

THE COLUMNS



by pupils; for pupils HSD's Newsletter: Issue 101

First week back after half term, and what a week of new things it has been - at least for us at The Columns, with us three new editors putting together an edition for the first time! And I have to say, seeing how much care and dedication put in to this paper by the current editors is a true inspiration, and I hope we can follow in their footsteps and continue this. I can't express how excited I am to be an editor. Although now I definitely have to learn how to correctly use a semicolon; and look forward to many more issues to come. Enjoy!

Editor, Megan

As we get further into the term, the columns team have started discussing our future with a large amount of our amazingly dedicated writers and editors leaving school this year. Thankfully, Megan, Meagan and I were given the opportunity to independently put together this issue in order to prepare for the transition. Happy Reading!

Editor, Roena

It's Just Too Pretty to Open

Sophia Kapelyukh

I'm sure we all have that cupboard shelf, stuffed to the brim with boxes that are just too pretty to throw away. Most likely they are Apple boxes from phones that go back centuries. You keep thinking you'll find the perfect use for them, yet they will continue to spend another year in that same cupboard. But how could you throw them away? They are so perfect, so clean, so immaculate in their design. If you do feel this way, I'm happy to tell you that you are one of Apple's most beloved customers.

Packaging is so vital in business, not only will it protect your product till the consumer starts using it, but if you do it well enough it might turn into an entire experience your consumers never forget.

If we take our Apple boxes as an example, or any technology company like Samsung or Google, I'm sure you'll remember what it is like to unbox your product. The suspenseful, exciting feeling of slowly pulling off the sliding white lid to unveil the strikingly, clear, black mirror of your new device. As you dig deeper, you discover the bonus treasures; headphones and charging wires are all packaged so carefully and neatly that you have to take a few seconds just to admire it all. The instructions manual is perfect as well. The company brand is stamped cleanly on the front and the pages feel crisp and pleasant to flick through, triggering the best ASMR response. Apple has carefully planned and planted each of these feelings inside their boxes for you to open. They design their boxes to be as simple as they can be; humans are attracted to minimalism and so are subconsciously pulled towards Apple's sleek designs. Apple also utilises the Halo effect with their packaging. This effect states that if you build positive feelings around a good, your attitude towards the product itself will be very positive. So all the amazing feelings of opening an amazing package are just so your connection with the actual product will be positive. And for eco-minded buyers, the products are purposefully made with premium, recyclable material. While being ethical and environmentally friendly, this can be a great marketing edge as well.

Another great thing about the packaging of Apple products is that of course, you just can't throw them away. They seem like the perfect storage containers, there must be something that you can store in them. And every time you open that cupboard stuffed with those boxes, the Apple brand screams at you, implanting itself into your mind, so suddenly you might remember it is time for a phone upgrade or you think it is time to change to a digital watch. Brands have a unique ability to remind you that you really want something, even if you have never thought about it before.

Packaging has become a key element for small businesses as well. Social media has boomed with videos captioned, 'Package an order with me'. Seeing someone put together a beautiful package with so much attention to detail and extra add-ons that they put into the package, encourages customers to buy from the small business, wanting the same experience for their products.

Packaging is the first impression you have of the business and your product, so businesses have to ensure it's the best it can be. From minuscule details like the colour of the parcel, it must be so perfect that the consumer will still keep the box in a cupboard for years to come.

Alexei Navalny

Jack Mitchell

On the 16th of February, in the Arctic penal colony in which he had been imprisoned since December, Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny died. The news was announced by Russian authorities the same day. They did, however, say that the cause of his death – aged just 47 – was a cardiac arrest, contrary to the popular opinion in the West that the Russian state was responsible. Media outlets and governments alike have used the death of Russia's only chance at some sort of opposition to the Putin administration as evidence that he and his government are dictatorial. Here is the story of Alexei Navalny:

Alexei Navalny was born near the border with Belarus in June 1976 and grew up 60 miles south of Moscow. He had an average upbringing and an average education in an average town. His law degree – obtained in 1998 – reinforced this supposed regularity: Alexei Navalny was a normal Russian. He was just like everyone else. But in 2000, this seemingly normal young lawyer started on a path few have dared to tread on, before or since. He joined the democratic party Yabloko. By 2004, he was Chief of Staff of the Moscow branch of the party. By 2005, he had aired the first of the television debates that he had organised and starred in. However, by the second episode, the state-run television network that had broadcast these debates had become suspicious, and the show was mysteriously cancelled with immediate effect.

In 2007, Navalny was expelled from Yabloko for asking to democratically re-elect the leadership. Alexei Navalny did not stop campaigning, however, but instead took his criticism of the government to new levels. He protested alongside 6,000 others against the parliamentary elections, saying that there had been election fraud. He was one of the 300 arrested and was charged for 'defying a government official'. He was only sentenced to 15 days in prison, but even this short stint shows how, even then, Navalny had an influence so great that the Russian state was worried about it. Years later, in 2013, Alexei Navalny announced that he would be standing for the Moscow mayoral elections. Only a day after registering as a candidate, he was sentenced to five years imprisonment for embezzlement and fraud, charges that had been filed years earlier. Thousands of his supporters protested and he was released on bail days later. Despite this, Navalny came second in the election, proving that ordinary Russians wanted a change from the corrupt, ultra-wealthy leaders that they had been stuck with for years – many of whom had been exposed by Navalny personally.

