

THE COLUMNS

by pupils; for pupils HSD's Newsletter: Issue 137

Photo - Ruby McNair

We have a bumper edition for you this week! 12 whole pages of wordy goodness. Why the jump to twelve pages I hear exactly none of you ask? Well, it's because the physical version of this (that contributors can pick up in Mrs Tevendale's room on Friday) can only be printed off with a number of pages divisible by four. And we usually only get enough submissions to fill eight pages, sometimes less, so that's usually what we publish. However: PLOT TWIST! 🗨️ 📰 🗨️ This week we had too much for eight full pages! This is largely down to Al's massive article on 18th century sail-powered warships, as well as a new regular contribution: a dystopian story set in the year 2100, to be published in the form of a weekly serial starting now! We've also had lots of great articles from our usual writers, ranging from books to the budget. So instead of padding it put to the usual eight, I had to pad it out to 12 pages. Will this become the norm? That depends on you, readers, on you taking the initiative and writing more articles for us. We've had lots of great submissions recently, and I think more people are reading. So we must be doing something right.

Editor Charlie

A Peruvian Mystery – Solved?

Lucy Smith

The Band of Holes is perhaps one of Peru's biggest archaeological mysteries. Spanning over 1.5km, around 5000 holes dug into the ground along the ridge of a mountain, archaeologists have spend almost a century puzzling over what on earth this phenomenon could mean. This month, new research has given us an idea into the purpose and origins of such a bizarre site.

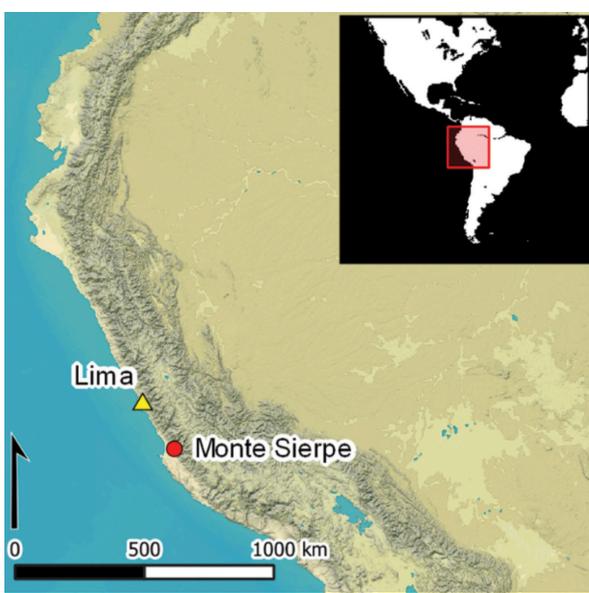
First discovered in 1933, on Monte Sierpe, many theories have surrounded these holes, ranging from burial sites, to extraterrestrial activity (yes aliens!). However, the one that seemed the most plausible, and the one that now has evidence to back it up, is the idea of a marketplace or storage of goods. We have known for a while that the holes dated from around 1000-1300AD, suggesting that these were of Incan creation. But in the more recent research, archaeologists took soil samples from various holes, and with new technology, they were able to detect traces of pollen from various plants, like maize, corn, and sweet potato. So it's highly probable that these goods were stored in these holes, even if only for a short time.

The mountain ridge that these holes lie along is a border between two main towns, so perhaps this was a way to communicate, or barter. All the holes are the same size, and in regular sets of around 80 each. Maybe it was a way of creating set measurements, we have kilograms today, but imagine a world before weights, we would simply say 'I want one hole of the maize, and I'll give you 3 holes of the corn.'



Even better, there have been khipus discovered around the area, khipus being the Incan writing system made of knotted ropes. These khipus have the same number of cords as the sets of holes, so it's possible that they were recording what was traded or sold at this marketplace, maybe even collecting taxes that were due.

Now, fascinating as all this is, it is still just theory, as a lot of archaeology is. Perhaps this new 'discovery' means nothing, or we've interpreted it all wrong, but it's certainly an interesting and thought provoking idea to consider, and worth keeping an eye out for any future news!



