



Summer 2017

**Newsletter for the
Alford Academy
Community**



Message from Mrs Milne, Head Teacher

Session 2016-17 has been a busy and successful year. In August 2016, pupils excelled in their exam results. Throughout the session a variety of events have taken place, including our sponsored walk, Children in Need and other fundraisers, Rotary Young Musician of the Year, numerous sports activities, Interhouse competitions, Duke of Edinburgh, Young Engineers, Digital Leaders and our Social Media and Wellbeing events, to list a few. Pupils are involved in planning and leading many of these highly successful groups and events, in turn developing their skills and helping them to 'stand out from the crowd'.

At Alford we work together to do our best for our young people. I take this opportunity to formally thank parents who have helped throughout the year, coaching sports clubs, sharing their life/work/skills to enhance learning, supporting events, providing feedback to us. In particular thanks to Colin Turnbull, chairperson of the Parent Council, David Wyllie for driving the fundraising and other Parent Council members for their on-going support. Next session, I am sure links between Parent Council and Student Council will continue to go from strength to strength as will the Parent Council's evolving plan to increase parental engagement.

Now to our pupils. They have had a really successful year with many individual and team successes which we acknowledged and celebrated at our recent Awards Ceremony and House Achievement Assemblies.

At the end of this session we say farewell to our retiring teachers, Mrs Booth (Physics), Mrs Bowen (Mathematics), Mrs Lawson (ASL), Mr Mackenzie (History/ASL) and Mrs Masson (PT ASL), who have contributed to the education of our young people for a combination of more than 150 years! We thank them for their hard work and dedication and wish them a very happy retirement.

Looking forward, Alford Academy continues to work through a period of change including ongoing developments to national courses, our 3-18 school agenda and staff changes.

It has been another memorable year at Alford Academy. I am extremely proud of our pupils and of our school. I end with my message to pupils at our Awards Ceremony: "Be ambitious and dream big, believe in yourself, work hard and never give up. And try switching your phone off for a while each day!"

I wish you all a very enjoyable summer and look forward to welcoming pupils back to school on Tuesday 22 August 2017.



Student Executive 2017 -2018:

Sarah Trewin (Depute Head Prefect), Elvi Fraser (Head Prefect), Katie Stewart (Head Prefect) and Ben Nichol (Depute Head Prefect)

Alford Academy U15 Girls' Football Team North of Scotland Cup Silver Medallists

Congratulations to the Alford Academy U15 Girls' Football team who reached the Final of the North of Scotland Cup against Banff Academy in June. Alford found themselves on the end of a heartbreaking final minute goal to give Banff a 2-1 win. It was a superb performance from every Alford player, all of whom have been exceptional throughout the tournament and should be proud of what they have achieved in their first year as an affiliated team.

Alford Academy would like to thank Morrison Construction for their sponsorship of a new girls' team strip.



Congratulations to our **Alford Senior Boys' Football** team who were runners up in the North East Scotland JM Low Trophy final.



Senior Netball Team



Junior Netball Team

Both our **Junior and Senior Netball Teams** won the Aberdeenshire League this year. Alford Academy would like to thank Sarah McGregor of S.A McGregor Geotechnical & Environmental Onsite Services for her sponsorship of the stunning new strips.

The **Alford Academy Boys' Basketball team** have won the Grampian League section of the Basketball Scotland Open Boys Schools' Cup. An unbeaten campaign saw them top the league, which included Banchory, Cults, Harlaw, Kemnay and Mackie Academies.

This is the first time Alford have competed at this level, with previous teams competing at U14 and U15. This young team with players from S3-S5 improved with every match; with all matches completed before Christmas.

This qualified the team for the national knockout stages of the competition where they were drawn at home against Millburn Academy from Inverness in the round of the last 16. The match was played on Tuesday 7th February with Alford winning a very exciting and close fought match by one point, 58-57. This was an excellent result against a team comprising mostly S6 players. This gave the Alford team a place in the Open Quarter Final which took place on 23rd February against North Inch Community Campus from Perth. In another exciting and close match the boys lost 74 points to 79 points. It has been a fantastic season for the team and the squad are looking forward to next year.

Alford Academy would like to thank the boys' Coach, David Wyllie, and parents for their support.



Deeside Orienteering Festival 2017

63 S1-S3 pupils from Alford Academy participated in the annual orienteering event for schools at Deeside Activity Park on 4 May. All the pupils performed well with two pupils winning Gold medals, two Silver and six Bronze. Alford Academy also won the Silver Team Shield.

