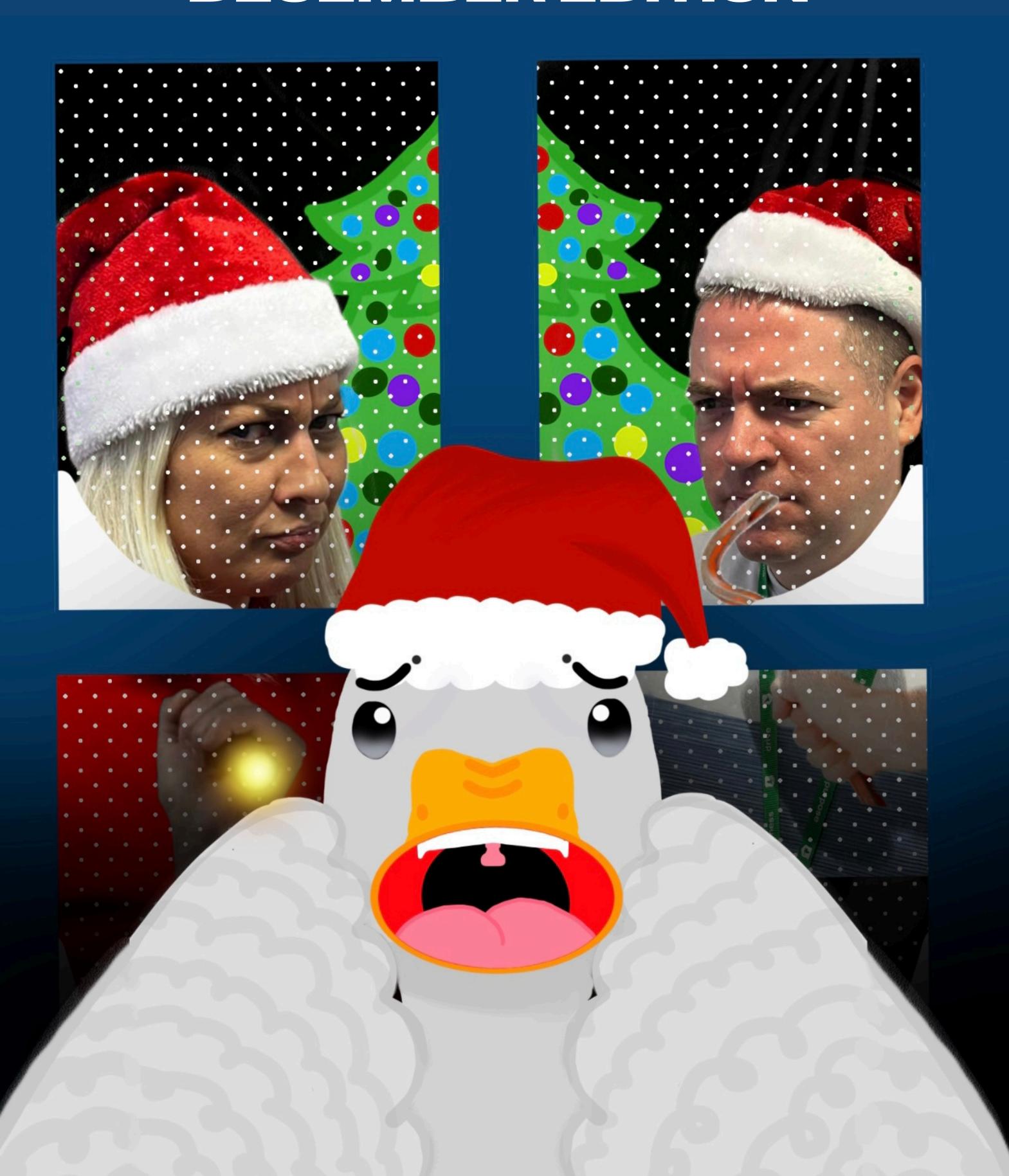
FROM CRAIGMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL

## THE SQUAWK

#### DECEMBER EDITION



DECEMBER EDITION — THE SQUAWK

## 'Everybody wants to be us...'

If you ever needed more evidence that The Squawk was the new hot stuff, this is it. Just off the press we've been copied again?!

A couple of weeks ago episodes of Stranger Things Season Five started dropping and all our devoted readers gasped as they introduced their radio station... The Squawk??? Started by Robin and Steve it blasts nonstop 80's music all around the clock, and while is part of the fictional tv show it is very much real. Just before the release of Season Five they partnered with Global Player to make this a reality, and if you download their app you can list to it for real, with Mindy Flare and Vance Goodman accompanying you on your journey to the upside down. We at Craigmount's original Squawk are not happy. The Squawk was started in 2024 by our very own Craigmount Pupils, and while most of them have left it still stands strong, posting an edition almost every month. So, this is an official media war. And we will win.

All of us at the Squawk had only just recovered from the shock of Stranger Things when we woke up this morning to another wannabe outlet stealing our great ideas. The front cover for The New Statesman's Christmas edition is the EXACT same as our Christmas front page. Both heavily inspired by the great film Home Alone, using their poster with the snowy window and remarkably familiar faces peeking through at us. This blatant plagiarism is not acceptable but is more concerning than any radio station, as we have not even released our Christmas paper yet.

Which can only mean one thing, we have a mole. We at The Squawk take this breach of privacy very seriously, and our eyes are painfully pealed for all suspicious activity within this organisation. While Henry "renounces any ridiculous accusations", might it have been Sathvik with his Squawk Cast, or was it even Mrs Burns?

We at the Squawk prioritise our integrity and original student work so will keep you, dear reader, updated on this pressing matter.





#### A LOVE LETTER TO MY FAVOURITE BAND

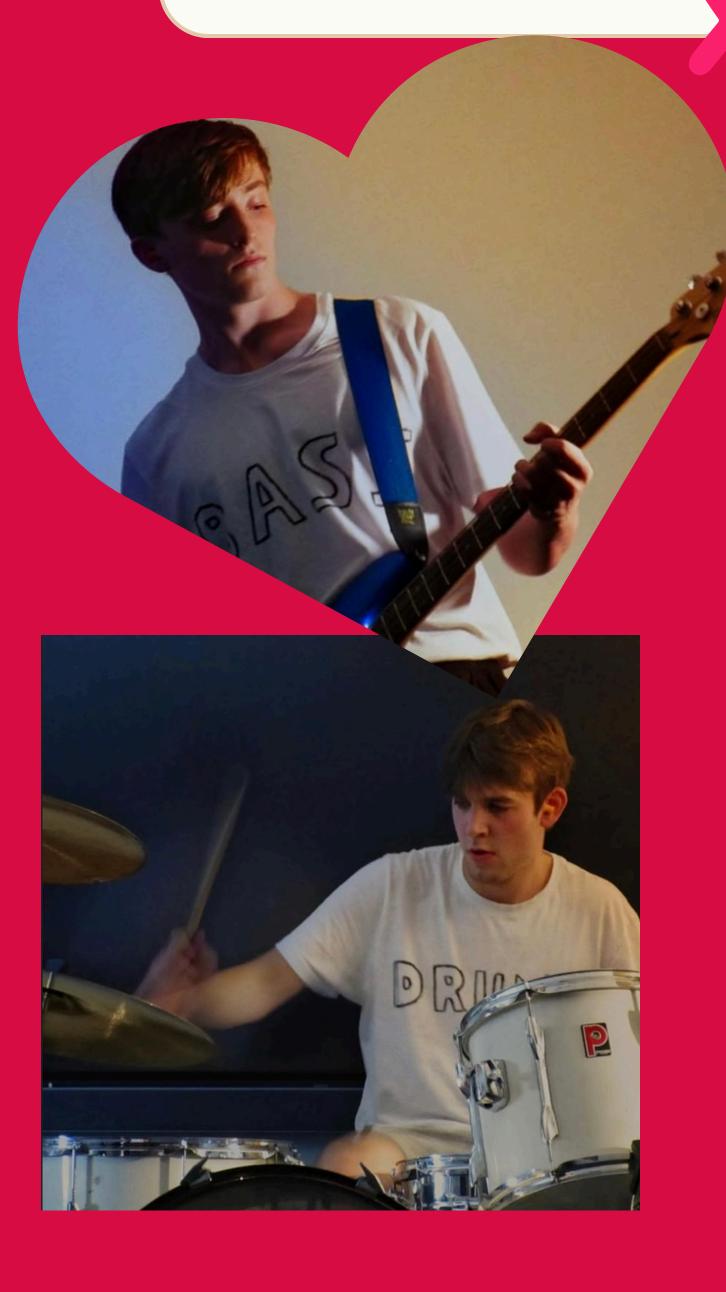
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#### BY HENRY JONES

