

# THE COLUMNS



by pupils; for pupils HSD's Newsletter: Issue 134

This week we take some time to remember those who fought for us over 100 years ago and commemorate their bravery and strength despite it feeling so far away from our current lives. This week we bring some articles of Armistice as well as tales of Dundee, our current economy and much more, we hope you enjoy.

— Emma Turton, Co-editor



## Remembering Armistice Day

Lucy Smith

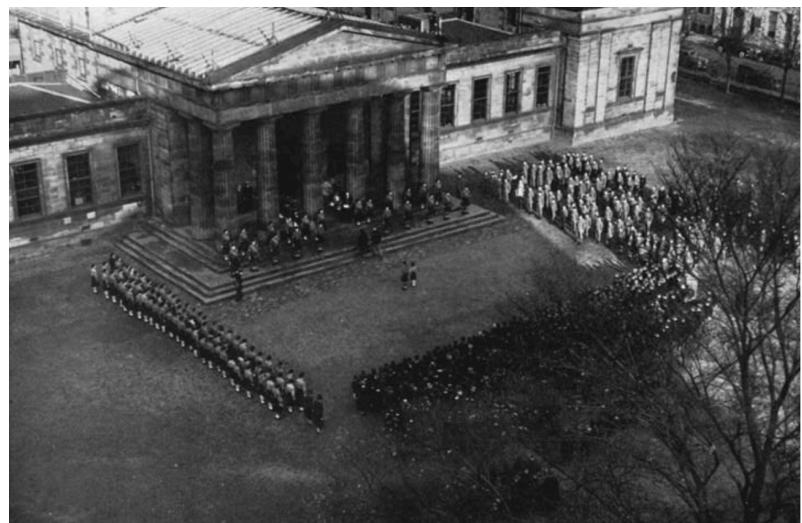
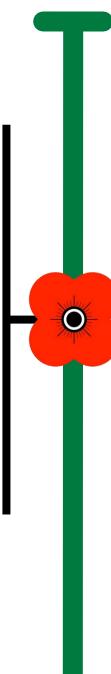
The first national Armistice Day was held in 1919, to remember those fallen in WW1. Today at HSD we hold an armistice parade the Friday nearest to the 11th, which almost all of us have attended, standing freezing in the playground.

Yet our way of commemorating Armistice didn't always look like this. Indeed the idea of the school hosting its own parade is relatively new. For years Dundee City used to host an Armistice day gathering in the city centre, outside the Caird hall, which is what our pupils would be involved in if they wished. In 1932, for some reason that space was no longer free, so we offered up our playground to the public, hosting Armistice day for the first time.

However, it wasn't until 1952 when we had our very own service. Even then, it looked quite different – it was indoors! The first photo we have of our parade is from 1956, by which point it was a whole school affair in the playground.

### 1956

You can see the school gathered at the bottom of the playground, and the cadets on the right. However, girls weren't allowed in the cadet force until the late 80s, so on the left you can see the schools very own Girl Guides, who took part in the ceremony instead



## 1982

In 1982, the weather was so bad so only the senior cadets came out, though at this point in time kilts were still very much in use. Interestingly enough, they have rifles, though some of our modern day cadets have been trained in rifle drill, we've never put it to use



## 1988

### 1988

The wreath laying that we know today, 1988, Mrs Watson would love her skirt...



## 1999

The ceremony from 1999, clearly our pipe band uniform has changed since then. We can also finally see a female cadet, in the middle of the banner party



## 2018

All these compared to the Armistice Day in 2018, the 100th anniversary of WW1, and of the CCF at HSD. Notice the change in uniform (trousers!). I wonder how this parade will look in the future!



## The Streets We Walk

Al Forbes

As I walk around the city of Dundee, or hop on the bus, it's not hard to spot the many negative factors our great city has. From graffiti, to gangs, fights and drugs, anti-social people and the innocent getting injured, I'm sure everyone, pupil or other, has seen their fair share of trouble, assaults, injuries and violence. Whether we have experienced it or not, seen it or heard of it, it happens. It's not like the myth of "when a tree falls and you're not there it doesn't make a sound," because wherever you are, whenever you are, someone is getting hurt. Someone is being targeted. And someone is going home tonight hurt and wounded. This is the story of the city we live in, and the constant threats we face. Welcome back to Under the Floorboards

 **Warning:** this article contains sensitive topics - drug use, assault, harassment, etc. Reader discretion is advised for those sensitive to these topics. 

