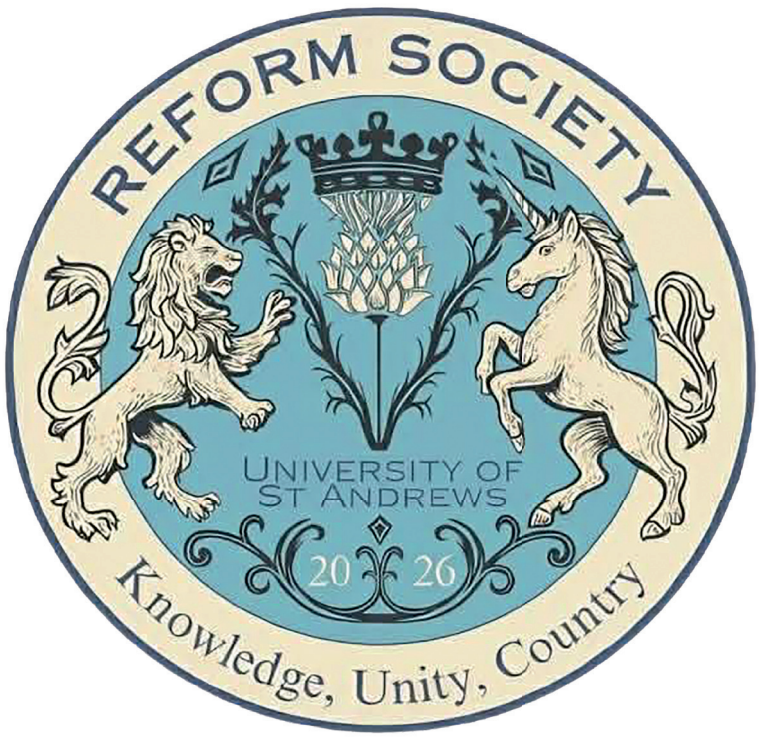
THE SAINT

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St Andrews Reform Society Event Disrupted Amid Provisional Union-Affiliation Backlash



PETRA PENDER
News Writer

St Andrews Reform Society has gained provisional affiliation status with the University of St Andrews' Student Association as of 13 March — a decision which prompted reactions from multiple political societies within St Andrews.

In a statement issued to *The Saint*, a Union spokesperson clarified that "an application has been submitted by a St Andrews Reform UK Society to become an affiliated society [...] We are currently reviewing this application in line with our affiliation process."

Prior to the Society's provisional affiliation, *The Saint* spoke with the Society's President and founder, a first-year student from Dundee who asked to remain anonymous. He said he initially started the Society because, while there is a Conservative Society in St Andrews, it lacked one focused on Reform. "I thought I'd take this opportunity," he said.

At the time of the interview on 16 February, there were 29 individuals who had registered interest in the society compared to the initial founding three.

Upon the announcement of the Reform Society's provisional affiliation, the group St Andrews Women Against the Far Right (WAFR) launched a campaign attempting to block the Reform Society's affiliation. Authoring an open letter to the Union, WAFR claimed that allowing Reform to affiliate would be "in complete opposition to the Union's values of inclusion and equality." The letter gained 500 votes in two days, according to the WAFR Instagram page.

Reform's first event took place at the Rule on 13 March. The location was initially advertised on the Society's Instagram account before then being deleted. The post's caption then read "DM," encouraging interested members of the St Andrews community to privately message the account for the event's details.

Several members of WAFR disrupted this event, which, according to the group, was an occurrence that has since been exaggerated.. "There are several points which keep cropping up in the Reform Society's version of events that are hyperbolised to a laughable proportion — namely that a 'large mob' of angry and 'threatening' students 'hijacked' their social," the group wrote in a message to *The Saint*. "There were six of us in total, involved in speaking to them, one by one."

Continued on Page 4.

The 51st State: Americans in St Andrews Shouldn't be Shocking

by Alex Brubaker

I'm American. A representative came to my California high school to speak about St Andrews to interested potential applicants. I heard, through this representative and through word of mouth, that St Andrews was beautiful, had strong academics at a lower price than US schools, and people there had fun. When I found out St Andrews was on the US Common Application, I was convinced. It was the only international university I applied to, convenient and appealing.

Read on Page 9.

The Crail Press: Scotland's Only All-Iron Printing Press

by Arnaz Mallick and Emma Ingram-Johnson

Around St Andrews, you may have seen bookmarks advertising the James David Forbes Collecting Prize. These feature ornate printed patterns in red, blue, and gold, hand-done by the Crail Press. The Crail Press is located in a shed at the end of Dawn Hollis' long back garden in Crail. Hollis led us through her home until we reached the end of the garden; she opened its door, and before us stood the only in-use Stanhope printing press in Scotland.

Read on Page 15.



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EDITORIAL

Free Speech, Free Press

As we sat down to write our penultimate editorial of the semester, we felt that it was time to have a serious conversation — something that The Saint is not one to shy away from. It's what makes us a student publication, intended to encourage debate, provoke thought, and prompt conversation. It's the product of free speech — the meaning of which has been hotly dissected in light of recent events.

As a publication which would not exist without free speech, our main objective is therefore to serve the student body, whether that be providing a platform for students to exercise their journalistic skills and perspectives or being a reliable outlet from which they can learn more about their University and local news. The Saint encourages a plethora of perspectives, viewpoints, and opinions. There, however, is a line drawn between one's opinion on a political matter and directly targeting entire groups, communities, and or individuals in a way which is explicitly hateful and harmful.

We, the Editors-in-Chief of *The Saint*, condemn hate speech in any medium or capacity.

In the interest of unbiased, objective reporting, The Saint's constitution outlines that the paper does not take a public stance on any issue. All Viewpoint articles and Editorials are the views of the authors, and do not represent the views of the paper. That being said, however, part of being a journalist means having the integrity to stand with what information you've found — no matter if it causes outrage or reveals something which others wish hadn't been brought to light. When countless sources entrust you with their stories, they rely on the institution that is the newspaper as a support system. Therefore, when, over the course of our tenures, The Saint has had to disable comments on not one, but two Instagram posts as a result of hateful and inflammatory comments directed at either the subject of the post's coordinating article or those featured in the post itself, it is our responsibility to advocate on their behalf.

Of course, when both of us stepped into the role of Editor-in-Chief, we were not so naive as to assume that everything The Saint publishes would be bread and butter, sunshine and rainbows. We knew the role came with the responsibility of fact-checking sensitive materials, hearing stories painfully recounted, and standing by the reportage of our team no matter what. St Andrews is not a perfect place — in fact, it's far from it. The front-page stories featured on these past few issues are proof of that. There are deeply-rooted and difficult issues which demand your attention — even if that culminates in a brief once-over of the headline.

To conclude, we would, of course, be remiss not to recognise the accomplishments of The Saint's team this Saturday, as we were honoured with three recognitions at the national Student Publication Awards.

Congratulations to Elodie, Manraj, and Simon. We are proud of the team for winning The Saint these awards, but most of all their reportage is the mark of the trusting relationship that working for a publication — student or professional — demands.

Good journalism is based on cultivating relationships with people. Our writers have been entrusted with the testimonies of their sources, and, in turn, we have been entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring they are told in the most unbiased, factually correct, and fair-minded way.

That being said, we hope you enjoy this issue. The diversity of its content reflects the complexities ever-present in St Andrews — there's sunshine and rainbows abound, but larger and darker issues at play, too. Maybe this issue's content will anger you, or make you think, or inspire you to learn more about a larger issue. But remember that behind each piece of reportage, there's a fellow human being — whether that be the sources included or the reporter themself.

Hannah and Ilaria

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Corrections
News writer Reece Colbert was miscredited
Illustrator Ramona Kirkham's name was mispelled

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Student Hit by Car During St Patrick's Day Union Wristband Pickup

AVA GOODMAN
News Writer

A University of St Andrews student was hit by a car on St Mary's Place on Tuesday 17 March, during wristband collection for the St Patrick's Day event at the Student Union.

The accident occurred around 3pm while many students were waiting in the queue for t-shirts and wristbands for the all-day St Patrick's Day Union event.

Second-year student Elizabeth was a witness to the event, and told *The Saint* that "the line for the wristband event was very organised. It was very long, but there was no one in the street."

She then recalled an "audible thump" from behind her, while she was facing Market Street, and turned to see a car "screeching to a halt" with its driver rushing out on St Mary's Place. "It had made me think that [the car] had dropped something at first, but then [I saw] a kid lying close to the sidewalk."

Elizabeth told *The Saint* that the Union staff "became aware really quickly because they were outside, so they immediately responded within a minute." Union security surrounded the student and placed the metal gates used for the outdoor line around him while they called an ambulance. Though the student was unresponsive initially, he was sitting up, speaking, and coherent soon after the accident occurred, with both Union staff and the driver checking on his condition

After the incident, first responders "wanted to keep the attention away from it," said Elizabeth. Union staff "kept [the student] contained, and they moved everyone even closer to the inside of the sidewalk," also making room for the implicated car to move into the parking lot next door.

An ambulance arrived soon after, by 3:30pm, and the student was moved off the street to receive care from emergency services.



According to Elizabeth, "most people didn't even realise what was going on. They weren't even paying attention."

The witness added, "It was kind of shocking, but I guess good for the student himself." For the students who did notice, not all of them took the accident seriously. Elizabeth explained that some students, both in the queue and passing by, "didn't have the most sympathetic tone," with some making jokes about the incident or discussing it "casually."

She specifically cited an incident of two American students who walked by and "looked at each other, laughed, and said 'Us tonight!'" in reference to the night out event later that day. "That's a really messed-up thing to say," said Elizabeth

When asked about the incident, a spokesperson from the Union told *The Saint*, "We can confirm that an accident occurred on Tuesday 17 March, outside the Union premises. While the incident took place beyond our property, a trained first aider from the Union attended promptly to provide support to those involved and assist the police."

They continued by explaining that the Union is planning to reevaluate their safety procedures by "reviewing how our queuing system works for popular events, to see if any lessons can be learned from the incident."

Photo By Ava Goodman

St Andrews Environment Prize Awarded to South Rupununi Conservation Society

NATHALIE HANZLIK-MEECH
News Writer

On Tuesday 17 March, the South Rupununi Conservation Society (SRCS) of Guyana was awarded the prestigious St Andrews Prize for the Environment, receiving $95,000 for its 'Transforming Environmental Education" project.

The St Andrews Prize for the Environment, presented annually by the University of St Andrews, recognises innovative solutions to pressing environmental challenges across the world.

Alyssa Melville, Environmental Education Coordinator at SRCS, accepted the award on behalf of the conservation society. According to the University news publication of this event, upon receiving the award, Melville said, "A big thank you to the St Andrews Prize for the Environment team and judges for recognising the work of the South Rupununi Conservation Society."

Melville continued, "This recognition affirms the importance of community-led initiatives and the real impact they can have."

The South Rupununi Conservation Society has been implementing its environmental education project for the last seven years. This environmental education program is geared towards primary and secondary students. Melville described the aim of this project to be "educating the next generation so that they will be able to deal with emerging environmental challenges."

The University press specified that the SRCS project involves students participating in a two-year programme in which they "study their environment before going on to design and lead their own citizen science projects." According to SRCS, the initiative has "reached more than 2,000 students across over twenty communities in Guyana's Region Nine."

Melville added, "For us, this is not just about winning an award, it's an opportunity. It's an opportunity for us to strengthen our environmental education program, support our communities, and create long term impacts."

Shona Stewart, Prize Manager for the award, explained to *The Saint* how the prize selection process works.

"Entries are first reviewed by a Screening Committee comprising University academic and professional staff. This is chaired by Professor Anne Magurran of the School of Biology and also includes the Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation), Professor Tom Brown."

Then, the "Screening Committee draws up a shortlist of entries for the judges' consideration, and the judges select three finalists, who are then invited to come to St Andrews to present their work to the judges, Screening Committee, and staff and students and also answer questions on it." said Stewart, adding, "The judges alone then choose the winner."

This year, the judging panel was chaired by Professor Sir Ian Boyd, Bishop of Wardlaw Professor in the St Andrews School of Biology, and the Master of the University's United College, Professor Ineke De Moortel, alongside four external judges.

Professor Sir Ian Boyd commented, "We've heard from three really first-class, imaginative, innovative projects. One about the conversation of sloths, another one about how to package water better in Sub-Saharan Africa, and another one about how to educate indigenous peoples in a place where there is a lot of social and economic change."

Boyd continued, "We selected the South Rupanuni Conservation Society project because it was a very imaginative project" in a place of rapid environmental, and socio-economic upheaval.

Continued From Page 1

After this encounter, members of Reform Society approached their table, "accused us of being aggressive" and "proceeded to shout at us," WAFR wrote. They added that someone from the Society made fun of someone at the table with disability-caused tremors.

> "According to WAFR, this disruption has since been exaggerated."

According to student Andrew Ibarra, who witnessed the occurrences at the Rule, after the WAFR group had left the pub, attendees of the Reform event began to use racist language.

Ibarra recalled approaching the table to engage the group in political discussion — namely, Reform's policies on inequality and immigration — he recalled that one attendee responded to his point by saying, "A n**** got to make bank." Having expressed outrage at the use of the slur, another one of the event's attendees got involved and told Ibarra he "should go back to where you came from."

Students for Reform — the UK-wide student Reform Association — released a statement in response to the confrontation with WAFR, reshared by the St Andrews Reform Society account. The statement referred to WAFR's actions as "harassment and intimidation," and stressed that "this event clearly highlights the need this country has for Reform on campus."

Suella Braverman, Reform MP and Party spokesperson for Education, Skills, and Equalities, subsequently wrote to University Principal Dame Sally Mapstone to further condemn WAFR's disruption, referring to the group as "a mob of hard-left activists." Braverman alleged that members of WAFR spread leaflets labelling Reform as a 'racist party' and expressed hope that the values of free speech and enlightenment would be upheld at St Andrews. She urged Mapstone to "investigate the incident and hold those responsible to account."

Reacting to Braverman's letter, WAFR's statement to *The Saint* wrote, "Like Suella Braverman, Women Against the Far Right believe strongly in the principles of free speech. Unlike Suella Braverman, we do not believe that immigration is an 'invasion' or that homelessness is a 'lifestyle choice.'"

They were also critical of Braverman for "taking more time to defend Reform Society from criticism than to defend students from hate crimes."

Other political societies in town have expressed solidarity with WAFR.

St Andrews Labour Society condemned Braverman's letter in an issued statement on their Instagram story: "Braverman's letter pressuring the University to allow a far-right party is a desperate product of a desperate figure in British politics who has clung on to extremism for continued relevance."

In a statement to *The Saint*, St Andrews Students for Scottish Independence wrote that "whilst all political discourse should remain respectful, we admire the resistance from the St Andrews community and urge the union to introduce stricter affiliation policies, especially considering their subpar reputation when it comes to protection of women and minorities."

Students for Scottish Independence also told *The Saint* that they "will not collaborate with the newly affiliated [Reform] society in any capacity and vehemently reject their politics."

One of Reform UK's central goals is reaching "net-zero" migration. The St Andrews Reform President acknowledged that while both Scotland and the wider UK have declining populations, "replacing a native population with people from anywhere else in the world" wouldn't solve this issue. He expressed a desire to "fix" declining birth rates, saying, "It would not be good to get a lot of people to come here to fix it temporarily."

The President went on to say that the reason many voters have switched from Conservative to Reform is a lack of action from Conservatives to reduce migration.

He shared that Reform believes in placing less emphasis on civic nationalism and being more "ethnically patriotic," which he defined as "the opposite of civic nationalism [which is] that if you're from Scotland, it doesn't matter your race." He clarified that, according to Leader of Reform UK Nigel Farage, however, "your ethnicity and your nationality and where you come from is important."

When asked his response to how immigration poses a threat, when many argue it has historically benefited Britain, the interviewee replied: "Immigrants of the past are not the same as immigrants now."

He also said that while Irish immigrants were once heavily discriminated against, "now we see them as brothers" because they "speak our language, share our culture," and have "similar" DNA.

"The Chinese and the Indians are not [at] the same level as an Irishman. [They do] not [share our] customs [and are] not [of] our culture [...] They'd have a hard time integrating, I guess," he said. "If 60% of the country became Polish or became Indian or Japanese, it wouldn't matter [...], it would be upsetting for you to be a minority in your own country, which I think is the main reason why people are getting upset and why Reform is leading in the polls."

> "Immigrants of the past are not the same as immigrants now."

When asked to provide details about when the British public had voted against migration, the President referred to the "many manifestos by the Conservative Party": "It was [a] core issue of Brexit, they wanted no net migration." The Conservatives have not won a majority share of the vote in Scotland since 1958. Additionally, Scotland voted to Remain in the EU in the Brexit Referendum.

The Society President cited that the "failure of the establishment" made Reform ideology relevant to people in Scotland, as well as its momentum in England: "People turn to a party that's new and offers brand new leadership and [...] government."

On 27 March, Linda Holt, Reform MSP candidate for North East Fife, withdrew from the race following backlash from comments she had made on social media about the former Scottish First Minister, Humza Yousaf, to whom she referred as an "Islamist moron" and "Hamas PR Act."

Additionally, Farage has frequently been accused of racism and antisemitism — even predating his political career during his time at Dulwich College, with a schoolteacher at the time documenting Farage's bullying behaviour, as was published in many media outlets such as Channel 4 and The Guardian. The President admitted he was unaware of these claims.

Regarding claims that Reform's ideology is inherently racist and xenophobic, the President of Reform Society replied that he did not agree, and said that if he felt Reform was "racist" or "full of hate," he would not be setting the society up.

A University Spokesperson said: "We have a culture of robust debate at St Andrews, and that is precisely as it should be at an international university with a diverse and politically engaged student population. Freedom of speech does not, however, extend to the right to intimidate others, and there is no place for that type of behaviour here, nor for attempts to stoke culture wars."

The spokesperson continued: "We have invited the Reform Society to submit a complaint so that these allegations can be properly investigated. We are also investigating a complaint that some people at a recent Reform Society event made racist remarks and publicly mocked a person with a disability. The University has no locus in any decision to allow the Reform Society to affiliate. That is a matter for the independent St Andrews Students' Association."

According to St Andrews Reform Society's Instagram, they are set to become an official St Andrews Society on 15 April.

Speed Limit to Change on Fife Road Following Accidents

JOSHUA PANTANO
News Writer

Strathore Road, a rural road in Fife outside Redford Cottages, will have its speed limit reduced to 40mph following a series of accidents. Local residents submitted a petition request to the Glenrothes Area Committee at a meeting on 18 March, 2026.

The petition, submitted by resident Clive Nisbet, had 71 signatures. At the meeting, Paul Casaldine, a local who lives at Redford Cottages, said that he witnessed thirteen accidents on Strathore Road since 2015.

"The most recent [accident] ended with a telegraph pole being struck," Casaldine said, adding, "Half of it [...] ended up on our back door, which we use all the time."

However, residents are concerned that reducing the speed limit is not enough. Casaldine said that the accidents could be occurring at lower speeds than 60mph, and therefore, additional safety measures should be considered.

"They're saying the average speed is 50.6 miles an hour," Casaldine said. "The road's speed is obviously 60 miles an hour. If this is the case, and I'm not doubting the stats, this proves that although it's 60 miles an hour, the accidents are happening well under."

Following discussion of the petition, the council agreed that Fife Council's Roads and Transportation Services would "implement the previously agreed signage on Strathore Road," "develop and submit a proposal detailing options for additional traffic calming measures," and "undertake the necessary consultation to deliver the TRO [traffic regulation order] and traffic calming measures to be agreed at the next meeting of the Glenrothes Area Committee."

Altany Craik, a councillor and member of the Glenrothes Area Committee, said the petition to reduce the speed limit was important due to the number of residents it affected. He said there would be improved safety measures for Strathore Road soon.

"The next steps are for the service to come forward with a design that covers speed limits, road surface treatments, and signage," Craik said. "There will then be a Traffic Regulation Order to make the change in speed from the National speed limit to 40 mph."

In the meantime, Craik urged locals to practice road safety, not only on Strathore Road but in general around Fife.

"While the process is ongoing, I would urge all road users to take care and drive safely to the road conditions," Craik said, continuing, "Changes to roads (speed and interventions) [are] an ongoing process and [are] there to help us keep residents and drivers safe."

In Conversation with Harry Bremner, Founder of Local Student Storage

REESE COLBERT
News Writer

This article has kindly been sponsored by Local Student Storage.

As April dawns on St Andrews, the age-old panic ensues: final exams are fast approaching, flights have been booked, and a year's worth of belongings suddenly need a new home for the summer. For the town's large international community, the logistics of transporting heavy coats, golf clubs, and kitchenware are a recurring nightmare; one that Harry Bremner has a solution for.

The founder of Local Student Storage, a St Andrews-based storage company, Bremner launched his business in response to the yearly stress of the April-to-May move-out. It was in 2015, when Bremner was still a St Andrews student himself, that he first recognised the need for better storage options.

"It was around April, and I'd been speaking to a lot of friends, and they were thinking, you know, I'm looking at renting a van to go to a storage unit, because I've got all my pillows, my books, and I don't want to take [them] back to Norway or the States or Taiwan. And I thought to myself, there's got to be an easier way," Bremner told *The Saint*.

Thus, Local Student Storage began to take shape, though the company didn't start in an industrial warehouse. Instead, Bremner first launched his business out of a family attic.

