

Comic Strip: Ambition



By Hannah Reid, S4

Christmas Concert Spreads Festive Cheer



Creative people across the school have been preparing for the Christmas concert since November. As with every year, there was an abundance of groups performing



in the concert with both Music and Drama groups performing. The concert which was on the 11th of December was attended by around one hundred people and had about eight groups performing. Groups such as the school Orchestra, Singers, Ukulele Collective and

many more were performing, and the Vice Chair of the creative arts committee, Kirsty Hay, was presenting. The concert was a fun way of showing the parents and the public the fantastic work that the pupils and staff of Inverurie Academy had been working on over the past two terms. One of said staff, Mrs Purvis, said, "The concert was a huge success. There were lots of positive comments from the audience and all people involved did themselves proud!" In the Christmas concert, most of the groups were performing Christmas themed songs and acts. Songs

like *Stop the Cavalry*, *Winter Wonderland* and *Polar Express* were performed and there even was a drama performance of *North Pole News*. The singers also did something festive by singing *Silent night*, *White Christmas* and *Merry Christmas Everyone!* We are sure you'll agree that the Christmas concert really did spread festive cheer.

By Hannah Reid, S4



Lest We Forget



On the closest Sunday to Armistice Day Towns, Cities and Villages may have a Remembrance Day Parade. Organised uniformed groups will parade through their town and usually attended a church service. That had hap-

pened in Inverurie 5 weeks ago.

The town came to together as one on that Sunday, while people lined the streets watching the uniformed groups paraded from the Royal British Legion to Inverurie Baptist Church. After that the uniformed groups paraded to the war memorial in the centre of town to hold their two minutes of silence and to lay their poppies and wreaths.



100 Years ago on the 11 of November 1918 at 11 o'clock, The Great War officially ended. All the fighting, misery and attacking had ended... People thought it would be the war to end all wars. They were wrong.

Remembrance Day was made to remember all the soldiers who fought and died during The Great War and all of the others that followed. On the 11th of November every year at 11 o'clock people all round the world will stop for a two minutes of silence. That was designed so people could think back and remember the people that have been lost due to conflict and also to remember other people that they have lost during war.

Miss Jones held an assembly for S1s to promote and explain the meaning of Remembrance Day and what it actually stood for. She held a two minutes of silence to respect

the memory of the fallen soldiers after the great war.

By Ben Sharp, S3



Long Serving Staff Member Bids Farewell



Vaila Gruban retires at the end of this term after just over 26 years employment in the Inverurie Academy school office.

Vaila was born on the island of Shetland, where she met her husband, Trevor, and they chose to make their family home in Aberdeenshire shortly before she joined Inverurie Academy. Vaila is the proud mum of Claire and Gemma, and the even prouder grandmother of Robbie and George!

In her time in post, Vaila has

worked with four Head Teachers – Mr Hogg, Mr Milne, Ms Evans and Mr Jones—and has seen many changes across the school. Vaila's main responsibilities in the school office are: ensuring pupils are enrolled to start school and also pro-

cessed to leave school; ensuring pupils are registered to sit their SQA exams; assisting with timetabling processes; school transport arrangements; booking transport for school trips; maintaining adverse weather records and emergency evacuation information and reception duties.

Vaila is a great colleague who is calm, conscientious, never flustered, and is always willing to help and support others – all with a ready smile. She will indeed be missed! We wish Vaila well for her

retirement and hope she is able to spend more quality time with her grandchildren, have leisurely walks with Lydia (her dog!), enjoy embarking on new home decorating projects and maximising the use of her new polytunnel!

Sandra Strachan, School Office Manager, who has worked with Vaila in the office for the last two and a half years said that 'Vaila has been a dedicated member of the school admin team over the last 26 years. She has been conscientious, hard-working and always willing to help her colleagues. She will be greatly missed.'

Head Teacher, Mr Jones, also told us that 'Vaila has been a great help over the past two years as I have settled in to the school. Alongside the rest of the Office Team, nothing has been too much trouble for Vaila and she will be sorely missed!'

We wish Vaila all the very best for her well-earned retirement and would like to thank her for her dedication and service to the school over the years.

