Hello! Let us start at the beginning. This is a magazine. It aspires to be a literary magazine. In these pages lie the best works of the most literary students being educated (to put it generously) at Tiffin School. We have essays, stories, poems, adverts and sidebars. What lies before you now is a repository of words. Words define us, shape us, form us. William of Wykham once said that manners made man. He was wrong. Ideas form men, and words form ideas. This magazine promises nothing more or less than to include words of varying sizes (but not fonts – we have a fetish for Garamond), spellings and import. So, without further ado, we present the first of at least one of Tiffin Literary Magazine. Kelis once said that her milkshake brings all the boys to the yard. She too, was wrong. It is our Tiffin Literary Magazine that brings all the boys to the yard…

The yard door is open, read on Macduff…

Your humble editorial team,

Gabriel Barton-Singer
Tom Mitchell
Daniel Jonusas
Daniel Henderson
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As the nights draw longer and the days grow colder, we have a few eerie tales to share; though you wouldn’t dare read these beside the fire on Christmas Eve.

As Mr. Hitchcock once said: the next scream you hear may be your own…

Old Greasy Beak

by DAVID MASON

Long ago, but not so long ago that people have forgotten about her, there lived an old withered woman. She lurked around in the dark corners of streets, begging for money. She had grey, wrinkled features and always wore the same dirty rags. She never washed. Her most notable features were her crooked nose and most of all, her hunched back—hence she was known as Old Greasy Beak. It was common belief that she was a witch, and some of the more superstitious thought that she was Satan’s bride.

One night, Old Greasy Beak was begging on one of the busier streets of the town. She was hunched up on a narrow corner when a very wealthy man walked her way. As she put out her little hat, the man didn’t even glance down at her. In fact, he crossed to the other side of the road to avoid the poor unfortunate woman. Later that night a faint shout was to be heard coming from the wealthy man’s house.

That next morning news was around the town that the well-to-do head of the large bank on the outskirts of the town had fallen gravely ill from the measles. Doctors had rushed to the scene—called by one of the man’s many servants. The banker was also suffering from mental distress. He claimed that he saw a hunched shadow at his bedside that night, but nobody believed him, as the servants were adamant that they had locked up all the windows and all the doors.

A week passed, and the man was slowly recovering from his illness after very expensive treatment. Old Greasy Beak was still begging on the streets trying to make some money from the passersby. One afternoon, a farmer’s wife was leaving town to go back to her farm. She happened to be walking down the same street on which Old Greasy Beak was settled. As she walked by, instead of giving a little loose change, the woman wrinkled up her nose and deliberately trampled on Old Greasy Beak’s money hat. That evening, as the farmer’s wife went to her larder to get food ready for her dinner, she suddenly noticed that all her food supplies had either gone off or turned mouldy. The woman was outraged. To add to this, left on the floor of the larder was a little money hat.

That night, a young boy was wandering down the road on which Old Greasy Beak had set up camp. Whilst he walked past, he simply smiled and dropped a penny by the old woman’s foot. The next morning, the young boy opened up his shabby curtain and looked out of the window. He blinked twice, and then looked again. To the boy’s amazement, there, standing on the windowsill, was a pot of shiny gold coins.
t continued; banging, banging, and banging... would it ever stop? The incessant raps upon the floorboards, reverberating, never ceasing, going on, and on... It was more than any man could bear! I tried clamping my ears shut, yelling to shut it out, my efforts to escape it becoming more and more frantic, while the noise; the intolerable din just grew more intense! I gave into its pull, yanking myself away from my work, raising my axe, preparing to face whoever—whatever it was...

I ascended the stairs, while the cacophony increased in its frenzy, more and more unbearable... never stopping, never faltering... on, and on, and ON...

It was in the nursery; I could hear it behind the rotting oak door, see the reverberations coursing through the flaking fibres—in God’s name, I could smell it! An overpowering reek of moldering corpses—the stench of putrefaction! Gripping the rusting, decaying bronze doorknob, I barged into the room—

It had stopped... the din was no more... I glanced around, searching some source... nothing. But the vile smell was still present; still festering in the atmosphere—it was toxic, choking the very oxygen from within my arteries. I rushed to the window, fumbling to heave the casement open.

But then I stopped. Something had moved outside! I squinted, trying to pierce that sickly veil of shadows. Good God, it was there! The lightning sliced through the air, illuminating the rain, the mud, the... the cross! It was his grave! But the movement; what was it that I had seen?!

Then I saw it again, silhouetted against the unfurling of the heavens, in the ground beyond the crucifix, the mud was beginning to churn, swelling up... There was something coming out of it! A... figure, robed in the waters of the earth...

Sweet Lord, it was Him! He was rising from the ground, breaking the brittle surface, as the very air around him shimmered, distorted by his foul visage... He reared his hideous head, his decaying, moulding head... He was coming towards the house! He was growing nearer, his every footfall a step closer to me, a step closer to the end... I could no longer see him—he was out of sight, amongst the—

There, on the window, was a handprint, frosted onto the pane, with its spider’s web of pin-sized cracks... I don’t—I still don’t know what compelled me to do it, even to this day. Slowly, oh so slowly, I raised my hand to the window, slowly, so slowly, I placed my hand upon the windowpane.

And with that simple move, my future became as insignificant and non-existent as my accursed past.
Christmas

by WILL NOBLE

Christmas. A time for spirits. A time for ghosts. The time when the fabric between our world and theirs is the thinnest. The time when they reach out, when they grab at all life on this earth. The lesser plants are suffocated. And when the cold, clamping hands reach out, grasp and smother the last pale green leaves, they cover our land in an icy blanket. A deathly blanket.

And it is during this time that sometimes even one or two of them can slip past the veil and suffuse like smoke, curling into this world, and a ghost story is born. You might think that is just a figure of speech. You would be wrong.

A living, breathing, ghost story is born. Born to come for us. To haunt this world. And here is the strange thing. It is all about our point of view. From our point of view, they are the wicked ones. But what we see of them are actually the ghost stories. And occasionally one of us goes missing.

And they get a ghost story.

The hair on the back of my neck rose. This place felt off. It felt... undecided, a tear in what should be real. It should not have been there. It should never have been there. It looked alive. Its walls were stark black, and irregular. Menacing windows, and a door twice as high as a tall man.

Everything was coated in an icy layer of snow. The only spot of colour was the rust on the door’s old hinges. A cracked stone path twisted up to it. The doors had obviously not been used in centuries, so why was the path cleared? What kept the snow from falling more on the old trail? When I went to investigate, I found out why.

The path was hot. It was warm, pulsing and thrumming with vibrations. Like skin. Like a vein that breaks the smoothness of flesh. I looked up, and saw something that had escaped me before. The walls were intricately carved, in wide, coiling patterns that seemed like you could lose your mind just by looking at them. Like an invitation to madness. The sable walls looked like the elaborate patterns of a petrified lava floe from a long-extinct volcano. This place was not right.

