

AVONMAIL

EDITION #1



COMPLETELY MADE BY PUPILS

WELCOME

Message



Welcome to the first ever edition of the annual Strathaven Academy magazine, which celebrates session 2022/2023.

Throughout the session, members of our S6 elective, supported by Mr Holmes, have been gathering information and recording photographic evidence of the many news stories and highlights of our school year.

We are very proud to follow on the heels of our highly successful school newsletter, which was brought to us through the hard work and dedication of Mr Wellcoat over the years. We are now introducing you to a new, fresh look with our glossy magazine. I hope the school magazine brings all our readers much enjoyment, as well as showcasing the many talents of our pupils including creativity, freedom to express an opinion and the editorial talents of our team.

"Let us remember: one book, one pen, one child and one teacher can change the world."

- Malala Yousafzai

Editor's message

It's been such a rewarding experience, helping to create the first Strathaven magazine. Creating examples for future magazine editions has been an exciting and scary process, but my team has dedicated a lot of time to perfecting our articles and layout throughout the year. Everyone has contributed so much and gone above and beyond for Avonmail. Special thanks to Mr Holmes for his continued involvement and support with the magazine and its articles. It was important to me as chief editor that my team had a chance to give the magazine personality, and I feel we really accomplished that!



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Mr McGarrie

8 MAY 1967 – 2 AUGUST 2022

When we returned to school in August, we were given the sad news that long-time teacher Mr John McGarrie had passed away. This news saddened not only pupils and staff, but also the wider community. This article will attempt to show the impact John had through anecdotes provided by his long-time colleagues along with quotes from pupils.

Mr McGarrie's enthusiasm and passion was clear in every lesson. He was a brilliant teacher who never gave up on any pupil, who saw the good in everyone and treated us all equally. He never raised his voice or got exasperated, and that calmness meant that even the most challenging pupil would never bother him. I have personal experience of this, having been in his National 5 History class, where two of my friends and I sat directly in front of his desk. One of my friends was struggling with the course, and Mr McGarrie worked tirelessly with him to ensure he got the best results he could.

For years, Mr McGarrie turned out fantastic exam results, but that was never the most important part of the job for him. He wanted to offer pupils other opportunities, which he did by giving up so much of his own time. There are many examples, but one was his passion for the environment. I was in his John Muir elective, and I remember going out to plant trees and clean up litter with Mr McGarrie - he did all this with absolute passion. He set up an eco-committee in 2010 and was always involved in initiatives to make the town and the school more sustainable. This resulted in him being in Strathaven Park on many occasions, working with local councillors and community groups outside school hours. All his hard work culminated in pupils being involved in last year's Cop26. He put hours into planning and helping pupils get the most out of this experience.

Mr McGarrie ran many clubs, from a signing club (due to his skill of being a teacher of the deaf) to a debating club, but the most amazing club he ran was his games club. This club involved every type of pupil: the pupil who sat on the stairs at lunch time on their own, the pupil who was struggling to be themselves, the pupil who was different, the pupil who felt they didn't fit in. Mr McGarrie persuaded these pupils to come to his club and gave them an environment in which to thrive, an environment where they could be comfortable, where they could feel part of something, where they made friends - all due to his kindness.

His selfless nature is summarised in this quote from Mr McNair:

"John was the most selfless teacher. Everything he did was about the pupils. Even when he had been given his diagnosis, he left me a voice note, with his greatest concern not being himself, but his worry that the pupils wouldn't have a teacher."

To finish, I would like to quote a former pupil who has graduated with a law degree. She emailed Mr McNair to say that she was deeply saddened by Mr McGarrie's passing. She said the following:

Mr McGarrie

“Mr McGarrie was literally and figuratively a giant of Strathaven Academy. I have fond memories of first and second year History in his classroom, and he definitely played a big part in my love of the subject in my later years at school. I know he will have sparked the interest of countless other students too. He was also very encouraging of the debating club, and sacrificed his time to give us the opportunity to participate in big competitions, like the Glasgow University Science and Technology debates and the Law Society of Scotland Schools debates. He was kind, caring and funny, and always gave the impression that he was more interested in his students becoming good people than good historians, a lovely quality in a teacher.”



Balloon Festival

ONE OF THE BIGGEST EVENTS IN THE STRATHAVEN CALENDAR

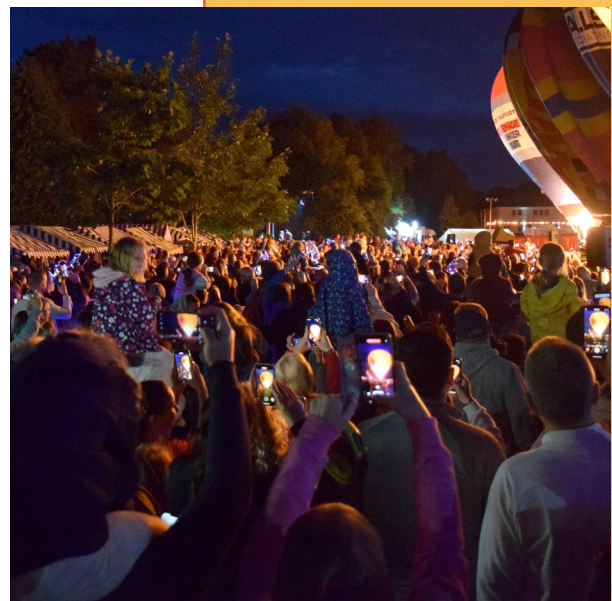




BY LANA C

In the last weekend of August 2022, Scotland's only hot air balloon festival - the Strathaven Balloon Festival - took place in Strathaven Park. After two years of the pandemic, it was no surprise to see the park bustling with thousands of people this year.

