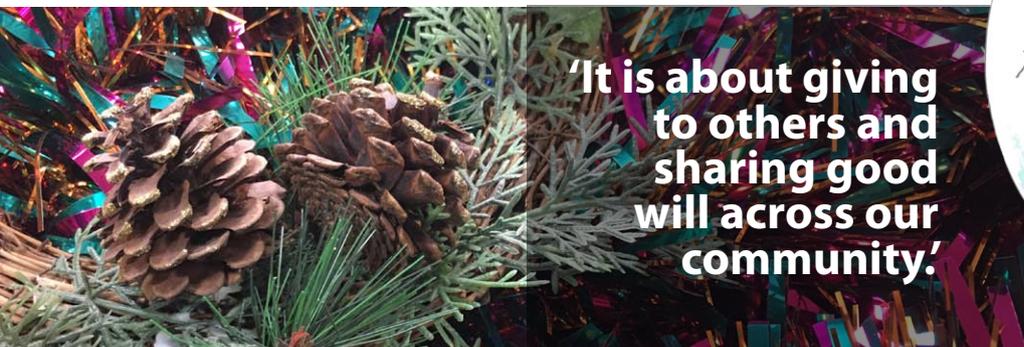




Newsletter



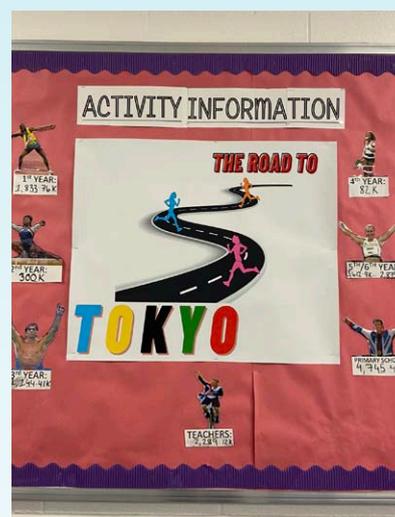
'It is about giving to others and sharing good will across our community.'



School Community Builds Christmas Spirit By Eidane M

As we approach a very different Christmas at Strathaven Academy, there will be various events taking place within the school community.

Although there are fewer activities planned, the restricted events include the annual Christmas Jumper Day, the Music department's (virtual) 'Performance Sessions Part 2', and the PE department's Santa Dash. The Santa Dash is being developed by the S5 and S6 sports leaders as part of their sports development course. The event on the 16th of December involves S1 and S2 pupils dressed in Christmas attire following a designated running/walking route around Strathaven Park. There are prizes for best individual and group costumes, with pupils contributing food items to enter. Local charities including Strathaven, Clyde, Avon, Nethan and Loaves & Fishes food banks are receiving donations. This complements the many causes to which staff, pupils and parents are contributing throughout the Christmas season. With the global pandemic that has been plaguing Britain for the past eight months in full swing, we already knew that this Christmas would be a new experience, to say the least. It is going to be hard to respect the restrictions in the lead-up to Christmas, but it is something that needs to be done to keep others safe. While you may stress about the potential lack of a big family gathering, we have to stop and consider that millions of families may be struggling. There have been many affected by financial burdens in recent months due to the instability that COVID 19 has brought. Christmas has always truly been about reflecting on what you have and being thankful for that. It is about giving to others and sharing goodwill across our community. We will continue to come together as a nation to celebrate the vital health workers that have been saving countless lives across the country. We have adapted to these uncertain times in such astonishing ways and I, for one, could not be prouder of our school and our country. Stay safe, stay home and save lives.



Race to Tokyo

Despite the pandemic causing the cancellation of the Tokyo Olympics in 2020, the Strathaven Academy PE department and Sports Ambassadors are determined to mark the occasion. They have been encouraging students to walk, run or cycle as much as they can, submit their progress to their Sports Council representatives and compete to be the first year group to cover the 9300 kilometres between Strathaven and Japan's capital.

