

## HOMeward BOUND

### An Expedition to Antarctica

Discover Kirsty's Story Inside

# INFORM



This annual magazine will offer an insight into life beyond college for our former students and the ways in which you can stay involved in our learning community.

In each issue, we'll speak to former students and find out where their paths have taken them. We'll also share some of our recent news highlights keeping you up to date with all the latest developments at the College.

Of course learning is for life, so we'll provide you with information on courses and training which will help take you further in your chosen career. You can also find out about events and the many other ways in which to stay connected to the College.

There might even be the occasional discount voucher offered exclusively to our alumni.

I hope you enjoy the issue and it inspires you to get in touch to share your own stories, knowledge and expertise.

**Dr Ken Thomson**  
Principal, Forth Valley College



## WORK STARTS ON **NEW FALKIRK CAMPUS**

Work has officially begun on Forth Valley College's new £78 million Falkirk Campus.

Scotland's Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science, Shirley-Anne Somerville, officially cut the first section of turf at the Middlefield site on Friday 10 November 2017.

The first of the inner steel structure also appeared recently on the site and work is progressing very well.

The new campus - which is earmarked for completion in November 2019 - will complete FVC's ambitious estates programme which saw their £21 million Alloa Campus opened in 2011 and their £29 million Stirling Campus opened a year later.

The new Falkirk HQ will focus heavily on training facilities designed for science and technology, engineering, sport and healthcare, and will also have state-of-the-art provision and capabilities to accommodate a wide range of FVC's courses.

For more information, please visit [www.forthvalley.ac.uk/new-falkirk-campus](http://www.forthvalley.ac.uk/new-falkirk-campus)



Follow us @falkirkcampus



### Get Involved

Our new Falkirk Campus provides a fantastic opportunity for businesses, organisations and people to become involved in supporting our vision – adding real value to the learning experience of our students.

With your support, we can make a real difference.

Please get in touch to have a chat about the different ways you could get involved.

Please call Pauline Barnaby (Development & Fundraising Manager) on 01324 403019 or email [pauline.barnaby@forthvalley.ac.uk](mailto:pauline.barnaby@forthvalley.ac.uk)

Some examples of how you could be involved include:

- Supporting key facilities including our training rig, distillation plant, virtual control room and health care suite
- Donating or purchasing equipment and resources for key areas of interest
- Offering student scholarships in your name (individual or business)

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## ALUMNI MEMBERSHIP CAN HELP YOU TO...

- Stay in touch or reconnect with former friends and classmates
- Share your success to inspire others
- Seek opportunities for personal development
- Get information on training to further your career
- Find out about dedicated alumni events
- Receive exclusive alumni discounts

For more information on our alumni network or to register, please visit [www.forthvalley.ac.uk/alumni/](http://www.forthvalley.ac.uk/alumni/)

**YOUR STORIES – Lynne Brierley**  
Former HND Business Management student



## Lynne inspires FVC students

**Business students are reaping the benefits of guest lectures from a former student who has set her sights on completing a PhD!**

Lynne Brierley (50) from Tillicoultry began her academic journey at Forth Valley College's Alloa Campus in 2014. She left behind a 28 year career as a civil servant in the Department of Work and Pensions to enrol on an HNC in Business Management course. This led on to an HND and, in 2016, a BA in Business Studies at Stirling University.

Lynne had done so well that she could have taken her pick of five University of Stirling courses. She is about to graduate with her BA on 30 June this year and has been accepted to complete her Masters in Business and Researching Business Methodology.

But even more impressive, is that she was supported by the university to enter a student competition to obtain funding that would enable her to carry out PhD research for a paper regarding the 'Work Programme' which helps the unemployed back into jobs in Scotland.

Inspirational Lynne has been giving FVC Business students the benefit of her experience and showing them just what is possible, if they work hard at college.

She said: "My former Business Lecturer at Forth Valley College - Julie Warnock – asked me to come in and speak

with her students and I have been in a total of three times now. I have really enjoyed it and coming back here and seeing the lecturers – who were excellent - has been great and I have been telling the students how much studying at the College can help you at university.