Recipe - Chocolate Ganache Truffles

Mrs Ross

These will not last long as very moreish! You can of course double the recipe.

Ingredients

70ml double cream
140g milk or dark chocolate

Makes approximately 14 truffles.

Method

Finely chop 140g of chocolate.
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.

Place in a shallow dish and put into freezer to set for about ten minutes.

Take teaspoons of the mixture and roll quickly into little balls. If mixture gets sticky, cover your hands with cocoa powder or drinking chocolate.

Roll in cocoa powder, drinking chocolate powder or chopped almonds. Serve chilled.

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. Decorate as you wish!



Under the Floorboards – Case File 5

The Leda Class

Al Forbes

This week, I want to go into detail about something that interests me. I've always been a sucker for ships around the time of the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars. I've always enjoyed films such as *Master and Commander* or *Hornblower*. In fact, I was so bold as to set my English portfolio on the Leda Class ship: HMS Leda (unless I change it I'm not sure).

To help my portfolio writing, I took a visit to the Unicorn and took some pictures and learn some facts. Hopfully I can pass on my (extensive knowledge in this field to you. I hope you enjoy, and welcome back to another instalment of Under the Floorboards.

Category	Guns	Crew	What Counted As This Class	What They Did
1st Rate	100–120	800–900	Massive three-deckers (HMS Victory vibes)	Fleet flagships, line of battle tanks, ultimate flex ships
2nd Rate	90–98	700–750	Slightly smaller three-deckers	Heavy hitters, second-in-command flagships
3rd Rate	64–80	500–650	Big two-deck ships... the RN's WORKHORSES	Main battle line ships, fleet action queens
4th Rate	50–60	300–400	Smaller two-deckers (barely counted as ships-of-the-line)	Colonial duty, escorting, not ideal in battle by 1800
5th Rate	32–44	250–320	Frigates (like the Leda-class 38s)	Scouting, showing the flag, raiding, chasing, independent ops
6th Rate	20–28	160–200	Small frigates, post ships	Dispatch work, patrol, minor fleet roles
7th Rate (rare)	14–20	120–150	Small unrated ships sometimes shoved in here	Courier duty, anti-privateer work

In the time of the French Revolutionary Wars and Napoleonic Wars, the British admiralty was pumping out ships fast. Massive ships of the line (such as the 104 gunned ship HMS Victory) battered the French, but that wasn't all the Admiralty was looking for



Picture 1: Badly damaged, HMS Surprise escaping from the French much larger ship Acheron. (brianrxm.com) (Master and Commander – The Far Side of the World).

Picture 2: HMS Surprise takes on two decks of the French ship Acheron. (patrickobrian.fandom.com) (Master and Commander – The Far Side of the World).



They were looking for fast, nimble, agile ships designed to out-sail larger enemy ships, or use there manoeuvrability against the larger-shipped enemy as an advantage. Ships such as the HMS Unicorn were a part of that effort, and were ment to do such tasks. Ships like the HMS Surprise (*Master and Commander*) or HMS Hotspur (*Hornblower*), both actually the names of Leda class ships (but these aren't since they're fictional) are frigates. Also, the fake coal power oven is actually on the Unicorn. Interesting.

The Leda Class were built to hold 38 guns, but some could (on active duty) up to or around 46 guns. The design was directly copied from the captured French frigate *Hébé*. With the French frigates being more technologically advanced in that era, it was vital for the British to match against the French at a time of war.



The Leda class was mostly built between 1800-1830, mass built out of oak frames and copper sheathing, but some ships were made mostly out of other woods. It was intended for long-range cruising, protection, scouting, and independent operations, but by the time the majority of them were built: war was over, and some of them only lived active duty for 3 years.

The starboard battery of the Unicorn on the gun deck. (Al Forbes).

