THE SAINT

CELEBRATING THE 300TH ISSUE

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St. Andrews Shawarma House Owner Pleads Guilty to Domestic Abuse Charges



REESE COLBERT & AVA GOODMAN
News Writers

Aydin Dag, 45-year-old owner of St. Andrews Shawarma House, pleaded guilty to Dundee Sheriff Court for "an abusive course of conduct between December 2024 and November 2025," according to *The Courier*.

Despite his conviction, Dag has yet to be sentenced. He returned to the Court for sentencing on 31 March, following repeated deferments, and was granted a sentence postponement period to demonstrate good behaviour before his final sentencing.

Dag, a St Andrews local, was found to have subjected the woman to verbal abuse through shouting and swearing, as well as physical threats to her and her family, according to court proceedings.

The Courier has reported that the takeaway eatery owner has previous convictions for violence and assault. They wrote that Dag was convicted for assaulting former employee Mohammed Aziz by " throwing a cup of hot liquid at Mr Aziz, which struck him on the body, as well as brandishing a knife at him and trying to strike him on the head with it."

"[Dag was] additionally convicted of behaving in a threatening or abusive manner by shouting, swearing and making threats of violence towards him."

The altercation, which took place 28 December, 2019 at Whitehall Crescent Restaurant in Dundee, resulted from a disagreement over unpaid wages at his now-closed Dundee restaurant Antalia.

According to an article by *The Courier* from 17 August, 2019, while sentencing Dag, Sheriff MacDonald noted this incident as his "second conviction for an offence involving the use of a weapon."

Leading up to sentencing for this 2019 offence, *The Courier* reported that "Sheriff MacDonald said he had the 'misfortune' of reading" Dag's criminal justice social work report due to his historically "negative attitude" towards Community Payback Orders (CPO).

MacDonald also told Dag: "You have reached the stage where I have to consider whether I have to protect the public from you." Dag was later at risk of

Continued on Page 4.

A Fossilised Student Union

by Truman Cunningham and Avery Cohen

Like many of our beloved St Andrean institutions, the Union is a bit dysfunctional. The website is so outdated, half the pages bring up 404s. Election guidelines are as complicated to read as Finnegan's Wake. The Union flirts with affiliating a Reform Society, whilst it alienates other (less racist) student groups. And the whole thing runs on a draft constitution that was actually vetoed by the student body two years ago, yet, for whatever reason, remains in force. For an organisation so important to student life, and rightfully committed to change, I hope that this year's new Union officials make it their priority to fix the institutional sclerosis.

Read on Page 12.

The Exploitation of Student Musicians in St Andrews

by Ben Bagley

Large events in St Andrews cost committees tens of thousands of pounds to run. While organisers will shell out for venue hire, transport costs, security, and professional sound technicians, student musicians providing the entertainment at these events often see little to no pay.

The Saint spoke to more than a dozen artists from across the town's music scene, uncovering a consistent pattern of underpayment. The majority of these musicians requested anonymity.

"We have played Christmas Ball two years in a row now without being paid," a member of a prominent student band told *The Saint*. "Because we're students, they think they can exploit us."

Read on Page 16.



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EDITORIAL

Putting Down the Pen

This is it: Our final issue, our last hurrah. The product of four years and hundreds of hours of blood, sweat, and tears. *And* this issue is *The Saint's* 300th. Who's cutting onions?

While looking through the remnants of The Saint's former office, we stumbled upon a dusty photo album complete with portraits of the editorial boards of years past. They looked a lot like us — bright-eyed, bushy-tailed, and obviously neeky enough to have dedicated their University experiences to the betterment of these 32 pages. We're sure *The Saint* looked a lot different then than it does today — but one thing remains consistent: They too were stubbornly in pursuit of their next story or truth to share.

Our four years on this paper have been a rollercoaster, from Events writers to Editors, to Deputies to Editors-in-Chief, we've seen the town from every angle and heard *all* the stories (it's true — we know *everything*). The bittersweet nature of this farewell cannot be understated: bitter because it's our last, sweet because we're leaving *The Saint* in very good hands.

Our wonderful Deputies, Alden and Arnaz, are ready to step forward to the helm of this paper and guide it through whatever may come their way. They've passed every test, copy-edited every article, and watched us reply to every angry email. Under their leadership, *The Saint* will go far, and we couldn't be more excited to see what they will accomplish. They are also equipped with a shining new editorial board, complete with some of *The Saint's* most brilliant voices and reporters who support its continued evolution and growth and make our newspaper what it is.

And, as sad as we are to say goodbye, it's time. We've done our best, and we hope you've enjoyed reading The Saint this year as much as we've enjoyed putting it together.

As a parting gift, here are some lessons we've learned over the past few years doing layout:

- Never, EVER, say "I feel like this is going pretty well" or "there's not that much left to do" or anything else along those lines. You will end up having to stay up until 1am redoing the entire paper.
- Snacks are always a good idea.
- Do not get into a toxic on-again-off-again relationship with InDesign. In fact do not get into a relationship at all if you can help it.
- Even though three-quarters of the Executive Team is, in fact, American, there are to be no Americanisms.
- In the words of a former pair of Editors-in-Chief: Ladies, if he can find the text-wrap button, he can find *anything*.
- The hardest part of managing nine sections, navigating media law, and leading a team of 100+ writers is writing the editorial.
- *The Saint* candles smell *really* good (https://www.thesaintnewspaper.co.uk/blank-3).

But above all, we have learned how incredibly talented and committed everyone who contributes to *The Saint* is. Let us be the first to say, journalism is far from a dying industry — we have an entire Editorial Board, 100+ volunteer writers, and a student-led Business and Digital to prove you wrong.

So, cheers to the team, and cheers to The Saint,
To questions, rewrites, and friends made along the way,
To the chaos, the craft, it's not for the faint.
This may mark the close of our tenure, it's true,
But the work continues — now it's up to you.

Hannah and Ilaria

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Corrections

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Student Union Seeks Main Bar Partnernship With JD Wetherspoons

IONA CARRUTH
News Writer

On 31 March, the University of St Andrews Students' Association made an Instagram post announcing their possible partnership with JD Wetherspoons to create a Union-run Franchise in Main Bar.

According to the post, the Union has applied for a loan with the University. If the loan is approved, the post outlines the three possible outcomes: the Union will partner with JD Wetherspoon, they will invest in the current spaces to make them more financially sustainable and suitable for student needs, or there is the possibility that Main Bar will be closed.

> "There is the possibility that Main Bar will be closed."

The Union's latest statement on their website explains that if the partnership with JD Wetherspoons goes forward, students and staff will be able to speak directly with the franchise to raise any concerns.

The space would still remain under Union ownership, and employees will also remain part of the Union team. The latest statement by the Unions states the reason for these upcoming changes, "as an Association, we must make changes. Main Bar has not been developed for over a decade [...] Our current financial position simply isn't sustainable."

In December 2025, the Union asked students to complete the Main Bar Survey, asking students what they wanted to see from the venue. In the Union's latest statement, they stated that they have "analysed an amazing 1,602 responses, and the message from students was clear: affordability, atmosphere, community, and safety are what matter most."

Third year student Kat Mortimer told *The Saint*: "I feel mostly indifferent about the concept of franchising with Spoons. I think the problem a lot of people have is that the Union is the Student Union, so the idea of it changing in any way is making a lot of people feel apprehensive."

Mortimer added, "We all love pitchers and cheap drinks, but when you think of Spoons you think of broader pub culture and something that isn't just for students."

The concept of a Wetherspoons in St Andrews is not an unfamiliar topic of discussion among students. This can be seen in a post by standrews.onion, a pretend news Instagram account with over 5000 followers. The post made on 20 July, 2025 headlines "Andrew Melville Hall To Become Scotland's Largest Wetherspoons." The Instagram account made another post on 2 December, 2025 (the same time as the Main Bar Survey) with the headline "Union Main Bar To Become Scotland's Worst (And Smallest) Wetherspoons." The post raises concerns about the main bar becoming a Wetherspoons, with the caption stating "this move is threatening a reality in which we see purple-faced old men trying to make their way into Friday Bops [...] Let's keep the union for students."

The Saint reached out to the Union for a comment, who responded, stating, "We're proactively exploring a partnership model with JD Wetherspoons that could help us keep prices affordable, improve consistency, and make the space work better year-round."

The statement continued: "At the heart of this is a simple principle: Main Bar is, and will remain, a student space that belongs to us, with our own staff employed by the Union."

> "Our current financial position simply isn't sustainable."

Even if a partnership goes ahead, the Students' Association and the team would retain control over what the space stands for and how it feels."

> "We've applied to the University for a loan to support refurbishment."

The Union added, "We've applied to the University for a loan to support refurbishment and are expecting to hear back in the next couple of weeks. We've also been clear that doing nothing isn't an option, given the financial pressures we're facing, but our focus throughout is on protecting jobs, supporting our [sic] student staff included, and keeping Main Bar open and at the centre of student life."

The spokesperson also emphasised the importance of student feedback throughout the entire process, as well as providing an estimate for the end of May for the final decision. Finally, the spokesperson encouraged anyone who wants to know more about the progress of Main Bar to go to the All-Student Forum on 28 Tuesday April at 6pm in the Old Union Diner.

Where is the Fountain? Update on Market Street Fountain Undergoing Repairs

JOSHUA PANTANO
News Writer

The Whyte Melville Memorial Fountain, located on Market Street, is undergoing a series of emergency repairs as part of a larger effort to conserve it. The North East Area Fife Committee, part of Fife Council, has invested £7,250 into the project.

The Pilgrim Foundation, a charity that does historical conservation and development in St Andrews, is currently engaged in a larger-scale conservation project on the fountain with funds from Fife Council. Money for the project comes from the St Andrews Common Good Fund. The Common Good Funds are grants from Fife Council given to local projects with a community benefit.

Comments on local Facebook forums had suggested that Fife Council could be planning to restore the fountain ahead of the University's summer graduations. However, Fife Council declined The Saint's request for comment regarding progress on the fountain's renovation. In a statement to *The Saint*, the Chairman of Trustees of the Pilgrim Foundation said the fountain is still under repair and reconstruction.

The funding of £7,250 covers "emergency repairs to the fountain's foundations and new perimeter drainage," according to a Fife Council press release, discovered after the fountain was dismantled as part of the larger conservation effort. Fife Council also stated that specialist contractors found that the fountain's original foundations would not be strong enough to support the fountain once reinstalled, thus necessitating the repairs.

The Whyte Melville Memorial Fountain was installed in 1880 by Lady Catherine Melville as a memorial to her son, Major George Whyte Melville, who was a novelist, poet, and soldier born near St Andrews. The four marble plates on the fountain depict an image of Whyte Melville, an epitaph, his family's coat of arms, and the coat of arms of the Coldstream Guards — his regiment in the British Army.

According to the Fife Council website, several council members have announced their support for the project.

"The Whyte Melville Fountain is a well-loved feature in the heart of St Andrews, and we know how much it means to local people," Councillor Jonny Tepp said in a statement on the Fife Council website. "This investment ensures the restoration can continue without delay and that the fountain will be reinstated in a safe and stable condition, operating as was originally intended. I'm pleased the Committee has been able to support this work, which helps preserve an important part of our shared heritage."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

being incarcerated after failing to attend a social work appointment. After his solicitor intervened, who claimed that Dag would comply with any community-based service, he was then sentenced to 280 hours of unpaid work within six months, avoiding jail time. Dag also had his right to operate a licensed premise revoked by Dundee City Council, prohibiting him from selling alcohol in Dundee.

> "The takeaway eatery owner has previous convictions for violence and assault."

In 2023, Dag was the victim of a physical assault at the South Street St. Andrews Shawarma House, where, according to *The Courier*, he was "repeatedly stabbed" by Edinburgh debt collector Yusuf Eroglu — who had travelled to St Andrews alongside his older brother in an attempt to pursue Dag over debts. Dag's solicitor claimed that, leading up to the attack, Dag was facing financial difficulties.

In 2025, Eroglu was sentenced to 42 months in prison after a majority of jurors found him guilty of grabbing Dag by the neck and repeatedly stabbing him on the body.

St. Andrews Shawarma House closed for a brief period of time following this incident.

In the wake of Dag's most recent conviction, Dundee Sheriff Court accused Dag of prioritising business interests over mandatory social work appointments.

The Courier reported that Sheriff Gregor Murray said: "In the social work report which I have read, there [are] reservations expressed about [Dag's] willingness or ability to complete a CPO," which Dag's current solicitor, Doug McConnell, has tried to obtain for Dag's sentence.

Dag was previously represented by solicitor Gary Foulis, who withdrew from the case after a fallout between the two, as stated by *The Courier*.

Under McConnell's representation, Dag has been placed on "a bail order associated with the high-tariff structured deferred sentence," according to *The Courier*. The Scottish Sentencing Council defines a deferred sentence as a sentence postponement period that allows an offender to demonstrate good behaviour — the tariff is applied if the offender misses social work appointments.

In conversation with *The Saint*, first-year students Maddie and Josie, who report going to the takeaway "once or twice a week," expressed unfamiliarity with any negative rumours surrounding St. Andrews Shawarma House's owner. Meanwhile, fourth-year student Erin and Master's student Carrie said that they've heard alleged drug rumours surrounding the takeaway before, but never anything specific to the owner, aside from the 2023 stabbing.

Upon learning about Dag's convictions, all of the students who spoke to *The Saint* expressed that they would be less likely to frequently buy from the Shawarma House takeaway.

Maddie told *The Saint* that continuing to support Dag's Shawarma House "feels like I'm supporting someone [bad]," with student Jodie adding, "[Buying from Shawarma House] isn't valuing the safety of our town."

> "I have to consider whether I have to protect the public from you."

Erin expressed a similar sentiment, saying that "[In St Andrews,] there [are] other places, you're never stuck for options." Carrie agreed with Erin: "It's the same thing as the Big Boss controversy, [...] don't go."

The Saint contacted St. Andrews Shawarma House, but the establishment declined to comment.

Mermaids Becomes a Society Amidst Performing Arts Network Launch

EDEN LEAVEY
NEWS WRITER

The Mermaids Performing Arts Fund is transitioning from being a part of the Students' Association subcommittee network to a society following the creation of the new Performing Arts Network.

The Students' Association has renamed its subcommittees "networks," or "groups of students bound by a common identity that campaign for issues relevant to their community," as described on the YourUnion website. While Mermaids has been "societised" according to Outgoing Mermaids President and Students' Association Performing Arts Officer Bella Hirst, a new Performing Arts Network (PAN) has been developed to focus specifically on student theatre representation, led by incoming Performing Arts Officer Lucy Turner.

This decision was a part of a wider restructuring within the Students' Association Networks that aimed to separate representational and activity-based student groups.

Hirst was closely involved in discussions surrounding the restructuring, working alongside President of Student Opportunities Robert 'RoMo' Moran.

In an interview with *The Saint*, Hirst said the change stems from Union reforms, specifically the Democracy Review and subsequent Change Programme, which examined how other student unions across the UK structure their committees. She explained that many unions operate under a more "representational" model, with committees dedicated to advocating for various student groups.

By contrast, the St Andrews Student Union previously consisted of a wider range of committee types, with some being representational, such as Saints LGBT+ and BAME Students' Network, and others being activity-focused, like STAR: St Andrews Radio and St Andrews Union Debating Society.

Hirst noted that Mermaids' primary function as a theatre-producing group meant that it was not fully suited to the Union's evolving representational structure: "Mermaids, being a group that focuses primarily on putting on shows, isn't always representational, and so the new structure wasn't quite aligning."

> "Mermaids' primary function [...] was not fully suited to the Union's evolving representational structure."

She said that PAN aims to address this gap by providing a dedicated platform for advocacy within student theatre, which Hirst felt was crucial to maintain even after Mermaids "societised," particularly in the absence of a theatre degree at the University of St Andrews.

"RoMo and I had a lot of chats about how student theatre could still fit into this new structure," said Hirst. "I firmly believe that student theatre needs a voice, and I believe that it needs that kind of advocacy, and it needs that place to be able to connect with the Union and the University so that we can make the shows that we keep on making, especially because St Andrews doesn't have an academic theatre programme."

According to Hirst, a constitution with various job descriptions is underway, and PAN will seek to appoint these new roles shortly, including a Storage Officer and Wellbeing Officer.

Responsibility for communal resources — like sets and props storage shared by Mermaids, Musical Theatre Society, and Gilbert and Sullivan Society — will transfer from Mermaids to PAN.

Hirst stressed that Mermaids' core activities will remain largely unchanged.

"A lot of what Mermaids functionally does isn't going to change that much," she said. "We're still going to be putting on our shows, still doing Fringe, still doing Christmas Ball, still doing all the fabulous things that we've gotten to do."

She also highlighted the benefits of separating representational responsibilities from the society's production work, commenting that balancing two leadership roles alongside Mermaid's extensive production schedule created a significant workload.

"Being able to split that workload a bit will make the jobs less strenuous for the people that hold them, and also, by nature, make people better able to do those jobs," Hirst said.

While many societies charge their members semesterly or yearly dues, Hirst confirmed that Mermaids will remain free to join, maintaining its accessibility.

"Something I was very, very keen on when the concept was first introduced is, I love that Mermaids is accessible and free, and I want to keep it that way," she said.

Unlike many subcommittees that rely on Union funding, according to the society, Mermaids is "entirely financially self-sustaining" through productions and events, predominantly Christmas Ball," said Hirst. "Our financial situation won't be changing."

As the Students' Association's new structure takes greater shape in the coming academic year, PAN and Mermaids are expected to play distinct but complementary roles within the student theatre community, with one focusing on representation and the other on production.

The Saint reached out to the Union for comment, but at the time of publication, no response was received.

Union Confirms They Will Not Affiliate with Reform Society Amid Student Protest

ANNABELLE MACKEY
News Writer

On 15 April, 2026, the St Andrews Students' Association confirmed that the Union would not be affiliating with the St Andrews Reform Society.

In a statement to *The Saint*, Union President of Opportunities Robert Moran said, "As a Union, our role is to ensure every student feels welcome, included, and heard, and to support respectful, open dialogue. Part of the way we do this is through our many societies. Although a few societies did not make it through the complete affiliation process, they can try again in October."

The Reform Society's efforts to affiliate with the Union have drawn controversy among student political organisations. Following an altercation at The Rule with St Andrews Women Against the Far Right (WAFR) on 13 March, Reform MP Suella Braverman issued a letter to University Principal Dame Sally Mapstone urging an investigation into the incident. WAFR later filed a report with the Union detailing anti-social behaviour and verbal insults from Reform members, according to WAFR leader Rebecca Long.

During the Union's deliberation, over twenty societies gathered outside the Union building from 2pm to 4pm for the Unity Demonstration against Reform's affiliation.

"We saw and heard the demonstration outside the Union yesterday and want to recognise the real sense of care, solidarity, and compassion shown by those who took part," Moran said.

He continued, "At its best, student life is about people coming together to stand up for one another and the kind of community they believe in. Yesterday felt like a reflection of that — students supporting each other, making their voices heard, and doing so in a way that was peaceful and respectful."

Speaking on the issue, event organiser Sage Wilson told *The Saint*, "When we see people trying to organise a Reform Society on campus in an area that is so visibly diverse and full of people from all corners of the world, we understand how harmful their politics are to vulnerable groups of people. We think we need to unite against that and say that we don't stand for that type of politics on campus, and that it poses a real danger and threat to people."



"This protest is all about unity," she added, "It's showing that all of these different communities are not separate, and their oppression that we experience is not separate, and we're going to champion love and community instead of the hateful, divisive politics of Reform UK."

The event featured speeches from representatives of WAFR, St Andrews Muslim Students Association (STAMSA), and St Andrews Students for Justice for Palestine (SJP). Across all speeches, the demonstration emphasised a desire to combat Reform's alleged hateful rhetoric, citing incidents of misogyny, racism, and Islamophobia.

Sarah Aziz, Alumni Representative of STAMSA and co-head of SJP, spoke at the protest. In an interview with *The Saint*, she said, "This rise of extremism doesn't come from a vacuum. It's logical that Reform would then invade St Andrews," adding, "We know how it will impact students. [...] We can't equate the speech of Reform to free speech. It's not the same that their speech is negating the rights of groups of people, be it immigrants, refugees, people from immigrant backgrounds, and people from religious backgrounds that have been marginalised."

Other participants also shared their views on Reform's attempted affiliation.

Bernardo Sandoval, a Mexican student, told *The Saint*, "The comments saying that immigrants of yesterday were better than immigrants today [are] offensive [to] me as a student in St Andrews. I believe that that's wrong, because I should not feel uncomfortable living here or studying here in the UK."

"I think reform stands for so many things that are absolutely abhorrent, specifically their hate towards refugees, immigration, and their lack of concern for women's issues," first-year Megan Titheridge-Stark told *The Saint*. "We, of course, believe in freedom of speech and that everyone is entitled to their own views, but we will not support people who flat out are exclusionary, racist, and discriminatory because that is not freedom of speech — that is bigotry."

Students and residents of all ages were in attendance. Former St Andrews Community Councillor John Docherty represented the older population, advocating against Reform with his 37 years' experience as a trade unionist.

"It doesn't matter what age you are, what sex you are [to] become involved and fight against Reform," Docherty told *The Saint*.

The Reform Society did not respond to *The Saint's* request for comment.

Photo By Annabelle Mackey

University to Host 2026 Holyrood Election Hustings for North East Fife Constituents

MARIA EBRAHIM
Incoming Deputy Eic

The University of St Andrews is set to host the 2026 Holyrood Election Hustings for the North East Fife candidates in conjunction with the St Andrews Students' Association and Women in Politics Society on Thursday 30 April, 2026.

The event — which will be the main hustings for the Fife North East constituency — comes ahead of the Scottish Parliament elections due to be held on Thursday 7 May, which will see the election of 129 members of the Scottish Parliament in the biggest set of elections since the 2024 UK general election.

The local Fife community will have the opportunity to have a question-and-answer session with the respective Fife North East candidates from each party, who will be individually featured, debate policies, and advocate for the public's vote in front of a live audience.

