

THE COLUMNS

by pupils; for pupils

HSD's Newsletter: Issue 118



After a nice Christmas Holiday, us at Columns are thrilled to be back in the new year to produce our first edition of 2025! The new year already full of occurrences around the world from politics to award season, as well as the usual cycle of New Year's resolutions we keep until mid January, its a kick start of an edition to come back to term with. Good luck to F5 and 6 on their upcoming prelims, and a big thank you to our form 4 writers Ayanah and Maisey, who will be taking over editing while we are on study leave. Here's to a fantastic 2025 for the Columns.

Editors, Megan, Meagan and Roena

AS AN AMERICAN

Meagan Dailly, F6

As an American, I continue to be bowled over by the intellect of my President-to-be. Not only has President Toupee'd Pumpkin graced the Canadian Government with the astounding wisdom that they should become the 51st state (which shouldn't be too hard now that Trudeau has wimped off) but he has now decided to invade Greenland and the Panama Canal.

Yes, the new leader of the free world has done us all a service by sharing this "bigly important" idea with the American people. However, he has clearly come up with the idea of invading Greenland without consulting people with brain cells (shocker I know) He has overlooked one minor detail which is that Greenland is a Danish protectorate making it both part of the EU and (here's the kicker) a NATO member. Now last time I checked if you are a NATO state you aren't really meant to declare war on other NATO states, but clearly the man who recommends we all drink bleach knows far more about international policies than LITERALLY ANYONE.



JUSTIN TRUDEAU RESIGNS

Jack Mitchell, F3

On Monday, the Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau announced his resignation outside his official residence after nearly 10 years in office. He will step down after the party he leads, the Liberal Party, chooses a new leader. Many were expecting him to lose the next General Election later this year, which by law must take place before October. It marks the fall of the once-dominant progressive hero that he was to many across the world.

Justin Trudeau, son of influential former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, was elected to Parliament in the 2008 Federal election, representing the constituency of Papineau in Montreal, a seat he still holds. He ran for the party leadership and won in 2013 with 80% of the vote, boosting the Liberal Party support significantly among the Canadian public. Two years later, he led the party to victory in the Federal election, winning a strong majority in Parliament. During his first term as Prime Minister, Mr Trudeau worked to reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio in Canada and introduced significant policies such as introducing the right to assisted dying and legalising cannabis for recreational use. He won two successive Federal elections, in 2019 and 2021, albeit losing his seat and losing his party's share of the popular vote. In both elections, the Liberal Party formed minority governments, limiting legislative power. Trudeau had to handle the COVID pandemic in 2020 and did relatively well, but recent economic struggles – chiefly huge rises in house prices – have led to resentment among the Canadian public.

Recent projections have suggested that the opposing Conservative Party would have won over double the percentage of the popular vote with 44% compared to the Liberal Party's 20%. He has also seen his approval ratings plummet to just over 30% from a high of 65% in 2016. The projected loss at the next election was a clear indication that the Liberal Party needed change, and after his own longstanding Deputy Chrystia Freeland resigned and criticised his leadership, Justin Trudeau felt the need to resign and hand over to a new Liberal leader who could try to revive the party's chances at the election.

Potential replacements for Justin Trudeau are being added to the already long list every day, but there are some front runners. Chrystia Freeland, Trudeau's aforementioned former deputy and finance minister has lots of governmental experience but she may be associated with the failures of the Trudeau administration, similar to Vice President Kamala Harris in the US Presidential Election last year. Another of the front runners is Mark Carney, who may sound familiar as he was Governor of the Bank of England from 2013 to 2020 and was Governor of the Bank of Canada before that. His financial background could prove crucial in an election focused on the country's, and the voters' finances. The other front-runner is Dominic LeBlanc, stalwart parliamentarian and close ally of Trudeau who has served in multiple positions under him.

Whoever does take the reins from Prime Minister Trudeau will have a very tough job of steadying the country and closing the large gap between the Liberal Party and the Conservatives before the election. He was once the poster boy of progressives the world over, but now shows how far one can fall in the harsh world of politics, in spite of his myriad successes.

THE PEANUT PRESIDENT

Maisey Lafollette, F4

President Jimmy Carter was the 39th President of America, he died at the age of one hundred years old on December 29th, 2024. The former President lived an interesting life and has gone down in history for his work.

Carter was born in Georgia on the first of October, 1924, to Lillian and James Earl Carter Sr. Due to his family owning a peanut farm, he became known as the 'Peanut President.' Carter went to various schools for higher learning such as the Naval Academy for a Bachelor of Science degree, Georgia Institute of Technology, and Georgia Southwestern College.

