

The ACADEMY STAR



Thainstone was packed with over 600 students, staff and family to commemorate a range of achievements.

Inverurie Academy celebrates excellence at awards' ceremony

Written by Iona Duncan

Prior to the pandemic, the Award Ceremony was an annual celebration of the best and brightest at Inverurie Academy. Returning this year, the Awards Ceremony Committee were hard at work since the start of the year to create an extravaganza held at Thainstone Exchange. Spearheaded by Mrs Hutcheson and Mr O'Connor, the event promised to be a fantastic night!

Held on the 12th of June between 7-9pm, over 650 people were invited to share in the successes of S1-S6 students. Around 200 pupils received awards and

were offered two tickets each for guests. Students received awards for the amount of merits they had accrued over the year; for excellence in subject areas; sporting achievements; cooking skills and many other impressive accolades.

Those who were eligible for an award received an invitation to their parents' email a few weeks prior to the event informing them where and when the Ceremony would take place. Parents/carers were invited to attend to support their young people, hence the need for a larger function venue than the school auditorium could provide.

During the school day, those who were getting an award were

taken by bus to Thainstone for a rehearsal. This was an excellent opportunity to run through the order of awards and practice sitting neatly in designated spaces. There were many logistical elements to consider - where the trophies would be situated; the order the rows were laid; where photos were to be taken etc. One of the school technicians would be taking photos during the ceremony after participants had received their awards. These will be available for parents and pupils to view to commemorate their success.

The event itself was electric - despite the heat outside, the function hall was nice and cool and looked very... *Continued on Page 3*

Foreword by Miss Ross

In our final edition of the academic year, The Academy Star has pulled out all the stops to bring you its biggest issue to date. Not only that, but the team have been hard at work deciding on a new logo for the paper - a big thank you to Mr Simpson for his help here!

Inside you will find over twenty pages packed with the latest news from the school and wider community. The reporters have worked tirelessly across several months to interview, research, investigate and write a vast number of articles. This is a testament not only to their continued hard work and dedication to the paper, but also a celebration of the sheer number of events which the school have taken part in.

One of the biggest celebrations within the school calendar was the Awards Ceremony held at Thainstone Exchange which has taken our front page spot. Iona Duncan attended and reported back on all the fantastic accolades that S1-S6 students received.

Oliver Greig was our roving reporter out during Sports Day, watching the athletic endeavours of the school champions and interviewing the winners. Turn to page 4 for the inside scoop on the event.

Meanwhile, S5 students Molly Bryce and Cara McNeil took part in the much-anticipated Battlefields trip to France and Belgium for a poignant week. Page 10 is where you will find their in-depth feature.

For more creative pursuits, there is a wealth of musical and artistic articles on offer. The 'Big Hop' trail can be found on page 6, while the Summer Concert, attended by several of our journalists, is showcased on page 15. Happy reading!



Maths Marvels

Written by Olivia Reynolds and Lauren Young

The United Kingdom Mathematics Trust (UKMT) Junior Maths Challenge (JMC) is a maths and logic-based challenge that offers an exciting opportunity to solve puzzles and earn certificates. The Challenge is for S2 pupils, and this year at Inverurie Academy the top two S2 maths sets took part. The date for the challenge was Wednesday 26th April, and it was held in two classrooms in the maths department. Mrs Clarkson and Miss Boyd watched over the two classes during the hour that students had to do the challenge.

"I feel that the UKMT competition can add a different type of maths to what you might do as part of the curricular provision," Mrs Clarkson stated.

Mr Smith added: "I feel the UKMT competition encourages

an ethos of high achievement and encourages people to take maths further as they go through the school curriculum and beyond into university."

The challenge can help boost a love of maths throughout the school community and encourage those people that enjoy maths to try something a bit different from ordinary work.

The entries have been marked, and the contestants have been ranked by score. Anyone who earns bronze, silver or gold will receive a certificate, and the best in class and school will have their achievement on their certificate. Exceptional students who reach the top percentage will be given the next challenge up, the Junior Kangaroo or even the junior Olympiad, which only 1,200 people enter.



Image 1: Left-Right (Chahat Shaikh, Caitlin Crampshee, Samuel Stephenson, Eilidh Swanston). Image 2: Tessa

... glamorous dressed up in Inverurie colours. The Provost of Inverurie, Jill Whyte, gave a rousing speech to attendees and Mr Hendry led the hosting events to welcome everyone. Deputy Heads Mr Gardner, Mr O' Connor, Mrs O' Connor, Mr Anderson and Dr Drysdale read out names while the Guidance teachers handed awards to pupils in S1-3. When it came to S4-6 pupils, the Principal Teacher of each faculty handed out the awards.

Speaking after the event, Mr Hendry was full of enthusiasm about the successes of the students. He said:

“Our Awards Ceremony at Thainstone Exchange was an outstanding success as we celebrated so many different pupil achievements from session 2022-23. This would not have been possible without the organising committee who have been working tirelessly since August 2022 to ensure the evening went so smoothly and the group is already planning for the 2024 Awards Ceremony on Wednesday 19th June 2024.”

Mr Hendry also wished to add a personal ‘well done’ to all those

who were awarded, stating:

“A huge congratulations to all our young people who collected an award, I hope to see them again next year along with more new faces.”

Mrs Hutcheson, one of the organisers for the event, was thrilled with the reception, saying:

“It was lovely to be able to share the successes, achievements and talents of so many of our pupils with parents, carers, sponsors and the wider community. They should be extremely proud of

themselves. Here’s to the next academic session where we will continue to celebrate our young people.”

Finally, Principal Teacher of English, Mrs Mackintosh, added: “The awards ceremony was a fantastic celebration of success at Inverurie Academy and was thoroughly enjoyed by all that attended. My personal highlights were handing out the English awards and seeing the beaming smiles from all the award winners and their parent/carers.”