#### WHAT IS HAND CRANK

HandCrank is a student band, made up of S6s, Ruaridh Orman, Gregor Kelt, Thomas McVey, and Lochie Farrar. They performed their first show at the Craigmount Performing Arts Festival in June.





"Quiz night, quiz night, quiz night!" These were the shouts echoing my empty skull around Wednesday the 19th of November, the excitement was almost too much to bear. As I walked the cold, empty streets towards the school of Craigmount at an unreasonable time, I kept wondering what the quiz would be like. Who's team would I join, and when would HandCrank make their appearance? As the number one HandCrank fan and groupie, I was so excited to see another HandCrank yet performance and I hoped to see them knock it out of the park (as usual). What I did not expect, and what I was not prepared for, was a fun and challenging quiz.

When I arrived, I paid £2 to enter and grabbed a hot and delicious vanilla hot chocolate from The Mount. I sat down, joined a team, and began.

The first round was about pop culture, in which participants were asked about various pop culture topics such as music, movies, and the Scotland win at the football. After the first round, HandCrank took up their instruments and started playing a smooth jazz melody to soothe the minds of contestants, easing them on to the next round.

As the next round began, the teams really had to put their thinking caps on because this round was anagrams for Christmas carols. As someone who barely knows any Christmas carols to begin with, this round was pretty difficult for my puny, HandCrank obsessed brain. Just as my brain was reaching maximum thinking capacity, I was relieved by my burden of higher thought, because HandCrank once again took the stage. Just as I thought it was time to get up and start dancing, they were shown off the stage by the events and prom planning committee.

Next, a classic Christmas quiz. The usual questions were featured (how many ghosts visited Scrooge, how many wise men were there, etc) alongside some new questions which shook up the usual formula. By this time, my heart was racing, when was the HandCrank round? I went for a walk, contemplating whether my HandCrank obsession was worth it after all. It was just then I ran into the band themselves. I asked them "aren't you glad to be performing?". In unison, they answered "Of COURSE we are. We are HandCrank and we will perform for anybody on short enough notice, any notice is okay, even if it's the day of".



Just then, I woke from my hallucination. I had dreamt through the entire sports round. My heart was pounding, palms sweaty, forehead fit to burst from my headache. HandCrank was about to come on. HandCrank. Hand. Crank. In front of me. They set up. "Okay, this is Handcrank, and their first song". I barely heard this. I was locked in, as the kids say. They got their instruments ready. Gregor counted in. 1. 2. 1, 2, 3 4.

They started playing 'Twist and Shout' by the Beatles. The rush of happiness and excitement I got from that first chord was immense. This is what I imagine winning the lottery must feel like. I quickly fell into a HandCrank trance, my life purpose fulfilled. That wasn't all Handcrank had in store, they went on to play several absolute bangers, such as Roxanne, Black Hole Sun, Shake it off, Johnny B. Goode and Kung Fu Fighting, in which we were blessed with the collective angelic voices of HandCrank. After the concert, I was finally ready to sit down with Handcrank and discuss.

"Do you think you are the best band?"

"Yes absolutely" - Thomas McVey and Gregor Kelt agreed.

"Well, -" – Ruairidh began to object

"No, we're the best, the very best" Lochie agreed.

That was it, case closed. HandCrank are the best band. Self-admitted. The moral of this story? HandCrank are the best band ever formed in the history of humanity, as admitted by themselves and remember they are ALWAYS happy to do any gigs for you, even if it's the same day, because they're just that kind.



Also, the prom committee are incredibly talented to put together a quiz night which was fun and a good chance to do a fun quiz with your friends, eat some delicious food, and have some hot drinks made specially by the friendly team at the mound. But mostly the Handcrank thing. HandCrank HandCrank HandCrank.





Everyone knows the classic story of A Christmas Carol. The story of Ebenezer Scrooge, a mean landlord whose greed and selfishness has consumed his life. Scrooge has no friends, no close family, and he absolutely hates Christmas. Charles Dickens wrote this classic novel to show the class divide in Victorian era England, and around two million copies have been sold since it was published in 1843. Naturally, this spawned a few movie adaptations, stage plays, and other books loosely based on the same story. But there is one version of Dickens' classic story of ghosts, Christmas, and the importance of family, that tops all the others. One version classed as the most accurate and entertaining version of A Christmas Carol. Not only is it the best version of A Christmas Carol, but it is also, in my professional opinion, the best Christmas Movie to ever grace our screens since Dickens set his pen on his paper. I am talking about the one, the only, The Muppets Christmas Carol.

Starring Michael Caine as its token human, The Muppets Christmas Carol is narrated by Gonzo the Great, who is credited as Charles Dickens himself. He is accompanied by his good friend, Rizzo the Rat, and together, they lead the audience through a heartwarming story of friendship and love.



The cast of this film is outstanding. Kermit the Frog plays the role of Bob Cratchit, perfectly encapsulating his kind nature and warmth in a way that would make even Charles Dickens shed a tear, Robin the Frog manages to capture the audience's heart as Tiny Tim, and Statler and Waldorf deliver an amazing performance as Jacob and Robert Marley, somehow dominating the entire narrative despite only being present for a single song.

Of course, my opinions about this film are strong. I believe The Muppets Christmas Carol is a masterpiece of film, and that people should stop making Christmas Carol films because who could possibly top the Muppets? But I might be biased. So, to balance out the praise, I interviewed Muppets expert, Miss Boyle, to find out how she felt about this film.

"It is the most accurate version of Christmas Carol ever made, which is surprising because its Muppets related." Miss Boyle began. She then followed this up, calling The Muppets Christmas Carol 'biblically accurate.'

"Second of all, its got the Muppets! What's not to love? This of all, songs! It's a musical, excellent! Fourth, Michael Caine!"

Michael Caine is the only human actor in The Muppets Christmas Carol, apart from a few background characters. This film was the first Muppets film that included a specific 'token human,' and this started a trend in the Muppets films, with Tim Curry starring in the Muppet Treasure Island, and Jason Segel starring in the 2011 Muppets movie.

