



James Gillespie's Trust:

www.jamesgillespietrust.com

Alumni Section:

alumni@jamesgillespietrust.com

James Gillespie's Trust: Alumni Section

Newsletter March 2025

Hello, and a warm welcome to you all!

At the time of writing, there is definitely a bit of a change in the weather, and it positively heralds the onset of spring. The snowdrops are beautiful and plentiful in lots of gardens and woodlands, crocuses and the daffodils are also becoming quite evident all around us too.

Having said that, it is Scotland where the weather can change in an instant, and indeed did the other day. Sitting waiting in the car park on my daughter I spoke to a group of friends from all around the UK and was saying how lovely the weather was, with blue skies and sun, and a balmy 12 degree temperature. I had not even left the carpark when suddenly there was an intense downpour of heavy rain less than 10 minutes later!

Dates for this year's **Gillespie Gatherings** have now been set - these will be 26th April and 27th September, so keep a note in your diary, and we will hope to see you at either or both.

We have been thinking about the sort of events that might be popular, and are working on these in the background. Details of these events have still to be confirmed, but please keep an eye on the website and facebook, or feel free to contact us nearer the time for details.

We would dearly like to hear from you with any kind of article that you think may be of interest to others, or try to help contact lost friends from your time at Gillespie's.

Following the resignation of Christine Ferguson, we are delighted to say

that Dave Philip has joined the team, and has been very busy helping

us. Some of you may have met him at our last

open day, where he did an excellent job ensuring that everyone was made to feel

welcome.

Do you feel that there is something more the Alumni

team could be adding to the work we have already

done? Are there any topics that you would like to see covered

during our open days? Thoughts and ideas are always very welcome.



*yours,
Fiona, Dave, Linda -
the Alumni Team!*

Gillespie Gatherings

Our next 'Gillespie Gathering' will be held on **Saturday 26th April** from 1 pm to 3.30 pm in the Muriel Spark Building.

We are delighted that the Headteacher **Neil McCallum** has agreed to give us a talk about the school at 2 pm, and we hope this will be followed by tours of the buildings given by pupils.

2025 is the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Malala Building, the main teaching block in the new school.

If you are interested in a tour of the school buildings, please let the alumni team know. Thank you.

Light refreshments will be provided and copies of 'Faithful and Brave' will be on sale. Once again there is no charge for the event. However, we welcome **CASH donations** to cover costs and to support the work of the James Gillespie's Trust, as we are unable to accept payments or donations by card at the school, due to a lack of reception.

'Gillespie Gathering' October 2024

The October 'Gathering' took place on Saturday 5 October and we were delighted to welcome 85 alumni, teachers, trustees and the current head teacher, Neil McCallum, to the Muriel Spark Building on bright Saturday afternoon.

Our most senior alumni visitor started school in 1940 and the youngest left school in 2007. We know that many who attended are not currently on our database and if you would like to join please complete the form on this website. There is no membership charge.

The highlight of the afternoon was hearing from former pupil **Grant Stott** who talked about his time at school. It was highly entertaining and very much enjoyed by all.





1964/65 Leavers 60th anniversary reunion

Irene Sime is co-ordinating arrangements for a 60th anniversary reunion in 2025. The date is **Saturday 10 May 2025.**

Irene has issued the following letter to those she has details for, but is aware that not everyone she would like to contact has been included.

"Dear friends

Some of the eagle eyed amongst you will have seen in the latest JGHS Alumni Newsletter that there was a tiny advanced notice of a school reunion being arranged.

It will be 60 years this year from when we left school and we will be 78 years of age so we are going to have a get together.

We are aware that in the last ten years since our previous reunion your circumstances may have changed but hope you will still feel able to join us.

It will be held in the Carlton Bridge Club at 36B Warriston Gardens, Edinburgh EH3 5NE (near George Heriot's playing fields) on Saturday 10th May 2025 so please put that date in your diaries.

There is plenty of parking (some may need to be paid for) and the 23, 27, 8 and 9 buses all stop at the end of Warriston Gardens in Inverleith Row.

Edinburgh is a difficult place to park in and to add to that is the complication of LEX for older cars so the venue avoids that concern. The club has an excellent Catering Manager namely Jane Mawdsley, and the lunch will take the form of a welcome drink and nibbles at 12.30pm followed by a 2 course cold buffet, tea and coffee all included in the price of £35 per head.