"My grandparents have a home, which is about 20 minutes from St Andrews, and I thought to myself, I've got quite a few friends here. Why don't I just take their stuff for them, a couple of suitcases, and I'll put it in my granny's attic," Bremner recounted.

"That was the idea. And I did this, but what happened was more and more people were like, oh, can you take my stuff? Can you take my stuff? And I thought, maybe there's a business here."

As the company grew, and Bremner was eventually forced to move the business out of the attic, Local Student Storage never lost sight of its roots in the St Andrews community.

"My first year, we had just seventeen students using the service. By the time I graduated, it was about one in ten [...] students in St Andrews that used the service. So it's incredibly popular and I'm very proud of that as well. It's expanded into a much bigger operation. But it's still managed by people that live in and around St. Andrews."

In fact, Bremner believes that it is primarily this student-first point of view that sets Local Student Storage apart from its competitors.

"The brand has been curated from a student's point of view. When I was a student, I knew exactly what everyone wanted. And I think that's quite a big differentiator. When you're ordering with other companies, I don't feel you necessarily get that personal touch or that kind of understanding," Bremner said.

"We know, for example, that students don't know how much they're going to store. So we don't charge you until we pick your stuff up. And if you order more boxes than you actually use, we don't charge you for those. And if you decide the morning we're meant to collect your stuff, that you need more time, you'll get more time. We're super flexible with that, and we do tend to be the most affordable option as well."

Now a Forbes 30 Under 30 entrepreneur based in London, Bremner still credits his early businesses, devised in DRA Scott Flat 3, as the foundation for his current success running a dog food business in London. Now, with the move-out season once again approaching, Bremner offered two pieces of advice to current St Andrews students. The first is for the University's aspiring entrepreneurs:

"My advice would be don't hold back, you know, try and try and don't be afraid if something doesn't work out because either you work on that idea and do something better or you can pivot, try something else. Don't have a fear of failure."

> "We want to make students' lives easy."

And the second piece of advice? Make your booking with Local Student Storage sooner rather than later.

"We're now taking bookings, things are open. I mean, bookings are actually already filling up a little bit. We do tend to sell out every year," Bremner warned.

Though a lot has changed for Bremner since 2015, even eleven years later, his core mission remains the same: "We want to make students' lives easy."

Ricky Gervais Denies Responsibility for Joke Cited in St Andrews Nurse Misconduct Case

CHARLOTTE SMITH
News Writer

Comedian Ricky Gervais has denied making an inappropriate joke after a St Andrews nurse was suspended from his role after allegedly repeating the comment.

James Murray, a former senior nurse at St Andrews Community Hospital, was fired from NHS Fife and attended a Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) hearing regarding his behaviour in the workplace.

His colleagues claimed that he swore at one colleague on multiple occasions and made a graphic remark about children during a discussion that included other paedophilic remarks.

While Murray admitted to making the statement, he told the panel that he was "repeating or discussing a joke originally told by a comedian (Ricky Gervais)."

On 10 March, Gervais rebutted with a post on X denying responsibility. He stated, "Not that it matters, but I'd just like to point out that this isn't my 'joke' either. I've never said anything like this in a sketch, a screenplay, stand-up, or privately."

According to the virtual hearing, which took place from 1 March to 3 March, Murray also admitted to the following allegations:

- Shouted to Colleague A on the ward.
- Said: "What's the f***ing point" or words to that effect.
- Said: "So why not f***ing say that" or words to that effect.
- Stuck two fingers up at Colleague A.
- During a conversation about Colleague A, said: "For f***'s sake, it's not my fault she's so f***ing miserable" or words to that effect.
- Said: "She's a Band 6 and only took the job so she could do her prescription course and she can't even f***ing do that."
- Said: "If you've got a f***ing problem, don't go behind my back, just say it to my f***ing face" or words to that effect.

The NMC stated at the hearing: "It is alleged that on the morning of 22 July, 2022, you approached Colleague A to discuss a staffing decision in relation to Covid-19 protocols, and you then behaved in an inappropriate, unprofessional manner towards the colleague by shouting, using offensive language, including swearing, and making a rude gesture upon leaving the conversation. The conversation could have been overheard by other colleagues and patients."

The panel continued, "Later that morning, following being reprimanded by the acting senior charge nurse regarding the above conversation, you approached Colleague B and spoke to her about Colleague A in an inappropriate, unprofessional manner, using offensive language, including swearing."

The NMC also said: "Later that same day, you and another work colleague were engaged in another highly inappropriate and unprofessional conversation of a sexual nature involving children. The conversation occurred in front of other colleagues and could have been overheard by patients."

The matter was referred to the disciplinary hearing after a local investigation took place. Murray admitted that his actions were inappropriate, immature, and unprofessional.

The NMC concluded that Murray's statement was not a simple retelling of a Gervais joke, but part of a "wider discussion which included further sexualised remarks involving children."

They stated, "Although described at the time as a 'joke,' the panel determined that such language has no place in a professional healthcare setting."

"The panel considered that this conduct demonstrated a serious lack of judgment. It was capable of causing shock and distress to colleagues, risked reputational damage to the profession, and was inconsistent with the standards expected of a registered nurse."

"It was of the view that the fact that the conversation took place within a clinical environment further aggravated its seriousness."

Murray's fitness to practice was found to be impaired, and a suspension order of six months has been imposed.

A spokesperson for the health board told *The Courier* that "NHS Fife takes matters of professional conduct extremely seriously."

"While we are unable to comment in detail on matters related to individual members of staff, we can confirm that the staff member in this case is no longer employed by NHS Fife."

"NHS Fife expects the highest standards of behaviour from all employees and whenever concerns are raised, robust internal processes are followed to ensure these are thoroughly examined and addressed appropriately."

New Research Maps University's Relationship with Colonialism

IONA CARRUTH
News Writer

A University of St Andrews press release on 10 March announced new research by the School of History and Computer Science, in which the colonial connections of over 900 alumni in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been mapped out in a unique interactive web-based visualisation.

The research has identified 901 alumni who came from — or later lived or worked — in the colonies of the British Empire between 1700 and 1897.

The mapping of these colonial connections has allowed for a greater understanding of the chronological, geographical, and career trends within the records, revealing that the emigration patterns of graduates were noticeably different from those of the wider Scottish diaspora.

The research has found that some alumni went to Canada, Australia, or New Zealand in the nineteenth century, but a significantly higher number went to British India — mostly the sons of Scottish merchants, ministers, soldiers, and administrators working for, or with, the East India Company.

The research was created under *The Biographical Register of the University of St Andrews*, established due to the efforts of previous archivists and librarians at the University.

The Biographical Register contains published biographical records for more than 20,000 individuals with relations to the University between 1579 and 1897. The core information from the research has come from the hand-written matriculation and graduation lists that survived in the University's archives.

The Saint reached out to the lead author of the study, Professor Aileen Fyfe of the Modern History department, about the importance of this research. Professor Fyfe told *The Saint*: "It is important for all institutions to reflect on the sources of their current wealth and reputation, and if it turns out that some of those assets were acquired through the immoral or unjust exploitation of power, then institutions need to consider how to respond."

Professor Fyfe added: "It is particularly important for universities, as places of education and responsible debate, to understand how they, too, have been implicated—both financially and intellectually — in the activities of British colonialism. This is not something that only affects big national organisations or institutions."

Professor Fyfe elaborated further on the specifics of the research, stating that "There are a lot of universities (and other organisations and institutions) in the UK researching their relationship with colonialism. The majority of them have been looking specifically at financial benefits from enslavement in the Atlantic world (whereas our project is broader, seeking to show a wider variety of connections — not just financial — and also including the wide impacts of British colonialism)."

Some examples of the benefits the University has derived from its colonial past, which still impact the University to this day, can be found in 'The University of St Andrews and the Legacies of Empire, 1700-1900' report. The report details the long-term benefits the University has derived from gifts and benefactions from donors.

Some notable donors were James Brydges, duke of Chandos and a director of the slave-trading Royal African Company in the early 1720s. The University also received benefactions from individuals whose business interests were reliant on enslaved labour in the late nineteenth century, including the Guthrie brothers, George Clerk Cheape, and David Baxter.

According to the report, "around 10% of the modern University endowment derives from the gifts made by such donors, 1700-1900. Numerically, these gifts were most commonly associated with service to the East India Company."

The report also states that, "around 16% of the students educated or examined at St Andrews in this period engaged in professions or occupations that took them overseas, as ministers, doctors, educators, and colonial administrators, most often in the service of the East India Company."

The University benefited not only from the money donated with colonial links but also from natural history specimens, plants, manuscripts, and cultural artefacts donated with colonial links.

The report lists donated items with confirmed colonial origins.

Alumni David Hill in 1832 sent the University a few Burmese manuscripts, and Charles Wilkins — a librarian to the East India Company — in 1806 gave the University a "beautiful copy of the Kuran" that had been acquired from the library of the Sultan of Mysore after his defeat at Seringapatam in 1799.

Professor Fyfe told *The Saint* about her next steps for the research: "The visualisation research that has just been published — that shows the colonial origins of some St Andrews students, as well as the sheer number and variety of graduates who had careers in the colonies — only focuses on the period to 1897. This is because of the accessibility of the historic student data."

Professor Fyfe continued, "Right now, I am running a VIP module focusing on the early twentieth century history of the University. We aim to gather the historic student data from 1898 to 1939, so that we can do a similar analysis of international students (including colonial connections). I expect that we will find far more international students, including more from India and Africa."

Fifth Sands International Film Festival to Return to Byre Theatre

CECILY TODD
News Writer

The Sands International Film Festival will take place in St Andrews from April 17 to 19, marking its fifth edition. The event — founded by the independent studio AGBO — is to be produced by the University of St Andrews and hosted at the Byre Theatre.

The festival will feature a programme of film screenings, panel discussions, and live events. One of the headline sessions, *An Afternoon with Craig Armstrong*, will include a conversation between composer Craig Armstrong and broadcaster Edith Bowman, alongside live performances by student musicians.

Joe Russo, co-founder of the festival, will take part in a discussion on filmmaking and industry developments. Opening events will focus on the role of AI, social media, and other technologies in shaping creative work. Russo said to the publication *Deadline*: "As we reach our fifth edition, I'm struck by the sense of intention, the care in programming, and the generosity of the artists. I'm excited to see where the conversations lead from here."



Filmmaker Charlie Kaufman is scheduled to appear in a discussion titled *Moving Pictures: The Poetry of Cinema and Vice Versa*, alongside poet Eva H.D. The session will explore connections between film and poetry. Film theorist Laura Mulvey will introduce a screening of her 1982 film *Crystal Gazing*, followed by a question-and-answer session with University Professor Glyn Davis.

The festival will also host its "This Much I Know..." series, which brings together industry professionals to discuss current practices in filmmaking and media. Participants include founder and CEO of Cinetic, John Sloss, AGBO Chief Creative Officer, Angela Russo-Otstot, and production designer James Price.

The programme includes several film screenings, such as Tony Benna's documentary *André Is an Idiot, Cutting Through Rocks* by Sara Khaki and Mohammadreza Eyni, and *Laundry (Uhlanjulolo)* by Zamo Mkhwanazi. The festival will close with Rohan Kanawade's *Cactus Pears*.

Festival Director Ania Trzebiatowska said, "Sands is a celebration of storytelling and its power to bring people into shared emotional and imaginative spaces, creating moments of connection where films become catalysts for conversation, understanding, and inspiration," as published in *Deadline*.

Photo From Wikimedia Commons

Fear and Loathing in Rural Vermont

Contemplating sobriety and hope

DESDEMONA SMYTH
VIEWPOINT WRITER

Who decides when you are sober? Well, everyone. There is no 100% applicable baseline for addiction. It looks different on everyone. But by the time I was seventeen, I had a White Girl Pill Problem down pat. I am just over three years sober; I still have the occasional drink or joint, so I'm not passing any piss tests, but I haven't picked up a pill off the floor of the Eras Tour, or any event like it, in three years. These days, sobriety has its own buzz. A low electrical buzz that never shuts off, a motel ice machine grinding through the night down a locked hall in my skull. No one hands you a medal for not taking a pill in three years. I get out of bed in the morning and scrub my brain raw to a sobriety that is administrative and full of paperwork. The administration gives me the control that pills used to; I can dictate my days by task and not dosage. I needed the experience of life; I wanted to arrive at my destination in perfect shape after sleeping through the journey.

The beauty of the pills — God help me — was the cleanliness. No smoke to fog up my dorm room, no smell to linger through Pre-Calculus or Spanish, no sneaking out required. Just a quick and quiet adjustment, a slight lens tilt, and everything was literally so much better. Everything was not particularly good or meaningful, but it was manageable. It was better, and that's a powerful promise when your baseline is a pain in your back that makes your legs go numb.

I used to play a game with velocity. I wanted to find a faster, smoother, and more efficient way to completely outrun my mind. You can take a pill that makes you faster. One that makes you feel like a worm, digging through April dirt, carving a reality for yourself below the noise. One that makes you wake up in dark forests. There are pills to make your dreams leak out like sap without you noticing. You can rattle an alternate reality around in your pocket like lose change. I was already on antidepressants and birth control, so some of the pills in my pocket were sanctioned. You can trick yourself into thinking anything is good for you as long as you don't remember what it feels like the next day.

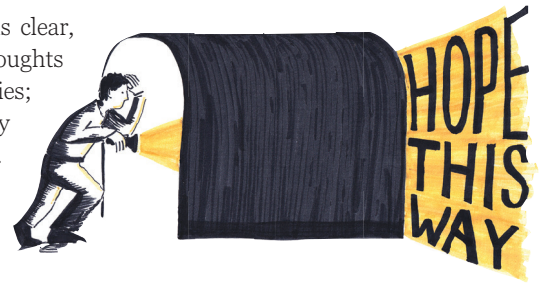
Getting high became a grim procedure in which I took inventory and made calculations; once you begin remembering but not recollecting what you did when you were high, that's when you've hit the jackpot. Your life will narrow down to a series of small, precise decisions that all point in the same direction, like iron filings around a magnet. There's no operatic downfall or grand collapse, just a gradual shrinking. Friends become logistics, conversations become obstacles, and time becomes something measured in milligrams rather than minutes. The worst part comes when you get good. I could talk, eat, run, and read while high. I was holding myself hostage! Gun to my head, feet on the blackbox stage, sweating through the 1989 World Tour jumper, a real hostage situation where the sirens had to flash, and the secret agents had to come, but still I had no epiphany. The truth is ugly and unsatisfying, something you loathe to read about when you're in search of a quick resolution. Sometimes you get to the beach, and the tide is so far in that you can't put down your towel.

I got sober because I ran out of room. I counted wrong, couldn't memorise my lines, and turned in essays that were never assigned. Frankly, the margins collapsed. My sleep got strange. My body began sending warning signs I could not ignore.

Withdrawal is not enlightening; anyone who tells you otherwise is either lying or selling something. It's itchy, petty, and humiliating. I kept an extra shirt in my backpack because I had to go to class, and knew that I would sweat through my shirt. Your body throws a tantrum, your mind and soul join in — revolting against the breaking of a contract that I signed as a minor. It's sweat, shaking, and in an acid-deep misery that feels personal. You're always awake, you're always asleep. The moderation of addiction has fallen away, and you're left in a RedBull ad without the wings. There's no lesson, no hidden wisdom. If you want to get sober, you just have to put on your walking shoes.

Most people talk about 'getting clean' as if it is a moral upgrade, rather than a recalibration of your values, and relearning how to literally put one foot in front of the other. Sobriety is returning to a baseline you avoided for a reason. That baseline is unbearably boring. The pain in remembrance or the chaos of consequence did not curtail my efforts at sobriety the way that boredom did.

Early sobriety is a room with fluorescent lighting and no exits, perpetually set to be whatever temperature would make you most uncomfortable. Everything is clear, defined, and disorganised. My thoughts no longer echoed across prairies; rather, they sat cold in front of my face: Tony Soprano's talking fish.



To get around this horror, to get out of the trenches, I built routines. The same Moka Pot coffee, same walk, same friends, same circuits around the day; anything to build a wall to stand between me and the logic that had kept me afloat for so many years. That logic is persuasive. It's chemical, emotional, dangerous, and euphoric. I know one possible answer to my problems is Pandora's Pill Bottle — and oh boy, I want to swallow them all just to get to hope, who lingers, small and dusty, at the bottom of my LePliage. I love getting high, but the pills were not about that; they offered me relief — efficient, optimised relief. The need for relief does not disappear when the chemical cravings do. Three years in, it's still around. That's something you must make peace with.

By the second year of sobriety, I stopped thinking of myself as being 'in recovery.' I stopped taking pills without telling my friends, therapist, or parents that I had even started them. It was me, my boyfriend, and our pills against the world, and now it must just be me. When I thought of myself as 'in recovery,' I felt I was anxiously waiting for something to arrive, some final state where the cravings vanish and the narrative resolves itself into a neat little arc.

Of course, this never came — I got used to waking up without calculation, without the constant subtext of acquisition and maintenance. I started making plans that extended beyond the next 24 hours. Sobriety came with a clarity that was cold and anxious; one must realise that *you are not, and never were, special*. I was not uniquely burdened; I was fifteen and chemically susceptible. A zoo animal, like any other, who dug their way out.

Three years is an unspectacular amount of time. I have no glowing aura of redemption except second-puberty acne, and I certainly have not unlocked a hidden path to enlightenment. I exist in stability, the kind that would have bored me senseless before. I wake up, I drink coffee, I write my to-do lists. Sometimes it's good. Sometimes it's dull. Occasionally, it's awful. I feel all of it, every seam in my brain, all the time. That's my miracle.

I was not able to recognise the miracle for a long time: the ability to endure without editing, to let something play out in real time, with awkward pauses, boring jokes, bad blowouts, and uneven pacing.

Some people like to check for cracks in the surface: Do I miss it? Of course I do. Not the reality that I barely remember, but the promise of salvation.

Altogether, three years sober does not mean I have solved anything. The underlying concerns are still there, pacing around, waiting for my attention. What do I do with my mind? Pills answered this by erasing it. Sobriety is handing back my mind, upsettingly intact, with a crisp Good Luck. Some days this feels like a fair trade, other days a back-alley deal. But it's the only deal on the table now, and I can't afford to void it.

I'm building a life that does not revolve around escape. It's a functional, if not impressive, life. My life will have the felicity to hold me together and let me breathe. My life *will* — I regain my free will. And under it all, no matter what, there's still a low hum. The motel ice machine. I walk past it every day. So far, I've kept walking. The walk is nice; a bit repetitive, quite long, but surprisingly not lonely. I walk companioned on the liminal track; I have known the divine and chosen the mundane. You get one awesome shot to experience. To know fortune, troubles, delight, music, desire, fear, beauty, revenge, love, and (of course) truth is the only experience worth having, and we only get one. I find myself compelled to write it down — in active addiction, I wrote pages of words I did not remember and found no truth nor nature — I must memorialise my friends and their laughter, the lapping sea, a running dog, eyes I love, all twelve months of the year, the worst parts of it all, colours, mists that hang over bay and eye! I realised that the 'goal' of my life must be to experience it; when the goal is to experience, you cannot miss your shot.

ILLUSTRATION BY RAMONA KIRKHAM

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Devil's Advocate

Aikman's?



SOREN RASMUSSEN

57% YES

SAM SPENDLOVE

NO 43%



This article is not sponsored by Aikman's Bar & Bistro.

It seems the work of the Aikman's defender never ends. Every day, I find my honourable home laid siege to by those whose narrow imaginings of the student pub fail to comprehend it, who see nothing more than a jaundiced quagmire of the drunk and disorderly. Every day, I hear this invective butchery by you torch-wielding mob, your misguided diatribes. But so be it. Dutifully, I'll roll up my sleeves and defend my land 'til the end.

Let the record show that you and I experience the same Aikman's. I must declare this upfront, for in my duties as defence counsel, I am consistently accused of blindness. But rest assured, I see the grime. I smell the curdling. I was there when you came to play cards and found your Queen of Spades beheaded by the molasses-flypaper surface of the wooden tables. I warned you: Never bring a new deck of cards into Aikman's. Never bring anything new, for that matter. Would you wear diamonds to the circus?

> "It is less a pub than a public forum serving beer [...] You will all create this place together."

You may think I contradict myself. But for a town whose cosmopolitan aesthetic hinges on being a brushstroke away from Caillebotte — whose figures ritualistically emerge from Sallies with champagne in hand like it's the Faubourg Saint Germain — we need a pub that actively rejects elegance, where a white tie and tailcoat *does* look a tad overdressed.

And what better third space does this town offer its students? Where else should we stake our loyalties? With TDR Capital LLP, otherwise known as the Rule? Or Forth Bridge Capital LLP, aka the Dunvegan? Should we wave the flag of Cheung Kong Property Holdings Ltd, proprietor of the Central, Whey Pat, Molly's, and Greyfriars? In this Timberlakian age of tentacled conglomerate parasites and Mixr strobe lights, should we not prioritise our few independent institutions? And if, like me, you honour the Keys as the hallowed ground of locals but don't always fancy a £7 pint at Criterion or Brew Co, where else can you go?

But I have been too conciliatory. Regardless of options, I *enjoy* Aikman's. I *prefer* Aikman's. It is democratic in the messiest sense of the word. As bartender Palmer Lykes puts it, "This place is allowed to create itself. This place creates its own culture. Any other bar in town, there's already an entailed reason for it to exist.