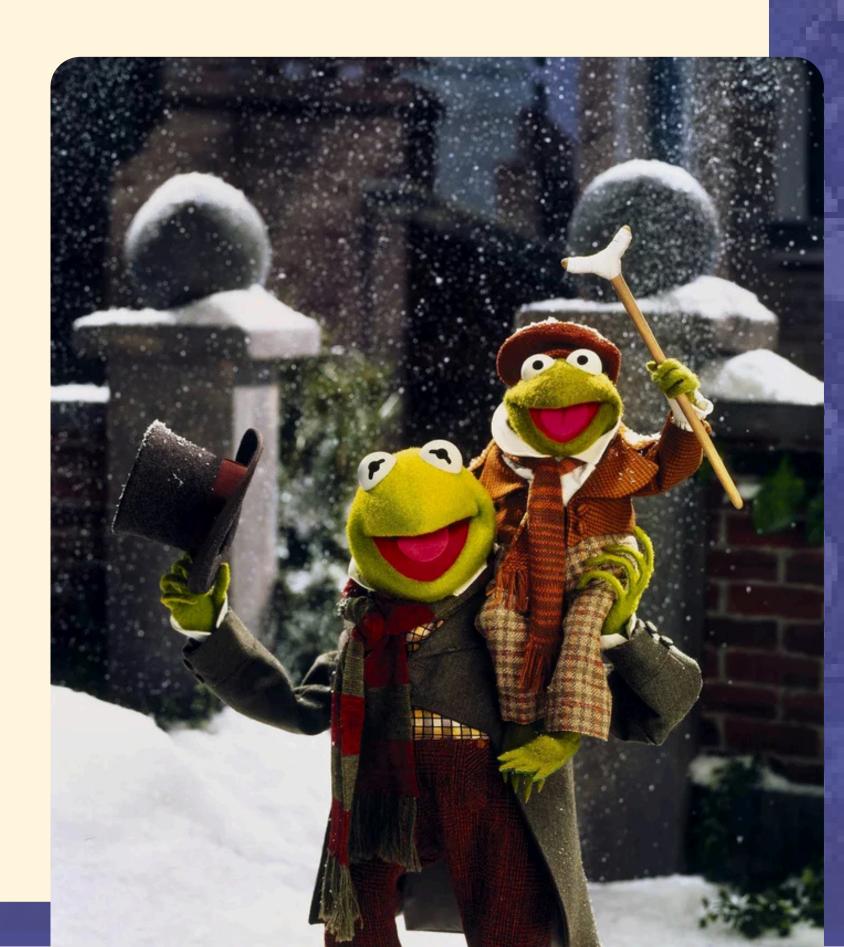
"Muppets strike this really great balance where they get a really serious actor to play the one character that needs a serious actor, and the rest are Muppets, and the best Muppets movies work when the serious actor takes it as serious as they would any other role, and Michael Caine nails that. He's the perfect Scrooge."

Michael Caine adds an air of professionalism to a film that would otherwise be seen as something childlike. He is cold and unlikeable as Scrooge, but he slowly warms up, his performance subtle and skilled. Michael Caine achieves a sense of belonging in The Muppets Christmas Carol because he treats the Muppets as if they are other human actors and not animal puppets, making for some amazing chemistry between every character.

When asked what her favourite scene was, Miss Boyle said, "It's got to be 'no cheeses for us meeces.' I mean if you ask anyone, that's the scene. It's perfect. The tone, the pitch, the mice. It's wonderful."

Of course, The Muppets movies are known for their musical style, with tearjerking songs such as Rainbow Connection, and funnier ones such as The Big House in Muppets Most Wanted. Man Or Muppet from the 2011 Muppets Movie even won an Oscar for best original song. This musical talent is seen clearly in The Muppets Christmas Carol. The film starts with a beautiful overture. The orchestra sets the scene of the small village in England that houses Ebenezer Scrooge, accompanied by the bustling morning of Christmas Eve. The people are happy, the sun is bright, and the movie is already a masterpiece. The overture is then followed by what must be one of the best songs in the entire movie, if not the one of the best Muppets songs overall. Scrooge. Here, we are introduced to Ebenezer Scrooge. A dramatic string quartet welcomes you to the gruff words of George the Janitor, immediately making the audience aware of how cruel Scrooge really is. The entire village complains about this man in one 2 minute and 27 second song. We go through a chorus of 'there goes Mr Humbug, there goes Mr Grim,' and even the food in the village has something to say about it. It is not until 1 minute and 58 seconds in when you are welcomed to the best lyricism in the entire film, nay, any musical to ever exist. This lyric tops Sondheim, Andrew Lloyd Webber, even the intricate references in Hamilton could not overturn the genius that is put behind this writing.

'No cheeses for us meeses' is a simple line. Many glaze over it, only feeling a little sympathetic for the small mice that are burrowed in the pile of straw. But underneath it all? It is an emotional display of how a capitalist society puts down mice families like this one. These mice nothing. No house, no have Christmas presents, and most of all, no cheese, and somehow, by some magical art of writing, this single line encapsulates it all. The mice have no cheese, Bob Cratchit has no food to bring to his family, Scrooge has no family to spend time with.



The line is not just about the mice, but about every character in this film who is missing something they so desperately yearn for. The rest of the song is just as good, but this line is a clear stand out in between the complaints from the other animals. For the next 82 minutes of the film, your mind is stuck on the tragedy of this mice family. Will they ever get their cheese? The way the audience is entranced by this mice family just proves the genius of the writing of The Muppets Christmas Carol.

Once the mouse related tears clear from the eyes of the audience, they're led on a journey through the village, with every member begging Scrooge to change. Beaker and Dr Bunsen Honeydew tell Scrooge he can surely learn to love in a beautiful song, Room In Your Heart.

When Scrooge finally decides to stop working, the ghost of Jacob Marley, his old business partner, visits him. Or, well, two ghosts visit him. Jacob Marley, and his twin brother, Robert Marley. Of course, this messes with the accuracy from the book, because Jacob Marley is the only ghost that originally visits Scrooge in the novel. This is made up for by the fact that they're played by Stadler and Waldorf, a duo that is inseparable. Draped in chains, they set the scene of impending dread and exemplify how doomed Scrooge is if he does not change his ways. We know how the rest of the story goes. Scrooge is visited by three ghosts, the ghost of Christmas past, the ghost of Christmas present, and the ghost of Christmas yet to come, consisting of a small candle-like creature, a large ginger man, and a haunting grim reaper-esque figure, Scrooge eventually learns how to be a nice person, and wakes up the next morning a better man. He gives Bob Cratchit medicine for Tiny Tim, he donates to charity, and he begins to celebrate Christmas. He's so nice, he most likely gave the mice their cheese!!!

I asked Miss Boyle who her favourite character in A Muppets Christmas Carol was. The answer I got was, "Honestly, probably the mice. And then in general, I think Beaker. I just like the way he looks, and the way he doesn't say any actual words, he just makes noises. I'm a Beaker girl."

And really, who doesn't love Beaker? The panicked scientist plays a charity collector alongside Dr Bunsen Honeydew and sings the song 'Room In Your Heart' at the beginning of this film, speaking in disturbed "meeps" instead of words. Despite this, the emotion in the song is still clear as they beg Scrooge to donate to charity for once in his life. Despite this song, Scrooge refuses to donate to the pair, creating a sense of disparity in the otherwise jolly film.

