

BIANNUAL
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fortunas





Our assessments for entry in August 2025 will take place on Saturday 25 January.

94%
HIGHER PASS
RATE IN 2024

65%
A GRADE PASSES
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(HIGHERS/2024)

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Fortunas 55

Many thanks to everyone who contributed articles or images to *Fortunas* 54; the deadline for submission of articles for the next Summer issue is **Thursday 27 March 2025**.

In most cases, to comply with GDPR, pupils are identified with just their first name and surname initial. In a few articles, however, pupils' full names are given. In such cases, pupils have provided their express permission for use of their full names. -Ed.

The opinions expressed in this magazine belong to the individual writers and not to Dollar Academy.

GDPR

Dollar Academy sends out copies of *Fortunas*, and any enclosures, in envelopes addressed to Former Pupils, former staff and friends of the Academy who have actively opted in to receive postal mailings. One copy is sent to each postal address on the opt-in mailing list. If you wish to change your postal mailing preference, or need to update your postal mailing address, please contact dollarfp@dollaracademy.org.uk. You can opt to receive a link to a digital version of the magazine using the same email address.

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From the Rector

As the festive season approaches, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you to edition 54 of Fortunas.

In the pages that follow, we celebrate the remarkable achievements and heartwarming stories that have defined our school community over the last term or so. From academic successes to artistic triumphs, and from sporting victories to acts of kindness, our students and staff have once again demonstrated the spirit and excellence that make Dollar Academy such a special place.

The festive season is a time for gratitude and giving, and I am immensely grateful for the dedication and support of our entire school community. Your contributions make Dollar Academy a place where every student can thrive and reach their full potential. The contribution of Professor Jim McEwen, who recently retired from his role as Chairman of the Board of Governors, is celebrated at the start of this publication and I would encourage readers to take a moment to learn more about this exceptional man who has given so much to our school over the years.

I hope you enjoy Fortunas and very well done to Heather Moore and her team for capturing so much of what goes on at the Academy.

I wish you all a joyous and peaceful festive season, and a prosperous 2025.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Munro". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the first name.

Ian Munro





THE FUTURES INSTITUTE AT DOLLAR ACADEMY

FIDA has achieved its most significant milestone to date: the launch of a new national qualification, the *International Sustainability Diploma*. The course is being piloted this year in seven schools across Scotland, including Dollar Academy—an initiative that is being closely watched by Scottish Government and Education Scotland, as it represents a significant curriculum innovation at a time of reform. Already, it has led to Dollar Academy being cited as a pioneer of interdisciplinary learning in the Scottish Government’s response to the Hayward Review and in the national press.

With such momentum building behind the Diploma, I am delighted to take this opportunity to share some insights with *Fortunas* readers.

What Exactly is the Diploma?

The *International Sustainability Diploma* is an innovative one-year programme of study. Instead of following a traditional, single-subject curriculum, students undertake a series of projects, each of which requires them to develop a solution to a real-life problem aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The projects are co-created with experts from industry and academia and are inherently interdisciplinary: they break down subject boundaries and encourage students to see the real-world relevance of their learning.

Instead of end-of-year examinations, students are assessed on a varied and demanding portfolio of work which they build throughout the course. This allows them to demonstrate the attainment of important skills such as independent research, problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration, communication and entrepreneurship.

The Diploma is credit-rated at SCQF Level 6 and is worth 24 tariff points—equivalent to one Higher. As such, it is recognised by UCAS, universities, colleges and employers, and it also carries international recognition.

Seven Pioneer Schools

The pilot involves 75 pupils in 7 different schools across Scotland: Alloa Academy; Braes High School (Falkirk); Clifton Hall School (Edinburgh); Dollar Academy; Inverness Royal Academy; Our Lady & St Patrick’s High School (Dumbarton); and Speyside High School. While FIDA provides resources and guidance, the course is led by teachers within these schools, and it is designed to encourage interdisciplinary collaborations across departments. Indeed, it is testament to the truly interdisciplinary nature of the Diploma that this year’s course leaders come from a variety of subject specialisms: Geography; Modern Studies; RMPS; Technologies; Business; and English. We were delighted to welcome these pioneering teachers to a day of collaborative professional learning and discussion with our own teachers in September. The day was attended also by the Head of Learning, Teaching and Assessment at Education Scotland as well as colleagues from the University of Stirling and an education journalist from *The Herald* who has been following FIDA’s journey. The range of perspectives in the room made for a productive and inspiring day.

What's in the Course?

The course comprises three distinct units. The first—*Understanding Sustainability and Design Thinking*—builds a common foundation of knowledge and skills. Students explore the concept of sustainability through the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and learn the principles of Design Thinking—a methodology for problem-solving and solution development widely used in business. Crucially, students learn by doing: whether creating a social media campaign about an SDG of their choice or working in teams on a 'hackathon'-type design challenge.

This learning is applied directly in Unit 2: *Designing Sustainable Solutions*. Working collaboratively in small groups, students must undertake a minimum of two 'Global Challenge' projects from a range of options. For instance, they might design an accessible playground to improve the health and fitness of older people; devise a new wave-powered method for water desalination; create a video game to combat climate anxiety; or design a monument to represent unheard voices in their community. In each case, students must investigate the problem posed; generate an original and relevant idea; iterate it through a process of feedback and testing; and ultimately present their solution and the thinking behind it.

While entrepreneurial thinking is developed throughout the course, it becomes the singular focus of Unit 3: *Entrepreneurship: Ideas into Action*. This unit is co-developed and delivered with the University of Stirling Enterprise Team, who ran workshops at Dollar Academy and Braes High in September and November respectively, introducing students to the vital role of business and social enterprise in achieving the SDGs. Later, students will select one of their project outcomes from Unit 2 to develop further as a sustainable business or social enterprise proposition, which they will have the opportunity to pitch to entrepreneurs.

Early Feedback

With Unit 1 complete and Unit 2 now under way in all our pilot schools, early indications are positive. Here are just a few reflections from teachers offering the course:

'This is possibly one of the most important courses we could offer. The Diploma will allow our students to be prepared for future career sectors, policy and personal challenges in a world that faces a climate crisis.'

'I've already seen how the Diploma takes my learners out of the subject silos and helps them see the bigger picture.'

'I'm finding that the way the Diploma is structured, it's great preparation for university. It's not as teacher led as a typical Higher, so it's a good transition.'

Early contributions from pupils are equally enthusiastic:

'I am very excited to get fully stuck into this Diploma. I feel it is a great opportunity, and a qualification in something that I deeply care about yet rarely get enough time to delve into within school. I also know that my classmates are very like-minded, and so I believe this will be a very fun and productive year.'

Next Steps

Much hard work lies ahead: developing new course materials; testing the robustness of assessment and verification practice; evaluating impacts for pupils and schools; defining a new 'Distinction' grade to ensure that attainment is recognised; and above all, listening to and learning from our early pioneers in classrooms across the country. Just as we expect students to test, adapt and iterate their ideas, so we must be responsive to the crucial feedback from our pilot schools so that we can develop the qualification in ways that make it as valuable and as accessible as possible.

Jacqueline Smith (FIDA Director)

A TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR JIM McEWEN

As Professor James (Jim) McEwen retires as Chair of the Board of Governors, it is my privilege to try to capture his enormous contribution over three decades of service. In doing so, I have sought reflections from the two Rectors and two Bursars who have worked alongside him as Chair, and from his successor, Professor Russell Morris. Their heartfelt contributions, together with my own, would have filled these pages twice over. What follows, therefore, is an attempt to distil the essence.

Where to start? Perhaps with some key dates. Jim (FP 1949–57) was appointed to the Board in March 1994, becoming Vice-Chair in 2003 and serving on the Executive, Investment and Health and Safety Committees. He succeeded John Cameron as Chairman in 2014.

He was perhaps most visible as the distinguished figure who delivered thought-provoking speeches at Prize Giving. Yet the Chairman is far more than a figurehead. Imagine yourself for a moment in his shoes—custodian of a school with over 1300 pupils and 250 staff, hundreds of families and thousands of alumni, operating within its local community and adapting to new political and economic realities, educational reform, a technology revolution and a global climate emergency. The challenges are many and varied, complex and consequential. Tackling them effectively requires a deep understanding of the past; a meticulous attention to the detail of the present; and bold strategic vision to set a trajectory for the future.

In the words of Rector Ian Munro, ‘Most of the Chairman’s work is far from the glamour of the Prize Giving stage. It is more often gritty; finely balanced; emotionally charged

or legally complex; and almost always intellectually taxing. How fortunate the school was to have Jim in its corner for so long. He remained accessible and engaged, offering thoughtful advice late into the evenings. His intellectual rigour challenged my thinking in the most respectful ways, and I know that some of my best decisions at Dollar to date were shaped by his guidance.’

At Dollar Academy, the Bursar is also Clerk to the Board of Governors—a role held for 29 years by Justin Wilkes, who affirms: ‘The job of the Chair is complex and demanding—a sure touch is required to ensure that the governance team remains harmonious whilst also challenging, questioning and testing the status quo. Jim met that requirement most deftly by virtue of his sheer personability, affability and keen intelligence.’

To this list, I would add ‘unflappability’—and if that isn’t a recognised word, it should be invented for Jim! In the most testing of circumstances, he remained a calm and reassuring presence; when views diverged, he would ensure all were heard with impeccable courtesy. We could not have had a steadier hand to steer the ship.

Jim’s effectiveness as Chair was rooted in the values he embodied. Astute, broad-minded, collegiate, inspiring, collaborative, considerate, dedicated, adroit, skilful, fair and unerringly thoughtful are just some of the words his colleagues have used to describe him. In the view of incoming Chairman Russell Morris, ‘Jim has been everything that Dollar could have asked: a compassionate leader with a strong sense of what is best for the school, the pupils and the staff.’ Former Rector David Knapman observes, ‘In an ideal world

all Governors would be walking role models for the values of their school. *Work hard, be kind and get involved* would certainly apply to Jim. Add to this mix large doses of modesty, integrity and diplomacy, and you might begin to understand his immense contribution across 30 years to the school he so loves.’

Service on the Board is a voluntary role, and Jim balanced it with an illustrious career in public health. He started out in general practice before becoming Professor of Community Medicine at King’s College London in 1983. As Director of Public Health for Camberwell Health Authority, he drove the development of measures to improve quality of life, particularly in disadvantaged areas. In 1989, Jim moved to the prestigious Henry Mechan Chair of Public Health at the University of Glasgow, a post he held until 2001. During this period, he was elected Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences, and also President of the Faculty of Public Health—a major leadership role in which he championed the development of national standards of practice and a multidisciplinary approach to identifying and reducing inequalities. He was awarded an honorary DSc from Glasgow Caledonian University in 2008; and since his formal retirement from academia, he has remained actively engaged in public health through consultancy for the World Health Organisation. Dollar Academy was exceptionally fortunate to benefit from Jim’s expertise when the Covid-19 pandemic struck, and his advice was central to the school’s response.

I asked Jim what he considered to be the highlights of his time as Chairman. He cited two. The first was the school’s Bicentenary in

2018: a pivotal moment that involved both looking back to appreciate how the past two centuries had shaped the school, and looking forward to envision an aspirational future. Jim was called upon to articulate that vision at the keynote event in St Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh. 'I never thought I would speak from the pulpit of St Giles,' he reminisced. 'It certainly wasn't a sermon!' David Knapman recalls Jim's commitment to this and many other occasions: 'Jim and his late wife, Pippy, have been a huge part of Dollar life. Together, they were an inspiring force for good and a cheerful and enthusiastic presence at any school event, of which they missed very few.'

Jim's second highlight was the more recent development of FIDA, the Futures Institute at Dollar Academy. For him, FIDA represents 'a strong commitment to the future', placing Dollar at the forefront of Scottish education with curriculum innovation and the forthcoming state-of-the-art building to support new ways of learning and teaching. With his usual perspicacity, Jim saw FIDA as an opportunity not only to enhance the educational experience of our own pupils, but also to forge important new partnerships with schools, universities, Scottish Government and national agencies such as Education Scotland, at a time when independent schools are facing existential challenges. Without the Chairman's strong strategic support and commitment to fundraising and investment, FIDA could not have made these swift and significant strides.

Current Bursar and COO Graeme Morrison appreciates Jim's 'unwavering commitment to the continued success of the school. Under his stewardship, Dollar Academy has



thrived and evolved, positioning itself more robustly for the future. He leaves behind a legacy of positive change and a school community that is undoubtedly stronger because of his dedication and vision.'

Perhaps more than anything, it is for his personal qualities that Jim McEwen is valued. For Justin Wilkes, 'Jim has been an irreplaceable part of my working life. It has been an absolute privilege to work alongside him and count him not only as a colleague but also a friend.' That sense of privilege and a deep gratitude for Jim's wise counsel and unfailing kindness are widely shared.

Ian Munro reflects, 'Above all, Professor McEwen is a true gentleman. I deeply admire his achievements in his professional, civic, and personal life, and I am honoured to have worked alongside him. I will never forget that he appointed me to the Academy, and I

will always strive to repay the faith he has shown in me.'

For my own part, I find it difficult to imagine the Board without Jim, not just for his leadership but also for the simple fact of his presence. He is the best of company—a man of many interests and thoughtful discourse. What might be taken as 'small talk' is meaningful with Jim—he listens, and he cares. He is also witty and engaging; it is a rare conversation that fails to spark the twinkle in his eye or prompt a moment of laughter.

Jim, we thank you for your service. Dollar Academy owes you a great deal, as do we all. We will miss you enormously.

Jacqueline Smith (Vice-Chair of Governors)



ALISON MORRISON

One theory I never tested to destruction: check out the quality of a teacher by teaching a class during the teacher's absence.

My very last experience in such a context in 2010 was the covering of Alison Morrison's JI class while she was otherwise occupied on a Parents' Welcoming Afternoon, shortly after she'd become Head of the Prep and Junior School.

I'd arrived spot on time (unusually) to find the class seated, bright-eyed and fervent with desire for learning. I was clutching copies of a Theodore Roethke poem designed, I thought, to stretch the minds. Everything went just so smoothly: the questions were lucidly answered; debates on ideas flew back and forward in the classroom; present participles were introduced, chewed over and fixed for ever; groups formed to debate maturely; motivational challenges in the poem were clarified; and everyone in the room wrote a ten-line poem on one moment of impact, with participles dangling throughout.

On the point of relaxing into self-delusion, as the lesson had flowed immaculately to its conclusion, I glanced at the classroom clock. Mild panic. Twenty-three minutes remained to the bell and my material was essentially exhausted.

There had been no typical summer term interruptions by Charities Committee members or wasps arriving in the classroom; no small child had struggled to his or her feet with a tuba, a cello or a set of pipes *en route* to a music lesson. Anti-climax had arrived and settled in the June warmth.

Alison's class had, however, revealed her exceptional qualities as a practitioner—academically secure, she knew how to encourage the best from her children. Her low-key energy revitalised children's study habits. Her supportive clarity allowed all to prosper, and those in her care felt she knew them all. Challenges were set to be met, and all problems had solutions if you were to work at the topic with focus and determination.

Others will detail Alison's organisational skills, her passion for sport and her capacity to inspire all around her without appearing to drive in too high a gear. Dollar was fortunate that she opted to send her two sons Courteney and Fraser there as pupils; and when she followed them into 'The Ship', as Courteney termed it, her progress into senior management was inevitable. She was the perfect all-round educator, but with wit as well.

One final recollection. In 2006, she mentioned to me the idea of *One Book One School*—a literary vessel designed to bring everyone in the community together. Thus, the *Treasure Island* project, with everyone in the Academy participating—gold doubloons being minted, the Dollar edition of the novel being printed (the first new Scottish edition in a hundred years, we were told), and a real Jolly Roger flying above 'The Ship'.

Alison leaves after an imaginative, supremely influential career in Dollar, but her retirement will not be one of slothful ease, even on her beloved island of Islay with Iain, while surrounded by her latest books TBR. New horizons await.

John Robertson
(Rector 1994–2010)

TIGHTROPE. DESTROYER. DOLPHIN.

You may be wondering why?

These words come from *what3words*, the innovative system that divides the world into 3-metre squares, each assigned a unique combination of three words.

Tightrope.Destroyer.Dolphin pinpoints the exact location of Alison's former office in the Prep School. The system allows for simple and accurate location finding and can stop people from getting lost—I thought this was relevant in this moment because I know many people will still feel a little bit disorientated without Alison around.

I very much include myself in that group, and I want to make clear just how grateful I am to Alison for all the help she gave me as I navigated my first couple of years at the Academy. Since those early days, I have always trusted Alison to provide me with the most honest feedback. We agreed on lots of things, but not all—which is healthy, of course—and I always valued Alison's wise counsel most highly.

Alison joined the Academy in August 2006, and her journey here was nothing short of extraordinary. As Head of the Prep and Junior School and Assistant Rector since 2010, she was a guiding light for both pupils and staff. And her dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment to holistic education have left an indelible mark on our institution.

Fun-filled Christmas dances, Moët et Chandon aprons, thoughtful assemblies, warm welcomes to sports teams from around the country, and impactful Open Days all spring to mind when I think of Alison's broader achievements. Although before my time, the school's bicentenary celebrations would not, I understand, have been the resounding success they were without Alison's oversight.

Beyond the day-to-day, Alison has been a mentor, a guide, and a friend to many of us. Her wisdom, patience, and genuine care have touched our hearts and enriched our own Dollar journeys. Her fierce intellect allowed Alison to contribute across the whole range of departments that make up our school.

I think some of the best *Fortunas* farewell articles have some sort of structure to them. As I near the end of Alison's, I want to return to the idea of *what3words*, but this time the words don't come from the geolocation app, but rather from some of Alison's colleagues when asked to characterise her. Here are some of their descriptive triplets:

Strong. Loyal. Determined.

Intelligent. Professional. Personable.

Compassionate. Thoughtful. Giving.

Hardworking. Creative. Energetic.

Alison's legacy at Dollar Academy will endure in the hearts and minds of all those she touched. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours, confident that she will continue to inspire and make a difference wherever she goes.

Alison, may your future be filled with joy, success, and fulfillment. Thank you for everything. You will always be a cherished member of the Dollar Academy community.

Ian Munro (current Rector)

ALISON MORRISON

Have you ever noticed that when you take a photograph of a landscape, the picture you look at on your phone in no way does justice to the reality?

How, in this short article, can I possibly explain how someone gave so much, every day, for so many years, to those around her?

Teaching is often called a caring profession, and no one cared more than Alison about trying to ensure that our school was a place of true excellence that aspired to give all of its children the best possible education in every way. From the classrooms to the Music practice rooms; from the sports fields to the Drama Studio; from the Art rooms to the pastoral and Learning Support environments; from the common rooms of the boarding houses to the quality of food in the Dining Hall, Alison's view was always that if we were going to do something, we should do it as well as we could. She would take an event, a school ceilidh for example, and lift it in every way with new ideas for the music, the food, the decorations, arrival, departure, photos, anything and everything. She wanted to make the experience as special as possible for the youngsters involved.

No element of school life was too small to be overlooked, and I well remember a senior leadership debate about the nutritional content of the items being sold in school vending machines! Alison enjoyed debating and held very thoughtful opinions and values which she would articulate very clearly, but she always listened to others and was very much a team player. In fact, she was often the glue that would hold the group together because everyone understood, and appreciated her dedication, her innate honesty, her sense of perspective, and her strong belief in working together for the benefit of others. Underneath an exterior that could be steely when needed was enormous compassion and a great sense of humour.

One good example of her skills was her brilliant organisation of the school's Bicentenary celebrations. It is unusual for someone to combine such high levels of organisational ability with such a flair for the creativity, and Alison was the perfect person to fulfil this role. She exceeded expectations (even though those expectations were very high) and created so many happy memories for the huge numbers involved. Creating special memories for others was, in some ways, her guiding principle.

As I hope I have made obvious, Alison contributed to every facet of school life, but, of course, her key area of focus was leading the Prep and Junior School. She and her team did a brilliant job of steering and developing all aspects of this, and hundreds of iterative improvements were made on a continuous basis. End-of-year reviews were a joy as the long list of changes and developments never failed to impress. Important as the co-curricular side was to her in terms of providing an all-round education, she was always completely on board with the centrality of classroom learning

and teaching.

If I have made Alison sound a paragon of faultless virtue, then that's because she was—but lest this brief overview makes her seem unduly earnest, I am going to mention just how much fun she was to work with. She laughed a lot and she loved what she did. In particular, she loved the children under her wing. I do think, though, that perhaps her greatest quality was her selflessness. When she took on leadership roles, it was never about her and her status, it was always with a view to being able to contribute to the whole, to improve things, to help make the school a better place for those in her care. My guess is that she was never happier than when she was watching school sport on a Saturday morning, listening to Pipe Band practice, or watching her Prep and Junior School children performing. I know that her amazing contributions will have filled her with her own special memories that will continue to enrich her life as she moves forward.

Thank you, Alison, for giving so much to Dollar.

David Knapman (Rector 2010–2019)



FAREWELL TO MRS MORRISON

In Dollar Academy halls, where dreams take flight,
stood Mrs. Morrison, a beacon of light.

For eighteen years, she has led with grace—
her guiding hand in every place.

With eagle eyes, she saw it all:
every stumble, every fall.

Prep and Junior she did lead
with wisdom; she did sow the seed.

From Junior 1, they learned and grew,
under her watchful eye, they knew.

Desert Island Discs, a talk from all,
the legacy of this, still standing tall.

Mrs Morrison, our fearless leader,
we love that you're such an avid reader.

Lost Spells, Treasure Island, a literary source,
The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and Horse.

Quint walks, assemblies, pen and ink—
offering pupils time to listen and think.

A face on the games pitch every weekend,
supporting the school, a well-placed friend.

An idea or concept she would always kick-start:
the bicentenary 'scent journey' to celebrate art.

Fresh morning coffee in the staffroom each day;
to finish, some spinning, to blow cobwebs away.

The pipe band played, their notes did soar
in harmony, forevermore.

'Highland Cathedral', an emotive tune,
followed her footsteps, every June.

The hills sat high behind her chair,
like solid soldiers, standing there.

Now, as she bids her fond adieu,
her legacy will carry through.

So let us raise our voices high
and bid farewell with tearful eye.

To Mrs Morrison, our guiding star,
we'll cherish you, from near and far.

The ship must sail on journeys new
as we wave goodbye from us to you.

A collaborative poem from the Prep and Junior School



FAREWELL TO MR IAIN MACKENZIE

Iain Mackenzie retired this summer after an impressive 16 years as a teacher in the Mathematics Department. During his time at Dollar, he stepped up to be the head of department for a period, and he was always our go-to data guru, using the data to provide helpful analysis and timely insights.

One of the earliest memories I have of Iain is from my first department meeting. I was quite nervous about meeting the team and decided to start with what I thought was a safe option, sharing holiday news. Iain immediately jumped in: 'I've got something to share...' Hurrah, I thought. To my surprise, he ran off to collect what looked like a hole punch or possibly a stapler. In fact, as it turned out, it was a Japanese paper compressor that squeezes sheets of paper so tightly together that they remain attached without needing any other binding. He was pretty pleased with it! With Iain, I learned, always, to expect the unexpected. His ability to offer an astute observation or crack a joke which got straight to the heart of the matter is one of the many things we all love about him.

Iain arrived in the department very early every morning to put the coffee on. This arrival was accompanied by a loud and varied soundtrack, which, on a good day, was further enhanced by some enthusiastic singing. It always lifted my mood to know he was there, and I am really going to miss our morning chats. Iain is thoughtful, wise, and well informed, and he was endlessly engaged with current best practice and pedagogy. To that end, he was an early adopter of AI. Alongside testing the limits of ChatGPT's capacity to solve Advanced Higher Maths problems, his initial trials included some pretty awful AI-generated poetry about the Maths Department! Memorable lines included: 'Fiona, your love for cover is infectious. You've taught us that every cover holds a universe of possibilities waiting to be solved.' We all hope that poetry isn't going to be Iain's major retirement project!

On a more serious note, Iain cared deeply about his pupils. I was touched on a regular basis by his support of his lower and middle school classes. I could hear him tirelessly encouraging them every lesson; he greeted them at the door on arrival, kept his expectations clear and never allowed them to be less than their best: 'We are good people; we don't talk over others,' was a regular refrain! I doubt they realised

how special it was to have a teacher who never gave up, who held them to the highest standards and who always gave them another chance. On a recent Duke of Edinburgh expedition with Form III pupils, it was clear how fond his classes were of him—even though one of his pupils mentioned that he sent a SPARX homework reminder at 6am! I know how much his Higher and Advanced Higher classes enjoyed his famous tangents and the richness of his lessons. His background as an engineer—and his general thirst for knowledge—meant he always had the information and background to place every topic in its wider context.

Beyond the classroom Iain had, in recent years, taught himself to play the saxophone and was instrumental to DAJO, described by the conductor as 'talented, incredibly reliable and willing to be flexible to fit the needs of the group.' He went on many trips (to London, the USA and China) with his colleagues in the Business Education Department. Many people shared with me their warm and fond memories of working with Iain, and I wanted to share Mr Abtin Pourgive's response in full:

'Iain has always been incredibly generous with his time, never hesitating to share his vast knowledge and experience to educate and guide colleagues. He has a sharp turn of phrase and a dry sense of humour that he uses to great effect. I learn something from him every week without fail. His passions extend beyond Mathematics to playing the saxophone, a skill he diligently acquired later in life. His dedication and enthusiasm have made him a valued member of DAJO. Iain's wisdom and tranquillity will be greatly missed.'

Iain was conspicuously absent from his own AI poetry so, to conclude, I want to leave you with an absolute gem, courtesy of Microsoft Copilot:

'In the hallowed halls of numbers and lines,
where equations dance and knowledge shines,
Iain stood tall, guiding minds with care,
For sixteen years, a legacy rare.
His chalk-dusted hands, a conductor's baton,
weaving algebraic symphonies, never forgotten.
And when twilight whispers its gentle refrain
Iain's saxophone hums, soothing life's strain.
Yet beyond the classroom, a secret fire burned:
a passion for football, fervently yearned.
Manchester United, his heart's true devotion,
their victories and defeats stirred his emotion.
So here's to Iain, the sage of numbers and goals,
retiring with grace, as the story unfolds.
May the sax's sweet notes and Old Trafford's roar
accompany him onward, forevermore.'

Rose Chamberlain



GOOD-BYE TO ALL THAT

FAREWELL TO MR PETER RUSSELL

The Studio Theatre. 7.27pm. The audience is seated, settled, expectant: who knows what will happen tonight? How, after all these years, does PGR keep doing it? The gaze wanders from programme to people-spotting, to the minimal set, and... idly speculating... to that square outline in the middle of the stage. Why build a square among rectangles of chipboard? But here is the man himself, welcoming us: his grin is wide; his eyes alight with first night adrenaline, voice deep and resonant, an actor's carrying tones. He is standing on the mysterious square, and... the lights go down: the play is on...

1969, and a young Peter arrives at Dollar Academy, to board in Rathmore House. Little does he know that after his Dollar years, he will

depart for London, Tokyo, Glasgow and all points in between before returning in 1997, to stay for more than 27 years. And so it is... here is Mr Russell in his English classroom, electric with characteristic flair and style, not unlike his own snappy dress sense, along with an edge of the unpredictable (who else would order a class set of potentially scandalising Tom Sharpe novels, but then have the good sense not to use them?)

That good sense—along with boundless energy, approachability, empathy and a rich, dark vein of humour—were good reason for appointing him Head of Heyworth House, and Assistant Head of Year in 2001. His early twin passions for cricket and drama were also being fully exercised—he was a busy man. After an exchange year in the US, he returned to developing the separate strand of Drama that was to be a defining contribution to Dollar's history. SQA courses were introduced, beside all the clubs and productions he oversaw, and in 2007 he became Head of the new stand-alone department.

For Peter, Drama was never just about staging plays, products for spectators to observe; it was so much more, a living process at the heart of

education. It gives children space to explore theirs and others' lives, and the world about them, through trying out words, movement and invention. It bounces them out of childish comfort zones, gets them to listen, respond, engage, see wider and understand more, to express themselves and speak clearly. It involves solving problems, experiment, risking failure, pushing boundaries, asking questions like *What if?* and *Why not?* Paradoxically, it is both discipline and anarchy: a bit unruly, but highly technical; a touch of magic, but hard, hard work. In fact, a bit like the man himself...

And let no one doubt how much work it was, not only running Dollar drama but underpinning Dollar cricket for decades, a sport uniquely hour-consuming. How did he manage all this? With extraordinary energy and drive, with resilience, dedication and the skills that saw him present remarkable plays, and, more importantly, to inspire countless young people to direct and perform themselves. Comedy, tragedy, whodunnits, political, experimental... *Mary Queen of Scots Got her Head Chopped off*, *Twelfth Night*, *Noughts and Crosses*, *Pride and Prejudice*... His range has been endless and exhilarating.

One such was *Metamorphosis*—which returns us to the opening conundrum: why the square pattern in the stage? The answer sums up the best of PGR—for, in a flash of calculated inspiration, this was where he built a swimming pool in the centre of the theatre and filled it with uncountable gallons of water, wherein the play's Narcissus could gaze at himself (no flood risk, of course, or Health & Safety slip, trip or drown hazard....). The magic of that literally ground-breaking production, the dream-like lighting on the water, remains with me still.

And so—*Good-bye to All That...* We who have left Dollar know that the waters of memory soon close over us; we are gone. But long may the ghost lines of Peter's swimming pool endure, cryptic clue to a mercurial, inspirational talent.

Geoff Daniel (former Deputy Rector)

MR PETER RUSSELL

A few days after I finished school forever, my mum came into my room crying. Someone's died, surely, I thought. Panic arose in me, and I asked her what was wrong. 'Nothing, nothing's wrong. Just read this.'

She handed me a letter and I soon calmed myself. There was no need to scare me like that, it's just a letter. A letter from Mr Russell? His end-of-school farewell letter to me. As I read it, my mum stood watching over me, smiling. By the time I finished reading it, I felt the tears prick my eyes, and I stood up and gave her a hug. Mr Russell was not only a Drama teacher, he was also quite the wordsmith, and the words of praise and care that he had written for me were truly moving.

When I was asked to write a farewell to this magnificent teacher, I felt the pressure—knowing mine would perhaps never quite live up to the one he wrote for me. His words of

affirmation and kindness regarding my efforts in school were not unique to that letter alone. Throughout my time at school, I knew he always believed in my abilities—not only regarding acting, but in my writing. This gave me confidence to try new things and even direct the Sixth Year Play in my final year. He was inspiring, and he was funny. I'm not alone in saying this; as I'm sure many Former Pupils have vivid memories of being a Form I or II pupil, on their way to Drama class, excited to see what he had in store for them that day. He is eccentric, and I cannot count the number of times my classmates and I laughed with him in lessons, before swiftly shifting gears and learning a valuable lesson a minute later. He has wisdom alongside wit. He could talk for hours about the significance of plays and even took us to see some: the memories of watching *Pride and Prejudice* (sort of) are forever imprinted upon my mind. But, for me, the best thing about Mr Russell was that he cared. It was always encouragement and nothing less. It is no secret that teachers have profound impacts on their pupils, and it is certainly true that I will always attribute part of my future creative development to his belief in my work. The school is truly going to be at loss without him, as, I believe, no one out there will quite be able to fill his shoes.

Whenever I see my mum, she tells me how she keeps meaning to write back to him and thank him for his kind words, but that life keeps getting in the way. I keep this letter on my bookshelf at university. So, this is the long overdue reply, Mr Russell. Thank you. Not just from me, but from all the pupils you have taught and made to feel confident and happy over the years that you taught at Dollar Academy. And after all those screeching, hectic Form I classes, I know that this retirement is well deserved.

Eve Murray (FP 2023)

Naturally, I think about high school sometimes. My mind is always drawn back to the oval Drama Studio, and there sits Mr Russell, a man of intensity and calibre. I see people now that remind me of him. Recently an Italian café owner in Lancaster served me in an embellished waistcoat. As he loudly entertained us with jokes directed at the surrounding tables, I leaned towards my friend from university and whispered, 'He reminds me of my school Drama teacher.'