Three years later, Alexei Navalny decided to take his anti-corruption brand to even higher levels by announcing his intention to run against incumbent Vladimir Putin for the presidency of Russia. The same charges that had proved so controversial during his campaign for mayor were used against him again, with judges saying that his former charges could be used against him. Despite this, and two serious attacks that had left him with only 20% vision in his right eye, he fought on, yet again protesting and yet again being arrested.

The world thought they had seen the worst of what the Russian state could do, but they were wrong.

In August 2020, Navalny became seriously ill while on a flight from Siberia to Moscow. He was rushed to a hospital and Germany sent a plane to evacuate him. He miraculously recovered in Germany. It was later discovered that he had been poisoned using Novichok, one of the deadliest nerve agents in the world. The most likely explanation for this is that the Russian government was responsible.

Alexei Navalny was discharged from hospital a few months later, and immediately returned to Russia, knowing that he would be arrested, which he was. He remained in prison in numerous facilities for two years, until his death.

Ramadan

Ayanah Adam

With Ramadan fast approaching, 1.9 billion Muslims around the world are getting ready for a period of fasting, spiritual growth and personal development. Most non-Muslims know that for one month a year, Muslims fast however they do not understand why we fast, and the significance of Ramadan. So, I am going to attempt to answer 6 questions about Ramadan, in hopes of more people understanding it.

Why is Ramadan called Ramadan?

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar and will either last 29 or 30 days. This depends on when the new crescent moon is visible. The word Ramadan comes from the Arabic word الرامض (Ar-Ramad) which means scorching heat. This is because, in pre-Islamic Arabia Ramadan was the very hot summer month. The beginning of Ramadan, however, goes back around 10 days each year. This is due to the Islamic lunar year being roughly 10 days shorter than the Gregorian year.

What is the significance of Ramadan?

Ramadan is a time of fasting (sawm) and spiritual growth and is one of the five “pillars of Islam” – the others being the declaration of faith (shahada), daily prayer (salah), almsgiving (zakat) and the pilgrimage to Makkah once in your lifetime (hajj). Able-bodied Muslims are expected to abstain not only from food and drink from dawn to sunset each day of the month but also from bad deeds such as arguing, lying and getting angry. Most Muslims will also perform additional prayers and try to recite the entire Quran in the month of Ramadan. In Islam, it is believed that in the final 10 nights of Ramadan the Quran was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w). It is not known exactly which night this is, but it is believed to be an odd night and is called ‘Laylatul Qadr’ (The night of power). In the holy Quran, it states, "We have indeed revealed this in the 'Night of Power'. And what will explain to you what the night of power is? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. Therein come down The Angels and the Spirit by Allah's permission, on every errand.

"Peace!...This until the rise of Morn!" Laylatul Qadr is such an important night for Muslims as it is "better than a thousand months" which means that observing worship on this night is better than observing worship for approximately 83 years!

What is the connection between the body and soul that observing Ramadan tries to explain?

In the holy Quran, it says that fasting was prescribed for the believers so that they may be conscious of God. By abstaining from things that people usually take for granted, such as food, it is believed that a person will be moved to reflect on the purpose of life and grow closer to God – the creator and sustainer of all existence. So, doing bad deeds effectively undermines the fast. Moreover, fasting allows one to get a feeling of poverty which will subsequently foster feelings of empathy and gratitude for their own life.

Can a Muslim miss a fast under special conditions? Do you have to make up missed days if they do?

Those who are physically limited, because of illness or old age, for example, are exempt from fasting and the same is true for those who are travelling, pregnant or breastfeeding. Those who can are obligated to make up any missed fasts at a later date. Those who are unable to fast at all, if they are financially able, are expected to provide food for the needy as an alternative action.

What is the significance of fasting over an extended period of time?

By fasting over an entire month, Muslims aim to foster certain attitudes and habits that they would be able to practice for the rest of the year. The month of Ramadan is often referred to as a spiritual training camp. Ramadan is not a time when Muslims try to put bad habits on pause, it is when they try to break these bad habits, such as lying, and replace them with good ones.

Do Muslims celebrate at the end of Ramadan?

At the end of Ramadan, Muslims celebrate the first of two major Islamic festivals – Eid Al-Fitr. On this day, Muslims go to the mosque in the morning for Eid prayer, visit their family and friends and exchange gifts. I hope that at least one person has learnt something and reading this article will inspire someone to learn more about different religions and cultures from around the world.

Percy Jackson Review

Izzy Clark

Warning: this review definitely contains major spoilers for the first season of the recently released “Percy Jackson and the Olympians” TV series on Disney+ (which you all should watch).

It should come as no surprise to all of you that I, as an avid fan of Greek mythology and young adult literature, am a massive fan of the “Percy Jackson” books. I have read all of them, and I have greatly enjoyed them since I was eight years old. They have been a crucial part of my childhood (I dressed up as one of the characters for World Book Day), and it was these books that got me interested in Greek mythology, which led me to pursue classics and archaeology. However, controversially, I actually quite like the films (get your gasps and shock out now, people). In terms of being decent films, they’re fun and good, and I deeply enjoy them even now that I recognise how badly they adapted the original source material.

Like many other fans of Rick Riordan’s successful book series, I was waiting excitedly for many years to see an accurate adaptation following the community-panned 2010 films. So when the news came that Disney+ would be producing a TV series based on the books, I was cautiously optimistic. I was fully prepared for the series to end up in development hell and never see the light of day, but as casting announcements trickled in and trailers became longer and longer, I started to feel more hopeful.

