

# Digest

DAME ALLAN'S

DECEMBER 2020



## A welcome from the Principal

As we have made it through to the end of this exceptional term, I know that pupils and staff will be breathing a sigh of relief. It is worth reflecting, though, that for all the restrictions placed upon us, it has been a very special few months simply because of how precious it has felt to be able to keep the Schools open for pupils to learn, play, and socialise. Truly, everyone has pulled together to make it happen - the cheerful flexibility of our young people, the absolute dedication of our teachers, the unwavering commitment of our non-teaching staff and our governors, and the supportive encouragement of our parents. What has been achieved has been of immense importance in the lives of our pupils, as well as the wider Dame Allan's community. A huge thank you is owed to you all.

As you will see by reading this edition of the Digest, it has certainly been a busy term! The usual festive Christmas performances have still gone ahead, albeit virtually. And it is heart-warming to see that our pupils across the Schools have gone above and beyond to help others, from supporting the People's Kitchen and Children in Need at the Junior School, to writing Christmas cards, making face masks, and supporting the West End Food Bank at the Senior School.

Looking ahead to the start next term on 5th January, we are planning to restart with the extra-curricular activities that were available before the 5th November national restrictions. This means a return to Saturday sports and out-of-school trips, and the full programme of activities will be published before the beginning of term. Clearly, we all hope that the evolution of the pandemic, with the vaccination programme, will begin to improve in the first half of term and that some easing of restrictions will follow, enabling us to widen further the range and scope of the activities programme.

The Christmas holidays will, as every year, be a period of rest and, I hope, some merriment! We will all be looking to find ways of connecting with the important people in our lives, in order to celebrate and share the excitement and joy of the season. May I wish you all a very happy, healthy and restful holiday, with a very much better year ahead.

## A Welcome Visit

The end of term saw a familiar face return to Dame Allan's.



Dr Hind is welcomed by the new Principal, Mr Will Scott, and the Head Boy and Head Girl - Victoria and Jan.

No one could have foreseen the events that occurred during Dr Hind's last year in post, or the challenges they would bring, causing planned celebrations to be revised. As part of these original planned celebrations, Dr Hind had wanted to present a gift to the school.

When the Cathedral was closed for refurbishment and the pews were being auctioned off to raise funds, there could not have been a more appropriate gift for Dame Allan's. Though later than planned, Dr Hind had the opportunity to present his gift of the pews to the Schools. They will take pride of place in the Newsom Hall underneath the memorial boards.

Commenting, Dr Hind said: "It was lovely to be invited back into the Schools and to see the Schools in such good health, in spite of the pandemic.

As a school and with such close links to the St Nicholas Cathedral,

it was fitting, both historically and spiritually, to be able to gift the pews to the Schools. It was lovely to be invited back and to see how well the pews have fitted in."

Dr Hind was also welcomed back to the Junior School, where he officially opened the newly developed pond area, aptly named Willow Waters, which was funded by DASPA Junior.

The final surprise of the visit came when Dr Hind was invited to the newly named John Hind

Hall. Dr Hind played an integral role in the building of the new junior school so there couldn't have been a more fitting tribute to him than naming the main school hall after him.



Dr Hind was invited to the newly named John Hind Hall.



Dr Hind plants a willow tree - closely watched by the Junior School Head Boy and Head Girl.

# DASPA

**DASPA has continued to find a role supporting the school and the Dame Allan's community during this pandemic. DASPA's focus for activities this year is friend-raising.**

With this in mind DASPA are connecting and providing support to parents with a LinkedIn group and Business Directory of Parent Businesses. Please email [daspa@dameallans.co.uk](mailto:daspa@dameallans.co.uk) if you would like more information.

DASPA has also held a free raffle for parents and staff sponsored by SS Healthfoods (Whitley Bay) which had over 100 entries and a Family Christmas Quiz. Both of

which marked what would have been the DASPA Christmas Fair.

The very active DASPA Junior Committee has supported the school with providing some Fun Friday Activities, comprising: a bookmark competition with prizes and sweets; popcorn and storytelling; thank you letters for staff; biscuit decorating; parents dressing up for pick up!; advent calendars; Christmas Bauble

Competition; a virtual Santa visit and a reindeer visit. The DASPA committee would like to thank staff, students and parents for their support in these activities which have helped bring a bit of cheer on Fridays! We're looking forward to working with the school next term for more Fun Fridays!

