

BIANNUAL
PUBLICATION
ISSUE 53
JUNE 2024

fortūnas



Dollar Academy

NEW FUTURES INSTITUTE
COMING IN 2025

1:15 STAFF TO PUPIL RATIO

BEAUTIFUL 70 ACRE CAMPUS

34 ACADEMIC SUBJECTS @ HIGHER

~70% A GRADE PASSES

120+ CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

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LAW, MEDICINE, ENGINEERING + ECONOMICS

60% OF LEAVERS GO TO RUSSELL GROUP + IVY LEAGUE UNIS!!

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THE SUNDAY TIMES SCHOOLS GUIDE 2024

INDEPENDENT SECONDARY SCHOOL OF THE YEAR SCOTLAND

WEEKLY AND FULL BOARDING AVAILABLE

34 DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES

10 BUS ROUTES TO DOLLAR FROM CENTRAL SCOTLAND

1350 PUPILS AGED 5-18

Open Morning 2024
Saturday 7 September

Fortunas 54

Many thanks to everyone who contributed articles or images to *Fortunas 53*; the deadline for submission of articles for the next Christmas issue is **Thursday 10 October**.

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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.

From the Rector

Welcome to another action-packed edition of *Fortunas*!

This academic year has been filled with remarkable achievements, memorable events, and countless stories that reflect the vibrant spirit of our school community. In Edition 53, we bring you a collection of articles, interviews, and features that celebrate the creativity, dedication, and talents of our pupils and staff.

Whether you are interested in academic achievement, sporting triumphs, or artistic endeavours there really is something for every reader—from a Scottish Cup victory on the hockey field to a ‘Top of the Bench’ laboratory success for our chemists.

Looking beyond our own school gate, I am also delighted to see recorded some of the considerable efforts that our community makes in pursuit of our charitable aims. Volunteering, fundraising, and the development of a new national sustainability diploma all play a prominent role.

Our contributors have worked tirelessly to capture the essence of what makes the Academy unique, and we are thrilled to share their stories with you. Editor-in-Chief, Heather Moore, and her hardworking team are also due a debt of thanks for breathing life into the pages that follow.

Readers may be aware that we were recently named **Independent Secondary School of the Year Scotland** by *The Sunday Times*. So, sit back, relax, and enjoy the diverse voices and perspectives that are found at the heart of our award-winning school. Happy reading!

With the very best of wishes for the summer, I thank you for your continued support of the Academy.

Kindest 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 and another below it.

Ian Munro
Rector




THE SUNDAY TIMES
SCHOOLS GUIDE
2024
INDEPENDENT SECONDARY
SCHOOL OF THE YEAR
SCOTLAND



FIDA: THE FUTURES INSTITUTE AT DOLLAR ACADEMY

This year has seen some important milestones for the Futures Institute at Dollar Academy (FIDA), both in terms of its expanding education programme and the new Futures Institute building.

Sustainability Diploma

Fortunas readers may recall that a key FIDA workstream over the past year has been to build its existing suite of projects into a one-year Sustainability Diploma qualification. FIDA successfully bid for Scottish Government funding to support the credit rating of the Diploma at SCQF Level 6—the same level as a Higher, and with an equivalent points tariff.

The Diploma offers an innovative one-year programme of learning. Rather than follow a traditional knowledge-based curriculum, students will learn through tackling real-world projects aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and co-designed with experts from industry and universities. They will deepen their understanding of sustainability and its interconnected social, environmental, economic and political aspects; and they will develop a sense of agency in devising solutions to the pressing global challenges that will shape their lives beyond school. As they progress, they will build the important skills of independent research, problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication—all of which are increasingly sought by employers, universities and colleges. Crucially, entrepreneurship is a golden thread that runs throughout, and this aspect of the qualification is being designed in partnership with the University of Stirling. The Diploma



will be offered to an initial cohort of pupils at Dollar Academy and two to three other schools in the 2024–25 session and will thereafter scale up to a national offering over the following years.

Readers who have been following national developments in education will be aware that the new FIDA Sustainability Diploma aligns with the recommendations of the Hayward Review, which proposes project-based learning as a central component of a reformed senior curriculum, and with the Scottish Government's Learning for Sustainability Action Plan. As such, it positions FIDA and Dollar Academy at the forefront of educational innovation in Scotland.

Clackmannanshire Wellbeing Hub/ Lochies School Design Challenge

Clackmannanshire Council called upon FIDA to co-design a competition for secondary school pupils to design an

outdoor space for the county's new Wellbeing Hub and Lochies School complex. In response, FIDA produced high-quality resources to guide pupils through the process of designing an outdoor space, from concept to detailed sketch or model, building in elements such as sustainable building materials, biodiversity and connection to local heritage. Pupils from S3–S6 across the county were eligible to enter, and a positive outcome of the competition was that young people were given a voice in the design of Clackmannanshire's largest infrastructure project. In March, members of the design team, including architects and landscape architects, hosted a workshop at Alloa Academy for eight shortlisted candidates, which gave the pupils a wonderful opportunity to develop their ideas further with professional input. Two winners—Harrison (S6) and Emma (S5)—were ultimately selected for a work experience opportunity with the design team later in the year.



Home Transformers

In September, Dollar Academy hosted a one-week FIDA project called *Home Transformers*, developed in partnership with Barratt, the UK's biggest housebuilder. It was attended by 34 participants from four schools: Dollar Academy, Alva Academy, Lornshill Academy (Alloa) and Wallace High School (Stirling). Pupils worked in mixed-school teams to develop a plan to renovate and upgrade an 1860s cottage that was in a considerable state of disrepair. Their brief was to reduce its carbon footprint as far as possible and to introduce measures to create and improve wildlife habitats, while preserving the building's original character.

Across the week, pupils worked with Barratt Group's Directors of Sustainability, Biodiversity and Design & Technology, and with researchers from Edinburgh Napier University's Institute for Sustainable Construction. On the final day of the project, each group presented to an expert panel, and Barratt generously offered an opportunity for a young person who made an outstanding contribution to undertake work experience with the company. The winning candidate was Evie (S5, Lornshill Academy), who visited Barratt's experimental research facilities at the University of Salford and attended an industry conference in London. Evie commented, 'It was super-interesting and amazing, as I saw and learned so many new things. I have contacts now to keep in touch with for future opportunities, too.'

Wildlife Welcome Here

The entire Junior 1 year group at Dollar Academy is working throughout the 2023–24 session on a FIDA project focusing on wildlife conservation that will also see them gain their John Muir Award. Over the first two terms, this has involved outdoor education sessions on campus and at Mill Green and Dollar Glen, led by Geography teacher Mr Eliot Sedman in collaboration with the National Trust Ranger Service. Working outdoors and exploring the wonderful natural environment that Dollar affords, pupils have learned about local wildlife species, ecosystems and threats to local biodiversity. In the summer term, they will draw upon this learning to develop their own ideas for a novel way to protect local wildlife. They might propose anything from a physical device to a community project or public awareness campaign. Pupils will be encouraged to think broadly about what would make the greatest impact, and they will have the opportunity to develop their ideas and present them at the end of term.

The Futures Institute

With planning permission now granted, plans are progressing at pace for our ambitious new Futures Institute, designed by globally renowned architect and Dollar FP Andrew Whalley OBE. Its innovative classrooms, laboratories and design facilities integrated under one roof will enable creative and collaborative working that breaks down subject boundaries. While the majority of the funds for the building are in place, a campaign is in progress to raise the remaining funds required. In March, as part of this campaign, the Dollar community enjoyed a spectacular concert of James Bond music played by the Scottish Pops Orchestra, led by David Christie. Donations of all levels to support our fundraising efforts are most welcome; more information on how to donate can be found at <https://dollaracademy.org.uk/support-us-futures-institute-building/> or by using the QR code below.

Jacqueline Smith (FIDA Director)



FUNDRAISING AT DOLLAR ACADEMY

Supporting the Next Generation at Dollar

Fundraising plays a vital role in ensuring Dollar can fulfil its charitable objectives and keep us at the forefront of education and innovation. Dollar quite simply wouldn't be the school it is today without the generosity of our donors and supporters, and our over-arching goal is to ensure that the long-term success and sustainability of the school is well supported through philanthropy. Since the last edition of *Fortunas*, whilst we have continued to receive very generous donations for our Futures Institute, we have also introduced our new Annual Fund.

Our Annual Fund

Each year, gifts to the Annual Fund are used to target our areas of greatest need, facilitating increased flexibility and freedom for the school and our pupils. For 2024-25 we have identified a range of projects, which includes: expanding the increasingly popular Strength & Conditioning Suite (enabling our athletes to perform at the top level); rejuvenating the Prep School playground and the new Kitchen Garden, providing fun and engaging recreational and learning spaces for our youngest pupils; and refurbishing areas of McNabb House to ensure our boarders experience the very best home-from-home environment.



Supporting the Next
Generation at Dollar



The Futures Institute

So far this year we have received over £150,000 in donations for our Futures Institute. This is a huge achievement, and we would like to thank all those who have donated. Donors have included Former Pupils, local businesses, current and former parents, governors and staff. For many, this has been their first donation to the school.

As part of our fundraising appeal, we held a sell-out concert in



March. Our audience was treated to iconic music from the *James Bond* films. The professional Scottish Pops Orchestra and accompanying singers were conducted by Former Pupil and Assistant Head of Music, Davie Christie. One audience member said, 'It was the most incredible evening of live music. Unprecedented in Dollar!' And another said, 'It was one of the best concerts I have ever been to. I will

definitely be donating.' We are working on plans for future events at the school with the Scottish Pops Orchestra; watch this space. You can keep up to date with FIDA developments by signing up to the monthly newsletter on the website: <https://fida.world/>.

Our Bursary Fund

At Dollar, widening access and encouraging a diverse and inclusive pupil population is hugely important. Our bursary awards are means-tested and targeted towards those in greatest financial need; they offer what can be a transformational educational experience for a child entering Form I.

We continue to receive donations for our Bursary Fund, and we are keen to hear from those who received a bursary during their time at the Academy. If you would like to share your experiences and tell us about the impact a Dollar education had on you, I would love to speak with you.

Leaving a Gift in Your Will

Legacy donations have been, and will always 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 donate 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 me, Rebecca McFarlane, the school's Fundraising Manager, on mcfarlane-re@dollaracademy.org.uk or 01259 742 511.

Rebecca McFarlane
(Fundraising Manager)



FAREWELL TO THE BURSAR: JUSTIN WILKES

Sometimes, when we say farewell to colleagues at HQ in the Playfair Library, those assembled witness a quite understandable outpouring of emotion between colleagues who have worked together for decades. Although Justin and I only stood together at Dollar for five years, such was the closeness of our working relationship that I want to start by stating I will miss him very much indeed and that I owe him a debt for the support he showed me when I joined Dollar.

Of course, I'm not the only one who should be grateful to JW. It is everyone connected to the Academy because, for almost three decades (and remember that's longer than some colleagues have been alive), Justin has successfully overseen the finances of the school and been at the centre of every major strategic decision.

These are not easy tasks. The average time for a Chief Financial Officer to be in post at a FTSE 100 company is 4.2 years. That Justin has fulfilled that role, and so much more, for so long, really is testament to both his professional competence and dedication to the Academy.

I think I saw this commitment to the cause perhaps most acutely during the pandemic, when Justin played a major role in determining our commercial strategy and contingency planning at a time when the chips were down for the school community.

There were lighter times too, of course. Justin and I enjoyed a good trip to Berlin together early on in our

relationship which was instrumental in developing our thinking about many areas of life at the Academy; we once went hunting, with hawks (fear not, no animals came to any harm, apart from the pair of us who were frozen) and then there was the memorable senior staff sail training voyage on the Clyde last summer, during which no one was actually violently seasick or fell overboard, but it was pretty close. All very fond memories.

His approach was, I would say, atypical of many Bursars, in that he never made the mistake of thinking the charity's funds were his own personal piggybank. Instead he always looked to support innovative projects and added much value to the plans along the way. In another deviation from the norm, he was also seen teaching pupils on numerous occasions and supporting DoFE expeditions.

Justin Wilkes was one of the key drivers in my move to Dollar; his skilled leadership has played a central role in the firm footing that the school finds itself on; his legacy is an extremely successful one, and he will be missed by many.

Justin, on behalf of the staff, governors and pupils, and parents—past and present—thank you for your once-in-a-generation service to Dollar Academy.

We wish you fair winds and following seas.

Ian Munro



FAREWELL TO WILLIE ANDERSON: MASTER OF ALL TRADES

While it is no doubt true that any big organisation, like Dollar Academy, has a team of skilled managers running it—representing any number of perspectives, each with their own particular area of expertise—it has to be said that every member of staff relies on the likes of masters like Willie to be able to function. He is a manager of all trades. He has been much more than just a janitor. He has been the backbone of the school, making sure the basics are done, using judgement based on decades of experience as to what will (and will not) work, giving impartial advice and, when necessary, just telling you how it is. And this is just scratching the surface of all that Willie has done for us since he joined Dollar in 1997.

He has been a stalwart in terms of simply *being there* over the years—always on hand to help with pretty much any situation. And this testifies to the core truth about Willie: he wanted to give his best, for everyone, all the time. He was never flustered, no matter how ridiculous the

task he had been asked to perform. His door was always open, and more often than not visitors would be greeted with his usual, ‘What are you saying to it then?’—his opening remark in every conversation. I know he will not miss the knock on his door from the police about fire alarms going off at crazy o’clock, nor will he mourn the loss of the mountains of lost property (that often left a unique smell in his office). But I know that he will miss seeing the smiling faces of the hundreds of pupils that he had such fondness for.

A keen golfer, many will not know he was club champion at Tillicoultry in 1974: no mean feat. He was a great supporter of golf at Dollar, a valued colleague, and—far more importantly—a friend to me and to countless other staff. I’ll miss his words of wisdom on the minibus, driving to golf matches with the pupils. Indeed, they have already expressed their sense of loss in his absence—frequently recalling the sage and inspiring advice he offered, as well as the kind words of comfort he was quick to give when

things didn’t quite go their way.

Willie is already working hard on getting his handicap down—no doubt, through trying ten different putters on twenty different courses. But, at some point, we know he’ll go back to the things he knows best. He leaves a hole at Dollar Academy, but we know he’ll be filling it, from a distance, most likely with a driver or 7 iron in hand.

Neil Blezard



JOAN RUSSELL

Joan arrived at Dollar Academy in January 2014 when she joined the school office team as a temp. She quickly established herself as a much-loved and popular member of staff, and we realised we had found a first-class receptionist; a permanent job quickly followed.

Joan's Irish charm, friendly manner and welcoming smile were reassuring to everyone who came through the Bronze Doors. She put everyone at ease, whether they were visiting for the first time or a long-standing member of the Dollar community. Joan's warm, caring nature is well known throughout the school, and nothing was ever too much trouble for her.

There was always a steady stream of Form VI pupils in Reception, too, begging Joan to take part in one of their various events or discussing the weekend's rugby and hockey scores. This engagement of the Form VI was a carefully calculated move on Joan's part—no one could ever refuse Joan when she was looking for a tour prefect!

Joan was always going to be a star. She gave Amanda Holden a run for her money as a judge in 'Dollar's Got Talent'. This led to film appearances, and she quickly proved to be a natural in front of the camera. Her first starring role was in the *Return to School* video (post-Covid) and, more recently, she appeared in a popular *Book of the Month* review. Without a doubt, she has been the face (and the voice) of Dollar Academy throughout her time with us.

New staff quickly realised that an extra five minutes was essential if entering school via the Bronze Doors in the morning. The very welcome, but mandatory, exchanges with Joan regarding what everyone did at the weekend;

golf; recipes; her beloved husband, Andy; we could go on Nobody left Reception without a smile on their face. Joan is known for talking (to everyone and anyone); making cups of tea (specifically Irish brands); baking (her lemon drizzle and biscuit cakes are famously delicious); playing (and losing) bridge; and shopping (a shareholder in Dunnes for sure). Above all, she is known for just being a wonderful member of our team.

Sadly for us, Joan decided that it was time to retire; she looks forward to spending more time with Andy and the family. As keen golfers, they plan to improve their handicaps, go for leisurely walks in the countryside and no doubt enjoy many trips to Ireland. Joan has recently found a new bridge partner and she looks forward to hopefully ending her losing streak. Each year, in the summer term, Joan plans to return to school to enjoy the musical productions, as she has always done, and we look forward to seeing her then.

Much thought was given to a leaving present for Joan. She herself had suggested that rather than buy her a present, we bought one for Andy—specifically a set of ear defenders ... Perhaps the CCF could help with this!

It goes without saying that everyone will miss Joan, and we wish her and Andy well for their retirement.

From us all, with love, *Slán agus beannacht leat.*

Amanda Clark and Elaine Gallagher



HELEN COOK

The Chemistry Department was sad to say *adios* to Mrs Helen Cook after 14 years' exemplary teaching.

A generous and valued colleague and friend, Helen worked part-time, but it is fair to say that she made a full-time impact every week. Her classes always enjoyed her carefully planned lessons which were enriched by demonstrations and practical work. She was never one to sit still and rest on her laurels—her professional learning was always ambitious, and over the years she has taken a keen interest in formative assessment and the variety of ways it can be achieved in the classroom. Notably, she led an inhouse professional learning strand examining this topic. Always wanting to make a difference in the classroom, her CPD often acted as a catalyst for further professional dialogue and classroom trials. Within Dollar Academy, she has been an active member of our IT Working Group, and, with Mr Dean Campbell in Biology, she initiated and ran a successful Professional Reading Group. Additionally, she challenged herself to write and resource a Forensic Science module for our Form VI pupils, and this set of lessons proved very popular.

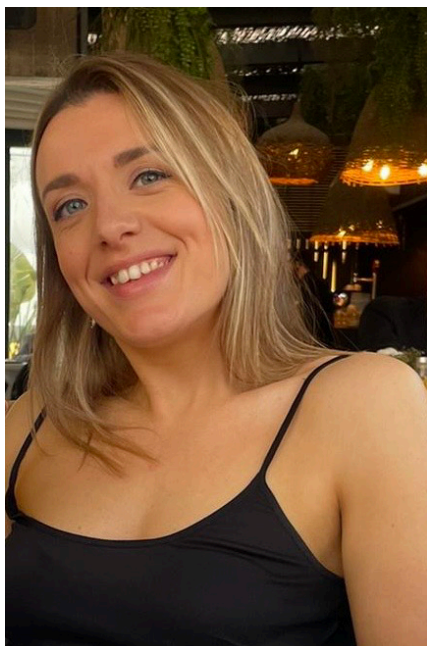
Her pupils enjoyed being

taught by her, and they achieved strong academic results each year. She developed a particular expertise in teaching those pupils who choose to study Chemistry at Advanced Higher level. She has been an SQA Marker for many years and enjoyed a well-deserved promotion to Marking Team Leader and Question Paper Verifier. In that role, her extensive subject knowledge—initiated through her own schooling in Cumbria, and broadened and deepened by a degree at Oxford—was often called upon when clarifying marking instructions and agreeing standards. Her eye for detail was often employed in school, too, and she provided a much-appreciated service when any new classroom resource or assessment required writing, editing or proof reading.

Outwith the classroom, she was a key staff member in our busy Christian Union, and she also established and ran the Jewellery Making Club. Helen is currently enjoying an extended period of travelling in Central and South America with her husband, Michael. When she returns, she intends to study for a Masters in Education, furthering her professional learning and ensuring that, when she returns to teaching, it

will be with even more determination to make a difference to the pupils she teaches. We all miss her already.

The Chemistry Department



LORENA McGOOKIN

Lorena joined Dollar Academy in 2016 as a teacher of Business and Economics, and she threw herself into the wider life of the school immediately. For several years she was an essential part of the Ultimate (Frisbee) Club at Dollar; she was a House Tutor in Argyll; she accompanied the Art Department on trips to London; and she was an integral part of the Romania Community Project.

In Frisbee she was an inspiration and role model for all players. She has taken pupils all over Scotland many times, not to mention the UK Schools Championships in England; she also accompanied pupils on two successful tours to Ireland. She has coached, supported and inspired hundreds of pupils in her time, including four young women who have gone on to represent GB at world and European level. No doubt she'll set up a club in New Zealand before too long.

She has been a part of five Romania Community Projects involving seventy Dollar pupils, seventy-two days, and countless hours of preparation and endless moments of

joy. Since 2017, Lorena has been at the forefront of the relationship between Dollar and Little John's House. In running the Romania Community Project, she has given a unique opportunity to our pupils, several of whom were moved so powerfully by the project that they returned to the Summer School on their own in following years. Even when Lorena dislocated a finger, broken an arm and was left stranded in Munich for 48 hours without so much as a clean pair of pants, there was no putting her off. Her longstanding commitment to the project is testament to the genuinely selfless person she is. She always puts others before herself and is happy to humiliate herself—covered in face paints and wearing a tutu—just to put a smile on the faces of the children at the Summer School.

In her early years at the Academy she was a standout form tutor who always recognised the importance of getting to know her pupils as individuals. She made form time fun: completing quizzes, creating news articles of their successes and encouraging them to work together as a team. It is not surprising that she swiftly moved into the role of Assistant Head of Year, where she was empathetic, compassionate, firm and fair.

She worked closely with Miss Jilly McCord, who had this to say about her time with Lorena: 'As my AHOY, Lorena saw the Class of 2023 year group right through to their departure last summer. A kind, fair and pupil-focused member of the guidance team, she always looked for ways to support both staff and pupils with thoughtful, well-considered solutions. Highly energetic, she was happy to get involved with year group activities and always led from the front. She was also the first person to volunteer to abseil from the Playfair Building during their Form VI

Programme, and this was typical of her approach. She was very easy to work with and a trusted colleague who will be much missed. I wish her well with all her future adventures.' She supported that year group and helped them to navigate the wild sea that is growing up. She was a role model for them giving them countless pieces of life advice and wisdom. I am sure the final piece of advice she gave them at their Summer Ball back in June of 2023 will resonate with them forever: 'If you can't be good, be good at it!'

Always the adventurer, the time came when trotting up Scottish Munros was no longer sufficient to satisfy her need to explore, so she set her sights on pastures new. I am sure she will be welcomed by both staff and pupils at her new school in New Zealand, though she will be greatly missed by all of us here at Dollar Academy.

Hazel Duncan



LEWIS TOD

Lewis joined the Mathematics Department in August 2021, fresh from completing his probationer year. Known affectionately to Form I as ‘The Harry Potter Teacher’ he quickly settled into the department and, during his time at Dollar, he has taught across the full age range. Arguably the best-dressed member of the department with immaculately wrinkle-free socks, Lewis sets a high standard both sartorially and pedagogically. He is rarely seen without at least two teaching and learning books in hand and is a reliable source of brilliant if, sometimes, surprising ideas. He is endlessly creative, careful, and thoughtful; he has kept the department on its toes with novel approaches and methods to analyse, debate and try—most recently a highly visual ‘exploding dots’ approach to balancing and solving equations! Many of us approach cover lessons in his room with some trepidation, as we never know quite which seating arrangement will be in vogue that week!

Lewis is a foundational member of the Learning and Teaching Policy Group and here, again, his knowledge of current educational literature has been a huge asset. During his time at Dollar, he has taken the lead on competitions, coordinating the UKMT and Scottish Mathematical Challenges and taking a team of Form III and IV students to compete in the annual Enterprising Mathematics Competition, qualifying for the finals in 2023. In addition to teaching, in the 2022–23 session Lewis set up Dollar’s first ever E-Sports Club. The club took part in the British E-Sport Student Championships, and one team even reached the final sixteen, an incredible achievement for their first year. He has also coached football; this season the team were unbeaten in the group stage, winning every game to qualify



for the 2024 quarter-finals. He has been a valued member of the boarding team as a Tutor in McNabb & Tait and will be hugely missed on a Wednesday evening.

Lewis leaves us to take up a new position at Linlithgow Academy. As a department we will miss his exceptional good nature, his willingness to be teased and his reliable ability to find the perfect GIF for any situation. We wish him all the very best for this exciting next step in his teaching career.

Rose Chamberlain



HANNAH YOUNG

Nine years ago, Hannah joined a department on the cusp of transformation and, ever since, transformation has been very much her guiding motif. An experienced teacher, she had spent most of her working life in Edinburgh and the commute, in her early Dollar days, was not always an easy obstacle to overcome. Nonetheless, relocating her family to Dollar allowed her to construct the base on which her career here would flourish. She came primarily as a teacher of History, exhibiting passion and insight across a whole range of topics—having taught Higher, Advanced Higher, A Level and IB—and this expertise was readily put to use within the department. Her pupils very quickly got used to her impressively high standards, rigorous interrogation of texts, a never-ending emphasis on extending vocabulary and a constant clarion call for bibliophilia. These core values were unrelentingly instilled into all those who sat before her.

Very quickly, however, this teacher of History was tasked with developing Modern Studies courses for all year groups, with stepping in to create Form VI modules and, most importantly, with creating content for Higher Politics (both in the classroom and online). These tasks were always met with the same level of enthusiasm and forensic focus; no academic stone was left unturned and every classroom-ready document was designed to the highest degree. Presentation was never more important than content, but it was always a vital part of the Hannah Young process. All of this pedagogical industry simply underlined her intellectual curiosity, her genuine passion for the subjects she taught, and her unstinting belief that we should do all we can to prepare our charges for life beyond the Dollar campus.

Hannah was also, therefore, active in her roles outside the classroom. She was key to the departmental trips to London, to the battlefields of the Western Front, to Russia and—most memorably—to Vietnam. She was always pushing and cajoling our pupils to appreciate their surroundings, to drink in the experiences they were being offered; at the same time, she always had enough energy to contextualise the trip in its political and historical reality. She also, singlehandedly,

constructed the Politics and International Relations Society, which became a Monday lunchtime staple and saw a whole raft of media and political figures dropping in to P06 to enlighten, fascinate and challenge our pupils. The sheer number of Dollar candidates for IR at our top universities is perhaps her most impressive legacy.

In the end, it is this motif—this desire to challenge, embrace and change our pupils' futures—a genuine transformative force—that is the shape she leaves behind. We all wish her well in the challenges ahead in her new role, beyond the classroom, but look forward to hearing of her undoubted successes.

Neil McFadyean

FIDA Contributions

In addition to her contributions to the History and Modern Studies Department, Hannah was integral to the success of FIDA – the Futures Institute at Dollar Academy. She was involved since its inception, building and delivering a number of online courses including Higher Politics. Twenty-one pupils have accessed the course directly through FIDA, and with Hannah's expert support, more than 90% achieved an A grade; a further cohort have studied the course this year. In addition, a number of other schools have been enabled to run Higher Politics thanks to Hannah's excellent online resources and in-person support. The Head of Modern Studies at one such school, a secondary in Dundee, described the resources as 'an absolute godsend' and the support 'immeasurable'; while a pupil from Elgin commented 'I really appreciate the fact that it's possible to study Higher Politics online, as it is a subject that fascinates me but I couldn't study it at my school.' The opportunity to broaden their range of subjects has made an enormous impact on young people's lives, with several students going on to study Politics and related subjects at university.

The core of FIDA's activity, however, is not SQA courses, but an innovative set of Global Challenge projects that involve learning in a different way. Each project poses a real-world problem rooted in the UN Sustainable Development Goals and involves young people devising an original solution through a process of research, creative thinking, testing, and adapting. From geopolitics to millinery, Hannah drew imaginatively upon her many areas of expertise to develop FIDA projects that challenge and inspire young people to learn and engage with the world beyond school. A natural innovator with a keen interest in the science of learning, Hannah also, this year, made an exceptional contribution to the development of a new national qualification: the FIDA Sustainability Diploma. Drawing upon her background in instructional design, she produced key elements of this ambitious course, working with impressive speed and commitment to ensure the qualification will be ready to launch in the 2024-25 session. Her contribution to all FIDA's endeavours will be greatly missed.

Jackie Smith



ANDREW MCGLEN

Andrew was delighted to join Dollar Academy in November 2023 as Head of Computing Science. Originally from Newcastle upon Tyne, he initially studied for his BA (Hons) in Economics at Northumbria University before moving on to Warwick University to complete his Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) in Business and Economics.

On completion of his PGCE, Andrew moved to Edinburgh in 2007 to set up home with his wife-to-be and embark upon his teaching career—first at Dunbar Grammar School and then Musselburgh Grammar School. During this time Andrew continued his studies by completing a BSc (Hons) in Computing & IT (part-time) with the Open University.

In 2016 he moved to Linlithgow Academy where, in addition to teaching Computing Science and Business Education, he became the school's Young Enterprise Coordinator and Principal Teacher of Digital Transformation.

He is extremely passionate about the subjects that he teaches and eagerly promotes their importance and relevance to future work, life, and learning. He is particularly determined to encourage more female pupils to study Computing Science at senior level and beyond.

Outside of school life, Andrew enjoys travelling with his young family, running, football, cricket and, when time permits, playing the occasional round of golf.

Andrew has really enjoyed his initial terms at Dollar Academy, and he speaks very highly of the warm welcome and support he has received from staff and pupils alike. He is very much looking forward to further enhancing the Computing Science Department, contributing to the wider school community, and developing links with the local community and local organisations.



CLAIRE NEWHAM

Claire joined the Computing Science Department in November last year. Having previously worked at Strathallan School and The Community School of Auchterarder, she was drawn to Dollar Academy because of its welcoming and friendly atmosphere and its extensive co-curricular programme. Originally from Glasgow, where she received her BSc (Hons) in Computing Science, Claire moved to Perthshire to be part of the boarding community at Strathallan School; she took on the role of Head of Netball whilst there, being a former player herself. And it was at Strathallan that she met her husband, a fellow teacher.

Outside of school, Claire likes spending time outdoors and keeping fit. Her biggest passion is dogs, and she recently adopted a rescue puppy. Together, they are exploring the Dollar area and the wider Scottish countryside, having lots of adventures along the way. When not in her wellies, she likes to put on her cowboy boots and head off to country music gigs both in the UK and in Nashville.

Claire has thoroughly enjoyed her first term at Dollar, and has embraced all the experiences it has to offer, both in the classroom and outside of it. She has enjoyed getting to know the pupils and staff alike, and she is looking forward to life in the Computing Science Department with her new colleagues and to participating further in the wider Dollar community.



DAVID YEAMAN

David joined the school as a teacher in the Chemistry Department in January. Dollar had always been on his radar (both as a teacher and parent): a big independent school, beautifully located, with a focus on academic performance and boasting a distinguished team of chemists. His career began at Merchiston in 2010 where he taught Chemistry and Physics and spearheaded the Golf Academy. He was fortunate to work with some exceptional teachers, giving an excellent start to his career. The arrival of twins, James and Alex, in 2012 precipitated a move to a more spacious location. A Head of Chemistry post at Strathallan School followed in 2014. David moved his family onsite, giving the boys more room to roam. The twins had a great early childhood at Strathallan, while David and his partner, Ami, made lifelong friends. A daughter, Emily, arrived in 2016, and Ami took up a part-time post at Kilgraston School in 2018 after four years of full-time parenting. With two teaching timetables and a six-day week, another move seemed in order; in 2021, he persuaded Kinross High School to take him on as a Chemistry teacher. Though he enjoyed teaching

outwith the independent sector at Kinross, David was drawn to Dollar for two reasons: the prospect of working with David Lumsden and his fantastic Chemistry Department. He is also delighted that his sons will join Dollar Academy next session. His first term here has been busy but entirely positive, thanks to all the teachers, pupils and parents who have already made him feel so welcome.



ARGYLL

As the final term of the year approaches and exams begin to loom over us, we have been reflecting on what an incredible year it's been for us Argyll girls. From artistic ventures like pottery painting to more active trips like go-karting and Topgolf, we are truly making every moment we have left with each other count. We have also been celebrating each other's cultures more than ever! Thanks to Sherry L. (Form VI) and Mrs Cecilia Wei, we all had an incredible night exploring Chinese cuisine for Chinese New Year. Moreover, we were blessed with Spanish food and traditional celebrations for the Fallas festival. *Muchas gracias* Alicia V.-S. (Form VI), and Alba Ontin (our Spanish Language Assistant) for the eventful night.

We were privileged to welcome 13 newcomers to the Argyll family this year. The youngest members of the house bring lots of energy and an element of delightful chaos to boarding life. They never fail to make us laugh, but they also keep us on our toes with their spontaneous comebacks and constant trouble making. Our Form

IV pupils are small in number but a crucial part of the House, as they bring lots of enthusiasm to every activity. Most of our newcomers this year were Form V pupils—and they are all strong personalities. Selma L. and Antonia A. have brought passion and excitement to the House with their immense commitment to their values and beliefs. Chiara K. and Linda S. have brought balance with their sense of calm and their direct opinions when offering advice. The genius of the year, Natalie Y. (Form V) is a friend you can rely upon and someone you want on your team when Quiz Night comes around! Finally, Kate F. and Una L. are the iconic duo: a force to be reckoned with. And you will never see just one of them, as they come as a pair.

Moving onto our Form VI pupils...even in March, we have already begun to say our farewells to Dollar and cast a backward eye upon our time here. Boarding has played a massive part in our lives; it is a huge part of where we are today and where we are going next—and we are going to some impressive places. Hannah R. and Luiza M. are going to the States, while Melisa G. and Sherry L. are continuing their studies down south. Anastasia I.

is going to Italy (don't join the Italian mafia!) to study Computing Science, while Kamila S. is going to pursue a career in Medicine. Alicia V.-S. is going to Spain to study Psychology and Emma W. is going to play cricket in Australia and also continue her studies in Loughborough.

We have all thoroughly enjoyed our time here and we will treasure the time we have left in Argyll no matter what lies ahead of us. When each of us joined Dollar, we had no idea how much of a big part of our lives these years would be, but now we can't imagine not having experienced life in Argyll. Above all, we cannot imagine life without the friendships we have made here.

So, for the last time: once an Argyll girl, always an Argyll girl.

Melisa G. (Form VI, Head of House) and Hannah R. (Form VI, Deputy Head of House)



HEYWORTH

Heyworth House has been as busy as ever this year, with activities ranging from ice skating, watching live sport and going to the panto in Glasgow. There was an amazingly wide range of skating skills on display that day—from Beáta K.'s (Form VI) expertise on the ice to the beginners who clung cautiously to the boards—but everyone had a fantastic time. We grabbed burgers from Five Guys afterward, and that outing offered a great opportunity to hang out with all the other boarders away from school. A few weeks later, Paula B. (Form V), Liv A. and Beatrix C. (both Form IV) visited the Edinburgh Christmas Markets, navigating the bustling stalls, seeking out delicious crêpes and warm scarves to stay cosy. We later headed back again to Edinburgh to experience the Christmas at the Botanics light show. Laurie S. (Form VI) and Mariia P. (Form VI), especially, enjoyed seeing the Gardens transformed by a dazzling display of lights. The annual Boarders' Ceilidh let us show off our dancing skills in an event that brought the whole boarding community together for a

lovely night. To mark the end of that term and bid farewell to those leaving the House, we had dinner at Pizza Express and a night of party games. We also welcomed our newcomer: Alice A. (Form III), who joined us all the way from sunny Australia. Alice has been very sweet, bringing a laidback energy to the House (and never missing a *Love Island* night.)