Firstly: the show is a much more faithful adaptation of the books than the films. Whilst certain individuals on the internet (with too much time on their hands) raised a stink about the casting of black child actress Leah Sava Jeffries as Annabeth Chase, a character described in the books as a blonde white girl, the general consensus from fans has been that the accuracy of casting actors resembling their literary counterparts should take second-place to recreating the story of the novel.

Whilst certain scenes were slimmed down to meet the season’s eight-episode run, other scenes were expanded upon and added to develop characters further and provide exposition in a way that was subtle and interesting. Characters like Percy’s mother Sally were given more scenes in flashbacks, and the friendship between Percy and Luke is also emphasised similarly. I really liked these added sections, as they helped to expand the narrative beyond the first-person perspective of the book. I was also a big fan of all of the visual effects in the show, especially the VFX and prosthetic work on the monsters, although I thought some of the scenes were too dark to see any of what was going on. This problem was especially prominent earlier on in the show, but thankfully the directors seem to have fixed this problem by the end of the series, and the final fight is tastefully set in front of the distant fireworks display, which makes the part of my brain that loves coloured lighting very happy. The soundtracking was also great, and whilst I do think the movie’s mix of 2010’s pop and rock music is almost unbeatable (I mean, Lady Gaga is amazing), the show comes pretty close - if, like me, you spent most of episode 6 scanning the background audio for obscure references to future books (don’t ask), I think you can also appreciate the excellent sound design and music choices. One of the main draws of the show, other than the adaptation of the plot, was the characters, and I doubt I’m alone in saying that the writers and actors did a phenomenal job at bringing these personalities off the page and onto the screen. Personal highlights for me included Walker Scobell as Percy Jackson, a brilliant casting choice I can fully get behind, as well as absolute scene-stealer Dior Goodjohn as minor antagonist Clarisse La Rue, and (my absolute favourite) Charlie Bushnell as Luke Castellan. I said there would be spoilers in this review, but I won’t go too far - so you’ll just have to watch the show to find out why. Of course, everyone in the show did a wonderful job at making the roles their own, especially those playing characters who were adapted and altered.

Overall, the first season of “Percy Jackson and the Olympians” is an excellent, faithful and compelling adaptation of a beloved book, with lots of future potential. With the news of a renewal and a second series very early in the works, I’m hopeful that this show can become a staple of children’s TV and continue to delight fans.

SAME WORLD, DIFFERENT YEAR

Roena Seenarine

As the clock approaches midnight and anticipation rises it feels almost as if time stops as many prepare to move on from the old and embrace the New Year. It is a day that creates a sense of unison, particularly because we would expect everyone to be celebrating at roughly the same time, right? Just a few weeks ago, the vibrant festivities of Chinese New Year, also known as Lunar New Year, unfolded in an electrifying display of tradition and festivities. However, if you cast your mind back to almost 2 months ago now, most of us will remember that Hogmanay celebrations were underway here in Scotland to mark the New Year. So how can two countries so distant by land and culture, celebrate the same thing so similarly yet so differently? This gets even more confusing when you learn that there are over 26 different New Year's dates around the world.

Surprisingly, New Year celebrations go on for different lengths of time around the world. Among all of them, Chinese New Year is the longest with an impressive 15 days that each hold special significance and are marked by unique customs. Meanwhile, the Persian New Year, referred to as Nowruz extends for 13 days and is made up of many important rituals which symbolise renewal and rebirth. Conversely, the Western celebrations that we are likely more familiar with, are single-day events typically marked by countdowns, fireworks and singing on the first day of January. Singing is also done by Ethiopians on New Year, all the way in East Africa, where they too take part in single-day celebrations to mark the occasion. Intriguingly, they do this during the first week of September. In the native language, it is referred to as Enkutatash which translates to, “gift of jewels” Its origins link to the fact that during the ninth month of the year, the rainy season stops in Ethiopia and crops begin to flourish.

Since there are a wide range of different calendars across the globe, as you might expect, some of them overlap. First, there is the Gregorian New Year, which we celebrate here in the UK on the 1st of January. Russian New Year takes place on the same date, however, it is entirely different as a result of Christmas being removed from the calendar during the society years which lead many traditions that would have been conserved for the 25th of December to be shifted to the start of the New Year. This explains why Russian children wake up to find that they have received presents from Father Christmas on New Year's Day.

What's also interesting to look at is the fact that within cultures that celebrate the Gregorian New Year, there are a wide range of unique traditions and superstitions. For example, in Denmark, smashing plates is supposed to leave all any ill-will and aggression behind as you move into the New Year. Another interesting tradition takes place in a variety of countries but originated in Spain. Known as “Las doce uvas de la suerte” it is believed that if you eat 12 grapes after it strikes 12 you will be granted with good fortune and prosperity for the whole year. Each grape represents one of the months of the year and for a lucky year, you must eat one grape for each chime of the clock. All of these traditions once again highlight how united we can become by festivities despite clear cultural differences.



How the 1975 rose to Fame

Emma
Turton



There was once a time when the 1975 were four teenage boys were messing around with instruments doing school covers in their garages in Manchester. Now the band took over the music industry, becoming one of the most musically diverse British acts currently and having over fourteen million listeners on Spotify. So how did they do it?

Matthew Healy is now one of the most iconic, controversial frontmen of our generation. But in 2002 the lineup was much different: Healy took place as drums and Elliot was the singer; but, after Elliot left claiming the band, “weren’t gonna make it” Healy took over as lead singer; and George Daniel replaced Matty on drums, Ross Macdonald as Bassist and Adam Hann as lead guitarist. They originally covered a wide range of punk songs at various gigs organized by a council worker. Around two years after forming the band began writing their own lyrics and were constantly changing names, honourable mentions being: “Talkhouse”, “The Slowdown” and, notably, “Drive Like I Do,” the band created a full album under this name, but after Healy had found a note in a book called “On the Road” by Jack Kerouac, given to him by a man holiday in Majorca which read:

“1st June-the 1975”, and so on the band decided on the 1975 as they thought it sounded cool and different.