The hustings — free to attend with booking encouraged — will take place at the Byre Theatre at 6pm, with doors opening at 5:30pm. The event will also be livestreamed.

University Principal Dame Sally Mapstone and Student Association President of Union Affairs Alice Hodges will open the event, with political commentator and former Leader of the Scottish Labour Party from 2015-17 Professor Kezia Dugdale as the keynote speaker.

It is confirmed that the University has commitment from six parties that their candidates or representatives will attend, including the sitting Fife North East MSP Willie Rennie from the Liberal Democrats, who is campaigning to defend the seat that he has held since 2016. The other five candidates in attendance will be John Beare for the Scottish National Party, Elizabeth Carr-Ellis for Labour, William Docherty for Reform UK, Conservative Party candidate Edward Sheasby, and Fife and mid-Scotland Green Party candidate Mags Hall.

According to the mygov.scot website, voting is open to anyone who matches the following criteria:

- Is aged sixteen or over on the day of the election
- Lives in Scotland and is registered to vote at a Scottish address
- Is a British or Irish citizen, or a foreign national who is permitted to enter or stay in the UK

The event organisers and the University welcome and encourage members of the community to exercise their right to vote, as well as to prepare and submit questions ahead of the hustings to publicaffairs@st-andrews.ac.uk.

InFocus

In Conversation with St Andrews Alumna **Dame Anne Pringle:** Former British Diplomat and Newly Elected University Chancellor

MARIA EBRAHIM
INCOMING DEPUTY EIC

Newly elected Chancellor of the University of St Andrews, Dame Anne Pringle, sat down with The Saint on Thursday 17 April, 2026 to reflect on her illustrious diplomatic career and her return to what she calls "the most meaningful place on the planet."

Born and educated in Glasgow, Pringle is a St Andrews alumna and is the first woman to hold the position of Chancellor in the University's 600-year history. Announced as the successful candidate on Tuesday 24 February, she will be formally installed in July during a summer graduation ceremony.

In the first-ever elected race for Chancellor, Pringle defeated Lord Mark Sedwill, Dame Barbara Woodward, and Lady Walmsley. She admitted her initial reaction was "disbelief," followed by elation as returning to St Andrews "is like coming home for me."

Pringle succeeds the late Lord Campbell of Pittenweem, who served as University Chancellor from 2006 until his death in September 2025. Pringle emphasised her intention to be "as visible [...] and as engaged and connected with students and staff as possible."

Pringle has already begun receiving emails from students and staff, and encourages more. She "promises [...] to read [all the emails] in due time." When she visits St Andrews, the Principal's Office will share this with the University body. Her message is simple: "Don't be shy, ask."

The Chancellor's role, dating back to the fifteenth century, is primarily ambassadorial, combining ceremonial duties such as conferring degrees with engaging with external donors and fundraising. For Pringle, it is also about stewardship — "defending and promoting the interests" of the University, particularly in global engagement and intellectual life.

"It's about making sure this University is sustainable," she explained, describing her approach as a "nudge process" to help secure St Andrews' future.

Pringle — who became a Dame in the 2010 New Year Honours — described becoming Chancellor as the highest honour of her life: "because my heart is in St Andrews [...] it's like a gift from heaven."

She graduated from the University in 1977 with a Master of Arts degree in French and German and later received honorary degrees from Heriot-Watt in 2010 and St Andrews in 2022 for recognition of her contributions to diplomacy.

After her 1977 graduation, Pringle joined the Foreign Office in London, working in the Soviet Department on human rights cases in Russia. Entering a male-dominated environment was, she recalled, "a culture shock" and at times "really quite misogynistic." Until 1973, women in the field were required by law to resign upon marriage.

Early in her career, Pringle struggled to be heard but gradually gained confidence, learning to "sift the noise" and recognise that she too had "good opinions to offer."

Her diplomatic career took her across Europe, including two postings in Brussels, where she relied heavily on her French language skills. When she left the Foreign Office, she was sent to the Royal Army Education Court, where she underwent intensive Russian language training to bring her up to a degree standard. Pringle headed the Foreign Office Policy Section as Vladimir Putin came to power in 2000.

From 2001–04, Pringle served as the British Diplomat to the Czech Republic, overseeing the country's entry into the European Union in May 2004 during a period of major post-communist transition and following their NATO accession in 1999. She also learned Czech. "I didn't *have* to learn," she said, "but it always seemed to me that if you're an ambassador, you really should have a good command [of] not just with the culture, the history, but the language."

In 2008, Pringle became the first female UK Ambassador to the Russian Federation, serving during a period of increasingly strained relations following the Russo-Georgian war until 2011. "It was really hard to get the Russians to engage," she noted, describing Russia's zero-sum approach to international relations: "If you win, we've lost."

While she had strong access, she noted that many colleagues did not, which she found "very frustrating." Despite political tensions, she spoke warmly of the Russian people, describing them as "very warm [and] funny," while acknowledging that "politics has a very tortured history [and how] you cannot take the history out of the politics and the direction of the country."

She stressed that being a woman was not the greatest challenge of diplomacy, despite "extraordinary" assumptions that she would not have been taken seriously. In practice, she said, "they were a bit frightened of me."

Returning to St Andrews at what she describes as a "deeply unhappy" and "very fractured" global moment, Pringle is clear that her role will not be political. "My role is not to use the Chancellor position as a political platform," she said, noting that doing so would be "alienating a lot of people."

She told *The Saint* that "people would expect me to be reasonably neutral." Regarding internal University debates, including the Rector Stella Maris controversy, Pringle stated: "I've got to be very careful," adding "I've obviously read the [Court] judgments [although] I haven't been involved in any of them [and] I haven't met the Rector yet."

Ultimately, if there are "issues of welfare or judgement that can land at my door," she said she must approach it "in a completely dispassionate, fair way as Chancellor."

"I'm very robust. I can face Putin and other people without blinking," Pringle said. She described herself as a natural leader who values "constant learning [and] meeting people."



Pringle is no stranger to University governance, having served eight years on the University Court — the institution's highest governing body — including four as elected Senior Governor from 2016-2020. During this time, Pringle "worked closely" with senior leadership, "including the Principal," and played a "crucial role" in major University developments such as the Eden Campus, the Laidlaw Music Centre, the redevelopment of Younger Hall, and new halls of residence.

She also played an instrumental role in the University's Covid-19 response. Reflecting on these projects, she emphasised to *The Saint* how they are "critical to everybody having an environment that facilitates their learning and development."

With her governing experience on the Court, she highlighted the importance of difficult financial decisions. "You have to prioritise quite ruthlessly on Court [...] there isn't a magic money tree." She believes that the Court is a critical part of the University infrastructure, "one that [...] isn't terribly well known."

Now based in Richmond, Pringle enjoys gardening — a hobby she developed later in life after years of a demanding civil servant career. Despite this, she remains deeply connected to her Scottish roots and intends to visit St Andrews "at least [...] half a dozen times" each year, adding that she has bi-annual general council and briefing meetings scheduled in her diary.

Looking to the University's future in her ten-year term, Pringle is confident that under her leadership St Andrews will remain " relevant and future-looking." She believes universities must not only "reflect society" but also shape it, playing a role in the "big debates of our times."

She continued: "to have this opportunity to come back and to mix again with the student body [and] make this University even better than it is is just such a privilege."

She also reflected warmly on her undergraduate days, recalling how she "wasn't too distracted" as a student but also "enjoyed the odd party," as well as her love for folk music events and West Sands, which she described as "comforting and heartwarming."

Offering advice to students considering diplomatic careers, she said, "It's the best career in the world," adding wryly, "[but] if you want to be very rich, then forget it."

Her career, she said, provided an "insider seat" on global events — "that's very privileged and terribly exciting." On success, Pringle's advice is clear: "You engineer your luck [...] It doesn't just happen."

As she begins her tenure, she expects a period of adjustment. "This year is going to be one of trial and error," she said. Yet her commitment is firm: "My heart is in St Andrews, absolutely."

Reflecting on a life shaped by decades of diplomatic experience, the Chancellor remarked: "People would maybe underestimate me at their peril."

PHOTO BY MARIA EBRAHIM

Doomscrolling in the Deep

The online world creates its citizens, not the other way around

STELLA PAK-GUÉNETTE
VIEWPOINT WRITER

The most successful cultural movement of the last two decades counts over five billion people as its members (the majority of the living human population) and has never once had to ask anyone to join. It's spread faster than any religion, any ideology, and with less effort on everyone's part. It has no leader, no founding text or manifesto, no headquarters, and no name. The only thing holding it together is an algorithm.

We're all familiar with doomscrolling: the compulsive act of scrolling through your endless feed of content long past the point where it's doing any good. We mostly treat it as a self-control or productivity problem, something to try and address with app timers or the recent "brick your phone" trend. What we talk about less is what it's actually doing to us collectively, and I don't mean our attention spans.

Here's where I want to make a distinction, because the usual version of this argument loses me at around this point. This isn't a piece about how phones are rotting our brains or how we were all better off before. The problem isn't that doomscrolling makes us dumber or sadder or more distracted, though it probably does all of those things too. The problem is more specific, stranger, and honestly a little harder to be annoyed about: it's making us all into the same person. Gradually, pleasurably, with our full cooperation.

There's a version of you that exists entirely on someone else's algorithm. Not a fake version, exactly ... more like a composite. Built from the same content you engage with, the sounds you let play through, the things you paused on for two seconds longer than everything else. The more unsettling part is that platforms might know this better than we do.

The thing is, they're running the same process on everyone. Every pause, every replay, every abandoned video at the one-second mark, all of it is fed back into a system that is just trying to keep you there mindlessly swiping. The level of surveillance creeps me out — how easily my phone can build a version of me from things I barely registered myself.

And it's doing that for everyone. Different people, different lives, but all moving through slightly different versions of the same content. It starts to get ahead of your preferences and knows what you want *before* you've properly decided. When that's happening at scale, taste stops developing in isolation. It starts to drift in the same direction.

The result is a kind of cultural homogenisation that's hard to name because it doesn't look like conformity. Everyone still believes they're developing a distinct point of view. And yes, maybe they are.



But without realisation, we're all doing it in the same aesthetic register and ending up somewhere uncomfortably similar.

This is where doomscrolling stops being your personal problem and becomes more of a cultural one. The sheer volume of time we spend *inside* our feeds means our phones do more to work in shaping us than almost anything else. I read something recently that described your phone as a kind of "fake home": the home screen, chosen wallpaper, the way you move between apps as digital rooms, how instinctive it all feels. Curated, personal, familiar, and like a space you've built up over time. But it's not, really.

It just feels that way because it's been made to. The environment is supposed to be tailored enough that you recognise yourself in it and feel that you have control, but structured enough that it's silently guiding you in the same direction as everyone else. You end up trusting it and stop questioning why everything feels so right and addictive. That's what makes the whole thing work. Because we're so comfortable in it, everything else just speeds up.

This speed at which everything moves through feeds leaves almost no space for the moment between encountering culture and absorbing it — the gap where you could form a real response. Your sense of what you like or dislike instantly becomes less about intentionality or gut feelings and more about recognising what already feels familiar.

Trends used to have a certain lag, and now they don't at all. Something can go from niche to mainstream to irrelevant before you even realise, and there's no space in between. Because this cycle is so compressed, most of us are just responding to the same things all the time rather than deciding what we think about them.

I used to think the Salomon hiking shoes looked like a bulkier version of those awful Keens your parents made you wear on holiday. But then I *kept* seeing them. In strangers' outfit videos, people styling them with jeans, videos over-romanticising hiking. Without even noticing, I stopped thinking they were ugly. I started considering them and then folded to consumerism and bought them. I actually quite like them now, which feels like the more concerning part.

What I find dystopian is, yes, the loss of originality, but also the fact that you can't feel it happening at all. The dystopia most people imagine is grey, brutalist architecture, everyone wearing the same thing. What's actually happening is quite the opposite of that. It's colourful and voluntary, and it comes with a dopamine hit. Nobody is forcing you to do it, but you keep choosing to, because it is enjoyable, and somewhere in the accumulated hours of that enjoyment, the edges of your taste quietly get filed down into something the system already knows how to serve.

None of this is a conspiracy. It's what happens when you build something optimised to hold attention at scale; it turns out what holds attention at scale is — across cultures, demographics, and time zones — more similar than we'd like to admit. Feed enough people the same signal for long enough, and the signal starts to look like a personality.

I don't know how to think about some things in the pure, unmediated sense anymore. I have opinions and reflexes and preferences, some of which are mine, some of which arrived fully formed and adopted without much interrogation. That might just be the condition of being online.

I think this is worth sitting with. Not as a reason to delete your apps or get a flip phone, but to recognise that what feels like your own taste might not be entirely yours.

ILLUSTRATION BY LOUISA NGUYEN

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Devil's Advocate

What is your favourite floor of Main Library?



27%

Level 1 (Basement)



13%

Level 2 (Ground)



30%

Level 3



30%

Level 4

Level 1 (Basement) - By Poppiena Horsington

Before I get into the nitty gritty, let's clear something up. If you go to the basement floor with any expectation of genuinely working you have already lost and you should honestly feel a bit embarrassed. This is not the mentality with which you should approach this floor. Simply put, the basement is 'kiki central'. It is a place to gossip and laugh with friends as your laptop sits lazily in front of you or a site to achieve some heavy eavesdropping. This is what makes it the best place in the library. When I think about how many inside jokes have been forged on that floor, I tear up. Everytime I'm down there I am bound to hear, or indeed utter, a 'Oh wait I forgot to tell you!' and again I am overwhelmed with the affection I have for this contained space of anarchy and cheekiness. Thrust into the world of casual catch ups and friendly feuds, this floor is for those who tell people that they spent six hours in the library — without mentioning, of course, that this included a two-hour lunch break. Don't fret, I see you. Occasionally, everybody needs some time to decompress while maintaining a fallible guise of being productive. Unjudging, it accepts you in any mood, any outfit, or accompanied by anyone. Love it the way that it loves you.

Level 2 (Ground) - By Sam Spendlove

Yes, the ground floor is the first thing you get when you're going to the Main Library. And, yes, it's the weirdest floor of the library. It's as if all the other floors got together and created one floor, but nobody could decide which floor's rules should apply to it. In some areas, it's a quiet floor, and in others it's loud. But therein lies its special power, its 'Middle Way'. When I was in first year, I felt too afraid to commit fully to my academics. The silence of floors three and four suggested a monastic dedication that's always been beyond me. Then again, I wasn't willing to give up altogether — I wasn't going down to the basement, where my peers were doing somersaults through those plush blue benches and swinging from the light fixtures. The ground floor was like a beautiful train station, boasting good WiFi and the ambient promise of going somewhere else soon enough. People came, people went, and whilst friendly conversation flowed, it didn't dominate; sometimes, business was being done on the ground floor — interviews for societies, awkward little meet-ups where members of a joint venture talked like corporate drones. Anyways, the bathrooms on the ground floor are the best. I cannot tell you how many times I've tried to use the third-floor bathrooms and have found ... well, just stick to the ground floor.

Level 3 - By Hannah Shiblaq

The third floor is simply the purgatorial solution to the Main Library's two extremes: Would you rather be on the over-crowded, debaucherous, (literal) ground-zero of unproductivity? Or among the troupe of Adderall-snorting, 9-to-5-ers on the top floor frying their brains from increased exposure to the sun's radiation? There exists a happy medium, and it literally lies between the two.

And to those of you who boast the fourth-floor's 'supremacy,' their floor plans are nearly identical; yes, I put in the work and research — you basement and ground-floor dwellers should try it out sometimes. Truthfully, apart from its media players, there is nothing that distinguishes it from its downstairs neighbour. In my opinion, it all comes down to that extra ascent made to the top floor where you burned, what, ten calories?

Usually when I tell people that I favour the third floor of the library I am hit with an overwhelming wave of confusion and slight disgust: Why the third floor? And yet, in the midst of these nae-sayers, there exists a consistent population of third-floor-favourers who I consistently see opting for the lesser of two evil silent floors. If the third floor is really as bad as all of you say it is, then how come I always see the same people sitting there every day? And what is consistency if not its own form of love.

Level 4 - By Ilaria Freccia

In my four years at St Andrews, I can unequivocally say that the fourth floor of the Main Library is by far superior to all other parts. All four floors are relatively similar in layout. What makes the fourth floor different, however, is the higher ceilings and natural light, allowing you to focus on your work without the crushing weight of hundreds of students' stress above you. To mediate any stress, all one must do is look out the window for the best views of the town and West Sands (depending on what side you prefer). The fourth floor is also the *healthiest* option. Travelling to and from the fourth floor requires an additional two flights of stairs from the basement and third floor, and four from the ground floor. This can help avoid some of the risks posed by prolonged sitting and increase blood flow, which can help with focus and productivity. My final argument for the fourth floor is that there is the least room for comfort. There are no sofas, comfy chairs, or booths to rest in. I am not going to the library for fun. If you do, well, you have bigger problems than what floor to pick. If I want to relax and work on a couch, I can do that in the comfort of my own house. The library is meant for hard work and focus, and, given the absence of rest spaces on the fourth floor, there is more room to do both. So, feel how you may, but like it or not, the fourth floor comes out on top.

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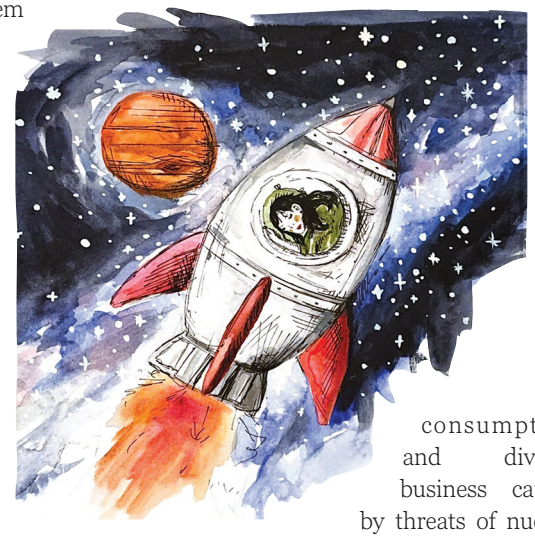
You Are Not Immune to Propaganda

Space travel has always been political

ISLA JEFFREY
VIEWPOINT WRITER

Unless you have been living under a rock for the last couple of weeks, you will be aware of the Artemis II mission in which four astronauts travelled around the dark side of the moon, before successfully splashing back down on Earth. The mission was an obvious show of how advanced our science and technology have become in the 21st century. It was also a tense reminder for the rest of the world of the sheer power that the United States holds. At face value, NASA is an organisation who work to better our understanding of our home planet and its celestial surroundings. However, space travel has never just been about science. International competition and strong nationalism have been embedded at its heart since we first attempted it, over sixty years ago. Such sentiment was sadly predictable. If you feel the need to show off the superiority of your nation, then where better to do this but in one of the last places that humans don't yet rule: space.

It would be easy to argue that the days of Kennedy and Khrushchev were decades ago, and that the US had to boast its strength due to their Eastern competition. In our modern times, it can't be propaganda, right? Wrong. When most people hear the P-word, it's likely that they imagine large posters tacked to a brick wall, depicting images of tanks or a message about morale. It feels like a word of the past, something only now brought up in high school history lessons about World War II. What we fail to realise is that propaganda is still alive and well, and that we are exposed to it on a daily basis. Yes, the space race is now well and truly over, but the American flag still stands on the moon. While presidents and governments have changed, the intense patriotism tied to space travel never really went away. In 1969, the stars and stripes planted by those on the Apollo 11 mission were not only a sign of the success of their journey, but became a symbol of America's triumph over the Eastern Bloc, communism, and anyone else deemed a rival of Western glory. The effects of this are still seen today. Everyone knows Armstrong; who cares about Gagarin? In April 2026, the undertones have remained largely the same, albeit being more implicit. Instead of a cold war against one group of people, it now appears that the US, under Trump, feels the need to showcase its tenacity to anyone who will bother to look. It's now them against the rest of the world, and they're not scared to flex their muscles. In a time of uncertainty over war in Iran, escalating inflation and constant criticism of the president, Artemis II, with its hardy crew, stood as a blatant reminder that America remains top dog.



It's hardly surprising that a new feature film centred around the epic wonders of American space travel was released adjacent to NASA's latest expedition. While Project Hail Mary alone may just feel like nerdy entertainment, in a wider context it becomes part of a greater display of nationalist propaganda, in which all corners of the media are flooded with 'land of the free' rhetoric. For a contemporary viewer, the discoveries that an intergalactic Ryan Gosling makes are not purely for the benefit of global understanding. They are symbols of a particular perseverance, engineering and intellect which are distinctly American.

At the end of the day, space is just another business. A ridiculously wealthy, consumptive, and divisive business caused by threats of nuclear war. For a sector aimed at looking beyond our world, its implications are disappointingly down to earth. Different countries with different rockets start up different rivalries with their neighbours, while each tells its people how great they are. From the space race to Artemis II, propagandistic sentiment remains an unfortunate driving force behind this branch of science.

ILLUSTRATION BY CLEMMIE SWIFFEN

To All the Articles I Never Wrote

An insight into The Saint*'s cutting room floor*

ALEX MCQUIBBAN
VIEWPOINT WRITER

Check, check, one, two, three. This is your favourite correspondent writing. Yes, that one. The one behind such award-winning articles as that one about how I hate reading, the multiple ones where I bash British Imperialism and try to shoehorn in the term 'North of Ireland,' or, as I'm frequently reminded by complete strangers at Aikman's, that one regrettable article where, for a week, I did everything *Co-Star* told me to do.

It is with a heavy heart that I announce my departure from *The Saint*. For almost two years, I have been this newspaper's tireless servant, pulling three new pitches, bi-weekly, out of my sleeve — or, according to my critics, my arse. And, as any diligent reader will have noticed, only one pitch got published in each issue. That is, when I wasn't stuck in the Devil's Advocate column writing about pornography.

Well, lucky for you, *dear reader*, I've kept a meticulous list of all my pitches, including those that were 'TOO HOT FOR PRINT,' those that were frankly too dumb to print, and those that were simply impossible to print.

