

# DAME ALLAN'S Digest

MAY 2022



## A welcome from the Principal

What a busy first half of term we have had! With exams season in full swing now, it is impressive to see the calm and purposeful manner in which our Year 11 and 13 pupils have stepped up - very best of luck to them all. And while all of that is going on, we have had a huge range of co-curricular activities on the go. It is great to see your children embrace the opportunities to broaden their horizons or deepen their participation in school life, something which is so important for health and happiness. At the junior school, I'm particularly looking forward to their Lion King production - it should be a roaring success.

We celebrated a range of team and individual honours at our Sports Awards Dinner last week, a great occasion for recognising the star performances, of course, but also the efforts of so many who commit themselves to supporting their team-mates and giving their best in the spirit of sporting competition.

This year sees the 75th Anniversary of our membership of the Headmasters' & Headmistresses' Conference - HMC - a group of 300 successful independent schools in the UK and Ireland. During the pandemic, HMC has been an important voice in representing our schools, sharing some of the exceptional work we have been able to do for our pupils, and leading conversations on a range of issues from pupil wellbeing to exams disruption. We're proud of this association and the work that HMC has done on behalf of Dame Allan's and for every child in the country.

May I wish you a very enjoyable half term break with your families.

## Lord Lieutenant's Visit



**It was an honour to welcome the Lord-Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear, Mrs Susan Winfield, CVO, OBE, to the Schools in May.**

During an inspection of our CCF Royal Marines Contingent, she presented four cadets - Oscar, Sophie, Sam, and Toby - with promotional stripes on behalf of Her Majesty The Queen.

Contingent Commander, Captain Phil Wildsmith, said it

was a 'memorable moment' for the pupils. "Mrs Winfield made four promotions to cadets who have shown leadership and the Commando Spirit we prize so highly in RM Cadets," said Mr Wildsmith, Head of Boys' School.

Year 13 pupil, Cadet Sergeant Taylor, who last year was chosen to serve as a Lord-Lieutenant Cadet having displayed an exemplary devotion to duty in the RM Cadets, accompanied her on the visit. Mrs Winfield also gave a talk to a group of

keen historians in Year 7 at the Girls' School.

During a Q&A session, pupils asked some fascinating questions about her role as the first female Lord-Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear.

Mrs Winfield told us: "I very much enjoyed my visit to the Schools, both talking to the cadets about their many different experiences and challenges, and talking to the Year 7 historians about the history of the lieutenancy and the wide ranging nature of the current role."

## Top cadet earns his Bronze Wings

**Cadet corporal Dent, who joined the Schools' Combined Cadet Force in Year 9, earned his Bronze Wings and a top award at a special aviation course in Weymouth.**

He was one of just 20 cadets selected from hundreds of 15 to 17-year-olds nationwide who applied to take part in the Royal Navy aviation foundation course, and will now progress to the Silver Wings programme.

As part of the six-day programme, Toby spent a day at RNAS (Royal Naval Air Station)

Yeovilton, in Somerset, one of the busiest military airfields in the UK. There he visited 727 Naval Air Squadron and the Royal Navy Historic Flight charity, Navy Wings. At the end of the course, cadets completed a 120-mark test, in which Toby scored top marks and was named 'Best Cadet' at an awards ceremony.

Contingent Commander, Phil Wildsmith, said: "Toby is a very dedicated cadet who thoroughly deserved his place on the course.

"Being a cadet brings with it a wealth of opportunities and



the CCF provides a safe place for young people to develop and enjoy themselves, while undertaking challenging activities. In Toby's case, being a cadet could be the beginning of a great future in aviation."

# Letters from the past!



**In 2015, Junior School teacher Mr Brown tasked his Year 6 pupils with writing a letter to their future selves. He asked them to include information on their interests and friendships, and state their hopes and dreams for the future.**

The letters were sealed and have sat unopened for seven years as pupils have made their way through the Senior Schools.

Before embarking on their A Level study leave in May, Mr Brown gathered the group of pupils, now in Year 13, and presented them with their letters.

He said: "It was great to see how strong friendships have remained and to hear about their aspirations; the diverse range of courses that the pupils plan to do is a great reflection of the varied interests that Dame Allan's pupils have."

"Before they left, I reminded them of the words that adorn my classroom wall and the message I have promoted to every pupil I have taught: 'be the best you can be!' I have no doubt that they will all go on to achieve great things."

## LEAVERS' DANCE SHOW

**It was fantastic to watch our talented dancers on stage for another spectacular show before we bid farewell to Year 13 pupils this summer.**

After performing to the camera in bubbles last year, we welcomed a return to the live Leavers' Dance Show, with stand-out performances from all our dance companies, Jeune, Mezzo, Rogue Boys and Vizavis.

