

DAME ALLAN'S Digest

APRIL 2022



Careers guidance from 'play-level to A Level'



PUPILS throughout the Schools benefited from the advice and guidance of many inspiring Allanians, parents, and business leaders who volunteered their time during another hugely successful careers week.

Regional director of the CBI, Sarah Glendinning; astrophysicist, Aine O'Brien; North East filmmaker and director, Krishna Muthurangu; and GP, Dr Georgina Cassie, were among alumni who kindly returned to Dame Allan's to share a wealth of experience, insight and information with pupils of all ages.

Many presentations, assemblies and workshops were planned for National Careers Week bolstering the continuous work being done to offer varied and informative career guidance to pupils throughout their time at school.

Bel Whitehouse, Head of Careers at Dame Allan's, said great careers advice is vital from 'play-level to A Level' to ensure pupils are ready for the world of further and higher education, and employment.

She said: "It's our job to open their eyes to the many opportunities available to them - to ensure they are never limited or held back when it comes to considering a future career. We proactively keep our career guidance as diverse and inspiring as possible, and we purposefully start at a very early age, and never really take our foot off the accelerator!"

The Schools fulfil the eight Gatsby benchmarks of good career guidance - offering a structured careers programme for all pupils, linking curriculum learning to careers, incorporating 'Find Your Future' activities into form time and PSHE education, and supporting work experience placements.

Career Ambassadors are appointed annually from Year 10 through to Year 13, and these students are responsible for mentoring younger students with GCSE choices, meeting and greeting visitors, and

supporting the various employer events throughout the academic calendar.

In March, Year 11s benefited from work experience mock interviews. Retired paediatrician Geoff Lawson, Performing Arts student Matthew Bell, Junior School Head Geoff Laidler and retired Deputy Head Bill Lomas were among the many Allanians who came to help interview pupils. Other representatives included the NHS, Coop, HMRC, the Institute of Chemistry, Willmott Dixon Construction, Credit Suisse, Universities and DfE Apprenticeship Service. Other alumni who returned to support the event included trainee solicitors Jenny Wilkes and Charlotte Gunn, designer Sabrina Oubanova, aerospace engineer Charlotte Keenan, teacher Sadaf Chaudry, meteorologist Eleanor Pinches and her brother Edward, a senior science communications officer.

Thanks should also go to the many parents who came to talk to Junior School pupils as part of the "Day in the Life of..." programme. These included Allanians, Dr David Ng, an emergency consultant at Northumbrian Specialist Emergency Care Hospital, and Jason Cook, a comedian and television writer.

Mrs Whitehouse, who spoke at the Westminster Forum, in London, on the importance of careers provision throughout all year groups, added: "Our alumni are a fantastic, powerful support for our present students. We are so grateful to those who return to the Schools to inspire future generations and help all pupils, from play-level to A Level, to realise the wealth of career possibilities available to them."



A welcome from the Principal

Pupils have made it through a long and very busy term, with everything from mock exams, music concerts and masses of sport, to dance and drama productions, trips and visits, with the prospect of so much more to come as the year continues.

It has been great to see so many children throughout the Schools embrace the increasing range of co-curricular opportunities available to them.

More than 120 pupils in Year 9 went on their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze expeditions and some 30 cadets attended a Royal Marines CCF camp. The Year 8 French Trip to Saint Omer - our first overseas excursion since the pandemic - is taking place in the holidays.

In the Juniors, we held our swimming gala for Years 1 to 6, a combined Arts production for Years 3 to 5, and our Year 6 residential trip to Wastwater - all fantastic new experiences for so many children.

As this academic year progresses, so too does our project at the north end of the Fenham site. It's been exciting for staff and pupils to now see the building practically springing up from the ground!

With the prospect of a proper exams season ahead in May and June for Years 11 and 13, we're set to complete much of a 'normal' school year - let's celebrate that simple pleasure!

Meanwhile, some time to rest over the holidays is important for everyone, even for exam years, so as to be fit and ready for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

May I wish you all a happy and refreshing Easter break.

Juniors take tour of North End Development



A GROUP of Year 6 pupils were given a special tour of the North End Development and learnt about its construction as part of National Careers Week.

Ten pupils from Dame Allan's Junior School visited the Senior School site to be shown around the £8m development by Gateshead-based contractors Tolent, now the steel framework is complete.

Dressed in high-vis jackets, hard hats and gloves, they walked around the perimeter of the construction site and learnt about the various contractors working on the large-scale development.

