

The ACADEMY STAR



*The auditorium and drama studio were packed with stalls and students eager to join the clubs on offer.
(Photography: Ailsa McLeman)*

Action-packed Activities Fair

*Written by Aimee Stott and
Charlotte Mitchell*

The annual Activities Fair was back in 2023 to give students the opportunity to take part in a variety of clubs and organisations.

Taking place on the 6th of September in the school's Auditorium, the event went right through the whole of lunch with S1s offered first choice on clubs at the start, while S2s and S3s were able to attend from 12:50pm onwards.

The Activities Fair offers students the chance to join new clubs and get a sense of what interests them especially, as well as helping

students to meet new people who like the same activities as them.

Staff from a wide variety of subjects as well as a number of pupils from different clubs gathered in the cavernous space (which also included the opened Drama Studio) to show off everything the groups had to offer. There were over 20 stalls to explore and many tables included specific examples of activities that the clubs provided. For example, the Podcast Club had taken along their microphone which they use to record as well as a video to advertise the latest podcast.

Speaking about the club, Mr

Simpson said:

“We are creating episodes for the school podcast ‘Inveramble’ and every episode is looking at important issues in the school. We meet on Wednesday lunchtimes and collaborate with other students and staff to produce interesting and engaging episodes which everyone can enjoy. Once published, episodes are available to listen to on Spotify, Audible and Apple.”

Even more excitingly, there were some fantastic new additions to the clubs available: the German Club (run by Ms McNicol on...
To be continued on Page 3.

Foreword by Miss Ross

A new school year brings with it a brand new edition of the paper and our Autumn issue promises to be the most ambitious yet!

After the success of the Activities Fair (reported on by Aimee Stott and Charlotte Mitchell as our front page spread), the Academy Star has grown exponentially again, and we now have almost 40 budding journalists eagerly wanting to contribute to the paper.

As you will see from this edition, interviews have been an especially important skill which many of our journalists have been developing this term. Not only have we been garnering opinions from our new S1 cohort about their experiences so far at Inverurie Academy, but we have also embarked on dedicated interviews with our new group of School and House captains (available to read on Pages 4-8). Furthermore, one of our senior journalists (Gemma Davidson) had the opportunity to speak with Katie Gibbs who is recently back from an incredible opportunity at Harvard, while Cara McNeil and Fiona McQuillan-Duncan discussed Isla Grant's political successes with the Scottish Youth Parliament.

As well as celebrating individual achievements, this edition also includes a warm welcome to new teachers who have just joined Inverurie Academy (page 13), fantastic trips for learners (Pages 9, 15, 21 and 22) as well as a top secret royal visit to the school (Page 24).

Peruse this edition to learn all about these events and much, much more! And don't skip the final section where we wish Mr Littler the fondest of farewells as he retires. More on this, including some messages from the school staff, can be found on Page 25.



Changing Times

Written by Oliver Greig

The Academy Star's newsroom continues to expand with this latest cohort being the largest the paper has ever had.

This year we have over 30 members with a huge number of S1 students having joined the ranks to become budding journalists.

Not only does this prove what an incredible experience the Academy Star offers for students of all ages, but it also means that we can introduce new and exciting elements to the paper which we haven't been able to do before.

With so many members now actively involved in the paper, we are continuing to broaden the amount of roles we have, focusing on various media responsibilities such as researching, interviewing, reporting, photography, and editing.

Expect to see more current news from the paper alongside

an increase in interviews for both staff and students. Even more exciting, the introduction this academic year of the NPA Journalism course means that, alongside the core Academy Star team, there are another 30 senior students who will also be offering supportive roles to the paper.

Speaking to the Academy Star, one new member, Charlotte Mitchell, explained:

"I wanted to join the paper because I thought it would be a really good experience and to let everyone know what is going on in the school."

Even with so many new journalists, we are always looking for more ideas. If you have a news story that you think the Academy Star should report on, please make sure to speak to Miss Ross and we will investigate!



Image 1: Ms Smith and Ms Stephens promoting the popular Netball Club. Image 2: Ms Grey (Librarian) and Ms Ritchie (TVE) were all smiles showing off the craft club's latest projects. (Photography: Ailsa McLeman)

Wednesdays at lunchtime in F21); the Spanish Club (run by Mrs Hutchison in F20 on Thursday lunchtime); and the Storyboarding Club (run by Ms Kinnaird).

Speaking about her new club at the Activities Fair, Ms Kinnaird said:

“The Storyboarding Club provides a supportive and collaborative platform for aspiring writers to hone their skills, share and explore various genres fostering a sense of community”.

There were also many familiar faces included at the stalls who were eagerly looking for new members. Some of these included: the Production Club, the Netball Club, the LGBTQ+ group, as well as the many clubs run in the library such as Book Group and Craft Club (which is now a joint enterprise alongside the TVE department).

Senior Management were also in attendance at the event, supporting both staff and students at the fair. Mr Anderson, Deputy Head Teacher, stated:

“The Activities Fair offers an excellent opportunity for students to join some of the clubs and ac-

tivities on offer. This has been the most successful fair to date and there's a real community feeling in the auditorium today.”

Isla Grant, S5 student, was in attendance and said: “I think it's really great that all the school is coming together and sharing everything that they're passionate about.”

Fiona McQuillan-Duncan, also an S5 student who was supporting some of the clubs at the Activities

Fair, added:

“This is definitely the biggest Activities Fair at Inverurie Academy yet and it looks like a very successful enterprise that will help encourage pupils to engage more in school activities”.

We certainly had great fun as the school newspaper both representing our team of journalists and reporting on the Activities Fair, and we are certain next year will be even bigger.



Image 1: Noah Campbell pictured alongside the colourful costumes in the Production Club. Image 2: Ms Kinnaird showcases the latest storyboards. (Photography: Ailsa McLeman)

Leaving a Lasting Legacy



School Captains for 2023-24 (L-R): Jake Cruickshank, Rachel Boyle, Rhona Fraser, Lucy Stirling, Holly Mackintosh, and Aaron Cardno.

Written by Hannah Denholm

The new academic year means a brand new group of School Captains who are determined to lead and inspire.

Our six School Captains for session 2023-24 are: Rachel Boyle, Aaron Cardno, Rhona Fraser, Holly Mackintosh, Lucy Stirling and Jake Cruickshank. All six faced difficult competition and went through a challenging interview panel in order to secure their role.

To better understand their vision for this coming year, three important questions were asked of each of them so they could explain what they saw as the top priorities going forward.

The first question - *Why did you apply for the role of School Captain?* - produced a variety of answers from the group of six.

Rachel Boyle reflected on her

time as an S1 joining the Academy in her answer, explaining that senior role models when she was younger encouraged her to take on a similar position once she got to S6:

“It cemented that idea of me wanting a similar leadership role and I knew being School Captain would give me the best opportunity to leave the biggest and most lasting impact.”

Similarly, Rhona Fraser agreed with the idea of leaving a legacy, adding:

“I really wanted to be a part of the bigger picture and to represent the school in a meaningful way.” She added: “Plus I really liked the tie!”

Aaron Cardno believed the role would provide a good opportunity to think of others and work in their best interests, stating:

“I think this is a role which can

give something back to the community. This was ultimately what I wanted to be a part of.”

Holly Mackintosh agreed, adding: “I really wanted to be part of the wider school community and make a difference.”

The final two captains, Jake Cruickshank and Holly Stirling, were focused more on their own skills and qualities in terms of what they could bring to the role. Lucy explained: “I’m an ambitious person and I knew School Captain was something I wanted to apply for as it would develop my leadership skills further.”

Jake added: “I have a lot of drive and motivation and knew that these skills would set me apart and allow me to bring something impactful to the role.”