This place has no reason for being. It only exists to sustain whoever chooses to come here and exist within it." By the people and for the people. Just take one look at the bathroom stalls with their equal parts poetry and profanity. It is less a pub than a public forum serving beer. And while the topic of conversation might get savoury, at least it's human. There's no match on, no television, and certainly no service. Just you, your friends, cheap(er) beer, an idiosyncratic cast of regulars, and maybe the geriatric tatters of a Trivial Pursuit. You learn to live together. You create this place together.

That equation is enough for me. If it's not for you, that's fine. I'll see you at midnight when your pub is shut, and it's Aikman's or 601. I'll be at the corner booth in the cellar. Grab a beer and pull up one of the empty crates for a stool. Then you can tell me all about the smell. Like pixie dust, I get the feeling that Aikman's doesn't work unless you believe in it. And I don't. I don't *a lot*. It was the couch that first killed my willing spirit; the moment I sat down, it smelled my fear and tried to eat me. Thank god my friend was there to pull me out. I spent the rest of the evening perched like a gay canary on the couch armrest, leaning forward with all the grace of Slenderman as I tried to join conversations. It's oh-so-hard to triumph over indignity — harder still when you're suffering next to three French-intellectual-wannabes who clearly take you for someone giving Sartre an itch in his grave. As if *he* never crossed his legs over an armrest.

Okay, so I don't like Aikman's. The minute I enter that mango-coloured bar, I want to leave; the weird drink case, the tweed, the narrowness of the space, and the perpetual clank of wooden chairs being moved here or there — everything combines and I see red. Well, I see yellow (funny story: the colour of the walls in Aikman's is actually my favourite colour. Anyway, I had it first). One time, I ordered something from the drinks case and, when the bartender lifted it out to give it to me, I saw that it had been hiding a dead fly. Then, I did the thing where you drag your finger across a table to check for dust; I did it for effect because I'm awful, but I did get results — a whole grey smudge of one. All that dirt and grime, and there's no room in the damn place to run from it! If you do manage to get away, you might end up entombed in the Cellar, where a Tory will undoubtedly try to convince you that they have a novel approach to austerity which will work this time ("Hear me out, hear me out..."). Gag me.

> "All that dirt and grime, and there's no room in the damn place to run from it!"

Supposedly, what people go looking for in Aikman's is *character*. You know, artsy-fartsy-boogie-woogie-fancy-nancy character. In fact, all anyone can tell me about Aikman's is that it has character. The more people say it, the farther I seem to get from a coherent definition of this 'character.' Is it the people? Because I once had an Aikman's crowd look at me like I had wandered in from Bama Rush just because I asked to be let through. I once asked for a chair, whereupon a pair of students holding cigarettes and paperbacks of translated French literature said succinctly: "No!" Listen, all Aikmanites: I don't want to talk to you, either. If, in seeking character, I have to accept being quietly called trashy and dumb by a Tory who's four pints in — I'll pass! I'll find some character elsewhere.

No one wants to say it? Fine, I'll say it: Aikman's is just a Greene King Pub for anyone who's ever owned a second-hand copy of *Middlemarch*, a CD player, or who wears/wore wired headphones. *YEP!* And I can say that because I've done *ALL THREE!* All character is mainstream in its own way — and with that curse, I leave you. Though many of my dear friends and loved ones can regularly be found in Aikman's, I simply must throw the baby out with the bathwater. Come find me somewhere later, guys — somewhere that can accommodate uptight plebeians.

ILLUSTRATION BY LOUISA NGUYEN

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The 51st State

Americans in St Andrews shouldn't be shocking

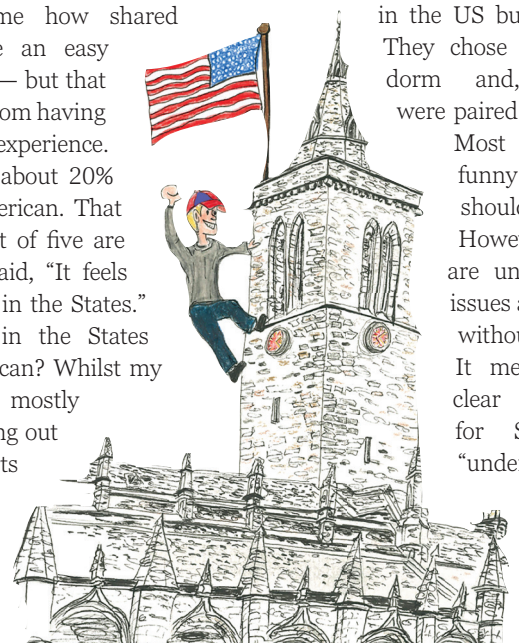
ALEX BRUBAKER
THE RELIC WRITER

I'm American. A representative came to my California high school to speak about St Andrews to interested potential applicants. I heard, through this representative and through word of mouth, that St Andrews was beautiful, had strong academics at a lower price than US schools, and people there had fun. When I found out St Andrews was on the US Common Application, I was convinced. It was the only international university I applied to, convenient and appealing.

I have the exact same story described in the front-page *Wall Street Journal* article, 'Americans Love Everything About This Scottish University — Except All the Americans.' One student is quoted, "You think you're coming to get this Scottish or international experience, and there's just so many Americans." Another says, "I thought I was gonna be the special American, hanging with all the British people." I understand the sentiment of being disappointed when making a big life change and realising it's more familiar than expected — but this perspective still confused me.

I thought this was a more prominent part of the University's reputation. Before I came, I watched advice videos on social media for Americans going to St Andrews that had hundreds of thousands of views. When I told people I had chosen St Andrews, they joked it was the "51st state," and told me to get ready to meet plenty of other Americans. I felt no deception about this aspect of the school.

I will say, I'm guilty of having quite a few Americans in my circle, definitely more than I was expecting. Moving to another country showed me how shared backgrounds create an easy basis for friendship — but that hasn't stopped me from having an international experience.



The article says about 20% of students are American. That also means four out of five are not. One student said, "It feels like another college in the States." What universities in the States are 80% non-American? Whilst my initial circle were mostly Americans, branching out a little, joining sports and societies, and just putting myself out there led to friendships with non-Americans. The notion of not being able to escape from Americans doesn't make sense when most students are from elsewhere.

The article, though, makes us seem inescapable. It mentions a student from New York expecting an "adventure abroad," who instead "got paired with a roommate from lower Manhattan." This student had a roommate, meaning they probably opted for a shared room — common in the US but rarer in the UK. They chose an American-style dorm and, understandably, were paired with an American. Most of the article is funny and superficial and should be taken as such. However, at times, there are undertones of larger issues at hand that seep in without being addressed. It mentions, without a clear reason why, that for Scottish students, "undergraduate tuition is free thanks to government funding." An article in *The Times* about a similar topic last May rightly points out that wealthy internationals bring flashy travel, expensive habits, and pay-to-play social events to the town culture. International fees may be a bargain by US standards, but they certainly still are not cheap.

A divisive wealth gap is something worth complaining about — not feeling unique enough in your international experience. Americans get a good end of the deal here. The shared experience of moving abroad with people from your home country creates a comfortable base for living abroad.

My favourite part of the *WSJ* article were quotes from a student from Falkirk, explaining how she has picked up some of her American friends' habits, but pokes fun at them for calling things "darties" and "overdoing the Cotswolds fashion." This shows how students end up sharing friendships across cultures. That's the opportunity Americans are coming here for, and it's happening, but discourse about divisions overlooks it.

I don't think we should be complaining about the number of Americans here *as Americans*. Instead, recognise the novelty and benefits of this experience, and connect with the country you have moved to — it's there, if you look for it.

ILLUSTRATION BY NIAMH MCPARTLIN



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We Can't All Be Broke

People are embarrassed to be wealthy

VIC PRIESTNER
VIEWPOINT WRITER

Ask an upper-middle-class person what tax bracket they're in, and you'll likely be met with silence. Not because they're unaware, but because saying it out loud somehow feels vulgar. Money, in British (supposedly polite) society, is something you possess discreetly, like a family friend in publishing or a Chanel wallet in a Waterstone's tote bag. Wealth doesn't shout, it whispers.

Financial role-play has become St Andrews' Olympic sport of choice. This is, objectively, an expensive town — but you don't need me to tell you that, just count how many students had to move to Dundee this year. Ball tickets near £80, events sell out at prices that would make Fixr's accounting team blink, and a 'quiet' week can still involve bi-daily £5 coffees and £25 Deliveroos. And yet, against all conceivable evidence, everyone here seems to be broke. Or, maybe, they're just pretending to be.



"I literally can't afford it" has become less a financial statement and more a conversation accessory. It appears in group chats moments before ticket drops, in queues to an event that's already sold out, in the prelude to purchases that are inevitably made. It does not mean *I cannot pay for this* — it means *I don't associate myself with the kind of person who can*. Being rich is no longer social currency. In fact, it's become embarrassing.

This is the crucial shift that 240,000 likes and 3,000 comments on my TikTok video enlightened me to: being rich is no longer social currency. In fact, it's become embarrassing.

Part of this is aesthetic. The era of loud luxury — monogram canvas, conspicuous labels, anything that screams t*his costs money* — has fallen quietly out of favour. In its place: understatement. Neutral tones, clean lines, brands you only recognise if you already know them. It's the 'exclusive' Longchamp work bag to the loud Chanel crossbody bag. 'Quiet luxury' is not just a trend, it's a strategy. It allows wealth to exist without announcing itself, to be legible only to those fluent in its codes. Indie-ness operates in the same way: to look scruffy, to thrift, to appear effortless. Someone's social class has become your costume.

But beneath the aesthetic shift sits something more uneasy. Wealth, today, carries a faint moral awkwardness. Its most visible forms — billionaires, tech empires, space tourism — have rendered it slightly grotesque. Even at a far more modest scale, that discomfort lingers. To be openly affluent is to risk appearing out of touch, excessive, vaguely unselfaware. So we edit.

Parents' wealth becomes a story of effort and enterprise — not incorrect, necessarily, but told in a way that subtly folds that effort into one's own legitimacy. At the same time, students emphasise their limits. The budgeting. The restraint. The fact that this next purchase — the ticket, the outfit, the weekend — is definitely the last one. You participate with no frugality, but narrate it as a stretch.

The humanities classroom is the arena of this performance. Sitting comfortably in seats we only access through *financial* comfort, we spend hours distancing ourselves from the very structures that allowed us to spend £40,000 on a career-less degree, instead of choosing the heartier option of getting an electrician's licence. Reflexivity, it turns out, is easier when you don't have to act on it.

The supermarket trope is perhaps the clearest example of this collective script. Everyone, it seems, shops at Aldi. Aldi is not just a supermarket; it's a personality — shorthand for thrift, reliability, groundedness. Claims of Aldi-browsing and Morrisons-meandering aside, hands seem to be full of M&S bags, and no one can be bothered to go anywhere but Tesco.

In St Andrews, wealth is not something you display; it's something you manage. You soften it, qualify it, wrap it in self-deprecation. You go to the ball, but you preface it with complaints. You buy the ticket, but you narrate it as a lapse in judgment rather than a ritual practice. You tuck your Van Cleef bracelet into your sleeve.

But this performance has consequences. When wealth is constantly disavowed — when expensive habits are narrated as reluctant indulgences — it becomes harder to distinguish between those who *can* participate and those who simply *cannot*. The language collapses the difference. Everyone is 'broke,' and so real financial exclusion disappears into the background. So the issue is not that people joke about being broke, or even that wealth is handled delicately. It's that the pretence has become so widespread that it obscures the fact that, for some students, there is no pretence at all.

In a town where money has learned to whisper, it might be worth asking who jokes, who denies — and who, despite everything, is still being priced out of the conversation.

ILLUSTRATION BY CALUM MAYOR

Has St Andrews Gone Naff?

AMELIA MACKENZIE
VIEWPOINT WRITER

Like any good logophile, I always have an arsenal of words *du moment* and, as ever, I have some bangers on the go. However, among "woof," and another word beginning with "w" not fitting for *The Saint*, the current favourite is "naff," essentially meaning something that, despite trying to achieve class or style, is a bit tacky, ingenuine, or, to use another favourite, ghastly.

Nothing gives me greater pleasure than describing things as naff. In my notes app, there is even a list called "Things I find naff," and it is my magnum opus — my Sistine Chapel, if you will. Ranging from the inherently naff to the more obscure, its contents include crushed velvet, fake Christmas trees, Formula One, GCSE Spanish, and the United Nations. Surprisingly, however, 47th on the list is the "posh uni" — and, yes, this includes St Andrews.

Now, generally, St Andrews is the opposite of naff — if it were down to a vote, our red gowns would probably be made of corduroy, and the hairlines of our men recede aristocratically, in sync with the West Sands tide. Nevertheless, having gained its bourgeois reputation, certain types have clung to this 'posh' idea of St Andrews and try to mould themselves to fit the 'brand,' and, consequently, have made the whole thing, well, rather naff.

The first guilty type we've all seen: the one, probably American, who has decided that their St Andrews years should be as quintessentially 'posh' as possible. For this, they need 'the look,' but they crucially miss the point. They buy the wax jacket and cop some wellies but forget that before they're fit to be seen in public, they must be dragged through a pack of your grandfather's hounds and the boggy moors of your Highland estate. They get their clay pigeon shooting membership, get the gilet, then never show up. They attend the polo, but they haven't a clue what the rules are, and people keep saying the word "chukka." This confuses them, but at least they got a picture of themselves gazing nonchalantly at a pony with a glass of Whispering Angel.

Another type is one who may be 'posh' but acts as if someone could take this away from them with the same fervour as Rachel Reeves takes away Daddy's money. Not necessarily seen, it can certainly be heard, specifically in the question, "What school did you go to?" Terrorising innocent freshers annually, the wild social climber hunts for its prey — 'mutuals' with whom they can reminisce about boarding school in a kind of RP utopia. And why not? Why risk mixing with those plebeians from state schools or, worse, the North? That would be unbecoming. Fortunately, this mostly dies down as people realise you might be 'good chat' enough to be worth lowering oneself to speak to — even if you are from Leeds — but mainly because the grifters they met in freshers' turned out to be, shock horror, utterly shallow.

The next type goes for the artsy/old money/academia aesthetic, scouring charity shops and vintage stores for obnoxiously rusty jewellery, mildewed garments of the deceased, and other shabby chic implements which end up looking shabby s***. On Instagram, they promote their 'elegant,' 'demure' image by posting pictures of poetry by authors who can't use punctuation. But whilst they snap the pages, smell their musty scent, and spill their black americano whimsically on them, they forget to actually *read* them, losing genuineness to performativity and looking, well, naff.

> "One must retain genuineness, inclusivity, and, crucially, individuality."

Naturally, the 'posh' seekers aren't restricted to these types — we all occasionally humour the stereotype, and, as a fiend for patriotic hymns on curry-spattered dinner tables, *mea culpa*. However, to avoid being naff, one must retain genuineness, inclusivity, and, crucially, individuality. You can celebrate your weird accent, flaunt your streaky fake tan, and enjoy feeling like you know Gregg personally — I do, and I feel wholly accepted. Because I have nothing to hide, I take pride in my roots and varied array of friends and, most importantly, I have a signet ring.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not purport or reflect the views of The Saint.

The Cons of Being Too Attractive

My biggest struggle? Being gorgeous, of course

JOSS WILDGOOSE BULLOCH
Events Writer

I wasn't born with this face. My parents helped — gave me the large eyes, the heart-shaped lips, the high cheekbones — but the rest is pure effort: countless hours at the gym and round the racecourse for the chiselled jaw that blesses many of you as I stride down Market Street. A boon, you might think. The world is made for attractive people — not only do you move through it on a current of compliments and stolen glances in the library, but you benefit too from the 'Halo Effect': Being attractive, people naturally think you funnier, kinder, and more intelligent.

Despite all this, sometimes I wish I had been born ugly.

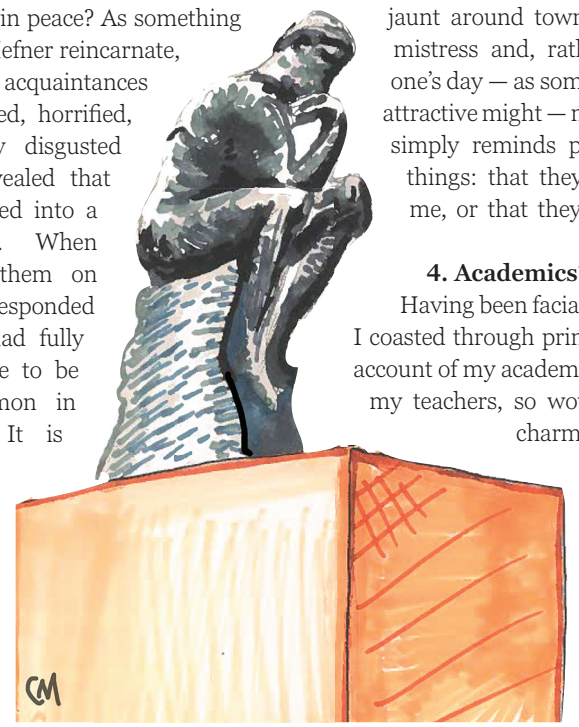
If you have a moment to lend an ear, let me tell you about the disadvantages.

1. Nobody Wants to be Friends With Me

After several years at this university, I can count my close friends on one hand with five fingers to spare. It puzzled me for many months as a fresher before I arrived at the natural conclusion: People don't like competition. It's not particularly hard to understand why you wouldn't want to be friends with someone who is constantly redirecting your 601 crush's attention, leaving you to scrap over the Divinity students at 3am. I do not blame them. I simply wish, occasionally, that I was easier to be around.

2. The Burden of High Expectations

Following on, why can't I simply settle down in peace? As something of a Hugh Hefner reincarnate, many of my acquaintances were shocked, horrified, and frankly disgusted when I revealed that I had entered into a relationship. When I pressed them on it, they responded that they had fully expected me to be a 601 demon in perpetuity. It is a heavy crown. A player must one day hang up his jersey, and it falls to those closest to him to accept this with a bit more grace than they have thus far managed.



3. Green-eyed Envy

I don't have the common displeasure of fighting the average St Andrews resident over pavement space. Rather, I must contend with something altogether different — the scowls and fierce looks I collect as I jaunt around town. Jealousy is a cruel mistress and, rather than brightening one's day — as someone, say, moderately attractive might — my particular situation simply reminds people of one of two things: that they will never look like me, or that they will never have me.

4. Academics? What academics?

Having been facially blessed since birth, I coasted through primary school — not on account of my academic talents, but because my teachers, so wowed by my aesthetic charm, were moved to quietly amend my test scores. As a result, I never had to endure the difficult but character-building challenges my peers suffered, such as long division or spelling. My place at St Andrews was secured only once I had attached a JPEG of my face in lieu of a personal statement. I regret nothing, except perhaps the spellling.

5. Future — Ruined

My academics, never having been up to scratch, were not what I intended to trade on. Where more naturally would I fit than modelling? And yet, having interviewed with several agencies and been met with polite refusal, the reason becomes clear — I will never model because firms cannot have their entire existing roster pale into obscurity overnight. I understand. I have not forgiven it. I'm still coming to terms with what this means for my prospects. Maybe I'll run for Union Exec instead.

6. The Burden, borne

I speak for the dispossessed: Those who, assumed to have it all, find themselves with nothing but their looks — and nothing but their looks precisely because of them. To all the looksmaxxers and gym bunnies currently crouched over a kale salad and a jawline roller: put it down. Pick up the ice cream scoop. Stay ugly.

It's a better life for all.

Illustration by Calum Mayor

Is Looksmaxxing a *New* Issue?

Men are only the most recent arrivals to the trend

SAFFRON ROWELL
Viewpoint Writer

Despite the validity of concern around looksmaxxing, despite the undeniable dangers posed by its extreme messaging about men's intrinsic worth, and the methods which influencers suggest to "ascend," I can't help feeling bitter at the sheer volume of outbursts and cries on behalf of men. Following Louis Theroux's *Into The Manosphere*, mainstream media has been agog with the phenomenon of 'looksmaxxing.' Derived from incel culture, it links young men's attractiveness to their prospects for success and physical worth as a person.

The extremity of the messages explored, and the tactics used by looksmaxxing influencers — ranging from sleep tapes that help to correct your tongue posture, to 'bone smashing,' literally taking a hammer to one's face in hopes that the bones will grow back in a 'more desirable' shape — have attracted due concern from the media.

A stark and ironic feature of this community is the extent to which women are excluded, even demonised. They are purported to be the root cause of the insecurities which drive young men into these channels (rather than the adult men online telling them they ought to feel this way), and are often told they don't have a place in this "male space." The influencer Clavicular, on a date with a female looksmaxxer, Mia Kirk, reportedly found himself torn between attraction towards her and his scepticism at her presence in a male-dominated community, believing it to be a sanctuary strictly for men.

Allegedly, it is men who are vulnerable to 'lookism,' men who are so discriminated against based on their appearance, and women who, apparently, have it *easy*. AWALT (all women are like that) is a phrase so popular within the community that it warranted abbreviation; '80% of women are attracted to 20% of men' is another common mantra.