My personal favourite character is, of course, Kermit's Bob Cratchit. Whenever this green frog opens his mouth to sing a tune, tears spring into my eyes. His voice is unmatched, his spirit unbeatable, and his joy unbreakable. His words constantly ring true, and the audience find themselves agreeing with everything he vocalises. Yes, Kermit, there is magic in the air.

So yes, the music, the cinematography, the colour palette, the performances, and so many thing that I would happily talk about (though this article is already almost as long as any of the Sonic reviews from last year), they're all perfect. Everything is combined into one 86 minute masterpiece.

And in the wise words of Miss Boyle in response to my stuttering mess of an interview question, "To me in terms of Christmas films, I don't think anything comes close."

I agree. No Christmas film even touches the peak that is The Muppets Christmas Carol. Move aside, Macaulay Culkin, we're giving your Chicago Film Critics Association Award for 'most promising actor' to Fozzie Bear. The Muppets Christmas Carol is the best Christmas film, and I find it very unlikely that any other Christmas film will ever be better in the future.

To loosely quote fellow Squawk member, Henry Jones: "Hey, there really is a Christmas carol in these Muppets."

And to contrast this quote, Kermit the Frog said, "The world has got a smile today, the world has got a glow." And I believe the world always has a smile. As long as someone out there is watching The Muppets Christmas Carol. So go watch The Muppets Christmas Carol. Trust me, a random S6. The film will change your life, whether you celebrate Christmas or not.





The season starts off super nostalgic. We get a scene with Will, the Demogorgon, and the classic song "Should I Stay or Should I Go," which is a clear throwback to Season 1. Then there's a breakfast scene that brings back that familiar, cozy Hawkins vibe. But of course, the calm doesn't last, Hawkins is completely locked down and under military control. You can really feel that "final season" energy in every scene.

The first episode moves really fast. Soldiers almost catch Eleven, Holly talks about monsters, and we see the connection between Will and the Demogorgon. These are all familiar types of tension, but everything feels sharper and more urgent this time. Our favourite group are back stronger than ever. And of course, the music stands out too, the Duffer brothers know how to use music perfectly.

Steve and Robin continue the dynamic duo theme, now working together at the WSQUK radio station. They lead the daily Squawk, what are the chances! The rest of the characters seem scattered and separate, but We find they are submitting messages in code via the radio. Their operations reaching new levels of sophistication to break into the upside down. The aim, find Vecna!

The upside down is different. There's a military base and whilst still dark, seems less threatening with noticeably less monsters. However we soon discover there's a wall, which can't be penetrated. Hopper and El take on the military, finding an almost forgotten character on the way.

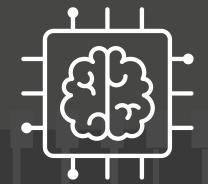
Dustin, who in past seasons, was the fun, lighthearted one, has the biggest character change. After losing Eddie, he carries a heavier emotional weight. His main struggle isn't just missing his friend, it's that the town still sees Eddie as a "villain" instead of the hero he was. Dustin honours Eddie by continuing the Hellfire Club, pushing through pain, and even growing his hair like Eddie did.

Holly is another character who really starts standing out. She gets kidnapped in Episode 2. Ted and Karen both stand up to the Demogorgon without even thinking twice. We are given more insight into the kidnapping; she isn't the only child to be taken. Vecna needs 12, but for what? He has them in a dreamlike land where he portrays himself as a friend rather than a monster.

Max, still in a coma, makes a welcome return. Some much needed light hearted added comedy is in the form of a new character, Delightful Derek! I think he may become a fan favourite. But, feeling bad for his family, as I think they are still tied up in the barn!

Overall, the season premiere focuses on setting the tone more than dropping huge events. The balance between nostalgia, tension, character growth, and pure excitement is perfect. Hawkins isn't the same place it used to be, and if the rest of the season keeps up this pace, Stranger Things is heading toward a seriously epic final chapter. I'm especially keen to see more of Will using his new powers and how the group will finally take on Vecna and the Upside Down.

# Special Investigation: AI in school



#### BY LUKAS

As students, we are often told by our teachers that we shouldn't use AI to complete our work or replace our own thinking. So what does that mean when we realise that teachers are sometimes using this to help them with their jobs? Lukas Elliott is on the case to find out more about the issues and benefits of AI.

Al stands for artificial intelligence and it has been around for decades. Examples of Al are chatGPT, copilot, Siri, Alexa and Google assistant, as well as some navigation apps. But now in 2025, it feels like we're going backwards – we have brain rot, Al art, Al videos – all made to entertain, confuse or just use up your time, keeping you glued to a screen. The genuine uses of this intelligence seem few and far between but there are time-saving and smart developments in the business world and these are gradually creeping into our lives in school.

On the 16th October 2025, S6 were waiting to receive their feedback from teachers for their UCAS draft. Every S6 opened their emails and they were shocked when they realise the teachers used AI to help write their feedback. At first they were shocked, and then confused – how are teachers 'allowed' to do this, when students aren't? Weeks after that day there was a huge thick cloud over everyone, no one trusted their teachers and the teachers didn't understand why. That is why The Squawk felt it was so important to talk about this issue.



We interviewed three S6 students, who wished to remain anonymous, to gather their opinions. So in of the lovely stairwell of the English Department, we asked how did they feel when the teachers used AI?

"Initially, I was reading through it I was like you know what this is not much feedback it is just telling that I have done well," responded the first.

The second added, "I was pretty disappointed when my feedback came in and I instantly saw arrows these things that people just don't use in writing, when reading the feedback it really I didn't come from a place of genuine care, a human wouldn't think in the same way especially because I felt bad because my feedback gave me information about a subject that I cannot use, which shows us that teachers are not using it as a tool. Do they just copy and paste it straight from what the AI has said?"

Finally, Student 3 said, "I thought the feedback for it I received was quite basic and it wasn't really feedback. It was more like this bit was good...do this...instead of actual instructions. It just gives back a general response, which I think it wasn't quite useful or good. As soon as I opened it, I was in PSE. It was so clearly AI at first I thought it was funny. I didn't realise that all the other teachers were also doing it. I think I was the one of the first people to get it, I didn't bring it up at the time...but yeah, I'm still using it. It is a bit crazy that everyone got an AI response."

Al has a bad reputation and here's why, the most popular Al service ChatGPhatGPT has a negative environmental impact due to the loads of energy required for training and daily questions, and because every single person is trying to get their carbon footprint down as quickly and as low as possible it put a bad taste in their mouths. And it gets worse because this was not the only case of teachers using Ai... a lot of teachers are using it in their classroom, there used a system called Copilot what is made by Microsoft, which teachers are also using.

We decided to go chat to Mr Sansom, Link Depute and Pupil Support Leader, to see if he could shed some light on the use of AI by teachers. The first question was directly put..did you use AI to help write the UCAS feedback? Mr Samson replied "yip", continuing, "we sat down as a year team to discuss the best way...most efficient way to get through 155 UCAS first drafts between two people."

Ultimately, I will say we use AI quite frequently for a lot of things. Mainly to improve efficiency. For example, I will use AI to make lesson plans, but they are made to be delivered by us."

"I am referring to generative AI but personally I wouldn't make something from scratch. With generative AI, I will chuck something from three to four sources and I might say can you please summarise this."