Carter had an interesting Naval career, he was a submariner who was in the Pacific and Atlantic fleets and was later made a lieutenant. He was even chosen by Admiral Hyman Rickover to work for the nuclear submarine program in New York. This is where he would work as a graduate at Union College for reactor technology as well as nuclear physics. He worked on the Seawolf as the senior officer, the Seawolf was the second nuclear submarine. However, Carter left the Navy after his father died in 1953, to spend time with his family as he had married Rosalyn Smith in 1946, who he had four children with. When he returned to Plains, Georgia, he became an active member of the community by working for county boards, helping with education, as well as volunteering at hospitals and libraries. In 1971, he would become the 76th governor of the state, and three years later in 1974, the Democratic Party chose him to be the Democratic National Committee Campaign Chairman. It wouldn't be until 1976, that he became President.

President Carter accomplished many things while in office, his hard work made him very popular, however, he only served one term. Some of his accolades are international treaties such as the Camp David Accords and the Panama Canal treaties, he was involved in a treaty of peace with Egypt and Israel as well as a treaty with China and the Soviet Union. Carter prioritised education and the environment so he worked closely with the Department of Education (which he helped set up) and the Department of Energy, who he worked with to increase the size of national parks. Carter wished to create new jobs, and successfully generated eight million new jobs. While his presidency as a whole was very successful ironically he would predominantly be remembered for his failings. High inflation and a hostage crisis in Iran was an international incident where numerous American Embassy employees were held captive by students in Iran for 444 days. Carter failed to negotiate the release of hostages and the attempted rescue mission failed, the hostages were only released minutes after President Ronald Reagan was inaugurated in 1981.

After his Presidency, Carter continued to help others by working as a Professor at Emory University and he founded the Carter Centre which helps people internationally to protect human rights, look after the sick and find peaceful solutions to various conflicts. Carter was also the author of thirty-two books. He was even granted a library and museum by the National Archives, which were named after him. Carter helped once a year at the Habitat of Humanity until 2020 and taught at a Sunday School in his local area. He was even awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002, for 'decades of untrifling effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development.' Carter wouldn't retire until 2023, he did so to receive medical care and to spend time with his family. President Jimmy Carter was an unforgettable President who left a lasting legacy.

A Journey to My Heart's Homeland

Ayanah Adam, F4

This winter, I had the privilege of travelling to Pakistan, my mother's homeland. It was a journey filled with warmth, culture, and a deep sense of belonging that is hard to describe. From reconnecting with family to experiencing the places my mum is constantly describing, the trip was a whirlwind of joy, learning, and reflection.

One of the highlights of my visit was attending a family wedding. Pakistani weddings are known for their colourful festivities, elaborate dresses, and joyful music. The celebrations stretched across several days, each event more dazzling than the last. Despite the groom's mum trying to set me up with her son, it was beautiful to see tradition and modernity blend seamlessly in the motherland as our families came together in joy, love, and unity.

Beyond the wedding festivities, I explored Lahore, my city which is rich in history and cultural heritage. I visited the magnificent Lahore Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Built in the Mughal era, it stands as a symbol of Lahore's glorious past, with intricately designed palaces and gardens that whisper tales of emperors and conquests. Every corner of the fortress seemed to echo history, and I was transported back in time as I admired its grand arches, marble inlays, and vibrant mosaics.

I also visited the serene Shalimar Gardens, another marvel from the Mughal era. Commissioned by Emperor Shah Jahan, the same visionary behind the Taj Mahal, these gardens are a stunning example of Persian-inspired landscaping. Their cascading terraces, marble fountains, and symmetrical flowerbeds create a breathtaking sanctuary of peace and beauty. Walking through the gardens, I could almost feel the stories of royal leisure and poetic musings that had taken place there centuries before.

A deeply moving experience was my trip to the Wagah Border, where the daily flag-lowering ceremony between Pakistan and India draws crowds filled with patriotic pride. The energy was electric as soldiers from both sides performed synchronized drills with fierce determination. The ceremony is not just a display of military precision; it symbolizes the complex relationship between two nations with a shared past. The thunderous chants of “Pakistan Zindabad!” filled the air, and I felt an overwhelming sense of unity and pride.