By Mrs Morrell and the Office Ladies

Brexit Means Breakfast



gazing into the headlights of the oncoming Vote Leave

In the month which presents the extended multibuy offer of both festive season and potential political pandemonium, this seems to be a fitting juncture to reflect on the true meaning of Brexit.

Picture, if you will, the hall inside the scout hut next to the school building. I had been asked at short notice to speak to the Cubs about Parliament Week, as well as my role as the local MSYP. It was during the Q&A session which followed that the 'B' word reared its multifaceted head. Cue internal screaming. Admittedly, the prospect of explaining Brexit to anyone isn't exactly something which gets me out of bed in the morning, let alone try to relay the Northern Irish backstop arrangements in simple terms to the voters of ten years hence.

Unfortunately, simple terms do not exist when it comes to Brexit. There is uncertainty about the uncertainty of the uncertainties. Trying to answer what Brexit means left me scratching my head, whilst

bus. Even "it means leaving the European Union" is a bold statement. The Prime Minister said famously, "Brexit means Brexit", making life easy for the dictionary writers.

My greatest concern during the exchange was falling into the trap of mistaking the word 'Brexit' for 'breakfast'. For all we know, Brexit could mean breakfast, although the future of continental breakfasts outside of the customs union seems to be as controversial as the ideal colour of toast.

All joking aside, recent weeks have reminded me of the true extent to which young people are interested in politics. At the end of November, I visited Mintlaw Academy and found discussion with Advanced Higher Modern Studies pupils stray towards the door marked Brexit. It was the comments of one pupil which stuck with me on the journey home: "lots of adults think that young people don't care about politics. We do care. It's our future and we

want to find out more". Goosebumps.

The discussion also concluded that young people – despite their interest – don't feel they know enough about Brexit, or politics more generally. Thankfully, the BBC – other media sources are available – has produced a helpful two-minute summary of the 585-page Draft Agreement on which MPs will be voting later this month. I would highly recommend a read.

The vote in the House of Commons on 11th December will be the most significant in years. We simply do not know how the Draft Agreement will fare. With the Prime Minister fighting fire on all sides, I really do feel sympathy. I admire anybody – within reason – who is prepared to serve in high office and am appalled by the vitriolic abuse our politicians endure. It is easy to forget that politicians are still people. We may disagree wholeheartedly with the policies they wish to pursue, but respect is vital in maintaining a healthy democracy.

With that, I wish you all the festive Brexit cheer possible this Christmas.

Josh MacRae, S5: columnist to The Academy Star and MSYP

Inverurie Pupils achieve 2nd place in Maths Challenge



The successful team: from left to right, Andrew Cunningham, Christopher Forbes, Depute First Minister, John Swinney, Matteo Carlier, and Laura Allan

On the 22nd of June, two S2 pupils and two S3 pupils (Andrew Cunningham, Laura Allan, Christopher Forbes and Matteo Carlier) went to the Thistle Hotel in Altens to represent Inverurie Academy in a Junior Maths Challenge competing against other Aberdeenshire schools to test their IQ and problem solving ability.

I was one of these people so I can give a first-hand experience, and I think that it was a really good opportunity for youths to demonstrate skill and co-operation. Overall, we did really well and made a good name for Inverurie.

The day started off with a poster making competition about coding and enigma machines. We were given a few weeks to look up these things and memorise some facts. After that, we had lunch (a buffet, amazing pizza ;)) and then took

each of the challenges, and revealed the winners and runners up. "2nd place..." the room went quiet... "INVERURIE ACADEMY!" There was clapping as we came up to the front for our certificates and Mrs Toet (our teacher) took our picture.

When we spoke to Mrs Toet, who led the trip, she told us 'We actually came second in the whole competition but we also came second in Aberdeenshire

which meant that we gained a place in the final in Glasgow. On the 6th of November, we all had a very early start and left Aberdeen at 6.20 am to get to the Glasgow Science Centre for a 10 am start. The team did very well, coming 57th out of the 72 best schools in Scotland and came home with some lovely merchandise. Well done to team Inverurie Academy!

By Andrew Cunningham, S3



Talented Pupils Showcase Their Work



By Max Hitchcock, S6

This November, for the second year running, our school held an art exhibition which displayed S4-S6 pupils' work. The exhibition promoted the effort pupils put in to their national qualifications and the beauty of art. By hosting this evening, it gives pupils a bit of preparation for the creative world of work where work is always being showcased and examined.