It is clear from these responses that all of the School Captains have the right qualities in place

already to make a difference in the school and they all show an enormous amount of passion and knowledge for the school community.

Now having a greater understanding of the School Captains and who they are, the next question - *What does the role of a School Captain involve?* - was designed to find out more about the position itself and the responsibilities they have.

Jake explained that the role involved lots of different responsibilities and that the position was expanding.

“As School Captain, we act as a go-between for pupils and the rest of the school community. To do this, we have a responsibility to create a sense of structure which will help with this sort of communication.”

Lucy discussed the need as a School Captain to work with lots of different individuals.

“We work alongside Senior Management which means there is an expectation from us to be very professional and responsible. Not only that, we also have a responsibility over prefects in terms of their duties, as well as organising certain events within the school.”

Rachel expanded on this particular aspect of the role, stating:

“We are tasked with representing the school. We are often asked to do tours and help with events, especially those which involve the wider school and local community. Moreover, a big part of our role is leaving a legacy behind. This is something we, as a group, have already started discussing and we are hoping to continue work on this to ensure that this year we focus on collaboration.”

This is something that Rhona was also keen to emphasise, adding: “The most important thing within this role is representing

the school, particularly for the outside community who only get a limited amount of access to the school and what we are doing. We need to ensure that we provide the best form of representation for the school during these events to show anyone visiting all the fantastic things on offer and the hard work that has been put into making the school better.”

Holly and Aaron focused their answers on representing students as well as the school as a whole. Aaron explained:

“Our role is to ensure pupils are being heard and reflecting their needs in the decisions we make.”

Holly agreed, adding: “We are meant to be the voice of the school to students, staff and the wider community. As well as this, we act as a line of communication between all these different groups and facilitate discussions. It’s a huge responsibility.”

The final question put to the School Captains was by far the most challenging to answer: *What is your vision for the school year?*

Each of the School Captains considered this question carefully. Rhona focused her response on communication:

“Ultimately I want to improve the levels of communication in the school, particularly between students and the rest of the school community. That has to be one of the top priorities for this year.”

Lucy agreed with this, adding: “Strengthening the line of communication is key, and focusing on establishing more of a pupil voice will really help with this.”

Aaron, too, thought pupil voice was an important factor:

“It’s vital we start developing the relationship between ourselves as School Captains and the rest of the student body, especially when it comes to pupil voice. Collaborating with our peers is the way

forward.”

Holly was eager to look at students’ wellbeing, particularly looking at mental health.

“One big thing I want to do is to ensure the school is a safe space for all. While the Academy offers lots of opportunities, it can also be a very daunting place at times and I want to make sure that every student feels that this school is somewhere safe for them.”

Jake wanted to focus his aims on collaborating with other senior students on creating more of a community feel within the school. He said:

“I want to work closely with House Captains to develop more of a community within the school which I think was lost a little during Covid. I’d love to help create a calendar of events to get everyone in the school working together.”

Finally, Rachel brought it back to the whole-school perspective:

“It’s difficult to set down just one legacy. Ultimately our aim is to be strong role models for students and to show responsibility and maturity as School Captains. Beyond that, though, I think the bigger picture involves improving the school overall and giving greater representation. Part of this is working with others, collaborating on particular aims and goals that we each share. Something I’m really passionate about ensuring is that we get involved with some of the big campaigns and events happening in the school such as the Rights Respecting Group and working alongside the Charities Committee.”

With legacy being a key word for the captains this year, it’s clear the group are determined to leave a positive mark on the school and we cannot wait to see how their hard work and determination pays off in the future.

Leading Our Houses to Glory



Madison Brooks

What made you want to be a House Captain?

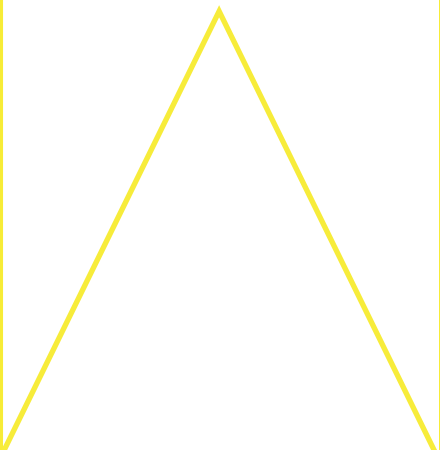
I was a House Captain last year and really enjoyed the experience. I loved being a part of something bigger and had the chance to make a difference.

What does your role involve?

I represent my house by being a positive role model and helping to organise inter-house activities.

What are your plans for the coming year?

I want to revolutionise the house points system and make sure that students have lots of opportunities to get involved.



Katie Bremner

What made you want to be a House Captain?

I wanted to make a difference in the school and be a positive role model.

What does your role involve?

House Captains meet with their respective Principal Teacher of Guidance to discuss ideas on how best to improve their house.

What are your plans for the coming year?

I want to create more of a house community feeling and bring some fun back to Crichie house!



Tia Morrison

What made you want to be a House Captain?

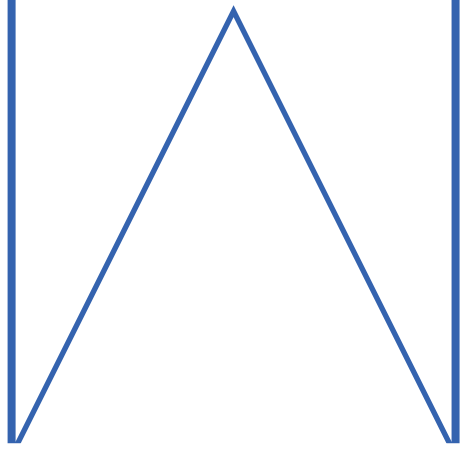
I wanted to get involved with all the year groups and be a voice for people who can't speak out for themselves.

What does your role involve?

Organising assemblies and house activities are two of the main responsibilities we oversee.

What are your plans for the coming year?

I would like to create a safe space for everyone in our house so that anyone in Crichie can come to us and voice their opinions.



Matthew James

What made you want to be a House Captain?

I wanted to have a say on what is happening in the school and speak up for people who can't.

What does your role involve?

There's lots to organise! We have to get key communication out to our house through assemblies and House Council, and we do this by working closely with the guidance team.

What are your plans for the coming year?

We're tackling assemblies head on with different themes. I also want to ensure that we emphasises the core values.



Mairi Cunningham

What made you want to be a House Captain?

I have been part of the House Council for a number of years and this was a natural next step for me.

What does your role involve?

Communicating with those in our house through assemblies is a big part of our role. We actively try to ensure that everyone in our house is heard.

What are your plans for the coming year?

We have a few plans for this year including Sports Day and House Council. Our main aim though is to focus on inclusion.

Annabel Bruce

What made you want to be a House Captain?

I wanted to take on more responsibility within the school and be someone that students can come to with any concerns.

What does your role involve?

Planning and speaking at assemblies is one of the biggest jobs we have, as well as growing our house through activities and House Council.

What are your plans for the coming year?

Increasing Harlaw pride is a big priority for me, as well as giving more opportunities for students to be heard.





Abigail Gray

What made you want to be a House Captain?

