



PEACOCK

by the pupils, for the pupils
October 2016

“Some people’s
idea of free
speech is that
they are free to
say what they
like, but if anyone
says anything
back, that is an
outrage.”

- Winston Churchill

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Cover Photo: Dr. Boyce's cake for the Macmillan cakesale on Friday 30th September.



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With thanks to Mr Kidd and Mrs Kendall, and all of our guest writers.

Also a massive thanks to Mrs Hunt for letting us use her office and her computer to edit.

Is the Media Colour-Blind?

Thirty-two minutes before I sat down to write this article, six children were reported to have been killed by barrel bombs in Aleppo. In some ways, I do not know what is more appalling: the fact that six more innocent children have been caught in the cross-fire of another proxy-war or the fact that, if I had not been researching the situation on the ground in Aleppo for the purposes of this article, I would have been oblivious to these deaths. After all, it is not like they are going to make the Ten o' clock news. With the celebrity 'circle of marriage' ongoing ('Brangelina' may have split acrimoniously, but thank heavens GB cycling sweethearts Jason Kenny and Laura Trott have just wed), the shocking but not surprising Labour Leadership contest results, and, in anticipation of some important US presidential news like - SHOCK HORROR - Hillary Clinton coughing, there probably would not be room for the story.

So, I'll write it here instead. At least 250,000 Syrians have lost their lives in almost five years of armed conflict. 11 million have been forced to flee from their homes. Chemical weapons have been used sporadically from 2013, up to the most recent reported chlorine attack this year. Up to 400,000 people are trapped out of reach from life-saving humanitarian aid.

Admittedly, the Syrian conflict has received some media attention. This was heightened after the British press made a dramatic U-turn from describing people fleeing Syria as a 'swarm', to calling them 'desperate migrants'. It's a sad day when it takes seeing a picture of a child who had been drowned attempting to flee the bloodshed in Syria to make some realise that Syrians – or, more accurately, those who aren't white westerners – are people too.

Even still, the coverage Syrian civilians' deaths receive pales in comparison to that given to the victims of the November 2015 Paris attacks. Of course, there are explanations as to why this is that go beyond a simply racist western media. The proximity of the 'City of Lights' to other European countries, the fact that an attack in Paris is a rarer occurrence than one in the Middle East, and a 'shared' European culture may go some way in explaining the disparity. There is even some philosophical justification in the form of Communitarianism. However, one cannot escape the fact that France's majority white population played some role; it's the only way 130 lives could have 'counted' so much more to the Western media than 250,000. Unfortunately, the media isn't solely to blame: there has been no 'Je suis Aleppo' doing the rounds on Twitter; no option to temporarily change your Facebook profile picture because their deaths evidently didn't 'matter' to us as much.

All of this points to one disturbing conclusion: we value the lives of white westerners above all else. In many respects, this isn't surprising. With approximately 94% of British journalists being white, the result is always likely to be unconscious bias. The prejudice is ingrained, not just by the way in which civilian casualties in terrorist attacks are treated. At the core of it all is the distorted representation of anyone who is not white in the mainstream western media. This is evidenced by the way in which those involved in crimes are depicted in the US media. All efforts are made to paint convicted white teen rapists like Brock Turner and Owen Labrie as boys who made silly mistakes. It was repeatedly reported that one had a place at Harvard, the other was a Stanford swimmer – as if either of these pieces of information are mitigating factors. Most photos

“All of this points to one disturbing conclusion: we value the lives of white westerners above all else.”

used in publications showed the boys in tuxedos or at swim meets, grinning from ear to ear. Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown, two black men, were not afforded the same treatment.

The photos selected aimed to make both men look like stereotypical thugs, even though they were, in fact, the victims of police shootings. Although it is clear that our western media has a problem with people who aren't white, I'm not sure aspiring to be "colour-blind" is the solution.

To be clear, nothing would make me happier than to see people treated equally, irrespective of their race, gender, religion and sexual orientation. But I don't know if the answer is to not acknowledge someone's race, especially if that means you can conveniently ignore the discrimination they continue to face even in the 21st century. Noticing someone's race is not a problem, only giving them prejudicial treatment because of it is. In fact, we should be very weary of individuals, journalists, and whole publications that profess to be "colour-blind", if what they mean is that the only way they can justify treating racial minorities with respect, is by 'pretending' that they are white.