To add to this, the work is showcased because it is a good way for pupils and parents to see the progression from National Five and Advanced Higher. Showcasing work also gives parents, carers, family members a chance, which otherwise they wouldn't have, to

view their child's or siblings work.

Moving on I spoke to Mrs Richardson and I've gathered that organising the display of 51 pupils' work isn't easy. She described it as being "a massive undertaking." Also mentioned was how each pupil had an expressive and design portfolio, which each had 3 A2 pieces of work. On top of this, the Advanced Higher pupils each had 18 A1 sheets

which all were displayed.

After organising all the art work, the creative industries class was tasked with the a mini project where they had to organise the event, to name a few things, this-involved promoting the evening,



room planning and providing refreshments. The effort that went into this event is extraordinary and clearly all of it paid off!

From looking at a few images, I've learnt how amazing the art work on display is, the talent and effort gone into it is truly exceptional.

To sum up, Mrs Richardson told me the highlight of the night was "The increased number of parents that attended and the comments that they made about how impressed they were with the standard of the work." Mrs Richardson also says that "A special thanks also needs to be given to Mrs Reid and Mrs Bonnyman for all their support and hard work in helping with the event and sorting the refreshments."

By Luke Wraight, S3

Inverurie Academy Races To Silver Award



From left to right, Josh MacRae, Sam Weston, Annalie Davidson, Keira Copeland, and Blair Center.

During the week beginning 10th of December the Inverurie Academy Rights Respecting Schools steering group has exciting things in store to help Inverurie Academy achieve the Unicef Rights Respecting Schools Silver Award, highlighting that we are a school which is aware of our rights. The 10th of December of this year, Human Rights Day, also marks 60 years since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted.

Last year Inverurie Academy was awarded the Rights Respecting Schools Bronze Award, showing our commitment to human rights and the global goals. Activities for the Bronze Award included S1 Modern Studies lessons and a questionnaire to pupils to gauge

awareness of their rights. Since then, posters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Global Goals have been put up around the school.

Shayne Omale, who runs the Inverurie Academy Rights Respecting Schools group Twitter account, has been working hard to ensure that the word is spread about the group's work, news about human rights, and has been focusing on a new human right every week on the page.

The Rights Respecting Schools steering group has been active for around 18 months, with a lot of the energy from the former Amnesty International group and Respect for All Ambassadors going into its formation. For several

months, the group has been meeting every Friday lunchtime to co-ordinate school activities for "Rights Awareness Week". These will include a game centred around global citizenship and the global goals to be played during registration and lessons led by pupils from the Human Rights Ambassadors S5 and S6 wider achievement group for S1 and S2 Modern Studies classes.

As well as this, there will be assemblies led by pupils from Human Rights Ambassadors, who have been working closely with the steering group to ensure that everything goes to plan. Mrs Turnbull believes that "it's important that we see our role as global citizens". Vice-chair of the Rights Respecting Schools steering group, Josh MacRae MSYP, has told the Academy Star that "it is really important that we engage with younger years to make this a school-wide effort; we need to engage with the whole school community to achieve silver award standard."

We look forward to seeing all the hard work pay off and we hope it helps to raise awareness of our human rights and the Global Goals!

By Blair Center and Sam Weston, S6

Christmas Around the World

On Christmas day, we do fun things like giving and receiving presents, writing letters to Santa and eating Turkey and brussel sprouts. But how do other countries celebrate Christmas?

Australia



Did you know Australia celebrates Christmas at the start of their summer holidays?! Australia's seasons are the opposite of ours because they are in the southern hemisphere. So our Winter is their Summer, and their Winter our Summer. Their Christmas holidays are from mid December to early February.

Their traditions are similar to ours: they also decorate their houses and put up a Christmas tree but they decorate them with colourful flowers which blossom in Summer called Christmas Bush and Christmas bellflower. They say that when Santa Claus gets to Australia, he lets the reindeers rest and use kangaroos instead!!

On Christmas morning, after open-

ing gifts, families have breakfast of ham and eggs. For Christmas dinner they have cold food or a BBQ.

Japan

In Japan, Christmas Eve is celebrated more than Christmas. Christmas Eve is a romantic day just like our Valentine's Day. Couples spend the day together, go for walks, look at Christmas lights together and go to romantic restaurants.

