



University of
St Andrews

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LINK

*The newsletter for families
of undergraduate students*

SEMESTER 1 ISSUE
Winter 2021

Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of *LINK* magazine in the 2021-2022 academic year.

We began the semester with the fantastic news that we were ranked top University in the UK according to *The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2022*. This is the first time in the history of the Guide – and in UK university league tables in general – that a university other than Oxford or Cambridge has topped the rankings. [Read more about the University ranking news on page two.](#)

While we have not fully returned to our normal schedule, it was great to meet so many new families at the beginning of Semester at the drop-in coffee session we held in the outdoor pop-up cafe outside our office.

We had hoped to hold further events but sadly it was Storm Arwen (and not Covid) that scuppered our plans for a Thanksgiving event at the end of November. The Met Office weren't overreacting when they issued a Red Weather warning: trees in the Sports Centre Grounds, on The Scores and in Kennedy Gardens were felled by winds of up to 98mph.

In this edition of *LINK* we have news of a new PhD Doctoral Training programme in the School of Medicine that will train a new generation of healthcare professionals with expertise in multimorbidity research.

We also beat tough competition to win two Green Gown awards in recognition of our efforts to reach Net Zero by 2035.

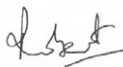
We know how difficult the pandemic has made it for students to follow the normal path of summer internships and early careers opportunities, so we have redoubled our collaborative efforts with the Careers Service, alumni and Family Programme to support and prepare students who are about to enter the world of work. [Read more about the Coffee Connect initiative on page 8.](#)

And last but certainly not least – read more about our unique 150th Golf Open experience taking place in July 2022.

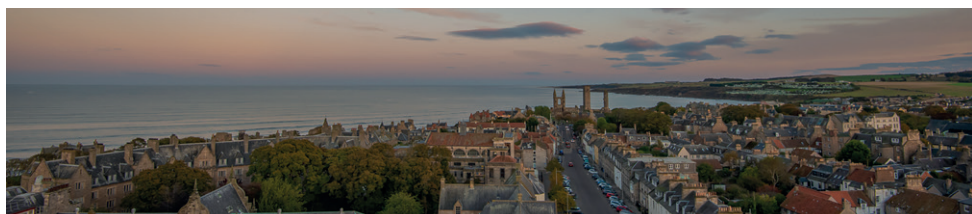
Please contact families@st-andrews.ac.uk if you have any queries, or any comments or suggestions for future issues.

We will continue to keep you informed of any developments with the Covid Omicron variant as they happen.

With all best wishes for the festive season and wishing you all a happy and healthy 2022,



Robert Fleming, Director of Development



St Andrews: number one university in the UK!



We were absolutely delighted to begin the semester with the news that St Andrews had been ranked the top university in the United Kingdom according to *The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2022*.

It is the first time in the history of the Guide and of UK university league tables that a University other than Oxford or Cambridge has achieved this ranking.

The University took first place this year largely due to its strong performance in student satisfaction, research, teaching quality, entry standards and graduate outcomes.

As Principal Professor Sally Mapstone FRSE said in her address to colleagues and students:

“You don’t get to the top of a league table like this, regarded as the gold-standard of UK rankings, unless you have the most gifted and committed staff, the highest quality of teaching, world-leading research, and are attracting the very brightest students who then achieve their potential.

It would be a fantastic achievement in any year, but for St Andrews to do it in one of the most challenging and difficult of any in our history, in the midst of a global pandemic, is significant.”

Read the full story about our top university ranking where you can also watch video clips of the Principal and the Association President talking about this fantastic achievement.

St Andrews' parents are number one, too!



We know that we are very lucky to have such proactive and supportive parents as part of our University community.

Thank you – we couldn't have reached our top ranking without you.

Here, some of our students – your children – describe what it means to them to be at the UK's top university.

"Waking up on the morning of the announcement that St Andrews was the UK's top university was pretty manic! I was bombarded with phone calls and texts and Facebook posts from family and friends. My dad cried! I was so incredibly proud to have even played a tiny part in this amazing achievement."

Hannah Carleton-Jepson, third year undergraduate MA Art History

"Studying here has been an unforgettable experience. Due to the scientific successes and breakthroughs of previous graduates of St Andrews Medical School, it carries a truly admirable reputation and is respected all over the world. I hoped to apply to St Andrews from when I was in early high school because I knew it was among the top universities in the UK. Seeing this ranking all these years later is a really validating experience. It makes me really proud of what we've achieved. The fact that it was achieved in the midst of a global pandemic makes the achievement all the more impressive."

Sebastian Vanicek, final year BSc Medicine

"It makes me happy to think I am a part of a community that was voted the number one university in the UK. Even though I'm one of many students here, I am positive that all of us contributed to this success. It is something we all should be proud of."

Tena Sindik, second year BSc Psychology

Many of you will have recently received a letter from the Principal, enclosing a message from fellow parents Rebecca and Patrick Gabrione.

