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LINK

The newsletter for families of undergraduate students



Semester 1 Issue
Winter 2024

Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of LINK magazine in 2024-2025.

We were delighted to start the academic year with news about our continued high rankings in the league tables: St Andrews was ranked first in Scotland and second in the UK in both *The Times* and *Sunday Times Good University Guide 2025* and the *Guardian University Guide 2025*, in addition to being named University of the Year for Student Experience in the new *Daily Mail University Guide 2025*.

It was a wonderful context within which to begin the new semester and to launch Making Waves: the Campaign for St Andrews. [Find out more about our Campaign here.](#)

The featured Family Programme member this issue is Lauren Lavelle, who describes her journey as a parent, and the impact she thinks that the development of 'New College' will have. We have the usual University news and updates from our Kaleidoscope Alumni Network and Annual Giving, and are delighted to introduce you to this year's Sabbatical Officers, who are elected to represent the student body. There's also information about upcoming in-person and online events.

If you're in town for graduation, golf or other events, then please pop in to see us – you're always welcome!

In the meantime, we hope you enjoy this latest issue and, as always, welcome your feedback.

I would like to wish you and yours all best wishes for 2025.



Robert Fleming

Director of Development



A quartet of awards

The University celebrated success in September when it was awarded high rankings in four league tables.

St Andrews was named Scottish University of the Year 2025 and University of the Year for Student Experience 2025 in **The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2025**. Overall the University was ranked second in the UK behind the London School of Economics, with Oxford and Cambridge ranked third and fourth respectively.

In the **Guardian University Guide 2025** St Andrews ranked top in Scotland and second overall in the UK.

The University was also named University of the Year for Student Experience in the new **Daily Mail University Guide 2025** while the results of the **National Student Survey 2024** showed that students at St Andrews are more positive about their education than students at any other mainstream university in the UK.

[Read more about our quartet of awards](#)



Celebrating success in the league tables!

Making Waves Campaign launch weekend

It was fantastic to see so many of you at our Making Waves Campaign launch weekend at the end of September. The Campaign aims to raise £300m in support of four key projects for St Andrews.

If you were able to join us, we hope you had a wonderful time.

If you didn't make the launch then look out for news of our international impact tours in [St Andrews in the News](#).

Meanwhile, we hope you will enjoy the following campaign videos and a photo gallery of the weekend.

- [Making Waves Campaign overview](#)
- [‘New College’ flythrough](#)
- [Digital Nexus flythrough](#)

[Photo gallery](#)

[Read more about Making Waves: The Campaign for St Andrews](#)



Students at the launch of the Making Waves Campaign

Family Programme – your stories

As Family Programme members you are a key part of our global University community. As such, we love to hear your stories and experiences of St Andrews while your student is here. In this issue Lauren Lavelle describes her journey as a Family Programme member, what resonates with her most about the Making Waves Campaign and the impact she thinks it will have on the University.



The Lavelle family

Journey as a Family Programme member

We became part of the St Andrews family in 2019 when my children decided to attend the University. As American parents accustomed to PTA type involvement, we immediately signed up for the St Andrews equivalent – the Family Programme. This programme provides parents with comprehensive access to all activities and events at St Andrews, as well as regular communications from the administration. It has been an invaluable resource, providing reassurance and a sense of connection while our children pursue their studies abroad. The Family Programme epitomises the inclusive and supportive community that St Andrews is renowned for, ensuring that parents feel as much a part of the University as their children do.

The Making Waves Campaign

The Campaign is an ambitious and transformative initiative that will elevate St Andrews in all the best ways: preserving its rich history and revered traditions while positioning it at the cutting edge of modern education. The Campaign's projects are set to enhance the University's infrastructure, faculty, and resources, ensuring that St Andrews remains a world leader in academic excellence while maintaining its centuries-steeped traditions. From state-of-the-art facilities to groundbreaking research opportunities, the Campaign is designed to foster an environment where students can thrive. We immediately recognised the importance of this effort and knew we had to contribute to its success.

A global leader in innovation and education

The new business school and other Campaign initiatives are poised to significantly impact the University, enhancing its reputation and ensuring its name is synonymous with academic excellence and innovation. No longer will St Andrews be known merely as the place where a future King studied or as the oldest university in Scotland; it will be celebrated as a global leader in innovation and education, maintaining its cherished traditions while advancing into the future. This recognition will benefit students immensely, enhancing their credentials and opportunities worldwide.