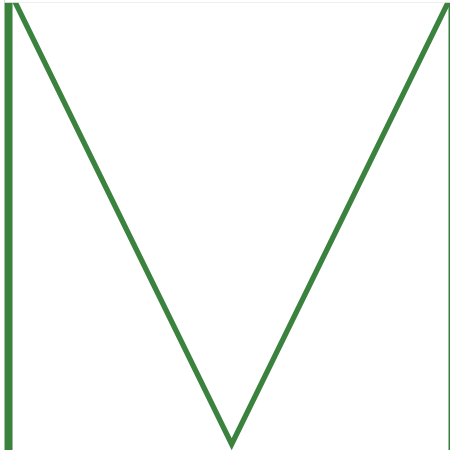
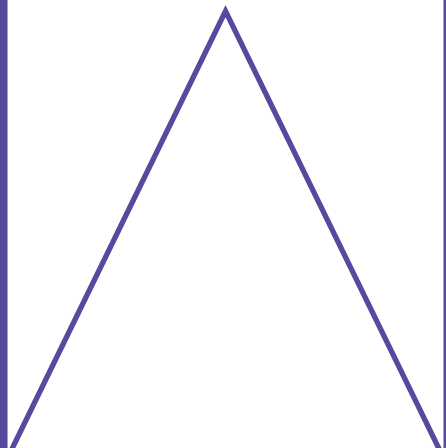
I wanted to be a role model for all the younger students and hopefully help to improve the school.

What does your role involve?

We are tasked with planning and delivering assemblies to our house group, running House Council and also running house events.

What are your plans for the coming year?

I hope to make our house more united and win lots of house points so that we can maintain our winning streak!



Sophie McPhee

What made you want to be a House Captain?

I wanted to raise house identity and spirit as well as make a difference within the school.

What does your role involve?

Working with students and staff to organise assemblies, plan activities and ensure young people's voices are heard through House Council.

What are your plans for the coming year?

We want to make people proud of the house they are in and try to gain as many house points as possible!



Miranda Wilson

What made you want to be a House Captain?

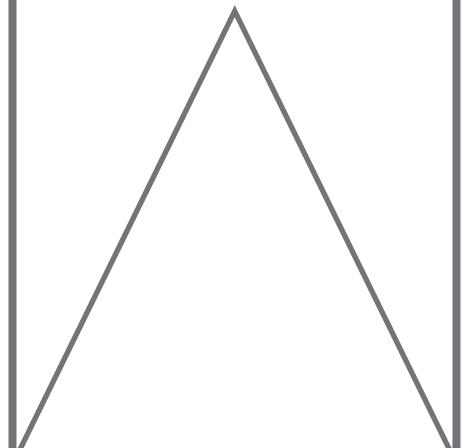
I'm an ambitious person and I wanted to take on more responsibility within the school.

What does your role involve?

Representing our house and being active leaders through assemblies, as well as bringing up house pride.

What are your plans for the coming year?

One of the main things I want to focus on is House Council as this is the best way to hear feedback from students and take action on their opinions.





Students Salty at Simpson's Salmon Jokes

By Molly Bryce

On the 23rd of September, over 20 students in addition to several teaching staff, departed on a trip to Pitlochry where they would watch the play 'A Streetcar Named Desire'. Miss Bell was in charge of organising the trip as her Higher English class were studying the text at the time. The trip was also open to students in other English classes for those who wanted to watch the renowned play and enrich themselves in the arts. Along with Miss Bell, the pupils were also accompanied by Mr Simpson, Miss Addison, Mrs Elrick, Miss Kinnarid and Suzi Sherriffs who all ensured that the students had a good time.

At 10:15 the students congregated in the bus park whilst waiting for the bus, and then later left at half past. It was around a 3 hour bus journey to Pitlochry Festival Theatre. There, students had a while to eat their lunch and stretch their legs after the lengthy bus ride. Unfortunately it was at this point that Mr Simpson started a terrible running joke involving the extremely unfunny fish... salmon. One student bluntly commented:

"Those were some of the worst jokes I've ever heard".

Subsequently at about 2 o'clock the group of students proceeded to go into the theatre itself. The building was fairly modern, containing a section selling food and drink for before the show and during the interval (many pupils indulged themselves by purchasing ice cream there at the halfway point of the play). The theatre room itself was quite lavish and had room to seat a large number of people. However the seats themselves were quite cramped with little legroom.

Despite this slight concern, once the play had started all was forgotten. The set on the stage was very impressive; detailing from plants, stairs, and a small fridge all contributing to a positive sense for what was to come. Additionally the stage would spin when signalling that a new scene was to begin, likely as a result of the play being divided by scenes instead of acts, proving its unique qualities in comparison to regular plays.

'A Streetcar Named Desire' was overall well-acted, well-presented and contained a harrowing and dark story with important themes running throughout such as that

of mental instability, fantasy/illusion, desire and loneliness. This was emphasised by the use of music, for example whenever a key scene would occur in the first half, polka and blues could be heard. As the play went on the music would become more frantic and louder and more frequent as the character's mental state would dwindle. Remarkably most pupils had pointed this out and were fascinated all the while being impacted by the serious themes it included. When questioned, one pupil said that "It really sat with me, I thought that the themes and music were extremely impactful".

It was around 5 o'clock when the play had concluded, a group photo was then taken to commemorate the day and back on the bus they went. It was agreed as a part of the selling point of the excursion that students could buy a McDonalds for dinner on the way back home. Forfar (about the halfway point of the journey) was where the group eventually stopped and finally feasted on fast food. After a one and a half hour trek back home, the students had further time to reflect on the experience, ready to apply their knowledge to their studies later.

Interview with: Katie Gibbs



Katie attended the prestigious institution for the majority of the summer holidays this year.

By Gemma Davidson

For most of the summer holidays, S6 student Katie Gibbs had an exciting opportunity to attend Harvard University in Boston. Beginning on the 18th of June until the 6th of August, Katie attended alongside three other young people.

How did the opportunity of going to Harvard come about?

My guidance teacher was the one who told me about the opportunity and I applied. It is a program for care experienced children, run through a company called Who Cares.

When did you find out that you were getting to go? How did you

feel?

I found out I was going in February. I got a phone call out of the blue and I was so happy that I started crying!

Did you have to do anything in advance to prepare?

There was a lot to do and organise like visas (including a trip to Belfast to collect them), documentation, and the dreaded jabs.

Tell me about the journey there?

We got a plane from Glasgow to London Heathrow, then from Heathrow to Boston. We stayed in the accommodation at Harvard where I shared a room with 3 other people. We had bunk beds in our room!

What is the first thing you remember doing at Harvard?

We got there quite late and I remember that no one was around. We were lost so we phoned Harvard Police for help! Once we got settled in, I then met up with other people and we went to Pinocchio's Pizza Place which was delicious.

What were some of the activities you did while you were there?

I studied a lot. In my free time though I went to see an orchestra as well as going to the Arnold Arboretum botanical research institution and park with friends.

What was your favourite thing to do?

I absolutely loved my performing musical theatre class, and hanging out with friends.

What did you learn?

In terms of my studies, I was focused mainly on Spanish and Musical Theatre. If I think about what I learnt about myself though, I would say I found out I am more independent than I thought.

What are you planning on doing when you leave school?

I would like to get a music degree and then do musical therapy or music teaching.

Would you go back to study at Harvard?

In my eyes, the experience was a once in a lifetime experience.

Where else would you like to study?

I would like to study either at Edinburgh, Glasgow, or the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.



A selection of costumes including Spiderman, Obi-wan Kenobi and Natsu (Fairytale).

Fandom's Ultimate Meet-Up

By Tylar Gillies

I-con (short for 'Inverurie Convention') took place this year on the 9th of September from 10am-3:30pm in the Inverurie Community Campus. I-con is an annual event towards the end of the year, and is used as an opportunity for people to cosplay and engage with people who have similar interests to them.

I-con is a huge success every year, and this year was no different. With a multitude of stalls ranging from candles to badges,

stickers to art pieces, there was something for everyone. The amount of people taking part in the event was astronomical, whether they were running stalls, cosplaying, or just wanted to see what the hype was all about. Despite I-con being a cosplay convention, attendees are not required to cosplay. However, everyone who was in cosplay clearly put a lot of time and effort into their costumes.