In January, Sadie S., Prairie G. and Katarina M. (all Form VI) set off to Glasgow to celebrate the Chinese New Year; they enjoyed a traditional dinner before sharing their talents in karaoke with a handful of unlucky members from the other boarding houses! We were also fortunate enough to score tickets to the Scotland v England Six Nations game at Murrayfield where (almost) the entire House cheered for Scotland. A visit to Topgolf gave Jette P. (Form V) her time to shine—no surprise, considering her role on the Dollar golf team—but it was Hestia F. (Form VI) who really impressed. Aideen M. (Form VI) made everyone proud as a member of the 1st XI hockey team during the Cup final; she and the

team bagged an exhilarating 3–2 win. After that, we headed to the Everyman Cinema in Edinburgh for a private screening of *The Holdovers*, which Lily F. (Form V) thoroughly enjoyed.

Alongside the fun hours and outings, the second term also provided an opportunity for us all to work hard, to focus on coursework and to polish up dissertations before the upcoming exams. It has certainly been a busy year in Heyworth, and we are hugely grateful to Nicola, Rebekah, Karine, and Liz (Assistant House Staff) for all that they do and to our House Tutors, for their regular visits.

Laurie S. (Head of House) and Sadie S. (Deputy Head of House)



McNABB & TAIT

Boarding school life at McNabb & Tait is always full of excitement—and the last several months have been no exception. Just before Christmas, we were ready for a busy time; the calendar was full of festive celebrations. We decorated the House with Christmas lights, posters and a beautiful Christmas tree, creating a very festive atmosphere. During Christmas Dance season, every boy shows off his Scottish dancing prowess—honed by Mr Baird’s fine instruction and coaching. The McNabb & Tait Christmas Party followed, one of the highlights of the year. There was a huge buffet with an incredible range of food, and we spent the evening playing games, opening presents handed out by Santa and, most importantly, performing our legendary House plays: a yearly tradition. We went to the pantomime, a yearly tradition, with the whole boarding community; this year it was *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. The panto, a uniquely British tradition, is often an entirely new experience for our boys from abroad. The Boarders

Christmas Dinner rounded off the season; the whole boarding community came together in celebration before departing on holiday. The dinner was followed by the Boarders Ceilidh and the legendary House Turns, in which every House must perform an act. After having practised endlessly, sacrificing all our free time for weeks beforehand, I am very glad to announce that we carried the House Turn trophy back to McNabb & Tait following our brilliant rendition of our original composition: ‘My Name’s Ben’. Preparing for and then performing the House Turn was a great bonding opportunity for everyone in McNabb & Tait.

After returning from the Christmas break, the seniors in the House launched straight into prelims, but we undertook a few fun trips to take our minds off revision occasionally. Some of the best-loved trips of the year were going to Topgolf in Glasgow with the Argyll and Heyworth boarders, and attending the England v Scotland Six Nations rugby match at Murrayfield.

That was an unforgettable experience, especially for all those from abroad who had never seen a rugby game live before. The paintballing trip was another favourite! Though it was rainy and muddy, it was incredibly fun for everyone—a very special experience. We also went to support the 1st XI hockey team in the Scottish Cup final against Edinburgh Academy. That was great fun—not least watching the girls win the Cup with a last-minute goal.

As always, the boys in McNabb & Tait support each other whenever possible. Many boys went to support Konstantin K. (Form V) at the Young Musician of the Year Competition and at the James Bond fundraising concert, in which he was invited to play with the professional orchestra. We also had many boarders support us during football matches in which Hal S. (Form IV), Oskar B. (Form V), and I [Toni V., (Form VI)] played. And many boys also went to support Hamish W., Ollie F. (both Form V), and Leo W. (Form VI) in their rugby matches, demonstrating

the powerful support we offer each other in McNabb & Tait.

Sadly, we have also had to say goodbye to some of our House Tutors recently, but we took the opportunity to celebrate their last nights with us before they left. Mr Greg Brown resigned as a Tutor in December (though he has not left the school), and we marked his departure with a nice chat over tea and biscuits and a final game of football. Luckily we still get to catch up with him around school, but his absence on Thursday nights has not gone unnoticed. Mr Lewis Tod also left us at the end of second term, as he is going on to teach at a new school. We are incredibly sad to see him leave and cannot put into words what he has brought to McNabb & Tait over the last eight months; we would like to wish him all the best at his new school. Lastly, Mr Graham Oliver will be leaving us at the end of the year to become the new Houseparent of Heyworth. Nonetheless, the boys are glad to see that he is staying within the boarding community, and we wish him and his family the best in his new post.

As the year comes to a close we can only look back and realise that we have had a lot of fun in McNabb

& Tait over this last school year. We achieved a good balance between studying and school work on the one hand, whilst enjoying all that boarding life has to offer on the other— creating new memories with one another all the time. As I write, we are all eager to see what the last few weeks of the year will bring as the days grow longer and the weather brings more sunshine.

Antonio V. (Form VI, Head of House)



THE PREP NATIVITY: Superstar!

Prep 1, 2 and 3 pupils dazzled audiences on Thursday 7 December with two sold-out performances of the Nativity show *Superstar!* in the Gibson Auditorium, the culmination of weeks of demanding work. The children performed brilliantly: singing, dancing and acting their hearts out.

In this play within a play, the Superstar guides the other characters to the manger; from Herod's Palace, they follow the dusty roads to Bethlehem before finally arriving at the stable itself where many excited animals try to glimpse the baby in the manger.

Prep 3 pupils stepped into the starring roles with aplomb. This Nativity play incorporates many musical styles and many different roles (from a class teacher to three wise men and their apprentices). Learning the volume of lines, songs and acting directions required for any Nativity is no mean feat, but every pupil in this year group rose to the challenge and should be proud of what they achieved.

Our youngest members of the school, Prep 1, experienced the joys of a Nativity play for the very first time. They worked incredibly hard, listened well in every rehearsal and sang beautifully. Their poignant and moving rendition of the song 'Superstar' was a highlight of the show.

In the role of Herod's courtiers and guards, our Prep 2 pupils led the song 'Wise Men from Lands Afar', complete with acting and super dancing. Throughout the rehearsals they had worked hard, and this was evident in their performance. The starring roles in next year's Nativity play will be in safe hands.

Putting on a performance of this standard is a team effort. The Prep 1 and 2 teachers must be thanked for the support they offered to Mrs Monika Harewood and me throughout the process—not least, we owe a great deal to our fabulous Prep School teaching assistants. The janitorial staff who set up the stage also deserve a thank you. Without their support, this show and the many rehearsals leading up to it could not have been possible.

The biggest thanks, however, go to Mrs Louise Timney and Mrs Hazel Duff from the Music Department.



Their enthusiasm in teaching the children the songs, including some difficult harmonies, is unfailing. It is no wonder that the children are always eager to go to their music lessons and perform their best. The Nativity would not run without their encouragement and support, and my gratitude is vast.

Though *Superstar!* took place in December, the children still speak of it fondly. It was a wonderful way to start the Prep School's Christmas celebrations.

Kate Cooper



PREP 5 SHOW IN A WEEK:

Disney's The Aristocats KIDS

On Monday 22 January, Prep 5 pupils closed their textbooks, put down their pencils and joined the magical world of Disney with a very special mission: to learn and perform a show in just a week. The show we chose was *Disney's The Aristocats KIDS*. Set in the heart of Paris, *The Aristocats* follows a group of elegant, high-society kittens who end up on an adventure to find their way back home to their kind millionairess with the help of the rough-and-tumble alley cat, Thomas O'Malley, and his band of singin' jazz cats.



Over the course of five days the pupils turned the auditorium into the *magnifique* streets of Paris by making props, organising costumes, and creating and painting the set. Mrs Hazel Duff put the children through their vocal paces as they tuned their voices and worked to learn the fast-paced, energetic songs. Mrs Lauren Murphy and Miss Lynette Pollock ensured that the script and choreography was in place, and Mrs Sandra Smith worked with groups throughout rehearsals to get the set and costumes just right.



The enthusiasm of the children (their smiles, laughter and energy every single day) was contagious, making it a fun week for everyone involved. It was great to see the hard work pay off as the children held a very special performance for Mrs Morrison on Thursday before delivering their final production to the Prep classes on Friday afternoon.



I couldn't be more proud of everyone involved in that week. The laughter, teamwork, creativity and musical ability that infused the Auditorium demonstrated just what the Duchess herself taught her kittens: *'It is important to have a well-rounded education. You never know when a knowledge of music might come in handy!'*



Lynette Pollock



JUNIOR 1 CANTATA: **TREASURE ISLAND**

This March, Junior 1 filled the Auditorium with joy, excitement and some fantastic music. The ever-inspiring Mrs Louise Timney organised for some solo performances before the cantata itself, and these were a roaring success. Thirteen young soloists enjoyed the opportunity to sing or play their instruments before an appreciative audience. This was followed by a voyage to Treasure Island for this year's Junior 1 cantata of the same name. The performance delivered wonderful singing and acting that had the audience smiling from ear to ear. The songs (especially 'Cheese on Toast') and the memories will live on with Junior 1 pupils (and all of the teachers involved) for many years to come!

Heather Holloway





JUNIOR SCHOOL BURNS CELEBRATIONS

The Junior School celebrated the work of Scotland's most famous poet on 23 January, the day of this year's Junior Burns Competition. The standard of the competition was high, featuring impassioned performances of 'Scots Wha Hae' and 'Address to a Haggis', as well as emotive renditions of 'Allan Water' and 'My Heart's In the Highlands'. The judges were impressed by the hard work, dramatic performances, and pupils' clear understanding of the poetry. This year's winner, Darcy K. (Junior 2) held the audience rapt during her 'Address to a Haggis' at the Junior Burns Supper, held on 25 January. Performances from Ailie G. (Junior 2) and Rosie D. (Junior 1) brought a further sense of gravitas and tradition to the event. Pupils enjoyed a serving of haggis, neeps and tatties, followed by shortbread, all washed down with some Irn-Bru. That event was a fitting celebration of the life and work of Burns.

Sophie Petrie



Reflections from the Winner: Nicky T. (J2F)

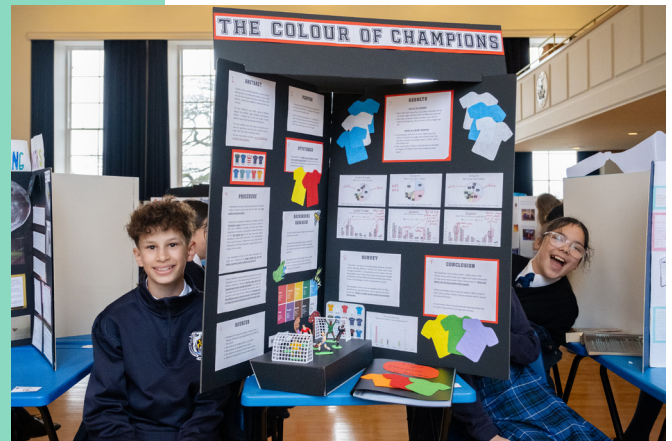
I was excited and nervous to take part in the Junior Science Fair. Having seen the standard of entries submitted in previous years, I knew that finding an original idea was going to be a challenge—but it was one I was looking forward to. I found the experimental stage—testing out my hypothesis—the most fun. I chose to evaluate whether the weight of an A4 sheet of paper would impact a paper plane’s flight range. I spent lots of time making paper planes, testing designs, creating standard flight paths, a ‘Randomizer’ and developing a foldability score.

There was excitement in the air when I arrived at the Assembly Hall with my presentation boards. As everyone set up their desks, I looked around and was awestruck by the number of outstanding projects on offer from my J2 classmates. It was inspiring. I was quite nervous waiting for the judges to make their way round the hall, but a few deep breaths—and the realisation that we were all in the same ‘ship’—made me feel at ease. The questions asked were interesting and challenging, and I was happy to discuss a topic I had enjoyed researching. When Mrs Petrie announced the winner, I was genuinely surprised and delighted.

JUNIOR SCHOOL SCIENCE FAIR 2024

The Junior Science Fair is always an eagerly anticipated date in our calendar, not least because it is an opportunity for us to celebrate the endeavour and creativity of all our young scientists. This year was no different, and the visiting judges were amazed by the high standard set by this year’s cohort. Huge thanks to everyone involved for making the event such a success.

Mike McComiskie



And From Our Runner-up: Ava H. (J2E)

I began planning my Science project back in December, along with the rest of J2. It took me a wee while to decide what I wanted to do because I didn't want to do something that was basic or that someone else might have done; I wanted to do something a little more creative. My project for the Science Fair investigated the so-called 'five-second rule', and I used the title 'Is It Safe?' I was inspired to look into this question because, almost every morning before school, I accidentally drop some cereal on the floor—and every time I wonder how much bacteria might be on it and how safe it might be to eat. It was fun to take photographs of the bacteria growing on my petri dishes every day and, whilst some of the results surprised me, my hypotheses were basically all correct! Coincidentally, the Science Fair was on my birthday (21 February), which meant that it felt like a birthday present when I was told that I had been named runner-up!





PRELOVED AT DOLLAR

As we approach the end of our first year with our new name, we are delighted to have had another fabulous session. Thanks to the help of our dedicated volunteers, we have hosted 21 sales days generating £16,000 in income. At the time of writing, we have a further seven open days before the end of term, and we hope to build upon this even further. Details of our open days can be found on the school website and on our Facebook page.

Our share of these funds goes to provide pupils, at all levels of the school, with exciting new equipment—a recent example is our provision of equipment for the new Prep School Netball Club. Further details of the projects we will have funded in this academic year will be provided in our newsletter and in the next edition of *Fortunas*.

Remember that selling your gently used, outgrown uniform with us is easy. Once you have an account, just drop off the cleaned items for sale. Once the item has sold, we transfer 80% of the sales price into your account.

We would like to offer a huge thank you to our volunteers and to all the parents who supported us this year with both stock and purchases. And don't forget, we also sell handmade Keepsake Bears (made from recycled uniforms): a perfect graduation gift.

Lee Deane



PRELOVED AT DOLLAR

PRELOVED UNIFORM AT MUCH LOVED PRICES



PSE UPDATE

This session, the Personal and Social Education Department began working with a remarkable organisation: Bold Voices (founded by Natasha Eeles). Their mission is to ensure that all young people receive an education free from gender inequality and gender-based violence.

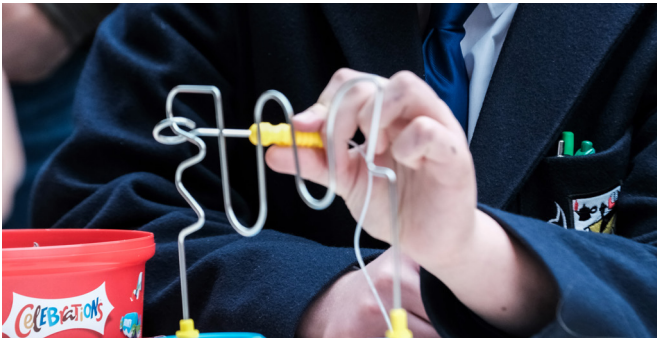
The Bold Voices team have visited us twice this year, speaking to our Form III and Form VI pupils respectively. These year groups were selected as we felt that at these points in the teenage journey many pupils are already experiencing, or are on the brink of experiencing, significant shifts within their social groups and relationships. Gender roles and expectations often play a significant role in these shifts. During the Form III talk—entitled ‘Creating Cultures of Consent’—Tash and her colleague, Anna, took us on a one-hour journey examining how our understanding of gender and our own expectations of relationships are shaped at each level of society. For example, we unpicked the stereotype (portrayed in many a romantic comedy) that male persistence will eventually be rewarded with a date or maybe even a kiss. The analysis of popular culture helps us understand how media messages can add to gendered expectations. Bold Voices made sense of an incredibly complex topic which is often over-simplified. In feedback, several pupils stated that they did feel pressure to ‘act and react in certain ways’ according to their gender.

The Form VI presentation had the same message at its core, but it was tailored to prepare pupils for what Bold Voices call ‘the Unspoken’ beyond school—namely, the horrifyingly high levels of sexual harassment and assault that exist in society, including at universities. The presenters’ inclusivity was extraordinary; the audience was led to understand and accept that everyone has a role to play in addressing gender inequality—and boys can be victims, too.

More recently, a local author, Alan Bissett (who is also concerned with gender roles and stereotypes) visited our Form IV PSE classes to discuss his recent publication, *Lads: A Guide to Respect and Consent for Teenage Boys*. Alan dealt with this topic in a humorous, sensitive and engaging way that included, rather than alienated, our ‘lads’, and he also managed to capture the attention of 180 teenagers last period on a Friday: no mean feat.

The PSE Department has hosted many other brilliant speakers this term. Fiona Spargo-Mabbs came from the Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation; Debra Barnes (author of *The Young Survivors*) helped us to mark Holocaust Memorial Day; Dr Emma Hepburn delivered a session on stress management; and a panel of faith leaders came to speak and help us to celebrate Inter Faith Week.

Katya Cunningham



SCOTLAND'S INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT CENTRE YOUNG PATHFINDERS PROGRAMME

Four of our Form III pupils (Alessia G., Harry H., Orla R. and Siena S. V.) have taken part in a programme of environmental events this session, organised through Scotland's International Environment Centre (SIEC) and the University of Stirling. Our pupils have taken part in a wide range of activities, including helping to plant around 300 trees as part of the Forth Climate Forest partnership at Gartmorn Dam (on a particularly wet day); they have also learned about biodiversity. At a Meet the Scientist event, they had the opportunity to hear from and ask questions of a number of scientists working on environmental issues. They attended an enterprise event and a careers fair, and they took part in an interesting 'debate and explore' into the world of AI and augmented reality. Pupils also competed in the Young Pathfinders Climate Competition where they presented their environmental problem and proposed solutions to a panel of judges. As a result of this, Dollar Academy has been awarded £500 from SIEC to help the Young Pathfinders put some of the ideas from their competition entry into practice.

Shona Scheuerl

FROM THE PUPILS

'I enjoyed the Young Pathfinders programme as it allowed me to learn more about local businesses and what they are doing to help our environment. I enjoyed meeting the professionals in our community who are making positive change to the planet.'

Orla R. (Form III)

'Last year I took part in the Young Pathfinders Programme, and what a year it was. From tree planting and flying high-tech drones to debates about AI, we explored a huge range of sustainable solutions and innovative ideas to support our ever-changing world. I am so grateful for this incredible opportunity to work alongside a fantastic group of people. In just a few months, I learned more about our planet than I could ever have imagined, enhanced my presenting skills, and I got to know and speak to many intriguing individuals. One of my favourite events was 'Meet the Scientist', where experts spoke to us about their amazing journeys through science and environmental studies. Everyone told inspiring stories—about treks through jungles to look at tree growth or about some new and exciting technologies to combat air pollution. We even had a climate competition at the end, through which we won £500 to put towards our sustainable solutions in the community. Overall, I had a fantastic time, and would encourage other pupils to get involved with every new possibility that comes their way.'

Siena S. V. (Form III)



NEWS FROM THE CHEMISTRY DEPARTMENT

Assignments and Projects

This school session saw the reintroduction of assessed coursework in the Science subjects at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher. Our pupils have been busy in the labs, with National 5 and Higher candidates investigating reaction rates in their Assignments. At Advanced Higher, the Project is a major piece of work, with at least 10 hours spent in D5, our Form VI Lab. Working individually, our pupils have looked at a whole host of topics, including making and analysing aspirin, benzocaine and paracetamol; using a variety of techniques to measure the alcohol content of vodka and tequila; and determining the calcium carbonate content of eggshells.

SCIS Schools Chemistry Masterclass

Staff at Heriot-Watt University generously provided a very 'hands-on' Chemistry Masterclass for five of our Higher Chemistry pupils. Alex T., Hannah C., Selma L., Sophie B.

and Xenia I. (all Form V) used specialist equipment in the undergraduate labs to make, purify and characterise an ester compound. They were able to experience distillation under reflux, fractional distillation, and I-R and NMR spectroscopy. All those present enjoyed their day out as university students!

RSC Top of the Bench National Finals

Having won the local Top of the Bench heat against 12 schools at Forth Valley College back in November 2023, our team of Amy S. (Form II), Eddie S. (Form III), Siena S. V. (Form III) and team captain, Megan C. (Form IV), pitted their wits and skills against 30 other schools from England, Northern Ireland and Wales at the Royal Society of Chemistry's National Finals, held in Scotland for the first time. The team, working in pairs at Edinburgh Napier University's laboratories, had to complete a written exam in the morning, followed by a practical assessment involving the analysis of water. While the marks were being totalled, the pupils learned about chemistry's role in water treatment from Dr Andrea Semiao from Edinburgh University. It was an intense day for the team, and while they were not placed, they really enjoyed the whole event, working alongside other talented and committed pupils and the RSC staff.

David Lumsden



WORLD BOOK DAY

It was a delightfully busy World Book Day at Dollar Academy this year. Scottish author Alan Bissett spent the day with us and gave entertaining talks to Forms I, II and III about his books and plays, the life of an author—and why, in his opinion, *Jaws* is the best film ever made!

Meanwhile, our Pre-loved Book Fair took place in the Library. It was very well attended by staff, pupils from the Prep and Junior School and senior school pupils, too. Only a few of the hundreds of donated books were left at the end, so it was very heartening to see that books haven't lost their power to excite and inspire! The remaining books were donated to charity. Thank you to all who donated and supported the fair.

Kathryn Rambaut



MODERN LANGUAGES CAROUSEL

Every March our Form VI Advanced Higher linguists have to face the somewhat daunting ordeal of a 20-minute speaking exam with an external Visiting Assessor, sent by the SQA to test and grade pupils' fluency. In preparation for this, we expose candidates to the still more daunting ordeal of our Carousel: a group of local French, German and Spanish speakers who come in and relentlessly fire questions at our candidates. If Dollar pupils can cope with that, then the actual speaking test should be a stroll in the park.

This year, we took the idea a bit further and extended the invitation to other local secondary schools. Pupils from McLaren (Callander), Wallace (Stirling), Larbert and Denny High Schools came into Dollar and joined in the 'fun'. Their accompanying teachers did not get off lightly; they were drafted in as additional inquisitors. Our classrooms were vibrant with foreign tongues.

Being a toe-in-the-water experiment, this example of Dollar outreach had a small-scale beginning. But many more schools have expressed solid interest in taking part in our Carousel next session and beyond. It is a win-win for staff and pupils from all schools involved, and we look forward to consolidating Dollar's linguistic hub status in March 2025.

At this point, it would be remiss of me not to thank the many friends of Dollar Academy who come into school and give of their time and linguistic skills to support our pupils. We have a growing list of French, German and Spanish speakers in our local community, and their input is always highly appreciated. We are not yet at the same stage in terms of Mandarin-speaking adults. However, not to be undone, Mrs Jennifer Millard ingeniously enlisted the Zoom support of employees at Edinburgh's Confucius Institute, so our twelve Mandarin candidates did not miss out on native-speaker interrogation.

Susan Rice





MANDARIN BANQUET 2024

Fifty pupils (from Forms I to VI) who study Mandarin went out for a Chinese dinner in Edinburgh this February to celebrate the arrival of the Year of the Dragon. Pupils tried out their chopsticks skills and sampled some Chinese desserts. Chinese New Year is a 15-day celebration in China, and the festive period ends on Saturday 24 February with the resplendent Lantern Festival.

Cecilia Wei

THE FORM VI PLAY: **IMMACULATE**

This year's Form VI play was undoubtedly...different from those of recent years. With a storyline and dialogue that made pupils laugh out loud (and teachers laugh behind their hands), it was an unforgettable performance. The Advanced Higher Drama class traditionally takes this production into their own hands, so we read through many unique plays and even held auditions—which the potential cast members took as seriously as contestants on *Britain's Got Talent*. After coming to a decision regarding both the play itself (*Immaculate* by Oliver Lansley) and the cast, the team got to work on what would become one of the most challenging experiences imaginable. Endless Drama periods, and hours after school were spent working on staging, lines and even finding the right teacups. Forgetting a line was far from out of the ordinary for the cast, but it was clear that they had one another's backs. One night, Daisy A. (playing Mia) forgot her line about angel wings. Some quick thinking from Alix K. (playing Gabriel) led to a mention of the weather and not being able to fly—to no avail. When this failed, Alix brought up chicken wings. Daisy still did not get the hint, responding that she, too, liked chicken wings!

Having to take on the role of actors as well as directors felt almost impossible at times, but everyone quickly learned to take the initiative. Hazel P. (playing Rebecca) more than enjoyed telling people where to go and what to say, as she sat back deciding which jeans would look best on stage. Our close attention to detail included holding heated debates about what the final line of the play should be. No one, even now, really knows who won that debate, but those and other such discussions helped to make the play a success. One of the hardest choices (one we really had to put their heads together for) was the right ringtone



for Michael's (played by George M.) phone. After much discussion, George Michael's 'Careless Whisper' was eventually chosen.

Certain characters, costumes and props also proved to be crucial elements, because who could ever forget Will T.'s first entrance (as Gary Goodman), high-fiving the audience? Or Zara M.'s entire outfit (she played Lucifer)? Or the Chorus' (played by Alicia V.-S. and Imogen I.) scrolls that definitely had nothing written on them! Or Megan F.'s final appearance (playing bartender and doctor) with two creepily realistic baby dolls. Every member of the cast presented themselves on stage

so differently, but each managed to grasp the audience's attention fully. With a play so full of arguments and shouting, you might have expected the hostilities to continue offstage, but, behind the curtains, you would only ever have found a group of people who were usually laughing more than the audience. Those two performance nights were full of excitement and fear, but none of that stopped the cast from finishing up their Domino's backstage, minutes before the show began. The Form VI Play gave rise not to just an unexpected group of actors, but to an unexpected group of friends.

Daisy A. and Hazel P. (both Form VI)

SCOTTISH SCHOOLS YOUNG WRITER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION 2024

This year, as in many previous years, Dollar Academy's English Department submitted a number of pieces to this prestigious schools' writing competition. Sometimes, there is no response at all. This year was an exceptional one in that two of our Form IV pupils reached the highly competitive shortlist stage. And when the final results were announced, we were delighted to learn that Emma Beatty (Form IV) had been 'Commended' in the competition and Paul Mackay (Form IV) had been 'Highly Commended'. The openings of their competition pieces are published opposite. You will find both pieces, published in their entirety, in the summer edition of *The Galley*. In the pages that follow, you can also read further work from both of these young authors, each of whom writes with a passion and skill that are extraordinary. We can easily imagine that you will hear more from these two writers in years to come.

The Scottish Schools Young Writer of the Year competition is organised by the Young Programme (YP) charity and this year's competition was open to pupils between the ages of 15 and 18. Pupils had to submit a non-fiction piece of between 900 and 1300 words, imagining that they were writing a feature or column for an intelligent magazine or serious newspaper. A shortlist of 11 papers was sent out to a panel of 11 judges, with no identification of author, age or school included. Each judge had to vote for their winner and two runners-up. In this high-profile competition, to reach the shortlist stage alone has been called an 'outstanding achievement'. The panel of adjudicators included Keith Aitken (journalist and broadcaster); Magnus Linklater (journalist and former newspaper editor); Sally Magnusson (broadcaster and writer) and James Robertson (writer and poet). Magnus Linklater wrote, 'A very impressive entry this year, with a wide range of subjects and some very sophisticated research.'

Heather Moore

In the following pages of the 'Literature' section, each of the authors has given permission for use of their full names. (Ed.)

HIGHLY COMMENDED: The Pre-Workout Predicament

'Slothful masses, chained to the computer chair and slaves to the comforts of the modern day, I present to you the paragons of self-mastery! Behold, the *Palestratos!*' The curtain vanishes and, in an instant, the bodies on the stage are revealed. They are meant to be beautiful. They *appear* to be strong. They seem to be posing, or at least, to be attempting to pose. But their hands, gesturing towards the heavens, won't stop twitching as if tickling the feet of Zeus as they hang from Mount Olympus, and their legs jitter until the entire stage is filled with wiggling sacks of flesh instead of athletes whose graceful stances imitate the marble statues of antiquity. What could possibly be the culprit? By the quivering feet of each 'paragon of self-mastery' sits a plastic tub of Sour Watermelon Mike and Ike Pre-Workout.

For those unacquainted with the delicacies of gym cuisine, pre-workout is a stimulating concoction usually consumed 30 to 45 minutes before a workout to combat fatigue and increase one's capacity for exertion. It's sold in a variety of forms—gummies, capsules, ready-to-drink bottles—but is most commonly found as a powder. What gives pre-workout its stirring effect? The simple answer is caffeine. An average scoop of pre-workout packs between 150 to 300 milligrams of the stuff. By comparison, a cup of coffee only contains about 100. I know, weak sauce. As if this weren't invigorating enough, many gym rats have adopted the practice of dry-scooping their pre-workout, and regardless of whether this is driven by an earnest desire for an even greater stimulus or simply to be part of a wider trend, it's a dangerous habit, with doctors warning that such high concentrations of caffeine can leave one's heart slightly too 'pumped' and on the verge of a heart attack. But if pre-workout were just extra-strength coffee, it wouldn't be as popular with teenagers as it's proven to be. What

really makes pre-workout so appealing to young buyers are its flavours.

‘Feeling like some Mike and Ike?’

‘What? No! I’m going to the gym to *enhance* my fitness.’

‘Oh, I’m sorry. I meant Mike-and-Ike-flavoured pre-workout. You want to get the best out of your workout, don’t you? You’re an athlete, after all.’

‘Hmm...I suppose you’re right. Maybe I do need some Mike and Ike.’

‘Well then, bottoms up!’

Paul Mackay (Form IV)

COMMENDED: Who Turned the Light Out?

Darkness. That’s it. That was all she saw. It was what she awoke to—brought by the bitter shrieks. It formed the broom she swept with, the dust she cleaned and the cold in her bones. It streamed from her in the tears that carried her to sleep. It was constant. It was painful. It was not what she deserved. We know this. We were told this. But we were also told of the light. The light that came pouring into her life one day. She saw it in the warmth that soothed her, the hands that held her and the love they gave her. There was so much light it blinded her. When she looked at her life, it was unrecognisable. And they gave her the light because she was good. They gave her a happy ending.

Heartwarming, they call it. Unrealistic is another word that comes to mind, but don’t let anyone hear you say it. If anyone asks, a fairytale ending is what you’re aiming for. And if you’re pure of heart, then you’ll get it. Except... how often does that happen? Hard work is another route that will guarantee success. Although, come to think of it, that doesn’t always work either. Maybe luck is the reason. Maybe society is just clinging on to that fairytale ending.

Society is unwilling to accept tragedy, and children, in particular, are shielded from it. The material they are exposed to from an early age—we’re talking Disney movies and such—enforces the idea that happy endings are guaranteed. Good will always prevail over evil. However, some tales have not always been so positive. In Hans Christian Andersen’s original 1837 tale *The Little Mermaid*, Ariel did not marry the prince as the modern animated movie depicts. Instead, the mermaid sacrifices herself, dissolving into a cloud of seafoam. Similar changes were made with tales such as *The Jungle Book* and *Tarzan*, which contribute to the unrealistic expectations children have of life—the disappointment of which will crush them when they reach adulthood. This is one reason unhappy endings are so important; they are genuine representations of the side of life that we try so hard to ignore. When, as a society, did we stop telling our children the truth?

Emma Beatty (Form IV)

‘DON’T LOCK YOUR DOOR: STORIES FROM MY GRANDFATHER’S CHILDHOOD’

‘I am a daddy’s boy,’ my Lolo (nicknamed ‘Jumbo’) confessed. He is not a talkative man, but when his eyebrows soften and his teeth clench to mark the onset of a low and raspy chuckle, one perceives the well of endless amusements locked behind his grin.

Since his birth in 1943, my grandfather’s family had been living in the relative security of a Manila hospital owned by his uncle. There, his ears were sheltered from the blasts of bombs, and the halo of the Red Cross granted him and his six siblings a refuge in which to spend their early years while the Japanese occupied the Philippines. Over two years would pass until the islands’ liberation, and until that time, Jumbo unknowingly inhabited this sanctuary bounded by the brutality of conquest.

Nevertheless, my Lolo’s family was not immune to the disruptions of war. His mother was forced to sell off some land to keep them afloat, and, fortunately for Jumbo, his father’s career as a lawyer was suspended. His ‘mestizo’ skin often raised the suspicion of the Japanese, keeping him out of the courtroom and in the hospital where he tended to his adoring son. When

he wasn’t busy being a daddy’s boy, little Jumbo faintly recalls playing with his siblings, including the older and naughtier Tito Paul who would scan the sky for planes and marvel at the ensuing dog fights.

Following Japan’s defeat in August 1945, such scenes were largely a thing of the past. My grandfather heard stories of American GIs throwing chocolates as they paraded through streets of ecstatic civilians, and ironically, it was only after the war—in the classroom—that my grandpa read about the events he had lived through but couldn’t remember: “There were lots of war crimes against civilians. There was rape of young girls. They would loot rice, and if you addressed them with the wrong tone or didn’t lower your head, they would slap or beat or behead you.’ But the infant Jumbo playing with his father in the hospital was oblivious to these details.

After the rain of bombs and subsequent showering of candy, Jumbo’s family eventually moved to a house on Manila Bay, its three storeys providing ample room for the children, who now numbered thirteen, their shrieks and whoops filling the second floor. Heading to school would have supplied another headache for my great-Lola, had it not been for their driver who committedly ferried the children to school and back each day. Upon their return, they would have been kindly greeted by a constabulary soldier, assigned by the government to ensure there was always someone to keep watch over the ‘incorruptible’ judge and his family inhabiting the

house. On guard in the back was an equally constant presence: a deer the family had received as a gift, and whose fur and gentle muscles were yet another object for the affection of my Lolo and his siblings. This pet was no preparation for farm life, however.

‘During summer, [Paul and I] would stay with our grandma and her sister who had a huge farm, and to keep us busy, they gave us chores.’ Paul and Jumbo spent the early morning bringing two buckets of water to the carabao and carrying back two buckets of milk to the kitchen where the helpers would boil it in preparation for breakfast. ‘Oh, that’s good,’ my Lolo remarked with a smile. ‘It’s very thick.’ With their toils completed, Jumbo and his brothers, the ‘city boys’, wandered off to savour the freedom of the province with their cousins. ‘We could go hunting; we could go fishing; we could go boating, and the older cousins would be mentoring us on how to do things... They even taught me how to swim.’