Mr Russell only taught me in my final year at Dollar. I can't act. I get shy and go scarlet in the face. He often quipped that I looked as though I wanted the earth to swallow me whole. 'Stop bouncing!' he'd plead, whilst I tittered and flopped around onstage, convincing no one I was Lady Macbeth. We didn't talk very much, and I was not his star pupil. I wore a stupid wig on the Sponsored Walk, and he kindly entertained that. Because it wasn't a relationship of mentor and prodigy (my acting skills being absent), we based our conversations more on English language and literature. His encouragements to speak up, to argue, were exciting. I always felt he was going to start an outlandish conversation—and I knew that I had better keep up. I wonder how many men wearing waistcoats in passing will remind me of him. I hope he will now have the opportunity to see more theatre productions. Maybe the chance to be a freelance critic in his spare time?

Susanna Lyndon (FP 2023)



GOODBYE TO MR JOE SHAW

In August 2020, Joe Shaw joined the Computing Department at Dollar Academy in a move from St. Mungo's High School in Falkirk. He arrived in the middle of the Covid pandemic, a difficult time to establish oneself in a new post. However, Joe took all the additional regulations and challenges in his stride, immediately demonstrating his adaptability and resilience.

Within the classroom, he quickly developed good working relationships with his pupils and established himself as a supportive and caring teacher. He nurtured many enthusiastic budding programmers in the co-curricular computing clubs. Outside the classroom, his passion for cycling led to him to set up a pupil cycling group, and to organise and lead a number of Duke of Edinburgh's Award cycling expeditions. As a colleague, Joe was easy to work with and a reliable team player who always did his best to help. He was full of good humour and positivity.

In August 2022, Joe took over the mantle of Head of Computing.

He welcomed Nathan Headley to the department and oversaw the transition of the department from the Younger to the Playfair Building.

Joe's overriding passion for cycling has snatched him from the clutches of the Academy. He is now a senior development officer with Paths for All, in charge of funding to promote active travel, cycling and walking across Scotland. Drivers on the route from Dunipace to Dollar will miss him whizzing past them on his bike twice a day. Staff and pupils at the Academy will miss his cheery presence but we wish him all the very best for the future.

*Rosemary McGuinness
(former Head of Computing)*

Mr Shaw's class was great. There was something about him that made it seem as though he was more friend than teacher. Capable in 'banter', obsessed with cycling, always trying to get people to join 'Chain Gang' (a road cycling group), he was much more than the Head of Computing. He tried to start a mountain biking club, but, most unfortunately, after just a few

Thursdays of riding the Dollar trails after school, he took a bad fall, breaking a vertebra in his back. Minutes after this fall, his phone rang. It was some kind of official call which he had to take—and so he did, while lying on the ground with a broken back. That perhaps gives a small indication of Mr Shaw's strength of character.

He has left Dollar to pursue a genuine passion: improving the local cycling facilities. We wish him all the best.

Cameron M. (FP 2024)

Erratum: This farewell article should have appeared in the summer edition of Fortunas (53). Ed.

SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION AT DOLLAR

Dollar quite simply wouldn't be the school it is today without the generosity of our donors and supporters, and our goal is to ensure that the longterm success and sustainability of the school is well supported through philanthropy.

Giving Week 2025

As we embark on another exciting academic year, we're delighted to introduce a new addition to our annual fundraising calendar: Giving Week.

In 2025, Dollar will hold its very first Giving Week. This weeklong fundraising initiative will kick off with a Senior Staff Challenge and culminate in our annual Fundraising Concert with the Scottish Pops Orchestra, when we invite our entire school community of parents, alumni, staff, and friends to come together to create a lasting legacy for future generations of Dollar pupils.

Our goal is to raise funds that directly support our Annual and Bursary Funds, as well as the Futures Institute; both are fundamental in enriching the pupil experience and ensuring Dollar continues to thrive in the years ahead.

Each day of Giving Week will feature exciting activities, inspiring stories from our pupils and alumni, and a series of special challenges to make every donation go even further. Together, we hope to make it a week to remember whilst ensuring that we can continue to offer outstanding education, state-of-the-art facilities, and enriching opportunities for all. So, watch this space: we'll be sharing updates across our website and social media channels as our plans develop. We look forward to embarking upon this new initiative with you.

Sharing Stories of Pupil Impact

Antonia A. (Form VI), from Romania, is one of our HMC Projects Scholars. The Scholars initiative offers international students an unparalleled opportunity to study at a UK boarding school. Toward the end of last term, Antonia won a prize for an essay she wrote about her time at Dollar. In it, she wrote: 'This experience gave me more courage than anything else, courage that I can do whatever I want, that I can be whoever I want and that I am more powerful than I thought I was. I gained confidence and I redefined my limits...'

Schools involved in HMC Projects are required to fund the complete costs of tuition, food and accommodation; the generous support from our donors is what enables us to do this. I highly encourage you to take a moment to watch Antonia reading her fantastic essay about her experience as a boarder at Dollar. It's definitely worth your time. (Scan the QR code opposite.)

The Futures Institute

Since the summer edition of *Fortunas* we have received another £144,000 in donations for our Futures Institute. We would like to thank all those who continue to support this important initiative. Recent donors include Former Pupils and current parents. You can keep up to date with FIDA developments, including the Diploma Pilot, by signing up to the monthly newsletter on the FIDA website:

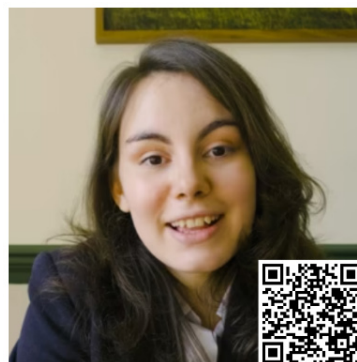
<https://fida.world/>

Leaving a Gift in Your Will

Legacy donations have been, and always will be, hugely important to Dollar. Leaving a gift in your will may be the ideal way to help if circumstances do not allow you to at present. Since Dollar Academy is a charity, we can be included as a beneficiary in your will; all you need is our charity number (SC009888) and contact details.

You can read more about how you can support the next generation at Dollar on the 'Support Us' page of our website. Alternatively, please contact Rebecca McFarlane on mcfarlane-re@dollaracademy.org.uk or 01259 742 511.

Rebecca McFarlane



A Warm Welcome to KATE MACNISH

Earlier this term, a few Prep and Junior School pupils enjoyed taking time to chat with our new Head of the Prep and Junior School and Assistant Rector, Mrs Kate MacNish.

Elodie.:

My name is Elodie and I'm in Junior 2. Welcome to Dollar Academy! Can you tell me, firstly, which of the three Dollar values do you value the most?

Mrs Kate MacNish:

That's a really good question. It's very hard to choose because all the values are important and all interlinked. But for me, 'Be Kind' stands out. I believe that kindness is the foundation of a happy school. When people are happy, they are ready to learn and do well, and they are going to make progress in their learning. When we choose to be kind, we are able to create a school where everybody feels supported and respected. This helps to create an inclusive and nurturing environment where all our pupils feel safe. To me, that is the most important thing. And kindness is infectious, it has a ripple effect—when someone is kind to you, it inspires you to pass that kindness on.

Elodie:

What is your favourite year group to teach?

Mrs MacNish:

When I'm teaching a particular year group, I always think they're the best. But then I move to a different year group and think: Oh no, *this* is the best year group. I do particularly enjoy teaching Junior 2s because the conversations and discussions are so engaging. But I also really enjoy working with the younger pupils in Prep 1 and all the other classes in between. I just love teaching and one of the joys of my job as Head of Prep and Junior is that I can visit any classroom I like and spend time with the pupils whenever I want.

Rafe:

I'm Rafe, and I'm the Stuart House Captain. Is there a place on campus that you particularly like?

Mrs MacNish:

I'm very fortunate to work in a school—and you are fortunate to attend a school—with such a stunning campus. It is absolutely beautiful. It looks lovely when the sun shines, but also when it's dark and the mist is down. I love walking up the driveway towards the Playfair Building, seeing the



flag and the steps up to the Bronze Doors. I love standing beneath the pillars, looking towards the War Memorial, and up at the hills and the trees. I'm particularly enjoying these September days, as the leaves begin to turn and the colours shift toward autumn.

Rafe:

You attended Dollar Academy as a pupil. Has much changed since you were here?

Mrs MacNish:

Some of the buildings have changed, and there are some beautiful, new buildings. When I attended the school, Westwater wasn't here and nor was the Maguire Building with its Captain's Room. I particularly love Westwater. But some areas are exactly the same: the Assembly Hall, and the staircase going up to it, is identical to when I was here. They even smell the same! There are also some teachers who were here when I was a pupil!

Amelie:

I'm Amelie, and I'm in Prep 5. Are you enjoying working at Dollar Academy so far?

Mrs MacNish:

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at Dollar Academy so far. It has been an incredible opportunity and whilst it has been a bit of a whirlwind with so much to learn and lots of new people to meet and pupils to get to know, I've embraced every moment. I am looking forward to what lies ahead.

Amelie:

Do you have any pets?

Mrs MacNish:

I have a dog—a cocker spaniel called Harris who is three. He often comes to school with me at the weekends and sleeps under my desk while I work.

Finn:

I am Finn and I am in Prep 4. Can you tell us where you worked before you came to Dollar Academy?

Mrs MacNish:

I was a headteacher in Stirling, in charge of two different primary schools. One was called Thornhill Primary School and the other was Kincardine in Menteith Primary School. They are both small primary schools in the countryside.

Rafe:

We know that you like to read us poems in Assembly. Where do you get the ideas for the poems?

Mrs MacNish:

Sometimes I'll think about what message I want to share in Assembly, and I'll search for an appropriate poem or look through my poetry books. Sometimes I will use a poem that is already a favourite of mine; for instance, we talked about 'Youier' a few weeks ago (by Donna Ashworth). That poem really suits an assembly for young people, as it encourages us not to compare ourselves to others, to embrace our uniqueness; it reminds us that being ourselves is the best thing we can be. There is no better person to be you than you! It is one of my favourite poems. I am looking forward to sharing more of my favourite poems at Assembly. There's a poem for every occasion.

Amelie:

What are your favourite things to do when you're at school and when you're away from school?

Mrs MacNish:

My favourite thing to do at school is to walk around campus; there is always something happening. I enjoy visiting the classrooms in both the Prep and the Junior School classrooms. I often wish I had more time to spend in the classrooms and just be a part of what the pupils are doing. Outside of school I like to go on long walks with my family and our dog, Harris. I also love spending time in my garden, and I enjoy growing flowers and vegetables. I love travelling too, especially to warm, sunny places.

Elodie:

Which Prep and Junior event are you most excited about?

Mrs MacNish:

There are so many things on the calendar, and we are all so busy all the time that it's difficult to choose the one I am most looking forward to. I love Christmas, so, at this point in autumn, I begin looking forward to the Christmas parties and concerts. I think, when I look back upon this year, that rehearsing and performing the Nativity with the youngest pupils will surely have been a highlight. I'm also looking forward to the summer term—the Sports Days and the Junior Musical—so I'd say I'm very much looking forward to going through all the events on the calendar for the first time!

Rafe:

Are you thinking about changing anything in the Prep and Junior School—perhaps organising more House events or events for charity?

Mrs MacNish:

The best way to make meaningful changes is by listening, so I plan to listen to consult with pupils, parents and staff to hear their thoughts of what could be improved or introduced. Over the coming months, I will be taking time to have those conversations and reflect on ideas that might help us continue to move forward.

Finn:

What would you say is the best part of your job so far here at Dollar?

Mrs MacNish:

There are so many wonderful aspects to the job. I absolutely love the campus—it is such a beautiful place to work. Getting to know everybody is another highlight, though this is a work in progress because there are so many pupils and staff members here. But the very best part of my job is working with the pupils. There is no better job than being surrounded by young people who have so much energy, enthusiasm and interesting things to share.

*Interview conducted by Elodie P., Rafe L. (both Junior 2),
Amelie W. (Prep 5) and Finn T (Prep 4)*



IAIN MACDONALD

Iain MacDonald is delighted to be taking the role of Head of Drama at Dollar Academy. He joins the school after seven years working at Linlithgow Academy where he set up the Drama Department from scratch, turning it into one of the most popular and high-attaining subjects in the school.

He believes that Drama has a vital role to play in the curriculum, equipping young people with skills including creativity, empathy, public speaking, and confidence which will be vital to them regardless of what path they choose in life.

Iain is also an avid proponent of creating 'thinking classrooms': a space where pupils can develop their critical thinking skills, focusing on process over product. This is something he hopes to bring to his classes at Dollar Academy.

Before becoming a teacher, Iain studied Drama at Queen Margaret University and completed a Masters in Directing at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. Upon graduating, he worked as a theatre director across the UK with a specific interest in small-scale, rural touring in the Scottish Highlands. He has also won two awards for short story writing, presented to him by Alexander McCall Smith.

In his spare time, Iain is an avid supporter of Celtic Football Club whilst also being a huge fan of film and reading. He lives with wife and young son, Harrison, and their miniature dachshund, Mr Beaumont.



ELIZABETH HARDING

Elizabeth joins us from Denny High School, and she is thoroughly enjoying her new position as Teacher of Mathematics at Dollar Academy; she is also working in Argyll House.

She first studied Manufacturing Systems Engineering at Strathclyde University. After that, she worked in industry, undertaking a variety of engineering roles, and this led to a move to Hertfordshire. In her role as commodity manager, she travelled extensively across the world, solving engineering problems and negotiating contracts. During this time, she also became a chartered engineer with the Institute of Electronic and Electrical Engineers. And, as she was spending a lot of time travelling, she decided to use the time to her advantage, studying for an MBA through Strathclyde University.

She has always enjoyed developing the engineers of the future and supporting pupils to obtain places at university or gain apprenticeships. Soon, she was ready for a return to Scotland and a change of career. After some voluntary work with adults, supporting their numeracy and literacy, she decided to pursue teaching. A PGDE in Secondary Mathematics at Strathclyde University came next, and she enjoyed her student placement at Grangemouth High School. Elizabeth loves spending time with her family above all; she also swims and is a regular at Bannatyne's swimming pool.



EMMA POOLE

Having grown up in Crieff, Emma is delighted to join Dollar Academy and find herself back in the countryside. Most recently, she taught Maths at Perth Academy. She has just returned from maternity leave, and she is enjoying the challenge of juggling her role as mum to three young children with her new role in Dollar's Maths Department. She has already been touched by the warm and supportive welcome she has received from colleagues and students alike.

Emma completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Strathclyde, where she studied Prosthetics and Orthotics. She spent her third year in Texas, working in the university hospitals and soaking up life in the USA. Upon her return to the UK, she was involved in a car accident in which she broke both wrists, losing dexterity in her hand movements. This didn't stop her and, during her recovery, she worked in a special needs school while studying Quantum Physics through The Open University. Once qualified, she returned to university to do her PGDE, qualifying to teach both Mathematics and Physics. She spent her first year of teaching in Padua (a perfect little Italian town just outside of Venice); she enjoyed this exposure to Italian culture and she learned a little of the language, too.

In Emma's younger years she was a keen gymnast, and she was even a member of the Scottish Gymnastics team at the Commonwealth Games. She travelled the length and breadth of the country, training and competing, quite often completing homework and exams on the gym floor or in the back of the car. Those experiences made her passionate about combining sport and academic study, and she looks forward to sharing this passion with her new pupils. Beyond the classroom, she has set up a Netball Club with one of her new colleagues, and she is helping with the already successful Gymnastics Club.



LINZI SMITH

Linzi joined Dollar Academy's Business Education Department in August. She previously worked as a principal teacher at The Community School of Auchterarder. She was drawn to Dollar, as several of her previous colleagues had moved here and spoken so highly of the Academy—highlighting the warm atmosphere amongst staff, the hard-working and polite pupils, and the opportunity to engage in co-curricular activities. Along those lines, she is already working alongside our Strength and Conditioning Coach to run a new HYROX Club after school. She herself has competed in two HYROX competitions this year, raising over £1,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support along the way.

Linzi studied for a joint degree in Business and Secondary Teaching at Stirling University, and she has since completed the Scottish College for Educational Leadership course in Teacher Leadership, as well as the Vibe Leadership Development Programme through Tree of Knowledge. As a part of these studies, she undertook a professional enquiry and she was, as a result, awarded Professional Recognition by the General Teaching Council Scotland.

Outside of school, Linzi spends most weekends in summer out on her paddleboard with her daughter or walking her dog in the hills. She enjoys the very lovely view of the hills every day now, teaching in the Younger Building.



LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS

This year we have two new language assistants; the other assistants are well known in our Dollar community already.



MARSAILIDH VANINI

Marsailidh joined the Business Education Department at Dollar Academy at the end of April. She previously taught at The Community School of Auchterarder. Originally from Nairn in the Scottish Highlands, Marsailidh obtained her degree in International Business with Modern Languages from the Strathclyde Business School. Her principal degree subjects were Economics and Italian, for which she achieved Distinction in the Spoken Language. Her five-year degree course included a year at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore business school in Milan, a hugely positive experience, and Marsailidh always tries to encourage young people to take up the enriching opportunity to study and work abroad.

Prior to moving into teaching, she worked in industry, in sectors including life sciences, private medical insurance and software, and in companies ranging from Scottish start-ups to US multinationals. She holds an Advanced Diploma in HR Management from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Marsailidh is enjoying supporting Miss Pollock with the Form I & II Badminton Club on Thursdays after school. Family life with two young children keeps her very busy outside of school hours but, when time and the weather allow, she enjoys gardening (with varying degrees of success).



ANDREA DUBOUT

Andréa is our new French Assistant. She was born and raised in the countryside of France in the Lot department (in the southwest of France) in a small town rather like Dollar. Later, she lived in Toulouse for four years. She studied English at Toulouse University, earning her degree in English Literature and Civilisations. Hoping to become a teacher one day, she decided to take a gap year in her studies and applied to be a teaching assistant at Dollar Academy. In her free time, she likes to read and she enjoys hiking; she has also been horse riding since she was a child.



BEATRIX RECUERO VALENCIANO

Beatriz is our new Spanish Assistant. She comes from Madrid in Spain, where she has just finished her degree in English Studies at Universidad Complutense de Madrid. She has a great interest in the study of psycholinguistics, forensic linguistics and neurolinguistics, and her dissertation analysed the linguistic traits of psychopathy in the Zodiac Killer's letters.

She has recently moved to Scotland for two main reasons: to improve her English skills, and also because she is in love with Scotland. She is fascinated with languages in general—specifically anything related to the English-speaking countries. She discovered her vocation studying Latin at high school, finding she had a passion for etymology (the study of the origins of words).

She also enjoys traveling and learning about different cultures, reading crime novels, watching romance series, spending time with her dogs, meeting friends, and drinking coffee (which must be done and is, of course, very sociable).

She has worked in many different jobs in Spain, before coming to Scotland: at McDonald's, in a health centre and as tourist guide in Madrid. She feels very lucky to have the opportunity to work at Dollar Academy.



A warm welcome to the Class of 2037 and a fond farewell to the Class of 2024...





SARAH CASSELS: HEAD GIRL

I first met Sarah through hockey. Watching Sarah play (especially if you are on the opposition team) will tell you everything you need to know about her. She is unmatched in her drive, enthusiasm, and determination. Since joining the school in Form I, her contribution to our unstoppable 1st XI team (scoring a phenomenal number of goals each week) was to make the team, indeed, unstoppable. I will never forget one of her debut matches in which she scored an incredible seven goals. From that moment, it was clear that she was going to be a star. Since then, her impact upon the pitch has been highly valued, leading her to become the captain of this season's 1st XI hockey team. She has also been capped for Scotland (scoring another wonder goal against Ulster): a truly incredible achievement. She is a phenomenal athlete generally. While she shines on the hockey pitch, she is an equally talented tennis player, often leading the 1st tennis team. Her sporting achievements are a credit to her continuous hard work.

Her unmatched work ethic, independence, and amiable nature mean that she excels in every challenge she takes on. She pursues academic success with the same fervour that is evident in her sporting endeavours. With a consistently successful rise through the school, Sarah is ready to take the next step to university, where she hopes to study Law. But first, she will conclude her school career with all but guaranteed success in Advanced Higher Mathematics, Advanced Higher Geography, and Higher Business. I have no doubt that Sarah will surmount these challenges in her usual fashion as she makes her way to the courtroom floor.

But what is most notable about Sarah is her unending positivity and strength of will. I have never known her to back away from a challenge, or face any challenge without a smile (though the smile might be through gritted teeth!). Her determination and spirit always energise and cheer me (and everyone else in her vicinity), and these qualities are exactly why her selection to the role of Head Girl was so apt. I have loved working with Sarah so far this year, and I am entirely confident that she will contribute immensely to the overall success of this Top 6. And I know that she will thrive in whatever she chooses to tackle next.

India Stevens (Form VI)

LOGAN MOSS: HEAD BOY

Logan has been an inspiring fixture at Dollar Academy since his arrival in Form I; he has given his all to the Academy and the pupils in it from the moment he started. He can claim many high-status achievements and much widespread recognition

in debating, having successfully represented Dollar Academy in national and international debating championships. He is renowned for his academic achievements across a broad range of subjects, everything from Modern Languages to History and Politics. I have been fortunate to take a few classes with him over the years, and I have witnessed firsthand his enthusiasm for sharing knowledge and ideas with all. This has not always been reciprocated—but anyone who does not engage with Logan thereby abnegates an opportunity to develop his or her own thinking. His dedication to *The Galley* over the years was recognized when he acted as the editor-in-chief last session. In that role, he provided all pupils at Dollar Academy with a voice, seeking to inspire others to explore their passions, whatever those may be.

Logan may be less well known (though he is equally valued) for the time he gives to his fellow pupils when they are feeling down. As Head Boy, he demonstrates exceptional leadership skills, always making time for others, regardless of his own immense workload. He serves as a reference point for us all regarding the importance of teamwork and communication. Everyone at Dollar Academy is extremely proud of him and his team's achievements at the World Schools Debating Championship; we are cognisant of, and deeply impressed by, the volume of work that he must have put in to come out on top in that prestigious competition.

The memory of Logan that most of us cherish above all, however, emerges from the Christmas Concert 2023 in the Usher Hall. That night, he—together with Natalie Y. (Form VI)—brought together every single member of the combined instrumental ensembles, the choirs and the audience through the narration of *A Christmas Carol*. I implore everyone to get to know Logan; he will happily chat with anyone about life at Dollar. He is a powerful Dollar Academy role model, who embodies the Academy's ethos of 'Work Hard, Be Kind, Get Involved'.

Erin More (Form VI)

ADAM HOWAT: DEPUTY HEAD BOY

Adam has been a core part of Dollar Academy life from Prep 1 through to this, his final year. In Junior School he gained the General Excellence Award and was a popular member of the year group, and he has thrived since arriving in the senior school. It has always felt almost a given that he would be in the Top 6; the role of Deputy Head Boy suits him perfectly. His confidence (earned on the rugby pitch) shines through; he has the ability to talk to anyone, pupil or teacher; and he will always get the job done.

Adam has an amazing ability (sometimes slightly annoying) to excel at almost everything he attempts. Whether on the sports field or in the classroom, he achieves at a high level in everything he does, setting a fine



example for others to follow. A superb tennis player, he has represented the school on numerous occasions, and he was an asset to the ski racing team in years gone by.

Most impressive, however, is Adam's talent on the rugby pitch. After captaining his rugby team in Form III, Adam has stepped up to vice-captain of the 1st XV this session (his second year in the 1st team). Outside of school, he was selected to the Junior Scottish Academy as one of the region's top players. This year he hopes to be a part of Glasgow Warriors; he progressed toward this goal when he captained a combined Glasgow and Caledonia team at a Merchiston tournament. Of course, he will let no one forget the time he earned 74 runs in Form III cricket against George Watson's: a moment that he still claims was the highlight of his career. (Ask him about his bowling, however, and you will get a significantly quieter response!)

On top of all his co-curriculars, Adam is studying Advanced Higher Economics, Statistics and Maths this year, with the hope of studying Economics at university next year. We all know that he is more than capable. Given his clean sweep of A grades up until now, he will clearly go far. He sets very high goals for himself, and then he works very hard to attain them.

But he is also a kind, friendly person who does right by everyone and whom everyone likes. As an assistant

tennis coach at Dollar tennis club, he knows a great number of pupils in the Prep and Junior school, and they love greeting him around school—especially now that he is a Deputy Head Boy... He never fails to make me smile, even on the toughest days, and for that I am ever thankful. He brings some great laughs to the Top 6, and this year will be all the more enjoyable for having Adam in our midst.

Sarah Cassels (Form VI)

ERIN MORE: DEPUTY HEAD GIRL

Four years on from having joined Dollar, Erin has successfully built a reputation for high academic performance and genuine kindness that saw her earn her rightful place as part of this year's Top 6.

Her choice of four subjects—Advanced Higher in Chemistry, Biology and Statistics, as well as her Music Diploma—has set her up for a busy-yet-enjoyable year. And it's no surprise to any of us that her diligence and dutifulness have helped her take these challenges in her stride. Erin can often be found in the Form VI Centre, surrounded by friends and working assiduously on some task—be it tracking down

missing prefects or revising for a test.

But it is her ability to combine all of the above qualities with a co-curricular record that never fails to impress. Her musical talents are apodictic and have earned her reverence; she has given memorable performances in front of the school and represented Dollar in the Scottish Young Musician of the Year 2024 competition. Her high-ranking position in the Navy section of the CCF is further evidence of her aptitude for leadership, and the first few weeks of Top 6 work swiftly demonstrated her mastery of leadership skills

All of this is concrete evidence singling out Erin as an immensely talented young woman whose qualities cannot be confined to a single field. But most impressive is the thread running through all of this: her unwaveringly authentic sense of goodwill. Anyone who fails to notice how generous, thoughtful and humble Erin is clearly has not spent any time with her at all. They were the first things I noticed when I was introduced to her, and those qualities shine as brightly today as they did then.

And for what post-Dollar destination is she hoping? To work in medicine: a selfless choice of direction that will allow her to combine her philanthropic heart with her intellectually rigorous mind. Is such a culmination a surprising one, though? No—at least not to those of us who have had the privilege of knowing her.

Logan Moss (Form VI)

HUNTER KINNEAR: DEPUTY HEAD BOY

Hunter has been one of the liveliest and most energetic boys in our year since he joined the school in Form II. A worthy member of the Top 6, he has taken to his role like a duck to water. A hard worker, he undertakes more than his share of the Top 6 duties—and always with a smile on his face.

Hunter likes to remind us that he was born in Kazakhstan and has lived all over the world. Now based in Aberdeen, he has been an integral part of the boarding community since he arrived—always insisting that the boarders will win the annual Tug o' War and talking up the boarding expeditions. He is also always up for a game of pool at the House.

Hunter does well academically: he is studying Advanced Higher Business and Geography along with Higher Maths. He is also, of course, an incredibly talented golfer. He has a handicap of +0.2 (beyond impressive), and he has taken part in prestigious events such as the Scottish Boys Amateur, earning full colours for his many achievements in that sport. But you will never hear him boasting about these awards, which demonstrates the kind of person he is. Alongside his talent in golf, He is also a keen skier and, once upon a time, he started for the Form III rugby team as a fly-half.

Overall, Hunter is utterly deserving of the title

of Deputy Head Boy. He will always work until the job is finished, smiling all the while, with a joke on his lips, and he will also help absolutely anyone in need. I know that for the rest of the year it will be a great pleasure to carry out my role alongside Hunter and that he will perform it to the highest standard.

Adam Howat (Head Boy)

INDIA STEVENS: DEPUTY HEAD GIRL

India has been a pupil at Dollar Academy since the very beginning, having joined in Prep 1. And throughout her 12 years at the school, she has never failed to impress her teachers, lighten a room, or make friends with those around her. She strives for success in every aspect of her life, whether it be academics, sports, friendships, or in her passion for music.

India can often be found on the hockey pitch, and this is no surprise: she has been a fundamental part of her team's numerous victories, including the 2023-24 Scottish Schools Cup. She was also selected for the Scotland Emerging girls' programme last year and has made an impressive debut against Ulster. These successes highlight her determination and capacity for hard work; she always performs to the best of her ability.

India's prowess does not begin and end on the hockey pitch; she is also known as an 'academic weapon'. She somehow finds the time to work extremely hard off the pitch as well, and she unfailingly achieves at the highest possible level, as her results over the years have demonstrated. She is also always willing to help others (like me!) when we inevitably need it. She is hoping to go on to study History and Economics at university next year. No matter where she ends up, we all know she will strive for excellence; she looks forward to a very bright future indeed.

India is a great friend whom I have come to value over the years of my time at Dollar. She is held in high regard by her many friends, her teachers (and, indeed, everyone else). This is because of her loyalty, her determination and, above all, the warmth and kindness she shows to everyone, every day, when she enters the gates of Dollar Academy. Going from being a small Prep pupil herself to being, now, a fully-fledged sixth year, India sets an admirable example for the younger year groups and she is always keen to encourage others. I feel very privileged to have the opportunity to work closely with India in the weeks and months to come this session. I know she will be tireless as she strives for, and inevitably achieves, success—not only as a sixth-year pupil and a core member of our 1st XI, not merely in her new role as Deputy Head Girl, but also in absolutely everything she takes on now and in all the years to come.

Hunter Kinnear (Form VI)

McNABB & TAIT

The life of a McNabb & Tait boarder cannot be defined by the bedtimes we adhere to, the curfews we follow or the building we come back to at night. It is instead defined by the small moments throughout the year where the boys come together for each other. We have really enjoyed watching one example of this: when the returning boys work hard to integrate smoothly 16 new boarders into McNabb & Tait life.

Our collective return to the House this year brought some new changes: a dart board, for instance, which has drawn a lot of attention, most notably from Mr Ranald Baird himself (though he has, unfortunately, yet to win a game). Last session we said goodbye to many House Tutors: Mr Tod, Alba, Mr Greg Brown and Mr Robert Florence. They have all gone on to new and exciting chapters of their lives. Mr Oliver, however, has decided to defect to Heyworth instead! In all seriousness, we wish them all good luck in their endeavours. However sad this has been, we were also delighted to welcome Mr Andrew Fynn, Mr Iain MacDonald, Mr Jim Richardson and Mr Calum Cunningham, who have all added a new depth to this year's Tutor lineup. They'll be supported by our veterans: Ms Heather Holloway, Mr David Chant, Mr Duncan Riddell and our longest-serving Tutor, Mr Dean Campbell.



The McNabb & Tait sporting success continues this year with Jasper T., Jerry C. (both Form V), Thomas G. and David C. (both Form VI) representing the basketball team in their strongest season yet. Hal S., Leander R. (both Form V), Konstantin G.v.K. and Blair B. (both Form VI) support this year's football team. Ollie F. (Form VI) plays a crucial role in this year's 1st XV as their mighty scrum-half, often supported by Ben C. and Hamish W. (both Form VI) on the wing. It has been great to see our younger boys maintain the House traditions, as Campbell N. (Form II), Mac S., Enzo G., Raphael M.R., Hiro M., Jake T., Jesus L. and Olly C. (all Form III) and Finn W. (Form IV) represent the school in rugby from the Tait end. This year more than ever the House finds itself filled with golfers—or at least boys who make good use of the golf course. Hunter K. (Form VI), Maximilian G., Leander, Ali Mert C. and Christian S.W. (all Form V) lead the way on the school golf team. And we must not forget Mr Neil McEwan, who will always show the boys up with a spontaneous practice swing.

This first term brought the successful new House Expedition, which saw Form V and VI boarders rough it out in the depths of what turned out to be quite a luxurious campsite. With fish and chips and a firepit in the

evening, not even a Thomas G. (Form VI) Dad joke could ruin the night. After an early wakeup call, it was off for some whitewater rafting and tubing; standout performances came from Finlay T. (Form V), who now holds the record for longest seated surf on the River Tay and from David for the no-look bellyflop.

Another family legacy lives on in McNabb & Tait as Paul M. (Form V) brings his charm to the Dollar piping community, following in his brother Hugo's footsteps. And our musical talents don't begin and end with piping; Flynn G. (Form V) and Konstantin also represent the House in Chamber Choir. The range of skills on display is testament to the nature of the House and shows that McNabb & Tait boarders thrive across all areas of school life.

And what better time to demonstrate House spirit than in the fight for the Leggat Cup during the Christmas Ceilidh? Following a strong performance last year, the House has its work cut out to bring the Cup home, but I have no doubt that we shall. And then there is the Sports Day's culminating event: the Tug o' War. Despite a small 'slip' last year, we remain entirely optimistic; training, tactics and (questionable) diet plans are all being implemented in the name of 'Team Tug'.

