

THE COLUMNS

by pupils; for pupils

HSD's Newsletter: Issue 98



Seasons greetings from the columns team! With one day left at the time of publication, we wish everyone a very merry Christmas and happy new year. I encourage you to check out previous columns editions, issue 96 has a very useful list of charities to donate to, any and all donations would be appreciated. While this year draws to a close, it's important to look back, enjoy the memories and reminisce. From happy moments (not failing higher maths) to bittersweet recollections; these are all an integral part of the human experience. Equally, recognising the privilege of our location is important, as more and more conflicts arise globally. While for some of us, Christmas will be a happy experience, for others that will not be the case. It's important to think and empathise beyond borders; from Gaza to Ukraine. It's equally important to look forward, to what can and will be in this new year. With that, here is the last edition of the columns for 2023!

Editor, Ruby McIntee



Spiced Ginger Cookies

A perfect Christmas cookie, full of rich spices and very moreish!

Ingredients

100g unsalted butter, diced
225g plain flour
2 x 5ml baking powder
2 x 5ml bicarbonate of soda
1 x 15ml ground ginger
2 x 5ml mixed spice
100g caster sugar
60g golden syrup



Method

1. Heat oven to 160c fan. Line two large baking trays with parchment paper.
2. Place the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and spices in a bowl and rub in the butter until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.
3. Stir in the sugar.
4. Heat the golden syrup in the microwave for 30 seconds. Add to the mixture and stir to form a dough. You may to use a fork to ‘mash’ the ingredients together as this does take some effort.
5. Using a teaspoon roll the dough with your hands into 16 walnut-sized balls, then arrange at least 2cm apart, on the baking tins.
6. Bake for 8-10 minutes until golden. Cool on the trays before transferring to a wire rack.

Christmas Concert



CHOCOLATE GANACHE TRUFFLES

A luxurious treat for Christmas.

Ingredients

70ml double cream

140g milk or dark chocolate



Method

1. Finely chop 140g of chocolate.
2. Place the double cream in a pan and bring **just to the boil**, remove immediately and add the chocolate, beat well with a wooden spoon till smooth.
3. Place in a shallow dish and put into freezer to set for about ten minutes.
4. Take teaspoons of the mixture and roll quickly into little balls. If mixture gets sticky, cover your hands with cocoa powder or drinking chocolate.
5. Roll in cocoa powder, drinking chocolate powder or chopped almonds. Serve chilled.
6. If dipping in melted chocolate it is easier to put the rolled truffles in the freezer first to let them harden to prevent them becoming too soft before coating in your choice of melted chocolate.

Makes Approximately 14 truffles.

Junior Nativity!



Christmas Jumpers!!



Ho Ho Ho!



Saturnalia

Izzy Clark

Happy holidays! The end of the year is always filled with a variety of different festivals and celebrations, regardless of where you are in the world and what cultural traditions you follow. There's something magical about the time around the solstice (the longest night of the year, usually around December 21st) and all the snow and ice that invokes a certain kind of wonder across humanity, from pole to pole and hemisphere to hemisphere, and throughout history. Whilst advertisements and pop culture would have you believe that Christmas is the only thing worth celebrating at the end of December, there's a massive range of different traditions from across the globe that are celebrated during this special time. From long-lasting events such as Christmas, Hannukah, Kwanzaa and Pancha Ganapati, to newly-created festivities like HumanLight and Longest Night, fictional winter holidays like Hogswatch, Winter's Crest and Snowdown, and revived traditions like Yule, Modraniht, Koliada and Saturnalia, there's an undeniable excitement that the end of the year brings us as a species.

As a classicist and a future student of anthropology, I'm always intrigued by ancient traditions and how they impact our modern lives. So the Roman festival of Saturnalia was a perfect topic for me to research for this piece. Saturnalia was a week of partying, revelry and misrule beginning on December 17th and ending on December 23rd (if you're looking to bring a bit of Saturnalia fun into your life, as of the time of publication, you've still got time!). The event was dedicated to the god Saturn, who, in mythology, ruled over humanity in a Golden Age long before Rome. The traditions of the Saturnalia reflected this state of innocence and bliss, as the nights reached their longest and the weather got its coldest.