Although the Friday evening flights were cancelled due to poor weather conditions, the weekend treated us well with heat and sun. Dozens of balloons and people flew, providing the public with fantastic entertainment and excitement.







Strathaven Academy Music

Back in August, Strathaven celebrated its first balloon festival in three years, and what a hit it was! This year, Strathaven Academy took to the stage and showed off some of its brilliant performers.

The impressive performances ranged from jazz to rock. The first artists to take the stage were Apollo, a rock band composed of Kayley L, Marcus H, Owen C, Emily S and Cara S. They rocked the stage with tracks like *Girl Is On My Mind* by The Black Keys, *Psycho Killer* by Talking Heads and more. These aspiring young artists had only been practicing together for two weeks prior to performing their high-energy set. They list Jimi Hendrix and Led Zeppelin as musical inspirations.

Next up, we had a brilliant solo artist, Skarlett B, who played us modern takes on beloved classics such as the Beatles hit *Octopuses Garden* and Dolly Parton's *Jolene* on her ukulele, which she has been playing for two years. Skarlett lists Taylor Swift as one of her musical inspirations. You can hear more from Skarlett at youtube.com/musicplusmentoring.



Skarlett B



Andrew A & Emily M

Balloon Festival Bands

We were next treated to a truly excellent performance by the jazz band. Members Samuel R, Coban P, Nicholas S and Sam M played their hearts out, giving us amazing renditions of jazz masterpieces such as Two and Watermelon Man, both by Herbie Hancock. These talented young musicians said that they had been inspired by Herbie Hancock, Charles Mingus, Charlie Parker, JJ Johnson and Ronnie Cooper. The jazz band has been playing together for a year.

After that smooth performance, we got an acoustic performance from rock/indie folk duo Andrew A and Emily M, who had only been playing together for one week at the time. They gave us their excellent rendition of Something In The Orange by Zach Bryan.



Jazz Band



Opaque



Fluoxetines

To end Strathaven Academy's showcase, we had a set from Öpaque, an indie singer/songwriter duo consisting of Nina B and Ira B. They played songs such as If I Ain't Got You by Alicia Keys and Valerie by Amy Winehouse. Most notably, the band introduced their new single Desiderium to the public. It was released on all streaming platforms on September 9th. The duo lists Phoebe Bridgers and Larkin Poe as musical inspirations.

Hallowe'en

On Monday 31st October, 56 pupils were encouraged to dress up for Hallowe'en and take part in a competition to find the best-dressed student. Each person paid a pound to the 2023 prom fund, and showed off their fantastic costumes from this year. Ms Barr and Ms Howitt judged the competition and attempted to pick the best from the entire year's wonderful display of spooky costumes. Joint second place went to Lewis M, Jack G and Blair M in a Super Mario trio outfit. In first place were Poppy C and friends in a very creative Toy Story aliens group costume, which included its very own claw!





Well done to everyone who took part!
Your costumes were very imaginative!

Our Seasonal Recipes

Here is a collection of some of our students' holiday favourites from our kitchen to yours!



A comforting butterscotch cookie, perfected through trial and error to create a treat we hope you enjoy!



The traditional and ever loved mince pies from the comfort of your own home have never been easier!

Make your own pastry if you want an extra challenge.



A fresh take on the traditionally boring festive vegetable - punchy brussel sprouts with almonds and lime.

These belong not only on the Christmas table but accompany any Sunday roast!

BUTTERSCOTCH COOKIES

Ingredients:

for the butterscotch brittle:

- 125g white sugar
- 2 tbsp water
- 4 tbsp butter
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp baking soda

for the butterscotch cookie dough:

- 170g butter
- 80g brown sugar
- 220g white sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 300g plain flour
- 42 grams of cornflour
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt



An alternative to making your own butterscotch brittle would be to substitute for *Werther's Originals*.

Method:

1. Begin by making the butterscotch brittle (if using). In a small saucepan, add the sugar, water, butter and salt.
2. Put the pan on medium heat and leave until the butter has almost completely melted before giving a stir with a spatula. Leave the mix again until it begins to bubble slightly.
3. Use your spatula to stir occasionally, and wait for the mixture to darken. You are looking for it to turn a golden brown colour which could take anywhere from 10-20 minutes. Keep a close eye on the mixture because once it starts to colour this can happen very quickly.

BUTTERSCOTCH COOKIES

CONTINUED:

4. Immediately add the 1/8 tsp of baking soda and stir to combine. It'll start bubbling slightly and will lighten even more in colour. Pour this directly onto a lined baking sheet. Smooth with the spatula and let this cool to harden.
5. Preheat the oven to 200°C or gas mark 6.
6. Wipe out and melt the second measure of butter in the same pan. For a deeper flavor, you can brown the butter by letting it continue to cook at a low heat until the milk solids separate, stirring occasionally and begin to darken in colour.
7. Allow the butter to cool while, in the bowl of a stand mixer, you add the brown sugar, white sugar and vanilla. Pour in the brown butter when it has cooled slightly. Add the egg and use the paddle attachment of the mixer to mix on medium. Mix for about 3-4 minutes or until the mix is light and fluffy.
8. While the mixer is running, combine the flour, cornstarch, cinnamon, baking powder and salt in a bowl.
9. Stop the mixer and add the dry ingredients a little at a time to the dough, using a spatula to mix it in until smooth. When the dry ingredients are fully incorporated, the dough should be fluffy.
10. Line a large baking sheet and spoon on heaped spoonfuls of dough, leaving room to spread.
11. Break your hardened butterscotch into pieces (or use your Werther's Originals) and place a large piece in the centre of every cookie. Bake for 10-11 minutes until only lightly golden. Tap the tray on your bench a couple of times when removed from the oven to ensure they spread.
12. Let the cookies cool for 10 minutes to set, and then eat right away for a softer cookie or they can be stored in the fridge for a more crispy, decadent bite!