Orla Horan

Stop Press

1066 Battle Re-enactment

The editorial meeting was briefly disrupted by battle cries and savage shouts coming from the back field where Henry and William were rehearsing their famous battle fought 950 years ago in 1066. At time of going to press there was no clear victor.



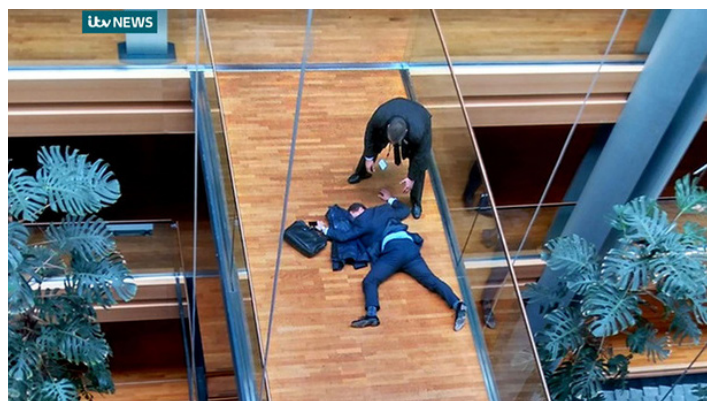
News about other arbitrments

Donald and Hillary went toe-to-toe in the second Presidential Debate. Again, at the time of going to press...in spite of Donald's less-than-generous comments about women there was no clear victor.



'Handbags at dawn'

The man tipped to be UKIP's next leader lay senseless after an altercation outside the debating chamber. Apparently, he was threatening to defect to the Tories. Good to see UKIP still fighting for what they believe to be right (wing). The UKIP infighting seems set to continue and at the time of writing, there is no likelihood of there being any clear victor.



Ed: At least at Leicester Grammar the fighting was fake and no one got hurt... Adults, eh?

In the news.

Since the last edition of the Peacock and the vote for “Brexit”, the country now has a new Prime Minister – the second-ever female one in Britain – Theresa May. After being crowned by the Conservative Party, Theresa May will now be leading the country through Brexit – a hotly-debated issue which some people want to be revisited. In the Conservative Party Conference Ms May has told her MPs that she wants to trigger Article 50 (which would initiate withdrawal from the European Union) and begin formal negotiations by March 2017. This means that Britain would leave the EU in summer 2019. In the Conference she said that “we need the confidence in ourselves, to go out in the world, securing those trade deals, winning those contracts, generating wealth, and creating jobs.”

Also on Ms May’s agenda is the creation of new state grammar schools which, according to her, will allow for more social mobility through educational opportunities in Britain. “It’s about ensuring we have good school places for every child,” she has said. The government is currently holding a consultation on how to identify the children from poorer families who could benefit most from the plans. However, many people oppose this, saying that it will increase the already widening gap between the classes; they argue that most children from grammar schools come from well-off families. Further, this move would be more damaging to overall educational standards as resources could be more focussed on grammar schools rather than on the schools that are already stretched.

Across the pond, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump have finished the first of many debates designed to attract voters in the American leadership elections which will take place in November

this year. Articles with the titles “Trump loses cool while Hillary stays calm” and others to a similar effect have been published with most agreeing that Hillary’s arguments and her debate was better than Trump’s. Indeed, the polls taken in the aftermath of the debate showed that the majority of viewers believed that the Democratic nominee had won. Trump, on the other hand, defended himself saying that he “didn’t want to embarrass her [Hillary]” and that he was “holding back”. A supporter of the Republican nominee said that “it wasn’t his worst debate but it wasn’t his best”, and others agreed.

However, the big shock this month has come with the much-loved show, The Great British Bake-Off, moving from the BBC to Channel 4. After being denied a larger budget from the BBC, Love Productions, who produce the show, has shifted its allegiance to Channel 4. In protest, Mary, Sue, and Mel, have all quit the show just leaving Paul Hollywood to judge Channel 4’s take on the show. Mel and Sue have been responsible for keeping the “human-interest drama” out of the show. They stormed out of the tent when, in the first series, they were asked to coax tears out of the contestants by the producers. From then on, whenever a contestant was crying in the tent, they made sure to put a coat over them and use un-airable language so that the clip couldn’t be used before the watershed. Many people wonder what the classic British television show will look like once it moves to Channel 4 next year.