What did the Romans - known enjoyers of lavish parties, raucous games and public revelry - do to celebrate a tradition all about freedom and fun? There were two aspects to Saturnalia festivities: a public ceremony, and private partying. The temple of Saturn in Rome (of which part still stands) was the site of a Greek religious rite carried out by the priests and members of the Senate on December 17th, which would be followed by a public banquet. Schools, gyms, courts and businesses were all closed for the duration of Saturnalia, so everyone would get involved in the street celebrations.

After the public part of Saturnalia came private events, where people would retreat to their own homes to engage in more merriment. Unusually for Roman society, Saturnalia was a time of freedom for all - including slaves, who were free to dine with their masters, or to reverse the roles and have food prepared for them. Women and children were also permitted at events typically reserved for only adult men, leading to a more relaxed atmosphere of partying for all. Whilst we typically associate Turkey and goose with winter celebrations, the Romans ate pork, a tradition I can definitely support. Saturnalia was also a time for gift-giving, and we have lots of archaeological evidence confirming an exchange of gifts between family members taking place on December 19th, as well as perhaps the first Christmas cracker jokes (the poet Martial has a book of poems designed to accompany gifts at Saturnalia).

The biggest part of the home-based portion of Saturnalia was the appointment of the King of the Saturnalia, much like the European tradition of King's Cake, where one member of the household is randomly chosen as "ruler" and must be obeyed to varying levels of humour. Along with the gifts, this is the aspect of Saturnalia that has best survived to the modern day.

Saturnalia's universal appeal let it spread all across the Roman Empire, impacting various different post-Roman cultures. Whilst it hasn't seen the same sort of Neo-pagan revival as Yule or Kolaida, there are still people who incorporate sections of the Saturnalia into their wintertime festivities. Nowhere does this better than the English town of Chester, who holds a Saturnalia parade each year, complete with military parades in Roman costumes, people giving out candles, and the exchanging of gifts. Chester takes its Roman history seriously, and whilst you might have to be a particularly passionate classicist to enjoy Saturnalia to the extent of some people, you can still appreciate the impact it's had on modern winter holidays.

So, as the Romans would say: "Io Saturnalia!"

UKRAINE

Sophia Kapelyukh

One Sunday, I met a Ukrainian refugee in my church. She and her mum are from Kyiv, and are taking refuge in the UK while their dad is still in Ukraine – no men are allowed to leave. Hearing their experience during the bombardments in Kyiv was unimaginable. Almost every night the air siren would sound and they would have to quickly make their way to the nearest bomb shelter. One endless night, after days of no sleep, the air siren sounded again. But she and her family did not go to the shelter - they were too exhausted to move. Lying in their apartment, not knowing if a bomb would strike their building down, they could only hope they survived.

The West is getting tired too, but they can't give up, otherwise Ukraine may perish.

A couple weeks ago the US senate had blocked the aid bill to help Ukraine as the Republicans pressed their demands for tougher measures to control immigration into the US. Now Hungary also blocked a €50bn in EU aid to Ukraine. Until now, the support from abroad have greatly supported Ukraine in their fight, but the stalling aid is greatly worrying for everyone... well almost everyone.

Many newspapers have called the wavering support an early Christmas present for Putin. Since Ukraine had begun its counteroffensive in 2022, it had retaken land such as Kherson and Kharkiv Oblast, huge successes and boosts for the country and the world. But with the withering aid from other countries, further successes look dimmer, and Putin's present keeps becoming more real and terrifying. Ukraine's counteroffensive in 2023 had failed.

"We really need the help. In simple words, we cannot get tired of this situation, because if we do, we die." Olena Zelenska said these words in an interview just hours after a Russian missile attack. She spoke gravely about the awful consequences that Ukraine would face if funding ceased, saying that Ukraine would be in "mortal danger".