"As I used to stand up and train people during my career as a civil servant, I actually really enjoy it.

**" I WOULD ENCOURAGE ANY FORMER STUDENTS TO COME BACK AND DO SOME GUEST LECTURES AT THE COLLEGE. IT IS ALWAYS GOOD TO PUT SOMETHING BACK."**

"From the first day I walked through the doors here at Forth Valley, it was all about making me more employable and attractive to employers. But I never imagined or expected to go on the journey I have been on. The College has opened up more horizons for me and I am now considering teaching as an option. So these guest lectures are really inspiring me too."

If you are a former student and are interested in coming back as a guest lecturer then contact [alumni@forthvalley.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@forthvalley.ac.uk)

## CONNECT FORTH LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

Students from Forth Valley College's innovative student broadcast media channels have launched a new website platform.



Connect Forth – which offers impressive radio, filmed podcasts, social media platforms and a striking newly designed brand – have developed an online option to bring all the streams together for students to develop, as they study for their BA Digital Media integrated degree. The degree is a qualification where students spend two years at FVC before moving on to complete their degrees at the University of Stirling.

Complete with a full management, social media and production structure – as would be found in any industry radio or TV station – Connect Forth offers second year BA Digital Media students the opportunity to apply for management and production roles to create the perfect content which can be broadcast to the full Forth Valley College student body.

Any former FVC students wishing to find out more can tune in to Connect Forth online at <https://connectforth.000webhostapp.com/index.html> and on @connectforth1 on Facebook and Twitter.



## FVC have got your back!

**An initiative to help reduce injury for tradesmen and women of the future is being backed and supported by Forth Valley College.**

A team effort between the staff and students of the Department of Care, Health and Sport and the Department of Construction have developed the 'I am the Machine' back care programme.

The programme – which was recently shortlisted for a TES UK award, was developed jointly by Sports and Fitness Lecturer Michelle Hamilton with the help of Construction colleagues Peter Nally, Colin Scott, Graeme Williamson and Kevin Bonner.

The initiative aims to help tradesmen and women recognise that pre-work warm-up and post-work cool-down - along with back care exercises - are vital to reduce the amount of back or joint injuries to Modern Apprentices (MAs) and young people working in labour intensive industry.

The scheme has now been successfully piloted with all bricklaying and painting and decorating MAs and full-time

students, as well as with learners on the Skills for Work programme.

Michelle, said: "For the past two years we have been trying to change the mind-set of young people, to help them recognise that warming up before work and cooling down after work - along with back care exercises - are vital to reduce back and joint injuries.

"What we hope to do now is to meet with potential employers to discuss the importance of safe exercise, warm-up and cool downs with workers and hope that our students will deliver warm-ups to their colleagues in the workplace."

Do you work in a company that could benefit from the programme? Contact Michelle on 01324 403292 or email [michelle.ahamilton@forthvalley.ac.uk](mailto:michelle.ahamilton@forthvalley.ac.uk)

## YOUR STORIES – Dr Kirsty Robb

Former HND Applied Biological Sciences student

An expedition to Antarctica will be the latest life-changing adventure for a former Forth Valley College graduate - who excelled in her early science studies at FVC.

# HOMeward BOUND

**“I AM PROUD TO BE A FORTH VALLEY COLLEGE GRADUATE AND I LOVED MY TIME THERE.”**



Dr Kirsty Robb (34) from Stirling, is gearing up to be one of only three Scottish women on a ship setting sail in January 2019 for one of the world's most inhospitable areas, as part of Homeward Bound - a groundbreaking leadership, strategic and science initiative and outreach for women, set against the backdrop of Antarctica.

The initiative aims to heighten the influence and impact of women with a science background in order to influence policy and decision making as it shapes our planet. Launched in 2016, Homeward Bound is targeting 1,000 women from around the world, all with critical science and STEM backgrounds, to undertake a year-long state-of-the-art programme to develop their leadership and strategic capabilities.