The achievement of being selected for, attending, and graduating from the University of St Andrews will be further amplified, positioning our graduates among the most sought-after and respected in the world.

Watch Lauren talking about the Making Waves Campaign

Email the editor at deveditorial@st-andrews.ac.uk if you would like to share a story about your experience of your student's key milestones at St Andrews or your journey as a Family Programme member.

Meet this year's Sabbs!



Left to right: Milo Hill, Cam Brown, Catriona Martin, Hitanshi Badani, Olivia King, Caitlin Ridgway

Here are this year's Sabbatical Officers – students who have been elected by their peers to represent them until June 2025. They are responsible for helping with all manner of student queries and activities.

[Find out more about our Sabbatical Officers below](#)



President

Cam Brown leads the Association as the main spokesperson for students.



Director of Student Development and Activities

Catriona Martin supports students with extra-curricular activities.



Director of Education

Hitanshi Badani represents students on matters relating to learning, teaching and research.



Director of Wellbeing and Equality

Caitlin Ridgway champions student health, diversity and inclusion.



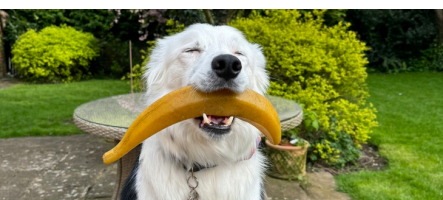
Director of Events and Services

Milo Hill designs and implements events for students by students.



Athletic Union President

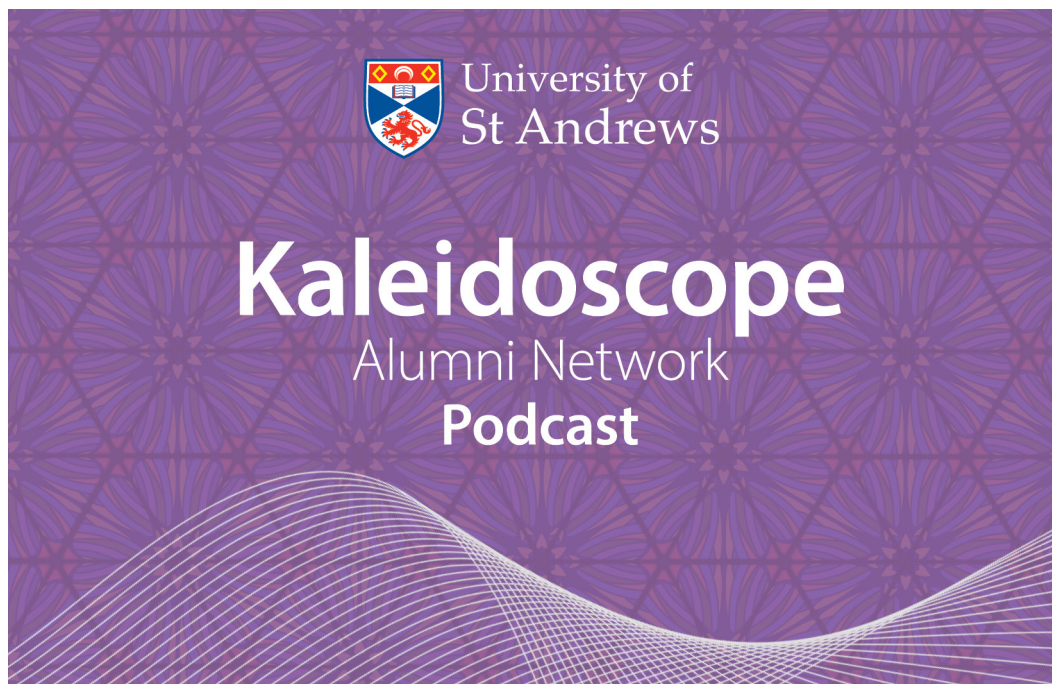
Olivia King leads and represents student sport.



And introducing the Director of Cuteness...

Inness offers support both to the Sabbs and to the wider community.

Introducing our Kaleidoscope Alumni Network podcast



Catherine Dunford, Alumni Relations and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Engagement Coordinator, introduces an exciting new initiative from the Kaleidoscope Alumni Network.

