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St Andrews Ranks Third Highest for Sexual Misconduct Among Scottish Universities



IONA CARRUTH
News Writer

An investigation by *The Daily Record* has found the University of St Andrews to have the third highest number of sexual misconduct claims among Scottish universities.

The recent article outlines data going back to 2021 from nineteen universities across Scotland. It states that the University of Edinburgh has the most claims with 127, followed by the University of Glasgow with 109, and the University of St Andrews coming third with 85 claims of sexual misconduct. According to the article, over the past five years, there have been more than 600 reports of sexual misconduct across Scottish universities — this figure, compared to those reported over the same period four years ago, has increased by 70%.

Rape Crisis Scotland Chief Executive Sandy Brindley told *The Daily Record*, "These are deeply troubling figures, particularly when you set them against the backdrop of increased sexual offending across Scotland. While an increase in reported incidents can signal growing confidence in the reporting process, I think we also need to confront the reality [that] it also signals a likely increase in sexual violence itself."

Alex Chun, President of Wellbeing and Community, told *The Saint*:

"Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) has been on the rise not just in the University sector, but in the United Kingdom as a whole. This rise in violence has been contrasted with a swell of support in St Andrews. In 2021, when *The Daily Record* article cites as the beginning of their data collection, many institutional and grassroots community actions rose in turn.

"That November, which marked the first year of students returning to campus post-lockdown, a Reclaim the Night march swept through town to protest SGBV. In the spring of 2022, the 'What Were You Wearing?' clothesline project by Got Consent? toured to great acclaim. Meanwhile, behind the scenes, the University and the Union worked alongside the EmilyTest group to reform our policies on student conduct and our reporting mechanisms."

"Some examples include our compulsory consent module during online orientation, the anonymous reporting mechanism of Report and Support, and the continuation of the Night Bus. As a result, we were the first University to be awarded the EmilyTest Charter. While receiving this charter is an honour, it is also a stark reminder that safety is written in blood and voiced by grief.

"SGBV is an insidious subject — it is under researched, under sourced and often underbelieved. Furthermore, the reporting process can be just as painful as experiencing it. As an institution, it is our duty to both try to prevent incidents from happening and to make the reporting process as easy on individuals as possible. We have yearly consultations on the functions of Report and Support, as well as a constant anonymous feedback form on the website.

"When I worry about students — and I always worry — and what we as the Union can do to fight this rise in SGBV and sexual misconduct, I remember one of the most comforting things a colleague in Student Services has ever said to me: 'Every report submitted results in action.' While that action may not always be a visible outcome, the reports matter because they shape University policies and where funding goes. Even if these numbers can feel like they don't show progress, I encourage everyone to use tools like Report and Support and the complaints submission process for the Union. Without these

Continued on Page 4.

Letter to the Editor

by an Anonymous Student

I write this email with a level of grief and urgency that I hope you will forgive, but not dismiss. What is happening in Iran is not political unrest. It is not a dispute. It is state-orchestrated brutality on a scale that defies comprehension, and it is unfolding in real time. Credible investigations and internal documentation reviewed by independent journalists show that at least 36,500 civilians were killed in just two days during the most recent nationwide crackdown.
Read on Page 12.

A Pint a Day Keeps the Doctor Away

by Tara Phillips

Carpe diem — to seize the day — means different things for different people. For some, it's waking up to welcome the sunrise and going for a run on the Scores. For others, it's a morning spent in leisure before heading to a common place, with familiar faces and pints. At various pubs across town, Willie Tair, Alan Fraser, and Gordon Smith, are united by a shared love for a midday pint and good chat.
Read on Page 14.

The Myth of Victimhood

by Theo Jebsen Moore

Whilst sipping one of Aikman's most eccentric beers in the all too familiar cellar of the bar and bistro, bubbly conversation was forced to a close as all ears pricked towards one side of the room. A chorus of tories, rosy faces barely poking out from a mountain of tweed, took centre stage as what could only be described as a dirge fighting tooth and nail against the slow encroachment of progress began.
Read on Page 24.

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EDITORIAL

The Good, The Bad, and *The Ugly*

Returning to St Andrews is always a joyful thing, but this semester, it is impossible not to feel a tinge of melancholy permeating the days. This is in large part attributable to the terrible, horrible, no good weather of our Auld Grey Toon. And, of course, the knowledge that we are beginning the traditional path towards our many lasts in this town. But, far deeper than this nostalgia-induced melancholy is a sense of unease and discomfort surrounding the series of global events that took place over the break. It is during this time, more so than ever before, that local, unbiased news is crucial.

In a small town like St Andrews, famously and affectionately known as the Bubble, it is easy to disconnect. But while it is a privilege to live in a bubble, it is equally important that we acknowledge the existence of such. Is it really okay not to care? Surprisingly, a majority of you seem to think so. With compelling arguments on both sides, however (see page eight of our Viewpoint section), as students and academics, we can surely all agree that it is important to, at the very least, have the opportunity to be informed.

As one of very few student-run print publications in the UK, and one of even fewer entirely independent publications, we take our role as a local newspaper very seriously (maybe, at times, even too seriously). We, of course, enjoy procrastinating with the Puzzles section and keeping up with the Sunday League as much as the next person, and sometimes (especially now) the constant influx of doom and gloom can be overwhelming. It's certainly kept us up at night. But, having dedicated ourselves to student journalism, not knowing is not an option — especially when journalism needs the emboldened passion of its devotees.

With the constant availability of digital news via online news sources, or, even better, social media apps, print journalism is slowly dying and with it, unbiased news. We all know how easily our Instagram and TikTok For You Pages subtly customise themselves, feeding us content that aligns with our beliefs and understandings and, in the case of news, increasingly distancing us from alternative or non-extreme alternative perspectives.

Not only does this insinuate unreliability, but when one of the most prominent print media outlets undergoes mass layoffs, journalism seems to be on a slow, steady march towards death. We are, of course, talking about The Washington Post. But we resent this view.

At the end of the day, people have always relied on stories — whether that be in the form of the town crier, prehistoric cave paintings, or epics performed in an amphitheatre to the gathered masses — this innate human impulse will not vanish. Even The Saint looks a lot different than it used to. Digital media has allowed us to take reporting beyond the fold, whether it be by way of breaking news posts or our new newsletter service, which sends each issue's top stories straight to your mailbox. So, no, journalism is far from dying — it's simply changing.

All that to say, albeit very dramatically, that print journalism, and journalism in general, is more important than ever. We are so grateful for the continued support The Saint has received over the years. There's no greater feeling than consistently running out of copies before noon every other Thursday. So, yes, give Issue 296 a read. We will admit, it's not the most uplifting of issues, but we're not here to uplift you; we're here to tell you the latest stories in their entirety — the good, the bad, and the ugly.

On that note, buck up, brave that foreboding front page story, and settle in to the goings-on of our own stomping ground. Maybe it's your first time — but better late than never! Whether you stick to The Relic for a Toppings book recommendation or desire a quippy review of this year's Barn Bash, we're happy to have you. Hopefully, we'll make it worth your while.

Hannah and Ilaria

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Corrections

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St Andrews PhD Student Convicted of Sexual Assault

ANNABELLE MACKEY & AVA GOODMAN
News Writer

University of St Andrews Neuroscience PhD student Jui-yi Chen was convicted on 30 January of having sexually assaulted a woman in October 2025, with reported continued inappropriate behaviour into November 2025. He pled guilty to two charges of sexual assault.

According to evidence presented in Dundee Sheriff Court, Chen had been in a relationship with the victim since September 2025. She had set clear boundaries which Chen then violated, subjecting her to an hour of "thrusting" and inappropriate touching in a shared bed, during which the victim pretended to be asleep, said Prosecutor Ewan Chalmers.

Chen later turned himself in to the police over email, following an admission of guilt to the victim over text. "Yes, I sexually assaulted you," Chen wrote, "Sexually assaulting you wasn't my intention. I have no excuses, and I don't know why I was waiting for you to stop me. I should have controlled myself."

> "Sexually assaulting you wasn't my intention. I have no excuses."

In response, Chen will face a £1000 penalty, undergo six months of supervision by a social worker, and is now registered as a sex offender in Fife. *The Courier* reported his plans to relocate to Sydney, Australia, upon completion of his studies, according to Solicitor Advocate Simon Whyte.

"These are serious matters, but I am prepared to accept that Mr Chen handed himself in and secondly there's real and, I think, quite genuine recognition of the errors that he made," said Sheriff George Way, as reported in *The Courier*. "There are boundaries, and I think this has been a very salutary experience for him."

In the Court report, Whyte shared similar sentiments, stating: "It comes through strongly in the [social work] report that he is remorseful and takes full responsibility."

A spokesperson from the University of St Andrews told *The Saint* that they "take matters of this nature extremely seriously" but do not comment on individual cases. According to the University's official Student Conduct Policy, a Student Conduct Officer will "make a risk assessment of [the] case [and] disciplinary action may also be considered" for students who face legal charges, which "could range from a move in location for teaching or living purposes up to and including temporary suspension from the University."

In the case of sexual misconduct, the University website makes clear that their "Duty of Care extends to both alleged victims and perpetrators." According to the Safeguarding HE website, duty of care is a legal "obligation to act with reasonable caution to prevent foreseeable harm."

The University spokesperson explained to *The Saint*, "It is up to the reporter of such an incident to determine which options are most suitable to them and what action, if any, they wish to be taken by the University." Students looking for further information on their "position and approach" can look to their Student Sexual Misconduct Policy statement on the University website.

Students who report any form of sexual misconduct will use a reporting tool co-designed with students and have their case handled by "front-line staff trained by Rape Crisis Scotland," the spokesperson said.

Regarding plans for more preventative action against sexual misconduct, the University said that "St Andrews and its students are leading the way in tackling issues of gender-based violence. We were the first university in Scotland to introduce a compulsory consent module for all students, and we were an early adopter of the Scottish Government's Equally Safe Toolkit."



PHOTO BY PREMIER NEWS

> "We are attempting to create an environment where students can [...] challenge sexual violence."

The spokesperson additionally pointed to the University's accreditation under the EmilyTest Charter, which "recognises institutions that have built and maintained environments where students are supported, encouraged, and empowered to report all forms of sexual misconduct." They continued that this accreditation is maintained through "demonstrating action that prevents gender-based violence and the harms caused, including changing the culture and ensuring students are informed of expected behaviour."

"Universities cannot change the world by themselves," the spokesperson said. "We are attempting to create an environment where students can recognise and challenge sexual violence in all forms."

The Saint filed a Freedom of Information request with Police Scotland. Neither Police Scotland nor Chen's legal team responded to The Saint's request for comment by the time of this article's publication.

More information on the issues raised in this article can be accessed by Rape Crisis Scotland on their website https://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/help-helpline/ or by calling the National Rape Crisis Helpline on 08088 01 03 02. Advice and support from the University on reporting sexual assault can be found by visiting https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/sexual-misconduct/.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

reports on the institution's record, positive change is harder to implement."

Of the University's 85 reports of sexual misconduct, *The Daily Record* reported that 35 resulted in an investigation and 26 ended with disciplinary outcomes.

On 30 January, Emily Drouet, CEO of EmilyTest, released a statement: "Drawing firm conclusions from FOI statistics would be misleading, inaccurate, and irresponsible. Higher reporting figures often reflect stronger student trust and clearer, centralised data collection rather than higher levels of harm. Very low or absent figures, however, give cause for concern, as no university is exempt from these harms."

In the article by *The Daily Record*, a Spokesperson for the Scottish Government also commented: "We are taking forward measures requiring colleges and universities to act to prevent Gender Based Violence and provide support for students experiencing abuse, as a condition of funding they receive from the Scottish Funding Council. This action will come about as a result of part of a new Scottish Government law that was passed last week, which we collaborated on with the organisation EmilyTest."

In response to *The Daily Record's* report, a University spokesperson told *The Saint*:

"We agree with Sandy Brindley that there needs to be a focus on the quality and accessibility of support for survivors, something we have concentrated on at St Andrews.

"In our experience, and that of others, when provided with trauma-informed reporting routes and support, the number of survivors coming forward will increase.

"Sometimes it is those institutions reporting higher numbers of instances of sexual misconduct who are making the most progress by providing an environment in which survivors feel supported and able to report.

"All reports of incidents of a sexual nature are taken seriously by the University and support is offered. It is up to the reporter of such an incident to determine which options are most suitable to them and what action, if any, they wish to be taken by the University.

"The University's definition of sexual misconduct covers a broad range of inappropriate, unwanted behaviour, from the most severe forms of sexual violence to unwanted touching, stalking, abusive or degrading remarks and across the vast range of inappropriate behaviour in between.

"The University of St Andrews was the first in the UK to hold an EmilyTest Charter Award. EmilyTest accreditation requires institutions to have built and maintained an environment in which students are supported, encouraged, and empowered to report all instances of sexual misconduct. This may mean that, on a simple comparison, St Andrews' figures appear higher than those at other institutions, where only assaults are recorded, or EmilyTest standards to encourage reporting of sexual misconduct are not in place.

"The University undertakes ongoing reviews of its processes to ensure we align with sector best practice and, in many areas, set the standard."

More information on the issues raised in this article can be accessed by Rape Crisis Scotland on their website https://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/help-helpline/ or by calling the National Rape Crisis Helpline on 08088 01 03 02. Advice and support on reporting sexual assault from the University can be found by visiting https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/sexual-misconduct/.

Local Taxis Fail Inspection Checks

Ten St Andrews-based taxis have failed, seven of which having been registered with immediate effect

REESE COLBERT
NEWS WRITER

An investigation has led to multiple local taxis being deregistered and taken off the roads in North East Fife.

Over the course of three evenings in November 2025, taxi operators in North East Fife were subjected to random vehicle inspections. Of the eighteen vehicles that were checked in St Andrews and Leuchars, only eight passed these spot checks. Of the ten vehicles that failed, seven have had their license plates removed immediately for issues including defective mechanical issues, damaged wheels, oil/coolant leaks, and warning lights on the dashboard.

Of the final three failing drivers, two were given verbal warnings regarding minor infringements, and one was given 30 days to repair bodywork damage.

These numbers raise concern when considered alongside West Fife, which recently underwent similar inspections and achieved a roughly 68% pass rate, compared with East Fife's 44%. West Fife operators who failed did not carry fire extinguishers, drivers were unable to present their ID badges, and the vehicles appeared dirty.

These issues were brought before Fife Council's Regulation and Licensing Committee earlier this month, leading multiple councillors to express their concern over the results.

According to *Fife Today*, Councillor Lea McLelland said, "What worries me is when you look at this, and there are all these warning lights on. Things like a tyre pressure warning, if you are in poor driving conditions, that could be catastrophic."



"No fire extinguisher — if you are in a car, that is the difference between life and death. It is like someone not caring," she continued.

While also expressing his concern, *Fife Today* reported that Councillor Darren Watt suggested that the stop check figures "detracted" from the results in the annual inspection reports, which saw significantly higher pass rates.

He found the spot check results, on the contrary, to be "absolutely alarming, particularly in the East Fife area."

Meanwhile, *Fife Today* reported that Tom Brown, Fife Council's lead officer for miscellaneous licensing, assured that the Council was maintaining close communication with taxi operators. He said that it "is all about creating a culture of learning and education and engaging with taxi companies and getting them to raise their standards."

"In February, there's a meeting with regular taxi companies, and we are going to try [to] increase a better culture of engagement," he said.

Brown advocated for using these techniques of learning and engagement to quell the issue, rather than "relying on enforcement to raise standards."

Ultimately, the committee determined that the operators who had failed the November spot checks would face an appointment with the committee. Licence holders who have passed all annual tests but failed a spot check will meet with the convener and vice convener of the Regulations and Licensing Committee. Those with previous failures or removed plates, however, will appear before the full committee, where they face the potential suspension of their license.

These safety concerns regarding Fife taxis are nothing new. Last May, 206 vehicles in North East Fife received similar inspections, with 45 failing. Issues included illegal number plates and damaged seatbelts, along with many of the same infringements recorded in November.

According to *The Courier*, the then-Councillor David MacDiarmid said, "If it was up to me, I would bring them all in, knock their heads together and knock some sense into them. Why have they not got it into their skulls these are the standards we set?"

Other Fife Council officials spoke out as well, with former convener Carol Lindsay saying that it was the worst set of figures she had seen in her eighteen years on the committee, and that "we have thrown every possible solution at this."

"There's one operator I can pick out who, when I was convener, we had in front of us at least five times, and she's back again," she continued.

As far back as June 2024, James Glen of St Andrews Taxis was recorded to have spoken out against the issue. Speaking to *The Courier*, he expressed the belief that people from outside the area were bypassing their local test regimes and "flocking to Fife," which has no written test.

He said that, while Dundee, Perth & Kinross, and Angus require operators to pass a knowledge test, with Dundee City Council also requiring a police test and other qualifications, it "beggars belief Fife Council does not operate a similar system."

These claims have been denied by Fife's licensing chiefs, who insist that all applicants are subjected to robust checks as well as a thorough police check.

However, Glen maintained that "Fife's current set-up is manifestly not working as it should or else there would not be so much unacceptable behaviour on the rank."

PHOTO BY ALDEN ARNOLD

New Chancellor to be Elected this Month

SARAYAH SHAW
News Writer

Following the death of the former University Chancellor, The Right Honourable Lord Campbell of Pittenweem CH CBE PC KC FRSE, in September 2025, the University is now holding elections for the new Chancellor of the University of St Andrews. Nominations for Chancellor opened on 1 December, 2025 and closed on 9 January, 2026, along with voter registration. Voting will occur through 16-22 February, during which time 7,072 St Andrews registered alumni and staff will elect the next ceremonial head of the University.

Dame Anne Pringle, Lord Mark Sedwell, Lady Walmsley, and Dame Barbara Woodward are the four candidates on the ballot, all of whom graduated from and have ties to the University, and are senior figures in public life, holding achievements in their respective fields.

With three female candidates in the running, the election could result in the first female Chancellor in the history of the University.

While the role of Chancellor is largely ceremonial, whoever is elected plays an ambassadorial role in promoting the University's interests and reputation, and supporting important philanthropic fundraising. The Chancellor presides at graduation ceremonies and is President of the General Council, which meets twice a year in Parliament Hall. The closest definition of the role, according to the return of the University to the Commissioners in 1826, declares that "the Chancellor is head of the University," to be consulted "on all public matters relative to its welfare."



The first candidate, Dame Anne Pringle, is a British diplomat who served as the ambassador to the Czech Republic from 2001 to 2004 before becoming the first woman to serve as the British ambassador to Russia from 2008 to 2011. She has pursued a career in both the public and private sectors and served as the Senior Governor on the Court of the University of St Andrews from 2016 to 2020. In a statement for the University website, she declares that she hopes to be "a champion for St Andrews interests, a fundraiser, a connector and a defender of free speech."

Lord Mark Sedwell is a British Diplomat and senior civil servant who served as Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Home Civil Service from 2018 to 2020. He is also a former National Security Advisor, British Ambassador, and NATO representative to Afghanistan. In his statement on the University website, Lord Sedwell aligns himself with the former Chancellor in emphasising "integrity, intellect and inclusion," while advocating for deepened partnerships and philanthropy in North America to support further research, scholarships, and investment.

Candidate Lady Walmsley is the National Vice-Chair of the Soldiers', Sailors', and Airmen's Families Association (SSAFA), the Armed Forces charity, while also chairing NATO's annual Radiological/Nuclear Conference. Additionally, Walmsley was the first defence analyst at the Centre for European Reform. While a postgraduate at St Andrews, Walmsley worked as a researcher for the former Chancellor Lord Menzies 'Ming' Campbell. In the statement she provided for the election, Walmsley claims, "I am St Andrews to my core." She has deep ties to St Andrews, having been married at the St Salvator's Chapel, and believes the Chancellor should be a more active and accessible member of the community.

The final candidate is Dame Barbara Woodward, a British diplomat and the UK Deputy National Security Advisor for International Affairs. She was the first female diplomat to the People's Republic of China from 2015 to 2020, before becoming the UK Permanent Representative to the United Nations between 2020 and 2025. In a statement on the University website, Barbara says she is inspired by the St Andrews motto 'Ever to Excel' and aims to sustain the University's "world-leading research and teaching, its reputation for financial stewardship and good governance," and its "high performance in student satisfaction."

One of these four candidates will be announced as the new Chancellor of the University of St Andrews on Monday, 23 February, 2026.

Photo by the University of St Andrews

Four Charged with Assault on South Street

ELEONORA NUCCI
News Writer

Police Scotland confirmed that four males have been charged following a serious assault on South Street at around 11:30pm on Saturday, 17 January.

The four made an attack on a 30-year-old man who, after sustaining serious head and facial injuries, attempted to enter a licensed premises on South Street, where he was refused entry, Police Scotland confirmed. He subsequently assaulted a member of door staff, who was not seriously injured.

The man was later arrested in connection with the door-staff incident and was taken by ambulance to Dundee Ninewells Hospital for treatment of injuries sustained during the earlier assault.

Following the incident, Police Scotland issued a public appeal for information in an effort to trace those responsible for the assault, with officers asking witnesses to come forward.

Inspector Helen Manuel said at the time: "We need to trace this group and would ask anyone who was in the South Street area between 11:30pm and midnight on Saturday and who saw what happened to get in touch."

Inspector Manuel also appealed for digital evidence: "Anyone with video footage or information that can help our enquiries should come forward and speak with officers."

In a further update issued on Thursday, 29 January, Police Scotland confirmed that the four males had been identified and charged as part of the investigation. The accused are two sixteen year-old males and two seventeen-year-old males.

Police also confirmed that a report will be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal. No further details regarding the identities of those charged or the nature of the charges have been released.

Police Scotland has not issued any additional updates about the event since 29 January.

Autcherlonies Golf Shop Raided by "Professional Gang"

PABLO BRIENS MONTERO
News Writer

At approximately 1am on Thursday, 15 January, Auchterlonies of St Andrews golf shop was raided by a "professional gang," according to *The Courier*.

A group of four individuals reportedly broke into the golf shop and ransacked the premises before fleeing in a black Range Rover a few minutes later. The car allegedly had false number plates.

The value of items stolen is yet to be confirmed. However, *The Courier* reports losses of approximately thousands of pounds of golf equipment from high-end brands such as Callaway, Ping, TaylorMade, Scotty Cameron, and Odyssey.