Asolemn day it must have been each year for Jumbo when he would have the wild, roaming independence of the province exchanged for the fenced and guarded yards of Manila Bay. Their house was only 50 metres from the Philippine Navy Headquarters, but, unsurprisingly, the beach was of greater interest to young Jumbo. He and his friends would swim daily, splashing about in the same cove that had seen the arrival of Spanish, British, American, and Japanese ships through centuries of battle and subjugation. By twilight he would sit, his hair slick

and cool from the Pacific, and hear the bugles softly sing their Taps, strangely mourning the dead from a distance: the dead who saved him in his infancy, whose cries he could not hear from the hospital, who were so close and yet so far away. 'As a child,' my Lolo explained, 'it's normal to be acting the innocent life that you are exposed to.'

Jumbo was ten years old when the sound of a gunshot seized the air. The deer had escaped, jumped over the fence. 'The guard at the house tried to catch it but couldn't...so he shot the deer, and the house boy and the security guard butchered it and ate it. We felt sad, but...I think I ate part of it, too,' my grandpa stated plainly and, thankfully, without the fondness with which he recalled the taste of carabao milk.

In his eleventh summer, Jumbo was at the farm once again, this time assisting the supervisor during harvest time. Standing among the verdant fields and bracing waters he so delighted in, he witnessed the division of produce between farmer and owner. 'For every five measures, one part went to the tenant and four to the landowner. I thought it was unfair that the ones who were really in need were not getting what was due.' But, being a child, there was not much he could change.

'We have to go to Manila right away.' It was early in the morning of Jumbo's eldest sister's 24th birthday, and at home, his family prepared to celebrate. It was summer, but at 17, he had outgrown the farm and was staying with his aunt in Angeles, listening to

the radio when it abruptly cut out, and his aunt beckoned him to the car. The drive home was silent. When they arrived, there was no longer a home, only ashes, press, and police. Arson, they suspected. On several occasions, my Lolo's 'incorruptible' father had refused bribes from politicians seeking his favour and crime lords whose cases he was judging. 'Please leave this house right now,' Tito Paul still hears his father's voice. 'If I accepted that money, I wouldn't be able to look at myself in the mirror again.'

Awoken by the flames on the night of the fire, Tito Alex rushed up the spiral staircase to his parents' room, but the handle wouldn't budge. By morning, only six of the thirteen children had survived the inferno.

A few miles from the bay in Makati, my mother and her sister were laughing, getting ready for bedtime. Each night, their father walked through the second floor to tuck his five children into bed, stopping at each room and trying the doorknob. 'Don't lock your door; don't lock your door.' My mother and aunt were too young to understand. Until their mother explained years later, they did not hear the waves on the beach the night fire consumed their father's house, the silence in the car from Angeles to Manila, the 19-gun salute at their grandfather's funeral, the extinguished happy memories locked behind the gentle voice that urged, 'Don't lock your door; don't lock your door.'

Paul Mackay (Form IV)

PLEASE LOOK AFTER THIS DEMON

‘Aww!’

That was their first reaction. Mine was to scream at the top of my lungs, bundle them into my arms and bolt upstream in the other direction. It seems their apples fell quite some distance from my tree. Unfortunately, I was in my third trimester of growing another apple, which made fleeing from impending doom a rather difficult task; I set my two troublemakers down on a fallen log while I caught my breath.

‘Mummy! We can’t leave it there. It’s hurt!’ insisted Sandy. Maybe I should have been proud that my little boy had such a big heart, but my brain was still trying to process what in the world it had just seen.

This is ridiculous, I thought, monsters don’t exist.

But... what else could it be?

‘Did you see how many eyes it had?’ shrieked Willow, the elder of the two (only by 27 minutes but I doubt she’ll ever let her brother forget it), at the top of her lungs. She had a passion for all things creepy crawly, and it seemed that whatever that bloody bundle of fur with way too many eyeballs was had been sorted into that category. She was practically squiggling out of her skin with excitement. Both children were looking up at me with those big, pleading eyes they’d spent five years perfecting—fortunately, I’d also had five years to build up immunity.

‘No,’ I stated firmly, they would not break me... their eyes widened.

Soon I was standing with a twin on either side of me, holding tightly onto their wee hands for fear they would get too close to the...the...thing? It looked like a supersized cross between a spider and some sort of rodent that lived under the floorboards. Whatever it was, it seemed pretty beaten up. It lay with its grotesque head the size of a basketball on the pebbled beach, while the remainder of its body rested in the shaded river that ran behind our house. The water surrounding it was clouded with blood, and I could see several cuts on its snout that desperately needed cleaning. It looked like the poor thing had broken a limb too; the fuzzy black appendage was poking out at an awkward angle and some of the webbing was torn.

Wait, it has wings! What in hell’s name is this creature?

A tug on my arm brought me back to my senses. Sandy was on the brink of tears as he tried to reassure it that everything would be alright through his sniffles. Willow, on the other hand, was about to explode, jumping up and down and babbling about how cool this was. The creature just blinked—with all twenty-two eyes according to Willow—at me. A forked tongue flickered over its lips. I supposed (if you squinted *really* hard) it was sort of cute.

Sighing, I told the twins, ‘Go get your dad. Tell him to bring the wheelbarrow.’

I waited on a convenient mossy rock, pondering the absurdity of the situation. At least it wasn’t tourist season; those Nessie hunters cause enough problems as it is, we don’t need to add any more fuel to their fire.

Soon, Sandy came barrelling back down the muddy path. I cringed; he was going to break his neck one of these days. I scooped him up onto my lap as he informed me that Willow was helping their dad, assuring me they’d be here any second now. I doubted locating the wheelbarrow would be a speedy process; my husband has the memory of a goldfish when it comes to misplaced objects. He insists that it’s the river’s fault – given it has significantly worsened since we moved – as if it flows from the Lethe itself rather than the Ness. Sandy then began an extensive and vividly detailed description of the creature—for the unborn baby’s benefit, given they couldn’t see it for themselves. He didn’t want them to be left out of such a monumental moment.

I spotted my husband plodding towards us in his tartan wellies, pushing Willow who was seated in the rusty wheelbarrow and smiling so widely I worried her face might split in two. When he spotted the creature, he blinked twice, shook his head, blinked again, and then seemed to accept that there was some sort of monster who happened to be lying behind our house. Clearly, the apples fell closer to his tree.

‘What do we have here then?’ he greeted, cheerfully.

‘An emergency!’ Sandy told him, urgently, leaping from my lap to drag his father closer to the wounded furball. Wincing as Willow jumped eagerly out of the makeshift ambulance—landing clumsily, but upright, in her matching wellies—I watched as she and her father waded into the river and started inspecting the damage. Well, he was

inspecting the damage—my little ball of chaos, on the other hand, thought she could best contribute by splashing around in circles.

‘How’s it looking, love?’ I asked, wondering how my quiet Saturday afternoon had turned into a rescue mission. One of those rescue helicopters you see flying over the hills now and then would’ve been handy.

He hummed thoughtfully to himself. ‘Most of the wounds appear to be superficial—but it’s lost a lot of blood, and I don’t like the look of that wing. I’m no expert, but I reckon if we get it warm, dry and fed then it has a good chance of recovering.’

I sighed again, ‘We’d best get started then. Shall we?’

Eventually, we got the creature back up to the house (the steps to the garden were a devil; thank God we live in a bungalow) and deposited it into the bathtub—discovering some cloven hooves that’d been crushed beneath it in the process. Sandy rinsed off the blood while his sister told the creature all about the different bugs that were depicted in the posters on the walls—an incentive for bathtime—and pointed out her current favourites: earwigs, slaters and midges (why she’s so fond of them I’ll never know).

They looked happy tootling about, so I popped out into the hallway briefly. My husband rounded the corner with a stack of towels, dropping them in with the kids before coming to stand beside me.

‘So...’ he trailed off.

‘So...’ I repeated.

‘Are we keeping it then?’ His eyes were hopeful.

I smiled fondly, ‘We do have an old dog bed that looks big enough.’

‘And it would only be until it recovers,’ he reasoned, excitedly.

‘Besides, we can’t leave it out there to run around like a wild haggis. It’s the humane thing to do,’ I finished.

We stepped into the bathroom together. The blood was gone, and Sandy and Willow were busy drying the creature, giggling as they did. It must have felt their effort inadequate, as it began to shake itself dry like a dog. Water flew everywhere, and I screamed as the cold water hit me. Everyone else started laughing.

‘Aww!’

Emma Beatty (Form IV)

THE HALF OF IT

I think on it, and am fairly certain that I have only ever been a half-believer. Now I hate to interrupt and assume the imperative so early, and so crassly, but before your mind rushes off—catch it. The big, bad B-word is yet to be penned or pinned down itself, but even the allusion to *belief* has a funny way of delivering us to an imagined room, a beige-brown hall of sermon, pews, and order; of salvation, and damnation, and everything that exists, or doesn’t exist, in the tight vacuum between. My unfortunate condition, I’m afraid, stretches much further than these walls.

Like all things, I suppose I am best advised to start at the root of the problem, but like all things, I am never quite committed enough to digging through the mulch and worms and what feels like the earth in its enormity to find those unassuming, grotesque shoots. I prefer, instead, to chip away at the abstract until the answer reveals itself to me like a statue of Marpesian marble, imposing and weightier than my unrefined scale can tell. The beginnings of childhood, though now frayed in my memory, seem as likely a place as any to start.

Of course, that period is the time of innocence and curiosity and tentative steps; one foot in front of the other. It’s the age of standing, falling, faltering, and growing, until we wonder whether we are the same person at all, changed

part by part like Theseus' most awkward, floundering battleship. Childhood's most proud and polished trophy, however, is surely its ownership of the little inch-thick window we are allotted within which, we have the ability, the right, to believe most eagerly and unapologetically in whatever we so choose. It's basic, lawless, though that's not to say desolate; it's the much-dreamed frontier life, where cracked yokes of logic and feasibility are not yet tough enough to rein in any child's convictions. It would seem, somewhere along the line, I missed that window (or it missed me; the edges of the sill are so hazy to me now, the PVC casing so porous, that I can't be sure) and I find myself here, writing with one hand as the other is still shooting at the glass.

My efforts to find the stem of the issue turn up fruitless and futile, as is customary. Perhaps I only half believe that there is a single point that can be blamed, faulted, condemned for my loss of faith in the world—the extraordinary, even the ordinary—around me. Perhaps I just don't want to believe this deficiency—of belief, of faith too, knotted and snarled together despite my determination to deal with them in isolation—is one that has always been festering within me. A newspaper clipping comes to mind, title startlingly bold in both its print and content. *The New York Times*, 19 October, Carl Zimmer writes under the 'Matter' section:

'After This Fungus Turns Ants into Zombies, Their Bodies Explode'

Here's how it goes: every so often, an ant will either be too ignorant or too believing in the world (if there's a difference) and step on a callous little fungal spore. The fungus does not take this lightly, does not forgive nor forget, and so it clings to the ant and launches an attack. Not a full-scale missile strike nor an honest-to-God outback showdown, but rather, a discreet diffusion of its troops into its unwilling, unaware host's body. As with any emigration or invasion, it takes a while to acclimatise, but it is only a matter of days of emerging and foraging and going about business as usual before the ant is half-fungus. Half, as always, is never enough, and so the fungus sends subtle signs, instructions coded in impulses, and galvanises the body of the wide-eyed ant as it is eaten away from the inside. It whispers for it to wander away from the nest and

to climb, higher, higher still, up a stalk or stem, reaching the summit just in time for every nerve to stand to attention and constrict at once in jaw-locking clarity. Seconds pass. The ant is dead and the fungus is not done yet. The victor splits through the ant's skull, a woolly, repugnant bine rising up towards the sun it does not need like a flag marking the territory it has won through deception and deceit alone, before it commits its last crime of this spectacle. The fungus bows, waits for any applause, and showers its spores onto the well-trodden trails below, falling, settling, and creating, on impact, a minefield for the next ill-fated ant; any shred of hope flees the stage that has been doused in nature's brutality, fearing a wildfire. The cycle continues.

I fear I may have been afflicted in much the same way. Belief, though generally averaging out to that halfway mark and absent when I require it most, creeps like a paralysis into my outermost limbs from time to time. Largely, it is a seemingly random Circadian rhythm it sets for itself, not nearly as regimented or calculated as the fungus, but through the haze of the phantastic and the sublime that surrounds the crux of the concept, I have picked out what appears to be a pattern. As I near the end of things, any things, my belief scrambles to raise its levels like a self-conscious sea, but quickly dissipates back into nothingness, a wispy foam barely covering the sand, as I move on to the beginning of something new. When you get to the end of something, nothing really changes, until it does, and you find yourself seeing that past through a false mirror—closer, warped, and not at all in the same hue as when you lived it. A murky blue becomes a Pantone Classic, poised and self-assured; the fleshed-out yellow of tissue exposed by childhood's wounds shifts, in the light of belief, to a pleasant *Peach Fuzz 1023*; grey takes on the shade of a fashionable misery that is characteristic, cardinal, of youth. Belief is the stage-master pulling the strings, conducting this onslaught of sickening optimism. If, and when, it gets its way, it'll be moments until even the most impervious of non-believers turn to grieve the loss of even the most harrowing stretches, simply because they are in the rear-view, veiled by the idyll of a fleeting youth.

I had never fully subscribed to the reverence that clings to this ideal of 'youth' either, which makes my fear of its loss all that more scathing. I didn't, and don't, really understand the man-made terrors posed by crow's feet and smile lines, and yes, maybe there is some submission

mixed in with the preventatives I apply every morning anyways, but being easily led is very different to being a believer. I didn't, and don't, know when the glory days, the haze, the heady fog of adventure and self-assurance and independence clouding the age of seventeen, were supposed to begin. Do I keep waiting till I feel it myself, or will some receptionist at the coming-of-age clinic tick my name and yank me from this waiting-room purgatory? The whole concept seems to me like a knotted word, of German sorts—long, contortionist, able to reveal all, in a few harsh syllables, to those who listen with some degree of fluency, or earnest faith. In this life, however, I don't speak the local tongue, nor can I will myself to believe without reservation; the concept remains wholly foreign to me. Wicked belief has worked its way into youth's very heart, instilling some false meaning in the past and snatching back any scrap of hope left with the aging years ahead, but the fact of the matter remains the same: I didn't, and don't, know how to decode, from the needlepoint of my youth, the instructions to tame my uncommitted belief, laden with a strange cynicism that wavers and surges all at once. I look, instead, to those who seem to have managed it.

We tell ourselves stories in order to live, Didion writes in *The White Album*, and I take heed, take note, mere seconds before the line is painted in tentative, translucent ink. These words begin her thirty-nine-page dissection of the slice of time that she bears ownership over, the Californian zeitgeist and the dissolution of the narratives created by, and for, herself and they do not quite end, but provide some reprieve for my condition. We tell ourselves stories in order to live, and when our belief in them starts to repeal itself, a snake forever swallowing its own tail, we writhe and bite and struggle against it (I have served this time already, believe me) until we submit, reaching a quietly lethal compromise that, till now, I'd neither felt, nor learnt the words for. It takes a second, but then the marble falls away like gossamer and the stalk shoots out of my head and it connects. In its duplicity, past its deceit, the scales balance and the halfway mark of belief transforms into a state of equilibrium, contentment, symbiosis between ant and trespasser. My realism need not be miserable, and my faith has no requisite to be all-consuming. I think on it again, and believe myself this time; my half belief is enough.

Inaya Syed (Form VI)

ONTOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS: THE CENTRALITY OF LANGUAGE, ART, AND THINKING TO HUMANITY

I recently stumbled upon an old book of Tennyson's poems. Clearing out my late grandparents' house, I spotted it amongst a small dusty pile of my grandpa's things. A near illegible inscription on the first page traces its heritage back to a bookseller in Dublin in 1862; whether it were an heirloom, or perhaps something he bought from a second-hand shop as a student at Trinity College, I'm not sure. But it got me thinking. Nobody alive today was alive when this edition was printed, nor did any of us meet Lord Tennyson himself; but I can still read his poems, and I can still learn the lessons he once sought to teach.

Some of those lessons aren't easily learned, though. The language is antiquated; the devices used, complex: but the beauty of ambiguity is that it lends itself to contrasting interpretations. Ontology is labyrinthine and tough to fathom, so it makes sense that the works which grapple with it are so too.

Many consider poetry to be the most human of our art forms. It reflects human imagination, experience, and perception; each word is carefully selected to produce a desired effect, and its rhythmic undulations reflect in miniature the rhythm present in all of us: breath, heartbeat, vitality—we are attracted to rhythm and rhyme because rhythm and rhyme constitute the repetitive, cyclical sequence that is living. Poems, words, have the power to influence, the power to change.

But who reads poems anyway? Who reads at all for that matter? Not children, is the answer. Last year, the National Literacy Trust logged the lowest level of reading enjoyment amongst children on record. Further, the BBC wrote: 'Fewer children across the UK are reading in their own time'—the figures sit at around a quarter—and that 'one in five is embarrassed to be caught with a

book.' 'Caught' with a book? Who is catching them? The Book Police? Jokes aside, this is a tragedy—and one with frightening consequences. Children do not want to read, nor do they even want to be seen with a book. Because that would be a crime.

This decline in reading is understandable. Those who used to read purely for entertainment were surely the first to drop the book and pick up the TV remote. 'Entertainment' is available now in such superfluous abundance that it is bombarding. The average individual probably subscribes to more streaming services than he or she reads books in a year, and almost certainly sees more of life through a screen than with the naked eye. (And there is little point discussing analogously the stereotypical teenage gamer, because those individuals are undergoing a peculiar evolution which is making them phenotypically more cave bat than human.) Technological entertainment is now ubiquitous, and books simply can't compete in terms of neurological stimulation. We seek dopamine, not enlightenment.

The result is, of course, that with fewer people reading, and reading less often, the quality of language and grammar is dwindling. Social media has contributed, ironically, to the demise of accurate, legible communication. The vastitude of messages we send and receive fosters laziness and abbreviation. Text slang is no issue for those who know the correct full form of the abbreviated word(s); but the same cannot be said for young people who, due to their intimate relationship with technology, are most adept at squeezing out of a sentence almost its entire grammatical and semantic accuracy. A felicitous anecdote relates to the issues arisen by the abbreviation of 'your' to 'ur'. This reduction of two letters saves young people hours of time during the hours they spend on social media but causes problems when they need to write more formally. Since 'ur' is also used as shorthand for 'you're', many get confused and use the possessive 'your' in place of the descriptive 'you're' (in itself an abbreviation). The same goes for 'whose' and 'who's', 'its' and 'it's', etc.

Educators and the education system are also at fault. There is an unthinkable disregard for the importance of language in the current Scottish education system. The Curriculum for Excellence (or Excrement, as it is often termed) assesses one's ability to regurgitate under acute time pressure, with Higher pupils, in particular, being told that they 'don't have time to think' in their exams—so they should write without really thinking. With scarcely enough time for even the fastest writers to finish the exam, the coherence and fluidity of one's response are the last things candidates are concerned about. Further, in some Highers

in particular, certain papers in the exam do not require any prior knowledge other than that of the necessary answer structure required to obtain the available marks—it is then just a race against time to complete the paper.

But this is fundamentally wrong. Most, if not all, of these examinations are in no way an exhibition of meaningful knowledge accrued, less so of intellectual ability. Writing in *The Sunday Times* a few weeks ago, Alex Massie correctly observed that the current system favours the development of skills over the acquisition of knowledge, opining '[b]ut knowledge is key to skills, because skills—such as problem-solving—are the application of knowledge'. I would take this still further and argue that the purpose of education is to make an individual a better *thinker*. Education is not about how quickly you can write something or how much you can remember on a given day: its purpose is to nurture pupils into flexible thinkers, able to absorb, consider, and synthesise complex ideas; to make independent inferences of their own; and to articulate their responses in a measured, reasoned, and thoughtful manner. Speed is not in any of those processes the goal nor the means of achieving it. Thinking takes time, and producing a well-articulated response is not helped by haste.

Worse still is the failure of all education systems in the UK to actually teach the English language and its structure. Spanish primary schoolchildren are taught structural grammar from a young age. Since Spanish is an inflected language like Latin, children must learn the correct conjugations for verbs, which specify, among other things, the person, tense, and mood. Spanish children know the endings for and have a sound understanding of the meaning of the present, present continuous, imperfect, preterit, near future, future, conditional, perfect, pluperfect, future perfect, conditional perfect, and preterit perfect tenses. They understand the functions of the indicative, subjunctive, and imperative moods; they know what the present and past participles of a verb are. The English language contains all of these structural significances and many more, but how many of its native speakers know of their existence, let alone could explain the meaning behind them? The truth is: Spanish children in primary school have a deeper understanding of language structure than most British adults. This neglect of teaching and the nationwide decline in reading are the main factors to which the degradation of the English language may be attributed.

And it's happening in higher education too. One of Scotland's oldest universities is considering suspending its modern languages courses due to financial unsustainability. In 2021, Aberdeen University accepted 67 full-time students onto a languages course; in 2023, that number had fallen to

just 27. Clearly such low demand makes offering the course inviable, but it is also indicative of a sharp decline in the perceived value of learning additional languages, and of language itself. This news comes after the discontinuation of English Literature degrees by English universities such as Sheffield Hallam following what *The Telegraph* described as a ‘Government crackdown’ on ‘low-value’ degrees—the valuation of a degree being based solely upon its economic prospects. It is forecasted that all translator positions will be redundant when language barriers are bulldozed by artificial intelligence: people won’t need to learn other languages, nor will they even need to understand the anatomy of their primary language, when omnipotent technology becomes wholly responsible for communication and transcription. And who needs an English degree other than English teachers and journalists (who can now study journalism as a discipline anyway, so it’s really just English teachers)? Education is now seen by many as a process, not a journey. What’s clear is that few people care for a language or linguistic degree anymore. Futile and fruitless, they just aren’t worth the hassle.

This is something that Benjamin Lee Whorf would, I think, be mightily concerned about. It is often said that we write how we think; that writing is a codification of our thoughts. The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis extrapolates this sentiment to state that language, grammatical structure, governs and acts as a framework for not only expression but thought itself; that language and cognition are two components of one mechanism (consciousness), and are therefore intrinsically, inseparably intertwined. Whorf himself wrote that ‘the background linguistic system (in other words, the grammar) of each language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas, the program and guide for the individual’s mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of his mental stock in trade.’ A strong case for the centrality of language to our daily lives, then.

Regardless of the hypothesis’ verisimilitude, it can be said that language is the facilitator of higher learning, and thereby (at least) influences our thinking. Wider reading is so compulsory to intellectual growth; it teaches us to consider incompatible viewpoints and to practise empathy. It is our answer to partisanship and intransigent obstinacy. To contend with multiple different lines of thought is to think with reason and with poise, to not rush to conclusions but rather to analytically compose one’s own views based on an appreciation of others’. It is also to choose amenability over obstinacy, philosophy over intransigency. But, to become flexible thinkers, we must first be receptive.

Receptivity is lost when information is one-dimensional. For there is scarcely a need to exercise critical thinking when presented with just one oracular line of information and opinion. There is certainly no need to store and retain nuggets of knowledge when we can access the Google goldmine in an instant—as the profound creators of the education system sagaciously foresaw. And there is no real requirement to understand or value foreign languages, or language itself as a communicative concept, when AI’s ability to translate renders all languages virtually homogenous. Therefore, by handing over to technology the responsibility of thinking about language—and thus, to a degree, thinking in general—we also forfeit our ability to be thoughtful and analytical; we hasten our departure from nature; and, by being constantly interconnected, we sever our most human and natural connections.

Our innate ability to express ourselves is the one thing about us that cannot be replicated, that cannot be manufactured. Though it may beat us in every other field, AI will never understand the repeating, continuous metric of having lungs that breathe and a heart that beats. Inhale, exhale; inhale, exhale: so calming in its constancy, or racing in its rapidity—but ever-present as a reminder of our existence and mortality. AI will never know what it’s like to *feel*: it can only replicate, not articulate. This is why we must not surrender to technology our ability to think and imagine, to perceive and conceive, to experience and express. Tennyson discusses the gift of art and perception in his poem *The Poet*:

‘The poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above;
Dower’d with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love.

He saw thro’ life and death, thro’ good and ill,
He saw thro’ his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,’

Poetry, a codified art form, helps us in our efforts to understand better ontology, our purpose. We are here, living, breathing, feeling, but without explanation. In our universal quest to figure out the unsolvable mystery, to discern our ‘own souls’, we must learn from those who have learnt before us, just as I may posthumously learn from Tennyson’s ‘everlasting will’ 200 years on. Art is both expressive and transformative; if, to be transformative, art must have an audience, then an individual is both actor and audience, changer and changed. Art is inexplicable,

just as it deals with the metaphysical. Through expressing, and sharing expression, we learn more about what it means to be human. Education is not a means to an end; it is a journey without destination. We will always be students—of each other, of nature, of time. Our species' learnings and thinkings are bound up in books, writings, paintings, poems, sculptures, buildings, music, stories... Art is the scaffold of the continuity of humanity. Expression is what connects us, through trouble and through time, and language is the thread which sows together the tapestry of humankind. Let's not unravel it.

Callum Campbell (Form VI)

ARTIST, OR JUST 'IST'

Michael Jackson is a name that almost everyone knows. When we think of him, his moonwalk, his striking features, or the opening riffs of 'Thriller' are what spring to mind. Despite this, his career was tainted with allegations and scepticism regarding sexual assault and child abuse investigations; these all followed him until his death in 2009. So why, even though the truth of his nauseating behaviour is universally known, does his music still surround us? On the radio, in the supermarket, streamed through our phones: his music still remains relevant even after the shocking veracity of his actions was exposed. So we must ask questions. Can we acknowledge devastating character flaws, yet still appreciate what has been created? Can we separate the art from the artist?

Many would argue no—an artist's work is too much an extension of themselves. Hence, the separation removes the meaning of the creation, and, by allowing the artist's work to remain adored, we condone their actions. This may be partly true, but there is also a clear distinction between a piece of work which might be expressive of the artist's controversial behaviours and opinions, and a piece which is untethered to them in every way other than the mind that made it. In fact, some argue that once art has been released out into the world, the artist is, in some way, irrelevant. Consider the work of Michael Jackson, J.K. Rowling, Woody Allen, Roman Polanski, Kanye

West and so many others; we would be dismissing so much art if we were put off by the actions of their creators. Ultimately, the separation of an artist from their art is not only possible, but vital.

As time passes, our scrutiny, perhaps, calms. So, does our proximity (in time) to 'crime' influence how we judge the criminal? Caravaggio, a renowned 16-century Italian artist, was known not only for the harrowing subject matter of his paintings, with their startlingly dark backgrounds, but also for being a convicted murderer. This does not deter hordes of people from gathering to admire his art, hung in galleries worldwide. The fact that he lived centuries ago may be the reason why people tend toward forgiveness of his actions, as if indulgence regarding moral transgression is hidden within the passage of time. In comparison, if a celebrated member of *modern* society slips up—drastically or minimally—the world bares its teeth with outraged cries for 'cancellation'. One example of this is the famed author of the *Harry Potter* series J.K. Rowling, whose feminist comments on Twitter left the transgender community feeling ignored and isolated. Use of the term 'cancel culture' has steadily increased in recent years, and Rowling experienced this to its full and brutal extent. Many people (without much thought or research) refused to further acknowledge the author as rumours of her 'cancellation' spread like wildfire, growing in severity with every Tweet and text. How strange that some hurtful Twitter comments

receive such a backlash when a murderer is forgiven; is it just because they are separated by centuries? We shouldn't really pick and choose: allow some to escape unscathed and uncriticised while hurling the weapon of hate against others. Ultimately, we do not have to forgive—to accept and smile and applaud—but we can make the executive and rational decision to recognise the wrongdoing and yet still read, listen to or watch, allowing for cognitive distinction within our minds.

The opposition would argue that by continuing to consume works by controversial artists we are, therefore, condoning their actions and also financially supporting them. This logic, however, carries the flawed ideology that people always associate media with its maker. For many, if not most, art is an escape. Whether listening to a song or reading novels, humans have found respite in art for millennia. Most people will consume that which they find pleasure in, thereby appearing to condone something that remains irrelevant to most. The truth is that the bigotry or abuse committed by artists does not dissipate the moment we stop buying, consuming, or acknowledging their art. Nor is the consumer any purer, more worthy or virtuous, for denying themselves that pleasure because of a self-righteous sense of morality gained from boycotting a 'tainted' piece of art. By taking note of an artist's wrongdoings, keeping them in mind while we still appreciate what they created, we manage to achieve

both acceptance and judgment, yet also enjoyment. Therefore, we must acknowledge that individual abstinence from certain artists does not bring justice or benefit anyone; it merely limits the potential for our enjoyment.

However, we must also ask the question: where does it end? If we deem one action wrong, then how do we judge all those actions that lie on the outskirts of that particular Venn diagram? Cancellation, or even the need for accountability, sits upon a slippery slope, and, since perception is individual and judgement subjective, what one person calls outrageous another may deem acceptable. There is the worry, too, that once we start, we won't know where to draw the line. And since there is no rulebook outlining what is acceptable and what is not, the separation of art from the artist brings with it a moral and societal ease.

Of course, ideas, opinions, laws, and prejudices change with time. Should we judge the offences of the past against the standards of the present? Should we acknowledge the evolution of human opinion? Furthermore, are there things that we, as a progressive society, do which will cause gasps of abhorrence in 50 years' time? Why do we think we are worthy to discern all the answers? The truth is that some actions are blatantly wrong, no matter the time period, but hindsight is a virtue, and we will always be critical of history. Art has a history almost as long as that of humans themselves: from handprints

in caves to graffiti on skyscrapers, ancient scriptures all the way to Taylor Swift's 'folklore'. Art is something we have been appreciating for millennia, and the admiration of art should not be impeded by dislike of its creator. Do we boycott the lightbulb with the news that Thomas Edison was involved in the overtly cruel murder of animals? No, we do not. Why is art any different?

The magazine *America* published these words: 'We are forced to face the troubling fact that the gods of art often use the least worthy among us to be their vessels.' This beautifully sums up the issue. Art is woven into human history; it has followed and influenced us through wars and revolutions. It is something we appreciate both actively and passively every day—something so important to our humanity that we cannot allow the actions of its 'vessels' to threaten or ruin it. So, whether it is a movie directed by an extremist, a book written by a political dogmatist, a song sung by a sex offender, or a piece of artwork created by a murderer—we must face the fact that by taking the art out from under the artist's faults and crimes, we allow ourselves unrestrained freedom to cherish and adore whatever art we desire, without the consequence of morality hanging over us.

Fundamentally, while it remains a personal decision, the separation of the art from the artist is integral to society, relevant to all, and crucial to the cultural enrichment of our lives.

Rhiannon Millar (*Form V*)



Christmas Art Exhibition



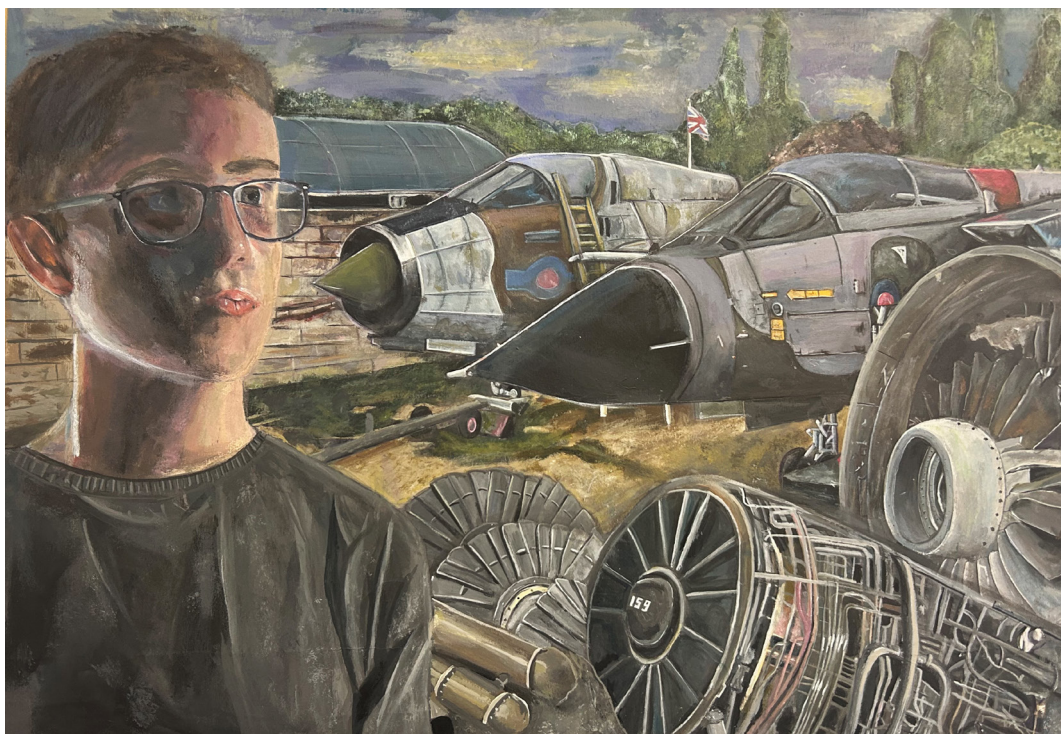




Alex T. (Form V)



Taylor H. (Form V)



Finley G. (Form V)



Oscar P. Form V



Rhiannon M. (Form V)



Leigh A. (Form IV)



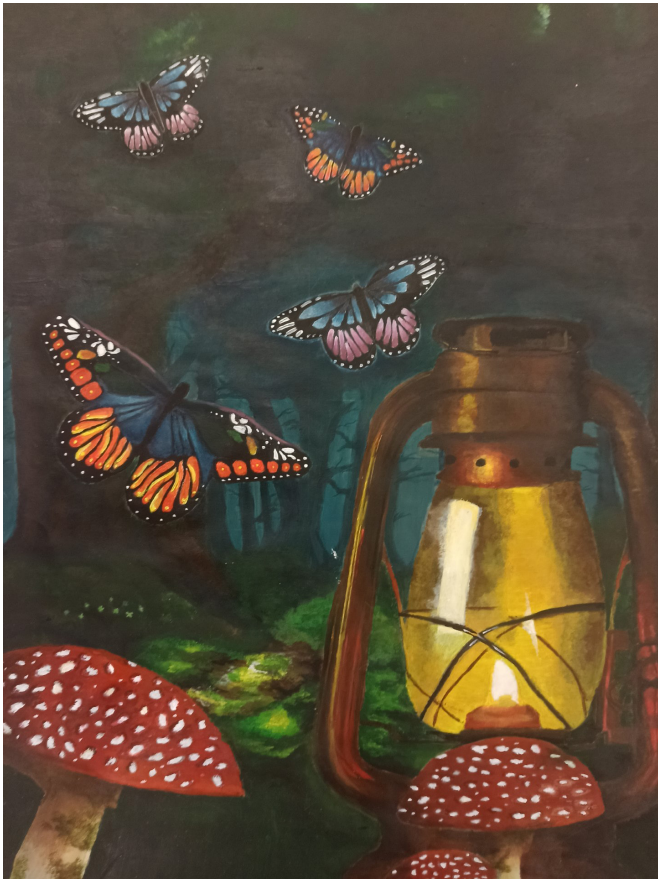
Oskar B. (Form V)



Ash H. (Form IV)



Lottie L. (Form V)



Tabitha P. (Form IV)



Maddie M.. (Form IV)



Ke (Coco) J. (Form V)

ART SCHOOL SUCCESS: A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR

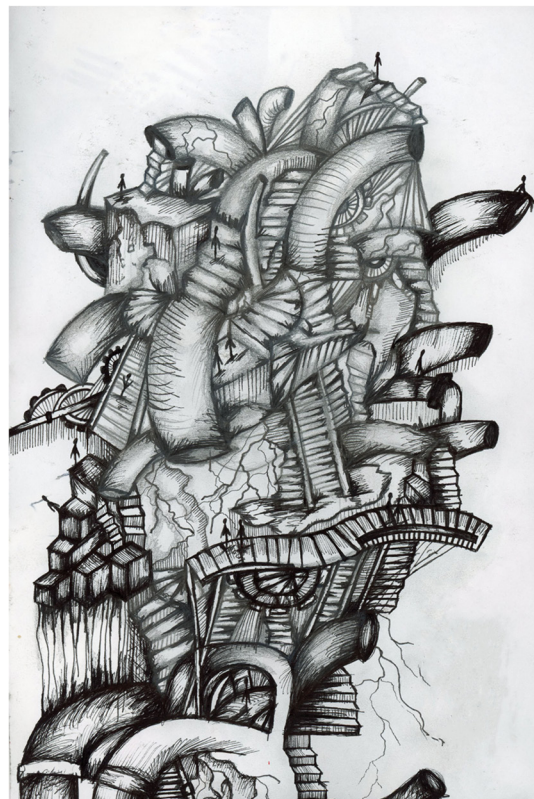
Remember the names: Laurie Smith, Molly Kelly, Nina Samuel, Mya Shiels, Rebecca Scott, Phoebe Timmons, Holly Allan, Jamie Scheuerl, Max Szapiro and Grace Edmond (all Form VI). This year's Art and Design talent has garnered an outstanding number of art school offers for some of the most prestigious courses in the country, at institutions such as Glasgow School of Art, Edinburgh College of Art, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Manchester, University of Bath, and Manchester's Institute of Fashion. At the time of writing, Dollar's art school and university applicants have amassed a staggering 48 out of 49 offers—with, we hope, more to come—in a broad spectrum of art and design disciplines, including Interior Design, Architecture, Fashion Design, Textile Design, Computer Arts, Animation, Illustration and Fine Art.