Junior School headteacher Geoff Laidler said: "It's been really exciting for the children to

see first-hand how the Senior School facilities are transforming, and learn about how this fantastic new building is being constructed."

The North End Development will see the creation of a large art department and 16 new classrooms, including three high-tech science laboratories and a suite of rooms for Modern Foreign Languages.

Principal Will Scott added: "The project is moving at a great pace and now the steels are up we are really seeing the building take shape. This is such a significant and exciting development in the history of the Schools, and it's nice to see how enthusiastic our younger pupils are about using it when they join the Senior School in September."

Charity thanks

We'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who supported the Schools' fundraising efforts for Ukraine.

A non-uniform day, sweet stall and cake sale helped raise an incredible £1,590.80 in aid of the Red Cross DEC Ukraine Appeal, and we'd like to give a special mention to the pupils in 8Z who made lovely 'Ribbons for Ukraine'.

Many of you generously supported the donations appeal, and we were able to deliver

two car loads of nappies, wipes, toiletries, and essentials to the Newcastle Polish Centre, in Elswick, destined for Ukraine.

Pupils continue to make us proud with their ongoing fundraising efforts. Well done to those in 7S who organised a bake sale and raised £129.85 for the West End Woman and Girls Centre, in Newcastle, and to pupils and staff who have helped raise funds for Age UK by knitting more than 130 little hats for Innocent smoothie bottles.

Magnificent performance

TALENTED Upper School pupils delighted audiences three nights in a row with their powerful and moving production of Noughts and Crosses.

The play followed the bitter-sweet love story of politician's daughter Sephy (played by Olamiji, Year 11) and rebel Callum (Joshua, Year 11), kept apart by bigotry, terrorism and injustice.

Noughts and Crosses - adapted from Malorie Blackman's best-selling novels, by arrangement with Nick Hern Books - is a set text for drama GCSE, and pupils felt strongly about the many themes it explores: racism, inequality, friendship and hope.

Isla and Emma, both Year 13, were brilliant assistant directors and stage managers.

Together with Kate in Year 10, they ran the production on the nights.

Head of Drama, Kristy Clark, said the cast put on a "magnificent performance."

"We have an exceptionally talented number of pupils in the Schools, and, despite the tragic nature of the play, directing it has been a delight due to the enthusiasm of our cast and crew," she said. "The limitations of the past two years have deprived the pupils of the experience of staging full-scale productions and, for many of our cast members, this is the first project of this kind they have ever been involved in. "They have been professional throughout, and grown into an extremely supportive and cohesive ensemble, who have been a joy to work with."



In conversation with.... Lee Kesson, Exams Officer



Tell us about your role:

One of the biggest misconceptions is that I only have work to do in May and June! In reality, while those two months are exceptionally busy, administering exams is a year-round task.

The day-to-day job depends very much on the time of year: in September through to February there is a lot of planning and some training, between December and March the focus is also on exam entries, and in the pre-exam period to May there is a lot of preparation, including the creation of timetables and the handling of confidential exam material.

Naturally, May and June tend to be the months I'm the first to arrive at school and one of the last to leave! The exam period is demanding and it's important everything runs smoothly. I have a team of eight invigilators who come in to supervise exams and I'm also dealing with inspection visits, special consideration and the despatch of papers.

The cycle finishes when I receive and issue exam results from the Awarding Bodies in August, then issue certificates and deal with post-results enquiries. Of course, in addition to external exams, I also handle the internal exams for Years 11, 12, and 13 in January and February, and run some University Entrance Exams in November.

Covid must have had a huge impact?

Working in a role that has very clearly defined black and white rules and regulations has meant that the past two years have been unprecedented for exams. New rules were being made by the government 'on the hoof' and often I'd hear of changes at the same time as students, parents and teachers.

I had to train on new systems to gather attainment data and, although students were not able to gain a true exam experience, they were able to achieve good results to move on to the next stage of their education.

What about now, are we back to normal?

We are getting there. A number of concessions have been made by the Awarding Bodies to recognise the disruption to learning and as a contingency, schools have still had to prepare for 'no-exams', in addition to preparing students for real exams this summer. However, I am hopeful and confident that they will go ahead, my team is trained up and ready to greet students into the exam halls this summer.

So, things are about to get busy?