Perhaps the most profound aspect of my trip was how I felt within myself. In the UK, being a visibly Muslim, brown woman often means standing out — and not always in a positive way. I’ve faced stares, comments, and even moments of hostility. But in Pakistan, I wasn’t in the minority. Here, I blended in. My hijab wasn’t a symbol of difference; it was simply part of the norm. The adhan, the call to prayer, echoed from every mosque, a melodic reminder of my faith that filled the air five times a day. Seeing people stop their work and gather for prayer was inspiring, a living example of how faith can shape daily life.

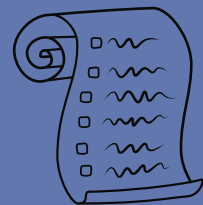
For the first time in a long time, I felt at ease in public spaces. I wasn’t bracing for judgmental looks or the weight of being ‘other.’ Instead, I experienced a sense of freedom and confidence, a rare feeling of belonging. I also felt a renewed connection to my spirituality, inspired by the environment where Islam was woven into the fabric of life.

As I returned to the UK, I carried with me more than just memories of family, weddings, and historic sights. I brought back a stronger sense of self and a deeper appreciation for my roots. Pakistan wasn’t just a travel destination; it is a home away from home — a place that reminded me of who I am, where I come from, and the beautiful faith that binds it all together.





NEW YEARS REAOLUTIONS



Charlie Grewer, F5

So it's a new year. If you've managed to wrap your head around the fact that it's now 2025 (I'd barely gotten used to it being 2024), then you might have started thinking about your New Year's resolutions. Maybe you want to eat healthier, or perhaps you want a better schoolwork-life balance. A friend could decide to drink less Red Bull. Could be your parents are going sober or you simply want to do better in school.

Conversely, I am going to argue that New Year's resolutions are a waste of time. Please note that this rant is not to be taken seriously, is not a well-structured argument, and is, like most resolutions, just a waste of time.

Of course, to begin with, most resolutions are either forgotten about or abandoned in the first few weeks of January, and barely any make it through until December. How long have you ever held a resolution? And even if you somehow manage to make it through the year doing whatever it is you decided to do, what then? It's never made clear what happens if you make it through the year with your resolution. Pat yourself on the back for improving yourself. Do you throw a party? Do you get a prize? Does anybody else give a damn? Do you end up feeling unfulfilled and wondering why you bothered with this in the first place? Probably the last one.

When you think about it, why do they even exist in the first place? Is it because people like the idea of 'new year, new you.' I've never liked this idea. Oh, I realise that I'm far from perfect and could certainly stand to improve a few things, but why decide to start on the first of January? Why not any time throughout the year when you feel it's appropriate? Instead of New Year's resolutions, why not summer holiday resolutions, where you aim to try something new (for example) over the new school year?

And then there's the pressure of having a resolution when you couldn't care less that you now end dates with a 5 instead of 4 and are too busy worrying about the prelims which start just a week after the Christmas holidays, whose idea was that! So, in conclusion (not sure this was an argument, but there you go), I am not a fan of New Year's resolutions. But what do you think? Write a 200-word essay on New Year's resolutions on the back of a napkin, send it to any newspaper other than this one and see if you can win something.

UPDATED MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Alastair Forbes, F1



Hello. Recently, Mrs Watson sent out an email regarding the update of the mobile phone policy for HSD. In this article, I will be expanding on the email, what it means, the rules, and the consequences if broken, plus how to understand it and exceptions. As some of you might know, I'm very interested in mobile phones, especially in how they affect us. Hopefully, no one else has decided to do an article about this, if so, I'm sure you'll enjoy this as much as the other one/s! For this article, I will be using Firefly and the e-letter to help me write this, along with a few odd websites.

In this paragraph, I'll give you a briefing on what I have found out about smartphones for the age group of the senior school. Recently, I watched a program called Swiped on Channel 4, about finding out the consequences (or effects) of banning all devices completely for a group of 12-year-olds for 21 days, as well as researching other phone-based problems. Some of the children were fine, almost glad of the ban. Some became more social, more energetic, learning more effectively. Some were getting more sleep or talking more with their families, but, some were bored out of their minds, and some couldn't bear it, breaking into tears, wanting their phones back. I have read that children and teens want to check their notifications, therefore being distracted. If this happens in school, it might affect their education. Another thing I have found is that phones will increase the want for people to make offensive comments and rude or inappropriate jokes, all because of what they see on platforms such as TikTok. Even though we will be able to see them at our homes, I'm hoping parents will be able to monitor or restrict such platforms, until the right age or maturity.