The Junior Committee has also been busy with junior uniform sales which has been a big effort with Covid restrictions but we're pleased to have provided this valuable service to parents and support the school by giving 50% of takings to the Covid 19 Bursary Fund. The committee is also selling new supporter scarves and hats in Dame Allan's Colours please email [daspa@dameallans.co.uk](mailto:daspa@dameallans.co.uk) if you would like to purchase one.

In January we will launch 'DASPA Will Month' with Kingswalk Law in Gosforth. The firm will donate their time to make wills in exchange for a donation to DASPA. Parents and carers will be invited to make wills with this firm, and we ask that DASPA receives a donation of at least £100 for each will.

DASPA would like to say a big thank you to all Dame Allan's staff for everything they have done this term and particularly Jackie Needham and Mark Burns.

The DASPA committee would like to wish all the readers of News Digest a Merry Christmas and the Happiest and Healthiest of New Years.



## Reindeer Flying Visit

Thanks to DASPA, our amazing parents association, the last Friday of term was extra special with the visit of a reindeer! Every pupil in every class across the junior school and nursery had the opportunity to visit the reindeer before it flew home - after all, it is coming up to that busy time of year!

# Sports

**While sport has taken a hit in the recent lockdown, there has still been much going on every day.**

The lunch time and after school clubs have continued to be as popular as ever with the introduction of Strength and Conditioning for Years 7-9 as part of that programme and it was great to see a "round 2" of house sport in the last 2 weeks of term as a reward for all the hard work from our pupils.

Perhaps a standout event was the Sports Nutrition workshop delivered by Harriet Bates, Performance Nutritionist from British Rowing. She delivered two very engaging talks on "nutrition to aid you in your school day" and "nutrition in the pursuit of sporting excellence." With over 130 participants on the night, she

fielded great questions from the pupils involved and we were delighted to have been able to provide an event like this.

It certainly has been a turbulent time for sport but the commitment and enthusiasm from pupils and staff has been outstanding and we hope that we can get back to normality soon. The aim is to re-launch Saturday Sport next term with the same programme we had advertised at October Half Term but as always, the Government may well change the guidance at short notice. We will remain positive about the offering of sport in the New Year but we remain as flexible as we can.



# Junior School Performances



## Virtual Choir

Some of the Junior School children have virtually recorded a performance of 'Standing Together' which was shared with parents via Class Dojo.

## Virtual Carol Service

The children from Years 3 to 6 have been filmed in their class bubbles, performing Christmas readings, carols and songs, and playing hand bells to create a virtual Carol Service which will be shared with parents to watch at home.

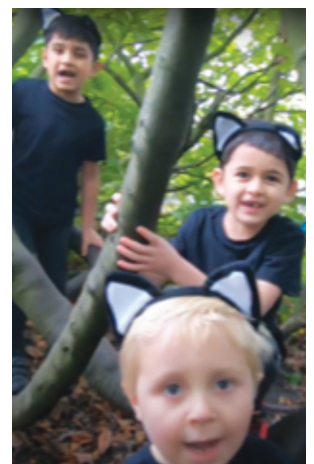
## Reception Nativity

Reception haven't let the restrictions get in the way of them producing their Nativity. The performance this year was brought to Parents/Guardians virtually, through Tapestry accounts.



## Peter and the Wolf

Although we have not been able to invite visitors into school to see live performances this year, Years 1 & 2 have been very busy filming their annual production. This year it was 'Peter and the Wolf'. All of our filming took place in our wonderful woodland and re-furbished pond area. The virtual performance can be enjoyed at home.





# Local Charity Support

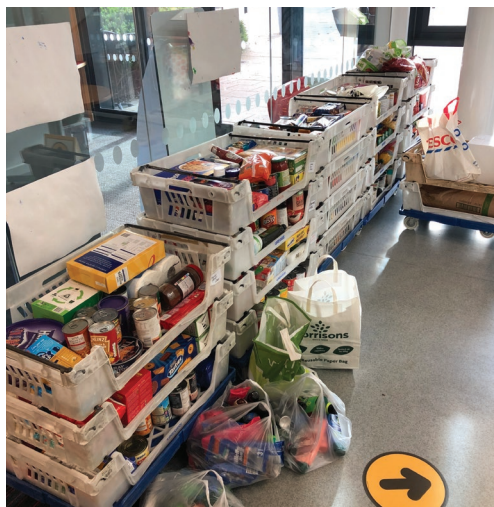
## Junior School

### Salvation Army People's Kitchen

The parents and children of the Junior School have given their whole-hearted support to our two recent charity collections. Earlier in November we collected food and essential item donations for the People's Kitchen. We filled an entire van with the many donations we received!