The next question was the big one, did you know that a lot of students were upset? "Point 1...the feedback given from my perspective was, we read it, we put it in Copilot, and it scripted feedback very well. If we put something into Copilot, it is possible that it gets confused. That's just how AI works. If I have copied 80 personal statements and Copilot learns but we haven't said 'this is a different personal statement about a different student', it can get confused about what is producing, you could accidentally copy the wrong one in. Maybe in our attempt to get feedback for you, we got it wrong in the way you view AI."

Mr Samson got back around to talk about how the students felt when they found out. "Getting wind that people were upset about what we have done did deflate us because we still read all the personal statements. No one has complained to us except one parent."

When asked about whether using AI might cause problems for applying for university, he said "given examples of ways to write things, you should not copy and paste".

What about the fact the teachers didn't tell the students that they were going to use AI to help them? Mr Samson responded, "I will take that. The miscommunication is based on how you guys are told 'don't use Ai for any of your work', and if that is the message that you are getting all the time you're view on AI is going to be negative. I don't think the Year Team necessarily realise the negative views on AI in the year group."

He continued by saying that these views are going to help the years below S6 when they reach this year group. "I hope it doesn't affect the relationship we have built with you guys for the last couple years. We thought the relationship we had with this year was a good one and we thought that they old enough to speak to us about it. So what I would say is, if anyone has a genuine concern, they come in to tell us. And I will quite happily go, well, do you know what, let's stand face to face right now and let's do some feedback.

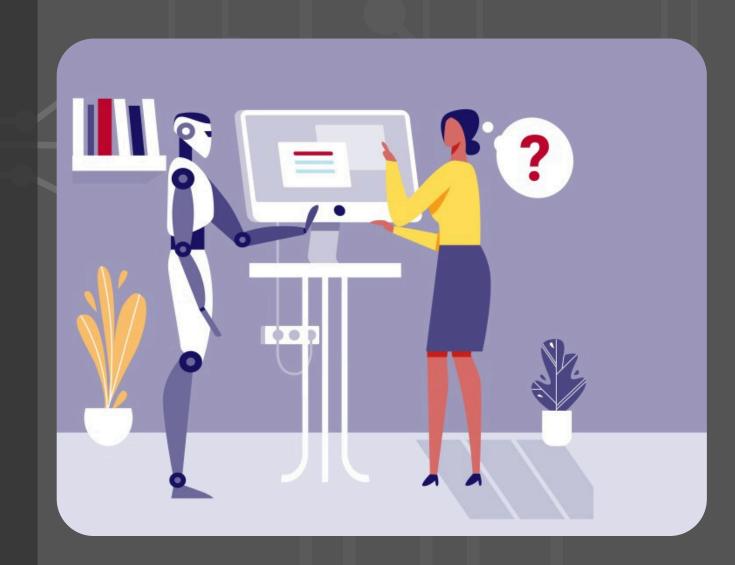
I would say my experience of first drafts of personal statement are that more often than not, what needs fixed is spelling and grammar and ideas need to be given to them about how they can enhance it, right? I would say that Co-pilot, when it gave suggestions, was giving very similar suggestions to what we were giving as a team."

"The benefit of the AI solution is you're getting more feedback than you would have been able to get from just a human being giving it to you. And that is where we started at the beginning. It was not to annoy anybody, it was not to make you think we didn't care, it wasn't to make you angry, it was genuinely to go, what tools do we have available and how can we give more feedback than we would be able to give on our own?"

The 11 November is normally when people prepared for the moment of silence, but this Squawk journalist was preparing for their interview with Ms Clark about the question of AI. The first question was did she know that people were

upset because the Faculty didn't tell the year group that they were going to use Copilot? Did she realise that S6 thought that the teachers just put drafts through the AI and didn't read it at all because the feedback was in some cases wrong?

Ms Clark responded, "I've worked with this year group for five years now. I would really hope that after five years, the young people would be in a position, especially after the work that we've done about building people leadership, about having the largest number of S6 representatives like ambassadors, that people would feel that there was somebody they could reach out to."



She added "it makes me so sad that people think that we didn't read them ourselves. You can't just ask AI to do the work. You have to refine it. You have to have the human eye in it. Yeah...AI is only as good as the prompts and you're checking of it. I've used AI for about 3 years for various things. And actually, if you speak to a lot of teachers around the building, they're using it for all sorts of reasons."

There does seem to be a massive leap from teachers who make us aware of the environmental and ethical impacts of Al at all for the environmental aspects and then jumping to using it regularly. Equally, can it be relied upon, will Al always get it right?

"It depends. Like I said, it's about the human checking, isn't it? So, you'd never use or you should not be using Al without the human element kind of involved. And I think we've all fallen foul, even in like personal lives using it where you've done something and not checked it thoroughly. That's why it can never be a substitute, which is why I think I was quite shocked when you've said people think that we just put it through and didn't check it and didn't care. Like I said, if there is an error, you need to tell us."

At the end of the interview Ms Clark wanted to add this. "I can answer these questions quite honestly, but I think sometimes there's a misunderstanding or a misrepresentation. If there's a genuine error, speak to Pupil Support. That's what we're here for."

Readers who have made it this far might be wondering why I am writing this article. As a Squawk journalist, I feel like it is important to have communication between students and teachers, but I know that sometimes people are too busy, or they might too worked up about things and they didn't want to explode on their teachers. Also that is what The Squawk is here for. The Squawk is the voice of Craigmount students. I did not write this article to shame the teachers who might be using Al. It is to show the view from both sides because I believe we need good communication between teachers and students.

In conclusion, if I can even call this a conclusion, teachers, if you want to use Al that ok but a lot of people might be not happy about that fact and some students might see you differently. We all know that teachers are very overworked but using something that is still very new and getting a lot wrong maybe isn't the best. Also my fellow students, please if you're not ok with what the teachers are doing tell them! Teachers are human so they will make mistakes. Communicate with teachers, teachers are not their own species where they are scary creatures. I am also not saying to walk into your next class and dap them up and start causing chaos, but there is a healthy middle ground where teachers and students can learn together.



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Euan BARCLAY

"A MASTERPIECE" Sathvik S.

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## A LOOK AT 'EGG PRODUCTIONS' FILMS FOR 2025 BY SATHVIK SRIRAMADESIKAN

Local filmmakers (and Craigmount pupils) Gregor Kelt and Euan Barclay (with their productions) company Egg Productions) recently premiered three short films at the Barnton Bunker: Handcrank the Movie, Chuck Healey and (the main event) Chicken Club. These films all heavily featured Craigmount students as members of the cast and crew, and had a great reception among those pupils who went to the premiere.



The first of the three films screened was Handcrank the movie, a mockumentary style film about a fictional version of Handcrank. It stars most of that band's lineup playing their roles as members. Gregor Kelt (one of the directors of the film and Handcrank's drummer in real life) described his aim as to make a "short, snappy and fun film", and broadly speaking he has succeeded. The gags are pretty much non stop throughout the film, meaning even if one or two might not work, they're likely to be followed up by a funny one soon after. Ruairidh Orman gets much of the screen time as Rory Dunn (no relation to the Squawk contributor),

FILM REVIEW — THE SQUAWK

the egotistical (and mildly abusive) frontman of the band, purposefully stealing much of the attention from members. The rest of the cast, consisting of Tom Bass Player (Thomas McVey), Drummer Boy (Sandy Rowe), Louis Black (Lochie Farrar), the Producer (Murray Thomson) and the Interviewer (also Murray Thomson). The cast all play their roles well, and have good comedic chemistry with each other, and despite the relatively short runtime allow for their characters to feel distinct and memorable.