If you speak to these pupils, they will tell you that an immense investment of time and effort is required to produce the necessary quantity and quality of work. The hours spent (during classes, lunchtimes and after school) have resulted in the creation of folios that can contend with those of the best domestic and international applicants. This testifies to our pupils' ambition, drive and confidence; they are capable of making the significant leap from Higher Art & Design into Advanced Higher, there creating folios of work deemed suitable for art school.

This year we have seen fashion and textile design outcomes that demonstrate skill and flair in equal measure: architecture models borne out of exactness and precision; interior concepts that have been daring in their use of materials and assembly; art infused with risk and creative experimentation; sketchbook drawing that is both original and personal in its execution. Look inside any pupil's folio case and you will see a profusion of work in all types of media, executed using all types of equipment. And now we live in a digital world and the age of the digital folio. Consequently, we are seeing, year on year, cohorts of creatives who display an assurance and confidence in their use of technology and editing software to produce the digital folio applications that art schools now demand. Many hours have been spent photographing, uploading, editing, enhancing, arranging, refining and reorganising studio work in response to each institution's requirements. When our pupils excitedly inform us of yet another offer received, it is all worthwhile—and an endorsement that they are now heading very much in the right direction. The next stage of their creative journey is already beginning...

Fraser Muirhead

The pupils mentioned above have given permission for their full names to be used in this article. (Ed.)



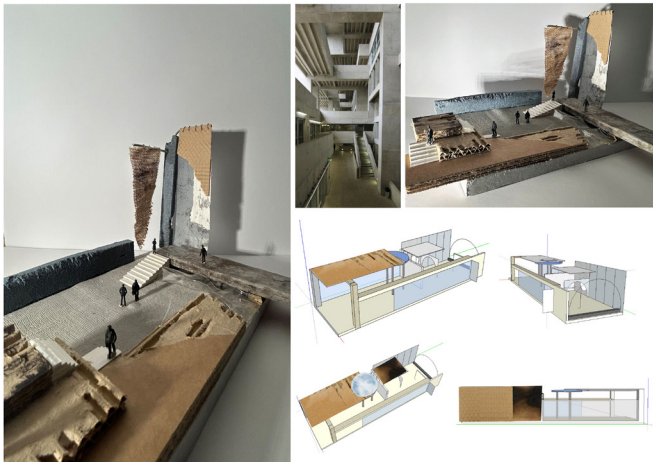
Grace E. (Form VI).



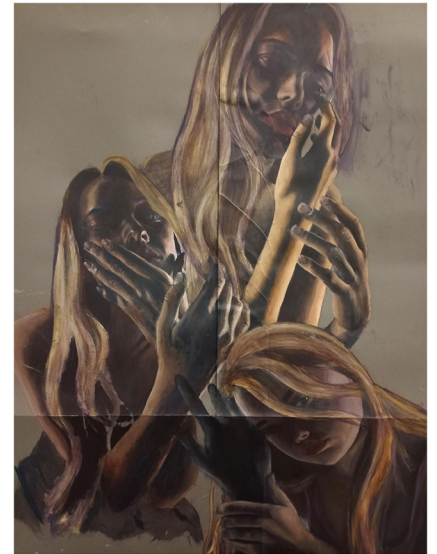
Jamie S. (Form VI).



Mya S. (Form VI)



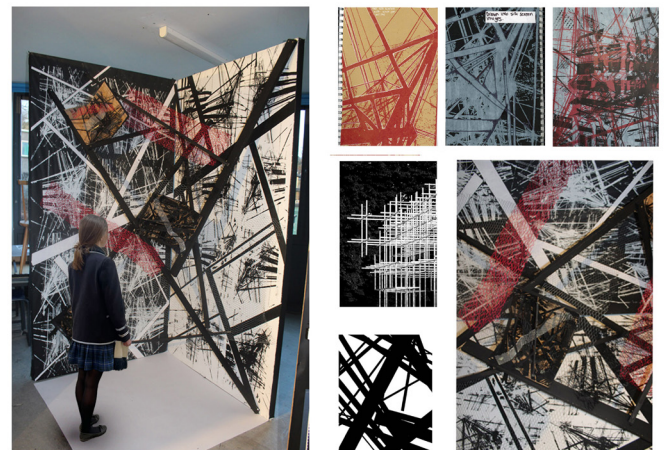
Laurie S. (Form VI)



Nina S. (Form VI)



Molly K. (Form VI)



Phoebe T. (Form VI)





CHRISTMAS CONCERT 2023

The Dollar community was pleased to be back in Edinburgh's Usher Hall for the 2023 Christmas Concert. Our last visit to this beautiful building had been in 2018 and so, for many, it was their first time performing in such an iconic concert venue. Audience members were welcomed into the building with traditional carols provided by our Brass Ensemble.

The concert began and the hall lights were dimmed to announce the arrival of eight Prep 4 pupils who led the Rector down the aisle as they sang 'Away in a Manger'. The massed choir of Prep, Junior and Senior pupils all held flickering candles as the Orchestra took over the melody and welcomed the Rector on stage to give an opening welcome.

The first half of this year's concert featured music inspired by Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. First Orchestra began with Alan Silvestri's soundtrack to the 2009

film *A Christmas Carol*. The ensemble handled this difficult orchestration well, establishing the mood for the evening. Logan M. and Natalie Y. (both Form V) narrated the tale, interspersed with musical items. Among these were: the Form I and II Choir's beautiful rendition of 'In the Bleak Midwinter' arranged by Dan Forrest; the Prep Choir's cheery 'Up On the Housetop' by Benjamin Hanby; and the Junior Choir's 'Christmas Children' by Leslie Bricusse. The Chamber Choir performed Edward Elgar's 'The Snow', accompanied sensitively by Alex P. (Form VI) and Adrian T. (Form III) on violin, and the first half ended with the massed choirs performing the well-known 'December the Twenty-Fifth' from *Scrooge the Musical* and 'God Bless Us Everyone' from Silvestri's film, encouraging the audience to clap along.

After a quick stage clear, the second half began with a stage full of brightly coloured Santa hats and Christmas tinsel. The theme for this half of the concert was 'Christmas Cheer', and our performers certainly achieved that. The Dollar Academy Jazz Orchestra (DAJO) opened with

'Winter Wonderland', featuring soloist George M. (Form VI). The Preps made everyone smile with their rendition of 'I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas', before Junior Choir offered a modern Christmas classic, 'Very Merry Christmas' by Pinkzebra. Form I and II Choir performed Kelly Clarkson's 'Underneath the Tree', before the audience had the chance to sing some carols themselves, accompanied by the Brass Ensemble. Mixed Voice Choir confidently performed an a cappella up-tempo carol 'Mary Sat a-Rockin' and Chamber Choir treated everyone to a stylish gospel arrangement of 'Away in a Manger'.

DAJO provided more Christmas favourites with Shakin' Stevens' 'Merry Christmas Everyone' with soloist Charlotte M. (Form IV), and the evening ended with their rousing version of Roy Wood's 'I Wish It Could Be Christmas Every Day', much to the delight of the audience who rose to their feet for a standing ovation. It was a truly festive celebration of Dollar Academy's talented musicians.

Louise Timney



SPRING CONCERTS

Every year, March brings the hustle and bustle of SQA practical exam preparation, but March is also concert month for the Music Department. These events offer pupils of our co-curricular groups from Prep 4 up to Form VI the opportunity to showcase their musical talents across the three concerts: the Prep and Junior Spring Celebration, the Form I and II Music Evening and the Senior Music Evening.

First on the calendar was the Form I and II concert on 14 March; that evening, our younger senior pupils entertained a delightfully full and spirited audience in the Gibson Auditorium. The Orchestra, Choir, Dollar Jazzlets, String Group, Wind Band and Flute Ensemble performed a varied repertoire, alongside solo performances from Ethan G. and Jessica C. (both Form II) and Murray M. (Form I)—the winners of our 2024 Young Musician and Singer of the Year Competition. Harriet M., Lucy M. (both Form I) and Jessica M. (Form II) led the audience in a toe-tapping Scottish dance selection as members of

the newly formed Scots Fiddle Group.

The following week, it was time for the older senior school musicians to perform. First Orchestra opened the concert with a rousing rendition of *Four Dances* by Malcolm Arnold, followed by 'Jupiter', a movement from Holst's orchestral suite, *The Planets*. Wind Band, String Ensemble, DAJO and the newly formed Double Reed Ensemble also performed with solos from Duncan K. (Form VI), Alex K. (Form VI) and Erin M. (Form V): all winners of the Senior classes of the 2024 Young Musician and Singer of the Year Competition. Both Chamber Choir and Mixed Voice Choir performed; the latter ensemble concluded the evening with the Bill Wither's classic 'Lovely Day'. Pupils were, again, delighted to perform to a full auditorium of supportive parents, friends and family.

The concert series ended with the Prep and Junior Concert on the afternoon of Monday 25 March in the Assembly Hall, featuring Prep Choir and Orchestra and Junior Choir and

Orchestra. Samantha G., Cameron U., Christian S.-V. and Zain W. (all Prep 5) opened the event with their drumming rendition of 'Scotland the Brave', while Mason S. and Magnus H. (both Prep 5), Ben B., Harvey P., Susannah M. and Beatrix R. (all Junior 2) also contributed solo items. Parents enjoyed listening to a variety of music including 'Doctor Who', 'I Want it That Way' and 'Smile' (one of the winning songs from the Prep Choir's recent appearance at the Perth Music Festival).

There was much to celebrate and enjoy throughout the entire concert series and a huge congratulations must go to all the pupils who performed.

Louise Timney and Hazel Duff



YOUNG MUSICIAN AND SINGER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

This year's Young Musician and Singer of the Year Competition attracted more than 70 Dollar pupils. Each performed on their chosen instrument or entered as a singer; some even entered in both categories. With such a huge number of performers, it was a difficult task to whittle this down for the second round and even more of a challenge to choose three pupils at each level for the final. As the talent was so abundant, the school's Music staff decided to hold two finals: one for the Foundation and Intermediate Level singers and instrumentalists as well as the Advanced Level singers, and a separate evening for the 17 instrumentalists in the Advanced class. Both finals were held in the Gibson Auditorium with an adjudicator and friends and family present. The pupils invited to the finals all performed with confidence; they certainly deserved their places and the subsequent prizes. The decision-making process was deeply challenging for both of our two adjudicators, Mrs Sarah Stewart (adjudicator for the first concert) and Mr Gavin Pettinger (adjudicator for the second concert). Each finalist received an Amazon gift voucher, and three of our senior

instrumentalists were subsequently invited to play alongside professional musicians from the Scottish Pops Orchestra in the March FIDA fundraising concert. Congratulations to all who took part. The results are below.

David Christie

Foundation

Murray M. (Form I, Voice)
Ethan G. (Form II, Piano)

Intermediate

Alex K. (Form IV, Voice)
Jessica C. (Form II, Trombone)

Advanced

Duncan K. (Form VI, Voice)
Erin M. (Form V, Flute)



CHORAL COMPETITIONS 2024

The choral tradition at Dollar is thriving. Membership in each of our five school choirs is growing by the year and currently around 400 pupils sing in at least one of our choirs. This year we took three of these choirs to participate in choral competitions. The first was for the Junior Choir; in February they travelled to the Parish Church of St Cuthbert to compete at the Edinburgh Music Festival Competition. The atmosphere on the day was joyous. Pews were virtually bursting at the seams with enthusiastic children and their teachers, and the balcony was full of families and friends who had come to watch and listen. The choir performed 'J'entends Le Moulin' by Emily Crocker, and 'Two for the Price of One', arranged by Andrew Carter. The audience were thrilled, beginning their applause before the songs had even finished. After the final choir performance, adjudicator Ms Marilynne Davies, stood up to speak to each choir about their performance. She praised Dollar for their well-blended sound and confident part-singing, as well as their energy and obvious enjoyment of singing. Narrowly missing first place (which went to Clifton Hall School), they were awarded

second place, receiving a 'Highly Commended in Class' certificate.

One week later, our Prep and Form I and II Choirs competed at the Perform in Perth competition, held at Perth Concert Hall. Prep Choir competed with two pieces in the Junior Choir Class (Primary 4 and 5): the set piece, 'Smile' by Charlie Chaplin, was followed by our own choice, 'Blame it on Brian' by Rebecca Lawrence. Adjudicator Mr Graham Dickie was most impressed by their 'clear text' and 'lovely bright sound' and awarded them first place; they received a 'First Class' certificate and the John Masterson Memorial Challenge Cup—and their success did not end there. We were contacted some two weeks later and learned that they would also receive the Arthur Bell Cup, awarded to the best primary school choir at the competition.

The Form I and II Choir rose to the occasion for their class: Choirs Up to S3. They stood confidently on stage to perform 'Hallelujah', arranged by Roger Emerson, and featuring soloists Will C., Murray M., Eve M. and Ruby



L. (all Form II); they also performed 'Gloria Festiva' by Emily Crocker. Mr Dickie was particularly impressed by the boys in the choir's changed-voice section, as well as the general blend between all three parts. Dollar was also congratulated for having such a large choir of this age group, with 90 pupils involved. Overall, he commended the choir for their sincere performance, sung with lots of detail, and awarded them a 'First Class' certificate and the Lady Juliet Scrymgeour-Wedderburn Cup.

Louise Timney





STRING DAY

This session, the Music Department offered two workshops for our instrumental pupils. Seonaid Aitken—a professional violinist, composer and radio presenter—led a day of string playing in September. Thirty-seven pupils from the Prep & Junior School and the senior school attended. Working in the Auditorium, Seonaid taught the pupils three pieces: a traditional Scottish reel, which they learned by ear using several string techniques; a jazz piece, in which the pupils improvised along to a backing track with rhythm section; and a Harry Styles pop song, arranged especially for our pupils, with differentiated parts to cater for beginner to advanced players. They performed this piece as a full string orchestra.

During lunch, Seonaid performed a short concert with Tom Gibbs, one of our other instructors, on piano. They played several jazz classics for an audience made up of pupils who had attended the String Day, as well as other Dollar staff members. The afternoon session consisted of a quick run-through before parents arrived to listen to our final performance. Seonaid introduced the concert with a talk about the many benefits of playing a musical instrument.

PIANO DAY

In January over 100 Dollar Academy piano pupils were treated to a visit from duo b!z'art: two professional pianists who specialise in the history and playing of piano duets. The musicians led a morning session in the Auditorium for our Prep pupils; they took the pupils on a magical, musical journey through fairy tales, using arrangements written for four-hands (piano duets) to accompany their adventures. The younger pupils loved the games in which they had to guess the characters from the music and identify the mood each piece created in the stories.

The afternoon session consisted of a workshop for older pupils; they were introduced to the history of piano duets and to those composers who were most prolific in writing for the instrument. Duo b!z'art demonstrated various techniques involved and offered examples of music and notations used by composers.

Louise Timney

FORM I TRIP TO HAMILTON

In the summer term, Form I pupils study musicals as part of their curricular Music classes. This offers an excellent opportunity to attend a musical, thus giving pupils deeper insight into what musical theatre is. In March, 100 of our Form I pupils attended a schools matinee performance of *Hamilton* at the Edinburgh Playhouse. There was virtually a full house, and the excitement in the theatre was palpable. I am sure the actors were delighted by the whoops and enthusiastic applause that started early and continued past the final curtain call. It was a wonderful performance, a demonstration of masterful choreography, inventive musical composition, and astounding vocal skills. Fast paced as it was, we could still hear every word of the actors as they rapped about the life of Alexander Hamilton and his impact on the history of the United States of America.

After the show, we were fortunate to attend a Q&A session with the cast and crew in the theatre. Our pupils heard from all departments: sound and lighting; backstage crew; wardrobe; front of house. Each department explained its role and even gave a demonstration of what their work involved. Did you know the *Hamilton* stage weighs the same as a Boeing 747? It also needs to be deconstructed every eight to ten weeks, packed into sixteen trucks, moved, then unpacked and re-constructed in fewer than three days! We also heard from the actors and musicians who explained just how much learning was involved, not least as they are often required to memorise the lines for multiple roles. They spoke to us, too, about what training and experience led them to their current positions. Overall, it was a powerfully enriching trip; the pupils learned a great deal and had an incredible time.

Hazel Duff



CINDERS: 'They *Shall* Go to the Ball!'

On Wednesday 13 December a few of Dollar's pupils were lucky enough to see Scottish Ballet's production of *Cinders* at the Theatre Royal in Glasgow. As we split into groups to take our seats, we admired the beauty of the theatre: the nostalgic feel of our red velvet seats, the golden twirls on the walls and, of course, the gloriously ornate chandelier. No matter how relaxing the atmosphere, nothing diminished the excitement we felt before the ballet began.

As the lights faded, our eyes fixed upon the stage: there was already a plot twist. *Cinders* was a boy! Everyone knows this classic fairytale which adheres to the typical formula of 'girl in despair, meets a boy, falls in love'. We all thought we knew exactly what lay in store. But Scottish Ballet's production twisted this around; some audiences were treated to a version with the traditional casting and other audiences watched a version with a contemporary role reversal. Interestingly, the gender of the dancer playing *Cinders* did not carry any real significance, as we rapidly forgot who was 'meant to be' playing whom, and instead became engrossed by the modern telling of this classic fairytale.

Whilst giving audiences a new perspective on familiar fairytales, the ballet also carried us into the *Cinders*



world. The outstanding costumes meant that the stage floor was covered in bursts of colour, giving the audience a rush, as if they, too, had been invited to the ball. It goes without saying that every single ballerina on the stage was impeccable. From their heads down to the very (very) tips of their toes. The choreography fashioned patterns and movement throughout the performance that elegantly painted the story of *Cinderella* for us, enhanced further through the music accompanying the flawless dancing. The musical lines, textures and sounds brought the story alive in ways that left

the audience breathless.

Unexpectedly, too, the ballet evoked floods of laughter within the audience; it was far from a stern or stereotypically serious ballet. As we filtered out of the resplendent theatre, our faces were decorated in smiles. This performance was easily loveable, effortlessly enthralling and completely wonderful.

Rhiannon M. and Anna J. (both Form V)



FORM VI BURNS SUPPER 2024

The annual Form VI Burns Supper proved itself, once again, one of the most enjoyable social events on the school calendar. The Burns Committee, led by Zoe F., had put together a first-class roster of speakers, singers and performers who kept the nearly 200 guests entertained all night. Mrs Caine, the staff host for the evening, kept the programme ticking along with aplomb, and from the first performance—George M.'s dramatic 'Address to a Haggis'—it was clear that this was going to be a vintage year. Inaya S.'s Immortal Memory speech was both scholarly and insightful, while great humour was threaded through both Will T.'s Address to the Lassies and Daisy A.'s witty and superbly paced reply. Izzy B. cleverly and thoughtfully linked Burns and his work to the current predicament of our Form VI year group and the wider school community in her Address to the School. And Mrs Alison Morrison's deeply personal reply will live long in memory. In amongst these speeches was placed a whole host of recitations and songs from Duncan K., Vanessa W., Ethan G., Kamila S. and Isla E., all of which showed the impressive array of talents to be found within this Form VI cohort. Zoe brought the whole evening to a fitting climax, thanking all those involved—with a special mention for both Miss Fiona Kelsall (who so ably accompanied the musicians on piano) and the impressive army of Form V pupils (who gave up their Monday evening to serve a very fine meal to all those in attendance).



Neil McFadyean



LESSONS FROM THE LECTERN: Reflection Upon Debating

Chairs moved into place. Judge: delivers introductions. Timer—check; paper—check; ballot—check.

Competitive debating is strange. And there's no doubt about that. Even the most proselytised of converts to the strange clique I call a 'circuit' or—when I'm feeling particularly sentimental—a 'community' are forced to acknowledge the peculiarities of our coveted pastime: the quasi-parliamentary language; the poorly informed use of undergraduate philosophical terminology; the disturbed stares in the direction of anyone who dares label themselves a scientist, rather than a humanities scholar. Add on

a seemingly innumerable set of 'analysis'-based jargon (which seem to all mean the same thing), and you'll be left with contemporary debating. And yet, the more I brave the lectern (or, more often, random table pulled across from the other side of the room), the more I feel obsessed with this hobby, entranced by the speeches and oddities flying around me. And the more I sit in cars and trains on the way to these events, the more I realise just how much it has impacted me—for better, or worse.

Opening Government: *'The case for debating is simple—and correct.'*

I was always a quiet child; in some ways, I still am. My voice, in primary school, barely managed to find its way through the jungle of other, more vocal, children. I was not without thoughts or potential answers, but I could never shake off my self-doubt. This made debating, in hindsight, a slightly strange choice of co-curricular. But I didn't stumble across it accidentally: I had yearned for so long to discuss current affairs and politics with people, so I dragged myself, nervously, along

to the first meeting of my school's Debating Society.

I remember the first debate I saw—and I remember how blown away I was. The fluency and lucidity of speech, the seeming complexity of points, and the speed. Oh, the speed. That will live long in the memory. The younger me could hardly keep up with what was going on in these Ferrari-engined polemics. 'Amazement' doesn't do it justice. For a long time, I would ask people: 'How do you do this?' Their response? Quite simple: 'Always ask: 'Why?''

This advice made little sense to me, at the time. The entire affair remained a mystery. And yet, I began to feel an enormous sense of pressure: sitting quietly at the back felt as though I were disrespecting those who were courageous enough to offer a speech, never mind the teacher who'd given up their lunchtime to supervise the whole thing. So, I threw my hat into the ring—reluctantly.

Debating, at heart, is a journey. Perseverance brings with it change. And as a younger me stepped up to argue in favour of banning junk

food in schools, I trembled nervously, begging that they might subside. How many people were in the room? Probably about ten, at most. But that didn't matter. There might have been five hundred, given how I felt. It took some time for me to become more confident in this regard but, to be fair, the speech went reasonably well. I'd established myself as a competent arguer, even though I still wasn't entirely sure of what was going on. And I wasn't as afraid to tell people what I thought.

Opening Opposition: *'Don't buy the utopia 'OG' try to sell you.'*

But it's not all success and fortune; things rarely are. I've had failures, and I remember them well. The first competition I ever attended saw me take consecutive losses. In truth, they didn't pack much bite; I knew I had a lot to learn, and I'd mentally prepared myself, beforehand, for the verbal thrashing I'd receive. Perhaps the brief successes scored by some of my newfound friends left me moderately disgruntled. At first, it was fine. But, after a while, they started to bother me. Were they...better than me? This question morphed slowly from mild appreciation into something resembling anger.

I shouldn't have felt that way—I know; I shouldn't approach things like that—I know; and I shouldn't have ever defined myself in relation to others—I know. But no matter how many times I recognised these truths, it didn't stop that feeling (however ridiculous) festering away in my mind. Debating highlighted this competitiveness; it shone a light directly on my desire not just to do well, but to be better than those around me. Some may call it pathetic, and I'd say that's fair enough. But I couldn't help it—in some ways, I still can't. Thank goodness, I learned to harness it.

Closing Government: *'It's important to realise the nuance of the situation.'*

This was the solution to my troubles. If I couldn't get rid of feeling down about others' successes, then why not use them to my advantage? This wasn't exploitation by any means; it was turning my anger and jealousy into a positive force—one of self-betterment, even. I took time to reflect on what had happened, and how I could get better. Now, there wasn't just a desire to improve: there was a need.

And so, I got to work. You'd be surprised how many debating videos and workshops there are out there on the internet; the community has made very good use of what the digital realm has to offer. I consumed these resources voraciously. The whole thing was still as strange as before, but I couldn't help but find it all so fascinating.

The best part of all of this was that it worked. Victory after victory. I kid you not. The next term, my team was on fire (which, of course, is not solely due to me; it is a team game, after all). But I could do my bit, and I felt—for once—as though the strange abstract phrases pronounced so often finally had some meaning. I sat there, no longer confused, but nodding in agreement with the judge during their furious gesticulations on 'clash analysis'. I was having the time of my life. Finally, I had seen success in something I'd cared about for so long.

Closing Opposition: *'The 'vertical extension' from 'CG' is completely 'derivative', never mind false.'*

But then, the question occurred: why am I enjoying this? I'd resolved my feelings by becoming better, true. But was this a good thing? Was I trampling over people who felt as I once had? Had I become my own enemy?

OK—perhaps that last question is a bit of a stretch. I'm not embarking on the path to anagnorisis like a mad king shouting at a storm.

But it's true to say that a fair sense of guilt set in. I worried that I had alleviated what I had once felt not by improving as a person, but by improving as a debater. I didn't feel any less competitive; I merely felt as though my hunger had—for now—been sufficiently satiated. Nothing had really changed. It was like papering over a cracked wall.

In this way, debating led me to reflect upon my life before debating. I'd never fought every fight to win (I came to terms quite easily with the fact that my untrained legs would never carry me to resounding victory on Sports Day, for example). But the same cannot be said for intellectual conflict. I hated (and I mean *hated*) being made to feel less clever than someone else. It was fine when it was unavoidable (a teacher), and I'm obviously not a genius; but, when it came to my peers—well, that ate away at me. And often these people were my friends. They still are my friends.

Adjudication: *'Thank you for what we thought was a very interesting debate.'*

No matter how many of these events I attend, the strangeness of the activity is still clear to me. I mean, who in their right mind would take this so seriously? This is the question that I feel must be asked, and yet the answer is so clear—for me, at least. My identity is constructed around what I feel my mind can do. Obviously, this isn't the only concern in my life; my family, friends, and other interests matter also. But I feel that my competitiveness results from what I interpret as an assault upon my identity: when someone else is the 'best', where does that leave me? Ridiculous, I know. But I can't help it. That's what standing at the lectern has taught me. Maybe it'll teach me how to fix it, too. In the meantime, I'll keep analysing. And I'll keep asking: 'Why?'

Logan Moss (Form V)



CHARITIES COMMITTEE 2023–24

In 2023–24 the Charities Committee raised over £5,000 for many worthwhile local, national and international charities. In September 2023, we ran the Form I Disco—a huge success, raising £564 for the Makimei Children’s Home in Kenya. The charity works to supply the basic needs and education of the children in their care, and they are working towards the completion of a new home. This event was quickly followed by another: the senior school’s Non-Uniform Day, which raised £1,600

for All for Armenia, a charity that supports the wellbeing, stability and future of the Armenian homeland. We sold Rice Krispie cakes and raised £222 for Macmillan Cancer Support. In November we raised £700 for Children in Need through selling cakes and the Teachers v Charities Committee annual football match. Well done to the teachers for their 3–1 win! In December 2023, we hosted the annual Christmas Senior Citizens’ Coffee Morning, welcoming Dollar residents

along to enjoy festive treats and some carols sung by our Chamber Choir. Towards the end of first term, we held a Christmas Jumper Day, which brought much festive cheer and raised £830. This was split between two charities: Doctors without Borders and Save the Children. These international charities support many crisis zones around the world. The Prep and Junior School held a Non-Uniform Day of their own and that, together with a Junior School football event, raised the sum of £864,



which was donated to the international charity Mary's Meals. The money will help the organisation continue its good work supporting children across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. We also arranged to donate food to local Clackmannanshire charity, The Gate. This charity was set up in 2011 to provide help and support for people affected by homelessness and food insecurity. In the spring term, the traditional (and very popular) Pie-a-Teacher event raised £681 for Comic Relief.

On the behalf of the whole Charities Committee, I would like to thank Ms Amelia Sanchez-Roman, Mrs Cath Kelly and Mrs Tamsen Livingstone for their invaluable encouragement, help and support all year. We would also like to thank all those pupils (and their parents) who supported us throughout these various fundraising initiatives.

On a personal note, being part of the Charities Committee has been a great opportunity; I have loved

planning all of these events while raising money for so many good causes. It has provided my peers and me with a chance to give something back to Dollar Academy in our final year, and I wish next year's Charities Committee the very best.

Eilidh G. (Form VI)



INDOOR SEASON SUCCESS FOR DOLLAR PIPERS

The indoor piping season kicked off on 12 January when many of our pupils competed at the Vale of Atholl Pipe Band Junior Piping and Drumming Competitions at Pitlochry High School. Paul M. (Form IV) was the overall Champion Piper, whilst Christian S. V. (Prep 5) was placed 1st in the Drum Pad section and Fraser P. (Form III) won the Novice Drumming category. Other results:

Under-18 Piping

3rd Callum C. (Form VI)

Novice 13–18 Piping

2nd Ben M. (Form III)

Under-15 Piping

6th Toby Chapman (Form I)

Novice 12 & Under

4th Murray M. (Form I)

Novice Snare Drumming

2nd Siena S. V. (Form III)

3rd Harrison R. (Form III)

4th Maya H. (Form II)

5th Niamh M. (Form I)



In February, our Juvenile band and soloists competed at the Glasgow Highland Club Annual Schools' Competition held at Hutchesons' Grammar School. The Juvenile band won the Senior grade event and received the club banner and shield. Our soloists gave some excellent performances which led to some outstanding results.

Senior Piping

1st Callum C.
2nd Paul M.

Intermediate Piping

2nd Fred B. (Form II)

Junior Drumming

2nd Eliza D. (Form II)

Next, it was the turn of the Novice A and Novice B bands to start their contest season off at the George Watson's College Invitational Competition. Our Novice A band came out on top in their category, with the Novice B band finishing 4th. There was more success for our soloists in a very large field of competitors. This was also the first outing for Mr Connor Sinclair, our new Piping Instructor and Novice B Pipe Major.

Senior Piping

1st Paul M.

Intermediate Piping

5th Ben M.

Junior Piping

2nd Toby C.

Junior Drumming

3rd Fraser P.
6th Niamh M.

The indoor contest season came to a climax on 10 March at the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships held in Kilmarnock. This is the biggest indoor pipe band contest worldwide. Our Novice A and Novice B bands both finished 3rd in their respective, highly competitive grades. The Juvenile band retained their title in a very tight contest in the Juvenile grade.

All in all, this represented a very successful start to the year for our pipers and drummers, and I would like to extend my thanks to our excellent staff and, of course, to our talented pupils for all their hard work and dedication leading up to these events.

Matt Wilson





GOLDEN LION 2024

One of the most exciting weekends on the CCF calendar is Exercise Golden Lion, held at Barry Buddon Army Training Centre. This exercise is the end of a three-year programme for the Advanced Infantry Cadets, and it brings together all the fieldcraft and tactics skills that have been taught over many Friday parades and other field exercises at Drumburn. This year's enemy forces were provided by Strathallan's CCF.

Once we deployed from Dollar Academy on the Friday night, it was straight into the training phase of the exercise with night navigation, patrol harbours and ambush drills keeping us busy until midnight. After that, we retreated to our bashers for some sleep. The clear skies that night looked amazing, but this also meant that the temperature dropped to -6°C; we were all thankful for the warmth of our sleeping bags. The next day, the CCF officers put us through our paces in section battle drills, deliberate attacks, weapons skills and navigation.

After all this we entered the

Exercise phase of Golden Lion, and immediately redeployed to the Barry lighthouse on the beach. This gave us a base of operations, but, more importantly, we could access the old lighthouse keeper's derelict house, which has the luxury of a mattress on the floor. There might have been a dozen people in a room not much

bigger than my bedroom but, after the previous night, it was a morale boost beyond measure. Outside the weather was turning and driving rain became our constant companion; as Major Scott likes to say, we were now 'Gore-Tex till End Ex'. During the next 14 hours we sent out three sections to destroy enemy forces at a disused railway junction; we conducted a platoon-level ambush on the sand dunes in the early hours of the morning; and, finally, we staged a dawn attack of the St Helena bunker. And so, ultimately, we were able to take the Advanced Hackles from the hands of the enemy forces.

Overall, it was an incredible weekend that tested everyone to their limits, and we all came away with a huge sense of achievement and pride, knowing that we had completed the toughest exercise that the Dollar Academy CCF provides.