Auchterlonies, a world-famous institution for golf, was established in St Andrews in 1895. It was opened by former Open champion Willie Auchterlonie and has since become a family-run business. Its location on Golf Place, near the junction between Golf Place and North Street, places it less than 100 metres from the Old Course.

This incident comes almost a decade after the sentencing of criminal gang members for an attempted armed robbery at the Old Course Hotel's Mappin and Webb jewellery store in 2016.

The Saint contacted representatives of Auchterlonies, who said they were unable to provide a comment due to the ongoing investigation.



Photo By Ilaria Freccia

University Hosts Holocaust Memorial Vigil

JOSHUA PANTANO
News Writer



On 31 January, the University of St Andrews hosted its annual Holocaust Memorial Day Vigil. This year's vigil theme, 'Bridging Generations,' included speeches and performances by the St Andrews Madrigal Group and university students, as well as a guest speaker from the Holocaust Educational Trust, Gillian Field.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day, officially established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005, commemorates the liberation of the concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau by the Soviet Red Army in Nazi-occupied Poland in 1945. The event honours the six million Jewish people killed in the Holocaust, as well as the millions of other victims of the Nazi government during World War II.

University Chaplain Donald MacEwan began by introducing the 'Bridging Generations' theme and invited University of St Andrews Principal and Vice-Chancellor Dame Sally Mapstone to speak before the crowd.

"This year's theme, Bridging Generations, invites reflection on transmission, on how remembrance is carried forward as direct testimony gives way to inheritance, and as knowledge takes new forms in each successive generation," Mapstone said.

MacEwan then invited Field to the podium, who spoke about how her parents survived the Holocaust via the Kindertransport, a programme that brought about 10,000 refugee children from Nazi Germany to Great Britain from 1938 to 1940. She shared stories, videos, and artefacts of her parents' experiences.

"We like to say that the Nazi plan didn't succeed," Field said. "Our family is still going. My sister and I are grandmothers to four grandchildren."

The St Andrews Madrigal Group then performed 'A Walk to Caesarea' by Hannah Szenes, a Hebrew poem also known as 'Eli Eli.'

Madrigal president Hanna Ward said understanding the deeper significance of the piece strengthened its impact: "A lot of us have sung this piece before. The words and the meaning are really beautiful."

Two students, Lilly Elliasevich and Cecelia Allentuck, shared a speech and a poem, respectively. Allentuck said her poem reflected on generations of Jewish families and her own connection to Judaism.

"I think the main purpose of [my poem] was those three words: be good, kind, and compassionate," Allentuck said. "I think those are always good reminders."

Assistant University Chaplain Bill Shackman closed the event by lighting six candles, representing the six million Jewish people who died in the Holocaust, and reciting the Kaddish, a traditional Jewish prayer for the dead. He shared messages of hope to be carried into next year's vigil.

"The Holocaust claimed the lives of over six million Jews who were murdered along with Roma, homosexuals, [the] disabled, political dissidents, and others," said Shackman. "The lessons to be learned are a stark moral warning: indifference, hatred, and dehumanisation can lead to horrific violence."

He continued, "Next year's Holocaust Memorial Day will give us yet another opportunity to reflect on how best to respond to humanity's capacity for evil and how to keep the world safe from genocide and hatred."

Photo By Joshua Pantano

West Wemyss Fife Tenants Faces Mass Eviction, Causes Uproar

NATHALIE HANZLIK-MEECH
News Writer

As of late January, seventeen tenants in the small Fife villages of West Wemyss and Denbeath face forthcoming eviction after their new landlord, Torah Capital, announced they were selling the properties they had bought in September 2025.

Some tenants have been given an eviction deadline of 22 March, while others have been told to move out by July. This recent development has caused backlash within this community, who are currently pursuing legal action in coordination with Fife Council and the Scottish Government.

> "[W]e're in a housing emergency, yet there's little to stop a wealthy landowner or private landlord."

Among those who have been sent recent eviction orders are tenants who have lived in their properties for up to 40 years. Ann Cation, 72, a retired headteacher, is among these long-term residents. According to *BBC News Scotland*, Cation "loved the house she has been renting" and was baffled to have received a hand-delivered letter saying [her] property had been sold.

Cation's husband Brian Cation, 74, a retired school technician, said, "[W]e feel absolutely devastated [...] [and] bitter to be evicted from our house, especially at our age. We thought this would be our forever home."

Richard Baker, MP for Glenrothes and Mid Fife, has been responsive to the outcry of these tenants. On 24 January, he chaired a general public meeting in Coaltown of Wemyss. As reported by *Fife Today*, Baker claimed, "[O]ne of the most worrying aspects of the recent Torah sale — other than the immediate need to fight eviction notices handed to seventeen households — is the fact that it illustrates only too well that current legislation doesn't provide the best protection for vulnerable tenants."

With regard to the registered address of Torah Capital being located in London, Baker commented, "[W]e're in a housing emergency, yet there's little to stop a wealthy landowner or private landlord with an extensive portfolio from deciding to offload housing stock in bulk in the future. We could be dealing with a similar situation again within months, or years. That needs to be addressed."

Fife Today reports that Baker said he will raise the issue in the House of Commons with the Prime Minister "at the first opportunity possible" and work with MSPs in the Scottish Parliament "to support strengthening legislation in Scotland."

Mairi McAllan, Scotland's Housing Minister, attended a meeting with MSP David Torrance of Kirkcaldy and assured West Wemyss tenants that they have her support. As reported by *The Courier*, Mairi McAllan confirmed: "I understand this will be an incredibly anxious time for residents [...] [T]he Scottish Government stands ready to discuss proposals for support with Fife Council, with whom we are continuing to engage."

> "Baker said he will be raising the issue in the House of Commons with the Prime Minister."

Currently, Fife Council is looking into bringing the houses into public ownership. According to *BBC News Scotland*, John Mills, Fife Council's head of housing, has confirmed that he has requested a meeting with Torah Capital before the planned evictions between March and July.

"I spoke with affected tenants [...] and I have assured them that the council will do everything within our legal powers to help them remain in their homes and prevent homelessness," Mills said. "I have asked for an urgent meeting with Torah Capital and I am awaiting their response."

Should Staff Teach Their Own Work?

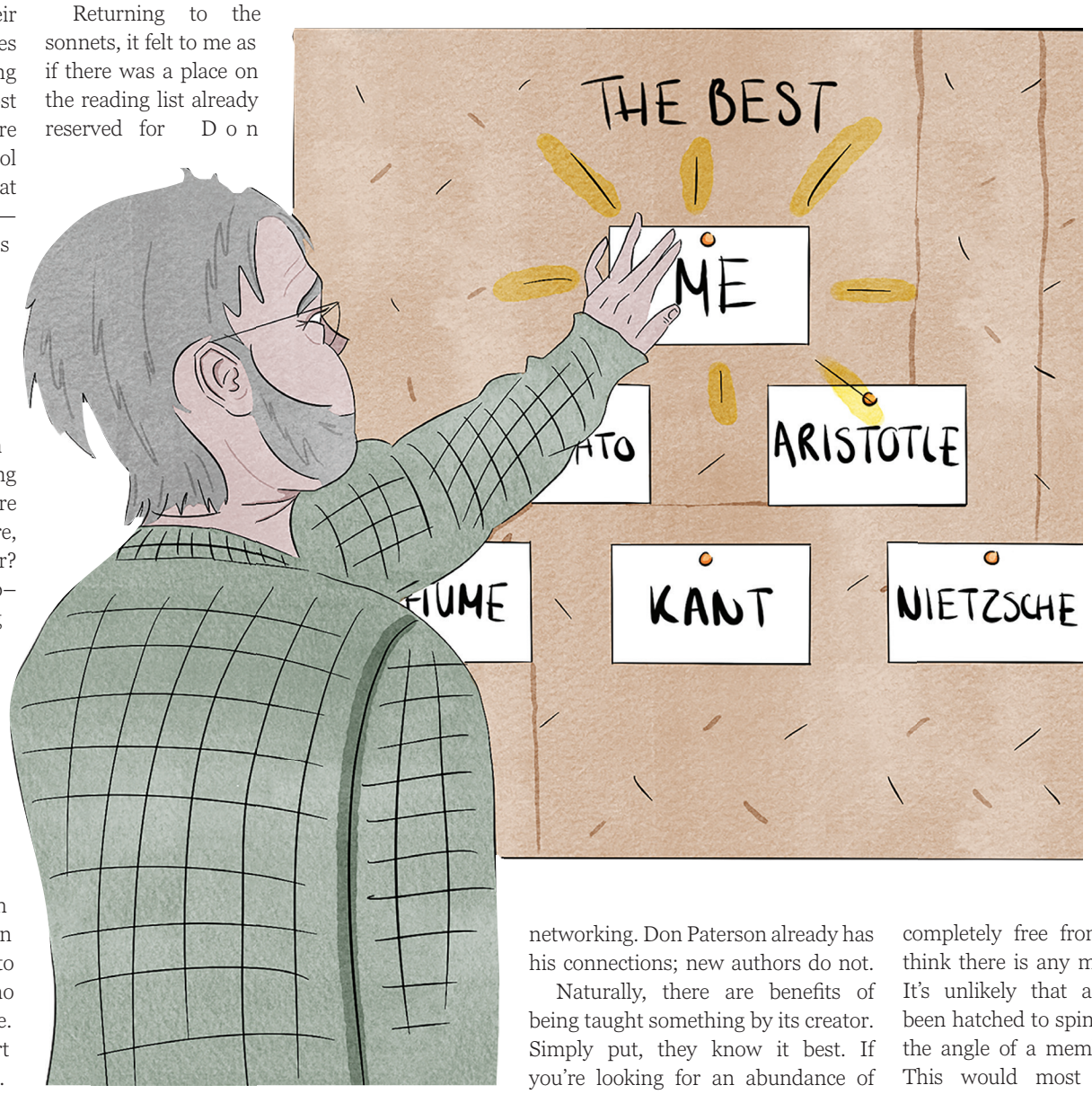
Putting your own name on the reading list has its drawbacks

ISLA JEFFRIES
VIEWPOINT WRITER

Semester one of first year English. Week 11 had commenced with daylight levels and academic motivation hitting an all-time low, as we began to read Don Paterson's *40 Sonnets*. Tucked away at the back of the book was a description of its author, stating that he had previously been a lecturer at the University of St Andrews. My immediate reaction was, how is that fair?

In high school, it was normal for lessons to be on various aged authors and their work, whose language was several decades out of date, to be understood by young teenagers. While our teachers had most likely dabbled in writing of their own, there was no question of it ever reaching a school syllabus. We were strictly taught names that would be easy to find in any bookshop — Shakespeare, Brontë, Dickens. And this is understandable — it's less tricky to grasp more niche aspects of a subject if you've already been able to wrap your head around the basics. However, in university the structure couldn't be more different. I was awed to find that past and current staff can easily include and teach their own work, just the same as if they were teaching a household name. While this may be more significant for those of us studying literature, the debate remains open: is this fair? Personally, I considered it to be a bit of a cop–out. If a student were caught submitting an essay that they wrote months ago for an assignment due the next day, they would be accused of self-plagiarism. If that's considered an academic crime, then how was this any different?

Of course, this is not to say that lecturers shouldn't provide their own work as supplementary reading, to which there are a range of benefits. Students can feel assured that they are learning from someone with considerable expertise in their field. Real substance can be added to lectures, while explanations for anyone who may be struggling will be in a familiar tone. It's among the primary texts, the true heart of the module, where the stakes are higher. There is far more power at play, as each decision or cut made over these texts will inevitably have a massive effect on how the module will play out. You could think of it as the *X Factor* of academia, where a handful of stars are made while plenty of others fail to qualify. Naturally, if you were given the opportunity to put yourself on the list which can transform novice writers into literary greats, there's a high chance that bias will be involved in this decision. Perhaps some see it as a cash grab? Putting your name down as required reading is guaranteed to boost sales for a short while, pulling you back from the fringes of irrelevancy. Or maybe we're overlooking the role of blind confidence? To consider your work worthy of sitting alongside some of the most well-established names in history is not exactly humble.



Returning to the sonnets, it felt to me as if there was a place on the reading list already reserved for Don Paterson. As an author and ex-lecturer, he was well known to the university. He appeared on the list like an old friend who has stopped showing up to dinner parties, but whose chair still remains empty out of respect. With each spot that gets taken up by someone familiar, the potential for a fresh new voice is curbed. What if by keeping that chair empty, the chance to meet someone different has been missed? It's almost like academic nepotism. If a university accepted a new student because they were already known to the admissions office, either through friends or family, there would be outrage. We know that this is unfair, as something like this would create one less place for someone equally as intelligent, yet without the advantage of influential networking. Don Paterson already has his connections; new authors do not.

Naturally, there are benefits of being taught something by its creator. Simply put, they know it best. If you're looking for an abundance of detail on a certain topic, where better to get this than from the mind where it was first thought up? The original author's ideas on their work are like gold dust, and may well be one of the strongest sources a student could wish for in an essay. However, if the author is seen as infallible, this can provide problems. When we learn about those outside the lecture theatre, many of whom have been dead for decades, if not centuries, we're allowed to get messy. It's a free-for-all of criticism and controversy. In their absence, we're permitted to outwardly say if we don't like or even can't stand their work. We can disagree, argue, debate, and make up our own minds. However, once the creator of that work is standing directly in front of you, it becomes far too awkward to try to point out any of its flaws.

So, when we get down to it, who really benefits from this decision? Could it be that the writers and researchers, esteemed as they are, have found a way of staying within the cycle of relevancy for at least another year, while their Waterstones sales temporarily skyrocket? Or is this decision swayed toward the masses? The students are being taught what has been handed to them; the direction of their learning has already been agreed before they've touched down in Leuchars. In any case, we should be wary of whose word we take as gospel, if anyone's, as unfortunately, nobody can be completely free from bias. Truly, I don't think there is any malicious intent at play. It's unlikely that a corrupt scheme has been hatched to spin a narrative or obscure the angle of a member of staff's teaching. This would most likely be considered academic misconduct. All we have to ask ourselves is where the scholarly talk ends and the personal opinions begin.

ILLUSTRATION BY EVE FISHMAN

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Devil's Advocate

Is It Okay Not To Care?



GREGORY CHANG

57% YES

ALEIA BHALLA

NO 43%



Let me be clear. I'm not saying suffering doesn't matter, or that civic participation is optional. Vote. Don't be cruel. Help when you can. But the demand that every educated person maintain emotional engagement with every global crisis isn't moral clarity. It's a recipe for burnout disguised as virtue. Be proud if you dedicate yourself to a cause. But don't, perhaps, sharpen the guillotine for those who simply don't share your particular passion, wagering that their indifference must trace back to daddy's credit card.

Here's the uncomfortable arithmetic: you have roughly sixteen waking hours per day. Subtract work, relationships, and basic functioning. What remains isn't infinite. Attention given to tracking one crisis is attention unavailable for your struggling friend, your dissertation, or, in a more charitable light, the St Andrews food bank, which could actually use volunteers. This isn't selfishness; it's maths. Triage isn't immoral in medicine, and it's not immoral in moral life either. Pretending attention is unlimited doesn't create more capacity; it just ensures you engage superficially with everything and deeply with nothing.

You have heard it said that 'silence equals complicity.' Am I therefore complicit in the child labour in Congolese cobalt mines? I own a phone. I haven't posted about Myanmar this week, does that make me a quiet supporter of the junta? Yemen, Sudan, Congo, Afghanistan, Haiti, climate disasters, trafficking, factory farming. An endless queue of catastrophes in which I am complicit.

The problem is, of course, that at this very moment, atrocities and emergencies are unfolding across dozens of countries. If I must actively resist all of them to avoid complicity, I become a day trader, endlessly rebalancing my 'care portfolio' across crises. Watching the moral markets, chasing the next spike, selling yesterday's outrage to buy today's. A full-time job with no closing bell and no off-hours.

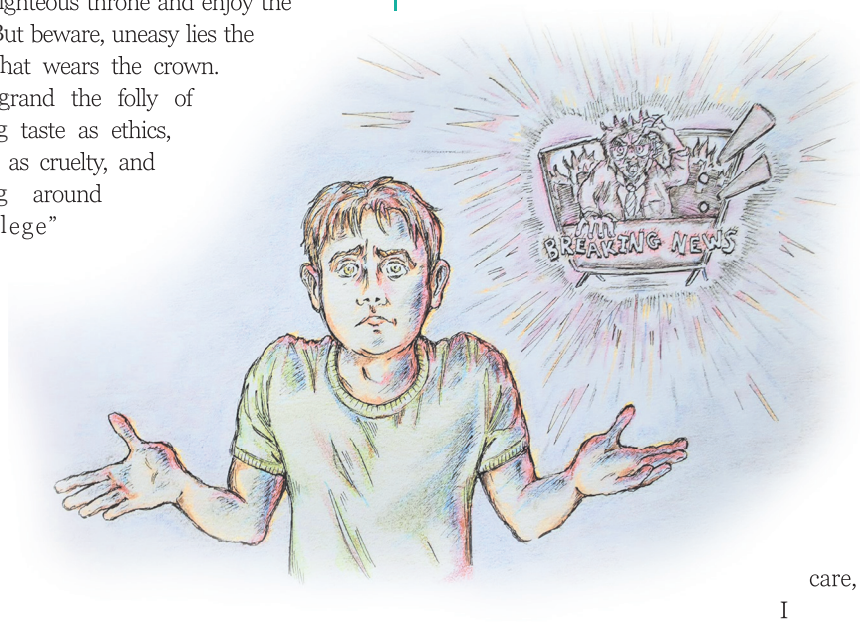
But if I'm permitted to select some causes while remaining silent on others, then I need to know: how to square the circle? Who decides which silences equal complicity and which are merely unfortunate?

If silence on any crisis equals complicity, then everyone is complicit in everything they're not actively resisting right now. And if everyone is complicit in everything, the term loses all meaning. You're left with a framework that demands infinite engagement. Absurd and impossible. Or collapses into childish finger-pointing about whose causes count.

That's not moral philosophy. That's moral blackmail with a syllogism attached.

So, here's my modest proposal. If you care deeply about everything and anything, wonderful. Go touch grass occasionally. But this business of policing what others are permitted to care about? Insufferable. Stay in your lane. Post your cause. Worry about your own thoughts and prayers. A human has a certain finite capacity for grief, and you must pick and choose, which means, inevitably, leaving out terrible things and people who didn't deserve to die. That's not a moral failure. That's being human.

Those who crusade against the 'apolitical' are making less of an argument than a sermon. They preach to the converted, to the choir, while the pews empty out. Fine. Climb onto your high, righteous throne and enjoy the view. But beware, uneasy lies the head that wears the crown. How grand the folly of treating taste as ethics, silence as cruelty, and flinging around "privilege" and "complicity" so eagerly, they fade into the ambient hum of moral theatre. If the goal is mobilising students toward genuine engagement, shame and surveillance won't rally them. It will likely achieve the opposite. Defensiveness, resentment, and justified scepticism toward moral policing masquerading as activism.



Care about what moves you. Let others do the same. In the digital age, everything is built around fleeting emotion, and while this may not matter when it comes to our parasocial relationships, it is devastating when it comes to our personal ones. When it comes to us acknowledging the atrocities of war and the humanitarian crises across the globe, we begin to forget, and so it becomes easier to forgive – even when forgiveness isn't earned.

But today more than ever, we cannot afford not to care. We must try our best to counteract the compassion fatigue of the internet and make it a point to feel every 'big feeling' that is subverted by our ping-ponging algorithms.

From every viral video's hook and every news headline, to the 'lore-drop' texts on the group chat, everything is trying to draw you in and make you think to yourself, "Hey, this seems important [...] maybe I do care. Maybe I *should* listen." But if all that we encounter on the internet today hopes to tell us why we should care, I wonder why we need to be convinced in the first place. Humans are by design empathetic creatures. We are evolutionarily built to care for our peers, to love our children, and to nurture our societies as a whole. After all, isn't our ability to empathise exactly what distinguishes us from most of our animal counterparts?

And yet we are straying away from this. We have stopped empathising, and under the guise of 'protecting our peace,' we refuse to go out of our way for our friends or to take on the burden of trying to help.

> "Every emotion that reminds us of our humanity is rooted in *collective care*."

And so, we must ask ourselves, is this okay? I say, undoubtedly, No!

In the last decade, we have learnt to desensitise ourselves to both the horrors and the joys of the world. Hours of our day are spent half-asleep and dopamine-starved on our couches scrolling between videos of puppy yoga, genocide, and distinctly un-subtle ads for Bloom supplements. And what do we learn at the end of this? Not about flexibility, or the world, or nutrients ... but instead we learn the art of decidedly not caring.

You may argue that we are only sorting through information, but in reality, the filter we are using is one which prevents us from ever reflecting on ourselves and the environment we live in. Nothing is exciting anymore, and nothing fills us with enough rage for our passion to last longer than a few weeks.

But the truth is, the most incredible displays of human connection and milestone moments in one's life are those marked by exceptional amounts of *caring*: freaking out about album drops and crying about failed situationships; protesting on the streets of a college town; creating masterpieces in the wake of immense pain and unconditional love.

Every human experience worth experiencing and every emotion that reminds us of our humanity is rooted in *collective care*. Now, I don't know about you, but I refuse to lose these connections because I wasn't willing to bear the inconvenience and the discomfort of *knowing*.

We cannot risk our care turning into indifference in an effort to protect ourselves from some tears. The second it does, we risk losing our laughter and with that everything that made us human in the first place.

ILLUSTRATION BY VERONIKA SULLIVAN

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Non-Drinkers Are Killing British Culture

AMELIA MACKENZIE
VIEWPOINT WRITER

Recently, Britain has been under invasion. The statistics are shocking and, like many, I am lamenting, "What is happening to this country?" But wait — before I am accused of painting St George's Crosses on roundabouts and making rackets outside Portsmouth hotels, that's not where this article is going. Indeed, it concerns itself with a completely different, truly disturbing crisis: sobriety is settling in Britain.