**RATING: 8/10** 

Next up was Chuck Healey. The shortest of the three films shown, but certainly makes good use of its runtime. It was probably the most serious of the three movies, with only a couple jokes at the very beginning of the picture. The film deals with the idea that detectives pursuing alleged horrific criminal Chuck Healey (Karl Maekivi) can't actually say what he did wrong (because his crimes are "unspeakable") and so are chasing him down, purely cause they were told to. Murray Thomson shines as a Marshall (part of the group hunting down Chuck) who begins to question whether Healey is truly a criminal, and seemingly comes to the conclusion he wasn't just in time to see Healey gunned down by his fellow detectives. The film's more self serious tone works surprisingly well even considering the inherent silliness of a bunch of teenagers dressed up as detectives hunting down Karl Maekivi in a gas mask and has genuinely effective moments of tension and shock.

THE PARTY OF THE P



RATING: 8/10

FILM REVIEW — THE SQUAWK

The main event and by far the most substantial of the three in runtime. Chicken Club follows Stevie (Adam Thake), Davie(Sandy Rowe) and Johnny (Murray Thomson) as they deal with a mysterious, seemingly paranormal cultish group led by a father (Karl Maekivi) of the new kid at school, Ned (Eliot Doyle). It tells much fuller of a story (with a beginning, middle and end) compared to the previous two, with callbacks to earlier in the film and something resembling a character arc surrounding the theme of belonging.

RATING: 8/10

The cast is good as always, with a highlight cameo by director Euan Barclay as a janitor. The characters get more room differentiate themselves here, Stevie's nerdiness, Davie and Johnny's lad-ness being given a good bit of room to shine. The movie's tone was the most varied of all three. Gregor Kelt spoke trying to achieved a "balanced tone" with Chicken Club, saying "a lot of the films that I like that I think are very good have a good mix of comedy and seriousness. The Holdovers comes to mind as an example" and that intent comes through in the final product as the movie has a range from the almost horror esque paranormal elements of the cult to the generally humourous and lighthearted dynamic between the main characters. The tone is balanced quite well since neither one feels out of place nor overshadowed by the other, and the overall final product was near universally considered the best of the three pictures among people present at the premiere.





## In Loving Memory of

## Chicken Club

The Squawk remembers Chicken Club. Gone, but not forgotten...

## Our Christmas Orchestra Has Returned!

Our Christmas Orchestra is coming back after a 5-year hiatus, all thanks to Nicholas from S6. Whereas our old orchestra used to tour in other countries from Germany to Disneyland, this year's will be playing locally at the Craigsbank Church 10th December. Let's hear more from Nicholas.

#### What made you want to bring our orchestra back?

"I was fortunate enough to have spoken to old Craigmount alumni, and a lot of them told me about the old Craigmount Orchestra, and how they used to go on tours to play in Germany and Disneyland! Unfortunately, after COVID, they stopped doing it! Since I've always been involved in orchestral playing, I thought, why not bring it back?"

#### How have you found organising all of this for us?

"Honestly, it took so long to arrange the music for it to be suitable for everyone to play. We have so many talented musicians in the school with different standards of playing, and what I had to do was to write various parts tailored to their level. The entire process took 5 weeks, but personally I have learnt so much more about orchestration - it's been a very enlightening process for me, and I hope everyone enjoys playing and listening to it!"

#### Why did you choose to play all these Christmas pieces?

"I feel like movie music is one of the best ways to introduce people to the magic of orchestra. Most Christmas Movie music is wonderfully orchestrated and written, and their melodies are easily recognizable – I wanted to give everyone a sense of familiarity and warmth when listening or playing the music."

#### And what's your favourite piece to play?

"Somewhere in My Memory from Home Alone! It has such an iconic melody and John Williams is just the best! I'm sure all of you can agree that the music to Star Wars is marvellous – John Williams wrote the music for all 9 movies!"

#### And some more from our trumpet player Ruth:

#### How have you found the rehearsals, any stories about them?

"They've been good, there's never been everyone there which means it always sounds pretty different. And whenever we pause, we hear Handcrank blasting from the other room, we just feel the bass pounding through the floor and just hear a wall of sound."

#### What's your favourite piece to play right now?

"I like Hall of the Mountain King, it's the theme from disneyland and it's pretty funny to play together. I've also been trying to get Tara to cover the pi song. Yeah, i've been trying to force her to sing about pi."

Look out for tickets - they'll be on sale soon, so come join us for a wide array of Christmas movie tunes arranged by Nicholas himself. We'd love to see you there.





The Game Awards for this year are coming up soon, and this year's Game of the Year list is absolutely packed with games many people consider masterpieces. Here is just a short look at the nominees:

#### Clair Obscure Expedition 33

RPG Game developed by Sandfall Interactive (a studio founded by former members of AAA Publisher Ubisoft). Its main gameplay mixes traditional turn-based combat with some more real time interactive elements for battles, which makes it more involved than old school turn based RPGs. The story has been praised for its intriguing plot, emotional impact and great presentation, with graphics and animations being of a very high quality. The game faced some controversy when some textures for newspapers meant to act as set dressing were found to have been made with the use of generative AI. The textures were patched out soon after launch, and Sandfall Interactive clarified that those textures were placeholder assets that were not intended to ship at launch.

#### Hollow Knight Silksong

Metroidvania platformer developed by Team Cherry. Sequel to Hollow Knight, following Hornet (a recurring character in the original Hollow Knight) as she tries to save the kingdom of Pharloom from a disease called "The Haunting". Compared to the original game, Silksong has a much larger map, more challenging combat and more complex platforming. The "Metroidvania" format also means that players are made to explore the map thoroughly in order to gain abilities and upgrades that then allows them to explore more of the map to progress further. The game has been awaited with a lot of excitement since its announcement in 2018, so much so that the hype of its release was so strong on launch that multiple game stores literally crashed from people trying to buy it. Some people have criticised the difficulty of the game, considering the amount of damage the enemies especially unfair.

#### **Death Stranding 2**

"Strand type game" developed by Kojima productions. This is a sequel to Death Stranding, following Sam Porter Bridges as he makes deliveries across Mexico to connect the post-apocalyptic earth whilst also fighting returning enemies, including ghost-like figures and real life humans. This game has been long awaited by fans since the release of the first game, but both games faced controversy due to their gameplay style, with some criticising the gameplay loop as being a 'walking simulator' due to the focus on delivering packages rather than traditional action game combat though Death Stranding 2 has more combat than the original.

#### Hades 2

Roguelite dungeon crawler developed by Supergiant Games and sequel to Hades. The Roguelite genre means that the player is made to attempt the game over and over again with expectation of failing repeatedly. This makes the player return to the start upon failure with each run allowing for different upgrades and abilities. The game's story also progresses across attempts, with the player able to interact and bond with NPCs in the Crossroads (the game's overworld) between runs. The game has garnered a lot of love for its gameplay, visuals, presentation, and the 2 alternate paths that can be taken in a run but faced some controversy for the ending of the story which some felt was unsatisfying compared to the rest of the story. Supergiant announced soon after launch that they were making changes to the ending and allowing players to revert the game after finishing a save file.