Eventually, after years of struggling to find a label, the 1975 joined the “Dirty Hit” Lable, a label created exclusively for them to share their music with the world. They created four LPs on this lable before producing their first album “The 1975”, more commonly known as the self-titled album, which gained mass recognition for its British indie pop sound across the world. The album has a monochrome aesthetic and feel to it, with Healy describing it as, “teen angst and apocalyptic.” The 1975 scored their first number one with this album and were becoming a seemingly indie version of One Direction, a notorious boy band.

“What qualifies a boy band, though? If it’s being a cause of hysteria and surrounded by female fans who also surround our hotel rooms and sold out shows, then we’re a boy band”, quotes Healy, in 2014.

Although not everyone was a massive 1975 stan in 2014. The band won the infamous NME 'worst band' prize, joining bands such as "Nickel- back", "The Clown Posse", and even, "Oasis". This was a huge blow to the band, but one that I believe spurred them to produce a better record and

prove themselves not only to the press and fans but to themselves. In 2015 the band posted a comic strip which hit many fans close to their hearts, "The hardest part of any relationship is to say goodbye," the message read. Eventually, fans discovered that this was the band reinventing themselves. They replaced the black and white aesthetic with neon and redid it as the band released their highly ambitious song "Love Me" which signified the release of their new album, "I like it when you sleep for you are so beautiful yet so unaware of it," a confident and loud album that showed their exploration in a sound that hadn't waned with their success. The record includes massive pop hits- see, "The Sound"- but also contains deep, melancholy songs such as – see, "Somebody Else". The album is 75 minutes in length and critics reacted positively with the album being described as a "masterpiece", and "magnum opus" in the press. This also gave them their first record to see them join a group of exclusive British artists to reach number one in the UK and US simultaneously, a list of just 16 that includes "The Beatles", "Radiohead", and Susan Boyle. The band went on their first headlining tour in 2017 and was high on the bill for many festivals. However, despite this influx of fame, the 1975 continues producing new eras in each album they release, along with even bigger hits. They have since gone on to create, "A brief inquiry into online relationships", a heavily pop-filled album full of politics and the effects of the internet with hits such as "tootitootitime" and, "it's not living if it's not with you," another album called, "notes on a conditional form," was released as their most experimental record yet, which mixes electronic and pop elements featuring, "if you're too shy let me know," and "frail state of mind." Recently they released their most critically acclaimed album to date: "being funny in a foreign language," which features elements of country and features the hit song: "about you," which set the 1975 in stone as one of the most influential British artists in history, and now fans are upset as the band are due to go on a five year break as the band wish to explore different paths. However, we know after the break we will receive one of the best albums ever. Just before the break, the band went on their biggest tour ever across America, Asia and the UK. They are still at their very best tour which signifies the end of the 1975 for 5 years.



UK INFLATION RATES SET TO RISE?

Prithvi Sudarshan

Nearly 3 years ago supply chains came to a halt after a cargo ship blocked the Suez Canal, causing billions of pounds worth of losses and further soaring inflationary pressures worldwide.

The Suez Canal is a major trading route that is situated in Egypt connecting both the Mediterranean and Red Seas, used for over 150 years and currently handles 12% of global trade.

So how is all this relevant today? In the past week attacks on cargo ships by Yemen's Houthi rebels have resulted in a 45% fall in freight flow through the canal, whilst not an exact replica of the situation faced a few years ago, its effects are very similar. To avoid coming close to the Iranian-backed militants, many ships have opted to take longer routes to reach their desired destination and those that continue to pass through the canal face increased insurance costs, these alternate routes not only add extra costs to operators (which will be passed onto consumers), but also result in longer travel times and increased greenhouse gas emissions.

Amid Russian sanctions caused by the Russia-Ukrainian war, the UK and wider Europe's reliance on Middle Eastern oil has increased in recent years. As oil plays such an integral part in the production of many products, a decrease in the supply of oil will mean British and European firms will face an increase in their cost of production. This will ultimately result in companies having to push up the prices of their goods contributing to a rise in the general level of prices aka inflation.

Thankfully the current situation is thought to be not as severe as a few years ago. As back in 2021, along with supply chain issues, firms faced high levels of consumer demand which led to increased inflation. However, currently inflation rates look to be returning to the governments aim of 2% as the Bank of England utilise increasing interest rates to reduce aggregate demand in the economy.

Health Blog



Maya McColgan

Exercise is good for the brain.

Research has shown that moderate to vigorous physical activity - even just increasing breathing rate and pulse rate for 10 continuous mins each day - has a positive effect on brain health. This includes larger overall key brain matter. Other benefits include improved problem-solving, memory, concentration and reduced anxiety and depression. Furthermore, regular exercise, even just 4000 steps per day, can lead to a reduction in cognitive decline and reduce the risk of dementia. Exercise also helps us to sleep better and feel better. So, if you have a spare 10 mins, you know what to do!



President's Day

Maisey Lafollette

President's Day is an American holiday celebrating the current and past Presidents, which was celebrated last weekend. America has had 46 Presidents, and this year there is an election for the 47th. Throughout the short history of the American Presidents, some have become famous while others go unnoticed. I wanted to research about the lesser known Presidents.