Yes, recent research all points towards drinking culture's decline in Britain as people choosing sobriety are quickly multiplying. Gen Z, in particular, is drinking significantly less than previous generations, with supposedly 21% being teetotal and considerably more foregoing the great British binge entirely. However, whilst this supposed death of British drinking culture is being praised by influencers, health gurus, and other perverts, I consider it my patriotic duty to warn of the consequences of a teetotal Britain.

One of our uniquely British characteristics is our veneration of booze. No other nation can get as utterly s***-faced in whatever distant town Mr. Ryanair can reach. We are a people who would go to the opening of an envelope if there was booze at the function. How else would we get through sports matches, funerals, or our niece's third birthday party? We must be intoxicated, and a humble J20 doesn't provide the buzz it used to. It's perfected at university with raucous Wednesday nights, "welcome drinks," and slurred society chants. As a fellow British student, I don't see a drunken fresher or a "tactful chunner," I see a patriot.

Who would take the baton to preserve such heritage if we went sober? Would British culture collapse? OK, I jest, but there is some truth about sobriety's incompatibility with Britain: it's reflective of an obsession with perfectionism that has just never suited us.

Today this attack comes not from the few who cannot drink for religious or medical reasons, but from influencers who bang on endlessly about "wellness" and "the grind." In this virtuous vein, they are convincing the world to go sober. They have an extreme suspicion of pleasure and indulgence, a water bottle fetish, and recipes for blueberry-protein-oat-based pancakes the same colour and taste as clothes dryer filter fluff. They are sober, smug, and strangely familiar ...

Looking to the 17th Century, there's an uncanny reflection of the Puritans who similarly condemned any pleasure and excess, particularly drunkenness. Their beliefs were initially rejected by most Britons for being as weird as they were boring, and consequently the Puritans rightly deported themselves in 1620 to set up their own land to be run by sober madmen where it remains as such today. Unfortunately, the Puritans gained control over England in 1649, but after eleven years of sobriety and sinlessness under Cromwell, the misery finally ended with a drunken cheer by (as any British child knows) "The king who brought back partying."

Any future attempts to condemn boozing always failed. British drinking culture brought communities together. It was ingrained in our traditions and today remains part of our raucous, imperfect, but unpretentious personality.

Fast-forward to 2026, and health obsessives are trying to recreate Cromwell's Britain, warts and all. However, whilst temperance resonates with American almond mums channelling their Puritan ancestors, Britian cannot surrender its future again to soulless and sober misery. And I will not cease from mental fight, nor shall my glass sleep in my hand, till we have our boozing back in Britain's green and pleasant land.

ILLUSTRATION BY KYLA BIESTY



The Curse of 'Sociographic' Memory

POPPIENA HORSINGTON
VIEWPOINT WRITER

Doesn't our whole life revolve around our relationships with others? People we love, people we loathe, people we think are cute and/or hot, and everyone in between. Very often, the people we meet in passing just fade into obscurity or become just another face in the St Andrews crowd. However, sometimes, especially for those burdened with a memory that adores and obsesses over social interactions, these people do *not* blur away. They instead become a figure that you see everywhere, clouded by the miasma of the odd bit of knowledge you remember about them. This is what I deem the curse of the small talk memory: knowing more than you thought you would, or should, about someone, but not enough to do a whole lot with.

Firstly, I would like to specify that my memory is only good when it comes to these random facts about people. Birthdays I forget; important dates wander away from me with ease; and I have only the usual amount of competence with names and stuff. However, if you ask me what my eighth-grade locker buddy's favourite song was, I would immediately answer with 'Sitting on the Dock of the Bay' by Otis Redding. I did not choose to remember this piece of information, regardless of how good the song is. What was meant to be a little conversation during a five-minute break has been wedged in the nooks of my brain ever since.

Let's do a shoe swap briefly. You meet someone at a party and get chatting. Once all the easy questions are out of the way, once we know where everyone is from and what everyone studies (followed up nearly always with "Oh wow, that's so impressive!" if you are nice and kindhearted), you find yourself following these threads of conversation into whatever web they weave. This could include where people were born, their hobbies (both past and present), or their favourite holiday. For the small talk endurer, these nuggets of human information slip away, replaced by song lyrics or something of the like. However, for the socially obsessed, these coals dig into the crevices of your brain and become diamonds; chunks of knowledge that are too embedded to be eroded, but not pertinent enough to daily life that they pop up constantly.

In a town this small, you are almost guaranteed to see this one-and-done acquaintance somewhere. I know I have made many an awkward eye contact, wherein I stare at someone too long in anticipation of them remembering me. Yet, there is no worse feeling than having an isolated interaction and then inevitably bumping into the person again and having them not remember you. They think you are meeting for the first time, but you know that you are actually re-meeting — and it puts you in a dilemma. Do you admit that this is not a new introduction at all? That choice makes you seem like you are an enthusiast and fan of this person, to the point of excessive recollection. Moreover, it makes them feel embarrassed for forgetting someone who so clearly cared about that one-off conversation. On behalf of us cursed with a socio-genic memory, let me assure you that this interaction was the regular amount of interesting! We enjoyed it just as much as you did (hopefully), only our minds refuse to let go of the details. I find it best to just keep quiet and relearn everything I already knew. I usually learn something new anyway, and thus my secret archives grow only further!

> "[M]y memory is only good when it comes to these random facts about people."

Meeting new people? Mostly fun, in the right circumstances and mood! Remembering random facts that sometimes make people uncomfortable because they do not remember having that conversation? Less enjoyable. For many, you just fell out of a coconut tree, as Kamala Harris would say. But for all of us who hang onto those small talk moments, we know that we exist in the context of all in which we live and what came before us (thank you, Kamala). Regardless of the potential embarrassment and perceived fan behaviour, I believe there is a beauty in paying attention to people!

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A Reluctant Love Letter to Football

A sports trip from inspiring, to broken, and back again

ALEX MCQUIBBAN
VIEWPOINT WRITER

Association Football is far and away the world's most popular sport. Love it or hate it, it's here to stay ... and there are a lot of reasons to hate it: the players, the fans, and FIFA itself are all reasonable targets for contempt.

A typical ninety minutes of the 'beautiful game' is replete with players diving, abusing the referee, and putting on the most unbelievably unsporting theatrics. If you're lucky, you might see headbutting, kung-fu, kicking, and biting. A fan of any self-respecting sport would likely come away thinking that footballers are the least honourable athletes on the planet. Indeed, footballers are notorious cheaters, abusers, and bullies on and off the pitch, with many famous footballers having been accused of truly heinous crimes, only to have their contracts renewed.

It should come as no surprise, then, that their respective clubs and the sport's regulatory body are hardly saints either. Half the clubs nowadays are owned by dodgy conglomerates or reputation-laundering dictatorships with horrific human rights records. And this sportswashing rot goes right to the top. Qatar – a nation known more for its reliance on slave labour than its strong footballing tradition – bribed its way to hosting the 2022 World Cup, before FIFA somehow managed to find an even worse candidate to host the 2034 edition: Saudi Arabia. FIFA President Gianni Infantino was even kind enough to give its inaugural FIFA Peace Prize to everyone's least favourite US President, crybaby, and soon-to-be Overlord of Venezuela and Greenland, Donald Trump.

Curiously, what I find puts people off football the most is football fans. They're perceived as brutish hooligans whose views on race, gender and politics are, to put it mildly, at odds with progressive norms. And this perception isn't far off. It's not entirely uncommon to see Nazi salutes at *SS Lazio* games (emphasis on the SS) or banners with anti-arab slogans at *Beitar Jerusalem* matches, and fans of English clubs *Chelsea* and *Millwall* are just generally known for being far-right xenophobes.

From this excoriating description, *dear reader*, you might assume I don't particularly like football. Well, you'd be wrong ... mostly. My love of the game was first kindled watching Barcelona's Lionel Messi, whose still-unparalleled footballing ability was, then, not overshadowed by sordid off-the-pitch controversies. This love was further cemented by appreciating *FC Barcelona's* resistance against Spanish fascism, by chanting for Catalan independence with thousands of fans at the Camp Nou, and admittedly, by giving into the tribalism that is recognising arch-rivals *Real Madrid* represented everything Barcelona was not: arrogant super-star players, Francoism, and suitably chauvinistic fans. However, numerous scandals, including Messi's botched departure, eroded Barcelona's sheen, and, for a long time, I felt I had fallen out of love. I still wanted Barcelona to win but no longer actively followed the sport.

That all changed recently. Before moving to Scotland, I was already fond of *Celtic Football Club*. Sure, the club didn't have Barcelona's sheer talent, but they had a similar ethos. Founded by Irish Catholics in Glasgow, not long after the genocidal famine Britain engineered in Ireland, the club and its fans are committed anti-colonialists. Every Celtic match, without fail, features Palestinian, Irish and Basque flags. Their arch-rivals, *Rangers*, represent everything Celtic are not: Protestant ascendancy, loyalist unionism, and monarchy. Its fans fly Israeli flags and Union Jacks, and the club long followed an unwritten policy barring Catholic players. What really did it for me, however, was going to matches. In all the games we've been to at Celtic Park, affectionately called "Paradise" by fans, my partner and I have encountered nothing but warmth and joviality. We've met fellow Irish-speakers, families with their kids, a cohort of old pensioners – one of whom spent an entire match offering us sweets and club trivia – and passionate if slightly obnoxious hecklers. We've sung *Fields of Athenry* with hundreds of compatriots and celebrated incredible goals. To make things better, Celtic players work their arses off, scarcely complain, and get right up after falling down.

> "Football's not for everyone, but it's not inherently exclusionary."

Football's not for everyone, but it's not inherently exclusionary. For every Ronaldo, there's a Messi; for every Rangers, there's a Celtic; and for every far-right racist, there's a nice old lady handing out sweets.

Come rain or shine, victory or defeat, whatever the roll of the dice, there's no place I'd rather be than Paradise.

Bang, and the Ads are Gone!

Poorly made ads are increasingly unescapable

STELLA PAK-GUÉNNETTE
VIEWPOINT WRITER

A few days ago, I opened Instagram and noticed something that wasn't exactly shocking: *pay for an ad-free version, £3.99/month*. Not a pop-up ad or a sponsored post, but a straight-up offer to buy my way out of constant interruption. Amazon Prime did the same thing to me a month ago. The message was pretty clear in that I could either keep watching and get interrupted more, or pay for a quieter experience.

I'm starting to realise we don't dip in and out of advertising anymore. We live *inside* of it, unless we pay to leave. When did we suddenly agree to live in a world where uninterrupted thought, watching, or scrolling is considered a premium feature?

I grew up around advertising. Both my parents work in the industry and, as a kid, I'd see campaigns their teams were working on. They took months of planning and care. Even if I didn't fully understand them at the time, I could always tell there was a certain intention behind them, a story that was being told. You were supposed to remember something from it: a song, a line, a feeling.

That's the part that's missing now. Advertising didn't just get more frequent; it got a whole lot emptier. Most of the ads we see today feel like they aren't designed to stick with us; they're designed to slip right past us, barely registering before the next one replaces it. They're not trying to be iconic or memorable. They're trying to be efficient.

The Levi's *Makeba* ad from 2017 is memorable to me for a simple reason: it was intentional in a way that's now rare. Real people, real music, and a single idea carried through from start to finish. At eleven, still convinced jeans were wildly uncomfortable and refusing to wear them, I wasn't the target audience, and it still stuck. The intention wasn't optimisation or being in a thousand feeds; it was to be watched and remembered. Today, ads may still be intentional, but that intention has definitely shifted. If I remember one now, it's usually because it annoyed me.

What's ironic is that even my parents warned me not to go into it. "It's not the same anymore," they'd say, half-joking, half-resigned. At the time, I assumed that was just the standard generational complaint of "everything was better before." But now I think they meant something more specific: the industry didn't just evolve, it thinned out.

Not so long ago, when advertising was finite – a TV slot, a magazine page, a billboard you'd pass every day on the same commute – there was pressure to make something *worth* the physical space that it occupied. Now, advertising is infinite. It feels less like something we encounter occasionally and more like something we live inside. It fills every single available gap: embedded in YouTube videos, halfway through shows you already pay for, tucked into articles pretending not to sell you anything at all. When sheer volume becomes the goal, memorability becomes instantly optional.

The result is a world where advertising doesn't feel like persuasion to buy a product anymore; it feels more like background radiation. Always there, vaguely irritating, and impossible to fully escape — unless you pay, or opt out of modern life entirely. When platforms offer ad-free subscriptions, usually on top of what you *already* pay, what they're really selling isn't luxury. It's relief. They create the noise, then charge you to turn the volume back down.

> "Today ads may still be intentional, but that intention has definitely shifted."

So when Instagram asks me to pay for an ad-free experience, I'm not really tempted. I'm unsurprised — I saw it coming. Advertising used to want our attention; now it simply assumes it. It's fair to ask: who cares? Ads are annoying, and this isn't exactly breaking news. No one is losing sleep over Instagram or Amazon Prime ads. But culture doesn't always shift dramatically. It changes quietly when the things that surround us every day stop trying to be thoughtful, memorable, or even human.

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It's the End of The World as We Know It

If history is analog, what happens to the footprint of our digital world?

SOPHIE RAE
VIEWPOINT WRITER

Part of a temporary existence means acknowledging the inevitable end of it. We grieve who we are today, knowing the micromoments will be gone by tomorrow. Life is so finite it leaves us desperate to cherish it, but it also makes us desperate to live on in some way: in memory, in stories, in writing. When there are billions of us, how do we differentiate ourselves? How do we avoid falling into the blur of time? It's terrifying. From meticulously detailed autobiographies to drunkenly etching your name into the Aikman's bathroom stalls, there is something unifying about the fear of being forgotten; the fear of moving on having left nothing behind.

Gone are the days of relying on time capsules. Instead, we have terabytes of storage holding our every text chain between friends and family, the songs we listen to while putting away clothes, and our favourite — and least favourite — shows we can not stop watching. And then there's social media, where we can post our sense of style and personal aesthetic to a 30-second soundbite of a song we really like, showing off our unique (but probably not too unique) sense of identity.

With the popularity of social media, personality and individuality have become synonymous with how you can prove it. From posting your Spotify Wrapped to carefully curating your liked reels to show off your niche interests and sense of humour, it begs the question: if other people can't see it, does your uniqueness exist? What would be left of you if the online world went offline? When every digital receipt of our own identity is gone and only the old material artefacts remain, who are we and what do we look like to those who never knew us?



Several years ago, due to a combination of user error and a lack of understanding of iCloud, I accidentally permanently deleted my entire collection of photos. These went back years, and it still scares me now to think there are memories I have forgotten about, their recollection now unprompted without any concrete reminders. Well, clearly not concrete if all it takes is the wrong two clicks of a button for them to disappear. I was left with the few physical photos I had printed on my dodgy home printer, their colours muddied due to a lack of magenta ink and wrinkled from where I had Blu-Tacked them to my bedroom wall. When I'm not here to fill those gaps with my memories, there won't be much left of me from that time at all.

Less individualistically, what do we have left of ourselves as a species if the online world collapses? We are so far removed from our own physical reality. If future generations look back, there will be a cyberspace-sized gap. We will appear to have still used Walkmans or CDs since they were the last fully physical development in the music world before digitalisation. Wireless headphones will lie as an abandoned mystery without any clear function. Fax machines were the closest we got to instant messaging. We were not the generation of progress, and we did not leave any new marks.

As easy as it would be to vilify the online world, it is a core part of our daily lives for a reason. It makes so many parts of our lives easier: communication, education, and the arts. Its value to our contemporary society is not inherently more or less than that of the material world. I just believe that we should not altogether abandon our physical footprints. Start a diary, make art, handwrite that letter, and print those photos. Or don't. Maybe we don't need to be remembered; maybe that's shallow. The question if we *should* be remembered matters not; we simply *want* to be, and that is as human a trait as our short, finite lives.

ILLUSTRATION BY ANA BROCKMANN ALDASORO

Sharp Skates, Sharper Pencils

What figure skating can teach about essay writing

MEGAN TITHERIDGE-STARK
VIEWPOINT WRITER

Our welcome back to St Andrews was pitifully disappointing. The start of the new semester beckons in fresh deadlines, required readings, essay questions, and a pointed lack of the Scottish winter I was promised. Luckily for us, however, the Winter Olympics are here to dust our academic worries with a layer of delightfully distracting snow. Milano's ice skating arena is home to 2026's Olympic Figure Skating and where I, for one, will be spending the majority of my mental focus this February.



The smooth ice, adoring crowds, music, jumps, spins; the whole culture behind skating is spectacle. A harmonious marriage of artistry and technical ability. The perfect sport. Well ... maybe I would have said that in the nineties. Yes, I love Figure Skating, but the changes made to the sport in the early noughties have slowly devolved the majority of performances into meandering, lifeless disappointment. The word 'performance' is perhaps too generous.

In 2004, the International Skating Union (ISU) changed the official grading system used in competitions from the 6.0 system to ... whatever we have now. Skaters were placed on a comparative scale within each competition, meaning there was no absolute scale to ensure consistency across comps. "Too subjective!", the ISU cried over an inherently artistic sport. After some impossibly juicy scandals, the old system was scrapped. Goodbye, six-point-oh.

The old system valued artistry and technique equally, as each held the same maximum possible mark, 6.0. The new system has *no* maximum marks. Each element (i.e. jumps, spins, etc.) has an individual 'Base Value' which is then added to, or subtracted from based on the execution of the element. Whilst there is a score for performance (which is still subjective ... looking at you, ISU), the technical score always outweighs it.

Jumps. The icons of the skating world. Axels, Loops, Lutzes. A complex jump can score so highly that there is no need to fret over small matters like: listening to the music, or skating well, or pointing your toes, or — I could go on.

I hear your sighs from behind your Palompo's cappuccino. I do admit, none of this (exciting!) detail is helping your empty Word doc. What can all this teach us about essay writing?

Like skating, writing is an art; it's a perfect balance of artistry and technical ability. Art cannot be divided up into little tick boxes. We are not graded paragraph-by-paragraph or point-by-point. A logical argument, presented illogically, is an illogical argument. Presentation of the *overall* work is the difference between a 2.2 and a 1st; a dwindling fanbase and a filled stadium.

Flair, style, dare I say it, 'Viewpoint' is inherently subjective. Annoying if you're trying to get your degree or win a competition, but it must be valued equally to technical ability. When technique is emphasised over individuality, we have only a collection of disjointed elements. A man springing about an ice rink like a deaf kangaroo or a drab essay filtering through point, evidence, explanation ... point, evidence, explanation ... point, evidence ...

Whilst I can't skate very well, the legends of the ice still manage to inspire me. The emotion in Michelle Kwan's perfectly-timed spirals leaves me awe-struck every time. She is to ice what a good writer is to paper: confidently in charge. Domineering, even. But paper has no feelings, so whip those paragraphs into shape! I'd give the same advice to an aspiring skater or a student struggling with an essay. Find balance between style and content, be brave, and show emotion. We live in the age of technology; if I wanted to read a robotic essay, I could. Don't get me wrong, I don't care to read your sob story, but give me an insight into how your mind works. A good skater has something to say. Force those pages to say what you think. Wear the trousers. the sparkling dress and deadly blades. Whatever gets you in the mood, I guess.

ILLUSTRATION BY LOUISA NGUYEN

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Just A Spoonful of...?

On supplements

DESDEMONA SMYTH
VIEWPOINT WRITER

There is a particular kind of optimism required to believe your body image issues will be resolved by something Kourtney Kardashian is selling as *Lemme Burn*, *Lemme Curb*, or *Lemme Tone*.

The modern supplement aisle is arranged to be a chapel: soothing labels and soft colours mixed with words that imply both science and behavioural absolution. *Cleanse. Burn. Detox. Reset*. The promises are vague enough to evade scrutiny and specific enough to feel personal. In the United States of America, supplements are not regulated by the same regulations that food, medicine, and confectionery are subject to. Your supplement can legally contain almost anything.

Amongst the most popular of these 'somethings' is green tea extract, sold as a metabolism booster, a fat burner. Tea conjures images of restraint, ritual; steam rising in a calm kitchen. But the encapsulated extract is not a cup of tea; it is a concentrated chemical distillation, sometimes delivering in a single dose what would take over 25 cups to consume. In that concentration lies a fact that sits awkwardly beside the branding: green tea extract supplements have been linked to cases of acute liver injury. Some people recover after stopping the product; yet a significant number of people suffer from acute liver failure, and require transplants — failure to get one can lead to death.

The pastel label tells a more flattering story — one in which nature has been captured, intensified, and made convenient — where our bodies are uncorrected by Western medicine, ignorant of ibuprofen, and the natural world with every single person in the exact same way. The packaged language hovers just shy of a medical claim: *supports fat metabolism, promotes detoxification*. Recently, I came across a TikTok promising that their (TikTok shop) Magnesium supplements (only £7.95!) would slow the ageing process in my body by *a complete reprogramming of microbial biology, genomic stability*, and revitalising exhausted stem cells. All in 200mg of magnesium! But these supplements in the United States are not regulated like drugs: they do not need to prove they work before being sold; they do not undergo the kind of large, rigorous trials we expect for medications that promise to completely change my molecular structure. Instead, the burden of proof drifts to the consumer, who is already tired, already worried, already primed to believe that their body is a problem waiting to be solved.

Weight-loss culture is the atmosphere that makes all of this feel reasonable. It teaches, relentlessly, that shaping your body is a moral obligation and that failing to do so is a kind of negligence. Under that pressure, a capsule marketed as "natural" does not feel like a risk, but an easy solution to a Sisyphean insecurity.

The celebrity endorsement is the final, sinister reassurance of 'success.' A wealthy person, who has access to private chefs, personal trainers, and plastic surgeons, tells you they love whatever supplement, powder, gummy, drink: we are meant to feel that we are sharing in their secrets. What you are not meant to ask is why someone whose life is buffered by wealth, staff, and elite medical care would have your medical interests in mind.

The real seduction of supplement culture is not that it promises dramatic transformation, it is that this transmutation comes with minimal disruption to your current schedule. You do not have to confront your schedule, your time management, your sleep deprivation, or your relationship with food. You can keep everything exactly as it is and add a capsule; if one supplement doesn't work, maybe try taking it in gummy form?

When harm comes, it comes fast and quietly. The liver does not send out a weekly newsletter; it fails gradually, then all at once, often in people trying to improve their health. There is absolutely nothing foolish about wanting to *feel* better in your body. The want is deeply human. The danger is confusing what is *natural* and what is *harmless*, *celebrity* and *credibility*.