Alford Academy held its very own **Race for Life** on 28 June. The event involved all pupils who walked or ran a 5K route round the campus grounds and adjacent playing fields. Cheered on by the House Mascots for Craigievar, Forbes and Kildrummy, the pupils had a great morning and managed to raise £410 for Cancer Research UK.





Congratulations to Alford Academy pupil Imogen who represented GBR in the recent Copenhagen Cup and, competing at Advanced Novice level in Ice Dance, gained her first international podium finish, with a first and second place, beating skaters from the UK, Scandinavia and other European countries with a season's personal best. Imogen plans on building on this success by competing in other contests in Edinburgh and London and ending the season at the UK finals in Sheffield. Staff and pupils at Alford Academy wish Imogen every success.



Congratulations to sporting siblings Jack and Adele who have had a tremendous year. Jack started the year by representing the Scotland East team at the Great Edinburgh cross country race, then went on to win the Garioch 5K race, an individual silver at the RGC/Albyn S4/5/6 event, came 10th out of 122 boys at the Scottish Schools Cross Country Championships and won a gold medal at the East of Scotland championships 800m. Jack competed in the Scottish schools championships at U17 level for the 800m & 1500m and is in the Scotland development squad. Adele finished 16th out of 147 girls at the Scottish Schools Cross Country Championships, took silver at the RGC & Albyn cross country championships and came 2nd at the Garioch junior run. She also competed in the Scottish Schools Championships this month.



Congratulations to Izzy and Stewart who shared the Sporting Dux Prize for Session 2016-2017. Izzy is a member of the Scottish Gymnastics Squad, working towards selection for the Commonwealth Games in 2018. She has achieved Scottish Senior Women's Bar champion and is in the top 15 in the British Championships. Stewart has numerous Gold, Silver and Bronze medals at national and international level for 800m and cross country running. He is the Scottish Under 20 Indoor 800m Bronze medallist. Stewart is heading to Kenya at the end of the month for 3 weeks to train at altitude with a number of elite athletes in advance of the next Scottish U20 and Senior Championships. Both Izzy and Stewart have the ambition to represent Scotland at the Commonwealth Games and Team GB at the Olympics.



Craig was awarded Junior Pigeon Fancier of Great Britain at the British Homing World Show of the Year at the Winter Gardens in Blackpool in January 2017. Craig won 3 out of 4 classes with 50 pigeons in each class. The show celebrated its 40th anniversary this year of being held at the Winter Gardens in Blackpool. This year 25,000 people attended the show coming from all over Great Britain and overseas.

Wellbeing event

On Thursday 23rd March S4-6 pupils were invited to take part in a range of physical and wellbeing activities after school. Pupils could choose from a wide range of activities including Tubing, Yoga, Basketball, Dance, Spinning, Zumba, Reflexology and many more. Grampian Mental Health Associates were also available to provide advice and support on dealing with exam stress and anxiety.

Following these activities, P7 – S6 parents from across the Cluster were invited to attend a parent information evening which included a presentation by Grampian Mental Health Associates on ‘Stress and Anxiety in Children and Young People – a Parent’s Guide’. The evening was well attended and parents found the advice and practical strategies to support their child really useful.



Our S5/6 pupils undertook a short course on CPR training, provided by Sandpiper Trust (Wildcat).



Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships – March 2017

Visit from the Moderator of the Church of Scotland General Assembly

On 27 April we were privileged to host a visit to our Campus by the Right Reverend Dr Russell Barr, who was the Moderator of the Church of Scotland at the time. After a tour of the campus, he met with S6 pupils and also attended an S3 assembly where he gave a presentation on the varied activities of the ministry and answered questions from pupils. He later posted on his Facebook page “The warm, bright and welcoming environment was matched by the calm atmosphere in the school with children of all ages and stages fully engaged in their various activities.”



On the 19th April 2017, Alford Academy's **Young Engineers** took part in the **MATE ROV competition** at RGU as Team Northern Light with their ROV 'Poseidon'. There were in total eight teams at the competition from all over the North East trying to secure a place at the next round in Long Beach California.

At the competition, Northern Light delivered a Professional Talk, Technical Report, Poster and the most exciting part - the pool challenges with Poseidon. The Pilot and Co-Pilot worked together with the rest of the team to complete the tasks. This gave Northern Light first-hand experience of flying an ROV, seeing how it works in the real world and how to give a professional presentation selling the benefits of using their ROV.

There were important lessons learnt including:

- How to adapt to situations when things don't go to plan
- Ideas of how to improve based on experience and seeing other teams and their equipment

Northern Light came away with the Future Development award for their varied age group and perseverance under tough circumstances. The MATE ROV competition is a very important day in the Young Engineers calendar and it is always an exciting and rewarding experience.