MINCE PIES

Ingredients:

- 250g self-rising flour
- 50g salted butter
- 2 Tbsp water
- 1 egg, beaten
- Caster sugar for sprinkling
- Icing sugar for dusting
- A jar of shop bought mincemeat



Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/gas mark 6.
2. In a bowl, place flour and butter. Rub in until the texture resembles breadcrumbs.
3. Add water gradually, until the mixture comes together in your hands.
4. On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough to around 1cm thick.
5. Use a circle cutter with diameter slightly larger than the holes on your tray to cut the pastry.
6. Gently press down into moulds, and fill with mincemeat.
7. Cut small star shapes of pastry (we couldn't find our star
8. cutter so just used smaller circles) and place in the centre of each pie.
9. Wash with beaten egg, and sprinkle with caster sugar
- this gives the pies a nice golden colour.
10. Bake for 12-15 minutes.
11. Place on a cooling rack to cool and dust with icing sugar.

ZINGY ALMOND BRUSSEL SPROUTS

Ingredients:

500g brussel sprouts
1 lime
20g butter
40g almonds, roughly chopped
½ chicken stock cube
2 tbsp water



Method:

1. Wash and halve the sprouts, removing any tough outer leaves. Zest and juice the lime.
2. Heat butter in a large frying pan on medium heat, add brussel sprouts and lime zest. Fry, tossing occasionally for 2 minutes.
3. Crumble in the stock cube and add the water. Cook for a further 3 minutes, until the water has mostly evaporated.
4. Add in the almonds and toast for a few minutes until the sprouts are beginning to colour.
5. Remove from heat, add lime juice and toss to combine.
6. Season to taste and enjoy! :)

HOW TO PERSONALISE YOUR SCHOOL UNIFORM

Are you tired of looking like everyone else in school? Are you sick of putting on the same old boring uniform every morning? Well, you've come to the right place! In this article, I will be giving you tips and tricks on how to jazz up your school uniform and make it more personalised!

The safest way to personalise your school uniform is by adding accessories. For example, adding your favourite pins and badges to your blazer is a great way to show your interests. Adding jewellery is another: anything from earrings, necklaces, bracelets, rings or even a specific type of glasses frame or chain! Painted nails, acrylics or not, are also a subtle way to show your style. Fashion accessories such as headbands, hair clips and belts are another easy way to customise your appearance. Even something as simple as changing your hairstyle, whether it's simple braids or a bun, or even the actual haircut itself is an easy way to express yourself.

PLEASE! PLEASE! PLEASE! Don't forget that this school has absolutely no rules on bag and jacket styles! There is a multitude of bag styles such as backpacks, handbags, tote bags - find the one that not only fits you but is also useful for school. To customise your school bag further, perhaps invest in - or even make - unique keychains/rings to attach to your bag. During the winter, take this opportunity to layer up with unique hats and scarfs, which will not only keep you warm, but also add to your style!

Now onto the more risky business. A basic rule of thumb to get started with jazzing up your uniform itself is to stick to black clothing (occasionally white/cream). However, this rule, like all rules, can be broken (at your own risk) if you are discreet enough. For every bit of clothing that exists out there, there will always be a multitude of different styles, cuts, fabrics and sizes. In this article, I will suggest the basic clothing itself and it shall be up to you to research and decide what type of clothing you want to have.

Find different styles and lengths of trousers, skirts, shorts or even skorts. With white shirts, focus on the type of fit and different collar shapes. How do you like to layer up? With an oversized jumper? A cosy cardigan or a simple black vest? Don't forget about your lower half! You can get away with funky patterned socks if you are discreet enough but, if not, stick to patterned black tights if you want to add something. Socks come in many different lengths - it's just up to you to find your preference. Leg warmers are another thing you can add to your uniform. If you are one of those warriors that bother to wake up for school early enough to have time to put on make-up in the morning, use that to your advantage! Make-up has unlimited possibilities and can be a great way to enhance your personal style.

Pinterest can be a good way to start you off and help you find inspiration for how you want to style your uniform. However, I will reiterate that, when customising your uniform and slightly bending the rules, you run the risk of getting that dreaded pink slip, so do understand that if you follow these tips, you do so at your own risk!

STUDY TIPS

STUDY TIPS

Having trouble studying?

Here are our tips:

You can write key notes or diagrams on post-it notes and stick them up around your house, in places like around your mirror and on the back of the shower glass. Then, when you are going about your daily routine, you can read the post-it notes. I find this a very effective way of learning key bits of information, and it's a break from the long study sessions which can feel so daunting.

Have lots of drinks around your study space. I'm talking a hot cup of tea/coffee, a large glass of water, a nice tasty drink like lemonade, and also a few snacks (in an accessible but not immediately visible place) as incentives for finishing questions or when you reach certain points. Having sustenance easily available around me helps to keep me in the one place, and able to settle down for longer study sessions.

Have something for your hands to do while you're reading. Fidget toys aren't useful for everyone, but personally I need to keep my hands occupied while I'm trying to concentrate.

Keep your notes neat. I find writing pretty titles can be a motivator for me to study; after all, there's nothing worse than building up the energy required to study, and finding that you can't decipher your own notes!

Break down the workload. Make sure you are aware of all of the components of each subject, and which parts you find more difficult. For example, when I am studying Spanish, it makes sense to split the exam down into four sections - reading, translation, listening and writing. I personally find listening the hardest, so I make sure to dedicate a lot more time to that than something I find easier, like reading.

Prioritise. I personally don't find study plans helpful, but I've recently started keeping a note of how much time I've spent on each subject or topic - if nothing else it helps me have a physical sense of accomplishment after putting some work in. Be honest with yourself about how much time you need to spend on each subject/topic; you will need to work more on things that you find harder.