A selection of S3 pupils (now S4s) receiving their awards.

Harlaw Hailed as Heroes



It was all to play for at this year's Sports Day with plenty of awards on offer.

Written by Oliver Greig

Inverurie Academy hosted their second annual Sports Day at the Aberdeen Sports Village (ASV) on Wednesday 31st May.

Students across S1-S3 competed in a variety of events including long jump, high jump, discus, shot put, 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, as well as relay races for both students and staff.

Before reaching the final competition, students first had to take part in trials to select the best sports people. Trials took place during PE lessons with tensions incredibly high to see who would be going forward.

In total, over 200 students were selected to represent the six school houses, with the chance to bring home individual as well as team successes.

Students were transported to the ASV by bus in the morning alongside a team of staff who would be

cheering them on during their races. There was a fantastic buzz in the air with a mixture of nerves and excitement for the competitors.

It was particularly exciting for the S1 students (now S2) who had never experienced an Inverurie Sports Day before. One S1 student commented:

"I was really excited when I found out I had been selected. Our sports days before were just held at school so it was really cool that we were getting to go into Aberdeen. It felt more like a really sports competition."

One of the most anticipated events was the student and staff relay. Harlaw came away the most successful here for both the S1 and S3 cohort. Speaking afterwards, Jessica Christie (now S4), explained:

"I was competing in three separate events: the 100 metre, 200 metre and then finally the relay.

I was really nervous before each race. In fact, I wasn't even going to compete in the 200 metre! Once I got started though I felt much better and it was amazing to have won all three, especially the relay because we broke the record."

The S3 girls relay team was not the only record broken at Sports Day however.

New S1, Rachel Christie, broke the 100-metre record as well. She said:

I was a little nervous before the competition but mostly excited to be involved. I felt quite confident during the race but I had no idea I had broken the 200m record until after I was finished. I was thrilled!"

Lots of students achieved personal bests with their competitions too and all those who took part, especially those who came away with a gold, were really pleased with the result of the competition.

Cian Milne (now S2), repre-



senting Davah, competed in two events for his first Sports Day and said:

“I was feeling pretty confident before my competitors. I was competing for high jump and long jump but the high jump was my top priority. I had managed to I was really happy to have won both though and my plan is to join the athletics team especially to do high jump.”

Meanwhile Jae Kinney (now S3), representing Selbie, had a lot of success in the 200-metre:

“The 200 metre race was really tiring. I felt a bit nervous before it started and I honestly didn't think I was going to win. I was really happy and relieved when I realised I had although I was mainly just out of breath!”

Isla Skene also won a series of golds at Sports Day, taking home not only the 400-metre and 800-metre races, but also being part of the winning relay team for the S2s:

“I didn't expect to win the 800-metre or the relay but I was hoping I might do well at the 400 metre because I'd come second

last year. I was so surprised when I won all three and was glad that the nerves hadn't got the better of me.”

It was Harlaw who claimed victory overall by lifting the house trophy after winning the most amount of points from those competing. Mrs Farquharson, Harlaw's Guidance Teacher, said afterwards:

“I can't express just how unbelievably proud I am of all my

Harlaw pupils this year in contributing towards us being the best house at Inverurie Academy! Winning Sport's Day doesn't mean you gain more points towards winning the Millennium cup, so I wasn't expecting a win, it was a real shock at the awards ceremony! To be there on Sports Day and see the team spirit of everyone and the attitude that my Harlaw Hawks had in giving 100% in every event was just amazing. To break another record this year with the S3 girls relay was also amazing! There was such determination, resilience and support on the day, with no negativity or opting out of events, and that's the real win of the day. To be there and see all my pupils working together as a team in order to be the best they could be made me extremely proud indeed, the fact we've won the Millennium Cup overall this year is just the icing on the cake! Go Harlaw!”

Mr Hendry also wished to add his congratulations, saying: “A lot of effort was put into this event. A huge well done to all those who took part!”



Hare today, gone tomorrow!

Written by Mazie Price

The North East's leading cancer support charity, Clan, has formed a partnership with Wild Art to bring a trail of sculpted hares to the North East, Orkney and Shetland. Schools were selected and artists were chosen to decorate their own 3ft hare. These formed the focal point of the 'Big Hop,' a trail of 40 hares from 40 schools to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Clan.

At Inverurie Academy, Mrs Richardson spearheaded the efforts of our talented artists. The team was made up of Margareta Kolistanikova, Asha Crossan, Jessica Dziwon and Mya Nicoll. Every pupil in the school was given the opportunity to draw a design to put on the hare. Some pupils' designs have been picked to paint on the hare. These hares will be placed around the North East of Scotland, Moray, Orkney, and Shetland along with others for the public to find during the summer.

Mrs Richardson, the Principal Teacher of the Creative Arts faculty, and Margareta, the Head Designer and Pupil Director of the project, told us some more about the painting.

Margareta told the Academy Star about the design process, stating: "We took a bunch of different designs and we took elements from some of them and made the finished hare. It was a long process, but worth it in the end as the finished product looks so fantastic!"

Another one of the artists, Jessica Dziwon, talked through what the designs mean:

"The overall theme was resilience and cancer research. We had



The featured designs show the colour and vibrancy of Inverurie Academy.

to make sure the designs followed those themes. We adapted the drawings created by S1-3 art classes to complete the final design which featured flowers for resilience; a blazer trail to represent the school; a star constellation on the head to represent cancer; and a heart with a plaster over it for heart cancer."

Mrs Richardson walked us through how the hare came to be at Inverurie. "Margareta was the head designer and the organiser," she clarified. "The school had to bid for the hare. Then we ran a competition for the decoration and the name of the hare." This was an excellent opportunity for the whole school to be involved

with the process before the select few took all of these ideas and created the final product.

