

# DAME ALLAN'S Digest

OCTOBER 2021



## An Adventurous Return

There has been a welcome return to normality throughout the Schools this term, particularly for Year 7 pupils who were able to go on their residential trips - much to the excitement of the boys and girls.



The outdoor excursions are always full of adventure and fun, helping students to develop confidence, resilience and social skills, and this year's experiences did not disappoint!

Dame Allan's Girls School took over 50 Year 7 students to Dukeshouse Wood, an 18-acre adventure park set on beautiful rural fellside outside Hexham.

The girls enjoyed two jam-packed days working together in House groups, developing skills, forming friendships and making the most of the high-adrenaline activities, including the high ropes and 3G-swing.

Inaya's comment, once she returned to school, summed up the experience perfectly: "What would I change about the trip? Nothing! I enjoyed every moment. It was extremely fun."

Special thanks to the four Sixth Form girls Megan, Cara, Clara and Izzy who came to help alongside the Head of Lower School Ms Ward, form tutors Mrs Hughes, Mrs McLaughlin and Miss Reynolds, and head of Bede & Brewer Miss Clifton.

The Boys School took over 70 Year 7 students for a three-day outdoor adventure to the fantastic Derwent Hill, in the Lake District. Despite heavy rain and wind, the boys threw themselves into all activities with enthusiasm.



They enjoyed orienteering, hill walking, canoeing, gorge walking and the high ropes challenge, as well as a torchlit low ropes course in the evening.

The weekend was a huge success, with the boys developing key skills of listening, organisation and self-reliance, while building on their resilience, working as teams and forming new bonds.

Again, the support of three Sixth Form students, Max, Tanvir and Kieron, was hugely appreciated by the eight members of staff on the trip: Mr Gardner, Mrs Cookson, Miss Stewart, Mrs Fletcher, Miss Kelly, Miss Vangelatos, Dr Leese, and Mr Dodsworth.

We now look forward to many more adventures with our Year 7 boys and girls in the academic year ahead.



## A welcome from the Principal

We have had a full bore restart this term, with lots of trips, activities and fixtures - what a great start to the year! As we learn to live with Covid, we are facing plenty of positive challenges as we adapt and settle into familiar routines and expectations, be that at school, at home or at work. It has been a particular pleasure to return to sports fixtures this term, and it has been lovely to see families coming in to support their children and meet each other.

Other big wins this term will include in-person gatherings of our parents' association (DASPA) and alumni association (the Allanian Society), full of energy and ideas for bringing our community together and supporting the work of the Schools. I am hugely grateful for everything they have managed to do over the last year and look forward to the events they are planning for the months ahead. If you would like to get involved then please do get in touch via our DASPA and the Allanian Society website pages.

And I can't finish without mentioning our North End Development, which is progressing through the demolition and foundation stage. You can stay up to date with the project on our website here; [www.dameallans.co.uk/alumni-and-development/ned](http://www.dameallans.co.uk/alumni-and-development/ned). Keep an eye out for our time lapse film which will be coming shortly! Have a very enjoyable Lord Mayor's holiday and half term break.

# Macmillan Fundraising Success

Pupils and staff collectively raised £312.50 For Macmillan Cancer Support with a 'Bake Off' competition, cake sale and coffee morning.

Our talented young bakers created a wonderful selection of colourfully-decorated layer cakes and chocolatey cupcakes. The competition was tough and first place prizes were awarded to Isla and Lucy in Year 7, Zaynab in Year 8, and Bella in Year 9.

The winning creations were shared on the Dame Allan's Schools Twitter feed, where Macmillan Cancer Support wrote: "Thank you so much for your fantastic support everyone. That looks absolutely amazing!"

# Re-opening To Prospective Parents

**While last year's virtual open events proved a success, it was very nice to open our doors and welcome in-person prospective pupils and their families in September.**

More than 80 families attended the Junior School open morning on Saturday 18th, while more than 200 families - some 600 visitors - visited the Senior School the following weekend.