I walked up to the wall nervously and put my hand on that unknown masterpiece. That was a mistake. I can be a daredevil, and this was what had got me this far. But this was too much. The wall was burning. It seared my hand and sent vibrations through my body. I ran, as fast as the deep snow would allow, and thought never to go to that accursed place again. But curiosity got the better of me within the week and I went back.

The place was gone.

It was all gone and replaced by a meadow, as if it walked with the winter snow. I could have sworn it had happened, and I didn't sleep for three nights. Nevertheless, I forgot about it until a year had passed since I had put my hand on the carved rock. And I felt it again. That searing sensation on my left palm that I hadn’t felt since I had placed a wavering hand on the bleak cruelty of that black rock had returned. I was drawn to it. It was back. But this time it was different. It was glowing. Not glowing like little children’s’ drawings of the sun. Nor like it was lit as if from another invisible source of light. Its edges were cherry
red, as if it had been heated in flames. He was definitely drawn to something inside that behemoth. This time he could not go back. He had a feeling that he could never go back. What was it? How had this happened on such a peaceful day? He had planned to collect firewood today but instead he had got lost in the forest. As if that was possible. He knew this forest inside out, and yet here he was. He looked around. He stood on the banks of a little pond. An eerie pond. Looking into its deep, dark waters, he felt that it was possible to get lost in the midst of your subconsciousness, never to return to anything resembling sanity.

The trees above him were gnarled, with stunted branches and grasping, contorted fingers, as if they were ready to cackle to the cloudy sky, to cry out in agony to the moon which was the bane of the darkness of night. The sky was just darkening, but under the knotted branches it was already gloomy.

Then he saw them.

(N.B. this is an excerpt)

DINNER TIME

by MUSTAFA MAJEED

It was three minutes to seven. A grandfather clock stood gloomily in the corner of a large room, where a man and two boys were seated around an ornate dining table. The walls were bathed in an amethyst evening glow that seeped in through the windows, and the rich odours of a delectable meal wafted in from the adjacent kitchen, where the hums of a woman could be heard. A stomach growled impatiently. Fed up with waiting, the younger of the boys uncrossed his arms and hopped
out of his chair. He toddled innocently up to
the head of the table, where his father sat
pensively. He stared up at him, balancing on
his tiptoes, his gleaming eyes wide in
anticipation.
‘Daddy?’ he inquired in a cherubic tone, ‘Is
dinner ready yet?’

‘Not yet, Eric’ said his father in a slow and
weary intonation, as if reciting a daily spiel.
‘You know that dinner starts at seven every
day, on the dot’. With a slight smirk, he rolled
his eyes and pointed sharply at the clock face
to punctuate the final word. Eric swivelled his
head in eager expectation, but upon realising
that it was in fact not seven, dropped his
shoulders and plodded disappointedly back to
his seat. The wait continued.

A woman stepped in from the kitchen,
leaning sideways against the doorframe in
visible exhaustion. Her sandy hair was tied in
a bun, but a few rebellious strands had broken
away and were now curving down her cheeks.
She withdrew her hand from a large oven
mitt, wiped beads of sweat from her brow,
and then placed the mitt in the pouch of her
plain floral apron.

‘Daniel! Eric!’ she called, ‘Dinner’s ready! Be
good sports and help your dear old mother set
the table, won’t you?’ Eric and his older
brother leapt immediately from their chairs
and hurried into the kitchen. They returned
bearing plates stacked twice their height with a
glutinous array exquisite food. Tender
chicken breasts drizzled with rich gravy were
bordered by sweet potatoes, their buttery
coatings glistening in the light from the
overhead chandelier. A plump turkey lay
imperiously on a platter of sautéed vegetables,
which had been cooked to a luscious crisp.

More and more food continued to arrive,
and the towering platters appeared to walk
independently, using the legs of the boys
whose little torsos they concealed. The table
was soon set, and all four were seated. It was
one minute to seven. They stared in gleeful
anticipation at their plates, which exuded an
almost golden glow. ‘Ah, skewered lamb, my
favourite!’ exclaimed the father. Without
hesitation he bit into the succulent rolls of
meat, and they were so plump and rich that
the juices dribbled down his chin. The others
joined in and they all chewed in silence,
savouring the moment. Then, with a sudden
clang. Eric’s plate dropped to the floor loudly.
His food spilt onto the pristine carpet and his
cutlery jangled momentarily on the table top.
He was shaking in his chair, shuddering
violently.

‘Eric, is there something wrong?’ asked his
father tentatively. Eric didn’t respond, but
continued to convulse. His eyes rolled up in
their sockets, and he began to murmur lowly
in some foreign tongue. Then, before anyone
could exchange a concerned glance, he
grabbed his head with both hands and let out
a feral, ear splitting scream. Shocked, the
father jumped up and strode over to clutch
Eric, whose fingers were digging so deep into
his face that he began to draw blood. They
watched in horror as his jaw began to distort,
morphing like malleable plastic. His chair
topped and he crashed to the floor, now
writhing so violently that the entire room
seemed to tremor. The chandelier crashed
down on the table. It shattered violently,
sending shards of glass in all directions.

‘Tom, do something!’ screeched the mother,
who was now cradling Daniel in the corner
and weeping with fear. Tom grabbed the
shuddering Eric by the shoulders and
wrenched him sideways, slamming him down
on the table. Eric struggled vigorously as Tom
attempted to restrain him, his head jolting
from side to side and his legs kicking
outwards. His eyes were now burning coal
embers and his mouth emitted an
incandescent glare as he screamed. A vehement kick lashed at Tom's midriff, sending him rolling across the room. He crashed into a cabinet – its glass casing smashed and he howled as the shards lacerated his face.

Slumped in an agonizing daze, Tom watched through a swollen eye as a frenzied Eric, with a force far stronger than his small body was capable of, tore a long metal railing from the chandelier frame as if it was no more than feeble liquorice. His wife stood up, her lip trembling and her arms spread wide to shield Daniel from harm. Eric hurled the shaft directly at her, and Tom could only watch as she was helplessly impaled, the sharp crown driving effortlessly through her skull with a bony crunch. She was dead in an instant, pinned like a limp doll against the wall, crimson blood gushing down the contours of her face.

Tom let out an inhuman scream. He staggered to his feet, oblivious to the pain of his severely gashed face and back. He picked up Eric's abandoned plate from the floor and lashed at him from behind in a fit of rage, knocking him in the temple with blow after blow of the heavy metal edge. The clangs resonated through the room, and Eric was now curled in a ball, screaming and babbling, but he couldn't stop – he needed to kill this, this thing – this abomination – to end it.