Capital is gained in many ways by making people feel insecure about their bodies; capital does not weigh risk against reward. It does not care if you live or die, it does not know your medical history. The body is not a trend, and it will not respond to branding. It keeps its own records, it tallies excess, strain, and injury without regard for testimonials or aesthetics. By the time your body settles score, and it always will, the marketing has long since moved on to the next miracle.

A capsule cannot know you. Real health is slow and unglamorous. Don't mistake this argument for one licking the boot of Western medicine — it has its own failings and shortcomings. Rather, I aim to alert readers to a tragedy: this tragedy is not only that some supplements can harm us. It is that we have been convinced that salvation lies within a bottle while the conditions making us unwell remain perfectly intact.

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THESAINTNEWSPAPER.CO.UK/VIEWPOINT



Letter to the Editor

Submitted by an Anonymous Student

I write this email with a level of grief and urgency that I hope you will forgive, but not dismiss. What is happening in Iran is not political unrest. It is not a dispute. It is state-orchestrated brutality on a scale that defies comprehension, and it is unfolding in real time. Credible investigations and internal documentation reviewed by independent journalists show that at least 36,500 civilians were killed in just two days during the most recent nationwide crackdown.

Morgues are so full that bodies are stacked, unidentified, unreleased. Families wander from hospital to hospital, prison to prison, morgue to morgue, begging for information, often to be met with threats, silence, or cruelty. Hospitals, once places of refuge, have become places of terror. There are verified reports of security forces entering wards to shoot wounded protestors in their beds, or forcibly removing injured patients mid-treatment, never to return. Medical neutrality has been obliterated. Doctors have been sentenced to death for treating their injured compatriots. For families who finally receive confirmation of death, thecruelty does not end. They are not told gently. They are not shown dignity.

Many are told, bluntly and viciously: "We killed your bastard. Come pay and take its body."

Families are forced to pay thousands of dollars in so-called "bullet fees", exorbitant fees for the ammunition used to kill their own children. If they cannot pay, they are threatened with having the bodies burned or withheld, denied burial, denied closure, denied humanity. In some cases, perhaps the most grotesque and vile of all, families are forced to bring sweets (shirini) alongside the money. In Iranian culture, shirini is brought to celebrate joy: weddings, births, achievements. Parents are compelled to bring symbols of celebration while collecting the bodies of their murdered children. This is psychological torture. This is humiliation weaponised.

Detention centres are overflowing. So many people have been arrested that the state has reportedly resorted to releasing detainees after administering lethal injections, allegedly potassium-based, knowing they will die days later in agony, quietly, outside prison walls, uncounted. Torture, disappearance, and slow death have become administrative tools.

This is not distant to me. My own family, respected businesspeople in import, mining, and manufacturing industries, have been detained, threatened, and warned to "stay in line." Our livelihoods were used as leverage against our silence. In the 2022 protests, my grandmother's home was barraged with tear gas, serving as a warning to my family: obey, or suffer. Some relatives who Khamenei deemed a threat as early as 8 years ago, were quietly assassinated under the duress of natural death causes. This is how Khamenei's regime governs, through fear, collective punishment, and trauma inflicted across generations.

You cannot imagine the pain and horror Iranians are living with. Parents who wake each day unsure whether their children are alive. Families too terrified to mourn publicly.

A generation taught that even grief is dangerous. And yet, despite this, Iranians remain among the brightest, most intellectually and culturally extraordinary people in the world. We are a nation that has produced Nobel Prize winners, globally celebrated scientists, philosophers, poets, and filmmakers whose work has shaped world cinema and thought. Iranian students, current and future, are resilient, brilliant, and acutely aware of who stood with them when it mattered. They will remember who spoke. They will remember who stayed silent.

The University of St Andrews has spoken out on other humanitarian crises, including Gaza and Ukraine. That moral clarity makes silence on Iran not just painful, but indefensible. Human rights cannot be conditional. Compassion cannot be selective. If the University does nothing, it sends a devastating message to Iranian students and future generations: that some suffering is worth acknowledgement, and some is not.

Universities are not only places of learning. They are guardians of conscience. History will not ask whether or not it was comfortable to speak. Please do not let the University of St Andrews be remembered for its silence.

The Saint *encourages all opinions and perspectives. If you would like to send a Letter to the Editor please email editor@thesaintnewspaper.co.uk.*

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The Heart of High Street: Choosing Local

MAISIE EVERITT
Features Writer

"People don't realise how local we are," said Trajan Nader of Blackhorn Burgers. Amongst a growing sea of commercial chains, the ecosystem of local produce in St Andrews is often overlooked. I spoke to three businesses here in St Andrews to explore how local produce can shape both community and individual wellbeing.

With food sources as close as Luvians, Fisher & Donaldson, and Hendersons Farms, Blackthorn employees Nader and Ryan Rooney both described Blackhorn as an operation with compact scale and great ease.

The company was founded in 2013 by Justin Hughes, who was brought up in St Andrews and sought to create a brand that ties community to business.

"I'm sure people would come here a lot more knowing it's all locally produced. When people realise how local it is, it definitely puts a smile on their face," Nader and Rooney explained. "More than half of our customers are students. Blackhorn and [...] [the] University [have] a symbiotic relationship." The pair explained that this relationship with students is integral to the character of their company.

The challenges of a local supply chain were revealed during the COVID-19 pandemic, Nader and Rooney said: "When you look at the supply chain impact, smaller firms have slowly fallen away. The price of beef has increased more than 50% in the past two years."

Despite this increase, Blackhorn wants to ensure affordability. "It's a pleasure for us to be serving students, but when it's unaffordable for them, you're not able to see the true extent to which they value it," they said.

In the face of these challenges, Rooney spoke of the need for continued support. "So long as people can continue to support local small businesses, we can keep that ecosystem going," he said.

Understanding the local is altered in St Andrews with its internationalism. The town's internationalism is both a magnet for more commercial businesses and a market for local storefronts.

The Isle of Skye Candle Co. is a Scottish-owned and founded family business set up in 2006. The company offered a new alternative in the consumer market — the first soy candle company in the UK. Using Scottish oils in their candles, they preserve local craft and showcase local material.

The company's large consumer base can be attributed to its foundations in Scottish produce. "People travel from all over for this. You can't buy candles like ours normally. Students often come in here looking to buy presents. We have niche products that you can't find anywhere else," she explained.

At the heart of the company's success is its process. "There is pride in this stuff, and understanding what the local and aesthetic image is," explained the employee. The company champions sustainability, but also image, guided by a mission to preserve what Scotland has to offer. Its ability to attract customers from all over is unsurprising, bridging St Andrews' international community with its local.

Byrde Dixon, the founder of Five Acres, promotes the individual's relationship with local produce. Inside Five Acres, is an atmosphere of celebration — one that encourages consumers to curate a healthy relationship with local food. "Partially, we started this because we love cooking and growing, but also we wanted to show people what we can do with it," Dixon said. "We have a place where we can cook the food that reflects our people."

Working with East Neuk Market Garden through a collective farming model, the seed-to-plate process takes place within a fifteen-minute radius. When asked what makes the farming process so different to that of large-scale companies, Dixon said it's the flexibility of unique growth in produce: "The difference is the actual produce you can access. On a farm, we have specialist crops that would never be accessible from big companies." Writing the menu a week before it's served, the cafe revolves around food that the farm can produce.

As a St Andrews alumna herself, she noted the increasing impulse to eat organically, and how liberating it is seeing students nowadays making choices to eat locally. Whether it be a choice for the community, bridging the gap between internationalism and locality, or due to your own relationship with local food, celebrating our St Andrews staples is integral to preserving the heart of the town. As Rooney said, "Help us so that we can help you."

As Dixon explained, the choice of Scottish produce is one that is "purely for your own enjoyment. When you eat local, you can taste the joy."



The Day Drinkers of St Andrews

TARA PHILLIPS
FEATURES WRITER

Carpe diem — to seize the day — means different things for different people. For some, it's waking up to welcome the sunrise and going for a run on the Scores. For others, it's a morning spent in leisure before heading to a common place, with familiar faces and pints. At various pubs across town, Willie Tair, Alan Fraser, and Gordon Smith, are united by a shared love for a midday pint and good chat.

Sat at The Keys Bar with Willie Tait



Tait, always accompanied by his golden retriever, Guthrie, and a pint of Tennent's, visits the Keys Bar every day. "I'll do some work, relax, have a couple of beers, chitter chatter, see who's doing what," explained Tait, who is self-employed in investment property development. "I can work from home, but I like having a couple of beers. People make the world go around — you can't sit in a little bubble and expect things to happen."

Guthrie, now twelve years old, has been coming to the Keys since he was just twelve weeks old. "This was one of the first dog-friendly pubs in town. I would have a beer and take him for a wander," explained Tait. "This is his spot, he's always here," he said, pointing to the floor on his left-hand side. To his right is a pint of Tennent's. Why Tennent's? "Tennent's is made in Scotland with Scottish water. It's clean, it's crisp, and it's only 4%."

For Willie, it's not all about the Tennent's, but also about meeting people. "You get people from all walks of life coming in here. The Church of Scotland ministers, guys from the golf club, [...] you've got guys that sweep the streets," he explained. "You've got all sorts, and everybody has a story to tell and to listen to. It all knits together. Because of that, St Andrews is so unusual."

For Tait, drinking culture is about socialising and connecting with others. "It's still the same now as it was when I was your age, that men drink shoulder to shoulder," said Willie. In spite of this, he "know[s] times are changing." The younger generation drinks more in the house and for effect. "If you drink for effect, you hit the slippery slope too early. Coming to places like this, having three or four at lunch time, you are still able to function properly. If you want to come out later, you can," he explained.

Should anyone "go overboard" and pay "the price the following day" with a hangover, he recommends "the hair of the dog" — consuming more alcohol to alleviate the symptoms — "because it sorts the system out and lets you come down slowly."

Tait tends to arrive at about midday. "I'll leave at about two, and some days, I'll come back at about half five, six o'clock if I want to play darts, or if something is going on, but I tend not to stay out late," he explained.

> "If I need a specialist I know I can find one here."

For Tait, the Keys is also a place of discovery. "If you speak to people face-to-face and ask them questions and are genuinely interested, you learn things, and you never stop learning," he said. "If you're needing something and don't have the answer, there is going to be someone who knows where you can find it. If I need a specialist I know I can find one here, in the Keys," said Tait.

He concluded, "In Scotland, there is a great expression: 'Never trust the man that doesn't drink.' It's true."

Sat at Whey Pat Tavern with Alan Fraser



Perched on one of the mismatched barstools, Fraser is seated with a pint of Guinness. "It's usually in the morning. I'm never in at night or the late afternoon. It's [from] twelve o'clock to two. I have a couple of these and head home," he explained, pointing at his pint. Alan comes from Cupar, does his shopping at Morrisons, and picks up some odd bits from M&S before concluding his weekly trip at the Whey Pat. It's been his ritual for the past four years.

"When the guys are in, they are quite friendly, even if I'm just seeing them once a week," he said. "They recognise me, they give me a shout, and they have a chat with me. That's what I come in for, speaking to people. I live on my own, so effectively, it is the company."

Fraser is a guy to remember. "99% of the time there is a Guinness starting to get poured, [it's] because they saw me walking past the window," he chuckled.

The Whey Pat has seemingly stolen his heart. "I've never been in another pub in St Andrews since I started coming here," he explained. "If you want a nice pint, at the right price, nice company, this place is welcoming. You get such a nice welcome."

Sat at The Criterion with Gordon Smith

Gordon Smith of Guardbridge visits St Andrews, and en route, he makes a stop on South Street at the Criterion, one of the oldest pubs in St Andrews, established in 1874. "I've been coming here for years," he explained. "I find this pub is the best pub in town — nice people, nice staff, the owners are nice and very chatty."

Smith strictly sticks to Aspall. "It's my preferred cider. I used to [drink beer], [...] but for whatever reason, over the years, it's crept in. It's a nice, dry cider, so I like that. And I think this place is about the only place in town that sells it," he explained.

Most days, Smith can be found in the Criterion. "Usually it's just a couple of pints," he said, "and it tends to be afternoons, just because of the age I am now."

Smith arrived in St Andrews with his wife. "She was doing some shopping, but then she went off, so I'll just catch a bus," he explained. "She knows me too well. We've been married 52 years. She tends not to drink during the week. She's good that way — I'm not," he said with a laugh.

When he comes to the pub, "there [are] some [people] that I know, but it's more to say hello to than to have deep conversations with. I'm quite happy to engage with total strangers, if they want to. If they don't want to, that's fine. I'm quite happy sitting on my own," he said.

The beauty of drinking during the early afternoon is that no one is drinking to get sloshed. "If I've ever gotten drunk, which I have a few times, it's been more by accident than design," Smith explained. "It's just more the company you're in. And somebody's asking, 'want another one?', 'oh, I guess I'll have another one' — That sort of situation. And you suddenly realise, 'flipping hey, how many have I had here?'"



Smith drinks at the Criterion because he believes that "we've got to keep the independents going. They are the heart and soul of the place." He and his wife used to go to the Whey Pat a lot because they knew the owners, and Kate's — the pub where Molly Malone's now stands. "I went to school with the owner's son, so we used to go there as well, just because we knew people. Gradually, we've just drifted into here," Smith explained.

"When those pubs became owned by brewers like Greene King, they totally changed," he said. "The staff changed; you didn't have the one-to-one that you have here. There's not that personal connection. They just work for another company."

> "We've got to keep the independents going. They are the heart and soul of the place."

At the end of the day, a pub is a place of gathering. Be it alone or with friends, the Keys Bar, Whey Pat Tavern, and the Criterion provide more than a beer tap; they serve as part of a daily ritual that provides a sense of community and identity to those who frequent them.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TARA PHILLIPS

Ramadan in St Andrews: Creating Community in Shared Spaces

MAIRA RANA
FEATURES WRITER

Ramadan in St Andrews unfolds in shared spaces: a makeshift prayer hall in the Chaplaincy and disposable plastic sheets that line the floors at *iftar*. These sheets, known as *dastarkhan* in Persian or *Sufra* in Arabic, reflect a long-standing Islamic tradition of sitting on the floor together to eat — a practice believed to carry greater *barakah*, or blessings, by virtue of the fact that it equalises everyone and reduces physical distance.

With no mosque, there isn't a dedicated space to facilitate the nightly prayers that are a staple of the holy month or the communal meals, *iftar*, at sunset. Still, the St Andrews community comes together for a month that emphasises spiritual reflection, compassion, forgiveness, generosity, and community. In a 'bubble' like St Andrews, these values take on a particular intensity.

But for those who have never heard of Ramadan, or have only been introduced to it by big signs advertising dates and festive foods in many a UK supermarket, — what actually is it? Put simply, Ramadan is a month-long period in which Muslims fast from dawn until sunset, abstaining from food and water during this window. Yet to reduce Ramadan to the physical aspect of fasting alone is to miss the point completely.



Ahmed Imana, a third-year medical student from Canada, described Ramadan in St Andrews as more personal and community-based than anything he experienced growing up. "Back home, Ramadan was very family-focused," he explained. "Canada is huge, and it's hard to organise things so everyone can come together. Here, St Andrews is small, and that actually makes everyone closer."

The reason he keeps coming back, though, he said with a laugh, is because "the food is genuinely really good. You can tell people have put time and effort into it. There's always a proper main course and dessert as well. They even ask the community what they want and get people involved in cooking if they're interested."

> "You're all going through the same struggle, and that brings you closer on a more personal level."

Aside from the food, it's the people. "After a full day of fasting, everyone's hungry, everyone's tired, and when you're sitting there talking to people, that shared experience creates a connection," Imana explained. "You're all going through the same struggle, and that brings you closer on a more personal level."

Here, Imana described feeling "more of a family sense in some ways." Back home, "[my parents] are at work, my sister has her own routine," he explained. "So I don't really see how they experience Ramadan day-to-day." In St Andrews, a lot of his friends also fast. "They're in medicine, too, and they might be going to the gym. I see how they cope and I can relate to them very directly," he said.

Sufyan El-Mansuri, a fourth-year computer science student, told me how he's preparing for Ramadan this year as president of the St Andrews Muslim Students Association (STAMSA). Ramadan in St Andrews exists only because students build it themselves, El-Mansuri said.

"Other universities rely on nearby mosques so most students go there, or in big cities like Manchester or Birmingham, students are often not too far away from home so they've got that option, too," he explained. "St Andrews is quite [geographically] isolated, which means everything has to be planned, organised, and maintained by the students themselves."

Three nights a week, around seventy people attend *iftar* in person, with many more collecting takeaway meals. On Mondays and Thursdays, the main meal is provided free of charge by Maisha and Jahangir, respectively, and dessert is taken care of by the committee and volunteers.

Saturday is the student-led star of the show, with cooking starting early in the morning or sometimes even the night before. There's a different theme each week, everything from Italian and Mexican to Caribbean and East Asian cuisine. The beauty of having such a diverse community means that there are always enthusiastic people who want to share and showcase their culture and heritage, bringing to life recipes and culinary traditions that have been passed down by their family.

There's a lot that goes into it: big food shops, preparation, cooking, serving, and cleaning before the same spaces are seamlessly transformed for night prayers, all coordinated by a committee of around fifteen students and volunteers.

"People assume it's amateur because we're students," El-Mansuri said. "But if you bring together passionate people who care about their community, you can create something meaningful." Ramadan, he explained, is as much about giving as it is about fasting.

Importantly, the society doesn't just serve Muslim students. In fact, a large handful of attendees come for the community and food. Staff members and local residents also regularly attend Friday prayers and have the option of collecting food to take home during Ramadan.

> "Ramadan is as much about giving as it is about fasting.'"

Local businesses play a crucial role in sustaining this effort. Restaurants across town provide meals, offer discounts, or sponsor iftars, generosity that students must re-secure each year. Across the River Tay, in Dundee, German Donner Kebab also offers a discounted *iftar* to STAMSA.

This has become "a STAMSA tradition at this point, and people really look forward to it. However, nothing is guaranteed," El-Mansuri explained. "Students go out, pitch, ask again and again. The fact that local businesses keep supporting us says a lot about the town."

Mohammed Mohiuddin, owner of Maisha, graduated from St Andrews in 2008 — the same year he opened the restaurant. As a student, he attended *iftars* in the Student Union with limited facilities and very little food. This made him think, "if I have any ability, I should contribute." Sometimes that meant bringing home-cooked meals and sharing them with his fellow students or inviting them to his home for *iftar*. Today, Mohiuddin continues with that same spirit of generosity on a larger scale, cooking for around 90 to 100 people every Thursday during Ramadan.

The level of commitment is demanding, particularly when balanced alongside full-time degrees. "There is sacrifice, I won't lie," said El-Mansuri, "but the reward is greater than the sacrifice."

"There is no other community in St Andrews that gathers every single day like this, for 30 days consecutively," he explained. "People who felt lonely suddenly feel like they belong. Students who never came before start coming every night. Ramadan creates memories people carry for life."

When the month ends, routines begin to return. Lecture halls fill, deadlines loom, and the long nights start getting shorter. But something lingers. The sense that, in this small coastal town, community can be built, meal by meal, prayer by prayer, by students who refuse to let distance from home diminish what Ramadan means.

PHOTO COURTESY OF STAMSA

From the Dunvegan Dribblers to the National Security Office

Lord Mark Sedwill reflects on St Andrews, Brexit, and diplomacy

LUCCIA MORAES
FEATURES WRITER

The year is 1983. A young Mark Sedwill just returned to his room in Sallies after a long day of maths and economics. Soon, he'll head to play football with the Dunvegan Dribblers before heading to debate practice, preparing to represent the University at the World Championships. Later, he'll head to the Dunvegan for a shift. Little did he know, his world would soon become much bigger.

After St Andrews, he headed to Oxford to complete his MPhil in Economics. "Oxford will be good for you," he was once told, "It will rub the edges off." With this idea in mind, Sedwill embarked on the beginning of a longer journey that led him to the centre of the British state.

"I'm not a politician," Sedwill said. "I've never been." He served as the head of the Home Civil Service from 2018 to 2020. According to Sedwill, this position falls outside the political realm. "It's a professional service," he explained.

Simultaneously, Sedwill occupied a sister role as Cabinet Secretary. In this position, he was the senior professional advisor to Prime Ministers Theresa May and Boris Johnson, holding a major influence over governmental decisions. In 2018, he took up the role of UK National Security Advisor.



> "'The professional machine,' as Sedwill called the Civil Service, had to keep going amidst the chaos of Brexit."

As National Security Advisor, Sedwill dealt with three major issues: The first was Brexit, the second was the Salisbury attack, and the third was the first phase of the pandemic. "The professional machine," as Sedwill called the Civil Service, had to keep going amidst the chaos of Brexit. Prime Minister Theresa May "needed someone who could hold it all together on the professional side" amidst Brexit negotiations, Sedwill recalled as his reason for taking on the Civil Service job. "She asked me to do it, or she certainly insisted I did it."

While the political side tackled progressing with Brexit, Sedwill, who was now fulfilling three roles simultaneously, handled the aftereffects of the Salisbury attack — an incident involving a failed assassination attempt to poison a Russian military officer and a double agent for British intelligence. "The major part of my job was essentially keeping going even though there was this Brexit negotiation going on," Sedwill said. "I was dealing with those bigger issues of national security [...] I was dealing with a question in Northern Ireland. I was dealing with issues in Korea, in India, Pakistan, in the Middle East [...] All of those things carried on."

The Civil Service, Sedwill elaborated, is obliged to provide a "first-rate professional service to implement the policy that [the government] decided." It wasn't a matter of personal political alignment: "You're not saying, I support Brexit, I support Remain [...] What you're saying is, we'll help you implement Brexit, or we'll help you implement whatever changes would have been made had it gone the other way."

The nonpartisan spirit of the Civil Service was only truly challenged once during Sedwill's time leading it. "Brexit was a fault line that ran across political parties," Sedwill said. "It wasn't so much a left-right thing.

It's become more of that now, but [...] the majority of the MPs in the Conservative Party were remainers. They sort of forget it now, some of them, but they were remainers at that time."