Is there still hope for a Christmas miracle? In a very recent interview, Zelensky was asked by the BBC whether he thought Ukraine was on the cusp of losing the war, his answer was firm, 'No'. Ukraine will keep standing strong and fighting determinedly against Russia, with the goal of restoring all of Ukraine's internationally recognised borders, including Crimea. For 2024, the country plans to mobilise 500,000 more men and produce a million more drones. But Ukraine must have the support promised to them, the West must keep standing with Ukraine until the end, because this is the only hope Ukraine have of winning the war. Countries must not give Putin the Christmas present he's been wishing for ever since 2014.

2023 IN REVIEW

Jack Mitchell

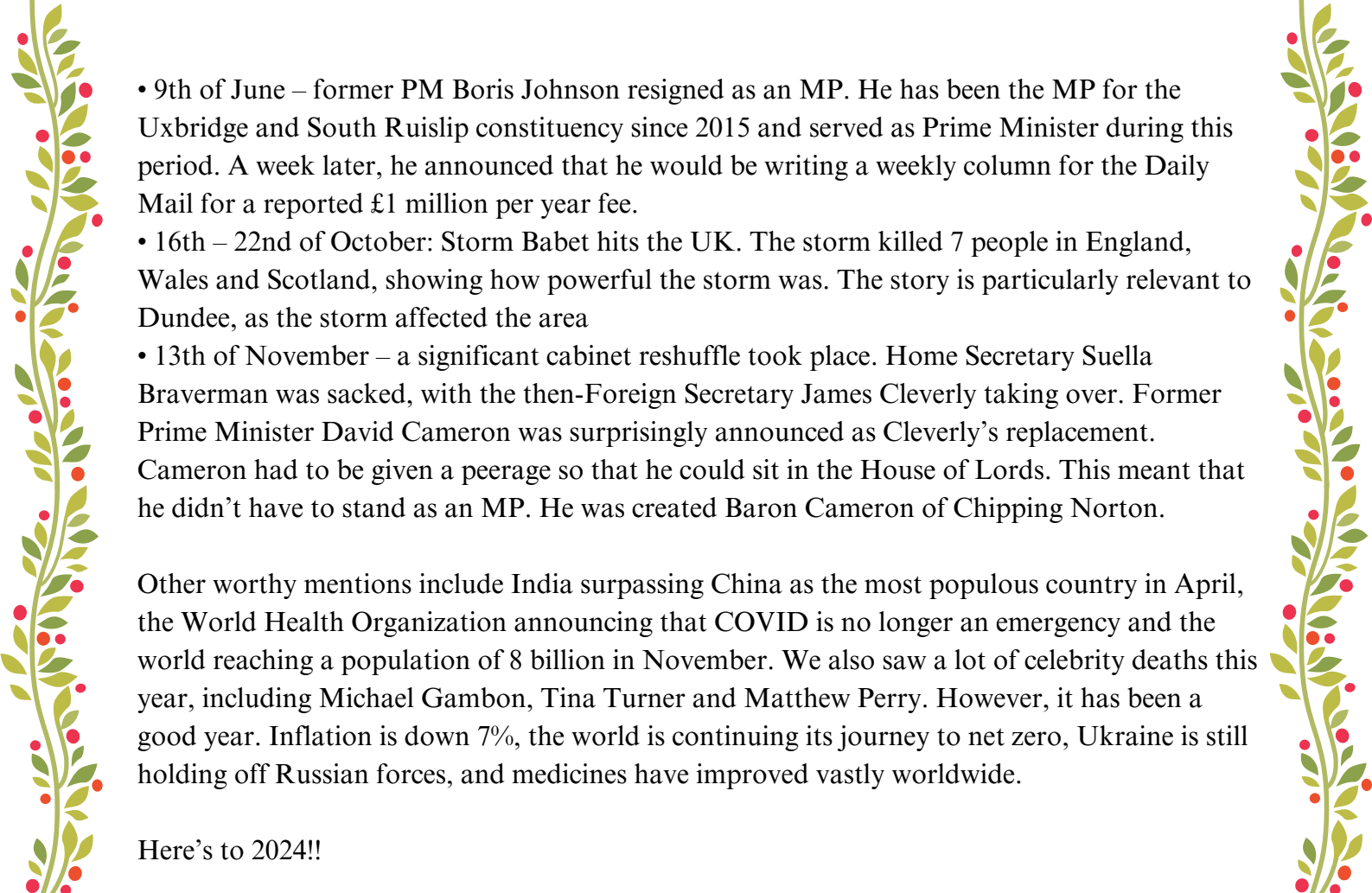
2023 has been a very busy year, with lots happening. We have seen climate change starting to have a bigger presence in the world, a hefty amount of political change, and high-profile deaths among other things. We will now look in greater detail at just some of the big events of MMXXIII (2023):