"The finished hare is in Clan and is going to tour around Scotland with other hares designed by different artists. There is going to be an award ceremony for the girls that painted and designed the hare and for the people who named it. After the hare has toured around Scotland it will be put on display in the school. We picked Clan as it is very close to all of the teachers in the art faculty."

The hare will be part of the trail displayed in various locations between the 2nd of July and the 3rd of September 2023.



An Enchanted Evening

The S6 Leavers celebrated the end of their time at Inverurie Academy and no more exams at Lochter on the 2nd June.

The theme of this year's Prom was "Enchanted Forest" and the colours were green, gold and black. This meant Mrs Elrick and her S1 helpers had great fun blowing up lots of balloons to make a funky balloon arch and decorating it with fake ivy, flowers made from book pages and gold sparkly butterflies. The theme carried onto other decorations, with frosted jars with more book flowers and tea lights on the tables.

The music was provided by returning teacher, Mr Duncan, who sang as well as getting us on the dance floor for a mix of ceilidh and more freestyle dancing.

The main stars of the show were the S6 cohort. They glammed up, with a stunning array of dresses, kilts and suits. It was more fashionable than the Met Ball!

Lochter welcomed the students with a red carpet and there was lots of conversations, photos and remembering all the good times. Staff especially found it heart-

warming to be able to say farewell to the students before they embark on their next steps.

Mrs Elrick, who organised the event, said: "It was lovely to say goodbye to our S6 students and we wish them all the best in their future endeavours. Keep out of trouble!"

Miss Addison Iso attended the event, agreeing that: "The space was perfect and the decorations were magical. It was great to see all of our S6s dressed up in their

finest to see off the end of their school careers." Thank you to the Prom Committee for making this such a memorable evening and a wonderful way to finish off the S6s time at Inverurie Academy.

We look forward to seeing all the fabulous photos that were taken by both staff and students showcased in the S6 Year Book - we have provided a sneak preview of some of the best here. The Year Book will be coming out on the 5th of July.



Fantastic Fiddlers

Written by Olivia Reynolds and Jessica Watson

Garioch Fiddlers' annual rally took place on Saturday the 22nd of April 2023 at Inverurie Town Hall.

This is the 38th annual rally from the Garioch Fiddlers who were accompanied by guest artists Cameron Nixon and Rachel Campbell, as well as the Alford Academy Pipe Band. It was especially nice to have Cameron Nixon as a returning member of the Garioch Fiddlers who had previously won the Young Fiddler of the Year in 2013.

The junior fiddlers also performed in the concert, playing three sets in total as well as playing alongside the main orchestra at the end to finish the concert.

The concert was an incredible success with a lively atmosphere that started with a rousing set from Alford Academy's Pipe Band before continuing with an evening filled with musical entertainment.

Trophies for the Garioch Fiddlers' competition were also awarded at the concert. Awards were given to Olivia Reynolds, Sophie Farquharson and Emma Cameron for a contest they took part in earlier in the year.

The theme for the novelty act this year was 'animals'. The orchestra played 'The Animals Went in Two by Two', 'Nelly the Elephant' and 'Pop Goes the Weasel', whilst some of the Junior Fiddlers wore masks and performed actions to the tunes.



The junior girls football team celebrating after their most recent win.

Storming to Victory

Written by Liam Sharp

Inverurie Academy Junior Girls' football team, led by Mr Dair, have been extremely busy this year with a wide range of successes, winning all of their league games and finishing with getting to the final of the League Cup.

The Junior Girls' football team is made up of a number of S1-S3s who regularly attend the training and football matches. During the year, they have managed to win all of the league games they have participated in and on the 10th of May 2023 the group was presented with the League Trophy award.

They went on to get to the final stage of the League Cup which they were runners up in. The team has been all around Aberdeenshire participating in their football matches including: Fraserburgh, Banff and Winning. Most of the places the team have been to this year proved a fantastic success.

Mr Dair decided to take on the Junior Girls' football team as his year group upon his return to the school from paternity leave. He commented that he felt "it has been so nice to take the Junior Girls' team up and through."

He added that he was glad that he took on the Junior Girls' team as they have been playing fantastically this season and they are also great to work with. He told us that he deeply enjoys being part of the JG team.

When we asked Mr Dair about the team he told us this:

"They are a fantastic young squad and they will only get better! Well done to the ladies and let's go again next season!"

We add our congratulations to the girls and wish them all the best with their next set of matches!

Treading battlefields past



40 senior students sailed from Newcastle to embark on the journey of a lifetime.

Written by Molly Bryce and Cara McNeil

During what would become one of the most crucial periods in history, Europe was ravaged by war, towns and villages on the Western Front were flattened, and once peaceful planes became battlefields. History students from S4 to S6 were given the unique opportunity to participate in an experience that would change their perspective on World War One.

On the morning of the 12th of June, a group of 40 students set off on our travels which were destined for Ypres in Belgium where we would discover the secrets and stories of The Great War

At 06:45, the 2nd Battalion Inverurie Pals were called to arms. We waved goodbye to our loved ones and were welcomed onto the coach by Jim, the tour guide, who shared stories of the war and became a core member of our unit. As well as Jim, joining us were

Miss Crabb, Mrs Cookson, Mr Anderson and Mr Simpson who were all instrumental in making the trip a success. As soon as we left the bus park, war songs were played throughout the duration of the journey. After departing, it was around a 4 hour trek to Newcastle. Throughout the course of the coach ride, Jim commented on the hilly geography of Scotland which would later be compared to the flat landscape and battlefields of Belgium.

Once arriving in Newcastle, we boarded the ferry that would take us on an overnight journey to the Netherlands (the kind of journey in which soldiers would have taken to go and fight in Flanders). The rooms in the ferry were small and cramped, however it was well suited for the night as the accommodation was not the main concern, and most of us only cared about getting to immerse ourselves in the battlefield experience.