We have also supported The Salvation Army this year, with their Christmas gift appeal. Pictured is just a few of the many donations we have received which will be distributed to children who may not otherwise receive a gift this year.

A huge thank you to all concerned for the support - it has been so heart-warming to see and hear the reactions of our chosen charities.



### Children in Need

Staff and pupils at the Junior School raised an impressive £2,264.93 for Children in Need through a range of exciting activities, including reception children keeping fit by taking part in some circuits!

## Senior Schools

### Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust

The Senior Schools managed to raise an impressive £900 through a non-uniform day, to support the valuable work of the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust.

### Miner's Lamp Community Hub

Year 8 pupil Maddie raised over £1,000 for charity by making and selling tie dye face masks, with all proceeds going towards the Miner's Lamp Community Hub, to support the work of its food bank and the supply of meals for children in the school holidays. We are so proud of Maddie, who even made front page of the Hexham Courant. It was great to see her efforts rewarded

with a community champion award from Hexham MP Guy Opperman.

### Christmas Cards

Boys from 7Z have been spreading some festive joy. Working with Your Homes Newcastle (YHN), the pupils have been spending their form time writing some Christmas cards to send to YHN's vulnerable tenants who are on their own and have expressed an interest in receiving a card from one of our wonderful students. Congratulations boys!

### 'LikL' Christmas Boxes

As part of the Sixth Form's Community Service, some of our year 12 students have been working with Newcastle United NCS. The students requested donations to make Christmas gift boxes for young children. As a result, they made up over

100 boxes and managed to raise over £300.

We are so proud of these students who have done an amazing job in helping to raise a smile on the faces of local children this Christmas.

It was great to see the Dame Allan's family pulling together with donations from current parents, staff, pupils, and former pupils.

### Social Enterprise

As part of their social enterprise project, year 12 pupils raised over £340 for the Newcastle East Foodbank by making and selling sweet bags of Christmas treats and candy canes.



## Polite Reminder about Parking

Following on from the reminder in the last issue of the Digest, we have received another complaint from one of our neighbours regarding parking on Nuns Moor Road. Please could we politely remind parents to park safely and considerately, and not to leave engines running when they are waiting at pick up. This is causing some distress to our neighbours.

## LAMDA Exam Results

Congratulations to 26 of our LAMDA students who performed their exams recently after they were postponed from March. All of the students did exceptionally well, with over half of them passing with distinction, which is particularly impressive.

## School Blazer

Uniform provider School Blazer are holding a January sale, with a third off selected uniform items. Their sale begins on 29 December, while stocks last.

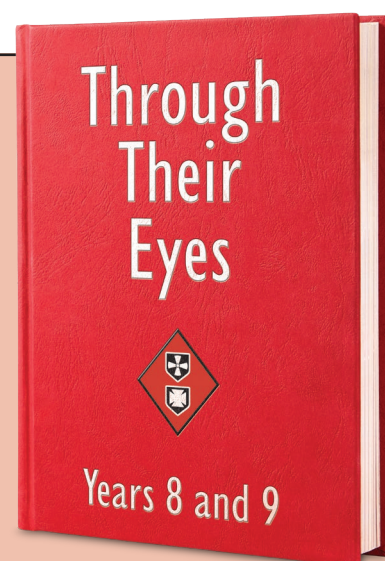
## Virtual Music Festival Senior school

Pupils worked hard on producing individual videos of themselves performing music, either in their year group music clubs, or at home. These videos were then combined into our virtual music ensembles - of which there was a great variety. The virtual ensembles were very well received, so a big thank you to all who took part!

- Symphony Orchestra • Intermediate Choir + Intermediate Wind Band • Ceilidh Band
- Junior Choir • Big Band

## Published Works

Several of our students in year 8 and 9, have been published in a new anthology called Through Their Eyes. They were encouraged to write from the perspective of someone or something else, and our entries featured diverse titles, such as 'When They Came, We Hid', 'Hunted', 'Recovery', 'Racism' and



'Pineapple on Pizza'. There's a copy of the anthology in the library for anyone who wishes to read it.



## The Allanian Society



It has been heartening to see the whole school community rising to recent challenges and Allanians making new contributions: Group Captain Tim Lindsay and Commander Caroline Dix MBE participated in the schools' Act of Remembrance from their respective military bases, Dr Rishi Srivastava discussed medical applications by videocall, Dr Jackie Gray gave a virtual community service innovation challenge, and a Zoom Christmas gathering is now in our Society calendar.

