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Et Cetera

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL

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Cover shot:

Lord Winston

HEAD'S INTRODUCTION

Friday 11th March. Year 9 students have gone to the Battlefields in France and one wonders whether they will have that sensation I have experienced driving in that part of France. That sense of history, of forebears who sacrificed much to make all of what we have possible. There is a lot happening and so some cover lessons to be done. I give it my whole day and have a dream of a time with Mr Orr's GCSE historians. They are impeccable, and during Period 3, produce, in test conditions, some stunning answers on the breakup of communism in the 1980s. History? Seems to me like it was yesterday. I forego lunch and mark some of the work so that I can give feedback in Period 4. The day closes, I tidy the room and look at the books which I decide I can either leave for Mr Orr to mark, or mark them myself on Saturday for two hours. I opt for the latter and hope that he will think that I am an okay Head. It has been quite a week: on Monday I spoke to 178 Year 11 students from other schools who want a Sixth Form place here: a number tried to get into Year 7 five years ago and are excited that second time round they might be successful. Not for the first time I count my lucky stars that I am here. I decide that we had better see our own Year 11 and tell them that there are others knocking at the door. We give them tea and cakes and I have a splendid time talking to them: they exude warmth, respond to my candour and close the event with a resounding applause. All of this helps to allay my worry at this time of year when I am beset by a fear that our decade-long track record of year on year betterment might reach a high from which we can only fall Icarus-like. Some colleagues were on 'Teachaways' last week: Mr Northover and Mr Wilson took seven colleagues to teach in two schools in the West Midlands, part of our work as a leading Teaching School. In an area of deprivation and needs, our teachers went to see how it is elsewhere (more of that inside). The Spring Term ever has me 'on the edge': are we working hard enough? I think so. I feel so sad that Mrs May thinks that we need selective grammar schools to achieve excellence. If she only she would come and spend a day. I think I could save her. I content myself, given that she will not do that, by writing my weekly postcard to staff on this misguided idea.

MR COLIN HALL
HEAD



AN EVENING OR TWO OF STARS

The city of Chichester in West Sussex proved a beautiful location for this year's school choir tour. Visiting churches built in 13th Century and touring one of the UK's lesser-known universities (the University of Chichester), the choir's musical pilgrimage stretched across the broad range of educational establishments in the city. We enjoyed a period of intensive rehearsals in the university and the idyllic, radiant St Paul's Church on a stunning Saturday morning and it proved to be a highly valuable use of time. Joined by the boundless enthusiasm of those touring with the choir for the very first time, the choir's 'old hands' were complemented by the wonderful energy of youth.

By the time of the concert to an audience of fifty or sixty in Chichester Cathedral, a synergy united the blend and balance of the choir and old favourites (*Abendlied, If Ye Love Me*) were performed with the same relish as newer numbers (*Sunset and Evening Star*). The choir returns well exercised and in fine shape for the forthcoming Katharine Kent concert at the beginning of next term and is eagerly preparing itself for a major international tour in the academic year 2017-18.

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON
DEPUTY HEAD



In the footsteps of Giacometti

ART (AND DESIGN)

How fortunate we are to have the stunning new Design Museum on our doorstep (literally almost). Never ones to let the grass grow we took a short trot through Holland Park with our keen and budding Art Aptitude students. On approaching the museum the students were awe struck by the new imposing architecture of the former Commonwealth Institute. Twenty five tonnes of Rhodesian copper roll across the vaulted rooftop of a re-imagined building. This big concrete tent was a physical showcase of the British Empire when it opened at the foot of Holland Park in 1962. Now the space is a cathedral to design and innovation. Entering gave way to stunned silence mixed with reverential awe, as students stared at this

magnificent new space and the magic of human invention that lay before them: the objects that shape our lives, and the skills and forces that shape them. The show 'Designer Maker User' considers how modern design has grown and evolved. The students were amazed at how primitive the first Apple iPod appeared and enjoyed witnessing a 3D printer producing architectural models. Armed with sketchbooks and cameras students gathered source materials ready to develop into new ideas when they returned to school. Students' forebears lived with the iconic and all important Commonwealth Institute. Fitting that a Design Museum should replace it. We'll be returning soon.