Now, I will be briefing you about what was in Mrs Watson's email about the new phone policy. All senior years should not let their phones be seen or heard on Fridays starting from 10.01.25 (the event is 'Phone Free Fridays'). You can only switch it on for paying for food, and F6 will have two spaces where they can use their phones. This rule will not affect pupils for the rest of the academic year. Next year (when, say, F1s will be F2s), this will come into effect for every day of the day.

Rules and Exceptions. It's simple in text, isn't it? Just make sure your phone can't be seen or heard throughout the school day. Bingo. This rule must be followed around the school campus, outside Mayfield's campus, and on the school bus. There are a few exceptions. If a teacher/PCS teacher has told you you can use your phone ('to identify these pupils and will have separate agreements in place for them.' Taken from Mrs Watson's email).

Consequences for breaking the rule. What will happen if your phone is heard or seen on Phone Free Friday (and all of the next school year) is that it will be taken away from you, for you to collect at the end of the day.

Most people I have talked to, think that the rule is a bit unnecessary, but seem to be fine with it. They said that 'it's an inconvenience, just like roadworks.' I (as a person who does not own a phone) am a bit concerned about this sudden shift in the phone policy and could take a while to get used to it. Although I have faith in this rule, and I hope this will bring a new era to the High School of Dundee.



The Golden Globes

Bea Bates, F5



Here it is. My most favorite time of every year without fail. Award season. While I wish I could have stayed awake all night just to see if Jeremy Allen White won for best actor in a television series (which he did, go Jeremy!) and if Ayo Edebiri won for best female actor in a television series (which she didn't. Justice for Ayo!), but unfortunately, school got in the way. So, what happened during the golden globes? Who won what? What are people (me) disappointed about?

To start off, the big titles. Best Motion Picture (drama). The winner is... The Brutalist! While I haven't watched the movie myself, due to its 18-age rating, from what I've heard, it was well deserved of the award it won. Unfortunately, I haven't seen that many of the nominations due to the fact I've been busy with studying (which I'm sure most of us are at the minute.) and the fact that I physically cannot sit through Dune 1 OR 2 without needing three naps throughout. My family gave high praise of Conclave, but I haven't yet gotten around to seeing it just yet! I plan on going to see A Complete Unknown hopefully at some point this weekend, and as soon as Nickle Boys is on my tv? I will gladly pay to watch it. Overall? I'm not disappointed with the nominations or the winner.

Next up, Best Motion Picture (musical or comedy). The winner was... Emilia Pérez! This category? I feel strongly about. Firstly, I don't feel that Wicked even stood much a chance against some of the other nominees - It's difficult to compare an 18 rated horror movie like The Substance to a PG family movie like Wicked! There's a bit of controversy surrounding the winner – Emilia Pérez - due to its transgender representation. a X user said the win was a “Joke” and said “it's a racist, xenophobic mess with awful Mexican representation made by a French director who didn't even bother to research out culture” (quote found on The Rolling Stones website.) so I personally feel as if this was a slightly undeserving win due to the audience feedback. The other nominations were incredible in my opinion. A Real Pain, starring the funny looking cousin at the start of home alone, AKA, Kieran Culkin, is a beautiful Comedy – Drama about two cousins exploring Poland in honor of their grandma which ends in tensions reigniting about their family history which came out on the 8th of January, and I recommend going to see it! But once again, I feel that the winner was ultimately undeserving. Personally, I don't think it made anywhere near as much of an impact in pop culture as Wicked's ‘holding space’ video, or the endless edits of Challenger's Art Donaldson (Mike Faist) I got on my TikTok and Instagram recommended page. But let's see how people react to the controversial win.

Next up, is Best Motion Picture (animated). This one was difficult for me. I've seen almost every nomination apart from the one that won, which was Flow! To put it simply, I think Wallace and Gromit should have won. With a very rare 100% on Rotten Tomatoes, Wallace and Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl, aired on Christmas day and had many families huddled around their TVs to watch the iconic duo make a return once again. Well, mine certainly did. But, the other nominees, such as The Wild Robot – which I cried for a solid hour about after watching it, Moana 2 – which personally wasn't anywhere as good as the first one due to its lack of a good story line, memorable music, and the same emotional effect the first one gave everyone. Personally, I think Inside out 1 & 2 are some of the best Pixar animated movies I've ever had the pleasure of watching – so well done to them for making \$294.2 million in the opening week! But, back to the winner. in all honesty, I hadn't even heard of the winning movie – Flow – until I saw the nominations. But as soon as I don't have to go on a dodgy website to watch it, I'll definitely give it a go.