They were the first open events for our Principal to meet visitors to the Schools in person, and both mornings proved a great success.

Many thanks to all pupils who acted as exceptional tour guides and to those who helped demonstrate the leading facilities and functions of our many departments.



## Music To Our Ears

It has been wonderful to see the return of live music to the school. This half term's lunchtime concert in our large recital space, the Lumsden Music Centre, saw fantastic performances by soloists and small chamber groups, organised by Clare Crinson.

Dame Allan's chamber choir sang beautifully at the Choral Evensong in St James and St Basil Church, in Fenham, on Friday 15th, with choral music by Moeran and Wesley and organ voluntaries by Langlais and Bruhns.

# Food Bank Thanks

**We were overwhelmed by the generosity of our students and staff who donated to our Harvest Festival collection for Newcastle West End Food Bank.**

Thank you to all those who brought in food and goods in support of the very worthwhile charity, which works tirelessly to provide emergency food to residents in the West End of Newcastle suffering hardships.

# DASPA

**The DASPA Committee were really happy to support the school at their successful open days this term. We're getting ready for our Christmas Fair on Saturday 27th November between 10am and 12noon at the Junior School. We would welcome any donations for raffle prizes. Please email [dspa@dameallans.co.uk](mailto:dspa@dameallans.co.uk) if you can help us. We are also starting our 50/50 lucky numbers fundraising initiative - please email us if you'd like to take part!**

All readers are invited to take part in our virtual international festival. If you have links to any country please email us. We're hoping to have links to almost all the countries in the world to show how diverse and connected we are in the Dame Allan's community. If you would

like to find out more or take part in our virtual international cookalong from 'itsfromscratch.org' please email us.

We're proud that we managed to support parents and carers with uniform sales in the past 18 months. We are happy to report that in addition to our half termly junior sales, we are now going to have regular senior uniform sales at St James and St Basil's Church at Fenham. These will take place on the first Tuesday of the month in term times at 8.45 am. The first sale will be on 2nd November and the second this term on 7th December.

Tea and coffee will be available. A big thank you to the team at Js and Bs who have been wholeheartedly supportive with this project.

We're getting ready for two Halloween parties at the end of this half term for

years 3-4 and year 8. We're sure these will be great events and would like to give a BIG thank you to all the staff who are donating their time to these events.

Finally, we'd like to thank junior school parents and carers for getting all the Christmas cards back to the school. This project, alongside our calendars and tea towels, makes a huge difference to our fundraising. Thank you to Mrs Needham for all her hard work in this project. On a similar note we're about to launch a project making calendars for local residents and some lucky Allanians! This is following on from our successful community bookmark project last year. Thank you in advance to junior parents and carers for encouraging your children to take part in this project and giving a little joy to our wider school community.



## The Allanian Society

The Allanian Society is looking forward to another busy year of events, supporting and working with the Schools. By the time you read this we have already held our AGM. It was lovely to be able to meet up in person again, and great to link up online with those board members who were unable to join us in school.

We recently held an informal social walk around the bridle paths of Gosforth, followed by tea and cake. It was a great opportunity to meet up with Allanians for a chat and some fresh air!

Looking ahead, we have a full diary and are already looking forward to celebrating Christmas with our annual lunch, sadly cancelled last year due to

Covid restrictions. This year the lunch will be held at Blackfriars Restaurant on the last day of term, Tuesday 14 December, at 12.00 noon. Tickets for the lunch can be booked online here <https://theallaniansociety.co.uk/event/the-allanian-society-christmas-lunch> or email [development@dameallans.co.uk](mailto:development@dameallans.co.uk)

We are planning many more events this academic year so please keep checking our events page for regular updates: <https://theallaniansociety.co.uk/eventswebpage>. We hope to see lots of Allanians at Society and Schools' events and look forward to meeting you.