This year I have the privilege of being supported by Nicky S. and Hamish W. (both Form VI). Nicky is the proud co-captain of the prestigious Dollar cricket team. His ability to multi-task makes him the perfect man for both jobs. Within the House, he is a strong leader whom all the boys listen to. Hamish's humility conceals a vast array of talents—not least his piano skills and his Italian language skills. His five As at Higher testify to his hard work and dedication. Around the House he enforces rules with a smile that no one can say refuse. These qualities (and many others) make him a fantastic deputy and a natural leader within the House. Hunter is also one of the school's Deputy Head Boys, and we are delighted that a boarder has been recognised with this responsibility.

It is impossible to write any more about McNabb & Tait without mentioning the Bairds. They guide this ship on its voyage, ensuring that 50 audacious boys become the esteemed young men that McNabb & Tait unfailingly produces. Of course, the McEwans are right there by their side, making sure the younger generation of boys conforms to the same high standards (whilst also scouting out potential Ultimate Frisbee talent, of course). Finally, we must thank 'The Ladies'. It takes a certain strength of character to spend what must seem an eternity cleaning 50 boys' pants and socks, amongst other jobs. But you have only to talk to any one of them to understand why they make such a profound impact. Their kindness makes them approachable when it comes to just about any problem, and their life experience means you'll always get a sensible, helpful answer. They truly form the backbone of McNabb & Tait.

Nicky, Hamish and I can only say how proud we are of the House this term and offer a tremendous thank you to everyone involved in what we know will be another successful year in McNabb & Tait.

Ben C. (Head of House, Form VI)





ARGYLL

Step foot inside Argyll House and you will be greeted with erupting bouts of rapturous laughter echoing downstairs as the girls scramble for Sally Beatty's freshly baked cookies.

We were delighted to welcome ten new girls to Argyll this year. The term kicked off with a mixed boarding trip to Willowgate Activity Centre, where we took part in a huge array of activities: everything from axe throwing to kayaking, combat archery to Highland Games events. After a full day of team building, we headed to McNabb & Tait for a barbecue, followed by an intense game of Truth or Dare involving army crawls across the room and frighteningly realistic chicken imitations.

During our House firepits, we learn a great deal about one another's talents and hear some incredible stories, too. We discovered Liana P.'s (Form V) remarkable acting history and Verity F.'s (Form IV) sailing abilities. Keen to share experience and love of hobbies, the newly founded girls' rugby club proved to be a popular activity, with Amy R, Sarah G. (both Form V) and Sydney B. (Form III) out on the pitches every Wednesday. The Argyll Band—which includes Catherine C, Selma L. (both Form VI), Amrei V. (Form V) and Selena P. (Form IV)—is another one of our newest additions this term. From soft rock to heavy metal, the band has an impressively vast repertoire.

We are also joined by two new House Tutors, Mrs Laura Smart and Mrs Elizabeth Harding. Though they've only been here for a few weeks, they've quickly become an inseparable part of the boarding house. It was lovely to have Mrs Cecilia Wei join us on our Go Ape expedition; we all left with huge smiles (and very muddy backs!). Of course, we mustn't forget our games evenings with Ms Emily Thain;

whether it's dodgeball or basketball, we always enjoy a good laugh.

The House Expedition was a highlight of the half-term: after a bus journey (made short by some great tunes) and the struggle to construct our tents, (resilience building), we had a very typically British meal of fish and chips, followed by an evening of games, scavenger hunting, and Elene K.'s (Form V) ghost stories, whilst dining on (our favourite) s'mores and chocolate.

Back home, our kitchen is a hive of lively activity: Clémence H. (Form III) fervently chats away about French pastries or Coco J. (Form VI) demonstrates her culinary expertise. There are, genuinely, no dull moments. In the past few weeks we have enjoyed shopping trips at St Andrews and Edinburgh, bowling and cinema nights; we have loved the Games, Pizza and Poker Nights, too. Every event gives us the chance to learn more about each other, whether we discover Emily G.'s (Form III) prowess at French or Toni U.'s (Form V) skills at Topgolf.

The positive, family atmosphere that infuses our House is a testament to the girls' willingness to contribute. Antonia A. (Form VI) is always so positive; Nika L. (Form III) is unfailingly kind; Laura L.'s (Form IV) sense of humor has us in stitches; and her big sister Una L. (Form VI) often gives the best advice. Everyone brings something special to our Argyll Family... and that's not forgetting Flynn H. (Junior 2), Amelia M. and Olivia T. (both Form II), whose room is never short of mischief! There is never a predictable moment, and they keep us on our toes!

As we write, we are approaching the October break, and we can't wait for the new memories that lie in wait over the weeks and months to come.

*Natalie Y. (Head of House, Form VI) and
Kate F. (Deputy Head of House, Form VI)*



supportive community. We look forward to continuing to build on this sense of home, ensuring every girl feels valued and supported during her time here.

We are excited as we look forward to the rest of the current academic session and to welcoming many more girls into Heyworth House in the years to come.

Leanne Scott

HEYWORTH

Starting the first term at Heyworth, life has been as exciting as ever. We were glad to welcome 12 new boarders, from all over the world, to our boarding community. We were also delighted to get to know our new houseparents, Mr Graham Oliver and Miss Leanne Scott, and our two new tutors, Miss Olivia Bell and Miss Watkin. They are all brilliant additions to our Heyworth family this year.

At the very start of term, we headed to the Willowgate Activity Centre to take part in water sport adventures (kayaking, paddleboarding and raft building), as well as more land-based activities. Capsizing was definitely on the kayakers' agenda, and everyone had a good time. In the evening, a very pleasant barbecue was hosted by McNabb & Tait; all the Houses socialised, and we were grateful for the warm hospitality. We discovered new and interesting facts about each other, bonding over the many different cultures represented in our boarding community.

At the time of writing, it is still early in the term, but we have been so busy already. There have been trips to St Andrews and Edinburgh, barbecues and expeditions, Top Golf and bowling trips. We have built a store of memories already, and there is much more to come. Already this term, friendships have been made and strengthened, and these will develop further over the rest of the session and beyond.

In the House itself, there has been lots of excited enthusiasm bringing everyone together. Ours is a second home, and we are open to all ideas: *Just Dance* is a definite favourite and movie nights, too. Sometimes we hold a quiz night, other times we just chat about all the events of the day or support one another through upcoming assignments. In Heyworth, we all want to work hard and thrive in our education, but we weigh that wisely against the need for downtime. We aim to sustain an active lifestyle, whilst knowing when to relax, and we are always supported in this by our boarding staff community.

Mr Oliver and Miss Scott organised the perfect trip to end the autumn half-term: our House Expedition. We travelled to the beautiful countryside around Aberfeldy: the discovery of a new place for many of us. Embracing what was left of the good weather, we went whitewater rafting; those brave enough to face the icy water jumped in. After an exciting couple of hours, we prepared for a night of camping, setting up our tents and enjoying a lovely meal beside

AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR NEW HEYWORTH HOUSEPARENTS

We are delighted to introduce ourselves as the new Houseparents of Heyworth House. I, Miss Leanne Scott, and my partner (whom some of you may be familiar with), Mr Graham Oliver, are excited to take on this role and continue fostering a warm, supportive environment for all the girls in the House.

Mr Oliver, of course, is a Geography teacher in the school, who has worked as an Assistant Head of Year for Form I and as a Tutor in McNabb & Tait. Before teaching, he worked as a geologist in the oil and gas industry. He began teaching at the Royal Grammar School in Guildford before joining Dollar Academy in 2021.

I moved from Ireland to Scotland to study Nursing at the University of Stirling. Having worked for the NHS for several years, I am currently enjoying my maternity leave following the birth of our son, Rory. We are joined by our friendly cavapoo, Paddy, who just may be the most popular member of the House!

The first half of the term has been wonderful, and we feel incredibly fortunate to have such a fantastic group of girls in the House. The atmosphere in Heyworth is warm and welcoming, and it's clear that the girls have formed a strong,



beautiful Loch Tay. At the campsite, we gathered around the campfire, sharing stories and experiences.

As I write, we are approaching the October break. The events and celebrations planned for the weeks before Christmas are eagerly anticipated. Our attention will also turn toward upcoming prelim exams. Together, as a House, we will surely experience highs and lows, successes and challenges. Our support for one another helps to make even the most daunting moments easier to manage. We

at Heyworth are excited for what the rest of this year has in store, and we cannot wait to make the most of every experience and opportunity.

Lily F. (Head of House, Form VI)



PREP 3: THE DAY OF MAGIC

Sometimes magic comes alive. Our Prep 3 pupils had a truly magical, fun day on 30 September. They learned about various types of magical creatures, read myths and legends in Literacy lessons and experimented with magical potions in Science, and then they spent an entire day celebrating magic.

The classrooms were brimful of fairies, dragons and goblins who enjoyed exploring Maths tricks and optical illusions. Outside, the children used natural materials to create some dwellings for their creatures.

The highlight, however, was a surprise visit from juggler and performer Allen Goldie, who wowed the audience with some truly out-of-this-world skills. He soon had the children joining in to have some fun too!

Monika Harewood







PREP 3: A VISIT TO THE JAPANESE GARDENS

Prep 3 pupils enjoyed an extraordinary visit to the Japanese Gardens this term. Following a quick (if noisy) mini-bus ride, we met Mrs Dibley, and she kindly took charge of us for the day. The pupils learned about Ella Christie (the founder of the Gardens) and her five-week sailing voyage to Japan, in 1907. On that trip, she gathered the information and skills that allowed her to establish her own beautiful gardens in Scotland. She died in 1949, leaving a spectacular area for everyone to enjoy. After falling into disrepair, the gardens and coffee shop were opened for the public to enjoy in more recent years. Now, over 40,000 visitors come to see these spectacular gardens every year.

In their own words:

I loved finding the Japanese words and letters. -*Erin*
My favourite part was going over the zig-zag bridge and jumping in puddles. -*Katie*
I loved finding the turtle and climbing Mt Fuji. -*Gordon*
I liked when we went into groups and made models of different parts of the gardens. -*Sophia*
When we walked over the wonky bridge, I thought I was going to fall into the water. -*Lucas*
From the zig-zag bridge, we could see the creatures in the lake that could suck our blood. -*Joe*

The two hours passed all too quickly, as there was so much to explore. Many pupils were excited and inspired to visit again, to show their family and friends around—especially the forest park area and the zig-zag bridge! A big thank you to Mrs Dibley and the three gardeners for keeping the place looking so beautiful for everyone to enjoy.

Karen Thomson





A JUNIOR 1 ASCENT OF DUMYAT

With rain forecast, Junior 1 set off to undertake an ascent of Dumyat, one of the more impressive Ochil summits. The intrepid group fully embraced this challenging experience despite the inclement weather. The cohort was divided into two groups: one group chose the shorter, but steeper, route from Menstrie; the second group undertook the slightly easier, but longer, traversing path from Logie Kirk.

As they made their way upward, the children reflected that they were following in the footsteps of Gavin and the Clan Stewart, which they had read about in their class novel, *Light on Dumyat*. They reached the mist-shrouded summit rocks at an elevation of 418m and convened at the cairn for a well-deserved lunch over their stories of courage and camaraderie.

Special thanks are extended to Mr Johns and Mr Sedman for their expert guidance throughout the ascent and descent, ensuring the safety and welfare of all participants. Additionally, a big thank you to Mrs Bunyan, Mr Riddle, and Mrs Ainge for their unwavering encouragement, particularly during the more challenging sections of the climb.

Despite the weather, this adventure proved to be a memorable success for everyone involved.

Annie Sheridan





JUNIOR 1 RESIDENTIAL: SPORTSCOTLAND INVERCLYDE

The Junior 1 residential trip to SportScotland Inverclyde was an unforgettable three-day adventure filled with beautiful sunshine and exhilarating activities.

The gymnastics hall buzzed with excitement, and pupils showcased their spectacular vaulting, their impressive balancing acts on the bars, their feats of athletic prowess on the hoops. Shapes were expertly crafted on the fast track, demonstrating remarkable agility. Lacrosse, for many, was an entirely new sport, played on the 3G pitch; it was enthusiastically embraced! Pupils loved scooping up the ball, refining their passing, and participating in team-building games.

On Thursday, our groups took a scenic ferry ride to Cumbrae, and it was with immense delight that the afternoon group spotted a porpoise. We had an invigorating cycle around the island after a bus ride to Millport. And our evening stroll to Nardini's in Largs for ice cream was delightful, though choosing between flavours was its own special challenge. Skimming stones across the water capped the day off perfectly.

As part of a climate change initiative at the Centre, the youngest and oldest pupils in the year group planted a tree on the hillside overlooking the town. The exact (what3words) location can be found at: [///refusals.bake.employ](https://www.what3words.com/#!/refusals.bake.employ).





JUNIOR 2 RESIDENTIAL 2024: BENMORE OUTDOOR CENTRE

Last session's Junior 2 pupils (now all Form I) were fortunate to return to the Benmore Outdoor Centre in Dunoon following a brief hiatus caused by the pandemic. To welcome us back, the sun shone all week, and the pupils took part in many outdoor activities. Caving, abseiling, biking, rock scrambling, canoeing and venturing into the treetops on a fantastic high ropes course were, not surprisingly, some of the highlights. We came back with new friends, stronger existing friendships and memories that will stay with us for a very long time to come.

Sophie Petrie





JUNIOR MUSICAL 2024: THE SOUND OF MUSIC

The Sound of Music is a celebrated, well-loved musical which barely needs an introduction. Even if you haven't seen the iconic movie, with Julie Andrews running around against a stunning Salzburg backdrop, you would recognise the classic Rodgers and Hammerstein score.

In June 2024, our Junior 2 pupils embarked on a journey when they retold the story of Maria, a troubled nun who leaves her life in the abbey to become a governess—and, ultimately, mother—to seven children: the von Trapps. With every child playing their part, the audience were wowed with impressive vocals, traditional Austrian dancing, slick scene changes and even a singing goat!

The Sound of Music, Jr was a nostalgic package 'tied up with string', and this fabulous production was certainly one of 'My Favourite Things' about 2024.

Sophie Petrie







FORM I CLASSICS: BOARD GAMES BONANZA!

The Form I Classics course takes pupils from the heights of Mount Olympus to the grim depths of the Underworld as they investigate the myths of the ancient Greeks and their abiding relevance. Inspired by the tale of Hades and Persephone, pupils were challenged to design a board game based upon a journey through the Underworld. The winning teams hosted a Board Games Bonanza for their classmates in the Assembly Hall, where members of the 'Myths and Glyphs' Classics Club decided on the overall winners.

Heather Lumsden



CLASSICS COMPETITION SUCCESS

In May of last session, pupils in the Form II Classics classes were given the opportunity to submit an entry to the Gilbert Murray Classics Competition, an annual competition for Scottish schools run by the Classical Association of Scotland together with the University of Glasgow. Charlotte Smith's newspaper article on the eruption of Vesuvius was awarded the prize for the Most Outstanding Entry in all age groups, whilst Will Cairns, Christie Munro, Layla Sullivan and Isla Urquhart were awarded Certificates of Merit for their creative gladiator designs.



POMPEII

NEWS OF YESTERDAY



Dramatic aerial view of the fast lava heading towards Pompeii detailed by a local illustrator from a position of safety

Breaking news of the day



Charlotte R. Smith

Over the last few days, dramatic and deadly events have unfolded in and around the towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum, in Campania.

Sheets of flames lit up the night sky and could be seen for miles around, acting as a warning to stay away. Mount Vesuvius came to life, destroying surrounding lands, homes and inhabitants.

- Pliny the Elder feared dead
- Thousands feared dead
- Famous amphitheatre destroyed
- Roman baths buried under a thick blanket of ash
- Volcanic ash still spewing into the atmosphere

The towns were still recovering from the previous eruption in 62AD when these events unfolded. The eruption caught locals by surprise as earthquakes are commonplace in this region. Pompeii and nearby towns had not been evacuated as the danger was unexpected, and the threat was not taken seriously. This natural disaster has destroyed several towns and cities at the base of Mount Vesuvius, including Pompeii and Herculaneum.

It all started with some minor earth tremors which after two days built up to towering fountains of lava lighting up the ash-filled sky. Clouds of smoke could be seen as glowing magma bubbled from the earth. The powerful and fast flow of lava started late on Saturday but experts say that it has significantly slowed since. The eruptions sent gas and ash a staggering 5km (3.2 miles), shooting directly into the atmosphere. Citizens also recorded ten overnight earthquakes in the surrounding areas of the volcano. The most recent reported earthquake was at 2am this morning and could be felt for miles around. Damage to buildings was caused to surrounding villages.

Rescuers are unable to approach the disaster zone due to the unbearable heat. Citizens who managed to escape are being looked after by locals from nearby towns.

The full extent of the damage is unknown as the area is unsafe to fully assess at the moment due to the hot ash. People tried to flee for their lives but got caught up in the lava and didn't make it to safety in time. Initial death rate estimates are between 1,500 to 3,500 people. There are fears that plants and animals could be harmed, and the total animal death count is yet to be established.

Pompeii is a popular holiday destination, home to many wealthy citizens, therefore, some holiday makers are likely to be caught up in this destructive natural disaster.

The whereabouts of local celebrity author and Navy commander Pliny the Elder is yet to be confirmed. He is a popular resident of Pompeii, and concern is mounting for his safety. His surviving family are praying to the Gods for news.

"My herd has disappeared overnight—I have lost my livelihood"

-Quintus (local farmer)

"I'm so lucky to be alive, as I only visited Pompeii yesterday for my monthly bath. I'm praying to the Gods for all the people in the town."

-Caccilius (banker)

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY NEWS

Last year's National 5 Design and Manufacture pupils worked according to a festive theme. The Design Assignment and practical element of the course requires them to respond to one of a selection of given briefs. Akira P. (then Form IV) designed a product that allows users to store ingredients and utensils for making seasonal drinks, such as hot chocolate, iced drinks or bubble tea. Her proposal was inspired by the theme of 'festivities'; the product was required to hold a minimum of three different items; it had to be easy to clean and include an element of rotation. Cara C., Emma K., Holly S.-M., Josh H., Lucy G. and Neve W. (then all Form IV) all produced products that would allow users to display a countdown to a seasonal celebration. Their products—also inspired by the theme of 'festivities'—had to be freestanding, fit on a windowsill and include an element of change.

Claire Brownbridge





MATHEMATICS BEYOND THE CURRICULUM

The Mathematics Department participates in several competitions throughout the session, both in individual and in team competitions.

The Scottish Maths Council sets two rounds of five questions for pupils to answer each session. These questions encourage mathematical thinking and develop problem-solving skills. Answers must be the pupils' unaided work, with full workings written out. Winners of certificates also receive one of the prized Scottish Maths Council mugs, presented at a ceremony each summer term.

Results for 2023–24:

Gold: 5
Silver: 1
Bronze: 2

For more information visit:

<https://scottishmathematicalcouncil.org/competitions/>

The UK Maths Trust also runs competitions across the year. The Junior, Intermediate and Senior Maths Challenges all involve answering 25 multiple-choice questions, which must be completed under exam conditions. The top pupils in each year group qualify for subsequent rounds.

Results for 2023–24:

Gold: 28
Silver: 79
Bronze: 95

For more information visit: <https://ukmt.org.uk/>

At the beginning of October, our team of four Form III and IV pupils took part in the SCIS round of the annual Enterprising Maths Competition at Fettes College. At this event each team

works together on mathematical problems, culminating in the relay round—always a fun way to end the day. Our team acquitted themselves very well but, unfortunately, did not qualify for the national final.

In December we take part in the annual GCHQ Christmas Challenge with pupils tackling festive puzzles in groups during a lunchtime.

For more information visit:

<https://www.gchq.gov.uk/news/xmaschallenge2023>

Catherine Childs

RITANGLE TEAM MATHS COMPETITION

At the time of writing, a team of eight Form V and VI mathematicians have entered the 2024 Ritangle Maths competition, another team event. This is the second time we will have taken part in this challenge and, having run out of time at Stage 2 in 2023, the pupils are determined to gain access to the elusive Stage 3 this time. Questions are released on a weekly basis and cover all areas of Mathematics: Calculus, Probability, Algebra, Combinatorics and Geometry. Successful solutions provide clues to an extended cross-number puzzle which will have been needed to be solved to reach the final round in December. Unlike other competitions, Ritangle not only *allows* the use of programming, dynamic geometry software and the Internet, it actively encourages use of these resources. It is incredible to see our pupils apply their skills from both Mathematics and Computing Science to tackle these unfamiliar but beautifully constructed problems.

For more information visit:

<https://mei.org.uk/ritangle/>

Rose Chamberlain





INTRODUCING HIGHER MEDIA

'Whoever controls the media, controls the mind.'

-Jim Morrison

Last session, for the first time, the English Department offered Higher Media to pupils in Form VI. We are delighted that the subject has captured the interest of so many, making for an enthusiastic and full class. In some ways it is no surprise that so many of our pupils want to engage with the subject; our lives are increasingly filled with media of all types and genres. It's inescapable. So why not learn to understand it more fully and empower ourselves through knowledge?

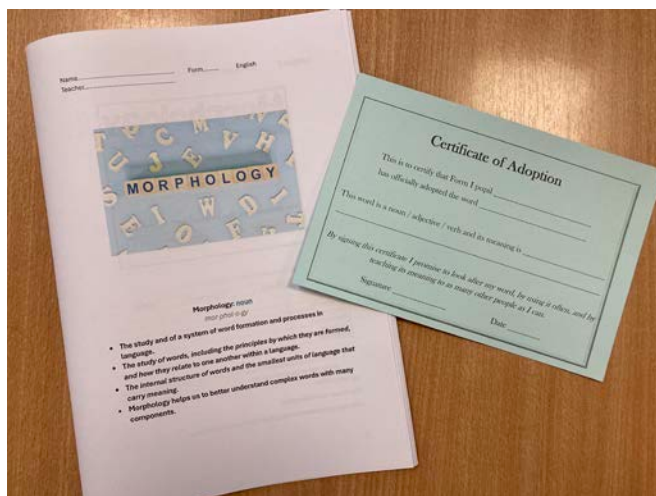
Teaching Higher Media is unlike teaching any other subject. We are all experts in a variety of ways. We learn as much from the pupils they do from us. The role the media play in our lives is both individual and collective; as a result, class discussions can sometimes take an unexpected and intriguing turn, but that just adds to our enjoyment of the subject.

As part of the course, the pupils plan, research, and create their own short films. This allows for individual creativity and the opportunity to build new skills in camera work, editing, and scriptwriting. Last year's cohort set a high standard: silent film, horror, romance, and comedy were just a few of their creative choices. This year, the pupils' concepts have been outstanding in their scope and ambition, and we are looking forward to seeing them come to life.

In the autumn, some in the class were able to gain hands-on experience with a professional film crew who had been working on campus. This gave our pupils real insight into the industry, and the experience has inspired future career choices.

Of course, the skills gained through the study of media are easily transferable: critical thinking, analysis, research, planning, skills of enquiry and evaluation, practical skills, creativity, and time management, to name just a few. In this media-saturated age, we believe it's vital that young people can evaluate competing sources of information and communicate effectively within a fast-changing digital environment. For me, learning how the young adults of our society respond to media representations is invaluable in shaping teaching and learning—now, and in the future.

Frances Mackie



VOCABULARY INITIATIVES IN THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

‘Vocabulary’

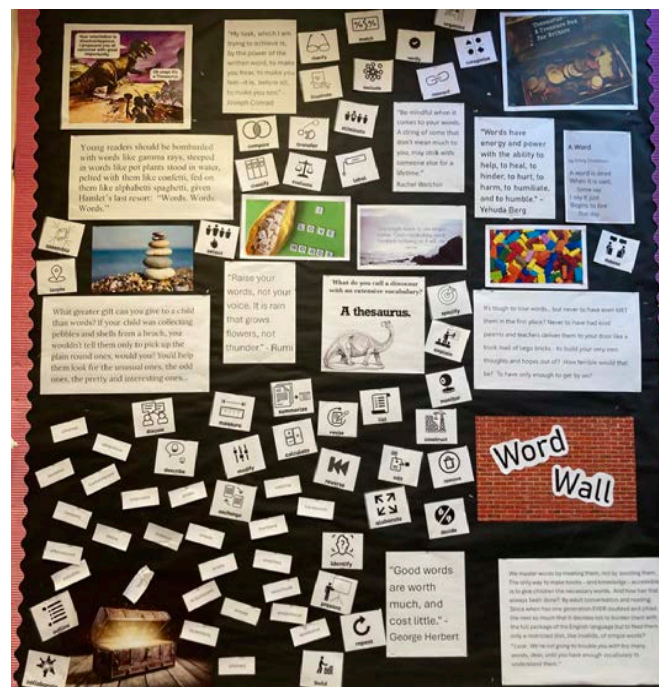
(Noun)

- All the words known and used by a particular person
- All the words that exist in a particular language or subject

The English Department has recently introduced a few initiatives to help pupils develop their vocabularies. Pupils have been encouraged to consider the words they know and use: their favourite words; the most expressive, weird, impressive words they know; and how being equipped with a broad vocabulary affords fuller access to ideas and subject information across, and beyond, the curriculum. We do not want pupils to feel limited by their vocabularies, but instead to find themselves ‘word rich’.

This session every Form I pupil has been given an interesting word to ‘adopt’, and they have all signed a Certificate of Adoption in which they have promised to look after their word by using it often, by teaching it to as many other people as they can.

A new teaching unit called ‘Morphology’ is a related development within the Form I English course. Here, we are striving to teach pupils about the systems of word formation, with the aim of better equipping them to decode and understand unfamiliar and complex words.



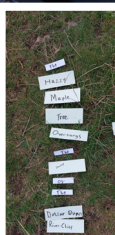
‘Word of the Week’

A ‘Word of the Week’ fixture has also been introduced to the Bulletin, with staff across the school community nominating words they consider to be interesting or important. These are then shared with pupils across the school. A fantastic range of words has already been shared, and we are grateful to form tutors and class teachers for encouraging our pupils to discuss and use these new words, thereby embedding them in our pupils’ vocabularies. As children’s author, Geraldine McCaughrean, writes: ‘Young readers should be bombarded with words like gamma rays, steeped in words like pot plants stood in water, pelted with them like confetti, fed on them like alphabet spaghetti, given Hamlet’s last resort: “Words, Words, Words”’.

Our first ‘Word of the Week’ was ‘indomitable’, chosen by the Rector. ‘Indomitable’ is an adjective that means ‘impossible to subdue or defeat’. Reflecting upon his word, the Rector wrote:

‘Whilst we all hope that life will have more highs than lows, there are certainly times when things will not go our way. The ability to bounce back, move on, and show indomitable spirit, therefore, can help us progress from the difficult moments. Interestingly, many elite athletes claim that part of their success is founded upon the fact that they can hit a bad shot, miss a tackle, or make some other mistake, and then—almost immediately—forget about it and move onto the next job, task or event. This ability to let go of failure (‘bouncebackability’ as it is sometimes called) demonstrates to me an indomitable spirit, which is clearly a useful thing to have as we navigate our lives. And indeed: “Our 1st XI hockey side have shown an indomitable spirit this year.”’

Rachel Gibb



‘...TO RE-WILD OUR LANGUAGE’ THE FORM II LANGUAGE AND LANDSCAPE DAY 2024

In A *Guardian* article titled ‘The Word-Hoard’, Robert Macfarlane wrote:

‘[W]e lack... a gathering of terms for the land and its weathers – terms used by crofters, fishermen, farmers, sailors, scientists, miners, climbers, soldiers, shepherds, poets, walkers and unrecorded others for whom particularised ways of describing place have been vital to everyday practice and perception. It seemed that it might be worth assembling some of this vocabulary—and releasing it back into imaginative circulation, as a way to rewild our language.’

We in the English and Geography Departments stand in passionate agreement with Macfarlane. On 25 September, every Form II pupil spent the day outside in the landscapes on our doorstep. The aims were simple: to delight in being outdoors, to look and listen with attention, to ‘re-wild’ our language.

From Amanda Edmiston, a Scottish storyteller, we heard old stories about the plants growing in Mill Green. From The Conservation Volunteers, we learned about the trees that grow on the banks of the Devon: the names of trees naturally branching out into characters, and narratives about their arboreal lives. The pupils learned to name the river features of the Dollar Burn and the clouds that race and drift, icy or vaporous, above Newfield. They improvised curious, idiomatic stories about the vagaries of sun, wind and rain.

Each pupil also kept a ‘word hoard’: collecting and treasuring the new vocabulary they encountered. At the end of the day, the children came together in groups to create ‘list poems’, employing their favourite new words and natural materials found in the spaces around them.

Heather Moore

DOLLAR BURNS CLUB WRITING COMPETITION 2024

Last spring, the Dollar Burns Club (DBC) again invited pupils from Strathdevon Primary and Dollar Academy to submit writing to their annual writing competition. This year's theme proved a popular one: 'Scottish Myths and Legends: Re-Imagined'.

Writers could produce anything up to 1200 words, interpreting this prompt in any way they chose and writing in any style (in Scots or in English). They were encouraged to read widely to discover some lesser-known Scottish myths and

legends, considering how they might re-imagine and re-interpret these. They were advised to experiment with setting, mood, characterisation, point of view; they could even write a new Scottish myth or legend. In their English classes, teachers exposed them to a wide range of sometimes beautiful, sometimes alluring, sometimes horrifying myths—many with their roots in the Ochils, or the depths of Castle Campbell, or the springs above Glen Quey.

The judging panel included Mrs Heather Moore (English teacher; editor of *Fortunas*; DBC); Ms Fran Mackie (English teacher); Mr Tom Dann (Junior School teacher); Elaine Walls (DBC); Keith Broomfield (author); Inaya Syed (FP and Deputy Head Girl 2023–24 and winner of 2023 DBC Writing Competition Open Category). Trophies went to winners

of the Strathdevon and the Form II categories; book vouchers for the winners; and certificates to all named writers. The six winning pieces are published in the pages that follow, including the Strathdevon winner, Freya S., now a Form I pupil at Dollar Academy. The full list of results are below, and the judging panel would like to thank all pupils who submitted writing for the time and care taken, the imaginative response and the creative risk taking and originality that went into their writing.

Heather Moore

Final Results

Strathdevon Primary Category

1st: Freya S.

Joint 2nd: Rory N. and Emily M.

Highly Commended

Charlotte C.

Aila S.

Emily C.

Jonathan M.

Aqsa R.

Lara C.

Junior 2 Category

Joint 1st Jet W. and Iris S.

Joint 2nd Bridget P. and Lucy G.

Highly Commended:

Tibbie C.-T.

Charlotte A.

Freya D.

Isabella I.

Commended:

Ailie G.

Charlie J.

Darcy K.

Form II Category

1st: Christie M.

2nd: Layla S.

Highly Commended

Ethan B.

Livvy P.

Will C.

Amy S.

Hamish M.

Commended:

Louise N.

Fred B.

Lucy L.

Imogen M.

Jack D.

Annie T.

Heidi N.

Open Category

Joint 1st: Emma G. (then Form III) and Niamh M. (then Form I)

2nd: Fraya A. (then Form V)

Highly Commended

Affan D.-A. (then Form V)

Emma B. (then Form IV)

Ollie E. (then Form I)

Nasifa M. (then Form V)

Stanley B. (then Form I)

Commended

Elliot C. (then Form I)

Aizah C. (then Form I)

Akira P. (then Form IV)

Anabia Z. (then Form I)

Strathdevon Primary Winner

THE MAIDEN OF THE GLEN

17th January 1448

Even at midnight, Dollar Glen was a beautiful place. The trees surrounding the clearing reached up into the inky sky and moonlight streamed through the branches, creating dappled patterns on the leafy forest floor.

Down one side of the glen the burn rumbled and gushed in spirals. The moon was a ghostly glow in the velvety, diamond-sprinkled sky, reflecting into the crystal waters. The shriek of a barn owl echoed through the glen.

Catherine Campbell shivered, but not from the cold.

Whenever she struggled to sleep, she would go for a quick walk down into the glen below her home, Castle Gloom. But tonight she was walking for a very different reason. It was Catherine's wedding tomorrow, and she walked into the glen because this was where she and her betrothed, Henry, had first met.

Curiously, Catherine could hear whispering, though it was late at night. As she neared the edge of the gorge, she caught a glimpse of two figures below, sitting on the wet rocks by the burn. Her heartbeat quickened. She'd heard stories of witches and faeries haunting this place, but as she neared, Catherine discovered that it wasn't witches or warlocks: it was Henry and, strangely, her friend Margaret. They were laughing together.

Catherine started to walk towards them. She could hear them talking now.

'Margaret, my love. It is time we returned to the castle. I cannot be tired for my wedding or Catherine might find out about us,' Henry said affectionately.