In happier news, a study published in the Science magazine has shown that bumblebees can experience an emotion similar to optimism when presented with an unexpected reward. It’s still unclear how this affects bees, or how it compares to more complex human emotions but for such small brains to experience a “positive emotion-like state” is a big deal.

Leanne Potter



On Saturday the 24th of September, Jeremy Corbyn stormed to victory in the bitter battle for the leadership of the Labour Party. He beat Owen Smith securing 62% of the vote. Corbyn has pledged to “wipe the slate clean”, but is that possible?

Unless you’ve been hibernating for the last few months, you can’t fail to have heard about the Eastenders-style drama crippling the Labour Party: from Ed Miliband quitting after the landslide defeat of the general election, to Corbyn, a man with his entire career on the backbenches, winning the leadership contest. This year’s walk-out of his front benchers provided yet more entertainment, leading to a vote of No Confidence in Corbyn amongst the MPs, which he lost quite spectacularly 172 to 40. Some members of the public were asking: ‘Will Labour ever be able to comeback from this?’

The vote of No Confidence triggered the latest leadership contest where front runners, Corbyn and Smith, a party member for 30 years, fought for the crown. However, many have claimed that the election was “rigged”, with only selected members being allowed to vote. Labour party members were only able to vote if they had been signed up to the party by the 12th of January. In the wake of Brexit, some 13,000 people joined Labour, meaning they would not get a vote. This is the key difference between last year’s contest and the present one.

There are numerous things which are already holding them back from winning a general election and these need to be sorted for them to win the keys to Number 10, Downing Street. Labour is finished in Scotland, after being thrashed by the SNP, which took many Labour MPs away from their seats in the Houses of Parliament. Additionally, Corbyn’s power has already been questioned in the one year he’s been at the helm of the party.

Given the unpredictability of global politics recently, from Donald Trump’s rising power to the shock of Brexit, there could be a possibility for a surprise win for Corbyn. However, I believe it is highly unlikely. Recent speeches are all about “should,” instead of “how.” And they are trying to be ‘New’ and middle-class, whilst losing their working-class backing for ‘insurgent’ politics and revolutionary tactics.

In reality, 2020 allows dangerously little time for Corbyn’s staunch believers to be persuaded to forego some core beliefs to make the party more appealing to the general public. Polls are a stark reminder of just how much work there is to do but with his own front bench team not believing in him, is Jeremy Corbyn doomed to be just the Labour Leader, and never the Prime Minister?

Sophie Puffet

Is the Labour Party Doomed?



Interviews of the Issue

As some of you may be aware, the LGS Trust has a new Chairperson, Dr Dauncey. We decided that it would be appropriate for the first edition of The Peacock this academic year to find out a little bit more about her. Here is what we discovered.

What is a Chair of Governors?

Actually, I am not a Chair of Governors – I am a Chair of Trustees! Because LGS Trust is a charitable Trust, Governors are called Trustees. Chairing the Board of Trustees is about pulling together all the skills and expertise of the Trustees so that we can effectively ensure that Mr King, his senior team, and in fact all the teachers and support staff within the Trust are doing their job properly so that all you pupils are getting the education and support that you deserve. I am happy to report that they all seem to be doing an excellent job!

What's your day job?

I am a doctor by profession and was a GP for over 20 years. However, in 2007, I moved into clinical risk management (sounds exciting, eh?!) and then I became Medical Director of an independent healthcare provider. I semi-retired in 2013 and have worked part time within healthcare, in advisory and governance roles, since then.

What are your ambitions for LGS?

When I think of how far LGS has progressed over the last three decades, it makes me very proud. But there is no room for complacency and LGS Trust has a five-year development plan. The overall aim for the Trust is to develop a co-educational centre for excellence in academic, musical, sporting and other areas of personal development within a Christian ethos. But I think it is important to think of LGS as part of the LGS Trust, which actually has three schools under its governance: LGJS is a vital part of the Trust's success and we have a new school within the Trust – Stoneygate School. This is a school with a different but complimentary offering to LGJS and LGS and extends parental choice within south Leicestershire.

The ambition is to ensure that all three schools grow and improve in their offering, not only academically but also the pastoral care, sporting, and other enriching activities at the schools.

Why did you want to become the governor of a school?

I have four children and they have all been pupils at LGJS and LGS. My eldest daughter started at LGJS in 1993 and I have been a parent at the school ever since – and I still have a son in Y11, so three years to go! With such a long-standing connection to the school, as well as being very grateful for all that it has done for my children, I wanted to give something back so I decided to apply to be a Trustee.