Yes! It's not just Year 11 and 13 pupils who feel the impact of exams on school life, everyone is aware of their importance. To accommodate exams, I take over the Newsom Hall and several classrooms, teachers assist in exam supervision and pupils need to remember that when moving around school they avoid disrupting exams. My role is central to the success of examinations and subsequent results, and I enjoy rising to the challenge each time!

Of course, receiving an education at Dame Allan's is much more than just exam results and it's nice to be involved in other areas of school life. I was a Royal Navy reservist for 19 years, which included active service in the Middle East during the 2003 Iraq War, and working here has allowed me to don the uniform and be a member of the Schools' Royal Marines CCF contingent.

A weekly dose of happiness!



WEEKLY 'Wellbeing Wednesday' sessions and a furry new member of the Junior School pastoral care team are helping to promote positive mental health awareness among our younger pupils.

Teachers are using dedicated class time each week to focus on mental wellbeing and happiness, and to give pupils a chance to discuss their feelings, thoughts and emotions in a supportive environment.

The Junior School has also introduced Zumos - an online platform that provides support and resources to help improve the resilience, self-confidence and happiness of its users -

for pupils to use daily, both in the classroom and at home.

Alongside these measures, 8-year-old Border Terrier Poppy has joined the pastoral care team and attends each Wednesday to support pupils and enrich their learning environment.

Deputy head and Poppy's owner, Deborah Farren, said: "We recognise the importance of promoting positive mental health from a young age, and that means utilising as many tools as possible - be it an online resource, a group wellbeing session or on a one-on-one walk with Poppy - to help pupils have an awareness of their own feelings, and the ability to express them."

The Allanian Society

We were delighted to welcome over a hundred people to the Allanian Dinner in early April.

Attendees, including alumni, former and existing staff and governors, enjoyed a drinks reception featuring music played by talented Year 12 pupil Matthew. A number of our visitors enjoyed tours courtesy of our sixth formers, and Allanian Lynne Loose played a beautiful piano piece in memory of former Head of Music June Reed. June sadly passed away last year.

The event was the first Allanian Dinner hosted by the Schools since the appointment of Principal Will Scott and the time together enabled members of the Dame Allan's family to celebrate the historic achievements of the Schools as well as look ahead to a positive and fruitful future. Amongst the guests were Dr Margaret Wilkinson (widow of former Head Fred Wilkinson), Dr John Hind and retired teachers including Charlotte Houlton, Eric Smith and Bill Lomas.

We look forward to hosting the next Allanian dinner on Saturday 11 February 2023. This will form part of a week of activities on site celebrating the completion of the North End Development and will include an opportunity to learn more about and see this exciting new space.

Save the dates - forthcoming reunions

To find out more or to book your place call the Development Office on 0191 275 1500. Alternatively you can sign up via the Allanian website <https://theallaniansociety.co.uk/events> or by email to development@dameallans.co.uk

DAGS leavers reunion - 7 May 2022

London drinks - 23 June 2022

1982 leavers reunion - 1 Oct 2022

Allanian Dinner 2023 - 11 Feb 2023



Our Community Volunteers

Many of our Year 12 and 13 students volunteer as part of Dame Allan's extra-curricular community service programme. It allows them to gain experience while giving back to their local community.

Two future medics Andrew and Molly give their time to Gosforth-based Café Beam, run by Smile for Life Children's Charity, and support young people with various disabilities and learning difficulties.

Molly, who is taking A Levels in Biology, Chemistry and Maths, helps café workers to take orders and serve customers. She said: "It's such a great opportunity not just as work experience, but to expand my awareness and understanding of working in a team of people with differing needs."

"I think this is a particularly important stepping stone towards medicine as it involves helping and taking responsibility for others, while also improving my communication skills in a work environment."

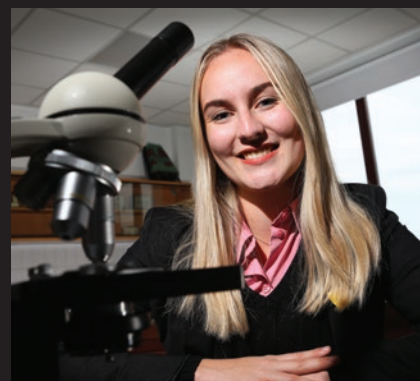
Andrew, who is taking A Levels in Biology, Chemistry and Economics, helps workers to develop key skills. He commented: "Volunteering supported my university

application to study medicine, but I enjoy my time there so much I want to continue working at Café Beam for as long as possible."