If – like them – you are interested in supporting the University during what is still a challenging time, then [read more about how you can help us](#) to continue to meet the goals and ambitions that have enabled us to be the number one university in the UK.

Green Gown Awards



In a year when climate change is the other issue on everyone's mind, the University of St Andrews fought off tough competition from across the UK to win the Green Gown Sustainability Institution of the Year Award.

The Green Gown Awards were set up seventeen years ago to recognise exceptional sustainability initiatives being undertaken by universities and colleges across the UK and Ireland.

The judges commended St Andrews for the following initiatives:

- **Transition team** – which supports a more sustainable way of living
- **St Andrews Network for Climate, Energy Environment and Sustainability (StACEES)** – which aims to build ambitious, lasting research capabilities focused on climate change, energy research and environmental sustainability
- **Eden Campus** – which is home to the University's award-winning biomass plant and **Hydrogen Accelerator**

The University also won the Student Engagement Award through the **Third Generation Project** which leads climate justice through social change.

[Watch the video overview of our sustainability vision](#)

[Read more about our success at the Green Gown Awards](#)

Meet the sabbaticals

Here are this year's Sabbatical Officers – students who have been elected by their peers to represent them until July 2022. They are responsible for helping with all manner of student queries and activities.

Find out more about our Sabbatical Officers



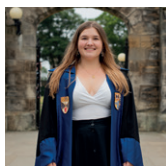
Lottie Doherty

Lottie is Association President. Her role is to be an advocate for students both at the University and on local and national political bodies. She is responsible for external relations with the local community and wider world, and is particularly focused on student accommodation, widening access, sustainability, the strategy and governance of the Association and alumni engagement.



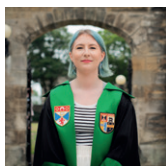
Jess Smith

Jess is the Athletic Union President and is responsible for representing students' sporting interests to Saints Sport, the University, and external bodies. The role involves supporting the 52 sports clubs, championing physical activity, running events, and developing the Athletic Union governance and strategy.



Leonie Malin

Leonie is Director of Education, with responsibility for representing students on all matters relating to learning and teaching in St Andrews. A central part of her role is to ensure that student voices are heard and carefully considered at all levels of the University.



Anna-Ruth Cockerham

Anna is Director of Wellbeing and Equality. She represents students on welfare, equality, diversity and inclusion and is focusing on the University and Union's approach to issues such as mental health, harassment and discrimination, sexual violence, physical health, and safety.



Avery Kitchens

Avery is Director of Student Development and Activities. He is responsible for the Union's activities through its (around 150) societies and subcommittees, as well as for co-curricular development.



Bella Zeff

Bella is Director of Events and Services. Her role is to manage the Union's venues and entertainment schedule and oversee commercial services such as bars and cafes. She also helps to oversee the Union's marketing strategy.

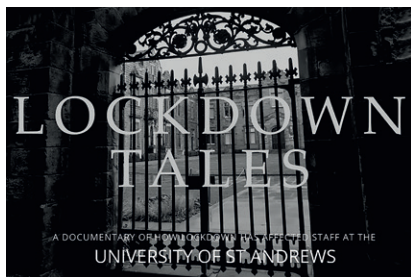
St Andrews in the news

Read about what's been happening this semester in and around the University.



St Andrews joins multimorbidity consortium

The School of Medicine has joined an £8.5m consortium of Scottish universities that will deliver a new **PhD Doctoral Training programme** to train a new generation of healthcare professionals with expertise in multimorbidity research. [Read more about the multimorbidity consortium.](#)



St Andrews Lockdown Tales

Members of the Royal Society of Edinburgh's Young Academy of Scotland at St Andrews spearheaded the production of a compilation of short video stories focusing on the diversity of staff experiences during lockdown. [Read more about Lockdown Tales and watch the video.](#)



One woman and her dog

Megan McEvoy recently received a master's degree (MChem) in Chemistry, along with 600 of her peers who were graduating in person for the first time since the outbreak of Covid-19. When Megan was suddenly disabled by Functional Neurological Disorder in her first Honours year, she credits her assistance dog Flint with helping to keep her keep going and complete her degree. [Read more about Megan and Flint.](#)



St Andrews Forest is growing!

Staff, students and members of the St Andrews community helped to boost the St Andrews Forest by planting a further 620 trees on land behind the University's Sports Centre during COP26 in November. [Read more about growing the St Andrews Forest.](#)

SaintsFunder update

The **SaintsFunder** crowdfunding platform is available to all students, academics, alumni, staff, Schools and Service Units to raise money for key areas such as academic research, clubs and societies and student experience. It promotes a culture of entrepreneurialism within the University and, as such, sits within the context of the Strategy 2018-2023.

We've had some wonderful projects coming through this semester from our talented University community. Here are three of the most recent.