Head Teacher's Message

Welcome to the Christmas edition of our school newsletter. The newsletter provides an opportunity to showcase the journalistic skills of our S6 Communications Team. Once again, the team has produced an excellent edition, featuring some of the recent school events alongside several thought-provoking articles. This term has continued to be characterised by the ongoing uncertainty related to the pandemic. Aoibhinn M discusses the uncertainty around SQA assessment procedures, which is causing additional strain to young people and our educational system in general. Changes to local levels of restrictions affect what we can and cannot do, in and beyond school. No indoor PE, no singing in Music and limited school events, to name but three; also, the insecurity of having to self-isolate at home for two weeks, following a positive Covid-19 test of a family member, a friend or possibly a complete stranger. All of this on top of the usual complexities of life and learning. 2020 is a year that we will never forget. Despite the increased levels of uncertainty and the many challenges presented, our young people have taken increased responsibility, shown respect to themselves and others, and demonstrated resilience beyond their years, ably supported by family members, friends and the hard-working staff of Strathaven Academy.

The Strathaven community should be rightly proud that almost all of our young people have consistently demonstrated our core values throughout this time of national crisis. I thank our young people for this and their families for the ongoing support of our school community. The festive period is a time for reflection and a time for looking forward. I would like to take a moment to thank each member of staff at the Academy. Colleagues continue to support and inspire our young people to ensure they fulfil their potential. As I have said to all staff recently, Strathaven Academy is a very special place and I am very privileged to be Head Teacher of such a vibrant centre of learning and teaching. Looking forward, I am certain the post-Covid educational landscape will offer many opportunities. An opportunity to harness our new-found digital skills. An opportunity to deliver equity for all young people. Perhaps an opportunity to develop an educational system that measures what we value, rather than valuing only what we can measure. What do you value? What kind of person would you like to be? Collectively, how good can we be? I wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Take care and stay safe.



MR BOYD,
HEAD TEACHER

A Note from the Editors

The school newsletter continues to be produced by the S6 pupil communication group. In addition to developing articles for the newsletter, our team has enjoyed updating the pupil zone on the school website. The process has challenged our time management skills, but we are enthusiastic about incorporating magazine-style content in this area. Due to COVID 19 restrictions, fewer events are taking place in school. As a result, we are writing articles responding to the issues

about which we feel strongly. Some members of the team are looking to journalism as a future career path and are publishing articles in the local newspaper. Developing our skills with professional magazine-editing software used in the media industry is really rewarding. Several of us have had our first experience of web design, and others are developing their photography skills. We hope you enjoy this festive edition, which highlights the voice of Strathaven Academy pupils.

Winter Edition Christmas 2020

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If you have something to report in our newsletter, email office@strathaven.s-lanark.sch.uk providing the name and class of the person(s) involved with their achievement/success and a photograph if possible.

You can also report achievements to our **Google Form** on the **school website** under 'News' and 'Wider Achievement'.

Visit our website at
www.strathaven.s-lanark.sch.uk

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'While we have made significant strides in gender equality in the past century, there is still work to be done...'

Women in STEM

By Eidane M

As you may be aware, STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths, and is a blanket term used to group together these subjects. When you think of a great scientist, you think of Stephen Hawking, you think of Albert Einstein, you think of Isaac Newton, and why is that? In my research into this topic, I have found that women have historically been pushed aside and men have been given credit for their work. An appropriate example of this would be Rosalind Franklin, who is now

known as the woman who discovered the structure of DNA. The credit attributed to her work was used by Maurice Wilkins and James Watson, who won a Nobel Prize in 1958. Unfortunately, Rosalind died four years before the scientists received the Prize. We can only guess that if Rosalind had been alive to contest this, would she have been overlooked and ignored because she was a woman? This, in my opinion, reflects a bigger problem in the STEM industry and an even bigger problem in our society today, where women can

be overlooked in favour of their male counterparts. Recently, there has been a boom in women joining STEM-related jobs. There are countless organisations working towards closing the gender gap, such as 'Women in STEM', whose primary goal is to create opportunities for girls and help them develop passion for the area. There is also a 'Women in STEM' day, which takes place on March 8th, to celebrate achievements and encourage young girls to join the STEM fields. While we have made significant strides in gender equality in the past century, there is still work to be done, so that one day, when you think of great scientists, you'll think of Marie Curie, Dorothy Hodgkin and, of course, Rosalind Franklin.