On the 24th of March Mr Sande accompanied six pupils from the **Young Engineer's Club** to the annual **SCDI club of the year event**. The event gives local schools the chance to come along and show what their science and engineering clubs have been doing. At the end of the day after every club has been judged, one lucky club gets awarded the club of the year award along with a cheque for £250 and the chance to go to the annual SCDI dinner in Aberdeen.

The event is split up into two parts, judging/extra activities and then the STEM challenges. For the judging you are given a time slot when the judges come along and judge you. And the STEM challenges are when a group of engineering and science companies set us a problem we have to solve. For the STEM challenges we are given five minutes at each station to try and solve the problem. After the five minutes we are graded on our team work and how well we solved the problem. After all the STEM challenges are completed all your points are collated and the school with the most points are awarded a trophy and a cheque for £100.

This year at the event we didn't manage to retain the Club of the Year award, however we did manage to win the STEM challenges and claim £100 for our club which we will use to continue development of other projects that interest club members.

F24 Experience

Being my first year of participating in the Greenpower F24 race I didn't know what to expect but I was instantly amazed by the cars and the engineering behind them and the teams of schools and adults proud to show off their work to the rest of the teams. I started the first race in the driver's seat, the adrenalin was wearing off by this time and I was starting to get a bit nervous, but I got over it and raced! Alford Young Engineers took a few things away from the race: 3rd place, a trophy, and a strong team because it wasn't just a race it was a small victory for the Alford Young Engineers.



I'm a Scientist Get me OUT of here

Pupils in the Science faculty have been interacting with scientists from across the UK in an online public engagement event aimed at getting students excited about science.

I'm a Scientist, Get me out of here sees students putting scientists through their paces through online live chats in which they can ask the experts about anything, from climate change to coding.

The aim of the event, which this year marks the 2017 British Science Week, is to get students excited about science. Students see that scientists are normal people, learn that science lessons relate to real life, and become more enthused about science.

This year we were allocated the Mental Health zone and pupils taking part had the opportunity to engage with experts in this field. Our pupils asked very interesting questions relating to mental health and found out what area the psychologists were researching. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed the event and were asking mature questions relating to their own mental health.

Bronze CREST Award – Wider Achievement

The Science Faculty offer wider achievement to all S1 pupils, an additional course to their CfE S1-2 Science classes. During this time pupils have the opportunity to enter into the nationally recognised CREST award.

A project-based awards scheme for the STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) delivered in Scotland by Techfest on behalf of the British Science Association. CREST recognises success, and enables students to build their skills and demonstrate personal achievement in project work.

In June, every S1 pupil taking part in wider achievement was presented with a Bronze CREST award, well done to all participants.



The Big Bang – Scotland

In June, 42 S3 pupils studying physics had the opportunity to attend the big bang event held in Perth. This event showcased a variety of careers in Science on offer and experts were on hand to offer advice. This was an interactive career fair where pupils had the opportunity to experiment, build and play with virtual reality welding. Pupils could act as engineers to build a model bridge, a replica of the Queensferry crossing, and walk over it. The event aimed at encouraging youngsters to study and think about careers in STEM, (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). Engaging pupils in STEM is something that Alford Academy is currently developing and any opportunities to develop STEM is encouraged and supported by the Scottish government.



S3 Bennachie Field trip

In May the S3 Biologists teamed up with the Aberdeenshire ranger service and spent a day investigating biodiversity at Bennachie. The classes were looking at 3 areas of the mountain range to look at the effect of light and moisture on the species of animals and plants found.

The Esson's side of the range has a purpose built pond for investigating pond life and classes spent time pond dipping and classifying and identifying species found and we were delighted that no pupils fell in!

Next the groups split up in two wooded areas, one dark and the other light. We found that where the forestry is managed and trees are spaced out (providing more light) there was a higher biodiversity (i.e. more species of plants were found).



P7 Link Day

An event was run where Primary 7 pupils along with S3 helpers designed a haunted house with a lighting circuit inside along with a spooky game created with Scratch. The day was a great success and the theme of Darkwood Manor used on link day continued with different activities during their link week.