The Allanian Society is now looking forward to 2021. With an eye to our heritage, we will mark the centenary of adopting the name Dame Allan's Schools and the bicentenary of the significant benefaction of the Clergy Jubilee School building

commemorating Bishop Shute Barrington. Most importantly, with an eye to our present and future, we are looking forward once again to meeting together in person, as well as virtually.

I hope to see many of you enjoying Allanian events in 2021!

Stephen Davies, *Chairman of the Allanian Society*

### Contact us

If you are interested in joining the board and helping to shape the future of the Allanian Society, please contact the Development Office: 0191 275 1500

e: [alumnirelations@dameallans.co.uk](mailto:alumnirelations@dameallans.co.uk)

We are also on Facebook, find us The Allanian Society



# In conversation with... Menisha Gela, Development Director



## **Tell us a little bit about yourself and your team.**

I am from Cambridgeshire, but came to Newcastle University and settled permanently in the city in my mid-twenties. Over the last ten years I have worked primarily with St Oswald's Hospice as well as a range of other organisations across the North East on projects such as Durham Brass Festival, Freedom City and The Great Exhibition of the North.

I've been working with the Schools on a part-time basis since the beginning of the year and joined on the 2nd November as a permanent member of staff.

The Development Team consists of me and Tove Elander, Development Officer.

## **What is the role of the Development Office?**

Primarily we work to grow and develop new relationships with the School's immediate and wider community. Be that through conversation, events or online tools. Our aim is to gain support for

Schools objectives such as creating new opportunities for our students, increasing pupil numbers, supporting our alumni and wider community and improving our facilities. We want to give people from all backgrounds across the City and further afield an understanding of the wonderful opportunities there are to both learn and work at Dame Allan's Schools.

## **Where can we find you?**

We're based in the Bursary at the Senior School. The door is always open, so do come and introduce yourselves.

## **What are your plans for the future?**

To be able to do my job effectively I need a good understanding of the organisation and its community. It's very clear that Dame Allan's is well regarded by lots of people. I want to hear as many of the voices out there - tell me what makes Dame Allan's unique and wonderful. I also want to hear about aspirations for the Schools. My ultimate

aim is to help to build a positive future for our Schools and strengthen our standing within the independent schools sector in Newcastle and the North East.

## **Why is this important for the Schools?**

We have lots going for us at Dame Allan's and a long legacy of providing young people with an outstanding education grounded in the generosity of our founders and the hard work of generations of staff, students and supporters. However, in buildings that have stood since the 1930's there is always work to be done and improvements that can be made. Having a functioning Development Office should help us to begin to work with our communities to realise our aspirations and create exceptional new programs and facilities for the benefit of our students.

## **What are your biggest challenges ahead?**

There is a risk that once a Development Office is set up we are expected to work in isolation and make things happen. You see it in lots of organisations. Where there is success however, there is an understanding that Development is a shared responsibility and takes a collective effort. I'm a glass half full kind of person, so whilst there are the obvious challenges

given the times we live in, I am fortunate to work for an outstanding organisation and have the support of an excellent team, including the Principal, the Bursar and the Governors. The Covid-19 Bursary Appeal we launched earlier in the year to support members of the Dame Allan's family experiencing hardship was well supported and shows the good will out there. Indeed, everybody I have spoken to so far has been very positive about how they can help me in my new role and support the Schools.

Of course, getting to know an organisation, planning and taking into account all the factors that need consideration to work effectively takes time but I think we have lots going for us as a School and a community and I'm really looking forward to the future.

## **Has COVID-19 affected your future plans and how?**

One of the best things about this job is that I get to meet and talk to lots of different people - which I absolutely love. Given Covid restrictions, meeting face to face won't happen for a while, but I do look forward to crossing paths with many of you at some point in the future. In the meantime, email, Googlemeet, Zoom or a simple chat on the phone are very welcome. Do say hello! Contact [mn.gela@dameallans.co.uk](mailto:mn.gela@dameallans.co.uk) or call 0191 275 1500

## Safeguarding at Dame Allan's

A recent BBC Panorama programme highlighted safety concerns regarding TikTok. The app is widely used by our pupils and we wanted to make you aware of the tougher measures put in place by TikTok to enable parents to safeguard children using this video-sharing app. The new safety features relate to the TikTok's Family Pairing facility, further information and details of how to activate this setting can be found by following the link below.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-54974813>



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

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