And to think Kirsty – who now works in the fight against superbugs at one of the leading UK centres for research and training focused on the discovery, development and delivery of better medicines – began her remarkable professional journey at Forth Valley College's Falkirk Campus

with an NQ in Applied Biological Studies just over a decade ago! Kirsty, who is also a STEM Ambassador for Science Connects regularly visiting schools to promote science, said: "I did not have a traditional route into a career in science, but I am proud to be a Forth Valley College graduate and I loved my time there. I was a Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Ambassador at FVC and I am still doing that role now. I just love going out and giving something back as I am really passionate about encouraging youngsters to be enthusiastic about science."

Originally from Girvan in Ayrshire, Kirsty moved to Stirling with her boyfriend and used her HNC in Agriculture from the Scottish Agricultural College to find work within that industry. But she quickly realised it was not for her at the age of 23.

"I should have listened to my mother," said Kirsty, "and done science at school. So I did a quick internet search and – even though I was not sure exactly what I wanted to do – I signed up for an NQ at FVC. Well something certainly clicked and I was

encouraged by the lecturers there, who saw something in me, to apply for an HND."

Modest Kirsty excelled, and in 2009 was presented with that year's Most Promising Student in the Department of Applied Science at the College's annual graduation ceremony... and that is one award that has certainly lived up to its name.

Now a Post-Doctoral Researcher at the Strathclyde Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Science (SIPBS) in Glasgow, Kirsty is working in collaboration with GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) in the fight against superbugs. Her science based expertise along with her adventurous nature – Kirsty is also an experienced mountaineer and Mountain Leader, qualified to guide people in the Highlands of Scotland – is set to take her on the most exciting stage of her career journey to date.

She went on: "I feel very proud of myself to get to this stage. I didn't think I would get anywhere with my application, but I have been through three rounds of application reviews and I am down to the 80 strong group – with only three from Scotland – who will be going on the expedition in

January 2019.

"It will without doubt be one of the highlights of my career and I think it will change my life!"

But Kirsty is quick to point to the place where it all began.

"Forth Valley College gave me the foundation to get to where I am today. When I went to university my practical skills were way better than my classmates in their third year at uni. The lecturing staff at FVC were fantastic and were all very encouraging. They nurtured something that was inside me.

"If I had to do it all again, I would do it exactly the same way 100%."

Kirsty is currently in the process of raising funds to help her take her berth on the Homeward Bound ship in January 2019. If you would like to donate or find out about gifts and merchandise available to help her cause please visit [www.gofundme.com/KirstyTeamHB2019](http://www.gofundme.com/KirstyTeamHB2019)

For more information on Homeward Bound visit <https://homewardboundprojects.com.au/about>

## YOUR STORIES – Carolann Monteith

Former HND Beauty Therapy student

# CAROLANN BATTLES BACK FROM RARE SKIN CONDITION TO LAUNCH HER OWN BEAUTY THERAPY SALON

Four years of beauty therapy study was nearly destroyed by a severe allergic reaction during a nail treatment – but former Forth Valley College student Carolann Monteith has fought her way back to health and opened her own business.

### PITYRIASIS RUBRA PILARIS

#### What is pityriasis rubra pilaris?

Pityriasis rubra pilaris is the name given to a group of uncommon skin disorders.

The name means scaling (pityriasis), redness (rubra) and involvement of the hair follicles (pilaris). Several types of pityriasis rubra pilaris are currently recognised

It causes a widespread red and scaly rash. A variation of this affects children and is called 'classic juvenile type' (type III)

You can find out more at Pityriasis Rubra Pilaris Support Group [www.prpsupport.org](http://www.prpsupport.org)

Carolann (35) from Shieldhill in Falkirk, was told by doctors that she would probably need to give up her dream of running her own beauty salon after contracting Pityriasis Rubra Pilaris (PRP) - a condition which attacks the immune system resulting in the scaling and shedding of skin. It is thought Carolann suffered a severe allergic reaction to a product she was exposed to during a private sector nail course, she took in early October 2017.

"It was quite scary," said Carolann, "the medical experts said I might need to prepare for the eventuality that I would not be able to return to beauty therapy at all.

"I was treated in casualty first of all for severe burns over my hands. Then this spread and my feet were affected and I could not walk or drive. I had to wear special gloves and I was told that I would have to undergo chemotherapy which would reboot my immune system.