He howled through gritted teeth as he brought the plate up to deliver one final strike. But he dropped it to the floor, lacking the strength to do it, and collapsed to his knees in a harrowing outburst of guilt and grief. He sobbed silently, his eyes stinging with tears and blood. An enormous dent in Eric's head indicated that it had caved in. A moment of silent shock and lamentation hung weightily over the room. Daniel was sobbing beneath his mother's corpse, and the indulgent scent of food had now degenerated into the vile stench of death. Tom heard a faint noise, and glanced up, whimpering in pain. Eric's finger was twitching. He froze, paralysed by fear. The crying stopped as his anguished expression immediately turned to one of dread - a final tear trickled down his face. He watched in horror as Eric trembled, then slowly began to sit up like a marionette, as if being hoisted from the shoulders by invisible rope. His mutilated head lolled backwards as he rose, momentarily exposing a lurid rash that coated his neck and lower jaw. Now fully erect, his head began to swivel around, independently of his torso. It paused momentarily, then after a gasp of audible exertion, continued. A sickening crack indicated his neck had snapped. Head fully rotated, he looked directly at Tom, his eyes now pupil-less.

The clock struck seven. A wry, malevolent smile befell Eric's face, a smile that reached far wider than any mortal smile Tom had seen. It revealed rows of sharp, bony teeth being gently caressed by a scaly tongue. Then he spoke, in an unearthly voice that seemed to emanate from within like an echo returning from the depths of an ominous cave.

‘Dinner time,’ it growled.
against their clothes, somewhere in the remote Swiss Alps. Even their parents had thought it an odd place to go for their summer holidays, and David was starting to suspect that they may have been right.

David had always loved climbing, and he had especially wanted to climb this mountain. It was famous for being extremely difficult, and he wanted to prove he could do it. He had persuaded his friend, and he and Michael had wanted to climb it for the past year, but their parents had been unwilling to say yes. Until, in the final week of the year on a school trip, the two boys had climbed up one of the most dangerous cliffs in Scotland to rescue three climbers who had been trapped by a sudden landslide. David’s parents had seen it as a sign that they were ready for the mountain and Michael’s had soon followed suit.

So here they were, three-quarters of the way up the cliff, visibility next to nothing. David was worried. If this snowstorm got any worse, they would have to climb back down; but that was impossible. They were over six thousand feet up – the only way off the mountain now would be to climb to the other side, or be rescued by helicopter.

“We’re not going to make it!” yelled Michael, his voice almost lost in the howling wind. David looked down.

“We have to,” he shouted, “It’s just another thousand feet or so until the peak. Once we’re there the opposite face slopes down to base camp. We just need to make it to the summit!”

He scrambled on the ledge above for a handhold and pulled himself up, his harness swaying dangerously.

David swung himself up onto the ledge and saw a small plateau, about three metres across, rammed into the arms of the mountain, nearly covered in snow. It was about a foot above him. Straining his muscles, he pulled himself up and collapsed onto the ledge, pulling his legs up behind him. The cliffs around the shelf gave some cover at least. He turned round and looked down. He could see Michael’s face screwed up against the cold as he climbed higher. The wind seemed to be pushing against his body, trying to fling him from the face of the mountain.

“Can’t go any further,” called Michael, “too... too cold...”

“Grab my hand,” yelled David as Michael struggled up. He flung his arm over the shelf and stretched towards Michael as the wind buffeted against his coat. Michael looked up.

“I’m coming,” he replied. Michael stretched his hand as high as he could, and just grasped his friend’s. His fingers fumbled against David’s glove and tightened. David pulled as hard as he could. He reached his other arm down and pulled.

“It isn’t going to work,” screamed Michael, “we shouldn’t have come.”

“Don’t worry,” replied David, “I’ll pull you up.” He strained to lift Michael, but he was too heavy. The cold was starting to numb his fingers. He wouldn’t be able to lift Michael onto the ledge; but he had to try. He pulled with all his strength. Michael rose a few centimetres, scrambling against the rock face with his feet to help. His spiked climbing boots managed to propel him a little further. But then it happened.

Michael’s harness snapped. The ropes were already under a lot of pressure, and the cold weather had made them brittle. Without the extra support, Michael slipped further. David yelled with the pain; his shoulders were being pulled out of their sockets by the weight of Michael and his pack.

Michael looked up in fear.

“I’m not going to make it,” he whispered. David shouldn’t have been able to hear him, but something strange had happened to the
wind. He could still hear it, but it was as if everything except them had been muted. David could hear Michael's every word. “David, I'm not going to be able to climb any further,” Michael told him, “You may as well let go. But I promise that whatever happens afterwards, I will come back. Say goodbye to everyone for me.”

With that, Michael slipped from his friend's hands, and tumbled down the mountainside. David looked after him in shock, shouting after his friend.

“Come back!” he screamed, tears rolling down his face, “Come back!” Soon David's vision clouded over, and he collapsed, unconscious, on to the snow.

That had been four months ago. Now it was December, and David was now in his Christmas holidays. He had been found by the helicopter rescue crew and taken back to a hospital in Switzerland. He had been in hospital for three weeks, being treated for severe frostbite and pneumonia brought on by the cold.

They hadn't found Michael's body. David has been the last one to see him, which is usually seen as suspicious, but no one suspected him. He and Michael had been too close.

After a few weeks he had been flown back to England. He had spent the rest of the school term being given sympathetic looks by teachers and being pulled out of school. He was getting bored of it; he wanted to get back to normal life.

It was on 21st December that he began thinking about Michael's last words. He had promised he would come back to see him again – but had he known what he was saying? Had the cold weather unhinged his mind? And even if he had meant it, it was impossible. David firmly believed that there was nothing after death. How could there be, with no proof?

But David had once heard someone talking about spirits. One of his Mum's friends had been telling her that ever since their husband had died, they had believed in spirits. They said that the Winter Solstice was the time when our world and the world of the dead draw closer, when the barriers between them become close and can even overlap. She had heard that when this happened, if a spirit wills it strongly enough, they can travel through this overlapping point and come back into our world. Mum had thought this a load of rubbish, and she had told David so several times after her friend had left. David had always trusted her and not believed in anything after death, but now, after hearing Michael's words, he wasn't so sure...

He decided to go for a walk to clear his mind. He would just walk to the local park and back, while he decided whether to tell anyone what had really happened on the mountain. So far he had left out the part about Michael's promise; the deepest parts of his brain still hoped that his friend would live up to his promise, and he didn't want that faint hope to be crushed. He left the house and walked to the park gate. It was freezing cold; the weather forecast had promised snow coming down from the arctic. He opened the gate and stepped through. A wide expanse of open land stretched before him, mainly scanty, windblown grass dotted with the whistling skeletons of trees. Dead leaves and twigs cracked underfoot like bones. David walked forwards, leaving footprints in the damp mud. The place usually looked better in the summer, with the trees forming long green avenues and the grass long and noisy with crickets. But now it was a bleak sight, with all the plants so full of life in summer now dead and decaying. Banks of fog were curling across the park, and there was a low, icy wind.