University of Sanctuary: Support for Afghan scholars

The University has a long history of supporting and extracting refugees from geopolitical crises and offering them a safe haven in St Andrews. It is within this context that the University would like to support academics and their families, or a scholar currently trapped and at risk in Afghanistan, by offering them the opportunity to relocate to St Andrews and re-establish a life there. [Read more about our support for Afghan scholars.](#)



Saints Coastal Rowing Programme

Saints Rowing won one gold and two silvers at the 2021 British Offshore Coastal Championships. They want to build on this momentum and encourage the wider community to participate in coastal rowing by fundraising for communal essential safety equipment such as life jackets, wetsuits and beacons that will help them to train all year round. [Read more about the Saints Coastal Rowing Programme.](#)



Dance Club: Blue Angels Bursary continues!

In their initial campaign, Blue Angels raised enough funds to create three full and three partial **Blue Angels Bursary Awards**. During this process they discovered there was a much greater need to support potential dancers than they thought. They have therefore decided to continue to raise funds to award more bursaries for 2022-2023.

To find out more about other exciting projects, visit the [SaintsFunder web page](#).

Coffee Connect – a mutually beneficial initiative

Alumni Relations and Careers are continuing to work closely on a number of joint initiatives involving graduates and parents to help prepare students who are about to enter the world of work.

Coffee Connect is one such initiative that is going from strength to strength. So far over 2,100 alumni and students have signed up worldwide to participate in the first two rounds. Here, a mentor and a mentee describe why they signed up to the programme and what they each got out of it.



Tiago Marques (Class of 2007) Mentor



Why did you volunteer to be a mentor?

I think we underestimate how lost some students might be – even in a non-pandemic context – let alone during the period we have just been through. You can make a big difference in a small personal world, and I felt I could help someone by doing this. I would certainly have liked someone to have helped me when I was younger. That's why I volunteered.

How were you able to help your mentee?

After our initial conversations, we now meet regularly. Flora uses this time to talk to me about work and life and the balance between the two. A problem shared is a problem halved! I think it helps her to talk to a person who is not so close to her as her friends and family, but who understands the positive and negative aspects of academia.

What would you say to encourage others to volunteer?

Think about whether this initiative would have helped you and, if it would have, then just do it! You'll benefit as much as the mentee - or more - from the interaction.

Flora Foltanyi, Mentee



Why did you sign up to Coffee Connect and what were you hoping to get out of it?

I had already participated in Coffee Connect last year and found it a really useful experience – so I decided to sign up again. I am planning to have a career in academia and wanted to talk to someone (besides my supervisor) with an academic background.

How did your mentor help you?

Tiago has been an excellent mentor. He has experience in mentoring and had a clear plan in mind, which helped to frame our discussions. We covered a wide range of topics and he really helped me to make up my mind about pursuing an academic career. We are continuing to meet on a regular basis.

What would you say to encourage other mentors to volunteer?

Tiago understands my research area better than my family or friends, although obviously not to the same extent as my peers and supervisor. As a result, he is always able to give me different perspectives and feedback, which helps me to think about questions and problems from a new angle. This input is invaluable to every student, so please consider volunteering!

Graduation 2022



We are looking forward to welcoming you back to the Younger Hall in all its refurbished glory in June 2022! During that month three classes of graduates – from 2020, 2021 and 2022 – will gather together with their friends, families and supporters for three weeks of celebration postponed by the pandemic.

[Read more about Summer graduation here](#)

Winter graduation ceremonies: video clips

For the first time this year our graduates can receive a bespoke clip of themselves as they crossed the stage. **Thanks to Laura Elizabeth van der Maas for letting us share her graduation video.** If your student graduated in person at the recent ceremonies we have a clip waiting for them! If they haven't received their clip, they can contact us at alumni@st-andrews.ac.uk to find out how to do so.

Coming soon!

SAINTS TALK

Online Lecture Series



Saints Talk

Look out for our new programme of Saints Talk lectures next semester. Further details are available on our [events webpage](#), in [St Andrews in the News](#) and on social media.



You can also [watch previous Saints Talks](#) again if you missed them first time round.

University of St Andrews Open Experience

Calling all parents, alumni, friends and supporters: booking is now open for the supplementary programme of activities during the 150th Open at St Andrews 2022!

During this exciting week of exceptional University events, you will have the opportunity to play in our friendly golf competition on the spectacular [Kingsbarns Golf Links](#) and enjoy some unique University hospitality and experiences along the way.

Surplus proceeds from the programme will support the Robert T Jones Memorial Trust Scholarship.

[Find out more and book the Open experience](#)

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Further information:
Take a look at our [semester dates](#)

[View the latest news and other information about the University](#)

If you would like to support our community you can find more information on how to [donate to St Andrews here](#), or contact: develop@st-andrews.ac.uk

Produced by Print & Design, University of St Andrews, December 2021.

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