The most important thing to remember is that making even a small effort is better than doing nothing. It doesn't have to be perfect, but trying and putting in an effort is always better than not doing so.

Last of all, relax!!

Your mental wellbeing is more important than any exam results so make sure you are taking enough breaks.

STRATHAVEN'S YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

In June 2022, Strathaven Academy was named Scotland's Most Enterprising School - a noteworthy achievement that was brought about by the hard work and initiative of countless Strathaven pupils across the board. This prestigious award honoured the numerous projects undertaken by S4 and S5 pupils in session 2021/22.

One key element of our school's success was Mr Blackwood and Miss Allison's S4 Enterprise and Employability class and their company, Topline. The creation of Topline was a complicated process, which began with students working together to choose a name and design a company logo. Students convinced 20 members of staff to invest in shares of £5, and this money was used to purchase the necessary materials. After overcoming a technical setback with the laser cutter, the class went on to produce unique products, such as laser-cut cream egg holders, that went on to be sold in local shops Gingintidy and Say It Gifts. This was an extremely successful endeavour, which saw the investors receiving back five times what they initially put in and the students themselves making £65 pounds each!

Strathaven Academy also became the first school in Scotland to have its own, unique coffee blend through partnership with Fower Coffee! Our 2021 S6 Enterprise elective collaborated with Stuart Jamieson, owner of Fower Coffee, to create the blend 1905, which is now used in the school barista machine. Over the course of the year, the pupils enjoyed valuable, real-life experience in marketing and enterprise, as well as the opportunity to work in a team. They now have a lasting legacy, ethically produced, locally roasted and encased in a recyclable, Strathaven student-designed package.

Another crucial factor was last year's National 5 Metalwork class and its collaboration with Martech. This small class of S5 and S6 students took a trip to the Cambuslang company early in the year, to gain insight into the production process and workings of this engineering company. Inspired by what they saw, the students then discussed the type of projects they could go on to do, hoping to create something that would benefit the local community. After much deliberation, it was decided that they would design and create three metal benches, one for St Andrew's Hospice, another for Kilbride Hospice and the final bench for the front of the school. The 2021 class will be the first of many to build meaningful pieces for our community, thus creating a lasting, positive impact that they may look back to in years to come.

STRATHAVEN'S YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

In conclusion, this well-deserved and prestigious award is, in the words of Deputy Head Ms Barr, "the result of several years of focusing on enterprising events, activities and experiences, within and outwith the classroom." A victory that was brought about by Strathaven's dedicated staff, enthusiastic pupils and a strong work ethic, encompassed by our school motto - labor omnia vincit - hard work conquers all.



READING WEEK 2022

In September, our English Department organised a reading week. Many activities were held throughout the week, starting with trips to the Edinburgh Book Festival on Monday and Tuesday. "Tackling discrimination" was the theme of the seminar-style chat on the Monday. This was an opportunity for pupils to be inspired by successful authors Jason Reynolds and Patrice Lawrence, and ask questions about their books, the themes within (particularly pertaining to marginalised groups) and their writing process. Their books (*When I was the Greatest* by Jason Reynolds and *Needle* by Patrice Lawrence) were given out as gifts at the end of the Q&A. A pupil who attended this event said, 'One thing that really resonated with me was the idea that libraries should feel like a safe space.' This was put into practice in our school library with the recent unveiling of an LGBTQ+ section.

This was one of many events taking place in the library throughout the week. On Friday lunchtime, we restarted the popular Starbooks Café, where pupils can eat lunch and chat about their books in the library. Hot chocolate and coffees were on offer and there was also a cake sale. Places were so in demand they had to be limited to 50 people! This will be a regular event, held on the last Friday of every month, with free drinks for those who win Reader of the Month.

In English, S1 and S2 pupils were encouraged to participate in a 'found poetry' competition. 'Found poetry' is created by blacking out words in a piece of text (in this case, a page from one of the free books from the book festival) and leaving select words visible. These words then form a poem. The 'blacking out' of words from the text can be done in whatever way the creator chooses, leaving room for artistic expression, which can relate to the content of the poem. The winner of this competition was Emma from 2LE, and the runners up were Ailsa from 2AV and Miren from 1LE. Their entries are shown below.

Departments all over the school got involved, with Harry Potter-themed activities taking place in Science throughout the week. This included first years being put into houses and other fun experiments.

Registration every day was reserved for reading, and every class participated in a Drop Everything And Read lesson, where they did just that! Pupils were instructed to bring in a book of their choice to read for pleasure last period on Thursday.

Friday was the annual Cosplay Day. This is an opportunity for pupils and staff to dress up as their favourite characters. There were many amazing group costumes, such as the English Department's array of Shakespeare characters, and Social Subjects dressing as characters from *Alice in Wonderland*. The prize for best costume went to S6 student Lana C, who dressed up as Pinhead from *Hellraiser* (pictured).



BAND CAMP 2022

2022 saw the triumphant return of Strathaven Academy's Band Camp, and it was a great success. Over thirty students were able to enjoy these three jam-packed days of outdoor fun and music, music, music, though it wasn't without its struggles!

Over the last few, difficult years, COVID has hugely impacted many aspects of student life and its effects have been sorely felt in the Music department. During the pandemic, whilst students were still in school, heavy restrictions were placed upon the practising of any instrument that could be played with your mouth - that was woodwind and brass instruments, and singing, too, outlawed. Needless to say, this meant that the concert band was completely shut down and no new students in the younger years were encouraged to pick up any of the shunned instruments. Luckily, Strathaven Academy was one of the few high schools in Scotland who still had enough people to start up again this year.