This also includes the room hire of £75.

Thereafter there is a bar and Jane will provide wine at a reasonable cost.

It would be helpful to her if you could put red wine / white wine at the end of your reply e-mail.

Please also inform us of any allergies and dietary requirements.

*Payment of £35 should be made by bank transfer to Irene Sime. **(Please make contact for bank details)***

We sincerely hope that as many of you as possible will be able to come as this may well be the last one and it would be so nice to see you all.

Best wishes

Irene Sime (Leslie)

Margaret Donaldson (Runnicles)

Jan Melvin (Geddes)

It would also be much appreciated if you are still in contact with any people for whom we may not have e-mail information to please let us know, with their permission of course, and we will pass on to Irene.

Irene already has a list of some of her classmates from previous reunion events but she is keen to update the list and make contact with others who were in the **1959-1965** cohort. If you are interested in more information about this reunion event for yourself or a friend please let the alumni team know jgtalumni@gmail.com and we will pass on to Irene. Thank you.

JGHS 1969 - 1975 reunion

A 50 year reunion is being organised to celebrate the year group that entered S1 in 1969 and left 6th year in 1975 or before. It will be on Saturday 20th September 2025 at Black Ivy, 4 Alvanley Terrace, Edinburgh EH9 1DU from 12.00 - 15.00 hrs

There will be an afternoon tea, fizz, music from our era and obviously a lot of chat. If you were in our year group or know someone who was, get in touch for more information at jghs69to75@gmail.com

We would also love copies of photos and/or written memories to include in a powerpoint presentation which will be shown on the day. If you are not able to attend, a copy of this can be sent to you after the event.

We hope you will be able to attend and that it will be a fun, relaxed afternoon to meet up with old friends and connect with people you have lost touch with and haven't seen for 50 years!

We look forward to seeing you on 20th September.

We are Elaine Mack (Sinclair) and Lynne McNicoll (Murray)

THE SWIMMING CUP SAGA

Over the years since leaving JGHS for Girls in 1960, I often wondered what happened to the Swimming Cup which I won two years' running, as did my schoolmates before and after me, Alison Dow and Flora Calder. I decided to seek it out. With this bee in my bonnet, I asked Jean Knox of the Gillespie Trust to try to trace the Cup's whereabouts. It used to sit proudly on display in a glass cabinet in the entrance hall of the 1966-2016 school building in Lauderdale Street. When this was subsequently replaced by a third building, all trophies were stuffed randomly and uncatalogued into various store cupboards and abandoned to oblivion. However, never-say-die Jean managed to find a willing member of the school staff, Tania Peters, who agreed to do a search with me through all the school cupboards – a tall order, to say the least!



One Saturday morning, Tania and I began our mission.

We unpacked every box and tea chest throughout the school. The search was fruitless, and we were about to give up when another member of staff asked if we had checked the PE cupboard. It was the one place we had NOT tried! We found a dark room crammed with tea chests and boxes full of assorted trophies over the decades. But hallelujah, in the very last tea chest and at the very bottom of this container, the last item in the box and packaged in bubble wrap, there it was!

It was faded and tarnished, but otherwise intact.

Oh the joy! I took it home, polished it till it gleamed like new and sent photos to all concerned. Thereafter Alison, Flora and I all met for lunch in Bruntsfield and then walked to the old Links school to take pictures of each other holding the precious trophy in front of the school entrance (it is now student accommodation for EU).

Many thanks to Tania for her perseverance in the search and to Jean who set the ball rolling. The plan is to catalogue all the trophies and provide a permanent home for them within the current school building. It's a heart-warming story and I am so glad to have found that beautiful Cup again.

NORMA ALLAN *JGHS for Girls 1954-60*

1975 Leavers Reunion

20th Anniversary



Did any of us love the School Hat?

We were delighted to receive this photo of some school hats belonging to Esther Donaldson, donated recently by her sister Amy.

Esther Donaldson went to Gillespie's, aged 5, in 1935. She was the eldest of three girls and loved school.

At school she played violin in the orchestra, and liked Mr McCrae who was a music teacher.

Miss Kiskey was her first teacher and Mr Seton was the deputy head. She was friendly with Joyce Berry.