RSM Scott K. (Form VI)





DRILL CADRE 2024

On Saturday 3 February 2024, Form IV and V cadets travelled up to Dunkeld to compete in Drill Cadre. Billed as the toughest course run by the contingent, it attempts to push all cadets out of their comfort zones, as individuals and as a team. This year saw a record 21 cadets taking part, which made for a nervous atmosphere on the bus. We had every right to be apprehensive because, immediately upon arrival, we had to run (in groups, carrying our bags) to the centre, without a single stop. We then had to produce specific items from our kit. Thankfully, we had planned for some of this beforehand. Finally, the instructors demanded that we carry our mattresses outside. Our bodies were tired, so this was a struggle.

There were various challenges to face over the weekend, ranging from early-morning physical training, to being responsible for Corporal Shelly and Cannon—along with countless room, drill and uniform inspections. One of the toughest tasks, however, was organising our own formal Mess Dinner for the Sunday evening. This was a whole-team effort, and it demonstrated the bonds that had been formed over the weekend. The highlight: a very competitive game of Uni-Hock in Mess Dress!

On Monday morning, everyone was exhausted and ready to go home, but there was one final hurdle to overcome: teaching your own individual lesson. These definitely caused the most stress, and everyone was very anxious. What if one says the wrong command? What if one turns the wrong way? There was great relief once that was completed, and we sat down to a celebratory lunch whilst waiting for the results to be announced.

I would thoroughly recommend Drill Cadre to any cadet wanting to test their abilities in the CCF. It is an intense, demanding and exhausting—but extremely worthwhile—weekend.

Sgt. Frederick R. (Form V)





NATIONAL FIRST AID COMPETITION

In November 2023, our CCF contingent's First Aid Team went down to Manchester to compete in the National & Inter-Service First Aid Competition. The 1st team—Inaya S., Amy M., Olivia M. (all Form VI) and Aadam H. (Form V)—were joined by several equally enthusiastic younger cadets, who were given the opportunity to act as casualties over the two days of competition.

As ever, the competition itself was fierce and full on. Sixteen other contingents competed in a series of high-pressure scenarios where anything and everything—from anaphylaxis to amputation—was thrown at us. Despite this intensity, the team performed astoundingly well in both the group and individual scenarios, taking home (once again) the hard-earned title of National CCF First Aid Champions. This feat certainly wouldn't be possible, or even conceivable, without the incredible expertise and hours of training provided by RSM Tracy Scott and Major Mark Scott. Many congratulations go to the team members and those acting as casualties for their efforts and achievements, and many thanks to the adults who make it possible.

CSM Inaya S. (Form VI)



NEW CLIMATE COMMITTEE

Early this year, two Dollar Academy clubs—the Sustainability Club and the Active Travel Group—merged to form the Climate Committee. The Climate Committee is run by pupils who have dedicated positions of responsibility; the chair of the Climate Committee is Ewan M. (Form V), our vice-chair is Antonia A., our secretary is Affan D., our researcher is Gregory K. and we have Selma L. (all Form V) in charge of marketing. Our goal is to create a green future and to achieve net zero for students at Dollar Academy and for the Dollar community.

Past activities have included tree planting, beach cleaning, installation of a bike shelter and introduction of a car sharing app. Recently members of the committee took part in tree planting as part of the Sustainable Dollar Initiative Nature Festival. Currently, we are working to create a Dollar Academy Climate Action Plan, which will target various aspects of our school systems such as active travel, pupil transportation, waste reduction and energy management. This will help us reduce our carbon footprint and be more sustainable.

The Climate Committee welcomes new members from all age groups with a strong interest and determination in addressing environmental issues. No prior experience is necessary.

Shona Scheuerl





LONDON ART TRIP 2024

The trip began with a rendez-vous at Edinburgh Waverley station. We were so excited as we boarded the train to London, clutching our sketchbooks for some sketching on the journey. We were on a tight schedule all the way; upon arrival, we hurriedly dropped our bags at the hotel and raced off to the West End to see the acclaimed *Hamilton*. Everybody loved it—especially the amazing costume designs and fantastic stage sets.

But the real highlight of the trip was the next day's visit to Warner Bros. Studio Tour London where we were privileged to 'see behind the scenes' of the *Harry Potter* movies. We saw iconic sets such as 'The Cupboard Under the Stairs', '4 Privet Drive' and, our group's favourite, the huge 'Hogwarts Castle'. We also spent time doing observational drawing in our sketchbooks and taking photos for consideration in our sketchbook and photography competitions. To conclude the day, we went shopping—not to Diagon Alley, but to Westfield Shopping Centre: the largest mall in Europe.

On the final, sunny, day, we took a delightful walk past the National History Museum to the V&A. It was very good to see all the different artefacts displayed throughout the museum, but our favourites were the Harry Styles cardigan and the Jean Paul Gaultier dresses. Our London adventure ended with a trip to Harrods, an amazing place to see.

Overall, the trip was a blast. Well done to those who won prizes in the photography and sketchbook competitions. And, of course, special thanks to Mr Milo MacDermot for organising the trip, and to Mrs Cath Kelly, Mr Mat Bauer and Alba Ontin for taking us.

Harry M. and Holly S. (Form III)



CLÈRES TRIP 2024

From the Pupils...

What was your favourite thing about the trip?

Eiffel Tower, Disneyland, shopping in Rouen, bowling, the amazing sights in Paris, the Seine boat trip, playing games with my host family.

What did you learn while you were in France?

How to eat proper raclette. *Cameron D. (Form I)*

I learnt how to pronounce French better with help from the family I was staying with. *Yasmine M. (Form I)*

I learned some new vocabulary, and also that French people speak very quickly. *Merryn R. (Form II)*

Speaking in a different language is very satisfying. *Ruby L. (Form I)*

France was a beautiful place but, while in Paris and Rouen, always look after your belongings. *Freya W. (Form I)*

I learned a lot about new food, resilience, patience and what to do on long bus rides. *Emma A. (Form II)*

I learnt about kissing on the cheeks when you meet and about the school system in France. *Ayla L. (Form II)*

What is your favourite new French word?

Saucisson, poulet, baguette, papillon, incroyable, pamplemousse, pique-nique, cravate, incroyable, crêpe, concombre and requin (which means shark. We learnt it when we were singing 'Baby Shark' with the French girls).

How would you summarise the Clères trip?

The baguettes are amazing. *Cameron D. (Form I)*

The most exhilarating trip! *Iona C. (Form II)*

An amazing trip which helped me expand my French knowledge, visit amazing parts of France, and make new friends. *Merryn R. (Form II)*

Exploring France was so much fun: a bucket list item of mine was to go up the Eiffel tower! Disneyland was great. *Emma A. (Form II)*

The trip was enjoyable, tiring, educational and, most importantly, fun. It made me want to travel more. *Harriet M. (Form I)*

Delving into different experiences and situations always put us to the test. We realised that we had to work in a team, support one another and never think just about ourselves. Speaking French outside of a classroom is very different from the classroom experience. At times, we experienced some language barriers, but we always overcame them.

Ruby L. (Form I)

Clères will always have a piece of my heart! *Niamh I. (Form I)*

We all had happy faces, but the best bit was when the girls got to go to Sephora. *Poppy M. (Form I)*

What advice would you offer to future participants?

Be very nice to everyone.

Speak slowly when talking in English and be prepared for a lot of walking and long coach rides.

Bring pictures of your family to talk about with your host family in the evenings.

It can seem awkward or even scary on the first night, but don't be afraid to talk to them, even if it's in English. Don't waste time worrying!

Be confident; you know more than you think. Don't forget to have fun and never take the trip for granted.

The first night is always hard.

Remember to pack your backpack for the day the night before. Try to go to bed early because the trip won't be as fun if you're tired.

Don't be shy when you are at your host family's house.

Enjoy it; take lots of pictures.

Jacqui Young



ROME MUSIC TOUR

On Monday 12 February, 24 pupils and 4 members of staff flew to Rome to spend five days in the Italian capital. The tour offered the opportunity for a cultural visit alongside the chance to perform a series of concerts in this beautiful city. The pupils, who all study Music, formed a choir and learned a range of pieces just for this trip, including hymns for a much-anticipated performance at St Peter's Basilica.

We enjoyed several sightseeing tours to the Trevi Fountain, the Roman Forum, the Colosseum, and the Spanish Steps. In the warm temperatures, pupils visited as many gelato shops as our five days allowed, always under brilliant blue skies. The pupils also loved making their own pizzas in a traditional Italian pizzeria, and we undertook a late-night ghost

tour of the city. We also appreciated the evening comforts and big breakfasts at our 4-star accommodation.

Three performances had been organised—one at St Andrews' Church of Scotland, where our pupils met up with some Dollar Academy pupils who were holidaying nearby. The St Andrew's Scottish Society hosting the concert provided the pupils and staff with a reception afterwards, and our two bilingual students—Clara G. (Form V) and Alix K. (Form VI)—were able to translate for us. On our final night in Rome, we performed a concert at St Paul's Within the Walls, a beautiful ornate church used for professional concerts and recitals. At this event, we also met up with some Dollar FPs, as well as parents of current pupils and their families.

Ultimately, however, it was

our performance in the Vatican that was the most special. Having spent a morning exploring the Catacombs of San Sebastiano, we enjoyed an outdoor rehearsal in St Peter's Square itself. Then came the most extraordinary part: we performed at a 5pm mass in the Vatican. To experience the atmosphere and history of this beautiful space whilst singing within it was an incredible privilege.

The entire week was filled with humour and fun and many sing-a-long sessions—even the bus driver and our tour guide, Fiametta, got involved. As always, our pupils did us proud both on and off the concert platform, and we made many happy memories that will remain with us forever.

Louise Timney



BATTLEFIELDS TRIP

In late September 2023, the 15th Dollar Pals Battalion departed from the front of the Playfair Building destined for the Western Front battlefields of France and Belgium—the first Battlefields Trip in several years (following a Covid-enforced hiatus). Our first day took us to the Ypres Salient, where pupils could actually walk through the original Great War trenches. Our time in the Sanctuary Wood trenches and tunnel systems shaped, indelibly, our understanding of the events of WWI. We also visited the battlefields and cemeteries of the Somme region in France—a very emotional day as the scale of the events of that summer of 1916 became vividly evident. We visited the Thiepval Memorial and the preserved trenches of Newfoundland Park, and we held a private ceremony for Finn P. (Form IV) who had had a relative killed at the Somme. We then headed to the northern part of the Ypres Salient—to the Passchendaele battlefield, as well as the Essex Farm Cemetery, the Poelcapelle British Cemetery and the Langemark German Military Cemetery. This offered several more moving experiences, aptly concluded by our participation in the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate, during which several Dollar pupils laid wreaths. Lastly, we held another private ceremony in the Ypres Salient to mark the very end of our trip. As Lily’s personal essay about the experience makes very clear, this is a trip that brings to life the pupils’ classroom learning in palpably important ways. We are all grateful to those staff and pupils who made the trip such a special one.

Neil McEwan



THE BATTLEFIELDS

*‘If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.’*

– John McCrae

We drove through the borders of Belgium, and we knew little of the horrors and sacrifices the men had suffered during World War I. We have seen nothing compared to what those men saw. This autumn, I went on a journey that I never thought I’d take, but it was the most moving school trip I have ever experienced. We were told ‘it would change us’, but I never thought I would feel the way I did.

It was the first battlefield of our trip. None of us knew what was before us. ‘We’re here because we’re here.’ That’s what our tour guide, Ian, told us. Just as the soldiers were told when setting off for war duties. They were trained to fight, but they were clueless—and terrified. We woke at 6am to the raucous sound of WWI-era music blaring. The girls in my room threw shoes at the speaker, angry, hoping the dreadful noise would stop. We stumbled down to breakfast to get our toast and cereal, then went back up to prepare for the day. We were driven to some incredible

landscapes, each telling a story, each allowing us to connect with the history it had seen. Visiting Messines Church, we experienced religious practices of the early-20th century. And, looking over the church tower, I stepped into the shoes of the Germans, spying over the highlands toward the British front line, carefully tracking every move. I saw the field where the Christmas truce took place: soldiers bonding on Christmas Day, purely innocent, with no instinct for violence, hoping merely to reunite with their families one day. The men shook hands with their enemies, exchanged gifts, took part in a friendly football match. They wished only for life to go back to how it used to be, for a chance to feel like young boys again.

Next we were taken to a World War I British trench. We were guided through its shallow, slippery swamps. The harsh rain poured down upon us, soaking us through; we couldn’t stand there for longer than five minutes. This was nothing in comparison to what the men endured for years,



sleeping in those waterlogged trenches every night. With our eyes shut, we listened to Ian speak of the horrors; we imagined ourselves as soldiers in the frontline trench. I lost myself for a second, until I heard the yell. ‘Over the top, over the top!’ Then a whistle pierced my ears. I looked up, anxious and scared, imagining the soldiers commanded to cross No Man’s Land, to face certain death. Locked in that moment, the whole experience felt so real.

Now, more than a century later, there are woods, wildlife surrounded by tall trees, all the beauty of life growing where once was only sadness and fear. We were led through the narrow trench into the five-foot high, pitch-black tunnel that a soldier would have dug out by hand. There were different paths, and I was worried I might find myself lost in a WWI tunnel or knock myself out on the ceiling. I wanted out—and quickly.

We were just halfway through our trip, and I had already walked in the footsteps of brave soldiers, most of a similar age to me. I hadn’t seen the horrors they saw, but, somehow, I could feel them.

Another 6am wake-up call: WWI music echoing in our ears. We tore ourselves from our beds, ate breakfast and got ready for the day. Staying in Belgium opened my eyes to the reality of war. When learning about WWI in my nice, warm and dry History classroom at school, I could never have felt the strong emotional connection that being in this place evoked. It is only when standing in a frontline trench that you can even begin to contemplate the true horrors and terrors that those brave soldiers experienced.

We travelled to the Newfoundland Park where the Battle of the Somme took place. Standing on a battlefield, knowing a great soldier could be lying beneath your feet, was haunting and incredibly sad. The Battle of the Somme was the biggest disaster in British military history. The damage caused to the landscape from explosives was still visible—like the battlefield’s own scars, telling us the story of those tragic four months. We bowed our heads whilst a piper played, and we paid our respects to every soldier who fought and gave his life bravely. My thoughts drifted to my own brother, in the Army. Learning what happened to the WWI soldiers, I feared that (if there were to be a similar war now) my brother would be on the battlefield, and that I would one day bow my head to a memorial with his name inscribed upon it.

We made our way to the Thiepval Memorial, one of the most extraordinary memorials I have ever seen. Every man remembered there was lost, his body belonging to the battlefield he fell on. We heard many incredible stories of the lives of soldiers. That which struck me most was that of a man who was trapped, with other soldiers, by an exploding bomb. He sacrificed himself by jumping on top of the bomb in order to save the lives of his fellow soldiers. That man never lived to cherish his Victoria Cross. I searched high and low to see if I could see the names of soldiers with my last name. To my surprise, there were hundreds.

In Belgium and France, I saw the broken ground from past trenches, shell holes and bomb attacks. These were symbols of war—the destruction of the land somehow representing the lost lives of soldiers. I realised the hard truth that the world is not at peace. The scars and trauma of the Great War are engraved in my mind forever. It is sad to think that the ‘war to end all wars’ was a complete lie, taking note of the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza, Yemen (to name just a few) in today’s world. Looking back on this trip, I realise how much I take for granted. I go throughout my day without the worry of the threat of war. This trip opened my eyes to what we have been—and what some people are—faced with in this world. I will never forget those who fought.

Lily A. (Form IV)



1st XI

HOCKEY 2023–2024

The 2023–2024 season has been fantastically successful for Dollar's Hockey Club. Over 300 players from Prep 4 through Form VI have attended training; 271 matches have been contested across 21 separate teams; and 657 goals were scored. The club entered the Midlands District Indoor Tournaments (for the first time in several years at both Senior and Form III age groups) and won, progressing through to the Scottish Indoor Tournaments at both levels. Our 1st XI netted a trawl of silverware, winning the Midlands Tournament, the Midlands Indoor Tournament, the Morrison's Academy 7s, the Goldenacre 7s, and ultimately winning the Scottish Cup (a particular highlight). Our Form III pupils also gathered trophies: the

Midlands Tournament, the Midlands Indoor Tournament and the U15 Scottish Schools Shield. Hockey at Dollar is also thriving in the younger age groups with the Junior 1A squad undefeated in their fixtures this season. Eighteen players have been involved in the performance BRAVE ACADEMY and four of these have progressed into the Scottish training squads; two players travelled to Germany and the Czech Republic over the Easter break to represent Scotland. Our Form II also have seven players in their age-group Midlands squad.

The Hockey Club and its players are indebted to the staff who, in a myriad of ways, support, facilitate, encourage, lead, engage, and challenge all our players to give of their best and achieve beyond their expectations. We thank them for all their hard work throughout the season. All the best to our Form VI players who leave Dollar's Hockey Club this year. We look forward

to hearing of your future successes within the game. As this season closes and the 2024–25 season approaches, 45 players are preparing to head to South Africa for a tour in August; others will enjoy a break before pre-season swings into action here in Dollar.

Gill Robb

This session's **1st XI** squad started proactively during pre-season, and this positive attitude was evident throughout the entire season. We held two strength and conditioning sessions each week, multiple other weekly fitness and pitch sessions, yoga, and quality team bonding sessions to prepare us for the Scottish Cup. The opening matches of the season were promising, and our first tournament win was the Midland District Tournament where we successfully defended our previous titles.

At the beginning of the



October break, the squad travelled to Sedbergh School and Kirkham Grammar School in England. Against Sedbergh, we played a hard-fought game which, unfortunately, resulted in a 0–1 loss. The following day, however, we took a strong 3–0 victory against Kirkham Grammar School.

In addition to our outdoor season, we fielded our first indoor squad this year, winning the Midlands Indoor Tournament which took us to the Scottish Indoor Tournament at The Peak in Stirling. We missed progressing into the final by one point, but it was a remarkable success in our first year of competing in the indoor season.

Our strong work ethic and superb fitness over the season also gave us an advantage in the 7s tournaments. We won the inaugural Morrison’s Academy 7s, conceding only one goal in the whole tournament. In the same week we experienced further success, winning the Goldenacre 7s hosted by George Heriot’s School. The final was a tough game against the hosts, resulting in running penalties where we took the title—winning a cup that had not been won by Dollar for a good few years.

Our Scottish Cup victory was undoubtedly the pinnacle of our season. We played St George’s School in the first round and secured a 2–1 victory, advancing to the quarter-final against The Mary Erskine School. An away draw did not stop the Dollar crowd from travelling to Edinburgh to

support, and the squad came out on top with a successful 2–0 win in a tough game. This secured us a place in the semi-finals against George Heriot’s. A home draw gave us an advantage, and the school body was granted a lengthened lunch break to support. The atmosphere was buzzing, and the initial passages of play were tight with the pressure switching from end to end. Dollar finally gained the upper hand and ran away as 3–0 winners. We were in the final. The squad travelled to Glasgow Green on 15 March to face Edinburgh Academy, the previous year’s winner. Dollar emerged as the 2023–24 Scottish Cup winners after that very intense match ended in a 4–3 victory. The squad fought until the final whistle and claimed the winning goal in the last minute of play—a massive achievement for the whole team.

The 1st XI have worked hard throughout this season, and their ethic cannot be faulted; they claimed many tournament wins and suffered just five losses throughout the entire season. It goes without saying that Miss Lynsey Allan and Mr Duncan Riddell have played a significant part in our success. They have encouraged all of us to be the best we can and pushed us to our potential and beyond. The Form VI leavers—Riley T., Megan F., Olivia (OJ) J., Emily N., Aideen M. and I (Alyssa W.)—will miss Dollar hockey immeasurably. We have made the most of our years representing the school and ended on a high. I wish next season’s players all the best



for the year ahead. I will be very sad to leave such a valued part of my Dollar life.

Alyssa W. (Form VI)

This year's **2nd XI** season was something to be proud of, with many wins and only a few losses. A definite highlight was the St George's 2nd XI tournament. As captain, I saw us all come together as a strong team, as we went undefeated in our pool despite some difficult games on grass. We went straight into the semi-finals and managed to win on running penalties—amazing considering that we had only practised them twice. In the end we came second, losing 2–0 in the final to a very good Watson's team—but we all had fun and left the pitch smiling. This year's hockey experience would not have been the same without Mr Duncan Riddell and Miss Emily Thain's excellent coaching. They kept us working hard, motivating us to improve while always making it enjoyable. This past year has been fantastic; without hockey, my time at Dollar would have been vastly different. I strongly urge everyone to give it a go and get involved, regardless of their age or ability.

Jessica H. (Form VI)

The **3rd XI** enjoyed a strong start to their season, winning the first two games, followed by an unfortunate loss against the High School of Dundee. Things quickly turned around, however, with a 4–0 win against Glenalmond College. As the season progressed, the team found that their results did not often reflect their performance, with losses coming more often than wins.

The **4th XI** had a tough season but still managed to keep their wins and losses balanced, and their spirits remained high. Between the 3rd and 4th teams, 34 goals were scored, and we had many great saves too. This season there has been a great focus on our defensive line in training and performing on the pitch.

There has been significant player progression with four players moving to the 2nd XI and thriving there. Others were selected to support at different stages throughout the season and this motivated other girls to assume more

prominent roles within the 3rd and 4th teams.

As a team we have kept our morale up—with the particular help of Yulia M. (Form IV) who never fails to make us laugh (both on and off the pitch). We have bedded in new players, with Irma P. and Robyn G. keeping our backline strong and our upfronts, Emily W. and Anna M-J (all Form IV), creating several goal opportunities. Our new goalie was Libby D. (Form V), whose confidence has grown throughout the year. As the season ends, we are sad to see our Form VI leavers go, and we hope that they continue to play hockey in the future. Thank you to Kody Fludgate who has stepped up as our head coach this year, and to the other staff who have supported him, and us, this season.

Sophie B. (Form V)

The **Form 3B and 3C** teams have trained as one squad this season, allowing for maximum skill development and enjoyment. A particular highlight has been the way we all support one another both on and off the pitch. We regularly share ideas about how the team works effectively to achieve the best results. Our coaches have provided valuable feedback, and this has helped us to improve our skills and our tactical understanding of the game. Whilst we have really enjoyed training, the fixtures were the brightest highlights of the season. These matches are where we learn the most about ourselves—even when we lose.

Our hardest fought games have been against other schools' A teams and a couple of senior-level XIs teams. These match-ups have really challenged us, and it was rewarding to find ourselves the victors in some of these fixtures.

As the season concludes, we are already looking toward the 2024–25 season and thinking about what we can do as a team to progress even further. We have all had fun this season: made great memories and developed new friendships. The team would like to thank the coaches, the school and all our parents for the support they have provided.

Erin C. (Form III)



After an extremely fun and exciting season, we in the **Form 2** squad are pleased to say that we have all enjoyed this hockey season. We have regularly had 45 to 50 players attend training sessions, and we have fielded 3 XIs teams over the season. We have had to overcome challenges, but we have all continued to grow and progress. The A squad highlights include several excellent wins and draws against some of the strongest teams, including those who had beaten us in seasons past. We came second in a tournament at Hutchesons' Grammar School, which improved our confidence a great deal. Our home tournament was a lot of fun. The 2B team have shown their talents all year, developing good teamwork and setting an example for all. The 2C team members have grown their skills to move the ball quickly and have really blossomed. This year has been an eye-opener for all of us, as we stepped up a year group and level. We have all enjoyed the Saturday matches, making those the highlight of every week. This season has been extremely successful, and I hope we can continue this into next season. Thank you to our coaches: Mrs Gill Robb, Miss Erin Carson, Mrs Catherine Munro, Mrs Claire Brownbridge and guest 'Coach (Chloe) Hall' for all their hard work and enthusiasm throughout the year.

Anna H., Kayla B., Darcy D. (all Form II)



The progress made by our **Form 1** squad over the 2023–24 season has been incredible. We train on a Monday afternoon on the Junior Astro (where we work on skills) and on a Wednesday afternoon on the main Astro (doing small-game practice).

The start of the season saw 8-a-side hockey, and we put out 4 teams each weekend. After Christmas we moved to 11-a-side matches, putting out 3 squads every weekend. Early in the season we played a match against Edinburgh Academy and lost, 2–7, but we worked hard to improve and, later in the season, we played the same team again—and we won, 3–0.

The weather was challenging; yellow warnings for wind, rain, ice and snow interrupted both training and fixtures. But, throughout, the Form 1 girls kept on working to improve their hockey. If training had been cancelled every time the weather was against us, we would not have progressed as much as we have.

We have expanded our range of skills and learned a lot from our coaches (Mr Ollie Volland and Miss Heather Holloway), especially as we moved from playing 8-a-side hockey to full-pitch 11-a-side games. Penalty corners were

new to us, and we learned to defend using masks and attack, using planned plays.

We have had a good season, winning plenty of matches and, of course, losing few too—but we never let that stop us from giving our best. We have learned from the very good constructive feedback from our coaches—always delivered with a positive vibe. We have improved so much, most of all in playing better as a team, learning to support each other and having fun.

Ruby L., Freya W. and Marley M. (all Form 1)

The **Junior 2** team can be described as hard working, dedicated, skilful and very much full of fun. We've played many successful games (our biggest win was 10–0!), and we've played some really challenging games. These only made us more determined to improve our skills and be a stronger group. The biggest change for us this year has been playing with a goalie; although this means that there is less chance of the opposition scoring, it also means we must work harder to score ourselves!

The away games might mean an early start (not *all* team members love this!), but we always have fun chatting, laughing, playing music and singing together on the bus journeys. The home games are always livelier, with more support at the side lines and the offer of a nice pasta pot after the game.

Hockey has strengthened our friendships both on and off the pitch. Just before a game starts, we have a 'D-O-L-L-A-R!' chant to motivate us; we might not win them all, but we always come off the pitch positive and ready to dissect the game in preparation for the next. We also really enjoy the tournaments, spending most of a day at another school, playing shorter games and being able to watch how the opposition teams play before we play them.

Miss Emma Dearden and Miss Emily Thain have been amazing; they have coached us in an encouraging way, making practice sessions fun and enjoyable whilst keeping us working very hard. We have a lot to thank them for. We look forward to growing and developing further as a team as we move into the senior school next season.

Vaila H. (Junior 2)

The 2023–2024 season has been a good one for the **Junior 1** squad; it really feels as though we are now playing like a proper team! We had a strong start in September, winning

our first three games against George Watson's College, the High School of Dundee and The Compass School, respectively. These wins gave us all so much confidence; we were starting to become 'hockey girls'—talking about hockey and practice all the time! Despite these being our first proper matches, we played really well. We scored 11 goals and only lost 2. Two of our games were away, and the bus journeys were great fun.

Unfortunately, we took a major dip after that and lost three games in a row. We were all disappointed, particularly as we had beaten George Watson's just a few weeks before—but it made us still more determined. Miss Bevhan Trevis worked us hard in training, and our performance soon improved.

A training game in early October was cancelled (poor weather), and our next game wasn't until 1 November. We then won 4 games in November, scoring 19 goals and losing 9. We had two games cancelled before meeting George Watson's again, but we were determined to do well. It was a tough game, but we fought hard and finished with a 4–4 draw: a pleasing improvement. January and February were good months: we won all of our matches, scoring 20 goals and only losing 5.

Our progress has been clear to see; each of us is becoming more confident with our stick skills. We also love the 'Haribo habit' (someone always brings Haribo for everyone—an unwritten rule we all abide by).

As I write this, we have just three games left in the season, and we are very much hoping for a strong finish. Our last game of the season is against George Watson's, and we are going to go out and fight for every ball to make Miss Trevis proud of us. She has been an amazing coach for the start of our hockey journey, and we will miss her next year. Hopefully she will come and see us all play when we are in the 1st and 2nd XI.

Phoebe M. (Junior 1)

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Junior 1



Junior 2A



Form 1C



Form 1B



Form 1A



Form 2B and C



Form 2A



Form 3B and C



Form 3A



3rd and 4th XI



2nd XI



SCOTTISH HOCKEY AND BRAVE ACADEMY SELECTION

Scottish Hockey

Congratulations to Tabitha P. (Form IV), Sarah C. and India S. (both Form V) and Riley T. (Form VI) who have all been named to the Scottish Hockey training squads.

Subsequently, Riley was selected for the Aspiring (Scotland U19) squad to play in a series v Canada, then a Four Nations tournament in Germany over Easter weekend. Sarah and India were also named as non-travelling reserves.

Tabitha was selected for the Emerging (Scotland U17) squad and played in the U17 Four Nations tournament in the Czech Republic at the end of March.

Scottish Hockey

BRAVE Academy

Congratulations to the following Dollar pupils who were all selected into the Scottish Hockey BRAVE Academy.

Girls:

Dundee Devils (Aspiring)

Tabitha P. (Form IV)

Sarah C., Rachel N., India S. (all Form V)

Riley T., Emily N., Alyssa W. (all Form VI)

Dundee Devils (Emerging)

Anna H. (Form II)

Mhora B. (Form III)

Catie D., Amy J., Izzy M., Lois W., Maddie M. (all Form IV)

Edinburgh Lightning (Emerging)

Emily W. (Form III)

Glasgow Thunder (Aspiring)

Christina D. (Form V)

Aideen M. (Form VI)

Boys:

Dundee Devils (Emerging)

Elliott O. (Form II)



1st XV

RUGBY 2023–2024

At the senior end, this season has been a whirlwind of emotions, with its share of triumphs and challenges. This year's group has exhibited remarkable resilience and fortitude, culminating in one of the strongest finishes in our long history.

The season started promisingly enough for our **1st XV** team with a fine opening performance and win against Stewart's Melville College, but no one could have predicted the run of injuries that beset the 1st XV. No less than 11 were sidelined with long-term injuries. Playing at this level is no easy task at the best of times—it's a real step up from U16 rugby in intensity, physicality, and skill level. For so many

to suddenly find themselves thrust into the competitive arena of league rugby was incredibly challenging, but it was very rewarding watching every single player rise to the occasion and do such a tremendous job.

I could not have been prouder than when I took a side ravaged by injuries down to Sedbergh to play their 1st XV, and watched our players match Sedbergh in every area of the game. It was probably one of the best performances I have seen from a Dollar side.

However, measuring success can be incredibly cruel... Some will simply say it's all about winning, League positions, and Cup runs. Yes, winning is important but it must also be kept in perspective. Success is about so much more than merely winning; it's about player development and most of all, player enjoyment.

Above all, it's essential to maintain a perspective that prioritises adherence to the fundamental playing principles and core values that hopefully create better people, not just good players.

Without any doubt, injuries hurt us this year, but this also made us stronger. As the injury list reduced, we found ourselves with real strength in depth. Although time had run out for our League and Cup ambitions, buoyed by the return of key players, we could look to the rest of the season with a tentative confidence. Such was the overall strength of this group now that we won the National Schools U18 Shield at a canter, brushing aside each team by a considerable margin and giving this group the lifelong memory of playing and winning on the famous pitch at Murrayfield.

As if winning at Murrayfield were not reward enough, this group of boys were far from done. They



set out to leave an indelible mark on the 7s circuit unlike any other team before them. First up was the prestigious (GWC) Caritas 7s; they became just the second Dollar side in twenty-two years to be crowned champions. This was quickly followed by tournament wins at the Glasgow Academy 7s and the inaugural Morrison's Academy 7s. The only blip was a semi-final defeat at the George Heriot's 7s. However, this defeat could not stop them being crowned champions of the U18 Super 7s Series, and they headed to the world-famous Rosslyn Park National Schools 7s with the distinction of being the top team in Scotland.

It is only natural that having such talented players attracts the attention of national and regional selectors, and this season proved no exception. Congratulations to all our players for taking the next step on the developmental ladder, all fully deserved given the players' strong performances throughout the season. Leading the way is Rory P. (Form VI). His performances as captain of our squad have been



outstanding, and he deservedly gained selection for Scotland U18s to play against the Welsh side earlier this year; this was then followed by selection for the U18 squad to play in the Six Nations Championship in Parma. Rory was joined this

year by Angus W. (Form VI) in gaining a Scotland U18 cap against Wales. A fantastic achievement by both boys, of which we are all very proud. A special mention must also go to U17 player, Max G. (Form V) who made it all the way to the Scotland U18 development training camp only to miss out on Scotland selection at the final hurdle. Many more of our young players have also been recognised for their efforts and selected for regional squads. Selected for the Caledonia U18s this season were Rory P., Angus W., Angus C. (Form VI), Max G., Adam H. (Form V), Bobby S. (Form V), James R. (Form VI), Dan R. (Form V), Rio A. (Form VI), Troye A. (Form V) and Fraser K. (Form VI).

At U16 level, we have a plethora of talent coming through with Lewis E., Cameron H., Dylan K., Alex T., Alfie A., Hamish L., Harry Q., and Nic D. (all Form IV) training with and representing Caledonia this season.

Sevens Tournaments

It would be remiss of me not to say a word about the whole-school success at 7s this season, a just reward for all the hard work put in by players and coaches alike. Crowned this season's U18 Super 7s Series winners, this year's **U18 7s** squad narrowly beat Stewart's Melville College by one point to the title. They had won The Glasgow Academy 7s, beating Stewart's Melville in the final, 12-7; they had also won the inaugural Morrison's Academy tournament, beating Strathallan School in the final; and they had won the prestigious Caritas 7s (George Watson's College) beating Stewart's Melville in the final, 34-12. A very strong showing at the Rosslyn Park National Schools 7s meant that they qualified for the second day, winning five out of their seven games overall and only losing 14-12 in the last play of the game to semi-finalists, St Paul's. The **U16 7s** also did very well. They won the Shield at the highly prestigious Sedbergh School 7s; they were Shield winners at the High School of Glasgow 7s; and losing Cup finalists at the George Watson's College 7s. They made a good showing at Rosslyn Park, too, only losing to eventual semi-finalists, Epsom College. The **Form 3 7s** were Shield runners-up at the Stewart's Melville 7s; Shield winners at The Glasgow Academy 7s; and Plate winners at the Merchiston Castle School 7s. The **Form 2 7s** were Cup semi-finalists at the Stewart's Melville 7s; losing Cup finalists at the High School of Glasgow 7s (2nd VII); Plate winners at the Merchiston College 7s; and our 1st VII took 3rd place at the Sedbergh School 7s. They missed out on playing in the final on points difference, and they were the only team to have beaten the eventual winners, Sedbergh School. The **Form 1 7s** were Plate winners at Stewart's Melville 7s; losing Cup finalists at The Glasgow Academy 7s; and losing semi-finalists at the Edinburgh Academy 7s. They also put on a very successful showing at the Rosslyn Park 7s, winning four out of five of their games.