You're on the bus and you hear two men behind you, sitting next to a woman. They're in tattered clothes and they smell faintly of something you just can't place your finger on. Out the corner of your eye? A small syringe, pills, a scrap of tinfoil. In that moment a switch flips in a teenager's head: curiosity, boredom, the 'what if' temptation. They think it'll be an escape, a badge of being cool, or a quick fix for stress. But drugs don't stop at one moment of bravado. They creep into friendship groups, romances, after school hangouts; and then everything that used to make sense gets messy. Attendance drops, grades slip, trust erodes, and suddenly the person who giggled at lunchtime is skipping school and hiding texts. The risks are painfully real: overdoses, severe mental health problems, and long-term addiction that can wreck lives before they've even started. It's what happens when curiosity meets a market of people who will exploit it.

Vapes and cigarettes glitter like tiny, portable rebellions (cause some people smoke it as if someone important cares enough to think 'golly gee what a rebel'). For a lot of people our age, vaping seems harmless, like gassy jellybeans, fruity flavours, quick hits, no ash. But don't be fooled. Nicotine hooks the teenage brain faster than you'd think, faster than an adult could, and leaves you wired, anxious, and needing more. What starts as 'just one' can become a daily thing that steals concentration, drains pocket money, and turns 'I'll quit tomorrow' into a pattern (like me and bonbons). Schools try to confiscate, parents try to punish, but the cycle keeps going because the fix is chemical, social, and psychological. If you've tried it, that's fine - you're not alone (not speaking from experience) - but be honest with a trusted adult if it's getting out of control. It's not a ticket into the 'popular group', it's a health risk.



There's another ugly thing we need to call out: being harassed for being 'posh' by private school kids. And if you haven't caught on, yes, I'm talking about the kids from the other schools that labor under the false impression that just because we were a blazer and inhabit an old building or two, doesn't mean we're posh. Posh puts us under the false impression that we're perfect, that we have no problems, that we're smart and wonderful. And yes, we are wonderful (usually), and we are smart (I see that test result) but we're not perfect! No one is, because if we are, there is no room for improvement or development. What the pupils from other schools fail to see is we are all just like them – but we just wear our uniform, and wear it with pride.

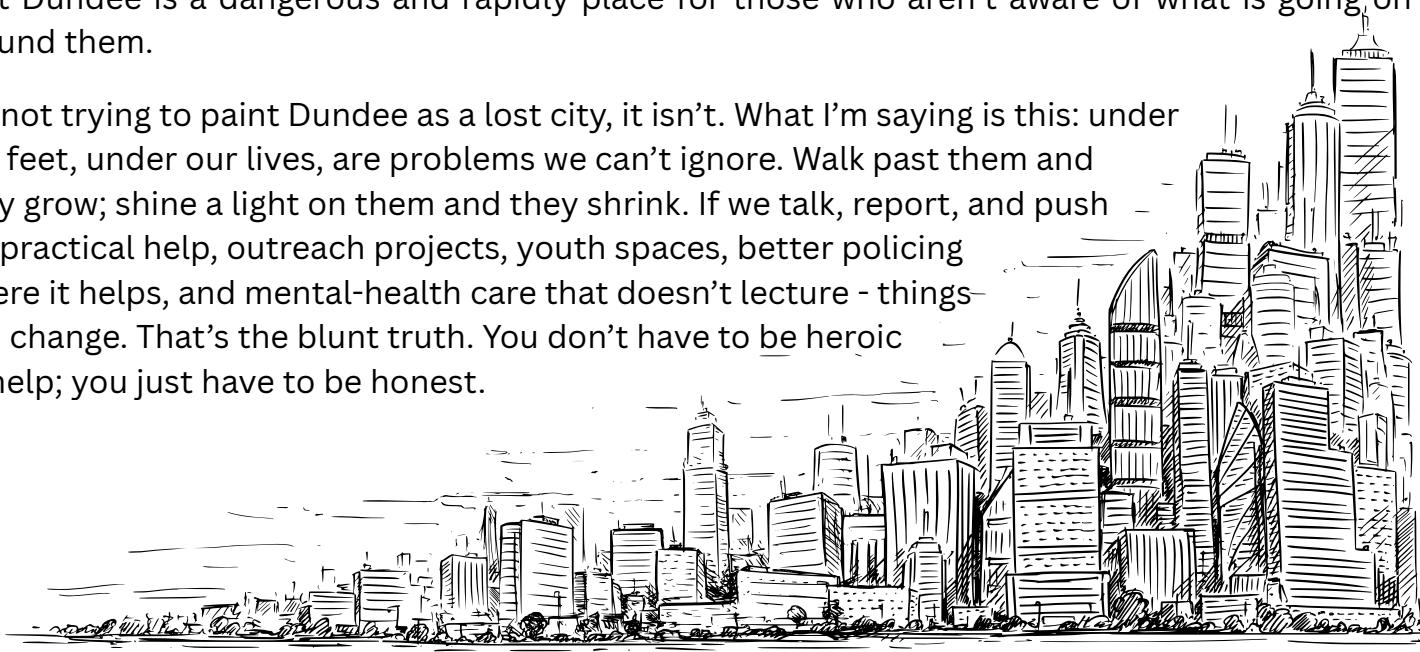
Assaults happen. Not everywhere, not every day, but often enough that you can't pretend it's just 'a story'. Some parts of town have late-night trouble, and sometimes friction leads to serious violence. It's physical injury, yes, but it's also the fear that follows, the missed buses, the shortcuts we stop taking, the places we avoid after dark. If someone gets hurt, it's not something to shrug off. Tell someone. Get medical help. Report it. We're not here to glamorise danger; we're here to say it exists and it needs stopping. Safety isn't just about telling you to 'careful', it's about adults and services stepping up: better lighting, more visible patrols, youth outreach, and places for us to go that aren't labelled 'dangerous' by everyone who doesn't understand.

