why did you do it *****? Please talk to me if you feel like that again, I will always be there for you no matter what. She did not reply, but started crying, which I took as acknowledgment, and agreement. And she did. Anytime she felt that way, she would open up to me about it and vent, which I hope made her feel better. And to my knowledge she has not attempted since.

The moral of this story is to please speak up!! If you feel suicidal, or anxious, or anything really, please tell somebody. From personal experience, if you don't tell someone, and bottle it up, it only gets worse! Something like this is incredibly difficult to deal with on your own, and having someone to talk to tends to make you feel better, and takes the weight of your problems off your shoulders. Even if it's only temporary.

Up to d8 - the Topical Columns Quiz

Are you up to d8?! Answer the following questions correctly and email your answers to dmfinlay@highschoolofdundee.org.uk. First pupil to send in a correct set of answers receives a prize! (Answers in the next issue of The Columns)

Entertainment

1. Strictly Come Dancing returned last weekend. How many Strictly Champions will have been crowned by Christmas 2023?
2. Craig Revel-Horwood and Anton Du Beke have been part of the show since the beginning. Who is the only other person who has been on Strictly Come Dancing since the very first series?

Food and Drink

3. Name Michel Roux's flagship London restaurant which was recently announced to be closing after 56 years.
4. The Great British Bake Off will not do any themed 'National Weeks' this year after causing offence last year, offending which nation?

Sport

5. How many Grands Prix did Max Verstappen win consecutively after his most recent victory in Italy, beating Sebastian Vettel's record?
6. Which Spanish player received an unwanted kiss after the team's victory in the Women's World Cup in a scandal which is still rolling on?

Politics

7. What controversial environmentally-minded scheme that is being implemented across the country has many motorists up in arms?
8. Name the former Prime Minister – who served for the shortest time in history – who has just published their book: 'Ten Years to Save the West'.

EDITORS' NOTE

We're happy to welcome many new contributors from the co-curricular fair to this week's Columns! Without you, this edition would not have been possible.

Submissions from all ages and on all topics are always welcome, and we encourage anyone to come along to our Monday lunchtime meetings in Robert Ferguson. For those of you in F5 or F6, as you may have heard in the assembly this Thursday, Expanding Horizons is another fantastic club to get involved in. It meets every Tuesday lunch in Dr. Smith's room. A huge congratulations and thank-you to all of those involved in Open Morning last Saturday. We at the Columns hope you've had a wonderful week.

Editor Izzy

Have a fab weekend!

THE COLUMNS TEAM