Heading a team of dedicated coaches has been a true honour, especially amidst the challenges of injuries and some of the negative press that rugby has been receiving lately. Despite these obstacles, each group managed to

increase their playing numbers, reflecting the unwavering commitment and passion of the coaches, creating a positive and enriching experience for all the players. The Dollar rugby section is fortunate to have such a strong coaching group, and I cannot thank them enough. And our community extends beyond the coaching staff to include players, medical professionals, officials, caterers, and parents. It's the collective effort of all of these individuals that makes Dollar truly special, fostering a supportive environment where players can thrive and enjoy the game they love.

Throughout the school there was also much to applaud and each of the coaches has commented in their own words or in the words of their captain. Finally, a big thank you to everyone...not least to the guys who are leaving us this summer. Thank you for all that you have done over the years and good luck to every one of you.

Don Caskie

Junior 1 had an impressive season winning over 80% of games played. What was most remarkable was the flair with which they played: there was lots of passing and offloading and great running support lines which led to many tries. These players have also displayed excellent team spirit and camaraderie; they have been brilliant school ambassadors wherever they have played. Tackling and defence has markedly improved throughout the year, and the team has gone from strength to strength. We warmly welcomed several complete beginners to the team, and Mr Barry Munro and Mr Abtin Pourgive are delighted with the progress they have made.

Abtin Pourgive and Barry Munro

It has been a pleasure to captain the **Junior 2A** rugby team this season, and there were many positives to look back upon. At the start of the season many boys lacked confidence when it came to the important skill of tackling; as the season progressed, we all improved. I would like to highlight Finbar M., Douglas B. and Nicky T. for their efforts around defence throughout the entire season. One of our most memorable games was against The Glasgow Academy when we won 4-3; we were excellent with our defence, and we also used space to our advantage with excellent passing and running skills in attack. The most improved player was Harvey P.: at the start of the season he was nervous to run forward and now he is running with confidence, on and off the ball. Our coaches, Mr Martin Hose and Mr Graham Hinshelwood, really helped all of us in our way of playing and we enjoyed learning under their guidance, developing our understanding of the game. Overall, this season has been a successful and enjoyable one for all members of the Junior 2 rugby squad. We look forward to continuing to improve next season and welcoming a new intake of players that will help strengthen our playing group.

Finlay C. (Junior 2)

This was a tough season in the Conference, but in all return games against the big Edinburgh sides our **Form 1** rugby

squad showed huge improvements. The boys were superb in the 7s circuit, with two semi-finals, a Cup final and a Plate win, before a brilliant effort down at Rosslyn Park where the squad won four out of five games. The squad playing numbers also increased over the year. Our key players were Kyle R.- S. and Murray M. We would like to make special mention of Malcolm P., who had never played rugby before this year and was a star performer in the 7s squad. The funniest moment of the year came on the bus on our way home from Rosslyn: there appeared to be a leak in the ceiling of the bus that was soaking all our boys' belongings; it turned out to be someone's broken water bottle in the rack above!

Steve Newton and Gregor Nelson

Mark Twain once said, 'There are three kinds of lies: lies, damn lies and statistics.' While the statistics for the **Form II** squad's matches (A and B teams combined) this season are impressive, they do not tell the whole story. This season has been one of the most enjoyable of my time coaching at Dollar Academy. Mr Ferguson and I inherited an enthusiastic and physically capable group at the start of the season; from the outset it was clear that their previous coaches had done a great job instilling both a love of the game and some very good basic skills.

The boys were ambitious and eager to learn, and we got off to a strong start moving the ball quickly, offloading and attacking the space. All the players deserve immense credit for their commitment to continual improvement and their willingness to learn. We have been blessed with large numbers training and playing regularly, and it was encouraging to see our numbers grow over the season. Two well-organised teams took the field regularly (and at times there was almost an army of subs for the B team, eagerly awaiting the half-time changes). A number of tough matches saw the boys pulling together in the face of strong opposition; heartfelt encouragement of one another helped raise the standard of performance. Our teamwork led both groups to a string of impressive victories, among them a hard-fought win against Glenalmond, which was particularly pleasing for the A group. Mr Ferguson tells me that the B squad have been a pleasure to work with and have improved steadily through the season. Some have already established themselves in the A squad, and a few more boys could now comfortably step up and play a part in the As. Strong groups bring their own challenges and, on a few occasions, we have had to be a bit 'creative' in order to keep matches competitive, but the boys took it all in stride. They are quick to notice, however, if we've allowed opponents to slip a couple of extra players on the pitch—credit due to the Maths Department!

The 7s season enabled us to develop our handling and support skill, the Sedbergh School 7s tournament having been a particular highlight. In the end we were third. Although we finished top-equal in our pool (beating the eventual winners Sedbergh in the process), the points differences were such that we were unable to progress to



the semi-finals. (Those lying statistics!). Nevertheless, the boys played what the Sedbergh headmaster described as 'the best 7s of the day', and we all thoroughly enjoyed that trip. At the same time, Mr Ferguson took another 7s squad to Merchiston where they played effectively together to win the Plate.

While I usually spend the long summer months doing some competitive running and playing 'find the golf ball' over a varying number of holes ('a good walk spoiled' according to Mark Twain), I already miss the rugby. And I know that as Mr Ferguson whiles away the hours on his tractor, thinking of even more effective drills to add to his coaching encyclopaedia, he finds the off-season a bit long too. We have both hugely enjoyed seeing our young sides develop in ways that can't be captured by the numbers. It's the fun and positivity that our players bring and the inherent joy and unpredictability of the sport with its odd-shaped ball that make it so rewarding.

Cameron Smith and Russell Ferguson

This season the **Form 3** squad has made significant improvements in training, and this has been reflected in some excellent performances and results in matches. The boys have shown character and enthusiasm throughout, and it has been great to see them enjoying their rugby. They have embraced a structured but attacking game plan.

The **A team** had a frustrating year in the Conference, starting with what were arguably our two toughest games against Stewart's Melville College and George Watson's College. They found their stride with some excellent wins against Edinburgh Academy and Peebles High School. Two agonising defeats against Fettes College and Merchiston really were the games that got away, but there is no doubt that the highlight of the season was gaining revenge over Merchiston in the return game, winning away from home 30-29 in the dying moments. This match really highlighted the group's character and work rate, and it was fantastic to see them close the game out. Paddy M. was a fantastic captain for the team, leading by example on the pitch and

motivating his troops. Paddy and David J. finished as top try scorers, with Hamish M. and Cameron H. also crossing the whitewash on numerous occasions. The A team's strength has been reflected in eight players being nominated for Caledonia representation, with a further three missing out due to age.

The **B team** have gone from strength to strength under the guidance of their coach Christopher Lawson; their hard work in training transferred into excellent wins against tough opposition. This season the squad enjoyed two fantastic wins over Merchiston (home and away) and other wins against George Watson's College and Edinburgh Academy. They only narrowly lost out to Stewart's Melville, 14-20. Robert C. has been an excellent captain for the team, and top try scorer for the season went to Ethan B. Other strong performers have been James S., Hamish H. and Nicholas L. Win or lose, this group have been committed, and their energy infectious. There is no doubt that there is hard work required, but they certainly have the makings of a strong group looking forward to U16 rugby.

Ronald Baird and Christopher Lawson

Things were looking optimistic for this season's **U16A** team. The Form IV year group had had a strong season the year before and a few Form V boys were dropping down for the year. The first game against Stewart's Melville was definitely one to learn from; we suffered a 48-20 loss. The boys went back to training with some positives, but there was a lot to work on. After a few more losses in the conference, we travelled to Marr College for the first game of the Cup. The rainy weather, hostile crowd and the number of injuries we carried led us to make a few mistakes in the first half, but the boys were ready for a big second half and we opened with tries from Alfie A. and Nic D. (both Form IV). Sadly, it was too little, too late, and we ended up in the Shield. A 29-7 win over Edinburgh Academy and a 21-12 win over Fettes, however, set us up well for the Shield quarter-final. In a back-and-forth game against Hutchesons' Grammar, though, we ended up on the wrong side of the scorecard.

After that, all focus was on the 7s season, and our first tournament was at George Watson's. We cruised through and ultimately defeated the host in the semi-finals thanks in no small part to a standout performance from Finlay W. (Form IV), but we faced a dominant Stewart's Melville side in the final. They controlled possession, and we ended up in second place. Owing to regional games, a depleted team travelled to Glasgow, but after a shaky first game we did go on to win the Plate. From there we headed to Sedbergh where we began the tournament with some free-flowing 7s to win against Kirkham Grammar School; however; this was followed by losses to Royal Grammar School Newcastle and Queen Elizabeth Grammar School. Once again entered we were competing for the Plate. A dominant performance against Prince Henry's Grammar School put us through to the final where we defeated Northampton School for Boys



to win our second Plate. Our final matches of the season were played at the Rosslyn Park 7s tournament where we found ourselves in a difficult group that included Epsom College, whom we faced in our first game. We brought good upfront physicality and managed a respectable 33–7 loss. Next up was Bristol Grammar School where our attack was very impressive; unfortunately, we let in too many easy tries in defence. Our final match was on the livestreamed pitch; nerves were high, but we calmed down after a first half hat-trick by Alfie. The season was capped off perfectly when Lewis E. (Form IV) scored a brilliant try in the final seconds of the game.

Hamish F. (Form V)

Dollar Academy's **U16B** team had a remarkable season this year, remaining undefeated throughout all matches. We began our campaign with two of the toughest fixtures possible. Nevertheless, we came out victorious which gave us the perfect start to the season. With our heads held high, we played Lasswade High School. It was an end-to-end game, and they were a very physical side. However, the match concluded in a draw of 36 points each. As the season progressed, confidence and morale soared. With the final three games left to play, we picked up the same number of dominant wins. The boys managed to finish the season with a phenomenal record of five wins, one draw and no losses.

Moving into the 7s season; our first tournament was held at the High School of Glasgow. Our many injuries resulted in a smaller squad. Though we only had eight players, rather than the full ten, they displayed great determination and resilience, and we were successful in the Shield final. Unfortunately, things did not go to plan toward the end of the season, as we were knocked out of the two remaining tournaments in the semi-finals. Despite the harsh end to the season, it had undeniably been a very strong one for the team. We all look forward to the season ahead.

Niall Gallagher and Ritchie Bruce

This was something of a re-set season for the **2nd XV**, with the vast majority of the squad being new to the U18 group. Couple this with a high injury toll across the group in the early part of the season, and there was a lot of pressure on what were largely Form V players. Hopefully the exposure gained this season will serve them well next season and can be built upon during the preparation camp in Tignes in August.

A bright opening game against Stewart's Melville ended in a well-fought loss, but the boys showed what they were capable of in creating some good attacking rugby. This set something of a pattern for the season, with several closely fought games and some very good wins. The standout match was a hugely impressive away win (48–0) against a good Edinburgh Academy side.

All of the boys have shown good potential and learned that consistency of performance is vital as you progress. If they can demonstrate this next season, along with increased maturity, then things should improve, and they will take greater enjoyment from the game.

In terms of standout individuals over the season, a few boys merit a mention. This is not about audacious feats or sublime skills, but rather sheer grit and the desire to just be a little better every time they laced up their boots. Cameron H. (Form V) moved around various positions, but good-naturedly gave everything for the team. William M. (Form V) consistently carried well, tackled hard and showed good game awareness, belying the fact that this was only his third season playing rugby. But the most improved player must be Aran B. (Form V); he's worked very hard on his fitness and strength and become a very good tighthead prop. He has settled in to become a core part of the team. While raw speed may not be his forte, the power he showed when carrying the ball meant he made ground, and it generally took three opponents to stop him. He also discovered that he can kick conversions!

Doug Smith

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Junior 1



Junior 2



Form 1B



Form 1A



Form 2B



Form 2A



Form 3B



Form 3A



U16B



U16A



2nd XI

EMILY N. (FORM VI) SELECTED FOR U18 SIX NATIONS FESTIVAL

We are delighted to note that Emily N. (Form VI) was selected for the Scotland U18 squad to compete in the Six Nations Festival in Colwyn Bay, Wales, over the Easter break. She played matches against France, Wales, England, and Italy before finishing with a match against Ireland. Here she describes her rugby journey.

My path to joining the Scotland U18 squad was a bit unusual compared to most. I started playing rugby by accident in August 2023 at a charity match with my dad. Stirling County needed a girl to play, and I eagerly accepted the invitation. The tournament began and, after scoring a few tries and using a handoff on a member of the Alloa team, I was told I needed to start playing rugby. The U18s coach asked if I would play for Stirling County and, two days later, I was down at Bridgehaugh for my first training session.

My first game was against Falkirk. It was a baptism by fire, having only completed a few contact sessions. My confidence grew from those first hits, and I knew then that I wanted to continue to play rugby. This was when I took the scary decision to stop all hockey outside of school and focus purely on rugby, spending most of my



free time practising passing and kicking with my dad to catch up. It paid off and County reached the Cup final at Murrayfield. Running out at Murrayfield was a surreal moment for me, only made better by running in two tries under the posts.

Christmas came and the next thing I knew I was being asked up to Dundee to trial for Caledonia U18s. After a successful regional series (including playing a game in a yellow weather warning in Inverness), I found myself at the Hive Stadium trialling for Scotland U18s. I dedicated every weekend and Tuesday night to camp training, from the moment of that trial to the U18 Six Nations itself. Doing that on top of club training and school was exhausting, but one of the best experiences of my life. To say I was nervous before the last camp in Wales was an understatement. The squad was going to be made up of 28 girls. We were still a squad of 30. But as the camp went on, that nervousness turned into excitement. I was going to represent my country at the U18 Six Nations.

We drove down to Wales on Wednesday and started training from the moment we got off the bus. Our first games were on Friday against France and Wales. Sitting in the team talk the night before our first games, I did not expect much—but seeing my name and photo come up under number 15 on the French team sheet, froze me in my tracks. Just a year ago I had never even played rugby; now, I would be starting against one of the best U18 sides in the world. That match did not go how we wanted, but our final game was against Ireland—and we sang the national anthem for the first time. It was an emotional moment, and it made me immensely proud. Again, the game did not go how we wanted, but the wider experience of the whole tournament was amazing, and I have come away a better and more confident rugby player.

Emily N. (Form VI)



CURLING CLUB 2023–2024

Dollar Academy's Curling Club has two main aims. Firstly, and most importantly, to introduce new curlers to the sport, giving as many pupils as possible the opportunity to learn the skills and tactics required to play. Our second aim was to enter competitions with other schools and to perform at the highest level possible. This year we made significant progress on both fronts.

Most Tuesday afternoons in the first and second term over 20 young curlers travelled to the Kinross ice rink to be expertly tutored in the skills of the game by our three club coaches (Dottie, Morag and Debbie). About half of our curlers were new to the sport this year, but they very quickly developed the skills to deliver stones successfully, allowing them to play competitively.

This season we competed in the Cathedral League in Stirling in November. We also competed, for the first time, in the Crabbie Trophy, held at Murrayfield in December. The season culminated in March with an excellent showing in the Hay Trophy event in Perth; our very young team lost just one of the matches they played.

Curling Club practice sessions will begin again in September and, as ever, complete beginners and more experienced curlers are very welcome to come along and get involved.

*Alastair McConnell, David Chant and
Andrew McGlen*



GOLF 2023–2024

The winter always proves a challenge for golf, as, intrinsically, we are always at the mercy of the weather. This past winter proved to be no different. Our competitions have been limited—some cancelled completely, while others have been rescheduled.

As we enter the new golf season, our golfers have been busy practising, honing their skills and getting into shape for the months to come. While there has been a notable drop in competition golf over the past few months, our golfers have exploited this opportunity to work on the more technical aspects of their game. We have put the indoor simulator through its paces, and even staff are still figuring out what it can do. Our jaws drop every time we stumble across some new discovery of its remarkable capabilities. Over the winter, we were fortunate to have Gleneagles coaches come to Dollar on a weekly basis to give our golfers valuable one-to-one coaching using the simulator. At the time of writing, we look forward to a summer that will no doubt prove to be another successful one. Results aside, Dollar golfers are as well prepared as they have ever been, and I'm sure they will acquit themselves to the best of their ability in the weeks that lie ahead. I look forward to providing an update about their summer exploits in the next Christmas edition of this magazine.

Neil Blezard





SWIMMING GALA NEWS

Swimming is a popular sport at Dollar Academy and, over three days in March, swimming championships were held at every level. There was much fun and splashing during the Prep 1 to 3 Gala fun relays, while the noisy and numerous rivalries in the Junior School Gala class races made for a lively, entertaining event. Finally, the Senior Gala offered the opportunity for form class challenges and various other championship events. It was a fantastic three days of competition, both light-hearted and cut-throat! There were some superb individual performances, and all the champions are listed opposite. Equally pleasing, however, were the many smiles and ceaseless laughter, the good-natured competitive spirit and the general enthusiasm for swimming across so many year groups. Well done to everyone involved.

Steve Newton

Swimming Champions 2024

Senior Gala

Form I Girls: Kardelen A.
 Form I Boys: Magnus L.
 Intermediate Girls: Charlotte S. (Form II)
 Intermediate Boys: Arjun B. (Form III)
 Senior Girls: Perrie S. (Form V)
 Senior Boys: Ollie W. (Form V)

Junior Gala

Junior 1 Girls: Lynsey B.
 Junior 1 Boys: Will M.
 Junior 2 Girls: Elsie B.
 Junior 2 Boys: Nicky T.

Prep Gala

Prep 4 Girls: Elize R.
 Prep 4 Boys: Finlay C. and Robert L.
 Prep 5 Girls: Samantha G.
 Prep 5 Boys: Will F.



FOOTBALL 2023–2024

The 2023–24 season saw a fresh injection of young blood into the senior boys' football team, as so many from last year's side had moved on. The work that Mr Greg Brown has done with our Form I and II pupils began to bear fruit not just in his Under-15 side, but also as several Form III pupils—and even one boy in Form II—have played starring roles for the senior XI this term.

We began at home to George Heriot's School on a wet October afternoon at Newfield and our young side came flying out of the blocks. We raced into a 3–1 lead with two goals coming from Hal S. (Form IV) and one from Robert K. (Form VI) and, although our opponents pulled one back and put us under pressure late in the game, we deserved this excellent opening win against bigger, older, and more battle-hardened opposition.

In our next outing, away to Merchiston Castle School, we had to contend with atrocious weather conditions—heavy wind and rain. We couldn't get any kind of rhythm in our play, but the players managed the situation well and prevailed by one goal

to nil courtesy of a Robert K. penalty. Our goalkeeper Max O. (Form III) gave notice of his ability with a couple of excellent saves as did Jack A. (Form II) who was notably assured in defence.

We began 2024 with a game at Clifton Hall School and, despite a fast start and the creation of three or four half-chances by Dollar, the first half ended goalless. Into the second half, play was becoming increasingly scrappy and error-strewn when Hal produced a moment of quality with a rocket of a shot from just outside the penalty box that flew into the top corner of the net. As full-time approached, we were increasingly being pinned back by our desperate opponents who were starting to throw bodies forward and take more risks. In the end we managed to hang on through some desperate defending, and Max again produced some fine saves to notch consecutive clean sheets.

After Fettes cancelled our fixture, we qualified as group winners, earning a home tie against a runner-up from another group in the quarter-finals. Unfortunately, that team was Jordanhill, the Cup holders (they went

on to retain the Cup) and—after a heavy defeat at Newfield, where we could have no complaints—our Cup run was over for another season. There were, however, positives to be taken away from the experience; so many of our talented young squad will be available for at least two more years.

As always, we say must goodbye and thank you to our departing Form VI pupils: Captain Toni V., Nathan P., Robert K., Rory B., Patrick M. and Adom A.

We must also say farewell and thank you to Mr Lewis Tod, who leaves us for Linlithgow Academy. Our loss is their gain, and on behalf of the players and staff we wish him all the best.

Paul Mckay



CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

This year's Prep School Cross Country race took place on 26 March following the Junior race, which took place on 26 February. These fantastic race days prepare pupils for participation in the Senior School Cross Country Championships which, this year, took place on Wednesday 13 March. An incredible 676 senior school pupils took part, and there were some strong individual performances. Each day's race was full of adventure, a powerful sense of fun and quite a lot of mud. There were those who walked or gently jogged, enjoying the social company, the landscape, the sense of occasion, smiling and waving at friends and staff members. And there were those who ran as though their lives depended upon it: leaping ditches and fallen trees, passing checkpoints in a blur, breathless, determined to be first (or one of the first) over the finish line. I would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who helped (on the course or off of it) to make these races a success. For a whole-school running event like this to work so smoothly is no mean feat, and it requires everyone's efforts and enthusiasm (staff and pupils alike) for it to succeed.

Steve Newton





Prep School Champions

Prep 4 Girls: Imogen D.
Prep 4 Boys: Charlie W.
Prep 5 Girls: Erin H.
Prep 5 Boys: Angus L.

Junior School Champions

Junior 1 Girls 1: Isla L.
Junior 1 Boys: Hugo K.
Junior 2 Girls: Ailie G.
Junior 2 Boys: Ewan B.

Senior School Champions

Form I Girls: Poppy W.
Form I Boys: Toby C.
Intermediate Girls: Katie N. (Form III)
Intermediate Boys: Percy D. (Form III)
Senior Girls: Jessica E. (Form IV)
Senior Boys: Cameron M. (Form VI)

DOLLAR ACADEMY TENNIS PUPILS ENJOY A SMASHING TIME

Dollar Academy pupils attending the GB National Tennis Academy continue to enjoy success. Here, Jason Atkins (Head of GB NTA) provides an update, highlighting and summarising our pupils' achievements since the last edition.



Charlie Robertson (Form VI) started 2024 with a career-high world ITF ranking of 25 and made the second round of the Australian Open Junior Championships. His highlight so far in 2024 was an incredible debut at ATP Challenger Tour Level—the second tier of men's professional tennis. He won through, qualifying to the second round of the main draw before losing to eventual finalist, Paul Jubb. In doing so, Charlie gained his first ATP men's world ranking points with a current position of 1,158. He is hoping to play at Junior Wimbledon this summer and play more men's tournaments. His junior success will give him a good platform to transition to the men's game and realise his goal of becoming a professional tennis player.



Hephzibah Oluwadare (Form V) was selected to represent Great Britain's U18 team in the Junior Billie Jean King Cup finals where the team finished third. She closed out 2023 by winning the British Tour Premier event in Loughborough. In February, she won the ITF J200 singles title in Oberhaching, Germany, before losing narrowly to Great Britain's Billie Jean King Cup star and former WTA top 40 player, Heather Watson. Hephzibah managed all this around the same time that she sat four prelim exams! Hephzibah's success on and off the court is attracting interest from Ivy League schools in the USA.



Hannah Rylatt (Form VI) had a great finish to 2023, winning an ITF J100 singles title in Loughborough and an ITF J200 doubles title in Vigo, Spain, alongside Hannah Read (FP 2022). Domestically Hannah was in fine form as well, winning four British

Tour titles including the season-ending TS Open Tour finals. Hannah finishes at Dollar this summer and has secured a Division I US college scholarship at the University of Central Florida.

Henry Jefferson (FP 2024; left



in January 2024) finished his time at Dollar on a high, winning his first ITF Junior World Tennis Tour singles title in his last event as a Dollar player at the J100 in Loughborough in December 2023. He worked his way into the world's top 100 at the point of leaving Dollar, and he has started well at the University of Florida. As a freshman 'Gator', Henry has secured a place on the team, with a 2–0 winning singles record at the time of writing.

Overall, in 2023, GB NTA players won ten Junior ITF Titles and one ITF W25 title. Dollar Academy has laid the foundations for this success by providing high levels of academic flexibility that enable GB NTA players to train and travel extensively throughout the year. The GB NTA players and coaches at Tennis Scotland owe a debt of gratitude to all the Dollar Academy staff who work so hard to support these exceptionally talented pupils.

*Jason Atkins
(Head of GB National Tennis Academy)*

EQUESTRIAN NEWS

In the equestrian world, Dollar has continued to showcase an array of excellent riders across a range of different disciplines including show jumping, dressage, eventing and tetrathlon. I am also pleased to note that we have many international and national riders representing the school: Molly K. (Form VI), Anna B. (Form V), Jessica E. (Form IV), Izzy H. (Form III) and me (Evie P. in Form VI). For the equestrian team itself, there have been two main competitions this year. At these events, our team members are always polite and friendly in disposition, and all Dollar riders are also excellent sportswomen.

The season opened with the Strathallan School Show Jumping competition, where Dollar entered teams at every level bar one. As is expected at any Strathallan competition, a challenging course was presented to the teams. We Dollar riders took it all in stride, however, and achieved notable team success in Class Two (70–75cm); the Dollar Glens—comprising Ava W. (Form VI), Annina L. (Form II), Francesca B. (Form III) and Neve W. (Form IV)—finished in an impressive 2nd place, beaten only by the hosts. Annina finished 5th individually, no mean feat at a competition with so many entrants. The individual Dollar success continued as the classes progressed, with Izzy taking 6th place in Class 3 (85–90cm) and Anna taking 2nd place in Class 4 (100–105cm).

The Dollar teams came together once again to take part in one of the biggest events on the school equestrian calendar: the Scottish Schools Equestrian Championships, hosted by Kilgraston School. On offer for the top teams and individuals was a qualification for the 26th annual National Schools Equestrian Championships 2024 in southern England. This added pressure had no impact on the performance of the Dollar teams, however. The 85cm team of Ava (Form VI), Neve, Annina and Imogen D. (Form I), and the 95cm team of Ava W. (Form IV), Jessica, Izzy and I both achieved 3rd place, while the 105cm team of Anna, Jessica, Izzy and I achieved 1st place for the second year running. There were also great individual successes, with three individual qualifiers; Izzy came 1st in the 95cm, Molly came 2nd in the 95cm and the 105cm, and Anna came 2nd and 3rd in the 110cm and 105cm classes, respectively. The individual placers battled over milliseconds to achieve their awards, and the competition on display was simply incredible to watch.

I speak on behalf of my fellow sixth-year equestrians when I say that it has been lovely to have the opportunity to represent the school for a final year and to see the growth of the squad over the season. I have no doubt that the Dollar equestrian team will continue to develop, and I expect to see them on the leader board for many years to come.

Evie P. (Captain, Form VI)





CLIMBING COMPETITION

Dollar sent a strong team of 11 climbers to the Strathearn Schools Climbing Competition at Morrison's Academy on the afternoon of Friday 22 March. It was a well attended event with great atmosphere, involving a series of challenging, creative (and sometimes highly unconventional!) boulder problems. Mr David Chant's impromptu basketball game at the start certainly got everyone limbered up and ready to go. Natalie N. (Form II) climbed very well throughout, missing a place in the finals by a mere three points. Robbie G. (Form IV and U16 World Ice Climbing champion and

U18 European Cup winner) won the boys S4-6 category despite a rotator cuff injury. All Dollar pupils climbed very well and, more importantly, represented the school admirably: they had fun and worked hard, all whilst supporting and encouraging the other climbers (from Dollar or the other schools). In the following pages, Robbie describes his career and incredible achievements in ice climbing, a sport that doesn't often get the spotlight in the pages of this magazine.

Heather Moore and David Chant

ON TOP OF THE WORLD

I never thought I'd be an ice climber—no less the world champion. I had never really done rock climbing (other than at birthday parties) until I was 13. I was instantly hooked by the sport, and climbing became an addiction fueled by miniature goals. At first it was to get to the top of a route, then it was to try and climb harder routes; soon it became more of a lifestyle than a sport for me. I started to train more in the gym, focusing on climbing-specific exercises, and I changed my diet to maximise my power-to-weight ratio. Before I knew it, I was training six days a week. My goals then changed from getting to the top of the wall to winning competitions and working toward selection for the GB Team. Not long after that, I made the best decision of my life: to start ice climbing...

Many climbers I knew ice climbed in the winter. When I watched videos, I thought it looked like a crazy sport that only insane people would try, so...I knew I had to attempt it. I went along to a taster session, and it turned out I was a natural. I discovered that it wasn't too different from regular rock climbing except that you had metal spikey objects at the ends of your limbs and it required a lot more strength. And I mean a lot more. I remember being wildly sore for days after I first tried it. It was that pain that made me love it. The raw emotion of fear, the adrenaline and the pump it offered, both to the muscles and the mind. I needed to make quick decisions about where to climb, even as the ever-present thought that I must avoid stabbing myself with an ice axe gnawed at my mind. Soon, ice climbing took over from rock climbing.

After training relentlessly and achieving a good result in the British Championship (I came 16th), I was selected for a Youth European Cup competition in Czechia. I had not been picked for Team GB, but I was allowed to compete alongside the other athletes. I trained hard for this



competition, as I wanted to prove not just to the GB coaches, but to myself that I was good. There were five routes I needed to climb in total—all around 20–30m high and overhung. On my first climb I was so nervous that I fell off because my hands were shaking so much that I wasn't accurate with my axe placements. After that embarrassment of a climb, I took myself away from the competition to get a better mindset: a mindset that made failure unacceptable. This worked and helped me place 2nd at that European Cup competition. And this guaranteed me a place in the GB team.

After that, there were many competitions on the horizon, but none loomed over me so powerfully as the Youth World Championships in Finland. This would be the biggest event I had ever participated in; I knew I needed to train as hard as possible, so I did not waste the opportunity to compete at such a high level. It took place at the end of the season, so I had plenty of time to become as physically and mentally prepared as possible.

When I arrived in Oulu, Finland, I tried to negate all stress and worry about the competition so that I could climb calmly and to the best of my ability. After brutal climbs affected by snowfall and -20°C temperatures, I qualified for the finals. In climbing competitions, you are not allowed to see the finals route before you climb it; you sit in a room 'in isolation' until it is your turn to climb. Waiting in isolation, I could hear the crowds cheering, gasping, applauding—but I never really knew how my opposition had climbed, as I could not watch them. My name was finally called... it was my turn. I can't really remember that climb now—it was all a blur. All I do remember was the adrenaline pumping through me and then, suddenly, I was at the top. I remember my sense of disbelief: I had topped a World Championships finals route. I remember the cameraman staring down, congratulating me. No other climber had gotten to the top as quickly as I had. I had won the World Championships. I was World Champion.

Robbie Gorn (Form IV)

AUTHOR JOAN HAIG COMES TO DOLLAR

Members of the Junior School, Senior Creative Writing Club and Advanced Higher Creative Writing students were privileged to welcome Joan Haig (FP 1997) to the school in late November. Joan is a university writing instructor, novelist, and non-fiction writer. Her debut novel, *Tiger Skin Rug*, was nominated for the Carnegie Medal and won Silver in the US Foreword Book of the Year Award. She has coauthored two books, *Talking History: 150 Years of Speeches and Speakers*, and *Great Minds: 2500 Years of Thinkers and Philosophy*. Joan was born in Zambia, grew up there and in Vanuatu, and spent her final two years of school at Dollar Academy. She now lives in the Scottish hills with her cats and other family.

We were very fortunate indeed that Joan took time to come and speak with us about her experience as a writer. She gave a wonderful workshop for Junior pupils based on her novel, *Tiger Skin Rug*, followed by some fascinating insights into her world as a writer. Her talks to the older pupils were equally thought-provoking and engaging; she asked pupils to reflect deeply upon their own creative processes, even as she described her own. The Q&A sessions that followed were very useful to our young writers who understood the great opportunity before them and Joan's answers were always brilliant. The pupils loved learning about the must-have items she keeps nearby for guaranteed inspiration! She left pupils feeling excited and assured about their own creative potential, having reminded us all that jotting a few imperfect words down to start with can—with commitment and determination—lead to beautiful literary creations. Below, Joan describes her journey toward becoming a writer and reflects upon some early influences from her time as a Dollar Academy pupil.

Beth Wright

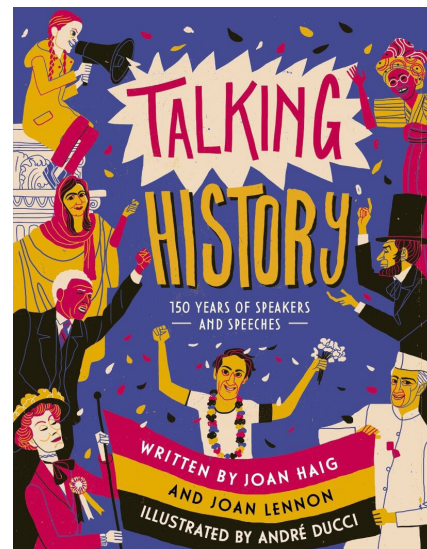
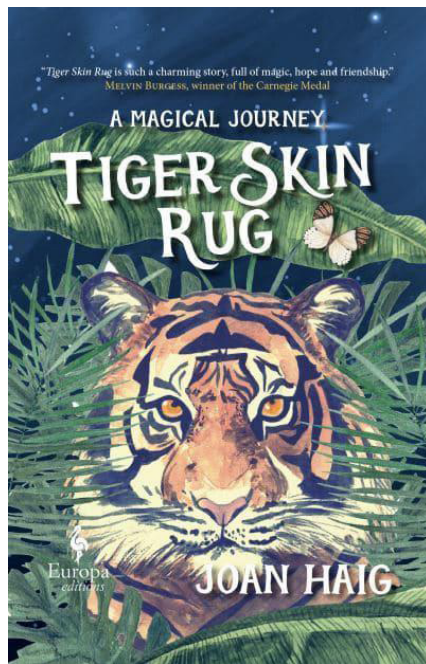
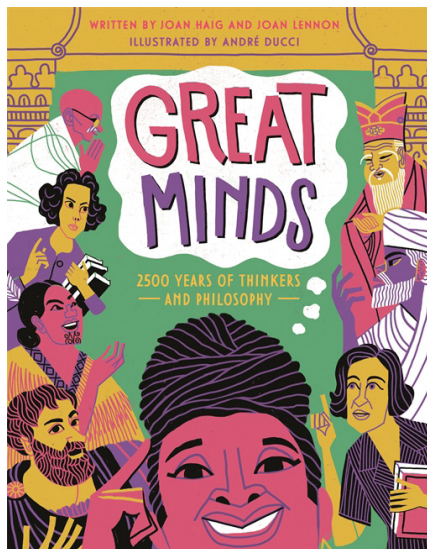


Letters from—and a Lion in—the Library

It was summertime when I first looked around Dollar Academy with my dad. The sky was blue, and the hills were green and gold. Pupils were out playing cricket, and arpeggios drifted from the music hall. A group of Art pupils pegged oil paintings to string across the corridor; a Science class, on finishing the last exam, was watching Wimbledon. It was nearing the point in the calendar when boarders would untack posters and pack up trunks.