Mrs Cookson voiced her opin-

ions on the ferry, summing up the experience perfectly: "I think the ferry was the most stressful part - it was definitely my least favourite part of travelling as we were on there for such a long time and it felt like we were making no progress at all! That being said, we did get to see a beautiful sunset and it was nice to get a bit of free time to move around the ship."

On the second day we were all eager to get to the mainland and finally get to see the endless amounts of fantastic sights that France and Belgium had to offer. Arriving in the Netherlands we commenced our journey, Belgium bound. With the flat landscape and canals of the Netherlands rolling past our coach, Jim turned on DVDs about the boy soldiers and the tunnelers of the Great War, both of which play significant roles in Britain's war story. As the famous spires of Ypres came into view and we pulled into the hostel's bus park, the significance of the history of our trip finally

started to feel more real.

We were greeted by Dieter, the manager of the youth hostel that we were staying at and were then given the chance to settle into our rooms. Later on in the evening we were allowed to go and explore the city of Ypres. The city itself was on the western front and faced a lot of destruction during the First World War. It was almost completely decimated due to the amount of conflict, however over a century later there is little evidence of the carnage WWI left behind.

We awoke the next day to the sound of bagpipes blaring through Jim's speaker, a motivation to get up and prepare for the day's adventures. During this first bus journey of the day, the members of the Battalion were all given crosses with poppies on the front that we could lay anywhere of our choosing. The coach drove us down the Menin Road; this particular road was special because over the course of the four years of fighting, both the Allies and the Germans were trying to push the other back with no progress. We timed how long it took to drive the length of the road (3 minutes and 45 seconds) which put into perspective how pointless the various battles actually were. The loss of life, the amount of men who

sacrificed their lives for 3 minutes and 45 seconds of road astounded us all.

Following this, we travelled to a wooded area called Sanctuary Wood which had seen a lot of fighting and was where many Canadian soldiers, more specifically the Princess Patricia Regiment, had lost their lives trying to capture a hill known as Hill 62. Around this area was a museum that was built for people to come and see the original trenches from the First World War.

Once everyone had gotten off the coach and put on our wellie boots, we trudged over to the wooded area where the trenches lay. Even though large trees surrounded us and the birds were chirping happily, it was clear that this was home to a former battlefield. Distinctive holes made by artillery fire and the deep trenches that stood before us acted as a permanent reminder of the scars in the landscape.

We were given the chance to go down into the trenches. According to Jim, these were almost identical to the ones in the Great War. Jim further described the difficult conditions in the trenches, explaining how rats the size of cats would be crawling around and that soldiers suffered with many diseases as a

result.

We then proceeded to weave around the trenches before heading down into a dark tunnel in which many soldiers and miners before us, whose stories we had previously been told, had used. The adjacent museum showcased multiple artefacts from the war including: weaponry, uniforms, medals and more.

The coach then transported us to the Hooze Crater Museum where Jim was able to explain the sorts of medical treatment that would be needed on the western front and the harrowing things nurses and stretcher bearers would have to deal with. It offered us a chance to consider the emotional and physical toll taken on those outside of the armed forces who were still so integral to the war effort.

Following the museum, we made our way to Hill 60 which was a man-made hill created during the construction of nearby railways and eventually became a crater due to mines being blown up from underneath. Once back on the bus, our new destination was a large lake also known as the 'Pool of Peace'. Once a large crater, created in a blast that could be heard from Downing Street and killed 10,000 German soldiers, nature had yet again taken control caus-





ing the crater to fill up with water. Again we were reminded that destruction could heal over time naturally and become somewhat of a spectacle.

Following this we visited the village of Messines, another war-torn destination which had to be rebuilt from the ground up. The village itself contained a large church which had a lot of cultural significance as the crypt was one of the only surviving parts of the building. We were told that in this particular crypt Adolf Hitler had once stood, the infamous dictator of Germany during World War Two, as well as Winston Churchill who were both there at similar times during the Great War.

Our final destination for the day was at the Jimmy Spears Monument. This was erected near the area in which the Christmas Truce had been held. It is a well-known fact that the Scottish international footballer, Jimmy Spears, was involved in the kickabout on Christmas Day, which is what prompted

Jim to play the song 'Sing for the Boys' by Alan Brydon. One student said that "it was one of the most emotional moments on the trip for me. I think it really hit me then about the amount of brave young men who died for pretty much nothing."

Rolling fields of poppies and green hills greeted us as we entered France the following day. Our destination was the infamous Somme. The first stop was Newfoundland Park, where we saw scars of trenches that were able to be reclaimed by nature. Now softened by time, these trenches were once the scene of a bloody battle, The Battle of the Somme. The park was where a Newfoundland regiment was mowed down by German machine gun fire and lost countless men in their regiment while trying to walk over the top of the trenches towards the front line. At this site we visited our first cemetery: as we weaved through the pristine white headstones we witnessed the true loss that

all nations involved in the Great War had experienced. Students found connections in the names of the graves and remembered the sacrifices these men made. We were then taken to see a monument that was erected in honour of our local regiment, The Gordon Highlanders. The men of The Gordon Highlanders had bravely captured a ravine named Y ravine on the 13th November 1916 where German soldiers had created deep dugouts and stored large amounts of weapons and shells, some of which were never recovered and still remain in the ravine today.

Our battalion continued on to Thiepval Memorial which is the memorial dedicated to the missing soldiers of The Somme. This memorial is home to over 73,000 names, highlighting the sheer scale of the death toll in one battle alone. Students and teachers sat on the steps of the monument searching for names of relations and remembering the names of those who lost their lives. Many enjoyed

this stop on the journey:

“My favourite part was visiting the monument in France and getting to spend some time finding the names connected to my own family.”