Let's start with the downright impossible: in an effort to one-up my *Co-Star* article, I once offered to go a week without using my hands just so that I could write a silly article about it. Unfortunately, by the time the editors realised how brilliant the idea was, I was knee-deep in dissertation work and had picked up a sport that requires you to use your hands 90% of the time (shoutout Gaelic Football).

My second-ever pitch became obsolete faster than you can type https://www.thesaintnewspaper.co.uk/profile/476c739d-6b6f-4915-847d-8971d1dbe839/profile. The unparalleled political pundit that I am, I decided to pitch a piece about abortion being the "end of Trump." Then, the election results came in, and it turned out the average voter cares a lot less about fundamental rights when they can't afford milk — not that Trump has done anything to bring down the price of milk except... start a war with Iran?

Anyway, speaking of dumb, many of my more 'unconventional' pitches likewise didn't make the cut. There was the time I pitched an article chronicling "shit St Andrews students say" *à la overheardrews*, or when, in the midst of a Pokémon-card-enthralled stupor, I pitched an article basically defending gambling. Another wildcard pitch was to interview students and see what articles they wanted to see in print — very meta. Speaking of meta, I very nearly got a *Mad Libs-style* article published. It would've looked something like this: "Late last night, a [university course] student was found [verb ending in -ing] a(n) [animal] at the back of [(in)famous St Andrews establishment and/or place of worship]" with readers filling in the blanks and the best rendition getting published.

Of course, the winning answer could easily have been 'TOO HOT FOR PRINT.' I know many of my own pitches have been unceremoniously rejected by *The Saint*. Among some of my 'hottest' pitches were: a treatise defending armed resistance and an article entitled "Not All Terrorists/Murders Are the Same". One pitch I tried my very best to get published was an article on "Why I (as a Dane) Hate Sweden." It was *supposed* to be a tongue-in-cheek commentary on silly national rivalries, and why the world would be a better place if our most heated disagreements were about what time to eat dinner or how to celebrate Christmas... but I fear no amount of tracking, back-tracking, and re-tracking could convince the editors that the pitch was actually kosher.

But, *dear reader*, you didn't just miss out on my insane ramblings; you also missed out on what I thought were genuinely decent takes. In an alternate universe, you could've *also* read about: the importance of male friendships, the worrying aestheticisation of politics, the myth of 'nice guys' finishing last, and why it's not just impossible but bad cultural analysis to separate art from artist. But, as readers of my academic writings will know, we don't live in an alternate universe, for there is no such thing. So, I bid you all farewell as I take the next step on my journey: a PhD at Trinity College Dublin, where (this time) I'm getting *paid* to write, albeit about less student-y topics like "the ontology of abstract objects and their role in philosophical explanation."

Love you all, and *slán go foill*!

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Modern Languages is the Sexiest Degree

AMELIA MACKENZIE
VIEWPOINT WRITER

The student population is in despair: because of the saturated graduate scene we can't get a job, and, because of a non-existent dating scene, we can't even get laid. It's a sorry situation, and, as a "chopped femcel" whose degree was rendered obsolete by Google Translate before even starting it, I too want to give up. I'm lamenting the lyrics to *Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now* — although not all of them because, unlike Morrissey, despite looking for a job, I never found one.

> "Because who isn't seduced by your infinite arsenal of past participles?"

Nonetheless, recently, Mumsie came to the rescue — I shouldn't worry about my prospects, because she heard (either from reels or another of her infallible sources of information) that Modern Languages is considered the sexiest degree. Initially, I filed it mentally with her other white lies, like how I'm single because I'm so beautiful, men find me intimidating, or that she misses me. However, after some pondering about what's considered "sexy," I realised Mumsie was right, and here's *pourquoi* ...

Firstly, Modern Languages exude authority and elegance. When ordering *vino tino y acietunas* on Iberian terraces, only you can authentically roll your Rs and casually banter with the token greasy bartender, demonstrating your cosmopolitan flair and putting those other fat sweaty anglophone tourists to shame. Monolingualism is simply not sexy. From experience, no matter how many hormones are coursing through you, when the grown man sat before you looks *le serveur* in the eye and orders his *chocolat chaud* with atrocious grammar and an accent somehow merging Angolan and Welsh, those feelings turn to hate.

Such superiority is also not just reserved for the holidays. In the Union smoking area when you select your international post-grad as your victim — sorry, friend — for the night, others may try to chime in, but without avail. Because who isn't seduced by your infinite arsenal of past participles? Or your seamless shifts into the subjunctive? Any mortal's loins surely quiver at the thought. Their attention has nothing to do with you having heard them speak their mother tongue, then cornering them and offering them a lighter, giving them no choice but to humour you. They just want you so bad.

Then there's your year abroad. Admittedly, I hated my year abroad, so upon returning to St Andrews I chose the room furthest away from France. With its West Sands view, it also conveniently looks away from it. However, after being the token *étranger* at work and consequently shunned like a rabid dog for a year, you will bask in whatever attention comes your way. Nothing is sexier than enthusiastic sociability and charisma, and after my stint in solitary confinement, I am basically Nigella.



But alas, it's not about the course, but the transferable skills, and a Languages degree is perfect for navigating relationships. Whilst translation teaches us both that tone is crucial and that we will never be enough, oral classes prepare us for intimate interactions, although unfortunately not as the name suggests. As there are only so many possible questions about summer holidays, oral questions can range from how you would have fled East Germany in 1984, or how you personally would fix the Greek economy. When faced with the inevitable "Would you still love me if I were a worm?" we therefore hear not an irritating conundrum, but another opportunity to flaunt our infinite wisdom, empathy, and ease with the conditional. A further perk is an extraordinary memory for information regarded by normal people as unimportant, like the German for 'fuel rods' (which is *Brennenstäbe*, by the way), so birthdays, anniversaries, and pets' names won't go forgotten.

Finally, you may not be well-endowed — it may be like braille up or down there — but what you do have is Quizlet plus, which is the academic equivalent of double Ds. When I whip out my digital vocab list, I feel those pangs of desire from my peers. I have something, and they want to have a go on it. You probably do too.

So, you may be clapped, unemployed, and as replaceable by AI as a phone operative, but, whilst AI can answer to administration or translation, only you can really answer, and earn, the question "*Voulez-vous coucher avec moi?*"

ILLUSTRATION BY SHALINA PRAKASH

The Piercing Nostalgia of University

Why are we already mourning the present?

SOPHIE RAE
VIEWPOINT WRITER

With dissertation season upon us, the academic year is beginning to draw to a close. Candlemas is always bittersweet: there's the good weather and the brighter days, but there's also the long summer break looming in the distance. It's a time of goodbyes and promising long-distance friends that you two will FaceTime at the closest opportunity. Every year until now, however, I've always thought of the return in September as inevitable. September is when everything goes back to normal, everyone comes back, the same good memories are had, and the thought of graduation is a distant, almost hypothetical one.

Uni always seemed never-ending — as a fresher, four years felt like I had my whole life to live before graduating. Now that I'm over the safety net of the halfway line, I couldn't be more aware of how finite it all is. This academic year in particular, I have become suddenly aware of the expiration date that creeps closer and closer. And yet, it's not even my last year. Third year has been full of "this time next year..." thoughts. "This time next year, it'll be our last Christmas ball," or, "This time next year, it'll be our last May Dip." For some reason, the focus always goes to the "last" part of that thought, rather than the bit about it being "next year." Because of this, I feel like my friends and I have already mourned our time at university. The cliché words of wisdom to "live in the moment" and, specific to uni, cherish every second of it as it will, apparently, be the highlight of your life, are to blame for this grief.

University is painted out to be your fantastical 'glory days,' and in many ways, it has a right to be. It's a unique community setting with a concentrated potential for socialising and learning, an environment that doesn't really occur anywhere else. Even before you go to uni, you hear tall tales from middle-aged adults reminiscing about their wild and wacky days of freedom before the old 9-to-5 kicked in. If this is the best it gets before the rest of our miserable lives, we need to hold onto it as best we can.

Somewhere, the cherishing becomes grieving. We mourn when we think of moving away from friends, of never being silly uni students again, but most importantly, of not knowing what comes next. In my mind, education has always had the simple three-act structure: Primary School, Secondary School, then University. There is no next act; everything seemingly falls away afterwards. What comes next is termed *Adulthood*. This used to make sense; I remember finding photos of my parents' graduations and thinking they looked so grown up. It's weird now, realising they were so young. I think about the stories they'd tell me growing up, and the uncomfortable realisation dawning on me that they'd have been two years younger than I am now in some of them.

As with most youth-focused life experiences, university is made to look like a golden age because of the expectations around how certain age groups should act. The association between youth and freedom is just as often untrue as any other stereotype, such as old people being boring. It's not necessarily the uni years that so many look back fondly on, it's the unique social atmosphere that's only available to teenagers and young adults.

> "If this is the best it gets before the rest of our miserable lives, we need to hold on."

Even in our digital age, with almost every person and community within reach at the click of a button, there is a distinct lack of environments in which to make friends when you are older. I think the only way I'd be able to live in the moment next year, without continuously being sad about its ending, is if the pressure of having the rest of the fun you are *ever* going to have for the rest of your life, *ever*, is taken away by enabling adults to have fun. Who knows, those future glory days of adulthood could even be better than those from uni; there'd at least be no coursework or exams to worry about.

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Marching Into the Past

Do Reform and Kate Kennedy go hand in hand?

THEO JEBSEN MOORE
Relic Writer

Despite the chorus of different accents around our streets reaching an unheard forte in recent years, the rattle of "traditional values" has, at long last, echoed up to Scotland's oldest university. The long shadow of Reform has ironically crawled into the country's most diverse university, with the St. Andrews Reform Society gaining provisional affiliation last month. Marching alongside the cultural fanfare, Kate Kennedy held their annual procession last Saturday. Whilst not explicitly in the shade of current nationalism, a pang of déjà vu coursed through my body as hooves clattered alongside the smug stomp of public school boys. I saw the same veil of culture which smothers Reform UK's stance on defending British values, hanging across the procession. I could even make out a resemblance in what lay beyond the veil: a hungry mouth gorging itself on the most self-aggrandising parts of history available at time's buffet.

The shock horror with which I hear people address the emergence of a Reform society in St Andrews seems ridiculous when considering the lack of outrage at the many other odious things beneath our noses. The callous machismo that lies at the heart of the political party, which seeks to other those not within their specific frame of the world, is reflected in the exclusivity of so many events in this town, best epitomised by the Kate Kennedy Procession. The bustle of Market Street is mandated by the council to be frozen for today's guffawing elite to prance through, as we lowly commoners are granted the liberty of ogling while the upper class of today impersonate the upper class of 600 years ago. A highly manicured image of the past is presented before us by a group of people whose picture of university life adheres to a posh fantasy, drawing on the ancient mythos of an old boys' club. It's built on the same foundation which Reform uses to attract supporters far and wide: invented patriotism for a time long gone — a time which never existed.

The scandals associated with the society are as archaic as the figures spotted in the procession; 2020 saw a barrage of reports coming from anonymous women about alleged sexual misconduct. Meanwhile, the club only started admitting women in the early 2010s. Yet despite these controversies, the club continues to grow as society's most marginalised boarding schoolers unite.

The appeal of membership in Reform or an exclusive club like Kate Kennedy comes from the same place of insecurity. Much like the party, the exclusive club offers a place of belonging for those proving an identity separate from the rest. The issue is that the identity is held up by nothing more than their separation. Without the exclusivity, the club itself lacks any sort of substance beyond their elite secondary school education. Like the procession, the club seems hollow in its tired aesthetic. Not all in the march, however, belong to the controversial club, as town and gown unite in celebrating St Andrews' most iconic alumni.

> "Kate Kennedy flaunts history in the same sanitised way Farage does."

For one afternoon, the Great Men (and also women) of St Andrews march out of the textbook, in an attempt to glorify and engage with the town's past. Ex-scholars, such as French revolutionary and journalist Jean-Paul Marat, walk side by side with the First World War's most notorious British General, Field Marshal Haig. Behind them walks Mary Queen of Scots. Then an arctic explorer. The list goes on. Whether or not this is an effective engagement with the culture of the University is questionable.

Marching these figures through the streets is not about historical understanding. Instead, the procession makes a spectacle out of history. Gilded outfits weave together the mythologised cast of heroes as St Andrews' most romanticised alumni. People who led messy lives are cut out of the history book like a line of paper dolls and led through town. Haig, named the "Butcher of the Somme," is turned into nothing more than another sequin on the bedazzled tapestry of history that Kate Kennedy presents us. Marat, a man who ignited massacres for the sake of anti-monarchist revolution, is placed beside medieval princesses.

So what then does any of this have to do with Reform? Well, Kate Kennedy flaunts history in the same sanitised way Farage does. For one day, we cheer on a parade of noble heroes from a time past. People we ought to revere for nothing more than the ornate crowns on their heads, rows of medals and glowing silhouettes. To know what lies under this veil is unimportant. It is instead about belonging. Knowing that the place you call home has a glorious past worth celebrating. The ugly face beneath it all, from the club organising it to the supposed heroes we cheer on, is hidden by a veil too tightly knotted around this town to be pulled off.

How to Be a Good Flatmate

MEGAN TITHERIDGE-STARK
Viewpoint Writer

Everyone has a story from their first-year flat. Bad manners, bad hygiene, bad cooking. We've all been there. Or so I've been told. *My* flatmates are simply delightful, a masterclass in communal living, decency, and respect.. I am truly saddened by how many horror stories I've heard of late, and thus, I present to you all: how to be a good flatmate. Taking advice from my real-life experiences, I hope you can see that being a wonderful flatmate isn't as hard as it seems.

My flatmates are so incomprehensibly kind. They pay attention to the minute details of my personality. I often read Agatha Christie novels, specifically *Miss Marple*, as the village murder mystery has always appealed to my quaint sensibilities. One of my flatmates must have noticed this fact, as one day, upon entering the kitchen, my tupperware had mystically vanished. They had really manufactured me my very own mystery! After a sweep of the kitchen, I naturally had to collect clues, stepping into the role of Miss Megan Marple. What was entirely perplexing was that the tupperware didn't seem to be taken for any practical purpose. The lid was left behind, rendering it entirely useless. No, this wasn't simple Robin Hood thievery. This was an intentional man-made mystery. Shocking in the first degree. I, of course, then moved on to interviewing my suspects. Alas, the WhatsApp group ignored my pleas. I was not put off, however. The next day, I returned to the kitchen, eager to find more clues. Lo and behold, I found the missing beast, lidless, in my flatmate's cupboard. Bizarre. I snapped a photograph for the dossier and left it there, knowing the mastermind of this intellectual exercise must have had more clues for me than that. I then interviewed the owner of the cupboard, who denied even seeing the tupperware. This bewildered me; I could not see the Christie-esque inspiration behind the overt lack of clues. I checked the cupboard a day later and was bamboozled to find it had vanished! Again! Caught up in deadlines, I shamefully had to abandon the mystery.



And yet, there was another twist in the story. Another flatmate told me, weeks later, when the vanishing tupperware was but a faint dream, that it had been sighted. Now this was a shock. The very kitchen from which it disappeared now held my lovely plastic box. Hidden away behind the microwave, the thrilling mystery concluded. And I was ecstatic to have such thoughtful flatmates who would go to such lengths to set it up for me. It really comes down to knowing your flatmates. For example, I have an absolute passion for cleaning. Some may call it obsessive, anal, or freakish, but wanting surfaces to be clean and clear is not necessarily a negative trait. My angelic flatmates naturally understand this, as they understand me. Every day, I am left with cleaning exercises to hone my skills. Every week, there is a new challenge to undertake. I have hoovered food embedded in the carpets. Bleached mould off the fridge shelves. Thrown away 'food' that could have passed for animal faeces. One time, a flatmate approached me with a concern. I am so grateful they feel comfortable enough to consult me. They had noticed a foul odour coming from the drain (no doubt from all the food that is poured down there). They asked me if I could deal with it. What an honour! I am the de facto cleaning lady for our flat. I love that my flatmates really encourage my hobbies. The drain was so disgusting that I had to fully unscrew it and clean all the parts separately. It was quite sharp, causing a minor injury that could have induced tetanus if it weren't for my vaccination.

Living in halls is a gamble, but take a leaf out of my flatmates' book, and you might find it significantly easier. Get to know the people you live with, and a beautiful friendship may blossom. Or perhaps not.

Illustration by Eve Fishman

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

A Fossilised Student Union

The antidemocratic turn of our fair institution

TRUMAN CUNNINGHAM & AVERY COHEN
VIEWPOINT AND GUEST WRITERS

Like many of our beloved St Andrean institutions, the Union is a bit dysfunctional. The website is so outdated, half the pages bring up 404s. Election guidelines are as complicated to read as *Finnegan's Wake*. The Union flirts with affiliating a Reform Society, whilst it alienates other (less racist) student groups. And the whole thing runs on a draft constitution that was actually *vetoed* by the student body two years ago, yet, for whatever reason, remains in force. For an organisation so important to student life, and rightfully committed to change, I hope that this year's new Union officials make it their priority to fix the institutional sclerosis.

Dysfunction is a product of apathy. Like Orbán's Hungary, a kind of illiberalism has taken over and fossilised within the Union, a result of tired and complacent ways of solving problems. This apathy has taken many forms over the last few years. For one, it has led to slow updates on the Union's online presence, including serious delays on uploads of the minutes to public meetings. Those of the Student's Association meetings, for example, still haven't been updated since February 2024. It also means that contradictions, incoherencies, and loopholes in Union guidelines have been left unresolved, with serious consequences. Due to ambiguities in the Union's campaign rules, candidates and Union officials regularly participated in cross-endorsements this election season without reprisal.

It doesn't seem like this matters on the surface, but without the easy access of public materials and clear Union rulebooks, the democratic legitimacy of the Union as a whole is called into question. Above all, an organisation that claims to represent all students *cannot* be seen as a clique. Otherwise, its function as a mediator between students and administration is compromised, and students are left without a voice to protest ridiculous new business schools and crowded tutorials.

Institutional apathy operates beyond rulebooks. It permeates the spirit of an organisation, reducing the scope of its operations and changing its self-conception. The French Revolution began with the Rights of Man; thanks to the apathy of moderate French, it ended with forty thousand severed heads. The Union's role is to defend the interests of students, not interfere with them in the name of well-being. It seems as if the Union is more concerned with the letter of the law concerning student societies than its substance, more willing to ratify a Reform Society bid for affiliation because they have enough members (no matter how abhorrent their platform is) than investigate why so many politically benign societies are considering disaffiliation.

> "Institutional apathy operates beyond the rulebooks. It permeates."

It is all the more ironic then, that the foundational law of Union operations is a constitution (or "draft laws") that the student body vetoed two years ago, yet remains in a state of permanent disrepair. These laws include sections that are incomplete or incoherent, with references to authorities ("appeal to XXX") that have clearly been left undecided. Cases like these are more concerning when the President of Union Affairs and Board of Trustees make decisions "on any matters not specifically covered by this Code of Conduct." That is to say, nearly everything in a constitution without well-defined powers.

The solution to Union dysfunction involves more than replacing the constitution or updating campaign laws (though these are certainly important). The problem at heart is rather one of commitment to promoting student interests. This means *all* student interests, not just those of Union officers, and certainly not those of a Board of Trustees, whose nominally public documents have been inaccessible for years. Democracy is hard-won. It requires commitment to the common good, anything short of which is ultimately corrosive. I hope that this year's Union officials understand that their responsibilities, above all else, are to students at this university.

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The Un-Hoppy End of Brewdog

St Andrews workers reflect on the chain's rotten core

EDITH OBORNE
FEATURES WRITER

Ten minutes' notice — that was how much time the staff at Brewdog were given before they were told via Zoom call that they were all being laid off. Brewdog was closing down. A Scottish company, once valued at £1 billion, was being sold for a mere £33 million to an American beverage company. And the 200,000 private individuals who invested their hard-earned cash in its fundraising scheme "Equity for Punks" (EFP) are left with nothing.

The passionately blue building now sits hollow on South Street, reflecting the hollow core of a company which made so many visionary promises but had no intentions of keeping them.

Matt is a student at St Andrews who worked at Brewdog for the last seven years. He joined, enthused by the company's ethos of 'beer for the people, by the people' — a company which was built on small investments by normal people, not corporations. A company which treated workers with respect, paying them a living wage, including paid 30-minute breaks and even a free pint at the end of their shift — perks unheard of elsewhere in St Andrews. Matt even had hopes of building his career there.

After seven years of mismanagement, however, the company's core values were gone. He was back on minimum wage, unpaid breaks, and constantly working understaffed. "It was a scam. One of the biggest scams I think the UK has seen in this century so far, to be honest," said Matt.

> "It was a scam. One of the biggest scams I think the UK has seen."

Brewdog began in 2007, pronouncing itself as a wake-up call to the old and stuffy beer industry. Although from incredibly wealthy families, co-founders James Watt and Martin Dickie claimed to be different. They raised their investment by encouraging private individuals to buy shares with EFP. Over 200,000 individuals raised about £100 million.

Yet Watt and Dickie cut a deal behind their backs, selling 20% of the shares in the company to a US private equity firm for £100 million when it was valued at its highest at £1 billion. This gave the US private equity the position of first in line for any payout if the company was sold. Meaning, while it was the people who had invested in EFP, they were left with nothing. But James Watt and Martin Dickie walked away with a nice wad of £50 million each.



Matt told me about one of his favourite regulars, Francis from Anstruther, who had invested a decent amount of his savings into the EFP scheme. Committed to the company, Francis and his female golden Labrador retriever were "literally there from the day it opened until the day it closed," Matt recalled. "I saw him almost every shift without fail." Francis had believed in the vision of Brewdog until the end, but would never see a return on his investment, and wasn't even given an official 25% discount on drinks.

"I hated the company," Matt said. Despite working for Brewdog, he would tell regulars of craft beer, I would often drag my friends to this performatively hip establishment, which painfully contrasted the cosier and more romantic pubs like Aikmans and the Central. I would blush coquettishly at the bar staff, in the hopes that they would let me try a range of their diverse selections of beers for free. They always would. Under the orange low lighting surrounded by neon strip lights and pseudo-rebellious signs on intentionally open brick walls saying vacuous slogans like "beers without borders" or "hops for the hopeless," I — and I'm sure many other students — have many happy memories of birthdays, game nights, and farewell parties.