Martin Van Buren was the eighth President from 1837-1841. Buren was the only President whose first language wasn't English, his was Dutch. His famous quote was, "As to Presidency, the two happiest days of my life were those of my entrance upon the office and my surrender of it." The Revolutionary War wasn't that long ago, but Buren managed to secure a trade deal with Great Britain.

Franklin Pierce was the 14th President from 1853-1857. Pierce was from New Hampshire and before he became President he worked in the House of Representatives. One of his most famous quotes was "Teach self-denial and make its practice pleasure, and you can create for the world a destiny more sublime than ever issued from the brain of the wildest dreamer." Pierce was two Presidents before Lincoln and it's reported he blamed Lincoln for the Civil War. Franklin Pierce died of cirrhosis.

Calvin Coolidge was the 30th President, he was in office from 1923-1929. Coolidge was formerly an attorney and the 48th governor of Massachusetts before becoming President. This President was known for supporting women's right to vote and he was against prohibition. Calvin's famous quote is "Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence."

Dwight D. Eisenhower was in the American Military and during World War II Eisenhower was the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force and he was promoted to five-star General of the U.S Army. Eisenhower was President from 1953-1961 and his Vice President was Richard Nixon. President Eisenhower was involved in the Korean and Vietnam Wars. One of Eisenhower's famous quotes is, "Whatever America hopes to bring to pass in the world must first come to pass in the heart of America." He also said, "A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both."

Stephen Grover Cleveland was both the 22nd and 24th President, meaning he is the only President to serve two non-consecutive terms, until possibly this year with Trump. Cleveland was known for making policies but he also angered many people. In 1894, he stopped the Pullman Strike so the workers would still work on the railroads, the Illinois Democrats and Unions were angered by this. Due to his unpopular policies, Cleveland's party nominated another man, abandoning Cleveland.

The history of American Presidents may be short but it's complicated. This year the election is looking likely to be between President Biden and Former President Trump. Whoever becomes the next President, I can only dream that they lead America to be the great country the Founding Fathers wished for.

Felons in Some American States Can't Vote, Yet a Man in Court for 91 Felony Counts Can Run For President

Megan Beckham

Former president Donald Trump's legal tangles are beginning to catch up, all while he is also a candidate for the 2024 presidential election. Facing a total of 91 counts across 2 federal districts and 2 state courts, following and sorting all of what's going on has become hard not to get mixed up. 91 counts of felony he is currently facing can all result in some sort of prison sentence, civil lawsuits in the state of New York threatening his business, and cases looking to disqualify him from the election ballot, here is a summary of what it all means.

New York state civil case

First filed in late 2022, this case isn't criminal but still holds legal stakes nonetheless. New York Attorney General, Letitia James sued not only Trump but also his adult sons, as well as others for fraud. Fraud of inflating and deflating the value of his assets to lower tax bills, and receive better loan deals and insurance policies. Lying to increase his net worth, which has been reported to have been fraudulently increased by 2 million.

On trial in October of 2023, it was ruled by the judge that no trial was needed as fraud was clearly and persistently committed, and therefore upheld the core argument of the lawsuit.

As for punishment, initially to revoke Trump's licenses to operate his properties in New York, and a \$15,000 fine for violating a gag order, but was officially decided just last weekend, when it was ruled by a New York judge that he must pay \$363.9 million, with an additional on \$100 million interest which is to increase daily until it is paid, for his long history of financial fraud, which of course he plans to attempt to appeal.

Hush Money – Manhattan criminal case

In March 2023, Alvin Bragg, Manhattan district attorney brought criminal felony charges against Trump for the first time, over Trump's involvement in falsifying records to cover up hush money payments during the 2016 election.

Trump's fixer at that time, Michael D. Cohen, paid \$130,000 to Stormy Daniels, who threatened to publicize a sex scandal involving her and Trump during the 2016 election. After being elected in to office, Trump quietly paid back Cohen. He is accused of lying and falsifying records about all these events, and therefore directly impacting the 2016 election, as well as falsifying other business records in other hush money dealings with other women. While paying a person hush money is not directly illegal, falsifying records and lying about doing so is the base argument of the case. It goes to trial on March 25th of this year.

Georgia criminal case – 2020 election

With a total of 19 defendants, including Trump and some of his most well-known advisors and colleagues, it is a huge criminal case investigating Trump's efforts to interfere with the Georgia, specifically Fulton County, 2020 election results.

With the indictment sent out in August 2023, 4 defendants have pleaded guilty and have agreed to work with the prosecution, with a proposed trial of August 5th 2024 for the others left.

The indictment discussed 8 different ways in which it was alleged they were tampering with the election, including a phone call with the secretary of Georgia state Brad Raffensperger, where Trump told him to “find 11,780 votes” – the amount he would have needed to win the state.

Election Subversion: Department of Justice

Another indictment Trump received in August 2023, four felony counts for election subversion, trying to remain in power after losing the 2020 election, with a trial date yet to be announced

Mar-A-Lago classified documents

Seemingly an older case with all these new ones now becoming relevant, Trump was revealed to be taking home highly classified documents to his home in Florida during his time as president, and keeping them there after his term ended, despite multiple warnings to return them, with the F.B.I. acting on a court-ordered search warrant in August 2022, discovering around 100 documents he should not have had. Trump was initially charged with 37 criminal counts, some of federal law violations, as the documents found held matters of nuclear information and general information of national security.

He was also indicted of attempting to delete security footage relating to the stolen classified documents.