Jim then took us to a cemetery where he explained the impacts of war on the people at home; buried in this very cemetery was a man hailing from Inverurie known as Private John Innes Lumsden. The cemeteries we visited were impactful to many:

“I think visiting all of the graves really did make me feel quite sad for all of the soldiers. All of the different stories for each individual soldier were enlightening as well as upsetting.”

The coach then took us to Lochnagar crater which was 22 metres deep and 80 metres long. Vimy Ridge was our next port of call, we visited the memorial dedicated to the Canadians as they were the ones who won this



tactical position. From the high up position of Vimy one can gaze over much of the French countryside or what would have been the front lines during the Great War. From our comfortable, air conditioned coach we were able to look out over the fields where the battle of Loos took place; this battle suffered heavy losses in Aberdeenshire and was the site of the first gas use by the British during the First World War. After a long day the battalion returned to the hostel and battled with each other in an intense quiz created by the teachers.

Our final day in Belgium saw the battalion returning to the Ypres Salient and journeying to Essex farm, the advanced dressing station where John Macrae, the poet who wrote the famous war poem ‘In Flanders Fields’, was stationed as a doctor and where he wrote his poem. The cemetery at Essex farm holds around 500 people



and is also home to the grave of the youngest recorded casualty in Ypres at 15 years old, although many boys were the same age or younger despite being registered as 18 or 19. We were then taken to Poelcappelle Cemetery where there were 7,000 graves - almost 6,400 of which were unknown soldiers. Following this, we were taken to Passchendaele, which was then followed by a 2 mile trek to Tyne Cot Cemetery. The group was astounded at the sprawling cemetery before them, the largest Commonwealth grave cemetery in the world. Row after row after row, the white headstones filled the space as far as the eye could see. There were 12,000 graves in total and on the walls 34,000 names were inscribed. Most of the men buried here were victims of the battle of Passchendaele.

We continued on to another cemetery named Langemark. Unlike the others we had visited however, this one was a German cemetery. Around 55,000 names of fallen German soldiers could be found there. This visit made it

apparent that death was a universal experience and that both sides lost significant numbers to a truly pointless war.

We then made our final trip into Ypres to change into our school uniforms before heading to the Menin Gate for the weekly ceremony that had been held there every Friday since 1918. After securing front row spots away from the large crowds, the ceremony commenced and our three representatives made their way towards the gates to lay Inverurie Academy's wreath. This was a wonderful moment for the school and was celebrated by the teachers on the trip:

"My proudest moment was the wreath laying ceremony at the Menin Gate and seeing all of the students in their uniforms. It was such an amazing and memorable experience."

The ceremony came to a close with a reading of the poem 'For the Fallen'. Our battalion then headed to our private ceremony at Belgian Battery Corner Ypres cemetery. With the scenic back-

drop of a setting sun over the now peaceful lands surrounding Ypres, we took a moment to reflect on the past few days, to reflect on the places we had visited and witnessed the impact of the Great War first hand. The ceremony contained poems being recited by students and another wreath being laid at the foot of the Cross of Sacrifice. In the final moments of the private ceremony Jim read us another poem which moved many to tears. This ceremony really made us all remember the sacrifices that were made by men of our country and others in pursuit of a greater, more peaceful world.

It was another early start, and we were all up and ready for another full day of travelling. With sleep in our eyes and travel pillows at the ready, we waved goodbye to Dieter and the hostel and set off on our way back home. It took a total of 2 hours for us to get to Calais and board our ferry. Still completely exhausted from the beginning of the day, we dragged ourselves off of the coach and onto the ferry. To most of us, the journey didn't

feel too long and we were shortly greeted by the white cliffs of Dover looming in the distance. Before we knew it, it was time to get back onto the bus. Only 10 hours to go! Surprisingly, most of us had managed to find things to keep us occupied for the majority of the duration: films, music and sleep were all common past-times. Regular stops were short moments of bliss and the chance to stretch our legs was truly something that we all appreciated.

After 19 hours of travelling, we were back in Scotland, our treasured home, something that we acknowledged many men in the Great War hadn't had the opportunity to do. The stop in Stirling was certainly a turning point in everyone's attitudes towards the journey. From Stirling to Inverurie we were dedicated to playing clas-

sic songs that everyone knew the words to. Not a single person was unenthused, even the teachers. Mrs Cookson stated:

"The most fun thing was the singing on the bus on the way home, it was a proper party bus, that was really good and unexpected as well, I thought it was going to be horrendous!"

The songs continued on up the road as we waved goodbye to the familiar faces who had been with us throughout the experience. We clapped as we switched bus drivers from Aled to Chris and cheered as we dropped off Jim. From then it was the home stretch, and the energy had only ramped up. As we drove into town, midnight approaching, no one seemed truly tired. As the coach came to a halt inside the bus park, we reunited with our loved ones who had not

so long ago dropped us off, despite it feeling like a lifetime had passed since then.

Looking back on this incredible journey, the Battlefields trip that took the 2nd Inverurie Pals to various new experiences was something that will truly resonate with most of us for the rest of our lives. Special thanks need to go to Colonel Crabb, Major Cookson, Captain Anderson and Lieutenant Simpson for accompanying all of us on the adventure of a lifetime, as well as Jim and our two coach drivers: Aled and Chris.

It opened all of our eyes to the horrors of war and the sacrifices made by many who we still remember over one hundred years later.



A lasting memento of the Battelfields trip: a wreath laid by representatives of the group marked by a note from the staff and students as well as the Inverurie Academy crest.

S1s take the lead at transition



P7s were able to work alongside current S1s as part of their transition to Inverurie Academy.

Written by Liam Sharp

This year at Inverurie Academy, a small group of S1s elected to work with Creative Arts teacher Miss Maguire on the skills framework as part of the S1 Leadership course. At the end of their course they had the opportunity to work with the upcoming S1s, currently in P7. Those involved were excited to be a part of this. At the start of the year, they were put into groups to create transition videos to support new S1s, as well as developing activity workshops for the three-day transition.