We were thrilled to announce the recent launch of our two [new podcast series](#) – *15 Minutes with...* and *Ad lib* – on Spotify. So what are they all about?

15 Minutes with...

This podcast series features colleagues from across the University. In season one, we've had the opportunity to showcase how they approach their work with inclusivity in mind.

The series began with [Ryan Patterson](#), who worked in the Careers Centre at the time of recording, followed by [Lesley Caldwell](#), Community Engagement and Social Responsibility Officer. Other featured colleagues include [Bill Shackman](#), one of our Assistant Chaplains; [Jonathan Kemp](#), a Teaching Fellow and Head of Music Technology; [Rita Tojeiro](#), a Reader in Astrophysics; and [Paul Gardner](#), a Senior Lecturer in Psychology and Neuroscience.

We hope you enjoy listening to them as much as we enjoyed recording them.

Ad Lib

Ad Lib is a series of conversations with and about alumni, with a focus on empowering alumni to share the narratives that matter the most to them. Some of you may already have listened to our first episode, Colonial Era Pipe Organs featuring [Jonathan Pinto](#) (MLitt 2022) and we're launching the series with the next episode, in conversation with [Tasnia Khandaker Prova](#) (MSc 2020). Tasnia discusses advocacy for street dogs and the cross-section of migration and conflict issues experienced by street animals, wildlife and people.

Over the next three months we'll have more alumni sharing their stories with us. You'll hear from [Steven Weathers](#) (MA 1995) charm us with tales of linguistic bravery and international entertainment, and [Juno Lee](#) (MA 2018) on lifelong entrepreneurship, with more to follow.

Real conversations, real change

These aren't simply discussions; they're calls to action. Our aim is to spark ideas, challenge assumptions, demonstrate authenticity and inspire all of us to be the agent of change for the collective.

Get involved!

Listen to the podcasts and send us your thoughts and feedback. Share them with your networks.

Join us on this journey! Get in touch and talk to us as we chart a course for the future of KAN. You might have an idea and/or a narrative to share. As an empowering community, we are open to those ideas and discussions as we create content – you can email us at stakan@st-andrews.ac.uk with your suggestions.

Thank you

Thanks to everyone who has helped to bring these podcasts to life. We are grateful for all the support and encouragement, with a special thank you to our colleagues – especially Chris Bragg, Jonathan Kemp and Udayan Meshram at the [Laidlaw Music Centre](#) – and at the [Careers Centre](#) – especially Michelle Stewart and Rachel McEwen – for supporting and funding a postgraduate internship for [Kimberly Rampasan](#) (MSc 2024), who was involved in the editing of these podcasts.

Thank you for being a part of this incredible community. Your voice matters, and we're excited to continue this journey together.



Tasnia Khandaker Prova (MSc 2020)



Steven Weathers (MA 1995)

10th anniversary of the Laidlaw Scholars Programme



Celebrating ten years of the Laidlaw Scholars Programme

We recently celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Laidlaw Scholars Programme for Leadership and Research at the University of St Andrews. This wonderful initiative was made possible through a generous donation by Lord Irvine Laidlaw of Rothiemay and administered by what is now the Laidlaw Foundation.

The University of St Andrews was one of the first universities in the world to offer Laidlaw Scholarships. We launched the programme in 2014 with the aim of offering students an opportunity to develop critical research skills and to grow their leadership capacities.

Today, the programme runs over two years and offers bespoke, ethical leadership training; an immersive overseas experience; global networking opportunities; and so much more. Laidlaw Scholars are now also part of an ever-expanding international network of leading academic institutions who offer the Laidlaw Scholars Programme worldwide. As noted by Laidlaw Scholars themselves in this special anniversary brochure, it is a life-changing experience that propels our students to new heights.

The Laidlaw Scholars Programme is dedicated to developing a new generation of leaders who combine strong research skills with a commitment to ethical leadership and data-driven decision-making. It does so by investing in passionate undergraduate students, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and experiences to become active global citizens and leaders in their chosen fields.

To quote Lord Laidlaw himself, the aim of this unique and formative programme is 'to equip self-motivated and ambitious undergraduate students with the knowledge and skills to become future leaders'.