'Yes,' she replied, then paused. 'Henry, I fear that once you're married, we will not be able to see each other.'

'Do not fear. Even though I may be far, I will never forget you,' answered Henry.

They leaned in and kissed. Catherine snapped out of her horror. Fury consumed every inch of her, and in her rage she threw herself at her betrothed; they both fell tumbling into the icy, frantic water below.

17th January 1859

The clatter of horseshoes echoed on the stone road through the gorge. Arthur Smith flicked his black hair out of his eyes and squinted at the road ahead. He was travelling through Dollar Glen on his way to Castle Campbell to meet his old friend, the Lord Provost of Glasgow.

His friends thought he was mad to take the path through the glen, as it was well known for the tale of 'The Maiden of the Glen', about a young woman who had thrown herself off the edge of the gorge. He could have taken the longer road around the glen, but it would have taken days

to complete.

Arthur Smith was not a superstitious man, and that could well be the reason he never turned up at the castle that night...

17th January 2024

Crying, Aila Wilson yanked up the hood of her jumper and plonked herself down on the grass. She didn't care that it was almost midnight, or that she was in the middle of Dollar Glen. All that Aila could think of was the kiss. She couldn't believe she'd ever loved him. He'd made her feel special, but now she just felt stupid.

It had all started with Aila going to the shops late that night. She was just buying a few things. On the way back, she went through the park as a shortcut. She'd heard chatting and poked her head round the corner of the sheds. Guess who she saw? Her boyfriend, Harris—and Molly. At first, Aila wondered what they were doing and why they were meeting, and then she saw...

17th January 1859

The full moon glowed in the darkened sky, like the centrepiece of a painting. Arthur's horse skidded to a halt.

'Go on Belle,' urged Arthur impatiently. Belle didn't budge.

He dismounted and tried to ease the horse on. Belle's ears suddenly pricked up. She raised her head, tense and listening. Arthur strained his ears and faintly heard singing. He let go of his horse slightly; Belle tore the reins out his hands and cantered down the track away from him.

Arthur cursed. He couldn't believe his trusty Belle had deserted him now. He would just have to continue on foot. The singing persisted—a haunting melody that seemed to come from the gorge.

Arthur walked to the edge and peered up to see where the noise was coming from.

Sitting on a wet stone by the waterfall was a woman dressed all in white. She had long blonde hair tumbling down her back and barefooted.

Suddenly the singing stopped, and she turned to look straight at him.

Arthur spun to go back to the road, regretting his decision to take the path through the glen, but standing there right in front of him was the woman in white.

Arthur swiped at her, and his hand passed right through. His face paled. She let out a shriek and dove at him. This time she was very solid indeed. The white lady knocked him down, and he fell into the deep and rocky gorge, suffering the same fate she had 400 years before.

17th January 2024

The grass was cold and wet, but she didn't seem to notice. She ran her hand along its surface. Strangely Aila could hear singing: a haunting melody drifting through the glen. She raised her head and stood.

Aila knew all the ghost stories and myths about

Dollar Glen. She'd lived there her whole life, but everyone knew ghosts weren't real. She did want to find out where the singing was coming from, so she tiptoed over to the edge of the gorge and peered down to the waterfall.

Sitting on a wet stone by the waterfall there was a woman dressed all in white robes, blonde hair tumbling down her back and barefooted.

Suddenly the singing stopped, and the woman in white turned to look straight at her.

Aila froze. The white figure rose. Aila knew that she must be a ghost but, looking into her eyes, Aila knew she meant no harm. She could see only sorrow in her misty grey eyes.

'Hello,' whispered Aila.

'Hello, Aila,' answered the spirit.

'Who are you?'

'Catherine Campbell.'

'Why are you a ghost?'

'My tale is told by many. I was living a life of luxury in the Castle Gloom. One night I came across my betrothed and one of my friends kissing. In a rage I threw myself at him, and we fell into the river,' the ghost said. 'Why are you here this late of night?'

'My story is kind of similar to yours,' Aila replied. 'I was crying because I'd caught my boyfriend, Harris, kissing another girl and I ran here.'

'My time is almost up. I must go soon.'

'What do you mean by your time being up?'

'On the 17th of January every year I materialise here and haunt the glen. If it is a full moon my powers increase, and I can go outwith my boundaries.'

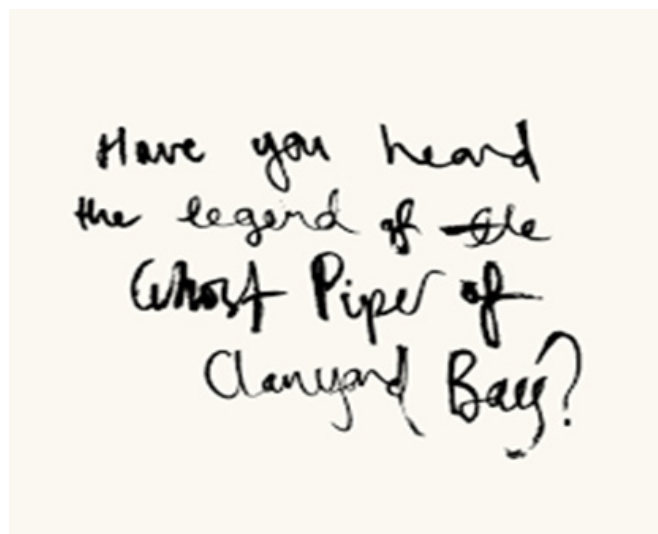
'Will you be here next 17th January?' asked Aila.

The spirit smiled and disappeared into thin air.

'Goodbye, Aila,' echoed the ghost's voice.

'Goodbye,' whispered Aila to the transfixing night sky.

Freya Sowden (now Form I, then P7 at Strathdevon Primary School)



Junior School Joint Winner THE GHOST PIPER OF CLANYARD BAY

Are ye feart ae ghost stories? Or are ye intae yon faerie tales? Well, huv I got a treat fer ye!

I masel' am mony 'hings ye see. Or wis. Lived an' farmed aw ma natural days oan the lands by Clanyard Bay, wi' ma faithful dug by ma side. Took masel' a bonnie lass an married her right by they braw rugged cliffs. Ocht, there were ayways daft talk ae faeries an the like doon yon caves. A cannae say a'd ever witnessed onyhin. Until that fateful day.

See, life is bliss wi' youth oan yer side, but time's a thief an' survivin' gits tougher. Noo, a'm sure it wis wi' gid reason, bit the wife, she became an awfy nag. Music wis ma escape. The drones ae ma bagpipes ye see, nae way could even she be heard whingin' an' hollerin' ower they. Quite accomplished a became, sae often wis the practice!

Twis oan the Lord's day ae rest it aw unfolded, but she wisnae geein me ony. Wi ma pipes ower ma shoulders an ma whisky tucked safe, aff a set doon the bay. It seemed there were another kind ae storm a brewin' there. The dug wis by ma heels as ayways. A gid hunter he wis, tae. Mony a hare he'd snared fer oor supper, bit oh whit a racket the howlin' he'd dae when a piped a wee tune or twa.

A nosy lot them that were finished wi their churchgoin' yon day. No bein' wan fer an audience, a preferred tae scramble doon the rocks toward the caves. Their words ae warnin' followed me, caught oan the wind an' drifted straight past ma ears; '... wicked... faeries... eerie... screams... cursed... storm...' Nuhin ye could make heid nor tail eh.

Junior School Joint Winner

THE WILL-O'-THE-WISPS

Isla had always been fascinated by the stars and tonight was going to be the most exciting night of her life. Tonight was the first time in 75 years that Halley's Comet would appear. Isla begged her father to let her go out, but he refused, as always, claiming it was too dangerous for little girls to go wandering around the Highlands at night. 'But why? There is no one around for miles!' she argued, but nothing worked.

'You're not going and that's final!' he said. Isla knew there was nothing she could do to convince him, so she decided to sneak out.

As the clock struck nine, she tiptoed down the stairs, out the back door and across the moors. Meall Fuar-mhonaidh was a short walk from her family's cottage and the highest point for miles. Isla knew it would be the best place to spot the comet from. But as she approached the base of the mountain, she heard a voice as delicate as snow calling out to her, 'Isla, Isla.' An eerie blue flame appeared in front of her, bathing the forest in an otherworldly glow. As if in a trance she followed, deaf to the cries of forest animals shielding their faces, frozen with fear from the unearthly light. More and more lights appeared in front of her as she walked on into the night toward the icy waters of Loch nam Breac Dearga, oblivious to the world around her.

Meanwhile her father had changed his mind and gone up to his daughter's room to find the bed empty and unslept in. On the pillow was a piece of crumpled paper: 'Gone to see Halley's Comet. Back soon. xx.'

He bolted from the room, down the stairs and off into the night. The icy wind stung his face as he sprinted through the trees. They swayed in the wind, their branches illuminated by the silvery moon. He cried, remembering their last conversation, wondering if those would be their last conversation. His chest knotted as he imagined Isla dead at the bottom of a cliff or lost in the woods, unable to find her way home; he imagined the moor-roaming creatures that might take her from him. The knot in his chest tightened.

The sound of a snapping twig woke Isla from her trance, and she found herself up to her waist in water, desperately trying to direct her legs back to the shore—but they would not obey. Against her will, they dragged her deeper and deeper. She looked around for something to grab on to, but there was nothing. Isla tried to scream but there was no sound; it was as if she was already drowning.

In that instant, her father emerged from the forest, frantically shouting her name. But it was as if an icy hand had ripped her voice from her throat. Isla thrashed her arms about, splashing her hands on the surface to attract his eyes. But her efforts were useless; she might as well be invisible. The waters closed around her head and Isla waited for death. But it never came...

Her father turned in time to see his daughter's head go under the water. Unthinkingly, he jumped into the water to save her, pulling her body out of the murky depths. He thought he was too late. Then, suddenly, she gulped at the night air, her eyelids fluttered open and her colour returned.

'I'm so sorry,' she whispered. 'I never should have left. It's all my fault.'

'No, it's not. It's my fault for not coming with you,' her father cried. At that instant, a blinding light flew over their heads, drowning out the stars, leaving a trail of blue and white in its wake. It was Halley's Comet. It was the most spectacular thing Isla had ever seen in her life. The pair hugged, speechless, watching the comet until it disappeared before heading home, hand in hand, through the trees, beneath the hills, back to their cottage. There, they sat before the fire wrapped in blankets with mugs of hot chocolate in their hands. Isla looked out the window and retold her story.

At the end, her father looked her in the eyes and told her, 'You are lucky to be alive, Isla. Those were will-o'-the-wisps—mysterious evil creatures that lead weary travellers off the path to their doom. I saw them once before when we lived in Orkney. I tried to pull your mother back up the edge of a cliff, but I could not. She fell to the bottom; I was powerless to stop them. I will never forget that day nor the cold blue light that shone from them. It still haunts me today.'

Isla let out the breath she didn't realise she had been holding. Her mum's death wasn't a tragic accident, as she had been told. The will-o'-the-wisps had lured her mum to her death, and they had tried to kill her too. She knew this wouldn't be the last she saw of the wisps...

Iris Sullivan (then Junior 2)

Form II Winner

THE LEGEND OF THE RAT BOYS

We were lurking in one of Edinburgh's narrow cobbled wynds. Ancient stone structures towered above us; my tie felt tight, an uncomfortable reminder that we should be in school. A streetlight's yellow stream dimly illuminated the alley in the winter's dark afternoon. We were bored, as never before. The thrill of our rebelliousness was running low, and the cold was biting our cheeks. We found ourselves staring at an old, crusted entryway, curious about its unusually small door.

'Who says you won't open that door, eh?'

My friend spoke directly to me. I looked at him, dazed from chill. 'Nah, I'm alright.' I punched his arm jokingly.

'I'll give you a fiver.' He seemed unusually eager.

My other classmate butted in, 'Yeah, Tom. I dare you!'

I didn't want to do it, but couldn't be bothered arguing; I knelt, sighing, soaking my trousers in wet dirt. The door was just a few rotting planks. A heavy rusted lock bound it shut; moss was developing in each slit between the timbers and a horrendous odour was leaking out from inside. I began fooling around with the lock. I hit it against the door's stone frame and pounded it against the aged beams when, without warning, I felt a shadow on

my back. It lingered, making the cold seem colder...

Panic rose up inside me. I turned around, unsure of what waited above me. My eyes met my mate's. Startled, he was zipping up his parka to cover up his school tie, fearful of being caught.

'What do you boys think you're doing?'

Still kneeling in cold dirt, I took in this angry man. He was elderly, with a hairy face and a pointed nose. He was wearing a long brown trench coat and a crocodile-green shirt. His face looked grim; grey hair protruded over his eyebrows, covering deep wrinkles. His stubbled beard looked as though it had been cut with scissors.

I looked at Billy, hoping he would speak. But my friend said nothing—just cast his eyes downwards and scuffed the ground. I nudged Darren to respond. 'Nothing!' he blurted, stepping away from the door. 'We're not doing nothing.' Fearful, I stood up beside him, my wet trousers sticking to my legs.

The man stepped closer, bending to look each of us in the eye. 'If I were you, I'd leave that door alone. Have you not heard the legend of the rat boys?'

'Eh?' Darren said defensively.

The elderly man's frail body seemed to quiver. I couldn't tell if it was anger, or just the cold. He turned and pointed with a wire-like finger. 'You see that old building there? That was a school. Three naughty boys bunked off one day, many years ago. It was thrilling for them at first. Freedom. It was like they owned the world; they could do anything.' He stopped pointing and

looked me dead in the eyes. His tone shifted to ominous displeasure. 'It was around noon when the school master caught on. He chased them around these streets trying to find them, getting closer and closer.' The man shuffled nearer to us. 'Once he caught them, he found this small door—small enough for only those schoolboys.'

We all turned to look again at the door we had been trying to prise open. 'The schoolmaster shouted at them angrily, "*You little rats! I'll put you in there, until you grow your own tails, and then you'll be much easier to catch!*" But on the way home, that schoolmaster collapsed and died, and the lads were stuck: trapped forever and eventually forgotten.'

The old man telling his tale grew hoarse and let out a stifling cough. 'Legend has it that they are still in there, all grown up, waiting to secure their freedom. But to secure their freedom, they need someone else to take their place.'

I shivered at the thought of being stuck in the darkness behind the door. 'So...' challenged the man, 'are you going to open that door?'

We each stood rooted to the spot, staring blankly at him. The old man began to slink off down the cobbled street, leaving us baffled but relieved he was gone. The sky was initiating darkness, and I felt as if our headmaster would lock us up right there and then if he found us bunking off. I was trembling with fear, while Darren, on the other hand, started to chuckle, trying to shake off the feeling of unease.

'He's crazy,' Darren bantered.

'Yeah! He's a weirdo,' Billy agreed. 'I'm not scared of him.'

They crouched beside the

door, examined it briefly, then laughed. They pounded the lock again, trying to break the door open. 'What ancient garbage he was talking,' Darren said.

'Yeah. I know. I want to see inside!' Billy said eagerly.

I backed away, creating some distance between me and the situation. I could not help but recall the old man's warning. I turned to look back to watch him disappear round a corner. Suddenly, what seemed to be a long, hairy rat's tail swooped out from the back of his trench coat. Was I hallucinating? It looked real. Maybe I was just scared. Then I realized.

'Stop!' I yelled at my friends.

It was too late. A backdraft blew me off my feet. It overpowered me, slamming my head on the cobbles. I screamed. The wind blew through my ears, muffling all sound. My head spun. Then it stopped. Everything went black.

When I regained consciousness, my head was ablaze. When I opened my eyes, Darren and Billy were gone. Nothing was left of them. The aged wooden door was closed, the lock intact, but it seemed strangely new: the rust had vanished. I rolled over quickly, still sprawled on the ground. I looked up the street and, to my horror, I saw not one, but three old men, walking down the cobbled wynd, all dressed in trench coats, all with rats' tails.

Christie Munro (then Form II)

OPEN CATEGORY JOINT WINNER

WHEN DID WE GO WRONG?

They say the sky was born to love the sea. That it was created to reflect all the stars and moons. I must assume it to be true. I can see it after all. In the way the small ripples of movement reflect the map of stars. In the way the moon is shared out across oceans. The way that they have been together since the start of time.

I often feel like the sky. Destined to love the waters, yet held just out of reach. It is something I cannot fix. I forever shall be the sky. And so, just as the moon glows, I wander down and grace the spray. My footsteps heed the shells and embed themselves in the shore. I open my body and let out my soul so it can waltz with the waves. My mind wanders over to where I belong.

My home and heart left me as soon as I turned my head. Now I yearn. I spend each and every night, regretting. Wishing upon each shooting star, cursing them when they ignore my pleas. And so I rid my lungs of their life and project my sorrow and guilt across the seas and stars. I let out the grief and regret concealed in my heart. The guilt of being caught. Condemning my people. And most of all I cry. Cry out for my mother. Try to let her know that I am sorry. That I was wrong. How I long to stop myself. Go back in time. Rewrite history. Knowing what I do now, I would abandon my heart in an instant if it meant I could keep my soul. Without my soul, my heart has no purpose. No meaning. I am just an empty shell of hope. The fire that belonged in me is gone. And I am cold and alone.

I am just the sky.

Yet, I am not it. For unlike the sky, I chose this. Unbeknownst to me, yet still I chose it. When I abandoned my skin on that beach and scaled the cliff. When I was found. That is when I chose this. This pain. When they found me. Your 'researchers'. Your 'scientists'. My torturers. You naïve humans believe them. Trust them when they say they are there to help. To protect. Yet when we go extinct, who will you blame? For I know it will not be them. They will say they did all they could. That it was impossible to save us. And as you always do, you will lap it up like hounds. You will soon forget about us. Write us off as a legend. A story that puts children to sleep. And you will never know. Never know who was to blame for the name *Selkies* on your 'unpreventable extinction' list.

Emma G. (then Form III)

Open Category Joint Winner

CONFESSIONS...

Honestly, Gloriana the Faerie Queen was regretting even organising this event. *No one was going to turn up anyway*, she thought. The meeting place was on the crest of a small hill somewhere in the Cairngorms. The sky was stunningly beautiful, the stars were sprinkled on the horizon, and the aroura borealis lit the surrounding hills in ethereal light. The rushing burn and the swaying of the pine trees in the light breeze were the only sounds for miles around. Gloriana realised with disappointment that she was the first one to arrive (she was running half an hour late.) Her already crushing regret only deepened. Then the calm silence was broken.

Crashing through the trees came the mighty water kelpie, ever doomed to drown poor, unsuspecting travellers. Then the cat-Sith and cur-Sith bounded over the burn with more fluid grace. 'At least some have turned up,' Gloriana grumbled. Next, the terrifying nuckelavee leaped over the top of a hill; its sheer size unnerved her. It has no skin or flesh and it rides a sheer-black, red-eyed stallion. It is enough to give even the darker spirits of the world nightmares.

Not one of the spirits spoke. The silence was painfully awkward. Then with a voice that sounded like the waters of the Earth, the mighty kelpie spoke. 'Remind me again why exactly I'm here?'

Now Gloriana really regretted calling this meeting. *Stupid, pointless, idiotic, useless*. The voices in her head were screaming dehumanising insults. *Hopeless, futile, incompetent*. With laboured breath, she shoved the thoughts into the darkest corner of her mind; she would deal with *them* later. The kelpie had asked

her a question, and she was just standing there foolishly. Composing herself, she replied, 'As Queen of the Faeries, it is my duty to care about every individual under my rule. So I called this meeting to discuss our thoughts.' Her voice was barely more than a whisper as she finished those last words. *Weakling*. The voices were laughing at her. Mocking her. *It is true*, she thought. *What good is an incompetent queen with no social skills?*

'Really? To discuss our thoughts?? What are you, a therapist or something?!!' the kelpie retorted. The kelpie instantly wanted to take that back. *Oh gods, why on Earth did I say that?! That's why nobody wants to be around you, you insufferable IDIOT! No one must know*, the kelpie thought. Gloriana's voice was so quiet that he had to strain his hearing to listen.

'Well, I just thought that people might want to talk and socialise...that is all.' Now the kelpie really felt awful. Gloriana had only recently become queen, so he guessed she would be beating herself up about the smallest details. Tension laced the ever-growing silence. After what felt like hours (or was it minutes—he could not really tell), the cur-Sith said, with a low growl, 'So are we going to have this little chat, or can I go back to my pups?'

The nuckelavee chimed in, with a voice that did not seem of this world, 'Honestly, I really like Gloriana's idea. It's one step closer to getting all the spirits on good terms with each other.' The kelpie was taken aback. He had no idea that the nuckelavee was this introspective—then again, no one dared venture near it out of sheer terror. Maybe there was a side of the spirit that was worth knowing.

Gloriana was also surprised by the nuckelavee's contribution. *This is the reason we spirits must talk, so we can make connections that would stop us from turning on each other*. She gestured to the spirits to sit. The nuckelavee sent shockwaves through the ground when it jumped off its horse then sat quietly on a moss-coated boulder. The cur-Sith lay down in the lush grass, propping its broad head on its jet-black paws. With a great leap, the nimble cat-Sith perched on an overhanging branch. Despite not having said a thing, the cat-Sith's eyes were gleaming with unsaid words. The kelpie remained standing, pawing at the ground with a large hoof.

The cur-Sith spoke first, 'Sometimes I wonder if I am a good enough dad. I have a litter of six, you see, and I think that I do not show them enough love. One day I had a horrible hunt, and this was right before a storm hit. I came back grim and starving. The youngest pup came up to me and asked, "Dad, why is there no food?" I growled at her. Growled! I feel absolutely awful. She had done nothing, and I just snapped at her. I haven't even apologised.'

And he whimpered—actually whimpered!

Gloriana wondered what to say to the spirit. But it was the cat-Sith who spoke, 'It sounds like you are putting yourself under pressure to do everything right. You are trying to provide for six pups and yourself which is a feat. All I think you need to do is be calm and think before you act. Don't let your emotions take over your actions. Do this, and your problem will most likely vanish. Just remember: you are trying your best, and don't be too hard on yourself. You are a great dad, don't deny it.'

Gloriana was completely and utterly stunned. The cat-Sith was a casket of wisdom, waiting for the right time to divulge her sage-like advice.

Then it was Gloriana's turn to speak. 'I understand I'm not the most confident individual out there, but I try to sound as though I know what I'm doing. The truth is, I have absolutely no clue. When I think I say something useless, my mind starts firing insults at me. I try to push them away, but they always come back. It's really demoralising. But I must keep going, because I don't know what would happen if I gave up my crown.'

In all her years on this Earth the cat-Sith had no idea that the Faerie Queen was going through such hardships, so to help her she said, 'It seems that you have a similar situation to that of the cur-Sith.' Gloriana nodded in agreement. 'I think you just need to realise that you are enough, and that the voices are lying. You are a great queen. Don't let anyone tell you anything different!' Gloriana nodded in confirmation.

The kelpie was debating whether to speak or not, but the nuckelavee got there first. 'I'm aware that I'm not the most physically appealing thing on the planet, but I have always dreamed of becoming a world-famous actor. The kind that the audience adores.'

This time instead of the cat-Sith speaking, the kelpie spoke, 'We literally live on a floating rock, so chase your dreams! It is possible. Follow your dreams, because you only live once. Once.'

'Thanks—that means a lot to me.'

'Don't mention it.'

Deciding that he wasn't ready to voice his own worries, the kelpie gazed into the night sky. *Maybe another time.* Breathing in the crisp spring air calmed his anger, giving him a sense of serenity and calm. Soon all the group were staring at the endless sky. The once-awkward silence turned into a comforting atmosphere. No more words needed to be said. Sometimes the best comfort is just appreciating the here and now. The group stayed late into the night, watching the moon creep across the sky, knowing that they were not alone and would never feel isolated ever again.

Niamh McGuire (then Form I)

THE HARRY BELL TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP 2024

Over the last few decades, the Harry Bell Travel Awards have generated a great deal of interest and resulted in some remarkable journeys and pieces of writing. The awards are open to any Form V pupils who wish to travel during the summer holiday to study a topic of literary interest. Recipients are required to write a lively report reflecting upon their experiences of a particular writer and a particular place.

In addition, the Harry Bell Travel Scholarship is awarded at Prize Giving the following year in recognition of the best written report. In 2024, the reports were, again, of exceptional quality, and the judges named two Highly Commended runners-up: Lottie Leech and Izzie Braid (both FPs 2024). The winner of this year's prize was Inaya Syed (FP 2024) who had visited Amherst, in western Massachusetts, to discover more about the 19th-century poet Emily Dickinson. An edited version of Inaya's report is published here.

EMILY DICKINSON STILL LIVES IN AMHERST

This title, first printed in *The New York Times* in the summer of 1972, seems to me to take on a form and bring about an impact much like Dickinson's own writing. At first it startles, raises questions, perhaps even jars in the reader's mind as their train of thought stutters, as if the phrase were dashed—or exclaimed!—or trailed off...an unassuming fragment achieving the incredible impact of Dickinson's works in its allusions to something much bigger than one could ever imagine. But while this statement may be daring, and bold—and all these things worked their way into the very soul of her writing—it fulfils the latter part of the Emily-Dickinson-experience, too: that sense of truth that endures past the eccentricities.

And true, it is. There's an electricity in Amherst, Massachusetts, spawned of 'Wild nights' and mixed in with the snow that 'sifts from Leaden Sieves' onto the tawny earth; a sure arrow leads this current back to the poetic soul of the town, the state, and the era itself. Emily Dickinson does not just still live in Amherst; through her art, she defines it, continuing to shift any reader's (indeed my own) view of the town entirely. To her—and to me, as I found myself agreeing at every turn of the page and along the cobbled streets alike—the Cold Spring Orchard by the river became the dome to a ground more hallowed than any of the town's twelve churches. The books in Amherst College's storied library took on a coat of rusted bronze paint as they became frugal chariots, carrying readers to fictitious and far-fetched lands. The local Female Seminary shrunk to a cage of senseless, imposed studies in fields she did not care for; she remarked (with the bite only a sixteen-year-old poet could offer): 'I'm all engrossed in the history of Sulphuric Acid!!!!' She speaks through Amherst—even now, a century and a half later—and through her poetry, the town seems to reply. As each passing landmark and view (that will survive us both) pieces together the shreds, scraps, and fragments of her life through her works—from the first, delicately (yet never tentatively) scrawled lyrics, to rebellion, to seclusion, and, eventually, to death—Amherst, and its spilled contents of friends, family, love, death, and controversy, surely remains her one enduring muse.

The poet certainly represents a sense of hope within the town—Amherst's native 'thing with feathers' that perched, and wrote, within the pale-yellow, three-storied soul of the Dickinson ancestral home, now restored and

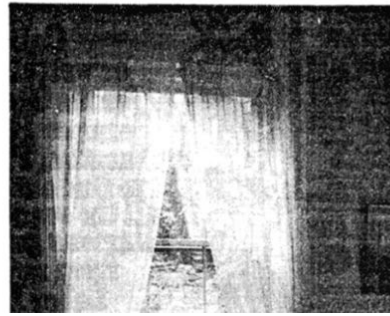
Newspaper clipping featuring Dickinson (The New York Times, Sunday, June 11, 1972)

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 1972

Emily Dickinson Still Lives in Amherst



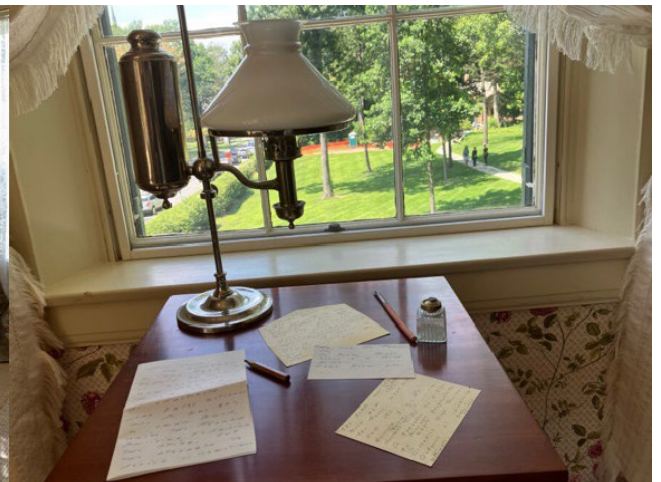
The shy, puzzling poet, who wrote timeless verse in her bedroom in the family's mansion on Main Street, is well remembered 86 years after her death.



preserved as the Emily Dickinson Museum. To call this home anything less than a point of pilgrimage would be disservice bordering on divine trespass. The Homestead stands impressively tall on Main Street, its pearly-white wrap-around porch beaming with pride at its status, its acres and, above all, the mind that walked its land and halls. There is a reverence, thick and heady, that clings from the first step into the house's welcoming parlours, that grows as you pass the kitchen quarters and Edward Dickinson's study and extensive library—but the door to Emily's bedroom marks the last defence between wide-eyed pilgrim and the Rapture itself. Four cream walls, littered with pink vining roses and trimmed with green damask curtains, encase the

space in which the poet spent the better part of her life: this seems stranger and stranger to me—no matter how many times I erase and rewrite it. These windows faced the same way back then; this sleigh bed was her own; and I feel, even in retrospect, like a Massachusettsan Prometheus, stealing the sight of something I was never meant to stumble upon. And so I will continue to borrow from the gods and say that the dearth of this moment to me could only be best expressed by the poetess herself:

*'That it will never come again
Is what makes life so sweet.
Believing what we don't believe
Does not exhilarate.'*



L: View of Dickinson's room from her main doorway. R: View from Dickinson's writing desk.



L: The Evergreens home R: Emily's first documented letter-poem to Sue

There is an exhilaration in the way her desk sits diagonal to her bed (and that, despite the magnitude of the ideas that grew from that bed, it takes up less than a half-arm's length itself), overlooking the west side of the Dickinson grounds. There is exhilaration in the notion that, sitting there, I see what she saw as she wrote words, letters, poems that the world still hangs upon. There is belief in the way that '*certain Slant of light*' filters in through the south-facing windows and illuminates oak and particulate matter alike: a black-and-white silhouette developing out of dust like a photo negative—moving, writing, talking in my mind as if nothing at all had changed. And perhaps it hasn't. Her room stands today meticulously restored, preserved as if in amber, and takes on the role of the changer, instead, in its constancy; the only thing(s) to be altered are those who enter Emily Dickinson's room as one person, and leave as another— and that this change will never come again is what makes it so incredibly sweet.

Dickinson's room was certainly her Panopticon—those windows that she lacked physically, forged, instead, by her mind—but her fondest subject resided outside the walls of the Homestead, albeit, only a few short steps away. Susan Gilbert, 'Sue' or 'Susie' to the poet, fulfilled many roles in Dickinson's life: her friend, her mentor, her primary audience and editor, her sister-in-law, and, by all accounts, Emily Dickinson's fiercest lifelong attachment.

Sue married Austin Dickinson (Emily's older brother), and Edward Dickinson's wish for his family to stay close together saw the construction of the Evergreens. Sue and Austin's home directly adjoined to the Homestead by a cobbled path, in Emily's words, 'just wide enough for two who love.'

15

Write! Comrade — write!
On this wondrous sea
Sailing silently,
Ho! Pilot, ho!
Knowest thou the shore
Where no breakers roar —
Where the storm is o'er?

In the peaceful west
Many the sails at rest —
The anchors fast —
Thither I pilot thee —
Land Ho! Eternity!
Ashore at last!
Emilie —

Throughout their lives, Sue was Emily's most frequent and valued addressee, receiving masses of ornate yet equally eviscerating letters, poems, and confessions, all pressed to the heart and carried along this path. Of these, the letters have drawn particular attention, highlighting the perhaps lesser-known fact that Dickinson was as much of a rebel in the epistolary world as the poetic. Letters to Sue take on many a form: from intricate descriptions and appreciations of beauty woven into an average day's reflections, to unornamental yearnings, and dotted shards and fragments of poetry (termed 'poem-letters' by Sue)—each form finding a way to subvert the expectations of the 19th-century's rigid letter-writing etiquette. The change in medium did not sway the poet's rebellious nature, and nor did it bridle her ability to inject intensity with a simultaneous dull pang of longing, as this letter (my favourite of those stored at Amherst College) demonstrates:

"Thursday evening: Sue is teaching in Baltimore at the time this letter is written.