Reactions to looksmaxxing seem to be working off the basis that young men have, themselves, invented/discovered the concept of looks bearing upon how one is treated — as if this is something unheard of? Journalists, therapists, and doctors alike have united to warn about the psychological damage of obsessive self-measurement, what a danger body deformation poses, and how physical change fails to offer a "sustainable" tonic to insecurities.

Meanwhile, not fifteen years ago, diets such as the "master cleanse," the cabbage soup diet, cotton ball dieting — restricting oneself to maple syrup, cayenne pepper, and lemon juice, vegetable mush, and cotton balls soaked in fruit juice (supposed to mimic the feeling of fullness) — were, at best, widely ignored by mainstream media and, at worst, promoted by it. Headlines such as 'Shrink Yourself For Summer,' along with the latest celebrity crash diets, essentially ran the social pages. When they applied mainly to women, obsessive eating and exercise routines were treated as gospel.

It can't be said either that looksmaxxing is filling a space now emptied of mainstream dieting. Online platforms are filled with women promoting unhealthy and unsustainable practices — from sharing their 'morning shed' of various face masks and lip tape, to 'skinnyisthefit' once again trending online. BBL surgeries — which have the highest mortality rate of any cosmetic surgery — have increased in frequency by 800% in the last decade. Hospital admissions in the UK for anorexia, which has the highest mortality rate of any mental illness, have doubled in the past ten years. Meanwhile, runways and retailers are once again embracing the razor-thin, acid tall 'look' in models, all under the guise of health.

But that's the thing, every part of this is hypocritical. Looksmaxxing derives from incel culture — a community infamous for misogynist leanings — yet encourages men to look better in order to be able to sleep with women. It almost perfectly mirrors 2000s diet culture — which fed entirely off of women's insecurities — but mocks and rejects women from its 'space,' claiming that we *have it too easy*.

As much as I am angry that women are still subject to the toxic culture surrounding their bodies, I worry for young men falling prey to this trend. As someone born in the full flames of diet culture, I can tell you with certainty. There is no end to the hamster wheel, no moment where it's finally enough. Follow the flashing green signs and get the f*** out.

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Hidden Heroes of St Andrews

A series of comics by Kyla Biesty



Library staff: the front line workers in a war on coursework.



"So do these points get me lounge access, or do they convert to miles automatically?"



"Wedding?"
"Tutorial."

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Spirituality Beyond the Surface

LUCCIA MORAES
FEATURES WRITER

In 'The Bubble,' religious life often takes the form of society events, attending services, or the occasional class discussion. For some students, spirituality extends beyond what can be publicly practised or defined and even beyond religion in the traditional sense. Instead, it takes shape in quiet, abstract, more personal ways.

There are only five religious societies affiliated with the union, but there are thousands of religions practised around the world. Some of these less familiar religions are present in St Andrews, even if they're not formally represented.

First-year Cecília Vieira is a practitioner of Candomblé, an Afro-Brazilian diasporic religion rooted in Yoruba culture. "It's kind of difficult to distil," Vieira said, noting that Candomblé relies heavily on oral history and physical participation to be understood. Candomblé was brought over from West Africa during the transatlantic slave trade and practised in secret among enslaved people. Vieira described Candomblé as "pure African spirituality." All of the songs, prayers, and rituals are conducted in Yoruba. Candomblé is centred around street deities, *exus*, and sky deities, *orixás*. Practitioners can pray and interact with *exus* who carry messages up to the *orixás*.

"Even if you're not a practitioner, it's all around you," Vieira said. Growing up in Rio de Janeiro, she constantly felt a pull to spirituality. "In a lot of samba songs and pop culture, there are references to Candomblé and Yoruba spirituality. So I grew up hearing about it," Vieira explained. "My mom, even though she's American, is very spiritual and open-minded. Since she was an American white woman living in Brazil, she wanted to participate more. My dad's Brazilian, and I have this [religious] heritage, so she wanted me to get a little bit of that."

"I was around thirteen when I really started learning more about it," Vieira said. Her stepfather is an avid practitioner of Candomblé and has produced cultural short films that shed light on their traditions. BAME Students' Network even screened his films earlier this semester. Vieira attributes some of her passion for Candomblé to him and his knowledge of the religion. "It's such an oral tradition, and he's been in these spaces [of worship], and his family practices it," she explained. His twenty years of experience make him a helpful source of connection for her.

Now that she is physically removed from places of worship, talking to her stepfather is one way she maintains her connection to Candomblé. "If I have questions, I call him up, and we talk," Vieira said.

Although much of her initial connection to Candomblé is due to her ancestral heritage and familial involvement, Vieira also has her own personal ways of engaging with the religion. "The ritual that might work for one person, that might make them feel good and strengthen their relationship with the *orixás*, might be different [from] what another person needs," she explained.



> "Candomblé relies heavily on oral history and physical participation to be understood."

Vieira also spoke to the philosophy of Candomblé and how that resonates with her values. "I don't see the world as black and white. I think it's just all shades of grey. And Candomblé very much aligns with that," she said. "Everyone can do good and bad. You give what you get, and you get what you give. You have a reciprocal, symbiotic relationship with your orixá."

While Vieira balances her connection with Candomblé both ancestrally and personally despite physical distance, fourth-year Aliyah Trovoada explores what spirituality looks like for her at St Andrews.

With her upbringing shaped by the cultures of São Tome and Mali, Trovoada has grown up surrounded by a world shaped by merged ideologies, one often conflated with witchcraft. "There isn't a name back home for these religions. They just call it 'religion from the Earth'," Trovoada said. "In day-to-day life, it means ancestral veneration. It means having a really deep and rooted connection to the Earth [and] to the land I live on and practice on. I think we get this negative perception that it's witchcraft and whatnot. It's really not. At the end of the day, we're just working with the tools that the Earth has given us."

Trovoada's spiritual practice is intertwined with Islam. Mali, her mother's homeland, initially consisted of various tribes who practised their respective spiritual religions. When Islam was introduced to the region, many Malians maintained some of their spiritual practices despite being converted to Islam, creating a unique blend of beliefs.

> "You have a reciprocal, symbiotic relationship with your *orixá*."

There is significant tension in Mali regarding the fusion of Islam with spiritual religions. Trovoada recalled 20,000 Malians paying a spiritual healer to cast a spell during the African Cup of Nations in hopes that Mali would win. "That's how deep it runs in our culture," she explained. "And then obviously, because it's still against Islam, the guy got arrested. It just shows how people still want it to happen; they still want to tap into it."

Trovoada doesn't feel a need or desire to explain the intricacies of her faith to everyone. "If someone were to ask me, 'What do you practice?' or 'What's your religion?' I would just say I'm Muslim or that I grew up Muslim," Trovoada said. "I don't even really have a religion. I don't identify with one, but I do have a certain belief system."

At St Andrews, Trovoada struggles to stay connected to her beliefs and family. "I feel so disconnected, so far. Not just physically, but even spiritually," she said. Without her family, Trovoada finds it difficult to find comfort, but has tried to incorporate her beliefs into her life here. "I've found ways to sort of deal with that. Even in my classes, I talk about these things, which is, I guess, an offering in a sense," she explained. "[For] one of my previous assignments for [Comparative Literature], I wrote a love letter to one of the goddesses that I really appreciate, and it made me feel definitely more at home."

Though their beliefs originate in different continents and are demonstrated in different ways, both Vieira and Trovoada's connections to spirituality are resilient, ancestral, and personal. Religious life at St Andrews is ubiquitous and unlimited, even without being named, organised, or frequently discussed. Spirituality is present here and everywhere.

ILLUSTRATION BY LUCY MAITLAND-LEWIS

The Baron's Tale

Painting, poetry, and clay pigeon with St Andrews' Renaissance man

ALDEN ARNOLD
DEPUTY EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Outside St Michaels Inn in Leuchars, a Zippo lighter snaps shut, and a man puffs his pipe. Blue smoke wafts across the car park — Condor Original, "dark, aromatic." "Go against the grain, go against the grain." His parting words hang in the air before his next draw disperses them into the March wind.

"My full name is Baron Charlie Lush, all right?" says the man, more commonly known as 'the Baron.' He's sat at the corner table, leaned over a Coke and a patchwork of dusty photo albums. "They also call me the Red Baron, though the police know me as the Perthshire Baron [...] It's nice and easy that way. Everyone knows who I am and what I'm about."

His business card, grass-stained, reads, "Artist, Writer, and Field Instructor." Daily, the Baron occupies his hours coaching University of St Andrews clay shooters at the Scottish Clay Shooting Centre in Leuchars. Indoors, however, the Baron indulges in the former two of these professions. It was during his many years at school — as student, teacher, then graduand — that the Baron commenced his varied and multitudinous careers.

Following his abscondment to Naworth Castle, the Baron found himself at Bramcote, located on the Yorkshire coast. "The school was still very Victorian in those days," he explained. You used to break the ice first thing in the morning to get into the bath, and there would be a foghorn blaring all night."

> "For the Baron, clay pigeon is not just sport, but an ancestral affair."

It was here at prep school that Lush found the opportune scene to cultivate his creative mind. "A couple of friends of mine, in our last year, we decided to put the first school magazine together. And we printed, and it was all done illegally — the headmaster didn't know," he recalled. The magazine, Bits and Pieces, later to become The Bramcotian, featured the Baron's first works. "I've still got a copy, it's got one of my poems [...] That was sort of my introduction to the literary world, I suppose."

Following his instructorship in Sussex, Berkshire, and Perthshire, during which the Baron taught prep school students fishing, shooting, fly-tying, photography, and music, he found himself drawn to academics again. "Just before St Andrews, I was getting back into writing. I'd always been interested in history, I'd written a novel, I'd written that poetry book [...] but I wanted to go into historical fiction," he explained. "So I thought, right, how about going to uni and brushing up on my English history?"

In 2000, the Baron matriculated into the University of St Andrews as a mature student at 42 years old. Here, he studied English, History, and Art History. "[Studying History and Art History] was just wonderful, because I got the best of both worlds," he said. I could bring the two together, you know? That was just heaven."

"[Prince] William was there. When he started, he was doing Art History. [...] it was rumoured that when he heard I was there studying Art History, he switched to Geography," joked Lush.

Drawing upon his previous education at the London College of Music, the Baron applied his artistic energy most intently to chamber orchestra and choir initially, but this was to quickly change.

"I met a young guy, Steve [...] I managed to persuade him to paint a portrait of me, which he did [...] though it was slightly raunchy," the Baron said with a smirk. "I said, I can write books, I can write music. The one main art I cannot handle is painting. And he just said to me, 'anyone can paint, you just need practice,' Lush recalled. "Well, I didn't believe him for a start. And then, eventually, I went out and I bought a little five pound watercolour palette from the art shop in St Andrews [...] [My painting] wasn't good, but it was good enough to make me do another."

It was not long before his works were being displayed around town. "I started exhibiting at the student exhibitions in the Preservation Trust Museum. Just one painting the first time, two or three the next, and the next time I managed to hold my own solo exhibition, which was the first in St Andrews for a student," he explained."[There was] lots of media coverage, university went wild, Lush does it again sort of thing," he added dryly.

When asked how he would describe his style, the Baron likened his works to those of the German expressionists and English impressionists of the late-nineteenth century. Lush credits Edward Munch as his primary influence. The Baron's works vary from landscapes to still life to self-portraits — his Fishing and Women series, however, remains his favourite.



"When I left [St Andrews], I took part in the Channel 5 art competition over in Glasgow. I got through a couple of rounds of that," he said. "Then, I exhibited at Edinburgh Airport, London, various places around, then off to New York for an all-British exhibition in Manhattan. I was selling paintings at the time, doing commissions." It was during this time that the Baron also made his short stint on reality TV, making guest appearances on Ladette To Lady and Big Brother, an accomplishment he regards proudly.

The Baron still paints, though he finds it more demanding than his writing. "Circumstances — everything has to be right to do it proper. It's not something you can really dip in and out of. You can a bit with writing," he explained.

While at University, the Baron kept practice with his country sporting as well. "I was still teaching as a shooting instructor at Gleneagles. So, with the clay club, I became one of the main student instructors, and I sort of collected a band of girls — newbie girls, who wanted to shoot — and they came to me every week," he explained. "So they became known as Charlie's Angels."

This is a love Lush has maintained since, and he now teaches St Andrews students the art of the trap. "I've now been doing that 26 years," the Baron said. The shooting club was short-staffed at the time, he explained. "These guys were looking for someone to look out for students on Wednesday afternoon. And I thought, well, I think that would suit me fine [...] I quite enjoy it, it gets me out, it gets [my] dogs out."

For the Baron, clay pigeon is not just sport, but an ancestral affair. "I shot a lot as a boy. It was a family tradition, shooting," he said. "My father was a very good shot [...] He went to Winchester. And he was a little bit of a lad at Winchester," Lush said. He actually held an illegal shooting range in someone's garage, a pistol range. He did that to turn a few extra bucks, you know, pocket money."

This connection to family heritage, Lush shared, is an integral part of how he understands himself. "Our ancestry is Norman, and that can be proved [...] [I'm] proud of it," he said. His name, Lush, translates from the French l'huissier, meaning "usher", a probable reference to the court of William the Conqueror, the Baron explained.

For the Baron, personal history remains an ardent passion. "Diaries — I've kept diaries for a long time. [...] I've got cupboards full of diaries," Lush said. This routine inspired his biographical and autobiographical works. When he puts these life stories down on paper, "[these peoples' memor[ies] will never be forgotten," he explained.

The Baron has endeavoured to write his own history, recounting his 68 years of life. "It's called The Baron's Tale, you know, after Chaucer," he explained. Lush has presently self-published five volumes of his autobiography, and he intends to write two more. "So far, it goes from birth to 2013 [...] the most interesting will be the next one. I get to work backwards, [...] from Covid to the present day. That'll be one novel, and then the next one will cover from '13 to '20."

Propped against his station wagon in the Fife car park, the Baron takes another puff of his pipe. "[A friend once told me], 'you have made such a varied life; there's nothing you haven't done' [...] I wouldn't have changed that. You know, doing the nine-to-five job for 40 years just was never going to be me [...] you have so many different routes around life [...] you just don't know which route that's going to be.

PAINTING BY BARON CHARLIE LUSH

"There Was an Artistry to it that We Forgot"

Scotland's only in-use all-iron printing press

ARNAZ MALLICK AND EMMA INGRAM-JOHNSON
DEPUTY EIC AND RELIC WRITER

Around St Andrews, you may have seen bookmarks advertising the James David Forbes Collecting Prize. These feature ornate printed patterns in red, blue, and gold, hand-done by the Crail Press.

The Crail Press is located in a shed at the end of Dawn Hollis' long back garden in Crail. Hollis led us through her home until we reached the end of the garden; she opened the door, and before us stood the only in-use Stanhope printing press in Scotland.

"There [are] very few like this left anymore," Hollis said. The Stanhope press, invented in 1810, was the first all-iron printing press, as opposed to the universally used wooden presses. It is now



the source of Dawn Hollis' living. The Crail Press is run solely by Hollis, a former PhD student at the University of St Andrews.

Eyes cast downwards, Hollis reached upward and into the typecase, pulling at letters, pressing them into the caselay to spell her name for us. "You [...] get used to everything being back to front," she explained. It inverts all of what computer generations consider the 'normal' method of composition. Our 'rules' — left to right, words and letters in the order they are spoken, auto-correct fixing clumsiness — are rendered obsolete when using the press.

Hollis used to be an academic at St Andrews, where she studied Classics and History. "I was pissed off in Classics, and then during COVID I was on maternity leave," she explained. "I was like — I'm going to go insane if I'm just spending my entire day in a house with a small baby and literally nothing else [...] I need an hour a day to go and not be near the baby."

While Hollis walked us through the printing process, her daughter played in the garden. We later learned that her daughter used the press herself to design her last birthday invitations.

"And I didn't go and write articles," said Hollis. Instead, she decided to print. "That's probably telling me something quite interesting," Hollis realised. So when the post-doc came to an end, she decided to go into printing as a business. Hollis is now the secretary of the British Printing Society, "quite a nice society of people doing letterpress," and prints for a living with the Crail Press.

"It is not a compact hobby," Hollis said, pointing to her myriad of gear and instruments. "[It's] simultaneously quite valuable but also really, really hard to ship and to get a hold of," she explained. "You kind of have to be in the right place at the right time." Most of Hollis' equipment is secondhand, and in the case of two of her presses, passed down to her.

"You tend to know people by the name of their press rather than their name or their face," Hollis said, describing the UK's community of printers. The letterpress community has shrunk rapidly in the last few decades. "Letterpress is just kind of an interesting sort of craft in these days," Hollis explained. "40 or 50 years ago, it was still a main part of the print trade [...] It was how print texts were produced for 400, 500 years — and then very quickly, quite suddenly became replaced." The rise of computers has been central to this process.



"There was an artistry to it that we forgot and have lost now," said Hollis, describing the work of those who made books and printed materials by hand.

"When you're typesetting, and you're fully justifying, you're having the margin straight on either side, you're having to make decisions about, 'How do you space that out?' What words do you put bigger spaces in between?" she explained. "Those are the kinds of things that typesetters 50 years ago would think about, would know instinctively."

"Now we just click a button, and it does it, you know," Hollis said. "I think that, looking at the layout of modern typeset books, the rules that I've inherited from some of the older people I worked with [...] they're just forgotten." Hollis gave an example, "Never have a widow: a single word at the end of a paragraph."



"The people who were doing this [...] they weren't necessarily the people who were doing the artistic design, but they had a training, and an eye for what would make an aesthetic and pleasing page," she explained.

Hollis confessed that she owned her first printing press before her first touchscreen phone. It is a pivot towards slower, more conscious creation that Hollis seeks through her business. The origins of the Stanhope press were tied to disseminating information — Hollis called it an "agent of knowledge." Much like crosswords and sudoku, it requires a breadth of brain activity and a range of creativity. It is not just the clash of cerebral and physical that the press requires, but a combination of literary, linguistic, mathematical, and spatial knowledge.

The letterpress has its own restrictions, however. "It's not quite as free as designing on a computer," Hollis said. "But I think that's what's quite exciting. Sometimes, I'm trying to do a design, and I think of a certain typeface [...] then I realise I don't have some of them [...] And once you run out of *one* letter that you need, you need to change your text," she explained. "I enjoy that — okay, there's this problem, how do I respond to that problem?" There is a physicality to Hollis' work, which is entirely hand-done. "When I'm setting my name," she explained, "I'll start with D. You put it in upside down, and every piece of type has a little nick in it, which helps you orient it. And then your thumb's going to hold the nick, and then you put in the next volume [...] Hand composition is a really important part of it because it's very restful and mindful."

> "It is a pivot towards slower, more conscious creation that Hollis seeks."

"Once you get the hang of it, it's fairly easy," Hollis said. Neither of us had seen anything like it before, each letter minute in Hollis' hand. Standing in Hollis' shed, which she had built specifically for the press, she explained each part of the mystical process. It is particularly moving to understand that this is how the art of printing was passed down from generation to generation. "But I think you can start pretty small," she said. "You don't need masses to start, but I think you get greedy. You want more and more options for design. It just depends on what you want to print."

"You know, I think there is a real appeal to something which isn't screen-based. And I think a lot of people find that when they come in."

Hollis described printing as an art that had been forgotten. Yet, with Hollis and her Stanhope at the Crail Press, it's hard not to feel a sense of optimism that there are people, even in corners of the world such as Fife, who keep this artistry alive.

PHOTOS BY ARNAZ MALLICK

Have You Heard of Report and Support?

TAO YAZAKI
FEATURES WRITER

Have you heard of Report and Support?

Out of around 50 people asked, most students had not heard of 'the Tool'. One student asked if it was a phone number, while those who had heard of it said they were not familiar with the process of reporting, as they "have not had to use it, thankfully."

Report and Support is an online tool that allows anyone connected to the University of St Andrews to report concerns either anonymously or with their contact details. This can range from issues like bullying, discrimination, abuse, assault, harassment, or well-being issues.

There seems to be a gap, however, between student awareness and the University's emphasis on it as its primary reporting platform. Following both a Daily Record investigation, which ranked the University of St Andrews third among Scottish universities for sexual misconduct claims, and recent cases of sexual assault and misconduct involving PhD student Jui-Yi Chen and tutor Aidan McKay, the University has increasingly highlighted Report and Support in its response.

So what exactly is Report and Support, and how does it work? "You explain what happened. You can do this anonymously or with your details disclosed. And then the first mechanism is support," explained Alex Chun, President of Wellbeing and Community.

Chun emphasised that disciplinary procedures are not automatically triggered when reporting non-anonymously."If you submit with your information, you'll be contacted and informed of different methods of support, and they'll put together meetings with you and help you choose what you want to do next," Chun explained. "For example, if a student is harassed, they could either choose to take it to [the Student Conduct team] if it's another student, or they could choose to take it to the police. The University will help that student manage that as best they can."

"It doesn't have to be [about] another member of the University," Chun explained, describing the different circumstances the system covers. "It could be something that happened in public. It could be something that you witnessed happen to another person. It could be something that happened to yourself in a classroom, in [accommodation], wherever."

After a student reports through Report and Support, it's read by Student Services. Then, Student Services emails or calls the student directly and attempts to get in touch with them to see how they're doing. The student is then asked what they would like to do. This often results in a second meeting, which can be more casual, where they ask the student how they're doing, what support they need, and lastly, what they want to do next.

