Forth Valley College

Making Learning Work

INFORM

PAUL'S JOINERY JOURNEY HELPS BUILD NEW CAREERS

Discover Paul's Story Inside

FVC ALUMNI

INDIVIDUAL. INSPIRATIONAL. INFLUENTIAL.

Forth Valley College Alumni Magazine

ISSUE 3

FVC ALUMNI

INDIVIDUAL. INSPIRATIONAL. INFLUENTIAL.

WELCOME TO THE THIRD EDITION OF **INFORM** OUR MAGAZINE FOR OUR ALUMNI

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

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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/

SCOTLAND'S APPRENTICE NETWORK LAUNCHED BY FIRST MINISTER AT FVC

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon chose Forth Valley College – one of Scotland's leading trainers of Modern and Foundation Apprentices – to launch a new network initiative during Scottish Apprenticeship Week 2019.

The College's state-of-the-art Falkirk Campus Engineering facilities were the perfect backdrop to the First Minister announcing the new Scotland's Apprentice Network – which is facilitated by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and aims to have an apprenticeship ambassador within every high school in Scotland by Scottish Apprenticeship Week 2020.

FVC Principal Dr Ken Thomson welcomed the First Minister to the Falkirk Campus where she met two former graduate apprentices and a group of 19 first year women Engineering MAs, who make up the largest intake of female engineers FVC has ever enrolled.

Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland, said: "Creating this network of apprentices who can share their experiences with others will help inspire the next generation.

"We know that work-based learning delivers for individuals, employers and the Scottish economy. Through the network, apprentices are going to have the chance to inspire young people to follow their example and become the apprentices of tomorrow."

Dr Ken Thomson, Principal of Forth Valley College, said: "It was a pleasure to welcome the First Minister to our Falkirk Campus to help us celebrate the start of Scottish Apprenticeship Week 2019. We are fully behind the First Minister's launch of the Scotland's Apprentice Network and feel this is a very positive initiative in terms of promoting apprenticeships to young people across Scotland."

For more information on apprenticeships at FVC, please visit www.forthvalley.ac.uk/ways-to-study/modern-apprenticeships

Do you work in a traditionally male dominated environment? We want to hear from you! Contact alumni@forthvalley.ac.uk

NEW FALKIRK CAMPUS UPDATE

Exciting new developments are taking place at Forth Valley College's new £78 million campus due for completion at the end of 2019.

Since our last issue of Inform, work has been progressing well with the halfway point of the build being celebrated in September 2018.

Key features of the new campus include:

- World class laboratories and workshops designed to reflect industry standards and the 21st century workplace.
- Unique facilities including a process training rig, transmission training centre, distillation plant, virtual control rooms, mini rigs and a biotechnology centre.
- The vibrant campus will offer first class facilities including a Learning Resource Centre, food outlets, hair and beauty salons and sports facilities.
- State-of-the-art classrooms will offer exciting opportunities for both collaboration and independent study.
- Highly advanced technology throughout the campus.
- Benefits for the wider community through the availability of contemporary event and exhibition space and conference facilities.

For more information, please visit www.forthvalley.ac.uk/new-falkirk-campus

Follow us @falkirkcampus

Are you interested in seeing the new campus? We will be organising tours that will be open to the public. Further information coming soon!

Get Involved

Our new Falkirk Campus provides a fantastic opportunity for businesses, organisations and people to become involved in supporting our vision.

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

YOUR STORIES – Lorraine Hume
Former HND Accounting Student

Lorraine wins university award

Former Forth Valley College Accounting student Lorraine Hume, from Falkirk, was delighted to add 'University award winner' to her list of achievements recently.

The 49 year-old mother of two and former FVC HND Accounting student, won the KPMG Prize for the External Reporting module of her BA Accountancy degree at the University of Stirling and collected the award at a special lunch at the end of 2018.

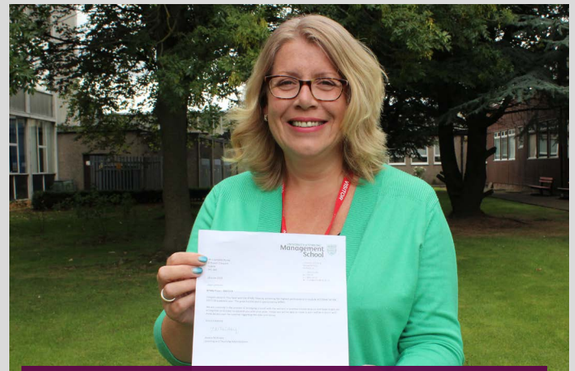
Lorraine scored 91% in the module which consisted of an essay, a class test and a final exam and beat off competition from her 90 classmates to claim the prize.

