



**20/20 Vision:
Scottish Review's
Young Scots
of the Year 2019**

*Our biennial celebration of
20 people in their 20s who are
involved in remarkable work*

Compiled by Barbara Millar



Fraser Cameron (22)

Fraser started his hospitality career as a kitchen porter at the age of 14, when he was still at school. He was then taken under the wing of chef Jonathan Brett at Easterbrook Hall, Dumfries, where he was given the opportunity to begin his training, before starting a two-year professional cookery course in Perth which involved work placements in some very good restaurants.

‘I love the camaraderie in the kitchen,’ Fraser explains. ‘When you have a really good group of people working together, the possibilities of what you

can create are endless. I also really love the feeling when a guest enjoys the food. It makes all the hard work worth it.’

Fraser won the Andrew Fairlie Scholarship at the age of 17. ‘I couldn’t have asked for a better chance to learn in Scotland’s only Two Star Michelin restaurant. The techniques, skills, flavour pairings and general knowledge I was able to learn while I was there has totally shaped the way I think about food. The military-style precision that is required to cook at that level has stuck with me everywhere I’ve gone.’

Fraser then went to work at Paul Kitching's celebrated restaurant 21212 in Edinburgh where he quickly progressed to sous-chef. He was just 20 years old. He is now also a Young Ambassador for Scottish Food and Drink and the first Chef Ambassador for Real Galloway Beef and The Galloway Cattle Society.

Now back in Dumfries as the sous-chef at the newly-refurbished 17th century Globe Inn, Fraser was recently invited to create a dish using a small amount of whisky from the Man O’ Words Cask No 1, the very first distillate produced by Annandale Distillery, with a value of around £1m. ‘I think this is probably the most expensive ingredient I have ever used,’ says Fraser. ‘I paired the whisky sauce with a prime fillet of Galloway beef stuffed with St James Smokehouse Man O’ Words whisky-cured salmon, glazed hickory-smoked silver skin onions and some nice shoots. I could never have imagined this when I was washing dishes at 14!’

Carrie Duggan (22)

Carrie was in foster care for 15 years, leaving care when she was 18. Now, using her own considerable experience, she advocates for other young people who are, or have been in care, supporting them and making sure their views are heard and acknowledged by the range of organisations who provide services.

Over the last four years she has taken a lead role in the coordination of a children's and young people's participation group and the '4Change Group for Care Leavers'. These groups bring together care-experienced young people to provide mutual support, but they also exist in order that there can be better responses by agencies to the complex needs of young people in care.



Carrie has also taken a lead role in the development of the local 'Champions Board' in Dundee, which engages with a wider number of young people and enables 'corporate parents' (heads of social service, police, education, fire services – those who have a duty of care) to hold services to account. She has contributed towards the development of a new drop-in advice service in the council's aftercare team, which enables care-experienced young people to receive immediate support for any particularly pressing need, and she is part of the process of ensuring that the services provided fully involve children and young people in the decisions which affect their lives.

Carrie took a lead role in producing a powerful short film – *Grit* – which features young people from across Dundee sharing their personal journeys of leaving care and the opportunities – and the challenges – of living independently, with a particular focus on mental health, loneliness and financial exclusion, and has facilitated a young person-led workshop on neglect, the most prevalent form of child abuse in Scotland.

She is now employed as a care-experienced young person's assistant with the Carolina House Trust, one of Scotland's oldest children's charities. 'As someone who is care-experienced, I feel privileged to use my knowledge and life experience to help other care-experienced young people,' says Carrie. 'Having someone who doesn't just say they get it, but who actually *does* understand and relates, is something I wish I'd had, so I am trying to be that person, a positive role model in someone's life who can influence and shape services and policies to make care-experienced young people's lives that little bit easier.'



Alyssa Faulkner (21)

'Pumptastic Scot' was a blog created by Alyssa when she was just 15. Alyssa was living with Type 1 Diabetes and also suffered from seizures connected with her illness.

'I wanted to share my story and also to educate the people around me,' she explains. She soon realised her experiences were echoed by young people throughout Scotland and that her blog was playing an important role in creating an important peer support network.

She then attended a conference about Type 1 Diabetes and realised that not much of the content was relevant to her life. 'There was plenty of information for children with diabetes and their families and for older adults, but there was little about the challenges faced by a young adult with the illness, such as going to uni, starting a job, getting pregnant,' she says, 'so I went to Diabetes Scotland and suggested putting on an event for people like me. Great idea, they said, you run it'.