Aimee Stott, one of the participants in the Leadership programme, stated that:

“I really enjoyed working as part of the S1 Leadership programme and getting to be involved in so many of the activities. It was good to know the work we were doing was going to help the P7s coming up.”

S1 Leadership is all about making new friendship connections, learning about the new school and finding out what goes on inside of the school. The new S1s get a

small taste of all the different clubs and activities that Inverurie Academy offers, as well as getting to see how fun they all are when they come up to visit. Miss Maguire was a big help to the course and the S1s all said that they could not have done it without her.

The largest project run by the group was the three day P7 transition visit. The group spearheaded various activity workshops and activities for them to take part in, inside and out of the school building. They also got the opportunity to meet the S1 Leaders and get to know them a bit better before they made their leap into secondary school.

Throughout the day of the P7 transition workshops, I spoke to a couple of different P7s coming up to S1 to see what work they were doing, if they were looking forward to the new school and how they were feeling about the transition.

Euan, a new S1, told the Academy Star: “I took part in a murder mystery which was really cool! My favourite part of the transition day was getting a tour around the

school. I love the canteen and I am always hungry!”

Another couple of learners stated: “Our favourite parts were coming to art and creating our rocks! We are most looking forward to the Drama department.”

Toby spoke about the variety of options on offer at the Academy:

“I took part in maths, which I enjoy. My favourite part today was lunch, and my favourite activity I took part in today was when we played with the djembe. I am most looking forward to the different subject choices at the Academy.”

One pupil, Marian, discussed the fantastic facilities in the library, telling us: “I took part in the Humanities quiz today! My favourite part of the day was lunchtime, as it was very tasty. I am really looking forward to the library at this school, the library is amazing, I love reading.”

The transition week was a roaring success, and the S1 Leaders (now in S2) gained many useful skills and deeply enjoyed contributing to the wider life of the school.

Summer Spectacular



Written by Aimee Stott, Gemma Davidson and Ellie Milne

The Summer Show graced the stage on Thursday the 29th of June 2023 at 7pm. Following on from the Christmas Concert - originally postponed due to poor weather conditions until early 2023 when it was a smash hit - the Summer Show promised to be just as big of a success. The programme was put together by Creative Arts teacher Mrs Purvis and included a series of the school's best musicians from the Concert Band, Celticad, and Brass Group, while the Production Club promised a dramatic performance of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.

The auditorium was filled with audience members and had been decorated with paper daisies, tulips and kites to give a suitably summer feel.

All of the acts performed very confidently with the closing act - 'The Palladiums' - so enjoyed by the audience that they were asked to play a second song.

After the concert there was the

chance to win a fantastic prize in the raffle. All tickets had sold out and audience members waited excitedly to see who had won. A range of prizes were on offer including toiletry sets, games, as well as the star prize: an Aberdeen Football Club family voucher.

With this being Principal Teacher of Creative Arts, Mrs Richardson's, final concert at Inverurie Academy, she was presented with a bouquet of flowers as thanks for her dedication and commitment to her subject and the school as a whole.

Speaking after the event, Mr Hendry said: "It was a fantastic evening filled with a range of

incredibly talented students. I was very proud of all their performances."

Mrs Purvis echoed Mr Hendry's enthusiasm, saying: "A lot of hard work went into the organisation of the Summer Concert however it all paid off in the end and was very rewarding. A huge congratulations to everyone involved!"

Finally, Mrs Richardson spoke about her experiences: "It was a very emotional evening, especially as this was my last one. No one was supposed to know!" Mrs Richardson added: "I was pleased to see all of our young people enjoying themselves and they did very well."



Super Mario Raft Race



A double win for the 'Mario' raft team.

Written by Liam Sharp

Inverurie Scout Group hosted the Inverurie Raft Race 2023 on the 4th of June. The Raft Race happens annually on the first Sunday in June, with teams racing against each other to get their handcrafted raft across the finish line first. The teams race 8 km, all the way from the start point in Kemnay to the finish line event at Davidson Park Inverurie. All the money that is raised from this event goes to the Inverurie Scout Group and local charities.

Scouts and Explorers set off from Davidson Park at 10am, making sure that the end event and activities were all set up for when the rafts came in. There were a variety of activities to choose from while you waited for the rafts to come in, including: bubble football, a bouncy castle and face painting. There was also

a variety of options for food such as burgers or sausage baps from the Scout Groups food tent, or ice cream from the Mr Whippy van.

This year, there were 11 rafts taking to the water to compete in the race, 10 of which successfully qualified. Sadly, one did not quite manage to make it as it didn't manage to stay together once put in the water.

This year's award holders were: In first place, the raft (who also

won best fundraising) named 'Mario'. They managed to raise a whopping £1,050.

The raft that won the Best Decorated Crew was "Barely Floating".

In last place, the raft who won this year's Wooden Spoon was the "Chingus McFloat Face" raft, they also managed to take home the best decorated raft award, with help from Mrs Richardson and her husband.

All rafters were safely back in Inverurie by 17:30, they all were glad of a towel to get dried up and to help them warm up again after hours in the freezing cold water.