I'll skip the more 'boring' ones, as people say, and get into the fun ones. Best performance by a female actor in a motion picture (musical or comedy) was... Demi Moore for The Substance! This.? this I was happy about. Demi Moore put her all into her performance, and it showed. She was absolutely incredible, and the substance was one of the few movies I willingly watched three times in a week. It certainly could have easily been Zendaya for Challengers as well, but I'm definitely glad it was Moore. For best performance by a male actor in a motion picture (Musical or Comedy again) was Sebastian Stan in A Different Man. Unfortunately, once again, I haven't seen it yet! But it's been on my watch list since it came out. As soon as I can watch it, I will 1 million percent sit down with a bowl of popcorn and watch it. Well, done Sebastian and Demi!

I'll quickly go over the notable wins again (by that, I mean the ones I'm glad about...) The best tv series (drama) was FX's Shogun, (Musical or Comedy) was Hacks – **SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE BEAR!!** Limited tv series was Baby Reindeer – definitely controversial.. But it was a good show, nonetheless. - in my opinion, it should have been The Penguin (I only feel strongly about this because I am an absolute DC fanatic.) and the last winner I was extremely happy about, as I mentioned before, was Jeremy Allen White for The Bear! And Colin Farrell for The Penguin! Hooray to both to both of them!!

Overall, today wasn't too bad. At least we didn't have a controversial opening speech from Ricky Gervais again... In my ideal world, I would have loved my favorite movies and shows to have won, but you can't win them all as they say! Next stop, The Oscars! Fingers crossed for The Substance.

Festive Fails

Rosie O'Ready

You've probably received some bad Christmas presents in your lifetime, but I'm guessing nothing as bad as a fleece, size 22, cow print, clearly sending the message of: fat cow. Well, this article is full of the awful, ridiculous, and thoughtless gifts people have received.

Getting a gift card for Christmas isn't a bad gift. You can pick something for yourself, that you know you'll like, instead of dealing with the hassle of gift receipts and returns. A lot of the time it's quite nice! So when someone received a Starbucks gift card from a coworker, they wanted to treat themselves to a lovely coffee at lunch. However, when they checked the amount on the gift card receipt, they discovered that this sly coworker had put just under the price of a cup of coffee on the card!

Imagine: Christmas Day, you go downstairs and discover some MASSIVE presents underneath the tree. How exciting! You open the first one and it's... a gigantic plastic CD rack. Oh, well that's good. You've got somewhere to put your small collection of CDs now. You excitedly tear open the next and it's... another CD rack? You quickly discover that you have – for some unknown reason – 4 gigantic CD racks, when your collection wouldn't even fill one!

Ooh lovely! Some nice toiletries. Sweet-smelling soaps, colourful bath bombs... How relaxing. However, one short glance at the contents inside tells you that they've already been opened, and half-used. Thanks, you really shouldn't have. Getting something practical for Christmas isn't bad, but it's usually not the best gift you'll ever receive. Oh, thanks for the coasters! Great, I really needed a box of tissues. How did you know I needed a tablecloth? They're certainly helpful, but not necessarily exciting. However, none are as unexciting as this. One year, an unlucky individual received sellotape as their Christmas present.

What could go wrong with receiving a mug? A cute picture of a kitten with a Christmas hat on would certainly cheer you up whenever you wanted a cup of tea. Apart from the fact that it's a regift. And you gave it to them last year





HIGH SCHOOL OF DUNDEE
PIPE BAND

★ ★

BURNS SUPPER

Fundraiser

music by
Fìobha Ceilidh Band

SATURDAY | 25TH JAN | 7 PM
INVERCARSE HOTEL, DUNDEE DD2 1PG

£60 PER ADULT, £35 FOR CHILDREN AGED 12 AND UNDER,
DISCOUNTS FOR LARGER PARTIES

(ENTRY FROM 6.30PM)

SCAN QR TO RESERVE YOUR TICKETS



ALL PROCEEDS WILL GO TOWARDS PIPE BAND FUNDS

PROBLEM OF THE WEEK

Haoqi Liu, F3

The problem of the week has now moved to its own Firefly page, which can be found at <https://hsd.fireflycloud.net/senior-years/potw> or by scanning the QR code. The firefly page could have more information depending on the problem!

As always, email solutions to me at liuH@highschoolofdundee.org.uk

Given that:

$$35! =$$

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Determine the digits a,b,c and d.



Have a
good
weekend.

The Columns
Team