

DAME ALLAN'S Digest

MARCH 2023



Lord Lieutenant of Tyne & Wear, Lucy Winskill OBE hails Jubilee Building as a 'beacon' for STEAM education

Our official dedication of the Jubilee Building, with state-of-the-art STEAM facilities, took place at the end of last half term as part of Dedication Week, a series of events, including visits from local primary schools, a performing arts showcase, and a talk from entrepreneur Sara Davies.



The dedication event saw guests, including local dignitaries, governors, alumni, and those involved with the project, tour the impressive Jubilee Building before it was declared officially open by Lucy Winskill OBE, Lord Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear.

Lord Lieutenant Winskill described Dame Allan's as an educational 'beacon' in the region. "What you have achieved here and what's

ahead of you is outstanding. Your investment in brains and bricks is impressive. Pure academic achievement, as important as that is, won't provide students with the skills they need in a changing society," she said. "They also need soft skills... resilience, teambuilding, tenacity, good communication, empathy. I sense in this school that those principles and attributes are instilled in pupils."

The transformative development provides state-of-the-art facilities for those interested in the fields of science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics, and pupils have been making use of the space since the start of the academic year.

Principal Will Scott said the development would further strengthen the Schools' provision of an 'inspiring environment that nurtures the breadth of talent, care for others, and excellence'.

He said: "The Jubilee Building represents a clear statement of intent to look positively to the future and to continue developing Dame Allan's Schools to the benefit of the education of our pupils.

"Alongside the dedication and professionalism of our teachers, the design and the quality of the space for learning are a mark of the care and the importance that we attach to our work."

This Special Edition of The Digest marks one of the most significant builds in the long history of Dame Allan's. We hope you enjoy delving into its pages to find out more about Dedication Week, our celebration of the Jubilee Building in all its forms.



Allanian Dinner

Dedication Week began with the Allanian Dinner bringing together over 70 Dame Allan's alumni, former and current staff and governors to celebrate the past, present and future of the Schools. We were thrilled to be joined by the Lord Sheriff Victoria Dunn and former teachers Eric Smith, Bill Lomas, Nick Glover, Sue Stewart, Liam Friel, John Blundred and Mike Henry.

The evening began with a drinks reception in the new exhibition area featuring beautiful music from Y13 pupil Matthew. Guests had the opportunity to see some of the fabulous pieces of artwork and the whole school cyanotype art project in the exhibition space before enjoying tours of the new Jubilee Building courtesy of our sixth formers.

Throughout the dinner guests heard speeches from key individuals in Dame Allan's past, present and future. Bryan Sanderson CBE, President of the Allanian Society, discussed his time at the Schools, from vivid memories of sitting the entrance exam for a financially assisted place, to the

transformational and long lasting impact of his education.

Head Girl Alex and Head Boy John discussed what Dame Allan's was like today and the opportunities available to pupils. Like Mr Sanderson before them, they alluded to the focus on the development of the pupil inside and outside of the curriculum. It was refreshing to see, that despite the difference in time in which they attended the Schools, the core elements and successes of a Dame Allan's education had remained the same.

Principal Will Scott concluded the speeches by discussing what we could expect the future of Dame Allan's Schools to be. Although the future is always uncertain and the world of education will be ever changing in an increasingly technology driven world, he stressed that we could expect the key values and ethos of the Schools to remain true to its charitable foundations.

We look forward to hosting the next Allanian dinner on Saturday 23 March 2024. It would be brilliant to see even more Allanians there next year.



A peek into Dame Allan's Archives



While the opening of the Jubilee building heralds a new era for Dame Allan's, it's also an opportunity to look back at the rich history and heritage of the Schools which spans over 300 years. Our extensive archive is a treasure trove of discoveries and we caught up with our in-house archivists Mrs Fiddman and Imogen Golding-Douglass to find out more:

Q: Why do you think it's important to keep an archive?

Mrs Fiddaman:

Keeping accurate records is a fundamental basis for our understanding of the past. So much social history is lost because the lives of ordinary people have not been considered worth preserving. I am determined that as much information about Dame Allan's is preserved for future generations.

Q: What's been your best discovery in the archive?

Imogen:

My favourite is the Headmaster's Log Book from around the 1880s. It includes his daily tasks including covering lessons for late teachers or suspending school due to the snow! I'm an avid record collector and was really impressed with the school's collection of choir recordings we have on vinyl.