Despite his resentment for the company, Matt is still nostalgic for his days working at Brewdog. He misses serving the regulars who were always kind and patient, aware they were working understaffed. He misses working with his colleagues who became good friends — and who are now left with no redundancy pay from the company, and reliant on compensation from the government.

> "Your money is going nowhere but James Watt's pocket."

"I genuinely always enjoyed the job. I feel slightly bereaved not having it anymore because I felt like it was a fixture of this town in some way. And I felt part of that. I really loved feeling like I was in that sector of the community," Matt said. "But below the surface, it was ugly as f***. And it will be the reason why I will never trust a company again."

"It's such a shame because it really has left a sour taste in my mouth," Matt explained. "The one lesson that I'll take from it, that I think everybody should take from it, is that companies don't care about you. You should care about you."

> "I really loved feeling like I was in that sector of the community."

"Any way that you can take advantage of them, you should. If you can afford to do a little bit less, do a little bit less," he said. "I'd say everybody should do a little bit less because they're not paying you out properly for it no matter what job you do."

After being an IPA connoisseur, Matt is now back to drinking Tennent's. When asked if he still drinks Brewdog, he said, "No, I don't think I ever will again."

PHOTO BY ILARIA FRECCIA

AI Until Proven Human

What happens when students are falsely accused of academic misconduct?

GRACIE JONES
INCOMING FEATURES EDITOR

Some names have been changed.

What happens when you're accused of using AI on assessed work? Your graduation might get pushed back, similar to a third-year medic. Or you might have to spend your whole summer proving your innocence, like one second-year student accused of cheating on her exam. Or you might get lucky and just have to complete an academic misconduct module, but who really knows? Of course, you could just ... not use AI, right?

Unfortunately, abstaining from AI use might not keep you safe from the academic misconduct process. The second-year student? She didn't cheat. She just got an extraordinarily high mark — too high for a first-year, her lecturers thought. The medic whose graduation's been pushed back? He was told, to his confusion, that his dissertation had been flagged both for strong vocabulary and weak language skills.

It was June of 2025 when Flora first learned something had gone wrong with her first-year exams. When her module grade appeared as a ten, much lower than expected, she "just assumed I was stupid and had f***ed up the exam." In fact, the exact opposite was true. She later found out she had earned a strong first on one section of the test, which was flagged for potential AI use because of its "suspiciously" high quality.

About five days after marks were released, Flora received an email from her School's academic misconduct officer notifying her that they'd been "asked to convene a School Board of Adjudication to consider an allegation of academic misconduct concerning unauthorised use of AI." She was sent a list of staff members who would be on the School Board and given back her exam paper with comments about suspected academic misconduct. They had highlighted sections that seemed "too high level" or contained what the school thought was overly technical jargon.

After submitting his dissertation last summer, Harrison Sharples, a third-year medic, received an email similar to Flora's. His work had been flagged for potential AI use, and an online hearing was scheduled to take place three weeks later. He was given a list of the evidence against him, but the reasons "were kind of contradicting each other," he recalled. One bullet point accused him of having a suspiciously excellent command of language, while another noted that his vocabulary and grammar were oddly weak. No specific examples of either were given, leaving Sharples confused. Still, he tried to prepare as best he could for the hearing, which consisted of a panel of School of Medicine staff members.

The questions Sharples was asked during the hearing "didn't really make a lot of sense", he explained. Staff asked him to define words he had used in his dissertation, both medical terms and other language that the Board thought sounded like AI.

"I used the word 'incarcerated,' and that seemed suspicious to them," Sharples recalled. 'Psychopharmacology' — the scientific study of the effects of drugs on the mind and behaviour — was also flagged. He thought this was especially strange. "We're using these words all the time, even in our lectures," he said. "So to question me on if I understand what the word means felt really, really odd."



One week later, Sharples learned the allegations of AI usage had been upheld. His grade would be capped at a seven, and he would receive a strike on his General Medical Council record. This came as a shock — he had not realised that the allegations would carry over into his professional life. Worried that he might not be trusted as a medical student, he decided to make an appeal.

Sharples appealed on the grounds that he had not been given specific reasons as to why the allegations against him were upheld. This appeal was approved, and a new hearing was scheduled for early November. At this point, it had been over two months since the whole affair had started.

Flora also found the academic misconduct timeline draining, having spent most of her summer waiting on the final outcome. She felt it wasn't just her module grade in jeopardy, but her entire academic career. "It was about me dropping out or not," she said, and that thought hung over her head for "eight or nine weeks." It didn't help that, like Sharples, her online School Board hearing went poorly.

"I came out of the call crying," Flora said. "The tone they [the Board] used was extremely aggressive." The Student Union Advocacy Co-ordinator, who was present for the hearing, described it as "an interrogation" and "like a PhD Viva," Flora recalled. The Board mostly questioned Flora on the content of the exam, testing her knowledge of the subject. Deep into summer, she "wasn't prepared" to answer specific technical questions. "There was no advice [before the hearing]," Flora said, "I was told it was going to be about AI in general. I was told it wasn't going to be about the actual content, but it was about the content."

As evidence, Flora submitted thirty pages of flashcards, screenshotted essay plans, revision plans from March, and all her diagram research with everything time-stamped, so that the Board could use Google Docs to see that she was "progressively working on it". She prepared a statement and chose to read it out during the hearing, but felt she didn't express herself as well as she could because she was so "terrified" by the "aggressive," "overly formal," and "stilted" tone of the Board members.

Just like Sharples, Flora found out a week later that the allegations had been upheld. She decided to appeal the decision as well.

Both Sharples and Flora found their appeals hearings at the University Board level "much better" than their first hearing with their respective School Boards. "[During the School Board hearing] it did feel like they just kind of had their opinion, and that was the end of it," Sharples agreed, whereas the University Board was more open to what he had to say.

After the School Board hearing, Flora decided to request further evidence. She obtained emails between various University staff members concerning her academic misconduct case. In some, lecturers wrote that "she can't get away with this" and that they "needed to catch her." Though Flora agrees that the University should investigate suspected AI cases, she was upset by the way staff wrote about her, especially after she discovered that her School had contacted IT services just days after her exam. After they asked if any technical abnormalities were visible on her computer, IT wrote back to the school saying that "there was no evidence of any wrongdoing." Learning that staff continued to treat her as guilty in internal emails even after IT denied it was "so f***king hurtful," she said. "They would rather believe I would use a thumb drive than actually use my own brain."

Both Flora and Sharples won their appeals. The charges were dropped, and any evidence that the whole affair had ever happened was scrubbed from their transcripts. Even with records now as clean as their consciences had been all along, however, the impact of the experience lingers.

When I spoke with Flora last autumn in St Mary's Quad, she turned her head at the sound of every falling leaf, nervous that one of the staff members from her hearing might walk by and overhear. She told me she checked for open windows before choosing a bench to sit at, just in case any of her lecturers happened to be inside. Before her academic misconduct case, she loved her School and enjoyed attending classes there. Now she dislikes even going into the building for fear of running into the professors who served on her School Board hearing.

None of the students interviewed felt that the University should ignore potential AI use. They just felt like the University should consider the student side of the academic misconduct process by prioritising faster timelines and communicating specific concerns better. "I get why they're so worried about it, but it's a hard thing to pin down. It just seems like no one really knows what they're looking for," said Sharples.

"It seems like there's so much pressure for them [the University] to catch people who use AI," Flora said. As Hazel put it, the academic misconduct process makes you feel as if "you're guilty [until] proven innocent" when suspected AI use is involved.

Sharples was so overwhelmed by the academic misconduct process that he deferred his Martinmas exams and thus will not be graduating this summer with the rest of his cohort. "After that happened, I heard nothing from them. Not even an apology." Eight months on from her appeal, Flora's grade has yet to change back to what she originally earned on the exam. "University centres have a tendency to forget that they're not just making random policies," Flora said, "They're affecting people's entire lives and trajectories."

ILLUSTRATION BY SANDRA PALAZUELOS GARCIA

Celebrating 100 Years of the Kate Kennedy Procession

ALDEN ARNOLD
INCOMING EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"Wouldn't it be marvellous if some of these people from the past could come back and you could walk the streets of St Andrews with them?"

On 18 April, 2026, St Andrews celebrated its centenary Kate Kennedy Procession. Townspeople, students, and University of St Andrews faculty alike gathered to watch as centuries of St Andrews' historical figures danced, fiddled, and recited poetry on the three streets. Among the parade were Wendy and Frank Quinault — dressed as Bishop Lamberton — two of the Kate Kennedy Club's honorary life members. Over a cup of coffee, Mr and Mrs Quinault recounted their 30 years organising the Procession.

The Quinalts moved to St Andrews in 1972, Mr Quinalt having received a lectureship in the University's psychology school. "I was on the staff at the time, and I had a lot to do with student welfare. I knew quite a lot of the students [...], and they said they'd quite like me to join [the Procession].

> "The club has its traditions rooted in medieval traditions."

The Club also approached Mrs Quinault. "I was asked about 30 years ago if I [would help] with the dressing of characters on the day of the procession, and it just snowballed from there," she said. "So, I've been mainly involved with the costumes [since]."

The Club's goals are threefold: to facilitate relations between 'town' and 'gown,' preserve the traditions of St Andrews, and raise money for local charities. Whilst the Club is still selective, admitting only a few new students each year, they pride themselves on their consistent engagement with both students and the town, an aspect that they see as distinguishing them from St Andrews' other member's clubs. Charity balls like Opening Ball and May Ball, like the Procession, are among the most popular of these endeavours.

Whilst the Kate Kennedy Club is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, the Club has its origins rooted in medieval legends. In the late nineteenth century, students organised Kate Kennedy Day to celebrate the infamous niece of Bishop Kennedy, one of the University's founders. Tale has it that Kate Kennedy was revered by medieval students for being immensely beautiful. "It's a lovely story," said Mr Quinault. "Whether it's actually true, I don't know."

The original Kate Kennedy Day, "to be honest, was a bit of a rag," said Mr Quinault. The University banned the celebration in 1881 for being raucous and controversial. It was not until 1926, inspired by then Rector JM Barrie — best known for his novel, *Peter Pan* — and his address on 'Courage,' that students Donald Kennedy and James Doak, rehabilitated the procession. With the help of Principal Sir James Irvine, it was re-established as a "serious thing," said Mr Quinault.

"The Club was sort of born out of the procession, then," said Mr Quinalt. "They're coterminous."

The Procession depicts St Andrews' 25 epochs, from the formation of the early church and the University's founding to the more contemporary citizens and golfers of the town. Students, townspeople, and University faculty dress "flamboyantly" in period costumes to represent these figures as they march through the town.

"Those costumes have been around for a while," remarked Mrs Quinault. "Some of them date back to the [19]30s and 40s [...], but most have been replaced." Mark Dennis, another honorary life member of the Club, led these recovery efforts. "He was really quite an expert on these things and designed lots of [the new costumes]," recalled Mr Quinault. "Mark would research these things meticulously and then source materials from all over the world."

"30 years ago [...] it was make-and-mend," and costume repairs often used "bits of lace of somebody's petticoat or something like that," added Mrs Quinault. "The costumes have improved a great deal because of [Dennis]." Dennis sadly passed away last December ahead of the centenary procession, but his indelible contributions to its design and costuming were visible in the parade's 150 historical costumes.

Mrs Quinault reserves the ceremonial role of dressing Kate Kennedy herself (or the actor playing her, rather). Tradition dictates that the role of Lady Katherine goes to the "most promising bejant". This is kept hidden until the hour of the Procession. "It's all very secretive," said Mrs Quinault.

The Procession is full of such small traditions. Kate Kennedy can be played by either a man or a woman, though the one requirement is that they must be beardless. "In fact, people have shaved their beard off [to be considered for the role]," said Mrs Quinault. Other roles come with similar beardless qualifications. "Robin Evvette, who plays Principal Irvine, shaves his beard off every year to play [the character]. I think that's dedication," joked Mrs Quinault.

Other ceremonial roles include 'Keeper of the Costumes,' 'Pro Keeper,' and 'Keeper of the Coaches,' performed this year by members Nico Fitzwilliam-Lay, Thea McMenamin, and Guy Nichols, respectively. "It's kind of a system of passing down knowledge," said Grace Sammartini, the Club's vice president.

In the Procession, the town takes precedence, stressed Mrs Quinnault. "It's something that celebrates the town, not just the University. It's not just University characters that are in the procession, you've got townspeople, provosts, and fishwives."

> "In the procession, the town takes precedence."

As a resident of St Andrews for the past 54 years, Mrs Quinault observed the University's slow takeover of the town, noticing that the ratio of students to townspeople has increased fourfold. The Club makes an effort to protect locals' roles in the Procession, she explained. The famous golfer James 'Tip' Anderson, for example, was played by Kenny Lindsay, a caddy and St Andrews native, this year. Other characters like Archbishop Beaton, Dr Adamson, and Prof Margaret Fairlie were also played by town locals. David Strachan, Chair of The St Andrews Preservation Trust, has been in the Procession since he was a child. "There's this lifelong connection with [the Procession]," concluded Mrs Quinault.

Children have been a target demographic for the Club's centenary. "All the years we've been involved, there's been some involvement with children," said Mrs Quinault. She recalled dressing her children up for the annual Christmas parties at Madras College and the passion with which her daughter dressed up as Kate Kennedy. The Club designed colouring books to distribute amongst the town's children ahead of this year's Procession, each page depicting one of the characters present in the parade. "The children are just really fascinated," said Sammartini. "They were asking me [questions] like, 'Who is Robert Ferguson?'"



For the Kate Kennedy Club, the 100th anniversary Procession is a time to look forward. "[The Club] has been adapting to changing times, and I think that's really the only way forward," said Sammartini. "[We are] maintaining the same core values but adapting them to the future."

The Club has changed extensively in recent years, setting up a trust for the Procession, registering as a charity, and admitting in 2012 its first female members. To expand its ability to deepen its involvement with local charities, the Club plans to set up a Life Members Association endowment. "The hope is [with the endowment] that we will eventually have enough money [through endowments] to pay for the Procession, and the Club can get back to [...] raising funds for local causes," said Mr Quinault.

"What's really inspiring to me is to see that the core values of the Club and the Procession have always been the same in a certain sense [...] it's joining the town, and it's preserving traditions and at the same time, preserving [...] this Scottish identity in history," concluded Sammartini.

PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER KELLY-BROWN

The Exploitation of Student Musicians in St Andrews

BEN BAGLEY
Sport Editor

Large events in St Andrews cost committees tens of thousands of pounds to run. While organisers will shell out for venue hire, transport costs, security, and professional sound technicians, student musicians providing the entertainment at these events often see little to no pay.

The Saint spoke to more than a dozen artists from across the town's music scene, uncovering a consistent pattern of underpayment. The majority of these musicians requested anonymity.

"We have played Christmas Ball two years in a row now without being paid," a member of a prominent student band told *The Saint*. "Because we're students, they think they can exploit us."

Christmas Ball is run by Mermaids, a Union sub-committee, which is described on its website as "first and foremost a funding body" — a mantra seemingly at odds with their approach to paying student musicians.

"We were asked to play at Christmas Ball for free last year," Marco Gil Harris, singer and guitarist of the Macaronis, told *The Saint*. "We hoped we would at least get some exposure, but they had us playing in the Union Bar while people were getting on the bus and kept telling us to turn the music down."

A committee member of this year's Christmas Ball confirmed to *The Saint* that the ball was allocated a budget in the region of £65,000 by the Union. "Whatever profit we make gets rolled over to the Fringe Representative, and we spend it on sending shows to the Fringe," this year's Christmas Ball Convenor, Eilidh Read, said. "This year, that profit was in the region of £20,000."

Musicians questioned why none of this enormous surplus was used to fairly compensate the musicians.

Leon Tasch, the former President of JazzWorks who performed at the Christmas Ball in 2024, shared his experience. He explained that Mermaids agreed to pay £45, the price of a ticket, to each member on the condition that they left the event immediately after their set.

"We were asked to perform outside on a rainy night in December," Tasch said. "Our equipment was exposed to mud and rain, and after our set, we sought cover. We were then promptly asked to leave in order to retain our payment."

Tasch also highlighted the poor communication and on-site support at Christmas Ball. "I performed at Christmas Ball with my a capella group, The Other Guys," he said. "Our contract specified that we required nine microphones. This was agreed and signed by both parties, yet at the event, we were provided with four and told to make do. There was no Mermaids representative present to address this issue."

The group received a carrier bag of cider as a belated apology.

Mermaids are not the only union-funded society accused of failing to pay performers. Gil Harris described a similar experience with CATWALK, the union-funded charity show, in September 2025.



"We played their pre-event for two hours without being paid," Gil Harris explained. "We also provided them with sound equipment and stayed behind to help set up sound for the DJ later, so it definitely felt like we'd earned some form of pay."

In response to *The Saint's* investigation, a spokesperson from the Student Union said the organisation has opened "a wider review of all of our networks," looking into the "financial transparency, operational procedures, and structures" of all of its networks.

Union-affiliated societies are not the only culprits. Five Card Draw, another popular student group, is one of several bands asked to play at a Barn Bash launch event for free. "As soon as I asked if we were getting paid, the tone of the conversation really shifted," one of the band's members said. "We were told it was a charity event, so we wouldn't be getting paid."

Organisers said Barn Bash relies on ticket proceeds from its launch event to run the main event in January. "We try to cut costs wherever we can," Lisa Timofeeva, this year's Director of Barn Bash, explained, "The reason a lot of events use student bands is because it's a cheaper alternative to what you can get online."

Musicians pointed out that funding is routinely allocated for venue hire, professional sound crews, and security, while student performers are often expected to play for free. Venues like The Rule charge £500 for hire, while security can cost anywhere from several hundred to several thousand pounds for larger events.

"We understand it's a charity event, but when all the contractors are getting paid, we should be too," another band member said. "If you're going to sell tickets to an event and advertise us as the entertainment, we deserve some form of payment. We dedicate a lot of time [to] preparing for these events, not to mention the time it takes us to transport our equipment and set up."

It's not only charity events underpaying student musicians. HAUS, a for-profit DJ organisation, hired Grammy award-winning DJ Flowdan to perform a headline set. Flowdan's agent confirmed to *The Saint* that his client charges between £5,000 and £6,000 for a set like the one he played at the HAUS event. A student band performing at the same event, however, was offered £40 to play for an hour. Split between the members, the fee amounted to £8 each per hour, well below the minimum wage in Scotland.

> "If you're going to sell tickets to an event and advertise us as the entertainment, we deserve some form of payment."

"If we book a student band and pay them all £40 an hour, it's just the same price as booking a small external act," Archie Donald, the Founder and Director of HAUS, said, "We can't always afford to pay double the rate for the same period of time."

These expectations also extend beyond student-organised bands. George Davies, saxophonist and band manager for JazzWorks, the Union-sponsored jazz group, was asked to play at the FS Fashion Show, 2025. He agreed to play the main event for free, but an FS committee member asked if he could also perform at the reception for corporate sponsors. "Performing for an hour for wealthy corporate sponsors at an event where they can afford to spray Dom Pérignon across the stage, without getting paid, feels like it crosses a line," Davies said. "For one member of the FS team to then suggest that I was being uncharitable for refusing to do that was a bit insulting."

A representative of the FS 2025 committee denied this statement. "I do not believe that a musician asking for compensation for a performance is uncharitable, and would never personally or professionally label someone as such," they said.

In a statement to *The Saint*, FS justified their payment policy on the basis that performing was "optional and voluntary." Davies explained that performing for corporate sponsors before the main event had begun was not mentioned when he initially agreed to take part.

As the band manager of JazzWorks, Davies is involved in an organisation that has adopted a proactive approach to payment."We have a policy of only playing paid gigs, with the exception of a few selected gigs each term for small charitable societies without huge budgets," Davies said. "We've found that standing up for payment has not really reduced the number of gigs we get."

It has proved harder for independent student bands to secure fair pay. The oversaturated market in the town and the lack of independent venues mean that big events are the only opportunities for St Andrews students to perform to large audiences. This makes it difficult to push back against unpaid work, creating a race to the bottom over who will accept the lowest fee. "You're scared to say anything because you're worried you'll never get hired again," Gil Harris said.

The St Andrews Music Fund, which often rents equipment to committees, introduced a Talent Compensation Policy last month, requiring organisers to pay performers a minimum of £15 each, per hour at events using their gear.

"Committees will happily pay for venues or to hire our equipment," President of the Music Fund, Palmer Lykes, explained, "but when it comes to student musicians, suddenly they don't want to pay. We hope this policy helps change this."

Student-run committees and promoters are reliant on their peers buying tickets for their gigs, but students seem to be the only ones missing out when it comes to dividing the profits. As one musician put it: "organisers act like it's a privilege for us to play, but equally it's a privilege for them to have live music at their event."

The Saint contacted CATWALK for a comment, but a response was not forthcoming.

