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# LINK

*The newsletter for families  
of undergraduate students*

SEMESTER 2 ISSUE  
Summer 2022

# Welcome

Welcome to the second issue of *LINK* magazine in the 2021-2022 academic year.

As you'll see from the front cover, our students were delighted that May Dip – one of our unique St Andrews traditions – has returned after a two-year hiatus.

Like our students, we were also delighted to return to in-person business with the launch of the Sands: International Film Festival, the official opening of the Laidlaw Music Centre, events in New York and London with the Principal and Vice-Chancellor Professor Dame Sally Mapstone, and the Alumni Weekend, which featured both in-person and live-streamed events.

More than anything, we are looking forward to meeting many of you at the Class of 2022 graduation and Classes of 2020 and 2021 graduation celebration ceremonies in the newly refurbished Younger Hall later this month. You can **celebrate with a bespoke whisky** (read more on page 9) or **mark the event by inscribing a flagstone or a seat plaque** (read more on page 8).

In this edition we feature a truly historical event: the installation of Dr Leyla Hussein OBE, campaigner and global leader on gender rights, as the University's first female Black Rector.

We also have news about our impressive performance in the recently published Research Excellence Framework.

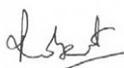
Most of the world watched in horror as Russia invaded Ukraine in February this year. **Read how the University community has responded to the invasion of Ukraine.**

Catherine Dunford recently joined the team as Alumni Relations and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Engagement Coordinator. She provides an update on progress and has some exciting news about a new Kaleidoscope Alumni Network, which will facilitate discussions about diversity.

Last – but definitely not least - read about the exclusive package we are offering parents, alumni and friends who are coming to the 150th Open – a not-to-be-missed opportunity!

We are looking forward to welcoming you back to St Andrews – whether at one of the graduation ceremonies or at The 150th Open.

With all best wishes,



Robert Fleming, Director of Development



## St Andrews welcomes its first female Black Rector



History was made on Friday 15 April when Dr Leyla Hussein OBE – campaigner and global leader on gender rights – was installed as the University’s first female Black Rector.

Dr Hussein – the University’s 54th Rector – was appointed by St Andrews students as their representative for a three-year term in November 2020. Due to the pandemic, however, she wasn’t able to come to St Andrews until this year for her ‘drag’ around town and official installation ceremony.

The Rector has been elected by the student body of St Andrews since 1858. As well as supporting students in a pastoral role, the Rector is also President of the University Court – the highest governing body of the University.

The Rector’s Drag is traditionally led and organised by students of the Rector’s Committee and gives the Rector the opportunity to meet students.

Dr Hussein was ‘dragged’ around town in an e-powered Triebike trishaw, which was officially introduced to the UK in 2018 by the pioneering charity Cycling Without Age Scotland.

She commented as follows:

“Two productive, educational and energising years into my term as Rector, I am honoured to be partaking in the storied traditions of the ‘Rector’s Drag’ and formal installation ceremony.

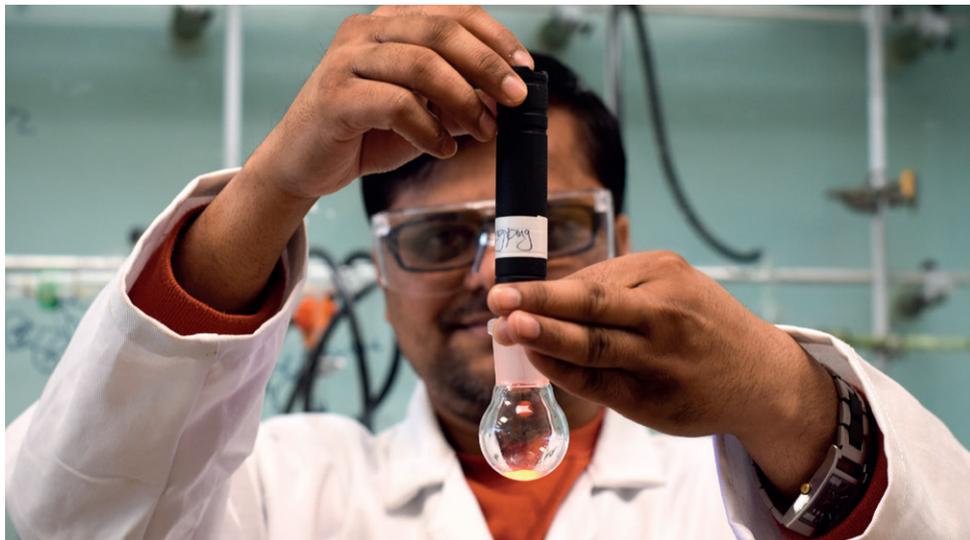
“As Rector, it is my greatest honour and responsibility to represent student voices at the highest levels of decision making at this historic University. The entirety of my term as Rector has been committed to support for student advocacy and activism and dedicated to the great structural change that such work contributes to.