Many dancers wowed the audience at Newcastle's Dance City with their own work on stage, including Maisie, Grace and Anna who each performed their A Level Dance solo.

Jeune performed Maniac, while Mezzo danced to a piece influenced by old black and white movies, created by Allanian Kayleigh Oborka-Letman, and Rogue Boys shared a new piece by Mrs Waters, to music by ACDC! Vizavis performed works choreographed by Carly Woodhouse, Nev Campbell and Allanian Adam Park.

Mrs Turnbull, Head of Dance, said: "The Leavers' Dance Show is always extra-special because it highlights how gifted and talented our students really are. Our leavers - Louis, Jenna, Isabella, Erin, Grace, Katie, Anna and Maisie - closed the show on such a high, with a truly fantastic performance."



## Charitable Giving



**A huge thank you to the many pupils and families who have generously donated to various causes over recent weeks.**

FemSoc - the Schools' Feminist Society - organised a collection of sanitary products for - The Hygiene Bank, in Newcastle, after the charity came to give a talk to pupils about period poverty and stigma. A huge number of items have been donated, and The Hygiene Bank will distribute them to local schools in the West End area of Newcastle.

Pupils in 12 VT arranged a collection of unwanted football boots, which they then cleaned and donated to the Newcastle United Foundation. The boots will now be given out to children across Tyne and Wear who need them the most. The collection was such a success that pupils have decided to make it a permanent initiative and boots can be donated at any time of the year!



# In conversation with... Rachel Plummer, Personal Assistant to the Principal



## Tell us about your role:

It's incredibly varied, but my main responsibility is to ensure that, day-to-day, things are kept running smoothly and efficiently, so that the Principal is able to focus on the bigger picture, particularly the vision and strategy for the Schools. There are lots of exciting and ambitious plans ahead, in many different areas, so it's crucial that the background operations have strong foundations.

My role allows me to meet a lot of parents, and provide a friendly and helpful link to the Principal. I also enjoy welcoming many prospective parents to the Schools and arranging for them to see everything that DAS has to offer.

## You started in December, how have these first six months been?

Busy! My predecessor, Lorraine Stephenson, had held the role for 22 years, supporting three different principals during that time, so I have big shoes to fill. I'm fortunate to have been supported by two very experienced members of the office team, Honor McPhillips and Linda Penman, who have really taken me under their wing and shown me the ropes. I hope to be able to build on Mrs Stephenson's legacy and support DAS with a new era of opportunities and challenges over the years ahead.

## You bring a wealth of experience to the role though:

Yes, I've worked as a personal assistant for 10 years. Most recently I was the PA to the director of an organisation providing

educational programmes for international students, working overseas in Africa, the Caribbean and the US. Being a PA in any organisation is a complete mix of the day-to-day detail, discussing new ideas and looking for creative solutions, whilst always being a completely dependable confidant of those I work with. It's a role I truly love and thrive in.

## This is your first PA role within a school, how do you find this environment?

Dame Allan's has a great sense of community and I feel really fortunate that my position allows me to work with all the departments across the Schools, as well as with DASPA and the Allanian Society. I attended the Allanian Dinner in April and it was an amazing opportunity to meet many former pupils and staff, who I have heard so much about and who have made such an impact on the Schools. I loved my own school days, so it feels very special to be able to now work in such an environment, especially one as lovely as DAS, and I consider it a privilege to play my part in our students' school lives.

## Food, Feast and Famine

All Year 8 pupils took part in a 'Food, Feast and Famine' day organised by RPS (Religious and Philosophical Studies), Food Technology and OLED (Outdoor Leadership).



The aim of the event was to encourage students to consider the roles they play, and the choices they make, when it comes to food availability, trade, shortages and supply, both in the UK and overseas.

Split on separate days for DABS and DAGS, pupils took part in three interactive and fun workshops to further their learning:

- Trading Game: Pupils examined market forces and pressures, and considered poverty, debt, and innovation
- Cooking up a Feast: They made a delicious curry with naan bread, and discussed the role food plays in religious and secular festivals.
- Food Shortages and Staples: Pupils imagined life as refugees or residents of a shanty town, and used real case studies to explore the challenges people face trying to access food and fresh water.

Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the event and were able to reflect on their own lives and consider what they can do that may make a difference on a global scale.

# Sporting Success

**The Summer Term has already seen some fantastic sporting achievements among our pupils, not only at the recent Sport Awards, but also on the athletics grounds, cricket fields and rugby pitches.**

Congratulations to all those selected to play for the county rugby squads, including Isabel and Sian in Year 10, and Annabel in Year 9, who all deserve their places on the Northumberland Girls U15 team. Nathan and Thomas in Year 12 have been selected for the Northumberland Boys U17 rugby squad.