Mrs Fiddaman:

The most exciting recent find came from the clear out of the bursary before the building of the Jubilee wing. We have long treasured the Boys' Admissions Register which records the details of boys entering Dame Allan's from the 1870s. The whereabouts of the companion register for the girls was unknown but a clear out of the bursary cupboards revealed the book! Together with

the boys' register it gives us a great insight into the social makeup of the schools.

Q: How can we keep archive material live in the school day-to-day?

Mrs Fiddaman:

A cabinet in the main corridor displays pupils' items from the archives. One of our recent additions to this collection is the restored photo of the Boys' School in 1935. From this we can identify 19 pupils who were killed in WW2 as well as 10 who were mentioned in dispatches. It also shows the last school image of Alisdair Christison to whom there is a special plaque in the Newsom Hall, next to the war memorial, placed there by his friend, the author Richard Adams who wrote 'Watership Down'. This photo gives a living link to the war memorial and an everyday reminder that those whose names are recorded were once children doing many of the same things as our pupils today.

Q: What's next for the Archivists' Society?

Imogen:

We are starting the process of digitising our archives which is a great way to engage more people with them. Our archives capture the history of the ordinary people of Newcastle, so to commit those to a digital space, will ensure they won't be forgotten.

Dedication Week roundup

The last week of term saw a range of events to celebrate the Dedication Week of our Jubilee Building. From art masterclasses to official openings, performing arts showcases to sell-out talks, it was a busy week of celebrations!

Art Masterclass

Pupils from local primary schools in Newcastle's West End tried their hands at creating Picasso-inspired sculptures in a special art masterclass hosted by Dame Allan's Schools. The clay model workshop, run by Head of Art Zoe Allonby, formed part of a series of masterclasses led by Dame Allan's as part of its work with four partner primary schools in the area.

"Teaching art at primary age gives children valuable skills; not only are they learning about shape, colour, tone, and form, for example, but they're also developing confidence and exploring forms of self-expression and communication," said Mrs Allonby, who has taught art at Dame Allan's for almost 15 years.

"We welcome pupils from our own Junior School each week to make use of the art facilities, so it's really great to now be able to extend that welcome to children from schools in the local area and share our passion for art."



Performing Arts Showcase

As part of the official Jubilee Dedication event, Dame Allan's pupils treated guests to performances across dance, music and drama! Extracts from the upcoming production of *The Addams Family*, a range of musical soloists, dancers and poetry readings all took place during the showcase. The standard of the performances was incredibly high and was a real testament to pupils' achievements in their co-curricular activities. A huge congratulations to everyone involved.

There will be many opportunities this half term to see even more performances across drama, dance and music and we would love parents, pupils, Allanians and other members of the Dame Allan's community to come along. The main highlight is of course the school production of *The Addams Family* on 16, 17, 18 March.

Tickets are available to book via the following link:
<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/events/eventlist/eventListingAccount/theaddamsfamilymusical?embed=1>



The Lectures

Dragons' Den star Sara Davies gives empowering talk to pupils.

Headlining Dame Allan's' exciting lecture programme during Dedication Week, Sara revisited her years at school and university as she inspired pupils to harness that same drive and passion in their own lives and work. Having famously started a crafting venture from her university bedroom at just 21 years old, the County Durham-born entrepreneur has grown Crafter's Companion into a multi-million pound, global success.



"I've got where I have because of my mindset," she told the audience of 250 pupils, parents and staff in a packed Newsom Hall. "If you meet anyone who knows me and you ask them to sum me up in a couple of words, the first word to come out of anybody's mouth is 'driven'."

"I wasn't brains of Britain, I was probably middle of the road," she admitted. "When I did my GCSEs, I knew I could have done better if I'd just pushed myself a little harder."

Her A Level years were transformative. Having started to take a keen interest in her family firm - Wear Valley Decorating Centre - Sara chose to take Business Studies alongside academic subjects Maths, History and French. Originally predicted Bs and Cs at the start of her A Levels, Sara's determination to secure a place at York saw her achieve 3 As.

"What I learnt then, as a teenager, was that there's a direct correlation between how hard I worked and what I got out of the other end of it," she said.