“To each student at this University who is demanding greater support, accessibility and inclusivity, I truly admire your contributions to the St Andrews community and hope to continue supporting your work in my final year as your Rector.”

[Read the full story about the Rector’s installation](#)

[Read the full story about the Rector’s Drag](#)

## Research Excellence Framework



The Research Excellence Framework (REF) published on 12 May this year is a detailed analysis of the research strengths of all UK universities.

Although REF itself does not explicitly rank universities according to research strengths, the metrics it produces are widely used in the higher education sector and in the media to benchmark research performance.

The REF found that St Andrews excelled in key research areas including Physics, Earth Sciences, Art History, Anthropology and Modern Languages.

A joint submission for Chemistry with the University of Edinburgh was ranked first in the UK, based on the quality and breadth of its combined research.

Medicine, Psychology and Neuroscience, History and Mathematics and Statistics also performed strongly.

The research portfolio that St Andrews submitted for assessment explored diverse areas ranging from the presence of toxins in vaping products and new methods to tackle tuberculosis in developing countries, to improving the understanding of positive change in post-genocide Rwanda.

Principal and Vice-Chancellor Professor Dame Sally Mapstone DBE FRSE said:

“The overall quality of our research has increased significantly since the last REF in 2014, we have cause to celebrate the achievements of several of our Schools whose research is rated amongst the best in the UK, and the fact that over 88% of the research we produce in this small corner of Fife has been held to be world-leading or internationally excellent is a remarkable achievement.”

[Read the full story about the REF results](#)

## St Andrews stands with Ukraine



On 24 February 2022 much of the world looked on, horrified, as Russian troops invaded Ukraine. Here is how the University community responded.

### St Andrews stands with Ukraine

On 30 March, in direct response to the call from the President of Ukraine for worldwide rallies and protests against the war, staff and students and the local St Andrews community gathered at the University's Lower College Lawn. From there, they walked to the West Sands where they formed a line in the sand to show their opposition to the war and to the aggression of the Russian government.

[Read the full story on St Andrews standing in solidarity with Ukraine](#)

### Institute for the Study of War and Strategy (ISWS)

On 12 May, Professor Phillips O'Brien, Director of the Institute for the Study of War and Strategy (ISWS) gave a strategic overview of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in a conversation with Professor Stephen Gethins, Strategic Adviser in the Office of the Principal.

The Institute for the Study of War and Strategy was established in 2016 as an interdisciplinary research institute involving the Schools of International Relations and History and the Department of Philosophy. Its function is to conduct and facilitate research and public debate on issues of war and strategy.

[Watch the video of Professor O'Brien in conversation with Professor Gethins](#)

### Hardship Appeal

In anticipation of the need to support St Andrews students and staff affected by the invasion in Ukraine, the University immediately launched a Hardship Fund to assist with accommodation, living expenses and other incidentals that they are likely to face in the months ahead.

The University Community's response to these appeals was overwhelming: the Fund raised over £150K within the first week.

[Find out more about the Ukraine Hardship Fund](#)

## Introducing the Kaleidoscope Alumni Network – celebrating our ethnic diversity



The University is committed to improving and celebrating diversity in all aspects of its life and to empowering its whole community, including its alumni.