He came to a gravel path and turned left along it. It led through a clump of gnarled trees whose branches interlocked, rattling against each other in the freezing wind. They leaned towards the path, meeting very low to make a sort of tunnel. David felt as if he was being trapped in a cage, with the trunks of the ancient trees forming the bars. He walked forwards a little. The sun was setting; it was
only two o'clock, but it was the shortest day of the year. The sun cast an eerie blue haze on everything. David walked further.
The sun set, and with one last golden flash the sky was plunged into darkness. The fog began to curl through the trees as it thickened. Suddenly, a strong gale blew up, and David stumbled back. The wind had nearly knocked him off his feet. If the wind between the trees had been a whisper, this was a howl. The trees seemed to be screaming at him; the very air seemed to be being ripped apart by the force of the gale. David heard a rending, grinding noise that filled his head, like the earth was being torn apart. The noise stopped, and David exhaled. He had been holding his breath since the sun set. He heard a noise like a footstep behind him, but he didn’t turn around. He knew that Michael, or something that had once been Michael, was standing right behind him.

“Don’t turn around,” said a familiar voice, “or bad things will happen. And when I say bad things, you do not want to find out what.”

Michael’s voice was as it always had been, but strangely hollow, as if all the life and expression had been drained out of it.

“Hello, then,” said David, suppressing his excitement, “I haven’t seen you in a while.”

“No, you haven’t, and you never will again,” replied the voice, “because if you do you will not be able to remember me or anything else again.”

David paled. He had to see his friend again – wasn’t that what he had been hoping for ever since the summer? But if he wasn’t allowed to look, he mustn’t.

“Michael, why did you come back to visit me? Why not your parents or your sister?”

“I can’t tell you about what happens after death, but we are allowed to return once a year. When we do we are only allowed to see those people who were with us as we died. I’m glad you were with me.”

David couldn’t resist it. He turned his head ever so slightly-

“Don’t turn around,” Michael warned, his voice hard, “I told you. If you do, you’ll wish you hadn’t.” David did. As he had turned his head, he had glimpsed things out of the corner of his eye that made him wish he hadn’t.

“So what does happen after death?” he asked.

“I wouldn’t tell you even if I was allowed to,” Michael replied, “I’m not even sure myself. Now I’m back here… well, I can’t even remember much of it.”

“Are you angry at me?” David asked, “I mean… it was my idea to climb that mountain.”

“No, of course not!” Michael exclaimed, “I don’t blame you at all. I should have known it was too difficult.” He paused. “There are others though, other spirits, who are much more angry about dying. The ones who were murdered are very vengeful. Every solstice they try to take revenge…”

David shuddered.

“And how are you?” he asked.

“Are you angry at me?” David asked, “I mean… it was my idea to climb that mountain.”

“No, of course not!” Michael exclaimed, “I don’t blame you at all. I should have known it was too difficult.” He paused. “There are others though, other spirits, who are much more angry about dying. The ones who were murdered are very vengeful. Every solstice they try to take revenge…”

David shuddered.

“And how are you?” he asked.

“Well, lots of people believe in a sort of heaven… I’m as well as I can be, being dead.” He sounded so depressed that David wished he could turn round and look at him. The urge to turn around, to see his best friend once more, was unbearable. How bad could it really be, just one quick look? Michael’s warnings were probably out of perspective – he had always made things seem worse than they really were. He had to look, just once.

“I know what you’re thinking,” Michael said warningly, “and you must not do it. It’s far too dangerous.”

David sighed. Michael was probably right. But he just had to see his friend again, no matter how terrible the consequences.

David turned around.
Whether you believe the events I am about to disclose, I do not give a care. But I must tell you that it is the truth, and nothing but the truth. For I am not mad, I am perfectly sane, just shackled by the devil. I am in fact a man of fine intelligence; I write books, ha! But while I am not mad, I am doubtful. For what is real when my senses deny my logic? What am I when I do not know the world as I thought I did? But I must confess this, for the noose I see before me will reveal not.

Before my first birthday my mother died, and I, my father having left the house previously, was left to the orphanage. After some time I was taken in by an old woman. The old woman herself was very benevolent. Her face was that of an old woman, wrinkled and adorned with time’s attrition, but, there was something else about her. Her hand! Her hand was black, pitch black like the night! It was this which I despised of her. She cared not for covering it up; it was there the entire time, yet no soul turned a head in the street. It made me turn pale. I would look at it and seem to lose sight of my spirit! It was truly demonic. You would think me mad but her cat was the same! His paw was completely black against the paleness of the rest of his fur. They infuriated me! They tormented me with their sight! I grew more and more hateful of the hands until, one day, at the very dinner table at which we ate, I seized the cat by its neck and slit its throat. One deed done, one evil expunged, I moved on to the woman. This may be more difficult, as I did not wish to kill the pleasant woman, merely take the hand. She was away, collecting milk and various other commodities in town. This gave me time. I immediately set to the task of concealing the cat. You should have seen my genius. I took the cat and cut the animal into little pieces, following which I ground it up under the millstone (for this was the old woman’s profession). O, I was so skilled! I scraped the remains into a sack and tossed it into the pond. The sack sank and, convinced at the extent of my precautions, I washed my hands and took to the task of preparing lunch for the old woman, but within minutes of me starting she was back. On opening the door she greeted me with a smile, but I was fixated on the hand. It was blacker than ever, the very evil of the earth was in that hand. But, to my horror the blackness had spread! The whole woman was as black as the hand! She was the incarnation of the devil! The rage coursed through my body. I grabbed a kitchen knife from the kitchen cupboard and gave it to her heart. She shrieked and the blackness fled her body in a mist of dust. I fell to my knees and slashed at the body, shouting all the while. I scrabbled for her eyes and ripped them of their sockets.
“The devil is no more!” I cried, “The devil is no more!”

The woman was soon a mush of my hacking, and, putting her in a sack, she too departed to the pond bed. I swept up the mess on the floor, for I am not a fool, and once again washed my hands of the success.

That night I went to bed quite content. The evil had been excised from my life. My soul was at last at rest! I slept peacefully, until on the twelfth hour I was woken, I still do not know how. I stepped out of bed, threw open the curtains. As far as I could see there was nothing, but then, out of the corner of my eye, movement. I turned my head.

There, in the very pond in which the old woman and her cat rested, came a figure. O, blacker than the night, for that was how I saw it, the absence of light! It rose from the water and raised a finger, a solitary finger, pointing below me. I shook, I shook frightfully, but I looked downwards.

My left hand was black.

It was in a strange way that I came to know of this rather grotesque tale which I shall tell. I am what you might call an entrepreneur or businessman by trade, and it so happened that one afternoon, after coming back from a court case with my lawyer, we were stuck in Hammersmith. Braving the blazing rays of the sun was not a prospect which held much appeal for me (nor for my companion), and so we opted to stay in the train and wait out the twenty-minute stay there. He told me this story as it came to him from his son-in-law, and, though it was not without its unlikely moments, I must admit, it unsettled me quite a bit.

The man's son-in-law, who was called George, was rather average. He worked in Hackney, and on the way back, he would stop for about twenty minutes at a station which I know not the name of, and there he would generally go outside to get some fresh air. This place where he would go was usually just a small, peaceful little town, but on the day that he went, there was a large festival happening, and the streets were chock full of people. Walking through the crowd, he managed to get shoved and pushed into a little gambling den.

