



The Lion

Monmouth School's
Weekly Newspaper



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Killed for an Education

Huw Paulson

Last Wednesday, the 12th January, the world was again plunged into another intolerable grieving by the actions of radical Islamists. This was the third time in as many weeks the world had been rocked by terrorist attacks, with a bomb exploding in Istanbul, a coffee shop being attacked in Jakarta and restaurant being overrun in Burkina Faso. All four of these attacks in such a small window of time were dealt by the hands of some form of fundamentalist group operating under the pretenses of their religion, even though no religion, especially Islam, cites for them to oppress civil liberties in such a barbaric way.

At the Barcha Khan University in Carsadda, within the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan, students were about to embark on another day of learning whilst the professors studied their notes for the impending lessons of the day. Before they could begin their day, however, four gunmen stormed the campus at 9:30 am, wielding rifles and firing at all they saw. The gunmen attacked the male dormitories and the administration building, firing indiscriminately at everyone who lay in their path. Pupils and teachers alike hid in terror for several hours as the gunmen and Pakistani security forces battled it out around the campus. Eventually, the security forces were able to kill the attackers, bringing to an end the traumatic events of the day. With over 3,000 students on campus, the initial fears of the death toll were for it to be vast, but one man managed to stop the death escalating in an unprecedented manner. Syed Hamid Hussein, head of the chemistry department, fought off gunmen with his own gun whilst allowing students to take cover and escape. Unfortunately, Mr Hussein paid the ultimate sacrifice as he was shot dead at the tender age of 34, but not before he had saved many other lives. Although the death toll is still unconfirmed, it is estimated to be at around 21 people, a high price to pay for a place only open to give men and women alike the chance of further education.

A commander for the Tehreek-e-Taliban, otherwise known as the Pakistan Taliban, claimed that this attack was orchestrated by the group, but only for his claims to be denied by the group's main spokesman, Mohammed Khurasani, who called the attacks 'un-Islamic'. This is second time in 14 months the Peshawar region as been affected by violence against educational facilities, with 132 children massacred just 30 miles away from this atrocity. Barcha Khan himself was against the Taliban, so the attackers timed this attack to coincide with the celebrations of the 28th anniversary of his death. To put the repetition of these attacks into stark reality, the people killed are killed for enjoying the chances we take for granted in our civilization, such as education we receive here at this school. For this we should be eternally grateful, but we must never forget the hardships of those less fortunate than ourselves whilst they strive to enjoy the liberties we have become so accustomed to.



FOMS

Charles Parkman

FOMS (Friends of Monmouth School) have done a great deal of work over the last few years as the school's funding committee which consists of enthusiastic parents and teachers alike. Since its inception, the FOMS have overseen significant development and progression of the school itself, aiming to serve a broadly educational purpose not only in an academic sense but also taking into consideration musical, sporting, cultural and artistic elements of the school as well. By way of example, items funded by FOMS in the past have included team football shirts, astronomy equipment, cookers for an overseas expedition, a table tennis table for one of the houses, a marquee used by the rowing club at regattas and the lectern and chairs in the Blake Theatre.

Under the guidance of its new President Dr. Daniel, the recently appointed Headmaster of Monmouth School, FOMS have continued to do their good work across the school, recently funding new kayaks and canoes for the weekly Kayaking Club run by Dr. Harrison and Dr. Jones, many pupils of which have taken a keen interest to ever since. Furthermore, amidst several inquiries from junior day boys, a brand new air hockey table has been installed in Wydean House whilst the recently established Soft Ball Club run by Mr. Dunn has also benefited in the form of new, state of the art soft ball bats.

In addition to this, the Computing Department has happily received 25 new Motorola lap dock units as a result of FOMS' funding, enabling teachers and students to carry out tasks more competently, with its ability to efficiently connect to Raspberry Pi being one of its many advantages, whilst the portability of these lap dock units now opens up the prospect of using them for educative school trips.

FOMS has also been heavily involved with the upcoming Monmouth Literary Festival this June, supplying funds for the entertaining "play in a day" whilst backing literature and poetry workshops as well, which are open to all students. Moreover, FOMS and the school have been able to entice several writers to come and speak to enthusiastic students across all three Monmouth schools, with the famous novelist Steven Camden and the well-established illustrator of the highly popular 'Horrible Histories' book franchise Tony de Saulles giving a glimpse of what this much-anticipated festival has in store.