Trump has pleaded not guilty, with a trial set to happen in May 2024.

The question, however, one that is beginning to look like it could potentially hold the fate of the 2024 US presidential election needs asked, can Trump still stand as a candidate if convicted?

The simplified answer is yes.

For a country so focused on a democratic system of running things, and the laws and requirements in place to participate in it as laid out in the US Constitution, there are surprisingly a sparse number of requirements for someone to be eligible to run for president. Over the age of 35, a citizen born in the United States, and has lived there for a minimum of 14 years. no rules regarding criminal records, open criminal or civil cases, or anything to do with the character of a candidate, at least at a federal election level.

At a state level, it is more complicated. As the only 2 main parties in USA politics, the Republican and democrat parties are guaranteed places on a presidential election ballot, and the election officials in each state are told by the party the names to write on the ballot. But to get on a presidential ballot, a person running has to win the primary elections. Because of this, different states could try and pass legislation on the eligibility of candidates for that state on primary election ballots, i.e. pass a law that candidates running in that state have to have a clean criminal record, something there's been a few attempts for.

Some state courts and officials, as well as many political experts, have argued that that Trump is ineligible to run under the 3rd section 14th amendment of the constitution. It bars people from running for president who have "engaged in insurrection or rebellion", after taking an oath to uphold the constitution, originally introduced post the American Civil War to prevent former confederates from gaining power.

The insurrection that is relevant here is what happened on January 6th, 2021, the events before and after it, and Trump's involvement in all three. Lawsuits by the Colorado state court and Maine's secretary of state found him ineligible to run in state election primaries, and more lawsuits like this have been filed in other states, with decisions still waiting to be made.

However, this doesn't lead to Trump being off the ballot immediately, first, the cases go to the Supreme Court, - of which the majority lies with the republican party and one-third of the judges appointed by Trump himself – will have the final say. And as both states have held the legislation while the legalities are dealt with, as well as us legal and court systems not being well known for their speed, it is likely that Trump will appear on the ballot anyways for the March 5th primary. If these bans, however, were ruled to stand, by the Supreme Court it could potentially open a door for a challenge against Trump's eligibility for a presidential election

I can personally remember the 2016 election in the USA, when I was living there and over those next 4 years I had to learn how to become politically aware, learn how to figure out what things other people saying using big words I didn't understand and concepts I knew nothing meant for me, for people I knew, even for people I would pass by in the street, and learn how to question how some peoples awful agendas got given so much power. I remember in 2020, another election year, joined by covid and worldwide panic, having to truly think about how quickly things could change and how quickly realities could become different in a matter of days. And now in 2024, I am thinking about how elections can so drastically change things, but also are not black and white. There are so many layers and every person is entitled to their own opinion, and every person's opinion matters. I am in no way trying to rebut this, only expressing my thoughts on this, a question of how can a person can be up to run a country when their own legal foundation is cracking beyond repair?

Piano Day



As some of you may already know, last Wednesday was HSD Piano day, and the start of the school's 3 day piano festival.

Pupils from all across the junior and senior school, as well as staff members performed throughout the day on Wednesday in Trinity. Congrats to everyone who participated and well done!



The Big Election Year

Jack Mitchell

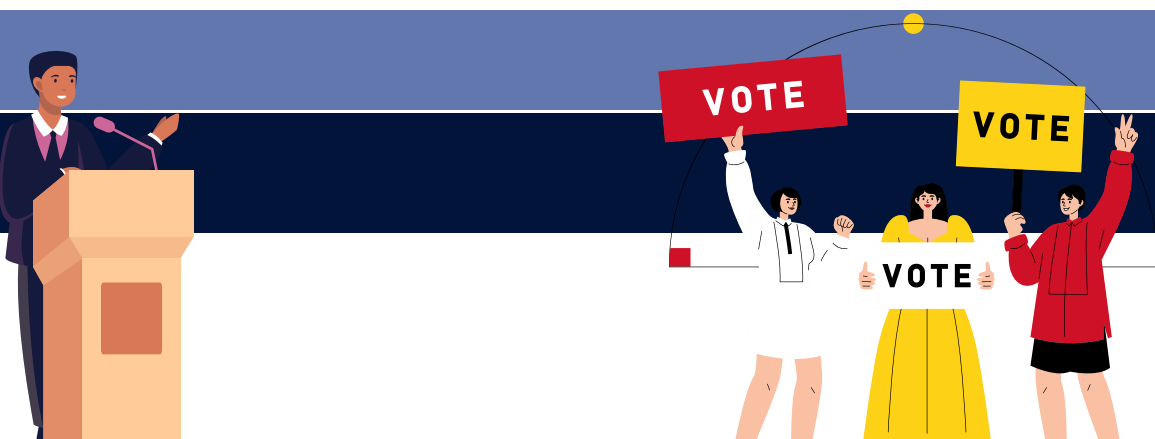
2023 saw people from countries such as Pakistan, Poland, Spain and Argentina vote for their political leaders. The number of people voting reached the high hundred millions, but that was nothing like what is predicted for this year. The nearly 70 countries due to hold elections this year have a combined population that is equivalent to 49% of the global population – which recently passed 8 billion. That number won't be voting, but after accounting for voting ages and turnouts, it is still likely that billions will go to the ballot boxes this year.