The HMS Unicorn was completed too late for action since the war had ended, so the admiralty, up to their neck in budget problems, eventually placed a roof over the decking to stop water damage. The masts were never fully added.

Unlike, say, pens, the Leda class ships had differences amongst them. For example, the *Trincomalee* was more bigger and wider than the unicorn since it's made out of a different type of wood (can't confirm which, sorry). The Unicorn is unique too. The stern of the ship is wrinkled, curved. That is because the hull of those old wooden ships would be less likely to be more damaged if it is curved, most likely to help with structural integrity if it does get punctured by a cannon ball. Sadly (or luckily depending on how you're thinking about it), this design was scrapped since it was considered to unattractive (quote anonymous; "it's just three large pimples sticking out of its bum"). But I beg to differ, the Leda is still beautiful in its own sense.



The curvy rear end of the Unicorn. (Al Forbes).

In a time when so many frigates existed in the world, let alone the British fleet, what made the Leda class so unique?

Well, to start of with, nothing. The Leda class was so similar to other classes such as the *Apollo* class, or the *Cydnus* class, or the *Amphibion* class, or the *Endymion* class (AKA The Leda if it went to the gym), or the *Amazon* class, or... you know what let's stop it there.

Okay never mind, the point is, there are so many other classes of frigates similar to the Leda class. Similar. Not the same. Because it did have a few differences.

It was one of the largest frigate classes ever built by the Royal Navy. It was famous for there excellent sailing qualities as it was fast in light winds and stable enough in heavy seas. Its distinctive French style hull lines, finer bow, fuller stern, etcetera, gives them even more speed.

It's more roomy and comfortable for crew than other earlier British frigates, and had flexible armoury. It could normally carry 38 guns but could often carry 46+ once wartime extras were added (ie smaller guns were counted).

One of the 18 pounder guns on the starboard gun deck. (Al Forbes).



Thing is, another thing that makes them unique is how lucky you can get with them. Since they were wanted ASAP by the Admiralty, some mistakes were made in the sense that the HMS Shannon was so badly warped from her ineffective building techniques, she nearly missed her confrontation with the USS Chesapeake, only seven years after launch, which is really bad when you come to think of it.

But, if your lucky, you can get on a ship that would last right to the 21st century (and hopefully beyond). The Unicorn and Trincomalee (the oldest ships still afloat) is still with us, and has a fighting chance of survival into the next century.

Now, I got a table of practically every Leda class ship, and edited it (a lot). See you on the other side!

➤ 1807–1811

Wrecked: Anson (1807), Meleager (1808), Doris (1809), Pomone (1811). Burnt: Blanche (1807)

➤ 1815–1820

Sold: Niemen (ex-French, 1815), Severn (1825*), Samarang (1831*). Broken Up: Nereus (1816), Tartar (1817), Aeolus (1817), Iphigenia (1817), Alceste (1817), Macedonian (1820), Niemen (RN-built, 1820)

*Listed for type alignment.

➤ 1825–1836

Broken Up: Creole (1828), Wrecked: Thetis (1830), Sold: Hebrus (1836)

➤ 1840s

Broken Up: Forte (1844), Arethusia (1845)

➤ 1850–1866

Broken Up: Newcastle (1850), Leonidas (1850), Ister (1858), Shannon (1859), Glasgow (1861), Fairy (1865), Modeste (1866)

➤ 1870–1875

Broken Up: Serapis (1870), Tiber (1872), Seringapatam (1873), Daedalus (1874), Menelaus (1875), Tenedos (1875)