I had the pleasure of speaking with one of the stallholders about their experiences with I-con. Their

products were specifically focused on the MCYT (Minecraft YouTube) fandom, including SMPS (Survival Multiplayer Servers) such as Hermitcraft and the Life Series. Speaking about what they enjoyed most about the convention, they said:

"I went to I-con years ago as a cosplayer, and I wanted to see what it was like behind the table. Getting to chat about shared interests is a real bonus." Another stallholder added:

"I-con represents community to me, and just an overall family-feel".

Those working behind the stalls were only one part of the I-con event, with those cosplaying also contributing hugely to its success. One of those was an Inverurie Academy student, LJ. When asked about their favourite thing about attending I-con, they responded:

"I love all the different cosplayers and the cool costumes. I-con is life!"

Many of them enjoy the freedom I-con and similar conventions give them; the freedom to be who you are, without worry and not to have to hide. LJ confirmed this particular idea by saying:

"I-con to me means being who you are".

To many people, I-con is something to prepare for all year, whether they are making their costumes, making their items to sell, or just wanting to save up money to spend on the mass amounts of stalls. I-con is particularly known for their catering towards fandoms from many different media. One of the stalls focused on TV shows and movies such as Criminal Minds, Good Omens, Twilight, and Supernatural, just to name a few. They sold a variety of items for each fandom: badges, pins, stickers, and even handmade candles. Many stalls

were like this, selling a multitude of handmade items from various pieces of media. There truly was something for everyone.

I-con 2023, like every year, was a huge success. Many people attending, cosplayers and stallholders alike, have said that this year's event was the best one yet, due to the organisers taking feedback from previous years to improve.

Miss Addison, one of the organisers for the event said:

"I-con is always a widely anticipated event, however this year really has been the biggest and best yet. The amount of people involved and contributing to the convention was fantastic and I can't wait to see how we can expand for next year!"

There is no doubt that, if this year is anything to go by, 2024 is bound to be just as good if not even better.



One of the cosplayers as Keqing from Genshin Impact.



Dress Down for Charity

By Liam Sharp

Inverurie Academy's Charities Committee are at it again, helping to raise money and awareness for local and national charities.

The Charities Committee is made up of pupils varying from S4-S6 and a mix of different teachers, with their aim being to help and organise different school fundraising events which help the school or chosen charities.

Last term, Inverurie Academy's Charities Committee raised an astonishing £579.03 for the Archie Child Bereavement Service, previously known as the Grampian Child Bereavement Network. ACBS works to help children, young people and families through the early stages of grief and losing a loved one. They have many fantastic services that they provide from their activity days all the way to their grief book service.

This charity was chosen after the S3 (now S4) World Studies classes made presentations on their chosen charities and showed how the money raised from the Dress Down

day could help to make a difference to their chosen charity. There

were 1-2 groups of pupils chosen from each class to go on and present their presentation in front of Mr Hendry and the judging panel, battling it out to say why their charity should be chosen.

Once ACBS was chosen as the winning charity, the Charities Committee got in contact with them to see if they would manage to come down to the school for a cheque handover. Anne Bone MBE came to the school on Wednesday the 13th of September on behalf of the Archie Child Bereavement Service to collect the cheque.

Miss Irvine and Miss Cully explained that the World Studies course is a fantastic way to see how passionate the pupils are towards their chosen charity. Miss Irvine said that she was "extremely proud" to watch all the presentations and to see the skills that the young people developed over the course, such as teamwork, problem solving and communication. All of these skills link back into our 4 core values at Inverurie Academy: Ambition, Inclusion, Integrity and Respect.

Miss Irvine and Miss Cully hope that this is a unit that they continue on for a very long time.

New Teachers on the Block



Left-Right: Mrs Moran, Mr Warrender and Mrs Meagher.

I'm Mrs Moran and I'm a Chemistry teacher.

How long have you been a teacher for?

1 year, this is my first year being fully qualified

Why did you decide to join Inverurie Academy?

I went to Inverurie Academy as a pupil (a very long time ago!) and I loved the idea of coming back here to teach.

What is your favourite part about the school so far and why?

Everyone has been so welcoming (staff and pupils), I feel very settled here already

What are you most looking forward to teaching/being apart of at this school and why?

I'm looking forward to teaching science to our new S1s, it's great to see their reactions to experiments and how excited they get about science.

I'm Mr Warrender and I'm an English teacher.

How long have you been a teacher for?

I have been a teacher for sixteen years (which is quite impressive as I'm only 28 years old).

Why did you decide to join Inverurie Academy?

I had taught at my last school for almost my entire career. It was time for a change and I had heard good things about Inverurie Academy.

What is your favourite part about the school so far and why?

Working with pupils is always the best part of the job. I've met some very impressive pupils so far.

What are you most looking forward to teaching/being apart of at this school and why?

For just now, I'm just looking forward to settling in and getting to know my classes.

I'm Mrs Meagher and I teach P.E.

How long have you been a teacher for?

I have been teaching for 20 years.

Why did you decide to join Inverurie Academy?

I had been working at Mackie Academy in Stonehaven up until 2021. I took a 2 year career break and moved to Australia with my family. On my return I was offered a job at Inverurie Academy which I accepted.

What is your favourite part about the school so far and why?

My favourite part of the school so far is the other staff in the P.E. Department. They're a great bunch and helping me find my feet.

What are you most looking forward to teaching/being apart of at this school and why?

I'm looking forward to getting to know more the of pupils and staff.

I'm Mr Challab and I am a Maths Teacher.

How long have you been a teacher for?

I have been working for 6 years.

Why did you decide to join Inverurie Academy?

I like Inverurie as a town in general and always wanted to be part of the academy school.

What is your favourite part about the school so far and why?

The favourite part is the building brand new with plenty of glass walls letting the sun in making it bright and sends positive vibes.

What are you most looking forward to teaching/being apart of at this school and why?

Inverurie academy has a mixture of most of the cultures from so many nationalities make the place very interesting and never dull.

I'm Mrs Paterson and I teach Design and Technology.

How long have you been a teacher for?

This is my 28th year – time for a new challenge!

Why did you decide to join Inverurie Academy?

I have family connections here as I grew up in Inverurie.

What is your favourite part about the school so far and why?

The pupils and staff have been so welcoming and helpful looking after me as I find my way around

What are you most looking forward to teaching/being apart of at this school and why?

Working with young people and the community. I'm loving hearing the strong North East accents!



I'm Mrs Batsford and I teach Art and Design.

How long have you been a teacher for?

I have been a teacher for 5 years.

Why did you decide to join Inverurie Academy?

Inverurie is such a friendly and positive place. Inverurie feels like a proactive place where the community support one another and look towards the future.

What is your favourite part about the school so far and why?

It would have to be how kind and polite the students and staff are.

What are you most looking forward to teaching/being apart of at this school and why?

Everything!

My name is Mrs Anderson and I work in Additional Support for Learning department.

How long have you been a teacher for?

I have been teaching for 21 years. Prior to starting here, I taught Drama and Media. I also worked in Guidance for a year to cover for a colleague who was away.

Why did you decide to join Inverurie Academy?

I had been looking to move to additional support for learning and when the job was advertised it was a great opportunity to move to the department. I also live close by so knew the area and the school and thought it would be a great opportunity.

What is your favourite part about the school so far and why?

My favourite part so far is how welcoming staff and pupils are when I introduce myself to work with them.

What are you most looking forward to teaching/being apart of at this school and why?

I am looking forward to getting to know more pupils and staff to support learning. I also look forward to being involved in the various activities and events which are on the calendar to happen throughout the year. I am also looking forward to not getting lost! I think I know my way round parts of the building now but still find new parts of the building as I move round.



All smiles for the S3 group on their unforgettable expedition.