MR OLIVER HERBERT
LEADING PRACTITIONER - ART

In 1952 Alberto Giacometti said, in an extended essay, that "*The object of art is not to reproduce reality, but to create a reality of the same intensity.*" Some sixty years later his words have provided the starting point and inspiration for our spring exhibition of work by our Art Aptitude students. Their work, all produced in lessons outside the taught school day, filled the gallery. Self-portraits emerging out of tangled and intertwining pen lines; wire figures brought alive through painstaking stop-animation; faces emerging from the text of pages long torn from their story (see the back page); cellophane body casts hung to spin, twist and writhe in the heat of blue lamps. The work, all produced by students aged 11 and 12, would not have looked out of place in *The Tanks* of the Tate Modern. Giacometti was obsessed with creating

his sculptures exactly as he envisioned through his unique view of reality; he often carved until they were as thin as nails and reduced to the size of a pack of cards, much to his own consternation. He said that the final result represented the sensation he felt when he looked at a figure. The notion that the artist goes deeper than the surface of the object under consideration is a concept most usually examined by undergraduates, yet here, under the guidance of our gifted Art Team, are our youngest students treading the footsteps of a great master. Such is the quality of work produced by artists at Holland Park.

MR DAVID CHAPPELL
ASSOCIATE HEAD



The MERCHANT *of* VENICE

For our seventh staff Shakespeare production we went off to Venice. In sixteenth century dress for the first time and with no modern additions to ease the flow, we played to four full houses. Whilst the audience 'in the know' worried all night that a pregnant Ms Pugh would trip in her long dress or that Shylock (Mr Seed) would really receive a face full of fluid as Antonio spat on him, we need not have been concerned. All went beautifully. Ms Pugh as graceful in pregnancy as she ever was before. This year, with only a single week of rehearsals, the stellar cast were convincing in this really quite unpleasant tale. Shylock raged and made himself very hard to sympathise with, playing his final demise with gravitas; his collapse (literally) making the audience regret that sometimes in life people just cannot be saved or changed. Mr Northover as the merchant Antonio was touchingly convincing as a man in love with his Bassanio. Their kissing and holding of each other melted hearts and the audience understood why Antonio was 'so sad' even if Antonio did not. Mr Northover's bare chest quivered as Shylock's knife came toward it. Portia, played by Ms Nightingale, delivered her quality of mercy speech in a perfectly undulating and modulated voice: the moral high ground impeccably captured and to be delightfully contrasted with her impish and

skittish behaviour with Bassanio's want of a ring. Ms Pugh's Nerissa presented a coquettish and sardonic counterpart as she toyed with (newcomer) Mr Orr's affections. Another newcomer, Mr Arnold, in his enormous fur cloak was equally wan and winsome. His portrayal of a suitor was matched by a flirty and pretty Mr Mitchell. Both, of course, were rejected men. Mr Clements' musical accompaniment of John Dowland music, a sumptuous set which manifestly glittered in gold and Venetian red provided a feast of a backdrop. Friends of the school turned out in great number and gave most generously to the school's charity. Andrew Jackson, chair of the Trustees of the Shakespeare Schools Festival was an honoured guest. The Mayor, Councillor Mrs Elizabeth Rutherford came to a special production and it was a delight to welcome back our former chair of governors Sir John Baker. Beyond loyal, our friend Sally Clarke left her restaurant for the evening to fend for itself and Celia Birtwell loaned a beautiful coat for Portia to don. Such a pleasure for me to host such talented friends of the school. And so, to next year's production. With *Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *As You Like It*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Merchant* behind us: we shall see.