➤ Late 19th Century

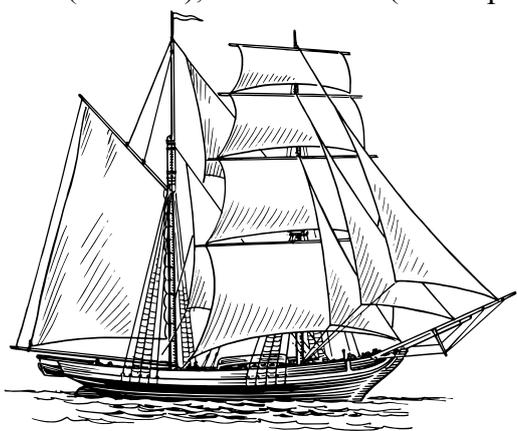
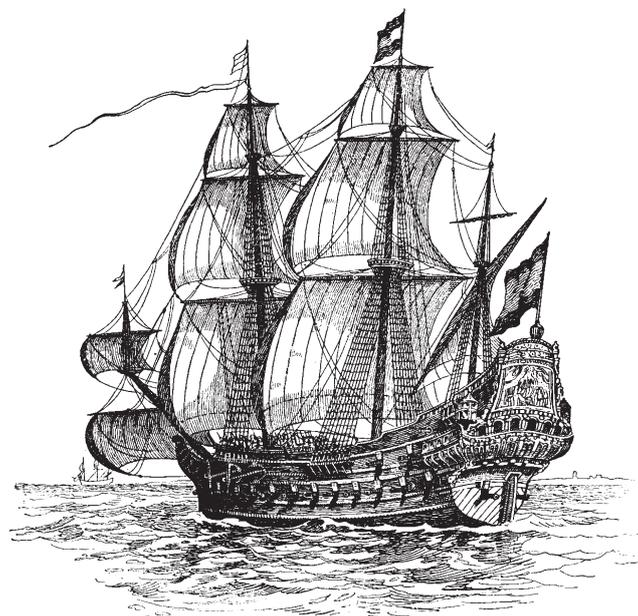
Sold: Cambrian (1892), Burnt: Tamar (1897)

➤ 1900–1905

Broken Up: Leander (1904), Hamadryad (1905)

➤ Survivors

Unicorn (Dundee), Trincomalee (Hartlepool)

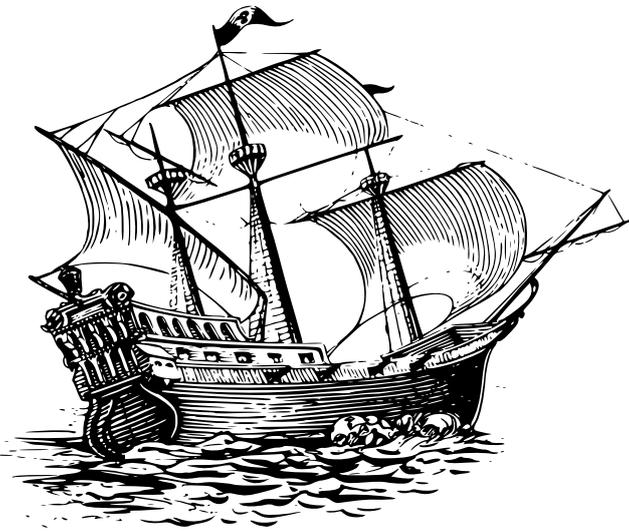


Now guys, let me just keep a bit of this article for a good cause, so I urge you, help preserve Dundee's seafaring legacy by supporting the HMS Unicorn! Donate to the Unicorn Preservation Society to help fund Project Safe Haven, which will secure the ship in the East Graving Dock. Your gift (including Gift Aid if you're a UK taxpayer) makes a lasting impact. Visit hmsunicorn.org.uk/donate to contribute and be part of history.

Bow shot of the Unicorn. (Al Forbes)



And that is the end of another one of my deep dives. If you have any requests for a next article, then please email forbesaa@highschoolofdundee.org.uk to present a topic idea. I hope you enjoyed this article, see you next time!



Thank you to the wonderful staff of the HMS Unicorn for being so warm and welcoming (even if it was freezing). Thank you to the Unicorn Preservation Society for keeping such good work up. For this article, I used recourses including Wikipedia and Wiki's

History Book Recommendations

Maisey Lafollete

There are two things I'm obsessed with, books and history, the only thing better than them: books about history. I've made a list of history books, both fiction and nonfiction for a variety of ages that I would highly recommend.