#### Kingdom Come Deliverance 2

Kingdom Come Deliverance 2 is a Historical RPG developed by Warhorse Studios. The game takes places in Bohemia in 1403, and features an epic story of betrayal, loyalty, and morality in the Middle Ages. KCD2 has breached new grounds in what games can be, with its movie-like plot and high definition visuals. Quite a lot of people think that it takes a lot of time put into the game to really get the most, since it starts off quite slow and is very open ended, meaning players aren't given much direction and could spend a lot of time not knowing or understanding what to do. However, the game's deep mechanics, immersive open world and the abundance of player choice in how to play means that its an experience with a lot to give with enough time sunk into it.



# Teacher Feature

Mrs Lennen tells
all on her love of
local history,
community and
Robert Louis
Stevenson

#### by Sophie Gates

It's 1646, and acclaimed Wham! singer George Michael is spotted at the founding of Corstorphine Primary School, blonde hair blowing in the wind, and a scarf wrapped round his neck. As George scans the crowd, he spots his lifelong friend, Sean Connery, in full James Bond attire. For years to come, the people of Corstorphine fawn over this history.

Of course, this did not happen. George Michael was not born until 1963, and he most likely had no interest in the founding of Corstorphine Primary School, and despite Sean Connery's brother living in Corstorphine for an undisclosed amount of time, it's doubtful that he made it to this event. Although, there is one person who is interested. One person you probably know. Science's own, Mrs Lennen.



We had the honour to go to the depths of the science department to talk about anything of Mrs Lennen's choosing. Despite neither of us stepping foot in the science department for about three years, this special opportunity piqued our interests and offered and opportunity only the strongest willed could resist.

Standing in her classroom, looking at the decorated walls, Henry got their voice recording app open, and Mrs Lennen began talking about the topic of this month's Teacher Feature. Local history.

"I am really interested in local history. So, where names of streets came from, where things used to be like at Pink Hill Road, with the station. Everyone just walks past and doesn't think about the fact that there used to be all these train stations. We used to have the psychic well where people used to come from Edinburgh for their holidays.

All that fascinates me. Now, as most of you may know, Corstorphine is full of unique and interesting history. Corstorphine Inn—previously the Black Bull—used to house Irish workers in the 19th century. The cluster of white houses at the top of Corstorphine High Street used to be associated with the Forrester family. Even though a lot of you may not live in Corstorphine, the small area is still full of stories and tales that a lot of people have not yet uncovered. Such as when George Harrison from the Beatles walked into the Egg Free cake shop on St John's Road and ordered a chocolate cake.

"My grandad used to stay on Lampacre Road, and the whole history behind that was that the lamp that's on the Old Parish used to be paid for by the rent for a plot of land at Murrayfield, so Lampacre Road is called that because it was the lamp acre."

The story behind the lantern at Corstorphine Old Parish Church is a simple one, but something many people do not know unless they've had the pleasure of being part of the ministers personalised tours of the Old Parish, where she also details where each previous minister is buried, and where she would be buried if she were to die whilst still working as the minister, making for a joyful tour of the cold stone building. The lamp embedded into the wall of the parish used to light up every night and guide people through the marshland surrounding the village. Believe it or not, Corstorphine was incredibly isolated until 1999 when Lothian Buses introduced the number 26 bus.

On top of all the physical and geographical history of Corstorphine, there are also historical literary references peppered in the road names in our small pocket of the city. "Alan Breck in Clermiston, all the street names there are named after characters from Kidnapped, the book by Robert Louis Stevenson."

Robert Louis Stevenson has a connection with Edinburgh as a whole. Some of you may know him from his novel Treasure Island, later adapted into the famed Muppets Treasure Island with Tim Curry, and some of you may know him from the novel Kidnapped, following David Balfour and Alan Breck Stewart as they travel through pirate-infested, Jacobite rebellion Scotland. Although some of you might know Robert Louis Stevenson because of Essendean place in Clermiston, or Alan Breck Gardens. Robert Louis Stevenson lived in Edinburgh, and his house sits proudly in the old town. A famous line from Treasure Island even says, "The Captain reminisced on his life before all of this. Especially his trips to Winston's pub on Kirk Loan."



But what else used to happen in our local area? As we delved into this conversation, we both found that wow, we knew nothing about where we lived.

"East Craigs and West Craigs were just two farms. So there's basically a bunch of farms that were all really close together. Buttercup farm, which is obviously where the play park is, East Craigs, West Craigs, and Clermiston mains. There's not much that's still there, but there's still two white houses just along from the capital hotel, and the farmhouse is still there behind Fox Covert Avenue, but it's private now."

We tried to pinpoint one specific part of the local area that captured Mrs Lennen's heart. Which part of the small village that is home to the five best pubs in Edinburgh (Manse Club, The Tarbet, The Corstorphine Inn, and The White Lady) really made Mrs Lennen want to learn more?

"It just all really fascinates me. My family have been living here since well- forever, really. My grandparents were from Leith but moved here when they first got married, so my parents met in Corstorphine, and obviously my kids live in Corstorphine, so its such a small community and everybody comes back, and so many people stay here. I love living here, and I love learning about everything."

Corstorphine is home to some other, less admirable things. In fact, in the 1600s, Corstorphine was notorious for how many witch trials were held in our own Old Parish Church. Women were punished for being accused of souring other people's milk, or simply giving them a weird look. Since then, members of Corstorphine have paid

respect to these innocent women, and it is safe to say Corstorphine has retired the act of burning and hanging.

"I recently read The Maiden by Katie Foster, which is based here. It's all about the white lady. I really am pleased that Wetherspoons researched their name for their pub properly and have lots of information about the white lady of Corstorphine. So, I don't really have a particular part I find the most interesting, but there is so much history here."

We both appreciate Wetherspoons too, as we know a lot of people do, but the homage to the famous tale of the White Lady definitely shows the commitment that they have to contributing to the local culture. We believe it was Dame Judy Dench who said, "who doesn't love a Wetherspoons?"

Similar to the previous teacher feature, this topic is something many young people may not be interested in. Yes, there are some modern beauties in our area, such as the newly Nandos at the Gyle, but it really is important that we embrace the heritage of where we live.

"I think it would be lovely if we did something about our local history at school. We could all do something about it. We should have some local history studies, because there's so many things to talk about. Where Queen Margaret College used to be, that used to be a really big statue and then that's been moved to Cramond and a lot of people probably don't even know it was there."

Of course, Queen Margaret college is most well known for educating Kevin McKidd, who is most know from Trainspotting, or more recently for portraying the morally complicated ex-soldier Owen Hunt in Grey's Anatomy. So, the celebrity roots definitely run deep in Corstorphine.

"So that's one of my interests. I'm also learning Scottish Gaelic on Duolingo, and the reason why I'm learning it is because I watched Outlander. I found it quite interesting, because someone said it was filmed locally. So I watched that, and then there are these long episodes were they're speaking Gaelic and I was like 'how did they know? Did they just learn the Gaelic?' And I'm guessing they don't really know it, and that's why I decided to learn. I wanted to understand what they were saying."

On the note of Scottish Gaelic, Scots and Gaelic were both made official languages on the 30th of November this year, marking a lot of progress in the acceptance of Scottish History that has otherwise been unacknowledged for decades.

The moral of this teacher feature is that kids these days should really learn more about their local area. Yes, we all love the late Chicken Club on St John's Road, and it's pretty neat that there's a Lidl downhill from the school, but what about the people who didn't have these things? What about those who lived without Greggs, or Wetherspoons, or One Stop?