Likewise, FOMS were also extremely helpful in their funding of the frame work used in the recent Monmouth Schools Art Exhibition in the Shire Hall, helping to bring out the pupils' pieces of work of which gained much praise from teachers, parents and the public. The FOMS have also been supplying adequate funds in the form of materials for the Greenpower Monmouth Team of the Design and Technology Department, in which a group of Sixth Form students taking D.T. aim to create a go-kart in order to race and compete with other schools, a project headed and influenced by the Head of the Department Mr. White.

These are just several examples that typify the amazing work FOMS have done over the last few years, and with the school continuously striving towards excellence in all aspects within it, there is no reason to doubt that the contribution of FOMS will not continue for many years to come.

Editor - Joe Norris | Production Editor - James De Sousa Stayton

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Alan Rickman

Freddie Price

So awesome was the late Alan Rickman in his role as Severus Snape in the Harry Potter franchise, matching the vision JK Rowling had implemented through her descriptions so inch-perfectly that it was easy to forget that it was acting. However if you asked any of his friends they would tell you he wasn't at all as vindictive and cruel like his character, and was a welcoming, cheerful and charitable man. Emma Watson was keen to point out his feminist ideals, and it seems fitting too that one of his last pieces of work was a voiceover for an advert by Save the Children. He really was a huge loss to the industry.

It is also easy to forget his tremendous roster of work outside of Potter, which is largely due to the iconic status that came with the role as opposed to the standard of his work. He starred in the legendary *Die Hard*, *Love Actually* and the hilarious *Dogma*, showing his extraordinary versatility as one of Britain's greatest dramatic assets. He was a loyal servant to theatre too, graduating from RADA, belonging for a long time to the Royal Shakespeare Company, playing the lead in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, a performance which earned him a Tony Award nomination. Additionally he was nominated for multiple BAFTAs, winning one, whilst also winning a Golden Globe and a Primetime Emmy award. He will be hugely missed by all of his fans, and it is a severe shame to lose yet another shining star who had so much more to give.

Ebola Deal Announced

Matthew Smail

A £3.5million deal has been signed by Gavi, the vaccine Alliance, to protect West Africa and surrounding countries from future outbreaks of Ebola. After the major outbreak in 2015 that killed over 11,000 people, predominantly in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, there have been efforts to create a vaccine for the virus; now 300,000 will be ready for emergency use by the end of 2017, giving Gavi a global stockpile of the vaccine. Due to the scale of the outbreak, around a decade's work has been condensed into the space of just a year and the trials which have already been carried out show it may give 100% protection, however data is still being collected from the tests.

West Africa was declared last week as being "Ebola free", after 42 days passed without a case in the affected countries. However a day later a case was confirmed in Sierra Leone, and the World Health Organisation has warned that more cases of the virus resurfacing are expected. Dr Jeremy Farr, the director of the Wellcome trust medical research charity, was pleased with the success of the test results and said, "As we saw with the new confirmed case just last week, the Ebola epidemic is likely to have a long tail and it's possible that several more isolated cases will emerge in the coming weeks and months. This vaccine, therefore, could still play an important role in containing any additional flare-ups of this outbreak, as well as being available to help prevent future epidemics."

Tennis Match Fixing

Alex Sidorowicz

Recent investigations made by the 'BBC' and 'Buzz feed' have revealed that over the past decade, there has been suspected illegal betting in tennis. While this was at first thought to have only been an issue in the lower tiers of the Tennis World, recent advancements in the investigation have shown that this could also be a problem within the professional tier.

A South American ex-tennis player approached the 'BBC' about the recent investigations, claiming that even the world class tennis players, 'are a little bit dirty in some way'.

The player, who requested anonymity, said tennis authorities 'know who is doing it' but are unwilling to stop it. The Tennis Integrity Unit (TIU) said it rejects 'any suggestion that evidence of match-fixing has been suppressed. We invite the player behind the allegations to make contact with the TIU and to share the information he claims to have,' the TIU added in a statement.

The 'BBC's World Have Your Say Team' had an exclusive interview with the anonymous player. 'This is like a secret on the tour that everybody knows, but we don't talk about it,' said the player, whose identity is known by the BBC. 'We just see it and keep working.'

