



University of St Andrews | FOUNDED 1413



# LINK

*The newsletter for families  
of undergraduate students*

SEMESTER 2 ISSUE  
Summer 2021

# Welcome

Welcome to the Semester 2 issue of *LINK* magazine.

Despite the restrictions of the second wave of the pandemic, we used our creativity to launch a series of online firsts – including our Winter Festival, an international Burns night (joined by more than 1,300 alumni, friends, staff and students from Peru to Perth); a telephone campaign and our annual Alumni Weekend.

For those students who remained here during the winter holiday and into the second semester, the **Can Do initiative** continued throughout the second lockdown with all shapes and sizes of events taking place.

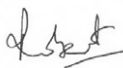
We were delighted to welcome The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge back in May to endorse the Can Do initiative and to plant the first tree for the St Andrews Forest - a key element in the **University's Environmental Sustainability Strategy**, Net Zero 2035.

It was very reassuring that, despite the restrictions and challenges of the pandemic, student satisfaction and attainment improved, while news about exciting research and awards also cheered up the dark days of winter.

Now there is light at the end of the pandemic tunnel: millions of people have been vaccinated and restrictions are slowly but surely being lifted. We have a lot to look forward to next academic year.

Please do contact [families@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:families@st-andrews.ac.uk) if you have any comments or suggestions for future issues.

With best wishes,



Robert Fleming, Director of Development



Hearts in the Quad featuring socially distancing students

## Royal support for Can Do



We were delighted to welcome The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge back to St Andrews twenty years after they met here as students. They visited their alma mater to hear from current students about how they have coped and supported each other throughout the past difficult year.

During the visit, Catherine (History of Art 2005) and William (Geography 2005) were accompanied by the Principal, Professor Sally Mapstone, and the President of the St Andrews Students' Association, Dan Marshall.

The Royal couple – known as the Earl and Countess of Strathearn when they are in Scotland – met current students involved in the St Andrews **Can Do initiative**.

Can Do was introduced in September 2020 as a joint University and St Andrews Students' Association initiative. It provides safe socialising activities and events as a way of helping to address the frustration and mental health challenges students face during lockdown.

The Duke and Duchess visited the Can Do marquee where they met students who have been able to plan and host their Covid-secure extra-curricular activities and events in the space. The marquee has hosted a diverse range of more than 500 events since its launch – from Ballroom and Latin dancing to charity and wellbeing activities – and has acted as a vital morale boost for students on campus.

During their visit, the Duke and Duchess took time to plant the first tree for the St Andrews Forest - a key initiative in the University's action plan to become carbon neutral by 2035.

St Andrews alumni, friends and supporters are being asked to **support the Forest initiative** by planting trees across the globe and signing up to a crowdfunding effort to help maximise the impact of the ambitious carbon reduction scheme.

**[Read more about the Royal visit](#)**

# Centre for Energy Ethics launch



The Centre for Energy Ethics (CEE) addresses one of the most urgent challenges facing us today: how to balance our energy demands with our concerns for anthropogenic climate change.

The Centre was officially launched on 25 February 2021 by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor Professor Sally Mapstone.

Under Director Dr Mette High, the Centre will foster a creative and interdisciplinary research environment, provide in-demand policy guidance and engage with industry and the public.

It will also provide a unique platform for collaboration across the arts, humanities, social and natural sciences that will help to answer not only what we can do – but what we should do – to address how to create a better energy future for us all.

**Visit the Centre's website** for information about research, people, blogs, podcasts and the latest news and events.

Dr High is supported by an Advisory Committee. The CEE and its activities are financially supported through grant funding and private donations. It is important to note that the Centre does not accept funding from energy companies of any sector.

If you would like to find out more about how to support the work of the Centre, please visit the **Centre for Energy Ethics website**.

# Annual Giving news

## Telephone Campaign

Each year – for the past three decades – our students have been calling alumni and parents all over the world as part of our annual telephone campaigns.