Wild Adventures

*By Ailsa McLeman and
Zoe Reynolds*

From the 18th September, a select group of S3 pupils went to Loch Eil, just outside of Fort William for an entire week on an Outward Bound adventure.

A charity organisation that encourages students to go wild with their learning, the group of 12 students were joined by Ms Smith and Ms Stephen.

Before the trip took place, assemblies were held in May of this year to encourage students to apply. It was a difficult selection process as the students needed to go through an interview with three teachers who asked students to describe a time where they had to overcome a particular challenge.

This question was designed to find out more about the students and to see how they coped with

difficult circumstances, testing their resolve and resilience.

There were four other schools also attending the trip meaning that the expedition was a fantastic collaborative experience.

Olivia Reynolds, one of the S3 students on the trip, went into further detail about her experiences:

“We got to do so many different activities: ziplining, rock climbing, gorge walking, camping and there were lots of team building activities. The zipline was probably one of the best activities we got to do because the line went over the gorge. It was very dramatic!”

Speaking about the trip as a whole, Ms Smith said:

“Running the leadership group with the group of S3 pupils was an absolute joy and I am super proud of everything that they achieved during the week. They endured some pretty extreme weather and conditions and overcame lots of

personal challenges. I can’t wait to see what they do in the future!”

When asked what her favourite part of the expedition was, Ms Smith replied: “The gorge walk was probably my favourite, as well as seeing the pupils become more confident in themselves.”

Ms Stephen added: “It was an honour to attend the Outward-Bound Leadership Trip. It was a great opportunity to see pupils push themselves out of their comfort zone and achieve as a team. The weather added to the challenge, but the pupils (and staff) pushed through. My favourite part as a teacher was watching the pupils enjoy the zipline so much, but as an individual I loved the jog and dip!”



Interview with: Isla Grant (MSYP)

*By Fiona McQuillan Duncan and
Cara McNeil*

The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) is an association that allows the young minds of Scotland to use their voice and create an impact in Scotland's political sphere. MSYPs are made up of young people from all over Scotland's constituencies, who were elected by their peers and young people around them. MSYPs are elected every two years, the next election being November of 2023, and around 160 of those aged 14-25 to have applied will be accepted into the role. Such an important, impactful experience is an incredible opportunity for young people to partake in. Isla Grant has been Inverurie's local MSYP since she was elected

in 2021. We had the pleasure of interviewing her and discovering more about the inner-workings and responsibilities accompanying the MSYP role.

All MSYPs are extremely dedicated to their field of work, and have been greatly inspired by role models, both personal to them, as well as those with a more widely known presence. When interviewed about the inspiration behind her decision to become an MSYP, Isla responded:

“There was a senior pupil who did it before me who was also in the Rights Respecting Group who inspired me to do it. I also wanted to make a change in the community, making the changes that I wanted to see and have a voice and a way to be able to do that.”

As an MSYP, Isla undertakes

many responsibilities and involves herself in multiple groups that aid the community as well as the people of Scotland politically. Isla herself described these roles saying:

“I'm a member of Inverurie Community Council which meets once a month. I go to Aberdeenshire Council's Education and Children's Services Committee and talk about education in Aberdeenshire and what young people want to see. I go to national sittings twice a year and I consult young people on issues that are being brought up in the sittings. I also attend lots of focus groups and workshops that are consulting about current issues and representing the voice of the people.”

MSYPs have many opportunities to visit other places around Scotland and the UK for different committees and sittings, allowing them to make many connections and have a voice in lots of different topics that impact the nation. During her time as an MSYP, Isla has visited a great many exciting places: “Most recently, I was in London for two weekends in a row at the UK Parliament as part of a committee investigating the cost of living crisis and its impacts on health. I've been to Orkney for one of our sittings this summer, as well as going to Cumbernauld for different sittings, and I've been to Edinburgh and Glasgow quite a lot too.”

Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament are elected by the young people of Scotland and this lets them have a say in their politics and who represents them and takes their voice into national interest. Isla Grant has been our local MSYP for around two years and she explained the process leading up to her winning the election and how she successfully campaigned and gained the neces-

sary votes and support to win her election.

“You had to sign up in March of the year the elections were running, then write yourself a candidate profile and then the elections run in November. To get people to vote for me, I went around with a laptop in the auditorium and encouraged people to get involved and vote, even if they weren’t voting for me. I had posters of myself in the school, I put the elections in the bulletin, and I posted on Instagram and Twitter to make people aware about the elections but also about me running for the elections.”

Being an MSYP gives the opportunity for lots of skills like communication, problem solving and leadership to be further explored and improved, helping to shape the next generation of leaders in our communities. Isla explained how much she has gained from her experience by saying: “I’m a much better team worker, I’ve worked with people the same age as me; younger, older politicians, staff members as well.

I’m a lot better at communicating with other people in groups and just one on one and I’m also a lot better at graphic design. Now I design quite a lot of graphics for social media.”

The ability to be in a position to create such an immense level of change as Isla’s is rare. As an MSYP, a key responsibility of Isla’s is having strong goals for the future of our government and using her influence to achieve these to the best of her ability. When asked about the ideas, changes and aims she has for her future in the Scottish Youth Parliament, Isla explained: “I want to see more young people involved in local decision making like in the Community Council and in Aberdeenshire Council, so whether that’s having a dedicated space for a young person on a committee or just coming into schools and running focus groups and talking to them. I want the Council and even the Scottish Parliament to do more to really work with young people rather than just saying that they’re working with young people. We

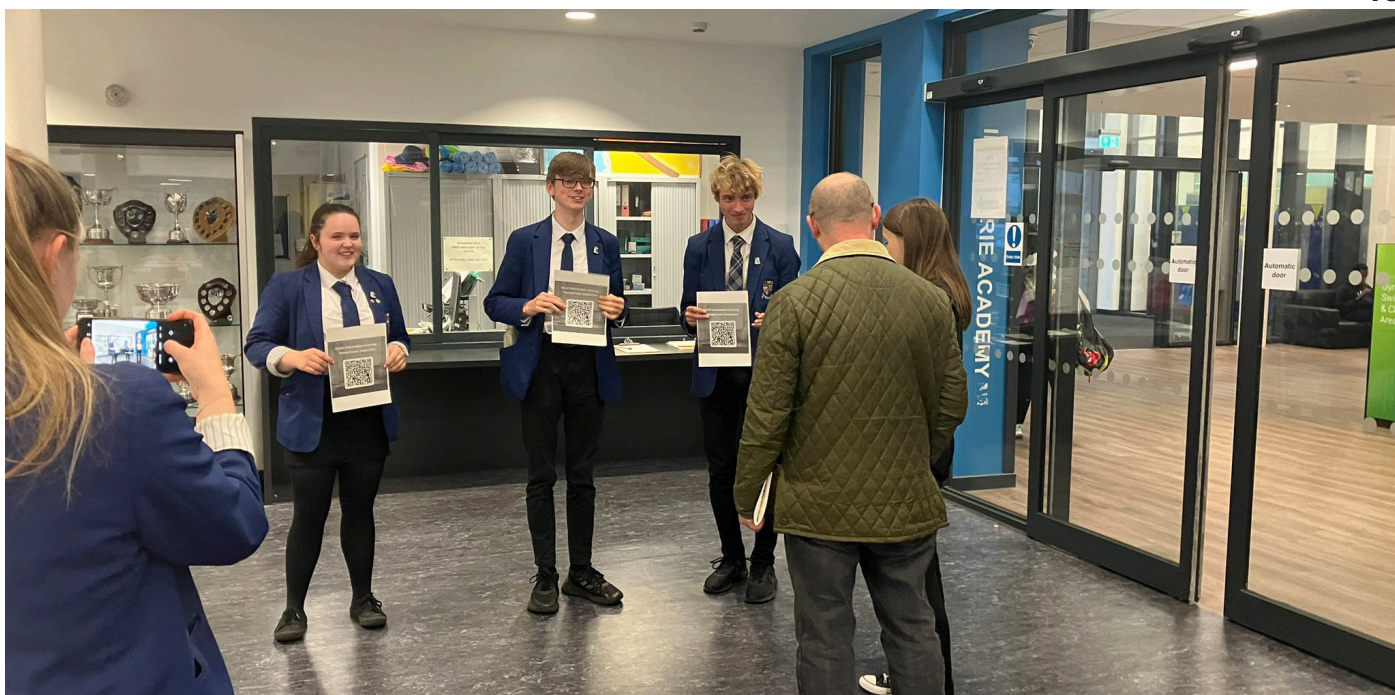
need to *see* that they are.”