[Find out more about the Laidlaw Scholars Programme for Leadership and Research](#)



Alison with her father in Wellington in 1997

Each month we publish stories about the many and varied paths that our graduates have gone on to follow and the impact that studying at St Andrews has had on their lives. We feature these in our e-newsletter *St Andrews in the News*.

In one of our most recent stories Alison Payne (BSc 1982) describes how she followed in her father's footsteps to study medicine at St Andrews, what it's like to live 'off grid' on the other side of the world and why she chose to give back to support future students.

Medicine without borders: from global adventures to giving back

My father – Leonard Robert (Bob) Payne (MB ChB 1957) – was born in Handsworth, Birmingham, in 1920 – the middle of three children. After a first degree in Physics and a career with Dunlop, myopia prevented him from taking on active wartime service and he was sent to Latin America. There, he was based in Lima and tasked with seeking alternative sources of rubber due to the Japanese occupation of Malaysia.

Intrepid trips up the Amazon with rubber tappers were balanced by an active and varied social life. He visited a completely deserted Machu Picchu in 1945. He also became fluent in Spanish, and introduced me, too, to the language and to Hispanic culture.

A post-war move to Medicine

In the post-war years that followed, my father chose medicine over the church (he was a devout Christian) and studied at the Universities of St Andrews and Dundee. In 1959, he met and married my Aberdonian staff nurse mother while working at Arbroath Infirmary, before moving south of the border once more to join a GP partnership in Coventry.

My early memories are of him working long hours there. He particularly loved maternity work and occupational health. His speciality was heavy metal poisoning.

As a GP's daughter, I grew up surrounded by medical journals and was fascinated by my dad's work and my parents' medical discussions. Ever fond of his alma mater, we spent our summer holidays in St Andrews, where we stayed in University accommodation – including John Burnett, Andrew Melville and David Russell halls.

I worked hard at school, and it seemed logical to me that I should go on to study at a University I knew, in a country that had become my second home.

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



Living off-grid in New Zealand

Making Waves with collective giving



We are thrilled that so many of you have joined us in celebrating our numerous outstanding rankings this year.

These endorsements don't just happen by accident. By supporting the University, our global St Andrews family has helped us to create and develop the unique environment of excellence that we are known for in St Andrews, and which underpins our future ambitions. As the Principal states in her recent mailing to Family Programme members:

'We have strategically channelled our funds to build for the future and support the experiences of our current students and staff. We have also made key decisions based on the five themes of our University Strategy for 2022-2027: World-leading St Andrews, Diverse St Andrews, Sustainable St Andrews, Entrepreneurial St Andrews, and Digital St Andrews.

'Our new Making Waves Campaign supports the realisation of this Strategy by fostering world-class research, educating future leaders, and attracting and nurturing the brightest minds from around the world.'

Since the launch of the Making Waves Campaign in September, our wonderful community of giving has been donating gifts of all sizes to our Areas of Greatest Need fund. Collectively, these will enable the University to:

- **make waves of influence** with the creation of 'New College' – the home for future stars of geopolitics and global business
- **make waves of innovation** in the new Digital Nexus building – the landmark home for Computer Science
- **make waves of inclusion and opportunity** by enabling brilliant minds from all walks of life to undertake study and research through scholarships
- **make waves of excellence** by establishing new, endowed Chairs of learning across the University.

If you would like to join our community of giving or make another gift you can do so by visiting our [Collective Giving pages](#). You can also learn more about our exciting Campaign projects on our [Making Waves web pages](#).

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported us so far. You are helping us to shape the future not only of our University, but also of the world. Thank you.

If you would like to find out how you, too, can help us make waves of global innovation and excellence, please contact:

- **Dr Jackie Whalen**, Annual Giving Manager, at jsw39@st-andrews.ac.uk or
- **Magdalena Croy**, Annual Giving Officer, at ms214@st-andrews.ac.uk

St Andrews in the News

[Read about what's been happening this semester in and around the University](#)



Raisin Monday: No place like foam

This year's Raisin Monday foam fight took place on Monday 21 October 2024 on Lower College Lawn.

The academic family is a tradition where older students adopt and mentor first year students. The 'mentoring' culminates in Raisin Weekend. Many of the friendships that begin as part of the academic family continue throughout University and beyond.