So she did. 'Young, Fun and Type 1' was a very well-received national conference in Paisley in 2018, followed by a second event in Glasgow in 2019. All the speakers were between 16-30 years old, all living with diabetes, and there were workshops on sport, diet, student life, employment, emotional and mental health, pregnancy, parenting and travel. 'I am hoping this will be an annual event and now there are more than just myself involved in planning it,' she says.

Alyssa, who is also part of the Diabetes Scotland Young Leaders project, has also spoken at a number of other events and on the radio, and she has been involved in producing a video to assist politicians and policy makers in making decisions that are grounded in the reality of young people's lives – some resulting in-patient care policy changes have been achieved as a direct result of her work. 'I am trying to prove that you can live life with Type 1 Diabetes normally,' she says. 'It is harder, but you can do it.'

Emily Findlay (24)

In 2018 Emily was proud to accept the British Empire Medal in St Magnus' Cathedral in Kirkwall. Family and friends were there to support her on this special day, as she received the award in the Queen's Birthday Honours for her work with charities in Orkney and across Scotland to raise awareness of cancer in young people.

Emily was one of those young people. Aged 14, she was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, a rare childhood cancer, and she had to leave her home town of Orphir to travel to the Aberdeen Royal Children's Hospital for gruelling treatment. She had chemotherapy and lost her hair. She was gravely ill and had to be resuscitated several times. But, despite numerous operations, relapses and scares, Emily has raised many thousands of pounds for the charities close to her heart.



She is still living with cancer, but now has a full-time job as Fundraising Manager of the Friends of the Neonatal Unit, part of the Archie Foundation (Archie standing for Aberdeen Royal Children's Hospital is Excellent) and Archie Overseas Events Officer. She is also the face of the #stillme Teenage Cancer Trust campaign, raising awareness of the effect cancer can have on teenage body image and speaking at a variety of events on her own journey, body confidence and her outlook on life. 'The ideal body and looks portrayed on Instagram, that many young people aspire to, are difficult to live up to at the best of times. The effects of cancer and treatments on appearance, like weight fluctuation and hair loss, can really add to this pressure,' says Emily. 'It's a huge learning experience for yourself to know how strong and amazing your body is, and to learn to appreciate that.'

The Archie Foundation has been an integral part of her life for many years before she worked for the organisation. When she was being treated in Aberdeen, the Foundation helped her and her mum with housing, so that she could be an out-patient while receiving her treatment. Despite leaving school with no formal qualifications, Emily graduated from Robert Gordon University with a BA in events management, juggling lectures and exams with the side effects of radiotherapy.

She has also just been named as Young Supporter of the Year in the Celebrate Aberdeen awards, which recognise third sector organisations. 'Having cancer has made me who I am,' Emily adds. 'I would not have been the same person had I not gone through everything I have.'

Vicky Glover (20)

Female boxer Vicky was selected to represent Scotland in the European Under-22 championships in Vladikavkaz, Russia, in March and went to to become Scotland's first ever female medallist in a major competition, winning bronze.

The featherweight, only 19 at the time, beat Lithuania's Amanda Millere on a unanimous decision before losing to England's Ellie Scotney in the semi-finals. 'No excuses,' she says. 'I gave it my all, really enjoyed the bout and had a great experience. I lost to the better boxer.'

Also in 2019, Vicky became British Elite Female Champion for her weight for the third successive year. This followed on from a breakthrough 2018 where she became the first ever female to represent Scotland at a Commonwealth Games in boxing at the Gold Coast, where she won her first contest before losing her quarter final on a split decision.

At the World Championships in Delhi in November 2018, Vicky won her first contest before losing to the eventual gold medallist in the quarter finals.

** Vicky is on the left in the photo below*





Lauren Leisk (25)

When Lauren's IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome) and food intolerances, which she had had since she was young, seemed to get worse in adulthood, she decided to take matters into her own hands. In the past, she had given gluten-free and dairy-free foods a go, but they didn't work for her. Then she heard about a diet developed in Australia which eliminates all foods which can trigger IBS symptoms. Fodmaps are carbohydrates found in a wide range of foods, including wheat, milk and onions, which are difficult to digest if you have IBS or other gut-related health problems.