Coping with Assessments By Aoibhinn M

One of the many changes the pandemic has brought to life as we know it is that this year's senior pupils will be tackling assessments in a way that has never been done before. For the first time, National 5 students will not sit exams, and instead grades will be decided through continuous assessment throughout the year. Summer exams for Highers and Advanced Highers are now cancelled. The uncertainty surrounding exams has brought new levels of tension and stress, as the cancellations for all, like last year, give a certain

significance to every piece of work produced in all classes. However, it is not as bad as it may seem. There is plenty of help and resources available to all who need it, including mentors in sixth year who give up their time to provide help to younger year groups. Teachers are working incredibly hard to make sure all their pupils are in the best position possible. If you are a student completing assessments, portfolios and coursework this year, no matter at what level, I urge you to be optimistic. Working to the best of your ability in everything you do will ensure success.

'Bringing to light the issue and discussing the stigma could potentially help those in need...'



Spotlight on **Mental Health**

By **Euan W**

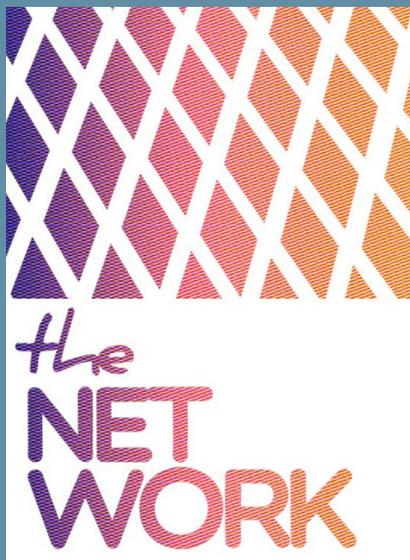
In these testing times, mental health may be something that people are looking out for on their own. However, in a time like this it is important for **everyone** to reflect. That includes men. For centuries, the stereotypical masculine man has been at the forefront of what people picture when they think 'male'. A large, well-built man, with a well-paid job, and - most importantly - no signs of weakness. Men are portrayed to be devoid of emotion in the media and history. However, we are all human. Men have the capability to have poor mental health and mental illness just as everyone else does. The societal expectations

of what has been deemed a 'man' is at the soul of this ignorance towards issues regarding mental health. Men are supposed to be strong, men are supposed to be the leaders, men are supposed to be shoulders for the petite women to lean on. Unfortunately, the harsh reality is, as intense as patriarchy remains, men are supposed to have these characteristics, and if they do not, they are considered 'weak' and not normal. Then they are made the targets of bullying. Men who show their true colours and do not conform to the norm, men who have a voice and aren't afraid to express their emotions from behind

that masculine barrier. It is important for us to normalise discussion of mental health in relation to men. As times are getting hard, it is becoming increasingly essential for all of us to end the negativity in relation to men showing their emotions. One in eight men will suffer from a mental illness, and the rates are ever increasing. Stopping the stigma is as essential as ever in our current, challenging times. Bringing to light the issue and discussing the stigma could potentially help those in need, and I feel this is the correct direction for us. Our S6 Health and Wellbeing Elective is striving to increase awareness of the many challenges to mental health and sharing the statistics involving young men. Our representatives are producing materials and providing links for pupils to read on the 'pupil zone' section of the website.

'The Network' Launch

As this year's Communications Elective group, we are pleased to announce a refresh of the 'pupil zone' section of the school website. We have been working hard to update resources and have rebranded the zone 'The Network'. We will continue to share information, thoughts, events and ideas. We also aim to share information about house points and events, as well as provide information on mental health, study skills and pupil life at Strathaven Academy.