The cricket season is underway, with our U14 and U15 boys' teams both playing particularly well, achieving encouraging results and an unbeaten start. A special mention must go to Will, in Year 10, who played two outstanding innings in one week and achieved '25 not out' for the 1st XI

against Barnard Castle. We wish the boys well as they play their first round of county cup matches.

Well done to those Year 13 pupils who were recently awarded the first Senior Sports Colours for exceptional talent in sport. Those who received their caps, and will have their names on the honours board, were: Charlie, Will, James, and Dan for rugby; Marcus, Sam, Eric and Josh for football; and Areej for netball.

We have also enjoyed a great start to the athletics season. In the first round of the

ESAA track and field cup, our Inter Girls competitors finished first and are through to the 'A' regional final. Junior Boys and Junior Girls successfully qualified for the 'B' regional final.

Pupils continue to celebrate some fantastic personal achievements. Rugby star Charlie played for England in the U18 Six Nations Festival, scoring a try against Wales, while Lucy is now seeded 37 in the England Ladies Badminton rankings, and won the U17 Gold Girls Doubles, the highest level tournament in the country.

## SPORTS AWARDS



**It was fantastic to see pupils, parents, staff and guests gather together at the Dame Allan's Sports Awards, to share and celebrate the sporting successes of many talented individuals and teams over the academic year.**

Every sport was represented, with teams across all age groups applauded for their successes in hockey, netball, rugby, badminton, squash, basketball and cross country.

Individual honours and colours were given to the pupils throughout the Schools who have celebrated remarkable achievements in sport.

Will, in Year 8, was named Sportsman of the Year, while Ellie, in Year 11, was awarded Sportswoman of the Year. Director of Sport Leadership Awards were presented to James, in Year 13, and Rosie, in Year 11.



Alun Barlow, who joined the Schools in September as the new Director of Sport, said: "Thank you to the pupils for their dedication, commitment, good humour and outstanding sportsmanship, which sets Dame Allan's apart. It has been humbling, extremely enjoyable and breathtaking at times, to watch the pupils excel in their sport."

A special thanks to guest speaker Mark Wilson - England Rugby World Cup Finalist 2019 (23 Caps), Newcastle Falcons Captain and Blaydon RFC stalwart - who gave a fascinating insight into his professional rugby career.



# The Allanian Society



**We are very pleased to once again open our doors to reunion groups and we look forward to welcoming back as many Allanians as possible over the coming year.**

On 7th May the DAGS Class of 1971 returned to the Schools 50 years on for tea, scones and a tour. It was a thoroughly enjoyable event, best recounted in the words of one of the 'Old Girls' present:

"I had no idea what to expect when told we were being given a tour of our old stomping ground, but can honestly say, it far exceeded my expectations. It was fantastic to see all our remembered classrooms but the best part was being with our group of

old classmates. So many different memories were added to my own and it was also a great place to meet and break the ice for those of us who were feeling a bit nervous. A fantastic experience and hopefully one I won't forget!"

Planning is already underway for the Class of '82 reunion and we would also like to invite all other reunion groups with a 'Class of' ending in 2 to join a reunion event on 1st October.

A date will be set shortly for the Class of 2011, 2001, 1991, 1981, 1971, 1961 and 1951 reunions later this year, as well as all year groups ending in a 0. Next Spring we plan to host the '3' reunion year groups.

Keep an eye on the events section of our website to register your interest. If you would like to be the year group representative for your reunion, please get in touch with us at [development@dameallans.co.uk](mailto:development@dameallans.co.uk). It's always helpful to have a point of contact for gathering old friends.

## SAVE THE DATE - upcoming events

To find out more and book your place visit our website:

<https://theallaniansociety.co.uk/events> or contact the development office at [development@dameallans.co.uk](mailto:development@dameallans.co.uk) or 0191 275 1500.

**Tony Allan Memorial Lecture Series**  
31 May 2022

**A tour of St James' and St Basil's**  
9 June 2022

**London Drinks**  
24 June 2022

**Reunion for all year groups ending in 2**  
1 October 2022

**Allanian Dinner 2023**  
11 February 2023

## School Trips



**Pupils in Year 8 were fortunate enough to enjoy the Schools' first overseas trip since the pandemic during the Easter holiday.**

The 38 pupils from both DABS and DAGS travelled to the French town of Saint-Omer, in the Hauts-de-France region, and made the most of the many activities on offer. The busy trip involved a visit to a theme park, chocolate factory and snail farm, as well as paying their respects among the war graves at the Tyne Cot Cemetery and the Menin Gate at Ypres.

At the very end of last term, after a two year break and postponements due to Covid outbreaks, Year 6 pupils were able to go away for a residential visit once again.