'With the help of my mum, Louise, we decided to prepare recipes substituting normal ingredients for low Fodmap alternatives which helped to alleviate my symptoms', Louise explains. 'We then shipped our meals and snacks to the Fodmap-friendly team in Melbourne, Australia, for laboratory testing and were delighted to receive Fodmap-friendly certification.'

At the age of 21, Lauren was a general manager of a UK-wide restaurant chain, the youngest in the country. This, she explains, opened her eyes to how to run a business. She also had a business degree from Edinburgh's Queen Margaret University under her belt. What she needed was cash, and a legacy from her grandfather was able to get her new business – Fodilicious – up and running. She has since applied for, and been successful in winning, a tranche of funding from a range of organisations including Santander bank, the Royal Bank of Scotland and the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Queen Margaret University has also been enormously supportive, she adds, as had the Chairman of Nairn Oatcakes, who has mentored her.

Fodilicious began by offering a ready meal delivery service across the UK. Lauren is now concentrating on her latest development – Cookie Buttons – a range of snack products, which are not only suitable for people with IBS and other gut problems, but which are also dairy-free, gluten-free, nut-free, low in calories and vegan. Over 30,000 units have been sold since July and she is now exporting the product to the United States via Amazon.

'If you're looking to start a business, the Scottish Entrepreneurial Ecosystem is a fantastic place to get support and advice,' Lauren recommends. 'And always reach out and network with others.'



Jessica Lilley (28)

After training as a teacher at Queen's University, Belfast, and spending two years working as a science teacher in the city, Jessica found herself feeling out of place in a school environment. 'I loved working with the kids, but the relationship of school teacher and teenager felt negative sometimes and the pressure of getting grades and so on was making everything tinged with so much seriousness. I wanted to help kids to learn while they were also having fun. I also knew I wanted to work with younger kids.'

Jessica had seen summer teaching jobs advertised on the Edinburgh Zoo website while looking for jobs as a

student and she realised this was the direction she wanted to take. She applied for every single zoo education job she could find until she succeeded in getting the one she wanted at Edinburgh Zoo. Now she works with kids on school trips, aged from nursery to secondary school, who visit the zoo for an education session about animals and conservation.

Her other projects are the Conservation Action Team (CAT) and Summer CAT. Jessica arrived at the zoo in the second season of CAT in 2017 and has continued its work of helping young people, aged 5 to 15 years old, build a connection to nature by learning about conservation projects all over the world, through Royal Zoological Society of Edinburgh projects. There are also hands-on, and very muddy, conservation activities in the zoo's wildlife garden. 'We have kids who return year after year and they have built inspiring connections with nature, the zoo and each other,' says Jessica. 'With many of the young people now reaching the upper age limit of CAT, we saw the desire they had to stay with us past that age and have been trialling the CAT Youth Leaders programme this year, allowing older CAT members to share what they have learned with younger members.'

Jessica, originally from County Fermanagh in Northern Ireland, is also working in primary school settings, sharing conservation messages 'in a fun and engaging way'. In fact, it is the children who inspire her: 'All over the world, our CAT kids included, young people are standing up for what they want for their future,' Jessica says. 'I'm not sure we have time to right the wrongs that have been done to our planet, but I've met some incredible young people who will make sure we do everything we can to try to fix what can be fixed.'



Ryan McCuaig (28)

When Ryan received his exam results at the age of 16 he didn't even open the envelope containing them. 'I believed that school and attainment simply wasn't for people like me,' he remembers. 'The school I went to struggled to deal with the overwhelming amounts of poverty, unresolved inter-generational childhood trauma and social isolation which pervaded Easterhouse at the time. Like many others, I started to disengage with education under those conditions.'

Ryan is now completing his two-year traineeship with Thorntons Law, having been awarded a law degree at Strathclyde University and a diploma in professional legal practice from Glasgow University. 'My desire to study law and to give voice to people who are denied one definitely stems from those early experiences of state intervention during my childhood,' he says. 'From an early age it felt like my life was dictated by complex legal processes, telling me where I could go and who I could see, despite the fact that I had done nothing wrong. I have a distinct memory of being in a back room at Glasgow Sheriff Court, drawing pictures with my social worker, while my fate was being decided in another room. When I reflect upon that day I feel like I was denied a voice. That is why I want to become a lawyer and provide that voice for others.'