Nonfiction

A Short History of the World in 50 Lies by Natasha Tidd:

This book has something for every type of history fan, from the times of Alexander the Great, to China in the Middle Ages, all the way to the Chernobyl disaster. Tidd, shows us how lies can change how we view different events and historical figures, she explains the myth and explains why it's completely wrong in a way everyone can understand and makes you want to learn more.

Agent Most Wanted by Sonia Purnell:

One of my all-time favourites, Purnell tells us the story of Virginia Hall, a woman amputee who became the most wanted women in all of Nazi occupied France due to her spy ring securing essential information for the Allies. We see her journey fighting against stereotypes and prejudices, her successes and failures and her legacy. You have to read it to find out more about the Limping Lady.

Hazardous Tales by Nathan Hale: This graphic novel series is perfect for children aged between nine and twelve. This series teaches children about American history after the famous spy Nathan Hale is eaten by a history textbook, and now he tells the story of America to 'Hangman' and a British soldier. There's plenty of humour woven throughout and is an entertaining way to educate children about history. Yes, the main character and author share the same name.

Fiction

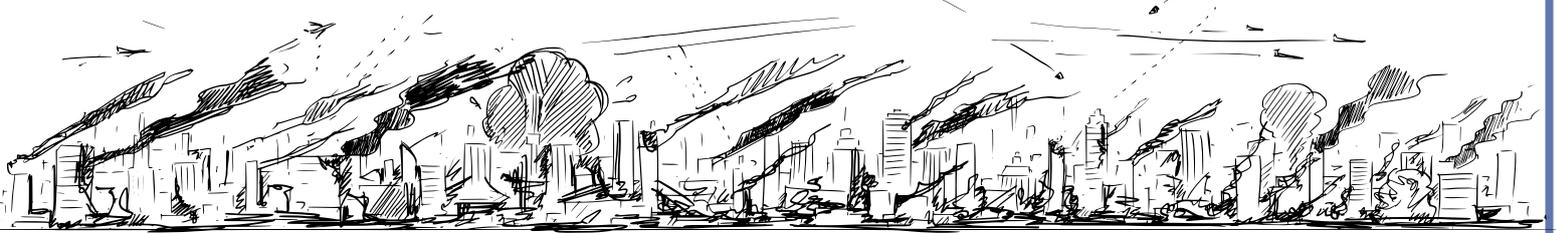
Don't Tell the Nazis by Marsha Forchuck Skrypuch:

I would recommend this story for readers ages about eight to twelve. Krystia lives in Soviet occupied Ukraine, until the Nazis invade and change everything. The Jewish community is forced into ghettos, including Krystia's friends, she has to risk everything to save them, but will she be able to?

Susanna's Midnight Ride by Libby Carty McNamee:

(I was fortunate enough to meet the author and have my copy signed.) The novel tells the story of a young girl named Susanna during the American Revolutionary War. Her home is invaded and she learns about the British soldiers' plans. She bravely rides away to warn Lafayette changing the outcome of the Battle of Yorktown. The novel is based on a true story, and I would recommend it to children around the age of twelve.

I could go on and on about history books, but I have to end the article somewhere. I hope some of you give these stories a chance and enjoy them as much as I have



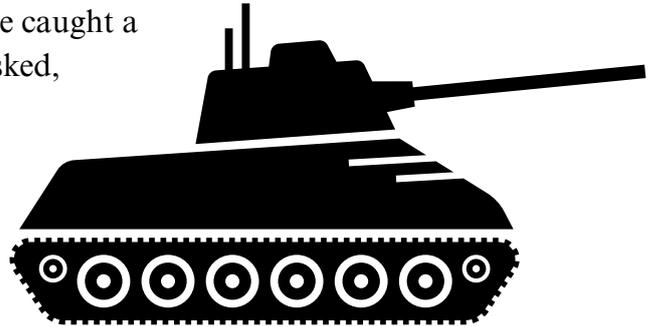
17:23 | 06.02.2100 | UST+4 | Moskva, New Soviet Powers

Supreme President Putina's posters draped every wall, her cold eyes watching over the square as she stepped onto the balcony. The men below saluted in perfect unison while the crimson flag of the New Soviet Powers climbed the pole, fluttering weakly in the icy wind. Then, like a single machine, their voices rose in hollow harmony:

“Rise the Soviet, new, once old. Rise the Soviet, great, once gone. Rise the Soviet, power, once nought. Rise the Soviet, Supreme President Putina.”