I wept a tear here, Susie—on purpose for you—because this "sweet silver moon" smiles in on me and Vinnie, and then it goes so far before it gets to you—and then you never told me if there was any moon in Baltimore—and how do I know Susie—that you see her sweet face at all? She looks like a fairy tonight, sailing around the sky in a little silver gondola with stars for gondoliers. I asked her to let me ride a little while ago—and I told her I would get out when she got as far as Baltimore, but she only smiled to herself and went sailing on...

Susie, did you think that I would never write you when you were gone away—what made you? I am sure you know my promise far too well for that—and had I never said so—I should be constrained to write—for what shall separate us from any whom we love—not height nor depth!

Your Emily."

Though Sue and Austin lived a few short steps from the main Dickinson home, the Evergreens has a new atmosphere entirely. Where the Homestead carries a feeling of restoration and rebuilding, the Evergreens feels as if it's been frozen in time these past two hundred years, caught and cast in media res. The house is, of course, empty now, but there is a strange sense of frenzy that lingers, and draws you closer, as you follow that well-trodden path; it feels, oddly enough, like the walk up to a party—but the music is now silent and the lights are all off; it is illuminated only by the sun and that same 'certain Slant of light'. Indeed, during Emily and Sue's time, the Evergreens was an epicentre of social and cultural events in Amherst—a status championed by Sue, whose disdain for the 'expected, suicide-inducing life of a wife' and whose love for the arts was almost as strong as Emily's.

In walking Amherst, visiting the College and the Homestead and Evergreens complex, and, of course, sitting and sifting through papers and manuscripts in her own room, the way I read Dickinson has forever been changed. She seems less like a far-off idyll to me, but no less a deity. It's strange (as most of these experiences have been), but it is almost as if our gap of two hundred years has been bridged, foundation by foundation, brick by brick, each one placed, sturdy and solid, by Amherst itself. I hope, of course, to visit again—but I must refer back to those words of Dickinson to epilogue this experience: that this string of fledging firsts will never come again, is what has made this visit so sweet.

Inaya Syed (FP 2024)



"A LITTLE PATH JUST WIDE ENOUGH FOR TWO WHO LOVE" — E. D.

SENIOR MUSICAL 2024

SISTER ACT

THE MUSICAL



It was nuns galore at Dollar Academy when the senior students performed *Sister Act* as last session's senior musical at the Macrobert Arts Centre in Stirling. The role of Deloris van Cartier, the charismatic wannabe performer, was expertly portrayed by Freya L. (then Form VI)—our very own champion gymnast, French horn player and singer. Her bubbly personality naturally conveyed the lead role on stage, and she enjoyed every minute of stardom as the fake nun surrounded by her 'sisters'. Lt Eddie Souther, her love interest, was played by James M. (then Form V). This role demanded that he sing one of the musical's hit songs, 'I Could Be That Guy'. James transformed from the goofy policeman into the suave knight in shining armour with ease—the audience enjoyed his extra-quick costume changes (from police uniform to red-and-white sequins), as well as his spectacular vocal range.

George M. (then Form VI) played Deloris' evil boyfriend, Curtis, accompanied by his band of men: TJ, Joey and Pablo played by Ethan G., Duncan K. and Kieran P., respectively (then all Form VI). They led the ensemble in another of the show's iconic numbers, 'When I Find My Baby'.

Caoimhe C. (then Form III) took on the role of Sister Mary Robert, the young postulant who, influenced by Deloris' passion and spirit, questions her role in monastery life. Caoimhe's beautiful voice meant that she performed 'The Life I Never Led' with great sensitivity and emotion.

The show featured a number of comedic roles, too, such as Sister Mary Patrick, the ever-excitable and energetic nun with a passion for singing and dancing, played by Zuzu J. (then Form V). And there was Sister

Mary Lazarus, the rapping choir leader who reluctantly makes way for Deloris and her more modern repertoire, played by Inaya S. (then Form VI). And, finally, there was Sister Mary Martin of Tours, the daydreaming elder nun with a talent for never knowing what is going on at any given time, played by Rosie E. (then Form V).

Mother Superior was performed with great emotion and empathy by Alicia V.-S. (then Form VI); her very convincing acting skills were on display as she portrayed the formidable nun. Forced to house the party girl Deloris, Alicia transformed from the cold and foreboding enemy into Deloris' greatest ally. Alicia's rendition of 'Here Within These Walls' was a highlight of the show.

A special mention must go to Mr John Delaney who created the six stained glass panels, complete with school crest, which graced the stage throughout.

The vocal numbers were many in this show, affording our pupils abundant chances to show off their part-singing, as well as provide the music for some energetic dance routines. The dancing was certainly all the more impressive as it had often to be done wearing heavy, full-length nuns' habits and veils! The band included many pupil musicians who provided a lively soundtrack for this popular musical, and audiences left feeling uplifted.

Blessings and, of course, huge congratulations to all who were involved.

Louise Timney







THE FORM I PLAYS

Last session, audiences were treated to two Form I plays, one directed by Mrs Verity Smith and the other by Mrs Susie Easto.

VILLAINS INCORPORATED

The play that we performed for last session's Form I drama production was called *Villains Incorporated*. In it, I played the head girl (Virtuous) who tries very hard to turn the so-called 'Bad Boys' (Notorious, Nefarious, Nemesis and Rapscaillon) into heroes. But my character fails... The play was very funny and even had some dance numbers, such as 'I'm Just Ken' and Michael Jackson's 'Thriller'. It also featured some very enthusiastic Dollar Hill High cheerleaders!

We had to be quite serious about practising during our lunchtime and after school rehearsals, as we had just a short time in which to rehearse the play before the performance dates. Though we had just six weeks' rehearsal time, I made several new friendships along the way—maybe this was because of (not despite) the pressured timescale. Our director, Mrs Verity Smith, was incredibly helpful and



positive throughout the experience. She pushed us to our limits, but that was part of the experience. If she hadn't, the play simply would not have come together.

Before the doors opened every night, the backstage space buzzed with excitement (and nerves). Fortunately, the nerves were overcome in time for the performances. On both nights, the audience cheered as loudly as they could and this made everyone feel incredibly proud.

Looking back, I think we all still feel an enormous sense of achievement after the hard work we put in. My own experience was very positive; I thoroughly enjoyed every moment. I look forward to watching this year's Form I production, and I am sure this year's cast will find it all as exhilarating and rewarding as we did.

Ishbel J. (now Form II)



INTO THIN HEIR

From the pupils....

I played the part of Pippa Peabody, an amateur sleuth, in our production of *Into Thin Heir*, a short Agatha Christie-style play. The hardest part was learning the lines, but I really love acting. I would definitely do it again.

Harriet M. (now Form II)

I really enjoyed playing the part of Sylvia Stark in this play. I remember reading the script for the first time and seeing how the different characters changed throughout. Being part of the Form I production meant that I got to know people I didn't know very well before; finding that they liked the same things as me was always delightful. Mrs Easto helped us so much when it came to learning lines and making sets.

Abi C. (now Form II)

I had a lovely time being part of *Into Thin Heir*. I played Norma Newcomb (the business partner), and I had lots of fun at rehearsals: memorising my lines and just being backstage during the show. Mrs Easto made the rehearsals and the play a wonderful experience for us all. A personal highlight for me was getting to design the poster for both shows.

Siobhan L. (now Form II)

My favourite part was seeing the audience's faces light up whenever there was a joke; that really made my night. I also enjoyed how the whole experience helped strengthen friendships within the cast. I loved it all!

Emily M. (now Form II)



FORM II PLAY:

A Midsummer Night's Dream

(And Mr Peter Russell's very last Dollar Academy production)

The 2024 Form II play was quite something. You could say it was an excellent performance; however, I feel (and I think all the other members of the cast would agree with me here) that that description doesn't go far enough. It also felt fresh and innovative, inspiring and surprising. I don't think any of us envisaged Shakespeare being fun and accessible. Who would have thought that having a surprise pillow fight would change our minds! Mr Russell helped change our perception of the Shakespearean language by making it relevant and bringing it to life; he never ran out of ideas, and he believed in us—even when rehearsals were a bit dire!

We all appreciated, beforehand, how important this play was going to be, as it was the last play Mr Russell would direct at Dollar Academy after over 20 years of teaching. This was very much the end of an era, and we felt privileged to be a part of his final production. I hope he feels we marked this important moment in the right way. Every single member of the cast would like to wish him the very best for the future.

Annina L. (then Form II)







CREATIVE INDUSTRIES DAY

At the end of the last summer term, we spent a fantastic day in the Art Department, taking part in Creative Industries Day. The most memorable part for me was the work we did on fashion; we designed hats out of card and paper and walked on a red carpet at the end to show off our designs. The fashion part, however, was just a small part of what we did that day. Working in groups, we also designed cars and raced them against each other. We created some amazing architecture, and we got to work with a professional photographer to take creative photos.

To top it all off, there were prizes (chocolate!) to be won for the fastest car, the best architecture, the best hat and the best photo. Attending the day really opened my mind about possible future career paths, and I can see myself choosing Art when it comes to my subject choices.

Freya C. (then Form I)



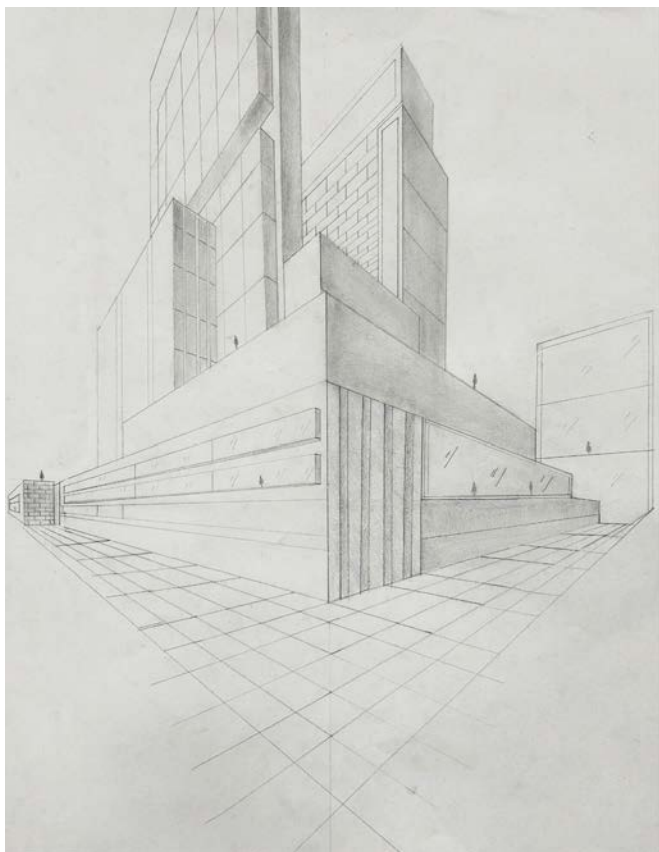
Darcy D. (then Form VI)



DOLLAR PUPILS WIN TOP AWARDS FROM THE ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY

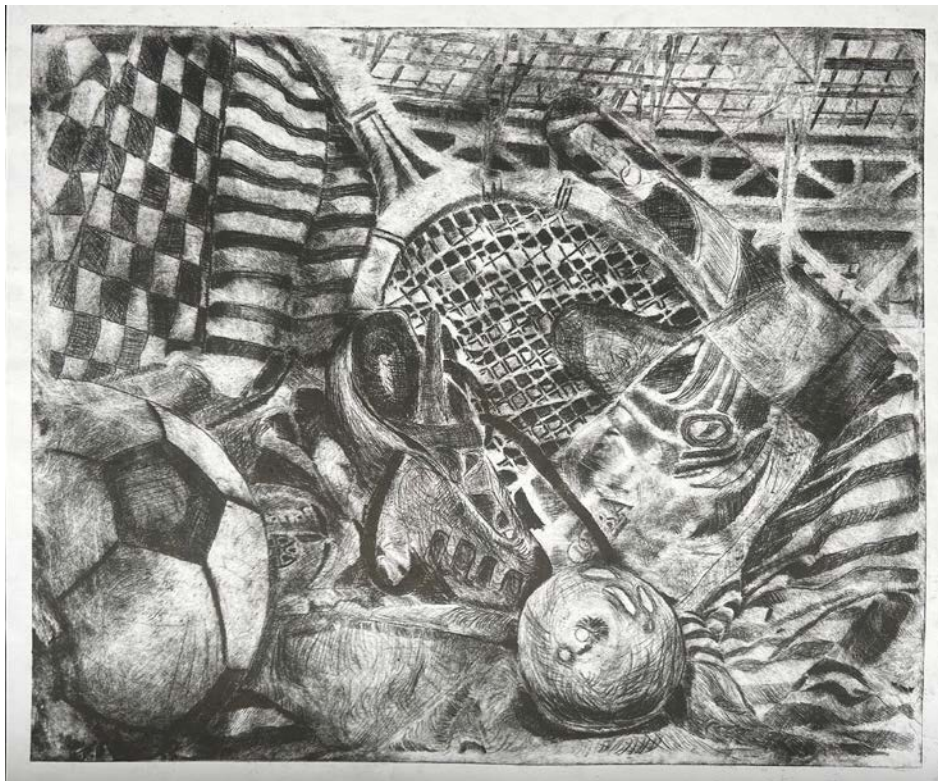
Congratulations go to Genevieve H. (then Form II) for having been recognised with 2nd place in the Junior Category of The Royal Scottish Academy Schools' Art Award in the summer of 2024. Darcy D. (then Form VI) was awarded a Senior Category Brodies Regional Award. Both artists were praised for their contemporary composition and advanced skill in their selected media. It is a pleasure to see both drawing and photography being celebrated at such a prestigious competition; our pupils are winning top prizes and being rewarded with the experience of exhibiting at the RSA.

Cath Kelly



Genevieve H. (then Form I)





Calum M. (then Form IV)



Mathew H. (then Form IV)

GALLERY



Libby T. (then Form IV)



Scarlett K. (then Form IV)



Holly A. (then Form VI)



Lily B. (then Form V)



Lola D. (then Form IV)



Coco J. (then Form V)



Selma L. (then Form V)



Rhiannon M. (then Form V)



Natasha N. (then Form IV)



Molly K. (then Form VI)



Sandy M. (then Form IV)



Irma P. (then Form IV)



RAMBERT'S *PEAKY BLINDERS*: *The Redemption of Thomas Shelby*

On a Tuesday evening in October, a group of Form V and VI pupils travelled to Edinburgh to watch Rambert Dance's production of *Peaky Blinders: The Redemption of Thomas Shelby* at the Festival Theatre. The performance incorporates a mixture of ballet and modern dance to convey the deep emotions felt by the characters throughout the story. This is further enhanced by the thoughtful placement of the live band, visible in the background of the stage.

The show consists of two acts, the first of which tells the story of Thomas Shelby and his criminal gang, the Peaky Blinders. It also depicts the discovery and then the loss of Shelby's true love. In the second act, Shelby explores the loss of his inner self and the emptiness he feels after the death of his love; he even considers ending his own life. While he's in conflict with himself, the other members of Peaky Blinders become involved in a gang fight, resulting in the loss of one of his brothers. In the end, however, and against all odds, he

chooses life.

This performance was a breathtaking rendition of the now-familiar story of the Peaky Blinders; it was a production that no one who attended that night (pupils or staff) will soon forget.

Amrei V. (Form V) and Catherine C. (Form VI)



CHARITIES COMMITTEE 2024-25

Dollar Academy’s Charities Committee is, every year, composed of a dedicated group of Form VI pupils. This year’s committee members have already been busy organising events in order to raise money for good causes. They are also very much looking forward to the next biennial Sponsored Walk, which will take place in June 2025.



Charities Committee 2024-25

Douglas Bates
Sophie Baldwin
Sophie Bokkers
Olivia Byrne
Rory Clark
Calvin Chen
William Cooper O’Farrell
Rosie Everington

Kate Fuchter
Lila Gow
Ksenija Ilickovic
Zuzu Johnston
Ruby Kirkwood
Selma Lujinovic
Rhiannon Millar
Magnus Munro

Victoria Murphy
Rachel Newton
Jamie Oldham
Daniel Riley
Fiona Robertson
Freya Robins
Andrew Ross
Nicky Strang

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

Last summer saw many pupils undertake their Duke of Edinburgh's Award Bronze training expeditions in the Ochils behind the school. Silver and Gold DofE candidates travelled further afield, completing training expeditions in the Cairngorms and the Ben Alder regions; Silver and Gold qualifying expeditions all took place in the wilds of Wester Ross.

Regardless of level, every pupil had to adjust to the reality of carrying a heavy rucksack over rough ground; to consider what those contour lines really meant and why south isn't always downhill; to hunt out a tussock and bog-free place to pitch their tent; to face wind, rain and even sleet with determination and grit. The pupils found an alternative to the traditional classroom as they trod old drove roads, wrapped in mist; as they clambered up to mossy summit cairns, quiet under blazing sunshine. They debated the best snacks to eat en route (GORP v Peperami, Jelly Babies v Soreen), whilst they reached unanimous agreement that filled tortellini (spinach and ricotta v 4-cheese?) made the best dinner—outvoiced only by those who argued for the merits of lightweight dehydrated meals. They invented games to pass the hours as they walked alongside raging burns, still lochans and crashing surf, swatting midges and clegs. They watched the sun, the moon and the stars as they rose and set. Every individual, regardless of fitness and experience levels, faced challenges that afforded them a true sense of adventure and achievement by the time they finally heaved their rucksack down one final time at journey's end. All pupils are to be congratulated for putting away their phones, willingly, and entering our wide, open spaces in the spirit of adventure. We hope they agree that they are the better for it.



This past DofE season marked a further important milestone, as the DofE Manager for eight years retired from his post at the end of June (though he continues in his teaching role at the school). Mr Andy Johns was involved with DofE for many years before he took over the role of DofE Manager from Mr John Fraser. Since then, Mr Johns has encouraged an ever-increasing number of young people to attempt their Duke of Edinburgh Awards. He was tireless in urging them to complete not just their expeditions, but also the other sections of the Award: Volunteering, Skill, Physical and, at Gold, the Residential. The job of DofE Manager is one of immense responsibility involving: writing and filing permission letters; communicating with parents; writing risk assessments; organising pupils into suitable groups on suitable dates; keeping on top of eDofE updates; copying maps; sorting out expedition staffing; recce-ing routes; booking buses and accommodation; creating training lessons; communicating with land owners; weather watching; teaching grid references, map reading and compass work, campcraft and tick preparedness; booking assessors and parent helpers; writing expedition reports; chasing section sign-offs; mending, maintaining, storing and purchasing outdoor equipment; and, not least, writing *Fortunas* articles.

The school, and DofE staff in particular, (and on behalf of the hundreds of children he has led into the Scottish landscapes) wish to say a heartfelt thank you to Andy Johns for his years of service. We know he is ready to lace up his running shoes, light of foot and spirit, to complete a few more ultra marathons. We wish him the very best.

Heather Moore





CCF UPDATE

RECRUITS

This year the CCF received record-breaking numbers of recruits with around 119 new starts; I have been informed that this is one of the largest intakes on record. Since the start of term, the recruits have enjoyed a vast range of activities from drill and uniform, to finding the hidden letters at six-figure grid references and command tasks.

The Recruits Training Day took place on 24 August. They were introduced to their sections and got to know their directing staff and the instructors who would be working with them through the school year; they learned the basics around shooting and handling rifles, as well as some drill and uniform tips. Although we have suffered typically temperamental Scottish weather, it never stopped our instructors, DS or recruits from showing up and giving their all. Currently, our recruits are learning basic CCF skills which they will use throughout their CCF careers, for example: how to move tactically with and without their rifle. One of my favourite moments so far was teaching a weapons lesson; I loved seeing the recruits' excitement and genuine interest in learning about the General Purpose rifles. At the time of writing, we have been preparing for CCF Inspection Day, which marks the end of the recruits' first session in the CCF. This year we ended that day with a very enjoyable Tug o' War Competition.

CSM Rebecca C. (Form VI)

INFANTRY

Since the start of term, the Basic Infantry section of our CCF has achieved an extraordinary amount. We have a very promising and enthusiastic group of Form III cadets, focused on learning the fundamentals of the Infantry syllabus. The charismatic instructors and directing staff, made up of the most senior cadets, are working incredibly hard to make lessons engaging and fun every Friday afternoon. The cadets have gained theoretical knowledge, but also valuable hands-on experience in the field, including two exercises so far.

The standout exercise was Operation First Steps. This 24-hour overnight activity put our cadets to the test, running them through every element of the course they had learned so far. The exercise included training in a builtup area (TIBUA), where sections battled their ways through a building to clear enemies, firing blank rounds and throwing grenades until the site was clear. Every cadet spent the night under the stars, constructing and sleeping in makeshift shelters and surviving on field rations.

In addition to Operation First Steps, Basic Infantry also participated in A2 Shooting Nights. These regular evening sessions offer cadets the opportunity to hone their marksmanship using GP rifles, firing live ammunition, as they strive for the coveted Marksman Commendation. These



nights bring out everybody's competitive spirit as cadets climb the leaderboard and compete against each other.

The enthusiasm and determination already proven by this young group of cadets is a sign of the bright future ahead of them in the CCF. There is still much to learn and practise, however, and there are plenty more activities on the horizon, all of which culminate in an ambitious final operation: Simba's Dice...

CSgt Oscar P. (Form VI)

ROYAL NAVY

The Royal Navy section of the CCF offers many



opportunities—you could learn scuba diving or enjoy the special experience of sailing under the Forth Road Bridge. Trips such as these encourage our Navy section cadets to explore new interests and come together with one another to form great memories.

Soon we will be going to visit the HMS Belfast in London, which I'm sure will prove to be one of the highlights of the year. We are also looking forward to many more sailing trips to Port Edgar. As well as our unique nautical experiences, we also take part in regular Friday CCF sessions after school, where we work together to solve Navy-themed, team-building activities and enjoy some lighthearted fun at the end of a hard week. These Friday lessons are where the cadets get to work on their different roles within a team; we give everyone the opportunity to teach and share their specific skills and interests with the group.

The Navy course will be changing soon to become more focused on the impact each individual cadet can have upon the wider world through their contributions to the section. It will require that cadets consider how they can support—or, at least, better understand—crucial aspects of the Navy's involvement in international relations, humanitarian aid and disaster relief, and different Navy sections across different countries will be better connected.

Within the Navy section, there is a strong sense of community; the older cadets are always there to answer and help their younger friends in the section, so it feels like a second family. We hope to welcome, with open arms, many new recruits to the Navy section next year.

WOI Erin M. (Form VI)

RAF

Over the last six months, the RAF has seen one of its sharpest increases in numbers, which currently stand at almost 60 cadets—and we are still growing. This huge jump in membership can only be attributed to the invaluable



work of Flight Sergeant Emily Teague (FP 2024), who led the RAF section at Dollar for two years. Emily presided over this growth in numbers and sought new opportunities for our RAF cadets. Some of these have included a trip to Perth Airport (during which we were given a guided tour of the airport and the various aircraft on site); a larger number of dates for flying and gliding opportunities; our own summer camp; and our induction into the Royal Air Squadron Trophy Competition.

All of the above makes it clear that Emily left some large shoes to fill in terms of leadership. Recent additions to our section, however, (such as new drones, flying dates and an upgraded flight simulator) will make the coming year a fresh and exciting experience for both our new cadets and holdovers from the last few years.

The RAF has also seen success in our recruits instructing. Last year the Head of Recruits was an RAF cadet, as were four other instructors. This tradition carries on this year with Corporals Lachlan B. (Form V) and Angus A. (Form VI) currently instructing. Perhaps the most exciting new opportunity for Dollar Academy RAF cadets is the Bronze Wing Skills Camp offered at RAF Lossiemouth. Attended by instructors Fraya A. and Finley G. (both Form VI), this training camp will offer invaluable opportunities, such as the use of advanced flight simulators and the chance to speak with Red Arrows pilots.

FSgt Adam M. (Form VI)

FIRST AID

This summer, the CCF First Aid team travelled to Montenegro to compete in the Samaritans International Contest, an international first aid competition held every two years. The team consisted of ten dedicated cadets; they were led by last year's First Aid captain, Inaya Syed (now FP 2024), and trained by RSMI Tracy Scott. The competition took place in the stunning mountain resort town of Žabljak, which, impressively, sits even higher than Ben Nevis...but is much harder to pronounce!

Nineteen teams from thirteen different European countries participated in the competition, making it both a memorable and rewarding experience. This was the first



time we had entered an international competition, but that didn't stop us from performing our best. The senior team did incredibly well and earned second place, coming just behind the reigning champions from Italy; the younger team (led by Nikita G., now Form IV) secured fourth place in their group (an impressive feat, considering that none of the team had competed before!). These results earned us second place overall. As a team of cadets, our first aid skills had developed from the same foundation: the 16-hour Youth First Aid course delivered to all recruits in Form II. This training, plus a great deal of hard work and dedication over the past year, laid the groundwork for our success.

This trip included a range of activities and experiences that transcended the competition itself, too. There was a beach day; a traditional Montenegrin dinner; an opening ceremony with remarkable dancing and singing; a



whitewater rafting expedition with the other teams; a visit to the Black Lake; and, of course, a party at the end to celebrate the conclusion of the competition.

Throughout the trip to Žabljak, we made our presence known with the chant of 'No Scotland, No Party!' After hearing our exuberant chant so many times, the other teams started to join in; this created an amazing atmosphere in the town (though they must have been sick of it when we left!). Major Scott and RSM Tracy Scott also had the great idea to start a new trend of swapping items with the other teams. This brought us closer with the other countries' team members, many of whom we are still in touch with. Within our team, we also started a mini competition: who could swap the most items for the best return. In the end, Inaya came out on top, beating me by just one t-shirt. We hope this will become a new tradition; it was certainly one of my favourite parts of the trip.

This trip to Montenegro was an unforgettable experience for the whole team. Competing internationally for the first time and securing such great results was a testament to our hard work and hard-earned skill. Beyond the competition, we formed friendships, began new traditions, and created lasting memories.

I'm honoured to follow in Inaya Syed's footsteps as the new First Aid captain, and I am excited to lead our team into the future. Whether it's refining our skills or keeping our 'No Scotland, No Party!' chant alive, this trip has inspired us all for the next challenge.

Sgt Yulia M. (Form V)



OCTC

This September, Dollar Academy's CCF embarked on an exciting new initiative: the Ochil Cadet Tactical Challenge 1818. The challenge—which took place over the course of 18 gruelling hours—tested the skills, endurance, and teamwork of the cadets across a range of military tasks.

The premise of the event was simple, yet demanding. The 14 senior cadets who participated were tasked with completing 18 cadet activities in just 18 hours, from 1800hrs on Saturday evening through to 1200hrs the following Sunday. Throughout the night, the cadets faced a series of physical and mental challenges designed to push them to their limits.

Among the tasks were: Close Quarter Battle Drills, Navigation, Shooting, Fire Control Orders and First Aid—all essential skills for any cadet. These activities not only required sharp technical abilities but also resilience and focus, especially as fatigue set in during the long hours of night.

Despite the intensity of the event, all cadets successfully completed the challenges, demonstrating their determination and teamwork. At the end of the challenge, one cadet stood out: Corporal Bailey C. (Form V). His outstanding performance earned him the prestigious Crossed Bayonets award, marking him as the top cadet of the event.

The Ochil Cadet Tactical Challenge 1818 was a resounding success, showcasing the strength and skill of Dollar Academy's CCF. It was not just a test of physical

endurance, but a testament to the camaraderie and leadership developed within the cadet programme. Plans are already underway for the next iteration, promising more challenges and opportunities for the cadets to shine.

Maj. MP Scott





PIPE BAND SEASON 2024

The outdoor contest season brought many great performances, prizes and fun along the way. With a slightly different template of contest dates, we once again hosted the Dollar Pipe Band Contest in May. The rain poured down, but bands just donned their rain capes and got on it, despite the usual Scottish weather. Our three bands competed extremely well under the circumstances, and our Juvenile band won the Grade 2 contest against many adult bands.

One of the highlights of our season is a trip to Northern Ireland to compete at the UK Pipe Band Championships. All three bands made the journey across the Irish Sea; we stayed (again) at Todds Leap Outdoor Activity Centre. An afternoon of activities proved a great way spend some time, whilst also helping the band gel as a team. From the Big Slide to Last Person Standing, everyone enjoyed the events on offer. No one seemed bothered by the early start the following morning, and our bands put on some fine performances that resulted in both the Juvenile and Novice A bands winning their grades and the Novice B band finishing third in their grade.

Next on the calendar was a trip north to the beautiful town of Forres for the British Pipe Band Championships. There, the Novice A band performed extremely well, taking home first place. Unsettled and changeable weather played its part for the Novice B and Juvenile bands; they battled the elements undaunted, however, and played with determination. The Juvenile band finished in a strong 2nd place.

We enjoyed an unusual break in the competition season, though we had our usual list of other, very enjoyable, events to play for. There was the Dollar Gala and the Dollar Academy Sports Days; Armed Forces Day; Beating the Retreat at Edinburgh Castle; and there was the added bonus of performing at the Royal Highland Show in Edinburgh. These events always give our pupils different environments to play in, affording them opportunities to demonstrate their skills to the wider public. This year, we decided to make the massed band event at Dollar Gala a little different, and someone decided upon the theme of *Minions*—it certainly brought some lighthearted fun to that very lovely day. Gru even made a special appearance!

The summer holidays arrived and our band members enjoyed a break before coming back to school in July to prepare for the second half of the season. First stop: sunny Dumbarton for the Scottish Pipe Band Championships. Our three bands delivered excellent performances. Piping is a subjective art, however, and our band did not bring home the top prizes that day, though all three bands featured in the prize list.

The Juvenile band also performed at Mr Callum Beaumont's wedding before the European Pipe Band





Championships in front of many who can well be termed 'piping royalty'. What better way to prepare for any contest? The band enjoyed this privilege and were glad to be part of the Beaumonts' big day.

The European Championships were a little closer to home in South Inch, Perth, though several overseas bands competed, as they had come to Scotland ahead of the World Pipe Band Championships in Glasgow the following week. That scorcher of a day in Perth once again saw our bands perform remarkably well. For the first time ever, our Novice B band won a major title in this category, under our new instructor, Mr Connor Sinclair. It was an outstanding achievement for this young group of players to come out on top against many schools' first-tier bands.

Our final contest of the year was the World Pipe Band Championships in Glasgow. Our Novice B reached the final out of a group of 20 in the heats, finishing in the top 10 at this level. Both Novice A and Juvenile bands competed strongly but missed out on the top prize. Our Novice A band, however, ended up winning the Champion of Champions title again, an indication of how consistently well they have performed this season.

And Mr Beaumont's wedding was not the only one in the Pipe Band Department. Miss Louise Augaitis also became Mrs Kirmizialan. We wish both

couples well. I would also like to extend my thanks to the full instruction team: Mr Callum Beaumont, Mr Lee Innes, Mrs Louise Kirmizialan, Mr Andrew Lawson and Mr Connor Sinclair for their hard work and their determination to see our young pipers and drummers thrive.

Matt Wilson





TATTOO ON STAGE: DOLLAR PIPE BAND VISIT LUCERNE, SWITZERLAND

Dollar's Pipe Band received a wonderful invitation to perform at this year's Tattoo on Stage in Lucerne, Switzerland. It was a fantastic experience for our pupils and staff. Below, three of our members give an account of the experience.

Shortly after settling in to our hotel, we headed out into the city itself for some downtime after a long journey. The city is beautiful, and there were many shops to visit: all manner of clothing shops, a McDonald's (a perennial Pipe Band favourite) and the Confiserie Bachmann (a rather exclusive Swiss chocolate shop). In the evening, we met up back in the hotel and had fun playing cards and chatting.

On Saturday morning we woke, bright and early, for a full day of rehearsals. But first we scoped out the venue for the tattoo. Home to 1,898 seats and world-renowned for its acoustics, the KKL (Kultur- und Kongresszentrum Luzern) Concert Hall was an inspiring and gorgeous place to perform. We played a full-band rehearsal, figuring out the tricky logistics of our entrances and exits. Soon after, the band rehearsed a couple more times with the orchestra and choir. Following lunch, as excitement for the performance began to build, we held a full dress rehearsal that involved a complete run of the show. (In between playing, quite a few vocal renditions of 'Celtic Crest' were performed, and a couple of TikToks might also have been filmed.)