"But, I rejected that and I chose to go down the holistic route. With my background and knowledge in beauty therapy and with the help of the doctors, a dermatologist and a course of steroids I am now in remission."

### Recovery

PRP is a rare skin condition and while it is not life threatening it can severely restrict quality of life and - in the case of Carolann – threaten to end her career before it had even begun. Her grueling home recovery consisted of moisturising her skin, wrapping it in cling film, burning bay leaves in the bathroom, using a turmeric mouth spray, visiting FVC's Falkirk Campus salon for paraffin wax treatments and managing to maintain a positive outlook.

Carolann – who is married with two teenage daughters – also counts the support of her husband Richard and girls Caitlin (15) and Chelsey (12) as a contributing factor in her recovery. She also cites her former lecturers and classmates at FVC as being intrinsic to seeing her fight back from the brink of despair to her opening her new salon – Recharge Natural Beauty – in the Falkirk Business Hub recently.

### Moving Forward

Ironically one of the last sections of her HND course led her into Business Studies and tasked her to create a business plan to enable her to start her own salon.

She said: "The beauty salon at the Falkirk Campus was a brilliant place to learn. As it is open to the public, students and staff you get to treat customers as part of your course, so you get the knowledge that brings before you leave the College and hit the ground running when you go into the workplace. The lecturers are also brilliant.

"I would definitely recommend Forth Valley College to anyone thinking about a career in beauty therapy. As long as you are passionate and can do at least two years of study and then think seriously about doing an HNC and HND, you can push on and have a good career.

"My only advice would be, if you want to succeed you need to listen, do your background knowledge and put in a lot of effort."

## "THE BEAUTY SALON AT THE FALKIRK CAMPUS WAS A BRILLIANT PLACE TO LEARN."

Carolann, went on: "The career I have picked has really helped me through this. As a beauty therapist you need to develop a really strong knowledge of the bones, the body, skin conditions and allergies and I have no doubt this helped me recover. My family and friends have supported me, kept me positive and picked me up when I was down. I knew it was going to be a challenge, but it was something I was up for. Now I am looking forward to building my new business here in the Falkirk Business Hub."

Inspirational Carolann started at FVC's Falkirk Campus back in 2013 and completed Beauty Therapy Level 2&3 courses before successfully attaining her HNC and HND in the same subject. She graduated in October 2017 and has also worked as a beauty therapist in Macdonald Hotels.

Carolann opened Recharge Natural Beauty at the beginning of March and is now working from Tuesday to Saturday every week from 9am-5.30pm (Thursday till 7pm) – offering a whole range of beauty treatments including reflexology and aromatherapy, something she thought might never happen.

"Falkirk Business Hub have been fantastic with me too," added Carolann, "and I can't thank them enough for allowing me to set up my salon here. There is a coffee shop, a gym, physiotherapy and a whole host of other companies based here which complement the work I do. I also believe beauty therapy is not just for women either, it is for everyone and I think that is very important.

"I am really happy and looking forward to the future, but I now want to raise awareness of PRP and have become involved in Facebook pages for those who have been affected by PRP and Psoriasis."

Recharge Natural Beauty can also be found on Facebook.

## YOUR STORIES – Adam Reynolds

Former BA Media & Communications student

# FORMER STUDENT TAKES A BITE OUT OF NEW PROJECT FOR CRUNCHY CARROTS

FVC's Stirling Campus was visited by a former student recently as he took a bite out of a new project for his digital marketing employers – Crunchy Carrots.

Adam Reynolds (26) from Falkirk, graduated with a BA Media and Communications in October 2017 and has secured a contract with the innovative Falkirk firm on the back of a successful work placement he undertook there during his FVC degree.

But he was delighted to come back to the Stirling Campus on Thursday 11 January 2018 to engage students and staff in a creative film project, gauging the reaction to a new greeting card accessory 'Butterfly Surprise' – which upon opening – a paper butterfly flutters into the air.