MR COLIN HALL
HEAD

*Tarry a little; there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh.'*



*Commend me to your honourable wife;
Tell her the process of Antonio's end;
Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death;
And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.*



A FREEZING COLD JANUARY IN PRAGUE

Contending with bracing sub-zero temperatures, students visited Prague in January to supplement their learning of the Cold War as part of their GCSE studies. Whilst on the visit students took in a broad sweep of History stretching from the 9th century and a visit to Prague Castle to the modern History of the Prague Spring and the occupation of the city by Soviet forces during the Cold War. As part of the visit students visited an underground bunker highlighting just how seriously the threat of nuclear war was considered at the time. "Being able to try on the original gas masks stored in the bunker brought home to me just how terrifying the prospect of conflict must have been to those living in Prague", remarked Yazid after our visit;

experiences proving invaluable reference points for students to assess the impact potential conflict had. Time was also spent in the old Jewish ghetto, Josefov, where students learnt about the experience of Jews in the Second World War when the city was occupied by Nazi forces following the Munich agreement. The students represented the school with maturity and impeccable manners and returned from the trip thoroughly stimulated by the experience and with an increased understanding of the context of their studies.

MR ALEX SEAL
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER

Schmittenhöhe

The Zell am See region of Austria is located near a glistening frozen lake that is surrounded by a mountainous region covered with a white blanket of snow and in close proximity, a snow-capped glacier - the Kitzsteinhorn towering at 3029m above sea-level. This was the spectacular setting awaiting our skiers during February half-term. Every morning, our 45 bleary eyed thrill seekers and 6 eager members of staff began their daily ascent up Schmittenhöhe and the Areitbahn gondola in order to meet their instructors. The lessons were the perfect opportunity to refine technique and gain confidence to snow-plough, parallel turn and carve their way back down along picturesque mountain passes and exhilarating slopes. Students experienced four hours of instruction each day and progressed at a considerable rate, with all students making exceptional development throughout the week. The weather felt as if one was skiing on a summer's afternoon and the view was breath-taking from every angle, except when

witnessing Mr Wagg laying face-first in the snow after an almighty 'wipe-out'. After the students had returned to the hotel for some recuperation and sustenance, there were a variety of après ski activities to keep the students entertained. From watching Ms Nightingale and Ms Wendt's dancing feet at the disco, to Mr Matthews being heavily beaten by the students at traditional Austrian pin-bowling. There was even the opportunity to witness a professional ice-hockey match at the local indoor arena. At the end of the week awards were given out to Sebastian Codet for 'overall skier of the week'. Special awards went to Sophie Belogonova and Luc Balomwu as the most improved skiers of the week and the unsung 'hero' of the trip went to Sacha Somboonsarn for his all-round positive attitude, behaviour and approach to every element of the trip. The trip was a resounding success and a wonderful experience for all who attended.

MR LUKE FULLER
LEADING PRACTITIONER





SCIENCE WEEK

Why are twins so rare? What happens to an embryo in the first moments after conception? Is Science still a profession dominated by men? Year 7 were fortunate indeed when Professor Lord Robert Winston paid a visit to help answer these questions and to celebrate our annual Science Week. He spoke powerfully about his research, the role of women in science and the, still unsolved, mysteries of male and female fertility. We were treated to an incredible film, taken with a remote camera, of the moment when an ovary releases an egg into the fallopian tube. Year 7 were suitably awestruck but they were able to recover sufficiently

to ask many insightful questions following the presentation. Professor Lord Winston then judged an overall winner from the four finalists in our annual Science Fair. He was genuinely taken aback by the standard of scientific thinking and the quality of presentations. He described Lora Detelinov's novel experiment on the infectiousness of yawning as 'a promising piece of research'. After much deliberation, the prize was awarded to Victor Kojey-Merle for his outstanding project on shape memory metals. The Professor was so impressed that he has promised to return next year to speak to our Sixth Form.