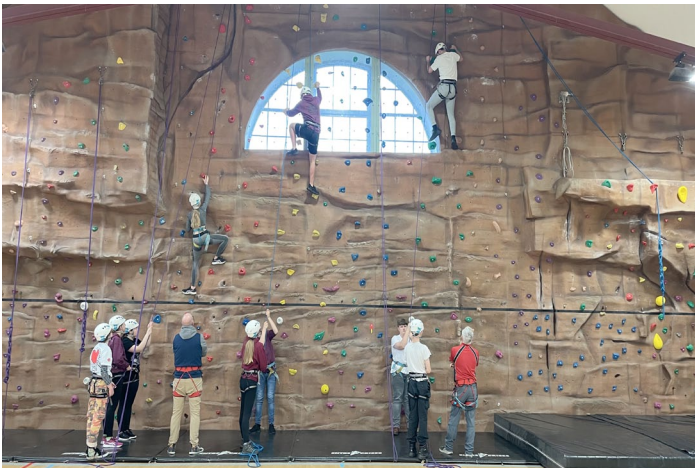
As the band wasn't at its full capacity this year, there were a few spare spaces on the trip, and these were offered in the first instance to the Advanced Higher Music class (the majority of whom leapt at the opportunity). As the trip drew closer, however, some spaces were still unfilled; the trip was opened up to anyone that could go, in a desperate attempt to avoid cancellation – and it paid off! You didn't have to be part of the band to have a fun trip: one of the Advanced Higher students spoke about how much they enjoyed it. "I loved the food and the dorms and at night the atmosphere was buzzing. I loved band camp and would love to go again next year, if only I were young enough!"

The troops left on Wednesday 2nd November, and, a couple of hours after painstakingly packing the whole Music department onto the bus in the drizzle, arrived at Dumfries House. Students were given a brief orientation and settling in period before starting the team-building activities: an educational search and rescue exercise, a mud run and indoor rock-climbing (probably the safest option in the wet weather).

BAND CAMP 2022

A few hours each day were dedicated to band rehearsals. Some time was spent working in different groups, but when everyone came together, the passion for music and strength of the band's connection truly came through. "The other non-band members and I were very lucky to hear them. Prime entertainment!" says a student who accompanied the band on the trip. There was also a one-off Samba tutorial, given by the one and only Mr Bryans, which was open to everyone.

The icing on the cake of this memorable camp was the evening shenanigans. Card games, quizzes, makeovers, campfire - it was all going on in Dumfries House. When the time came to pack up and head back to Strathaven, it seemed to come too soon but I'm sure everybody who managed to make the trip will remember those brief three days in a golden light. One such student told us, "I for one had a great time, it was fun seeing the teachers in a more casual light and getting to know people outside of school! It was an unexpected joy that I am glad I got to experience."



'The atmosphere was buzzing. I loved band camp and I would love to go again.'

CREATIVE AND AESTHETIC SHOWCASE

In October, many of our talented young artists and musicians came together for the Creative and Aesthetic showcase. This public event allowed the young photographers and artists to display their hard work, alongside recipes and treats prepared by the Home Economics and Hospitality students.

Alongside this, the Music department held its Young Musician of the Year contest for the first time since 2019. Both junior and senior pupils were competing for title of Best Instrumentalist and Best Vocal Performance. Open auditions were held in late September to let candidates battle it out before the final performance, and whittling them down to just four performers in each category.



JUNIOR VOCALIST

- FLORENCE R
- GRACE C
- BONITA W
- LAUREN C



JUNIOR INSTRUMENTALIST

- MATILDA F
(PIANO)
- AURELIA M
(VIOLIN)
- CARA M
(PIANO)
- ZOE G
(CLARINET)



DURING THE SHOW:

The show was opened by Sam G and Beth G, piping in the audience. A fantastic display of talent came from our junior vocalists, including a Welsh language piece performed by Florence R. Following this were the junior instrumentalists, with a vast range of traditional violin pieces, Disney classics and an alt rock piano arrangement. The senior vocalists were chalk full of wonderful renditions, particularly that of Marcus H: the first and only male vocalist of the evening. However, the fiercest competition came from the senior instrumentalists, who put on a tremendous display of musicianship. Guitarists and flautists alike showed the determination and skill of our young musicians.

A fine selection of haggis bon-bons, meringues and other small treats was on offer during the intermission, as our judges - Rebecca M, Linda O and Ian T - all local and highly esteemed musicians and teachers, deliberated over their decision. In the end, however, there could only be one winner from each category, and after some time, the awards were presented. Lauren C took home the prize for Junior Vocalist, alongside Aurelia M for the Instrumentalist award. From the seniors, Nina B's powerful rendition of Listen by Beyoncé led her to take the award home, followed by Nicholas S receiving Best Instrumentalist, and overall Best Musician of the evening. It's safe to say everyone in attendance thoroughly enjoyed the performances from the evening.