Mikhail “Misha” Volkov was born in the New Soviet Powers. His father had been a military commander, and after seven years of education, Misha was forced to enlist in the army. He was quiet, but a thinker—a strategist who could outsmart men twice his age in puzzles and war games. Being a thinker, however, was not always a gift. He questioned orders, questioned the way the state was run, questioned everything. But questioning was dangerous. Every answer came with a warning; every curiosity met with silence or punishment. Still, he couldn't stop. The silence only made him listen harder.

He had seen things the State denied existed: transports moving through the night, soldiers wearing masks marked with a symbol he had never seen before. Once, he caught a glimpse of files stamped with the word ICE. When he asked, his superior told him there was no such program. Misha learned to keep his thoughts hidden behind obedience. But at night, in the barracks, he'd sketch maps in the dust under his bed— maps of the northern borders, the routes of the convoys, the distances to the Icelands.



He didn't know why. Not yet. But something inside him whispered that every rule, every command, every “truth” the State fed them was a lie waiting to be broken.

17:28 | 06.02.2100 | UST-5 | Maracaibo, Ultimate Trump States

Thiago Alcaraz, on the other hand, had been rebellious from the start. Raised in the slums and passed around the black market, he learned early how to survive. Clever and quick, he became the leader of a group of boys who called themselves “Los Perdidos” — the Lost Ones.

But not every day was a victory. Some nights, Thiago returned empty-handed to his street family, their stomachs grumbling through the silence of the alleys. Hunger carved lessons into him that no school ever could. It taught him what power truly meant— control of food, of guns, of people. And he hated it.

He hated the rich men who lived above the markets, trading lives for credits. He hated the soldiers who turned away when children starved in the gutters. And most of all, he hated the world that told him this was the only way to live.

When the recruiters came offering a chance— a uniform, a ration card, a way out— Thiago didn't hesitate. He joined them. But not because he believed in the Ultimate Trump States.

He joined to learn how to break them.

17:35 | 06.02.2100 | UST+8 | Chengdu, Xi Empire

Yan Mei lived by the scenic Fuhe River. Every day was the same: wake up, breakfast, music, art, and dance, then lunch. After that came history lessons with her strict tutor, followed by long hours of language study. And when the day finally faded into evening, she would sit by the riverside garden, counting the stars with her tortoise, Rui Zhi.

Yan Mei had been born in Chengdu and had grown up on the very banks where she now watched the night sky. Though her parents worked far away in Beijing and Shanghai, she had never left her quiet city. Life had shaped her into the perfect traditional girl—graceful, polite, and reserved—but behind her calm eyes lived a quiet restlessness.

Sometimes, as the river rippled silver beneath the moonlight, Yan Mei would wonder what waited beyond its curve. The world outside Chengdu seemed vast and forbidden, yet something in her longed for it—something she couldn't quite name.

When her father returned one evening and told her she had an opportunity to go to Beijing, she didn't even hesitate. For someone who had always followed the same routine, that single yes felt like freedom.

17:42 | 06.02.2100 | UST+2 | Cape Town, African Tribal World

Tau Khumalo was a lion. People called him the Lion, and he lived like one—fierce, proud, and unyielding. He fought on the streets for money or food, and when there was nothing left to win, he hunted wild elk in the hills and sold the meat at the markets. There were no rules in the south of the African Tribal World. If there were, no one followed them.