The Home Civil Service is supposed to be (and typically is) nonpartisan, but even a government office intended to appear neutral fell to polarisation amidst such a period of unrest. Sedwill discussed the controversy that infiltrated government offices during his time there: "Every institution that tried to be impartial — the BBC, the Civil Service, the judiciary — got accused, actually, by both sides, of being partisan. Didn't happen over COVID, didn't happen over Trumpism, or anything of that kind. It did happen over Brexit, and it was hard."

Sedwill had two career highlights. "One was Afghanistan," he told *The Saint*. "The second was really being the National Security Advisor, I think. I really enjoyed that job. In career terms, being Cabinet Secretary was a hell of a thing to do, but it wasn't the thing I felt I had always tried to acquit myself for."

Being a diplomat means more to Sedwill than just maintaining peaceful relations and negotiating agreements. To him, it means you need to "embed yourself in a new place and get under the skin of a different country [and] culture. Get to know people, but get to know them [on] their own terms and in their own language. And as a diplomat, that's the epitome." Sedwill gained this perspective through his time living in Afghanistan, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq while learning Arabic to best connect to the culture.

The life of a diplomat is a sacrificial, yet rewarding one, Sedwill said: "You have loads of adventures [...] but it does come at a cost. This is not a career choice; it's a life choice."

> "The life of a diplomat is a sacrificial yet rewarding one."

Now, Sedwill is a candidate for the next chancellor of the University. Emphasising his rejection of the title of politician, Sedwill joked, "This is only the second election I've ever been a part of. The first one was to be President of the Athletic Union." He laughed fondly, recalling his first candidacy. "I think the electorate was, like, 35 people. And you didn't even get to make a speech."

As a teenager, Sedwill first applied to St Andrews as "a bit of a wild card." He recalled arriving at St Andrews for the first time, looking around, and thinking, "Oh, wow. This is it." He never expected just how far he would venture from that first arrival.

Some advice is worth taking, and some is not. Despite having once been told it would be beneficial to "rub the edges off," he remembered thinking in the moment, "I'm never having the edges rubbed off." Now, he stands by that belief: "I still reckon that the successful career I had really arose because I never let them rub the edges off."

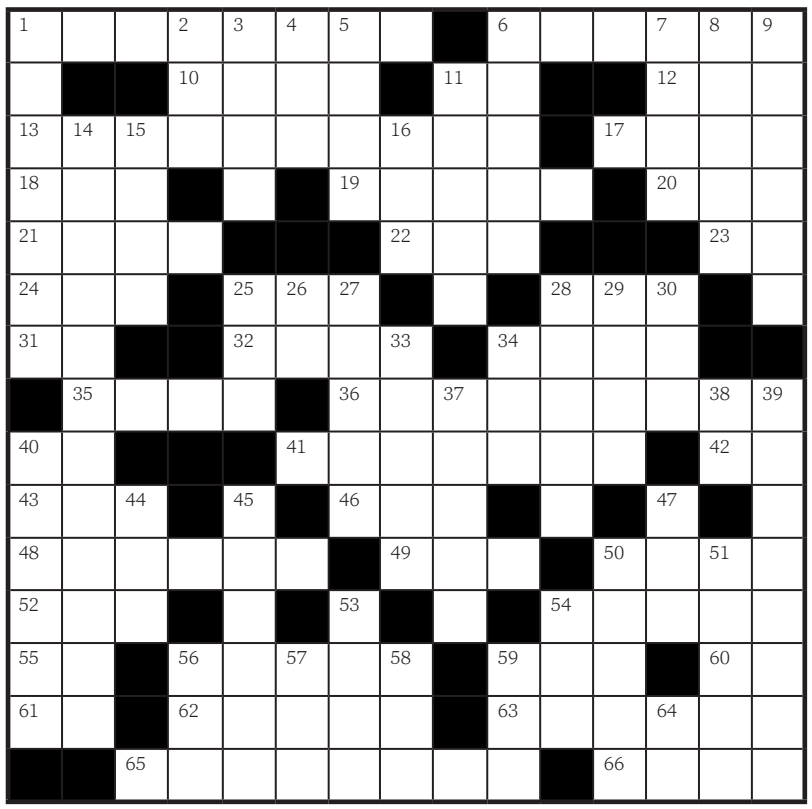
ILLUSTRATION BY LAUREN MCANDREW

PUZZLES

EDITOR: LUANA VAN ORANJE

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'Til Deadlines Do Us Part'



WORD LADDERS
BY MADELEINE OLIVER

Change one letter per step (using real words) to turn the first word into the last

L O V E K I S S

— — — — — — — —

— — — — — — — —

— — — — — — — —

— — — — — — — —

B A B Y D A T E

SPELLING BEE
BY ALEXANDER WISEMAN

Make 4+ letter words. Words must use the center letter, letters can repeat



CROSSWORD BY MADELEINE ABIGNALE

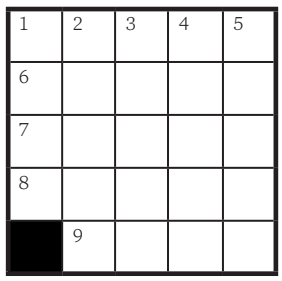
ACROSS

1. Grandmother who lives in Moscow
6. Spanish rice dish
10. 'You go girl!'
11. City in California (abbr.)
12. What a ghost might say, mirrored
13. Admirers should check for allergens before sending these
17. Internet-famous Scottish Straight cat in Japan
18. Humphrey of the comedy troupe *The Penny Dreadfuls*
19. Diplomatic skills
20. Nickname for a Mary, Margaret, or Mabel
21. Aussie aviators: abbr.
22. Lead-in for a South Street pub, or this paper
23. Tee size
24. Website address
25. '____ you kidding me?'
28. Country code for UK Olympians
31. A classic sandwich with no lettuce, perhaps?
32. Edible Polynesian algae
34. What one may do whilst kneeling
35. What two people under Cupid's spell might do, en route, in London, with *36a*
36. See *35a* (2-3-4)
40. 1982 Sci-fi film
41. Where one spins in a club? (2-5)
42. Video game slang for 'too good'
43. '____ we there yet?'
46. Charged atom
48. Rapper with top hit 'Betrayed' (3-3)
49. Kiss, hug, hug, as a love note sign-off
50. ____boat
52. Airport code in County Fermanagh, N.I.
54. Inner circle
55. 'Grande' size, in non-Starbucks terms (abbr.)
56. Coca-Cola rival
59. Opposite of 'bien'
60. American higher-level curricula
61. Poet Eliot
62. 'Am not!' retort
63. Plums x Apricots =
65. What Fleabag excitedly whispers to the camera when The Priest taps her shoulder (3-5)
66. Gender neutral pronoun

DOWN

1. What you might give to a baby or a partner (4-3)
2. West Coast college in America
3. How some might like it
4. Prince's nickname in Shakespeare's 'Henry V'
5. Currency in Myanmar
6. Copy and ____
7. Soil composed of sand, silt, and clay
8. Dr Seuss character who speaks for the trees
9. Grandmother in Lima
11. Cafe con ____
14. They might be tugged on during a wedding (5-6)
15. Speaking exam
16. Tit for ____
25. Maths subject with variables (abbr.)
26. US state that borders Connecticut (abbr.)
27. You might use the kissy face one to express adoration
28. Activist Thunberg
29. It's a Valentine's cliche for it to be filled with rose petals
30. 'Street Fighter' protagonist
33. Open, as a present
34. Vietnamese soup
37. 'Like a ____ bricks' (3-2)
38. ____-Peep, who lost her sheep
39. Neurological disorder called Saint Valentine's Malady
40. Phone notification for national warnings
44. Animal with antlers
45. Breed of curly haired cat
47. Seeing red
50. French toast?
51. One step up from *47d*
53. ____buco
54. Diet sodas are often this, with 'low'
56. Goal on the Old Course
57. Type of name for a beau
58. Letters to repay
59. Speedometer abbr.
64. Exclamation of surprise

MINI CROSSWORD
BY JULIA EMERY



ACROSS

1. A peck in Paris
6. Blocks from a website
7. Draped clothing option from South Asia
8. Where to hear STAR
9. What a *1a* and a *1d* is?

DOWN

1. A smooch in Spain
2. Barclays, digitally
3. Wife of Abraham, originally
4. "____ the loneliest number"
5. Computer operators

SUDOKU BY ISAAC OLDHAM

	3	8			5	6	9	
2			7		6			8
6				4				3
8								5
	2						3	
	4						6	
		3				5		
			3		9			
9	7			5			2	1

PATHFINDER BY LUANA VAN ORANJE

E	Y	W	L	A	H	E	R	C	I
X	H	O	L	L	S	M	E	V	A
C	S	W	O	A	O	M	R	O	L
L	N	A	C	I	C	Y	H	S	U
U	O	R	I	F	E	P	E	S	R
S	I	Y	E	R	D	P	R	D	E
E	V	O	P	U	S	P	D	S	A
R	D	E	S	Y	E	R	R	A	P
N	O	E	A	B	L	E	K	W	P
E	C	H	T	C	I	D	W	A	Y

Create a continuous path of the words below. Start at the highlighted 'C' and end at the 'Y', moving horizontally or vertically

AWKWARD
CHEESY
COMMERCIAL
EXCLUSIONARY
OVERDONE
OVERHYPED
PREDICTABLE
PRESSURED
SAPPY
SHALLOW
SHOWY
SUPERFICIAL

CONNECTIONS BY ALEXANDER WISEMAN

Find groups of four items that have something in common

ONYX	LEATHER	PAPER	BEESWAX
CORAL	BLUR	CHOCOLATE	PULP
IVORY	SILVER	MILK	CARD
JEWELLERY	FLOWERS	ABBA	BRONZE

REBUS BY JULIA EMERY

Phonetically interpret the rebus to decipher the phrase

— — — — — —

— — — — —

— — — — —

SIGHT SIGHT SIGHT

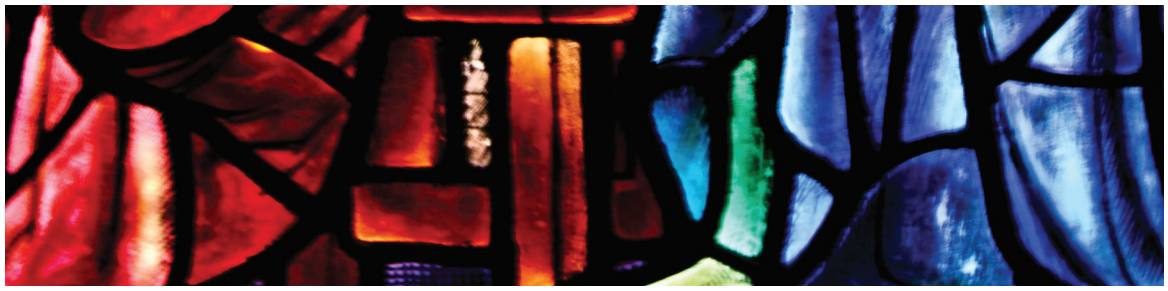
Through the Looking Glass

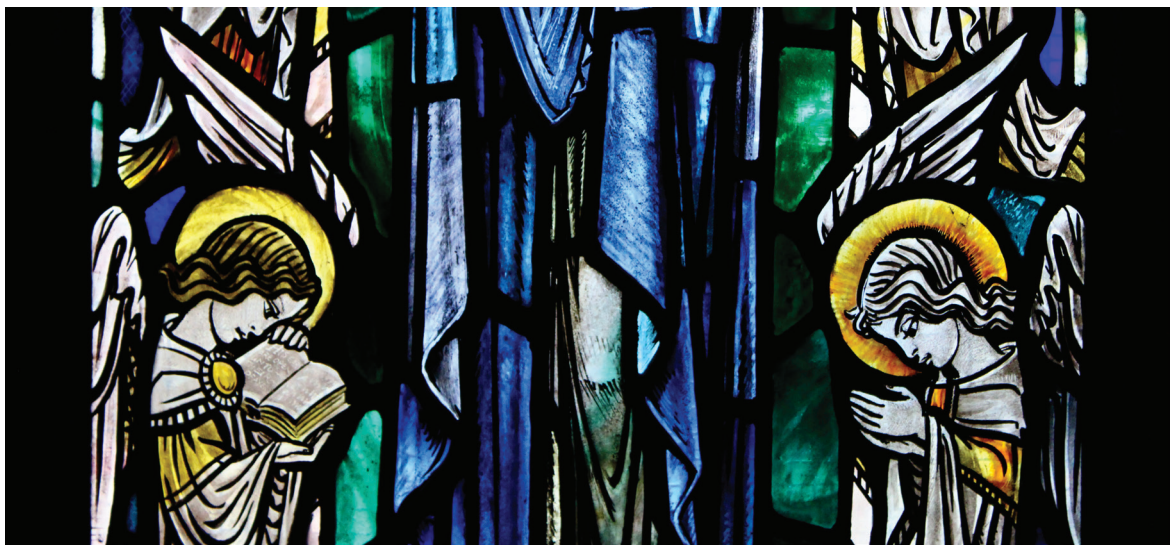
SMILLA SPASIC
PHOTOGRAPHER











Down by the Harbour

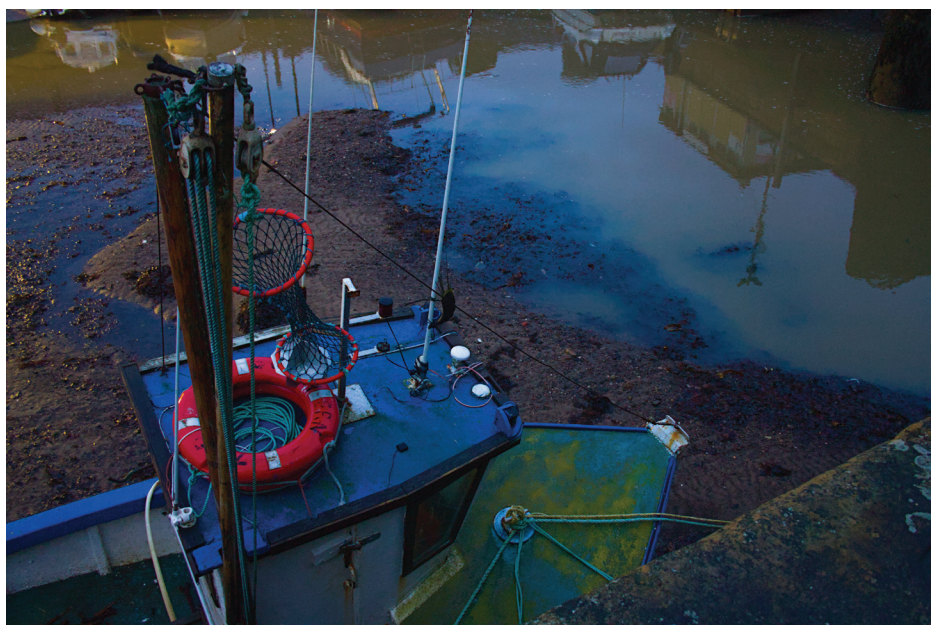
ALISA SENSES
PHOTOGRAPHER









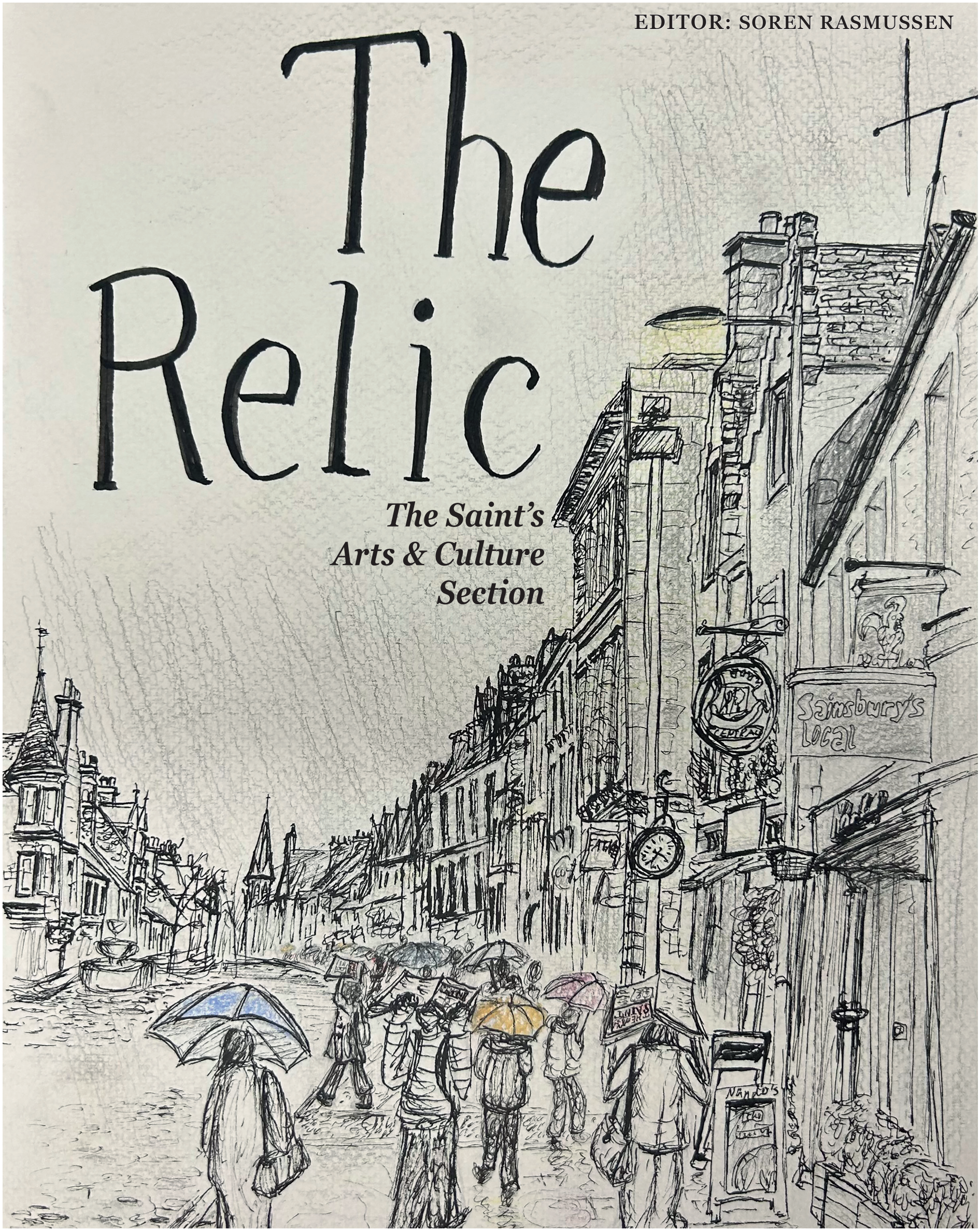




EDITOR: SOREN RASMUSSEN

The Relic

The Saint's Arts & Culture Section

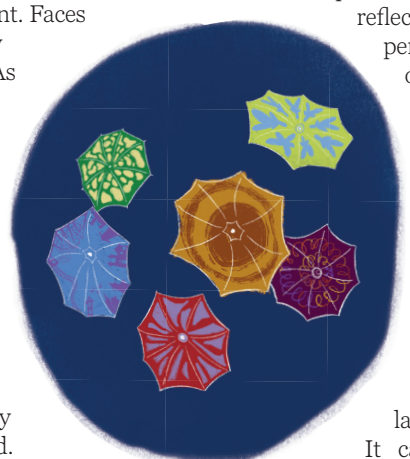


Reflections, Rhythms, and Rivulets

How to wield the rain

SYLVIA COVACI
Relic Writer

You're walking down Market Street, wired headphones humming and shoulders hunched under your heavy book-bag. Menacingly, cunningly, small raindrops begin to patter on the pavement. Faces turn up and stare tiredly into the low, black sky. As the spitting turns into a heavy stream, umbrellas unfold in a sea of yellow, black, red and rainbow. Hoods are lifted, faces shadowed; wellies squeak and raincoats rustle. Footsteps on Market Street gather speed, skirting round deepening puddles and valiantly leaping treacherous mud. Our entire landscape, beyond the sky, is so often alchemised by rain. This visual metamorphosis cannot be ignored. As an artistic medium, rain offers infinite opportunities. So, for all those creative souls hoping to draw inspiration from our infamously tempestuous climate, here is a list of ways to wield the rain:



1. Photography. Not necessarily of the sky, or even of the occasional leprechaun-spawning rainbow — think more of the rain's properties and products. Raindrops are tiny spherical mirrors, reflecting, refracting, and dispersing light. One popular option is puddle photography. If you position your camera parallel to the puddle's surface, you'll capture the reflection of the landscape above and around it. It has the effect of a miniature lake — one sky sharp, the other slightly blurred and warped. Look closely, too, at the way rain lands on different surfaces. It can create patterns, sliding off roofs and through gutters, and can draw little rivers in windows.

2. Watercolour blotch-painting. If you have tubed watercolour paints, take a few colours and spread them on the paper. Make sure it's thick watercolour paper, otherwise it'll just curl, warp, and split apart. You may apply the paint in dots, streaks, lines, or whatever fits your whimsy. Keep in mind, though, that if you add too many colours the painting may turn out muddy — much like the puddles! Then, set it out in the rain for a few moments, and watch the colours bleed and bloom. You can even tilt the paper to nudge the paint a certain way. When you feel it's right, remove the paper from the rain and set it to dry.

2a. Now, if you want to go further with the former, try to find pictures in the rain's painting, the way you'd look for shapes in the clouds. Watercolour is a great medium to layer with ink, as it dries so quickly. Take a pen of any kind and outline the images you see. Add details, shade, adorn, embellish, do as much or as little as you desire.

3. Ink blotch-painting. Ink, like watercolour, blooms delightfully when exposed to water. Make a loose sketch in ink — a portrait, still-life, landscape, what have you — and ensure you have both a paintbrush and a paper towel handy. When water comes in contact with ink, it dilutes it and allows it to run across the page. Depending on how long you expose your sketch, it will blur, blotch, and blend with varying extremities. Say, for example, you sketch a portrait. After letting the rain soak the face, use your paintbrush to drag the droplets under the eyelids and along the ridge of the nose to make shadows. You may also use a paper towel to blot certain areas, creating highlights.