It was when Ryan started working in an office in Glasgow with an extremely supportive manager that things started to change. 'She believed in me, supported me and encouraged me to do some qualifications, which the company paid for,' he explains. 'She helped me to shift my mindset and start to value myself and my abilities. She also set boundaries and held me to account. I passed all the exams first time and used those qualifications to apply to law school.' Initially at university Ryan felt he didn't fit in because of his background. So he decided to treat university as a job, getting up at six and putting the hours in. Four years later, he graduated with a first class honours degree.

He was then asked to talk about his experiences at conferences, and for BBC *The Social*, an online platform where contributors make content, mostly short videos. He has also spoken regularly on *The Nine* and BBC *Seven Days* on a variety of social issues, and he was introduced to Who Cares? Scotland, an advocacy charity, with care-experienced people at every level of the organisation, which also campaigns on behalf of care-experienced people in Scotland. 'I have gained a new family of people like me who know what it's like to grow up feeling a wee bit different from other people around you,' says Ryan. He was appointed chair of the organisation in 2019 and says: 'It is an absolute privilege to be involved.'

Ross MacDonald (23)

From the age of 16, pretty much every Saturday and occasionally mid-week, during the football season, Ross was taking photos of junior football club Pollok FC. It was voluntary.

‘I supported the club and I also needed as much experience as possible,’ Ross explains. ‘I did all my work, as far as possible, for free.’ As well as taking photos at every home and away fixture, Ross also covered club events, new signings and player portraits. He also used the club’s social network channels to promote the images.



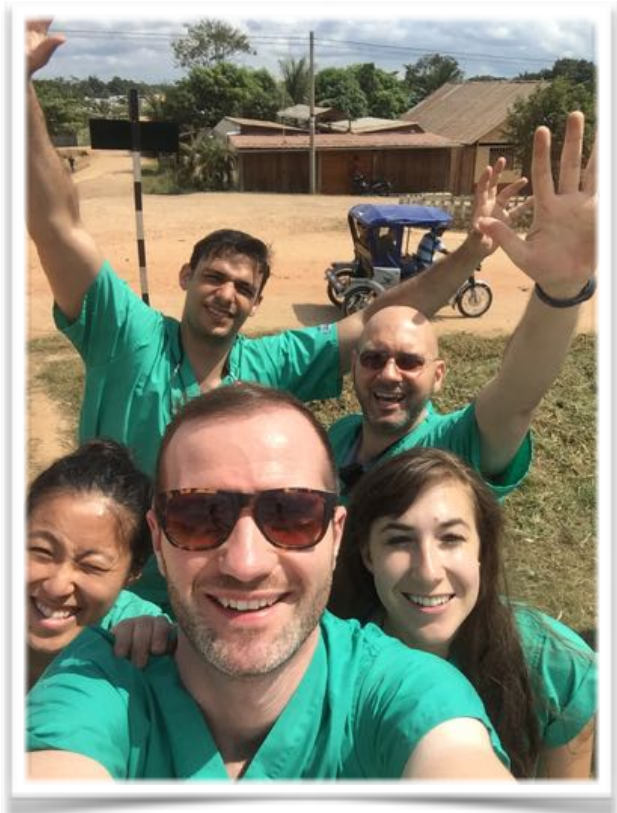
He had always had an interest in photography but was determined to pursue it as a career. At high school he achieved a higher in photography and then went to college to take an HND before getting a Saturday job at SNS on the picture desk, which developed into a full-time role. He then moved across to the photography department, where he has been working for the past year, covering mainly football and rugby, but also all other major sporting events in Scotland, the UK and further afield.

In 2013, when he was 17, Ross was a finalist in the *Herald* newspaper’s photo competition. The theme was grass roots sport and the image that clinched a finalist’s place for Ross was of two mud-covered Glenafton Athletic players consoling each other as Pollok players celebrated a late winner in the background. ‘It showed the two sides of football – the hard work, and the mud, that people will go through for victory,’ says Ross. The competition was in conjunction with the Scottish Football Museum and the judging panel was so impressed by the quality of Ross’ images that he was offered an exhibition of his work at Hampden Park, Scotland’s national stadium.

The secret of a good sports photo is capturing the moment. ‘Of course it needs to be sharp and well-lit,’ Ross points out, ‘but you need to be able to get the one moment that tells the story of the match. This could be a goal or try, a celebration, a dejection or an incident. You need to be focused for the whole match, anticipating the big moment that will tell the story of the event’.