Illustration by Eleanor Vielhaber

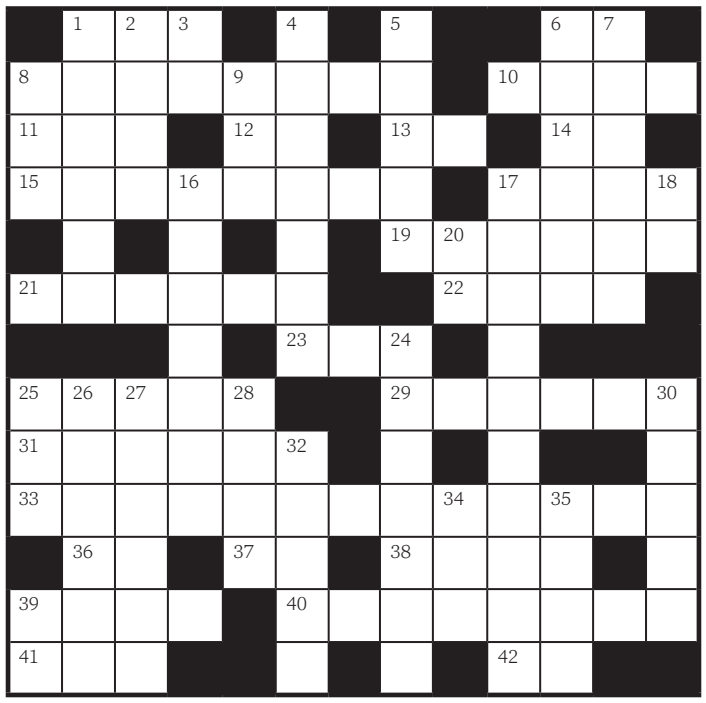
PUZZLES

EDITOR: LUANA VAN ORANJE

PUZZLES@THESAINT.SCOT @THESAINTSTA THESAINTNEWSPAPER.CO.UK/PUZZLES 23 APRIL 2026

'300 CANDLES FOR *THE SAINT*'

CROSSWORD BY MADELEINE ABIGNALE AND LUANA VAN ORANJE



ACROSS

1. Government body that regulates the tube, black cabs, and red double-deckers
6. Alphabet start
8. "There's 104 days of summer ____"
10. What one might drink after a run, en Sevilla
11. Recede, as the tide
12. 'Cool ____ a cucumber'
13. Holiday pics might be posted here
14. Radio freq. between 30 and 300kHz
15. What a ginger does, sans SPF
17. Animated internet pics
19. What someone with a summer job is
21. Tradition closing the academic year, at *25a* (3–3)
22. Actor Damon
23. Old Course time to not be missed
25. Where one builds sandcastles, typically
29. Big-billed tropical bird
31. Snitch on
33. Charlotte, Emily, and Anne were the famous ones (6–7)
36. Sunshine state, abbr.
37. Airline service for young children flying alone, abbr.
38. What one might have done for a prolonged period in the sun, to obtain *15a*
39. Summer month
40. What keen travellers might do, as for a flight
41. 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' or 'Treasure Island' inits.
42. Oceanic distance of 1,852 meters, abbr.

DOWN

1. ____ rasa
2. Where Barca footie fans might read up on news
3. "____, a note to follow so"
4. Cause disorder to
5. Ouzo flavouring
6. Glittering
7. Big breakfast spread, in a hotel
8. Ship, abbr.
9. Greek letter after Sigma
16. Tight, form-fitting dress
17. What will happen for many fourth years in June and July
18. Elder, abbr.
20. Morning
24. What one might gaze up at on a holiday night, à Bordeaux
25. 'One sec' in text
26. Vigorous scolding
27. Coral reefs circling lagoons
28. Rwandan ethnic group
30. 'Rudolf the Red ____ Reindeer'
32. These might be high in warm destinations (abbr.)
34. Day of worship, abbr.
35. Dutch cheese
39. Counterpart to *18d*

SUDOKU BY ISAAC OLDHAM

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

MINI *CRYPTIC* CROSSWORD BY ALEXANDER WISEMAN

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9				

ACROSS

1. Small cake's pointed shape
6. Man appearing in a bazaar once
7. Pianist drops opening four notes, taking in alternating current — his character ____ an ____? (2–3)
8. Hotel in the French Mediterranean designed for a unique clientele
9. Spot it in a photo here, for that woman

DOWN

1. Son isn't a good person
2. Initially couldn't add several integers offline, makes calculators
3. Nothing mirrors char in this mountain spinach, to a Yank?
4. First of numerous obscure, calm, holiday evenings in Seville
5. Log in that may be turned into treen

WORD LADDERS BY JULIA EMERY

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

S A N D

_ _ _ _

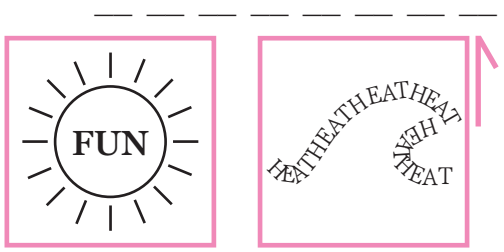
_ _ _ _

_ _ _ _

_ _ _ _

S U R F

REBUS BY JULIA EMERY



CONNECTIONS BY MADELEINE OLIVER

Find groups of four items with something in common

SPOT	SURE	PINK	BEECH
PEER	ESPRESSO	SEE	GRAY
TASTE	GLANCE	GRAINER	TEARS
GLEN	CHOCOLATE	FEATHER	LINE

NEW PUZZLE!

LOGIC PUZZLE BY L. VAN ORANJE

Use the clues to deduce relationship between the categories (one option per category in each pair). Eliminate pairs you know can't be true with an 'X', and mark pairs you know are related with an 'O' (hence eliminating all other options)

		PARTY GUEST				ITEM BROUGHT			
		OLD TOM MORRIS	DAME S. MAPSTONE	PATRICK HAMILTON	LADY K. KENNEDY	BIRTHDAY CAKE	CROQUET SET	PIMM'S	BUNTING
ARRIVED AT	1:30PM								
	2PM								
	2:30PM								
	3PM								
ITEM BROUGHT	BIRTHDAY CAKE								
	CROQUET SET								
	PIMM'S								
	BUNTING								

The Saint is celebrating its 300th edition in style with a quintessentially British summer garden party. Work out which guest arrived when, and what they brought with them...

CLUES

1. Of the person who brought the croquet set and the person who arrived at 1:30pm, one is Old Tom Morris and the other Patrick Hamilton.
2. Dame Sally Mapstone either arrived at 2:30pm or at 3pm
3. Lady Katherine Kennedy arrived 30 minutes after the person with the croquet set
4. The person who arrived at 3pm either brought bunting or was Lady K. Kennedy
5. Patrick Hamilton arrived 30 minutes before the person who brought the Pimm's

ARRIVED AT	PARTY GUEST	ITEM BROUGHT
1:30PM		
2PM		
2:30PM		
3PM		

Kate Kennedy's Centenary Procession

CHRISTOPHER KELLY-BROWN
PHOTOGRAPHER















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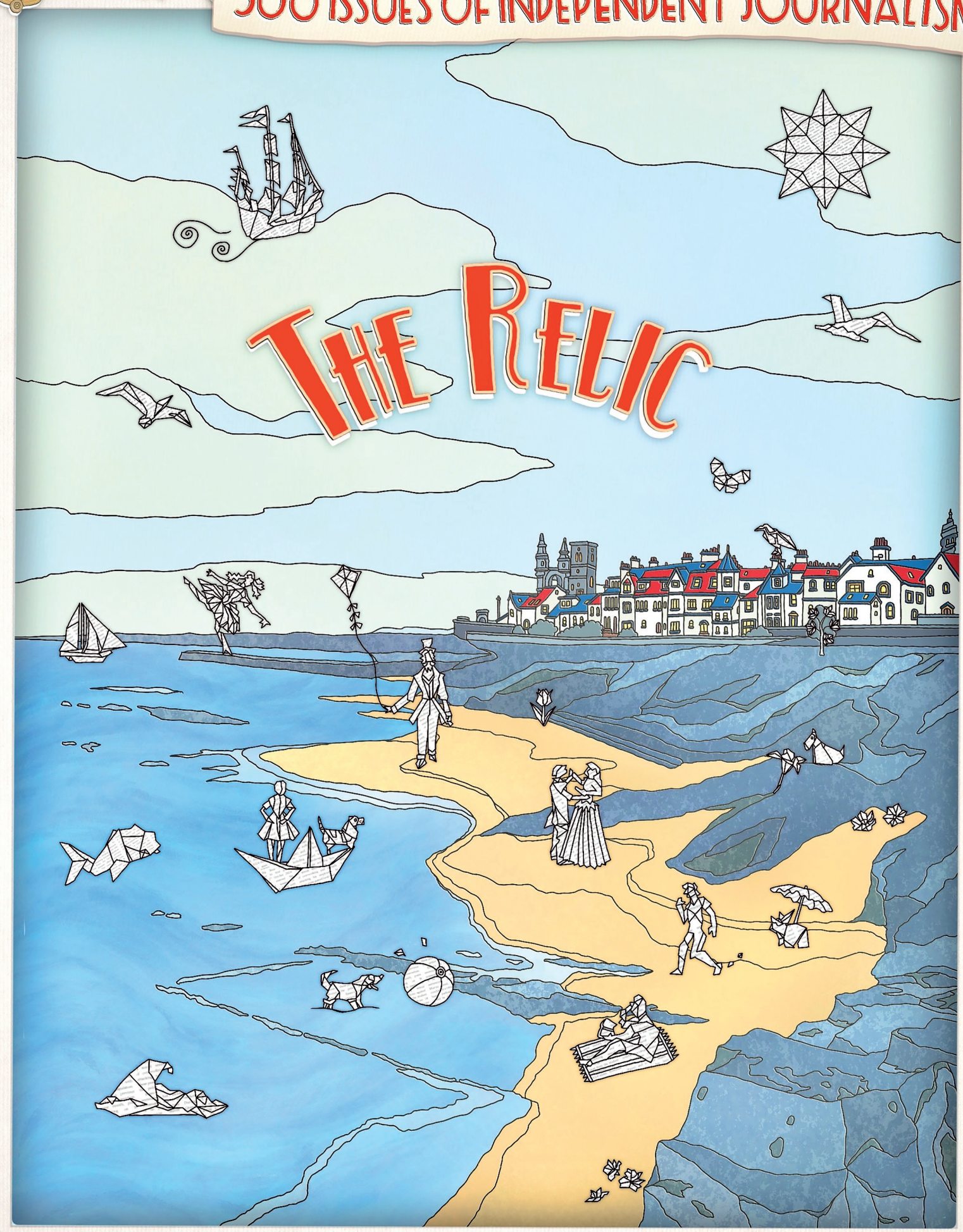
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2026

My Farewell to *The Relic*

CARLA LONGO
RELIC WRITER

I have sat down to write this article many times, and each time I have stood up to do something else. I have always thought I was good at finding the right words, yet right now there is not a single one I would pick. But I have already wiped my desk, hoovered the apartment, and gone for a run, so it's time to focus. Maybe I just don't want to say goodbye.

Another thing I don't like is interviews. I didn't like them this year, when I had to apply for my master's, and I didn't like them three years ago, when I got called in for my interview to join the Arts and Culture section. I remember the small Union room with the two editors-in-chief, and how I had put on a bit too much perfume. I remember being asked what my favourite piece of creative media was, and replying with a series of ghost novels for middle schoolers. It was the first and only thing that came to mind. After saying it out loud, I thought I was doomed. Still, it felt like a beautiful moment, finding a place where my interests were not just shared, but celebrated.

When a friend asked me how it went, I simply said, "I don't know if I said the right things, but at least I was honest." And that is exactly what The Relic has been for me over these three years, a place to be honest.

Every semester, I gave myself permission to write one article that was more personal than the others. Sometimes it was about a childhood memory, sometimes about coming to university as an international student or about how studying Classics helped me through difficult moments. Having a space to express these reflections has meant a lot. What meant even more were the messages from people who read them and recognised themselves in what I wrote, something I will always be grateful for.



Many opportunities came out of The Relic. I remember writing an article about tarot cards and then being invited to read tarot at the Debate Ball. That was the night I learned that we all have the same problems. I got to watch short films made by St Andrews students, and to give a shoutout to my own projects, like the exhibition a friend and I put up at the Wardlaw Museum last semester. Still, what I treasure most is the constant sense of wonder I have found in this section. I feel it most strongly at pitch meetings, maybe my favourite part of the whole experience. The number of ideas I have never even considered that come up in that hour never fails to amaze me. People suggest articles about vegan meat, literature about the end of the world, the trend of radio bets during Christmas, the role of public art. I am someone who tends to live too much in her own head, and just sitting down for an hour and listening to the interests and inner worlds of others is truly inspiring.

Of course, it has not always been easy. There have been hard times, weeks when I didn't have a single idea for an article, when the last thing I wanted, among so many deadlines, was to write more. But staying through those moments is also part of what made the experience what it was. Now I can look back at what I have written as a mosaic of my university experience. There were many moments when I did not want to write, but not a single one when I regretted it.

So if there is something I would pass on, it is this. Go to more socials than I did. Go to more handouts. Stop people after pitch meetings to compliment their ideas, even if it feels uncomfortable. This is an exciting section. It is vibrant, it is alive. It will give you back more than you expect.

And as for me, I hope my days as an Arts and Culture writer are not over. I am sure there will be another newspaper to join next year, during my Master's. But what I know for certain is that The Relic will always have a special place in my heart. I write this last article already with nostalgia, but also with the feeling that nothing is truly ending, and with the certainty that I will always be able to follow what comes next. Goodbye!

ILLUSTRATION BY RAMONA KIRKHAM

St Andrews: A Watery Linguistic History

How we can etymologise placenames to uncover lost landscapes

EMMA INGRAM-JOHNSON
RELIC WRITER

Did you know that any placenames ending in *-ey* or *-ay* refer to an island?

It is fairly clear why Scottish islands like Orkn*ey*, Rothes*ay*, Colons*ay*, and Raas*ay*, surrounded by water, are thus named. In southwest Oxfordshire, however, the most landlocked region in England, these "ey" sounds also confusingly litter maps and signposts. The villages of Pus*ey*, Goos*ey*, and Charn*ey* are utterly inconceivable as islands — but when this flat landscape was marsh, these villages would have been mini sanctuaries from floodplains where it was difficult or unsafe to build settlements. The only presence of natural water left in the village I call home is a singular chalk stream, an offshoot of the once torrenting Ock, which gives the nearby city, Oxford, its name. Bone-dry and dusty in the summer months, a playground for hares and rabbits, the river is the last trace of water systems that once ruled, and labelled, Oxfordshire.

These linguistic histories are not difficult to decipher — hidden in plain sight, as the cliché goes — and help us to better grasp the worn landscape history of our little town in Scotland, too.

In St Andrews, most of the placenames are seemingly simple — Grannie Clark's Wynd? Probably where Grannie Clark lived. The plethora of streets, beaches, and even houses with one of the four dials of a compass incorporated into their names? Simply makes it easier to get around. Butt's Wynd? Hopefully, a less straightforward explanation can be found for that one.

River and waterway names are where the fluctuating history of St Andrews becomes more interesting.

As early as 1160, the word *Kines*, accompanied by the Latin word for river, *fluuius*, appears in writing. Sites along the Kinessburn are much studied by Earth Science and Sustainable Development students, but the linguistic history of the river unveils something that even the physical landscape, shaped and hollowed by the river, does not remember.

Burn means fresh water in Gaelic — simply enough, here it means flowing water. *Kines* is more difficult to pin down — one Glasgow University study links it to the "fall" (*eas* in Old Scots) of water from a headland (*ceann*). *Ceanneas*, then *kines*, then *kiness*. The evolution of the word itself mimics the river's rampant reshaping and realigning of the land around St Andrews — on no OS map can a waterfall be identified on the Kinessburn's route — a ghost terrain maintains its eerie presence in the local conversations, signs, and history.

Even pubs are not immune to this watery etymology. The Rule takes its name from the tower still standing in the Cathedral ruins —



marking the site that St Rule deposited the bones of St Andrews after he exhumed them from what is now the Peloponnese in Greece. That damp journey from the Mediterranean to the North Sea, while folkloric, landed the remains less than half a mile from the sea.

The Anglicisation of these placenames often masks their real meaning — the various Scots and Gaelic etymologies vary and are extremely culturally dependent, but are more insightful into the ancient pilgrim site's history.

It is not only recently, however, that the language used to describe this town has been scrubbed of its Scottish twang: a map made by John Geddy, a student here in 1580, only labels the "*collegi*", colleges, in Latin. "*Mariani*," "*Saluatoris*," "*Leonardi*" — St Madras, St Salvator, and St Leonard. The Latinate, Christian universe has held a firm grip over the language we use to talk about St Andrews for thousands of years.

St Andrews' naming tradition, searidden as it is, traces the journeys of humans as well as of the natural world throughout its time as a settlement, combining histories of pilgrimage, fables of lost landscapes, and our human obsession with water into one. On our mass migrations to the library this upcoming revision week, sluicing like a river trying to find empty chairs at 8:15 am, perhaps we can slow down, look around, and try to find more evidence of our communal history, and remember that we form an ever-growing part of it, too.

ILLUSTRATION BY MOKSHITA NAGANDLA

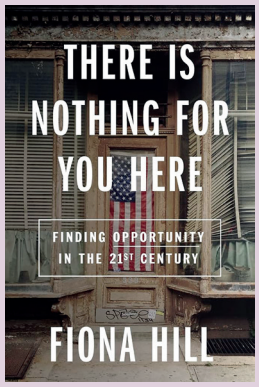
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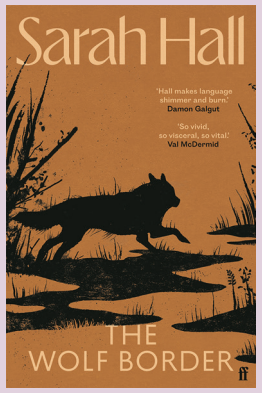


Mikey Recommends...

There is Nothing for You Here by Fiona Hill

The blurb of There Is Nothing For You Here highlights Fiona Hill's studies in Moscow and Harvard, but (rather rudely) neglects to mention that her studies of Russia, on which she is now among the world's foremost foreign policy experts, began with an undergraduate degree at St Andrews. Her book is both a memoir of her time in politics, including her witness testimony at Trump's first impeachment inquiry, and a compelling chart and analysis of the rise of populism as it reverberates across the US, the UK and Russia.

Book Club Recommends...

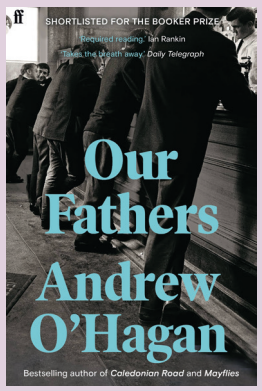


The Wolf Border by Sarah Hall

Sarah Hall graduated with a creative writing MLitt from St Andrews in 1997 and has since become one of the UK's most critically lauded novelists and short story writers. Her fifth novel, The Wolf Border, follows Rachel Caine, who lives in isolation studying wolves in Idaho. Summoned back to her native Lake District to aid the reintroduction of wolves to a rural estate, she confronts the wildness of nature and of humanity as she struggles against the forces of politics and nature.

STAFF PICK

Alix Recommends...



Our Fathers by Andrew O'Hagan

Andrew O'Hagan, a distinguished graduate of the University of St Andrews, recently wrote *Our Fathers*. This family-history memoir is unique as O'Hagan flips the script to explore the complexities of three diverse diaspora families, Scottish, Irish, and Indian, whose lives have been shaped by the intricate forces of migration, colonialism and the post-war welfare state. The book transcends traditional storytelling, combining oral histories, meticulous archival research, and his own insightful reflections. Through the personal stories of grandchildren, recovered letters, and excerpts from parliamentary debates, the book weaves a tapestry of voices, allowing readers to engage with multiple generations in conversation. O'Hagan explores compellingly through a disjointed narrative that fatherhood acts as a cultural contract, intertwining family obligations to the state, through taxes and loyalty, with the ways families creatively resist or subvert these systems through remittances and informal economies. It is a beautifully crafted exploration of familial bonds, identity, and the far-reaching impact of historical forces.

Who's Afraid of Louis Theroux?

Man under rock discovers manosphere

ISABEL BIRGE
RELIC WRITER

Extreme misogyny, anti-feminism, hypermasculinity, and so-called "red-pill" philosophy are among the foundational principles of the "manosphere," a troublingly far-reaching online ecosystem of influencers who have, at long last, been given the Louis Theroux treatment.

"Make no mistake, this is a horror movie," Letterboxd user aaron says of the now month-old documentary *Louis Theroux: Inside the Manosphere*. The film, which premiered on Netflix on 11 March, follows prolific journalist and broadcaster Louis Theroux as he investigates the behind-the-scenes lives of prominent "manosphere" influencers known online as HSTikkyTokky (Harrison Sullivan), Sneako (Nicolas Kenn De Balinthazy) and Myron Gaines (Amrou Fudl), among others. The views proudly disclosed by these influencers are nothing short of horrifying, but hardly eye-opening, as Theroux is somewhat late to the party.

The criticism the film has amassed has primarily been on these very grounds. It was during the early days of the pandemic in 2020 when Theroux first discovered the "manosphere" through his young sons. Since then, numerous books and documentaries have been produced on the subject. Moreover, the purportedly more intimate portrait of the lives of these men the documentary claims to portray is misleading, as it is merely a continuation of the performance these Andrew Tate wannabes put on across social media platforms.

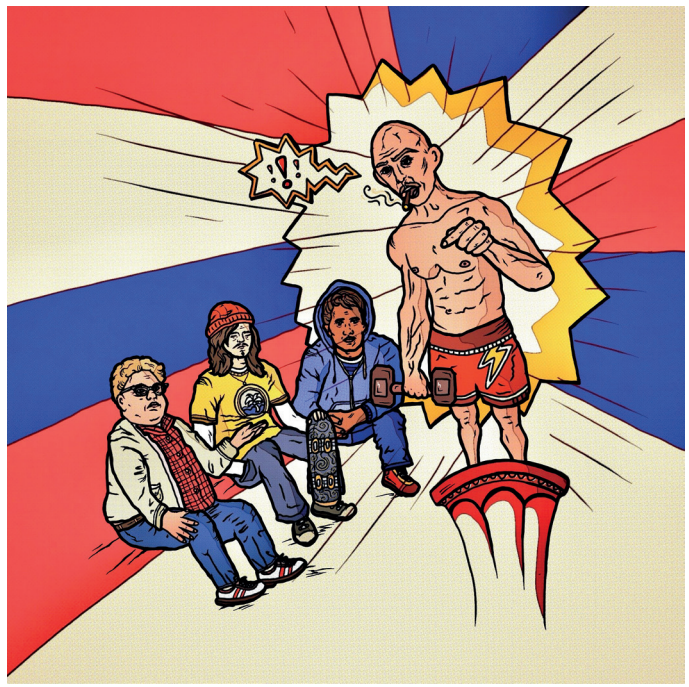
Despite the prevalence of the "manosphere" both within its own realm and in popular thought, the documentary's audience seems especially narrow. Lucy Mangan at *The Guardian* notes that it engages in "too little examination of how online misogyny affects those who didn't choose to be part of it," while Ed Power writes for *The Irish Times* that "The documentary needs more anger and surely more female input."