Soon it was time for the performance itself. We got completely dressed and tuned up, ready for a 7:30pm start. We were delighted to open the concert—marching down the aisle of the concert hall and onto the stage. The band performed several tunes, from the hornpipes and medley to the drummer's fanfare. After the 'Highland Cathedral'





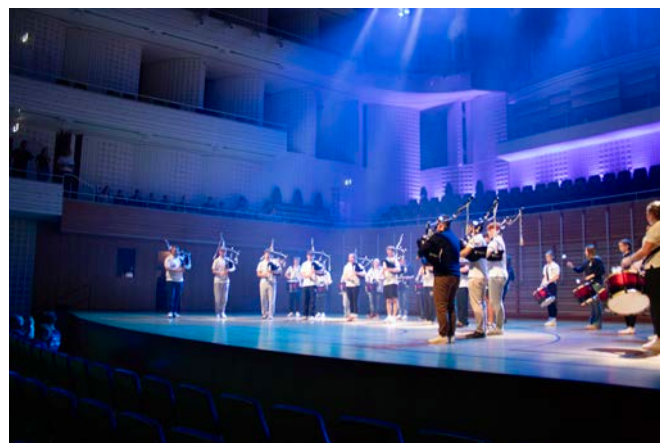
grand finale, performed with all the other musicians, we felt a late-night pit-stop at McDonald's was both called for and well earned. The next morning, we got up to do it again, putting on another strong performance that we will always remember.

After Sunday's performance, we had time to explore a little bit more, so we went on a beautiful boat trip round one part of Lake Lucerne. Being on the water afforded stunning views of the town and lake, but also the picturesque countryside and the towering mountains beyond.

This was a very memorable trip, thanks to the thrilling nature of those performances and our enjoyment of Lucerne—but to stop there would fail to do justice to the experience. We feel a deep sense of gratitude for being invited to play at an event which drew not only thousands of listeners, but scores of musicians from around the world. Mesmerized by the glimpses of other ensembles practising their concert sets on Saturday, we left Switzerland with an even greater appreciation for the effort and discipline that enables impressive performances...and, ultimately, with new appreciation for the maxim boldly scrawled upon the Piping Hut whiteboard: 'Hard work beats talent when talent fails to work hard.'

All members of the Pipe Band are extremely grateful to our instructors and to our Swiss liaison for a wonderful experience in which audiences were wooed, beautiful sights and sounds were wondered at, closer friendships were forged, and cherished memories were formed.

Ben M. (Form IV), Bea C. and Paul M. (both Form V)



BISLEY, THE ASHBURTON AND BEYOND...

After months of training and preparation Dollar's full-bore rifle shooting team departed from the school in July and headed down south to the prestigious ranges at Bisley, aiming to defend our Scottish title and bring home yet more silverware for Dollar.

Bisley, known globally as the home of British shooting, is host to a series of international competitions each summer. Dollar brought a team of 18 down for the initial Ashburton Week: the CCF Schools Imperial Meeting. There, schools and cadets from across the UK compete in several major events at varying distances, up to 600m. During that week we shoot as a team, with wind coaches, plotters and register keepers all ensuring the firer can focus entirely on themselves; scores are collated for certain competitions.

Shooting is an individual sport in many ways, requiring intense concentration and personal accountability, but our team dynamic is what sets Dollar cadets apart. We constantly push one another to be better during training; we offer encouragement during competitions; and we celebrate successes as a team. As a result, we have become an incredibly tight-knit group of friends, and this, too, is a key ingredient in our success.

The final day of Ashburton Week is the pinnacle of cadet rifle shooting, the culmination of all the major competitions. For our team, the excitement began the night before; the captain and the vice-captain carefully select the top shots based on the week's performances. Four main teams are formed, ready to compete the next morning.

Dollar has always been a serious contender at Bisley, and this year was no different. We won eight major competitions last season, including the London Scottish Centenary Challenge Cup, which we have won for 25 consecutive years. The youngest





members of our team defended our title as winner of the Cadet Pairs, and they also won the Cadet Fours title. There was an enormous number of individual successes achieved across the entire week as well.

We ended Ashburton Week with the Ashburton Dinner, celebrating our success. This evening offered a valuable opportunity to thank all the adult coaches and the captain for their support. It was also a bittersweet farewell, as many of the team departed at that stage. Meanwhile, the most experienced members of the team stayed on for another week to compete in the prestigious Imperial Meeting: the perfect conclusion to an unforgettable week.

The Imperial Meeting is the largest international full-bore rifle shooting competition, and it offers Dollar's best shots an opportunity to demonstrate their skill and prepare themselves for the challenges as they move up a year group. Combining every element of the sport in a completely independent competition, Imperial offers the chance not only to represent Dollar, but to represent yourself and get your name into the big leagues.

Oscar P. (Captain 2024–25, Form VI)





FELLBACH EXCHANGE 2024

At the end of last session, I had the privilege of going to Fellbach for ten days: a fantastic experience. We went swimming in the outdoor pool, cooked traditional German food, and went to a theme park—but, best of all, we had the chance to attend a German school. I really enjoyed the trip (though it was stressful at the beginning), but my host family made me feel so at home.

We arrived at Stuttgart Hauptbahnhof where our exchange partners welcomed us and drove us home to Fellbach. Our host family was so polite, helpful and, especially, patient when I struggled with some German words. The parents were so friendly, and I can't thank them enough for making the trip so enjoyable.

We really only noted a couple of differences between German and Scottish schools. Their start time is much earlier than ours (about 7.50am), but their classes finish at 1pm! This is great because we then had plenty of time to try new things and spend time with our friends and partners. The other major difference is that there are no school uniforms, and this helped us to blend in more easily with the other



WORK EXPERIENCE IN FELLBACH

pupils.

My favourite activity was visiting Tübingen—a little nearby town, that is absolutely gorgeous. I loved the beautiful boat tour along the Neckar River. We bought souvenirs from a local tourist shop, and I will never forget the delicious ice cream. Another highlight of the trip was my exchange partner's 15th birthday party; we celebrated with a BBQ and a lovely walk to watch the sun set. The most memorable experience for all of us was visiting the Fan Zone during the Euros; the atmosphere there was something completely new to me.

Overall, I loved this trip, and I will never forget it, nor the many new friends I made there. I learned so much German and my speaking is so much more fluent than it was before. An exchange like this is a very beneficial way to improve one's language skills, social skills and, best of all, enjoy a holiday with old and new friends.

Nikita G. (Form IV)

During the summer I had the opportunity to go to Germany on the Fellbach Exchange; I undertook a work experience placement in the mayor's office, where I mainly worked in the Communications Department. I wrote articles for the local newspaper (in German), conducted research and interviews, and was able to experience meetings of the local government. Throughout the work experience placement, I wrote around eight articles for the newspaper—everything from a piece advertising a local museum opening, to a report on a local cultural festival. The highlight was undoubtedly interviewing footballer Sami Khedira, as I got to write an indepth and wholly original article for the paper. We learned all manner of key skills during this trip: even simply commuting to work independently every morning was useful, and we learned about the importance of a positive work ethic; these experiences will certainly shape my approach to any work I undertake in the future.

Adam M. (Form VI)



RETURN TO FELLBACH

We were, in turn, delighted to welcome our German visitors to Dollar for the return leg of the exchange in September. The group spent ten days in Scotland, hosted by their exchange partners, and they spent part of their time in school attending lessons. They also undertook day trips to Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stirling. Fortunately, the weather was kind. The group had a wonderful time and made the most of their experience. One of the highlights was the ceilidh in the school's Assembly Hall; everyone danced and had fun together. It was a fitting end to a very successful exchange, throughout which many lasting friendships were formed. Planning is already well under way for the 2025 edition of the Dollar–Fellbach exchange, when we will do it all again!

Andrew Fynn



TAIWAN EXCHANGE

The exchange between Dollar Academy and Taiwan Zhongping Middle School in June 2024 was a resounding success. It provided a unique opportunity for pupils from both schools to immerse themselves in each other's cultures, improve their language skills, and forge lasting friendships.

The Taiwanese pupils participated in a variety of academic lessons and practical activities. The excursions in Edinburgh and Stirling allowed them to experience the beauty and rich heritage of Scotland.

One of the highlights of the programme was the homestay experience, providing pupils from both schools with glimpses of everyday life in Scotland and in Taiwan. They all enjoyed spending time with their host families, sharing meals, and participating in local activities.

Many of our pupils cherished their amazing experiences in Taiwan. Clara G. (then Form V) was one such pupil who wrote the following account of the exchange.

Jennifer Millard

The Taiwan exchange was an incredible experience that left me with memories I shall never forget.

From the ancient streets of 九份 (Jiu Fen) to the most delicious hot pot, it truly was a very special trip. On the first day, I visited Dihua Street, famous for its traditional medicine and long, ancient roads. I was even witness to a traditional festival featuring a play spoken in Taiwanese Hokkien. Just being there for one day gave me a spectacular insight into the culture and life of that place.

The following day, we had the privilege of attending ZhongPing Middle School. This gave us all a better understanding of daily life in Taiwan and the differences between our cultures. On the third day, after school, I visited the local department store (Honhui Plaza). With 21 stories in total, this gigantic technoworld was unlike anything I had ever seen before. The arcade, the virtual reality experiences, the cinema, the shops: all were of a much higher quality than similar things at home, and the food did not disappoint.

The next day, we had the privilege of visiting the National Palace Museum and Taipei 101 Tower. The grandeur and elegance of those places could only be admired in awe. On the fifth day, we were immersed in the traditional culture of the native people of Taiwan. Their colourful, elegant attire and fishing practices were extraordinary, and we began to gain some understanding of Taiwan's native culture.

The next day, we visited Taiwan's National Theatre and Concert Hall. We learnt about the acoustics and the other features of the space. We discovered the echo that bounced between the two magnificent buildings when you clapped your hands (due to the mathematical precision built into the very architecture). In the evening, I visited the night market. An array of cheery sounds, appetising smells and bright lights hit me as I wandered round. This was a thrilling experience, incomparable to anything in Scotland.

The penultimate day of our trip, sadly, arrived, and we visited Taiwan's beautiful coastline and the famous 'golden' waterfall. The variety, breadth and scope of experience to be found in Taiwan, from city sites to rural landscapes, is spectacular. The places I saw, the people I met, the things I did, and the bonds I made were powerful and will always be cherished.

Clara G. (then Form V)





AH GEOGRAPHY TRIP 2024 ABERFELDY

There are two very important elements for a successful and enjoyable Geography field trip: favourable weather conditions and a group of students who are keen, caring and willing to get involved. These elements came together perfectly on the Advanced Higher Geography field trip to Aberfeldy in September.

The fieldwork undertaken included slope measurements on glacial deposits in the Sma' Glen; soil, vegetation and microclimate analysis in the woodlands around Glassie Bunkhouse (our accommodation for the three days); river measurements on the Cochill Burn beside Griffin Wind Farm; settlement studies in Aberfeldy town; beach profiling beside Loch Tay; and the study of infiltration rates and rural land-use mapping whilst looking down across the Tay Valley.

Our pupils also prepared and cooked all of their meals with the help and advice of the school's Home Economics Department. Catering for 21 requires careful planning, but the good weather allowed us to eat both of our main meals outside. The trip culminated in a raft ride down the River Tay and, not surprisingly, we all ended up in the water at some point.

All returned safe and well, with a huge range of data, graphs and fieldwork write-ups, ready to progress with their own geographical studies.

Alastair McConnell





FROM CALEDONIA TO PATAGONIA

This year, fourteen pupils (currently in Form V), led by Mrs Heather Moore and Mrs Catherine Munro, are gearing up to tackle the 'O' circuit trek in Patagonia's Torres del Paine (southern Chile) over ten days next October. The months between now and then aren't so much a leisurely prologue to the expedition as a time to strengthen ourselves physically, mentally, and socially in anticipation of the demands of what will be a very challenging adventure in Patagonia. Accordingly, during the first weekend of September, the Patagonia team set out for a brief but intense hike into the Central Highlands (the Ardverikie hills).

We were accompanied by Mrs Heather Moore and Dollar's former Head of DofE, Mr John Fraser. The parents of Hamish L. (Lachlan and Lynn) were also of great assistance on the weekend trip, and their two spaniels were in bouncing, cavorting attendance.

We arrived at the start of our walk, near Moy, in the late afternoon with maps and a plan for the following 24 hours. That evening's hike involved a six-kilometre march, with modest elevation gains, to our wild campsite near the Lubvan ruin. This was completed rather quickly, even considering our well-equipped rucksacks. We had prudently prepared for the worst of Scottish weather and were rewarded with a warm breeze and a nearly cloudless sky for most of the weekend. The surrounding hills were in full view, and in the light of late day, their peaks cast stunning shadows upon the stark faces below. We made it to the site just as the sun was retiring and sprinkling its gold upon the grass. Unfortunately, the view could only be enjoyed behind a grey haze: either the mesh of a most useful face net or the biting swarms of midges that found their dinners just as we arrived intending to enjoy ours.

We were quick to get to bed, and, in the morning, to pack up and escape to higher ground where we enjoyed a mostly midge-free breakfast. Climbing up another several hundred metres of pathless hillside landed us at the top of Beinn a' Chlachair, just about a kilometre above sea level. We marked the occasion by sprawling our tired limbs across the cairn and taking photos of the three team members who had just summited their first-ever Munro. There was much farther to go, however, so we took our bearings and were soon on our way to the next Munro, dipping down slightly with the still, smoky-blue Loch a' Bhealaich Leamhain to our right. As we ascended the final hundred metres of Geal Chàrn, we vanished into a heavy mist that marked the end of the balmy weather and left us to wonder at the sights below when we reached the peak. Even during our descent, the sky remained overcast and cool... Perhaps in an attempt to reinstate the heat, a pupil (who shall not be named) opened a pack of Scotch Bonnet peppers and many, to their immediate regret, bit heartily into them. The ensuing hysteria and physical effects of that snack are best left to the imagination. Amidst the hilarity, some powerful team bonding took place.

The last few kilometres of the trip down through the autumn-coloured grasses progressed swiftly, and before we knew it, we were back in the same parking lot we had set out from the day before. The bus ride to Dollar was spent snoozing, chatting, and enjoying a well-earned fish supper in Pitlochry. Over the coming days, as the fatigue wore off, we grew increasingly grateful for the experience and the social bonds formed, and the memories solidified themselves only more fondly in our minds.

Paul Mackay (Form V)



MODERN STUDIES TRIP: WASHINGTON DC

At the end of June, the Modern Studies Department took a group of 34 National 5 pupils to Washington DC—though the trip got off to a rather shaky start. When we arrived at Edinburgh Airport and began to queue to check our bags, we were approached by an airport staffer who told us, ‘Now, *obviously*, your flight has been cancelled.’ We were, ‘obviously’, not aware. By some miracle, they managed to get our whole group on a Virgin flight and off we went: just five hours behind schedule. We arrived at our hotel at around 1am local time and got straight to sleep in preparation for a busy first day.

That first day began with a guided tour of the National Mall, including stops at the Lincoln Memorial and the Vietnam and Korean War Memorials. A guided tour of the US Capitol Building followed, providing a glimpse into political history that revealed how the building is itself a monument to American democracy. A short walk in blistering heat took us to the US Supreme Court (quick photo opportunity). And that evening, we strolled down Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House where we mixed with the crowds of onlookers, tourists, and demonstrators—all viewing President Biden’s home, beautifully illuminated.

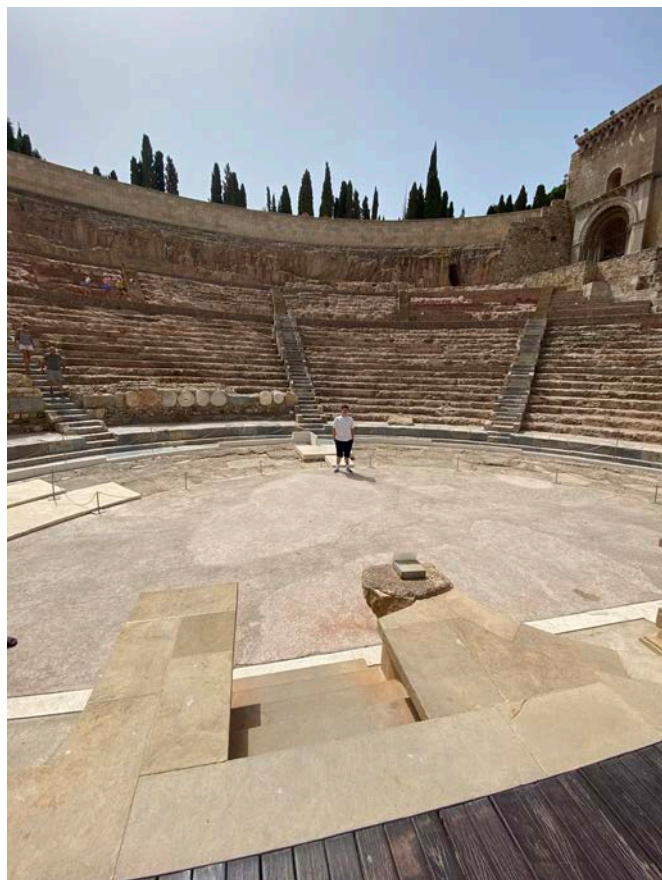
On Day Two, we headed across the Potomac River to Arlington National Cemetery to visit the graves of John F. Kennedy and Robert Kennedy. We saw the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Space Shuttle Challenger Memorial. After lunch, we spent some hours in the Smithsonian American History Museum, visiting displays outlining the founding of the United States of America, the history of the Presidency, the experience of America in its overseas wars, and a stunning exhibition on the nation’s First Ladies. Following our intensive academic experience, some downtime had been well and truly earned; we visited that classic and irresistible symbol of American consumerism: the shopping mall. Fully assimilated, we, too, consumed—much retail therapy was enjoyed.



On our last day, despite the heat, we spent the morning at the White House Visitor Centre, learning all about the American political executive, followed by a wonderful lunch. A spontaneous trip to the famous Ford’s Theatre in downtown DC (site of Abraham Lincoln’s assassination) taught us a lot about Lincoln and his assassin, John Wilkes Booth.

Our trip certainly was a whirlwind tour of DC, coupled with an unexpected heatwave that made walking around a little tricky (thank goodness for the DC metro), but the pupils had a unique opportunity to visit the heart of American democracy and visit some places they may never get to see again in their lifetimes.

Hannah Sinclair and Neil McFadyean



THE MACNAUGHTON CLASSICS TRAVEL AWARD 2024

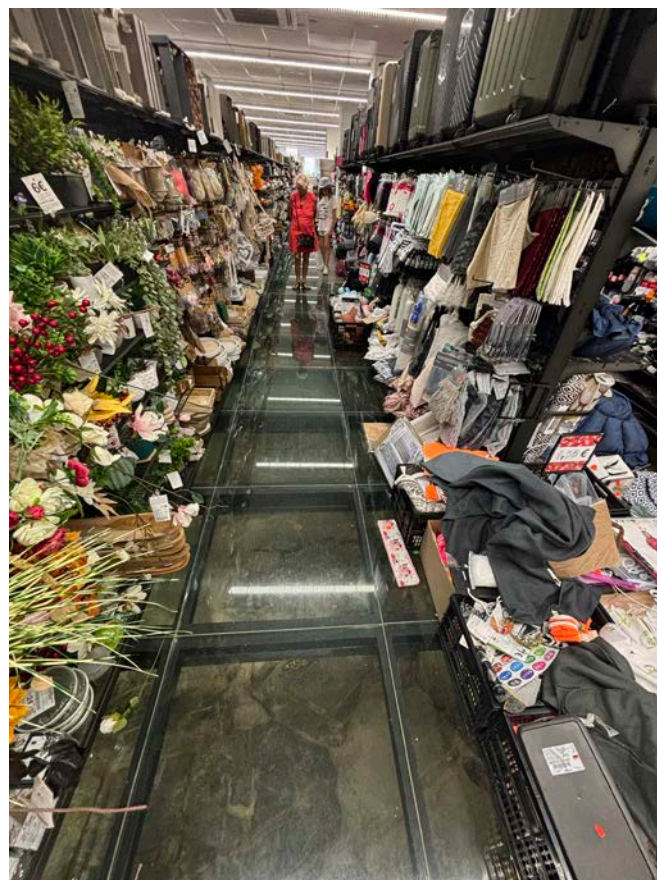
The Macnaughton Classics Travel Award is open to any pupil who has taken a classical subject (Latin or Classical Studies) at Higher level. The recipient undertakes a trip to a classical site with a specific writing project in mind. This year, the Award was presented to Ewan MacMillan (Form VI).

Receiving the Macnaughton Classics Travel Award gave me the perfect opportunity to re-explore Cartagena, a city I have come to know over the last 18 years. It gave me the chance to indulge in its classical background—rather than just revisiting the same cafés and restaurants that I know so well from earlier trips.

Cartagena is situated on the coast of southern Spain in the province of Murcia. Founded by the Carthaginian general Hasdrubal, brother-in-law of Hannibal, around 227BC, it was then captured by the Romans in 209BC; they thrived on Cartagena's resources, such as silver and lead, and its port for trade. The Romans left their own mark on the city by building structures such

as an amphitheatre, road networks and by taking control of the port's operations. I wanted to see what sort of influence Rome had had on Cartagena and if there was still evidence of this in the city today.

Many will tell you not to waste money on buses or taxis when exploring this city, as it is best experienced on foot. What I love about the city is that, no matter where you are, you are never far from ancient artefacts—and some are beautifully integrated into present-day life. Take TEDI, a shop located on the Calle Mayor (Main Street). When you walk inside, you would think it was an ordinary shop;



it's only when you find yourself at the rear of the premises that you discover a glass floor allowing you to look directly down upon the fascinating and immaculately preserved Roman ruins below. This blend of ancient and modern runs right across the city, reflected even in the name of the city's main gift shop: Carthago Nova Souvenirs (New Carthage Souvenirs), honouring the name given to the city by the conquering Roman general, Scipio Africanus. The new name distinguished it from the mother city, Carthage, situated on the north African coast in modern Tunisia. In Higher Latin we studied extracts from Virgil's *Aeneid*, where he highlights the love and protection the goddess Juno had for Carthage, showing just how important that ancient city was to the gods. Naming Cartagena 'Carthago Nova' implied that this was to be a city better, even, than the mighty Carthage.



In the heart of the city stands the Roman theatre. Constructed between 5 and 1BC, with a capacity for 6,000 spectators, it was built as part of a large entertainment complex that also housed a forum, public baths, and temples; the intention was to make Cartagena feel more like home for the Romans. The theatre was discovered in 1988 during the investigations of Sebastián Ramallo, an archaeologist from the University of Murcia, and the restoration of the site was completed in 2003. It's truly amazing that such a huge structure lay hidden for so long. Now the structure attracts more than 250,000 visitors each year to Cartagena. Looking down at the theatre floor from the viewing gallery, it's hard to appreciate the scale of the building; it's only when you descend the stairs to the stage and look back at the seating area that you begin to realise the immensity of the structure before you. The onsite museum was designed by the renowned architect Rafael Moneo, who cleverly detailed a multi-roomed experience which climaxes with the theatre itself as the final room, and it shines back at you like a jewel when you step out into the scorching Spanish sun.

A highlight of my trip had to be travelling on the *barco turístico*, a small tourist boat that sails from the port out to Fuerte de Navidad ('The Christmas Port'). I learned a great deal about the military, strategic and commercial importance of the bay, now and long ago. By conquering the port, the Romans had complete control of the Mediterranean, allowing them to store patrol boats and pounce on any unwanted vessels that entered, whilst also keeping a watchful eye over general comings and goings on the Mediterranean. Historically, Cartagena's main minerals were silver and lead, but today (just outside of the Bay of Cartagena) it is the Refineria de Escombreras, the oil refinery where 20% of all the gas that is imported to Spain is delivered and processed. Even today the city plays a vital role as the gateway of resources into Spain.

Now filled to the brim with knowledge regarding Cartagena's port and security in the past, I wanted to investigate the city's more modern defence system. This

required a visit to the guns of Cartagena, high in the hills at the entrance to the bay. My aunt and I cycled up to these guns one evening when the temperature had dropped. Up there, 218 metres above sea level, the views from the summit are stunning; you can see for miles. There are two 381mm gun barrels, each with a length of 17 metres (made by Vickers of England), with the capacity to fire a 1-tonne bullet almost 35km out to sea. These guns were built on Cabo Tinoso between 1933 and 1936 to prevent enemy ships (intending to plunder the port or attack the military arsenal) from entering the bay. They were only ever fired once in anger during the Spanish Civil War in 1937, their presence having been enough to keep any intruding vessel far away. The site has seen much refurbishment since 2010, and it now bring in a large volume of tourists. Whilst there I saw the *barco turístico* sailing past Escombreras, a lovely end to my trip as the sun set over the hills, and I could look right along the coast from La Azohia to the Port of Mazarrón, the sea shimmering in the evening sun. The very presence of these guns indicates the significance of the Cartagena Bay to Spain; their function was to ensure that nobody else could conquer the city as the Romans had done all those years before.

Ewan MacMillan (Form VI)



TIGNES 2024

The rugby squad was extremely fortunate to have our pre-season training take place in Tignes, in the French Alps, within an amazing performance hub and sports facility centre: Apex2100.

We are aiming high this season and have a clear vision about what we want to achieve. A close team bond is crucial in finding a pathway toward our goals, and we could not have had a better beginning than what Tignes offered. It was an exciting opportunity for players and coaches to get to know each other that little bit better and to really build the necessary teamwork, both on and off the pitch. Unbeatable facilities, high-quality coaches, a productive training environment and a great group of boys made the trip nothing short of perfect.

It was a week filled with a lot

of hard work, but so much enjoyment. Two intense training sessions on almost every day meant that we were physically pushed to our limits. The high altitude and extreme heat made it very difficult to adjust and keep up, but the boys excelled in the harsh conditions. Not long after our arrival, the squad were woken up at 6am for a 2km run and a morning dip in the freezing lake (altitude 2100m). This definitely got everyone switched on for the rest of the day. The Form V players woke to a similar experience not long after, and were summoned to complete their initiation: a march around the lake performing a selection of Dollar songs and chants.

One day, the coaches decided to treat the squad to a day of rafting to improve our team building skills.

This was a fantastic experience—and a welcome break from the hard work of training.

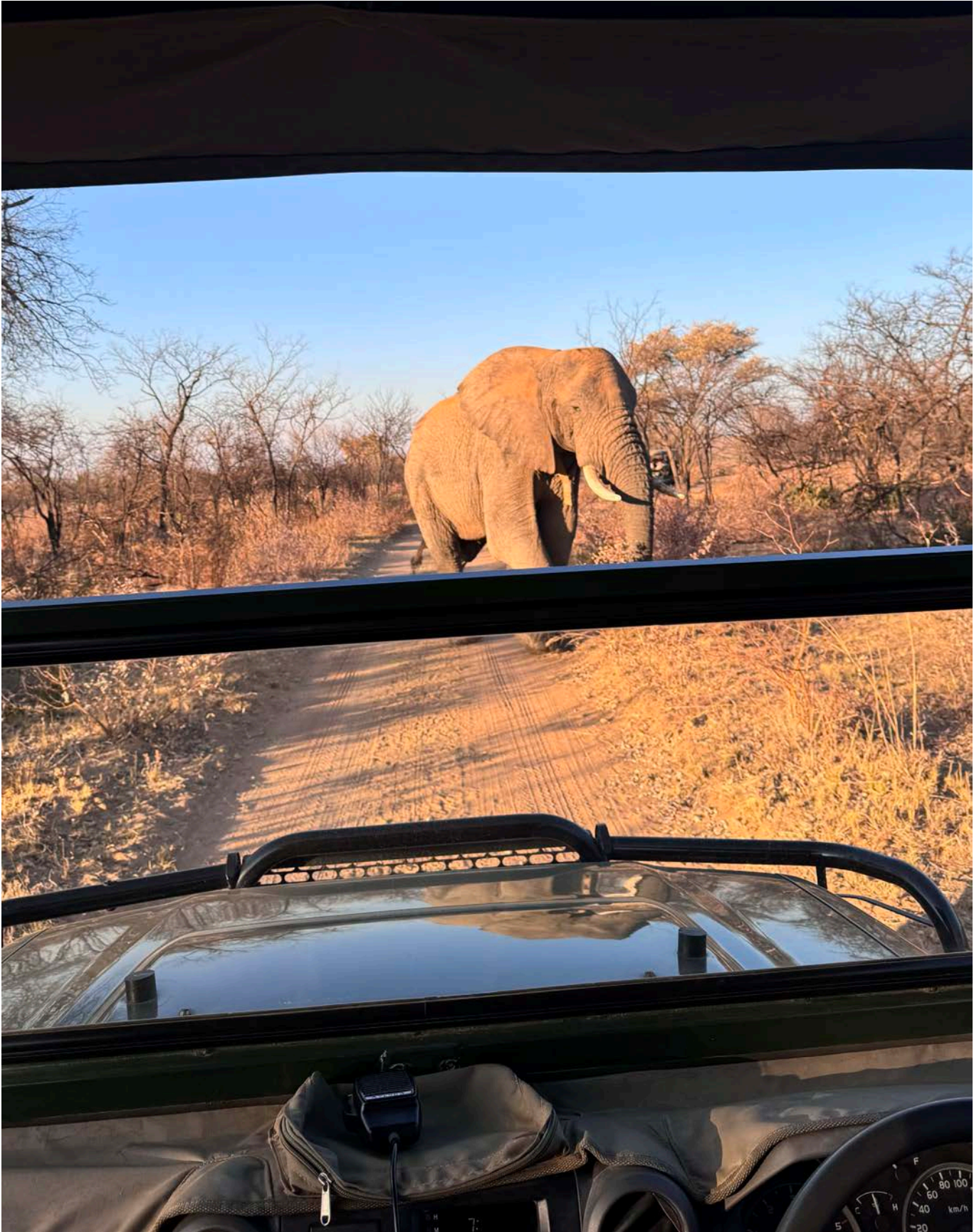
Every day brought different activities: from learning to juggle to improve our hand-eye coordination to a cold plunge that would aid our recovery. The trip offered so much excitement, as well as many new skills.

Our time in Tignes gave this squad the opportunity to experience a week in the life of a high-level athlete; a very tough week of hard work was balanced against the exact amount of recovery needed, and there was a lot of fun and team bonding in between. Two year groups form our senior rugby teams, and this trip helped us all to really get to know one another and build a brotherhood filled with spirit and identity.



We concluded our trip with a game against the highly esteemed French rugby club, Grenoble. We played in two different games against the club, featuring a 1st XV and a 2nd XV. It was an extremely competitive environment and an amazing opportunity to perform against such a high-quality group of players: a great first outing for the teams. This squad is filled with an abundance of talent and players who complement each other so well. I'm beyond grateful to be leading such an amazing group of boys.

Troye A. (Captain 1st XV, Form VI)



HOCKEY TOUR 2024: SOUTH AFRICA

On 11 August, 45 Hockey Club girls, from Forms IV through VI, left Dollar and set off on what would be the trip of a lifetime to South Africa.

We flew from Edinburgh to Doha and then onwards from Doha to Johannesburg, where we would stay for the first three nights of our trip. Our first accommodation was provided by the University of Pretoria High Performance Centre: an amazing facility that catered for all sporting groups. That centre allowed us to work hard in our first training session in the sun, setting the tone for the tour. Exhausted from our 24 hours of travelling, we celebrated Mia E's (Form IV) 15th birthday that night. (Mrs Karen Thomson and Miss Heather Holloway went out for cake but came back empty-handed after a traumatic Uber ride!) So, after a cakeless celebration, we had an early night.

The next morning started off with some pre-breakfast team-building activities, including some very wobbly human pyramids and terrifying trust exercises. After a second training session and a nutritious lunch, we headed away for our first match against Hoërskool Oos-Moot. Our opposition greeted us like old friends, warmly welcoming us into their school, and our three squads of fifteen players were ready for a good match. The 3rd XI took to the pitch first and enjoyed some great support from the 1st and 2nd XI. Some great hockey was played that day; the 1st XI won 10–0, and the 2nd XI followed up with a 3–1 victory. The 3rd team were narrowly defeated, 2–1, but great effort was invested by all. Our hosts provided a tasty burger dinner, allowing everyone time to socialise. Sarah C. (Form VI) gave a fine vote of thanks, before it was back to the university. A fantastic evening quiz, led by Miss Holloway, provided belly laughs for all.

An early breakfast on Day 4 preceded our journey into Johannesburg to visit the Apartheid Museum, where a guided tour opened our eyes to South Africa's culture and history over the last century. We left with some profound insights, and for many, a transformed perspective regarding the country we were visiting and what it has been through.