4. Footprints. On very rainy days, you'll notice some shops have large overhanging canopies. As students walk in to buy overpriced lattes, their footprints track water into the dry, lighter flooring underneath. This creates a chaos of overlapping stamps, marked by wellies, sneakers, heels and dog-paws of all sizes. Granted, this art is temporary — unless you snap a photo to sketch up later.

5. Percussion. This last one's more for enjoyment. One of my favourite qualities of rain is the sound it makes when it lands on different surfaces. Its frequency and volume fluctuate, singing rhythmically as it hits umbrellas, windows, metal trash-cans and roofs.

So I have to say, though I'm awfully tired of the rain, I cannot deny the beauty of its metamorphoses. I hope this list will lend you a few ideas on how to wield it — and that you don't forget your umbrella on the way to class tomorrow.

Illustration by Maya Mason

The Middle Ages Never Ended

ISABEL BIRGE
Relic Writer

Did you know that the 1990 Christmas classic *Home Alone* is actually a blood libel allegory? Think about it: a blonde-haired, blue-eyed Christian boy is robbed on Christmas by two stereotypically Jewish-presenting men. It doesn't sound all that unlike the medieval antisemitic trope in which Jews were falsely accused of engaging in the ritual murder of Christian children. Am I reading too much into this? Maybe. I study medieval literature, so it's sort of my job.

We often think of the Middle Ages (or popularly dubbed "Dark Ages") as a time period of no significant intellectual output, an era that gets lost somewhere between classical antiquity and the Renaissance. Perhaps that is why we as medievalists choose to study it; we are drawn in by virtue of its obscurity.

Once one becomes properly acquainted with the joys (and horrors) of the medieval, they start to show up everywhere. In other words: Once you see it, you can't *un*see it. This brings me back to *Home Alone*, which was the last thing I expected to be discussing in my seminar on medieval identities. The concept of the blood libel (along with other antisemitic tropes) gained popularity around the Crusades as anti-Judaic sentiment was on the rise. When discussing, more broadly, medieval anxieties about the Eucharist, my professor posed a semi-rhetorical question: Did people actually *believe* in this stuff?

It all comes down to the nature of truth, she said. Using the Holy Grail, a trope popularised by Arthurian legend, as an example, did medieval Christians actually believe that the cup from which Jesus supposedly drank at the Last Supper had divine powers? Of course, we can only speculate as to what medieval people would have thought when they read or heard some version of Chrétien de Troyes's *Perceval*. My professor's answer to this question struck me. She explained that while they may not have believed in the literal truth of the Grail, they certainly believed in it in the abstract. So the short answer is yes.



These truths, which appear in medieval tropes such as the blood libel, the Eucharist, courtly love or the Holy Grail, do not simply disappear with time, nor do the motifs that reflect them.

In the broadest of terms, a great deal of the literature conceived of in the Middle Ages was, like much of modern (especially popular) literature, organised around a set of tropes that gave a voice to the dominant beliefs, values and fears of the time. Depictions of courtly love allowed people to contemplate and reconcile anxieties around romantic love with church doctrine. The notion of the impending apocalypse served to express the deeply felt eschatological dread across many medieval religions.

As in modern fiction, these tropes operated within a simultaneously entertaining and morally instructive context. What is literature if not a mirror for society? Medieval motifs appear in modern literature, of course, but they remain relevant beyond fictional contexts, perhaps more so than ever.

When I watch a modern politician publicly apologise for infidelity, I think of the medieval practice of confession. When I hear the term "fake news," I am reminded of the near-mystical power of the written word in many medieval cultures and the perceived dangers of misinterpretation. When I think about the medical and moral policing of women's bodies today, I can hardly tell the difference between that and the medieval treatment of the dually sacred and corrupt female body.

I have been, of course, trained to notice these things. Their ubiquitousness, however, grants them importance beyond the realm of literary scholars.

When asked why I study medieval literature, I often cite the following example: The ever-present existential crisis of climate change consistently reminds me of medieval apocalypse anxiety. It was commonly believed, particularly within medieval Christianity, that the end was nigh. This anxiety gave shape to the way people interacted with the world, especially in a moral sense. How might we contend with that same feeling? Will we ignore it, crumble under the weight of it or allow it to spur us into action?

Perhaps we ought to look to medieval literature for counsel. If we are living in the end times, then it may be equally true that we are living in our very own Middle Ages.

Illustration by Ramona Kirkham

Family

with Topping & Co.

Looking for your next read? *The Saint* and Topping & Co. have come together to save the day. Find below the best festive stories, all books are available locally in store.

Topping & Company BOOKSELLERS

BOOKSELLER PICKS

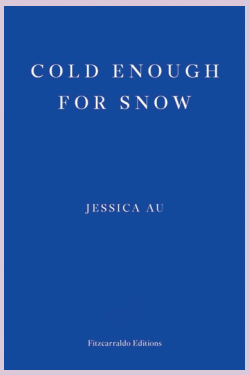


Jen recommends...

This Love by Lotte Jeffs

This Love by Lotte Jeffs explores what it means to forge a family with the people you love; it is filled with imperfect and messy characters who are so full of love that you can't help rooting for them. A beautiful exploration of the unique ways queerness and queer love can look, as well as the power of found family and how one unconventional family is built! If you're looking for an expansive exploration of relationships and the way they are woven throughout our lives, then this is the book for you!

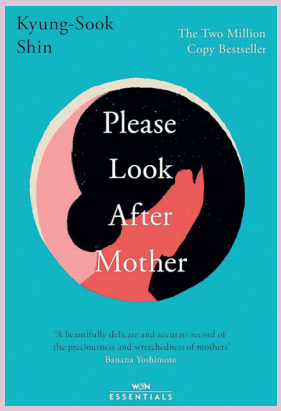
Erin from Book Club recommends...



Cold Enough for Snow by Jessica Au

Cold Enough For Snow by Jessica Au is a stunning meditation on a distant mother and daughter's travel to Japan where they desperately attempt to connect. Moving between bookshops, restaurants and museums, the two try to communicate their opinions on art and philosophy, but the barrier between them continues to cause resistance. Spectral and non-linear, these outings seep into the daughter's reflections on her childhood and her mother's position as a migrant. Ultimately, Au encourages us to stop trying to build a complete image of our loved ones and, instead, to watch them interact with small things, like the feel of the rain or the way they flick through the pages of a book.

STAFF PICK



Soren recommends...

Please Look After Mother by Kyung-Sook Shin

In the chaos of a busy Seoul subway station, a woman is separated from her husband. A frantic search by her children ensues, but as memories resurface and secrets emerge, the mystery of her physical whereabouts becomes something much greater, forcing the whole family to question how well they know this woman they call their mother.

Winner of the Man Asian Literary Prize and already a contemporary classic in Korean literature, *Please Look After Mother* is a piercing yet compassionate tale on the sacrifices of motherhood, the oppressive forces of modernity, and the power of food as an expression of love. Through her elegant and gentle prose, Kyung-Sook Shin builds a *Rashomon*-esque narrative of layered memories, shifting perspective, and brilliant second-person narration that depicts a mother in all her unseen multitudes. The adventure that ensues is a jewel in the crown of contemporary and Scottish literature, and is undoubtedly worth picking up.

Celebrating 30 Years of *Tigermilk*

On Belle & Sebastian's enduring impact

RUBY LUHRMAN
RELIC WRITER

When we think about the defining qualities of the music that we love, we often think about breadth. A band's ability to captivate listeners over decades, reach many different places, and resonate with disparate audiences is no small feat. My parents played Belle and Sebastian in the kitchen when I was little, they were the background to countless study dates in high school, and now they play in my flat in St Andrews when friends come over for coffee. Somehow, their discography has defied time, place, and social group. What is it about this Scottish band's music that swept up our parents in the 90s and continues to resonate with youth today?

The story begins in 1995 Glasgow, when founding members Stuart David and Stuart Murdoch met at Stow College's Beatbox program — a government-training scheme for people on income support. The Stuarts tinkered with their sound for a year before finally producing a collection of demos they felt were worthy of recording. They applied to record their songs with Electric Honey, a student-run label, and were met with success. To complete their sound, they recruited local musicians Richard Colburn, Isobel Campbell, Chris Geddes, and Stevie Jackson to perform on the album. To tie it all together, the band officially assumed the name Belle and Sebastian. And thus, the band's debut album, *Tigermilk*, was born, recorded in the blur of one short week in March of 1996.

Tigermilk is a masterful blend of indie rock and chamber pop. Its intricate sound was composed by layering orchestral cello, violin, flute, and trumpet over more traditional rock and roll features. Intimate lyrics exploring the loneliness of adolescence resound over the upbeat twee-pop melodies, creating a unique contrast. This contrast in lyric and melody conveys the experience of coming of age just right. After all, it is both things — immensely lonely, but simultaneously unwaveringly optimistic.

> "This contrast in lyric and melody conveys the experience of coming of age [...] immensely lonely, but simultaneously unwaveringly optimistic.

Tigermilk grew into an underground hit, and 1,000 copies of vinyl were sold after the album's release. After *Tigermilk*'s success, the band released eleven more studio albums. Over their decades of music-making, members left (including founding member Stuart David), and the band's sound shifted from album to album. And I think it's exactly Belle and Sebastian's ability to shift their sound without losing their distinctive essence that has enabled their music to endure the test of time and permeate generations. These shifts are evident when looking at their albums in sequence.

In 1998, Belle and Sebastian released their album *The Boy With the Arab Strap*, containing the title track that would become their most popular song. With this new album, the band's sound evolved from raw, bedroom pop to a polished and smooth project. Despite the album's new sophisticated nature, the songs didn't lose their authenticity like they so often do when bands find success. The album preserves the band's intricate instrumental sound and lyrical honesty, exploring themes of loneliness and the frustrations of modern life.



My personal favourite album, *Fold Your Hands Child, You Walk Like A Peasant*, was released in 2000. It's a mellow fusion of folk rock and baroque pop, and it was the band's first album to feature prominent vocal contributions from female band members. The airy voices of Isobel Campbell and Sarah Martin suit the dreamlike soundscape with refreshing clarity.

Most recently, *Late Developers* was released in 2023. Characterised by retro guitar riffs and disco influence, the album moves further towards the brightness of indie pop. The songs are delightfully upbeat and danceable, and though they seem a long way away from *Tigermilk*'s low-fi sound, the band's essence is preserved in the album's nostalgic style, which nods towards its twee pop roots. And as always, the lyrics are rich with bittersweet vulnerability about growing older, as reflected in the lines, "I sometimes wish that I was blind / To all the futures that we left behind / Now we've got kids and dystopia."

In 1996, many of our parents were hooked on *Tigermilk*'s offbeat sound. And today, exactly thirty years later, youth all over the world recognise *The Boy With the Arab Strap*'s whimsical acoustics. This month, Belle and Sebastian are scheduled to play two shows on their anniversary tour in Troon, Scotland. I can't think of a better way to spend a weekend than celebrating a discography that has so gracefully navigated time and place.

ILLUSTRATION BY VERA KAGANSKAYA

The Victorian House of Lead Pipes, a Garden Mouse, and Absinthe Stains

MARI CLAUDIA REIMER
Relic Writer

My recurring dreams lead me back to Westoun. I 'inherited' this mid-19th-century house built out of windstone on Wardlaw Gardens from my academic mother, Louisa.

In my first and second year here, I went to raves in the garage, watched friends sloppily kiss their long-time crushes in the corner of the living room, drank from my first beer keg while doing a handstand in the front garden, and saw drugs for the first time being snorted off the kitchen floor. In a sense, I spent my St Andrews 'youth' at Westoun.

From across the ocean in Texas, I was frequently pulled back to Westoun in my dreams. There, my academic mother sat at the piano with her hands tied to the ceiling by string, striking the keys like a marionette, while I ran through the unknown parts of the house, chased by the frantic tempo of her music.

These dreams made me horrified to move in. It did not help that Louisa, decked in scarves and holding a large glass of wine, had once drunkenly mentioned that a man died on her bed. The same bed that was to be mine. My biggest concern was how I would walk to the bathroom in the middle of the night without being visited by the home's prior residents.

As soon as I received the bit and barrel keys to the heavy wooden front door, I ceased to be afraid. I was no longer a guest passing the white-ringed entry vanity where shots of absinthe once sat; I was Westoun's caretaker, trying to iron the stains out of the wood. I felt like I now had a responsibility to look after this home with its herringbone floors, tall spider-webbed ceilings, and grand staircase carpeted in red that wraps around the main wall only to lead to nothing. I have since come to adore the house's hauntings, treating the slamming doors and midnight knocks as something that just nonchalantly happens.

> "The house takes on a voice of its own. It is always Westoun and I."

I take naps in the garden's only puddle of sunlight and steal hydrangeas from the vacant neighbour. In the blue kitchen with its matching blue tiles, my pink dress hangs from the ceiling drying rack. The dress hung there for the entirety of two semesters, never warm enough to wear in Scotland, and now permanently smells of cooked meat. I sprawl out on the oriental rug in my bedroom and admire the patches where the fibres have frayed and baby-blue ribbons, gifts from a friend of my mother, hang from the chandeliers. I have spent countless hours in the bathtub, finishing all seven of Jane Austen's novels while eating peanut butter and bananas. The house takes on a voice of its own. It is always Westoun and I.



In April, when it felt like my life was falling apart, so was the house. A seagull was living in my chimney, and not wanting to evict a single mother, I endured her 5am wake-up calls. The cabinets of my blue kitchen were coming off their hinges, and the entry wall was (and still is) covered in rain-soaked stains, causing plaster to crumble onto the cracked black-and-white tiles, a soft shedding that can be heard at night. A garden mouse named Jonathan took up residence in my bedroom, making frequent visits, jauntily running back and forth from its hole in the wall to hide behind my Le Chameau rainboots.

Finding lead in our water pipes was the height of it all. Deprived of water, I turned to wine for a week. This endeavour quickly came to an end when I walked into St Andrews Wine Company and was greeted by a worker's pointed finger: "Look, it's the girl who has bought the same bottle for five days in a row." I pivoted to pomegranate juice immediately. I sipped it from a wine glass as I watched the front lawn be torn to shreds to replace all of the pipes.

> "It feels melodramatic to say, but leaving Westoun feels like a part of me is dying."

Now the camellias outside my bedroom window are appearing to bloom again, a signal that my time here is ending as graduation nears. It feels melodramatic to say, but leaving Westoun feels like a part of me is dying. I am losing a space that has become more of a home than the one I grew up in in Texas.

My dream is to one day buy the house in full, restore it to its proper state, and provide every past resident with a key to return home to. That way, I can watch the flowers bloom over and over again and never worry that my time with Westoun is coming to an end.

PHOTO BY CLAUDIA REIMER

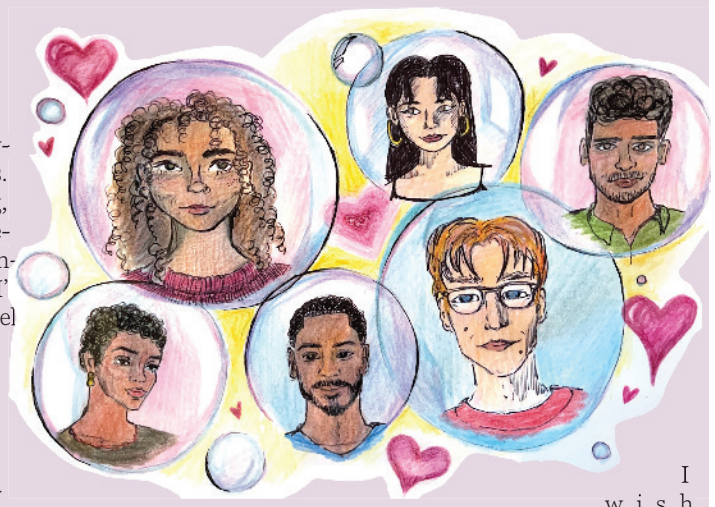
Love in the Bubble

During my stint here in St Andrews, one As I came to discover for myself, sensitivity is misunderstood. At first, I thought it was a sign of being comfortable with your masculinity. This *boy* proclaimed to love romcoms, sang in public, wore jewellery, and acted relatively charming. He was a self-identifying romantic.

This sensitivity turned sickly sweet. He was a horrible planner and a boring but incessant texter. He cried in my bed about his ex. When I asked for the same support, it became "too much" and "too serious," so he hung up to play Clash of Clans. I saw him on dates with other girls and heard about his escapades on Wednesday nights through the grapevine, both likely featuring the same overplayed and cheesy lines. He ignored me in public and then crawled back for help with his overdue essays and disgusting attempts at grammar. He refused to come to the pub on my birthday because it wasn't a "special occasion." I quickly saw all of it for what it was: self-obsession and emotional immaturity.

Once I was done getting blown off for video games and embarrassed in front of my friends, it took me weeks to break it off because no conversation actually got through to him. It was obvious he wanted something more serious than what I was offering. Telling his entire extended family about me was a giveaway to this, though he refuted it every time. "You have to trust me to communicate what I want," he would say — if you are ever told this, run fast. He was either a liar or couldn't handle rejection (or both), because he then proclaimed to love me and wrote "315 pages of love letters, of me for you." Luckily, I never saw those pages.

After everything, I don't regret my decision to become involved with him; I'm only mad at myself for letting it go that far. Thankfully, lessons lie in everything, dear reader, sobbing boys included. Skip his tears and remember that just because something is casual does not mean you deserve to be treated like a convenience.



I wish the best to his new girlfriend, I just hope he cries less about me than he did about his ex.

DO YOU HAVE A SURVIVAL STORY? EMAIL ARTS@THESAINT.SCOT TO BE FEATURED.
ILLUSTRATION BY ELIZABETH LANG

The Myth of Victimhood

STAUCA and the power of the underdog

THEO JEBSEN MOORE
Relic Writer

Whilst sipping one of Aikman's most eccentric beers in the all too familiar cellar of the bar and bistro, bubbly conversation was forced to a close as all ears pricked towards one side of the room. A chorus of tories, rosy faces barely poking out from a mountain of tweed, took centre stage as what could only be described as a dirge fighting tooth and nail against the slow encroachment of progress began. Hearing William Blake's 'And did those feet in ancient time' briefly took me back to school choir, until the whiplash of the situation snapped me back to the present (although the interior would suggest that I was in the '70s). The song I was listening to seemed to convey how the St Andrews Unionist and Conservative Association, or STAUCA, see themselves: scrappy underdogs who have carved out a bastion against an unstoppable tide of progress.

Blake's hymn gives caution towards the devouring forces of change which were sweeping across Britain in his time. He pitches a fight between the satanic forces of industrialisation and England's honest and vulnerable natural state. In heed of this warning, STAUCA have taken shelter against fast-paced change by locking themselves in their cellar. In their haste, they seem to have lost the key. For many, STAUCA seem unable to crawl out from their shell of irony, gripping onto needlessly edgy and attention-seeking jokes. Through this campus-wide unpopularity, STAUCA have done the impossible. They have forged a narrative of being plucky heroes standing defiantly against the faceless backdrop of student politics. The believability of this act is questionable, however. Should we accept the victimisation of STAUCA when the political theatre is actually shifting back towards conservatism?



Before the scales are tipped in this public debate, I would suggest a look back at the mythologies of other groups. For the Ancient Greeks, the primordial Titans were usurped by the more familiar cast of gods in an epic battle called the Titanomachy, a myth which expressed the violent blossoming of progress against the stagnant ancients. Although comparing the might of STAUCA to lumbering giants may be a bit far-fetched, their bellowing cries for days gone by in the depths of Aikman's echo the cries of the banished Titans wailing from Tartarus' dank caves. A myth more suited to the narrative they have authored could be found in Richard Wagner's *Ring Cycle*.

Channelling the romance of national myth, Wagner painted the tragic glows of the last sunset to shine on the old order in the Twilight of the Gods, the last section of *The Ring Cycle*. Heavily inspired by the myth of Ragnarok, Wagner shows the noble and tragic end to the gods, who meet their fiery deaths due to the faceless hordes of dwarfs, or Nibelungs, who seek control over the world through means of industrialisation. The gods are toppled, similarly to the Titans, by a force which represents the new. This theme is only a small leap away from the core message of the society's anthem.

STAUCA have adopted the attitude of the doomed gods, longingly gazing into the lapping flames of progress as they come to swallow them up, thanks to their unbending need to keep their controversial flair. That is not an attack on the group, but a self-admitted truth. A truth which STAUCA intensifies every time they host a "Thatcher Thursday," every time they call something gay, and every time they sing 'And did those feet in ancient time.' It is their defiance to change that we either love or hate. STAUCA are not clueless — they have chosen to build the funeral pyre of self-loathing with the hate they get, and they've made their bed in it too, cosying up to their noble resignation like all mythical old orders. I don't think that STAUCA want to rebuild Jerusalem. They're too busy performing in its ruins.

Image from Wikimedia Commons

Not Another Cover Band

ILENA DAY-DELL'OLIO
Relic Writer

"We are the only original band in St Andrews." These words were spoken into the microphone on the 6-inch stage of Sandy's Bar by Felix Saint-Bris, one of the two singers of the three-man band, the Herons. What ensued was a setlist of songs about wearing designer clothes on a Hinge date and eating porridge in the morning. What could've been a coy and slightly embarrassed performance was the opposite. They gave us a show in every sense of the word. Felix repurposed his microphone stand as a fireman's pole and, clinging to it, fell onto the drum kit, which Ilya Husan continued to play as Ben Bagley followed on guitar and voice. Hypnotic Beckettian intervals of silence punctuated the songs, which themselves held an absurdist quality. And, in between dancing some estranged version of the twist, I looked at it all and felt an odd sense of pride. The songs *were* originals; they belonged to the Herons, but they also belonged to us.



I sat down with Felix and Ilya to discuss cover band culture in St Andrews. Ilya also drums for the Macaronis, a band built around curated covers with the occasional original. Asking him which band he preferred would've been like asking a politician a yes or no question. We started basic. I asked what made the Herons different, but it turns out things aren't so simple. "Everyone starts off with covers," Felix explained. Original music does not arrive fully formed, nor as a reaction to the St Andrews cover scene. It started off with half-and-half sets until it felt "good to stick to originals, and see progress, as musicians and as a band." Over time, those originals wove their way into the band's identity: "If the Herons were to play covers, we wouldn't be the Herons."