Niall McGoldrick (29)

Scotland is a hot-spot for oral cancer; even compared with the rest of the UK, its rates for cancers of the mouth are significantly higher, but a young dentist in Fife is aiming to combat this disease with a charity he helped to co-found. Let's Talk About Mouth Cancer was set up by Niall and four other volunteers to improve the prognosis of patients diagnosed with mouth cancer through early detection (Niall is in centre of photo). The focus of their campaign is to raise awareness of mouth cancer, the signs and symptoms, and the associated risk factors, to steer people in the right direction to seek advice and to promote mouth self-examination as part of an awareness programme.



‘We are all passionate about tackling mouth cancer and getting people talking about this disease,’ says Niall. ‘Our message is universal.’ Niall, originally from County Fermanagh in Northern Ireland, studied dentistry at Dundee University, graduating in 2013. He is now a specialty registrar in dental public health with NHS Fife, working throughout the east of Scotland. He has also recently completed his masters in public health at Dundee, achieving a distinction.

Over 65s, especially people who smoke and drink to excess, are particularly prone to mouth cancers, Niall explains. ‘It is also a disease which often affects the poorest communities.’ But young people who drink spirits and large quantities of alcohol are also at risk and Niall runs oral cancer awareness programmes at Dundee’s Overgate shopping centre, in order to reach those most in danger.

Niall has also led expeditions to the Peruvian Amazon to provide dental services to deprived communities in remote settings, often only accessible by river. ‘It can take two to three hours travelling by river to reach some of the villages, which only have electricity for parts of the day and which have little access to any healthcare services. We extracted teeth and dealt with fillings and abscesses – relieving chronic pain which may have gone on for years was one of the most important things we could do.’

But his main focus, as a primary care specialist in Scotland, is making sure people have access to healthcare, especially in relation to oral cancer. ‘I want to help to improve access to dentistry,’ Niall sums up. ‘It’s why I work in the community.’



James McIlroy (26)

Late one night in 2013, when he had just started his degree in physiology at the University of Edinburgh, James was browsing through some medical journals when he came across an article which, he says, 'changed my life forever'. James, to the best of his family's knowledge, is the first McIlroy to become a doctor. He grew up in Glasgow, Brunei and Aberdeen. He went to Robert Gordon's College in Aberdeen, followed by a degree in medicine at the University of Aberdeen. He undertook an intercalated degree at Edinburgh University in 2014, where he

was awarded an honours degree in physiology. He then returned to medical school in Aberdeen, graduating with a distinction in his final year.

But it was this journal article which was to prove such a turning point. In the paper, James read that researchers had transplanted faecal matter from a lean mouse into an obese mouse – and the obese mouse lost weight. 'It seemed like an amazing idea,' he says. 'I then read another paper that showed researchers had successfully cured a life-threatening gut infection in a human by transferring bacteria derived from a healthy donor stool into the intestinal tract of the patient. I realised the microbiome was a controller of health and disease and manipulating the microbiome could be the answer to all sorts of medical problems.'

Soon after that, James started to refine his ideas and started a company – EnteroBiotix – which he aims to make into a global speciality microbiome-focused biopharmaceutical company with its HQ in Scotland. 'My idea was to create a tablet patients could swallow that contained beneficial, donor-derived bacteria,' James explains. 'Our first formulation has been distributed to doctors across the UK and into the EU, for use in patients suffering from a particularly nasty infection of the gut.'

The feedback the company has received so far has been very promising, says James. 'Next year we will be conducting substantial and sophisticated clinical trials. Each year there are tens of thousands of patients who could potentially benefit from our medicines and technology. My goal is that our company continues to grow and that we successfully conduct the requisite clinical trials to ensure that, ultimately, one day all of these patients get access to it.'

Michael McNamara (23)

Michael was a young carer from the age of 10, helping a family member who had addiction issues and mental health problems. This had a huge impact on his schooling. 'It was not my priority at this time,' says Michael, 'and I didn't have much of a social life either'.

His non-attendance meant a referral to the Children's Hearings System (CHS), Scotland's care and justice system for young people, one of its fundamental principles being that children and young people who commit offences or those who need care and protection are supported through the same system.

In the fullness of time, Michael was able to become one of the independent members of the hearings system himself and is now in this third year of involvement. 'It's a great experience and the training is amazing,' he says. 'The young person is at the heart of everything the CHS does and I think young people should be involved in everything that affects them and their families.'