Let's take a break and talk about language for a second. Calling someone a 'druggie' is easy and satisfying in a mean way, but it's cruel and useless. Words that (can sometimes) dehumanise people make it harder for them to get help, and harder for us to see the full picture. Addiction and substance use usually come with trauma, poverty, boredom, mental-health issues, or being targeted by older people who use kids as customers. If we want change, we need to talk about people as people, not as caricatures. That way, we can push for treatment, harm reduction, and real community support instead of just shouting 'lock them up' and walking away. Of course as long as they do there bit to get better, let's make sure they do.

There's a wider background noise to all this, graffiti that isn't art when it's on people's homes, broken lights that make alleyways feel dangerous, groups that loiter and make a bus stop a place you'd rather avoid. These little things add up and tell the city's story: neglected, frayed, and at times, uncaring. But things can be different. Community clean-ups, youth clubs that actually listen, and meaningful partnership between schools, council, and police can chip away at the fear. It won't be instant, but it's better than pretending everything's fine because we've stopped noticing.

And why I did this article? It's because if the graffiti outside the school showed anything, it's that Dundee is a dangerous and rapidly place for those who aren't aware of what is going on around them.

I'm not trying to paint Dundee as a lost city, it isn't. What I'm saying is this: under our feet, under our lives, are problems we can't ignore. Walk past them and they grow; shine a light on them and they shrink. If we talk, report, and push for practical help, outreach projects, youth spaces, better policing where it helps, and mental-health care that doesn't lecture – things can change. That's the blunt truth. You don't have to be heroic to help; you just have to be honest.



## Helplines

If you have seen or experienced any of the above and you believe that you want support, then please contact a number below, tell a trusted friend, or an appropriate adult. If you're ever in danger, call 999. To report something that's not an emergency (like drugs, harassment, or assault), dial 101 - or, if you just fancy pretending you're in America, 911 (kidding, don't). Free help lines include Childline (0800 1111) for anyone under 19, Breathing Space (0800 83 85 87) if you need to talk about stress or mental health, and Samaritans (116 123) for when life just feels a bit too heavy. Speak up, stay safe, and remember: silence helps the problem grow.

## Tales of Dundee

Staying behind for the after party? Here are a few anonymous whiteness who (indirectly quoted) saw some stuff in Dundee...

“I was on the bus and this person that was high just trudged on – didn’t even pay for a ticket. He went and sat on the step. The bus was jam packed. As the bus lurched forward, he stood up and fell hands first into this ladies chest. I got off soon after.”

“I came home from afterschool stuff, and there were these two dogs barking at each other. One of them, probably an XL Bully if I’ve ever seen one, wasn’t on its leash and ran off to find the dog it was just barking at. People jumped as the dog ran past them and climbed up the other dog’s owner’s back.”

“There was this guy at the bus stop that started yelling at a group of students, around S1 age in the playground.”

“I saw a guy running about after he wet himself”

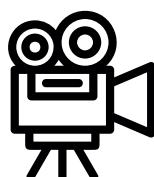
Thank you for reading this case file; of Under the Floorboards. Stay safe

## MOVIE REVIEW

K. Caddick

### the perks of being a wallflower -

This week, I rewatched The Perks of Being a Wallflower, and it's easy to see why it is regarded as a modern classic—it gets just what being a teenager feels like. Everything about it is so delicate from the awkward lonely classes to the quiet moments when you feel like you belong. It perfectly captures the awkwardness and excitement of growing up.