Indeed, these influencers could do with no small amount of feminine rage. However, it is perhaps unrealistic to expect Theroux to be the one to provide it. For the female viewer — particularly she who has been tuned into the persistent, misogynistic background noise generated by these men and lauded by figures like Donald Trump — there is much in the film to provoke disgust, but little to arouse surprise. If the purpose of the film is to be shocking, then it utterly fails in that regard.

The disheartening reality of the influence the "manosphere" has had over burgeoning teenagers and adult men for many years may be eye-opening for those (men) who have yet to thoroughly educate themselves on the ways in which many aspects of modern society seem to be running back towards the 1950s and, more importantly, take long, hard look at themselves in the mirror.

Shortly after the film came out, I asked some of my male friends what they thought of its premise and if they would consider watching it. While most of them exhibited varying degrees of ambivalence towards the prospect, one of these friends objected to it on the basis that it would be "too depressing" to spend 90 minutes vis-à-vis some of the most vocally misogynistic men on the planet. While I can't say I disagree with this sentiment, avoidance of even the most superficial portrayal of what has undoubtedly become a powerful arena exerting a concerning amount of influence on impressionable minds is, at best, complacency, but more likely a part of the problem.

Theroux, too, I would argue, is complicit in perpetuating the reach of the "manosphere." In a scene from the film in which influencer Justin Waller reluctantly invites Theroux into his home, Waller's partner, Kristen, offers a curiously scripted response to the journalist's queries as to the dynamics of their relationship: "My lane is changing diapers, cooking and cleaning, and [Waller's] lane is working [...] I, to my core, believe that as human beings, male and female, that's how it's supposed to be." In another scene, Amrou Fudl's girlfriend stands beside him, virtually silent, as he explains their "one-sided monogamous" relationship (a practise shared by many of these influencers) in which his girlfriend is expected to be loyal while Fudl is permitted to sleep with whomever he chooses. Meanwhile, HSTikkyTokky and others condemn the "disgusting" lifestyles of women who use OnlyFans for income despite engaging with the platform themselves.



The lack of female voices throughout the documentary is troubling, especially given that many of these influencers have had numerous allegations of sexual assault made against them. Herein lies, I think, the predominant issue with Theroux's film: the real-world implications of the "manosphere" on its young viewers, but more so on women, is easily discarded in favour of supposedly light-hearted moments, such as Theroux poking fun at how HSTikkyTokky's "calves need work." For those who are somehow encountering the "manosphere" phenomenon for the first time, the documentary may be illuminating, but to leave it as the spectacle it has been allowed to become will only empower both its leaders and followers.

ILLUSTRATION BY ISABELLE HOLLOWAY

Folktales for Three Scottish Flora

SYLVIA COVACI
RELIC WRITER

Thistle

Once upon a time, there was a warrior flower. It was the mid-thirteenth century near Ayrshire, Scotland. A fleet of Norsemen had travelled to the region, plotting to conquer the land. The Norsemen left their ships at dark with the sly design of ambushing sleeping Scottish Clansmen; cunningly, they removed their shoes to tread stealthily upon the earth. Little did they know, this land was home to the mighty *Cirsium vulgare* — the Scottish spear thistle. As the fleet crept over the rippling fields, the flower readied its spiny defence. One soldier, upon viewing with vicious fervour the Clansmen's encampment, stepped hard on the thistle, and his shriek pierced the cold black night. The Scotsmen, awakened, rushed to their weapons and valiantly defended their homeland, vanquishing the Norse.

> "As the fleet crept over the rippling fields, the flower readied its spiny defence."

So reads, notwithstanding my narrative embellishments, the legend of the Scottish thistle. The thistle, Scotland's national flower, has long been a symbol of resilience and valour. In 1687, King James VII founded the Order of the Thistle. To be appointed to the Order is the highest honour in Scotland. The Order's motto is *Nemo me impune lacessit*, "No one provokes me with impunity." These words are more than a testament to the hearty beauty of the thistle, not picked without injury; they sing out the unfaltering bravery of the Scottish nation. From the lowlands to the highlands, the thistle adorns moors, forests, and valleys. I remember in September, while trekking the Fife Coastal Path, I saw a thistle among the wind-wrecked grasses — it was standing tall, spikes poised, and so violently purple. That such a flower was once a medieval warrior feels only natural.



Heather

Calluna vulgaris, or common heather, is another native Scottish flower with mythological heritage. Heather is a hardy shrub, toughened to withstand highland weather. It blooms in lilac and, rarely, in white. White heather finds its folkloric roots in Malvina, the daughter of the Celtic bard Ossian. Malvina was a beautiful, kindhearted woman, engaged to the warrior Oscar. A day before their wedding, Oscar was slain in battle, and the messenger bearing news of his death gave Malvina a sprig of purple heather, on the late Oscar's request. Malvina's tears fell on the heather, turning it white. In her grief, she blessed the flower, that it may bring good fortune to those who find it, and that they should not suffer a similar tragedy as hers. As white heather is sacred, ephemeral in its rarity, to encounter it is to receive a divine grace of nature.

Heather is also involved in faerie lore. It is said that white heather blooms out of a faerie's final resting place. Faeries are known to live in the bells of heather, drinking up the plant's honey. The heather lives in heathlands, moorlands, and mountains, defining the sublime highland landscape. In Celtic folklore, these are "thin places": thresholds where the human realm and otherworld bleed and blend. The trees, brambles and flowers that grow in these places often hold mystical significance; if you listen close enough, you may just hear the sleepy song of a faerie resting in the heather.

> "Faeries are known to live in the bells of heather, drinking up the plant's honey."

Rowan

Sorbus aucuparia finds its mythological roots in Hebe, the Greek goddess of youth. In a moment of carelessness, Hebe lost her chalice of ambrosia, the nectar of the gods, to a league of demons. The gods sent an eagle to retrieve the chalice. During its wrestle with the demons, the eagle was said to have shed blood and feathers; where these met the earth, they became rowan trees. The bird's feathers made the shape of the leaves, while the berries were the same colour as blood.

The rowan is a tree of providence. Its power was said to come from its berries; not only is red the strongest colour for warding off evil, but each berry is also marked with a five-point star. This star, a pentagram, is an ancient protective symbol. It follows that the rowan was often used to ward off witchcraft and evil spirits, being made into amulets of crosses and loops. The crosses were often placed at the threshold of a house to keep out witches. The people of Strathspey, Scotland, would make a hoop out of rowan on May Day, when witches were particularly active. To protect their sheep and lambs from malign beings, they would herd sheep and lambs through the hoops. As rowan trees watch over the inhabitants of the houses they are planted near to, to harm a rowan, or cut one down, is a grave taboo.

So be humble in the presence of nature's blessings; the blooming things everywhere protect us in ways we will never know.

ILLUSTRATION BY NIAMH MCPARTLIN

Love in the Bubble

On forgetting the name of your dog

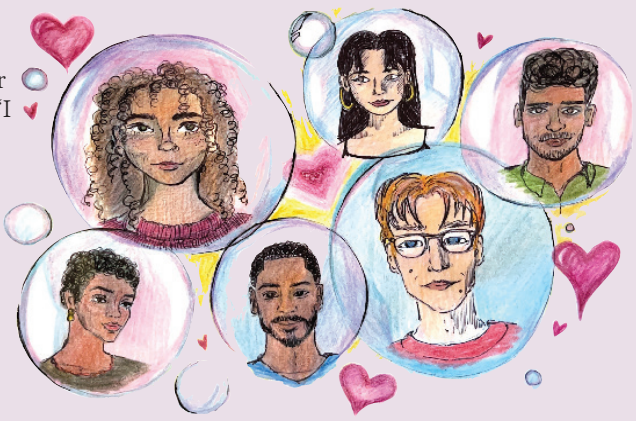
I started to wear my favourite perfume again. It is citrusy, and my mom gifted it to me, but I stopped using it for a year because whenever I did, I expected to find you sitting next to me. I wore vanilla for a while. I liked it less, but at least I was not haunted by ghosts.

I would spy on your life like a child outside a candy shop. The new city, the new job, the new girl. And what about me? On my side of the fence, I was stuck. Couldn't move forward, couldn't move back. At night, I wrote lists of things I liked, just to remind myself I existed outside of what I was feeling.

What I did not expect, though, was that my life would go on too. They told me, but I didn't believe them. Still, I got into my dream university. I travelled across Europe with my best friends and discovered how useful it is, my ability to sleep on buses. My family adopted two kittens. When I'm home, I tell them all my secrets. The people around me are smart and kind and inspiring. They make me want to get up and do things, important things, things that will make a difference. I am so excited for myself. It feels both wrong and exhilarating.

And there's a truth I don't like to admit: I have started to forget you. The name of your grandma. Your dogs. I believed I knew your favourite football team, but my dad corrected me the other day. "Impossible," I said, "I would know," but I checked, and he was right. It scares me. Part of me never wants to let you go. But I also welcome it with relief.

Every day I receive so much love that it spills out of my pockets and colours my shoes. It stains every step I make in this town. And luckily, it is not from you.



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

50 Words for Drunk

What our vocabulary for inebriation reveals

SOPHIE LYNN
Relic Writer

In his 1983 book *Class: A Guide Through the American Status System*, class theorist Paul Fussell makes the provocative and entertaining claim that in America, you can determine someone's social class by how they talk about sex. According to Fussell, the lower down the social ladder, the more direct and unvarnished the language tends to be, while higher-status speakers avoid bluntness by relying on euphemism, indirection, and at times elaborate metaphor. For instance, where one speaker might say "they had sex," another might opt for "they slept together," while someone more status-conscious might gesture toward "they became intimate" — and, at the furthest reaches of absurdity, one might hear that the pair "found themselves momentarily entwined in a private convergence of affections," or "drifted into a shared atmosphere of mutual regard," phrases so decorous they seem determined to float several feet above the fact itself.

I first became aware of Fussell's theory several years ago when I was living in America, and when I moved to St Andrews, I was surprised at how well it seemed to apply here — not only for sex, but for the way people talk about drunkenness. My time in Aikman's Bar & Bistro has revealed just how expansive the vocabulary that people here use for their inebriation can be, as I've eavesdropped on St Andrews University Conservative and Unionist Association (StAUCA) socials, but also the varied types of Aikman's clientele. I've noticed the StAUCA lot (a group known for their privilege) seems to use the most concrete metaphors, such as "well-lubricated" and having had "one over the eight," which carry with them a faint air of inherited etiquette, as though intoxication is being acknowledged but carefully kept at arm's length. Even in excess, the language retains a kind of composure.



By contrast, one young man, who I became acquainted with because he'd once been in a street fight with my friend, told me about the myriad of words he'd learned in his time drinking in various pubs around Scotland, such as, "wazzed, blootered, wankered, mullered, gazeboed, and shoelaced," each delivered with the confidence of a man who had not only experienced these states, but catalogued them. Placed alongside the more carefully moderated idioms of the StAUCA set, this begins to suggest a contrast that looks almost too tidy to be real, as if Fussell's theory had been lifted wholesale and dropped into a Fife pub. The temptation is to read it as a simple opposition, but even a brief exposure to the social life of a university town complicates that picture. The fact is, class is such a nebulous and uncomfortable topic that it rarely announces itself in anything as clean as vocabulary alone. Language, after all, is rarely a fixed reflection of identity; it is more often a tool that shapeshifts depending on who is listening, where one is speaking, and what kind of self one is trying to project. The same person who might claim to have been "absolutely steaming" on a Wednesday night could, by Friday brunch, insist that they were merely "a touch worse for wear." Likewise, those who favour "well-lubricated" in public could, a few moments later, admit to being "battered." The categories bleed into one another; the performance slips.

There is also, perhaps, an element of defensiveness built into these euphemisms. To say one "had a few" or was "a touch worse for wear" softens the edges of excess; it renders something potentially embarrassing into something sounding charming. The more elaborate the phrasing, the more it seems to insist that nothing so vulgar as simple drunkenness has occurred. One has not lost control; one has merely, temporarily, entered into a "shared atmosphere of mutual regard" with a few pints of La Chouffe.

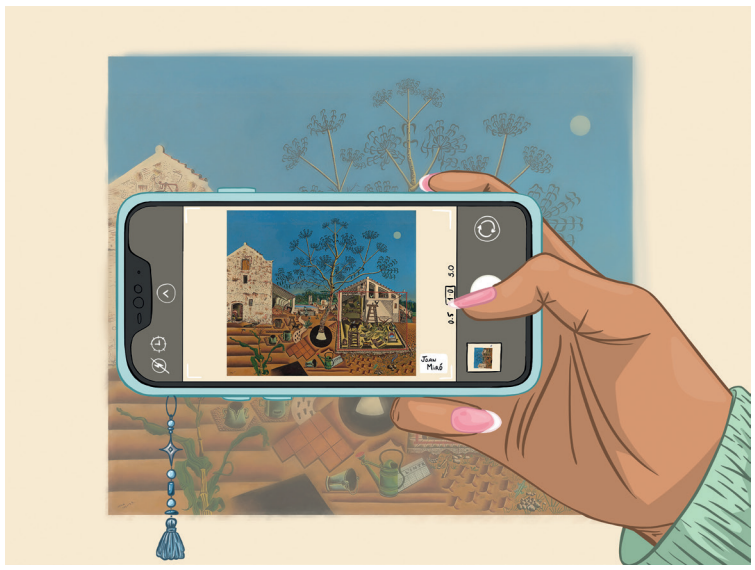
What all of this suggests is that the language of intoxication, like the language of sex, offers a small but telling window into how people navigate status, self-presentation, and social comfort. Whether one is "cronked" or "four sheets to the wind," "merry" or "with the fairies," the choice is never entirely neutral. It reveals, if not exactly where one stands, then at least where one thinks one stands, or where one would quite like to be seen standing, ideally with a drink in hand and just enough linguistic distance to make the whole thing seem intentional.

Illustration from Artvee

Why You Want to Photograph Art

ILENA DAY-DELL'OLIO
Relic Writer

In the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, I stood in front of Van Gogh, who was blue and post-impressionistic. The green of his eyes, like the green that rimmed his hat, brought out the red hues of his cheeks, lips, and ears. The thick brushstrokes gave so much movement to the portrait that, for a moment, he felt alive. You could almost see the paintbrush and Van Gogh's accompanying hand gestures. I cried. A woman asked me to move out of the way, which was fair enough given I was standing right in front of the painting and had been doing so for ten minutes. I stood off to the side where a girl was editing her Instagram story of the Van Gogh, undecided about what filter to use. The woman took a photo and left, having seen the painting almost entirely through her phone. Safe to say, the tears had subsided. Well ... what the hell had just happened, and why?



"Esse est percipi," wrote Bishop George Berkeley in his 1710 work *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, which translates roughly to: "to be is to be perceived." Berkeley resolved this with an omniscient God who perceives us into being, but where does this leave us in the secular age? What Berkeley could not have foreseen was Instagram — a platform where followers, not God, perceive a curated selection of our lives. Not as omniscient as the real deal, but maybe that's for the best.

In history, we've largely never wanted to see art, but wanted to be seen seeing it, or so was the case for the upper echelons of society. "Conspicuous consumption," coined by sociologist Thorstein Veblen, describes consumption as a display of wealth and status. Though this could apply to some guy's Lamborghini going 80mph down North Street, it also applies to Tudor aristocrats who chose the worst seats in the Globe Theatre, facing the audience rather than the stage to be seen, or to those invited to the Paris Salon, where presence and taste became tools of distinction amongst the elite. Whilst Instagram posts of artworks similarly proclaim, "Look! I was here — I'm *very* into art, as you can see," most of these photos now gather digital dust on your camera roll. Here, art is less about perception than possession. A photo becomes a souvenir, more personal than a fridge magnet from the gift shop, but not quite personal enough to survive a camera roll purge when storage runs low. Partly to blame are institutions that encourage a speed-dating approach to art. I know I would rather take a zoomed-in photo than be part of the Mona Lisa mosh pit. Brian Eno's 2018 exhibition, *77 Million Paintings*, sought to counter this by designing a gallery with enough sofas to prioritise slower artistic engagement, challenging the speed and schedules of its audience. The last time I visited the National in Edinburgh, I noticed a girl seated on one of the gallery's folding portable stools, sketching a sculpture before her. It was art inspiring art, and it suggests that being moved by art should have a bit more to show for itself than just photographic evidence that you were there.

But what if you're not much of an artist, or don't plan on crying over a painting? You could just take a picture of the plaque; you'll likely forget which painting it belongs to, forcing you to look it up and maybe learn more about the history of the artwork, its movement, and the artist. If you insist on photographing art, try including the people looking at it. Think about composition and framing. Bonus points if they mimic the artwork in pose or colour. Perhaps go the opposite way and give in to the urge of being perceived. Buy prints and put them on your living room wall against your landlord's wishes in a feeble attempt to resurrect Paris Salon culture, albeit with a bit more Blu Tack and a bit less elitism. Or do what I do and write about art in your student newspaper. We will never outgrow our need to be seen, so all we can do is spend more time with art, and in turn, give it the respect it deserves.

Illustration by Dasha Andreeva

Keeping Scottish Crafts Alive

RUBY LUHRMANN
Relic Writer

Growing up, I was instilled with a deep appreciation for crafting. At my grandmother's house, she dedicated a sunny side-room to 'making', calling the supply-covered table the 'making table.' On the table, she showed me how to embroider flowers and messages onto my favourite shirts. She let me pick out the shiniest yarn, always purple, and taught me basic knitting patterns. She coached me on collage techniques, turning old magazines into intricate designs awash with texture. Working with my hands in that way was soothing, and these days, amid the busyness of university life, I often find myself missing it. After speaking with peers, it has become clear that I am not the only one longing to pick crafting back up. And further research has revealed that there are widespread movements that have long encouraged, and continue to encourage, us to do just that.

Many of us recognise the name William Morris and are familiar with his work, but his leadership in the Arts and Crafts Movement is less widely known. Emerging in late-nineteenth-century Britain, the Arts and Crafts Movement was a reaction against industrialisation and mass production, pioneered by artists who sought to revive traditional handicrafts. Morris, among many other figures of the campaign, worked to promote traditional handicraft techniques over factory production, emphasising quality and nature-inspired design. Over a century later, fast-paced mass production is more prevalent than ever. In response, a renewed sense of urgency has revitalised the craft movement, embracing eco-friendly and sustainable practices, prioritising slow design, and supporting local artisans. Nowhere is this more evident than in Scotland, which has emerged as a vibrant hub for craft revival culture.



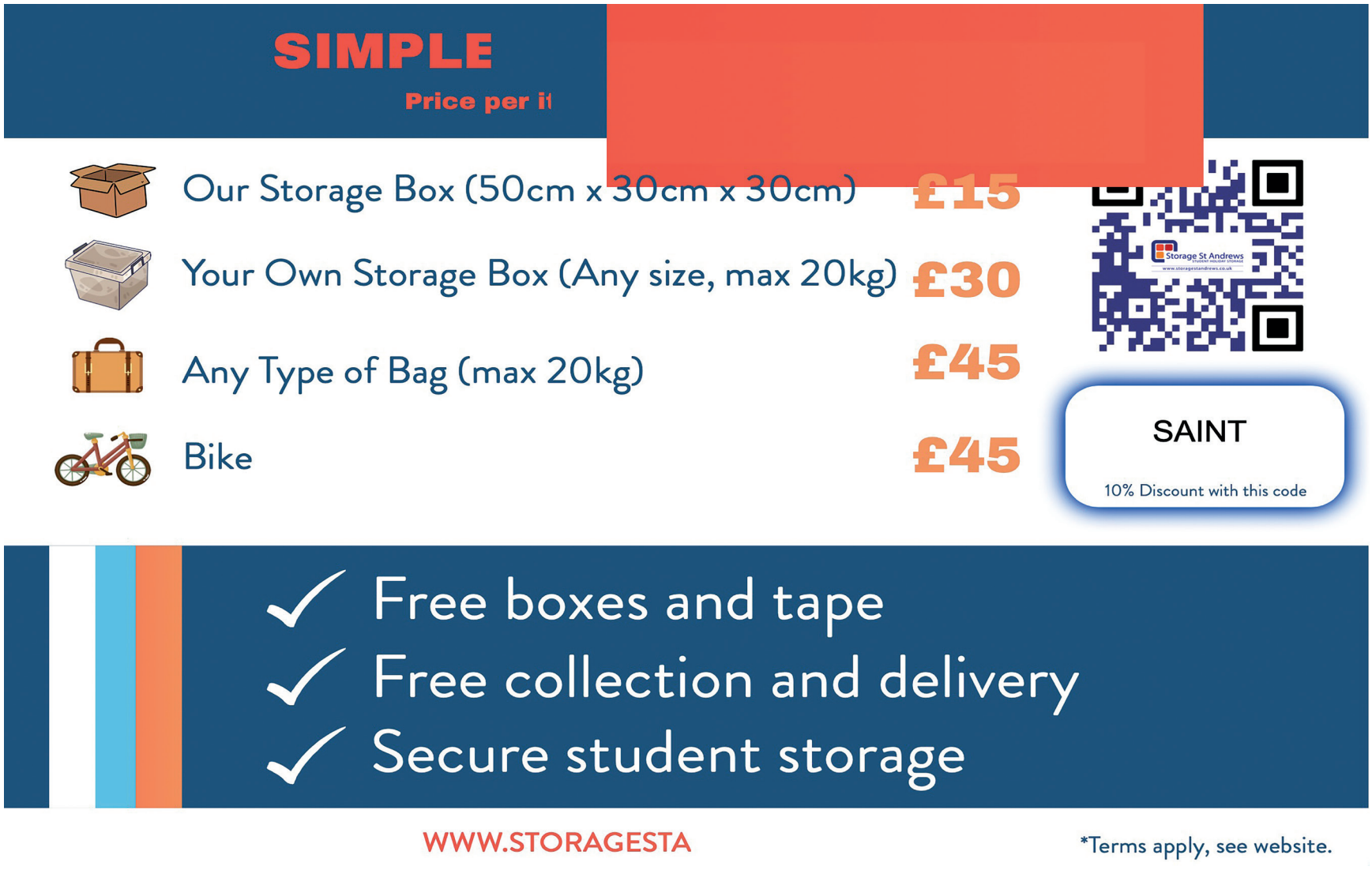
To better understand Scotland's efforts to preserve traditional crafts, it's helpful to look at the country's rich history of craftsmanship. Traditional crafts were originally practised out of necessity, as practical skills and trades with distinctive styles. Usually produced using local materials, these crafts were closely tied to their place of origin, making them important symbols of cultural heritage. Although functionality came first, many traditional crafts were imbued with expressiveness and creativity, depicting Scottish artists' enduring innovation. Among the most well-known traditional crafts are hand knitting, handloom weaving, Shetland lace knitting, felt-making, quilting, basketwork, and pottery. Beyond these skills, many of which are still being practised today, there are hundreds of less common traditional crafts. Heritage Crafts has classified many of these dwindling practices as critically endangered, indicating that they lack sufficient craftspeople to transmit the skills to the next generation.