MSYPs travel to many different places and work with lots of other people to help further the Scottish Youth Parliament’s agendas and purposes. Consequently, this involves MSYPs having a wide range of connections nation-wide who they have to communicate regularly with. After being part of the Scottish Youth Parliament for multiple years, Isla has built up her connections: “I’m well connected with lots of different councillors and especially on social media. Lots of politicians and decision makers are on social media now and it makes influencing change much easier.”

Having the opportunity to speak to Aberdeenshire’s MSYP, Isla Grant, and learn more about the role she undertakes in such an important and influential aspect of the way our country is run, was an incredible experience and we graciously thank her for the time she took out of her obviously over-filled schedule to partake in our interview.



As part of her political work, Isla recently attended the British Youth Council’s Youth Select Committee to gather evidence about the impact of the cost of living crisis on young peoples health and well-being.



The prefect team was on hand to ensure everyone gave feedback on the event before they left.

Looking to the Future

By Molly Bryce and Yasmeeen Zarouali

On the 19th of September Inverurie Academy hosted the Senior Phase Post-School Destinations Information Evening where all S4-6 students and their parents and guardians were invited to come along. It allowed seniors to try and help gain an idea for what they wanted to do in the future, and how they were going to get there. The school hosted speakers coming from universities, colleges and apprenticeship organisations from all over Scotland where they presented what they do and what advice they can offer to students and their families. Some of the talks available were: the University of Aberdeen, St Andrews University, Robert Gordons University, a former Inverurie Academy student (now doing a medical degree in UOA), Glasgow Caledonian University, Student Award Agency Scotland (SAAS), Aberdeen Foundation Apprenticeships (AFA) and

North East of Scotland College (NESCOL). Due to the large variety offered it was hard for many students to narrow it down to only 5 that they could attend (as it was down to the timing and it couldn't all be fit into one evening if every student were to attend every talk) however for the talks that students could attend were found to be well received and inspiring.

At around 5pm attendees flooded into the school building, those anticipating the event were then ushered into the Auditorium by the Prefect volunteers. First the Guidance team spoke, introducing themselves to parents and guardians and also giving a debrief on the evening to come, the names of the speakers and the rooms they would be in were displayed above so students would have an idea of where to go for the talks they had booked. Each session would last 15 minutes respectively, so that students could gain a full understanding of the topic the speaker was talking about. At first the layout of the evening was some-

what confusing, as it was difficult to grasp where to go and when, however students quickly found their way with one student commenting: "It was a great evening and it was helpful to go if you had specific places you wanted to learn more about such as a specific university".

One of the most popular talks booked was University of Aberdeen. When the students and parents walked into the classroom, they had prospectuses for students to grab and look through. Niamh, who was hosting the talk for the University of Aberdeen and currently studies at UOA detailed many things about the university, stating that the University had around 14,000 students which apparently classed as a medium sized school (she didn't think so). On top of this, the University of Aberdeen is currently the 2nd top university in Scotland, ahead of schools like Glasgow and Edinburgh. Niamh said that this was a huge ego boost for the university and hopes many people

will consider Aberdeen. To brag some more about the University, Aberdeen is No.1 in the UK for medicine, 4th in Archeology and Physics and then 8th in Politics. These figures were astounding for those in attendance since the University of Aberdeen is so close by. The University of Aberdeen offers so many undergraduate courses and can give you the flexibility of a joint degree. Of course, while studying at University of Aberdeen, they offer a wide range of clubs and societies, there are 180 societies and 50 sports clubs which have access to the state of the art Sports Village and Aquatic Center and 50% off discounts! Niamh also mentioned a Taylor Swift Society and Quidditch Club, which is very inclusive to all the students. Overall it was great to have an insight into Inverurie's local university and to gain further understanding about the process.

Another university that was on show was Robert Gordons University or RGU. It was another popular talk from a top university that many students from Inverurie Academy have attended, therefore creating a close relationship between the Academy and university. Inverurie Academy even has it's own RGU representative - Lousie Duruham - who comes in every second Wednesday to support students. RGU is fantastic in the respect of aiding disadvantaged students who come from difficult circumstances, therefore giving everyone equal opportunities so they can receive a good education. This is called the Apply Access Program, which the spokesperson went into great detail about. Another prominent scheme that they offer is the Access To course, available to all S5s and S6s. The program offers 12 different courses in subjects such as Law/Law Management, Communication

and Media, Engineering, Nursing and Midwifery and so much more. It lasts approximately 5 weeks and is completely free of charge, therefore meaning that anyone can go (again showing that RGU is all about equal opportunities). It allows pupils to discover what they want to pursue for their future careers, and can be an excellent addition to a personal statement when applying to University. One student commented: "What I liked about RGU was that they offered a 5 week course that allows us to dive deeper into the subject that we are interested in".

St Andrews, the number one University in the UK, was a late addition to the Post-School Destinations Information Evening but a welcome one. Morgan White, the Education Liaison Officer for the university detailed everything to know about what St Andrews has to offer. Pupils were also given prospectus to further their knowledge about the school such as the specifications for each course and the multiple societies and traditions going on there. The most obscure of the societies being the Wine and Cheese Club in addition to a Tunnocks Teacake Appreciation Society which really shows that there is something for everyone! Morgan also spoke quite a bit about the way in which St Andrews structures their courses (many Universities also do this) where students can take other classes along with their degree. For example, students can take history classes along with a law degree which is known as a Flexible Degree - again presenting alternative options for students wanting to take the university pathway. Additionally, likewise to many prestigious universities, pupils were told that (depending on the degree chosen) they would have the opportunity to go abroad

as a part of their course so that they could have a chance to explore the world all the while learning and gaining valuable knowledge for future careers, which was quite an apparent theme of many of the talks, presenting students with different choices so that they can choose the pathways they want to pursue.

Inverurie Academy was delighted to have one of their very own former students come to present his experience in University so far. Jamie Simond was a pupil at Inverurie Academy and is now studying medicine at the University of Aberdeen. He gave us a great insight into what medical school is like and how it's taught at UOA. Jamie gave advice to first time university students, for example, he much preferred staying at student accommodation in Aberdeen instead of staying in Inverurie because it is handier for him to go to the library late at night. As well as night outs of course! Jamie mentioned that the first lecture is always terrifying and classes are a lot different to the Academy. University is a lot of independent learning which is hard work and you can easily fall behind. He also mentioned it's best to get the teachers to personally know you which will help when you need references or to update your personal statement. Jamie also mentioned how classes work and how the classes are taught, which is mostly seminars and tutorials. Most of all though, the best thing that he found about university is making friends. He said that since he was in university accommodation, he made friends from all courses with a variety of personalities that weren't only medical school students. Having Jamie come in was great as he was local to the school therefore relating to us students at the Academy, he

had a great personality and brilliant advice.