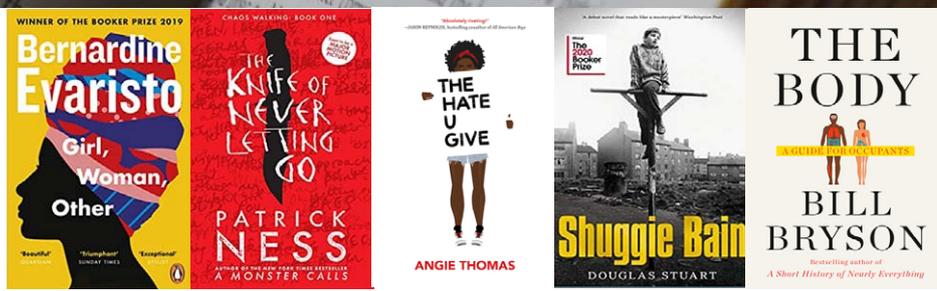


'Rain was a natural state of Glasgow. It kept the grass green and the people pale and bronchial.'

Douglas Stuart, *Shuggie Bain*

The English Department Recommends...

You can't go wrong with a Netflix binge these days, but reading books is a great way to expand knowledge and reduce stress. During lockdown, many people read to fill time and cure boredom. If you're looking to add some books to your personal library, here are some of the English department's favourite reads: Mrs Reilly recommends *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernardine Evaristo, *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell and *Circe* by Madeline Miller. Mrs Bradshaw and Mrs McDonald recommend *The Knife of Never Letting Go* by Patrick Ness, *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas, *Farewell Tour Of A Terminal Optimist* by John Young, *Bearmouth* by Liz Hyder, *Me Mam. Me Dad. Me* by Malcolm Duffy, *Shuggie Bain* by Douglas Stuart and *The Body: A Guide for Occupants* by Bill Bryson.



National Book Week

By Ellie H

The week beginning the 16th of November was Book Week Scotland. We shared what we were doing via social media that week. As we missed our Reading Week in September, we wanted to go the extra mile to mark this occasion. Around the school, there were a number of different events taking place. A virtual assembly was held for all S1 and S2 pupils during tutor time. Reading registration took place all week for S1 to S3 pupils. A 'DEAR' (Drop Everything And Read) period for all year groups and staff took place. Junior pupils recorded themselves reading stories to share with primary pupils. A poetry and writing competition ran all week. Finally, staff took part in a 'When I was Your Age' event, where a photo of them at age 16 was displayed with a note of their favourite book/s at that time, along with any words of wisdom they would give to their younger selves!

'...his team of code breakers will be remembered for the tireless work they put into the war effort and the amount of suffering they helped prevent.'

Profile of Alan Turing **By Lewis F**

To commemorate this year's Remembrance Day, we thought it would be important to speak of a World War II hero, who is also one of the greatest Britons who has ever lived - Alan Turing. Alan Turing was a mathematician and the British government used him and his team of code breakers to crack the German submarine enigma code. The German submarines terrorised the British Navy and Britain's supply line was almost completely severed as the U-boats destroyed many of Britain's supply ships. However, cracking the enigma code made the submarines more predictable and much

less of a threat, and this was all thanks to Alan Turing and his team. It is estimated he shortened the length of the war by two years. The amount of suffering, starvation and violence he prevented is immeasurable and he is, without a doubt, a British hero. However, despite everything he did for the British people, he was not treated with the honour and respect he deserved. Alan Turing was homosexual and, in the 1950s, being gay was illegal. Turing pleaded guilty to these ridiculous charges and the government banned him from working with them. Using the Official Secrets Act, the British government prevented him from speaking of his accomplishments and hid all the work he had

done during World War II. The medical procedure he had to endure as part of his sentence was horribly severe. After everything he did for the country he loved, this was his appalling 'reward'. In recent years, the British government has recognised Alan Turing's work and he has finally been given the respect and recognition he deserves. His story is depicted in the film *The Imitation Game*, where Turing is played by Benedict Cumberbatch. Despite how he was treated during his lifetime, his work to bring an end to fascism in Europe is now well-known in the UK and he and his team of code breakers will forever be remembered for the tireless work they put into the war effort and the amount of suffering they helped prevent.