Aspiring microbiologist Eve chose to volunteer in the healthcare sector and secured a community service placement in the NHS with the Grove Medical Group, in Gosforth.

She gives her time to help people referred to Meet and Move, a rehabilitation group for those recovering after a fall or operation, and suffering from a general loss of mobility. She joins weekly sessions led by a physiotherapist and helps attendees with muscle-strengthening exercises.

"Volunteering has not only developed my social skills, but also really opened my eyes to how the pandemic has affected the elderly and more vulnerable," said Eve, who is taking A Levels in Chemistry, Biology and Geography.



"That's further strengthened my desire to work in the field of microbiology and be part of the next generation battling against disease and illness."

Sport Round Up

The term has continued with some excellent sporting achievements on the fields, pitches and courts.



Our KS4 and KS5 squash players all did exceptionally well to reach the England National Schools Squash Finals in March. A huge congratulations to the KS5 team who finished in second place, and to the KS4 team who came 5th.

The boys have continued to enjoy a great rugby season, and the Schools were delighted to host the inaugural Dame Allan's 7's. Our u16 and u13 teams celebrated victory in the Northumberland County 7's, while our u14 team shared the winning title with Newcastle School for Boys after a thrilling 10-10 draw in the final. The u13 team also won the Mowden Hall 7's tournament without conceding a try. It was great to see four of our Year 11 players - Tom, Charlie, Ollie and Jack - chosen by Newcastle Falcons Academy for a recent u16's festival.

In netball, the Junior School Year 5 players were crowned champions of the NHSG u10 Invitational Netball Tournament, while the combined Year 5 and 6 team finished third in the Tyne and Wear Netball Finals. The Juniors also celebrated success on the hockey pitches, with the Year 6 girls qualifying for the u11 England Hockey Area Finals.



In cross country, Year 6 runner Nick won the 'u11 Boys' Inter-Schools Cross Country Competition with an impressive sprint finish, and Charlotte, in Year 5, came 2nd in the 'u10 Girls' race. A special mention to Logan and Ethan, in Year 1, Evie in Year 2 and Anna in Year 3 who all won medals in a mini cross country event at Longridge Towers School.

It was fantastic to hold the House Cross Country race at Healey Estate after a three-year absence, with more than 150 pupils completing the extremely tough course. Congratulations to winners Will, Jack, Owen, Nikhita, Anna, Elizabeth, Ellie, Marina and Abi.



Recently, we put the spotlight on England junior badminton player Lucy, who trains up to 20 hours-a-week around her GCSE work. Lucy, in Year 10 was selected to play for England u15s in the European 8 Nations, having previously achieved gold medal success in her first appearance for the national u15 team.

The talented player has already attended two Badminton England Junior Pathway training camps this year and won two medals at a national u17 Gold tournament. Read about Lucy's success on the news page of the Dame Allan's Schools website.

Save the date Friday 20th May where we will be celebrating all the year's sporting achievements at our Sports Awards Dinner at the Eagles Arena.



NEWS IN BRIEF

HOUSE MUSIC

Well done to all the talented musicians who performed at this year's House Music Competition. Prizes were given to guitarist Maria in Year 7, singer Lettice in Year 11 and pianist Matthew in Year 12. Congratulations to Lettice, whose fantastic performance earned her the title of 'DAS Young Musician of the Year'.



REGIONAL WINNERS

Arwen, Imogen, Ben and Nasif celebrated incredible success at the English-Speaking Union (ESU) Churchill Public Speaking Competition, where they triumphed over five teams to be crowned winners of the regional final. The team will represent the North-East in the Grand Final at Churchill College, Cambridge, in May, and we wish them the best of luck.



YOUNG REPORTERS

Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have created some fantastic news articles, video reports, and

podcasts for the BBC Young Reporter competition and festival. The reports - linked to the theme 'Me and My World' - cover a wide range of fascinating topics, from fashion and sport, to heritage, prayer and mental health, and are available to view on the News section of the Dame Allan's website.

TRANSPORT

We were thrilled to hear such positive feedback about our latest transport booklet, which detailed all the different ways to travel to and from the Schools. We will be continuing to incentivise sustainable travel choices and improve the existing provision in the future. In the meantime, we would encourage you, where possible, to choose active travel choices and help the Schools become more sustainable. Can we please remind parents/guardians to avoid Fowberry Crescent, Bolbec Road and Bourne Avenue and be extra considerate to our neighbours.