We have already seen the election in Taiwan, in which the pro-China candidate lost. While this was somewhat of a surprise, the victorious William Lai and his party only won by a very slim margin. Elsewhere, the main election of note is that of El Salvador. The incumbent Nayib Bukele increased his percentage of the vote by over 30%. His main policy has been to crack down on the criminal gangs that had been wreaking havoc on the Central American country. Salvadoran police were given almost unlimited powers to arrest anyone they deemed to belong to a gang, which has led to 1.6% of the entire population being imprisoned.

Looking ahead to the rest of the year, many more elections are yet to take place and many more votes are yet to be submitted. Eight of the ten most populous countries in the world will see elections take place over the course of the year. They are, Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Pakistan, Russia and the United States. The European Union is also set to see its Parliamentary Election in early June, with 400 million people eligible to cast their votes, the highest number in the world bar India.

Back home in the UK, our election does not yet have a set date. The power to call the election belongs to the Prime Minister. Many believe the election will take place in either May, October, or January – which is the latest it could possibly be. There are many reasons for these ideas. As mentioned in my 100th edition articles, the main parties standing for the general election are the Conservative Party, the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats and the SNP. The latter will only be standing in Scotland, but the other three will be fiercely campaigning across the constituent countries of the UK.

Overall, this year will be a big boost for global democracy, despite fears that countries such as Russia and Azerbaijan will see fraudulent elections, further downgrading their very low scores on the Fair Election Index.



Upcoming Performances



Jazz Soirée - Feb 29th

Leng Gold Medal - Feb 27th

Festival of Chamber Music - Mar 12th

D-Day 80th Anniversary Concert - Mar 18th

Chamber Recital - Mar 21st

Spring Concert - Mar 26th



New Year; New Recession

Charlie Grewar

The UK has entered recession once more. (The last one took place in early 2020, triggered by the covid 19 pandemic) The Office for National Statistics has stated that “UK gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have fallen by 0.3% in Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2023, following an unrevised fall of 0.1% in the previous quarter.” Simply put the economy has been falling for six months and that means that we are now in recession. It’s the third time the UK has entered a recession in 25 years. So what does this actually mean? The Nat 5 Economics quick study notes on Firefly inform me that in a recession “unemployment will be rising and inflation will be falling.” Well maybe. Days before the recession was announced inflation was found to have remained at 4% in January. The UK unemployment rate recently decreased to 3.8%. Of course, the worst may be yet to come. However, it’s worth noting that this recession is relatively mild, especially compared to previous recessions when negative economic growth could reach 5%. The recession however is of great political significance.

After a fairly unproblematic few weeks for Rishi Sunak’s government with the COVID inquiry moving to Scotland and anti-Semitic behaviour for Labour things were looking non-disastrous for the conservatives. Then this happened. Shadow Chancellor, Rachel Reeves was quick to lay the blame at Sunak’s feet, claiming that he “has now put our economy into reverse”, dubbing it “Rishi’s recession.”

There seems to be a lot of 'R' alliteration going on. Sunak did pledge to grow the economy last January, so has spectacularly failed in that department, but it does feel a bit like Labour is trying to make itself look good following the Rochdale by-election mess, considering that Sunak has little control over recent global economic events such as the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but this will likely damage the reputation of the Conservative party anyway. A general election is coming up and, if the recent by-elections are anything to go by, Labour must feel pretty confident about their chances this time. Of course, we'll probably shift back to the Conservatives in another decade when we get tired of Labour, such is the political state of the UK.



Nathan Taylor

The River Conspiracy

Many of you may have heard of a book series called Percy Jackson by Rick Riordan. It's an extremely popular book series in America and there's a whole new television show about it, but for those of you who don't know, it's a book series about a boy who discovers he's the child of a Greek god. But I'm not here to talk about Percy Jackson, I'm here to talk about the books that followed. Rick Riordan (Uncle Ricky) wrote many fewer known series afterwards that existed in the same universe as Percy's. Percy makes cameos in most of them, but they mostly focus on other ancient religions like Egyptian, Roman and Norse Mythology.

Now here's where it gets interesting. In Greek Mythology, they talk about five rivers that run through the Underworld (the land of the dead where people were believed to go once they died) for the dead to drink from, however, they mostly focus on the Styx as it's the river that the dead float down to get to the underworld. But they also focus on rivers in every other ancient civilisation. The Egyptian Nile, the Roman Tiber and even in Norse they talk about the Gjöll, the river that separates the dead from the living. Which makes sense as rivers are good places to grow crops and so are considered prosperous.

My theory is that each of these important rivers are actually all connected in the underworld. That all of these different civilisations in the books from Percy Jackson to Magnus Chase are secretly connected by these mystical rivers and will one day all combine forces to fight some mega god. That's all up to Uncle Ricky. As for the fifth and final river, I'd suggest something to do with Chinese mythology which is also very deep. Again, I'm not here to take the author's job.

I'll leave that to the Fanfic writers.



YOU'VE BEEN LIED TO

Meagan Dailly

WARNING: THIS IS A COMEDIC CONSPIRACY THEORY PIECE... or is it?

Red vans with their unusual white tops can be seen on every road, dutifully bumbling across Scotland, though they are not all they seem. These vans skulk from one garage to another delivering much needed car parts to local garages all over Scotland and even to Shetland and the Faroe Islands. Or so they would have you think.

Intelligence agencies are crucial for the defence of a country. Dingbro LTD is really the primary source of Scottish counterintelligence. Founded during the cold war, the car part distributor has gathered information directly from the Scottish people without any suspicion because who would suspect a car part distributor of espionage? The company has the perfect cover for travelling all over the country since everyone, even in the furthest reaches of the highlands and islands, needs to have a functioning car. Dingbro employees not only have ample opportunity to speak to car mechanics, but they also get to speak to

Scots who work in service stations and roadside restaurants across the country. This makes it easy for Dingbro to absorb vast quantities of information from a substantial portion of the population very rapidly which is vital for their intelligence systems to be accurate and up to date.