Charlie, Sam and Patrick's friendship, built on the foundation of reliance, is what makes the film so special. They hold each other up through the chaos of high school, and it feels completely real. But underneath the support, there's a real desperation underneath of wanting to belong, showing how easy it is to be taken advantage of in your teenage years when you are just trying to figure yourself out.

I think the reason it sticks with me—and so many others—is its quiet resonance. It's not dramatic, it's honest. The music, the letters, the late night drive and the cosy feel... they all stay with you long after the film credits roll.

Even after rewatching, it hits just as hard—if not harder. It's emotional, even a little heartbreakingly, but ultimately hopeful. The Perks of Being a Wallflower is a film that reminds you you're not alone, no matter how messy life gets.

# Mamdani Wins

Jack Mitchell

After a long, heavily publicised New York mayoral race, it was announced that assembly member Zohran Mamdani had won. This result had been expected after numerous polls showed Mamdani had a significant lead over former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, although in the days and weeks leading up to the election, this gap narrowed considerably. The election saw the highest voter turnout in decades due to a large uptake in voter registration among young people, many of whom were incentivised by Mamdani and his policies.



The mayoral election gained huge media attention, both in the United States and across the world as well, mainly due to the complete change in style of Mamdani to normal politicians. His policies, although not incredibly left-wing by European standards, are a lot more radical than his opponents and predecessors. This young, radical nature led to tens of thousands of New Yorkers volunteering to help his grassroots movement. The lack of corporate funds being funnelled into his campaign also sets him apart, particularly from his main opponent Andrew Cuomo, who received a very large amount of corporate donations and donations from high-net-worth individuals.

His victory seems to have spooked many in the political establishment and business world, not least President Trump, who has repeatedly attacked Mamdani and branded him a 'communist' on many occasions. We'll now see how the clash between very wealthy New York residents and businesses, and Mamdani's younger and less well-off voters plays out.



*A Zohran campaign poster*

The election result also has a huge effect on American politics as a whole, showing significant appetite for a Mamdani/Bernie Sanders/AOC style of politics, albeit in a heavily Democratic city.

Mamdani was not the only Democratic success that night, with many more election victories for the party across the country. In Virginia, the Democrats won the races for Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General, as well as winning a majority in the state's house of delegates. Democrat Mikie Sherrill won the gubernatorial race in New Jersey and the party retained its seats on the Pennsylvania state Supreme Court bench. Prop 50 also passed in California, adding 5 safe congressional seats for Democrats to win in an attempt to balance the redistributing in Texas by Governor Greg Abbott which aided the Republicans.

The New York Democratic victory also has implications across the pond. Here in the UK, we've seen similar youth support for left-wing parties, with the Greens outperforming Labour and the Liberal Democrats in many polls. In a similar way to the United States, we may see a huge uptick in support for the more progressive left led by Polanski and the Greens, and Corbyn and Sultana with Your Party to counter the exponential growth in support for the populist right with Reform. The coming general election could provide the foundations for a shift like this in British politics which would mirror America. Whether or not that will actually happen is debatable. Only time will tell.

# An Investigation Into the UK's Economic Inactivity Problem

Nhat Nguyen

A growing number of people in the UK are unable to work due to long term sickness or disability. According to a recent study, 800,000 more people are out of work due to health conditions than pre-Covid. This is estimated to cost employers £85Bn/year in lost productivity and sick pay and increase pressure on the NHS.

Reasons:

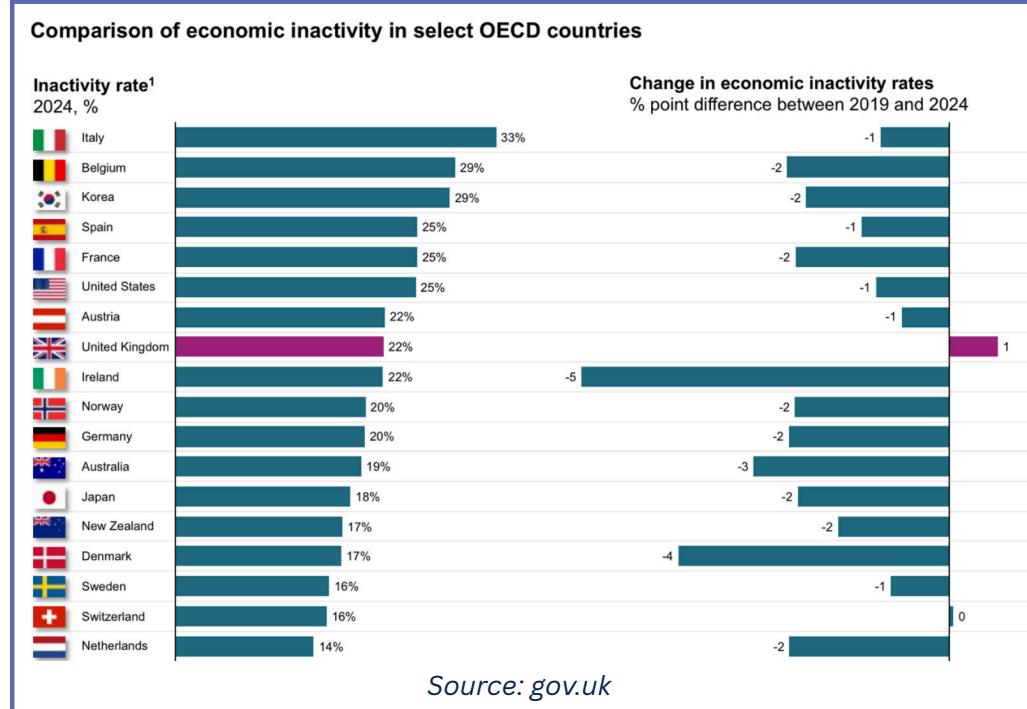
- Mental health issues among young people preventing them from gaining experience and getting on the job ladder
- Physical sickness in older workers and the lingering effect of the pandemic keeps them out of work
- Aging workforce which means as more older adults have health conditions, more students are economically inactive due to caring responsibilities

Why this matters:

An economically inactive workforce has serious consequences for the UK.

- Smaller workforce reduces potential economic growth and productivity
- Higher spending on benefits and healthcare along with less tax revenue for the government put more strain on government finance

The UK is the only OECD country where economic inactivity has risen since 2019, while in other countries it has fallen. This is due to the rising number of people economically inactive due to long-term sickness, now at a record 2.8 million. Long NHS waiting times mean many conditions go untreated and many people in their 50s opted for early retirement after Covid.



How can this be solved:

This is partly a policy failure. Solutions include:

- Reducing the NHS waiting times so people can get quick treatment and avoid long term unemployment
- Introducing early-intervention schemes - identify workers at risk of leaving work due to health issues and giving them early treatment can prevent the cost of health complications down the line.
- Supporting firms to invest in wellbeing programme such as flexible working conditions and healthcare benefit

# Seven Questions for Staff

Lucy Smith

Welcome your new favourite series in The Columns! Over the next year I'll ask the beloved teachers of our school seven questions each week, in an attempt to get to know them better, who knows what secrets will be spilled...

The honourable first guest in this series is the fabled Mr Smith of Senior Management Team, you have the floor.

1. Cats or dogs, and why? – **Dogs, because they're loyal**
2. What did you want to be when you were younger? – **I studied astronomy at university**
3. Comfort TV show/movie? – **I don't watch TV shows for comfort, I watch them for challenge**
4. What department do you wish you were in? – **Classics**
5. Favourite musical artist? – **David Byrne**
6. What was your first job? – **I worked for GCHQ**
7. Go to karaoke song? – **I've never done karaoke, but if I had to choose a song, Older by They Might Be Giants**

Typical Mr Smith answers, that's all from him this week! Keep an eye out for the teachers to come...

## Editors' note

Well, I hope you all enjoyed this weeks edition. As Emma pointed out in her introduction to the paper, this is a time to remember the many conflicts that have taken place in recent history. It is also a time to remember the mistakes, attitudes, fears, and politics that brought about these terrible events, and a time to learn from them, something that is more important than ever in the world today. All too often throughout history, the lessons of the past that should have been learned, have been ignored. The truth is that a minute once a year is far too little an amount of time to spend remembering these lessons and the sacrifices made. The devastation of decades and centuries of bloody conflict, the uncountable loss, and the darkest parts of human history cannot be condensed into a single day or speech. Granted, this is only a school newspaper nobody reads, but if you can all take the time to think a bit more about the horrors and suffering the world has seen and continues to see, and try to learn from it, to try to do anything you can to maybe make the world a better place, then do.

Everyone have a good weekend. Till next time.

Your Editors - Charlie, Emma, and Shan