SENIOR VOCALIST

- SKARLETT B
- MARCUS H
- NINA B
- EVA B

SENIOR INSTRUMENTALIST

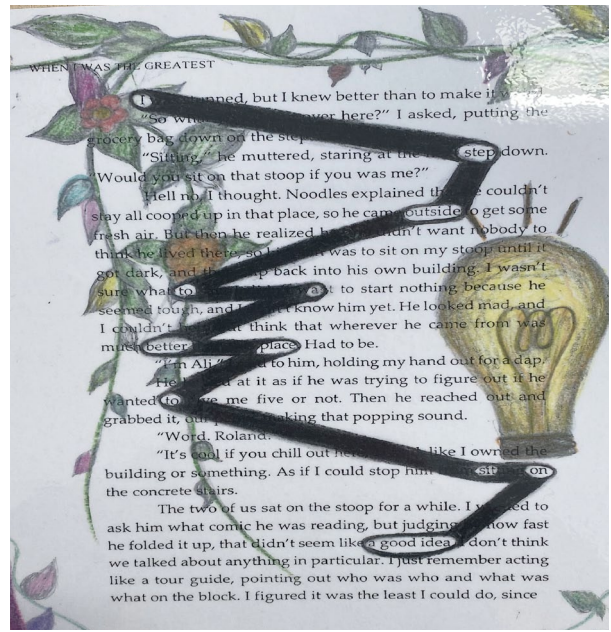
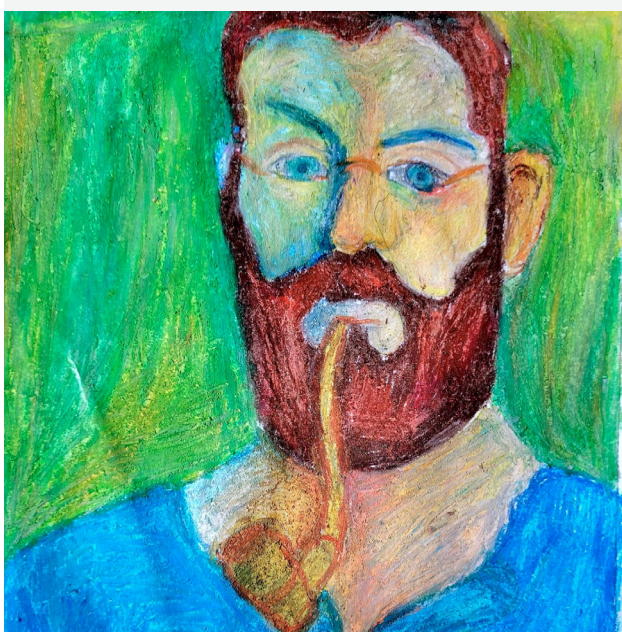
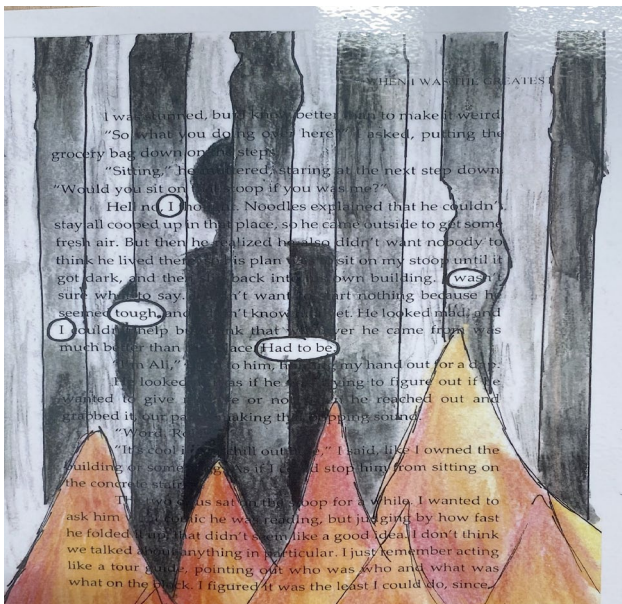
- TOM S
(GUITAR)
- NICHOLAS S
(SAXOPHONE)
- MADELINE F
(FLUTE)
- KYLE K
(PIANO)

All Aboard For Creativity



SPOTLIGHTING STUDENTS

Here is just a sample of the amazing creative work by some of our Strathaven students...



NEW AND UPCOMING ARTISTS

Lizzy McAlpine

The 23-year-old Lizzy McAlpine has really risen into the public eye over the last year with the release of her second album *Five Seconds Flat*. Lizzy's music would probably be classed as folk-pop, and is known for its beautiful lyrical storytelling, diverse collaborations and stunning vocals. As well as the hit *Ceiling*, our favourite song is *Erase Me* featuring Jacob Collier.

The Amazing Devil

The Amazing Devil is a London-based alternative folk duo which is quickly gaining popularity by doing something a little bit uncommon. These two brilliant singers are also actors - Madeleine Hyland, who was featured in *Vanity Fair*, and Joey Batey, well-known for his role as Jaskier in *The Witcher*. We would recommend you check out their most recent album *Ruin*.

Black Midi

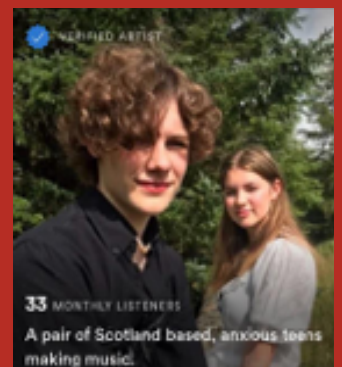
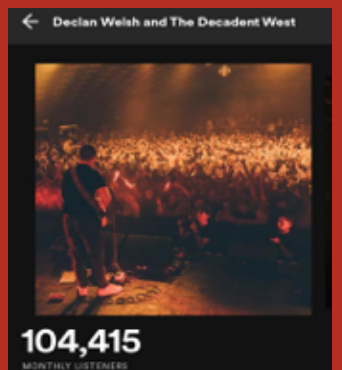
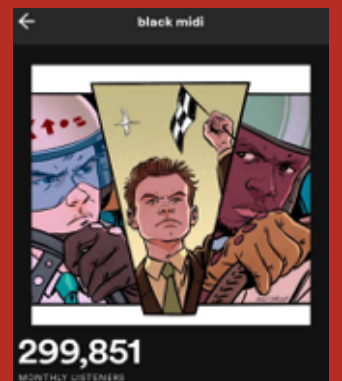
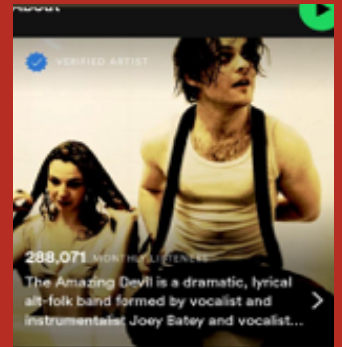
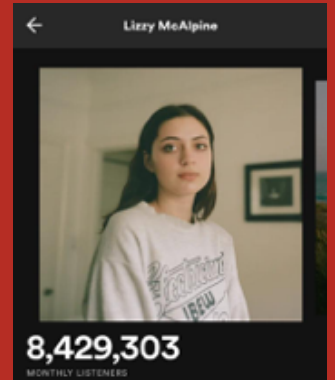
Black Midi is a stylized rock band, also based in London, that has been performing since 2020. Progressive and experimental, their music consists of a wide range of tracks from spoken word to recorded jams, each album wildly contrasting. This band is always pushing genre boundaries and including unexpected techniques and instruments in their music just because they can. If you're a fan of experimental rock, we would recommend giving *Of Schlagenheim* a listen.