Event organisers were pleased with the audience turnout this year as there was a constant flow of people engaging in the event. The Scout Group commented:

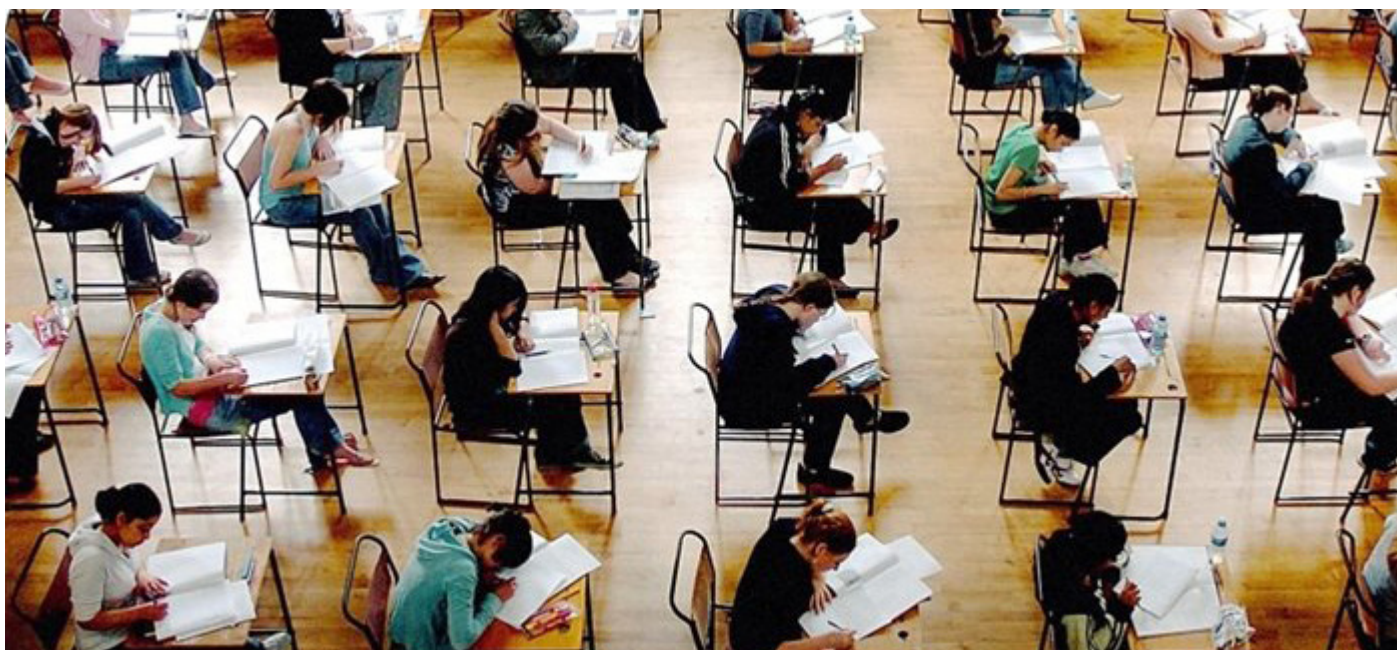
"Well done to all the teams who paddled, walked and pushed their way down the 8km of the River Don to Inverurie. Fantastic fundraising! Low river levels meant a long day for all involved, but many thanks to all those who helped and contributed to a successful day."

It was clear to see that everyone, spectator and racer, had a great time and really embraced the fun-filled spirit of the event.

Roll on Inverurie Raft Race 2024!



Nightmare on Victoria Street...



Hundreds of senior students were involved in the month-long examination diet. Credit: Holyrood

Written by Fiona McQuillan Duncan and Molly Bryce

As the 2023 exam season comes to a close, students are finally being relinquished of the pressure of their exams (which is, agreeably, a very busy and chaotic time for all).

While stress is a natural aspect of life, many students struggle with over-stressing during such an important period of time, causing their mental health to decrease. However, there are many small ways that can help students to relax and manage stress during the exam-diet. The feedback towards this year's exams were extremely varied, with students having mixed emotions depending on the paper that was sat. There were definitely plenty of ups and downs for everyone with this year's exams. Hopefully, this article will also provide helpful tips for those facing exams in the years to come.

As previously mentioned, stress is a large factor during the exam period due to the looming deadlines as well as the number of exams to study for. The amount of exams (especially during National 5s) is quite a daunting task with some students even stating that they had 8 exams to contend with. On the contrary, Higher is also no walk in the park as the subjects are expanded upon in terms of difficulty and the amount of content covered in the course.

The exam season started in early April and continued right the way through May. This meant that many exams were quite close together. For example on the 2nd of May, there was a National 5 History exam, and what followed was 3 consecutive National 5 exams which included: Maths, Applications of Maths and German (all subjects which require a lot of revision).

A recent study of the pupils at

Inverurie Academy showed that 57.1% stated that they felt anxious or stressed throughout the entirety of study leave (which lasted around 5 weeks). This clearly shows a problem, and could potentially lead to a more permanent mental health condition like anxiety. Overall, the mental health of pupils is definitely somewhat of a concern due to the pressures of the exam period, and while exams are something that should be taken seriously, the mental health of students should take priority so that their full potential can be realised.

While exams are very clearly an overwhelming and stressful time, there are lots of small lifestyle choices that can make exams and studying seem more manageable and less daunting, and therefore improve the mental health of students during this time. There are simple ways such as eating a healthy diet, drinking enough

water and getting enough sleep. These will help you physically, and also improve your mental health and keep you more focused.

A growth mindset is key to having a more positive attitude towards school, which will help you to feel more motivated towards studying. Multiple students were questioned as to what motivated them to revise, the most common answers that were given consisted of: the fear of failure, wanting to do well in the future as well as not wanting to disappoint their families. To achieve this, the majority started revising in late March or early April.

In order to pass exams, it is imperative that revision is to be carried out. The act of studying, and different ways to study, can easily confuse students who do not have a lot of prior experience with exams/studying. There are many different ways to revise which cater to all learning types. Popular ways include: flashcards, mind-maps and past papers (which can be found on the SQA website or from your teachers).

The Academy Star asked the pupils at Inverurie Academy what ways they believed they could have improved on studying. Some of their recurring answers were:

To begin studying earlier so that you don't feel overwhelmed closer to the time of exams; to pace yourself and take breaks so as not to cause a burnout; and to utilise the SQA past papers as they are a key to understanding the type of questions that will be asked of you in the exam paper.

Another very important aspect to help with revision is to have a dedicated revision space, this will prove to be a quiet space that will help you to focus, and have some control in such an uncertain time.