“As a truly international university, our ambition is to be a beacon of inclusivity. We will achieve this through an approach that empowers our whole community and involves a determined shift in culture. Inclusivity will inform all of our policies and practices.”

**Professor Dame Sally Mapstone DBE FRSE, Principal and Vice-Chancellor**

Discussions about diversity are ongoing around the University and we are not only listening but actively participating. We have a new position in Development that is focused on creating engagement opportunities for alumni, supporters and friends of the University across our ethnically diverse community. Our aim is to recognise and celebrate the significant contribution to society made by our alumni from minoritised communities and thereby to encourage them – and future generations of St Andrews alumni – to stay connected to the University and to each other.

To facilitate this and – taking inspiration from some initial conversations we have had while connecting and championing our ethnically diverse community – we are introducing the Kaleidoscope Alumni Network. The kaleidoscope (from the Greek kalos ‘beautiful’, eidos ‘form’ and skopós ‘watcher’) provides a fitting metaphor for the many different and complex perspectives of our combined cultural and lived experiences. Through a kaleidoscopic lens we can see and – using our agency – change form, patterns and relationships.

In a world where we are all being asked to reflect on what belonging means to us individually and collectively, we hope that our efforts to recognise and promote the diversity and full range of St Andrews alumni experiences will be supported by the entire global St Andrews community, including our Family Programme members – the parents and guardians of future alumni.

Please get in touch if you would like to make positive, intentional efforts to benefit all ethnicities within the global St Andrews community – including those different from your own. We would also love to hear from you if you have questions about the Kaleidoscope Alumni Network. As the network grows, we hope to have many conversations about what identity means in today’s world, as well as having some fun!

Contact Catherine Dunford, Alumni Relations and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Engagement Coordinator at [alumni@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@st-andrews.ac.uk)

**[Read more about the University’s strategy for equality, diversity and inclusion](#)**

## Alumni stories



Each month we feature alumni and student stories and experiences on our [Alumni updates](#) web pages and in our e-newsletter [St Andrews in the News](#).

From time to time there is a story that demonstrates just how much studying at St Andrews can change the trajectory of a person's life. Farkhodjon Israilov (MSc 2010) tells one such story. Studying at St Andrews ultimately led him to have a successful career in banking and reach the finals of the British Council Study UK Alumni Awards 2021-2022. We share his story here.

### **St Andrews: Living the dream**

My journey to the University of St Andrews began in Tashkent, Uzbekistan with my family.

My parents were engineers in the oil and gas industry. The collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, however, was a difficult time for educated people. After that, everything changed for my parents: their degrees were no longer valued, and their salaries were reduced to the extent that they could only afford to feed and dress us. But they never complained and continued to support me and my siblings in our studies because they understood the importance of education and the opportunities it could give us.

The new independent Uzbekistan came into existence in 1991. During the first few years this resulted in an initial drop in the standard of education in schools, and my parents had to work hard to pay for private classes to compensate for this. All the time I was at school my dream was to study in the UK, be successful in my career and make them proud of me.

[Read the whole of Farkhodjon's story](#)

# St Andrews in the news

Read about what's been happening this semester in and around the University.



## Professor Dame Sally Mapstone DBE FRSE

The Principal and Vice-Chancellor and three other members of staff at the University of St Andrews have been recognised in the Queen's Honours List 2022. Principal and Vice-Chancellor Sally Mapstone has been made a DBE, while Stephen Stewart (Director of Sport and Exercise), Dr Isobel Falconer (Reader, School of Mathematics & Statistics) and Claire Lavelle (Assistant Director, Student Services) have all received an MBE.

[Read more about University staff recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.](#)



## Saints Sport success

Saints Sport has had a number of notable successes this semester. Saints Golf recently won the BUCS national championship while the Saints Sport Tennis Club won two prestigious Tennis Scotland Awards. In addition, the University of St Andrews has been chosen to host a new rowing competition featuring the four nations which will take place this summer at East Sands.