In 2023, the organisations Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland, Creative Scotland, and Craft Scotland launched a survey to gain a better grasp of the current landscape of traditional craft makers in Scotland. The survey was launched shortly after Heritage Crafts released its list of endangered crafts, aiming to gather information to support the preservation and revitalisation of Scotland's traditional skills. Really Interesting Objects, a group of craft specialists, was commissioned to undertake the research and reach as many craft makers as possible. The director of Craft Scotland described the survey as an effort to sustain crafting skills, which are crucial to the vibrancy of Scotland's arts sector. The organisations aim to use the survey's findings to develop solutions preventing further decline in the traditional craft sector and to celebrate and share its value.

Beyond these organisations, local communities across Scotland are supporting the revitalisation of craft through grassroots efforts. Communities are initiating projects and local collectives to renew interest in traditional skills, focusing on connecting with cultural identity and embracing environmental sustainability. In Argyll and Bute, a community-focused event called Deep Roots has been launched, dedicated to reconnecting with land-based practices, including traditional craftmaking. The West Moss-side Art Collective in Stirlingshire has launched an initiative that brings together artists and makers to engage in basket making, weaving, knitting, and other traditional crafts.

On a more individual level, recent trends show a rise in hands-on hobbies like knitting, crochet, pottery, and weaving, particularly among younger people in the UK. Research suggests that crafts can be therapeutic, helping young people manage mental health challenges and digital fatigue by offering a slower, more mindful, and environmentally friendly activity. So, if you find yourself with free time and a desire to work with your hands, consider taking up a traditional Scottish craft — and in doing so, help keep it alive.

Image from Library of Congress



Behind the Scenes of Kate Kennedy's 100th Procession

MALI DELARGY
EVENTS WRITER

Last weekend marked the centenary of The Kate Kennedy Spring Procession, taking place on Saturday 18 April. As if by design, the anniversary coincided with the 300th issue of *The Saint*. With no shortage of milestones to celebrate, what better way to honour both than with an article?

I realised I knew very little about the procession, which is shocking (and almost unacceptable), since it sits at the heart of St Andrews' heritage. I was glad to find that The Kate Kennedy Club had organised a Historical Symposium at the Town Hall prior to the festivities. And so, on Thursday 16 April, that's where duty took me.

Before the presentations on offer, I wandered around a small exhibition room in which newspaper cuttings, costumes and cartoons were displayed, giving me a glimpse at the material history of the procession and a taste of what the evening had in store.

The speakers, presenting after a drinks reception, ranged from trustees to professors, discussing the history of St Andrews and the procession – from Popes to poems to pestilence. For those as little informed as I was, I should say that the centenary marks the 1926 return of the procession after it was banned in 1881.

The procession's roots lie in fifteenth-century legend, with the highly esteemed Kate Kennedy's visit to her uncle, Bishop Kennedy. Once a pagan ritual, the procession now celebrates Kate herself, who features as a character. The procession aims to promote town and gown relations while upholding an important St Andrews tradition.



Kate has traditionally been depicted by a man, with the first female 'Kate' appearing as late as 2022. The club has not been without controversy, having been accused of sexism, with the University severing ties in 2009 over the allegations. In 2012, women were admitted for the first time, ending over 80 years of exclusion.

The presentations included Dr Bess Rhodes describing the path Marie de Guise took through the town and the location of her feast with James V by the harbour. The next speaker discussed the £2 million in damages caused by Storm Babet, with £1 million raised in donations so far.

I learned about the different characters of the procession, including Joan Clarke (the first time I have heard the words famous and fishwife used in the same breath), Edward Jenner (inventor of the smallpox vaccine), Jean Paul Marat (revolutionary politician and theorist), Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (the first woman to matriculate at St Andrews, later removed), and Agnes Blackadder (first woman to graduate St Andrews with an MA).

These medieval characters were introduced by Professor David Sinclair, who mentioned that many medical degrees were awarded *in absentia* in receipt of a large sum. This seemed a strangely familiar concept!

The chair of The Kate Kennedy Trust, Martin Passmore, described historical receptions of the procession, citing one 1860s newspaper which called it "an excuse for making merry and wearing fancy dress," which is still undeniable. Passmore described the procession as "a harmless, amusing way to honour the memory" of Kate Kennedy, and emphasised the enduring importance of the St Andrews tradition, urging his audience to "think of that ... the exuberance of the Kate Kennedy Club."

The presentations, concluded by some lighthearted heckling and quite a few "hurrahs", were followed by a second drinks reception. For an event that invited anyone and everyone, had a casual dress code and cost only £5 to attend, there was definitely a memo to be missed. From the uniformed club members and the blazered alumni, I was very aware that I wasn't one of the gang. Even for a free drink, I didn't feel like hanging around.

While the club, famously prestigious and elusively elite, isn't to my personal taste, the Symposium made for a fascinating and informative evening. My very gappy knowledge was filled by an extremely qualified and passionate line-up, and I left appreciating the "exuberance" of the eccentric Kate Kennedy Spring Procession.

PHOTO BY DANIEL TOOMBS

Spring has Arrived, and so has Craft House

JOSS WILDGOOSE BULLOCH
INCOMING EVENTS EDITOR

"Put the band up on a stage, have some more people taking drugs in the corner — now *that's* a festival."

Such was my advice to the Craft House committee on my departure. Craft House is not, ordinarily, my scene. My usual Saturday afternoon tends to involve going for a sea swim or playing a spot of croquet, not maypoles or watercolour stations. And yet, somewhere between sipping my complimentary Jarritos and listening to The Macaronis play their fourth Radiohead song, I found I was actually enjoying myself.

Craft House has been an evolving brand over the past three years, and their spring garden party *Midsommar* was their big debut.. With 250 tickets sold — ranging in price from £9- to £20, this was their largest event yet. Proceeds went directly to their artists' fund, which students can apply to. Craft House is charitable, artsy, and well-priced, three things which rarely appear in the same sentence on the St Andrews events circuit.

It is worth pausing to examine what Craft House actually is, and what it is trying to do, because the two are not always obvious from the outset. The society has not had the decades of experience that Welly or Oktoberfest have had to cleanly and coherently define its identity. Born as an art gallery squeezed into a spare bedroom, it has spent three years quietly becoming something more ambitious, without yet having the name recognition or legacy that its older competitors on the circuit take for granted. Midsommar felt like a deliberate step towards something bigger, closing that gap. The Botanical Gardens compleimented the Midsommar theme, complete with maypole and the particular artsy-chinos energy of a spring afternoon. Craft House's event exemplified the fact that the society was working out, with some confidence, what it actually wants to be. If the collective can hold onto that and scale it up, there is a version of this event in a few years' time that will generate genuine envy among the older names on the circuit.

Another chronic issue with the events circuit is, frankly, there's often not a lot to do. Midsommar did not suffer from this malaise. One could wander around the art gallery, take in the usual scenery of an afternoon in the Botanical Gardens, try and fail at spikeball, scoff down some pizza, re-enact Year Four4 art class messing around with watercolours, or simply sit back on the grass and listen, as Five Card Draw played their spring Lo-Fi beats. Craft House, by actually giving attendees multiple things to do, has brought novelty to the events scene..

The challenge for Craft House has never been the quality of what they produce, but exposure — getting their name into rooms and conversations it hasn't yet reached. There was a particular species of attendee on Saturday who seemed faintly surprised to discover that what they were at was, in fact, rather good; that Craft House was, in fact, rather serious about what it does. At £9 minimum entry, with proceeds going to the artists' fund, the only real question is why more people weren't there.

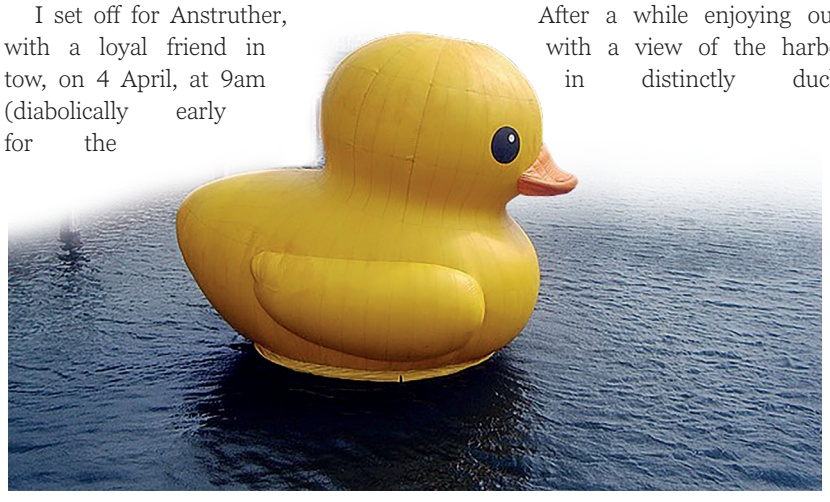
It tends to be a truism of the events scene that bad events are a lot easier to write about than good events — there's more to criticise and to condemn. With that in mind, this has been an excruciatingly difficult article to write.

Waddle it Take to Win? The Anstruther Duck Race

FLORENCE GILL
EVENTS WRITER

On a crisp spring morning in April, almost the entire town of Anstruther (or what seemed like it) assembled at the Dreel Burn to anxiously watch The Duck Race — where over a thousand bright yellow rubber ducks are launched into the river, and everyone watches with bated breath to see if their sponsored duck will win.

I set off for Anstruther, with a loyal friend in tow, on 4 April, at 9am (diabolically early for the first Saturday of Reading Week). Upon arriving, we found a quaint coffee shop to stock up on snacks and energy for the high-adrenaline event waiting for us. We debated whether we should sponsor a duck (£2 each, with all proceeds going to the Anstruther Improvement Association, which organises the event every year), but ultimately we didn't have time to stay for the prize-giving event, so we had to settle for just engaging in the general excitement of the race.



After a while enjoying our coffees with a view of the harbour, kids in distinctly duck-themed paraphernalia began to appear (a personal favourite being the toddlers with rubber duck deely-boppers, although the duck armbands and tutus were also excellent), and we knew it was time. Downing our drinks and saying goodbye to the lovely ladies in the café who had just asked us where the duck race was so they could "stay far away from all of that" — it was too "high energy and brightly coloured" for them, apparently — we rushed to follow the path of families in costumes to the race site. Despite being too late to get a prime spot on the bridge over the river, a kind lady with a pram saw our fluster and pointed us in the direction of another top spot, in a pub beer garden just around the corner. We settled into our viewing spot just in time to hear a cheer go up — we couldn't see anything yet, but assumed that meant that the ducks had been dispatched. A few minutes of anticipation later, the first of them began to appear along the stream.

I can't describe the energy as anything except electric, which may sound sarcastic, but I promise it's not. Gasps and shouts were heard from the crowd at the first few ducks, who fought an intense battle around the rapids and waterfalls (ok, fine, the faster-flowing streams and a few rocks). The atmosphere didn't dissipate once the winning duck had been caught and crowned either — neighbours in the crowds were chatting, kids were running wild, and other onlookers were anxiously waiting for a glimpse of their sponsored duck, presumably hoping that it wasn't stuck in the rocks further upstream.

Despite only being a twenty-minute drive from St Andrews, Anstruther (on the East Neuk of Fife) has a very different vibe from our University town. There's no doubt that a duck race would be popular here, but it would most likely be co-opted by students clutching cans of Tennent's and very few families with toddlers in tutus. Not that I'm against that — I'm always up for a cheeky tinnie at an event, and I think it would be a great way to raise money for charity (any societies up for it next year?). However, there was something uniquely wholesome about the whole community coming together for what was, fundamentally, the very unserious and whimsical event of watching rubber ducks float down a slow-moving stream!

IMAGE FROM WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

An *Udderly* Brilliant Day at Kinkell Byre

NATALIE CONTINI
EVENTS WRITER

There are worse ways to spend a sunny afternoon in St Andrews than lounging in a field sketching Highland cows.

A joint trip between the Art Society and the Highland Cow Society took a group of us just outside of town to Kinkell Byre, a venue many students recognise for its events but far fewer have experienced in daylight, let alone as part of a rewilding project. We were greeted by members of both societies and, most notably, Highland Cow Society committee member Finn Murray, whose enthusiasm for the land — and its residents — set the tone for the day.

Before long, we were introduced to two of the farm's more imposing figures: Findlay and Shortbread, the resident Highland cows. Despite their size, they seemed almost indifferent to our presence, far more interested in grazing than posing for the influx of students. As Finn explained, this grazing is precisely the point. The cows are part of a broader rewilding initiative, working to break up the dominance of grass and allow a more diverse range of plant life to emerge. It's a slow transformation, but one that promises to restore the land to something closer to its natural state, encouraging biodiversity and eventually more wildlife.

It's hard to imagine that the same land once functioned as an apple orchard.



Now functioning as an events venue that many students have had a drunken encounter with — perhaps not even knowing there were Highland cows in their midst. Kinkell Byre, tucked less than ten minutes away from the town centre, feels worlds away, and on the day we visited, it was almost offensively picturesque.

After our introductions to the show and the land, the focus shifted — fittingly — to art. We were welcomed into Kinkell Studios by Milla, who introduced us to the studio's ethos: creating work that is deeply connected to the surrounding environment. Offering a range of courses and workshops, the space felt less like a traditional studio and more like an extension of the landscape itself.

Armed with sketchbooks, watercolours, and varying degrees of artistic confidence, we headed back outside. This time, our subjects were Ginger and Coco, two Highland cows who proved far more cooperative muses than their male counterparts — holding poses that felt statuesque. The Art Society provided materials, and I situated myself with my watercolour set (I came prepared) with a full view of the cows, the vast sea creating their backdrop.

There is something disarmingly peaceful about painting outdoors, especially in a setting like this. With the sun out, the breeze just noticeable, and cows quietly grazing in the background, it was easy to forget about the looming deadlines or usual St Andrews routine. Around me, members of both societies seemed equally absorbed, whether sketching, chatting, or simply taking in the surroundings.

Credit is certainly due to the Highland Cow Society, a newly formed addition to the St Andrews roster, which initiated the collaboration. For a society in its first year, the event felt remarkably well-organised and thoughtfully put together. With one more event planned for the end of the academic year, they've set a strong precedent– and it's worth keeping an eye out for what they do next.

The day ended on an unexpectedly charming note: a lift back to town in a classic Land Rover, courtesy of Rory Fyfe, who somehow managed to fit an impressive number of us into the car before dropping us off on South Street.

All in all, it was one of those rare university events that manages to feel genuinely thought-through rather than just well-attended. It was also my first time seeing Highland cows up close– not as a postcard cliche, but as a part of a working and evolving landscape. While I've never been to an event by either society before, this collaboration made a strong case for both– an unlikely pairing on paper, maybe, but one that worked better than more standalone events manage to.

PHOTO BY NATALIE CONTINI

I Know You Are About to Yawn

EVA SCHILTON
SCI-TECH WRITER

Maybe not this exact second, but soon, just from having read the word, you might yawn. It is so contagious that it can be triggered by text alone, by the mere idea of one. It occurs across species: you can make a dog yawn by yawning at it, and chimpanzees catch yawns from strangers on a screen. Yet for all its universality, neuroscience cannot fully agree on why we do it. Yawning begins in the womb, survives into old age, and resists conscious suppression. It is one of the oldest things our brains do, but we still do not really understand it.

Yawning looks like the simplest thing in the world. In reality, it is a precisely orchestrated event; triggered by the hypothalamus, shaped by dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin, and executed through a coordinated sequence of cranial nerves and muscle groups that evolution has conserved for hundreds of millions of years. Its functions run deeper than an aid for ventilation: current research links yawning to brain cooling, shifts in arousal, and a form of social contagion so powerful it tracks with empathy.

An urge to yawn originates deep in the brain. Two structures are central: the hypothalamus and the brainstem. Within the hypothalamus, one region stands out — the paraventricular nucleus, or PVN. Animal studies have shown that directly stimulating the PVN reliably triggers yawning, suggesting this cluster of neurons acts kind of like a switch for the reflex. The brainstem, on the other hand, contributes through the reticular formation, a sprawling network of neurons that regulates wakefulness and arousal. Together, these two structures coordinate the full motor sequence: the slow drop of the jaw, the deep intake, the stretch, and finally, the yawn.

The brain-cooling hypothesis reframes yawning as a form of homeostasis, or internal climate control. When we yawn, the jaw stretches wide, cool air rushes in, and blood flowing to the brain drops slightly in temperature — a small adjustment that may prevent the kind of overheating that impairs cognitive function. It sounds almost too procedural, but the experimental evidence holds up. Yawning increases in warm environments and after intense mental effort, and decreases when ambient temperatures are cool.

Contagious yawning is one of the strangest yet most informative social reflexes we have. The simple act of watching someone yawn triggers the same response in the observer, and the mechanism appears to run through the mirror neuron system: the same neural circuitry that underlies imitation, empathy, and the basic capacity to model another person's inner state. When you catch a yawn, your brain is, in some way, joining someone else's experience. The empathy link has empirical support. Studies show that individuals who score higher on empathy measures are more susceptible to contagious yawning. Research on autism, a condition associated with differences in social cognition, has instead found reduced responses. The behaviour also appears in chimpanzees and dogs, pointing to deep evolutionary roots: such a phenomenon may be less a social nicety than an ancient bonding signal, a way of keeping a group neurologically in sync.

Yawning becomes clinically interesting at its extremes. Pathological yawning, excessive, involuntary, and divorced from its usual triggers, has been documented in multiple sclerosis, where it may reflect disrupted thermoregulatory signalling in a damaged nervous system. It appears in migraines, in the early stages of epileptic seizures, and as a surprisingly common side effect of antidepressants, where serotonin modulation appears to disinhibit the yawning circuit. This pharmacological footprint is particularly telling: the fact that manipulating serotonin levels reliably alters yawning frequency confirms that the reflex is deeply embedded in the brain's core regulatory systems. In this light, a sudden change in yawning pattern is not trivial; it may be one of the body's more legible signals that something in the central nervous system has shifted.

Yawning has spent centuries being misread as rudeness, laziness, or a mind that would rather be elsewhere. Neuroscience tells a different story: an ancient thermoregulatory reflex, a neurochemical cascade, a social signal older than language. The next time you try to suppress one in a lecture, know that you are suppressing something your brain has been doing since being in the womb.

Seeing Beyond the Rainbow

LOGAN SIBBALD
SCI-TECH WRITER

A recent study, published in the journal *Cellular and Molecular Life Sciences*, proposed a biological mechanism that may explain how dragonflies see near-infrared light — far surpassing the capacity of human vision. This ability, termed "super red vision," can also be found in other animals, such as butterflies and mantis shrimp. Looking across the rest of the animal kingdom, colour vision differs greatly between many species and ourselves.



While humans have trichromatic vision (meaning we can see red, green, and blue), the vision of other mammals, like dogs, is dichromatic (only seeing blues and yellows). As such, the concept of human colour vision, to a dog, is analogous to our conceptualisation of dragonfly sight — how can we see through the eyes of something which perceives a different set of colours than we do?

To understand this, it is important to cover the basic physics of vision. Visible light constitutes a very small portion of the electromagnetic (EM) spectrum, with a wavelength ranging from 380 to 750 nanometres (nm). As the wavelength of visible light increases, you progress through the colours of the rainbow, with violet and red corresponding to the shortest and longest wavelengths, respectively. Beyond the range of visible light, you reach near-infrared from 780 to 2500 nm — and at the opposite end of the EM spectrum, ultraviolet light from 10 to 400 nm.

Mammals can visualise wavelengths of light through various types of photoreceptor cone cells in their eyes. Each cone is defined by the presence of a different form of a light-sensitive protein called opsin. Opsin converts the light energy entering the eye into a chemical signal, which is then sent to the brain and processed into a coloured image. As such, the number of different opsin proteins, and by extension cone cells, determines the vision system of the animal. As before, it follows that dichromats have two types of cones, whereas we humans possess three.

It is in insects like the dragonfly where things become complicated. In addition to their 360-degree vision and photoreceptor cells that are slightly different from ours, opsin proteins in dragonflies are far greater — believed to be between fifteen and 33. As such, they can perceive not just visible light, but also polarised light, ultraviolet, and near-infrared. In comparison, our eyesight seems rather pathetic, and therefore, comprehending what the world might look like through theirs becomes all the more intriguing ...

To see polarised light is to see with reduced glare. While our vision may be obscured by a reflective brightness covering the surface of a pond, for example, the dragonfly can make out the contents of the water. Inspecting a flower, dragonflies would see dots, lines, and traces across the petals — revealing trails of pollen and insectile footprints — whereas we would simply admire the block of visible colour. In terms of near-infrared (if you are a lover of nature documentaries or ghost hunting programmes), you will be familiar with night vision, where foliage is white, skies are black, and the haze of distant objects is reduced — unlike us, dragonflies do not require a special camera to see this.

Like any biological trait, the dragonfly's impressive vision system is not without purpose — it is an adaptation that has been specifically evolved. For example, their capacity to see near-infrared enables them to distinguish males and females during flight, permitting the selection of a suitable mate. With their perception of polarised light, finding a body of water suitable for egg-laying is simple.