In a survey conducted by members of The Academy Star, almost one-quarter of participants said that they did not have a dedicated revision space. This could have a serious impact on their ability to focus and could also have caused unnecessary stress.

To conclude these ideas, although stress during such a time is natural, it can be easily remedied

through focus and positive action such as having the right mindset, ensuring you start revising early enough, finding a peaceful place to study, and most importantly staying healthy.

There was no doubt that the 2023 exams were a shock back to reality for students in the form of the first set of relatively normal exams since before Covid-19. However, the chance to sit the exams offered a much-needed experience for students to have a proper understanding of what examinations are like as well as offering a specific purpose for all their studying and revising.

Well done to all the students who sat their exams this year. We hope all your hard work has paid off and we wish you the best of luck on results day!



An Interview with... Brody Patterson

Written by Oliver Greig

Brody Patterson (S4) represented Scotland this year in a cooking competition designed to encourage young people to pursue a career in the hospitality industry.

Springboard Futurechef, a schools-based programme, is supported by a number of high-profile chefs like Brian Turner CBE and Michel Roux Jr, with Brody keen to join their ranks.

Having won the regional finals in Elgin in February, beating seven talented rivals, Brody then travelled to Westminster Kingsway College in London on the 13th March for the finals. He was joined by a number of other young people from across England, Ireland and Wales in order to cook up a storm for the judges.

The first night was a chance for the students to mingle and they were treated to a fine-dining experience to spark inspiration for their cooking the following day.

Speaking about the journey so far, Brody explained:

“This all started with a cooking competition in my Home Economics class. We were tasked with creating a one-course meal on a budget which myself and another competitor from another class were lucky enough to win. After that it was the local competition where we competed under the watchful eye of our mentor at Pitodrie House. I was thrilled to win the local round and then make it to the regional finals. It was a dream come true to get to go to London.”

The competition itself was a tense affair. 12 finalists competed with 2 hours and 45 minutes on the clock to prepare a main course and dessert for a panel of



industry-leading judges, including Adam Handling, Nieves Barragan Mohacho and 2023 National Chef of the Year Ben Murphy.

“I was feeling pretty confident when I arrived,” Brody said. “There’s no doubt that when I arrived at the competition the nerves started to kick in a bit more.”

Brody opted to make a dish showcasing some of the best Aberdeenshire ingredients: he paired a filleted fish with lemon and dill as well as braised potatoes and a variety of vegetables including purple-sprouting broccoli, spinach, and broad beans. The dish was served with a classic French *beurre noisette*, a brown butter sauce that complimented the other flavourings well. Brody followed

this with a baked apple crumble for a sweet, warming dessert.

Speaking about the experience, Brody said:

“I really enjoyed the experience even when some parts went a little downhill. It was a fantastic opportunity and I’m really hoping to take part in more competitions in the future as well as keep cooking in general.”

For Brody’s efforts, he received the Springboard FutureChef 2023 finalist award as well as the Baxter Storey FutureChef UK National finalist certificate at Inverurie Academy’s awards ceremony.

Congratulations on all your achievements, Brody, and we look forward to seeing what delicious dishes you create in the future!

Reading Rewards

Written by Elizabeth Wilkins

Inverurie Academy has started an exciting journey to become a Reading School. Supported by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Book Trust, it aims to promote a positive reading culture across the school for learners and the wider community. There are several levels to the programme and Inverurie Academy is focusing on the 'core' level, targeting S1 and S2 students especially.

One of the most important parts of Reading Schools is the appointment of Literacy Ambassadors. In 2018, the Literacy group was formed and worked closely with S1-S3 pupils to promote reading and literacy within the school. After a brief pause due to Covid, Literacy Ambassadors resumed with 13 students and 3 staff members who currently meet every fortnight on a Tuesday in the school library. Recently they have now been focusing on supporting the Reading Schools programme as well as being good role models and representing the school as well.

One way in which the Literacy Ambassadors have shown positivity with reading in school is through the reading signs for classroom teachers. These are laminated signs where teachers can add the book they are currently reading alongside the genre and display them in their classrooms. This has been well-received across the school and has showcased the wide range of interests' teachers have, as well as encouraging students to pick up a book and read as well.

In order to celebrate the successes and achievements of students within school, a Reading Schools



Students from S1-S6 with their Reading School awards alongside Miss Grey (left) and Ms Sarran (right).

Awards Ceremony was held on Tuesday 27th June in the library. Students from S1-S6 were invited to attend and were given a variety of certificates for their hard work and reading abilities. Some of the certificates included awards for the Literacy Ambassadors and the Book Club, as well as awards such as Book Adventurer, Avid Reader, Widely Read, Classics and Assisting in the Library. There was a lovely atmosphere to the ceremony with everyone applauding and English staff also present to cheer on the students. Ms Sarran and Miss Grey had created a celebratory buffet for afterwards which was definitely appreciated!

Speaking after the ceremony, Kirsty Johnston in S3 said: "It feels great to be acknowledged for reading widely."

Another award winner, McKenzie Cook, said: "It's amazing! It feels great to be recognised for all my hard work and achievements."

Ms Sarran, one of the organisers of the Reading Schools programme and Literacy Ambassa-

dors group, said:

"I loved that we had the opportunity to organise the Reading School Awards Ceremony at our school as it signifies the culmination of a whole year's worth of work and engagement with so many enthusiastic young people in the library and around school. Young people who love reading and books, and the meaningful exchange around both."

Miss Grey, Librarian at Inverurie Academy, added: "Our Reading School journey has been hugely rewarding so far and I'm very proud of how much we have achieved. Our Literacy Ambassadors have put in so much work to highlight the many benefits of reading for enjoyment. The Awards Ceremony was an important celebration of everyone's hard work and we are so pleased we could recognise pupil achievements around library use and reading".