Spook-tacular Orienteering

As everyone knows, many events in and out of school have been cancelled this year due to Coronavirus restrictions. Unfortunately, Halloween parties were not an exception. To uphold the Halloween spirit, the S6 social committee organised a 'Spooktober' selfie orienteering event. On Friday, the 30th of October,

S6 students were invited to dress down or dress up and take selfies in different areas of the park in small groups. Pupils were given over an hour out of class to take their group photos. The walk was a great success and improved the mood of students. The walk ended at the bandstand, where a photo was taken of the year group.



S1 Team Building

Despite Coronavirus restrictions putting a stop to many extracurricular activities, 180 S1 pupils were able to enjoy a very successful team-building day hosted by the S6 Sports Development classes. This included games like Capture the Flag, Island-Hopping and Caterpillar Riot. Ms Cochrane's 5EL class, Ms Barran's 5DL class and Ms Aird/Ms Fletcher's 5BL class hosted the sessions. Unfortunately, plans to host the day in the John Hastie Park were halted by the council's efforts to preserve the longevity of the football pitches for football, so the day had to take place in the field next to Kirklandpark Primary. The S5 and S6 Sports Development pupils took the lead and are happy the event will contribute to their course's mandatory coaching hours. This will soften the blow of being unable to venture out to the local primary schools and coach there! The positive outcome of this event has led the SD pupils to begin plans for a follow-up activity day, preparing a coaching day in a specific sport. Despite the success of the day, many pupils found teaching young children rather challenging!

CONSPIRACY of the Week

By Josh M

We may think we know what is going on in the world around us and what is going on in government, but this is not the case for everyone. Some groups claim to know what is "really going on". Not every theory is a half-baked idea, which has no basis in reality or evidence to back it up. Sometimes - very rarely - you will get a theory to which even the most rational people subscribe. It might be due to the abundance of evidence or even how the theorist proposed the idea. There are some theories against which you cannot argue; for example, in the 1950s, the American government gave unsuspecting army men LSD in an attempt to study its effects. This was a mere folk tale for almost twenty years. A freedom of information act request in 1976 uncovered a cache of 20,000 documents, all about the project known as 'MK Ultra'. The request was made due to the conspiracy theories about the government testing mind control, LSD and other illegal acts on unsuspecting people. Not every theory is about denouncing a certain political group, figure of

power or incident; sometimes they exist to get word to the public and potentially expose the people leading your country. Untrustworthy figures in power and allegedly corrupt politicians are probably the most obvious reason why 60% of the population believe in conspiracy theories. Everyone feels they have a firm grasp on what goes on in their government. However, when someone states what they think is happening, everybody may flock to check out the new perspective. Most of the time these views and ideas are going to be a whole load of rubbish but, occasionally, a diamond in the rough arises. These theories may not be about big political events or happenings; they could be about something in your town or village. Not every conspiracy theory is true, but when you do find one that turns out to be credible, the false theories forgotten. This new, shiny 'true' theory is used as proof that we should believe in conspiracies, which is clearly not a good idea most of the time!

Strathaven Academy - The Performance Sessions

Every year, the Music department puts in a lot of hard work and dedication to provide live music for elderly people in local old folk's homes. They bring together musicians from throughout the school and the school's Music Ambassadors. As a group, they join and perform in a few different homes. This year, however, due to restrictions, the Music department decided to make a video consisting of all the excellent musicians and play this for the residents instead. The video is put together

by the Music Ambassadors and features performances recorded by pupils at home. Emma C, one of the six Music Ambassadors, spent a lot of time at home and in class compiling all the videos of the many S5 and S6s. Mrs Blades oversaw the whole process, as well as communicating with all the homes. We are also hoping to develop a Christmas concert video for release in late December. We hope you are able to tune in to help support the school and the Music department!