Lorraine, said: "I had no idea that the award actually existed. I could have cried when I opened the letter. I put a lot of effort into that section and it is nice to get this recognition. I am quite proud of myself.

Lorraine was eager to talk about how Forth Valley College inspired her to a new career.

She said: "I loved my lecturers. They were so supportive. It can be daunting coming back to education and studying after so long, but they recognised that and helped me to settle in.

"I would recommend the College and the HND Accounting course to anyone as I thought the lecturers were fantastic. They came from industry so their examples and experiences are a bit more real."



Have you won an award beyond college? Be sure to get in touch and let us know alumni@forthvalley.ac.uk

YOUR STORIES – Lynette Wilson
Former HNC Childcare & Education Student

Lynette's college foundations set her up for university and a mentoring role

Academic foundations laid at the Falkirk Campus has encouraged an early years professional to go back to university and mentor Foundation Apprentices through Forth Valley College.

Lynette Wilson, from Stenhousemuir, completed an HNC Childcare and Education in 1999 at the then Falkirk College of Technology. Lynette is now working as a Senior Early Years Officer at Comely Park Nursery Class in Falkirk. Her wealth of experience has now inspired her to continue her studies through a BA Childhood Practice at the University of Glasgow and also to help Lucy Wall, a Foundation Apprentice who is on work placement through her course at Comely Park.

Lynette, said: "My role is to set up the nursery, open up and welcome the children and parents every morning and afternoon. I love it and would recommend this career to anyone.

"I ensure all children are happy, healthy and achieving their full potential within a safe environment as well as working in partnership with parents/carers staff and other professionals from a variety of disciplines."

She went on: "We currently have a Foundation Apprentice – Lucy Wall - with us who is still at school and going through her FA at FVC and it is great she can come in and get some experience at our nursery and we can support her through her placement. I find it really rewarding helping Lucy.

"I have now progressed from studying at the College to becoming an early years practitioner, helping new students develop their skills, to now going back to higher education by studying for a BA Childhood Practice at the University of Glasgow. I am in my second year and have two years to go. FVC or Falkirk College as I knew it, definitely gave me a stepping stone into that and inspired me to go back to studying. It was a bit of a shock to start with, but I drew on past experiences as a student of FVC."

Could your employer take on an FA? Contact foundation.apprenticeship@forthvalley.ac.uk

YOUR STORIES – Dr Kirsty Robb
Former HND Applied Biological Sciences Student

Kirsty returns from a successful Antarctic expedition

A former Forth Valley College graduate – who is now known as the 'Protein Queen' in the fight against superbugs – has returned from an expedition to Antarctica which has boosted the global impact of women in STEM sectors.

"I WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE WHO DONATED TO ME OVER THE PAST YEAR FOR MAKING IT ALL POSSIBLE AND WITHOUT FORTH VALLEY COLLEGE, I WOULD NOT BE WHERE I AM TODAY."

Dr. Kirsty Robb (36) from Stirling was one of only three Scottish based women on a ship that set sail in January 2019 for one of the world's most inhospitable places, as part of Homeward Bound - a groundbreaking leadership, strategic and science initiative and outreach for women, set against the backdrop of Antarctica.

Now Kirsty has agreed to become an Alumni Ambassador for Forth Valley College to help inspire a new generation of young people to get involved in STEM subjects.

Kirsty was keen to describe the sorts of things she was doing on her three week expedition. She left Scotland on Boxing Day 2018 and arrived in Argentina on 27 December. The expedition ship, the MV Ushuaia, left Argentina on 31 December 2018 and arrived on the White Continent on 2 January 2019. Kirsty then spent 21 days on her expedition before returning to Argentina on 19 January and setting foot back on Scottish soil at the beginning of February.

Kirsty said: "It was very intense and there was lots of training and workshops on board. The main focus was on learning to lead – through knowing yourself and being curious about others. There was also a focus on scientific communication through highly visible means of TV and radio, but also through our own social media and more traditional networks and I found it really useful.

"We were learning about ourselves and how we interact with people and even if we did have differences we could still get on with each other. It was all about listening, understanding and being curious and asking questions.

"This was made easier as we had no means of communicating with the outside world. We had no connection through our mobile phones, we were woken up every morning and even our decisions on what we could eat were made for us – which meant we could concentrate on the important work of understanding and communicating with each other. It was great."

The Antarctic adventure aimed 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, using science to build conviction around the importance of their voices.