It must be very time-consuming?

Being a Trustee wasn't too time-consuming but being Chair is proving to be a little more so! But I am enjoying it.

Do elements of your day job cross over into your role in school?

As I said before, I only work part-time but the role of Chair at LGS Trust is a similar role in many ways to my role as a non-executive director at the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust. Both roles are about ensuring the organisations are running smoothly and effectively.

Do you have time for any hobbies?

I have two springer spaniel dogs that need walking daily. I also enjoy going to the gym. We have a house in Devon and, when I am there, I enjoy body boarding – although I am not very good at it!

Sarah Inchley

Chair of Trustees

On Wednesday the 6th of July 2016, it was the Lower School Prize Giving. Former LGS pupil, Ed Barker, was invited by the Headmaster to present the prizes and talk about life after school. As a professional musician and political speech-writer, Ed's story was very inspiring.

Following Prize Giving, I wanted to find out more about Ed and, over the summer holiday, Ed agreed to be interviewed about his time at LGS and his success as a musician and speech writer. He also talked about playing the saxophone alongside George Michael in front of 17,000 people; saving turtles in Costa Rica; writing a book about his hero whilst sitting on a beach in Mozambique; and performing a new Christmas show this year at the Little Theatre in Leicester (Ed- See the end for further details).

What is your best memory of your time at Leicester Grammar School?

I have two best memories, one playing piano with Dr Whittle in a dance band; and also arranging and participating in the Three Peak Challenge of climbing Snowden, Scafell and Ben Nevis in twenty-four hours (which we achieved with twenty-three minutes to go!).

What was the first musical instrument you ever played?

I started playing the piano at seven, before learning to play the clarinet. In fact, I almost ended up learning to play the oboe, which is what I initially thought the clarinet was called!

When did you realise you wanted to become a professional musician?

I realised I wanted to play music at the highest level when I was 14. I taught myself on my sister's saxophone very quickly before a National Youth Orchestra audition and to my surprise (and horror at the time!) they let me in on saxophone and I didn't get in on clarinet, which I was taking much more seriously!

Who has inspired you most in the world of music?

A saxophonist called Nigel Hitchcock who has played alongside Robbie Williams, Ray Charles and James Brown. He creates a great sound and is able to improvise in such an inspirational way.

What's the best place you've been to and why?
A few years ago, I went to Mozambique with a

friend and travelled around. I spent time on a beach watching killer whales and snorkelling in the sea and it was there that I wrote a book about Nigel Hitchcock. I also loved Costa Rica where I did a Turtle Conservation Project, protecting turtles from poachers.

Who's the most famous person you've met?

I'd have to say George Michael, with whom I went on tour. We played in front of 17, 000 people a night. I was really nervous but got some great advice from a fellow musician which helped put my nerves into context. He said: "Nobody is going to die if you get it wrong."

If Simon Cowell asked you, would you be a judge on X Factor?

Yes, I would. However, I would insist that the show becomes more focused on the music and less about the celebrity elements of the show.

You also work as a speech-writer for politicians.

Which politician has impressed you most?

I know politicians have a bad reputation, however I have met some really amazing and talented ones. In fact, I've formed a jazz band with two politicians, which has enabled me to see their human sides; I see politics as a force for good.

What are your ambitions for the future?

I want to take music to a wider audience and keep on recording music. In fact, I'm in the middle of recording a Christmas album right now, which I'll be launching via a live show in Leicester. It's at the Little Theatre on the 30th of November. (The Box Office is now taking bookings on 0116 2551302)

If you were to offer one piece of career advice to pupils at Leicester Grammar, what would it be?

My advice would be to always be brave and take risks. Always push boundaries and take yourself out of your comfort zone.

What three words best describe you?

Brave, optimistic and enthusiastic.

Ed Barker

Isabelle Topping

Ask Prab



The iPhone Seven: Seventh Heaven or Forbidden Fruit?

On 7th September, apple had an unveiling event for the next generation of their smart watch and phone. The iPhone 7 had been highly anticipated with several leaks and speculations giving concurrent information: the removal of the iconic headphone jack, and the addition of new camera technology. As soon as the event ended, people ran to social media to preach about Apple's innovation and their ability to "consistently be at the bleeding edge of technology." But is this the reality? Or once again has a technology company been able to pull wool over its customers' eyes?