Cover bands dominate the St Andrews music scene, but for good reason. As Ilya mentioned, "they are easy and reliable," and even more importantly, "they are safe," not just for the musicians, but for the venues that hire them. Friendly to pubs and events, cover bands give audiences something they already know, whereas playing originals removes that immediate point of comfort. Not all cover bands play it safe, however. Thrush has been one of the few bands to show originality and artistic liberty with their covers. Originality that often goes unappreciated by pub owners. As Ilya went on to question, "If the event organisers are booking a live band, are they gonna book a band whose songs nobody knows? Or someone that can get a whole crowd going?" Like a faint echo of 1950s lounge singers, copy-and-paste cover bands are easy listening. Audiences don't need to work very hard. They already know the songs, the lyrics, and can afford to half-listen. Where covers fade into the background of a Friday night, originality refuses to. It demands your attention. "If you're making the effort to come see a band, that band better put on a show for you," or, as Felix poetically put it, "get freaky with it." That explains why last semester's show in Sandy's Bar felt like a critically acclaimed play at the Byre. Simply playing the music isn't enough. Original bands must give audiences a reason to stay, because unlike cover bands, they cannot lean on familiarity to carry them through the set.

The pull of a good cover, however, goes far beyond St Andrews. After all, the best of Ella Fitzgerald often overlaps with the best of Sarah Vaughan, both covering Cole Porter's jazz standards. With some stretching of the imagination, orchestras could be considered the original cover bands. The Beatles, The Who and The Rolling Stones all started off as human jukeboxes. That being said, I don't know how many more well-worn covers I can take from St Andrews. "In my first year, there were four or five bands. Tops." Felix said, "Now, thanks to Signpost, there are a lot more, which is great." But perhaps, just as Signpost helped grow the scene, it could encourage bands to take their next steps. Because, as Ilya said, "I feel like people are yet to see the true potential of some musicians and bands in St Andrews," and maybe, when they do, St Andrews might hum with the sound of new music, rather than simply chiming the old.

Photo by Loulou Sloss

Dead Language or Living Playground?

Translating the modern world into Latin

CARLA LONGO
Relic Writer

I am no longer entirely sure what tricks time has played on me. When I close my eyes, I am still a second-year student in my attic room on the third floor of Regs, surrounded by lecture notes that never quite made it into neat folders. And yet, here I am, in the final semester of my degree. And at St Andrews, your final semester usually means one thing: the dissertation.

One question lies at the heart of mine: What happens when literature is translated not from Latin, but into it? My research grew from a desire to unite my passion for Classics with my love of modern literature, leading me to focus on the translation of contemporary works from English into Latin.

This practice is particularly fascinating because it runs against our expectations. We are accustomed to thinking of Latin as a source language rather than a target language. Anyone who has studied it will be familiar with the exercise of translating Seneca or Cicero into English. The reverse operation is far less common, and yet it belongs to a tradition with far deeper historical roots than we might expect.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, Latin ceased to be anyone's mother tongue, but it did not disappear. Instead, it survived for centuries as a lingua franca across Europe. Texts originally composed in vernacular languages were translated into Latin to ensure wider circulation. Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* and John Milton's *Paradise Lost* are just two notable examples. The language also expanded to describe new realities, particularly in science. Words, such as *telescopium* (telescope), were coined to describe new scientific inventions or name newly discovered lands. Far from being a closed system, Latin has continued to evolve. Dictionaries of Latin neologisms are still published today and include words such as *computatrum* (computer) and *interrete* (internet). These are all examples that challenge the widespread assumption that Latin is incapable of expressing modern ideas.

The way Latin is taught has also shaped how we perceive it. Before the Humanist period, many texts now considered central to classical literature had not yet been rediscovered. Medieval students therefore learned Latin through a different body of texts, often emphasising composition and later prose. The 'classical' Latin we prize today is the result of historical selection rather than a complete picture of the language. This selective tradition has consequences, representing only one phase in Latin's long history, crystallising a lively matter into a single, however beautiful, frame.

The translation of modern texts into Latin and Ancient Greek continues to this day. A short walk into Toppings reveals Latin and Ancient Greek editions of *Harry Potter*, alongside works such as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *The Little Prince*. These books are often approached as curiosities, but they raise important questions about accessibility and the future of classical languages.

In my own dissertation, I will focus on the Latin translation of Oscar Wilde's comedy *The Importance of Being Earnest*, published in 2021 by Juan Coderch, a professor at St Andrews. When I spoke to him during my research, one remark stood out. He explained that his primary motivation for undertaking such a demanding translation was simple enjoyment, the pleasure of rendering beloved texts into a language he admired. It is a reminder that Classics is not only an intellectually rigorous act but also a creative and, most importantly, fun one.

The final work I will examine is Julia Donaldson's immensely popular children's book *The Gruffalo*. Here, my interest lies in its pedagogical implications. Translating children's literature into Latin could provide an engaging way to introduce younger audiences to the language. I remember my father sitting me down in front of Indiana Jones in English, hoping that exposure alone would help me learn. Why should reading bedtime stories in Latin be any different?



These are just some of the questions I hope to explore as I write my dissertation. For now, I hope this article has offered an overview of the possibilities contained within the Latin language and the potential to look at the subject from another perspective. Because at the end of the day, Latin is not only about what has been preserved from the past — it is also about what we choose to do with it now.

Illustration by Zoe Small

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Red, White, and Rosé: Barn Bash 2026

JOSS WILDGOOSE BULLOCH
EVENTS WRITER

In my first year, I made a great many American friends. Following some summer reflection, I decided that losing a few of them felt not only healthy, but necessary. "Trimming the fat" is, after all, a compulsory ritual after first year. Somewhere between having to explain the concept of sarcasm and dodging the emotional turbulence of the 2024 election, I found myself growing tired of a particular strain of American spirit — one eager to be internationally palatable and self-conscious of their own volume.

Now, halfway through second year, I somehow, conversely, have even more American friends. The problem, it turns out, was never Americans themselves — it was my taste in them. And nowhere is that corrected taste more rewarded than at Barn Bash.

Among the many Americans in St Andrews who arrive keen to announce that they are not really American at all — 'Scotch' by ancestry, 'Irish' by temperament, or, occasionally, 'spiritually Chinese'— it becomes oddly refreshing to meet the opposite species: the gun-toting, burger-frying, flag-waving, red-blooded, U-S-A American, who makes no effort whatsoever to adapt themselves to European sensibilities, and shows up exactly as they are. American culture, at its best, works when it stops apologising for itself; Barn Bash proves that point.

After half a dozen evening black-tie balls in first year, many older students begin searching for something more niche. Barn Bash already has an advantage here. It does not demand stiff formalwear or solemnity. It uses the little daylight January offers when most events wait for nightfall. It replaces bow ties with boots and velvet with denim. It is not a victim of black-tie fatigue. It feels, mercifully, different.

The £85 lunch remains the gravitational centre of Barn Bash, and the committee knows it. It is worth noting that the lunch's price tag helps fund the substantial sums Barn Bash raises for Help for Heroes — the UK charity supporting injured veterans and service personnel — with this year marking a record-breaking total. This year's offering leaned fully into the American fantasy: classic burgers and fries, corn on the cob —if it ain't broke, don't fix it. The restraint worked. According to guests, the food was noticeably better received than last year's turkey amalgamation, not because it surprised anyone, but because it didn't try to. Barn Bash imports a version of America that is indulgent and culturally loud, trusting that those to whom it appeals shall be attracted.

The wine at lunch, meanwhile, was another story. Whispering Angel rosé appeared in, frankly, excessive quantities. Expectations were high but largely met through the sheer volume of alcohol. Had you only procured an after-party ticket, you may have noticed that every single lunch attendee was already steaming at half two. The committee may celebrate how international they are, but the event itself remains thoroughly American: generous, loud, and unapologetically social.

That sociability carried the afternoon more reliably than any formal programming. If you grew tired of Leland's American classics or pushing and shoving in line for a drink, the smoking area offered unexpected refuge. Though the weather suggested Siberia rather than the American South, the space heaters transformed it into something almost civilised for January.

Of course, there is only so long one can drink, smoke, and dance. Enter: the mechanical bull. Barn Bash's great cultural artefact provided ten seconds of bravado and supplied entertainment for those unsure what to do with themselves before the first buses began to leave.



And here lies Barn Bash's one genuine problem — not unique to this event, but worth naming nonetheless. There is not a lot to do. You can circulate the same three or four rooms as many times as you like, attempt to converse over the music, smoke half your pack, lose people and find them again, and boogie out. Try doing this for five hours and you may find yourself meditating by the taco truck to see if the time moves along a little quicker. This isn't a failure of ambition but a structural fact of small-town spectacle: the scale of events invites intensity, not variety.

Fireworks eventually closed out the afternoon, letting me know I could return home without my editor scolding me. Say what you want about Barn Bash — that it is excessive, culturally loud, or theatrically unserious — but these things give it its energy. The winter edge softens and people will bother to talk to strangers with a selfie stick. For a few hours, St Andrews traded polish for momentum, and momentum, it turns out, is enough.

And if you need the opinion of someone not journalistically tied, I leave you with one last quote: "Barn Bash has the hottest girls and the best coke in St Andrews."

Make of that what you will.

PHOTO BY JOE SEAL

What's Online?

www.thesaint.scot/events

Winter Memory Postcards

Wish you were here!

HANNAH WILKINSON
EVENTS WRITER

Can one truly capture the spirit of Christmas with an iPhone 15? Anyone who has spent an indecent amount of time labouring over the perfect Instagram photo dump will surely draw the same conclusion: the most wonderful time of the year stubbornly refuses to be reduced to a 20-slide carousel.

Sit, Stay, Savasana

Yoga with a canine twist

NATALIE CONTINI
EVENTS WRITER

Upon entering the room, I was greeted with that lovely puppy stench so many dog owners come to know. Nice at first, like that fresh puppy scent, but after numerous accidents on the wooden floor of the event space, and eventually on many victims' yoga mats, the smell turned a bit foul.

Smith on *Glyph*: Powerful Stuff!

FIONA MCALLISTER
Events Writer

Instead of queuing for Bop or downing drinks at the pub, I spent a rainy Friday night nestled among the literarily inclined at Toppings & Company. Although not on my typical agenda, Toppings was hosting an exciting guest. So pints were put aside, as I couldn't pass up the opportunity to hear from renowned Scottish author Ali Smith discussing her newest novel, *Glyph*.

Author of works such as *How to Be Both* and the Seasonal Quartet (*Autumn, Winter, Spring, Summer*), *Glyph* is Smith's fifteenth novel, and sister to *Gliff*, published in 2024. Her works have been translated into 40 different languages, not 30 like the Toppings employee who gave the introduction, suggested – much to Ms Smith's chagrin.

Such a distinguished author attracted hordes of sweater-clad connoisseurs of the written word. When I arrived at this event, the bookstore was bustling with anticipation, and all seats were filled. I was graciously ushered to a 'reserved' seat near the back of the store by a cheerful Toppings employee, who jokingly assured me it was reserved for 'press.' How official – I would definitely be calling my mom about this after.

> "Such a distinguished author attracted hordes of sweater-clad connoisseurs."

With heads craned to get a glimpse of this literary legend, Ali Smith began her talk. She discussed the inspiration behind *Glyph* before reading aloud a short excerpt from the novel, then answering questions from the audience. Behind her sharp prose is an even sharper mind, as her wit carried her audience through even the most dreary of evenings weather-wise. Although one woman behind me did doze off during the read-aloud, I was thoroughly engaged.

A perennial theme in both *Glyph* and Ms Smith's talk is the idea of flattening. She shared that 'glyph' has multiple meanings, denoting both a singular character or symbol and a carving or groove. Glyph, therefore, is a minuta, the smallest unit of meaning, but also an indentation that makes the flat dimensional. Therefore, a glyph resists flattening as it is both multitudinous and complicated. Smith shared that she was inspired by this metaphor of flattening and wanted to explore the ways we, as individuals and as a collective whole, can resist being reduced and compressed.

Glyph is in part a response to incomprehensible horrors and atrocities that flatten our world, and through language gives its readers a method of inhabiting multiplicities. Ms Smith spoke about how we shouldn't be desensitised to violence and instead seek to comprehend it — through reading, writing, and thinking critically; we can visualise a model of complex solutions to complex issues.

Powerful stuff! As a student studying the humanities, I often take for granted that I have the privilege of discussing texts and ideas at length, so I applaud Ali Smith for opening this dialogue to the community and her readers at large.

Although Ali Smith's wit was often humorous and refreshing, it was at times directed at eager audience members or the poor student reading the (albeit factually incorrect) introduction. There is a time for sharp jabs and sarcastic comments, but hopefully not at the expense of the well-intentioned supporters of your work.

Surprisingly, for a student-centred town, I was one of the very few students in the audience. I understand that this was a sold-out event, but perhaps, when available, discounted tickets could be set aside for the literarily inclined youth. In any case, the Toppings employees and volunteers were incredibly kind and ensured that each attendee felt welcomed — especially to the 'press.' Whether for an evening with a visiting author or a quick perusal between lectures, Toppings is undoubtedly a delightful refuge for the bookish.

> "Toppings is undoubtedly a delightful refuge for the bookish."

I left elucidated, buzzing with ideas and conflicting opinions. It's the kind of intoxicating feeling gained after the most engaging seminars and fruitful tutorials.

Or, it could have been the complementary glass of wine.

The Olive and The Oak Comes to the Byre

FLORENCE GILL
Events Writer

It's not an easy time to be Middle Eastern. From what little news we hear living in the West, you would be forgiven for considering the 'Middle East' as an exotic, faraway land of deserts, terror, and badly-written villains from early-2000s movies. It becomes easy, conventional even, to disregard the parts of these countries that many natives would consider integral — the art, the poetry, the food, the music. These elements of society have shaped generations, and personally, I think they are the *most* important things to remember in times of political turmoil. When life is difficult, we must turn to culture to remind us of joy and meaning.

That's why, as someone with a mother who escaped Iran during the revolution in 1979, I was excited to see *The Olive and the Oak* advertised in Rector's Café as part of the Byre World Series. It was described as "a meeting of East and West" – a spotlight on connections between Middle Eastern and Western arts and cultures that are so often starkly separated.

Upon entering the Barron Theatre, I was greeted by the soft but captivating sounds of the santur, a traditional Persian instrument played beautifully by Dr Parmis Mozafari. It seemed a delightful preface to what I expected to be an evening of similarly engaging performances.



Unfortunately, the event got off to a slightly slow start — not that Dr Röder's lecture about the Empress Soraya, a German/Persian public figure, second wife of the Shah Pahlavi, wasn't interesting, but it wasn't exactly what I was expecting, and ran on slightly too long. Perhaps, in an academic setting, I would have been more invested in the story, but instead I was itching to get to the other performances promised in the programme.

Despite this, the rest of the evening flowed naturally, through musical recitals, poetry deep-dives, and reflections on visits to Middle Eastern countries from foreigners' perspectives. The connections in cultures were highlighted well, and with a careful grace that acknowledged hard times whilst focusing on other aspects of society. The easy movement between items was aided effortlessly by the thoughtful narration from Dr Ayah Durkawi, who conceptualised and curated the event. Her elegance in narration translated well to conversation, as she earnestly described to me her motivation for this event: her students. She explained that understanding the connections between cultures is integral for students of foreign languages, especially those for whom such cultures are often obscured or inaccessible.

Undoubtedly, the stand-out elements of the evening were the dances and workshop from ZarifAtToul AsSamer, an amateur volunteer dance troupe who use *dabke*, a traditional folk dance, to spread awareness of Palestinian culture and raise money to support Palestinian orphans.

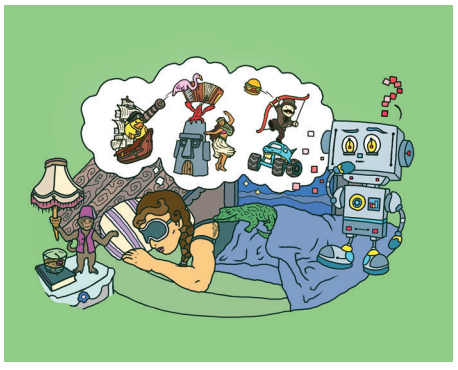
It was a lovely, high-energy interlude in a series of otherwise engaging but serious talks, and the audience connected with it instantly, clapping and singing along. If I'm being honest, I was initially reluctant to join in with the dance workshop at the end — I'm much better at watching dancing than I am at participating, but the dancers' enthusiasm wouldn't allow me to sit still. After an explanation that the dance was meant to unify people after a long day of harvest, we began clumsily attempting to recreate the moves from the stage. I found myself holding hands with the people around me, dissolving into laughter together as the instructor yelled that we weren't unified enough, and that we would repeat the dance until we did it perfectly (which, thank goodness, he didn't hold us to). This was a perfect encapsulation of the spirit of the evening – connecting with strangers through united joy in the unfamiliar.

Photo by Florence Gill

Watching Your Nightmares

How AI is turning our sleep into cinema

BHANI KAUR
SCI-TECH WRITER



Imagine waking up from a particularly vivid dream — one where you were flying over a city made of glass or talking to a long-lost friend — only to have the details evaporate the moment your feet touch the cold bedroom floor. For as long as humans have existed, our dreams have been the ultimate private cinema, a theatre with an audience of one. We have spent centuries trying to describe, paint, or analyse them on a therapist's sofa, but the actual footage has always remained locked inside our skulls. However, thanks to a marriage between neuroscience and artificial intelligence, we are finally beginning to crack the code of the sleeping mind, and the view from the other side is as haunting as it is fascinating.

The breakthrough comes from the realisation that when we see something in the real world, our brain processes the information in a very specific, measurable way. When you look at a red London bus or a golden retriever, blood flows to specific regions of your visual cortex in a distinct pattern. Researchers, most notably at Kyoto University in Japan, decided to see if an AI could learn this 'language' of blood flow. They placed volunteers inside fMRI scanners — large, doughnut-shaped machines that track brain activity — and showed them thousands of images, ranging from simple letters to complex photographs of aeroplanes and owls. As the subjects looked at these pictures, the AI watched their brains, learning to associate specific neural flickers with specific shapes and colours. It was essentially building a dictionary: one side was 'human brain activity,' and the other was 'visual reality.'

Once the AI was sufficiently trained, the real experiment began. The subjects were told to fall asleep inside the scanner. This was no easy feat, given the machine's mechanical whirring, but as they drifted into the early stages of sleep — a state known as hypnagogia — the AI remained vigilant. It was not just waiting for the person to wake up and report their dreams; it was attempting to live-stream them. By examining the patterns of blood flow in the sleeping brain and comparing them to the dictionary it had built during waking hours, the AI attempted to reverse-engineer what the dreamer was seeing.

The results are nothing short of surreal. We are not yet at the stage of watching high-definition, 4K 'dream movies' with crisp edges and clear dialogue. Instead, the AI produces what can only be described as digital ghosts. If the dreamer sees a dog, the AI might generate a morphing, multi-limbed shape resembling a cross between a golden retriever and a cloud. If they are dreaming of a person, a hazy, impressionistic face might shimmer into view. These images are often blurry, shifting, and strangely beautiful, resembling a watercolour painting that refuses to dry. In one instance, when a brain pattern resembled a man and a dog, the AI generated a bizarre, unsettling hybrid — a 'dog-man' that would look right at home in a Victorian ghost story.

Despite the low resolution, the accuracy is startling. The AI is remarkably good at identifying the category of the dream. It can tell with a high degree of certainty whether you are dreaming about a building, a piece of furniture, a man, or a woman. We have effectively moved from guessing what happens behind closed doors to actually peering through the keyhole. It is a milestone that feels like the 'silent film' era of neuroscience; we are watching the first glimmering, grainy frames of a technology that will only become more lucid with time.

While the prospect of recording our dreams is exhilarating for artists and psychologists, it also carries a hint of the 'nightmare' suggested by the title. The inner sanctum of the mind — the last place on Earth where we have total, unadulterated privacy — is being mapped. We are learning to translate the private language of the soul into something that can be played back on a screen. As technology evolves, we may eventually have to ask ourselves: once we can record our dreams, will we ever truly be alone with our thoughts again?

ILLUSTRATION BY ISABELLE HOLLOWAY

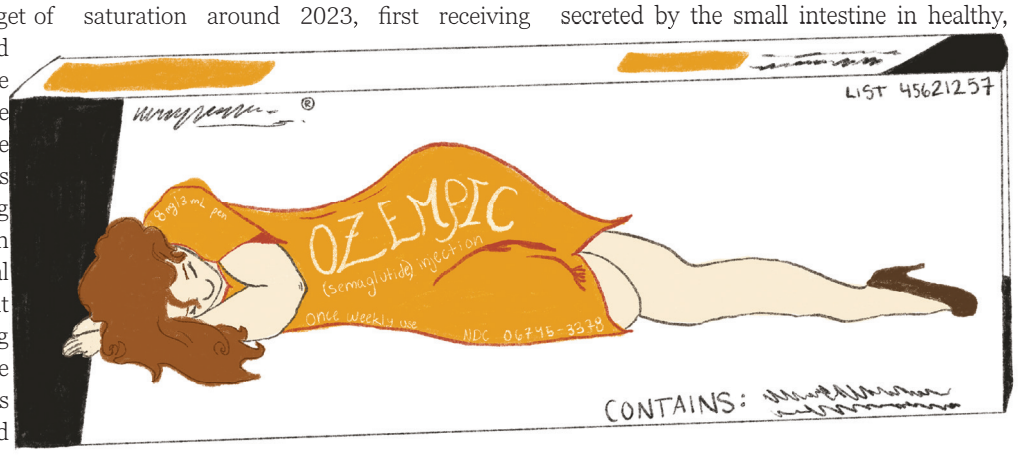


Infallible Ozempic?

EVA SCHILTON
Sci-Tech Writer

The more we sit and ponder, the more options to 'better ourselves' we can come up with, specifically in the realm of aesthetics and appearances. Whether that be our skin, hair, body, or face, there is a solution for anything and everything we wish to change – or rather, erase.