Pupils in Year 6 experienced ghyll scrambling, canoeing, an adventure journey, the Tyrolean Traverse, orienteering and the shelter building challenge, amongst other activities at Wastwater.

Earlier this term, Year 12 geography students enjoyed a fieldtrip to the beautiful Lake District, in Cumbria. There they studied

human geography in Keswick and travelled to Easedale Tarn, near Grasmere, to look at glacial features in the landscape.



# DASPA

**DASPA had a brilliant Summer Fair, attended by more than 500 people, which raised over £3500. Thanks so much for all of your support. DASPA were pleased to support our DAS world challengers and Social Enterprise. It was wonderful to see the large family of Dame Allan's Schools coming together and fantastic to be able to hold this event once more! All raffle prizes have been allocated to the winners but if you have a query on the numbers please email [daspa@dameallans.co.uk](mailto:daspa@dameallans.co.uk).**

The DASPA Ball Committee are also busy finalising all our arrangements for our Black Tie and Diamond Ball sponsored by Queensway Dental. We have a great evening planned with some fantastic auction prizes. We also have a Diamond raffle where a diamond necklace donated by Angelic Diamonds will be won in a raffle on the night! We have lots of entertainment planned in the evening too. Thanks to our sponsors Queensway Dental and Vertu Motors.

This coming half term we will have parties for Year 6 (1st July) and Year 7 (29th June), grateful thanks for the support of staff who will enable these parties to happen. We're delighted that

Reception will get a film night this year and that we have been able to offer a 'normal' DASPA year for events. We're also pleased to announce that we have been able to give some financial support to the Year 13 Ball.

We have a coffee morning and senior uniform sale on 7th June and 5th July at St James' and St Basil's Church, Fenham (8.45am to 10.00am). We're also hosting coffee, tea and cake on the book return days for Years 11 and 13.

Many thanks for your support, email us at [daspa@dameallans.co.uk](mailto:daspa@dameallans.co.uk) if you'd like to get more involved.

*The DASPA Committee*

## Transport

As we continue to encourage active and sustainable travel to and from the Schools, we are proud to have achieved Green Level Modeshift STARS accreditation and are awaiting the approval of our application for the Bronze Award. However, there are still lots of areas where we can improve. We would greatly appreciate it if you could continue to help us do this by choosing active travel choices. If you are driving to the Schools, please make sure you do not block residents' drives or leave your engines running when picking up your child. We are still having isolated incidences of this occurring on Fowberry Crescent, Bolbec Road and Bourne Avenue, which, as I am sure you will understand, is upsetting our neighbours.

## GRAND FINALISTS

A huge congratulations to the Schools' talented public speaking team who represented the North-East in the Grand Final of the ESU-Churchill Public Speaking Competition. Speaker Arwen, questioner Imogen, chair Ben, and team reserve Nasif travelled to Cambridge to take part in the prestigious event. They formed one of 13 teams to reach the final, from 400 teams across England and Wales to enter the competition, and should feel very proud of their achievement. While there, they were treated to a tour of two colleges by former Head Boy and Head Girl, Georgie and Virginia.

## Changes to Speech Day

You should all now be aware of the changes to prize giving and Speech Day detailed in the Principal's latest letter emailed out to parents. We can't wait for our Summer term prize giving on 28 June at St James' and St Basil's Church and Speech Day on 14 September at the Sage.

We hope that, by making these changes, we will be able to better recognise the efforts and achievements of so many of our pupils, celebrating the great events and capturing the essence of what it means to be a member of the Dame Allan's family.

## Safeguarding at Dame Allan's

Thank you for the support we have received for the first senior school parental forum we hosted on 18 May on the topic of extremism online. A number of parents have expressed a keen interest in further sessions. If there is anything you would like us to cover in future forums, please let us know.

The use of social media as a communication tool has been widely aired in this Digest. As they grow older, pupils need continuing parental support to use social media platforms sensibly, appropriately and kindly. Pupils are taught about the positives

and negatives of such platforms including the very real criminal consequences of sharing indecent images.

Inappropriate comments and bullying online will always be treated with the utmost seriousness when it is brought to our attention.

There is a great deal of useful information on the CEOP site about socialising safely online as well as information on fake news, gaming and being a positive bystander. Please do look through this with your child and reinforce the messages that they receive from school about behaviour online: [CEOPS website](https://www.ceop.gov.uk).



**DAME ALLAN'S SCHOOLS**  
building the future

t: 0191 275 1500 e: [news@dameallans.co.uk](mailto:news@dameallans.co.uk) [www.dameallans.co.uk](http://www.dameallans.co.uk) [f](#) [t](#) [in](#)