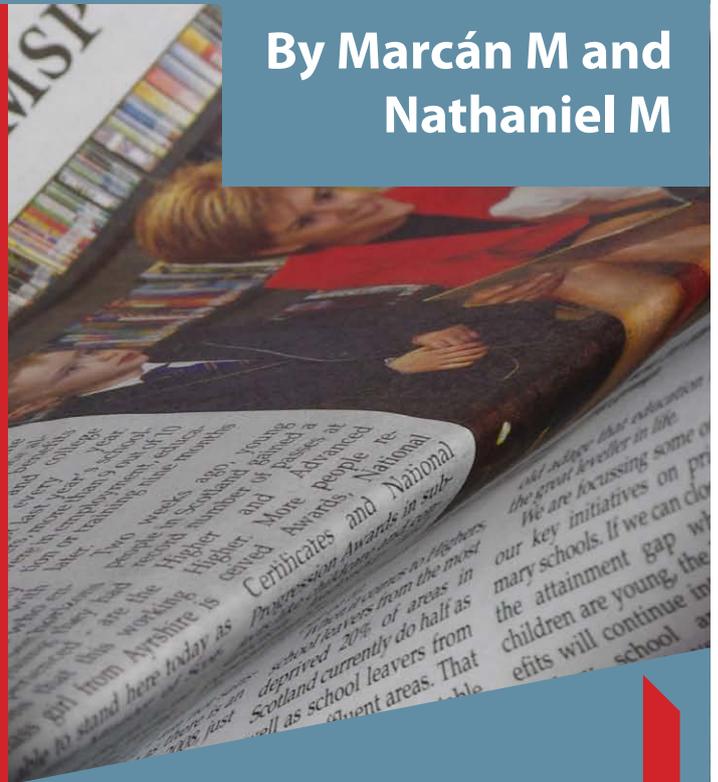
Debate Corner

'Scottish Independence'

Marcán Says...

The issue of Scottish independence can be a heated one, with emotions often taking precedence over reason whenever discussed. Despite the fact that I had no opinion on the subject for a long time, some recent research has put me in favour of the 'No' campaign. What I mean by this is that when you take the emotions out of the discussion and focus just on the facts, it starts to look very clear what side common sense supports. One of the first things I noticed when I was looking for information on the subject was that independence with the SNP would mean a hard economic border with the rest of the UK. If you do not understand how little sense that makes, let me just give you some statistics. In 2017, 60% of all of Scotland's export income came from other UK countries, totalling £48.9 billion out of the £81.4 billion Scotland made overall. What's more important about this statistic is that in 2018 this rose from £48.9 billion pounds to £51.2 billion. Which brings me to my next point: If the SNP's drive for Scottish independence was anything more than pandering, I would expect to see them moving away from trade with the UK and towards trade with other nations, which, in my opinion, does not seem to be reflected by the facts. In addition, after burning bridges with the EU over Catalonia, you have to wonder whether the SNP actually cares what happens to Scotland, when they could just be riding the populist wave for independence into power. Then, when Scotland eventually leaves the UK, they will throw their arms in the air and admit they have no idea what they are doing.

By Marcán M and Nathaniel M



Nathaniel Says...

Scotland voted by 62% to 38% in favour of Remain in the EU referendum in June 2016. This, in my opinion, could easily justify a second independence referendum. Scotland has been uprooted by the rest of Great Britain. The majority of Scotland voted to stay in the EU. Scotland can afford to be independent but due to coronavirus, the timing for a referendum isn't now. When everyone is back at work, we would definitely thrive independently with reusable power alone, as we can fuel nearly all of Scotland. As we leave the EU, the UK has been the main fishing provider for years. The EU now wants a deal to own part of the fishing regions in Scotland, which takes profits away from our country. Finally, I think Scotland has been undermined by England for far too long through national votes such as the EU referendum. It is time we went our own way.



STRATHAVEN LEARNING COMMUNITY



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