The air itself in this little hangout was very oppressive and cloudy, and George could not see where he was going very well. Now, by chance, he happened to sit down at a table where an animated game of Texas Hold'em was going on. The players in such games are usually very obsessed, and not fussy at all about who plays as long as the game goes on. And so without really knowing what was happening, George found himself dealt a hand and very much a part of the game.

The person seated at the head of the table instantly drew his eye. George noted that his suit was of an extremely expensive make, as was the rest of his garb. He gathered that the man must have made a small fortune out of gambling. The hand was dealt, and everyone revealed their cards. George was last, after the head of the table. The rest of them, apparently, were all looking resigned, as if they knew the man would win.

He, too, had a confident expression on his face, as he revealed his cards — George still
remembered them — the four of clubs, diamonds, hearts and spades. He had four of a kind, an almost impossible run of luck. But then George revealed his cards, without really knowing what he was doing and what they were: the four, five, six, seven and eight of spades. He had a straight flush, which in the game beat the leader’s hand.

From this point onwards, I tell the story as my lawyer told it to me from George’s point of view — the reader must be aware that this story was transmitted orally.

The man’s countenance bore a thunderstruck expression for a moment, until he once again resumed his smile. From the looks on their faces, the other players were similarly shocked, as George gathered his chips. He chose not to cash in with the cashier, and left them on the table.

The leader shook hands with George, and took him to a table on which several drinks were laid; he gave one to George. The cans bore the same, rather strange name (and to this day, apparently, George has never found such a fizzy drink — I shall leave the reader to decide whether this was a figment of the man’s imagination or not):

MONEY
It’s good while it’s there

Somewhat unnerved by this, he took a swig, and turned round. The leader was gone. George searched the entire casino for him, but there was no trace to be found of this rather strange persona.

After a little while, his attention turned back to the drink. The can itself was an electric, neon blue, and the drink was a clear gold—taking the message on the cover literally, no doubt, he observed privately. There was another strange thing about the drink. George noticed that however much he drank, the can never seemed to get any lighter.

The next day, George went to the supermarket first thing in the morning. He went to the till to pay. As he inserted his credit card into the chip-and-pin device, the screen flashed and said:

TRANSACTION DECLINED

George stared in blank shock for a few moments, before, regaining his senses, he rushed outside, and dialled his bank’s number. He demanded to know what nonsense it was that was occurring.

The reply seemed to come after an eternity. A voice which seemed somewhat surprised, and just a little suspicious, informed him that George had shifted his entire account balance to a new account the previous night, and that nothing was left.

After hearing this, George went from incredulity and amazement to rage. He furiously got into his car, and drove to the local branch of the bank, where his account vault was situated. Here, he said a few brief words to an attendant, who took him down to the vaults.

For him, I am told, everything seemed to happen in slow motion—the door slowly swung open with a hiss. The attendant’s features became shocked. George saw a completely empty chamber, every single last note taken. And then the attendant’s voice, as if from miles away, distorted, “Where did that come from?” Following her disturbed gaze, his eyes alighted upon the object of her curiosity, and the world fell away.

The object was a small, shattered blue can, empty of all liquid. It read:

MONEY
It was good while it was there
A Wykehamist

In libraries his unremitting eyes have traveled through books,
His sensible shoes have been quiet on the carpet and floorboards,
He will perhaps be a soldier, or a master of some kind;
Others will enquire politely, in their heads, how be is quite so old, at 34,
In love, at loss.

Cloistered, mannered and thus made. A man
Shaped by well-cut lawns, Latin and brisk walks.
His forward drive was never doubted,
Not risking two runs, competent, secure
And trusted.

He has gone now, to be ten minutes early for a train,
Once gone, he will be vanished, unmade at last
All those years of cultivation lost,
Despite all this, be will be reshaped.

A boy will come amongst those aged walls,
Reformed, that each return ad domum,
Shall seem less far, his stride shall grow,
Until be too, is joyously at home, here and there.

by GABRIEL BARTON-SINGER
Poetry plays a major role in the studying of English at Tiffin. On a Wednesday afternoon, over a spot of tea and biscuits, some students have grown accustomed to discussing poetry between the hours of two and six. This has begun to happen so regularly; they’ve begun calling themselves a Club. What nerve. Though, it can’t be said that nothing goes on: we have some detailed annotations and pieces of their own creation within the following pages.

Here is an example of a poem we’ve analyzed recently: Rain, by Don Paterson:
There are certain rules to be obeyed upon joining Poetry Club. The first rule of Poetry Club is: you do not talk about Poetry Club. The second rule of Poetry Club is: you do not talk about Poetry Club! The final rule of Poetry Club is: everyone tries their hand at writing.

Ten-Minute-Poetry has proven popular among the members, with some interesting results to show for it! However, none of the following poetry has been named or given a title.

By the middle of January
The cold begins to irk,
The men and women of the British Isles grow
Sick of rain and darkness and of winter murk.
Guests, like unrefrigerated fish, are good for just two
days
Before their proteins sour,
Or unfamiliar habits start to faze
Their hosts – but most of all,
It is the climate of our national land
Which outstays its welcome.
By August, tiresome has become what once was
summer bliss,
And by the middle of January
Our merry festive season
Really, really starts to take the piss.

In early 1943
A mother plants an olive tree.
It grows, as trees are prone to do
And soon, it has a decent view
From where the land begins to die
Towards the lowly dying sea
To where it stretches, past the ground
Where Abraham could once be found
With Wife, and Sheep, and Seed to run
Through sons of sons and daughter’s daughters
Forward blindly like the waters
Lighting up the Jordan Valley green.
This tree looks out across its holy land
While underneath the holy fertile sand
Its roots grab tight its pride of place:
The middle of the World, where it belongs.
Then came the desperate ’48, the ever underdog
Took in her mouth the leg that kicked her.
Then the calf, and then the knee,
Jaffa, Haifa, Galilee,
Pissed her bladder dry upon the olive tree
Which never knew its mother.
It doesn’t know. How can it know?
If it knew, its oil would turn to tears.

Granny keeps a python in her handbag,
She plans someday to teach it how to dance.
When she’s mastered her vocation
She says she’ll tour the nation
And then perhaps tour Germany and France.

There are problems with my Grandmother’s intentions,
As anyone with half a mind can see.
For although she’s wise and canny
There’s a problem with my Granny
She’s taken quite a shine to LSD.

Because I cannot dance for flip,
I don’t. Because I seem to lack in luck
For cards, and love, and omelette-making
I try hard to refrain from faking
Aptitude for doing them in public.
This section of the magazine is not concerned with the abilities of Tiffin boys to write, but their ability to understand the writings of others—the art of literary criticism, criterary witticism and witterary littecsisms.

This section of the magazine is not concerned with the abilities of Tiffin boys to write, but their ability to understand the writings of others—the art of literary criticism, criterary witticism and witterary littecsisms.