Christmas Day in Japan is a day of happiness. The most popular food eaten on Christmas is fried chicken! It's a really busy time of the year for places like KFC. Christmas is not a holiday in Japan. Some schools do close but a lot of businesses just treat it as a normal day. But there is the Emperor's Birthday on the 23rd of December which is a national holiday.

Germany

In Germany, Advent is a big part of their celebrations. Many types of advent calendars are used. They use a type of calendar made out of fir tree branches. They also have a calendar called a Advent Kranz. It's a circle of fir branches with 4 candles on it, like the ones used in churches. A candle is lit at the start of each week of advent.

Instead of giving presents on Christmas Day, families give each other presents on Christmas Eve!

Parts of Germany have different kind of Santa Claus, Christkindl. Children write letters to Christkindl which they leave on their windowsill. As well as Christkindl, there is also der Nikolaus who brings little gifts like chocolate and sweets on the 6th of December which is St Nicholas's Day. He puts presents in the children's shoes which are next to the door.

Germany is famous for its Christmas Markets where many types of Christmas foods and decorations are sold. It's opened by The Nürnberg Christkind, who is a young girl who has Christ like qualities. Every year a little girl is chosen to be Nürnberg Christkind and takes part in a parade where she wears a long gold and white dress with gold crown, occasionally with wings, like an angel. Before opening the Market she has to 150 official Duties! Like visiting hospitals, old people homes and nurseries. She has TV interviews and gets visit other cities!



By Ife Akiode, S4

Inverurie High Street Wins Third Place



Each year, the charity 'Keep Scotland Beautiful' and the National Towns Agency 'Scotland's Town Partnership' hosts a poll to vote for Scotland's most beautiful high street. This year the public vote took place in October with the winner being announced in November: Turriff high street! Inverurie achieved a place in the final vote alongside five other towns: Jedburgh, Cupar, Denny, Linlithgow and Turriff. Despite losing out to Turriff, the end result showed that Inverurie's high street is highly commended, coming in third place.

There was fierce competition between first and second place with just ten votes separating Turriff and Linlithgow who were awarded second place. You just need to take a look around the high street of Turriff to realise why they are worthy winners. Turriff business association said that "Turriff's high street is very lucky to host a vibrant, unique shopping experi-

ence, a wonderful heritage and a high standard of care and cleanliness that reflects the pride we have in our town." Their entry also highlighted the town's heritage sites and the 'Turra Coo' was mentioned.

On the other hand Inverurie's success won't go unspoken: with our historical WW2 memorial and town hall, we too have an interesting heritage. Also worth mentioning is how lucky we, as a town, are to possess such a vibrant and diverse high street. The broad range of locally owned shops is truly fantastic and is something to be proud of.

Mr Jones told us "Whether we work or live in Inverurie, we can be really proud of our town and surrounding area. In addition to having the backdrop of such beautiful scenery, it is great that Inverurie has been recognised in the 'most beautiful high street' competition."

The owners of Gibbs Menswear

also told us that "This is a great accolade for Inverurie town centre and a reflection of the hard work put in by the volunteers of the IEI group."

The competition itself aims "to celebrate civic pride in our towns and the groups who come together and work to change their communities for the better: making local places clean, attractive, accessible, sustainable, vibrant and inclusive for all to enjoy." The chief officer of 'Scotland's Town Partnership' also said that " We need to celebrate our towns and empower our communities to ensure that Scotland's towns remain vibrant and continue to play a vital role in our nation's future." To add to this, the operations director at 'Keep Scotland Beautiful', Pete Leonard, commented "A flourishing high street is a symbol of an active, engaged community."

Overall, the idea of having a competition like this is incredibly positive as it brings out the best in communities and gives other towns something to strive for. The fact Inverurie ranked 3rd in the whole of Scotland is fantastic and our town is very lucky to have such a wonderful high street.

By Luke Wraight, S3

Inverurie Pupils' Icelandic Adventure



group enjoyed the lagoon for 2 hours before departing for their hotel after. A busy day.