Apple has gained a notorious representation over the previous few years. They have become a figurehead of luxurious devices and at the pinnacle of modern design; as a consequence they feel it is appropriate to price their products accordingly. An android phone of equivalent, if not superior, specifications to their flagship iPhone 7 can be found for more than £200 cheaper. Even including all of the (so called) "exclusive" features of an Apple product, the price difference is not excusable - especially when other platforms have their equivalents to things such as Apple Pay, FaceTime, and iMessage.

The new prices for the flagship iPhone 7 and 7 plus have also been subjected to a price hike due to various economic factors (Brexit weakening the British Pound against the Dollar, Apple's share prices being scarily volatile as of late).

Their top of the range model is £919! How a small (albeit pivotal) device can be sold at such an extortionate price, I do not know, but I think it has to do with the same arrogance and devious thinking that Apple has that they are an "exclusive" and "luxurious" technology company.

This thinking is evident across their platform: from iCloud (their cloud sharing platform) to some of their key selling points for their devices, such as seamless handing over of data and applications. Earlier this year, after my father decided to upgrade his iPhone to a more recent model, I asked him, as he sat at his desk with a MacBook, iPad and iPhone on the desk, "would you have spent all this money on Apple products, if you had originally bought an android smartphone?" His honest answer was "No." He and I continued to discuss how Apple uses their platform to lock in customers into their "exclusive" ecosystem of devices. Unlike android's open approach, Apple has made their devices in such a way that to "get your money's worth" and to use all of the features of your Apple product, you must only have other Apple products. For example, on an Android phone you can sync all of your passwords and files between any internet enabled device. On the other hand, with an iPhone, if you want to access your music, photos, or movies, all of that must be done through Apple's proprietary software.

Unfortunately, other devices have not had the best success in challenging Apple's dominance

over the mobile market due to various stereotypes, bad press and lack of an informed customer base. The prime example of this is the recent Galaxy Note 7 drama. Due to external companies who assemble the batteries for Samsung's brand new iPhone rival, Samsung has had to face the brunt of abuse stemming from some rare cases of battery leaks and resulting fires. Although the Note 7 is a brilliant phone, this has created a massive stigma against Samsung and the reliability of their devices, despite them not being responsible.

Despite all of these problems with Apple's ethics and business model, it seems other platforms never seem to be able to catch up due to it being ingrained into our society's mind that Apple is a reputable and leading technology company. Also, if they were not so overpriced, Apple's devices are brilliant pieces of engineering. Perhaps a more competitive market would result in even better products from both sides of the mobile market. As for now, it appears that Apple will continue to dominate the mobile market and bring more and more customers into its isolated ecosystem.



The Rio Olympic Games were team GB's most successful overseas Games ever. They finished second overall in the medal table with a total of 67 medals: 27 gold, 23 silver and 17 bronze.

Team GB won medals in 19 different sports and won golds in swimming, sailing, triathlon, rowing, gymnastics, diving, equestrian, golf, cycling, canoeing, boxing and athletics.

Before the Games there was scepticism that they were going to work, after Rio de Janeiro Governor declared a state of financial emergency.

This year mascots were named Vimicius and Tom, although no one seems to have heard very much about them.

One of the most memorable moments from the Games was the green diving pool which, Olympic organisers admitted, had an unknown cause. (Some commentators believed they were probably hiding something).

One of the highlights of the games was definitely the cycling with a total of 12 medals, half of which were gold.

Another highlight for me was the true sportsmanship medal, awarded to Abbey D'Agostino of the USA who stopped to help the Norwegian Nikki Hamblin whom she tripped up. They went on to cross the line together.

Personally, I really enjoyed the games. They had me staying up late to watch them and I was incredibly proud of my country when the medals were awarded. It really inspired me to try to do more sport. Although there were a lot of issues before the games, I think the spirit of the games was still there and that everyone seemed genuinely happy. It is a question of how the Brazilian government is going to pay off its debt but in every other respect, the games were a success.

William Wale

Desert Island Discs

Inspired by BBC Radio Four's "Desert Island Discs" programme, we asked Mr Fishpool, a new member of the Geography department, which five records he would take with him to a desert island and why. Mr Fishpool's choices were:

Bombay Bicycle Club – 'Carry Me'

This was one of the first live gigs I ever went to.