Stephen Davies,  
*Chairman of the Allanian Society*

# In conversation with... Leela Stedman, HR Manager.



## Tell us about yourself and the Schools' HR department:

I've worked in HR for 15 years and joined DAS in December 2020 as the HR Manager for both schools. This is my first time working in education and I've been fortunate to be supported by two fantastic members of the HR team - Amy Boyle and Liz O'Sullivan, who has since retired.

I handle the day-to-day HR services, but also strive to create, encourage and drive a culture where staff are motivated and developed, in order to achieve their very best and maximise performance. HR has come a long way from its original perception of personnel!

Wellbeing and employee satisfaction of staff are so important. I believe that passionate, happy people are the best kind of people to have in an organisation.

As an employer, DAS encourages a supportive environment and provides many resources for its staff.

I think the school environment naturally encourages development of qualities such as self-discipline, confidence and independence, whilst creating a community culture in which members care and support each other. HR plays a vital part in influencing the organisational culture and ensures that all staff are well suited to the organisation and strive to complement it.

## What challenges have you faced in your role?

Having worked previously in the industrial sector, I do enjoy the challenges that the education sector brings - with a different focus on areas such as safeguarding, and the recruitment and development of staff.

Recruitment is a very difficult, candidate-driven market at the moment for many organisations. While teaching staff are easier to recruit for, we do struggle to find the right support staff. So, it means focusing our efforts with targeted campaigns to reach those audiences that might not necessarily consider working within a school.

## How has the pandemic impacted HR?

It has been a challenging time for everyone, but staff have been fantastic

in their management both during lockdown and back at school.

Our aim is to positively support and encourage staff to be open and honest about the daily stresses and pressures they face. We are acutely aware that there may be long term effects as a result of the past 18 months. That said, DAS staff are amazing at remaining positive and focussed on providing the very best outcomes for the students.

On a personal note, it's great to now start seeing and meeting staff face-to-face without masks, as getting to know people is so important in my role.

## What has been a highlight of your job?

I started mid-academic year last December, so getting to see all the preparation that goes into the start of the new academic year in September was exciting.

I'm also enjoying meeting the many new members of staff after months of recruiting, and have more of an appreciation of all the training involved. We are getting new projects underway, such as the implementation of professional reviews for the development of support staff.

There are many benefits and perks to working here - the school dinners are amazing to name one, as well as the actual environment. I feel proud walking around both schools.

# Junior School Mascot

The Junior School and Nursery have four of these fabulous toy dogs, hand sewn by Mrs Kelly to help support, comfort and bring a sense of adventure to all our younger pupils.

One of the colourful little pups has already taken the Year 3 boys and girls

on a local scavenger trail as part of their Geography work.

The children have been suggesting some fabulous names for the four mascots. Keep an eye on the Schools' Twitter and Facebook feeds for more information and to follow their travels.





## Restart A Heart

Our fantastic school nurse Mrs Proctor has been teaching students (and staff!) how to save a life, with assemblies on the importance of early CPR and defibrillation on a person suffering a cardiac arrest.

Mrs Proctor, who came to Dame Allan's in 2017 after 11 years working in Newcastle's emergency department, spoke to the Boys' and Girls' Schools about the 'Chain of Survival' ahead of 'Restart A Heart' day on October 16th.

"I'm passionate about teaching children CPR," she said. "I hope that by encouraging them not to be afraid to step up and help, alongside the greater availability of community defibrillators, then survival rates of those suffering from out-of-hospital cardiac arrests will improve."

There is one defibrillator at the Senior School and another at the Junior School.

## Welcome Back Seb!

It was wonderful to welcome back old Allanian and political writer Sebastian Payne last month to regale us with tales of his time here at Dame Allan's and talk to sixth formers and staff about his fascinating career and new book, **Broken Heartlands: A journey through Labour's Lost England**.

Now Whitehall Editor for the Financial Times, author and presenter of Payne's Politics podcast, Sebastian attended our Sixth Form back in 2005 - 2007.