The next morning

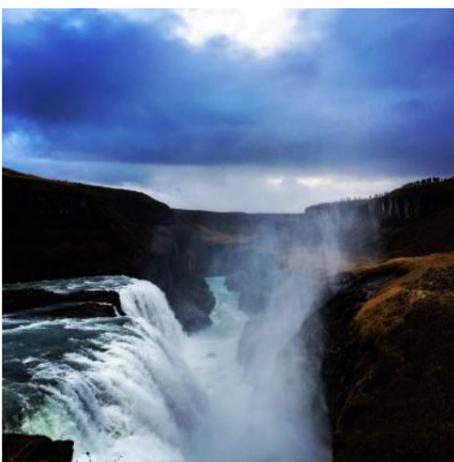
This October our school, along with Rayburn Tours, hosted a 5 day trip to Iceland. The group of S4-S6 pupils visited sites including the Blue Lagoon and Skógafoss Waterfall.

The adventure through Iceland began the same day that they arrived with the group visiting "The Bridge Between Continents" which is one of the world's major tectonic plate boundaries. The site is between the North American plate and the Eurasian plate. The group had the opportunity to use the 18m footbridge over the plates which represents the relationship between Europe and America.

After the crossing bridge they enjoyed unlimited pizza before visiting the "Blue Lagoon" which is a mineral rich lake filled with geothermal sea water giving it an average temperature of 37C. The

they enjoyed a hike into the hills where they got to see the steaming mud pots and hot springs before being given the chance to swim in a naturally heated river. This offered a taste of the "real" Iceland.

Next, they visited the "Thingvellir National Park" which is one of Iceland's most important historical and geographical sites. The cracks along the landscape show how



the tectonic plates diverge. The appearance of these long deep

cracks was described by Raburn tours as "giving the appearance of a crevassed glacier."

The group was then given the chance to relax at an ice cream farm before being taken to the "Geysir Geothermal Area"; here they saw steaming water being shot out of the earth to around 15m-18m high. The next location was the "Gullfoss Waterfall." The waterfall is Iceland's most famous and in English means "The Golden Waterfall", the waterfall drops enormous glacial cascades from 32m high into a narrow 70m deep and 2.5km long canyon.

The group, now in their third day, visited another waterfall called the "Skógafoss Waterfall." This waterfall is an impressive 60m high and is the greatest attraction in the area. As the water thunders down, it creates mass amounts of spray which react with sunlight to create rainbows for all to see.

The visit to the waterfall was followed by a visit to the "Sólheimajökull Glacier." The group met with an Icelandic mountain guide who took them on a glacier hike.

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After the hike, they visited "Vik" which is Iceland's most southernly village and is the only seaside settlement left without a harbour due to natural circumstances. The group had the opportunity to take in the beauty of the area and to see the basalt cliff faces, "Reynishverfi Beach".

The final excursion of the day was to the "Seljelandsfoss Waterfall" which is a massive 65m and is the

only waterfall of its kind with a path behind it!

On the group's fourth day they participated in a trip into a glacier cave and visited

"Hraunfoss" which houses a series of waterfalls streaming from a lava field.

Their final day of activities in Iceland began with a visit to a picturesque beach of the beach is covered in smooth black pebbles or lava pearls. At the beach there were iron remains of a British ship wreckage and a series of stones used to demonstrate the strength of fisherman.

After the beach, the group visited the "Saxhóll Crater" and then the "Kirkjufellsfoss Water Channels". The channels are 463m above sea level and lead to a waterfall with the beautiful background of the mountains.

The group's final excursion was to the "Gerðuberg Columns." The basalt columns stretch for about 500m and can be up to 3m tall! The group was given an introduction into the formation of the columns and the volcanic nature of Peninsula.

One long journey later. The group arrived home. I'm sure they won't forget this truly unforgettable experience and I myself am very disappointed I didn't get to go because it sounded like they had a great time!

By Luke Wraight, S3

Oh, What a Cracker!

Christmas Jokes!

1. How did the ornament get addicted to Christmas?

-He was hooked on trees his whole life!

2. Why did Frosty ask for a divorce?

-His wife was a total flake.

3. What do you get when you cross a duck with Santa?

-A Christmas quacker.

4. Why do mummies like Christmas so much?

-They're into all the wrapping.

5. What do you call an elf wearing ear muffs?

-Anything you want. He can't hear you!

6. What do you get when you cross a snowman and a vampire?

-Frostbite!

By Ben Sharp, S3