I spoke to Lee Smith, who identifies as queer, about their experience with harassment and reporting. Their experience with reporting highlighted some of the concerns Chun raised. The first incident Smith described involved verbal harassment on Market Street by people who appeared to be students at the University. Smith reported the incident, not to Student Services, but to Confessdrews, a popular student-run Instagram account that posts submissions of confessions and advice. "I remember typing on that because I wasn't necessarily expecting a change," Smith said. "I just wanted to remind people that in St Andrews, as welcoming and safe as it can be, some people still find [the town] so comfortable as to be openly bigoted and nasty."

When asked why Smith reported to Confessdrews and not a University mechanism like Report and Support, they explained, "I suspected it would be tedious, [Confessdrews] was low effort. I just needed to talk about it."

The second incident Smith shared occurred in a residential area at night. Two young men shouted a homophobic slur after deliberately and forcefully bumping into Smith. Smith refrained from reporting this incident to the University as well.

"A part of me didn't want to do it because I thought they weren't students," Smith explained. "If they're not students, how was the university going to help?" they explained. Looking at the Report and Support page, "it's very clear that it is a university-associated platform," Smith said. They pointed in particular to the 'tell us where this behaviour or incident took place' section, in which the listed locations are places where students typically gather. The list did not include areas such as residential or public spaces where both town and gown interact.

In an attempt to retroactively report the incident, I sat down with Smith and went through the Report and Support website. This involved fifteen questions and ten pages, some with quite extensive drop-down menus. "This feels like just another survey," Smith said. "I feel like the last thing I want to do when something's gone wrong is to suddenly go, 'oh, you know what, let me fill out this survey so that they can collect more data.'"

Smith felt that the emphasis on demographic data collection was symptomatic of the University's emphasis on reactive approaches. "There's nothing preventing these incidents from happening in the first place," said Smith "It's just a 'let us know that they did happen.'"

Bartosz Rogala is the coordinator for GotSupport, a peer-support group that works with Student Services. He is also the next President of Wellbeing and Community.

For Rogala, the Report and Support Tool has the potential to play a critical role in making sure students report issues. However, "we're missing a very, very key part of responding to sexual and gender-based violence — understanding what it means to run proactive approaches to the issue," he explained.

Rogala explained that a lack of accessible information on the reporting process raises questions: "What does it mean to [submit] a disclosure to Report and Support? What happens if you do it anonymously versus with your name? What does the University do with that data?" The procedure's transparency "is a big part of an issue like SGBV [Sexual and Gender-Based Violence] because it is such a personal, such an intimate issue for a person experiencing it," he explained.

"To say that this tool is the golden pathway towards supporting [SGBV issues] feels a little bit disingenuous," said Rogala. "I feel like there's a lot more work to do before that or alongside reporting support to make sure that students actually feel like they can report these issues to the University."

"There needs to be a lot more clarity on what Student Services, the police, and different areas like sexual assault centres and SARCs [Sexual Assault Referral Centre] and FRASAC [Fife Rape & Sexual Assault Centre], do. What does it mean when you reach out to these people?" Rogala asked. "It's a multiple-hour process going in there. If you hear all of that and then you don't know how that process is going to look, there is no way that you'll even think about wanting to go to a place like that."

Rogala also finds the format of the Report and Support Tool to be lacking in humanity. "The biggest thing on my mind as someone who runs a service is actually thinking about the students who may never engage with the service itself, right? The students [who] are [sitting] in ABH, in their own room, not really seeing the possibility that something like Peer Support is available."

"If students know that there is a human that they can go and talk to and help them navigate this process, it's easier to then think about how that disclosure is going to look," Rogala said.

When asked about how the Tool responds to feedback, Rogala stated that there were frequent forums to discuss Wellbeing and the Report and Support Tool. Student Services also conducts yearly reviews of the Tool. However, Rogala feels like "there is a lot of talking, not a lot of doing." For example, "the University was awarded the EmilyTest Charter, and a lot of the time we see that the University puts this everywhere," he said. The Emily Test GBV [Gender-Based Violence] Charter is an accreditation run by charity EmilyTest and awarded to universities that complete a comprehensive programme and meet the charity's minimum standards for addressing GBV on campus.

Rogala noted that recent media coverage of sexual misconduct in St Andrews highlights a gap between the University's achievements and students' experiences. "What we're seeing and what we're experiencing doesn't always reflect these amazing awards and achievements," he said. "The process [by] which it takes to make change is one of the most difficult things to deal with. It takes so, so long to get something done."

While a spokesperson for the University in a previous interview stated that higher reported disclosures can be attributed to better infrastructure for reporting as a result of the EmilyTest Charter, Rogala said that these figures were still quite low.

Rogala gave suggestions on how the Report and Support Tool can be improved, including creating social media campaigns on how Report and Support works and looking at incorporating other resources, such as easily accessible self-swab kits.

"Even if you don't think you should report, chances are you should, because it can help provide evidence and data that shapes university policy," Chun said. "Without students telling us what needs to be done, the University can't really work towards fixing things." Even a single report about feeling unsafe in a particular area could lead to increased security patrols along that route, they explained.

"I do think that whether it's a perception that Report and Support is extremely formal, or if it's just too long to fill out, there is something barring students and staff from reporting microaggressions on Report and Support," they said.

Both Rogala and Chun emphasised the other services available beyond Report and Support.

"There [are] many, many different statistics about sexual and gender-based violence, but the majority of them say that most cases aren't reported," Chun said. "The reporting process can be re-traumatising to survivors. So it is very much up to the individual. That being said, I do hope that no student ever feels like they're alone [or] they can't come and talk to someone about this. We have many different avenues other than Report and Support because it can be very difficult to just write everything down, as opposed to talking to someone."

Rogala stated that the subject of this article "is one that's really, really important to show to our survivors in St Andrews, to highlight to them that we aren't just hiding, and that we will do work towards this. We will show what is available, but also, we won't just stop at what is available. We're going to continue working to make sure there's more available to them, too."

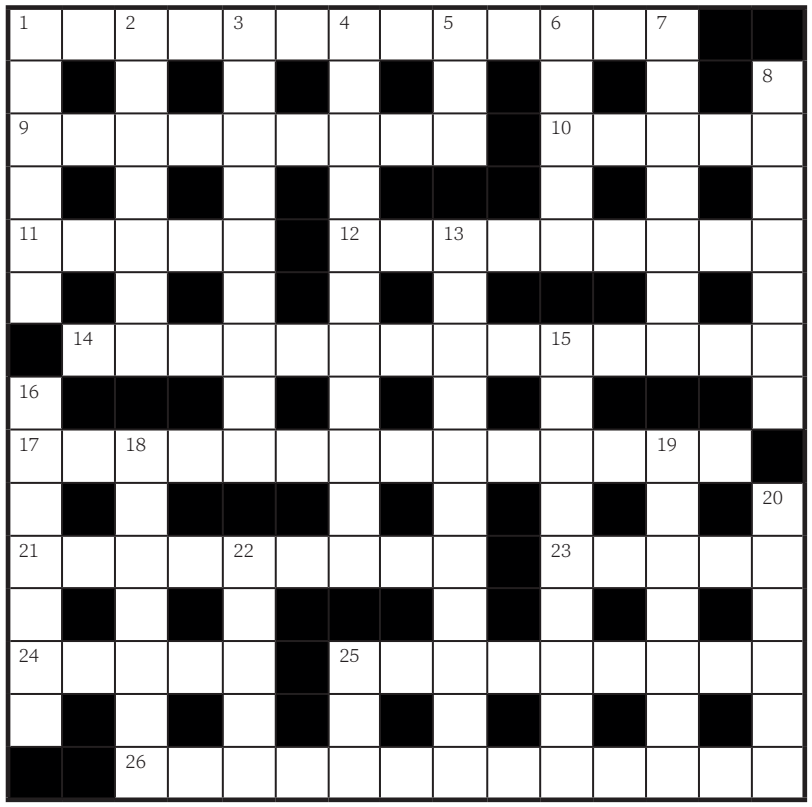
More information on the issues raised in this article can be accessed via Rape Crisis Scotland on their website https://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/help-helpline/ or by calling the National Rape Crisis Helpline on 08088 01 03 02. Advice and support on reporting sexual assault from the University can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

PUZZLES

EDITOR: LUANA VAN ORANJE

@THESAINTSTA THESAINTNEWSPAPER.CO.UK/PUZZLES 2 APRIL 2026

‘He Is Risen! To Solve Puzzles...’



CROSSWORD by Alexander Wiseman and Julia Emery

ACROSS

1. Calendar highlight for pranksters (5–3–3)
9. They are thrown down on *1a*, with regard to a prank war
10. Chocolate source
11. Provide, formally
12. ”You’ve been punked” in Paris, on *1a* (5–4)
14. Secretive operations, in preparation for 1a perhaps (5–3–6)
17. “Hook, line, and sinker” in The Hague, on *1a* (4–2–4–4)
21. Nightmare locale, cinematically (3–6)
23. “You won’t be laughing when the boss ____ you after that prank”
24. What a just fine performance may do (3–2)
25. An individual on an internal committee, say
26. Tale about the making of a quilt (8–5)

DOWN

1. Debates
2. Military circular symbol
3. Well-educated class, archaically
4. What one might do with texts from a crush
5. “____ Miserables”
6. Window sticker
7. Viscerally reacting to a prank with a foul-tasting drink
8. A certain sponge’s alarm clock, or an annoying wake-up noise on *1a*
13. Descriptor for someone both formidable and fearsome
15. Group that may get the drop on you
16. Something you might be told “not to take” on 1a
18. Kind of pressure involved in water filtration
19. Fratty Silicon Valley worker (4–3)
20. Bird of prey returning to Scotland from South Africa around now
22. Cosmonaut who followed Gagarin
25. Knight’s title

CONNECTIONS by Julia Emery

Find groups of four items with something in common

LIONHEAD	SWISS	CROSS KEYS	DANISH
THE CROWN	CHEDDAR	DUTCH	MONTEREY JACK
THAI	WHITE HEART	FETA	FLEMISH GIANT
GOUDA	MINI REX	ROYAL OAK	CUBAN

SUDOKU by Isaac Oldham

The colours are meaningless! Just some Easter fun

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

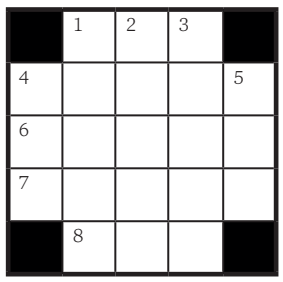
WORD SANDWICH by Luana van Oranje

Find a word that comes after the first word and before the second word to form two new words/phrases

EASTER	_____	SLOPE
FACE	_____	SUNDAY
SNOW	_____	SHOT
BUTTER	_____	FISHING

NEW PUZZLE!

MINI CROSSWORD by Madeleine Oliver



ACROSS

1. “____ is just a number”
4. Symbol of Christianity
6. Itsy ____
7. Scratched an ex’s car
8. Fleur East most-streamed song

DOWN

1. Easter-born horoscope, most years
2. “Caught you out” (3–2)
3. *The Only Way Is* ____
4. Wife of JFK jr.
5. New South Wales airport code

WORDSEARCH by Madeleine Abignale and Luana van Oranje

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

BASKET
BLOOM
BLOSSOM
BUNNY
CHICK
CROCUS
DAFFODILS
EGG HUNT
HOT CROSS BUN
LAMB
MAY POLE
NEST
SIMNEL CAKE
SUNSHINE

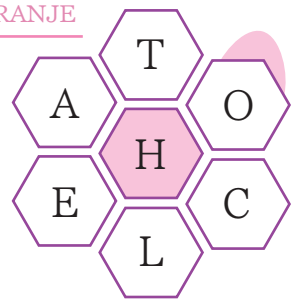
NUMBER CHAIN by Isaac Oldham

6
x 29
/ 2
- 29
x 3
+ 43
/ 31
?

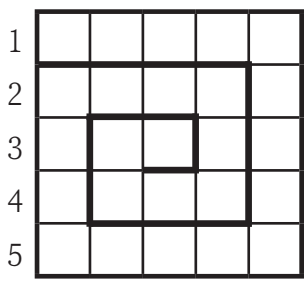
NEW PUZZLE!

SPELLING BEE by Luana van Oranje

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



WHIRLPOOL by Madeleine Abignale



Row clues fill the corresponding rows (all 5 letters long). Whirlpool clues start at the top left and spiral inwards following the dark line ‘path’ (one after the other, any length of letters)

ROWS

1. Actor Hemsworth
2. What a chocolate egg is, to a child
4. Vote in
5. A chaotic state
6. One who is taught

WHIRLPOOL

1st. He was resurrected on Easter Sunday
2nd. Dutch spring flower
3rd. Caused by an unexpected result, especially in sports
4th. About; concerning
5th. Stationary cooling device
6th. Hand-held cooling device
7th. French definite article

St Andrews Springs Forward

CHRISTOPHER KELLY-BROWN
PHOTOGRAPHER

















Stone-Faced and Stoic: St Andrews' Gargoyles

SYDNEY SUNDT
PHOTOGRAPHER













The RETIC

The Saint's Arts & Culture Section

EDITOR: SOREN RASMUSSEN



Literary Journalism with Topping & Co.

Looking for your next read? *The Saint* and Topping & Co. have come together to save the day. Find below the best stories before they made their way on-screen, all books are available locally in store.

Topping & Company BOOKSELLERS

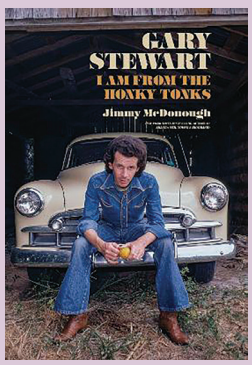
BOOKSELLER PICKS



Mikey recommends...

Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer

Jon Krakauer's landmark of literary journalism chronicles the life of Chris McCandless, a young man who completed his law degree, donated all his money to Oxfam, cut contact with his family, and left his life behind to become a nomad. Two years later, his emaciated body was found in an abandoned bus in the Alaskan wilderness. To some McCandless is a hubristic fool, and to others an incarnation of the American spirit – Krakauer, however, treats McCandless with neither reverence nor disdain. Instead, he approaches him with enormous sensitivity, willing to chastise and to celebrate, to empathise with McCandless and to be mystified by him. An emotive portrait of a complicated man, a complicated landscape and a complicated country, Krakauer writes *Into the Wild* like no one else could.

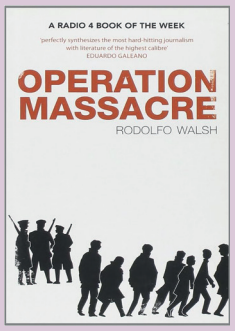


Mike recommends...

Gary Stewart: I am From the Honkey Tonks by Jimmy McDonough

If you're looking for a post-exam reward, take a rollicking whisky trip through the American south with Gary Stewart, one of the wildest characters in country music. Known for his distinct warbling style, Stewart leapt up the charts in the late 1970's with unapologetic and unforgettable barroom ballads like "She's Actin' Single (I'm Drinkin' Doubles)." Yet within a few years his hard-living lifestyle caught up, and he vanished from the scene, becoming an object of obsession for musicians and fans alike. Legendary critic Jimmy McDonough (*Shakey: Neil Young's Biography*) has produced what will certainly become a modern classic.

STAFF PICK



Hannah recommends...

Operation Massacre by Rodolfo Walsh

Step aside, Truman Capote — there was a nonfiction novelist in town long *before* you arrived in Holcomb. While *In Cold Blood* is a masterclass of literary journalism, another which most English speakers aren't aware of (and ought to be) is Rodolfo Walsh's *Operation Massacre*. Published in 1957 — nearly a decade before *In Cold Blood* — *Operation Massacre* documents the planned execution of a group accused of partaking in a Peronist coup at the height of the *Revolución Libertadora* in Argentina. While twelve men were shot, seven survived to tell Walsh of their experience, one which was fundamentally denied by the Argentine government. Using techniques similar to those of *In Cold Blood*, Walsh draws detailed portraits of the massacre's victims, impressively compiles evidence, and speaks on his struggles as a reporter writing within a dictatorial de facto state. As you can imagine, *Operation Massacre* is far from an uplifting read — but it is nonetheless one that is tremendously important. Walsh, now one of the many Argentine 'disappeared,' has become somewhat of a hero, forever canonised in Latin American literary-journalistic tradition; he certainly did not die in the name of reportage for Truman Capote to take *all* the credit.

Foraging in Fife

A few lessons learned the hard way

ALIX RAMILLON
Relic Writer

Foraging has gained popularity largely due to its accessibility, yet this very aspect can also be a drawback. Gathering your own food fosters a deeper sense of place and reveals the vital role wild plants play in our food system and ecological health. Recently, I've been watching *DIRT* by Huckberry, a YouTube series which showcases farming, foraging, and fermenting, highlighting communities dedicated to these practices across generations. From Hokkaido to Maine, we see a testament to this connection between the body and the good, intergenerational transmission of knowledge, as well as the roots of our dishes' names. It supersedes the traveller's experience from walking around to informing, curating, and redefining what to forage on one's way home for lunch or dinner. In cold climates, for example, cabbage can be conserved under the snow, which gives it a sweet taste.

But one cannot forage what one does not understand. This brings me to the importance of land literacy. In places like Fife, while foraging may seem accessible, a lack of ecological understanding can cause harm rather than harmony with the land. I learned this firsthand while foraging for wild garlic along Lade Braes the other week. I mistook lily of the valley leaves for those I was looking for, which led to a bout of nausea. Thankfully, the doctors assured me this was a common mistake from credulous non-ruralites. Herbaceous beings are connected to our surroundings, and although we can and are meant to live off them, our consciousness of what represents a comestible plant can be foreshadowed by our naivety towards the dangers on a sunny day.

St Andrews has seen a surge in foraging activity, particularly post-Covid, as revealed when speaking to alumni. There are even entire communities of foragers that thrive. It makes sense: There's value in knowing the history of our food. Those who personally source their ingredients strengthen the bond between land, producer, and table. We crave this connection, seeking food that transcends the instant gratification often found in supermarket offerings. The allure of the Bourdain effect resonates with many, including myself.

Interestingly, many residents of St Andrews come from urban backgrounds in cosmopolitan cities where such accessibility is less common. They appreciate the ease of foraging, although it often lacks that distinct taste of the earth that we yearn for, like a sensation that tingles on the tongue and lingers in our minds.

The East Neuk coastline, in particular, offers a bounty of seaweeds like kelp and dulse. The region of St Andrews and Fife has three distinct habitats: coast, hedgerow, and woodland. This differentiation is crucial for a land-literate forager. In Fife, you can encounter laver, sea lettuce, dulse, sea beet, and even mussels, though the latter might pose a challenge in foraging.

> "Those who personally source their ingredients strengthen the bond between land, producer, and table."

It's important to note the differences in identifying plants. Lily of the valley and wild garlic thrive in damp, shaded woodland, yet they can be easily confused. The key distinguishing factor lies in the leaf base. Lily of the valley lacks the sharp pointed lobes and is significantly glossier with more veining. A simple aroma test (by crushing a leaf) serves as a primary identification method. Caution is paramount. Many believe misidentified mushrooms are the biggest threat, but giant hogweed also poses serious risks. Its sap can cause severe burns or even blindness and can be found along riverbanks and roadsides in Fife.

Understanding the land and its offerings is crucial to responsible foraging. Let us engage with our environment thoughtfully, ensuring that we nourish both ourselves and the ecosystems we interact with. Because foraging looks for what appears edible, it is especially dangerous, and we should research the subject and forage with friends. Maybe it is my personal approach to it, but sometimes smell tests like crushing a leaf can cause confusion because we have spent so much time looking for the holy grail. So sit down and read old dusty manuals on foraging, and let your mind be clear from confusion before incorporating foraged plants in any of your dishes.

Illustration by Ramona Kirkham



The Concerning Rise of AI Fiction

On the disappearance of the literary voice

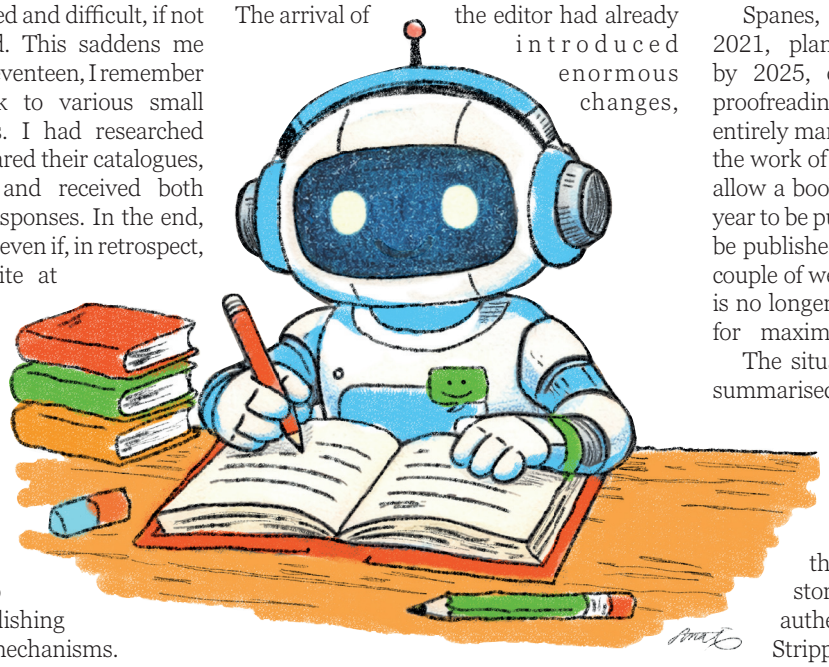
CARLA LONGO
RELIC WRITER

For fun, I asked ChatGPT to write a story about a girl who had just been broken up with. In less than five seconds, paragraphs appeared on my screen. What I read reminded me of airline food. It hinted at something real, it smelled a little like real food, yet you could tell it was not a complete meal. Chat used banal metaphors and cheesy lines, describing how her pain was "not loud, not dramatic, just steady like rain that refuses to stop" and how "healing, she realised, was not about forgetting Steve, it was about remembering herself." All very nice, I guess.