The Troubles had a profound effect on both Heaney and Trevor and influenced their literature. Throughout their works the memory of these violent times resonates in their own sense of community, as the construction of the individual and communal identities of Ireland have been shaped around these collective experiences. Whereas Heaney expresses a political desire for national stability, Trevor withholds from directly commenting on political matters, instead using Felicia’s desire for concordance, despite her persecution, as a metaphor for enduring forgiveness as an end to this violence.

Despite writing in Ireland at the same time, Heaney and Trevor had very different upbringings. Brought up in Protestant Northern Ireland, Heaney, a Catholic by blood, migrated from the Troubles to Southern Ireland in his latter years. Conversely Trevor, a Protestant, brought up in Southern Ireland, later emigrated to Devon. Both men therefore spent their childhood years amongst minority communities, and were subject to the ever-shifting tensions of sectarian division. Despite this, both authors feel a strong connection to their Irish identity; Trevor, having lived through the Troubles remarked ‘You reflect and dwell upon [it a great deal’ believing that ‘It will therefore...
creep into what you write whether you like it or not.’ Similarly Heaney too has a self-confessed personal desire to explore the complexities of the national psyche through his work; he has ‘a tentative unrealized need to make a congruence between memory and bogland and, for the want of a better word, our national consciousness.’ It seems evident that both understand the scope of their influence on the literary stage; Heaney comments that North is ‘a profoundly self-conscious book’. Both authors therefore endeavour to explore the complex and contradicting nature of the Irish identity.

The nature of memory is fragile. Personal recall is usually selective, partial and subjective; that is to say that the very essence of memory is unreliable, warped, biased and often exaggerated. Yet we rely so heavily on our memory to guide our sense of self and our opinions which, in turn, shape our outlook towards society and its values. In both Heaney and Trevor’s works, memory of the past is presented in a way which allows us to develop an understanding of the present. That is to say that by describing the traumas of the past that have affected characters and voices, we can better understand their motivations for action.

Throughout North, Heaney documents the memory of different voices, adopting different perspectives and positions through time. By doing so, Heaney can construct and develop a complex sense of a communal identity. Heaney opens North with ‘Mossbawn’, a set of two dedicatory poems. Mossbawn, the name of the family farm on which Heaney grew up, immediately draws upon Heaney’s most personal memories of childhood. However the focus of the poem is an ‘absence’, the absence of his aunt; a memory filled with warmth, a ‘sunlit absence’. The proceeding idealised semantics (the ‘honeyed’ water, the ‘slung’ bucket, ‘each long afternoon’, the ‘reddening stove’) evoke the power of memory and the security of his sense of home. However, as the voice shifts us to the present, where ‘whitened nails’ and ‘measling shins’ consume his thoughts, we are allowed to delve into the psyche of the voice, realising that behind fond reminiscence lies a deep sense of loss. Trevor, similarly, uses both suppression and idealisation of memory throughout Felicia’s Journey. Felicia, our protagonist, is haunted by the death of her mother and the largely patriarchal upbringing she has endured. Through narrative selection Trevor suggests that Felicia’s memory of her mother’s death is one that she largely suppresses, however the ever present reminder of her silent great-grandmother, a physical embodiment of death, works to constantly bring painful memories of both personal loss and communal loss from the atrocities of Easter 1916 to the surface. Furthermore her father’s desire for her to continue her work in the role of house-keeper and carer is again a constant evocation that brings these painful memories of oppression back into her conscience.
Although the ‘Mossbawn’ poems were of personal significance to Heaney, they act to ease us slowly into the political and historical voices which follow, reminding us from the outset that we are human and that the communal voice contains a group of individuals, who like us, have emotions. Heaney appeals to this audience to empathise with the complexity of the problem, developing an understanding on an individual level, in order that we build a sense of the complexity and confusion of the identity of the whole, ‘in the hope that hope might have a future.’ From the autobiographical voices of Heaney emerge the voices of others. The voice of the ‘Bog Queen’, a potential ancient sacrificial victim whose body was preserved in peat in Ireland, recounts her visceral decay. Although she ‘lay waiting’, her body being reclaimed by the ground, she reminisces over ‘dreams of Baltic amber’ – the hope and wish for beauty and peace in her homeland. We know however that this wish seems unachievable, as in her memory of the past there is conflict – the Viking conquest of Ireland. Her preserved body embodies the continuation of violence, unrest and untimely death in her country through her continuing bodily decay. ‘Through marrying elements of national and personal history, through myth and image,’ from her individual story we develop an understanding of the whole, as we know that her wish that Ireland might return to a state of peace and beauty is still so far away. These hopeless dreams, when realised across the nation, create a widespread, national apathy. Likewise, Trevor too uses memory in a way that develops pathos towards his characters by contrasting the images created by the selective and subjective memory narrated through free indirect discourse, with events as they are narrated through the authorial figure of the omniscient narrator. Throughout the majority of the novel we see Johnny Lysaght through the eyes of Felicia, however ironically at the end of the novel for the first time we see him through the alternative eyes of Hilditch, who sees in Johnny everything which Felicia, in her mind, doesn’t.

At our first introduction to him there is only a ‘whispering echo’, a ‘murmur of his voice’ imprinted in Felicia’s imagination; from the very start we know the inevitable failure of Felicia’s mission, her memory of Johnny is too faded to withstand fantastical reappropriation and instead, due to her pregnancy and the child she bears, she constructs a highly romanticised and unrealistic character which she hopes Johnny will be. Although we feel sympathy for Felicia, due to her naivety, she represents a wider and more generalised stereotype of Irish women – as suppressed and dominated by the patriarchal society in which they live. In the domestic setting, Felicia, seeking employment, was told by her father that she should have only a part-time job as ‘It was what he wanted for her… He’d worked it out’ (FJ 28). Felicia’s father clearly dominated and suppressed her opinions before she left for England. Through
the memory of the individual, whether suppressed or open, and through a shared history, we can draw inferences about a communal identity.

In both Felicia’s Journey and North, place is used by Trevor and Heaney to help construct a sense of communal identity. This theme, which runs throughout both works, is often viewed analeptically; the flashbacks of Felicia to her childhood in a small town in provincial Ireland which is her home, and the historical allusions of North to the rootedness of identity in the ground of Ireland. Memory of place is vital in influencing an individual’s sense of self. Furthermore, the association of place with memory is also of importance when considering the effects of place on our sense of self. This association, working in both directions, enables Heaney to employ the landscape as a metaphor for the psyche. Place acts as a catalyst of this phenomenon, acting to trigger suppressed memories, which further resurface other traumatic memories. By doing so, we are given an understanding of why characters act the way they do, and think the way they think. This may begin to develop our understanding of the whole, showing interactions between peoples conflicting beliefs, allowing us to understand the contradictory and turbulent nature of attempting to classify the wider community, breaking down the stereotype that is so often branded upon these peoples.