The Glasgow Caledonian University also came to talk to us and offered prospectuses as well when we entered the classroom. Niall Seenan explained that GCU is the leading modern university in Scotland and ranked 50th out of 131 UK Universities by the Sunday Times modern leading Universities. The campus is an all-in-one campus saving you from going from building to building in the typical Glasgow weather (rain, wind and some more rain). There is Glasgow Caledonian University's very own Starbucks on the Campus and free breakfast options. The university offers many different types of courses such as they have The School of Business, The School of Computing, Engineering and Build Environment and The School of Health and Life Sciences etc. Niall mentioned that the Engineering courses work closely with Rockstar Games who created GTA and Red Dead Redemption and other popular titles. GCU also have their very own TV studio and Podcast Studio and work closely with STV and the BBC. These opportunities are great for those wanting to pursue Journalism and Media. The University also offers for those in medical school, to work alongside the NHS and get hands-on teaching with the equipment and life sized dolls. GCU really prides itself on teaching students in a very practical way so they are ready for the world of work. In my opinion, this was one of my favorite talks that evening since the spokesperson, Niall, was very funny and charming throughout the talk, he was very engaging and was the right person for this presentation.

Also at the evening was NESCOL and Aberdeenshire Foundation Apprenticeships. Having the

Apprenticeship organization come to the evening was really helpful for those wanting to take a different path after secondary school. It was really informative and gave options of different types of foundation apprenticeships. NESCOL was there to remind students that university is not the only option for after secondary school and that college can be a fantastic alternative depending on what you want to do.

Daniela Smoke was the spokesperson for NESCOL and she explained all the opportunities you can take at the college. One option is doing a "2 and 2" which is 2 years at college and 2 years at university. This was extremely helpful for those students who felt they were not quite ready to go to university. The college helps you build the foundation of knowledge to go onto higher education or a career.

The Senior Phase Post-School Destinations Information Evening was a definite success in showing students what pathways they can pursue through providing them a variety of options. Whether pupils choose to go to university, college or an apprenticeship, it is completely up to them. The evening managed to open their eyes to this, reminding students that the future is coming and it is up to them to make the choice in what they want to do with their lives.

The S1 Experience

By Lily Paterson and Rowhyn McKnight

The start to a new term at Inverurie Academy means new pupils, new House and School Captains and new teachers. This can be a very big change for everyone but especially the S1s who are coming to a completely new school.

There was a definite mixture of excitement, nerves and worry however all the S1s agreed that the support they received from the school, especially their buddies, was outstanding.

When discussing their experience so far, the S1s we interviewed said that their biggest fear was finding their way around the building, however there was plenty to look forward to as well.

"I was really excited about all the different classes that we got to learn about," explained Erin from Davah.

Luckily these nerves have since disappeared and the S1 year group have really settled into the school community. Many of the S1s have already signed up to clubs and activities because it's a great way to make new friends.

"I joined all of the library clubs because I really enjoy the library and anything to do with reading. Plus I get to annoy my sister!" Jessika from Thainstone said.

Callum from Selbie added: "I've joined the Coding and Lego clubs because these were already my hobbies and I knew I would enjoy them."

With the first term completed, the S1s are now super excited for the year to progress and everyone really seems to be loving all the hard work the teachers are doing to help us learn!



Peterhead Prison

By Annabel Bruce

On the 11th of October a group of students from Higher RMPS went on a school trip to Peterhead Prison Museum in Aberdeenshire.

The group of students met at 8:50 to begin their voyage. The journey included collecting staff and students from Meldrum Academy who were joining the trip.

Arriving at Peterhead Prison Museum, the group were met by their tour guide who explained what would be on the tour as well as describing the differences between the old and modern prison.

The tour itself was approximately two hours long and involved the tour guide, Alex Geddes, showed the group round several of the rooms inside the prison. One room in particular, called 'The Murder Room', was especially terrifying because there was blood spattering across the furniture and up the wall. Mr Geddes described some of the horrific incidents within the prison as the tour was progressing which was both engaged and petrifying.

Mr Geddes, who was a former prison guard at Peterhead Prison, continued the tour by showing the Laundry Room which is supposedly haunted. Students reported feeling a chill as soon as they entered the room which Mr Geddes confirmed most people felt.

The students also had the opportunity learn more about specific prisoners who were not named. Mr Geddes went into great detail about the crimes they committed and their experiences within the prison.

Finally, the students got to see some of the prisoners' artwork which was quite impressive. Furthermore, the group managed to spot a few of the short stories that had been written by primary school students. Many of the names of these primary students were very recognisable as they are currently still at Inverurie Academy!

The tour as a whole was very scary, the most terrifying part was definitely the mannequins. One student even screamed at seeing them as these mannequins were lurking in the shadows and in lots of different rooms.

Miss Cully said about the experience: "One of the reasons I wanted to do this trip as I have done the trip before with other Higher classes and it was very successful. It's an important trip as we focus on the differences between reformation and retribution which is part of the Justice section of the RMPS course."

Mr Geddes spoke openly about the ideas around rehabilitation, stating: "It is a cultural issue. I understand the principles behind rehabilitation and it has worked with other countries however I don't think it works for Scotland." He added: "I think prisons look too much like a college environment and yet it's not having a good influence on prisoners. Something needs to change."



Too Hot to Handle



Three students from Inverurie Academy were amongst those attending the gathering this year.

By Liam Sharp

This year several pupils from Inverurie Academy took part in the 25th World Scout Jamboree, which was hosted in Seoul, South Korea. They spent around 3 weeks of their summer holidays taking part in various daring activities and meeting new scouts from all across the world.

The World Scout Jamboree is an International camp for young people aged between 14 and 17 and for the best of the best in scouting. This camp only happens every four years and it is a very tough selection process to be able to get in. This year there were over 40,000 scouts from around the globe who took part in WSJ 23 South Korea, with 90 units attending from right here in the UK.

There were 36 young people from the North East and Highlands and Islands of Scotland who attended the Jamboree, three of

those young people were from Inverurie Academy. All 36 young people flew out on the 26th of July 2023 from Aberdeen International Airport to Incheon International Airport, South Korea. Before they were able to fly out they had to take part in several training activities from team working to camping expeditions, learning #skillsforlife that would be used when they arrived in South Korea.

Once the scouts had arrived in Korea they got to take part in lots of adventurous and daring activities, from sightseeing and checking out South Korean monuments to camping on site with all of the other scouting groups. They also met a lot of scouts who were from Seoul in South Korea, which they thoroughly enjoyed.

Sadly, due to the heat wave that hit South Korea, all of the UK scouting units were evacuated from the campsite and moved into nice and cool hotels to continue

their WSJ experience, however this hiccup did not stop the scouts from having a whale of a time. They were being offered lots and lots of gifts from the Koreans as they wanted to make sure they were okay. Rhona Fraser, School Captain and one of the attendees, explained: "All the Koreans are being really kind to us!"

The North East and Highlands and Islands of Scotland group finished their magnificent adventure in Korea and flew safely back to the UK on the 14th of August 2023, having had a wonderful (but very warm) time.

The attendees all said to me that they wanted to go to the World Scout Jamboree 2023 so that they could "make new friends from all over the world, explore and travel the world, especially parts you wouldn't normally see, and put our scouting knowledge to the test!"

Speaking about their experiences once they were safely back in the UK, Natasha Hoare explained:

"It was a great experience and I loved meeting new people. I loved how kind all the Koreans were when we were being evacuated."

Overall, the scouts I spoke to said they had an amazing time even through the evacuation process, and they thoroughly recommended getting involved if you were thinking about it as it is a once in a lifetime opportunity that you will get to experience.

And don't think you're too old to get involved! If you are over 18 you can go to the 26th World Scout Jamboree as staff.

"Get involved because we don't just dream. We act."



The annual Groupfest event took place at Inverurie Town Hall.