Founded in 1973 by the Dingwall brothers in Fraserburgh, Dingbro limited has grown from a "small family business" to a "company" with thirty-three bases across the central belt and the Northeast coast of Scotland. However, members of Dingwall family still run the company. Dingbro's board is comprised of a diverse group of individuals who, intriguingly, all happen to have the same surname. Surely this is to maintain the interests of the government. Studies have shown that between 70-75% of children have similar or the same political opinions as their parents. Due to this the Dingwalls, or should I say the government, can ensure the security of this branch of Scottish intelligence. By making sure that the officers of the business all already have their interests aligned with those of the "business," the government can ensure they do not become discovered.

As a government agency, Dingbro has special connections to the Scottish government. It holds the contract with the Scottish government for being a "trade only supplier to emergency services, councils and local authorities." This allows for good access to government facilities and equipment which can provide good meeting points with government officials. Dingbro also has outstanding financial charges to the government dating back to the 1st of October 1982. These unsatisfied charges include two different bond and floating charges, two letter of offset charges and one standard security charge.

Though the company had a turnover of £193 million and a gross profit of £84 million, they have not satisfied their outstanding charges going back for over 40 years. Could this be because the government is covering for them, pulling these numbers out of thin air to make this front for a Scottish intelligence agency sound credible?

But if all of this is so secret and cannot risk being discovered, why choose bright red vans? Red is a symbolic colour. For centuries it has been used as a metaphor for determination, confidence, and strength. This is probably why it was chosen as the colour to symbolise the communist party or, more recently, the Soviet Union. The colour red was chosen for two reasons. The first to make sure other citizens of the USSR could identify Dingbro as

fellow comrades. The second is that since people talk about black or white vans being suspicious; by choosing a bright red, the vans stand out from the norm which creates a false sense of security. A new meaning for a red herring. But this is mere speculation. There is no hard evidence, nothing to back up this outrageous claim.

Except there is.

Dingbro LTD has thirty-three bases strategically positioned across Scotland (which is one of the most strategically significant locations if you plan to cross the Atlantic) on both coasts.

Scotland is not only accessible from Russia, but it also houses the UK's nuclear arsenal remarkably close to the area where there is a large clump of Dingbro locations. They claim to be car part distributors which means they have an excellent excuse to travel all over the country, they also have unquestionable access to mechanical parts and equipment such as "suspension air bags and brake drums for large lorries & cranes. Filters and batteries for deep sea oil tankers & cruise liners." Dingbro also hold the contract with the Scottish government for servicing emergency services, councils and local authorities which gives them easy access to government facilities and equipment.

When you look at the UK Government report, it says the company was founded in 1982 only a month before the death of General Secretary Brezhnev. Brezhnev was best known for his doctrine where he stated that "threat to socialist rule in Europe was a threat to the Soviet Union and therefore justified the intervention of fellow socialist states." Could Dingbro be his replacement for the Cambridge Five? A way to ensure there was no British intervention in the Soviet Union? Dingbro vans have been seen in the Loch Ewe area of the Highlands where there are both NATO refuelling station and bi-annual NATO exercises. NATO was founded to defend member countries from the threat of a Russian attack. During the second world war Russia took part in the Arctic Convoys which supplied Russia with food and supplies needed for the war effort. These convoys took place out of Loch Ewe, this is how this secluded and otherwise unknown area has been breached by Russian intelligence.

If that is not enough to convince you, take a look at their website. This website is so simple and archaic it has clearly been created in haste at the start of it being common for real businesses to have a website. The graphics of the website are terrible and the whole website is extremely glitchy. The website has multiple slogans in a desperate attempt to establish their claim as a legitimate company such as, "Treat others how you want to be treated" this sounds less like a customer service policy and more like part of the communist manifesto. Their website is also riddled with both spelling and grammatical mistakes. This is consistent with English being a second language, it also emphasises the point that the website was created with haste and little care. Not only are there no end of clues on the website, but when you compare the British Government's report to the website, you can see there are inconsistencies. The website claims that Dingbro was founded in 1973, whereas the government report states that it was in fact founded in 1982. Does this inconsistency prove a fatal flaw within the espionage plot of the Russian government?

The only thing left to say is that Dingbro LTD is a façade. Fake. False. A front for a secret government organisation designed for international espionage



Solutions to be published in next week's edition!

1. The High School of Dundee was founded by monks from the Lindores Abbey. In what year was the school founded?
2. Dundee's nine incorporated trades were formed in the 16th century. Name both of the trades which begin with the letter 'b'
3. The city of Dundee council area has the second highest population density in Scotland, with 2,470 people per km². Which Scottish council area has the highest?
4. The city of Dundee's coat of arms contains a pot of white lilies on a blue field. Which of Dundee's patron saints does this represent?
5. D.C. Thomson is a Dundee-based media company whose publications include 'The Courier', 'The Evening Telegraph' and 'The Beano'. Name another of D.C. Thomson's current publications?

EDITORS' NOTE

Properly editing my first-ever Columns, wow. This was supposed to be so we could learn what on earth we're supposed to be doing next year. We definitely still have a lot to work out. I'm really excited to be able to leave my mark on the paper. I don't know how but look forward to some changes...

Editor Meagan

Have a fab weekend!

THE COLUMNS TEAM