Adam, said: "It is great to come back in and see my lecturers in a professional capacity and I am delighted that it is in connection with such an interesting project. I am making a promo video for the card accessory and Crunchy Carrots are developing a new website for the client and raising awareness on social media.

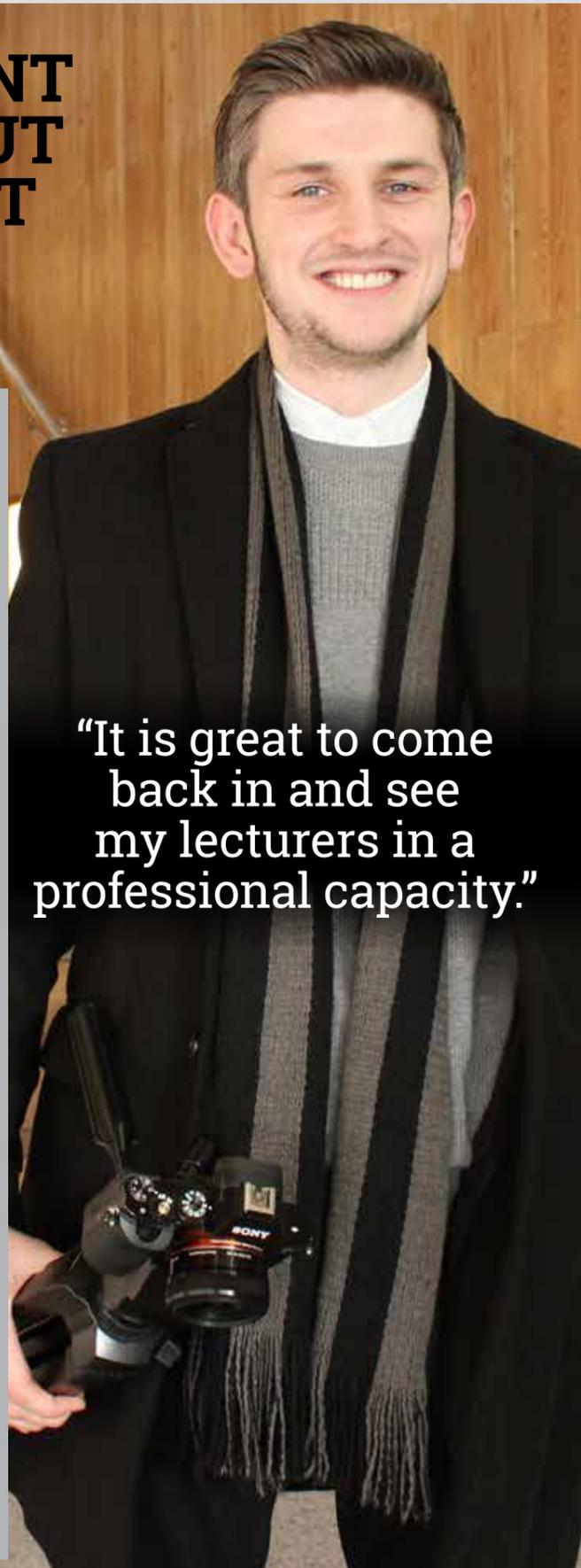
"I had started at Forth Valley College on an NC Sound Production course and changed to the BA Media and Communications, spending a total of four years at the Stirling Campus.

"I loved all my lecturers and the marketing module and core principals of communications, design and media throughout the course have really helped me get this job with Crunchy Carrots. The degree gave me an all-round understanding of marketing, advertising and digital media and was a great stepping stone to the industry.

"I would definitely recommend it as it has prepared me for working in the sector and at Crunchy Carrots I get to put a lot of what I have learned at the College into practice. Forth Valley College has given me a well-rounded education in all aspects of the media."

Fi Milligan-Rennie, Curriculum Manager in FVC's Creative Industries Department, said: "The staff in Creative Industries were delighted to hear that Adam had gained employment with local media company, Crunchy Carrots. We were more than happy to welcome Adam back to our Stirling Campus where he completed his studies, and to hear how he was putting the skills and knowledge he learned on his course into practice in industry."