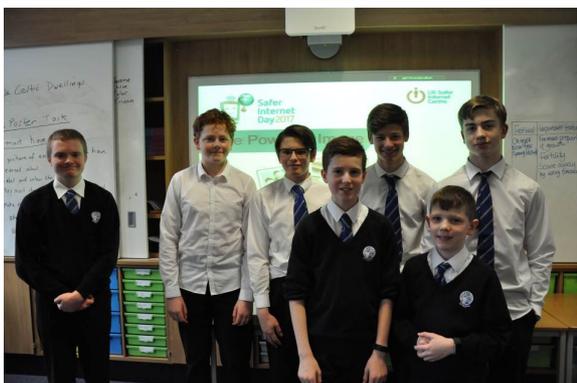
Alford Academy Digital Leaders

It's been a busy year for Alford Academy's Digital leaders, with the team getting involved in a number of events throughout the year. In February, the Digital Leaders organised and delivered A Safer Internet Day Event to P6 and P7 pupils from Alford and Midmar primary schools. This event included a presentation which covered several top tips for staying safe online along with a number of practical activities.

In March, the team assisted again when they went one Saturday to Craigievar Primary to lead one of several events organised by head teacher, Andrea Drummond, to mark British Science Week. The digital leaders (Jack, Callum and Calum) took with them a range of technologies that they have been working with in the Alford Academy Robotics Club, including several BBC Micro:Bit and Raspberry Pi mini-computers, and a homemade capacitor. In addition to this, they also demonstrated their skills in coding in the programming languages Python and Scratch.

In the same month, the team was in action again when they assisted at two separate parents' evenings and three lunchtime STEM events put on for Alford Primary School pupils. At the parents' evenings, the team helped parents to access the Internet with the school's laptops, and at the lunchtime STEM events the team demonstrated the Raspberry Pi mini-computers to the primary school pupils.

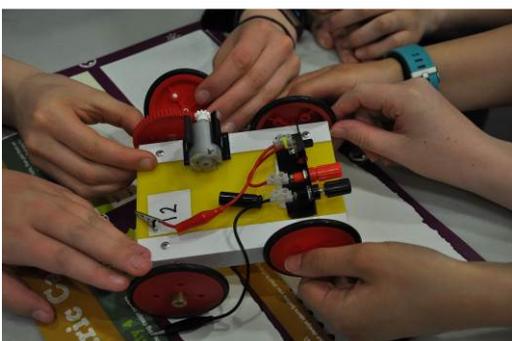
On top of this, a team comprised of four of the older members of Alford Academy's Robotics club, all of whom are digital leaders, have made it to the final of a Scotland wide competition to design a new sports app . The judges were "very impressed" with the entry submitted by the Alford team, who will now head to Glasgow in September to compete against five other teams in an intensive two day coding boot camp, with the overall winner being announced by Andy Murray in November.



Safer Internet Day



Stem challenge



Stem challenge



Raspberry Pi mini-computers

Cairngorms National Park Junior Rangers

The project involves pupils from secondary schools in the five local authority areas of the National Park, working alongside Ranger Services and other partners in the Park. It is based on a European model of engaging young people in fun, practical activities in Protected Areas that provides them with new skills and the opportunity to act as ambassadors for the National Park. Fourteen Alford Academy pupils undertook a range of activities in the Cairngorms National Park for 5 days of learning and adventure with a focus on Woodland Skills, Biodiversity, Visitor Management, Outdoor Access as well as a day of canoeing on the River Dee.

Pupils achieved the John Muir Discovery Award and graduated as a Cairngorms National Park Junior Ranger.



Guernica/ Syria Exhibition

This year, second and third year students held an Art Exhibition inspired by Pablo Picasso's famous anti-war artwork 'Guernica'. This was the culmination of the students' hard work in both Spanish and Art and Design classes. Spanish students researched the history and culture of the famous painting created in response to the Spanish Civil War and the bombing of civilians. From this they produced posters, displays and live presentations at the exhibitions. In Art and Design, students produced their own anti-war paintings based upon the current crisis in Syria. The event was a success with a variety of high quality work displayed as well as a host of traditional Spanish food on offer. Money raised at the event is going to refugee charities.



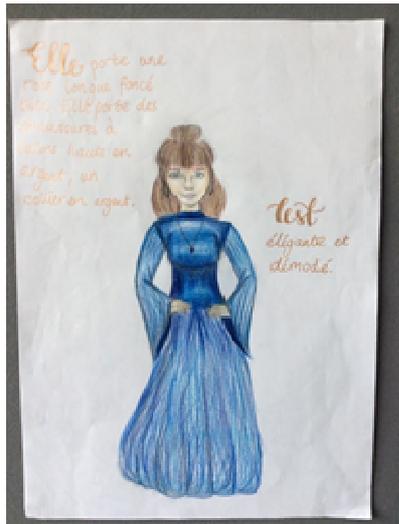
Article de Lois (S3) sur notre défilé de mode

Article by Lois (new S3 student), on the fashion show organised by two S2 French classes earlier this term.