Kirsty also added: "I would like to thank everyone who donated to me over the past year for making it all possible and without Forth Valley College, I would not be where I am today. The whole expedition has taught me about leadership and strategy mapping and I – and all my 79 shipmates on the expedition – are all planning ahead on our personal lives, our work, our relationships and how we can be better leaders and I have an all-encompassing 100 day plan to follow.

"The experience has helped me push my reset button and I certainly have less stress as a result and I am excited about what my fellow shipmates and I can now achieve. But, I already know I am going to do the double by visiting the Arctic Circle next year with Love Her Wild UK - a womans' outdoor adventure group - across 200km of the Finnmark Plateau in Norway. I can't wait."

Homeward Bound are now recruiting for their next expedition in 2021 and more information can be found by visiting this link www.homewardboundprojects.com.au/application/

YOUR STORIES – Hannah McIntyre
Former HND Applied Biological Sciences Student

A grounding in science at Forth Valley College really prepared Optometry student Hannah McIntyre for a life changing volunteering adventure in South Africa.

Hannah was a sight for sore eyes in rural South Africa

Hannah (27) from Camelon a former HND Applied Biological Sciences student at FVC used her skills to help people on board the Phelophepa train - meaning 'good, clean health' - run by the Transnet Foundation in partnership with Glasgow Caledonian University, which visits some of the poorest areas in South Africa delivering first rate health care to those who need it the most.

The project won the United Nations Public Service Award in 2008 and has gone from strength to strength, from a three-carriage eye clinic to an 18-carriage state-of-the-art mobile healthcare provider, treating up to 100 patients a day.

Hannah studied at FVC before progressing on to studying for a degree in Optometry. Hannah said: "Transnet run two trains that go and deliver healthcare to rural areas. I first heard about it through Glasgow Caledonian University who have got a partnership with Transnet, so there is the option to find out more about it and sign up and go in the third year of your degree with some of your classmates.

"There were six of us altogether in my group and we all went at the start of June 2018 for just under three weeks - two full weeks on the train which was great! On the train we were doing a mixture of different things, we were mainly testing eyes and there would be people waiting just to see you, sometimes for up to a week, before we even stopped at the station."

If you are a former student and are interested in sharing your story then contact **alumni@forthvalley.ac.uk**

Hannah went on: "The experience was mixed for me. I feel I got so much from it practise-wise that I will never get at uni, until I am in a real life work situation. It wasn't always happy times. It really gave me an insight into how other people have to live and how little some people have – I think it has really opened my eyes a wee bit to that and how a tiny bit of a volunteer's help can help someone else.

"I will now finish up my degree in July 2019 and I have got a year of supervised testing before I am officially qualified, I am now considering the option of going on to do medicine at Dundee University, but that is still a wee bit away so we will wait and see."

PAUL'S JOINERY JOURNEY **HELPS BUILD NEW CAREERS**

Joinery skills honed at the former Falkirk College of Technology have led Paul Harris to help build careers for Forth Valley College Construction Modern Apprentices.

Paul (41) from Denny, has come a long way since starting his CITB Joinery Apprenticeship in 1994 aged 16.

A short stint with a firm called Manpower led to Paul setting up Alpa Joiners with his cousin Alan Harris and they ran a successful business for 11 years. Paul set up his own company 11 years ago and is delighted to work closely with Forth Valley College to help train his Modern Apprentices. We asked Paul about his journey.

How much did college benefit you?

"I wasn't very good at school and I didn't have many qualifications, but I did know one thing and that was that I wanted to be a joiner. I absolutely loved college and the lecturers took me under their wing and I focused on learning as much as I could. I even represented the College in competition, which was great.

"I now have six staff working for me and 10 sub-contractors and also have three MAs – one who has just completed his apprenticeship."

What is your advice for people thinking about doing an MA or for employers looking to take one on?

"I think anyone wanting a career in joinery should do an apprenticeship as it properly sets them on the straight and narrow and gives employers a wee bit of security. It may cost the employer a wee bit of money, but it helps instil the apprentice with respect for their employers and makes them a better employee.

"I have three MAs who go to FVC and they are all good workers who adhere to our high standards here at Paul Harris Joiners. If the apprentice commits to the job and to the company and to always learn and listen, they will reap the benefits and I will look after them."

How much do you like working with Forth Valley College through the MA programme?

"The college has been good to me and looked after me as a young man learning my trade and I like to be involved with the College through the MA programme. It's great that the college is trying to bring new young people into the industry that are willing to work hard, as that really takes the pressure off employers such as me."