International

- 6th of February – a 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit Turkey and Syria. The death toll of the earthquake and its aftershocks amounted to over 50,000 people. It was the deadliest natural disaster of 2023. The World Bank estimated that the earthquake caused over \$34 billion in damage.
- 18th of June – the Titan submarine (which was carrying 5 souls) went missing. The submersible was on a tourist expedition to view the wreck of the Titanic. Each of the tourists had to pay a reported \$250,000 sum for the journey. Unfortunately, all 5 onboard were confirmed dead after debris was found by the Coast Guard. It is thought that the vehicle imploded due to poor design for the high-pressure environment it was in.
- 4th of September – Storm Daniel hits the Mediterranean. The tropical storm was the deadliest of its kind in the Mediterranean and left almost 10,000 dead. Most of the damage was dealt to coastal Libya. Over 1,000,000 have been affected.
- 8th of September – While Storm Daniel continued affecting Libya, an unrelated earthquake of magnitude 6.9 hit nearby Morocco. This natural disaster took place near Marrakesh and killed nearly 3,000.
- 7th of October – the war between Israel and Hamas began. Palestinian militant groups – led by Hamas – launched an attack on Israel on this day, with the resulting retaliation initiating a two-sided war. Thousands have been left dead. The war continues.
- 30th of November – 13th December: the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference took place in Dubai, UAE. Nearly 170 world leaders attended, as well as thousands of diplomats and ministers. Representing the UK were Foreign Secretary Lord Cameron, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and the King, as well as Scotland's First Minister Humza Yousaf. On the final day, a somewhat positive outcome was achieved after nearly 200 countries agreed to 'transition away' from fossil fuels. COP29 will take place next year in Baku, Azerbaijan, another 'oil state'.

UK

- 15th of February – Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon resigned. She had been in office for 8 years. Following a press conference in which Sturgeon announced her decision was an SNP leadership election. Kate Forbes, Ash Regan and Humza Yousaf faced over a month of debates and campaigning before Yousaf was announced as victorious.
- 6th of May – the coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla took place. Over 2,000 people took their seats in Westminster Abbey for the first coronation in 70 years, while almost 20 million watched from home in the UK. They were joined by some 400 million others who watched from abroad. The ceremony cost an estimated £100 million.
- 9th of May – after just three days, a different spectacle took place. Namely: Eurovision. The competition was held in Liverpool due to the UK's second-place position in last year's Eurovision. The winner normally hosts the contest the following year, but the victorious Ukraine could not because of their ongoing war with Russia. Sweden won the competition, while the UK came second last.

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- 9th of June – former PM Boris Johnson resigned as an MP. He has been the MP for the Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituency since 2015 and served as Prime Minister during this period. A week later, he announced that he would be writing a weekly column for the Daily Mail for a reported £1 million per year fee.
 - 16th – 22nd of October: Storm Babet hits the UK. The storm killed 7 people in England, Wales and Scotland, showing how powerful the storm was. The story is particularly relevant to Dundee, as the storm affected the area
 - 13th of November – a significant cabinet reshuffle took place. Home Secretary Suella Braverman was sacked, with the then-Foreign Secretary James Cleverly taking over. Former Prime Minister David Cameron was surprisingly announced as Cleverly’s replacement. Cameron had to be given a peerage so that he could sit in the House of Lords. This meant that he didn’t have to stand as an MP. He was created Baron Cameron of Chipping Norton.