When she left, aged 17, she went into the Civil Service.

Sadly Esther died last year but is survived by her younger sister Amy.



Photo from 1931 also featuring school hats, worn by Helen and Betty Harper.

donated by Elaine Sandeman.

Obituary- Sheena Margaret Purdom (nee Smith) 1948-2025

Sheena spent 13 years as a pupil at James Gillespie's, from 1953-1965, at a time when it was an all girls school. She made lifelong friends and remained an active member of the local community.

Sheena trained as a teacher and followed a career in education until she retired. She taught biology in several Edinburgh high schools, retiring eventually from Leith Academy.

Always keen to support those who needed an extra helping hand, Sheena was, after retirement, while her daughter was still a pupil at Gillespie's, a volunteer on the Parent Council. Later, she represented them on James Gillespie's Trust.

In recent years Sheena served as a Trustee, giving her time and expertise where it was most needed to support the young people and staff at JGHS. She was always keen to ensure all pupils were able to participate in school activities and that financial barriers were removed wherever possible. Her time as a Trustee culminated with three years serving as chair of the Trust until she stepped down in November 2024.

Sheena made a real difference to so many young people and her legacy will continue as the needs and interests of young people will continue to guide the decisions of the Trust in future.

Sheena has a special place in our hearts and she will be sorely missed. Our thoughts are with her friends and family, particularly Ian and Anna.



Looking back -100 years ago..... From the 1925 School Magazine

From the 1925 School Magazine I found this interesting view on national characteristics, written by fifth year pupil Margaret G Rae. I was particularly amused by her comment, doubtless the case back then, that Aberdeen was not a very rich city. Think this underlines how much times have changed. Read the article here for yourself, there are other comments that reflect the differences in the last 100 years.

"A Citizen of No Mean Cities

Although to a foreigner all Scotsmen fresh from their native land may appear to be very similar, it is surprising how different the characteristics of the inhabitants of certain Scottish towns are. As I have been resident for several years in each of Scotland's three most important cities - Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen (Apologies to Dundee) perhaps I may be permitted to give a few of the personal conclusions which I have come to regarding the manners and customs of the Scots living in these towns.

Let me begin with the Aberdonians. In my opinion the jokes against the Aberdonian are sadly out of place. Certainly, there are always exceptions which prove any rule, but, in this case, I think some person must have applied a rule to the exceptions, and have come to the conclusion that the said rule held good generally as well. I don not really think the Aberdonians, on the whole, parsimonious. They may not be lavish givers, but perhaps this may be more easily understood when it is taken into account the Aberdeen is not a very rich city, and that the inhabitants are chiefly of the middle and lower classes. These northerly Scots are perhaps inclined to be narrow minded, and the majority of them are old-fashioned in their ideas. Visitors to the town are regarded with great interest, and are stared at quite as if they were curiosities. The Aberdonian, nevertheless, takes up a very friendly attitude towards strangers to his native town and will gladly point out any place of interest. This friendliness he extends also to his fellow citizens. I have often seen two men absolutely unknown to one another exchange comments about the weather as they pass each other on the road. In Edinburgh, I fancy this would be considered very strange, but the Aberdonians

Looking back—50 years ago..... From the 1975 school magazine



“ At Easter this year we said goodbye to Miss McIver who has been our Headmistress since 1967. She came to us after long and varied service to Education. She taught in Glasgow for some years and was then Principal teacher and Lady adviser at Elgin Academy. She then became Headmistress at Stobswell Girls’ Secondary School in Dundee where she gained a high reputation for her efforts on behalf of the pupils.