Our bodies have always been a target of the media, product development, and the drug pipeline, aiming to provide the necessary tools to *at last* fit the impossible and increasingly unachievable standards. Change came with the 2010s body positivity movement, urging audiences from all over to finally detach from the incessant chase of the 'ideal body' and all unhealthy attitudes that accompanied the chase. Appearing drastically distant from the 1990s Kate Moss quote, "nothing tastes as good as skinny feels," with many women (and men) sighing in relief that this rhetoric and 'lifestyle' would no longer plague their lives. The relief was rather short-lived, as by 2020, Moss's quote resurfaced, bringing along with it a renewal of the 'heroin chic' aesthetic and the rise of new medications marketed as weight loss options.



The latter, specifically injectables, dominate the forefront of any discussion about beauty, from Botox and Hyaluronic fillers to, recently, Ozempic. However, we must pay special attention to how we categorise the last of these – a medication licensed as treatment for Type 2 diabetes, not a weight loss shortcut for half of Hollywood. Starting in 2022, semaglutide (branded as Ozempic) first appeared in articles and interviews, used by celebrities as an infallible method to achieve their goal weight. This phenomenon reached cultural saturation around 2023, first receiving backlash in 2024, when media audiences noticed the first cases of the feared 'Ozempic face,' leading to criticism regarding the illegitimate use of the medication.

Semaglutide, the active ingredient of Ozempic, is a glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonist. It was first licensed by the FDA in 2017 as a self-injectable treatment for Type 2 diabetes patients in cases where the body either produces insufficient concentrations of insulin or does not use insulin effectively. Ozempic is typically supplemented with other medications (such as Metformin or Insulin injections). The receptor agonist works by mimicking the actions of GLP-1, a naturally occurring hormone in the body that belongs to the group of incretins (metabolism-related hormones) that are naturally secreted by the small intestine in healthy, non-diabetic individuals. Incretin hormones generate a two- to three-fold greater insulin secretory response; in individuals with Type 2 diabetes, this secretion is reduced or non-existent. Agonists such as GLP-1 work as manufactured substances that attach to a cell receptor and cause the same reaction, as if the substance were naturally occurring. The reaction causes an increase in insulin production (lowering blood glucose levels from the bloodstream), suppresses the release of glucagon (a sugar) from the liver, and slows stomach emptying, increasing the time food remains in the stomach and inducing satiety, lowering appetite.

The main concern from a physiological standpoint is the risk of side effects, given that there is no legitimate need for the medication for those without Type 2 diabetes. Side effects include: gastrointestinal issues (nausea, vomiting), increased risk of hypoglycaemia (a significant drop in blood glucose levels) causing dizziness, as well as reported links to an increased risk of pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas).

The use of this medication by non-diabetic people has sparked controversy – from shortages affecting diabetic patients who depend on it, to ethical questions about following a treatment plan without medical need, as well as a social concern that its popularity reflects a return to damaging body-image ideals that many have fought to move away from. Our last reflection begs the question: Ozempic, is it infallible, and if so, is it worth it?

Illustration by Maya Mason

UK No Longer Measles-Free

LOGAN SIBBALD
Sci-Tech Writer

In January, the UK lost its measles-free status, as declared by the World Health Organisation (WHO). This means that sustained transmission of the disease — which is caused by the highly infectious measles virus — reached a level above that at which its spread can be controlled. The WHO's decision is based on data from 2024, where cases in England totalled 2,911 — a number not seen in over a decade. Although early figures from 2025 suggested that there had been fewer cases than the previous year (957 in England), the WHO attributes the uptick in measles to falling rates of vaccination.

The measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine — now, as of 2026, offered with added protection against varicella (chickenpox) in the form of the MMRV vaccine — is used to prevent the spread of these viruses. It is administered in children in two doses at twelve and eighteen months, and stimulates the immune system such that it can fight off these pathogens should they infect the body in the future. However, although vaccination rates above 95% are recommended to limit the spread of measles, from 2024 to 2025, only 84.4% of children in the UK had received their two doses of MMR by the age of five.

This substandard statistic has been influenced by a number of factors. Ironically,

> "From 2024 to 2025, only 84.4% of children in the UK had recieved their two doses of MMR by the age of five."

the original success of the MMR vaccine, which practically eliminated measles in the UK following its introduction in 1988, has made parents complacent in getting their children vaccinated. Many vaccination appointments have also been missed in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

These effects have been further compounded by the sudden rise of the modern 'anti-vaxxer' movement. The beginnings of this misinformed, conspiratorial crusade can be traced back to false claims that linked the MMR vaccine with autism in children, and have been furthered by dangerous postings on social media, fearmongering during the pandemic, and the unfounded ramblings of US President Donald Trump and Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr.

With this, it comes as no surprise that measles is also rising in the US. After peaking at 2,267 cases last year, 588 cases have already been reported since the beginning of 2026, 94% of which were unvaccinated. Together, this signals a worrying rise in vaccine scepticism and offers a glimpse into the disease-ridden future humanity could be faced with if it is not halted.

However, it is important to acknowledge that not all individuals who refuse vaccination are anti-vax, or have been solely influenced by the anti-vaxxer mob. The NHS has previously recognised that people from minority ethnic groups are more likely to show greater "vaccine hesitancy," which differs from anti-vax in that it is driven by valid concerns about the effects of vaccines on health. This is often a result of distrust in the healthcare system, founded in historical discrimination by medical professionals, and racism. To address this, the UK Health Security Agency is hoping to build trust with such minority ethnic groups through targeted outreach and by meeting concerns with evidence, to dispel any fears driven by the spread of misinformation.

Addressing vaccine hesitancy will play an important part in increasing MMRV vaccine uptake. It will also be crucial for the UK to increase access to vaccination appointments. Indeed, a 2025 study published in the scientific journal Vaccine interviewed 22 parents in England, of whom ten said they struggled to access vaccination services — mainly because of complex booking systems and lack of GP appointments.

The roadmap for regaining measles elimination status in the UK is clear — improve GP access, address anti-vax claims, and support and inform those who are vaccine hesitant — how quickly this will be done is another matter.

The Four-Week Cycle and Sport

Hormone cycles contribute to higher injury rates in women's sports

ELODIE COWAN
SPORT WRITER

It is no secret to over half of the population that there are ebbs and flows within each monthly cycle. This is a broad statement and does not account for women who do not menstruate for many reasons, including amenorrhea, PCOS, hormonal conditions, or other gender-specific factors.

In sport, however, the calendar rarely accommodates biology. Match day does not care which phase of the cycle you are in. You are expected to show up and perform, whether you are in a high-energy phase or on day one of menstruation.

As women's sport enters a new era of increased sponsorship, greater visibility, and commercial growth, however, questions are being raised about whether the gender research gap is limiting the athletes' performance and contributing to injury patterns.

For years, training programmes have largely been designed around male physiology. As investment grows, the question arises: Are female athletes still forced to operate within systems not built for their bodies? One area where this conversation becomes urgent is the rise in ACL injuries in women's sport. Professor Kirsty Elliott-Sale, Head of the Centre of Excellence for Women in Sport at Manchester Metropolitan University, has dedicated much of her research to the effects of female reproductive hormones on athletic performance.

Speaking on *The Game Changers* podcast, Elliott-Sale discussed controlled studies suggesting that increased levels of oestrogen, typically around day twelve of the menstrual cycle, may be associated with a greater risk of non-contact ACL injury. The theory centres on hormonal influence on ligament laxity and neuromuscular control — yet there is something of a dichotomy.

However, there is something of a dichotomy. Anecdotally, many female athletes report sustaining ACL injuries during menstruation, around days one to four of the cycle, when oestrogen levels are comparatively low.

This was the case for Olivia Boscaccy, one of St Andrews' most accomplished footballers. She tore her ACL in July 2019 during pre-season conditioning, taking a step to turn onto her left foot. She recalls being on her period at the time.

Her injury was diagnosed quickly in the US, with an MRI confirming damage to her ACL, MCL, and meniscus within 24 hours. Boscaccy's injury occurred before this research became more widely discussed, and she said that menstrual health was never raised as a possible contributing factor.

She was also unaware at the time that female athletes are statistically more prone to ACL injuries, and noted that structured prevention work was not part of her team's training programme until after multiple injuries began occurring within her cohort.

The science, Elliott-Sale emphasises, is not settled; the body of high-quality research remains limited, and hormones may represent only one variable among many. Training load, recovery structures, biomechanics, and inherently male-centred programme design may also contribute.



Hormones may influence risk, but they do not operate in isolation. For athletes, the injury is rarely theoretical.

Fourth year Anja Colombi tore her ACL in October 2024 while playing away in a netball match in Edinburgh. Her diagnosis was not immediate; after visiting A&E, she was discharged with a splint and crutches, but no MRI. Weeks later, a consultant confirmed a full ACL rupture and partial meniscus tear.

Colombi reflected, "I saw his face change when he did the tests. He said he was almost certain it was my ACL. I just burst into tears."

Colombi said that no one discussed menstrual cycle timing at any stage of her diagnosis or rehabilitation. She added that much of the information she received about her injury and recovery came from her own research rather than from her medical team.

Now further into recovery, she believes that rehabilitation programmes should better reflect the realities of female physiology: "Rehab plans are set, and you just follow them. I think there should be more flexibility and more structure around the cycle."

She also thinks that injury prevention education needs greater emphasis and that the coach holds the responsibility for educating themselves and their team.

Boscaccy also reflected on how little her rehabilitation programme accounted for hormonal variation. "It was very by-the-book," she explained, "with no variation or cycle syncing."

Six years on from surgery, she has recently torn her meniscus again.

Boscaccy feels that the long-term toll and the lack of emphasis on prevention from the outset are missing from the conversation: "You think surgery fixes it, but every time it hurts, there's that fear of tearing it again."

If hormones may influence performance or injury risk, cycle-specific training appears logical in theory. Team sport complicates that logic. Can a squad realistically individualise training around twenty different hormonal profiles, or does the nature of competition require uniform preparation regardless of physiology?

Education for coaches appears to be increasing, particularly at elite levels. Research and investment at clubs such as Arsenal Women indicate a growing recognition of menstrual health within professional sport. In addition, UEFA-linked research panels are examining the impact of menstrual cycles on performance.

Investment in women's sport is no longer marginal, yet there is a question as to whether this education empowers athletes or risks over-medicalising their bodies. As women's sport becomes more commercially valuable, pressure to optimise performance increases.

A source in the US told *The Saint* that there was an incident in which a collegiate lacrosse coach allegedly placed an entire team on hormonal contraception, though this claim could not be independently verified. It does, however, raise broader ethical questions.

Hormonal contraception can regulate menstrual cycles; in theory, synchronising cycles could simplify training periodisation. Hormonal contraception, however, is a medical decision with implications beyond sport, having potential impacts on fertility, mental health, and long-term well-being.

The issue is not whether hormonal contraception is valid — for many women, it is a positive and personal healthcare choice. The question is who makes that decision and under what influence.

If hormonal regulation were ever normalised as a performance strategy, where would that leave athletes for whom hormonal contraception is unsuitable, whether for medical, ethical, or religious reasons? Could this unintentionally exclude some women from participation?

As research into hormone patterns in sport expands, the landscape may shift. Whether that shift will lead to better support or increased control remains uncertain.

The four-week cycle is not a weakness; it is a biological reality. As women's sport grows in audience, sponsorship, and prestige, so too does the value placed on marginal gains. The question facing the industry is not simply whether hormones influence injury or performance, but how that knowledge will be used.

Will it lead to better education and athlete-centred support? Or, as the price of success rises, will physiology become something to manage? For now, the scientific research persists, the questions remain open, and the four-week cycle continues to confuse.

IMAGE BY ELODIE COWAN

Scotland's Late World Cup Call-up

FREDDIE COUGHLIN
Sport Writer

Scotland accepted a formal invitation to the T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka just fourteen days before their first game, leaving them a tight turnaround to prepare for their first match against cricketing royalty — the West Indies, in Kolkata.

The Saltires' golden ticket came when Bangladesh withdrew from the tournament. The ICC rejected the side's request to move their games from India to co-hosts Sri Lanka amid political tensions in the sub-continent. As the next highest-ranked team, Scotland got the late call-up.

Speaking to *The Saint*, Trudy Lindblade, CEO of Cricket Scotland, cited the "long days, late nights, and a lot of problem-solving" behind the ten-day turnaround. With the BBC running the headline, "No sponsor, kit on order and visa wait," Lindblade was pleased to report that the team had secured a lead sponsor, distinctive kit, and a full house of visas: "Now we're ready to play."

For the players, the last ten days have presented a different challenge: "It's been about keeping calm, but enjoying the excitement," Scotland's frontline spinner Mark Watt told *The Saint*. "We've got a lot of young players [on] our team at the moment," said Watt. "Ten days ago, they were sitting in the house, and now here we are in India at the World Cup. It's amazing."

The team has been keeping themselves busy over the winter. Wicketkeeper Matthew Cross was in the process of renovating his house when his side got the nod; others had spent the last month in an indoor fitness programme.

"The squad had already been training in preparation for upcoming tours," Linblade reflected positively on the team's condition. "Given the circumstances, they're in good shape."



Some of the Scottish squad are well accustomed to playing overseas already. Explosive batting all-rounder Brandon McMullen represented Abu Dhabi Knight Riders in the International League T20 throughout the winter. Others have competed in domestic T20 tournaments in New Zealand and Nepal, with Watt himself representing Karnali in the Nepal Premier League through November and December.

Defeats to Afghanistan and Namibia in warm-up games last week presented a harsh introduction to the subcontinental conditions, yet strong individual performances with the bat from McMullen and captain Richie Berrington provide optimism ahead of the challenges of the tournament.

Scotland's group includes West Indies, Italy, England, and Nepal, with the top two teams progressing to the knockout stage.

"We feel we can win games here," said Watt. "We've done it before at World Cups, and we've beaten all the teams in our group in the recent past."

Despite their failure in the qualifiers, Scotland are currently ahead of both Italy and Nepal in the T20 world rankings, so they stand an outside chance of progression if England or the West Indies falter.

"I don't think teams will take us lightly, as we've created a few upsets ourselves in the past," he added. "We know we've got world-class players in our squad, who can perform on the biggest stage and against the best teams."

For football fans, this is a strikingly familiar story: Denmark received a similar invitation just ten days before Euro '92, replacing Yugoslavia. Against all odds, they went on to win the tournament.

The story behind Scotland's inclusion has already brought success, raising the profile of Scottish cricket internationally. "Our challenge now is to turn that into impact at home, inspiring more people to get involved and helping us discover the next Richie Berrington or Kathryn Bryce," said Lindblade.

Scotland enters the competition free from the pressure of expectation and with an unpredictable format like T20, there's every chance they might upset the applecart.

Image Provided by Cricket Scotland

The New Golf Course in Town

JOEY CHATAWAY
Sport Writer

St Andrews is often described as "heaven on earth" when it comes to golf, but a cold, rainy Wednesday morning on the Craigtoun Course was hardly a celestial experience. Though the conditions were thoroughly miserable, the Craigtoun is a fantastic addition to the St Andrews course roster, posing very different challenges from the links courses on the coast.

The Duke's Course came into the hands of the St Andrews Links Trust in January. One of the first steps the Trust took was to change the course's original name owing to its ties with Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor. The now-rebranded Craigtoun Course, named after the nearby country park, is a five-minute drive from St Andrews and the latest addition to the town's ever-growing golf circuit.

Right from the first tee shot, it was obvious that my customary erratic approach wasn't going to cut it. The fairways, though fairly generous for a woodland course, are significantly narrower than those on the links. Booming slices with the driver are out of the question, so opting for a fairway-finding iron is the smarter call.

The course punishes players who sacrifice distance off the tee with long holes. The second hole, a 613-yard par five, was especially gruelling with the wind blowing a gale. The long holes were made all the harder by the state of the ground, which has been waterlogged after weeks of dire weather in St Andrews.

It must be said that the ground staff have done an admirable job keeping the course open during the winter months, and I am sure that, come spring, the fairways and greens will be in much better shape.

Even on such a grisly day, it was clear that this course would be stunning in a few months' time. The views over the town and beach, although obscured by rain at the moment, are as good as they get. Large-scale excavations for a new, private eighteen-hole course are taking place by the second and third holes, but the building site doesn't interfere much with the scenery.

The rows of tall trees shelter the fairways from the wind, maintaining a peacefulness about the Craigtoun that is sometimes lacking on the links. By spring, once the rain has abated, with the greens playing a touch quicker and the fairways offering a bit of roll, Craigtoun will be a joy to play.

The clubhouse experience is a crucial component of any round of golf, and the Craigtoun clubhouse is fantastic — among the best public clubhouses in St Andrews. The food and pints are fairly priced, it offers great views of the course, and the staff were charming.

It was hard not to visualise sitting on the balcony, overlooking the 18th, when the sun finally returns. A summer at the Craigtoun sounds like an enticing prospect indeed.

Sunday I'm in Love

BEN BAGLEY
Sport Editor

After a long winter break, the Sunday League kicked off again last weekend in a high-scoring afternoon of action.

Spartans, chasing their third title in as many years, romped home in a 10-2 demolition of Real Sosobad. It was a rude awakening for the newly promoted side, who will need to adapt quickly to the pace of the top division if they are to stand any chance of survival.

The title defenders weren't the only team to register double digits, with Botswana Meat Commission also racking up eleven goals against Sheffield Tuesday. BMC were unlucky to miss out on a spot in the final last season and will no doubt have their eyes on the prize this time out.

Beavers and Strokers also picked up wins on opening day. Strokers are no doubt still reeling from their defeat in last season's disappointmentl.

"Losing 6-1 in the final was heartbreak," Strokers captain Chris Black told *The Saint*. "We just didn't have the quality to cope with their star players." Black will be hoping his side can go one better this semester.

Teams have been busy in the January window, looking to capitalise on the folding of former Division1 side Paqueta Crisps over the break.

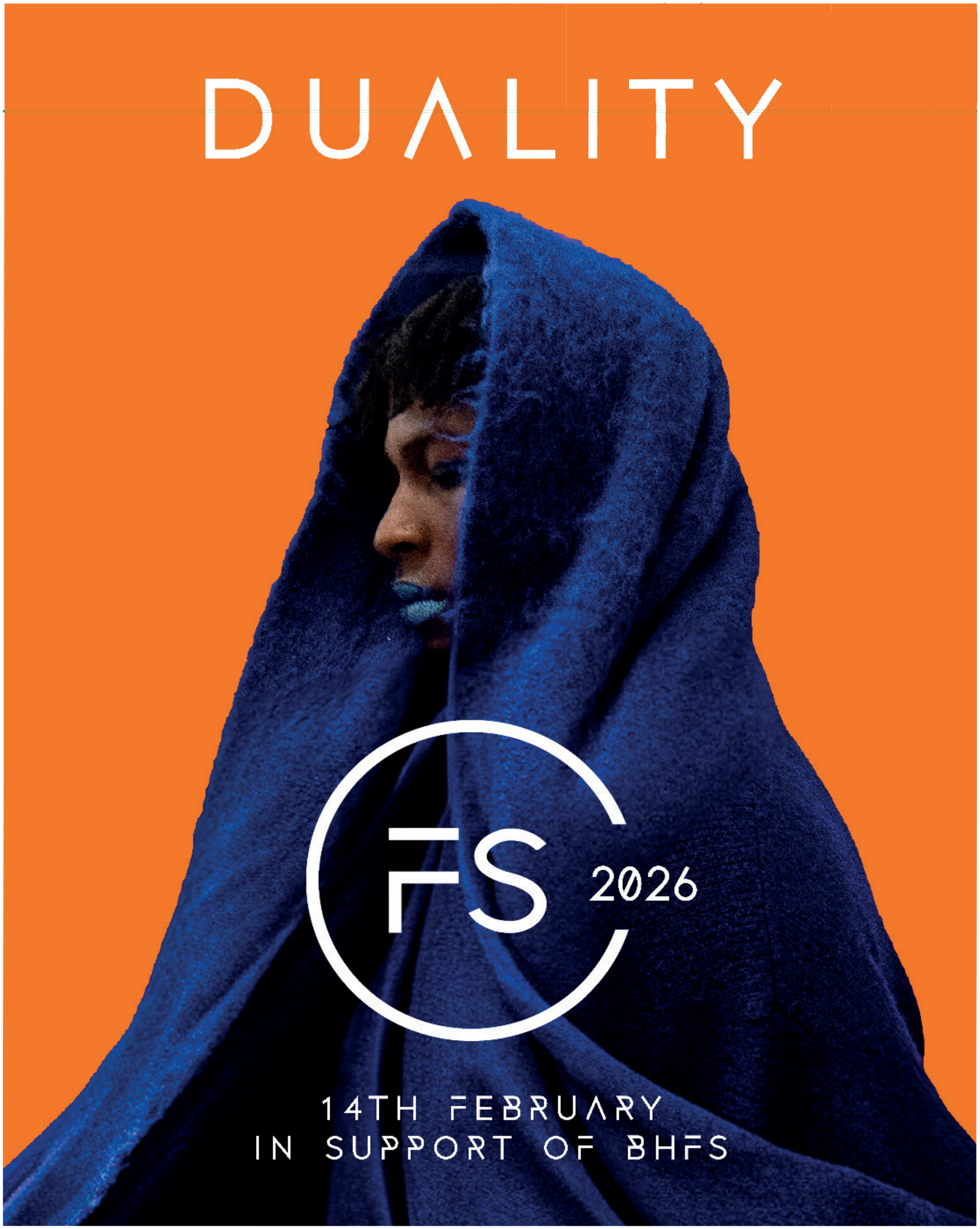
"There are a lot of talented players on the market," Butts Wynderers captain Oumar Sagna said. "We've been aiming to take advantage of that as much as possible with our recruitment."

This season promises to be another cracker. Keep up to date with the Sunday League in our print edition and online.

DIVISION 1

Pos	Team	Pld	GD	Pts
1	Botswana Meat Commission	1	+10	3
2	Spartans	1	+8	3
3	Beavers	1	+3	3
4	Strokers	1	+2	3
5	Butts Wynderers	1	-2	0
6	DLL	1	-3	0
7	Real Sosobad	1	-8	0
8	Sheffield Tuesday	1	-10	0

Weekend Results		
Beavers	5 - 2	DLL
Botswana MC	11 - 0	Sheffield Tuesday
Spartans	10 - 2	Real Sosobad
Strokers	5 - 3	Butts Wynderers


DUALITY
FS 2026
14TH FEBRUARY
IN SUPPORT OF BHFS