In sum, dragonfly vision is a testament to the diversity and specialisation of the animal kingdom — something you might not appreciate just by looking.

ILLUSTRATION BY VERONICA SULLIVAN

Artemis II: Going Back to the Moon

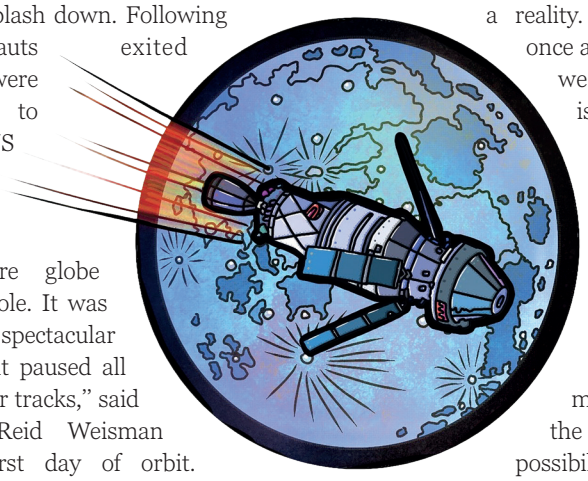
HANNAN ANJARWALLA
Sci-Tech Writer

The Artemis II space mission realises NASA's bid, since 1972, to put humans back on the moon. NASA's Apollo 17 programme in December 1972 marked the last human footsteps on the Moon — more than 50 years ago. Commander Reid Weisman, pilot Victor Glober, and mission specialists Christina Koch and Jeremy Hansen were the astronaut crew chosen to chart this next path beyond Earth's borders. The Artemis II mission aims to prove human spaceflight capabilities and pave the way for future lunar exploration.

The Artemis II rocket system was assembled at NASA's Kennedy Space Center from November 2020 to October 2025. The ten-day journey sent the crew more than 400,000 km from Earth on a looping trajectory that carried them around the moon's far side and back. Although Artemis II did not land on the Moon, it is a crucial step towards a planned 2028 landing, systematically testing spacecraft systems, mapping routes, and validating the data metrics future missions rely on.

The course had eight key steps. Lift-off from Florida occurred on 1 April at 6:35pm, with the rocket entering high Earth orbit. This orbit sits around 35,000 km above Earth and is used for long-term satellite observation and communication, including TV broadcasting and weather monitoring. The next step was Artemis II separating from its launcher, a portable device designed to protect the rocket's main capsule during launch. Following this, Artemis II's main engines — producing 8.8 million pounds of thrust at lift-off — sent the capsule into a lunar flyby, where it followed the moon's trajectory path without entering its orbit. These steps represented the outbound mission phase.

The inbound return phase began on day ten around 11:30 p.m., when the Artemis II capsule separated from its service module, a rocket component that provides essentials like oxygen, water, and power. The capsule then veered off its lunar trajectory, plunging toward the Earth's atmosphere at roughly 35 times the speed of sound, towards the splashdown site in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of San Diego. A planned communications blackout occurs during atmospheric re-entry, as the extreme speed heats and compresses air molecules into a superheated plasma layer that blocks signals.



At around midnight, the first parachutes were deployed, located in an upper body tube of the rocket motor. The parachutes slow down the craft, enabling it to safely descend and splash down. Following this, the astronauts exited the craft and were transferred to a waiting US transport dock ship.

"You can see the entire globe from pole to pole. It was the most spectacular moment, and it paused all four of us in our tracks," said Commander Reid Weisman during the first day of orbit.

The Artemis II mission reignited a widespread curiosity about life beyond Earth and whether humans one day could reach or even live on the moon. Set for 2028, Artemis V is expected to launch, marking NASA's push for long-term exploration of the moon with one crewed lunar landing per year. This refers to NASA's quest to build a 'moon economy' — a commercial ecosystem of services and industries designed to support lunar missions and sustain long-term human presence on the moon. What once belonged to science fiction magazines and comic strips is slowly becoming a reality. "Humanity has once again shown what we are capable of. It is your hopes for the future that carry us on this journey around the Moon," said Jeremy Hansen, representing a broader message about the scale of human possibility. Investing in space exploration lets us study the origins of Earth's history, while also imagining a future where life beyond Earth becomes possible.

Illustration by Isabelle Holloway

Stuck on Repeat?

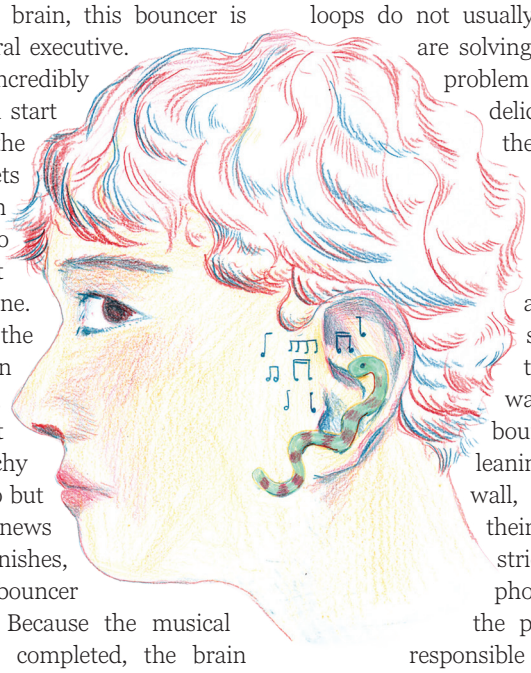
A melody on loop in your head? It's called involuntary music imagery

BHANI KAUR
Sci-Tech Writer

Have you ever found yourself trapped in a relentless, internal concert where the performer refuses to leave the stage? One minute you are minding your own business, and the next, a three-second snippet of a pop song is playing on loop behind your eyes. This phenomenon is known scientifically as Involuntary Musical Imagery, but most of us know it by its much more descriptive name: the earworm. To understand why your brain decides to host these uninvited musical guests, it helps to think of your mind as an exclusive, slightly chaotic nightclub.

> "If you hear a catchy chorus on the radio but the DJ cuts to the news before the song finishes, your internal bouncer becomes agitated."

Every nightclub needs a bouncer at the door to decide who gets in and who stays out. In your brain, this bouncer is known as the central executive. This bouncer is incredibly focused. When you start a task, it opens the velvet rope and lets in the information you need, refusing to close the guest list until the job is done. This quirk is called the Zeigarnik Effect. In the world of music, this means that if you hear a catchy chorus on the radio but the DJ cuts to the news before the song finishes, your internal bouncer becomes agitated. Because the musical sequence was not completed, the brain perceives it as an open loop, a guest who has entered the club but has not reached the dance floor yet. In a desperate, misguided attempt to find closure and 'finish' the song so the night can finally end, your brain replays that snippet over and over. Ironically, because we often only remember the catchiest bit, the bouncer never sees the song exit the building, and the cycle continues.



You might notice that these musical loops do not usually strike when you are solving a complex maths problem or writing a delicate email. Instead, they pounce when your brain is bored or exhausted. When you are performing low-attention tasks, such as walking to the shops or washing up, your bouncer is effectively leaning against the wall, scrolling through their phone. Without strict supervision, the phonological loop, the part of your brain responsible for processing sound, sneaks a record onto the turntable and starts playing it on repeat. Similarly, when you are incredibly stressed or cramming for an exam, your mental bouncer is simply too tired to intervene, leaving the door wide open for that annoying jingle to seize the spotlight and take over the sound system.

If you are currently being held hostage by a particularly sticky tune, there is a surprisingly simple way to evict the uninvited DJ: reach for a pack of chewing gum. It sounds like an old wives' tale, but research published in the *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* suggests it actually works. The reason is tied to how we 'hear' music in our heads. When an earworm is playing, you are not just listening; you are 'sub-vocally' mimicking the music. Your brain is essentially using the same motor pathways and muscles you would use to actually sing or speak the words, just on a microscopic, silent level. By chewing gum, you are essentially occupying the dance floor with a physical task. The brain cannot try to 'sing' the song if the equipment is already busy grinding away on a piece of minty rubber. It is a mechanical interference that breaks the internal playback.

So, the next time a song gets stuck in the gears of your mind, remember that your brain is simply a frustrated perfectionist trying to finish a melody. You can either listen to the full song to give that internal bouncer the closure they crave, or you can give your jaw a workout and force the club to close early. Either way, you do not have to hum 'Mr. Brightside' forever.

Illustration by Ramona Kirkham

Student Shines in Pro Golf Tournament

Judd Sundelson on playing in the DP World Tour

JOEY CHATAWAY
SPORT WRITER

The Saint spoke to St Andrews student Judd Sundelson, who competed on the DP World Tour in March. After winning the South African Amateur Championship, Sundelson qualified for the SA Open Championship, competing against some of the world's best professionals.

"It was my first professional event on the DP World Tour," Sundelson told *The Saint*. "It's slightly intimidating when you go from being one of the favourites in the amateur competition to someone no one has any expectations for."

"The level is obviously really high on the tour," he said. "The course setup was tough — much longer than the course we played at the SA Amateur — so there was a big emphasis on driving distance."

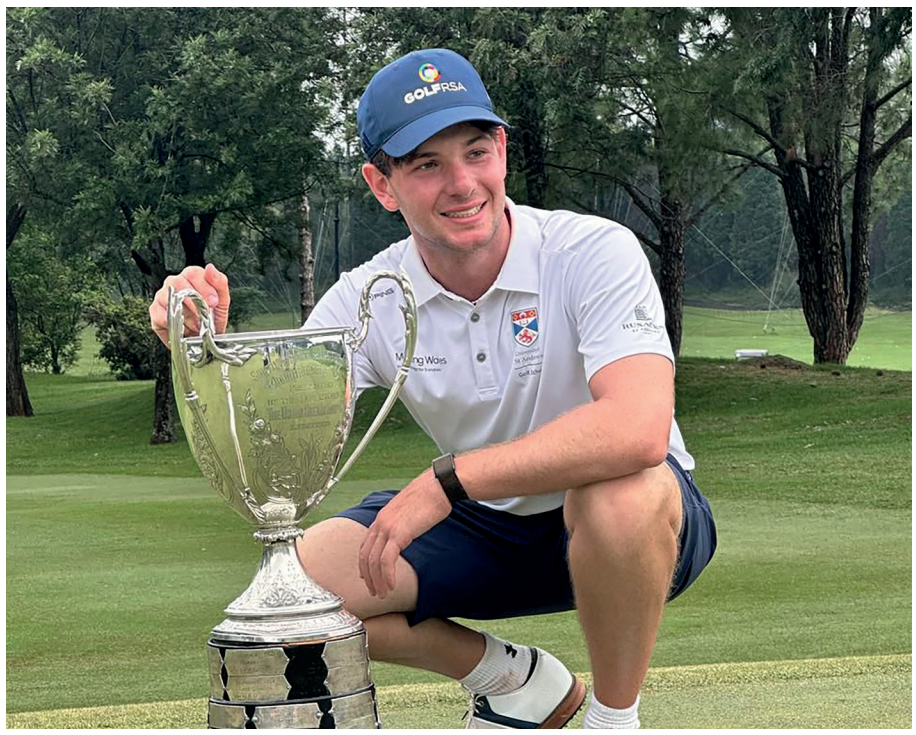
"Driving is one of the stronger aspects of my game," Sundelson explained. "My driver actually broke the night before the tournament, which added a bit of stress."

Sundelson ended up posting +7 over the first two days, missing the cut at +2. "Because of the level, you always have to be at your best," he said. "On the DP World Tour, you can't slip up. To stay in it, you have to play sublime golf the whole week."

Sundelson completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Nottingham before coming to St Andrews, where he is studying an MSc in Finance and Banking. In 2025, he won the R&A Student Tour Series Order of Merit, the premier competition on the university circuit.

He hopes to build on this first tour appearance and go pro a few months after finishing his studies.

"I think I just need to be more consistent," Sundelson said. "I need to carry on with more self-belief — belief in a long-term goal. I'm not fixated on instant results."



Even from a brief conversation with Sundelson, you get a real sense of his determination to succeed at a high level.

"Golf runs in my family," he said. "My grandfather was a great golfer. My dad was a great golfer, so I've always had that natural ability. Then it's just drive and hard work. I think I work harder than any golfer at the university. I want it a lot."

Balancing the demands of performance sport and university work is no easy task: Sundelson described his packed schedule, which consists of playing golf and training in the gym most days alongside his classes.

As well as training, the Master's student has had to take a lot of time off to play in tournaments both in the UK and overseas.

"The university has also been really kind and helpful. They've accommodated me with missing tutorials, and they've helped me get extensions when needed," he added. "The university has definitely played its part in supporting me."

Sundelson is part of the performance golf programme at St Andrews, which seeks to nurture elite athletes at the university. "We get good coaching here," he said. "I think the programme's just going to improve over the next couple of years, and you're going to see a lot of good golfers coming out of here."

The Links Trophy — St Andrews' biggest amateur tournament — is the next target in sight for Sundelson. "Obviously, I'll go in there with a level head and try to do my best, and see where I end up at the end of the week."

Before competing in the Links Trophy in June, he will represent the South African team at the Africa Region Five Golf Tournament in Eswatini next month. The team will then tour all the major amateur tournaments, including the British Amateur, hosted in Liverpool in the summer.

With the Open round the corner, it will be exciting to see how St Andrews' number one fares this summer and into his professional career. Great things are sure to come.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY JUDD SUNDELSON

BUCS Successes for St Andrews

GABRIELLA THOMAS
SPORT WRITER

It's been a successful year for Saints Sport in BUCS competitions, with victories across a wide range of sports, from basketball to archery.

The Boat Club enjoyed success in Newcastle earlier this year, medalling for the second year running. The Women's Championship Coxed Four finished third, while the Women's Championship Pair and Championship Double both placed sixth — a testament to their training.

"I get to see firsthand how driven all the athletes are and how much effort they put into improving every day," Caitlin Kelly, one of the club's coxswains, told *The Saint*. "It was really great to see our hard work pay off and to celebrate the successes of the weekend."

The Women's Water Polo team were crowned winners of the Scottish Tier 1 Competition, recording nine wins and only one loss. Their coach, Ian McCallum, who also coaches the GB men's team, has played a crucial role in their success.

"He's been with the team through good and bad seasons and has been a strong voice advocating for the club with the AU," captain Claire Douglas told *The Saint*. "I've been captain for two years now and have had so much fun watching the team both in and out of the pool. The senior members of the team create a great foundation."

The team scored an impressive 153 goals during the competition, conceding only 37 — a dominant performance that made them worthy winners.

The mixed fencing team were also named BUCS Team Champions after beating Oxford 122-117 at the finals in March.

"We're a small squad of six, so it was a real team effort," men's captain Anderson Bull said. "Different people stepped up in key moments to get us over the line."

Looking ahead, the team hopes to build on this success. "We are losing a couple of fencers at the end of the year, so there will be a bit of a build. The goal is definitely to build on this and push for back-to-back titles."

In archery, novice Amber Kennedy won the Novice Women's Recurve in the Northern Qualifier.

The Women's basketball team had an undefeated season, with an average point difference of 60. Their victory over Worcester at BUCS Big Wednesday felt inevitable, and they were crowned Trophy Champions.

The Men's Ultimate Frisbee team showed consistency, placing fourth in both the Indoor and Outdoor Nationals this year, while the Korfball team finished fifth in the BUCS National Trophy last month. The weightlifting team also saw success, with Hannah Chen placing first in her category and teammate Jack Fernando coming third in his.

Despite the successes already, the season is far from over. Some clubs, such as cricket, are yet to begin their BUCS matches. athletes is ready for their chance to compete. Yet more victories might be around the corner.

Whisteblowers: A Sunday Scandal

Referees are not showing up for the Sunday League

GREGOR MURRAY
Sport Writer

In an era where football is often overshadowed by online outrage over refereeing decisions, the University's Sunday League faces its own refereeing controversy. As opposed to the Premier League, it's not poor decisions, but a lack of referees to blow the whistle at all.

> "If it were free, I wouldn't be bothered, but we pay £265 a semester."

Sunday League teams pay the Athletic Union £265 per semester to take part in the competition, with 'all matches officiated', a promise made on the Saints Sport website. This semester, this has largely gone unmet. The vast majority of games have reportedly been played without a referee, leading to complaints from captains and protests over results. Matches on Sunday are meant to be officiated by players from the University's football club, with each team covering one set of fixtures per semester. The system is organised by the Football Club Vice-President, Dylan Ellins, with players expected to take on refereeing duties.

Last year, Director of Football Stuart Milne reminded players that "refereeing is a small responsibility — only once or twice per semester at most — yet it is crucial for the smooth running of matches." A £10 fine was introduced for no-shows, doubling if unpaid after a fortnight. The Football Club Vice-President has since confirmed that this fine system is no longer in place. Referees who cannot make their assigned match are simply told to find replacements, but without penalties, many simply don't show.

"Without a referee, decisions — instead of being objective — are based on who shouts the loudest," Matteo Veratelli, captain of Inter Sundays FC, told The Saint. "There is never anyone officially keeping time, meaning matches overrun." The lack of oversight has also disrupted scheduling and the overall running of the league.

"I don't think we've had one game this semester with a football club referee," said Chris Black, captain of Strokers. "The timekeeping has ruined a couple of games for us, too."

Spartans' vice-captain Nakul Gupta said only one of his side's matches had a referee this semester. "He did his job for the first half, then decided to play for the other team after half-time," Gupta said. Spartans lost the game 6-5 to Beavers in a result that has summed up the holders' season. "It is shameful that this was allowed to happen, especially because both sides agreed on what happened," he added.

With entry fees set and collected by the Athletic Union, responsibility for resolving the issue lies with them. Each match costs teams close to £40, making the league a significant expense for many students.

"If it were free, I wouldn't be bothered, but we pay £265 a semester as a team," BLFC captain Patrick Maitland said.

"People used to make a lot of noise about the lack of refs, but I think we've all given up hope now," Maitland, now a fourth-year, has become well accustomed to playing matches without officials.

The absence of referees has cast a cloud over what has otherwise been a compelling Sunday League season.

Typhoons Lose Johnny Wookey

REUBEN GRAVES
Sport Writer

St Andrews Typhoons captain Andy Benstead felt confident going into this year's Johnny Wookey Memorial Match against Edinburgh. With a squad that mixed experienced players and younger talent, he believed his side had a real chance.

Edinburgh Eagles went into the game in good form, sitting only one place above the Typhoons in the BUIHA table, the British universities' main ice hockey competition. It was always going to be a tough game.

Around a thousand St Andrews students piled onto buses at half six, Buzzballs in hand and Tennents already disappearing before bag checks. By the time they reached Fife Ice Arena in Kirkcaldy, they were in full voice.

A rendition of Loch Lomond got things going, followed by a moving tribute to Johnny Wookey, a former student and ice hockey player who passed away before graduating in 2012. Even though most people there had never met him, it was clear how much he still means to the club and the university.

In classic university sport fashion, there was a long delay as the referees had been given the wrong start time. The crowd were left to wait about half an hour before the game could begin. People were confused, restless, and making their feelings known. If anything, this added to the atmosphere. There were ironic cheers at puck drop when the match finally got underway.



The opening ten minutes were cagey, and loud cheers echoed around the arena every time a player smashed into the glass-screen, surrounding the ice.

Edinburgh were sharp and went 3-0 up in the first period. The Typhoons created chances but lacked the clinical finishing of their opponents. The second period was more promising for St Andrews, who clawed it back to 5-3.

Cameron Herr looked like the Typhoons' best player, but most of the crowd seemed more interested in the eight-foot beer snake forming in the stands than their peers' performance on the ice. Edinburgh came out 10-3 winners at full-time.

Despite the result, the atmosphere only improved throughout the match. More singing, more shouting, and even a bit of 'friendly' fighting on the ice added to the drama. By the end, the crowd cared less about the score and more about the occasion.

This is a tradition that clearly isn't going anywhere. Johnny Wookey will be remembered every year, and as Benstead said after the game, the freshers have now had a taste of it, and will want even more next year. I know I'll be back, and probably shouting even louder.

Photo by Reuben Graves

Sunday I'm in Love

BEN BAGLEY
Sport Editor

Sheffield Tuesday's winner-takes-all clash against DLL was the talking point heading into the final round of Sunday League games. With Botswana Meat Commission having already booked their place in next week's final, it was a straight shootout for the remaining spot.

DLL have been the surprise package this season, upsetting the likes of Spartans and showing a consistency that has kept them there or thereabouts all season.

After battling just to stay up last year, Sheffield Tuesday have mounted a serious charge this season. Their win over Strokers last week had things firmly in 'whisper it quietly' territory.

Their story has shades of Ghana's run at the 2010 World Cup. Fortunately, Luis Suarez was not on hand (no pun intended) to deny them on the Sports Centre astroturf this time, as they ran out 5-1 winners.

Botswana Meat Commission will certainly be the bookies' favourites after an invincible season, but Sheffield Tuesday go into the final in excellent form. Stranger things have happened.

It has been a frustrating campaign for the defending champions, but Spartans signed off in style with a 12-5 win over Strokers in a repeat of last semester's final.

Real Sosobad 10-5 defeat to Beavers confirmed their place in the second tier next season, while Butts Wynderers face a play-off against BPM to ensure survival.

I'm delighted to announce that I'll be handing over the keys to Freddie Coughlin, a true Sunday League merchant, leaving you, our valued readers, in the safest of hands.

As FIFA President and Donald Trump's lapdog Gianni Infantino once put it: "I don't care if Monday's blue; it's Sunday I'm in love."

DIVISION 1

Pos	Team	Pld	GD	Pts
1	Botswana MC	7	+26	21
2	Sheff Tues	7	-8	13
3	DLL	7	0	12
4	Spartans	7	+18	10
5	Beavers	7	-3	10
6	Strokers	7	-6	7
7	Butts Wynderers	7	-5	5
8	Real Sosobad	7	-20	2

Weekend Results

Beavers	10 - 5	Real Sosobad
Butts W	4 - 10	BMC
Sheff Tues	5 - 1	DLL
Spartans	12 - 5	Strokers

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