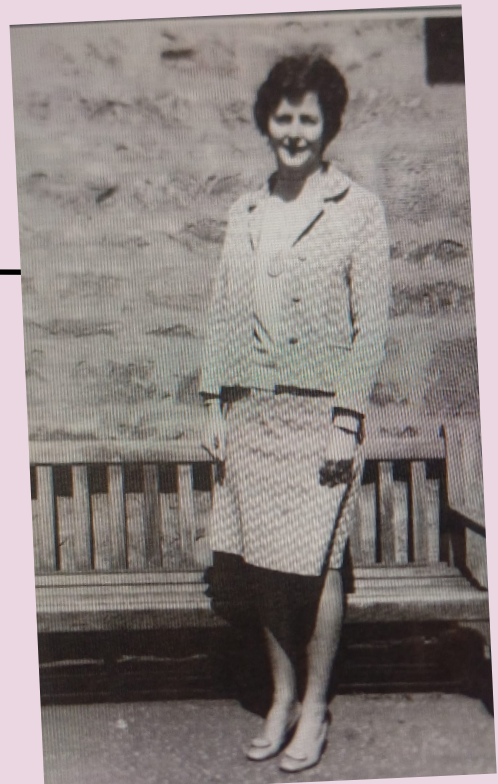
She came to Gillespie’s at a time when many changes were taking place in Education. She developed the idea of the School Council, encouraging the pupils to take as great a share as possible in the running of the school. She has always encouraged participation in outdoor pursuits and has always had a keen interest in the development of voluntary work on the part of pupils. In connection with this she served for some years on the Committee for Community service in Secondary Schools.

Possibly the most memorable event during Miss McIver’s tenure of office was the change of Gillespie’s from being a selective secondary school into a fully comprehensive school which once again boys took their place. Her efforts to make this transition an easy one have been rewarded and she now hands over to her successor a school which has much to thank her for.

We all wish her good luck and good health in her retirement.”

We say goodbye to **Miss Reid**, the Principal teacher of Maths, after ten years of devoted service to the school. Miss Reid’s great interest in her subject impressed both colleagues and pupils—many of whom have achieved considerable success in their studies.

Also, **Miss C M McIntyre** retired this year after twenty-five years as Principal teacher of Business Studies in the school. She came to us after 7 years at Hutcheson’s Grammar School for Girls, Glasgow. She will always be remembered for her conscientious teaching and many of her former pupils have gone on themselves to be Principal Teachers of Business Studies. We, on the magazine committee, have always been grateful the considerable help she has given us in producing the magazine. We wish her well in her retirement.



for

But - we say hello to **Dr P Thomas** as our new Headmistress.!

Dr Thomas obtained a degree in chemistry at the University of Leeds and then completed her doctorate there. After teaching for some years both in England and Scotland, she became Assistant Rector at Blackburn Academy, West Lothian. Her main interest there was in the Guidance side of teaching. We look forward to having Dr Thomas as our new headmistress, and hope that she will be happy with us.

Alumni Team

Introducing Dave Philip (JGHS 1988-1994)

The JG Trust Alumni team are delighted to welcome a new member.

Dave Philip responded to our newsletter appeal for volunteers and will be a valuable and welcome addition to our team.

Dave was Head Boy at James Gillespie's in 1993-94 and went on to achieve a first-class honours degree in Geography at Dundee University (94-98).

Subsequently he was awarded a scholarship from the National Environment Research Council (NERC) to pursue an MSc in marine biology and ecology at Heriot Watt University (98-99). This led him to a career as a marine environmental consultant.

Following this he joined the marine estate team for the Crown Estate in a range of roles including marine environmental and renewable energies, as well as sustainability.

A keen sportsman Dave played field hockey from the age of 11, played for his club (Inverleith Hockey Club) in National Division 1 and qualified as a coach. He coached in his Edinburgh club, at Dundee Wanderers, Heriot Watt Ladies and for 3 years East District Boys, under 21, under 18 and under 16.

Dave now lives near Meggetland in Edinburgh and would be delighted to hear from any former schoolfriends.

think nothing of it. They are very much inclined to gossip, and anyone liable to be freely discussed. Aberdeen in this respect is just a big village. One person know quite as much— usually more— about his neighbour's business than the neighbour does himself.

The citizens of Edinburgh differ greatly from those of Aberdeen. In the capital the inhabitants are reserved and standoffish. Many of them, I fear, are inclined to be 'snobbish'. They do not easily make friends, and a stranger to Edinburgh could quite easily settle down in a house and live there for several months without getting to know his next-door neighbour. They are certainly more broad-minded than the Aberdonians, but the Aberdonian has a warmer heart than his fellow Scot of the South, or, if this is not so, at least he shows it more. The shop-assistants in Edinburgh are anything but friendly, and one of their chief difficulties in life seems to be to conjure up a smile. However, although the Edinburgh people are somewhat cold to begin with, when one does make a friend in Scotland's capital, that friend will usually stand by one very well in time of need.