[Read more about Raisin Monday and watch the video highlights](#)



St Andrews Prize for the Environment winner 2024

The Kham River Restoration Mission won this year's St Andrews Prize for the Environment. Natasha Zarine – co-founder of EcoSattva, the eco-consultancy behind the project – was presented with the \$100,000 prize in an award ceremony in St Andrews on Thursday 31 October.

[Read more about the Kham River Restoration Mission](#)



£5 million investment in doctoral students

UK Innovation and Research (UKRI) recently announced that the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) are supporting doctoral students at the University through a collaborative proposal titled NETGAIN: Developing the science and practice of nature markets for a net positive future.

[Read more about the NERC Award](#)

Winter Graduation ceremonies



Celebrating at Graduation!

On Tuesday 3 and Wednesday 4 December 739 students walked across the stage at the Younger Hall during the University's winter graduation ceremonies. There were 990 students graduating in total, including those graduating in absentia.

Congratulations to all the students who received their academic awards!

If your student graduated in person, we have a bespoke video clip waiting for them that shows their moment crossing the stage. If they haven't received their clip, they can contact us at alumni@st-andrews.ac.uk to find out how to do so.

[Read more about the winter graduation ceremonies](#)

[Read full biographies of the Honorary Graduates](#)

Join us online wherever you are in the world ...

SAINTS TALK

Online Lecture Series

Saints Talks

We introduced Saints Talks in 2020 to give alumni, parents and friends a flavour of some of the exciting research projects taking place in St Andrews. Topics have ranged from 'DNA detective work tracking the spread of pathogens' by Professor Matthew Holden to 'Documentary film (and other media) in a Post-Truth world' by Dr Leshu Torchin.

Laidlaw Live

Laidlaw Live enables us to showcase the breadth and talent in our musical community and to give alumni, parents and friends all over the world access to performances by world-class visiting musicians.

You can either watch live-streamed concerts on social media or [watch again on our YouTube channel](#) – there are many different musical genres to choose from.




Global Burns Night 2025

Join us again this year to celebrate the life and works of Robert Burns - Scotland's National Bard – through song, poetry, music ... and much more.


This online salute to the ploughman's poet is now in its fifth year and has become a popular fixture in our events calendar.

Save the date for **Thursday 23 January at 7pm (GMT)**. Details to follow.



The University of St Andrews
Global Burns Night

7.00pm (GMT)
Thursday 23 January 2025
Live on Microsoft Teams



University of
St Andrews

...or join us in person



sands

International Film Festival of St Andrews



Alumni Carol Service – London

This year's candlelit London Alumni Carol Service will be held at **7pm** on Wednesday 18 December at St Columba's Church, Pont Street. Alumni and friends are invited to stay for a complimentary glass of wine after the event. This is a ticketed event. Please register for the London Alumni Carol service [here](#).

Sands International Film Festival 2025

Please save the date for the Sands International Film Festival of St Andrews, which will take place from **Friday 25 April to Sunday 27 April 2025**. Join us for an exciting and diverse international showcase of contemporary and classic cinema, with a range of supporting events.

Graduation

Summer graduation will take place from **Monday 30 June 2025 to Friday 4 July 2025** in the Younger Hall, St Andrews. The ceremony at which your student will graduate depends on the degree subjects studied. Students will be informed of their graduation date and ticketing procedure.

The Arnold Palmer Invitational

Save the date for the Arnold Palmer Invitational 2025! This one-day tournament will be played on **Saturday 28 June 2025** on one of the courses at the Fairmont, St Andrews. It brings together alumni, parents, students and friends of the University in support of **Saints Golf** – our performance golf programme.

Goodbye 2024 and hello 2025!

With all best wishes for the festive season and a happy new year from Development!



Saint Connect

Saint Connect is the University's global online community for networking, career mentoring and keeping up-to-date with what's happening at St Andrews.

As members of our Family Programme, you have exclusive access to Saint Connect.

Through this platform, you can connect with fellow parents and friends and volunteer through our Coffee Connect mentoring scheme, which is run in collaboration with the University's Careers Centre.

Join Saint Connect or scan the QR code below.



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Details of how the University makes use of your personal data and protects your privacy are available here in the **Development Privacy Notice**.

Here is a copy of our **Gift Acceptance Policy**.

If you would like to support our Making Waves Campaign, please contact us: **makingwaves@st-andrews.ac.uk**

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