Bonjour tout le monde! Je voudrais vous parler de notre projet français ; un défilé de mode. C'était un projet très agréable, où nous avons porté nos vêtements préférés et le narrateur les décrivait en français y compris la couleur, le type et le tissu.

Voici quelques déclarations de mes collègues de classe :

Aaron m'a dit "J'ai aimé ce projet pratique car il vous met en situation de vie réelle." D'après Tyler, "nous devons décider de la façon, dont nous allons le faire et cela nous a amené à nous impliquer."



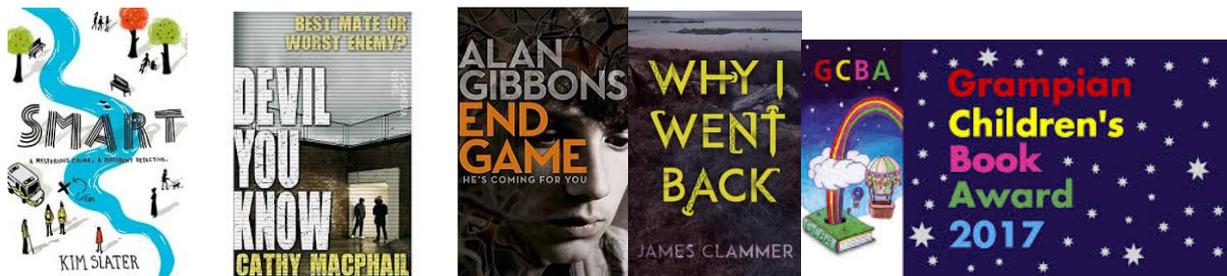
Voici un dessin de Lydia, Lana et Olivia, qui ont dessiné le défilé de mode.



Et pour couronner le tout, d'après Fraser et Max; " Nous avons aimé le défilé de mode parce que c'était une emprise créative sur les choses, et notre partie préférée était de porter des 'onesies' confortables "

S2 Study and Organisation Classes

Pupils in S2 have been working with the school librarian, Jackie Coroon, all year on a reading project. Each group have read 2 young adult books and completed work around the novels including making an animation using the iPad. The pupils were lucky to have one of their authors Cathy MacPhail visit the school to speak to the S2 year group in October. The pupils got the opportunity to attend the Grampian Children's Book Awards on 10th May where they met James Clammer, author of "Why I Went Back" and Alan Gibbons, author of "End Game". The pupils have worked extremely hard this year and have developed their reading skills, confidence and team working skills.



The four books that were read are all available in the library for anyone that would like to borrow them. Although they are all mysteries, the characters, plots and writing styles are all very different and if you borrow one you are sure to enjoy it.

School Uniform

A reminder to parents that blazers and knitwear can be purchased online at www.academyuniformsltd.co.uk – online orders must be placed prior to **Friday 7 July** for free delivery to school on Distribution Day **Thursday 17 August 2017** (please remember to use voucher code ALFFREE at check out). Staff from Academy Uniforms will be at Alford Academy (Dining Area) from 11 am to 12 noon on 17 August to distribute pre-ordered blazers and knitwear – they can also answer any queries and deal with any exchanges on that day. Items can also be ordered online at any time and sent to home address if preferred (please note a delivery charge is payable). We believe that wearing a school uniform helps to create a positive ethos in the school. All pupils are expected to wear school uniform. The uniform is: school tie, white shirt, black trousers (not jeans) or skirt, black shoes and a black jumper or cardigan with school badge for S1-S3 or a black blazer with school badge for S4-S6. The revised uniform was introduced in 2015 following a request from the Student Council and is the result of many pupils' hard work and we thank parents for their support.

Term Dates Session 2017/18

Monday 21 August 2017	In-Service Day – school closed to pupils
Tuesday 22 August 2017	Start of Term 1 (pupils)
Friday 13 October 2017	End of Term 1 (pupils)
16-27 October 2017	October holidays
Monday 30 October 2017	Start of Term 2 (pupils)
13-14 November 2017	In-Service Days – school closed to pupils
Friday 22 December 2017	End of Term 2
25 Dec 2017-5 January 2018	Christmas holidays
Monday 8 January 2018	Start of Term 3
Friday 9 February 2018	Occasional Day – school closed to pupils
Monday 12 February 2018	Mid Term holiday
13-14 February 2018	In-Service Days – school closed to pupils
Thursday 29 March 2018	End of Term 3
30 Mar-13 April 2018	Easter holidays
Monday 16 April 2018	Start of Term 4
Monday 7 May 2018	May Day holiday – school closed
Monday 4 June 2018	Occasional Day – school closed to pupils
Friday 6 July 2018	End of Term 4
9 July-17 August 2018	Summer holidays