Our second match took place that afternoon, against Montana High School, and they proved to be slightly tougher opposition: only the 1st XI came out with a (4–0) win. The other two teams suffered 2–0 defeats, but they had played some brilliant hockey. We received top-tier hospitality from Montana; they gave us an amazing barbecue dinner, including traditional delicacies such as pap. India S. (Form VI) offered a lovely thank you, and we headed home with a few new pieces of swapped kit!

Our last day in Pretoria began with some morning activation, before we headed off to Mabula Game Lodge: safari time! After a long, hot bus journey, we cooled off in an ice-cold pool before getting ready for our evening game drive. We set off at 3pm in 4x4s, with Ranger Russell's vehicle



leading the way, hoping to find the Big 5. They did not show themselves, but over the course of that incredible evening we were amazed to see buffalo, impala, rhinos, zebras and hippos. It was an indescribably powerful experience to see these wild creatures roaming free in such a beautiful landscape. Following a snack of dried fruit and biltong, we all enjoyed a very good night's sleep full of wild dreams.

We had an early wakeup call the next morning and left at 6.30am for our second game drive. The morning held some extraordinary sights in store: we witnessed a beautiful South African sunrise, and we even found the lions we had been searching for. We were incredibly privileged, in fact, to see a whole pride: seven lion cubs, two lionesses and the male lion, too... all lounging contentedly in the morning sun. Each vehicle drove cautiously near for close-up and personal views of these stunning beasts. The rest of our drive involved almost getting trampled by elephants, as well as seeing some lovely cheetahs—an unforgettable experience.

And there were further adventures on the horizon... it had come time for us to transfer back to Johannesburg and board our two-hour flight to Cape Town. Upon landing, we were treated to another stunning sunset as our bus brought us to our hotel in Stellenbosch.

Day 7: Matchtime. Our third match was against Paarl Gimnasium. The weather was overcast, a bit dreich, so we felt much more at home, and the 1st XI emerged with another 5–1 win. The 2nd team played a great game, demonstrating their skills, but suffered a narrow 1–0 defeat. Captain Olivia B. (Form VI) scored the first goal of the tour for the 3rd XI, before a lovely lunch with our hosts. A visit to Cheetah Outreach, a sanctuary dedicated to the conservation of these beautiful creatures. A hearty dinner at the Thirsty Scarecrow in Stellenbosch preceded a welcome night's sleep.

Day 8 brought another early wakeup call, and we were soon away on the Cape Canopy Tour: eleven zipwires, strung high over a vast and stunning canyon in the mountains near Stellenbosch. Of course, there were high winds, which made it all much more entertaining (several people even found themselves slightly stuck halfway across the ziplines). This was an absolutely exhilarating (if somewhat terrifying) experience. The drive back to Cape Town that afternoon revealed more of the stunning scenery of South Africa, the mountain road affording wide views of the sprawling city below, stretching out toward the sea. We checked into the Fountains Hotel, our home for the final four nights. Dinner that night featured an impromptu prank for Mr Callum McLeod—a lovely ice cream sundae and surprise birthday sing-along from the restaurant waiting staff.

The next morning brought a visit to Muizenberg Beach for some surfing lessons—very exciting! Wetsuits donned, safety briefing done, Mr Riddell and Mrs Robb led the way, showing great skill and balance. They were swiftly

followed by Mara C. (Form VI) and Jasmine M. (Form IV), our surfing experts, who rode some great waves into shore. Most of us had never surfed before, but success was quickly won, and (after some tumbles) we all caught our very own waves. We very much needed our lunch of fish and chips on the stunning beach, before piling back onto the bus for Match 4.

The opposition that day was Langa Hockey Club, where the 1st XI took another win, 6–0. The 2nd XI came in with a close 1–1 draw. The 3rd team earned their first win of the tour, with goals from Murron S. (Form IV) and Isla. We had time for a quick shop down at the waterfront, and it was amazing what 45 girls can buy in an hour!

Penultimate Day: our morning started off with a boat trip to see the seals on the well-named Seal Island. The swell was up, and there were some green faces on board, but we all made it back in one piece. Some skilled haggling at the local market resulted in a few purchases, before journeying to the Cape of Good Hope where we watched the huge waves roll in. Our visit to Simon's Town gave us an incredible opportunity to see penguins right on the shore—an utterly delightful experience.

Finally, though, it was time for our final fixture against Reddam House Constantina. Here, the 1st XI gained their fifth victory out of five matches played. Amy J. (Form V), India and Sarah (twice) kept banging in the shots, and they won 4–1. Mr Riddell was certainly pleased with the results of his squad on this tour! It was another warm day for the 3rd team, and they were so close to a win. We were 3–4 down with two minutes left; a goal-mouth scramble saw a great chance to draw, but it was squandered at the last moment. The 2nd team fought hard and held onto a 1–1 game for a long time, until the opposition broke for a last-minute winner. These matches concluded what had been some amazing hockey out in South Africa, played against some competitive, but very friendly teams, in places we would never forget. We celebrated with an Italian meal, capping off the incredible variety of different cuisines sampled on this tour.

Before our departure, we had raised £1,100 for Pebbles Project through our Family Quiz Night and our Sunday Prep and Junior coaching sessions. One morning had been spent enjoying craft, puzzles, games and even hosting a little tea party for pre-school pupils near Stellenbosch. That school allowed local farmers the opportunity to send their children to school for R800 (£8) a month, whilst they worked on the fields. It was a happy place to visit, and we all benefited from our time there. Lunch down at the V&A Waterfront gave us time to relax before our tour of District 6, Cape Town. This area is famous due to events of the 1960s and 70s when the local multi-cultural population were forcibly removed from their homes by the government, relocated and segregated outside the city, enabling the government



to use the land to build student flats and hotels. The guides themselves were former residents of District 6, and it was crushing to hear their stories about how they were removed from their homes, relocated to townships far from Cape Town, and never given the compensation they were promised from the government at that time.

That day was spent gaining difficult insights into the culture and history of the area, concluding with a walking tour of the city. We were especially moved by the Bo-Kaap district, where Muslims were segregated during the apartheid area. We noted the powerful Islamic influence—the beautiful mosques and the houses that were painted in bright, vibrant colours following the liberation of the Cape Malay who lived there (when they were finally released from the stipulation requiring that their houses be painted only in white).

Later that night, after the powerful events of that day, we enjoyed our final dinner of the tour at Green Point. Form VI took control of the awards ceremony; there were fun prizes for pupils who had fully entered into the fun spirit of the tour, others were awarded for their excellent play, and still others for their teamwork and perseverance. Overall, the South Africa Hockey Tour was an extremely memorable set of experiences that no one will soon forget. A huge thank you goes out to all six members of staff who gave up their time to come with us. Mrs Karen Thomson (tour leader and 3rd XI coach), Mr Duncan Riddell (1st XI coach), Miss Heather Holloway (3rd XI coach and social media extraordinaire), Mrs Gill Robb (2nd XI assistant coach and assistant tour leader), Mr Callum McLeod (2nd XI coach), and our saviour, Dr Sandra Smith, for keeping us all in one piece (and for taking amazing photos).

*Sarah C. (1st XI Captain);
Mara C. and Olivia B. (all Form VI)*



HOCKEY 2024-2025

Season 2024-2025 is off and running for the Dollar Academy Hockey Club. In the run-up to the October break, 21 teams contested 108 matches, and in excess of 300 players (across Prep 4 to Form VI) have attended training.

Our Junior 2A team won the High School of Dundee Hockey Festival, and Gavrielle O. (Junior 2) was awarded Player of the Tournament.

Congratulations are also due to the 20 Dollar players selected into the Scottish Hockey BRAVE Academy: Christina D. (Form VI); Tabitha P., Amy J., Maddie M., Grace S., Lois W. (all Form V); Emily W., Mhora B., Lara C., Mia F., Millie C., (all Form IV); Abbey S., Anna H., Elliot O., Imogen M., Rosalie P., Kayla B., Maya M., Mhairi M. (all Form III); Toby C. (Form II). Five of those players (Christina, Tabitha, Mhora, Amy and Emily) have also been selected to progress to the Scotland Emerging and Aspiring squad trials. At the time of writing, we wish them luck ahead of announcement of squads in mid-October.

Gill Robb





THE DOLLAR DOG SHOW

The brand-new event gave the four-legged members of our community their moment to strut their stuff, wag their tails, and maybe even steal a sandwich or two. Over 40 dogs, along with their owners (ranging from Prep 4 pupils to visiting FPs) took centre-stage in the arena, showing off their best moves.

While Dollar families soaked up the glorious weather at the end of Sports Weekend, the event also raised £260 for FIDA and the Perthshire Abandoned Dogs Society. Local businesses were very generous, donating prizes for various categories. Special thanks (and tail wags) go to Jill at Kelso and Titch in Bridge of Allan, who not only provided doggy bags for all participants, but also a fantastic ham-

per for the 'Best in Show' winner.

The organizing committee, consisting of some very capable Form II girls, share their reflections of the day below.

Catherine Munro

It was a wonderful day filled with joy and excitement. The sun was shining, and it was very warm. This was (in all likelihood) the first time a dog show has been held at Dollar, and it will hopefully not be the last.

Although it was a competitive event, everyone had a great time. The decorated arena looked beautiful, and the goodie bags which were distributed at the end included treats, toys, rosettes, and more.

When the day came, we all enjoyed seeing the different dogs in their amazing costumes, performing tricks such as jumping through hoops and walking to heel. We were all very impressed by how well trained the dogs were!

One of our favourite parts was the Best Costume category because of the entrant who dressed her corgi as the king; we all found this hilarious and very appropriate.

We would like to say a thank you to our amazing judges: Mr Abtin Pourgive, Miss Lynsey Allan and last session's Head Girl, Evie Penderis. We also wish to thank our fantastic host, Mr David Christie, whose witty commentary throughout brought lots of laughter to everyone present. We'd also like to thank Mrs Catherine Munro who came up with the idea of the Dollar Dog Show and made it happen. The Dollar Dog Show was a big hit at the end of last session and, with any luck, next year's will be just as good.

*Darcy D., Annabel R.
and Thirzah M. (all then Form II)*

SPORTS WEEKEND:

Saturday and Sunday 22–23 June 2024

SENIOR SCHOOL SPORTS WINNERS:

Form I Girls (Williamson Cup): Pippa R.

Form I Boys (Sweet Cup): Toby C.

Intermediate Boys (NCB Trophy): Alex S. (then Form II)

Intermediate Girls (Scott Cup): Charlotte T. (then Form II)

Senior Girls (Heyworth Cup): Amy Jenkinson (then Form IV)

Senior Boys (Edina Cup): Max G. (then Form V) and

Tyler H. (then Form VI)

Tug O'War winners: Day Pupils



PREP SCHOOL SPORTS DAY: Thursday 20 June 2024

WINNERS:

Cup for Best Piper: Cameron U. (then Prep 5)
Cup for Best Drummer: Zain W. (then Prep 5)
P5 Girls Cricket Ball Throw: Poppy F.
P5 Boys Cricket Ball Throw: Ben A.
P5 Girls Long Jump: Poppy F.
P5 Boys Long Jump: Hugh C.
P5 Girls 75m Sprint: Poppy F.
P5 Boys 75m Sprint: Louie H.

Girls' Champion: Poppy F. (then Prep 5)
Boys' Champion: Louie H. (then Prep 5)

House Cup:

1st Atholl
2nd Stewart
3rd Argyll
4th Mar



JUNIOR SCHOOL SPORTS DAY: Friday 21 June 2024

WINNERS:

Junior 1 Girls: Georgia S.
Junior 1 Boys: Daniel W.
Junior 2 Girls: Alise G. and Ailie G.
Junior 2 Boys: Nicky T.





CROSS COUNTRY

The school's Junior and Senior School Cross Country Championship races moved into the autumn term this session, and were much enjoyed by all. Thanks to everyone who helped to make these days so successful, and very well done to all pupils for their efforts!

Steve Newton

Junior School Cross Country: Monday 30 September

Results

Junior 1 Girls

- 1st Erin H.
- 2nd Annie A.
- 3rd Poppy F.

Junior 1 Boys

- 1st Angus L.
- 2nd Will F.
- 3rd Charlie C.

Junior 2 Girls

- 1st Annie E.
- 2nd Gavrielle O.
- 3rd Georgia S.

Junior 2 Boys

- 1st Alex B.
- 2nd Munro S.
- 3rd Hamish S.

Quint Results

- 1st Argyll
- 2nd Stewart
- 3rd Mar
- 4th Atholl





**Senior Cross Country Championships:
Thursday 10 October 2024**

Results

- Senior Boys:** Raphael J.-R. (Form V)
- Senior Girls:** Jessica E. (Form V)
- Intermediate Boys:** Harry M. (Form III)
- Intermediate Girls:** Poppy W. (Form II)
- Form I Boys:** Ewan B.
- Form I Girls:** Ailie G.



DOLLAR ACADEMY TENNIS PUPILS SHINE ON THE WORLD STAGE

Dollar Academy pupils attending the GB National Tennis Academy continue to enjoy success. Tennis Scotland provides an update, highlighting and summarising our pupils' achievements since the last edition.

Dollar Academy pupils at the GB National Tennis Academy (GB NTA) have continued to shine on and off the court. Pupils train for around 20 hours per week, almost a full-time job in and of itself, and then there are the 25 odd weeks a year travelling to tournaments; this all means they miss a lot of school. In spite of this, the dual career student-athletes within the GB NTA at Dollar gained outstanding exam results. Two players gained scholarships at top Division I Colleges in the USA, with others more than fulfilling their academic potential—all despite a busy tennis schedule. One further player—likely to go to America in the summer of 2025—has been courted by several leading academic schools in the USA, including Harvard and Stanford.

On the court, too, the players have thrived. Charlie Robertson's (FP 2024) impressive year continued, finishing as runner-up in the British National Junior Championships U18 Boys' Singles. He went on to enjoy a successful clay court season, reaching the quarter-finals in the ITF J500 and J300 events in Offenbach and Milan, and then again in the J300 in Santa Croce. In Milan, Charlie finished as runner-up in the doubles, too. At the French Open, he won through, qualifying to the third round of the main draw. Charlie maintained his form during the grass court season, where he made the final of the ITF J300 in Roehampton before making the third round at Wimbledon in his last event as a GB NTA player. His performances over the year earned him further support from the LTA, which helped him travel to the USA. There, he reached the final of the ITF J300 singles and

doubles events at College Park, before his season highlight so far: reaching the semi-final of the US Open Junior Boys' Singles Championships in New York. The ITF ran a fantastic story on this achievement; a link to the story can be found below. Charlie's performances over the year took him to no. 9 in the Junior world rankings, earning a spot in the ITF World Tennis Tour Junior Finals in China; there, Charlie finished third.

Hephzibah Oluwadare (Form VI) missed much of the season through injury, yet she still managed to make some consistent singles results, reaching the third round in the J200 and J300 events in Nonthaburi, Thailand and the third round at Junior Wimbledon. In doubles, Hephzibah's highlight on the world stage included reaching the quarter-finals of the ITF J300 in Austria and the second round at Wimbledon. Hephzibah still has another year of eligibility on the Junior circuit. In the Women's circuit, Hephzibah has made steady progress, climbing to 838 in the Women's WTA world rankings, by virtue of consistently reaching the second round in ITF Women's events, including the W100 Shrewsbury, W75 Glasgow, W50 Quinta do Lago, W15 Monastir—often having to win through qualifying to get there. Hephzibah has won 11 matches of 19 on the Women's tour, a win percentage of 58%. Domestically Hephzibah reached the British National Junior Championships U18 Girls' Singles semi-final and she won the Women's TS Open Tour National Doubles Championships at Scotstoun with Marelle Raath.

Hannah Rylatt (FP 2024) had a good year split across the Junior and Women's circuits. Hannah continued to climb the ITF Junior world rankings, moving up 200 places from 379 at the start of the school year to 179 in April 2024. Hannah's singles highlights include reaching the semi-final at the ITF J200 in Aldershot and reaching the third round in the ITF J100 in Limassol, both in singles. In doubles, Hannah enjoyed further success finishing as runner-up in the ITF J200 in Aldershot, playing with another Dollar Former Pupil Hannah Read (FP 2024) in the ITF J100 in Limassol. Hannah also reached the quarter-finals in the ITF J200 in Santo Domingo. Domestically, Hannah finished as runner-up in the Women's Singles at the British Tour Grade 2 in Frinton, whilst reaching the semi-finals in the British National Junior Championships U18 Girls' Doubles event, also with Hannah Read. Hannah Rylatt finished at Dollar in the summer of 2024 and earned a Division I scholarship at the University of Central Florida.

Once again, none of these achievements would have been possible without the support of staff at Dollar Academy, who work hard to help each pupil combine a dual career as a student-athlete tennis player. Tennis Scotland cannot thank the school enough for the support provided since the start of the GB NTA programme in August 2019.

Jason Atkins (Tennis Scotland)

To read more about Charlie Robertson's recent achievements, visit: <https://www.itftennis.com/en/news-and-media/articles/a-family-affair-helps-scotland-s-robertson-into-us-open-boys-quarters/>



ANOTHER YEAR OF GOLF SUCCESS

It has been another successful year for our golfers. Through hard work and dedication, they have met with success in both team and individual tournaments. There are numerous successes (too many to list here), but the two most notable are winning the Frost Trophy in June, held against the glorious backdrop of the links at Elie. In individual competitions, we have enjoyed success at the Dunhill Schools at the Fairmont, St Andrews. There, Leander R. (Form V) and Jette P. (Form VI) won the senior boys' and girls' events, respectively. We continue to build on the partnership we have with Gleneagles. Ever more of our pupils are able to hone their skills and develop their game, and we have been lucky to host more internal competitions there. Golf continues to offer an increasing number of pupils at the school opportunities to expand their horizons and build their skills, which will help them for a long time to come.

Neil Blezard



A Golf Tournament: A Pupil's Perspective

This summer I was lucky enough to play in the Scottish Boys' Amateur Championship held at Scotsraig Golf Club. The event consisted of a 36-hole, 2-round qualifier followed by a sudden-death matchplay format. If you played well enough in the qualifier—and made the cut of 6 over par—you would enter matchplay on the third day of the tournament. I made the cut.

My first morning match was highly contested and would enter extra holes, eventually leading to a win on the 20th hole. After winning my afternoon match that day, I entered the fourth day of the tournament.

The pressure was on as I awoke to the gravity of my situation. But I was able to use this pressure to sharpen my game, and I managed to win my third match (which included two eagles and five birdies). Reaching the quarter-finals of this national competition meant everything to me and being able to represent my school at the highest level of junior golf filled me with pride. The tournament didn't end there, however, as I was able to win my quarter-final match and enter the final day of the competition. There were 126 golfers at the beginning of this event, so making it to the last four was a great achievement.

Unfortunately, I lost my semi-final match in a close contest against the eventual winner. Although I did not win the event, I learned a great deal over the course of this tournament. Among other things, I learned how to deal with my emotions under pressure and how to channel my focus when it was most important. I am truly thankful for all the support I received throughout this tournament and also the support that I have received more widely, in golf, over the course of my time at Dollar; this has allowed me to turn my golfing dreams into reality.

Hunter K. (Form VI)



GUS WARR

(FP 2018)

Gus attended Dollar Academy from 2016 to 2018, where he played scrumhalf for the 1st XV and age-grade international rugby (U18, U19 and U20) for Scotland. Having also represented England at Under-20 level, he made his Premiership debut for Sale Sharks against Harlequins at Twickenham Stoop in September 2018, at the age of 18. He joined Doncaster Knights on loan at the end of the 2019–20 season, and again ahead of the 2021–22. He was then recalled to Sale Sharks and played a big role there, making five consecutive starts in the No. 9 shirt. In June 2024 Warr was called up to the senior Scotland squad for a tour of the Americas, making his Scotland debut against Canada on 6 July 2024 at TD Place Stadium in Ottawa. Scotland won the match 73–12. Warr has the Scotland No. 1223.

On 6 July 2024, I achieved my childhood rugby dream by playing for Scotland. In soaring 30-degree heat, I made my debut in a 73–12 victory over Canada at Ottawa's TD Place Stadium. Already bursting with pride, my day was made even more perfect when I added to the score with a brace of tries in the second half.

One month earlier, Sale Sharks had just lost the Gallagher Premiership semi-final away to Bath, narrowly missing out on a second final at Twickenham in as many years. As a squad we celebrated a successful end to the season by completing the 'Didsbury Dozen'. The following day, feeling a little bit worse for wear, my phone rang; I turned it over to see it was Gregor Townsend calling. He cut straight to the chase and gave me the great news that I had been selected for my first-ever international training camp



and had been named as part of the Scotland touring party to Canada, USA and Chile.

Two weeks later, I met Aaron Reed (my Sale Shark teammate and close friend) on the platform at Preston train station. We headed north to Edinburgh and, upon arrival at camp, met up with Ewan Ashman, a fellow Sale Shark Academy graduate and ex-teammate. It was great to have Aaron and Ewan there, who had been in camp before, to ease my nerves on the first morning and guide me through my first week in camp at the Oriam.

One week later—and the day after Aaron's wedding—the team departed from Edinburgh Airport en route to Canada, albeit with a slightly longer-than-planned stop in Heathrow!

At the Monday evening team meeting I was told that I would be making my international debut starting against Canada. All the debutants were congratulated by the wider squad, and I immediately messaged my family to share the good news. It wasn't long before flights were booked, and we were joined in Canada by my girlfriend and my best mate from Dollar, Rory Power (2018 FP)—neither of whom wanted to miss my Scotland debut.

Preparing for my first international was a new experience: I made many memories and forged many new friendships. Whilst I enjoyed the week leading up to the game, my most distinct memory is of singing the national anthem for the first time as Scotland's No. 9. It was very emotional: I felt an incredibly special buzz knowing that my dream of representing my country had come true. With a big



MAX WILLIAMSON (FP 2020)

exhale as ‘Flower of Scotland’ drew to a close, I was able to take in the moment before turning my attention to the game.

At the post-match function, we were presented our caps. Hearing ‘Gus Warr, Cap Number 1223’ was a special moment; it made my mum cry. It was confirmed that the cap number was mine forever, and it was worn proudly for the remainder of the night.

With player rotation, and not being involved in the match against USA, I had more downtime, which meant that I was able to enjoy the sights of Washington DC and take in all the political history of the area.

My final game of the 2023–24 season, and my second game for Scotland, came a week later against Chile, where the Andes provided a stunning backdrop. This match drew Chile’s largest-ever attendance for a home game against a Tier One nation, and it was played at the national stadium: Estadio Nacional Julio Martínez Prádanos. The stage was set for an extremely physical and scrappy opening 20 minutes before we gradually pulled away and eventually won the game 52–11.

The summer of 2024 is one I will never forget. Scoring a brace in my Scotland debut and receiving my cap are experiences that will live with me forever. To do this alongside fellow Dollar Academy FP, Max Williamson, is testament to the hard work of Don Caskie, Director of Rugby at Dollar Academy, and his role in preparing and developing players to achieve their rugby dreams.

Gus Warr (FP 2018)

A powerful second-rower, Max attended Dollar Academy from 2014 to 2020. He came through the age grades for Scotland playing at U16 and U17s and played for the Scotland U20 side from 2020 to 2022. He signed with the Glasgow Warriors ahead of the 2022–23 season, one of four graduates from the FOSROC Scottish Rugby Academy. He scored his first professional try in March 2024, helping to give Scotstoun its 17–13 victory over Cardiff. He was invited to train with the senior Scotland squad during the 2021 Guinness Six Nations, one of Gregor Townsend’s ‘apprentice players’. Having represented the Warriors in pre-season matches against Newcastle Falcons in 2021 and Ulster in 2023, Williamson made his professional debut off the bench in a 26–12 victory over Benetton at Scotstoun. In June 2024 Williamson was called up to the senior Scotland squad for a tour of the Americas. He made his Scotland debut against Canada on 6 July 2024 at TD Place Stadium in Ottawa, helping his nation to win that match 73–12. Max is studying Mathematics at the University of Strathclyde. He has the Scotland No. 1220.

The 2023–24 season was an exciting one in my professional rugby career and an important one for my development as a player. I learned a lot that year and experienced many different places with different teams.

It wasn’t an ideal start to the season personally, as I had suffered two concussions early on in pre-season. This left me unavailable for the first couple of games, and I’d been unable to play in the pre-season games to try and earn a place in the team. The week I made my debut, I was called up to the team on Tuesday due to another player falling ill, so I



knew I had to make the most of the opportunity.

Making my debut for the Glasgow Warriors match against Benetton was a big moment for me. I had been with the club for four years, but I was not quite ready for professional rugby until then. It was an amazing feeling to finally play that day. I was then involved in twenty games over that season, which concluded with us winning the United Rugby Championship for the first time in nine years—the perfect start to my career in Glasgow.

Earlier this year, before the Six Nations, I received a phone call from the Scotland forwards coach. He said I had been close to selection for the squad and, if I kept my head down, I might have a chance for the summer series. When I got the call from Gregor Townsend to say that I'd been selected for the summer tour of the Americas, I was very happy. I really wasn't sure whether I would be selected, so finally getting that phone call was a great feeling.

Ever since starting regional try-outs at school, my dream has been to play for Scotland; finding out that I was selected to start in the first game against Canada was amazing. I just tried to take everything in for that whole week—and not do anything different to how I would prepare for any other game. On the way to the game, I saw my family walking into the stadium. As far as I had known, they weren't coming, but they'd flown out to surprise me. Seeing them there as I was coming into the stadium on the bus was very special. We won that game convincingly, and the whole day was just a dream come true.

I was fortunate enough to play in the other three games against the USA, Chile and Uruguay—all challenging teams to play. Our week in the USA was particularly difficult as our training took place in a 35-degree heat wave most days. There was so much to do in Washington whilst we were

there; it was probably my favourite city to visit, as all the sights were so close to our hotel. It was also amazing to visit South America and experience somewhere I'd never been before. To win all four of our games—something Scotland had not managed to do on its last trip to the Americas—was a great accomplishment. Each team offered different attributes and strengths that we had to overcome each week, and it was interesting to see how the coaches prepared us for each team.

Reflecting on the 23–24 season, I have a lot of fond memories, but I'm now looking forward to the upcoming season. My focus this season is to continue to improve my own game at Glasgow, to try and keep developing week on week. Hopefully, I can keep putting my hand up for selection; I am very excited for the season ahead.

Max Williamson (FP 2020)



4 NATIONS GRADED INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

Miss Lynette Pollock teaches Prep 5 at Dollar Academy, but she keeps herself very busy in her spare time.

It was going to be an exciting summer, I realised—I had been lucky enough to be re-selected to play for Scotland at the 4 Nations Graded International Badminton Competition. This year's competition was being held at the National Badminton Centre in Milton Keynes over 17–18 August: the training ground for the England Badminton Squad and an incredible facility. Our Scotland team were excited to try and top our podium place from last year and reach for gold—and I am delighted to say: we did.

Our squad was made up of eighteen men and women from across Scotland; we then split into four different teams, each team playing a group of matches against each of the four nations. England, Ireland and Wales each brought their own high-level competitors, and every match came down to the wire with just a few points between teams. Highly charged matches are always enjoyable to play, and I know I speak on behalf of everyone on the team when I say that those matches are what make any competition all the more special.

Competing away from home is a very different experience. Not having the same level of support—especially the home support that we enjoyed last year—meant that it was even more important to help each other as a team. We all offered one another guidance, wisdom and the odd 'pick me up' messages whenever we could. We really did pull together in all aspects. Our hard work not only resulted in gold medals, but also in a very narrow overall match victory that let us take the title and claim the Four Nations trophy—something we are all incredibly proud of.

Although we are all fierce competitors on the court, off the court (across all the various teams) you could not find a more fun and welcoming group of people. Every one of us knew what it had taken to be there, and we all just enjoyed every moment, always cheering one another's accomplishments. Laughter and high spirits all added to the experience, leaving us all with truly unforgettable memories.

Lynette Pollock





Out for a walk around Resolute (-45°C).



Location map showing shipping routes along the Northwest Passage.

CURRENT TALES FROM THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE

The Northwest Passage (NWP) in the Canadian High Arctic has attracted interest for centuries, in particular since the ill-fated expedition of Sir John Franklin and his teams on the ships HMS Erebus and Terror in the 1840s. In more recent decades, the shipping industry has had a keen eye on these waters because of their potential to offer an economically viable route between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The main thing preventing this has been the persistent presence of sea ice. Sea ice has been a headache for explorers and commercial seafarers alike, and it continues to be a region of high risk to ships. With climate change, however, the expectation is that it won't be too long before the route opens up consistently year on year, making

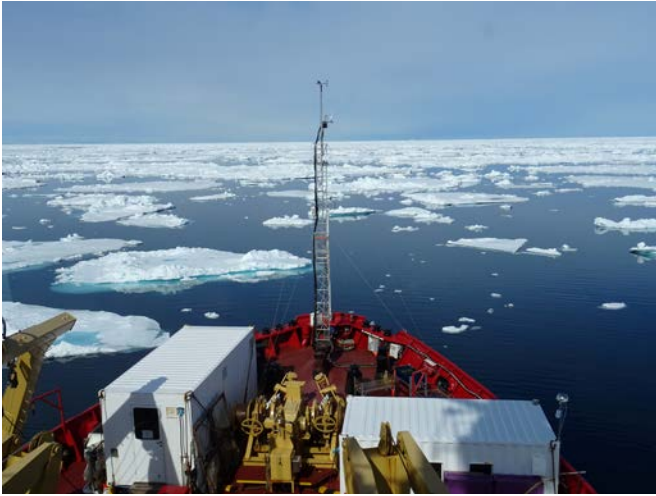
this a convenient passage for ships of all types. It might be convenient for ships, but the increase in ship traffic would have consequences for both the surrounding natural environment and the local communities. I have found this region fascinating, and I've been privileged enough to visit the area during my career in Polar Research. I'd like to share some findings and my experiences with you and paint a picture of how things are now.

I visited an Inuit community, Resolute, in 2019, to talk with the locals and hear from their perspective how ships are impacting their lives. This was part of a wider project called 'Arctic Corridors Northern Voices', where researchers worked alongside Inuit at many communities, who drew, on maps, the locations of wildlife and areas of cultural significance close to where they live. Resolute is a small community on Cornwallis Island, located on the NWP route (see map). The community rely on ships to bring their supplies such as fuel, equipment, and other goods, but it was interesting to hear the Inuit community members speak of their concerns about the impacts an increase in ship numbers would have on their lives. They have already seen an increase in ships, and

they used maps to show me places close to Resolute that have changed as a result. Marine mammals such as walrus and whales have been driven further away due to underwater noise pollution, and cracks in the sea ice (produced by ships transiting earlier in the year) have disrupted their over-ice hunting routes. Some ships dump their ballast water or waste in the ocean, which negatively affects the wildlife. Through this project I became increasingly interested in understanding the wider picture of the trends in shipping, and ultimately provide information to Canadian policy makers about regions at particular risk from ships. Through a Canada-Inuit-UK partnership scheme, I've been doing this research at the Scottish Association for Marine Science in Oban since 2021.

There has been a noticeable increase in shipping throughout the Canadian Arctic in recent decades, and one reason is that there's been a reduction in sea ice across the region as a whole. Less sea ice means that more ships are entering regions that were previously inaccessible, and this includes all ship types, from pleasure craft (e.g. yachts) and cruise ships, to large tankers and bulk carriers. The

CCGS Amundsen travelling through Baffin Bay.



Resolute community in the background, across the frozen bay.



Inuit community members showing regions of significance near Resolute, at the mapping workshop.



Small boat stuck in sea ice.

shipping 'seasons' (i.e. the number of weeks per year that ships can travel safely) are becoming longer. One part of my work was to analyse historical sea ice charts, to calculate the length of shipping seasons in each geographic location throughout the Canadian Arctic, for every year since 2007. For most of the region, the story was as expected, that the seasons were becoming longer. However, the story in parts of the Northwest Passage region was almost the opposite. My colleagues and I discovered that there were locations on the route that were sea ice 'choke points', where the shipping seasons were actually becoming shorter. These are on the Northern Route, in M'Clure Strait and Viscount Melville Sound (see

map). Our findings showed that the reason for this was that thicker and older (multi-year) ice was entering the passage from further north, creating zones that were inaccessible or hazardous to ships. The older ice from the far North is becoming more mobile as it begins to break up, moving southwards into the channel that now has less of the thinner (first-year) ice than was previously present each year. The prospect of the NWP becoming a viable shipping route, free of hazardous sea ice, is unlikely any time soon. Our paper about these results was recently published in *Nature Communications Earth & Environment* and it attracted global media interest, since seafarers are keen to use the route.