This year was slightly more challenging.

Nevertheless, we decided that we would do everything possible to continue this tradition: through these campaigns students develop vital skills and experience that they can transfer to the workplace and, indeed, to life. We also wanted to support priority projects such as the Can Do initiative, Wardlaw Scholarships and mental health and wellbeing.

It took several months to prepare and modify the necessary processes and systems but we succeeded!

Between 21 February and 21 March 2021 our student callers phoned more than 600 alumni and parents across the world from their homes, using their own securely encrypted laptops and smartphones. We all missed being in one room, calling together, making friends and eating late-night pizza, but the students adapted brilliantly to the new situation.

Thank you so much to all those who took time to chat to them about memories of St Andrews and careers advice and who pledged a total of £129,857 to University projects through our new automated secure payment system. These conversations and your support meant so much to our students and strengthened their sense of belonging to a close-knit University community.

### If you would like to add your support, find out more here

Three of our student callers share their thoughts here:



"I decided to work as a student caller so I could speak to more people while living alone. I expected to bond largely with my fellow callers but really it has been hearing so many encouraging stories and heartfelt advice that has made me feel more connected to St Andrews and other people than ever."

**Kimberley Wong (fourth year undergraduate, MA Comparative Literature and English)**



"I wanted to take part in one last Telephone Campaign before graduating, even though it looks a bit different this year with all of us calling from our homes rather than the callroom! It's so encouraging to have these conversations with alumni and parents, and to see many of them wanting to support the University's projects. It's a real reminder of the wonderful St Andrews community we belong to!"

**Peter Forde (fourth year undergraduate, MA Geography)**



"I enjoy being a student caller because of the amazing conversations I get to have with alumni who have gone on to do fantastic things after university. As a final year student, it makes me feel very hopeful about my own future to talk to people who have built fulfilling lives for themselves after leaving the Bubble!"

**Chloe Mosonyi (final year undergraduate, BSc Neuroscience)**

# SaintsFunder

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 – a key pillar of our strategic vision for the next few years.

Despite the constraints of the pandemic, our students and academics have developed some inspirational and exciting new projects. Find out more below.



## St Andrews Forest

**St Andrews Forest** is a project that grew out of a student proposal presented to the University's Environmental Sustainability Board. Its aim is to offset carbon emissions equivalent to student semester travel.

Many thanks to parents, alumni and friends who have answered our initial call by planting their own saplings!



## Laidlaw Live: Music from St Andrews

**Laidlaw Live: Music from St Andrews** emerged when the pandemic brought live music to a grinding halt.

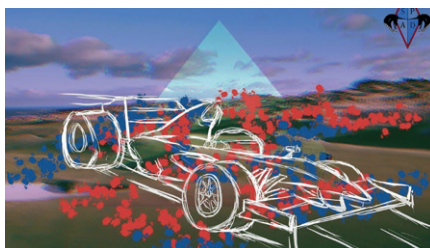
This live-streaming capability has since been delivering singing, music and joy to all.



## Sponsor a Scope

In **Sponsor a Scope** the School of Earth & Environmental Sciences is raising funds to replace 50 thirty-year-old petrological microscopes. This equipment is essential to the learning experience within Geology degree programmes.

Read more about why **Patrick Foster** (BSc Geology 1974) couldn't resist studying Geology here – or giving back to the School of Earth & Environmental Sciences.



## Saints Performance Automotive Design (SPAD)

The **Saints Performance Automotive Design (SPAD)** team are participating in the Formula Student 2021 competition. Members are in the process of submitting engineering and business plans.

To find out more about other exciting projects, visit the **SaintsFunder web page**.

## Alumni stories

Each month we feature alumni and student stories and experiences on our [Alumni updates](#) web pages.