Arcade Fire – 'Ready to Start'

One of the headliners at Reading Festival I went to see the summer after I finished my GCSE exams.

Curtis Mayfield – 'Move On Up'

They used to play this song at the Emirates whenever Arsenal won a match.

Radiohead – 'Reckoner'

A calming song I could listen to on repeat, so ideal for a desert island.

The Who – 'I can see for Miles'

The best headliner I saw at my first Glastonbury. It was incredible to see the spread of people at the Pyramid stage.

Sarah Turner



Serene Says:

The school year has started and summer has become a distant dream.

Coming back to school brings all sorts of delights: pathetic gossip; not being able to find a place to sit in the refectory; and the horrific possibility you may have a locker outside upstairs D wing.

At the beginning of term I always enable myself to have the best start: I do not mean getting out of bed early and sorting myself out with time to spare, I mean buying the most useless amount of stationary from Staples in an attempt to make myself feel better about having to be up by 7am. But the early starts, to me, are not the worst part of going back to school.

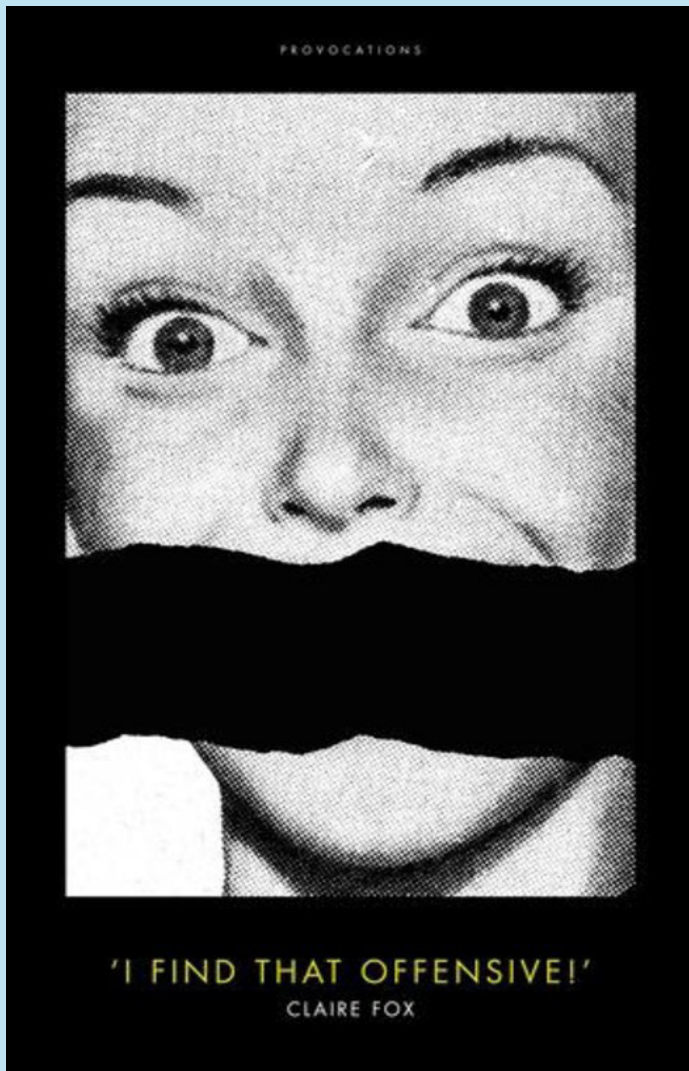
Small things that you cannot change about general school life annoy me. For example: when one person is walking on the wrong side of the staircase and manages to cause a chaotic London-style traffic situation amongst everyone on the stairs. I also get irritated when the eager Year 7s, submerged in their oversized blazers, bump into you on the street as they rush to their next lesson - which they're five minutes early for. All joking aside, there are more important issues that get to me as well.

Of course, keeping on top of homework is something that is ingrained into us from the first day of year 7 (which adds to the stress of preparing for the weekly Latin vocab test!). But, by the second week of term, when every teacher believes that their subject is the most important - and therefore they have the right to set us the greatest amount of homework - you might as well call me Jack from Titanic because I am drowning in work.

As there is nothing I can do to stop all these things from happening, I might as well embrace these parts of school life. I hope everyone has a good start to a good school year!