Declan Walsh and The Decadent West

The fusion of East Kilbride-raised poet, singer and songwriter Declan Walsh and small band The Decadent West has been making waves throughout the nation since the release of a debut single in 2018. They have now toured the United Kingdom and also performed at festivals including Glastonbury, and things are only set to improve. From anthems to ballads, this band's style is both poppy and rocky. They are known for their critical and biting lyrics to which anybody living in today's society can relate.

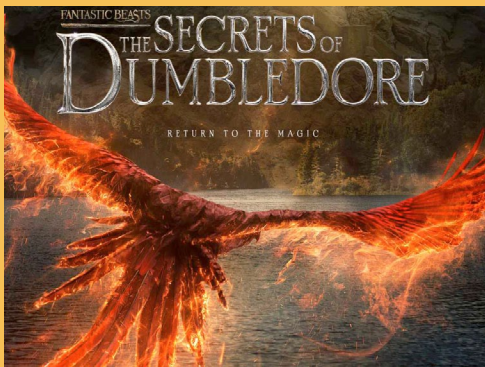
Opaque

An honourable mention to Strathaven Academy's very own up-and-coming duo Opaque, who have performed at several small gigs. They released their first original song *Desiderium* in September 2022 and their second, *Almost a Love Song*, just this February! Keep an eye out for this talented duo's new music, all support is appreciated.



Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore

With all the anticipation around the game Hogwarts: Legacy, this film, set in the Harry Potter universe, has been relatively overshadowed and forgotten. And for good reason: it is a truly dreadful and pointless experience, with one of the most nonsensical plots ever committed to screen. It follows on from the critically panned *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald*, which I actually enjoyed, despite its plot being rather hard to follow. The sequel, however, has a plot of pointless irrelevance. It is not the sign of a well-constructed narrative when you could take the first and last scenes, remove the rest of the film and still have it make sense; even with a running time of 2 hours and 23 minutes, barely anything occurs! The large cast goes from place to place, completing seemingly random activities, all in an effort to “confuse” the main villain Grindelwald, who can see into the future. Speaking of the characters, most of them are just as pointless as the plot itself; Newt Scamander, played by Eddie Redmayne, was a good protagonist in the first *Fantastic Beasts* film, but as the stakes have risen, his importance has diminished and he is increasingly being shoe-horned into the narrative. He is a magizoologist - not someone equipped to fight a war. Jacob, who made for good comic relief in the first film, is also shoe-horned into the plot. The reason given by Dumbledore for bringing Jacob into this fight is your clichéd “pure of heart” nonsense - the man will most likely die horribly! Of course, he doesn’t, because writer JK Rowling will need to beat us over the head with more jokes in yet another sequel! The rest of the cast simply blurs together into a congealed mass; they all just stand around being expository robots with no personality. The only standout was Mads Mikkelsen’s Grindelwald; he played the role well and was by far the greatest part of the film.



Thor Love and Thunder

This movie was so utterly devoid of quality it turned me off the entire Marvel cinematic universe and I have not watched any new release from it since. I went in with high expectations, as I had enjoyed *Thor: Ragnarok* a great deal; however, this movie seems like a parody of it. The humour, which worked so well in *Ragnarok*, makes *Love and Thunder* unbearable to sit through, as every character spouts endless unfunny jokes and takes nothing seriously; even Thor’s girlfriend’s cancer diagnosis is played for laughs, along with the children kidnapped by the villain Gorr, played by Christian Bale, whose amazing talent is utterly wasted by the terrible script and his pitiful amount of screen time. The movie also has a bad habit of giving characters random abilities they have never had before, purely to push the plot forward; a truly lazy form of storytelling, perhaps proving how uninterested writer and director Taika Waititi was in making this film. Thor himself is the worst offender in the bad humour stakes; this is a man who has lost his entire family, many of his friends and his home, yet he meanders through this film as if nothing in the plot impacts him on any level, simply spouting whichever joke came to the writer in that moment. He is also a complete imbecile, seemingly stunned and shocked by everything he sees. This is not the fault of Chris Hemsworth, who does his best with what he’s given, but what he’s given is so bad I wouldn’t be surprised if the script had been AI-generated.

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

Last year our school achieved the Reading Schools Silver Award. This year we're going for Gold, and that's why we've got some staff and students to share their book recommendations.

Non-Fiction

Jenna (S6): Pandora's Jar by Natalie Haynes

A non-fiction look at Greek mythology through a feminist lens. Suitable for all readers.

"Very insightful."

Miss Atterson: Anne Frank's Diary - graphic novel adaptation

"Very poignant. If anyone is interested in it, they should read it."

Mr Blackwood: The Secret Race by Tyler Hamilton and Daniel Coyle

An inside perspective on the world of professional cycling, specifically focussing on Lance Armstrong.