And finally, if any of you don't know who George Michael is, that really is a wake up call to do your research. And maybe include something about Lord Forrester while you're at it.

### Activism at Craigmount High School

#### **By Ruth and Adam**

In the modern day, as a teenager on the internet, political issues are more visible as ever before, meaning often you can feel small and unable to do anything but watch the world burn around you. This overwhelming feeling of helplessness can be hard alongside the label young people are given of 'the future of the world'. At times in the school community, you can feel like your voice isn't heard, but what if we told you that wasn't true, what if we told you there's a way to make a change? Right here, at Craigmount High School.

We interviewed Mrs Clark, as someone who used to be in charge of rallying pupil action groups, she is a plethora of knowledge on how you can make a change within the Craigmount community.

Pupil action groups are the first thing you'd think of when considering activism in Craigmount High School. "The reason we have pupil action groups comes directly from pupils wanting to act on certain issues" Mrs Clark told us. "They're led by an S6 year leader and a teacher who are given additional time in the week in-order to help organise these." This allows the PAG leaders to further their work and do more than what break time offers.

The PAG are also offered extra opportunities to achieve through the funding provided by Deloitte. "We've also had a paid partnership with Deloitte for the last couple of years, to try and promote young people to get funding from big companies, and then to put it towards good causes. All the different PAG's have received various levels of funding over the past couple of years from that."

This financial help has allowed the pupil action groups to further their work with the school and the wider community, such as providing some reusable water bottles to some members of the school and running the Market Place. "They've also given us some training about social media and about how you can amplify your cause."



As an organisation the school has supported many charities and groups which deal with local but also global issues. Edinburgh Children's Hospital charity, 'Show Racism the Red Card', the Trussle Trust, and local food banks are just a few.W ith an upcoming charity even ran by the charity and equity PAG to raise money for Maggie's on the horizon. While the school is happy to support causes which the students are passionate about, Mrs Clark told us about the limitations.

"We do have to follow guidelines that make sure we are not overly political, that can be difficult, and everybody has different views, but going back to the fact were a council organisation, we are mandated to follow these to the best of our abilities"

We also look internally as a school to support young people facing issues within our school community. "As a school we try to ensure that a young person regardless of their additional support needs or financial background has the same chances as anybody else." One way this is done is through trips which the school offers, the school offers financial help for any families who are struggling to afford school trips, making sure all young people have the same opportunities.

Mental Health- Mrs Lynch, Room 2/11
Sustainability- Mr Shepherd/Mrs Croll, Room G/24
Digital Champions- Miss McLaughlin, Room 2/13
Charity and Equity- Miss Cowan, Library
Rights Respecting Schools- Ms Hope, Room 2/16



by Orla Hogarth and Louise Tod

#### It's your £10 gift guide for all the family!

It is that time of year again- the most magical but potentially the most stressful (and expensive). Are you already racking your brain to find the most perfect gift for your secret Santa? Instead of going on TikTok for inspiration and doom scrolling for hours, follow this guide to be the best Santa you can be. And even better, all for £10 and under because you don't need to splash the cash or work 12-hour shifts to enjoy the festive season.

## Primark

Primark is the perfect place to find affordable fluffy socks and pyjamas, getting a lot for a small price.



- Check along Pyjamas £8.00
- Believe it or not, but you can get not just one, but two sets of fluffy pyjamas and a pack of fluffy socks for £10
- 2pk Fluffy Heart Socks £2.00
- Microfleece Long Sleeve Pyjamas £4.00
- Printed Bottom Pyjama Set £4.00









A self care set found at Superdrug is a classic seasonal gift which can even have a Christmas theme.

- Extracts Body Scrub £2.00
- Fruity sticky toffee pudding shower gel 90p
- Frosted Candy shower gel £1.99
- Body Puff £2.00
- Charlie Pink body spray £1.19
- W7 nail polish in a range of colours £2.00









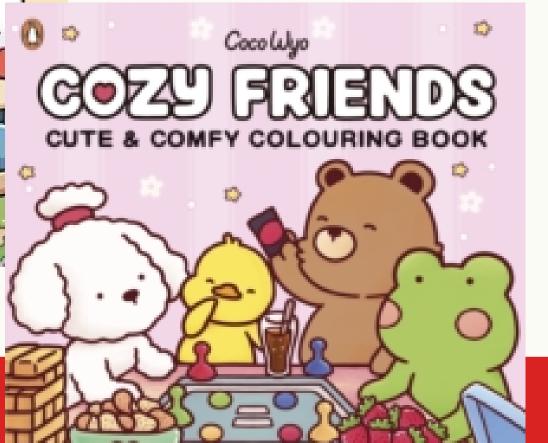
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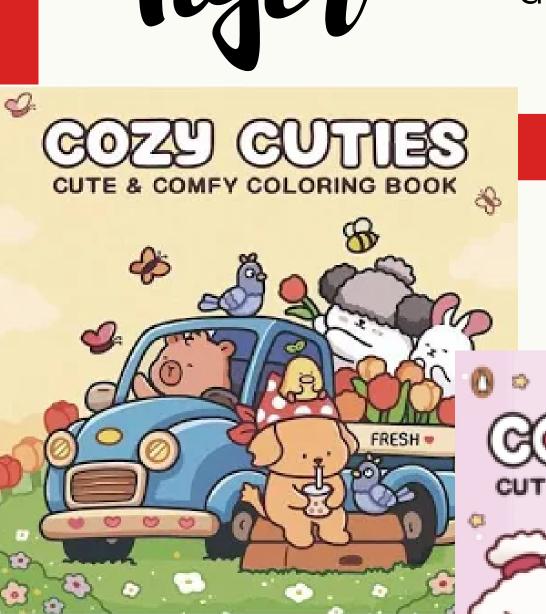
## Flying Tiger

- It's not to late to decorate with these cute Christmas decorations from Flying Tiger, and you can get all 5 for just under £10!
- Felt Gingerbread Man Ornament £1.50
- Christmas Bobble Green House £2
- Christmas Bobble Croissant £2
- Christmas Bobble Gingerbread House £2
- Grey Mouse with Scarf Ornament £2





 Hobby Craft sell the viral Cozy Colouring Books with a £4 or 3 for £8 deal.





Key chains from the Entertainer, New Look and The Works can offer a range of different, fun designs to fit everyone's individual aesthetics.

- Fuggler £4
- Brown crocheted bear £5.99





# TGI

TGI Jones (which we all know as WH Smith's) is the place to get books for your book loving friends.

• A Good Girl's Guide to Murder £7.49

• Diary of a Wimpy Kid- Party Pooper £7.49

Morrisons offer items to make coffees and drinks at home to have a cozy Christmas.

- Keplin Handheld Coffee & Milk Frother Whisk
   £3.00
- Nutmeg Home Fir Tree Glass Mug- £2.50
- Marshmallows £1.35
- Kenco Iced Hot Salted Caramel Instant
   Coffee Latte Sachets £2.00
- Carries Instant Hot Chocolate Sachet 50p





Morrisons

#### Christmas Wordsearch!



















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CHRISTMAS TREE
CHRISTMAS HAT
CANDY CANE
REINDEER

SNOWBALL SNOWMAN PRESENT GROTTO GLOVES BOOTS ICE





## PLEASE HELPUS!

WE WOULD LOVE IT IF YOU COULD SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW TO GIVE US YOUR IDEAS ABOUT WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN THE SQUAWK!