DASPA

This term has been a busy one for DASPA. The end of the last half term saw us supporting a lunchtime Year 7-9 fashion show. DASPA provided the prizes for the event and took part in judging the fantastic show stopping entries. Several of the entries will be on display at the Summer Ball.

The Committee were also pleased to hold the DASPA Family Ceilidh, earlier in March. While numbers were limited due to Covid, all those who attended had a great time with many requesting a Ceilidh earlier than March next year... watch this space!

The event was enjoyed by everyone from new-borns to grandparents and really brought the Schools' community together. The evening was enhanced by the dancing showcase from the Schools' Irish Dancers from Kelly Hendry's School of Irish Dancing.

We wish them best of luck for the forthcoming World Championships.

Thanks to our Ceilidh Band Leader, Cathy and our music department for enabling this wonderful event.

We have also supported the Schools with refreshments at concerts and performances and helped with some of their charitable initiatives for Ukrainian refugees.

At our recent DASPA meeting we were able to support various funding requests including agreeing to purchase an AED machine, staging for school productions, exercise bikes, melting point measuring apparatus for chemistry and chefs' whites for the food technology department.

At the Junior School, we had a fantastic Harry Potter movie night and our Easter Party for Years 1 and 2 went swimmingly. Many thanks to all those involved. We are getting ready for our

annual summer fair which takes place from 12 noon to 2pm on Saturday 21st May at the Junior School. We'll be collecting donations from the Junior School the week before. If you're having a clear out of toys or general tombola things, please bear us in mind!

We have been thrilled by some of the generous donations for our raffle but we are always hoping for more. If you have any prizes to donate, please do get in touch.

Tickets for the DASPA Black Tie and Diamonds Ball, sponsored by Queensway Dental (at St James' Park on 18th June) are selling fast. Don't miss out on your chance to purchase tickets, please email daspa@dameallans.co.uk for more information. We are excited to announce that we have enhanced our event with the chance to win a diamond necklace on the evening, which has been kindly donated by Angelic Diamonds. Ongoing thanks to our other generous sponsors Queensway Dental and Vertu Motors.

Our regular uniform sales have been well attended and the events for the senior school (on the first Tuesday of the month at St James' and St Basil's at 8.45am) are proving to be a great place for parents and carers to meet.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Vanessa Morrell Chair of DASPA

Safeguarding at Dame Allan's

Fake news - what does it mean?

It is a fact that many pupils are exposed to information on the internet and within social media that may not be true, fair or accurate. It is increasingly difficult for young people to interpret such information appropriately and it can have detrimental effects if it is taken as received wisdom, believed and then disseminated further.

Fake news (false or heavily edited information), disinformation (false information deliberately created usually to harm individuals or groups) and misinformation (false information accidentally shared or created) as well as conspiracy theories (involving a combination of the above) are widely available on many platforms open to young people.

Platforms to be aware of

Social media platforms are, of course, great ways for young people to interact but can also be dangerous if used without privacy settings and appropriate supervision.

A popular platform is "Discord" which aims to link people with similar interests. Please note that the Apple recommended age rating for Discord is 17+ but it is still possible for under 17's to register and use the platform. We know from anecdotal evidence here at school that it is primarily used by those in the lower school. A useful guide on how to manage the platform safely is included here: <https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/esafety-news/parents-guide-to-discord-on-how-your-kids-can-use-it-safely/>

Sites which need no personal information to 'connect' with other users at all are particularly prolific in terms of the spreading of 'fake news' and conspiracy theories. 4 Chan is probably the most popular of these and is easily accessible by young people who are taking much of what is said on these sites as fact; much of which has its basis in extreme right wing, racist, and sexist ideology.

Information about 4 chan can be found here: <https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/news-blogs/what-is-4chan-and-why-is-it-controversial/>

Parental Forum 18th May

Gail Forbes, the Prevent Education Officer for Newcastle, will be coming into school to talk to parents about the issues raised in this digest. Her work focuses on the prevention of terrorism as well as helping parents to understand issues associated with children accessing extremism online, including conspiracy theories. We are hoping that a representative from the National Counter Terrorism Force at the Metropolitan Police will be available to talk to parents as well. This parental forum will be on 18 May at 6pm. A form will be sent to all parents for expressions of interest in attending this forum soon.

As always, we would advise that you keep talking to your child about what they are accessing online and supervising their access as appropriate to their age and their level of understanding and maturity.



DAME ALLAN'S SCHOOLS
building the future