**"It is great to come back in and see my lecturers in a professional capacity."**



## AN EMPLOYER'S TAKE ON MODERN APPRENTICESHIPS



Taking on an apprentice can be a big decision, with so many different things to consider.

However Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) are an increasingly popular choice for employers looking to develop their workforce. A Modern Apprenticeship is a nationally recognised training and qualification route which helps employees gain essential skills and an industry recognised qualification. They are designed to support your business by training your employees, and some or all of the training will be funded by the Scottish Government and administered by Skills Development Scotland.

We caught up with Moira Miller, the owner of Mona's of Muckhart coffee shop, to find out about some of the benefits to taking on an MA.

### What makes an MA work for you?

A Modern Apprenticeship works for us because we were looking to take on someone that we could mould into our way of working, using our methods and procedures. It's really an investment in our future workforce.

### Why did you choose to take on an MA?

Well we thought long and hard about what type of employee we wanted and decided that if we took on a Modern Apprentice it would enable us to afford a full-time employee and train them specifically for our business.

### What do you think is the best part of having an MA?

The best part of having an MA is that we have the full support of the College and that has been invaluable in that they're just a telephone call away and we also have regular visits with a member of staff.

### What is your top tip for taking on an MA?

I think my top tip for taking on an MA is to be prepared to devote time to their training if you want to get the best out of them and be prepared that it will take effort from both sides.

### Why would you recommend an MA to other employers?

Being a small business, I would recommend an MA to other employers because it is financially beneficial and is an investment in the future of your business.



Have your own business? Interested in finding out more about taking on an MA?

For more information please visit

[www.forthvalley.ac.uk/develop-workforce](http://www.forthvalley.ac.uk/develop-workforce)

## Meeting Space @ Stirling



The 'Making Partnerships Work' initiative now means members of the Institute of Directors (IoD) Scotland are able to reserve a meeting space for up to four people at our picturesque Stirling Campus.

Open from 8am-5.30pm Monday to Friday and based in the heart of Scotland, the Stirling campus could be the ideal place for business owners, executives, directors and managers to plan their next moves.

Take advantage of the free on campus parking and free Wi-Fi as well as the catering and dining facilities on offer.

Available to IoD members only. For enquiries and bookings, please call the Stirling Campus on 01786 406097 or email [fvctheplace@forthvalley.ac.uk](mailto:fvctheplace@forthvalley.ac.uk)



# FVC ALUMNI

Interested in giving back?

**You could:**

Share your story to inspire future students

Volunteer as a college ambassador at events

Offer work experience opportunities

Become a mentor to our current students

Deliver guest lectures

Support fundraising

**PLEASE EMAIL [ALUMNI@FORTHVALLEY.AC.UK](mailto:ALUMNI@FORTHVALLEY.AC.UK)  
IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION.**

## MAKING LEARNING WORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ANNUAL DINNER 2018

### Celebrating the 'Year of Young People'

Do you have an idea for a project or an initiative that would benefit young people in the local area? If so, we would like to invite you to attend our annual engagement dinner this year on Wednesday 30 May 2018 at our Stirling campus.

Take the opportunity to network with other guests, get ideas on how to get your idea off the ground and enjoy a 3 course meal with picturesque views of Stirling.

If you would like to attend, please contact [alumni@forthvalley.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@forthvalley.ac.uk)

Please note limited spaces are available.



SUPPORTING  
year of young people  
bliadhna na h-òigridh  
2018

## GALLERY RESTAURANT OFFER

Where the art of fine dining combines with stunning scenery

**2 courses: £7.50 per person**

**3 courses: £10.00 per person**

Dinner menu available every Tuesday & Thursday evening.



To make a reservation visit:

[www.forthvalley.ac.uk/the-place/gallery-restaurant](http://www.forthvalley.ac.uk/the-place/gallery-restaurant)

Forth Valley College, Stirling Campus, Drip Road, Stirling, FK8 1SE

# Gallery

RESTAURANT



INDIVIDUAL. INSPIRATIONAL. INFLUENTIAL.

email: [alumni@forthvalley.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@forthvalley.ac.uk)

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Making Learning Work