MR DANIEL SEED
DEPUTY HEAD

BARONESS JAY

On a bright Friday 17th March, a group of budding enthusiasts for all things political were treated to an extravaganza of eloquence and erudition from the current chair of the constitution committee, and long standing member of the House of Lords, Baroness Jay. Formerly the Leader of the House of Lords, and spokesperson for women under Tony Blair, her centrality to government was revealed in an intriguing hour of candour and clarity. It was a wide ranging lecture on some of the fundamentals of the constitution, embracing the role of hereditary peers, the Lords Spiritual and the honours system. With a sparkling glow of energy, panache and flair, the students relished the Baroness' pellucid clarity and wit. The students' questions themselves were a clear indication of their enjoyment: populism, female equality, Brexit and The Northern Powerhouse were all matters on which she spoke ably and incisively.

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON
DEPUTY HEAD

AND OTHER SCHOOLS DO IT TOO

My alma mater, once Durham Wearside Grammar School, now Durham Sixth Form Centre, has just been judged to be outstanding by Ofsted. 'No stone is left unturned in the drive for improvements in the classroom'. This is no surprise. When I last visited in January with Mr Robson for one of our collaboration visits, it was all too clear to me that this was what was going to happen. The school receives exactly half of the budget we have and facilities and resources are precious. What strikes so forcibly is the utter quiet commitment of its students. 'Students' conduct in lessons and around the school is impeccable'. Most A Level classes are 30 students in number and the corridors are packed with students on stools beavering away silently. The atmosphere was stunning. This is the northeast after all, where money, jobs and prospects are tight. Students demonstrate profound commitment. We'll be sending some Teachaways to Durham. Its Head, a mother of three young boys, has wrought with her leaders and teachers such a joyous school. Ofsted said 'the Head provides aspirational and visionary leadership'. Quite true!

MR COLIN HALL
HEAD



MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Sixth Form and Year 11 students met on 2nd February 2017 for our annual Model United Nations session. The topic for discussion was the sub-Saharan African AIDS crisis. Students had spent considerable time researching the countries they were representing and arrived brimming with fascinating facts and innovative ideas and solutions. Discussion was of an impressively high academic calibre and debate ranged from the questionable morals surrounding life changing ARV medication to the empowerment of young women as a strategy to tackle the crisis. Model UN always provides students with an outlet to express developing opinions and observations of the wider world in an academic environment not confined to the usual exam focus and specification limitations. It was a pleasure to witness the chair, Nishat Uddin (year 13), introduce and manage the debate with masterly ease and academic maturity. All students illustrated their capabilities as young people to work collaboratively and organically. As ever with Holland Park students I was proud of the globally cohesive, forward thinking and progressive resolutions to the topic for discussion. I look forward the next Model UN session and what new ideas it will bring!

PE REWARDS TRIP

On Saturday 4th February, Mr Mark Matthews and Mr Adam Goodsell took a group of budding gymnasts along to the Oxygen rebound park in Westway as a reward for the outstanding contribution to PE extra-curricular clubs. Once they had donned their specialist trampoline socks, students and teachers were off for an hour' bouncing. Included in the park were sprung basketball courts, foam acrobatic pits and a high diving trampoline tower. Packed with children and adults of all ages, the morning ended with an impromptu dodgeball competition as a number of other Holland Park Students were visiting the park on the same morning. Once back to terra firma, legs were stretched and joints rested. The following Monday it was not a surprise to see all students back for more at our school's trampolining club.