But on the other side of that rough coin, Tau was a kind brother. He had a younger sister, Amahle—sweet, quiet, and blind. The only thing he placed above fighting was her. For Amahle, he would walk through fire.

One day, word spread of a new plague sweeping across the western coast. Tau knew it would reach them soon. Without waiting for the first signs, he took up his prized spear, packed what little they had, and paid a cart puller to take them north—toward Lagos, the capital, and whatever future waited there.

17:49 | 06.02.2100 | UST+3 | Cairo, Middle East Jewels

Layla Hakim sat in class, half-listening as her history teacher, Dr. Yusuf Darzi, droned on about the old world. Most teachers avoided the topic — it was nearly forbidden — but Dr. Darzi was different. Today, he mentioned a virus called Coronavirus, an illness that once swept across the globe and was only stopped by what he called “the fastest vaccine in human history.”

The class barely reacted, but Layla couldn't stop thinking about it. No one talked about the old world anymore. And yet, as rumours of a new infection began spreading through the streets of Cairo, the name Coronavirus lingered in her mind like a spark that refused to die.

Layla was, in many ways, ordinary. She had a best friend, Mira, a large family of seven, and dreams of one day becoming a doctor — to help, to heal, to understand. She imagined a house full of laughter and children, far away from the tense silence that seemed to hang over the city.

But lately, something inside her was changing. The more she listened, the more she realised that the stories they were told — about the world, the virus, the past — didn't quite fit together.

18:00 | 06.02.2100 | UST | Oxford, Icelands

In the unmapped wastelands of the Icelands, a small civilisation survived — far from the frozen prisons where the contaminated were locked away. The old United Kingdom lived on, not above the ground, but beneath it, buried in a maze of hollow tunnels and forgotten stations.

Down here, outcasts and the unwanted found refuge. People who didn't belong to any state, who didn't fit in the mould of power or obedience. Among them lived a quiet order of doctors, diplomats, and engineers — minds too dangerous to serve the Five Powers.

This hidden world, unseen and unrecorded, had become something far greater than a sanctuary. It was the centre of everything — the virus, the lies, and the truth that could bring the world to its knees

Part 2

20:00 | 06.02.2100 | UST+4 | Inchoun, New Soviet Powers

Misha sat in the mess hall, eating his ration of steak and vegetables under the dim buzz of fluorescent lights. Around him, soldiers talked in low voices — the same talk, the same meals, the same discipline every night. Then, the loudspeakers crackled to life.
“All officers, head to Stage 1. All othe—”

The broadcast broke. Static filled the hall, sharp and cold, before a strange mechanical voice cut through. It wasn't military. It wasn't human.

“This is not a warning. The virus was not born. It was made. They are coming for the truth — and for those who still remember. Find it beneath the ice before it's too late.”

The words echoed through the steel walls, hollow and distorted, before vanishing into silence. For a moment, no one moved. Then came the shouting — orders barked, chairs clattering, boots pounding on the floor. Some claimed it was a glitch from enemy frequencies. Others muttered about ghosts, forbidden transmissions, curses from the Icelands.

Misha didn't move. He just stared at the empty speaker, his fork frozen halfway to his mouth. Around him, chaos grew louder, but his mind was already working, replaying the voice, the words.

Beneath the ice.

He didn't know what it meant. But deep down, he knew one thing for certain — this was no interference.

To Be Continued...

Budget 2025

Jack Mitchell

On Wednesday, Chancellor Rachel Reeves' long-awaited budget was announced, with a number of new and updated policies confirmed. It was slightly overshadowed by the Office for Budget Responsibility's early release of its assessment of the budget a few hours before Reeves was due to speak. The chancellor called the mistake 'deeply disappointing' at the dispatch box.

One of the biggest policies announced was the decision to abolish the two-child benefit cap that meant families could only claim child benefit for up to two children. This cap has been seen by many to be keeping children in poverty, as it is typically poorer families who have over two children. Many Labour MPs tried to get this change to the child benefit system to be made in last year's budget, but the policy was ruled out due to its cost of between £2-3 billion. The fact the Chancellor decided to remove the cap this year shows the government is seeking to appeal more to its left-wing voters, many of whom have recently been showing support for more left-wing parties like the Greens who have been calling for more extreme measures to tackle poverty and inequality.