"I think anyone wanting a career in joinery should do an apprenticeship as it properly sets them on the straight and narrow and gives employers a wee bit of security."

PAUL HARRIS
Former Joinery Apprentice

Are you looking to recruit an apprentice for your business? Get in touch at business.development@forthvalley.ac.uk

YOUR STORIES – Avril Burns

Former HNC/D Professional Cookery Student

PASTRY CHEF AVRIL RISES TO NEW LECTURING CHALLENGE

Professional pastry chef Avril Burns has used skills learned at Forth Valley College and at Dundee University to take steps on to a lecturing career.

Avril (47) from Banknock recently completed a TQFE online course through Dundee University and that combined with her HNC/D Professional Cookery course at Forth Valley College from 2014-2016, has led her to a part-time teaching position one day per week at Halbeath College in Dunfermline.

The talented cook whose main role is Head Pastry Chef at Cromlix Hotel Dunblane, had enquired at Forth Valley College on how she would go about becoming a qualified lecturer and was advised to complete the HNC level course as she had been out of school for so long, before moving on to the HND.

Avril, said: "The facilities at Forth Valley College's Stirling Campus were modern and very new. The lecturers were very helpful and were always available if I needed help. The course has retrained my brain to become a more organised person and opened up many doors and opportunities.

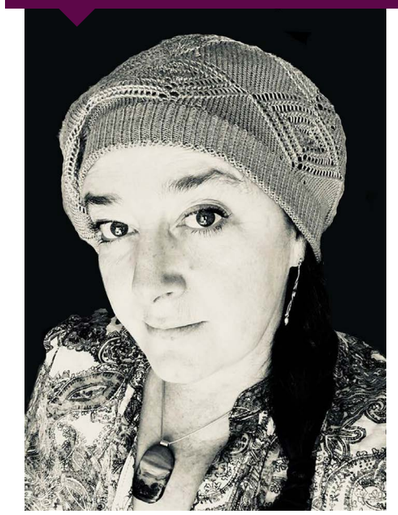
"It has helped me move on to the next step in my career by encouraging me to become more determined to succeed. The college lecturers have given me great support and through them I have made great contacts, which will hopefully get me to where I want to be in the next part of my life.

"I would recommend anybody who wants to follow in my footsteps to do it. College is the best place to learn, or even a training scheme, if available in their area, as you can work and learn at the same time.

"I enjoyed college. I met lots of people, some doing the same course as me, but all of very different ages and backgrounds. I enjoyed watching and learning from the different lecturers most of all, as it gave me food for thought on how I would do it."

YOUR STORIES – Justine Bainbridge

Former HND Art & Design Student



"She has the most expressive face! Folk say they can't help but smile back at her."

GREAT NATIONAL EXPOSURE FOR JUSTINE

A photograph by Justine Bainbridge, a former Forth Valley College student of HND Art and Design, has won the Commendation in Black & White Photography at the 2018 Scottish Portrait Awards.

Currently completing Hons in Glass & Ceramics at the National Glass Centre in Sunderland, she said: 'I don't often enter competitions, but as part of the criteria of the professional practice module at university, I had to choose something to take part in and I chose the SPAs."

As a result of entering the competition she has received national attention for her candid shot featuring fellow artist Deborah Sanderson at the launch of Karen Strang's 'The Burn and the Tide' exhibition at the Lillie Art Gallery, Milngavie, earlier last year.

"She has the most expressive face!" said Justine, "Folk say they can't help but smile back at her. However, the uncensored title raised a few eyebrows, so I was astonished to hear that out of the thousands of entries it was in final running."

The announcement saw Justine take up an invitation at the winner's awards ceremony and gave Feminist AF coveted wall space at the subsequent exhibitions in Glasgow and Edinburgh. This exposure not only led to a talk and an exhibition of Justine's glass and jewellery work at the Scottish Arts Club, but also to the curator of the Resipole Gallery, Acharacle, purchasing a copy of the photo and inviting her to submit three pieces for an exhibition in March.

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 lecturers
- Support fundraising

PLEASE EMAIL ALUMNI@FORTHVALLEY.AC.UK IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION.

GALLERY RESTAURANT OFFER

Where the art of fine dining combines with stunning scenery

2 courses: £10.00 per person

3 courses: £12.50 per person

Dinner menu available every Tuesday & Thursday evening.

To make a reservation visit:
www.forthvalley.ac.uk/the-place/gallery-restaurant/
Forth Valley College, Stirling Campus, Drip Road, Stirling, FK8 1SE

Gallery RESTAURANT

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email: **alumni@forthvalley.ac.uk**

Forth Valley College
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