Soyez Sage

Debate of the Issue:



As a Year Eight, Mr Rich's assembly stimulated controversy. From my - and many other people's perspectives throughout the school - the assembly mainly promoted a negative response. However, the main message I got after listening to the assembly was that people should be able to share their opinions about other people's experiences freely.

As a member of the UK, living in a 'free world', we are told that it is alright for open speech but to what extent can we speak freely without offending people? I believe that expressing yourself and your opinions is very important, but I also believe that we should all respect other people's opinions and feelings whilst expressing our own.

Absolute free speech, for example promoting hatred, has been argued and debated over many

years in free societies. In fact over recent years the law has changed in the United Kingdom so that it is now an offence to verbally promote racial hatred and violence. So this is an example that there are sometimes negative consequences of free speech, and that sometimes we do have to consider the impact on others of the things we say.

However, we should be free, and are indeed free, to speak openly, for example, to criticise governments, the State, business and other areas of our day-to-day lives. This is not something that can be said of all countries across the world and we should always defend our rights and the rights of others to speak openly.

Madison Bishop and Emily Bennett



illustration by Thomas Mann

Sitting on Offence

I think it's safe to say that Mr Rich's assembly was the most provocative assembly I've ever experienced in my ten years at Leicester Grammar School. It evoked fiercely mixed opinions and sparked debate across all year groups as students battled to justify their thoughts. I'm perhaps not the best person to give an unbiased view and coherent arguments for and against the issues he raised, primarily because, for the most part, I agree with him.

It has become apparent that society is becoming weaker in our tolerance for controversial opinions. We are so quick to dismiss someone's views just because they may not be concordant with our own. The open minds we all pride ourselves on having are narrowing because of this simple reason. We cut off people who offend us, and instead of engaging in debate with them, and widening our exposure to varying points of view, we gravitate towards and surround ourselves with the people who share the same opinions as us. This may not seem like such a dangerous proposition, as it is human nature to be more comfortable around things we are used to and which are most like us. However, as I said earlier, the biggest, and indeed most dangerous outcome of this is that we end up isolating ourselves and consequently develop a 'thinner skin'. A snowball effect has been created. We are now so intolerant of each other's opinions, we find them offensive, and demand that people not express them.

Claire Fox, the writer whose book the assembly inspired, explores this in her book: "I Find that Offensive." Fox argues that we now live in a "culture of offence" in which stating that one is hurt or offended by something or someone's opinion is enough to shut down debate. This is the product of a thin-skinned health-and-safety generation, who are unable to grasp the distinction between physical and psychological harm¹. Furthermore, we are now sheltering others from the harsh reality of life - bad things happen and people should be talking about them. One of the most ridiculous issues Mr Rich raised was that Law students were allowed to opt out of lectures based around sensitive issues such as rape. We are therefore condoning the creation of generation of lawyers who are not life-hardened and therefore able to

deal with the challenging situations that they will inevitably face. As well as this, some universities, previously sanctuaries of free thought, now have censorship rules forcing students to keep their ideas within the parameters outlined by governing bodies. They are not allowed to explore their own thought, but are intellectually and philosophically restricted.

I fully appreciate that there were certain topics that were approached in a manner that many would find offensive (and many did). However, this was the very heart of his argument. He was not belittling sensitive issues but was instead exposing them and trying to remove their stigma. For example, there is such a taboo around discussing rape that we don't talk about it at all. By doing this, we are indirectly allowing it to happen, as we are not facing the problem head on and trying to find a solution. We are instead brushing it under the carpet, filling our hearts with pity for victims, but then silencing anyone who dares speak out about it, lest it offend someone. We must allow and encourage people to voice their views about such complex issues, as only then can we raise awareness about them.

There is an obvious flaw to Fox's argument that all opinions (including hate speech and harassment) are "just talk." There are of course, as seen on the news recently, often violent consequences to such "talk", as illustrated by the Charlie Hebdo shootings. But one could argue that this is a devastating result of the society we now live in. We are so easily offended and unwilling to accept other opinions that radicals use this to justify their actions, in the hope that the public will be empathetic to their cause.

There is an incredibly important debate to have here, one that centres on whether or not it is time to break down the walls of taboo that we have put up, running the risk of voicing opinions that others find offensive. Only by allowing people to debate crucial and controversial subjects can we truly be a free nation. Fox's argument is too radical to be considered the right way to go about the structuring of society but it does open the door to a discussion that needs to be had.



Roald Dahl Day



At the Junior School