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

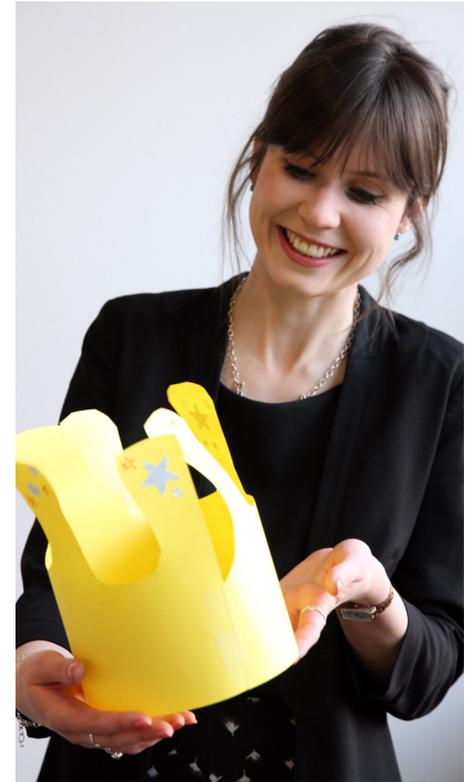
Revolutionary fervour has thrived within History classrooms across school as Year 9 approached one of the seminal moments of the fall of Tsarist autocracy: Lenin's April Theses. Thus it was that on Thursday 26th January students spent an afternoon locating Lenin within a pantheon of revolutionaries and analysing historical sources. The aim: to better understand the complexities of his character and the debate surrounding his impact on the Russian Revolution of 1917. Contributions from students were perceptive and nuanced, leading the minds of many to conclude that whilst figureheads take much of the glory, the resolve of the masses often goes unheralded. As edifying as their contribution was seeing students wilfully engaging in those most significant of historical themes: cause and effect, interpretation and the impact of societal groups versus that of individuals.

WORLD PI DAY

Mathematically, March 14th is the only date suitable on which to celebrate World Pi Day, but that this is date also marks the birthday of Albert Einstein makes for a celebration of all things number related. For several years Holland Park School has held a pi competition with prizes for the students who can remember the most digits of this irrational number without hesitation or inaccuracy. The last three years have been dominated by Max Ungless, Hilcious Herman and Roman Bloch who have demonstrated extraordinary abilities to recall hundreds of digits of Pi with pinpoint accuracy. The event took place in room 3.14 and at 3.14pm we began. Once again, the top places were taken by our three reigning pi champions but Max's performance was nothing short of exceptional with him reciting 2225 digits of Pi flawlessly, Hilcious was second with 329 digits, followed by Roman with 210. Every contender will be entered into the world Pi ranking list (www.pi-world-ranking-list.com) Max's performance should see him within the top 65 people in the world with Hilcious and Roman in the top 100 rankings in Europe. A quite incredible feat; we are looking forward to seeing what they can do next year.

TEACHAWAYS

Whether it was all as cosy as Kirsty Young's Castaway island (Ms Pilling made an excellent Kirstie in assembly as Messrs Chappell and Northover and Robson treated students to some iconic sounds) our Teachaways certainly came home from the West Midlands excited and enthused. 'How old are you?' asked one of Ms Murray's new temporary class and 'what's my name then?' This was new territory for our teachers. 'I'm fitter than you, mate' said one of Mr Mitchell's students as they went side by side in a press-up bout. Our 'teachaways' returned quite humbled at just how grateful students were for quality teaching. Ms Murray avoided the age question and guessed correctly, after a hint, that the student was called Mercedes. She went on to teach what was, by all accounts, a wonderful lesson. Mr Wilson and Mr Northover had left their 'babies' at home and had a treat of a meal at Ask Pasta – quite a young dads' escape. They want to teach away more often! More 'teachaways' are planned in Harrogate and in Durham: such exchanges of experience serve to enrich our offering to our own students and provide an ever important sense of perspective.



OUR GOLD MEDALIST

Jamie Keats, Year 7, represented Hammersmith and Fulham at this year's Panathlon, a sporting event for people with disabilities. This year (he is an old hand) Jamie competed in wheelchair racing, an obstacle course, and Boccia: a Paralympic sport similar to boules where contestants throw a ball down a ramp to get closest to the jack. He won gold medals in the wheelchair race and Boccia. Like all athletes Jamie has achieved his success through hardwork and determination; training every week is what it takes to achieve gold in these events. Working hard is in Jamie's nature. He has thrown himself into his school work and stays in school after lessons on most evenings: Monday - Dissection club, Tuesday - Time Travellers, Wednesday - Computing Club and then on a Friday, additional Maths club! He is a stunning talent and a credit to the school.