Now and again a truly inspiring story comes along that makes us realise how much St Andrews has impacted some people's lives. Charlie Andrews (MSc 2020) – who came to St Andrews in 2018 to study Computing and Information Technology – has one such story to tell. We wanted to share it with you here.



### With a little help from my friends ...

I have always been a keen footballer and have competed for a variety of teams and clubs throughout my life, so during my first week in St Andrews I decided to trial for the University's football club. I was delighted when I was placed in the Men's 1st team. This was a big commitment as it involved numerous training sessions, gym sessions and matches throughout the week but I loved it all, and to this day I believe that joining the football club was the best decision I ever made during my time as a St Andrews student. It gave me a structure and fun outside my studies, and I met some amazing people whom I now consider friends for life, and whose support helped me so much on the road to recovery.

[Read the whole of Charlie's story here](#)

## St Andrews in the news

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



### Wardlaw Museum has reopened!

The Wardlaw Museum has reopened after more than a year's delay – caused by the pandemic. Philanthropic donations have been a major factor in enabling the extension and redesign of the museum. [Read more about the reopening of the Wardlaw Museum.](#)



### Fife Migrants Forum given Community Fund award

The first Conversational Café in North East Fife – established by the Fife Migrants Forum – has been given a £3,000 donation from the University of St Andrews Community Fund. [Read more about the Fife Migrants Forum.](#)



### Olympian appointed new Director of Rowing

Olympic rower Alan Sinclair has been appointed Director of Rowing at the University of St Andrews following a ten-year career rowing for Great Britain. [Read more about our new Director of Rowing.](#)



### Professor Sir Ian Boyd elected to Royal Society

Sir Ian Boyd, Professor of Biology at the University of St Andrews, has recently been elected a Fellow of the prestigious Royal Society. [Read more about Professor Sir Ian Boyd.](#)



### Gold for gender equality at St Andrews

The School of Biology has become the first department of biology in Scotland to be awarded the Gold Athena SWAN award – an accreditation that advances gender equality across higher education and research. [Read more about our gender equality award.](#)



## The Younger Hall: update



Since it was inaugurated in 1928, The Younger Hall has been at the heart of the University's ceremonial occasions. Generations of students have sat exams here, performed in concerts, danced on its famous sprung floor and crossed its stage to become fully fledged alumni.

After nearly a century of constant use, it is now time for a refurbishment and upgrade. We are therefore partway through a comprehensive programme of renewal and restoration works to give this ceremonial and symbolic heart of the University a new lease of life.

The renewal project has had a clear focus on the careful restoration of The Younger Hall's distinctive neo-classical and art-deco features.

We have worked closely with Historic Scotland to ensure that these architectural features are upgraded with the highest degree of sensitivity. Specialists in lime-render and historic paint analysts have informed the redecoration and restoration plans. Critall – the original manufacturers of the building's iron windows – have engaged closely with the design and production of the upgraded windows. These will not only match the originals, but will also improve the building's energy efficiency.

A new extension at the north-west corner of the building will create independent access to the basement facilities of the Hall. This has been designed as a sandstone-and-glass transition between the existing building and a more contemporary architectural style. The space will house the main donor board and will link to the 'backstage' area of The Younger Hall.

The architects have also developed thoughtful designs and creative use of lifts to ensure that students and users of the Hall can easily access all areas. This will include the basement and first-floor teaching rooms, the auditorium and balcony and the stage itself.

### [View a fly-through of the Younger Hall refurbishment](#)

We are looking forward to welcoming you back! In June 2022 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.

## Joint Alumni Relations and Careers initiatives

Alumni Relations and Careers are working 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

It's not always easy for students to connect with others, which is why we teamed up with the Careers Centre to create **Coffee Connect** – an initiative that matches graduates and students to enable them to network over a virtual coffee. So far, over 1,400 alumni and students have signed up worldwide to participate in the first two rounds of this highly successful project.