Bringing the Community Together

By Oliver Greig and Liam Sharp

Group Fest has been running for several years now and is a project ran by Mike Heberton's team at the Inverurie Community Council (ICC). The event aims to invite as many non-profit groups that do good work within the Inverurie community as they possibly can.

This year the ICC managed to fill the Town Hall easily with all these good, hard working groups because there is so much positive work happening within Inverurie. But with the high demand to be involved with Group Fest, the ICC have to mix things up every year so that everybody can have their fair chance to run a stall. They do this by some years having youth groups to other years when they have some of the sports groups; they try to have a good variety of groups attend the event each year.

The idea of Group Fest is to bring all the groups and charities that run within the Inverurie community together for networking, so that they can learn from each other, share best practice and to

build a network that they can rely on for support and guidance in future. The other reason group fest is run, is to raise awareness of all the different groups charities that run within our community, by bringing the public along to the event, it gives them a captive audience that are actually interested in what they have to offer.

This year the event was on the 9th of September from 10am until 3:30pm. The event was organised by Mike Heberton, Chair of the ICC; Heather Watt, ICC secretary; and Colin Wood, Vice Chair of the ICC. This core team were responsible for inviting all the individual groups and coordinated the arrangements for the day.

Every year this event is ran in the Inverurie Town Hall and this year the event was ran in conjunction with Inverurie Farmers Market, which is held in the square immediately outside of the Town Hall so that people attending the Farmers Market could attend Group Fest as well.

This year's catering for Group Fest was done by Cafe Loco, which is the inhouse cafe at the Garioch

Heritage Center.

Speaking about the event, Colin Wood said:

“The Community Council is for the people of Inverurie to be heard. It is really important that people in the community are acknowledged and listened to as they know best what the town and community needs.”

An Academy Star exclusive:

We were lucky enough to speak to Colin Wood from Inverurie Community Council, and he told us some unreleased news about Group Fest 2024 after the success of Group Fest 2023.

They have already started planning Group Fest 2024 which will be held later on in the year to give groups and charities a little extra time to prepare. 2024s Group Fest will be held two months later on Saturday the 9th of November 2024, 10am until 3:30pm in Inverurie Town Hall.

Make sure to come along to find out all the amazing things which the Inverurie community groups are doing.



Royal Revelry at the Academy

By *Oliver Greig*

Inverurie Academy recently welcomed the Duke of Edinburgh to its community campus on the 6th of October.

Prince Edward was visiting Inverurie to meet with various voluntary groups including the Garioch Amateur Swimming Club (famously attended by Olympian Hannah Miley), Evolving Inverurie, and Cycling Without Age.

The Duke was piped in by S6 pupil Olivia Craig before being welcomed by senior members of the Inveurire community including Aberdeenshire Provost Cllr Judy Whyte, Aberdeenshire Council Leader Cllr Gillian Owen, Aberdeenshire Deputy Leader and Chair of Communities Committee Cllr Anne Stirling and Aberdeenshire Council Chief Executive Jim Savege.

Speaking about the experience, Olivia Craig explained:

“I was a bit terrified at first because I wanted to ensure that

I was playing well, especially as I was representing the school to the Duke of Edinburgh. However when I actually started playing the nerves went away and it went really well. I got the opportunity to speak to him afterwards and he said he was very impressed with how I played.”

There was further musical entertainment courtesy of the talented Celtacad group who performed several Scottish pieces in the main auditorium.

The Duke was then given a tour of the campus to explore its fantastic facilities, particularly the bouldering wall and hydrotherapy pool. During his tour he met with members of Inverurie Guides and Scouts, alongside Kuk Sool Won of Inverurie – which is a family-run martial arts club. Time was also spent with Garioch Rugby Club and the Hairy Bikers girls cycling club from Kellands School.

Lunch was provided in the dining area of Inverurie Academy where community partners, staff

and pupils were able to interact with His Royal Highness.

Dr Drysdale, Deputy Headteacher, was fortunate enough to attend the gathering and said:

“It was an honour and a privilege to meet HRH The Duke of Edinburgh at Inverurie Community Campus on Saturday, to showcase all our young people representing the school, whether as students or members of community groups.”

When asked about the experience of sitting down to eat with The Duke of Edinburgh, Dr Drysdale explained:

“It was not widely advertised as the event was not published in the Royal Diary until the day before he attended so it felt like a lovely, intimate, community affair. Not many schools can say they have catered to royalty! Many thanks to our school catering and janitorial staff for all their hard work.”

Goodbye Mr Littler!



Saying goodbye is always difficult, however the news that Mr Littler, Principal Teacher of Guidance for Barra, was going to be retiring at the beginning of the October holidays was particularly heart-breaking.

Having been PTG for almost 9 years, starting at Inverurie Academy back in 2015, Mr Littler has consistently shown himself to be a kind and compassionate teacher and mentor to both students and staff.

His tireless work in support of Barra pupils is proof of his dedication as a Guidance teacher, not to mention all the work he has done in support of the wider school community.

Of course we, as a school, are delighted that he is getting to enjoy a little rest and relaxation, however we couldn't allow him to leave without a proper goodbye from the Academy Star team as well as the rest of the school staff.

Mr Hendry said: "During his time at Inverurie, Mr Littler has gone the extra mile to support, nurture and inspire so many young people. He will be missed

but I am sure I speak for staff, families and pupils (past and present) in wishing him a happy and healthy retirement".

Mr Littler's colleagues in Guidance added: "I am going to miss his stories, his IT skills, his awful, awful, AWFUL dad jokes (that he cracks up laughing at when everyone else just groans), but most of all I'm going to miss his gentle soul and his big heart. You are one in a million Mr Littler and we miss you already."

Miss Ross, who was mentored by Mr Littler when she was a Probationer Teacher, said:

"I couldn't have asked for a better mentor in Mr Littler. Most will know him as a supportive figure for students, however he showed the same level of care and dedication to myself when I was starting out as a teacher. His guidance and support were a huge reason for why my first proper year as a teacher went so smoothly and I cannot thank him enough. There is no one who deserves their retirement more but he will be very much missed!"

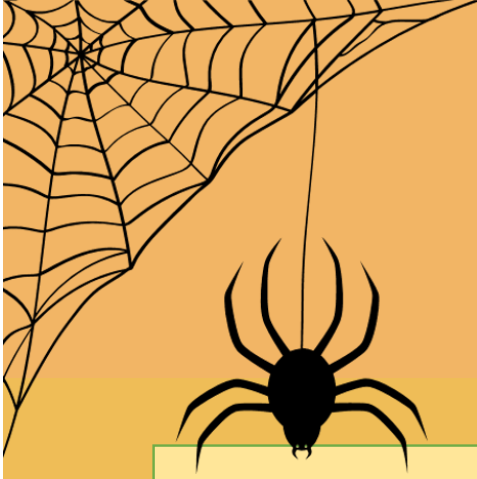
Mrs Mackintosh, who worked

with Mr Littler in Guidance, said: "Mr Littler will be greatly missed. He was a fantastic colleague who clearly loved his job and taking care of his pupils."

Finally, Madison Brooks, one of the Barra House Captains, wanted to offer a final farewell:

"When I visualise the Barra house, I see a great big tree with all the different branches stretching out to every student. Mr Littler is the roots of that tree, holding everyone together and offering that sense of constant strength. He is incredibly supportive and accessible for everyone to talk to. We will all miss him so much and it will leave a huge void for us all when he's gone. I want to say a huge thank you from myself and everyone in Barra for all his hard work over the years and I hope he enjoys his retirement."

Everyone at the Academy Star, as well as the school as a whole, wish you the very best Mr Littler. Inverurie Academy will not be the same without you!



Battle of the Bands

9TH OF NOVEMBER!

The bands performing are:

The Palladiums

Untitled

Engineering Rouge

Provosts Circle

The Cool Tides

Full Stop