I continue to research the impacts that ships are having in this sensitive region. To experience firsthand the impact on a community was eye opening, and a good way to learn the importance of listening to the people who live there, who live life in a way so connected to, and respectful of, their environment. We can all gain from their wisdom, and I feel privileged to have had the opportunity. I will not forget the beauty of the pure white landscape, and being able to go for walks in temperatures of -45 °C. If you get a chance to go, my tip is that wearing ski goggles would prevent frozen eyelashes ;-).

Alison Cook (FP 1994)



CHASING A DREAM:

My Paris Olympics Experience

When you dream of something your whole life, work toward it for over ten years, and then have it slip through your fingers, it leaves a deep mark. My experience at the Paris 2024 Olympics did not conclude with the fairy tale ending I had hoped for. Despite all the hours, discipline, and focus I'd dedicated to my sport, none of my matches went well. For any athlete, the Olympics is the ultimate stage, and to walk away empty-handed after years of hard work was devastating.

My journey to Paris was one that began at school. I grew up in an elite environment, not just with my own family, but in the world of Dollar and its Academy. Some of my school colleagues may remember a young Seonaid

determined not to follow her sister's path. But, over the years, a competitive spirit morphed into a commitment to myself—a promise to be the very best I could be. I took the path of least resistance and followed where she had already led: into Olympic shooting.

My journey to Paris wasn't just about training hours or competitions—it was about resilience in the face of health struggles that have made these last several years especially challenging. There were times when my body just wouldn't cooperate, when even basic training felt like a battle. There were days when I couldn't train the way I wanted to, when I had to take a step back, because pushing harder wasn't an option. Balancing my health with the intense demands of high-level shooting was tough, but I was determined not to let anything keep me from performing at my best. Every setback pushed me to find new ways to stay in the game, to adapt. By the time I arrived in Paris, I felt that I'd fought through so much just to get there. I was ready to give it everything I had.

And yet, even with everything I'd put in, when I stood on the firing line in Paris, things just didn't go as planned. Expectations were high. I was, after all, World No. 1. But no matter how prepared you are, things don't always unfold as expected. It's the hard reality of any sport—and life—that effort doesn't always guarantee success. With a broken rifle, my air rifle was a battle from the get-go. Every



time I took a shot, I tried to re-set, to bring myself back to the moment and push forward, but by the end of my match, I knew I hadn't made it.

I did have another match. My 3 Positions match: the one I'm better at. I was leading after the first position (kneeling). I was third after the second (prone). I only needed to be eighth after the last position (standing) to go through to the final, but a tactical error on my part (combined with some tricky wind conditions) meant I was too pushed for time, and so I didn't make it through. This year was the first time that I hadn't made a final.

Leaving the competition floor that day was one of the hardest moments of my life. After a decade of striving, I walked away without a medal and with a heart full of questions. Where did I go wrong? What could I have done differently? These thoughts were tough to shake off, and they still linger sometimes. But looking back, I've come to realize that failing at something I'd worked so hard for doesn't mean I didn't grow from the experience.

One thing I've learned is that failure isn't final. It's just part of a larger journey. We rarely talk about how even the best athletes experience setbacks and losses. We're human, and no amount of training can make us perfect. What we can do is learn from these moments. When something doesn't work out, it's an opportunity to look closely at what happened, to understand ourselves better,

and to come back even stronger next time.

In the days that followed my disappointing performances, I found strength in my support system—my coaches, family, teammates, and fans who cheered me on even when I didn't win. Their encouragement reminded me that I am more than one match, one score, or one event. The value of this journey wasn't just in medals or rankings, but in the resilience and growth I gained along the way.

My message to anyone reading this, especially those dreaming big, is this: It's okay to fail. It's part of reaching for something truly great. Failure teaches you resilience, humility, and gives you a chance to decide whether you still want to pursue your dream. Even when things don't work out, remember that your journey has meaning and that every step—whether it's winning or learning from a loss—brings you closer to becoming the person you're meant to be.

So, here's to getting back up, to facing new challenges, and to never giving up on the dreams that truly matter.

Seonaid McIntosh (FP 2014)



IN PURSUIT OF THE BIGGER PICTURE

Nina Thompson-Pueyo left Dollar Academy in 2023. After an exciting year out, she began her studies toward a BaSC in Interdisciplinary Problems and Methods at London Interdisciplinary School, which *The Times* calls 'The most radical new university to open in decades.' Here Nina describes her journey to LIS and also shares what her first few months have been like.

I have always needed a 'bigger picture' when learning anything. If I couldn't see what the point of learning something was, or how I could use it in my life or my future, my brain erected a barrier that I always struggled to move past. I often found myself most passionate when learning about *people* in each subject; I liked looking at human geography, or how biology related to our behaviour, but I had no real interest



in the 'other' parts of those subjects (natural geography and cellular biology), and I struggled to convince myself they were worth learning.

I was not interested in the depth that Advanced Higher reached toward in each subject. It makes complete sense, as by AH you are beginning to specialise, and this prepares students incredibly well for a standard degree. But I lasted a little under three weeks in AH Modern Studies before the depth of our topic investigations left me far behind. I loved reaching a greater understanding of how the world worked and why; I loved trying to better understand our democratic system and the many

social issues we grapple with, locally and internationally. But I felt I had already attained the depth of knowledge I wanted. My first thought, in considering what to study at university, was to pursue some form of Politics or International Relations course, but I soon realised I could not spend three (if not four) more years studying something I was already struggling with (and not enjoying) at school.

In sixth year at Dollar, I finally settled on a courseload of Advanced Higher Expressive Art, English and Spanish; I also undertook modules in Media and Italian. I applied through UCAS to study some combination of Spanish, Modern Languages, Cultural Studies, and Comparative Literature. Each course I applied to was as broad as I could make it, with as many modules piled up as possible. I knew I needed a wide range and variety in my studies or I would switch off—but the more I investigated these courses the more I realised the modules themselves were not related or interconnected. It wasn't enough to study lots of separate things; I sought the links between them too.

I came across London Interdisciplinary School by chance and spent about two hours devouring the website to find out more. It felt purpose built for me: a brand-new university using real world issues as the basis for its curriculum, teaching rapid-fire disciplinary perspectives using both qualitative and quantitative methods. I had to weigh up going to a 'standard' university or an unconventional one. My biggest qualm was missing the classic student experience: societies, libraries, local student spots, first-year halls, etc. On the other hand, I knew that London is rated the best student city in the world (with good reason), and the more I investigated it, the more I realised that there would be plenty of 'student life' out there to participate in. LIS also made it clear that it was the responsibility of the students who would make up the founding

cohorts of the school to create the culture they wanted to experience. The university is simply not steeped in decades, let alone centuries, of history the way many UK universities are; so its students are free to create the experience they want for themselves.

Ultimately, I did choose to attend LIS, but I took a year out first. I felt that, as I was about to pursue a degree in real-world issues, I would benefit from actually being in the 'real world' for a bit. So I worked as a swimming instructor and lifeguard in Melbourne, Australia. While not the most glamorous job, it was an incredible experience. I was there for nine months in total, spending Christmas and Hogmanay across the world, far away from my family. I was still able to satisfy my passion for learning about other cultures, and I met some fantastic people—most notably, an older Honduran lady whom I volunteered with. Together, we would discuss anything—the local gossip from the shop or the cultural differences we both noted in moving from our respective homes to Australia. After my nine months there, I spent a little time at home (too little if you ask my family...) before moving down to London for university.

The overarching structure of London Interdisciplinary School is definitely unorthodox compared to a more traditional university. I am studying for a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences in Interdisciplinary Problems and Methods. The BASc itself is irregular, with very few being offered in the UK, and it emphasises the relationship across disciplines in the course. It is split into three modules: Problems, Qualitative Methods, and Quantitative Methods. In our Problems module we look at one complex problem throughout the semester, using disciplinary perspectives and what we learn in the Methods modules to tackle that problem. Disciplinary perspectives are short, three-week, rapid-fire courses on specific disciplines, teaching us key concepts and theories, and the connections between the disciplines



and our problem. Our two Methods modules look at how we can garner data to investigate these issues. Quant. Methods focuses on problem solving and numerical thinking, while Qual. Methods looks at language and communication. At the end of Year One and Two, we study a complex problem of our own choosing, using concepts and methods learned each year. In the third year we create a Capstone: an extended research project that, again, tackles a real-world problem with an emphasis on professional development. Throughout, we are encouraged to use our own initiative, making contacts and setting ourselves up for the working world.

So far, the course has been intense, but fantastic. We all came in from different educational backgrounds, each having our own strengths and struggles, but this has led to an incredibly supportive cohort of individuals who all help one another. When I explain to people that I have no exams and that the assessment methods include making videos or giving presentations, they express doubt at the academic rigour of the university, assuming that breadth means it must be easy. (If only!) Instead, we have weekly formative assessments for each module—three a week for those keeping track—amounting to 20% of that module. On top of that, we have summative assessments for each: this term, it is a group pitch

and a reflection on said pitch for my Problems module; a group video on our mathematical estimations for Quant.; and a 2000-word academic essay for Qual. It is full-on. But LIS believes that if we are bold enough to join such a new and alternative university, we must be prepared to be challenged academically. My Problems topic for the semester is inequality, for which the disciplinary perspective options were Economics or Evolutionary Anthropology for the first month. I chose the latter and got an Anthro 101-style dash through the discipline.

In terms of student life, ours is definitely not the usual university experience, but the first three LIS cohorts have made massive strides in creating a lovely culture at LIS. There is unity not only between the three BASc years, but also between Bachelor's and Master's degree students. We aren't quite big enough to boast sports teams yet, but I have already been training with UCL's water polo team and attending Imperial's ceilidhs, so I'm not missing out on that front. While it is still early days, my time so far at LIS has been fantastic and shown me that a standard university experience isn't necessary—perhaps education should be a bit broader, a bit more interdisciplinary.

Nina Thompson-Pueyo (FP 2023)

FP NEWS

WEDDINGS AND ANNIVERSARIES

McGARVIE

Ewan MacGarvie (FP 2013) married Jenna Campbell-Butcher at her family farm in Bedfordshire on 10 August 2024. The couple are based in London.



MACDONALD Platinum Wedding Celebration

Jock (FP 1951) and Eileen Macdonald (*née* Russell, FP 1951) recently celebrated their platinum wedding anniversary, marking seventy years of marriage, having met at school over seven decades ago. Fittingly, they returned to the school Library, where the Lord Lieutenant Johnny Stewart handed over a card from King Charles. They were joined by Provost Donald Balsillie; their son, Niall (Max); and chief bridesmaid, Sheena Cruickshank. The happy couple were married in St James the Great Church in Dollar on 18 August 1954.



BIRTHS

STAFF

PETRIE

We are happy to announce that Sophie Petrie (Assistant Head of Junior School) and her husband, Ewan, welcomed their son, Innes Alexander James Petrie, on 29 October 2024.



DEATHS

BUCHANAN

Deirdre Buchanan (FP 1948–1951) died peacefully on 26 July, aged 90.

CHALMERS

Morgan Chalmers (FP 1976–1984) died on 4 August.

EDWARDS

Alexander 'Sandy' Edwards (FP 1969–1976) died suddenly at home on 5 October 2024. Sandy studied at Glasgow University to become a vet, and throughout his long and successful career, his skills were highly valued by clients and colleagues. He was still practising in Harrogate when he died. Sandy leaves behind his wife, Rianne; daughters Bryony, Tamsin and Kiera; stepson, Kieron; four grandchildren Sophie, Alice, Teddy and Ada; and two older sisters, Margaret (FP 1969) and Morag (FP 1971).

IZATT

Gordon Izatt (FP 1959–1967) passed away peacefully on 11 July after a long illness.

JACK

Garion Anne Jack (*née* Gray, FP 1959–1967) died peacefully at Borders General Hospital on 21 September 2024. She attended Dollar Academy from the age of five through to her final year when she was Head Girl. She was a social worker and volunteered for Scottish Women's Aid and with a local art therapy group in Berwick-upon-Tweed. She was also a talented artist across several mediums, most noted for a Millenium stained glass window for Aberlady Church. She leaves behind two daughters, four granddaughters, siblings Alison and Neil (who also attended Dollar Academy), and her longterm partner.

JARVIS

William (Bill) Jarvis (FP 1952–1960) died peacefully, after a long illness, on 14 August, aged 82 years. Obituary to follow in the next edition.

MARSHALL

Marshall (*née* Mackenzie, FP 1941–1946, [left in FI]) died peacefully. Contact daughter, Roz Clase, for details: 07966 320 039.

NORTON

Elspeet Norton (*née* Younie, FP 1938–1947) died on 27 June 2024, aged 94.

SHARPE

Elise Sharpe (*née* Park, FP 1945–1952) died in her 91st year on Friday 21 June 2024 at Mearns House Care Home in Newton Mearns. Elise had been Secretary of the Highland FP Club and a representative governor between 1988 and 2003.

SKEA

Mary Christine Skea (*née* Hartley, FP 1952–1955 [left in Form II]), died peacefully on 31 August 2024.

FORMER STAFF

CANNON

(Stephen) Chris Cannon, who taught Classics at Dollar between 1960 and 1993, retiring as Head of Classics, died peacefully on 22 August 2024. Obituary to follow in the next edition.

GLASGOW

Ron Glasgow, who taught PE at Dollar between 1960 and 1989, retiring as Head of PE, died peacefully on 6 October 2024. Obituary to follow in the next edition.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thursday 22 May 2025:

Golden FP Afternoon Tea for FPs who left school at least 50 years ago, before and including 1975. Booking will open on 1 March 2025.

Saturday 21 June 2025:

25-Year (Class of 2000) Reunion in Dollar
40-Year (Class of 1985) Reunion in Dollar

Contact Kirsty
(dollarfp@dollaracademy.org.uk)
to be put in touch with the
organisers.

21–22 June 2025: Sports Weekend

Saturday 21 June 2025:

FP Sherry Party in the Library, 6–8pm
All FPs welcome; no registration
needed.



Sandy at 80



Family in 1950, Sandy on left

ALEXANDER (SANDY) FULTON BELL FP 1945–1950 (left in Form II) 1937–2023

Sandy Bell was the second son of Rector Harry Bell and Sophie (*née* Fulton). Although he was actually born in Glasgow, in January 1937, Sandy was very much a child of Dollar Academy. He retained a deep affection for the school all his life, despite the trauma of his father's dismissal in 1960, which, to the end of his life, he felt was a great injustice and morally indefensible. His quarrel, however, was never with the school as an institution, but with the governors of the day. From both his parents, he inherited a strong sense of right and wrong, along with an ethos of public service.

Sandy and his elder brother, John, were joined by Patricia in 1939, and they enjoyed an idyllic upbringing in Dollar until 1940 when Sophie and the children were evacuated, just before the Battle of Britain, firstly to the USA and then to Barbados. Harry Bell was working alongside Lord Wolfenden as Scotland's chief educational advisor to the Air Training Corps, and Sandy always maintained that this role made them potential targets.

In 1945 when the family returned to Dollar, Sandy could barely read or write, which didn't go down well with the Rector! That was soon rectified, although his sporting achievements—in athletics, boxing, cricket, rugby, and golf—always outshone his academic prowess. In 1950, he joined John at Shrewsbury. After Shrewsbury, the next step was the Army. He entered Sandhurst in 1957 and was commissioned as an officer in the Argyll & Sutherland

Highlanders. For him, a highlight was serving on the Royal Guard at Balmoral in 1963 and washing up with the late Queen. Renal failure after running an endurance race in the jungle in Borneo effectively cut short his successful army career.

In January 1970, Sandy married Sophia Morgan Elles and shortly afterwards left the Army to join Associated British Maltsters as a sales director. Harry was born in December 1969 and Thomas in February 1971. Tragically, Sophia died in a traffic accident just before Christmas that year, leaving Sandy with the daunting task of bringing up two small boys whilst holding down a demanding job. With the help of family, friends and a redoubtable old school nanny, he achieved it. In 1984 he married Alison, who (he always maintained) 'rescued' him—from who knows what? She survives him, along with Harry and Thomas; six grandchildren; and his brother, John, a resident of Barbados since 1987.

Sandy had a lifelong desire to aid the disadvantaged, helping to set up the Airborne Initiative to rehabilitate young offenders; serving with the TA; and establishing Splash, a fundraising swimming gala. He used his legendary charm to good effect in all these ventures.

Sandy's enduring legacy to the school he loved will be the Harry Bell Travel Awards and Scholarship, established with his siblings to mark the centenary, in 1999, of their father's birth. Long may it continue.

The Bell Family



DOROTHY BRAND (née IRONS)

FP 1941

1925–2024

Born in Kinross, Dorothy; her brother, Andrew; and her sister, Elza, all attended Dollar Academy, as did her mother, Margaret (briefly). Margaret was the sister of George Westwater, after whom the Westwater Building was named. Obtaining a bursary, Dorothy was a 'train pupil' who loved sport and the boys. She had a certificate of merit from the Royal Academy of Music in London for playing the piano and she loved to drive, first doing this in her father's bakery van delivering bread to the country houses. Training as a nurse at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary ceased when she married Peter Brand in 1947—a nurse could not be married and continue to work. Three children followed: David, a doctor in Guernsey; Joyce, a lawyer; and Roger, an accountant in Hong Kong and London. Dorothy made her own clothes with style, sang as she did the housework, asked the butcher for 'the point of the rump', i.e. the best bit of the beef. A pragmatist to the end, she made us realise that money is important as well as principles. In widowhood, she lived for a time in St Fillans and then Comrie, enjoying the world of antique auctions. The last of our family's war generation, she kept quiet about things that she disliked. Just smile and play 'Fur Elise'.

Joyce E. Brand



PETER J. BRAND

FP 1940

1922–1973

From Cowdenbeath, an only child, his father had a draper's shop, and he later lived in Milnathort. A 'train pupil', he spent a final year as a boarder when his mother was dying. At St Andrews University he studied History, but the war beckoned and his was a proud record of service (from 1942–46), with the Royal Scots in South Africa, then with the Gordon Highlanders in North Africa and Sicily. He spent his 21st birthday in a ditch near Sferro. He came later for the D-Day assault in Normandy, then went on to Holland, Ardennes in Belgium, Hanover in Germany and finally back to Libya. After the war he walked from Milnathort to Kinross to see his school friend Andrew, and there was Dorothy.

He trained as a librarian and worked in Dudley and finally Clydebank. He introduced a record-lending library and was highly praised for his modernising skills. He bought a van and redesigned the interior as a dormobile (using a DIY book) in which to enjoy family holidays in Europe. Dorothy recalled being refused entry to Saint Mark's Basilica in Venice because she was wearing summer slacks. Fun was also provided with a boat at Balmaha on Loch Lomond. A bibliophile, he created panels depicting the history of bookbinding, yet to be displayed, when he died suddenly in 1973. He lived on for us, always in the presence of Dorothy. On a sombre note, he kept a war gun and bullets in order to shoot his family and then himself, if Russia arrived here. Despite this, he believed in the power of good men to overcome evil as guided by the Bible. He was familiar with the view to Bishop Hill above Loch Leven, and so Hymn 715 'Behold! the mountain of the Lord', written by local poet Michael Bruce, was sung at his funeral. The tribute of Robert Burns also seems apt: 'Here's tae us! Wha's like us? Gey few, and they're a' deid!'

Joyce E. Brand

IAN MACKENZIE GUILD

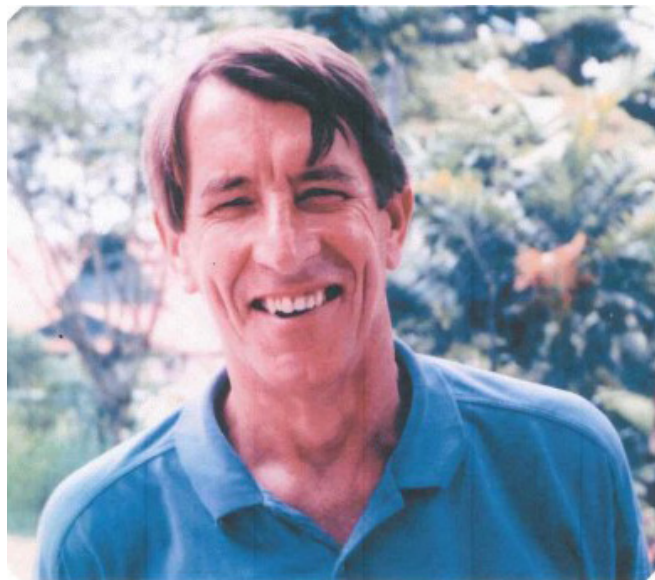
FP 1947–1956

1937–2024

Ian was born in Glasgow and in 1947, after his family moved to Dollar, he started at the Academy, enjoying nine very happy years at the school. He was always an extremely cheerful individual, prepared to be involved in all aspects of school life—sometimes to the detriment of his academic studies! On the rugby field he played for two years in the 1st XV, where he was a very destructive wing forward. He also played his part in the Corps, reaching the rank of sergeant—perhaps an indication of his interest in life in the army.

After leaving Dollar, Ian undertook National Service for two years in the Black Watch regiment, during which he gained his commission. After spells in civilian life in the UK and India, he moved to Australia in 1963, where he was allowed to transfer his commission to the Australian Army. He started his service with the 1st Battalion Royal Australian Regiment, a connection which he maintained throughout his military career. In 1965 he was sent to Vietnam and took part in Australia's first engagement in the war, at the battle of Gang Tot. Then it was on to Papua New Guinea for two years, before returning to Australia, finishing at the rank of lieutenant colonel and acting as chief observer (for the United Nations) of the Truce Observer Corps in Lebanon. Finally, he returned to Sydney for the last three years of his service, up until 1984, with the 5th/6th Battalion. Ian was very proud of the time he spent (20 years to the day) in the service of the Australian Army, and he enjoyed that time to the full.

Moving on, Ian continued his relationship with the military world with his active membership, for nearly 40 years, in the Australian charity Legacy. This charity takes care of the welfare of the widows and families of those individuals killed or badly injured during their time in active service. Ian chaired the Appeals Committee for some years and served a term as vice-president (Sydney). He also



played a significant role in organising the commemoration of the Battle for Australia, and he served on the Boer War Memorial Committee. Together with Ann (*née* Hewitt, FP 1952 [Junior 2]), whom he married in 1993, Ian brought real energy and determination to all of the charitable activities they supported—they were never just token supporters. In recognition of Ian's significant contributions over many years to so many meaningful activities, he was awarded both the MBE and OAM (Order of Australia Medal).

In other areas he continued an extremely active life, primarily fundraising for schools in Australia and at Oxford Brookes University in the UK. Ian was extremely successful in this area, raising significant seven-figure sums for these establishments.

Until Ian suffered physical problems in his final years, he was always a very active individual, interested in a wide range of sports. After school he played rugby for various clubs including West of Scotland, London Scottish, and the Calcutta Rugby Club. Then he moved on to the golf course, playing regularly at the Royal Sydney Golf Club and (when in the UK) at St Andrews. He was a member of Sydney Cricket Ground and, for many years, he found the time to swim every morning at Balmoral Beach.

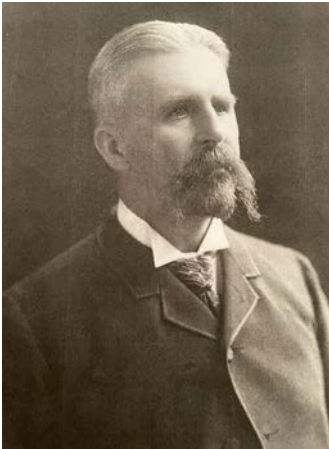
Ian will be remembered and missed by so many people for his great generosity, his care for others, and his sense of humour—he was a truly inspiring friend.

Ian is survived by his wife, Ann; his children Hamish, Dougal and Alex; and grandchildren, Max and Sam.

*Ann Guild (née Hewitt FP 1952 [J2])
Robin Wight (FP 1957)*

As School Archivist I receive many inquiries and quite a few visits from families researching their ancestors. The stories we unravel are often fascinating. I thought it might interest readers of *Fortunas* to see what high-achieving and exciting lives some of Dollar Academy's Former Pupils led. In the following pages, you can learn about David Marr Henderson (left 1851), known as 'The Colossus of Lighthouses' in China, and the life and adventures of Gilbert Edward Turnbull (left 1928) in Burma.

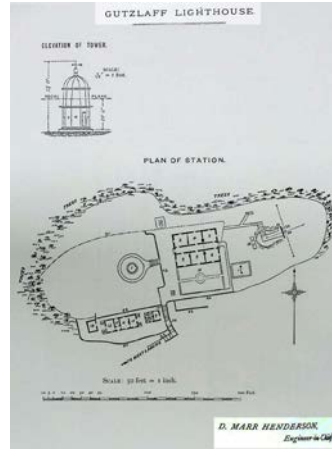
Janet Carolan (School Archivist)



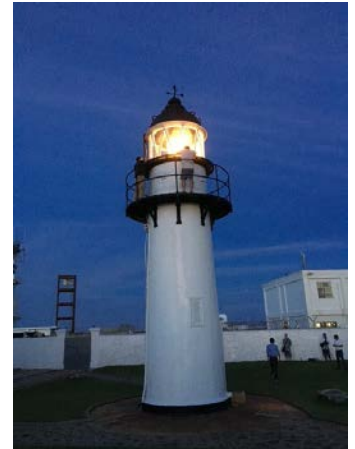
David Marr Henderson



Double Dragon Medal



Gutzlaff Lighthouse



Fisher Island lighthouse

THE COLOSSUS OF LIGHTHOUSES

David Marr Henderson was born in 1840 and started his education at Dollar Academy soon after his mother died when he was four years old. Although his ancestral home was in Abernethy, he was born at Handcross in Staffordshire. His father was working there at his brother's firm of Fox Henderson & Co., the company that built the Crystal Palace for the 1851 Great Exhibition.

At Dollar, David showed his academic ability, winning prizes for History and Arithmetic. He boarded with Mr James Walker, the first teacher to be appointed when the school was founded in 1818. Mr Walker retired in 1851, and perhaps that is why David was moved to Blairlodge Academy in Polmont, where he also did very well academically and even won a prize for the best-kept garden.

At 15, he started an apprenticeship at Fox Henderson, whilst at the same time studying for a degree in Engineering and French at Queen Elizabeth College, Birmingham. In 1869 he joined the Maritime Customs Service as Chief Lighthouse Engineer in Shanghai. During his 30-year career there he designed and built some 34 lighthouses. Many were destroyed during World War II because they were navigational aids. Of the 22 remaining, 8 have been declared national monuments by the Chinese government.

In 1885 the honour of a 1st Class, 3rd Division Double Dragon was conferred on him (see photo). This was a personal gift from the emperor, and it was presented to him by the emperor himself. David also patented a lens for lighthouse lanterns and won the Mandy Prize from the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE).

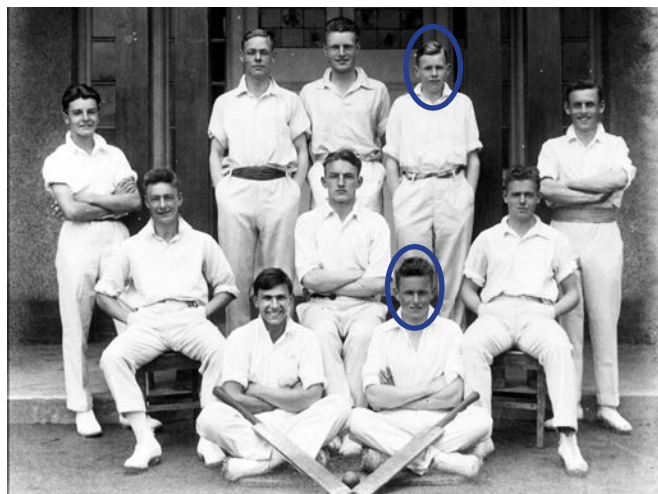
Outside of work he introduced the smooth-coated retriever, his favourite gun dog, to China, and he won many prizes with them. He was a keen tennis player and horticulturalist.

In China he is known as 'The Colossus of Lighthouses', as no one before or since has designed and built so many. It is also said that not even a computer could draw plans any better. He died in 1923. The archive of his designs is held at ICE. For information about a forthcoming book, please contact the school archivist (carolan-j@dollaracademy.org.uk).

Felicity Somers Eve (great-granddaughter of David Marr Henderson)



Gilbert with Peter, Dolly and Nancy



1st XI 1926 with Gilbert and Tommy Turnbull

AN ADVENTUROUS LIFE IN BURMA

Gilbert Edward Turnbull (left 1928) was born in Ballia, India in 1908. He was sent to Dollar Academy with his older brother Tommy in 1922 and both boys were enrolled in Junior 2. They boarded in Aberdona Villa with Mr Allsop, the Head of Music. Both excelled at sport. Gilbert captained the 1st XV rugby team in 1927–28; he was in the 1st XI cricket team; he was Edina Champion in the School Sports; and was also Company Sergeant Major of the OTC. *The Dollar Magazine* contains many descriptions of his sporting triumphs.

Gilbert enrolled in the civil service and was sent to Burma with the Colonial Frontier Services. His first job was as a timber assistant in the Tharrawaddy District in central Burma. Not long after arriving he fell in love with and married a beautiful Burmese lady named Aye Myint. Their first child, Nancy, was born in 1938, followed by Peter in 1939 and two years later by Dolly. Their world was shattered in 1942 when the Japanese invaded Burma. All British civilians living in Burma were immediately given ranks by the British Army and Gilbert was made a major. He was sent to the Chin Hills to help the local Chin people in their fight against the rapidly advancing Japanese Army.

However, a price had been put onto Gilbert's head, as he was a well-known and influential man in the area. To keep the family safe, the decision was made to leave Burma immediately. They were living in the Wa State in the far east of the country, near China, and they had to somehow get to Assam in India, on the western border of Burma. They had to cross three major rivers: the Salween, the Irrawaddy and the Chindwin, and they would have to do this on foot or on horseback.

Undertaking this journey were Gilbert, Aye Myint, Nancy (age 6), Peter (4), Dolly (2) and Aye Myint's brother,

U Thein Mg. Being young and single, he would be able to help them on this very dangerous trek. To make matters worse, it was the monsoon and conditions were appalling. They had to travel through rough mountainous country, and there was the constant threat of attack by the Japanese or sometimes hostile villagers, making the trip hazardous in the extreme.

En route, little Dolly became sick and tragically died. She was buried where she died, and the family just had to keep going. Eventually, after 48 long days, they arrived in India at Imphal, Manipur, the famous tea-growing area of Assam. The family spent the rest of the war in Simla, whilst Gilbert returned to Burma and re-joined the British Army to continue fighting with the Chin people against the Japanese. Three years later he brought the family back to Burma. By this time, Gilbert was extremely well respected by the local people, and he spoke several native languages. He was appointed Deputy Commissioner of Bhamo in the north of Burma, and the family went to live there.

In 1946 Gilbert was awarded an MBE (Member of the British Empire) medal for his work with the Burma Frontier Service (he served as a resident commissioner and then deputy commissioner in Bhamo) and for his service during the war.

When Burma became independent in 1948, all British government servants lost their positions. Gilbert bought a farm near Maymyo, a hill station about 40 miles from Mandalay. Leaving his family to look after the farm, Gilbert became manager of the Panga Rubber Plantation (in the south of the country), owned by the British company, Fairweather Richards & Co. There were problems with the ethnic Karen people, and in 1953 Gilbert was kidnapped by a Karen insurgent known as the 'Silver Arrow'. Gilbert



Turnbull family visitors August 2024

was kept hostage for a couple of weeks whilst negotiations took place between the company and the insurgents who were demanding a ridiculous amount of ransom money. Eventually the company agreed to pay £20,000, and Gilbert was released. The news of a foreigner being kidnapped made headlines throughout the country, as it was the first time this had happened, and it was followed by many copycat kidnappings.

After this incident, Gilbert retired to Maymyo. He and his sons built their dream home, 'Sunnyside', but, unfortunately, Gilbert never lived there; he died of a heart attack in 1964, aged 55.

A more detailed account of his life is available, including a description of the amazing meeting held at the Turnbull residence in 1946 when General Aung San (father of Aung San Suu Kyi) and several ethnic groups discussed Burma's independence from the British. It is available from the authors (via the School Archivist).

*Janine and Cathryn Turnbull
(daughter-in-law and granddaughter of
Gilbert Edward Turnbull)*



Dollar
Academy