The Glasgow people are unlike of Edinburgh and Aberdeen. There is no stand-offishness in this city, nevertheless the citizens do not address unknown fellow citizens with the same freedom as they do in Aberdeen.



Dave Philip

School trip to Florence 1975

In 1975 a School trip to Florence was arranged. It was joint venture between Royal High School and James Gillespie's.

The following documents have been donated by Alan Ireland, (husband of Sheena Kinghorn, JGHS 1960-1973) who received the information from Alastair Allanach (RHS archivist)

Florence 1975

John Murray. Mary Bryden. Alastair Gray Cathy Gray. James Nicolson. Gina Stewart. Dave Thornton. Liz Turner. Giona Wilson.	Shiela Prestage. Elopath Ruthven Carolyn Thomson. Lynn Thomson.	Matthew Coan. Neil Leslie. Kenneth Macintosh. Susan Braidwood. Alison MacDonald. Alison MacDonald Janis Wheeler. Niall Bacon. Ashok Jacob. Mandy MacDonald. Alison Wood. Anthea Butler.
Colin Butler. Gordon Cairns. John Cowie. Alan Douglas. John Gourlay. David Hamer. Bruce Hannay. Alan Ireland. Andrew Jeffrey. Donald Johnstone. Raymond Johnston. Douglas McKelvie. Gordon McInally. Michael Ritchie. Robert Taylor. Douglas Wryphelt. Eric Williamson. John Wood.	Malcolm Crawford. John Baxter. Robert Couper. Allan Harper. Alastair Jeffrey. Bill Ross. Keith Roxburgh.	Rhonda McAuslin. Karen Raie. Susan Houghton. Shona Kerr. Alison Masfurlane. Karen Sagers. Alex. Whiteside. Stephen Ashforth. Alan Kees. Martin Ritchie.
Ashila Aikman. Eleanor Brown. Helen Brown. Heather Boyd. Sarah Dyer. Till Haycock. Carol Hope. Frances Longman.	Drew Elder. David Gordon. Gairn MacDonald. Douglas Patience. Richard Prestage. Keith Sommerville. Michael Whittaker. Keith Allison. Leslie Fairbairn. Fred. Wilson. James Russell.	Hazel Fether. June Rapsen.
	Adrian Doyle. Niall Duthie. Keith Inglis. Gairn McInally. John Mitchell. Hugh Lervey.	
	Sarah Boyack. Hilary Curran. Pam. Gibboly. Anne Morrison.	

"This is the 'Team Sheet' and other documents. You are eighth in the group of eighteen on the left of the document. It's amazing how costs have risen through the years - it was around £5,000 for all transport and hotels for just over 100 travellers - around £50 per person for 13 days."

Sir George Warrender, 1st Baronet

(c. 1658 – 4 March 1721) of Bruntsfield and Lochend.

Sir George Warrender was a Scottish merchant and politician who sat in the House of Commons from 1715 to 1722.

Bruntsfield House



Warrender was the only son of **George Warrender** and his wife **Margaret Cunninghame**. His father died when he was an infant. His ancestors were the **de Warrenders of Picardy**, one of them having come to Scotland in the train of Mary of Guise and Lorraine.

He became a dealer of foreign trade at Edinburgh. On the 26th of July 1695, Warrender bought Bruntsfield House and land from **James Fairlie**, and subsequently went on to buy adjacent properties.

He married **Margaret Lawrie** daughter of **Thomas Lawrie**, a merchant of Edinburgh, on 13 April 1680. She died in 1699 and was buried on 2 June 1699.

Six months later he married, by proclamation dated 10 December 1699, **Grissel Blair**, daughter of **Hugh Blair**, merchant of Edinburgh.

In 1705 he was member of a syndicate that was assigned farm of the customs and foreign excise of Scotland for three years. He was Lord Provost of Edinburgh for the year 1713 to 1714. Warrender was Lord Provost of Edinburgh under three sovereigns -William and Mary, Anne, and George I, and was created **Baronet of Lochend, in the County of Haddington**, on 2 June 1715.

Warrender was a Whig, having been fined as a dissenter under James II, and supported the Hanoverian succession. As Lord Provost, he had proclaimed George I's accession at Edinburgh. He was elected as Whig Member of Parliament (MP) for Edinburgh at the 1715 general election.