In North Heaney explores the complex relationship of the Irish to their land. This relationship is one of strength and one of weakness, where their dependence on the land can be disabling; this is figured in Antaeus. The son of Poseidon and Earth in Greek mythology, Antaeus, acts as ‘an allegory of colonization’, his strength is dependent on the sustenance and nourishment of the land. Although this relationship sustains him, for he ‘cannot be weaned/ Off the Earth’s long contour’, he is disabled by Hercules who ‘triumph[es] unassailed’, leaving Antaeus a ‘sleeping giant’ – the dormant, failed champion, Ireland. Heaney suggests that ‘Hercules represents another voice’ – the political voice of the English – the imperial voice. Whereas in North the relationship of the people to the land was one of sustenance, in Felicia’s Journey place also acts to destroy relationships. In Felicia’s small hometown in provincial Ireland, her Father and brothers experience the paralysing effects of the communal malaise. It would seem, at first, that Felicia’s father feels morally bound to the society in which he lives; adopting the traditional Catholic outlook. His disapproval of Felicia’s relationship with Johnny Lysaght, citing the only reason as ‘he joined the British Army’ (FJ 53), despite it only being hearsay, leads ultimately to the breakdown of Felicia’s relationship with her father – later feeling bound by her guilt to communal morality and not to have an abortion. However finally, at the very end of the novel, it is revealed that
Felicia’s Father wishes for her forgiveness, ultimately breaking away from the constraints of the stranglehold of Catholic morality. Here, Trevor again references the complexities of constructing a communal identity when individuality is constantly at odds with it.

In North, the gendering of Ireland as a space can also be taken to allude to these social stereotypes, representing Ireland as a passive woman, raped by the male imperial power, her conqueror, Britain. Particularly in ‘Act of Union’ is this aggression expressed, with the consummation of the turbulent and violent relationship between England and Ireland, now bearing a child – the ‘wardrum/Musterling force’ that ‘leaves you raw, like opened ground, again.’ This notion of ‘trouble’ born out of this relationship can be seen to be paralleled by Felicia, Johnny and their child. Out of their relationship and out of their different backgrounds is born a conflict of their own. However with the abortion of the child comes the emotional journey for Felicia – unable to escape the grip of her society and her upbringing in a place where such practices are considered universally and absolutely immoral. Again the motif of the vicious relationship between the conqueror and the conquered, gendered as Ireland and England, is explored through the portrayal of ‘the Irish girl’ and Hilditch. Although the allusion of the pairing and gendering of these characters is to suggest this ancient relationship, Michael Parker believes that Trevor ‘transcends such simplistic paradigms, and embraces a much broader picture of humanity and inhumanity.’

The connection between memory and place is one that cannot be underestimated. The entwining of the two is inevitable and subconscious as both are rooted deep within the psyche. It is these two fundamental entities which shape our individual identities, personalities and actions. Heaney and Trevor were both clearly affected by their personal memories of the Troubles. Both men clearly felt that it was their duty to explore the conflict between the individual and the whole, exploring, through their writing, the role of memory and place in the differences between their characters, living in a country in which no stereotype or classification can be branded upon an entire community without exception.
despair’ (Gardner). The lexical choices of the introduction of Chapter 22 proliferate with a semantic field of sickness: ‘vague recurrent feeling of illness’, ‘wave of heat’ and ‘groaning involuntarily’. It alludes to the duality of both a mental and physical ailment, as Gardner suggests.

The introduction also reduces the social elite to mere animals: ‘cognate with his son's bay’. This zoomorphic description of Bertrand’s speech has a subtle dualism. Semantically, it dehumanises the Welches and likens them to beasts but, pragmatically, it suggests that the social elite are no more civilised than the Lumpenproletariat. Furthermore, the notion of a ‘bay’ implies inanity and a lack of substance. It, also, foreshadows Gore-Urquhart’s comments that Bertrand had the ‘disqualifications’ unlike Dixon: ‘I knew young Welch was no good as soon as I set eyes on him’.

In the chapter, Dixon seems to be in a liminality of identity: he appropriates the voices of others throughout the chapter since ‘he seemed to have forgotten how to speak ordinarily’. The latent content of this ventriloquism reveals an identity crisis. According to Marcian theory, Dixon is suffering from both identity foreclosure and identity moratorium: he was forced by society to adopt the role of lecturer yet internally explores other identities. As Dixon realises that his career has been ruined, ‘I’ve done it now’, his identity as a lecturer has been shattered. This plunges him into a crisis of identity. Moreover, Dixon’s loss of social identity reflects his Entfremdung, alienation in the Marxist sense. He feels detached and lacks fulfilment from his work due to the commodification present within the university. As a lecturer, Dixon is merely completing a series of endless discrete and repetitive motions, trapped within the social norms of his age: he wonders ‘What, finally, is the practical application of all this?’. In Dixon’s view, his labour is neither one of enlightenment nor one of intellectual satisfaction, but merely an exchange value.

Dixon’s linguistic style is one that is devoid of rhetorical ornamentation with excessive purple prose, an oratory register that starkly contrasts with the voices of characters such as Welch. A Marxist reading would argue that this dichotomy is symbolic: Dixon represents the base and, so, in his rebellion is attempting to shape the superstructure. In contrast, the ‘great roar of wordless voices’ endeavours to maintain the status quo. The chapter concludes with the superstructure seemingly triumphant: ‘without even telling them…everything faded out’. However, the ‘shouts, whistles, and applause [that] came from the gallery’ imply that eventually the base would be dominant and a social revolution would occur.

However, this interpretation would be ignoring Dixon’s own inclinations and the cultural context of the novel. Thus, as a matter of New Historicism, it could be argued that Dixon’s reaction against the university intelligentsia is an allegory of the changing political sphere of the 1950s. The election of the Conservatives in 1951 represented a movement away from ‘state control’ that arose from the socialist Labour policies. The Conservatives electoral slogan of ‘Set the People Free’ advocated for the idea of greater individual control and self-reliance. This led an uprising, especially from the young, against the established social constraints. Dixon’s lecture could be argued to be symbolic of this movement: he criticises the ‘home-made pottery crowd, the organic
husbandry crowd, the recorder-playing crowd’, groups which formed the culture of the time.

The chapter consists of few paragraph breaks and almost an excess of commas—graphologically interesting features. The lecture is an intoxicated stream of thoughts rather than a constrained and prepared delivery. However, the objections of the audience, such as the Principal’s ‘That’ll do, Dixon’, are not graphologically separate. Instead they are interposed within the paragraphs. This evokes an inimical atmosphere, one of confrontation between established and counter culture. The warlike imagery, such as ‘advance-guard’, ‘surge’ and ‘fanatical Nazi trooper’, in the chapter emphasises this notion of culture struggle. However, the chapter does not connote one culture overthrowing another. After all, Dixon desires to be among the ruling class as much as Bertrand. Instead, the chapter paradoxically both undercuts and perpetuates the social constraints of post-war Britain: Dixon despises the Welches, and the power hierarchy they represent, yet is far from a Marxist revolutionary.