In her third year at university Sara did a placement at a small, local crafting company, Graphicus. That experience



proved to be life changing. It was in her final, fourth year at university that Sara invented The Enveloper - an envelope-making tool for card crafters - and sold more than 8,000 units of the product within the first 24 hours of it being debuted on shopping channel, Ideal World.

"By the time I graduated in May, my business was turning over more than our family firm, which had been running for 25 years - I achieved a first-class honours degree and was named the top student on the course across all three years.

"When you've got the drive, you can do absolutely anything. I was never the smartest person in the room, I wasn't even at the halfway mark, but I had more drive in abundance than every other person, and that's what made the difference. I worked at full capacity, and always believed there was that little bit more in the tank."

Addressing pupils directly Sara said: "What you need to now think is: 'Am I driven? Where does that drive come from? What gives me that passion? What holds me back?' Find that drive to be the absolute best version of yourself, for yourself."

You can find a full review of Sara Davies' lecture on the Dame Allan's website.

www.dameallans.co.uk/news/news-stories/post/~board/dame-allans-news/post/dragons-den-star-sara-davies-gives-empowering-talk-at-dame-allans-schools

The final talk of this year's series of 'The Lectures' will be from Allanian, professor Ruth Gregory - a notable mathematician and physicist who specialises in the field of cosmology on 23 March. For tickets visit: www.trybooking.co.uk/BWAC

Top tips from Sara Davies:

- The harder you work, the luckier you are....
- Be the best you can be, and you'll find that fulfilling...
- You are a product of the people you surround yourself with...

The changing nature of education: from Socrates to STEAM

The opening of any new building, particularly one as significant in size and cost as our Jubilee Building, is always a key milestone in the history and development of a school, and indeed any organisation. Stories about schools over the decades and centuries tend to revolve around long-serving characters in the staff room, notable alumni and buildings. Stories, of course, must simplify in order to appeal and endure.



The more complex narrative on the changing nature of education is harder to get across, though, partly because it is multi-dimensional. Witness, for instance, the endless debates about slack modern behaviour standards, from the days of Socrates onwards “... children ... have bad manners, contempt for authority; ... disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise. Children are now tyrants, not the servants of their households. They contradict their parents, ... and tyrannise their teachers.” See also, the ways in which the learning environment has changed, for instance with the use of

technology which has legions of supporters as well as armies of critics.

In Edinburgh last October, at the annual gathering of HMC, The Head’s Conference group of leading independent schools, the Age of Enlightenment was the guiding theme, celebrating and reflecting on the contributions of great 18th century Scottish thinkers like David Hume, philosopher, historian and economist among other things. Looking back a bit earlier, to the European renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries, we see another age of progress driven by the exchange of ideas and new thinking across

disciplines in art, architecture, politics, science and literature. A common theme through these great periods of European development is that the most interesting ideas don’t belong neatly in one dimension or perspective - they can be developed and challenged through different academic, technical and cultural ‘lenses’. Filippo Brunelleschi’s earlier development of linear perspective in his drawings, in order to render depth and space more realistically, is a good example of this. Of course the archetypal renaissance character is Leonardo Da Vinci, a man whose work knew almost no bounds as a painter, draughtsman, engineer, scientist, theorist, sculptor, and architect.

Of course, teachers can wax lyrical about Leonardo until, well, the end of lesson bell. But, getting back to the point, he represents the quintessence of thinking and working beyond boundaries, beyond ‘silos’, to extraordinary effect. A modern day version might be Elon Musk, although he may have found his limits with Twitter.

So how does the Jubilee Building advance our vision of education as working across disciplines, fusing ideas and thinking, examining challenges from different perspectives, and driving innovation and creativity? The answer is STEAM - with the letter A added to Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics - STEM - to represent the role of Art in STEAM. Why does art and creativity belong with science subjects? Why have a building that co-locates an extensive new art department and exhibition gallery with design technology, mathematics and sciences?

You will find the answers on the walls: STEAM.

The Development of the Jubilee Building

From a recreation yard for the Girls' School, classrooms and even a caretaker's cottage to 16 classrooms, three physics laboratories, art facilities with print room, a multi-functional exhibition space, a living wall, a design technology workshop together with changing rooms and staff facilities, here is our Jubilee Building journey.

See what a normal day is like in our Jubilee Building

<https://www.dameallans.co.uk/alumni-and-development/jubilee-building>



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