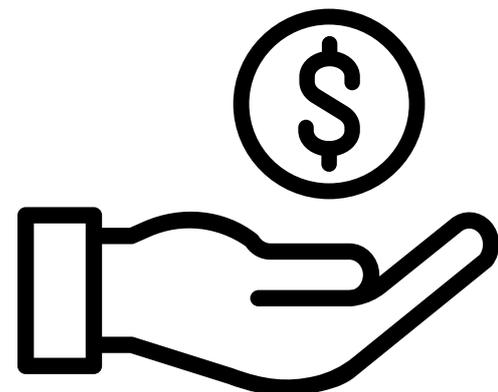
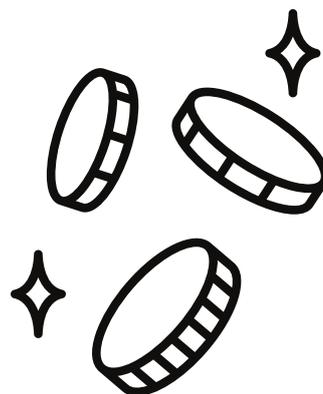
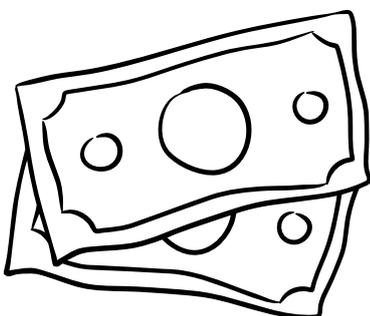
Another policy appealing to Labour's base is the increase in minimum wage from the amount set by last year's budget. 18–20-year-olds on the minimum wage will see an hourly increase of 85p from £10 to £10.85, and those on the National Living Wage will see an hourly increase of 50p, from £12.21 to £12.71. This move will appeal to those on lower incomes and young people, from whom the Greens have seen the biggest uptake in support.

The so-called 'mansion tax' also has been called for by many on the left for some time, and has now been realised by the government. Properties worth over £2 million will now have to pay an extra charge of £2,500 a year alongside their council tax; properties worth over £5 million will have to pay £7,500 per year. This is yet another budget policy that appeals further to the left of Labour's base, which clearly shows the party is now viewing the electoral threat from the Greens as substantial, particularly among younger voters.



In addition to these new policies, income tax and national insurance thresholds will be frozen for another three years, as have the fuel duty and rail fares. The freezing of tax thresholds means that more people end up paying a higher rate, increasing government revenue.

Overall, many of these policies seem to be appealing to more left-leaning voters, showing that Labour is trying to poach potential Green voters through fiscal means, and potential Reform voters through toughening immigration measures. Whether or not any of these policies will actually end up achieving what they are aiming to do remains unclear, but the Labour Party is certainly trying.



And finally...

Seven Questions for Staff

Welcome back to another week of interviewing our fabulous staff at HSD! Today I bring to you the brilliant Mrs Broom of the Chemistry department...

1. Cats or dogs, and why? – **Cats. They're just better – I like their independence**
2. What did you want to be when you were younger? – **A 'Blue Peter' presenter, or a singer in a rock band**
3. Comfort TV show/movie? – **10 Things I Hate About You**
4. What department do you wish you were in? – **Business Management – mainly for the people**
5. Favourite musical artist? – **I'm torn between so many, but my gut reaction is to say 'The Foo Fighters'**
6. What was your first job? – **I worked in WH Smith's and did a paper round before that**
7. Go to karaoke song? – **'Son of a Preacher Man' by Dusty Springfield**

What a delightful set of answers, we're finally getting some cat love. Until next time!

Editors' note

That's all

folks!

Your Editors - Charlie, Emma, and Shan