An excerpt like this may seem harmless, but this is precisely what makes it dangerous. A text that is not bad enough to be unreadable yet clearly lacking everything that allows a story to speak to us can still carve out its own market. A quick search online reveals YouTube videos and masterclasses promising to teach/reveal how to write a whole book in a single day, sometimes reaching the astonishing record of 45 minutes. Books written with AI belong mostly to commercial fiction, such as harmony novels, which follow very similar plots and predictable endings. This has become a real business, with so-called 'authors' offering tips on how to bypass the limits of AI programs and other software to write explicit scenes, with various levels of creativity.

Moreover, the use of AI in book writing has massively increased the number of submissions to publishers, which were already high, making the submission process even more limited and difficult, if not often completely closed. This saddens me especially. When I was seventeen, I remember sending my first book to various small independent publishers. I had researched them thoroughly, compared their catalogues, written cover letters, and received both positive and negative responses. In the end, my book was published, even if, in retrospect, not everything we write at seventeen should be. Nonetheless, the entire process taught me a great deal, giving me the chance not only to work on my story with professionals without needing agents or intermediaries, but also to understand the publishing world and its mechanisms.

That this opportunity is now a distant dream for many aspiring writers, who seek a niche of people who believe in them and allow them to gain experience, is truly a shame. What makes a story are its imperfections, its inconsistencies. Perhaps this is also what we find beautiful in the classics, texts that were often published as serials in newspapers, such as the novels of Charles Dickens or Emilio Salgari, and were frequently not edited at all before going to print. The arrival of the editor had already introduced enormous changes, pushing many books to adhere to certain standards and styles, like the demonisation of adverbs that became widespread in the 2000s. I still remember my habit of highlighting each one of them when revising my short stories. With AI, this process could become even more extreme, producing texts that are increasingly homogenised and polished in pursuit of the absence of errors, leaving very little room for authentic expression.



Spanes, an Israeli startup founded in 2021, planned to publish 8,000 books by 2025, creating a system for editing, proofreading, formatting, and design entirely managed by AI, effectively replacing the work of three or four people. This would allow a book, instead of taking months or a year to be published and ready for readers, to be published and ready for readers in just a couple of weeks. Wonderful, isn't it? Writing is no longer an art, but a product optimised for maximum sales at minimum cost.

The situation is complex and cannot be summarised in a short article. I am aware that AI is a growing field and that compromises with it are and will increasingly be necessary. Yet there is a certain concern, because the very heart of what makes a story alive lies in its imperfections, authenticity, and human intuition. Stripping these elements in favour of flawless, market-ready content risks producing words that are technically correct but emotionally inert.

ILLUSTRATION BY ANA BROCKMANN ALDASORO

Eleanor Parker and the Social Media Scholar

SOPHIE LYNN
RELIC WRITER

No one can deny that the landscape of academia has changed drastically over the last several decades. The rise of the internet has made previously cloistered fields far more accessible, opening spaces once reserved for a small academic elite. Blogs, social media, and digital archives have allowed scholars to reach audiences far beyond academic journals and student bases, reshaping both how knowledge is shared and who gets to engage with it.

Eleanor Parker is the perfect example of this 'new generation' of academics. While in her undergraduate years at Oxford (she is now a lecturer there), she began a blog called Clerk of Oxford, where she wrote about her studies in medieval history with a particular focus on the notoriously insulated field of early medieval British literature. Launched in 2008, Parker's blog quickly became one of the first academic platforms to leverage social media in a meaningful way, with her then Twitter presence gaining notability in the early 2010s and helping the blog reach a wider audience. While the blog has had no new posts in several years (the archives are still up), it has done wonders in expanding access to medieval history for learners who might not otherwise study the period.

This broader impact was brought into sharper focus here at St Andrews on 25 March, when Dr Christine Rauer, a professor of medieval literature, organised an event featuring Parker. At the event, Rauer introduced Parker first by mentioning her blog and presence on X, highlighting the significance of her digital outreach alongside her more traditional academic achievements. Parker's social media handle was also the first item on a handout distributed at the event, a small but telling detail that underscored how seriously such platforms are now being taken within scholarly spaces. This attention on Parker's social media symbolises a broader shift in academia, where public engagement is increasingly recognised as a valuable complement to traditional scholarship.



I am, in many ways, a product of the kind of academic outreach Parker represents. I first discovered Parker through her profile on X back in 2022, when I was seventeen, living in semi-rural Colorado. The academic world she inhabited seemed so very different from my own, and her descriptions of old religious festivals and obsolete traditions utterly enchanted me. I credit Parker's blog as one of the reasons I decided to study medieval history at St Andrews, and I feel her influence on my life demonstrates just how powerful this new academic landscape can be when it is used thoughtfully.

However, there are those who remain against the use of technology in academic spaces, viewing social media as a threat to the credibility of traditional scholarship and an unserious pastime. Parker wrote about this struggle in 2014: "Career-wise [the blog] may do me more harm than good; I sometimes imagine sceptical 'real academics' stumbling across my blog, silently judging me [...] To many of the people who have power over my career, blogging doesn't count as a worthwhile activity, even as a form of outreach or impact."

While critiques of social media in academia are understandable, particularly in disciplines like medieval studies where complex ideas can easily be oversimplified when translated for a wider audience, dismissing these tools entirely risks missing their transformative potential. As Parker's work illustrates, digital tools (when used with care) can challenge the insularity of traditional academia, revealing a future in which scholarship is defined not only by discovery, but by the connections it creates.

While debates over the role of digital platforms in serious scholarship will continue (and rightly so), Parker makes clear all of the benefits of this new frontier of academia. As one of the first scholars to use social media to share rigorous medieval studies with a wider audience, she demonstrates that specialised fields can be made accessible without sacrificing depth — and I, for one, hope that more scholars will follow her example.

ILLUSTRATION BY SANDRA PALAZUELOS GARCIA

In Ireland, Artists Will Be Paid to Be Artists

RUBY LUHRMAN
Relic Writer

Basic income schemes work to provide regular and unconditional payments to individuals who qualify, helping to reduce poverty and support economic security. While many countries have attempted to implement basic income programmes, these initiatives have often been temporary, functioning as trials rather than permanent fixtures. In 2022, Ireland initiated one such trial to test out a Basic Income for the Arts scheme. The test scheme was introduced in response to the damaging effects of Covid-19 on the arts sector, aiming to support its recovery. The programme selected 2,000 artists and creative worker applicants at random and provided them with a €325 weekly stipend. Although the stipend was modest and taxed, it provided artists with a reliable source of income, allowing them to work fewer other jobs and focus on their art.



The pilot ran for three years and was widely successful. Artists included in the trial commented that they were benefiting from being able to self-fund community groups, afford medical appointments, and feel more confident about starting and supporting families. Beyond improving the lives of the artists involved, a cost-benefit analysis published by the DCSS found that the pilot was profitable, bringing in €1.39 for every €1 spent. This profitability was driven by participants earning more, paying higher taxes, and relying less on social and healthcare support. Just last year, following the pilot's positive outcomes, the Arts and Culture Recovery Taskforce made the decision to implement the Basic Income for the Arts (BIA) as a permanent scheme.

The permanent scheme will begin in May of this year, when artist applications will open for assessment over the summer. Though the exact applicant criteria have yet to be released, they will most likely resemble those of the pilot scheme, rendering a broad range of artists — including writers, visual artists, actors, musicians, designers, and directors — eligible to apply. The structure of the scheme itself is also set to mirror the pilot, paying successful applicants €325 weekly over the course of a three-year cycle. In preparation for the scheme, Ireland has allocated €18.27 million in its 2026 budget.

Contrary to recommendations made by the Artists' Union of Ireland, the task force decided that artists selected for a cycle are ineligible to reapply for the following three-year cycle. Put simply, artists can only receive funding for three out of six years at a time. This decision has given rise to anxiety surrounding the length of each cycle of the scheme. Some have argued that three years is an insufficient amount of time for artists to develop their craft and achieve economic stability. And further, some have contended that the repeating three-year cycle merely replicates the pilot scheme continually instead of establishing a permanent programme.

Other worries include the scheme's exceptionally limited capacity and random selection process. The pilot trial in 2020 received 8,200 applications for 2,000 available spaces. The number of applicants is only expected to grow as the scheme becomes more established. Many have noted that, given the scheme's limited capacity, it benefits only a small minority. Ethical questions have also been raised about the fairness of random selection, which does not prioritise artists facing the greatest financial need. Despite these concerns about the scheme's initial approach, public sentiment appears largely positive. A recent public consultation recorded 97% of the 17,000 respondents as supportive of making the BIA scheme permanent.

Inspired by Ireland's success, current campaigns are lobbying to introduce a BIA scheme in Scotland. Equity Scotland recently commissioned research showing that local councils are investing 18% less in the arts than they did in 2010. In response to this significant decrease in arts funding, many organisations and individuals have begun advocating for change. Organisations such as Equity Scotland, along with artists' unions and industry figures, are urging the Scottish Government to consider piloting a BIA scheme. With arts funding under pressure, these calls for a Scottish BIA scheme underscore the urgent need to support artistic livelihoods and strengthen Scotland's arts sector.

Image from Wikimedia Commons

Laidlaw and the Role of Public Art

ILENA DAY-DELL'OLIO
Relic Writer

If art once had its place in a gallery, it no longer belongs there alone. What modernism held apart, carefully framed and elevated, postmodernism dissolved, collapsing 'high art' into the stylistic promiscuity of popular culture. By holding a mirror up to reality, postmodernism blurred the boundary between art and everyday life, and in turn, opened the doors of galleries and museums to the mundane — to the kitchen and the advert through Andy Warhol's *Campbell's Soup*, or to the television commercial through Gilbert & George's *Gordon's Makes us Drunk*. But the door that postmodernism opened not only let the everyday in; it allowed art to seep outwards into the design of ordinary life. Aesthetics were no longer the concern of artists or museum curators, but of corporations and marketing teams in an effort to mass-produce culture. By extension, art was no longer protected by modernism's faith in 'high art,' or by high-tech museum security.

"Form follows function" was modernism's mantra. It is most often applied to architecture, which remains modernism's stronghold, with many of the spaces through which we move being unapologetically shaped by function. Whilst easily dismissible, modernism's insistence on function was not simply restrictive but reverential. By confining art to galleries, it acknowledged that the space in which we encounter artwork governs how we experience it. To understand art's place outside those institutions, however, we must first understand art. For musician Brian Eno, art is *not* something intrinsic to the artwork, but rather what happens within *you*, the observer. The value of the artwork lies in the degree to which it helps you have the experience that you call art. In the public space, however, context shapes the conditions under which we engage with, and even surrender to, the world an artwork suggests. It is therefore insufficient to hang a Henri Matisse print in the library, dust off your hands, and call it a job well done. Getting Matisse to paint a chapel in Saint-Paul-de-Vence with his own take on religious iconography — now that's a different story. Art must lend itself to both form and function: it must become not only inseparable from the building, but also from those who use it.

Three paintings entitled *Powódź/Flood* by Natalia Bocian now hang in the Laidlaw Music Centre, a temporary exhibition born out of the collaboration between Fife Contemporary and StAnza. An audio station plays Bocian's poetry about the Wrocław flood of 1997, drawing the viewer into a retelling of the disaster as they stand in the foyer. Whilst this is a refreshing change from the Getty-Images-style stock photos that most walls have to offer, other artwork attracted my attention. Overlooking the open stairwell are 24 abstractions of musical notation, something almost everyone using the centre would recognise and would have just engaged with, coming straight from their rehearsal room. This artwork not only speaks to the function of a music centre and to those who use it, but it also moves beyond a temporary exhibition to become effectively inseparable from the building itself.



Of all places, the physics building has a similar artwork called *In the event of always falling back down again* by Tim Fitzpatrick, which abstracts images of the solar light spectrum. When I studied astrophysics, before I fully grasped the consequences of my UCAS choice, seeing the artwork between classes on a crowded rush-hour staircase restored humanity to a field that felt so far removed from it. These artworks, though, are too few and far between. Cost is one reason, but only if art is considered in the first place. Art is usually an afterthought and sometimes only placed there to reassure us that this corporation, this university, this bank, is suitably creative and cares about us. I've heard rumours that the SPACE accommodation laundry room has stock prints of jazz artists, because nothing shouts 'jazz' more than putting your dirty underwear in the washing machine on a delicate cycle. Here, art becomes simply a box to cross and a far cry from what Brian Eno described.

Spaces should be designed so that art and function are conceived together from the outset. To truly put art in its place is not to restrain it within some gallery or reduce it to some marketing ploy, but to make art become something that quietly transforms the spaces we pass through every day.

Illustration by Maya Mason

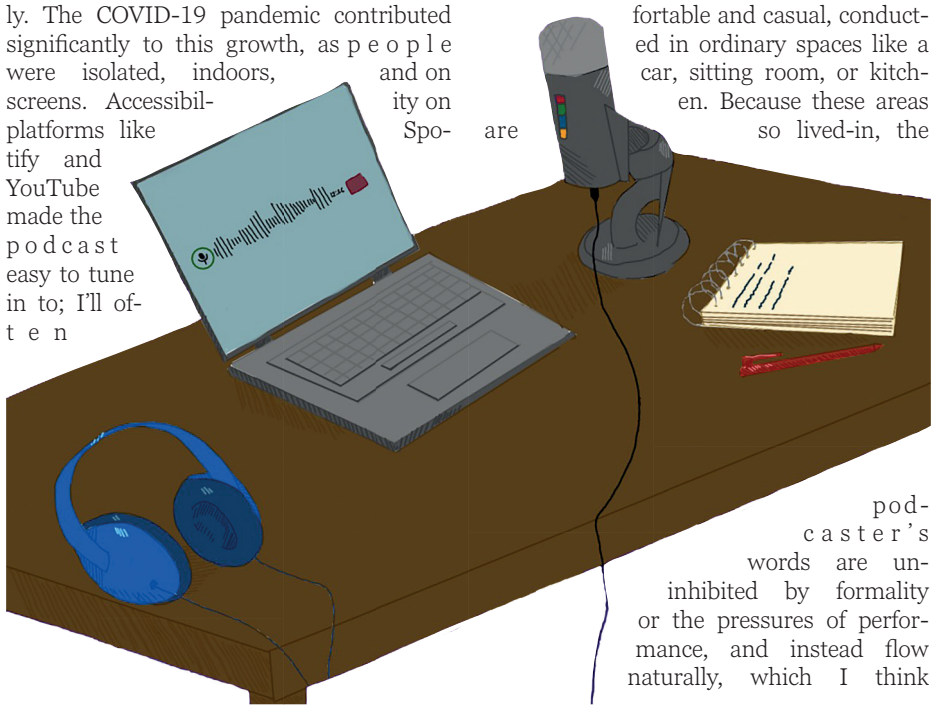
The Art of a Great Podcast

SYLVIA COVACI
Relic Writer

We all have ways to unwind. For some (insane) folks, that may be a plunge in the North Sea; for others, it is eight episodes of *The Office*, a cathartic tennis session, a trip to Tesco for tiramisu, or a silent cry listening to the Marías. Now, allow me to introduce my own little ritual. Before we start, I'll list a few prerequisites that I believe enhance the enjoyment of said ritual: You are unmotivated, angry, seeking understanding, desiring distraction and a laugh, or just generally paralysed by the grim sort of stagnacy that comes in the middle of the semester. Just last night, after nearly tearing my hair out over the intricacies of male mate choice in *Drosophila melanogaster*, I knew it was time: I opened my computer and turned on my most beloved podcast — Madeline Argy's *Pretty Lonesome*.

Argy has, in my eyes (or ears, rather), mastered the art of the podcast. Argy's has doubtless been the most authentic, raw, and rare host I have come across. But before I present *Pretty Lonesome* as a testament to the powers of the podcast, it would be worthwhile to discuss what a podcast truly is. Coined in 2004 by British journalist Ben Hammersley, 'podcast' unites 'iPod' and 'broadcast.' Hammersley created the term in response to the 'Audible Revolution' of the 2000s, when amateur radio was rapidly popularised and made available for download on the then widespread device, Apple's iPod. I find the term quite genius in its blend of the technological and the traditional; the word broadcast comes from the Old English *brād* (wide) and the Middle English and Norse *kasta* (cast). In essence, it means to sow by scattering, which I think is a very poetic way to describe the reach of radio.

Since its inception in the early 2000s, the podcast's popularity has risen exponentially. The COVID-19 pandemic contributed significantly to this growth, as people were isolated, indoors, and on screens. Accessibility on platforms like Spotify and YouTube made the podcast easy to tune in to; I'll often have one running in the background as I cook breakfast, sketch, or unwind at the end of a particularly gruelling day at uni. It's also easy to find what you like, as podcast episodes are often titled under a unifying theme or topic. The structure of a podcast, too, is pivotal to the viewer's enjoyment. Personally, I'm not a fan of the sterile-room, huge-microphone, hard-armchair kind of setup; it feels inauthentic, clinical, and scripted. I think a good podcast should be comfortable and casual, conducted in ordinary spaces like a car, sitting room, or kitchen. Because these areas are so lived-in, the podcaster's words are uninhibited by formality or the pressures of performance, and instead flow naturally, which I think gives room for the kind of spontaneous journey a podcast should embark upon.



The podcast is rooted in human conversation. This kind of media is unique in its nearly infinite scope; human conversation takes the form of anything and everything. A good podcast, as I see it, should resemble an hours-long talk with friends — the kind where you're lounging on a dorm floor until three in the morning, covering everything between the biology of body propaganda to how capitalism is killing our artists. Because podcasts are conversations, we, the viewers, may decide who we wish to listen to. Of course, there is no oral dialogue we may give in return, but the igniting of an internal dialogue is doubtless.

What drew me to Argy's *Pretty Lonesome* was the way that she saw me, so vividly and honestly, through her words. I felt the furthest thing from lonesome. Not only did her way of speaking appeal — a fantastic blend of humour, philosophy, and storytelling — but in hearing her language, I never failed to learn. It is an innately human experience to discover oneself through the stories of others. This is why we seek out tragic films after heartbreak, why we are affected by books that capture so divinely an experience we thought ours alone, and why we are healed by the gentle empathy of a friend. A podcast, with its vast and intimately human voice, has the ability to achieve this same miracle.

Illustration by Eleanor Vielhaber

Invite Me to a Matcha Rave

Will the wellness fad reach St Andrews?

ISABEL BIRGE
Relic Writer

It is 9am on a Saturday: Techno music is blasting, people are dancing, and the ceremonial grade matcha is flowing.

Those acquainted with rave culture are likely to agree, I would think, with the fact that it is far more preferable to watch the sun come up as one *leaves* a rave as opposed to when one arrives. I would also imagine that the same lovers of EDM and the '90s would find the absence of mind-altering substances at such an event to be completely unthinkable.

I experienced similar incredulity upon discovering the growing popularity of the 'matcha rave.' Be it conscious consumerism, sober curiosity, or an irrepressible craving for hedonism (that refuses to be supplanted by even the most wellness-obsessed individuals) that drives one to tear up a caffeine-fueled dancefloor, the rise of the matcha rave calls into question the continued place of many tenants of social life for twenty-somethings: alcohol, drugs, and sleep deprivation, to name just a few. And, perhaps more importantly, when will Spoiled Life be hosting one of these events?

A search query of "matcha rave" on TikTok will expose the phenomenon's indelible mark on the millennial and Gen Z social scenes of many affluent metropolitan areas, apparently circumnavigating the globe from Sydney to Dubai to London. It doesn't take long to realise that (as I had incorrectly expected) this is decidedly *not* ladies-who-brunch. Indeed, the illustrious matcha rave is, at first glance, somewhat indistinguishable from the *rave* rave, featuring strobe lights, smoke machines, and a throng of dancing bodies. The only real difference is that it is 11am, and everyone is sober, if you can believe it.

Regardless of whether or not raving — matcha-fueled or MDMA-fueled — is your thing, the matcha rave exemplifies the increased, apparently wellness-driven societal awareness of the detriments of traditional party culture and thus a movement to both question and redefine what it means to party in one's twenties. In this post-COVID world we inhabit, people, especially young people, seem to be more conscious of the potentially disastrous effects of the binge-drinking and drug-taking that is so often taken to be inextricable from clubbing. Not only that, but even in major cities, it has become increasingly less common to find clubs open past 3 am, where partygoers previously took these wee hours of the morning for granted, in that surely there was *some* dive bar still open.

But, even in a world (or, at least, certain social circles) where Strava is the preferred form of social media and step counts and sleep scores are worn around like medals, EDM is not dead. Nay, it continues to thrive, but potentially with better sleep and fewer hangovers. Still, many would argue that the dreaded hungover Sunday is the price one simply must pay for the indubitable social benefits of a few (or many) drops of liquid confidence.