The interview detailed on how matches are fixed and to what levels the players go to keep the match fixing a secret to the public. The player talked about the 'three big groups' who control betting in tennis and that any payments to players are made using cash, with no bank-to-bank transfers allowed.

'Each group has many guys who go to talk to players. They have many guys inside the circuit. Also, they have many accounts. They have 50-60 accounts where they place small money. At the end, it's huge money. It's really big.'

'You know who is doing it and who is not. As a player, I know who is missing on purpose or returning a shot in the middle on purpose... who is trying, and who is not. So we work on this. We know.'

He also claimed players exchange knowing smiles and make comments that indicate they have fixed a match. Perhaps the most intriguing thing he revealed about the scandal was the case made about the professional players. 'I started to believe [top players were involved] a few years ago, when a guy told me the result of the next two tournaments.'

He told me exactly who was going to win and how it was going to happen. In the beginning, I thought he was just bragging about it to make me fall for his game. But then I was laughing that every match was happening the way he had been telling me it was going to happen... and I'm talking about a Masters series, where there are just big names.'

The player also said that the corporations and the authorities could prevent this match-fixing if they wanted to, telling the interviewer that the authorities 'know exactly who is doing it and, if they wanted to stop it, they could stop it today. It's super-easy. They just don't want to do it.'

With these revelations, the elite players are coming forward to add their point of view on the matter. British number one Andy Murray said he has never been approached to fix a match and called on the tennis authorities to be 'proactive'. 'As a player, you just want to be made aware of everything that's going on. I think we deserve to know everything that's out there,' he said.

These allegations have led to much public interest but we will not know more until further investigations are made.



Eyes Wide, Tongue Tied

Joe Norris

In 2009 The Fratellis took an indefinite 'hiatus' from the music scene; many were left wondering whether they would ever return? If not, then the band would be best remembered for the pounding football chant-esque hit, 'Chelsea Dagger'. However, it seems that front-man Jon Fratelli has other ideas.

The Fratellis fourth studio album, *Eyes Wide, Tongue Tied* finds the band continuing their reinvention away from the likes of 'Chelsea Dagger' and towards a more middle of the road sound, rewarding intent listeners with some truly captivating moments. Once again, we find that the trio is at the top of their game when they bump up the tempo, crank up the amps, and let themselves go as they did on *Costello Music* and to an extent on *Here We Stand*. Songs like 'Baby Don't You Lie to Me!' and especially 'Down the Road and Back... Again...' are small windows into the band's past; with both featuring immediately captivating guitar-based hooks that are easy to sing along to, and both being nearly on-par musically with much of the band's earlier work. Another prominent track is 'Thief' which features a methodically descending bass-line, some trademark "ah-ahs" and even manages to incorporate an essence of swagger to take it to the next level.

However, this is not to say the album is perfect. The Fratellis have long had issue with creating a different sound and at times, it sounds rather forced. Particularly with their slower numbers it seems difficult for the band to create an intriguing sound; they seem to fall apart without their trademark energy bursts and husky chant choruses.

'Whistle for the Choir' is perhaps a perfect example of what they can do with less tempo, but fail to achieve. Songs like 'Dogtown' and 'Get Surreal' are what cause this album to be at times an awkward listen.

Eyes Wide, Tongue Tied certainly outdoes its predecessors for sheer energy; it most definitely contains a fair number of stand-out moments. The moments of genius are simply scattered over a desert of what seems to be buoyed-up mediocrity. The Fratellis are still a work in progress, but they undoubtedly have potential; now that they are reunited, who knows what could happen.

Oscars So White

Oscar Parkman

This time last year saw the Oscars announce its 87th annual Academy Award nominees, prompting critics and celebrities to take to social media and state their disapproval of the lack of ethnic diversity, overlooking the creation of the Twitter hashtag #OscarsSoWhite. Now, it has been resurrected as #OscarsStillSoWhite, as the debates over diversity in Hollywood have been sparked once more.

For the second year running, no black or minority actors have been nominated in the four Oscars acting categories, which has resulted in a much larger wave of media-negativity. Idris Elba and Will Smith had been tipped as contenders for Best Actor after their performances in *Beasts of No Nation* and *Concussion*, respectively. Creed star Michael B Jordan and his director Ryan Coogler were also left off the shortlist - though Sylvester Stallone was recognised for his work in the film, nabbing a nomination for Best Supporting Actor after reprising the role of iconic boxer, Rocky Balboa.