The narration of the chapter is characterised by dramatic irony: comedy arises when the reader's fears are confirmed with a degree of hyperbole. The reader comprehends Dixon's attitude to the subject of his lecture yet understands that it is the last chance to impress the university facility. However, the reader is also aware of Dixon's tendency for disaster, especially after alcohol. It is inevitable that the entire lecture will be a disaster. However, the scale of the debacle exceeds all expectations. This irony is sustained through narratorial intrusion, when the omniscient narrator subtly intrudes into the character focalisation: ‘the drink, of course’. This highlights the certainty of calamity whilst stressing Dixon's obliviousness. Comedy, also, stems from the juxtaposition of absurdity and logicality. For example, Dixon decides to ‘suggest by his intonation, very subtly of course, what he thought of his subject and the worth of the statements he was making’. It seems logical to do so since all is lost however, the incongruity of making such statements in front of facility staff and public dignitaries is vividly apparent.
Michelle Paver’s visit to Kingston Grammar was exciting for a year 7 student in many ways. First, we got to see what other schools in Kingston are like, as many eager students from various schools came to see the author and we all joined together as one community. It was time for the moment that we were all waiting for, “The Michelle Paver talk!”

She seemed to be an intelligent lady; her hair coloured brown, hazel eyes and she had a booming voice; she started off by introducing the characters of her book leading to the background stories of each character with twists and turns to pull the reader in. Following on, she described how the story was based on a boy’s survival in the wilderness and how he made vital things like weapons for hunting and weaving clothes.

Finally she read her book with so much expression that everybody felt like they were the main character Hylas - going on all of those amazing adventures. We then queued up waiting to talk to her and get our books signed. It was a morning not to be forgotten and we look forward to more days like this.
While some have been meeting authors there has not been a boring moment at Tiffin this term, a new Mock Parliament has been created and from it the traditional form of the Parliamentary Sketch has emerged just in time to be in the Tiffin Literary Magazine.

Parliamentary Sketch
by GABRIEL BARTON-SINGER

In room 15, on Friday Lunches, debate meets heckling in the Mock Parliament chamber. The ethos of the chamber is haphazard formal, that is to say that half the members have three or four cabinet roles and schizophrenically change roles each week, the other half vaguely recall their party and mostly turn up to shout the name of the Shadow Chancellor aggressively. Use of parliamentary language is insisted upon, what exactly this entails is unknown. The routine of the average session is as follows:

The statement will be made on the government on any area of policy; then the government will blame the opposition for the economic crisis. Everybody shouts the Shadow Chancellor’s name. Then Noah Wescombe or Max Traeger makes some serious points from notes. Then they are heckled. Then the Speaker will feel the need to say something. Then the Speaker will let the leader of the Lib Dems speak despite best intentions, and he will proceed to tear shreds out of the opposition, the government and his own party.

There is a lull in proceedings as some people drift in and out. The Shadow Chancellor’s name is chanted ritually. There are some more statements from the opposition. The Speaker coyly asks Ms May to stand and flirts with her (Jack Nicholson). Then the Defence Secretary (Robert Bywater) will stand and proceed to get very angry, he will normally sit down again (this is not guaranteed).

The Liberal leader is up again and is denouncing everybody. There are some cheers and boos. The Opposition will continue to be very earnest from notes. Arjun Popat will remember he is Prime Minister. The Speaker will be confused and angry, and depending on his success with Ms May, possibly aroused. Finally the Liberal Leader will put something to a vote, decide on next session’s discussion, be pithy and sit down. Mr Carswell (Tom Mills) will be controversial.

The House Adjourns.
The termly *TLM* essay competition welcomes entries from all students, the title is as follows and the word limit is 1000; a minimum of 600 words must be written:

“A Bachelor’s Complaint of the Behaviour of Married People”

This essay title was first used by Charles Lamb in his *Essays of Elia*.

Good luck to all competitors; the best essay will be published in the next issue.

Scrabble Club is a fantastic opportunity both to converse with friends around the board and to enhance your vocabulary. It is a great way to spend your lunch-time. Personally, I find the club to have a friendly atmosphere and to be beneficial in gaining understanding of new words.

‘I would definitely recommend Scrabble Club to others’ – Hadi Sajid

Scrabble Club has a leader board and our current leader on the single word scoreboard is Ishaan Sikka. Making use of all his tiles and a double word score square, Ishaan was able to score an extraordinary 76 points. Come and see if you can beat his score.

*Every Thursday First Lunch*

*Room 51*
Mr Rennie is a teacher at Tiffin School, he is a connoisseur of wine, has expert knowledge of the collective nouns for species of duck, is head of Sixth Form and briefly worked in the Secret Service. Tom Mitchell and Gabriel Barton-Singer sat down with him and asked him a little about himself, and literature.

If there were to be a fight between the English Department and the Biology Department who would come out on top?

A mental duel, or a physical scrap?

Well obviously we have more, we are a larger tribe; I suspect science would triumph, but we would be merciful.

And in a mental duel?

A draw - with both parties wounded.

If you had to say what your favourite book was, what would you say, and would you be telling the truth?

I’m going to sound like some pretentious undergraduate, but the book I return to is the Trial, by Kafka. It’s just such a metaphor for modern life - being controlled by outside forces we don’t understand – it’s what being a teacher is all about actually.

We’ve always thought that Kafka can be a bit of a Marmite author, and on the subject of Marmite, do you love it or hate it? Because we’ve always been able to take it or leave it.

Remarkable! I am a Marmite addict; I will put excessive thicknesses of many millimetres onto a piece of toast. It’s almost a chilli experience where that savouriness is almost painful but pleasurable – masochistic!

It’s ascetic, is it?

I wouldn’t say it was ascetic, I would say it was indulgent.

Have you ever tried Vegemite?

I have tried it; I considered it an inferior product but would eat it if forced to.

Moving on now, we’d like you to imagine you are in the Nazi regime, if you were of equipollent rank in the Nazi regime as to your rank as a teacher here, what would you be?

Are we talking in military rank, or political circles?

Military rank, Oberst, Kommandant, or right at the top with the Reichsführer Generale?

Über gruppenführer.

If you could only have five horses the size of ducks, or one duck the size of a horse, which would you have?
I’m a duck-lover; I love ducks (at this point Mr Rennie used a Latin term which our speakers did not pick up). Ducks make me smile; I would have a giant duck. And it would follow me around. I would fly it to work if it were that big.

A sub-question, what is the collective noun for ducks?

Which species? It’s a ‘spring’ of teal, which is a comment on the way that, when disturbed, they fly vertically upwards in a springing motion.

Final question: your name is Mr Rennie; we wondered whether you have ever had indigestion and, when you did, whether you took a Rennie?

Not the first time I have been asked that. I have had indigestion though fortunately I am not particularly afflicted and if that is the case then I will take whatever is to hand. I’m looking at the Chemistry: very simply it’s either a carbonate or a sulphate ion.

So you’re not a believer in nominative predestination?

No, although that can be very amusing, like the guy who designed the toilet – Thomas Crapper.

Excellent stuff, thank you very much for your interview.

A pleasure, thank you.

Teachers wishing to be in next term’s interview should contact Tom Mitchell, or one of the other editors.