While the town of St Andrews may not exactly be renowned for its party scene, it does feature some deliciously overpriced matcha lattes. Which brings me back to my previous question: When is Spoiled Life hosting a matcha rave, and where is my VIP invite? In all seriousness, St Andrews and its distinguished crown jewel of yuppie-driven gentrification seems an apt venue to test-drive the appeal of the sober soirée, perhaps as an afterparty for one of the Instagram photo-op run clubs it hosts.

Party culture is changing. Will the bubble of St Andrews change with it and embrace the calls for reform spearheaded by Pilates goers and practitioners of the TikTok 'clean girl' aesthetic, or will it stay in the dark ages of the brain cell-devouring, devil-worship-inspiring substance commonly referred to as alcohol? In any case, if you ever see someone doing lines of a mysterious, powdery green substance, be sure to feel at least a little bit ashamed of your clearly inferior partying habits.

Photo from Haberdoedas Photography

Glitterball: The Final Curtain Call

FIONA MCALLISTER
EVENTS WRITER

St Andrews can be quite a snobbish town. I — for the most part — dress and act in a pretty conformist way, and even still, I cannot shake the feeling of a spectral gaze looming over me. I can imagine this feeling must be exacerbated for visibly queer students, or those who present themselves atypically to the posh-casual aesthetic that has gripped the majority of the student population.

Aren't you all tired of the same shoes, same haircut, same bag, same same? Instead of breaking free, St Andrews students seem to further entrench themselves within the familiar. Glitterball presents itself as the perfect respite from this monotonous dalliance, a delightful evening in which you can show up as camp as you please. Therefore, it cuts deep that this year's Glitterball was its last.

On 21 March, 2026, the curtain was set to fall on this iconic event in the Spanish Gardens. But the party didn't carry a dismal or disheartened energy. Instead, St Andrews stepped out in full force to give Glitterball one last hurrah.

Hosted by Ivy, the (drag) 'queen of the Kingdom of Fife,' Glitterball showcased a myriad of both local and student talent. A particular favourite of mine was Mollover Twist's rendition of Sinatra's 'My Way.' Please, sir, can I have some more? The crowd was begging for an encore! Saints Pole also exhibited jaw-dropping talent, twirling in synchronicity to tracks from 'Mia and Sebastian's Theme' from *La La Land* to Britney Spears' 'Gimme More.'

This year's headliner was none other than Tomara Thomas, third-place contestant on *RuPaul's Drag Race UK*, Season Five. She brought an effervescent energy and livened the crowd, who'd been on their feet for the past several hours. Her playful banter with Ivy made the time slip by as we danced and laughed the night away.



Typically, you must have your guard up on a ball dancefloor, lest you catch an apology-less shove or have an inebriated attendee step on your toes. However, no such reservation is necessary at Glitterball — the crowd was incredibly kind and good-spirited.

Levi, a third-year exchange student, was grateful for the welcoming atmosphere at Glitterball: "For a university with an often stuffy atmosphere, it was such a relief to see a crowd of people who were able to be entirely themselves." Pluto, a first-year attendee, echoed this sentiment: "I rarely get to wear funky outfits — it's so cool to get to wear fun formal stuff and be camp and queer."

Wendy further shared that "what I love about Glitterball is being around people I know and love. It means a lot to feel safe in a town where I don't always feel wanted." According to Wendy, St Andrews is not the best environment for queer students: "I get comments here — not the nice ones — from locals and students that I haven't received from people anywhere else."

Glitterball may not be your cup of tea. It is less of a typical ball and more of a talent show. But the spaces where queer students can feel safe and let loose are dissipating. Queer students bear the burden of placating those who want a more palatable version of themselves by toning down their appearance. So the cancellation of Glitterball seems like another kick in the face.

So, how do we move forward?

Isabella, a first-year student, shared, "I had friends who seemed surprised that a straight person would want to go [...] Glitterball is for everyone who wants to be there; it's a fun time."

St Andrews students needn't be so snobby and judgmental about what events they attend. Glitterball guarantees a high-spirited event amongst a welcoming crowd — what's not to love?

So, if (fingers crossed) curtains reopen once more, attend! Or don't — stick to your fashion shows and balls with a hefty £70+ ticket. In the meantime, show up for your queer friends and community members, hold those in your life accountable, and tip your local drag queens.

PHOTO BY ALEX BARNARD

'Kickin' It Country' Lassoes Locals

REBECCA WALKER
EVENTS WRITER

As a student in St Andrews, one tends to wonder where on Earth all the "real adults' are. Not the postgrads, but the homeowning, tax-paying, family-supporting members of society. As it turns out, they're all at the Vic on a Saturday night.

'Kickin' It Country' was marketed as "the UK's largest country experience," yet my immediate impression upon arrival was of an event woefully underattended and underadvertised. The bar was deserted, the music loud, and the promised country decor nowhere to be found — but we held out hope.

As the hours passed, the venue slowly began to fill up, at which point the mood picked up massively. I watched a woman dance on a table, multiple people heckling the sole country music performer, and an impressive balancing act involving a tray of Baby Guinnesses. Despite being the only act in the event's "great instalment of country music," which effectively meant performing for four hours uninterrupted, the musician was impressively upbeat. She offered a good mix of both the classics and newer, trendier songs and possessed an almost inhuman level of energy the entire night.

Although the ambience was far from my cup of tea — in my notes, I described ordering my first ever White Claw as "the most exciting thing that's happened all night" — the organisers clearly knew their audience. Regarding the people around me, especially the 50th birthday party we were unintentionally gatecrashing, it looked like a great time.

Taking a cursory tour of the venue later on, I found myself by the cowboy boot-decorating station, an addition which I thought was cute and creative, but undeniably expensive. For £10 a ticket, the venue was disappointingly similar to the Vic on a non-ticketed, free to enter evening — with many fewer students — and I found myself wondering what you're actually paying for when going to this event. In spite of my financial reservations, and the atmosphere described by my plus-one as being "like a massive hen do," the vast majority of attendees *did* seem to be having the time of their lives.

In my interview for *The Saint's* Events section, I was asked how critical I was willing to be of an event, and my response was to acknowledge that I am simply not the target audience for some functions. 'Kickin' It Country' was undeniably one such case. Although it had its issues, namely in the value-for-money department, it appeared to be a genuinely enjoyable evening for a lot of people, who I can imagine are fed up with their nights out being overrun by undergraduates.

CATWALK: Fashion with a Charitable Twist

NATALIE CONTINI
EVENTS WRITER

Why are there so many fashion shows in St Andrews?'. That's the question I found myself and the many other attendees of St Andrews' CATWALK Charity Fashion Show asking. With what seems like one every week of the Candlemas semester, I can imagine this phenomenon seeming totally obscure to those outside of the St Andrews bubble. What exactly justifies having quite so many fashion shows in one town?

One attendee told me that the reason there is a plethora of fashion shows is merely because "everyone cares about fashion." Sarcastic or not, I believe the statement is far from the truth. After all, how many in attendance truly draw fashion inspiration from what's on stage, or see it as anything more than an upmarket party?

Those attending CATWALK, are in any case making a difference by doing so. Each year the St Andrews Charities Campaign, its organiser, raises money for 3 different charities,one local, one national and one international . This year's show was in support of Fife Women's Aid (local), Centrepoint (national), and Médicins Sans Frontières (international). There are 5 subcommittees that are dedicated to raising money over the course of the school year: Events, Race2, Challengers, RAG, and, of course, CATWALK. So when attending that latter event myself, I was expecting to learn a bit about these charities they were raising for. Yet, I found little to no representation of these organisations.

Anyway, I digress – let's take it back to the bus ride dropping me at the back entrance of the Fairmont. So much for a *luxury* experience – something fellow passengers snipped made them feel like 'peasants'. It was at least exciting to have moved beyond the beach ball flinging realms of Younger Hall where CATWALK took place in previous years. However, inside there was not much to do. The frigid temperatures made it unbearable to mingle outside, the bar was overcrowded, and any chance to explore the property featured heavily in the show's advertising was hindered by the show taking place in a backroom . The only place to go was to the ballroom where the stage was. I found a seat behind the reserved section and hunkered down to spend another 45 minutes twiddling my thumbs and people-watching before the show actually started. Meanwhile, a DJ played music that the girls next to me equated to evoking a 'Roblox waiting room'. Indeed, CATWALK somewhat resembled *Dress to Impress* – albeit a little less pink and perhaps offering a more complicated theme than 'Day at the Beach' or 'Supernatural'.

This year's theme was Solstice. According to the digital programme, they aimed to explore the contrast between light and dark. The intermission demarcated this, the first half of the show focusing on 'bare-boned' looks and the second with a more bright and fun atmosphere which had the audience cheering and clapping along. This was something that didn't happen at all for the duration of the first act. At the beginning of the show, the models appeared to be wearing a base layer, most of which I have an inkling came from their own closets. There was little to no information about where any of the clothing came from or if any of it was student-designed which threw the focus on the fashion itself into question. I enjoyed the whole spectacle but felt pretty disappointed in the real purpose of the show. Don't get me wrong, there were some unique pieces on the runway but the majority were disjointed. Some of the models swapped outfits, which could have worked but there was no attempt at restyling when someone else wore the same thing. It became clear that the night was less about the fashion and more about the spectacle. As for fitting the theme, the music throughout did most of the heavy lifting in creating the aesthetics while the lighting seemed more of an afterthought. The technical aspects of the show did work in its favour. Meanwhile, the models took well to the choreographed modern dance-esque movements, despite a few missteps. The show as a whole was fun to watch, as long as you didn't go into it expecting to see haute couture or the latest styles from Milan.

One qualm that I had with the structure of the show was the aforementioned unnecessary intermission. I understand that the purpose of the break was most likely for the models to change their hair, makeup and clothing — all of which I did enjoy more in the second half of the show. However, the break gave the overall impression that it was a way to get people to spend more on drinks and the raffle. Don't get me wrong, I love a glass of wine at an event like this. However, I was discouraged from partaking when I heard the exorbitant prices; I was told by the group next to me that their friend spent £54 for just 2 drinks. I'm not sure if the prices were set by CATWALK or The Fairmont, nevertheless ___.

At the end of the night, I left the Fairmont with little knowledge about the charities or the fashion, but for being my first fashion show in the St Andrews scene I can still see the appeal.

Waffles and Waves: Brunch at Dune

FLORENCE GILL
EVENTS WRITER

This article has kindly been sponsored by Dune.

Stepping into Dune on North Street, you'd be forgiven for thinking that you have just entered an old-money sailing cottage, with its blue nautical-chic interiors transporting you far from the medieval surroundings of some of St Andrews' oldest buildings. The upstairs restaurant area provides an iconic view of St Salvator's Chapel, and the sunshine outside completes the feeling of sitting on a seaside harbour – only without the fishy smell.

The brunch menu boasts a range of mouthwatering (if slightly unconventional) options, such as 'Kimchi Benedict' and 'Octopus Hotdog'– not your usual mundane stack of pancakes! Living up to the title of *Waffles and Waves*, three waffle dishes are also available, savoury or sweet. I have always had an impression of Dune as an expensive restaurant (likely due to the gorgeous location and décor), reserved for family visits and special occasions. However, as an avid brunch fan, the menu was very student-friendly, with most of the dishes costing less than ten pounds.

If you want your brunch to be on the boozier side, the cocktail list is also one of the most affordable I've seen in my time in St Andrews. All cocktails cost under £10, and a Bloody Mary (with your choice of spirit) only £6! Unfortunately, with work to finish in the afternoon, we instead opted for lattes, which were delicious. For food, we chose Dune's most iconic dish – their lobster roll, accompanied by steak and eggs, a perfect balance of breakfast and lunch. My steak was cooked to a lovely medium-rare consistency with a wonderfully runny fried egg, and my partner's roll was full to the brim with fresh lobster in a creamy chive sauce. Despite how busy the restaurant was, we weren't waiting long for either our coffees or our food, and it all felt very fresh, with an admirable degree of artistry in its presentation.



Service is fundamental to any great restaurant experience, and Dune's was certainly excellent. As students in St Andrews, it can often feel as though you're being rushed through a meal, once the staff realise that, given your student status, you likely won't be spending tons. At Dune, we didn't feel like that at all — the multiple staff members that served us and the tables surrounding us were cheerful and attentive, as well as happy to chat. Mistakes and misunderstandings are impossible to avoid in the service industry, but the tact with which they are dealt with says a lot about the level of care that an establishment has for both its staff and guests.

My academic fiancée and I were able to have a tasty wedding-planning brunch in a cozy spot, and not once did we feel rushed or ignored, which made all the difference. It was the food and its quality, however, that was the standout part of Dune, offering a unique blend of flavours and culinary skills.

Come next weekend, whether you're feeling peckish for great food, wanting to try something new, or simply in search of a fun meal out with friends, I would strongly recommend choosing Dune for your next Sunday brunch — boozy or not!

PHOTO BY PIETRO BARBINI

The Kent Meningitis Outbreak

The origins of an unexpected resurgence

BHANI KAUR
SCI-TECH WRITER

Over the last few weeks, the sudden outbreak of meningitis in Kent has served as a chilling reminder of the Covid-19 pandemic. News reports detailing vaccine rollouts, case statistics, and mask wearers loudly echo those publicised six years ago. The unwelcome, but familiar, feelings of anticipation and uncertainty have somewhat returned. However, with tentative thankfulness, as of 23 March, the outbreak has likely passed its peak, totalling twenty confirmed cases.

This unexpected wave of meningitis is thought to have originated from Club Chemistry, a nightclub in Canterbury, and has primarily spread amongst the University of Kent's student population, resulting in the death of one of their students, whose name has not been disclosed. Juliette Kenny, an eighteen-year-old pupil, also passed away, just twelve hours after the onset of infection symptoms.

According to the NHS, these symptoms may include a high fever, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, and a rash that does not blanch when pressed with a clear glass.

These symptoms of disease can be caused by certain types of viruses and bacteria, the latter of which is the most life-threatening and currently afflicting Kent. Following an initial infection of the nasopharynx — which sits behind the nose — the bacterial pathogen responsible for the disease crosses into the nervous system, passing through the blood-brain barrier (BBB). Once in the brain, the bacterium causes a build-up of inflammation, swelling, and pressure, along with further breakdown in the BBB, leading to long-term neurological damage.

It is this neurologic component of infection that is used to diagnose bacterial meningitis, usually via a lumbar puncture. This involves taking a sample of the fluid in the spine by inserting a long needle between the vertebrae. This fluid is then assessed using a special stain, which highlights the meningitis-causing bacterial cells.

Aside from invading the nervous system, it is also common for the meningitis-causing bacterium to cross into the bloodstream. When this happens, the body's immune system begins to aggressively attack itself, leading to septic shock and, if not tackled rapidly, death. Treatment typically involves administration of antibiotics and fluids intravenously, as well as steroids to reduce brain swelling if required.

The particular bacteria responsible for the Kent outbreak are group B meningococcus (MenB), which is typically passed by close contact. Although vaccination offers the best protection against the disease, the MenB vaccine was only introduced in 2015 in the UK, and only for infants. This is because the Joint Committee on Vaccines and Immunisation (JCVI) advised the government that vaccinating teenagers against MenB was not cost-effective or overly necessary, since the vaccine does not prevent the transmission of the bacteria to others. However, the MenB vaccine does minimise the chance of severe illness, and as such, is currently being offered to students at the University of Kent and other universities in Canterbury, as well as eligible school pupils. Preventative antibiotics are also being offered for impacted individuals to try to kill any MenB present.

Because of these measures and the nature of the pathogen, the risk of meningitis for the rest of the UK remains low. Indeed, the bacterium can only be transmitted by prolonged physical interaction and is, thankfully, far less contagious than viruses such as SARS-CoV-2.

While the recent outbreak has certainly brought once-forgotten pandemic-era memories to the surface, it also highlighted how much society has changed to handle infectious diseases. It is hoped that any future outbreaks of a similar nature will be responded to and contained just as rapidly as this one.

Gerascophobia: Feeling Old Yet?

HANNAN ANJARWALLA
SCI-TECH WRITER

As a soon-to-be university graduate, I cannot help but think I am getting old. Chatting with my younger cousins applying to university, or first years excited about their first May Dip, I am only 21 and already feel the looming fear of ageing. It is a feeling shared far beyond fourth-years: whether you are finishing high school, leaving your teens, or starting a new job, there is always an impending feeling that time is suddenly moving too fast. No matter your age — 16, 30, or 70 — conversations about getting old will always be rehashed. Gerascophobia, the phobia of ageing, is to blame for this. It is all part of the brain's tendency to process ageing as a risk rather than a natural transition.

As the brain ages, various chemical changes fuel this fear. Gerascophobia — a psychological phobia produced by high-functioning anxiety — intensifies as cognitive worries about growing older deepen. This is driven by fluctuating levels of neurotransmitters, the means by which the brain sends chemical messages from nerve cells. Crucially, levels of Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid (GABA), the neurotransmitter that calms behavioural activity, decline, heightening emotional reactivity around conversations about ageing. The amygdala, a small central membrane that is the brain's emotional processing centre, simultaneously becomes overactive, triggering a fear-driven response to perceived threats of ageing rather than a rational one. Combined with reduced transmission of dopamine, the hormone that regulates pleasure and motivation, it amplifies alertness and triggers the brain's defensive mechanism, strengthening anxiety-based preconceptions of ageing. These changes all elevate the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, the body's long-term stress response system. This causes a gradual increase in cortisol, the body's primary pressure and stress hormone, which, long-term, harms brain health by sustaining anxiety, irritability, and emotional irregularity.



Fundamentally, gerascophobia is driven and sustained by various internalised societal pressures. Negative portrayals of ageing in popular culture often frame growing older as correlating to loss of physical beauty, fun, or social life, creating a distorted narrative that deepens personal anxiety. Movies and TV shows rely on familiar stereotypes — the grumpy grandparent, the technologically confused elder, and the boring retiree — turning ageing into the butt of a joke or a source of constant pity. Furthermore, these stereotypes are reinforced by beauty companies and advertisements that treat ageing as a flaw their products can fix, promoting unrealistic standards of how we should strive to look. These all work together to worsen the brain's cognitive flexibility, where individuals struggle with 'psychic equivalence', as concerns about ageing are perceived as an immediate and dangerous reality. This reinforces mental patterns that fuel persistent negative thoughts about ageing, making it difficult to effectively rationalise and consider other perspectives. At an extreme level, this can lead to Dorian Grey Syndrome (DGS), a cultural and psychological condition marked by a refusal to mature due to consistent fear of ageing. This leads to an excessive preoccupation with appearance, money, and cosmetic surgery, triggering longer-term mental health issues.

"For the first time in human history, we have entered an era in which old age is taken for granted," said Chao Fang, Deputy Director of the Centre of Ageing and the Life Course at the University of Liverpool. In past centuries, growing old was considered a luxury reserved for the elite classes. Despite medical advances that have immensely extended life expectancy, ageing is framed as something undesirable rather than valued. It is time to shift this mentality. Growing up is exciting, daunting, uncertain, but ultimately inevitable. Embracing these emotions lets us face the future with curiosity rather than fear.

ILLUSTRATION BY VERA KAGANSKAYA

Spinosaurus: The King of the Cretaceous

CALLUM BROWN
Sci-Tech Writer

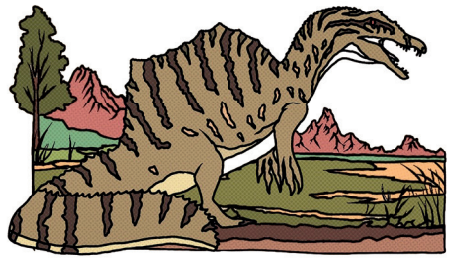
As most five-year-olds can tell you, *Spinosaurus* has always ranked among the coolest dinosaurs, but despite its consistent standing, its anatomy and behaviour have been the subject of wild debate. The original discovery of *Spinosaurus aegyptiacus* pegged it as an upright Godzilla-esque creature supported by its hind legs and tail. No more than 30 years later, it was overhauled and became the longer, traditional dinosaur shape we all know and love. A few decades after that, its boxy jaws were swapped out for narrow fish-eating ones.

As years continued to go by, the namesake spines were given a new shape, the tail became thicker, the feet became webbed, and on and on it goes. With the recent discovery of a new species of Spinosaurus — *Spinosaurus maribilis* — the semi-aquatic predator finds itself up in the air yet again. This long line of changes begs the question: how much can we really learn from fossils?

Perhaps the largest change in palaeontology recently has been the revocation of "shrink-wrapping," a practice in which skin is placed directly over bones, leaving little room for fat, muscle, and other organs. This problem created iconic mythologised creatures like Jurassic Park's *T. rex* and led to pervasive misconceptions. In reality, animal silhouettes often bear little resemblance to their skeletons; just take a look at an elephant, pug, or hippo skull. Unfortunately, soft tissues are almost never fossilised, which means we often times have to guess at the distribution of muscle and fat based on skeletal shape, bone texture, and modern-day descendants.

Another big change came from the discovery of a feathered *Sinosauropteryx* in 1996. Prior to that, dinosaurs were associated much more strongly with their reptilian relatives rather than their avian offspring, leading to scaly, lizard-like depictions as seen in Jurassic Park.