Mrs Juskowiak: Ten Steps to Positive Living by Windy Dryden

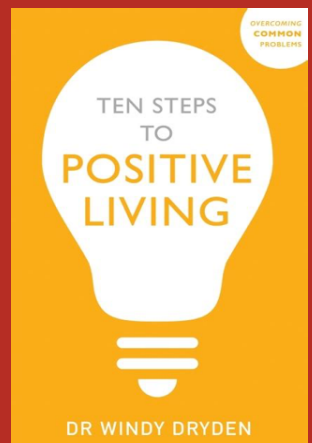
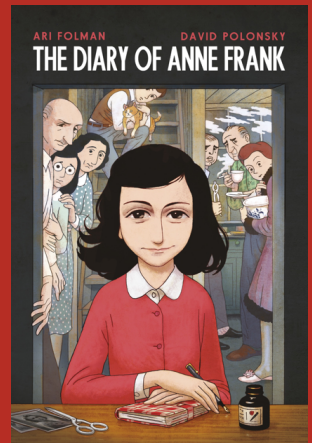
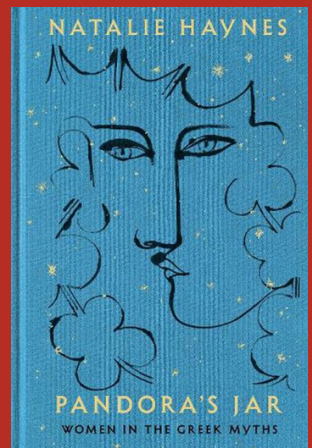
A self-help book about taking responsibility for your own actions, recommended for S4 and above.

"Really practical. A quick read."

Hannah (S6, author of this article): This is Going to Hurt by Adam Kay

A very important insight into the work of a junior doctor. Eye-opening, especially after the pandemic and all the current talk about NHS budget cuts. Has also been adapted into a TV show.

"Harrowing, humorous and endearing."





Fiction

Miss Dickson: Girl Meets Boy by Ali Smith

“An uplifting, fun and quick read. Smith creates a fresh story about love and gender fluidity as she reimagines the ancient myth of Iphis and lanthe.”

Catriona (S6): His Dark Materials by Philip Pullman

A fantasy series, suitable for younger readers. Has also been made into a TV series.

Mr Connor: The Machine Gunners by Robert Westfall

A children’s historical novel set during the war. Suitable for younger readers and won the Carnegie Medal - a children’s fiction award.

Æthon (S6): Birthday by Meredith Russo

Young adult queer fiction, following the story of a young trans girl, her struggles and her friendships.

“More captivating than any other book I’ve read.”

Skarlett (S6): Half Bad by Sally Green

Young adult fantasy novel with underlying themes of prejudice.

Mr Cassidy: The Tattooist of Auschwitz by Heather Morris

This novel centres around the man who tattoos numbers onto people entering the concentration camp.

“It’s quite dark, but suitable for anyone interested in history.”

Mr Taylor: American Gods by Neil Gaiman

A dark fantasy novel, which has been made into a TV series. Suitable for S5/6.

Mrs Reilly: The Marriage Portrait by Maggie O’Farrell

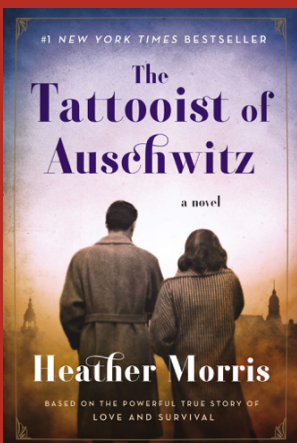
This historical novel is a retelling of the poem My Last Duchess by Robert Browning. It tells the story of a girl in Renaissance Italy who is being prepared for a marriage and puts her trust in her parents with disastrous consequences.

“Emotive, unexpected and inspiring ending; historical, with a character-driven plot.”

Miss Inglis: Daisy Jones And The Six by Taylor Jenkins Reid

Set in a parallel universe, this novel is based on the story of Fleetwood Mac. It is more suited to older readers.

“A complex book with great, well-written characters.”



GREASE CAST LIST

Our school show cast has been announced! Rehearsals are in full swing for the 2023 production of Grease, performing threenights from the 21st to the 24th of June. We are all very excited to see it come together next year!

DANNY – Ross B
SANDY – Eva B
RIZZO – Grace A
FRENCHY – Jenna A
MARTY – Olivia C
JAN – Emily S
KENICKIE – Daniel T
DOODY – Kodi B
ROGER – Cara S
SONNY – Steven D
T-BIRDS SWING – Gabriel A
PATTY – Brooke L
CHA-CHA – Madeleine W
EUGENE – Luca A
VINCE FONTAINE – Marcus H
GINNIE CASINO – Mirra F
MISS LYNCH – Izzy L
TEEN ANGEL – Mr Sinclair
PINK LADIES SWING – Nina B

Good luck everybody!

**NEXT EDITION
2024**

Are you creative?

Are you in S6?

Are you interested in journalism?

**SIGN UP FOR THE NEWSLETTER
ELECTIVE 2023/2024
AND HELP CREATE
EDITION 2 OF AVONMAIL!**

The background of the cover features two silver trophies with yellow ribbons draped over them, set against a blurred background of a person. The trophies are positioned on the left and right sides of the frame, with the ribbons flowing between them.

AVO IMAIL

STRATHAVEN ACADEMY'S FIRST MAGAZINE

A SPECIAL THANKS FOR THE PUPILS WHO PUT IN THE HARDWORK AND DEDICATION TO
CREATE AND FINISH THIS MAGAZINE:

Jenna A, Nina B, Kodi B, Josh C, Lana C, Nate D, Hannah K, Patrick M, Honor T &
Matthew W