### Work shadowing

The Careers Centre offers a global Work Shadowing Programme through which alumni, parents and University staff can offer students work shadowing opportunities.

Your input could include anything from providing an insight into different careers over a chat and a coffee to giving a student invaluable experience in your workplace.

**Find out more and register to provide a Work Shadowing opportunity**

### International internships

After all the constraints of the past year, our students are keen to gain experience and make a positive contribution within organisations through international internships.

If you have, or know of, a paid internship or opportunity within your organisation that you can offer our students, please contact the Careers Centre at: [employers@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:employers@st-andrews.ac.uk). You can then start the conversation and have your opportunity advertised across the University.

Thank you to all the parents and alumni who have helped us to support our students on their career paths during this particularly challenging time.

## St Andrews students give huge vote of confidence

The University recently carried out a Teaching and Student Experience Snapshot and got a pleasant surprise: teaching satisfaction levels had increased during the pandemic, despite the disruption of lockdown and remote learning. And not only that – average grades had improved slightly.

The snapshot looked at St Andrews' undergraduate and postgraduate entrants and covered the period from September to December 2020. Satisfaction levels with teaching modules were assessed using an anonymous online questionnaire. The overall satisfaction level was the highest the University has recorded in the last six years.

Professor Clare Peddie, Vice-Principal (Education) and Dan Marshall, President of the University of St Andrew Students' Association welcomed the news:

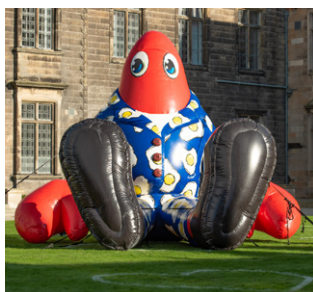
"While we should treat this snapshot with a degree of caution, this is a remarkable outcome. It reflects well on our staff's ability to deliver high-quality teaching during the pandemic and on our students' willingness to appreciate and recognise what is possible under current circumstances."  
– **Professor Clare Peddie**

"Whilst for many students this hasn't been the year they had hoped for, [this] news is incredibly positive. It is testament to the way in which students and staff have worked hard and pulled together to overcome the challenges of the pandemic and I'm glad that students have recognised staff who have gone above and beyond to support them."  
– **Dan Marshall**

[Read more about the Teaching and Student Experience Snapshot](#)



## Gallery of our Can Do lockdown year



Images from left to right, top row to bottom row: Can Do beach activities; Hearts in the Quad in St Salvator's Quad; Saints Sport summer camps (© Christopher Wilde); learning in the time of Covid; socially distanced pier walk; Can Do inter hall event; Doorstep Saints: Degree Conferral 2020; self-isolating student; Can Do Community Action Day; Philip Colbert's installation The Death of Marat and the Birth of the Lobster at Can Do Cocktails; Doorstep Saints: Degree Conferral 2020. All photographs were taken by Gayle McIntyre unless otherwise indicated.

## Graduation 2021



After careful consideration, the University had to take the difficult decision to cancel in-person graduation ceremonies planned for June 2021. Our duty of care to students, their families, our staff and our local community has informed all the decisions we have made in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Vice-Chancellor and the Deans are, however, conferring degrees virtually this week (beginning 28 June 2021). Videos of these degree conferrals will be broadcast on the website.

[Read more about dates and times of virtual degree conferrals](#)

## Raise a glass

In another joint Alumni Relations and Careers initiative taking place between 28 June and 2 July, alumni all over the world will 'Raise a Glass' in an online Alumni Mentor Bar to our Classes of 2020 and 2021. They have booked one-to-one appointments to congratulate and welcome our new graduates to the alumni community and offer them careers advice and support.

Congratulations to all the families of final year students who are celebrating the end of their studies this summer. We wish them the very best of luck for the future.

We would also like to thank all families for their tremendous support of our students throughout what has been a very challenging year for everyone.



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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](mailto:develop@st-andrews.ac.uk)

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