Though this remains accurate for some larger dinosaurs like the long-necked *Brontosaurus*, the iconic *Velociraptor* should really be covered in mottled feathers and feature small wings instead of scabrous arms. This has been just one portion of a long and ongoing debate over skin in dinosaurs. Texture, colour, patterns, scales, and feathers are all hotly debated for most species, and almost all the iconic dinos are colored and textured based on guesswork alone.



Researchers have found preserved feathers for *Yutyrannus* – an ancestor of *T. rex* – but it lived nearly as far from the king of the dinosaurs as *T. rex* did from us, leaving 60 million years of speculation. In fact, melanosomes (pigment-storing organelles) have only been preserved for a handful of species, and do not give any indication of blues and greens that may have been present.

This being said, we can actually infer a lot about dinosaur behaviour through their bones and tissues. In Netflix's recent *The Dinosaurs* series, *Spinosaurus* was shown with its open mouth submerged in the water, waiting for an unfortunate fish to swim between its jaws. Though it is speculation, scientists point to lots of evidence for this hunting style.

The most basic piece of the puzzle is the teeth; *Spinosaurus* had conical teeth instead of large banana-shaped ones like most predators, which means it specialised in eating fish. Additionally, the nostrils of Spinosaurus are positioned near the base of the snout instead of the tip, which would allow its mouth to be almost fully submerged for as long as it wants. Finally, some strange dimpling in the bones of Spinosaurus, along with large sinuses, indicates that it may have had a lot of specialised pressure-sensing structures, allowing it to acutely feel vibrations in the water – perfect for ambushing. It is mainly through this comparative anatomy that we can make assumptions about the body and behaviour of this megafauna.

Though our understanding of ancient animals continues to evolve, for most creatures, there is a clear convergence to one form or another. While *Spinosaurus* has been through many changes, it has always kept its namesake spines, and although *T. rex* may be feathered, it is still undoubtedly the king of the Cretaceous. As researchers unearth more and more fossils, their confidence and consensus only grows meaning today's reconstructions are the most accurate and evidentiary they can be.

Illustration by Isabelle Holloway

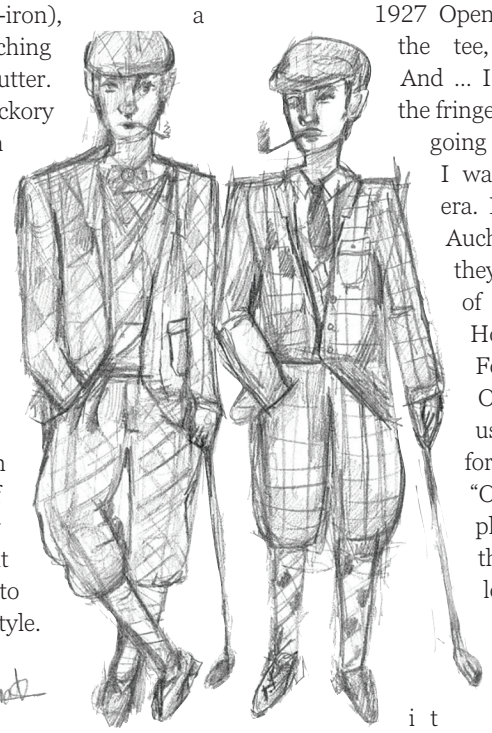


The 'Fore'-father of Modern Golf

The Saint played 'hickory' golf at Kingarrock Golf Course

FREDDIE COUGHLIN
SPORT WRITER

St Andrews is littered with nods to the golf of The 'Fore'-father of Modern Golf St Andrews is littered with nods to the golf of yesteryear. You may have gazed at the old clubs adorning pub walls, eaten at The Niblick, or perhaps you live on Bobby Jones Place. But it's all looking, no touching ... or so I thought. With my 'bubble-bursting' comrade, Geordie Coles, I played hickory golf at the only remaining course in the UK, Kingarrock Golf Course — a short 'drive' from St Andrews. 'Hickory' refers to the wood used in the club's shaft. These clubs became popular in the UK in the late 19th century, with Scottish club makers using imported hickory from the United States. However, by the 1930s, steel shafts had begun to replace their wooden counterparts as the standard. We were met by our caddie and guide for the day, Oliver Nicol (a former Master's student at St Andrews), who works at the nine-hole course. After a brief history lesson on the course and the sport, Nicol showed us the clubs in our bags. The original 1900s sets included a spoon (five-wood), a driving iron (four-iron), a mid-mashie (six-iron), a mashie niblick (pitching wedge), and a putter. "The key with hickory golf is to slow down your swing," Nicol said. "The clubs are slightly heavier than modern ones, so they do a lot of the work. With good timing, the balls will still fly." Equipped with balls and a bag of wooden 'Reddy Tees', the wait was over — time to tee off, hickory style. Our first hole had the course's only bunker, a small stream, and thick rough behind the green. Could my hickory golf career have begun with a more hostile hole?



Mashie niblick in hand, dressed like Bobby Jones, I pictured the scene: the 1927 Open in St Andrews. "On the tee, Freddie Coughlin." And ... I middled it. I was on the fringe of the green. This was going to be easy. Perhaps I was born in the wrong era. I was ready to phone Auchterlonie's to see if they were stocking some of their earlier range. How naïve I was. For my next shot, Oliver advised me to use the mid-mashie for a bump and run. "Old-school golf was played more along the ground, with far lower shots than you see today," Nicol explained. Here is where I found it much more difficult. "The club faces have very basic grooves and generate much less spin than modern clubs," was the excuse Oliver gave on my behalf. Kingarrock was built by Frederick Sharp, a wealthy jute magnate who moved his family to Fife in 1906, specifically because it was close to the Old Course at St Andrews. He then decided it wasn't close enough, so he built his own course. During the Second World War, the course was turned over to farming and lay dormant for decades — perhaps golf wasn't the most agricultural thing to happen there after all. Fortuitously, a map of Frederick's course was discovered in the 1990s, leading to its restoration and reopening in 2008. It was an immaculately spent afternoon, embracing golf's purest form. Kingarrock is accessible by bus from St Andrews, about twenty minutes by car, and has a locals' green fee of £35, which includes club hire.

To watch Freddie Coughlin's day at Kingarrock Golf Course, see 'Bursting the Bubble' on The Saint's Instagram page, @thesaintsta.aintsta.

ILLUSTRATION BY ZOE SMALL

How to Win Saints Fantasy Premier League

GREGOR MURRAY
SPORT WRITER

The Premier League is undoubtedly the most-watched football league in the world. Fantasy Premier League (FPL) has captivated the minds of many aspiring football managers.

For those unacquainted, FPL is a virtual game where players rely on the performances of real-life football players to gain points for their own team.

FPL playership has skyrocketed in the last decade, rising from three to over eleven million players. St Andrews is no exception to this FPL outpouring, with a variety of students becoming consumed by the competition.

One of the town's numerous student leagues is the Saints Fantasy League, consisting of an assembly of students who participate in the University's Six-a-Side and Sunday League, eager for some virtual footballing competition.

The Saint sat down to speak with a couple of the leading managers in the league.

The league leader, Maximilian Volmar, only began playing fantasy football at the start of the season, but is sitting pretty at the top of the table.

"I have always been a Bayern Munich fan, but now I follow the Premier League closely because of FPL," the manager of Bukayo Sakmaballs said.

"This season has been unpredictable and competitive," Volmar continued. With many influential players failing to hit their marks this season, and several new talents emerging in the Premier League, many fantasy teams have endured a rollercoaster season so far.

Volmar also commented on the pleasure of participating in the FPL league. "Football is already so captivating, but playing FPL just adds another dimension to the entertainment, especially when competing against other students."

The German student told *The Saint* his secrets to success. "I try [to] have a balanced team of both players that are consistent point scorers and shorter-term picks with favourable fixtures," he said. "I put in players who I think are good but may have been 'unlucky' but look like picking up points."

The league's organiser, Laki Palaniappan, is an experienced fantasy player.

"I've [run] a league [with] friends from home for years now and thought it was time to bring it to St Andrews," Palaniappan told *The Saint*.

This campaign, he is hopeful for a high finish with his side, Lakinfenwa, having won the league last season.

"I have been doing my best Newcastle impression," said Palaniapan, disappointed with his season so far. He nonetheless stays positive ahead of the run-in — "A lot can change between now and the season's end."

Palaniappan remains hopeful of catching up to the top spot of the league. "Volmar will have to watch his back," he said. "He has used three of his chips with seven rounds to go, which could prove to be a major error."

As with any other friendly league, the Saints Fantasy League includes a forfeit for the bottom-place team.

The manager of BasedBillyBunter, who remains anonymous, will have to stage a great escape to avoid the forfeit of taking a cardboard cutout on a date. The Bunters find themselves in a similar position to the Wolves, with a sizable gap at the bottom of the league.

> "The bottom-placed manager has to take a cardboard cutout on a date."

As for me, I've had a poor FPL season. My advice? Do not captain Viktor Gyökeres and do not place any faith in Tottenham players keeping clean sheets.

It remains to be seen who will prevail in this season's Saints FPL.

On the Field with St Andrews Gaelic Football

GABRIELLA THOMAS
Sport Writer

"If you could be anywhere in the world right now, where would you want to be?" Anna McDonagh, student and captain of the St Andrews Gaelic Football Society (USTAGAA), called out across the 3G pitch, glittering in the much-anticipated afternoon sunshine.

"West Sands," someone replied enthusiastically.

"Here, right now!" McDonagh laughed, correcting us as she set us off on a sequence of stretches.

A typical training session with USTAGAA consists of warm-ups, a variety of drills, and a match. However, this being my first time, McDonagh kindly took me to one side as she set out cones, taking me through the basics of passing, bouncing, and toe-tapping.

Passing in Gaelic football involves striking the ball with your palm or fist, and bouncing is required to travel with the ball for more than four steps; however, it cannot be done multiple times in a row. I managed to grasp these skills at a rudimentary level, so long as I remained still, unmarked, and focused.

Toe-tapping, or soloing, proved more elusive. Like bouncing the ball, this skill allows you to travel more than four steps, but can be done repeatedly. Toe-tapping requires you to drop the ball onto your foot and kick it back into your hand. For those fond of keepy-uppy, this will be familiar, but for me, it was a whole new ballgame.

After a range of drills to improve passing, interceptions, and shooting, McDonagh began to throw out bibs for the match at the end of the session.

Excited and now in neon orange, I stuck by McDonagh as she helped me get a sense of the game. Juggling playing and coaching as we ran about, her expertise was clear. In fact, her teammates could not speak highly enough of her after the match.

"[She's] very welcoming," Orla Rozanska, the society's social media officer, told *The Saint*. "And, I suppose, forgiving — people make mistakes all the time, you know, and one of her rules is 'stop saying sorry'."

Having captained her school, helping them reach the All-Ireland semi-finals in 2024, and having won the Intermediate Senior County Championship in 2023 with her club Rostrevor, McDonagh — despite her modesty — has a long and decorated history with the sport.

USTAGAA, however, welcomes players of all abilities. The session was well attended, with over twenty eager players at a range of skill levels, including several interested members of the rugby club.

"The rugby people have been absolutely great at the sport," the society's president, Alex McQuibban, told *The Saint*.

"There are quite a few Australian study-abroad people involved in the club," Alex Flintham, the club's co-vice president, said. "When we say it's very similar to AFL, they're very interested."

Despite being quite a new society, interest in Gaelic football in St Andrews has been strong, with about fifty people attending their first give-it-a-go.

"This university has so many people from the Irish community," McQuibban said, "and just so many people who are down to have a bit of fun."

McQuibban also emphasised the sport's history of suppression under English colonialism and its consequent significance to Irish identity.

"It was banned throughout the island for a long time," McQuibban said. "It's become a symbol of active resistance."

While they *have* got the ball rolling, many of USTAGAA's current committee are set to graduate this year, so the society is keener than ever to welcome new members.

As I finished the session breathless, sporting a scuffed knee, my neon-orange bib, and a 100% win rate (so far), I cannot recommend it enough.

Make Football Great Again

Why this summer's World Cup might be the worst in its history

PATRICK MAITLAND
Sport Writer

Donald Trump's blossoming friendship with FIFA president Gianni Infantino is turning international football into a Key& Peele skit. Whether he's inviting the Argentina squad to the Oval Office, taking his own winner's medal at the Club World Cup, or accepting the sycophantic 'FIFA Peace Prize,' Trump is making this year's tournament all about himself. But beyond the antics, domestic tension and war with Iran — who have already pulled out of the tournament — have cast serious doubt over this Summer's World Cup.

FIFA is no stranger to controversy. Before a ball had even been kicked at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, much had been made of the host nation's LGBTQ+ rights, a country in which homosexuality was, and still is, illegal. FIFA's assurance to fans that everyone was welcome at the World Cup felt as disingenuous as it did unlikely. When you have official ambassadors of the competition calling homosexuality "damage in the mind" twelve days before the opening ceremony, you can forgive the scepticism.

In addition, there were the appalling conditions in which the construction of the seven new stadia had been undertaken. In 2022, Anti-Slavery International estimated that over 6,500 workers had died across the different sites in Qatar. The report goes on to reveal that those who did survive the ordeal were subjected to "extortionate" recruitment fees, despite typically earning under £1 per hour. The numbers are as harrowing now as they were at the time.

As is so often the case in football, however, the outrage was short-lived.



The same people who had been slating the competition were on the edge of their seats just two weeks later as they watched Japan beat Germany in dramatic fashion. The level of football at the last tournament — culminating in perhaps the greatest final of all time — somehow managed to pave over the gaping cracks in Qatar.

Donald Trump and Gianni Infantino pledged to make the 2026 iteration "twenty times bigger and better" than in Qatar — whatever that means. This obviously fictitious number can't be referring to ticket prices, as this year's fees are only around three times more expensive. We must look, then, at the controversies outside of the tournament to find what it is exactly that will be so much 'bigger' in the US.

At the time of writing, a reported forty-six people have died in ICE custody and detention facilities, and the resulting riots have been tearing cities apart. Los Angeles, which is supposed to host eight games in the SoFi Stadium, has seen the most significant unrest of the host cities, with thousands taking to the streets in protest. If a country's inhabitants are fighting against their own 'Immigration and Customs Enforcement,' can it really be deemed fit to host an international sports tournament, where fans from overseas will be arriving in the thousands?

Even if fans still want to go, tight restrictions in the US will make travel impossible for some. For the first time, fans of one host nation (Mexico) will require visas to watch games from another host nation (the US), and many fans of participating countries face partial or strict travel bans to America. To make matters worse, Iran announced that it would be boycotting the tournament after their request to play their games in Mexico was denied. These restrictions are unprecedented for a World Cup and cannot be swept under the rug.

The World Cup, like the Olympics, was once a symbol of unity in the sporting community. Whether it was the first post-war World Cup in 1950 or Africa's first time as hosts in 2010, the tournament has always carried a profound, sometimes unspoken significance. In recent years, FIFA has demoted the competition to nothing more than a cash cow, churning out billions of dollars every four years. Should they take the same approach this summer, which they most definitely will, this will likely be the worst World Cup that we've ever seen.

Image From Wikimedia Commons

Men's Footballers Make History

REUBEN GRAVES
Sport Writer

On Wednesday, St Andrews men's football pulled off one of the biggest results in securing the Scottish Tier 1 title for the first time in the club's history after a 4-1 win against rivals Edinburgh.

The Saints are just one win away from promotion to the BUCS Premier North, the top tier of university football, where they'd play alongside elite sporting universities like Loughborough.

To secure promotion, St Andrews has to go through a three-team round robin against Nottingham Trent and Northumbria, who have won their respective Tier 1 leagues.

The Saint spoke to first-team captain Jack Ferry about his side's successes this season and hopes for the business end of the season.

"I am confident in our ability to go out and challenge any team if we play at our top level," Ferry said. Although St Andrews narrowly lost to Northumbria in the Cup last season, a convincing performance showed that they can compete at the top level.

St Andrews first has to beat Nottingham Trent away on 15 April.

"It's an exciting challenge," Ferry said. "They are more of an unknown, but they wouldn't be here if they weren't a good side." The captain does not underestimate his side's opponents.



Consistency has been the key for the first team this season. "The talent and ability [were] always there," Ferry said. "But building a title-challenging side was difficult in the past when the group kept changing."

For seasons, the squad has been pulled apart every summer as fourth-years left, but a consistent side in the dressing room has made life easier this season.

"A group of freshers, six or seven of them, came in a couple of years ago and have stuck," Ferry said. "They have grown together, stayed in the team, and become the core of what is now a seriously good side." Instead of rebuilding every year, the team has been able to gel as a team and build momentum.

"Semester abroad players have also added real depth this season," Ferry said. "They pushed the standards and [gave] us more options when it mattered."

Ferry is confident that this season marks an important step in the progression of football at St Andrews.

"I see no reason the six or seven boys who have joined this season won't do the same or push it even further next season," Ferry said.

The way this team has been building over the past few years, you would be inclined to believe him.

Image Provided by Saints Football

Women's Lacrosse Secure Title

ELODIE COWAN
Sport Writer

The women's lacrosse team secured the Scottish 1A league title with a hard-fought 16–11 victory over Glasgow under the lights.

St Andrews set the tone from the beginning with a dominating display. Glasgow came back into the game in the third quarter, but a loss was never on the cards for St Andrews.

Captain Morgan Allen played a crucial role in controlling the game, managing the important final stages.

> "Wenger, BuzzBall in hand, described it as 'the littest day of [her] life.'"

"It's a reflection of all the hard work we've put into training," Allen said. "We didn't let the hard game in December put us down."

December's reverse fixture in Glasgow was frustrating for the Saints. They lost 11–8 after Glasgow declined to reschedule because of reading week, leaving St Andrews with only one substitute.

There was no love lost between the two sides, who have played a number of heated encounters with numerous red cards.

The tension was equally high this time round.

Glasgow protested the officiating throughout the game, despite both referees holding professional qualifications. At full-time, Glasgow's Athletic Union contacted St Andrews to raise concerns about the officials.

Supporters surged onto the pitch at the final whistle. Among them was the family of first-year lacrosse player Lyle Crumley, who had travelled from Texas for the occasion. Crumley's two brothers, dressed head to toe in Saints lacrosse merch, were particularly delighted.

Jada Wenger, BuzzBall in hand, described it as "the littest day of [her] life."

Co-captain Patty Riley highlighted the connection within the squad as central to success. "We have connected new and old players and had so much fun together."

Celebrations continued well into the night, where the post St Patrick's Day peace made the champions' presence all the more noticeable. The squad headed to the Union in full kit alongside the men's football team, who were also out celebrating their league success. Requests to borrow their trophy for a team photo fell on deaf ears.

Despite the side's success, lacrosse will not be entering the race for promotion. Alongside ongoing limitations in support from the AU, over half of the current squad are graduating or returning to their home universities. The focus instead shifts to rebuilding and creating a more sustainable structure for the club's future.

The rebuild will be led by incoming captains Lyle Crumley and Ella Williams. Both have had standout seasons and will look to carry this momentum forward, with a focus on maintaining the positive environment that has defined the group.

While the team may be changing, it is not disappearing. There is already talk of what comes next together. Plans are in place for many of the seniors to reunite in London, with several looking to join Putney Lacrosse Club. There are even discussions of UK and US road trips every other year, ensuring the group stays connected beyond university.

Beyond the title at stake, this night carried a different meaning for those finishing their time at the club. For many of the seniors, this team has been central to their university experience. It is where they trained, competed, and built the friendships that defined their time in St Andrews.

It is hard to imagine a better ending than a league title under the lights, surrounded by teammates who have become close friends.

Sunday I'm in Love

BEN BAGLEY
Sport Editor

As the clocks go forward, we are ticking ever closer to the thrilling climax of the Sunday League.

Botswana Meat Commission extended their cushion at the top to six points with a win over Spartans. Whisper it quietly, but an invincible season is certainly on the cards.

The race for second place took an unlikely turn when Sheffield Tuesday got the better of a nine goal thriller with Strokers. Tuesday will play DLL in the final round of fixtures to decide who meets BMC in the final.

Strokers captain, Chris Black, was left dismayed after the game went ahead without a referee.

"It's scandalous," Black vented in the captain's WhatsApp group. "A no-ref fixture should be voided."

Much has been made of the officiating this season but the lack of a referee for such an important game will no doubt intensify scrutiny on the Sports Centre and heighten the calls for VAR in the Sunday League.

At the bottom end of the table, Butts Wynderers kept their slim survival hopes alive with a 7-2 demolition of Beavers. The Wynderers' first win of the academic year may have come too late, while Real Sosobad's defeat sealed their return to Division Two next season.

In other business, *The Saint* is delighted to announce the inaugural *Ballon Dimanche* award for the Sunday League player of the season.

Submit nominations to bb213@st-andrews.ac.uk by the close of play Sunday 18 April. The winner, chosen by the sportswriters, will receive a prize courtesy of *The Saint*.

DIVISION 1

Pos	Team	Pld	GD	Pts
1	Botswana MC	6	+20	18
2	DLL	6	+4	12
3	Sheff Tues	6	-12	10
4	Spartans	6	+11	7
5	Strokers	6	+1	7
6	Beavers	6	-8	7
7	Butts Wynderers	6	+1	5
8	Real Sosobad	6	-15	2

Weekend Results		
BMC	6 - 5	Spartans
Butts W	7 - 2	Beavers
DLL	4 - 2	Real Sosobad
Sheff Tues	5 - 4	Strokers

-10%

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