In Parliament he voted with the Government in every recorded division. At the start of the 1715 Jacobite rebellion, he was in London but went to Scotland in August, judging it was more important for him to be at Edinburgh at the time than in Westminster.

In 1716 he applied for compensation for his expenses and loss of trade during the rebellion.

He supported the Government with regard to an opposition motion of 4 June 1717, censuring Argyll's rival, **Lord Cadogan**, but subsequently was fearful of the temper of the city as a result of his behavior in the House of Commons.

Warrender died at London on 4 March 1721, a year before the next general election, and was buried at Bunhill Fields. He had a son and daughter by his first wife, and three sons and five daughters by his second wife. He was succeeded in the Baronetcy by his eldest son John.

School trip to Florence 1975—

Two more Documents from the joint school trip in 1975

World Wide Coaches (Scotland) Limited
 9 ST. LEONARD STREET,
 LANARK, ML11 7AD.
 Telephone: Lanark (0555) 3732 & 3013
 Cables: Scotcoach. Telex 779080

Your Ref. *Mr. Murray*
 22nd October, 1974.

Our Ref. *Mr. Murray*

Ian Fleming, Esq.,
 Town Twinning Officer,
 Public Relations Department,
 1, Cockburn Street,
 EDINBURGH.

Dear Mr. Fleming,
 Following our telephone conversation to-day, I
 now have pleasure in submitting our suggested itinerary and
 provisional quotation in respect of your proposed visit to
 Florence next March:-

1975.

Friday, 21st March Edinburgh - Hull (225 miles)
 Join Car Ferry leaving at 18.00 hours for overnight
 sailing to Rotterdam - berths or couchettes provided.

Saturday, 22nd March Rotterdam - Heidelberg (355 miles)
 Via Utrecht and Arnheim, cross into Germany and then via
 Autobahn passing through the Ruhr Valley, Cologne,
 Frankfurt, to Heidelberg for overnight stay.

Sunday, 23rd March Heidelberg - Brunnen (244 miles) *
 Leisurely journey passing part of the Black Forest and
 following the River Rhine to Basle. Cross into
 Switzerland and via Lucerne to Brunnen at the eastern
 end of Lake Lucerne. Overnight stop.

Monday, 24th March Brunnen - Florence (344 miles)
 Journey to-day via Altdorf, then through the St. Gotthard
 Tunnel to Airolo. Continue via Lugano, Como, Milan,
 Bologna to Florence.

Tuesday 5th Nov.

Director: T. C. Edwards. H. R. Forrest. D. S. N. Gately, F.C.A. R. Whitford. J. S. Whitford (Managing)

Ref. No. 0981 Scotland.

WORLD WIDE COACHES (SCOTLAND) LIMITED
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Mr. John Murray,
 Barton,
 EDINBURGH EH3 8BS.

YOUR REF. _____
 OUR REF. _____
 INVOICE DATE **WH/2375.**
 15th April, 1975.

Visit to Florence.
21st March to 3rd April, 1975.

To hire of two 45 seater coaches from Edinburgh to
 Florence and return, including freightage of coaches
 on Car Ferries and on St. Gotthard Tunnel Train,
 Compulsory extra Insurance cover whilst on Continent
 and Continental Road Taxes.

2 Coaches @ £926.50 per coach (as quoted)
 2 x £51.75 (extra mileage - 414)

Car Ferries - 8 Adults @ £28.58
 2 Adults (group Leaders) @ £11.43
 79 Students
 1 Student (one way only)

Hotels: Gasthaus Zur Eisenbahn, Heidelberg £11.43 £228. 64. £1,853. 00.
 Nights of 22/23 March and 1/2 April 925. 83. 103. 50.
 90 Persons x 2 x DM23.50 = DM4,250 5. 14. 1,159. 61.

Hotel Eden, Brunnen £760. 79
 Night of 23/24 March
 90 Persons x Sfr.26 = Sfr.2,340

Hotel Posta Gries, Bolzano 391. 30.
 Night of 31 March/1 April
 90 Persons x £4.55

409. 50. 1,561. 59.
 £4,677. 70.

INVOICE NUMBER _____
 TOTAL AMOUNT DUE _____