[Read more about Saints Sport success.](#)



## Holm Oak in Queen's Platinum Jubilee Green Canopy

The iconic Holm Oak in St Mary's Quadrangle is one of 70 trees across the UK to have been selected to form part of the Queen's Green Canopy network in celebration of her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee. The trees were chosen to reflect a range of themes – Royal, history, children, education, literature/creative arts, science, conversation, communities, and health and wellbeing.

[Read more about the Holm Oak.](#)

## St Andrews in the news – continued



### St Andrews launches solar farm

The University's new solar farm – part of its strategy to achieve net zero by 2035 – was unveiled by Kate Forbes MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy, on her recent visit to Eden Campus. The solar development will provide electricity to the Campus and will reduce the University's overall carbon footprint by approximately 5%.

[Read more about the University's solar farm.](#)



### Official opening of the Laidlaw Music Centre

The Laidlaw Music Centre was officially opened at the beginning of April. To mark the occasion, donors to the project and members of the local St Andrews community were invited to performances by Diva Opera, Music Centre staff and student performers and Jamie MacDougall, one of Scotland's leading artists, who also hosted the Saturday afternoon event.

[Read more about the opening of the Laidlaw Music Centre.](#)



### Graduation and celebration ceremonies 2022

We can't wait to welcome you back to the Younger Hall in all its refurbished glory when the Classes of 2020, 2021 and 2022 will at last gather together with families, friends and supporters to celebrate their graduations.

Please note that you can commemorate this special occasion with an inscription on a flagstone outside the Younger Hall or with a seat plaque inside. [Find out more about commemorating the new Younger Hall.](#)

[Read more about summer graduation](#)

# “Class of” whisky

To celebrate the three graduations this year, the University has curated a unique whisky for each of the graduating classes of 2020, 2021 and 2022.

The single cask for each year will only produce around 300 bottles, with each bottle being uniquely numbered and costing £85. **These graduation whiskies are now available for pre-order** and will be available for collection during graduation at the graduation marquee. Alternatively, the bottle can be safely packaged and sent to you for an additional fee.

For further information, please visit the [University Shop](#) website.



# Live photo printing at graduation!

Is your student graduating this year? If so, stop off on your way to the graduation garden party and use our live photo printing facility. Every time you post a picture to Instagram and Twitter using **#SaintsGraduation** we will print it – live. It takes just 30 seconds. Prints are unlimited and are free for all graduation guests to take away as a unique souvenir.



**TAG #SaintsGraduation**

on any Instagram or Twitter photos  
and we will print them for FREE



## HOW?

Post your photos to Instagram or Twitter and tag **#SaintsGraduation**

\*Make sure your profile is public\*

## WHERE?

Photos will be available to collect for FREE from the Alumni Relations team at the graduation garden party

## WHEN?

Your photos will print instantly after they are posted and can be collected during your allocated garden party



# Are you coming to the 150th Open?



Calling all parents, alumni, friends and supporters: booking is now open for the supplementary programme of activities during the 150th Open at St Andrews 2022!

During this exciting week of exceptional University events, you will have the opportunity to play in our friendly golf competition on the spectacular **Kingsbarns Golf Links** and enjoy some unique University hospitality and experiences along the way.

We are delighted to announce that we will be hosting a **Golf Graduation ceremony** as part of the University of St Andrews Open Experience. Those booking tickets for the Open Experience, or who are playing in our tournament will receive priority tickets to the Ceremony, honouring Jack Nicklaus, Lee Trevino, José María Olazábal, Catriona Matthew, Sir Bob Charles, and Sandy Lyle.

Surplus proceeds from the programme will support the Robert T Jones Memorial Trust Scholarship.

## Find out more and book the Open experience

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Keep connected with our social media channels:

**Facebook**  
**Twitter**  
**Instagram**

**Saint Connect**

**Global Parents Group on Saint Connect**

Further information:  
Take a look at our **semester dates**

**View the latest news and other information about the University**

If you would like to support our community you can find more information on how to **donate to St Andrews here**, or contact: [develop@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:develop@st-andrews.ac.uk)

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