When I met the Rector, I expected him to ask what I aspired to 'be' or 'do' in life—it seemed the first thing teachers, aunties, hairdressers, and doctors always wanted to know of a fifteen-year-old. I never had a good answer, because I didn't have a clue. But the Rector didn't ask. Instead, he said, 'I see from your letter that you are a writer.'

My English teacher, when I arrived at the school the following term, needed a little more persuasion. English was



my favourite subject, and I did well in most of it, but I struggled with creative writing. My friends—Jayne and Hannah, in particular—were stylish writers. But I crammed in too many adjectives and adverbs and my plots were frumpy. In my final year, the class was taught by the lovely Miss Gabriel, with the Rector covering Brecht. He played *The Threepenny Opera* in German and loudly, and he called every one of us a writer. It wasn't, he said, a question of whether we were writers or not; it was a question of what *kind* of writers we were.

My subjects at Dollar were varied—Maths, Chemistry, Modern Studies, English and Drama—reflecting my not knowing what I wanted to 'be' or 'do' with my life. If on Monday I was considering how to become a UN ambassador, by Wednesday I was running a resort, and come the weekend I was a stage director. The school and my parents were generous: they let me dream it all for a while. Along the way, I joined Amnesty International and wrote endless letters from a desk in the library. And it was in that space that I got to direct the school's Sixth Form Play. I chose *After Liverpool*, by James Saunders, a script made up of short scenes and awkward vignettes

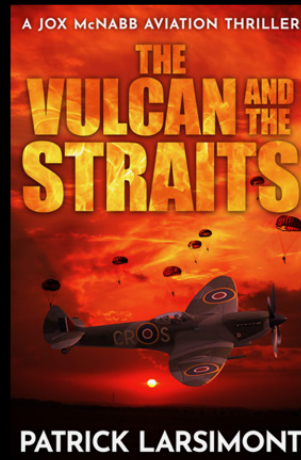
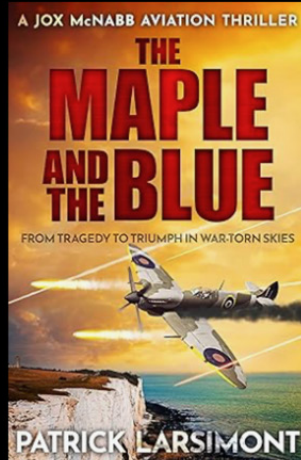
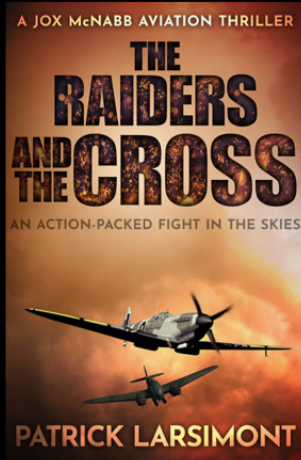
that prompt uncomfortable laughter. I loved that the performance took place against a backdrop of bookshelves. I can think of no better pop-up theatre than the Dollar Academy library.

After Dollar, I travelled to India as a volunteer and lived with monks for a while in the Nilgiri Hills—the Blue Mountains—before taking up my place at St Andrews to read English. I joined the One World Society to save the planet. Literature wasn't doing that, I thought, believing instead that the solution lay in politics and global connection: I graduated with a degree in International Relations, and itchy feet. But my love affair with politics was short, and I still didn't have any sort of career plan. I planned an expedition that didn't get off the ground, helped recruit bagpipers for a charitable event, lived alongside pirates in Nigeria, and applied for doctoral funding in African Studies. All the while, I was writing. Letters and diaries, mostly, and then field notes and academic papers. It wasn't until my late thirties that I enrolled on a creative writing retreat in the Highlands to try fiction. The story I wrote became *Tiger Skin Rug*, my first novel, and I have since had two more books published.

Recently, I was invited back

to Dollar Academy. It was wintertime and the sky was blue. The hills were grey and mauve. It was wonderful to be back. After a workshop on tigers with the Junior School, I had lunch in the staffroom and met the librarian. She told me about a *lion-skin rug* that once hung in the library. It went missing, perhaps lost in the school fire. In the afternoon, I joined a group of seniors and made sure to tell them that they are all writers. For some reason, it takes confidence to say you are one, and hearing someone else say it can help. I also told them that if literature can't save the world, I don't know what can. As I left, down the drive to the tall gateposts, I reflected on what kind of writer I am, and concluded I am still a work in progress. With the pillars of the school in my rear mirror, I imagined sketching a play about a lion in the library, to be performed...well, where else?

Joan Haig (FP 1997)



WRITE HERE, RIGHT NOW

It's hard to believe I left Dollar 40 years ago, in circumstances similar to those of Jox McNabb, the main character of my novels. He was also a Dollar boy, though he left rather earlier: in June 1939, a dark time for the nation. Some might argue that—with the miners' strike and Mrs Thatcher—1984 was pretty dark too, but not for me. I had a whale of a time.

Like Jox, I have good memories of school, but perhaps that's age and the telescope of memory making the heart grow fonder. I had much to be grateful for: a decent education and the grades to get to Edinburgh University. Dollar at the time, and I assume now, produced smart, robust young men and women, optimistic and can do, without the self-entitlement that I later discovered many of the named private schools revealed in. That's not to say I didn't make chums amongst the public school fraternity; in fact, my books are littered with them. Jox's No. 111 Squadron pals: Moose, Pritch, Mack, Axel Fiske and Mike Longstaffe are all real chums of mine. As a little aside, Mike's three

daughters went to Dollar. In my time, two similar sets of sisters made an impact: the four Fairservice girls and the three Donaldsons. Anyway, that's another story.

University was a lot of fun. I graduated with large hair and bad dress sense (it was the eighties), but with a decent degree. That's when life threw one of its occasional curveballs. My father was from Belgium, and whilst I had been educated in Scotland, I still had a Belgian passport. It was 1988, and I was called up for military service. Scotland was in mourning after Lockerbie, and I felt pretty low as in the words of Status Quo in 1989, I was 'In the Army Now.' Well, actually the Air Force.

At school, CCF was a big thing and many of my Dollar cohort joined the British Army enthusiastically. I was less keen, and didn't much fancy sweeping up behind a tank for months on end, so I applied to be an officer candidate. During the selection process 'my familiarity with the Anglo-Saxon world' worked in my favour, and I ended up serving for the best part of two years. Air bases tend to be in the middle of nowhere; being far from friends in Scotland made it quite a lonely time. That said, it was certainly interesting. The baddies were various

terrorist groups, plus, of course, the Russians and the Warsaw Pact. It was the end of the Cold War, and I was in Belgium on an airbase with American ground-launched ICBMs and two squadrons of F-16s. It was during the SALT III (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks), but perhaps the less said about that, the better.

I was out in time to watch the first Gulf War from the sidelines. In London, I stayed with Dollar chums, Victor Buchanan (a Governor now, I believe) and Alasdair Clynes (both FPs 1984). My memories are a bit jumbled (it was the raving 90s), but I do remember that the controversial MP George Galloway lived in the flat upstairs. He and Victor had regular arguments through open windows. I also remember a hot weekend when Victor and I built a swimming pool. This involved a lot of plastic sheeting, some timber and very little know-how, but somehow it worked—until the water turned green.

Ironically, telling the tale of 'what I did last weekend' in an interview got me my first job in advertising. Well, that and getting tipped off by Will Mackenzie (a Tait boy) that a job was going. For better or worse, I embarked on a 30-year career. At the time it was seen as fairly glamorous—maybe it

still is. I had my ups and downs with it but, on the whole, had great fun. In retrospect, it's a rather silly way of making a living, but, that said, it was clearly attractive to a number of Dollar FPs. From memory, in my year alone, Jane McNeill, Andy Allen, Bimal Harry and Sue McCusker all worked in advertising. In the years below, Will Mackenzie and Malcolm Thorp (who introduced me to his flatmate and my future wife, Alison) were also in advertising. There are others, many of whom were a good deal more successful than me, but I did OK. To give a flavour, my dubious 'claims to fame' were that I 'invented' Fantasy Football for *The Telegraph* and I put on the Spice Girls' first concert in Istanbul (for Pepsi). Without getting too starstruck, I worked with Pamela Anderson, Henry Cooper, Ruud Gullit, Mikhail Gorbachev, both Perrys (Matthew and Luke) and the Two Ronnies.

All of which was a long and winding road that led to my getting married (30 years next year) and having two daughters... And then the global pandemic came along. By that point advertising was pretty much done for me; the business's perpetual drive for youth saw old geezers like me as expensive, 'pale, male and stale.' But I had a good ride.

One thing that had always bugged me was how ideas were the domain of creative teams. I was once told by a famous creative director that the brains of 'creatives' were wired differently to us unimaginative account handlers (the guys who run the business). I'd worked with some of the 'rock stars' at Abbott Mead Vickers. BBDO, DDB, Saatchi & Saatchi, Iris and Adam & Eve. (If you know advertising, you know them.) I'd met all creatures great and small, and paid



them stratospheric salaries. Some were brilliant, but others the embodiment of the 'Emperor's New Clothes.' Frankly, I thought I could do better and just wished I'd had the gumption to give it go.

I suppose that's what I finally did. I wrote my first novel *Yesterday's Soldier* during lockdown. It was complicated and too long. I didn't really know what I was doing, but I have since knocked it into shape, and it'll be published next year. During Lockdown Two, I wrote my second, *Brookwood Boys*, a ghost story set in the largest cemetery in the UK. That's out this October in time for Halloween. I hope you'll check them out.

This brings me to my WW2 Aviation series: the story of Jox McNabb, the Dollar schoolboy that becomes one of The Few. I began the series after winning a competition. In my books, Jox becomes one of the RAF's most decorated fighter aces. So far, I've written four novels and have been contracted for a total of eight. I guess I'm fortunate; not too many authors get a ten-book deal.

Dollar FPs have been great supporters. Many appear in the books. Writing is a solitary endeavour, and I certainly need inspiration and a degree of amusement to keep writing. A way to do is by using the names, personalities and traits of those I know to form

my characters. No one is a baddy, but some are close to the bone. I make no apologies; it's all done for a bit of a laugh. I can't help myself.

The Vulcan and the Straits is out on 31 May. You'll find it (and the others) on Amazon. I've donated my books to the Dollar Academy library so pupils can check them out. I'd be interested to hear what you think. I suppose Jox's story is a coming-of-age tale which should appeal to the TikTok generation, but I'll be honest my 16-year-old isn't that interested beyond asking, 'Does that make you famous?' Her 22-year-old sister is a bit more involved, making my promo videos and web ads, but not *actually* reading the books.

My parting words to current pupils is that there's always a chance for a fabulous first (and even second) career, if you dream big enough and go for it. The foundation that Dollar gives you will stand you in good stead. Things like courtesy, hard work, respect and good manners, loyalty, and being there for your pals will always count. Small things like not walking with your hands in your pockets, never eating in the street, and having the self-respect not to sit in the dirt have also stuck with me. Oh, and now and again, maybe give your folks a break—they're sacrificing a lot to give you the best of starts. Well anyway, that's what Jox McNabb thinks and so do I, as I write here, right now.

Patrick Larsimont (FP 1984)

DOUBLE OLYMPIAN AND FANTASY AUTHOR

Reflections from Jen McIntosh (FP 2009)

I'm a bookworm. Always have been. Raised in a household of sci-fi and fantasy lovers—with *The Hobbit* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* as my bedtime stories—I was never short of a book growing up. I also have an over-active imagination. As a child, I spent more hours than I care to admit creating all kinds of stories in my head, featuring all my favourite characters. But sometimes I felt a character was missing. So, I'd invent my own. And then things...spiralled.

I always loved creative writing at school, but it was never enough for me. I loved inventing characters—creating adventures for them, villains to defeat and so on. They were rarely more than snapshots, flickers of scenes that played out in my head when I should have been studying. But they were fun, and they helped me escape some of the more difficult moments of my teenage years.

It wasn't until we had a school talk from an author called Nicola Morgan, promoting her book *Blame My Brain*, that I realised 'author' could be a career choice. We'd read one of her books in class, and I bought another there and then. I was enamoured with her. She was so...human. Intelligent and witty, but human. Until that point, authors had been these magical remote creatures, a species apart from the likes of you or me. But she was so down-to-earth and relatable that I realised it was attainable—if I was willing to do the work. So, I kept writing. Developed



those scenes into something bigger. Pieced them together until I had the bare bones of a complete story.

Then along came sport, and I prioritised chasing my Olympic dream. Ten years of my life disappeared in a flash and, when I finally walked away, I didn't feel like I had much to show for it. Time and distance have changed that perspective, but through all the ups and downs, I never stopped

writing. It was an escape from the pressures of the environment, a way for me to channel and make sense of what could be overwhelming emotions. It helps me make sense of the chaos in my head. It gives me a chance to reflect, to connect and *create*. I've yet to find a better outlet for venting some frustration than coming up with a good fight scene.

Double Olympian and fantasy



author are not two titles one would expect to hear together, but the real power of sport lies in its stories. They are the beating heart of its enduring appeal. The underdog defeating the odds. Shared experiences turning rivalry to friendship. Resilience triumphing in the face of adversity. Stories like these capture our imagination, bring us together, show us that anything is possible, inspire us in our darkest moments. They have the power to change lives, to make the world a better place.

I had two dreams growing up. Firstly, to compete at the Olympic Games. Secondly, to become a published author. Surprisingly, the latter has proved harder than the former. Some skills have been transferrable, and that has been invaluable. I have a thick skin for constructive criticism, good attention to detail and I'm not shy of hard work. There have been some steep learning curves, too. I chose to self-

publish my debut novel, *Blood of Ravens*, as it allowed me to retain full control over a project that meant so much to me, but that also meant learning about formatting and marketing and so many other things that go into publishing a book—things I'd never considered. Fortunately, with all the experience gained through sport, none of it phased me and I was happy to embrace the challenge in pursuit of the dream. I love writing, and I just want to be in a position where I can keep doing it.

I'm in the process of writing the sequel now, though productivity has been somewhat derailed by the arrival of our first child, and I have at least a dozen other projects sitting on the shelf that I'm itching to get to. I don't know if I'll ever 'make it' as an author, but if there's one thing I learned from sport, it's that, while it is not possible to succeed without hard work, it is possible to work hard and not succeed. It is also possible to fail and still grow.

Working hard, doing what we love, even if we don't achieve our dreams, is still valuable. Regardless of how successful I am as an author, writing and publishing *Blood of Ravens* was still worth doing—even if only for my own enjoyment (never mind personal growth). But maybe someone else will take value from it; maybe it will help them, and that would be incredible too.

Jen McIntosh (FP 2009)



*Back Row (L-R): Cathy Jordan, Jane Hunter, Fiona Kenney, Elaine McGrouther, Patricia Baxter, Patricia Lambert
Front Row (L-R): Avril Hamilton, Elspeth Cameron, Jean Guthrie*

DINING IN NIGHT: The 50th Anniversary of Girls in the CCF

At the 2023 CCF Dining In Night on 1 December, an important anniversary was celebrated: it had been 50 years since girls were first permitted to join the CCF. It is now simply a matter of course that girls are given equal opportunities throughout the school, but it was very different in the 1970s. Indeed, when the Girls Section was formed in 1973, it was the first time that female cadets had been admitted to any CCF in the whole of the UK.

The CCF decided to mark this 50th anniversary at this session's Dining In Night. Major Mark Scott was aware that I had been one of the recruits in that first intake of girls, as I had mentioned this when my son was in the CCF. He asked if I would try to contact as many of the original intake as possible to invite them to attend that night. I still had a copy of the official photograph of the Girls Section taken in 1973 and, luckily, it included the names. Avril Baird (*née*

Hamilton) assisted me, and we managed to make contact with 21 of the original 26 recruits. I am pleased to say that eight of us from that historic first intake were able to attend—a good turnout 50 years on.

I was privileged to be the guest speaker on the evening and thought that it would be interesting to give the cadets some background about why admitting girls to the CCF was such a milestone. Although Dollar Academy has been co-educational since its establishment over two centuries ago, the school was still run very much along gender lines in the 1970s. I had firsthand experience of this. I intended to become a civil engineer when I left school and wanted to take technical drawing in Form V. I knew that there were no girls in what was then the Technical Department but I thought that the reason for this was perhaps a lack of interest in technical subjects.



When I tried to sign up for Technical Drawing, however, I discovered that girls were, in fact, banned from the Technical Department! I was astounded to learn this, and also confused as to why being a girl should have had any bearing on what subjects I could study.

The school was not at all comfortable with my intention to become a civil engineer. Various attempts were made by teachers and senior staff to dissuade me from that path. I was told that engineering was not a suitable career for a girl and provided with a list of what were considered more appropriate occupations for a young lady.

After many weeks, however, the Governors finally agreed that girls could be allowed to study technical subjects. So it was in November 1973 that I took my place as the first girl in the Technical Department at Dollar. I went on to study Civil Engineering at the University of Edinburgh. When I graduated with an honours degree in 1979, I was the first female Dollar FP to graduate in any branch of engineering. I was very proud when there was a short note about this achievement in *Fortunas*.

In 1984 I passed the exams to become a chartered civil engineer and a full member of the Institution of Civil Engineers. Later in my career I was elected to the senior rank of Fellow of the Institution. I was only the second Scottish woman ever to achieve this. My message here to the cadets was that it is very important to keep persevering to achieve your dreams, no matter what barriers are put in your way.

What led to the change in policy that allowed girls to join the CCF? The main driving force was Captain Danny Mullen of the CCF, who was in charge of shooting at that time. He was very supportive of girls being able to shoot, and girls were permitted to join the Shooting Club from Form III onwards. The first girl to join the Shooting Club was Jean Guthrie (now Dunnet), who went on to be the school nurse for many years. Jean was very proficient at shooting, and Danny Mullen was keen for her to go to Bisley for the annual competition.

No girl from any school had ever competed at Bisley before; when Jean went in 1971, it was as a coach to the school team. Although she was not able to participate in the general competitions, Jean did manage to shoot in the Ashburton Shield. She was, therefore, the first girl to shoot at Bisley in any capacity. Then, in 1973, Avril Hamilton and Elaine Strachan were the first girls to shoot officially as part of the Dollar Academy CCF Bisley Team.

All those who join the CCF have their own reasons for doing so, but I am sure that the opportunity to take part in exciting and challenging activities forms a big part. Although it may not always be apparent to the cadets, they are learning a wide range of transferable skills. These include problem solving; planning and organisation of tasks; decision making under pressure; communication skills; working effectively in a team; and how to be a leader. These are skills that will equip them for life whatever path they take.

The evening was an undoubted success, and I would like to thank Lt Colonel Stewart and Major Scott for inviting us to the 2023 Dining In Night to mark the 50th anniversary of girls joining the CCF. It was important that this pivotal occasion in the history of the school was remembered and celebrated.

Elspeth King
(née Cameron, FP 1975, BSc(Hons) MBA CEng FICE MCIHT)



YOU'RE STILL WALKING; WE'RE STILL BUILDING...

Dollar Academy has supported the development of Uphill Junior School in Iruhuura, a primary school and kindergarten in a poor subsistence-farming community south of Fort Portal in western Uganda, since 2014, and the Sponsored Walks have been major milestones on that journey.

The Covid pandemic transformed the world, though we are learning to live with it. In Uganda, a 22-month-long closure of the schools had a devastating impact on the national education system, but for those institutions that have been able to reopen, life is slowly returning to normal. In the case of Uphill Junior, heroic efforts by the staff, supported by tremendous generosity from our donors, allowed a basic level of home education to continue. The populace was in hard lockdown, there is no electricity in most of the rural homes and there are no electronic devices available to the school to hand out. Paper and pencil and carbon paper (who here, younger than 40 years old, knows what *that* is?) and a lot of teachers' shoe leather were the order of the day. The school did eventually reopen, and it has gone from strength to strength, and so has the development programme.

Meanwhile, here in Dollar, school functions also returned—including the Sponsored Walk. Once again the wonderful interest that the Academy has shown in the development of Uphill Junior resulted in our being selected to receive funds, and I was delighted to be able to attend the lunchfield in Glendevon to pass on our appreciation directly to as many of the dinosaurs, fairy princesses, cartoon characters, furry animals and pieces of fruit as I could. Once again, every penny that was raised for The Uphill Trust has gone to the school, to help create something that will make a real difference there.

♥ Letter of Appreciation ♥

To the Uphill Trust team & all the donors

I wish to express my happiness for our new staff quarters.


The compound is away from the trading centre & provides a conducive environment for living, relaxing and preparing lessons.

Having electric light allows us to work in the evenings and the location is very quiet - ideal for reading and for mastering the content to be taught in school.

In our new accommodation we really feel like Kings and Queens!

Yours in service

Awori Immaculate
Teacher of Kiswahili, Music & Dance



The school undertakes to provide accommodation for its teachers, as there is no available housing in the conventional sense of the word. Until now this accommodation has been limited to some very poor facilities. We have now been able to acquire a building and convert it into seven, much better, living units and, using the Sponsored Walk funds, we have also built a new block comprising a kitchen and four two-room living units on the same plot of land. We are also in the process of constructing a sanitation facility on site, far superior to anything previously available in the community. I am proud to be a part of both communities, and I am so grateful for the kindness and support shown to Uphill Junior School and the people of Iruhuura by so many people connected to Dollar Academy. I look forward to developing opportunities for Dollar people to travel to Iruhuura and spend some time at the school. Equally, I can't wait to see Uphill's founder and director, Muhimbise Elius, onstage in Dollar's Assembly Hall, addressing the school. He would like to thank you, too!

Niall (Max) Macdonald
(Chairman of The Uphill Trust and FP 1975)

www.uphilltrust.org
Anyone interested in learning more about our work or supporting The Uphill Trust is welcome to contact us directly.

THE JOANNA MORGAN JONES EDUCATIONAL TRUST (2012–2024)

Jo's Trust: A Head Girl's Legacy

Jo's Trust was formed in memory of Joanna Morgan Jones who attended the Academy with her younger sisters, Rachael and Claire. Joanna became Head Girl in 1987–88. In recent years, the Trust has played a significant role in the affairs of the Academy.

On leaving Dollar, Joanna attended Aberdeen University to study Medicine and was fast-tracked to take examinations for membership of the Royal College of Physicians, going on to qualify as a psychiatrist. She married Graham Jones, an RAF helicopter instructor, in 2002, and had two children—Zac and Eleanor. In 2006, Joanna experienced the first serious symptoms of a brain irregularity, and subsequent lengthy investigations and treatments produced evidence that she was suffering from an incurable glioblastoma. Joanna died in March 2012, having made the very most of the time she had left following her diagnosis. Despite having very limited sight, she was skiing with her family just two weeks before she finally succumbed to her illness.

In April/May of the same year, it was suggested to Joanna's parents, Angus and Judith, that they should form a trust in Joanna's memory to raise and disburse funds for three purposes: to make donations in support of brain cancer research and to provide means-tested bursaries for pupils to attend Dollar Academy in Forms V and VI, with the intention of studying or working in a medicine-related field after finishing school. A third, most important goal was to establish an annual Open Evening (sponsored by the Trust, and held at Dollar Academy) for pupils from any school in Scotland, affording an opportunity for young people to learn about careers in medicine and methods of application to related courses.

Jo's Trust was registered in October 2012 and planning began for an inaugural dinner in March 2013. This event received tremendous support and provided the springboard for a subsequent series of 'Dollar Balls' and annual fundraising walks, culminating in the highly successful 'Dollar Concert' in March 2023. These events were not only lynchpins of the Dollar social calendar (and very good fun to attend), they were also highly successful in raising funds.

Over its life the charity provided five two-year bursaries, including one boarding place. Although it had been successful in its way, the Trustees decided, in 2018, to change focus away from bursary funding. The experience of the bursary scheme had shown that, in general, there were



insufficient numbers of applicants, and it had become clear that many donors were more in favour of supporting medical research than school places. Despite a number of pupils emerging from the scheme and going on to work in the medical field, a new direction was agreed with the specific target of brain cancer research as its aim.

Until this point the charity had made regular donations in support of cancer research, but a meeting with Professor Steven Pollard, who heads up a group working on understanding the development of neural stem cells at Edinburgh University's Centre for Regenerative Medicine, was to provide new impetus and tighter focus. The work undertaken by him and his team is groundbreaking and inspirational. Immediately following that meeting, a donation was made to help purchase equipment related to Centre's research on stem cells. Further discussions led to a decision to support specific researchers and PhD students, in consultation with Professor Pollard. It was felt significant that the Trust was now supporting work by a world-leading team at a local university and that much of their work was centred specifically around glioblastomas.

Over the course of its activities, the Trust funded bursaries to the value of £48,500, and brain cancer research, in various forms, to the value of £83,500. A final disbursement of £53,000 is about to be made to Professor Pollard's team, bringing the overall total to £185,000.

The Trustees, past and present, would like to record their thanks to the many friends and supporters of the Trust who have made such generous donations over the years and offered support in other ways by giving generously of time and expertise which has enabled Jo's Trust to make a significant impact in its chosen areas.

As an enduring echo of the Trust's work, the highly successful Open Evenings, in which more than 2000 young people have already participated, will continue, but run by the Academy. These take the form of presentations and Q&A sessions by medical professionals and admissions tutors from various Scottish universities. The Open Evenings will continue to carry Joanna's name, and it is hoped that in this way Joanna's legacy will live on, and that the work of the Trust will continue, in some way, to play a part in the future of medical science.

*Justin Wilkes
(Former Bursar and Trustee)*

DOLLAR FORMER TEACHERS SUPPORT GHANA EDUCATION REFORM

This year, some of Dollar Academy's former teachers, including a former Rector, have been involved in a project which aims to raise the standard of secondary education in Ghana. The project is being supported by a Ghanaian company, T-TEL, funded by the Mastercard Foundation to the tune of many millions of US dollars.

As a former Head of Biology at Dollar Academy, from 1985–2010), I set up a team of nine for this project. The team includes John Robertson (former Rector, 1994–2010), covering English; David Delaney (current Dollar teacher), covering French; Rosemary McGuinness (former Head of Computing Studies, 2000–2020), covering Computing and ICT; and Dr Martin Hendry (former Assistant Rector, 1989–2011), covering Physics. The task was to edit teacher manuals written by Ghanaian teams for the new curriculum. The work is likely to go on for another two years as the three-year programme is rolled out over the country. In March, I visited Ghana along with Jack Jackson, (former HMI) and Ron Tuck (former CEO of SQA); he spent a week with the teams, teaching and helping with the writing and editing of the manuals.



This project had its genesis back in 1998, when then-Rector John Robertson gave me permission to join the SQA as Examination Officer for Biology and Chemistry. In that role, I worked with Ron Tuck in Lithuania and Estonia. On my return to Dollar, John Robertson allowed me to continue with my foreign work, including with Pakistan's Aga Khan University Examination Board. (In fact, Dollar's Charities Committee funded the rebuild of a school in the Himalayas, razed to the ground after

the great earthquake of 2005.) So, great oaks, from little acorns grow, and Dollar's influence continues to extend to all corners of the planet, thanks to that generous decision made by John Robertson and the Governors over 25 years ago.

*Andy Morton (Former Head of Biology)
For further information, contact Andy
via the editor.*

Photographs courtesy of Seth Nartey

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

As an architect, with 35 years at The Glasgow School of Art now behind me, I just wish to express how impressed I am by the excellent standard of architecture, fine art and design displayed in *Fortunas* 52. I suspect that Cameron L. and Stacy A. may well be students of architecture by now with a great career in front of them; their respective physical models (still very important in the current virtual world) are mind-blowing, both conceptually and in terms of their physical execution. I would also commend the strong design images with their historical referencing by Jane B., and the deconstructionist sensibilities of Cara P., not to mention the powerful life drawing of Riley G., and portraiture of Darcy C.

I would also add that today's expertise by Dollar's students in this field represents a progressive continuum of the work fostered by 'Pop' Campbell back in the 1950s. I spent much of my sixth year (1957–58) in his Art room, under both his and Adam Robson's tutelage, working on architectural projects in the footsteps of another Dollar FP, Robin Johnston (FP 1957).

Finally, returning to *Fortunas* 52, I enjoyed the 'Creative Industries Day' feature following on from the article by Andrew Whalley; I recall visiting the excellent courtyard house for his parents ('The Ostlers') with members of the Scottish Solar Energy Group back in 1989, noting in particular its innovative use of 'Visi-heat' glazing and 'Thermascrene' panels.

Kind regards and best wishes for 2024,

Colin Porteous (FP 1958, Emeritus Professor of
Architectural Science. The Glasgow School of Art)



Ross McGonigle (FP 2002) hitting at the 5th

DAGS SPRING MEET 2024

The King's Course at Gleneagles played host to our Spring Social on Sunday 24 March. The committee had been nervously monitoring the weather forecast in the days before the outing, however, our fears were misplaced; a calm and sunny spring day provided ideal golfing conditions for the 36 golfers. Just two days later, the courses were closed by snow!

Morning rolls and coffee in the clubhouse gave FPs and school staff the opportunity to catch up and share nervousness ahead of the early season round. We were delighted to be joined by FPs (with leavers' dates spanning almost 55 years) in both a playing and non-playing capacity, all keen to enjoy the social benefits of DAGS.

There was a pre-round putting competition with a hickory putter and 'guttie' golf balls. Some fantastic long-range putting efforts led to the first prizes of the day being awarded. The main competition then saw players competing for overall Scratch and Stableford Prizes. Chris Drysdale (FP 2002) shot a fantastic round of 71 to narrowly win the Scratch competition

Gregor Lawson (FP 1996), Nicky Morton (FP 1997), Greig Mason (FP 1996) on the 5th tee

Chris Drysdale (FP 2002) participating in the putting competition



on countback from Andrew Johnston (FP 2016).

The Stableford Prize was won in what might have been a career-best round of golf from Bruce Torrance (FP 2008). Playing in the final group, Bruce came home with a large smile and a colossal 49 points, edging Bobby Watson (FP 1974) by 10 points! Scottish Golf promptly received a scorecard submission, resulting in a significant cut to Mr Torrance's WHS index! Kayleigh Caine pipped Neil Blezard to the Best Staff Member Prize, perpetuating what the committee understand to be a fierce rivalry!

In addition to the usual Scratch and Stableford prizes, players were greeted by a surprise 'Beat the Pro' upon reaching 'Wee Bogle', the 135 yard par three, 16th hole. Despite some laser accuracy from the resident pro, five smooth-swinging DAGS members managed to sneak their tee shot inside him. Chris Drysdale also won the Nearest-the-Pin competition at 'Deil's Creel' (11th hole), and our secretary, Joe Fitzgibbon (FP 2008), won the Longest Drive at 'Blink Bonnie', the par 5, 6th hole.

Thanks, as always, go to those who sponsored prizes for the day: Gregor Lawson (FP 1996), Neil Blezard, GolfClubs4Cash and Gleneagles. We look forward to seeing our members in Glasgow and Muckhart later in the year.

If you are interested in joining DAGS as a Former Pupil or teacher, please email us at: fpdollargolf@gmail.com.

Joe Fitzgibbon (FP 2008)

Chris Drysdale, Alasdair Munro, Ross McGonigle, Ross Donaldson (all FPs 2002)

BIRTHS

STAFF

ROBERTSON-POURGIVE

Mr Abtin Pourgive (Teacher of Maths) and his wife, Hazel, are delighted to announce the birth of their son, Beauden Bardiya Robertson, on 13 March 2024, weighing 3.7kg. He loves snoozing, cuddles, and filling nappies for Mr Pourgive to change.



MARRIAGES

MCNICOL-MACKENZIE

Alice McNicol (FP 2009) married Alasdair Mackenzie at his childhood home, Castle Leod, on 19 August 2023. The couple are settled in Rome.



FORMER STAFF

FOSTER-BUCHANAN

Ruth Foster (former Prep and Junior School teacher) married Jack Buchanan in Perth on Saturday 10 February.



DEATHS

BAILEY

Richard Bailey (FP 1957–1961) died on 22 February 2024 in Vancouver, Canada.

BELL

Marguerite Bell (FP 1943–1949) passed away peacefully in Nanaimo, British Columbia in January. See obituary in this edition.

BELL

Sandy (AF) Bell (FP 1945–1950) died peacefully at home on Christmas Eve, 2023, aged 86. Much-loved husband of Alison, and of the late Sophia; father of Harry and Thomas; grandfather of six; Argyll & Sutherland Highlander. Younger son of Rector Harry Bell and his wife, Sophie; brother of Dr John Bell (FP 1953, left 1948), now living in Barbados, and of the late Patricia Hossack (FP 1957, left 1952). Joint founder of the Harry Bell Trust and Travel Scholarship, of which his sons Harry and Thomas are Trustees. Full obituary to follow in next edition.

BRAND

Dorothy Brand (*née* Irons, FP 1942) died on 17 January 2024, age 98. Obituary to follow in the next edition.

DRYSDALE

David Drysdale (FP 1947–1953) died suddenly on 8 January 2024.

EPPS

Pamela Epps (FP 1932–1945) died on 26 October 2023. An obituary was published in *The Scotsman* in November and is reprinted on the following pages.

FERGUSON

Robert (Roy) Ferguson (FP 1953–1955, left after Form II) died on 8 May 2022. Roy was a boarder in Tait House. He is survived by his wife, Roberta, and children: Robert (FP 1986), William (FP 1988), Amanda (FP 1990), Claire (FP 1994) and Gareth (FP 1997).

GRANT

Jean Grant (*née* Everitt, FP 1940–1947) died very peacefully at Murrayfield House Care Home, Edinburgh on 19 January 2024, in her 95th year.

GUILD

Ian Mackenzie Guild (FP 1947–1956) died peacefully in Sydney on 25 March 2024 with his family around him: dearly loved husband of Ann (*née* Hewitt, FP 1952); beloved father of Hamish, Dougal and Alex; and dear grandfather of Max and Sam. Full obituary to follow in the next edition of *Fortunas*. If you have any memories of Ian and his time at school, please share these with the FP Registrar.

KEITH

Donald Keith (FP 1951–1957), born on 6 January 1939, in Dunfermline, passed away in Somerset West, South Africa, on 7 February 2024, after an 18-month battle with lung cancer.

KING

Eric King (FP 1957–1962), Group Captain RAF (Ret'd), died on Tuesday 20 February 2024, age 79. Loving husband to Barbara (FP 1962), father to Eric (FP 1988) and Fiona (FP 1986), dotting grandfather to Robbie and Jamie.

LUMSDEN

George Lumsden (FP 1941–1946) died on 9 January. Until his death, 'Geordie' Lumsden was one of the few surviving members of the famous Edinburgh City Police Pipe Band of the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, and he served as Pipe Major of the five-time winners of the World Championships from 1984 until 1988. He died at the age of 97 after a lifetime of successful competitive piping, judging pipe bands and solo competitions, teaching and reed making.

MASON

Roderick Mason (FP 1971–1979) died on 5 January 2024. See obituary in this edition.