Some of the Academy's members made efforts to justify the organisation's selections, with Reginald Hudlin (co-producer of this year's Oscar ceremony) calling the situation "frustrating". He said, "Maybe if there's 50 great films by black film-makers, they will get three nominations... It's just a frustrating thing that the voting doesn't reflect what America is saying very loud and clear."

Pledges have been made to double the number of female and minority members of the organisation behind the Oscars, and they have been welcomed by some of Hollywood's famous names. Oscar nominee Matt Damon praised the initiatives, but added the industry had "a long,

long, long way to go," while Iron Man star Don Cheadle called the measures, "a step in the right direction."

It is unquestionable that the issue of ethnic diversity within the film industry still casts a large shadow, so expect this year's Oscar host Chris Rock to have this on his hit list during his routine on 28th February.





Just Jim

Joe Norris

Momentarily featuring Alex Rome-Griffin, Jasper Ray and the back of my own self, Just Jim is Craig Roberts's most recent cinematic endeavour. Starring Richard Harrington from Hinterland and Emile Hirsch, it is the story of a young, depressed Welsh boy. There is a strong hint of Richard Ayoade's *Submarine* in Roberts' directional debut. He manages to skilfully combine a sense of teen awkwardness with Dostoevskian paranoia to create a darkly comic, yet simultaneously monotonous atmosphere.

Roberts plays the lead role Jim, an awkward misfit whose life is transformed by the arrival of new neighbour Dean (Emile Hirsch), who teaches him to be a rebel. Jim makes frequent trips to a rat infested cinema constantly repeating the same hint that Dean may be a figment of Jim's imagination. It is this *Fight Club* style of open ended-ness that really captivates the viewer – is Dean real, or is he just a product manic depression, inspired by the dead end town in which Jim lives? Dean never truly seems to develop into a character but then again, neither do any of the others. The camera work is classy, but ultimately the story peters out.

Just Jim touches mainly on the thematic issue of depression and suicide. In many ways Roberts captures the boredom of his home town almost too well; the story starts slow, and stays that way for 40 minutes. It is not until the belated entry of Dean that my attention was truly caught, but this was entirely the idea of the film. The irony is that in capturing the repetitiveness so accurately, the tedium is transferred to the viewer.

Overall the deadpan valleys accent does get on your nerves, but this should not take away from the cinematic beauty of the piece. For such a low budget film, Roberts (who also wrote the script) works wonders from his directorial seat. This, combined with the thought provoking plot-twists makes Just Jim a film well worth watching, but possibly not revisiting.



The Lost City of the Monkey God

For what seems like decades, experts have pondered and postulated over the existence of the great 'Ciudad Blanca'. The original international speculation ensued in 1957, after an American explorer emerged from the steamy jungle rampant and raving of a new lost city. In the same calibre as the Lost City of Atlantis; the White City or, City of the Monkey God was subject to some global scrutiny. Many experts in the field of anthropogenics and archaeology dismissed the prospects of this phenomenon and claimed that the recovered artefacts were fakes... The American explorer consequently committed suicide rather than face the public humiliation of being a crazy revolutionary in his scientific domain. However, it seems that this death may have been in vain as last year evidence arose from a recent expedition into the heart of the Honduran jungle.

The research team; comprised of archeologists, an anthropologist, an ethnobotanist, documentary filmmakers and representatives from the Honduran Institute for Anthropology and History, spent eleven days in the country's eastern Mosquitia region. "I became fascinated with the story... and have been ever since trying to prove or disprove the legend, and see what in fact was there," said Steve Elkins, an American filmmaker who led the project. Virgilio Paredes stated that no one had set foot in the region for 600 years and that the discovered artifacts dated between 1000 and 1200 AD. So what exactly was discovered?

The biggest haul of the expedition was a cache containing 52 artefacts. What is apparent is that this group of objects was left in one place, a possible offering to the acclaimed 'Monkey God' – although that needs

to be determined. In the adjacent region of Mesoamerica, one way of displaying your 'elite-ness' was to be seen elevated from the ground. Subsequently, people in the positions of power would precariously perch themselves on thrones or seats. Some of these items of furniture were uncovered and some of them were branded with animal figures. It was described as a 'fascinating discovery' that offered a valuable insight into the ancient world.