Other worthy mentions include India surpassing China as the most populous country in April, the World Health Organization announcing that COVID is no longer an emergency and the world reaching a population of 8 billion in November. We also saw a lot of celebrity deaths this year, including Michael Gambon, Tina Turner and Matthew Perry. However, it has been a good year. Inflation is down 7%, the world is continuing its journey to net zero, Ukraine is still holding off Russian forces, and medicines have improved vastly worldwide.

Here’s to 2024!!

Neils Christmas Quiz

NEIL BHAT

The puzzle for this week is as follows:

Santa has a new sleigh. It still accommodates his 9 reindeer, but they must be in a 3x3 square formation. Rudolph must be at the front row of the square, to accommodate his shiny nose. Also, Dasher and Dancer have had a disagreement, and cannot be next to each other in the formation, although they can be diagonally touching. Subject to these conditions, how many ways can the reindeer be arranged? It is not necessary to send the numerical answer; an expression for the answer is acceptable.

THE ANSWERS FOR LAST WEEK WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT EDITION



Christmas Cheer

India Simpson

The final weeks of this term have been filled with house events focused on Christmas spirit and involvement. Last Friday we had the regi paper chain competition, despite the lack of paper and the need of innovitave approaches (Wallace using more ordinary white paper, Airlie's trip to reprographics, Aystree's graph paper and ripping up jotters, and Lindores halving the strips to make a peculiarly thin paper chain), the event was a lot of fun, especially when it came to measuring out the chains at lunchtime. Airlie had the longest chain, then Wallace, Aystree then Lindores.

We also had beat the teacher on Monday lunchtime, with the teacher in the hot seat being Mrs Hudson. There was a record breaking number of participants: 53!!! Out of these, 34 managed to beat Mrs Hudson. The scores, by the number of pupils from each house who 'beat the teacher', were: 1- Aystree; 2- Lindores; 3- Airlie; 4- Wallace. Special congratulations to Scarlett C, from Aystree, for getting full marks! A great effort from all involved!

Form 5 and 6 also had the additional pleasure of the House Christmas Singing Competition. Lindores had a inventive and creative production of 'Step Into Christmas', Airlie shone on the pillars performing 'Last Christmas', Wallace's 'Sparkle and Shine' in Trinity was short but sweet, and Aystree highlighted an important message about Christmas during their rendition of 'Do they know its Christmas'. Lindores came first place, Wallace second, Airlie third and Aystree fourth. Overall, it was a fantastic effort, involving all of 5th and 6th year. It was great to see everyone involved and excited about this house event.



MERRY
CHRISTMAS

HOUSE EVENTS

A quick breakdown of House events and standings!

HOUSE DEBATE

Wallace

HALLOWEEN GROUP

Aystree/Wallace

HOUSE CHEER

Lindores

F1 HOCKEY

Wallace

PAPER CHAINS

Airlie

HOUSE TEACHER QUIZ

Wallace

SWIMMING GALA

Wallace

HOUSE COLORS

Airlie

HOUSE CHOIR

Lindores

66/7 HOCKEY

Aystree

BEAT THE TEACHER

Aystree

66/7 RUGBY

Wallace

JUNIOR HOUSE DEBATE

Airlie

EDITORS' NOTE

And that's a wrap (pun intended) on The Columns for 2023! What a year it's been - and we at The Columns team hope you've had just as exciting a term as we all have, and that you're all looking forward to the holidays (I know I am!). Hopefully, we can all enjoy the holidays (well, as much as possible when prelims loom ahead) and spend time with our families and loved ones.

Personally, I know I'm most excited for all the party food and roast dinner I'm going to eat, but everyone has a different favourite part of the holidays. Maybe we'll even get a white Christmas...

Editor Izzy Clark

*Have a fab
weekend!*

see you next term!!!

THE COLUMNS TEAM