MENZIES

George Menzies (FP 1959–1964) died on 22 February 2024. See obituary in this edition.

McILWRAITH

Alan McIlwraith (FP 1950–1963) died on 21 November.

PETRIE

Professor Graham Petrie (FP 1951–1958) died in Dundas, Ontario on 9 December 2023. See obituary in this edition.

RITCHIE

David Ritchie (FP 1966–1974) died peacefully on 15 November 2023 from metastatic prostate cancer.

SCRIMGEOUR

Neil Scrimgeour (FP 1938–1949) died on 24 February 2024. Neil was born in Malaya and at a very early age came back to Scotland to be educated at Dollar Academy along with his



brother, Harry. On leaving school they both studied Medicine at St Andrews University. After graduating, Neil was called up for National Service and was based in Singapore. In due course he married Jean and they sailed to Perth, WA, where he developed a GP practice running three surgeries. He was an extremely talented doctor, popular with patients and fellow physicians. He leaves behind his wife, Jean; daughter, Fiona; son, Robin; and six grandchildren.

SNEDDON

Ian Cunningham Sneddon (FP 1973), much-loved, died suddenly in June 2023 after a short illness. Ian's early years were spent in Yemen and Libya, where his father worked as an engineer. He was younger brother to Colin Mark Sneddon, also a Dollar pupil, in whose memory the Colin Sneddon Memorial Prize for Physics was instigated and is still awarded annually by the school. Ian helped develop new types of interactive training for companies and government agencies in the USA and UK. A keen fencer at Dollar he later went on to serve as Chair of NI Fencing, coaching locally, committed to securing funding for the sport in NI and encouraging new fencing talent. In 2006 he was central to bringing the Commonwealth Fencing Championships to the King's Hall, Belfast. Ian is survived by his wife, Susanne; sons, James and Andrew, and their families. *1 Corinthians 13.*

WILSON

Craig Wilson (FP 1951–1958) died on 5 January 2024.

FORMER STAFF

COLLIER

Joyce Collier, Matron of Tait House from 1980–1997, died on 10 July 2023. Among her many achievements in the House, she—together with her husband, Geoff (former Head of Chemistry)—successfully ran the only coeducational boarding house in Dollar Academy's long history, looking after five girls and twenty-eight boys in Tait House for a whole year.

FP NEWS

Seonaid McIntosh (FP 2014) won British Shooting's first-ever World Cup medal in the Mixed Team Air Rifle, winning a gold medal in Cairo with her partner, Dean Bale.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SATURDAY 28 SEPTEMBER: '4' DECADE REUNION

Did no one step forward to arrange a reunion for your year group this June or were you not able to make the date? Then why not get a few of your classmates together and come along to our first decade reunion, for leavers of the Classes of 1954, 1964, 1974, 1984, 1994, 2004 and 2014 (assuming you left after Form VI).

Timings

- 11.00 Guests arrive
- 11.30 School Tours begin
- 12.30 Drinks in Dining Hall
- 13.00 Lunch is served
- 14.45 Group photo by Bronze Doors
- 15.00 End of Reunion

Cost: £20pp (£5 for ages 4–12)

Includes a welcome drink, two-course meal, glass of bubbles and a memento of the day.

To register, or if you have any questions, please email Kirsty on dollarfp@dollaracademy.org.uk or call 01250 742511.

FP SOCIALS

There will be FP social evenings in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and London in October and November, and these dates will be circulated in the FP e-newsletter in August.



MARGUERITE HANNAH BELL (née BOULLET)

FP 1943–1949
1931–2024

Marguerite Bell (*née* Bouillet) passed away peacefully in Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada. She was predeceased by her beloved husband, John, in 2017, with whom she spent more than 60 years.

Marguerite was born in Glasgow and grew up in Elie, Fife, the eldest of three children, who all attended Dollar Academy. Marguerite attended the school from 1943–1949 and lived in Playfair House. She was a good student, a prefect and played on the field hockey team while at Dollar. She enjoyed her time at Dollar, and it prepared her well for her education at the newly established School of Physiotherapy at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. She worked as a physiotherapist in Kirkcaldy for a short time before moving to Canada in 1954. There she worked for the Canadian Arthritis and Rheumatism Society in Nelson, B. C. as a mobile physiotherapist.

She was a trailblazer in the new profession of physiotherapy. In 1955, she transferred to Montréal's Queen Alexandra Hospital, the infectious disease hospital for Québec, treating children with polio and TB.

In Montréal she reconnected with childhood friend, John Bell, with whom she had grown up in Elie. They married in 1957, settling in Ottawa and raising two daughters. Marguerite worked as a physiotherapist at the Ottawa Civic Hospital for 20 years, becoming the director of the department. She was a strong leader who was admired and respected in her profession. After retiring in 1988, they moved to B. C. where Marguerite opened a private physiotherapy clinic which she operated for several years.

Marguerite was active throughout her life with the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society. She was an accomplished dancer and instructor. She delighted in spending time with her grandchildren and travelling with John to Sri Lanka, Scotland, on Alaskan cruises, and around B. C. She was an avid reader, an expert sewer, gardener, and knitter. She enjoyed keeping in contact with many Former Pupils from Dollar and valued the friendships she had made during her time at Dollar.

Marguerite was a dedicated mother, and an active and devoted grandmother. She was open-minded, inclusive, and embodied a strength of spirit, unending generosity and unflinching kindness to everyone she encountered. She will be greatly missed by her loving family: daughters, Margaret Corcoran and Jeanette Harper (Ian); grandchildren Sean (Natalie), Michael, and Liam Corcoran, Aimée, Julie and Hannah Harper; great-grandchildren Elliot, Avery and August Corcoran; sister, Aimee Roger, in Oakville and brother, Victor Bouillet (Grete), in Norway; and many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Jeanette Harper



DR THE HON. PAMELA ANNE EPPS GP

FP 1932–1944
1927–2023

‘Pamela Epps, GP who pioneered treatment of people struggling with drug addiction’

Faced with a deranged and suicidal knife-wielding drug addict, Pamela Epps deployed her customary no-nonsense approach: ‘You don’t really want to die do you? It would be an awfully messy business.’

Summoned by police at 2am, after the young man insisted she attend or he would kill himself, she sat alone with him as he pressed the large blade against his stomach. Slowly the amiable and empathetic GP gently talked him round and removed the weapon, much to the relief of police waiting anxiously in the hall. It was one of several alarming incidents

resulting from her decision to open her Edinburgh surgery to patients struggling with drug addiction—something she also did for HIV patients at a time when others were physically backing off—and a move she never regretted, although she always kept the telephone number of the local police station on her desk and didn’t hesitate to dial it. ‘It was extremely hard work and on many days I was drained and exhausted,’ she admitted in her autobiography, ‘but it could be very rewarding—not often I will admit, but sometimes. And, being quite selective with those I agreed to treat, I made many friends among them and they in their turn could be strangely protective towards me.’

Dealing with such difficulties was nothing new for Pamela Epps, or Dr White as she was then. She had a core of steel and had already overcome hurdles that would have defeated a lesser woman: she had her first daughter while studying for her medical degree and later took on the health authority which had declined to let her run her own practice, concerned that her domestic arrangements would interfere with her professional commitments. She appealed and won, single-handedly running a surgery for 25 years.

Pamela Anne Moncreiff was the seventh and youngest child of Lord James Moncreiff, the 4th Baron Moncreiff and his wife, Lucy. Born at

Edenthorpe Hall, near Doncaster, the family moved to their ancestral home, Tullibole Castle, Crook of Devon, Kinross, when she was five. Her childhood there, in the early 1930s, was idyllic. She and her youngest brother were able to run wild in the countryside and the house was always full of friends and siblings. But by 1942 everything had changed: her father died suddenly, her three brothers had gone to war and one of her sisters was widowed. As a teenager she found herself living alone in the castle with two widows. However, she threw herself into schoolwork at Dollar Academy and went up to Edinburgh University a year early at the age of 17.

Her daughter Anne was born in 1946 and Pamela graduated MBChB in 1949, going on to work as a registrar in TB wards in Doncaster before returning to Edinburgh. She became Dr White in 1951 after marrying Edward White with whom she had three more children, Nicolas, Vivienne and Douglas.

During the 1950s she began working as a GP, assisting a doctor in the city's Rankeillor Street, running the large practice singlehandedly from 1964 when he became ill and later died. When her subsequent application to take over the practice was rejected by the Scottish Home

and Health Department, she appealed. Unknown to her, more than 1200 patients had signed a petition requesting she be given the practice. She successfully argued her case 'feeling a bit like Perry Mason', and believed she was the first woman doctor to win an appeal to the Scottish Medical Committee: 'I feel it was a worthwhile battle to have won because I'm sure that the true reason I was turned down in the first place was that I was a woman.'

She and Edward divorced in 1972 and in 1979 she married Ernest Epps, buying a house on the shores of Loch Awe where she could escape the pressures of her ever-increasing workload. During the 1970s she also trained as a hypnotherapist, using the therapy as part of her toolkit for psychological ailments. When the 1970s and 80s saw the rise in drug abuse and the advent of AIDS/HIV, she faced both issues head-on. Never judgmental, she was straight-talking and astute, developing her own strict system of care for addicts which won her praise from police, and taking on HIV patients others had turned away. But her practice was time-consuming—she regularly worked 12-hour days—and treating those with drug addiction was a constant struggle, full of disappointments and only occasionally rewarding.

'One thing I quickly learned was that coping with addicts requires constant firmness, patience and above all a sense of humour.' After running the practice single-handedly for a quarter of a century, she retired in 1989. Ernie had died suddenly a couple of years earlier but, accompanied by family, she returned to their cottage in Argyll every month for almost 33 years.

Another tradition she kept up spectacularly during her life was attending the Edinburgh International Festival. Her mother took her to the first festival in 1947 and she never missed a year until she was into her 90s. She appeared on BBC Radio 4's *Front Row* programme during the event's 70th anniversary recalling, with enthusiasm and wit, some of the performers she had seen who included Peter Cook and Dudley Moore, Alan Bennett, Kenneth Branagh, Emma Thompson and the 'absolutely magical' ballerina Margot Fonteyn.

Pamela Epps is survived by her four children, four grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and a great-great-granddaughter.

The above obituary originally appeared in The Scotsman on 8 November 2023; it was written by Alison Shaw.



RODERICK MASON

FP 1971–1979
1961–2024

Roderick Alan Lauder Mason was born in Hong Kong in 1961 to Catherine Mary (*née* Simpson) and Robin Royce Mason. He was the second of their three children, with an older sister, Isabel Jean (Bryce), and younger sister, Fenella Mary Mason.

The Mason family lived in Hong Kong until 1977. Rod's father served with the Hong Kong Government in the Agriculture and Fisheries Department, and Rod's mother (a teacher) worked at the prestigious Diocesan Girls' School. They were a very happy family. Rod attended primary school in Hong Kong, where he learnt to speak Cantonese. Rod's parents, proudly Scottish, ensured their children received a Scottish education. At the age of 10, Rod passed the entrance exam to Dollar Academy and then regularly travelled across the world by himself, from Hong Kong to school, boarding at Tait House. His sisters eventually joined him at Dollar, boarding at Playfair House. Rod excelled in representing the school at rugby, a passion that endured throughout his life. Friends like Clifford Lang, Simon Cooper, Ross



Hall and Jock Hutchinson remained close to him over the years.

After leaving school Rod joined the Merchant Navy. He worked with Shell in the Middle East for a few years before joining the Hong Kong Police Force in 1983. He took pride in the wide range of challenging posts and assignments that came his way. Whether working undercover to intercept international narcotics traffickers (the well-documented 'Operation Clinker'), leading public order response units, or heading up the Marine Police's fast boat unit, Rod unwaveringly led from the front, securing clear devotion and the utmost respect of the men and women under his command. Rod received many commendations throughout his career and retired from the Force as a Senior Superintendent of Police, a position which both acknowledged and reflected the remarkable career success he enjoyed.

During his early career Rod married Gillian Hendry (FP 1978) and they had four lovely children. Kiki, the eldest, was followed by triplets: Robbie, Jamie and Jenny. They divorced when the children were small, and Gillian returned to Scotland with the children, leaving Rod behind in Hong Kong to focus on his work and rugby.

Rod played rugby for the HK Police and was still playing well into his 50s. He was elected Chairman of HK Police Rugby, overseeing one of the golden eras for the club. Even more notable was his appointment as tournament director for the world-famous Hong Kong International Rugby 7s, a position he made his own for well over ten years. Rod took his commitment to rugby to a new level when he took unpaid leave to coordinate the Commonwealth Games Rugby 7s tournament in Glasgow in 2014.

On his retirement in 2016, after 32 years of distinguished service, he was given a tremendous send-off by both the police and rugby fraternities. He returned home to Scotland and set up home in Coupar Angus. Rod was delighted to be able to spend 'full-on', quality time with his children at last. He saw Kiki study and gain a degree in fine art. Robbie got his trade certificates for plumbing in 2022. Jenny trained as an estate agent, whilst Jamie has been studying at Dunfermline College pursuing his love of film. During this time Rod also wrote a book about his time in the Hong Kong Police called *Operation Clinker*; it was published in 2020.

In September 2023, Rod married for the second time to his new love, Pauline Brannan, formerly Taylor, *née* Wilson. They bought a house in Forgandenny, Perthshire. Tragically, Rod suffered a heart attack on the way to their honeymoon cruise, in January 2024.

Rod is survived by widow, Pauline; sisters, Fenella and Isabel; and his four children, Kiki, Jamie, Robbie, and Jenny.

Isabel Bryce (FP 1977)



GEORGE MENZIES

FP 1959–1964

1948–2024

George Menzies, former Falkland hotelier and host to the famous, has died aged 75. George was born in the Hillfoots village of Alva in 1948 to Robert Menzies, a mining engineer, and his wife, Helen Miller of Rhodders Farm, Alva. He was the youngest of four boys. In 1931 his father founded Tillicoultry Quarries which today is run by Wallace Menzies. George's wife, Margaret, said he could remember the sound of millworkers' clogs as they made their way to the weaving plants.

George enjoyed his years at Dollar Academy where he made lifelong friends and joined the school's CCF. He left school at 17 and joined the Merchant Navy as a navigation officer cadet with Clan Line where he remained for six years before working on Esso's supertankers for ten years.

George had his first date with Margaret, a food and nutrition graduate, in Glasgow in 1975. He proposed at a Stirling Rugby barn dance and the couple married in July 1976. For the last four-and-a-half years of his career at sea, he was joined by Margaret. She said of this time, 'We saw many exotic countries, but an awful lot of oil terminals. We were in Iran when the Shah was overthrown.'



In January 1980, George and Margaret bought The Covenanter Hotel, Falkland. Five months later their son Alisdair was born, followed by Graham in October of the following year. The hotel had a cocktail bar, a public bar and a restaurant, but no letting rooms. George proved a natural host, and foreign guests were thrilled to see him in his Menzies tartan kilt. The couple introduced a bistro, lettings rooms and self-contained apartments, but they soon became aware they were not the only occupants in The Covenanter. Margaret said, 'These were our two very friendly ghosts. Our cat wouldn't go near two of the rooms. Voices could be heard and shadows walked through the walls. One regular to our bistro came with his very young daughter who always asked for a place set for her "friend". The parents assumed it was an imaginary friend until one night when the friend joined them. I don't think our excellent staff were too keen on the ghosts either because they liked to rumple newly made beds.'

Margaret said that Johnny Cash was 'exceptionally nice and a very gentle giant', but she was not

taken with Andy Williams who came on one visit with Johnny to film a show at Falkland Palace. 'Frances Shand-Kydd (mother of Princess Diana) was a regular either for dinner or just a drink and a chat; in fact, she stayed with us when moving to her house in Falkland.' She also recalls that 'Reverend Ian Paisley visited in our first year and Alex Ferguson, Alex McLeish, Walter Smith and Craig Brown all dined with us—though not at the same time.' In 2002, after 22 years, the couple sold The Covenanter and moved into the property business.

Away from work, George had a share in a yacht and cherished sailing around the Western and Northern Isles of Scotland.

'We had an amazing life together; we always worked, played and partied together all our married life. George's passing has left a hole in my life, but we were blessed with two wonderful sons, five amazing grandchildren and the fantastic memories of a life lived to the full.'

The above obituary originally appeared in The Courier (Dundee); it was written by Chris Ferguson.

GRAHAM PETRIE

FP 1951–1958

1939–2023

It is with profound sadness that we announce the peaceful passing of Graham Petrie on 9 December 2023 with his daughters by his side. Graham was a deeply thoughtful and intelligent man. His intellectual curiosity was boundless leading him to share the depths of his knowledge and insights generously. As we mourn his loss, we remember this along with his kindness and humility; a lasting legacy that will be remembered with deep admiration and respect.

Born on 10 December 1939 in Penang, Malaysia, Graham was educated at boarding schools in Malaysia and at Dollar Academy in Scotland. He read English at St Andrews University and Brasenose College Oxford. In 1964 Graham emigrated to Canada and taught English Literature and Film at McMaster University in Hamilton Ontario. After retirement from McMaster, Graham went back and taught for a year at St Andrews and spent some time teaching for Queen's University at their Herstmonceux Castle campus in Sussex, England.

Graham published two novels, *Seahorse* and *The Siege* and several short stories. He also published several well-received books on film. As a member of the Toronto Film Society since 1965, he was their Scholar-in-Residence and helped to organise the programming for their trips to the Nitrate Film Festival. In December last year Graham received the TFS Inaugural Petrie Award, and he was also one of the founding members of the Canadian Film Studies Association. As a humanitarian, he was also a long-time member of Amnesty International and joined in letter-writing campaigns to free political prisoners. He also sponsored children through World Vision and gave monthly to many other charities. Locally he was a proud sponsor of the arts and the Hamilton Conservation Authority. He was a member of both The Westdale and the



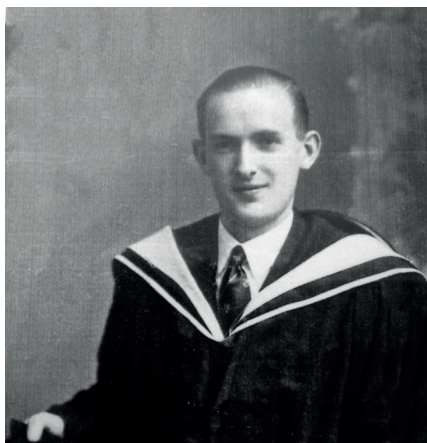
Playhouse Cinema. Along with his wife, Catherine, he enjoyed being part of the artistic community in Dundas. Graham spent his retirement travelling to film festivals in Italy and the United States. He enjoyed hiking, seeing films and he continued to write and to mentor students. He was a great collector of books and wine.

Graham is predeceased by his parents, John and Catherine Petrie, and by his first wife, Anne Baillie (who died in 1974) and his second wife, Catherine Gibbon (who died in 2021). He leaves behind a loving brother, Ian Petrie (FP 1966), from Edinburgh, and two daughters: Alison Young (Rob) of Brantford, Canada and Janet Henderson (Eddie) of Dundas, Canada.

He was also a devoted Grandad to Flint, Fiona, Jeff, Carley, Tori, Kenzie, Marshall, Isabella, Sienna and Sophie.

'From where I stand, the sun is shining all over the place...Singing in the rain...'

Alison Young



JAMES A. WALKER
M.A., M.Ed.
Former Teacher of
Mathematics and Assistant
Rector (1964–1989)
Died February 2023

James Adam ('Faithlie') Walker was born in Fraserburgh. Jimmy's origins in the family of a master butcher no doubt explain his later expertise in preparing choice cuts of meat for the freezer (perhaps also his distaste for vegetables) and certainly explain his culinary skills. After Fraserburgh Academy, Jimmy followed courses in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy (Physics) at Aberdeen University. As a proud 'Brocher' (a native of Fraserburgh), he also had a close interest in the Doric language and in his northeast roots, and he enjoyed verbal joustings involving the Walker Doric, often quoting Scots vernacular poetry.

National Service beckoned, allowing for travel to distant parts of the world (such as East Lothian and Cornwall). Duty done, Jimmy, who had added what later became a Master's in Education qualification to his Mathematics degree, was well prepared and qualified to tackle the challenges of the teaching profession, initially in Aberdeen then in a first Head of Department post at

Breadalbane Academy in Aberfeldy, before being appointed to the post at Dollar in January 1964. In the meantime, he had become a member of the Scottish Mathematics Group, which had been set up to overhaul the structure of mathematical education in Scotland and, crucially, to provide textbooks to support their recommendations. Working on and revising these books took up a lot of Jimmy's time for years afterwards.

Jimmy had not, of course, come to Dollar alone. Isobel and Jimmy had met at Gullane Tennis Club when he was stationed at Gosforth, and they were married in Gullane in August of 1953. In due course along came first Cameron and then Janis (both FPs), and to Dollar also came Clach the cairn terrier.

Family life was very important to Jimmy, who took a keen interest and pride in all the members of the family as it grew to include grandchildren and a great-granddaughter.

Dollar was a friendly and welcoming school, and Jimmy was particularly good at offering advice and help to newcomers, from Rectors to probationer teachers. Teaching Mathematics was, of course, his priority, and many Former Pupils will testify to the professional approach to his work which included, as it should in any good teacher, an interest in the progress of the pupils as well as in the intricacies of the subject. Nor was Mathematics in any danger of losing its place in the curriculum on Jimmy's watch—he knew how to fight his corner with uncompromising tenacity.

It was not surprising that Jimmy became the Academy's first Assistant Rector. One of his main responsibilities was the preparation of the timetable, an annual ordeal in those pre-computer days when the work was done on vast sheets of paper, using a wall-mounted framework divided into dozens of small compartments into which multi-coloured pegs representing

subjects and members of staff were moved about. Many a time a carefully constructed 'solution' had to be dismantled following the irate reaction of a head of department whose exact requirements had not been met. This work lent itself to the meticulous perfectionism Jimmy applied to all he did in the teaching and administrative aspects of his career, during which he showed an ability to inspire respect and terror in equal proportions—not only in his pupils but also in his colleagues.

Running to a timetable means you don't notice the time going past, but Jimmy found the time to be an active elder of first the West and then of what became the Parish Church, and treasurer of the Tennis Club. He masterminded successful fundraising campaigns when he was not looking after his productive garden or setting off on lengthy caravanning holidays, including abroad. Only Jimmy would think of (illegally) towing a caravan through central Paris. In France Jimmy could also put his linguistic skills to the test, to the undisguised hilarity of the family. Nor should we forget his disconcerting ability to redecorate his house at the same time as marking Highers papers for the Examination Board, further proof of his organisational ability!

Jimmy enjoyed a long retirement, during which bridge and golf were added to his activities. When Jimmy turned 90, a colleague asked for news of him and responded with: "Trust Jimmy to make the most of the pension scheme!"

In his later years he suffered physical frailty but received a very high standard of care at Beechwood. Everyone will have their own memories and associations, but I am sure those who knew him best would agree that, in describing Jimmy, the words 'respect', 'affection' and 'gratitude' take on their full meaning. Isobel, Cameron, Janis and all the family have our deepest sympathy.

Grant Lindsay
(former Head of Modern Languages)

Mr Walker

‘An outstanding Maths teacher, with a No. 36 Mills grenade, whose understanding of risk and vulnerability impacted over 20 million people.’

‘An outstanding Maths teacher’

Jimmy Walker vanquished the ‘anti-Maths mindset’ over fifty years ahead of the present UK Prime Minister Mr Rishi Sunak’s efforts. At our 25th Dollar Reunion, Jimmy said that ‘the class of 1968 was the finest year he could remember in his teaching career’, so let us pause for a moment to reflect and respond.

Mr Walker (as we knew him) encouraged a slew of mathematical whizzes to face risks and vulnerabilities in life, and his skill in doing so was evident in the excellent Higher results and in the number who went on to study Maths beyond that level. Mike Sharp was the undisputed King of Maths in our class of ‘68. As an actuary, Mike further honed his mathematical and statistical skills to understand the risks in our increasingly torn world. Jimmy equipped others in the Maths whiz category, too: David Armstrong, Roddy Cowie, Elspeth Gardner, Muriel Mackenzie, Euan McMillan, Bill Redpath, Tony Sweet, and Morag Williamson all learned, from Jimmy, how best to navigate the risks and vulnerabilities of life.

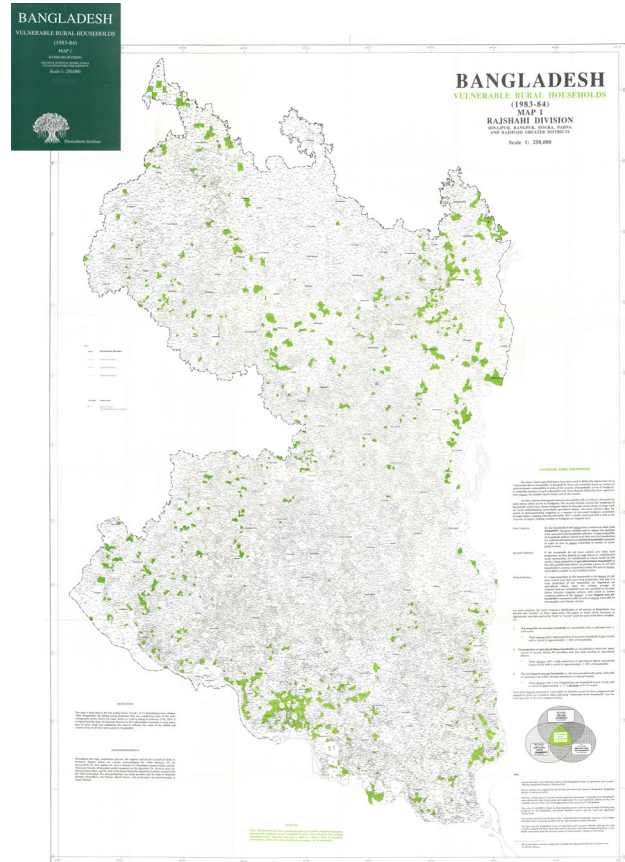
‘with a No. 36 Mills grenade’

As with many teachers of his generation, Jimmy did his national service after World War II. In the classroom, his brusque manner, his illegible chalk scrawl on the blackboard, his intolerance of poor behaviour and inattention all produced an initially stern façade.

However, contrary to that hawkish exterior, Tom Redpath remembers Jimmy’s end-of-term story about going fishing in order to mitigate a food crisis with his wartime comrades. ‘When it seemed there was a risk of no fish being caught, Jimmy threw a No. 36 Mills grenade into the water and, lo and behold, there were plenty of fish.’ The incident was reported to the Commanding Officer, he told us, and Jimmy himself was put in charge of the enquiry to find the culprits. ‘They never did find them!’ he told us.

‘who impacted over 20 million people.’

Jimmy had an uncanny understanding of individual pupils’ strengths and weaknesses. One day Jimmy sidled up to a pupil’s desk at Dollar and quietly laid down a hot-off-the-press book, written in French, entitled something like: *Théorie des ensembles et diagrammes de Venn*. The book was full of brightly coloured fonts and diagrams on pristine white pages.



Fifteen years later, the memory of the Venn diagrams and colourful set notation from Jimmy’s proffered book inspired work on the Map of Vulnerable Rural Households in the Rajshahi Division of Bangladesh in 1983–84. Villages classified as vulnerable on three counts were categorised and mapped in order to identify the prevalence of Vulnerable Rural Households. Interestingly, many of those households in Rajshahi Division remain highly vulnerable to increasing climate risks today, 40 years later. In today’s uncertain world, memories of Jimmy Walker’s mathematical underpinning of both risk and vulnerability remain paramount.

Thank you, Jimmy.

Class of 1968



ALISTAIR WILSON

FP 1951–1958
1939–2023

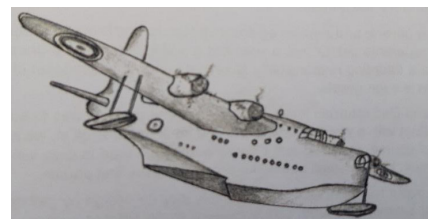
I can't remember when I first met Alistair; at the time, I had no connection with Dollar Academy. It would certainly have been at a kayak, or 'canoe', race (as we called them long ago). He was at the end of his Olympic career, and I was just a rookie, looking for an opportunity to race against the best in the world. It's only more recently, when talking to Alistair and reading his book, that I discovered we had so much in common in terms of our introduction to the sport.

Both west coast boys with a love of the sea and all things boaty, our fathers obtained tractor inner tubes which were our first much-loved 'boats', although they took ages to inflate! We sold treasured possessions to buy our first canoes, made from canvas and wood. Alistair sold his stamp collection, and I sold my electric train set. We started at the age of 15, and both of us were surprised to win our first races at the tender age of 21. Alistair always paddled solo in bare feet, no matter what the weather, as do I. We both almost drowned early on in our careers, after capsizing solo in

big waves offshore. Alistair managed to swim ashore in the gloaming, and I was rescued by my father in a rowing boat—both lucky boys.

And we were both 'Dollar boys': Alistair was a pupil (FP 1958), and I was a teacher—some thirty years after he left. But there the similarities end. Alistair was a champion runner at Dollar—at Junior, Intermediate and Senior level—and within three years of his first race in a kayak, he was on the starting line at the finals of the Olympic Games in Tokyo in 1964, an astonishing achievement, which was almost entirely of his own doing with very little outside help. He built his own first canoe because he was brilliant with his hands. I had a John Brown's shipyard worker build mine, and Alistair went on to set up a world-renowned business manufacturing some of the best paddles you could buy. In those early years, we all used 'Lendal' paddles, and were proud to do so; the trademark name still lives on today.

What were the origins of this remarkable man? Alistair was born in Calcutta, three weeks before the outbreak of World War II. His father and grandfather, both skilled engineers, ran a business there which



contributed considerably to the war effort: building and repairing army trucks. At the end of the war, Alistair flew to the UK for the first time, with his parents. Flying home in those days was not quite the same as it is now. The trip took four days, with stopovers at Karachi, Cairo and Sicily, in a Sunderland flying boat, which used water as a runway, of course, spray flying. Alistair, a great artist, draughtsman, and designer, drew the plane (with no camera) as a memento of the trip. He and his sister sat and slept on a sheepskin rug and spent some time with the pilot on the flight deck, high above the passengers below—a thrilling experience.

But life working abroad was such that you couldn't just pop back and forth as we do now, burning carbon. So Alistair stayed with both sets of grandparents in Prestwick and his parents went back to India; they would not see their wee boy again for another 18 months. Eventually, it was decided that boarding school was the obvious choice, so Alistair was sent to Dollar along with his cousin Tom to get a 'proper education'. He stayed in Argyll House, along with John Cameron (former Chairman of Governors), whose recollections of Alistair appear on the opposite page. Tom was an academic star: awarded Dux of the school, gold medallist at Glasgow University School of Medicine and, later, a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons. At Dollar, Tom was 'brainy' Wilson; Alistair was 'sporty' Wilson, popularly known as 'Happy' Wilson because of his endlessly cheerful and optimistic demeanour. What a wonderful nickname, capturing the spirit of the boy...and the man.

After building his own kayaks and racing them in Scotland, he was



curious about racing in England, where he could pit himself against the best of British kayakers. Travelling up and down in his old Ford Anglia was not as easy as it is today; there were no motorways. He arrived at his first regatta and picked up his brand-new wooden racing K1, a Struer, made in Denmark: a work of art, still prized by kayak enthusiasts with vintage collections. He struggled initially to handle the new unstable racing boats, but he was soon winning events. On his first visit, one young lady, Marianne Tucker, attracted Alistair's attention. She was the British Ladies Champion, and a competitor at the Rome Olympics a year before. When she was asked about Alistair—by a fearful British Team paddler concerned about his position in the ranking order—she replied, 'Don't worry about him; he's just a flash in the pan.' Well, he wasn't—either for Marianne nor for the fearful paddler. He came back to beat all the GB paddlers the following year and, to add icing to the cake, he married Marianne! She and Alistair set up home in Scotland and soon his paddle-manufacturing business was flourishing. They brought up three lovely children who, along with Marianne, survive Alistair.

Later, Alistair went on to participate in all kinds of kayaking adventures, paddling the Colorado

River and the shores of Greenland and Alaska. So much to tell, but not here, sadly. If you want to read more, copies of his book are available in The Wee Bookshop, Dollar, and there's also a copy in the school library; it is well worth a read. One Amazon reviewer described it as: 'A fabulous book about an amazing journey. I knew nothing about paddling and kayaking, but the insight Alistair gives us into this sport is fascinating. I felt myself involved in his personal battles for fitness and improvement throughout the book. A truly amazing man, and his book is a wonderful journey of dedication and achievement on the athletic stage, but also on a personal level: the brains, the designs and the entrepreneurial skills he possessed were so interesting to read about. Incredible.'

In later years, when Alistair's health was not so great, I visited Alistair and Marianne from time to time in their beautiful home, which they had designed and built at Lendalfoot, overlooking Ailsa Craig and the Clyde where his adventures on the sea started so long ago. I was always made so welcome, and there was never any shortage of chat, of course. I'll miss his warmth of spirit, his generosity, and his 'Happy' outlook enormously.

Andrew Morton (Head of Biology 1985-2010 and World Masters Kayak Champion in 2006 and 2016)

Remembering 'Happy' Wilson

I had the good fortune to be at the same school, and in the same boarding house, as Alistair—or 'Happy', as he was affectionately known by all of his many friends. And a better, truer friend I could not have had.

Perhaps it was because we both came from farms that our paths first crossed. We didn't have much else in common—he was superbly fit and I most certainly was not! But there was a 'gang' of about three or four—of which Happy and I were part—who usually managed to get the blame for any of the unsolved mysteries which occurred from time to time!

After we left school, we were allowed to go on a short holiday and Happy, I and another school colleague (Harry) went off on a camping holiday in my old car to Ireland.

One night we had, as usual, left it too late to find a campsite. Darkness was already upon us when we passed a well-lit gateway. 'Let's go in here,' said Happy, and the rest of us readily agreed. We quickly found an ample area of good, flat and dry, grassland, so we pitched our tent and settled down for a good night's sleep.

The next morning, soon after daybreak, we were rudely awakened by two Garda and discovered (to our horror) that we had set up camp beside one of the runways at Shannon International Airport!

Once we had convinced the officers that we were not 'terrorists' but 'simple farm boys', they were very understanding and took us back to their HQ for a real Irish Breakfast.

And so, Happy, I shall miss you. But I have so many, many happy memories of our friendship which I will always treasure.

John Cameron CBE (Governor from 1968; Chairman of the Governors, 1984-2014)


THE SUNDAY TIMES

**SCHOOLS GUIDE
2024**

**INDEPENDENT SECONDARY
SCHOOL OF THE YEAR
SCOTLAND**



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