Chatting to Head of Politics, Mr Oliver, Sebastian said he felt inspired from his very first politics lesson at Dame Allan's some 16 years ago!

# Book Binge



Pupils who took part in the Summer Book Binge enjoyed a celebratory breakfast in the Library recently, with prizes and House Points for their fantastic efforts.

Some 27 students read an incredible 210 books between them over the summer holiday - 23 pupils read 8 or more books to receive a Gold award and certificate, two pupils read 6-7 books to take Silver, and two pupils read 3-5 books to achieve Bronze.

# Raising Awareness

**A huge thank you to the girls from 11J who collected £175 through a bake sale and raised awareness of period poverty in Newcastle.**

They donated the money to Smart Works, a volunteer-run charity that helps local women get back into work. The charity works closely with more than 100 referral agencies across the region, such as mental health charities, homeless shelters and women's refuges, and gives practical support to women including packs of beauty and sanitary goods.



# Noughts and Crosses

More than 50 Upper School students auditioned for a role in their upcoming play, and rehearsals are now starting for what promises to be a powerful production of Noughts and Crosses.

The bitter-sweet love story of Sephy, a politician's daughter, and rebel Callum, tells of two young people kept apart by bigotry, terrorism and injustice. Their desire to be together threatens family loyalties and sparks a growing political crisis.

The play, adapted from Malorie Blackman's best-selling novels, by arrangement with Nick Hern Books, has already been studied by GCSE drama students as part of the curriculum.



Tickets will go on sale in January for performances on February 10th, 11th, and 12th.

# Competitive Comeback



**Competitive sports fixtures have returned to the pitches outside Dame Allan's Schools this term and we have celebrated some fantastic performances across all year groups.**

In hockey, Junior teams have played against Mowden Hall and Durham School, while Senior teams have taken on RGS Newcastle, Austin Friars and Yarm. The first round of House Hockey Matches took place on 9 October.

The u14 and u16 girls' hockey teams remained unbeaten in all their preliminary matches of the National Schools Hockey competition and now progress to the regional finals at Durham University.

In rugby, every boy in Years 7, 8 and 9 represented the school in festivals versus Kings and RGS Newcastle, while the 1st XV celebrated a 36-7 victory against Durham in the Schools Vase competition.

In cross country, there were some fantastic performances from those in the Junior School at Mowden Hall, with special mention to runners who placed: Year 1 boys - Ethan Ray (1st) and Logan Barlow (2nd); Year 2 boys - Daniel Harrison (2nd) and Edward Huntley (3rd); Year 2 girls - Freya Rudge (1st); and Year 6 boys - Nick Surtees-Brown (1st).

We have also seen a return of the squash club at The Northumberland Club, in Jesmond, and the first round of the National Schools Finals, as well as netball and basketball fixtures.



## Safeguarding at Dame Allan's

**Due to the very high level of trespassing on train tracks by young people in the North East, Network Rail in partnership with Learn Live are working to help raise awareness of students across the UK educating them about the dangers of the train tracks through interactive digital delivery.**

Please consider watching the safety videos with your child.

The session is less than 15 minutes and explains why it is important to stay safe near the tracks.

We have made things easier for you to watch the free safety videos by just entering the email [railsafety@learnliveuk.com](mailto:railsafety@learnliveuk.com) into the 'I am registered' field when you first watch the videos.

Please note these are the recommended age ranges, we would always advise you to view the clips first to gauge suitability for your child.

Please click on the link below to view the relevant safety video:

**Primary school version: Age 7- 11**

<https://learnliveuk.com/network-rail-primary-school-safety-talk/>  
<https://learnliveuk.com/i-am-train-safe/>

**Secondary school version: Age 11-16**

<https://learnliveuk.com/network-rail-secondary-school-safety-talk/>  
<https://learnliveuk.com/i-am-train-safe/>

**College & University version: Age 16 plus**

<https://learnliveuk.com/network-rail-college-safety-talk-lnw>  
<https://learnliveuk.com/i-am-train-safe/>



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