Michael also works as a health support worker at Glasgow's Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in the intensive care unit. 'I assist in supporting personal care for patients within the unit,' he explains. 'I also have a responsibility to ensure that the unit is clean, safe and secure, and I speak to and support relatives when they come to visit their loved ones.' He also sits on the board of Glasgow Housing Association with a city-wide responsibility and volunteers for a community council.

At the age of 23, he is the father of four children from six months to six years. One of his children, who would now be five, was still-born and Michael says this has had a huge impact on his family's life. The caring role he began when he was just 10 still shapes him. 'My advice for young people who care for someone is that it is okay to ask for help. And it's also okay if you have to say no. It's okay to hand over the support to someone else and to start to try to live your life the best you can. The caring role will never leave you – it has not left me 23 years down the line. But I have learned to manage it better.'





Rosie Moore (26)

'It's the best job title in the world,' says Rosie. She describes herself as a 'Love Ambassador' and, as she points out, titles don't get much better than that. Rosie is co-chair of the Love work group, one of the groups set up as part of the wide-ranging three-year review of the care system in Scotland, tasked with delivering real and lasting change to the lives of children and young people in care.

There are some 13,000 children and young people in care across Scotland, and one of the things many miss most, not being part of a family, is the feeling of loving and being loved. Rosie understands this only too well.

As a teenager she was in foster care in Manchester and her lived experience is one of the reasons she feels so passionate about her work. 'The benefits of love in the care system are countless,' she says. 'We would have children who would be able to flourish and reach their potential. Children would feel safe and would grow up with a sense of worth and value, and recognise they have people around them who love and care for them, whoever these people may be. If we have children growing up with that support and nurture around them, we are going to have adults with a sense of confidence, of self-worth, better well-being and who can build relationships to thrive, as they are supposed to do.'

Rosie moved from Manchester to Scotland on her own in 2014. She was accepted on to the social work degree course at Strathclyde University the following year, but because she had come from the care system in England, she was not entitled to the same benefits she would have had had she been in care in Scotland. So she had to get a job in KFC to pay her rent, which meant a long day at university followed by 6pm-3am shifts at KFC. She acknowledges she would never have got through her degree, and have achieved a first class honours, without the support of The Robertson Trust, which awarded her a scholarship, enabling her to ditch the job at KFC to concentrate on her studies. Through the Trust, Rosie was also able to act as a mentor in a school-based project in Glasgow and take up a work placement with children's charity Aberlour.

This led to her work with the Care Review, which is where she has had the opportunity to combine her experience and knowledge with a passion for making a difference to children and families. The review reports back next year and Rosie says the work it has done, which has involved talking to 5,000 people across Scotland, will be bold, radical and transformative.

Yanik Nyberg (25)

‘As I was finishing my final law exams at Aberdeen University, I came across a video on the internet where a man in his 90s had turned an Eritrean desert into a green oasis by flooding it with seawater,’ says Yanik. ‘I was hooked immediately.’ A few years on from that internet revelation, Yanik is running an agri-environmental company – Seawater Solutions – which addresses climate resilience in agriculture by helping farmers redevelop their land in order to grow high yield salt-tolerant crops using seawater. Through saline agriculture and environmental engineering, the company is tackling important climate factors including coastal erosion, carbon emissions and agricultural pollution, and can promote agricultural value by creating artificial wetlands and habitat for wildlife.



‘I love anything to do with nature and the outdoors,’ explains Yanik, who grew up in Senegal, Vietnam and Botswana, as his parents were diplomats, arriving in Scotland to study politics and international relations, followed by a Masters in Environmental Entrepreneurship at Strathclyde University. ‘I’ve always been fascinated by irrigation and its importance throughout our society’s history. How we manage our water in terms of agriculture is the reason we developed civilisations and will also be the solution to today’s climate crises.’

Yanik has built his company to include four core staff and 25 volunteers in Scotland and Vietnam, where pilot projects have been underway. The first successful harvest has been wrapped up in Scotland and an aquaculture system is underway in Vietnam. Around the world, more than 13% of land has been degraded. If salt-tolerant plants can be grown in these areas, enough food can be produced to feed the world and can produce substantial amounts of bio-fuels, Yanik believes. Having already won a multitude of awards including the Shell LiveWIRE Smarter Futures award, Young Scottish EDGE and Young Innovator of the Year, he will be looking for investment in 2020 to expand his business worldwide.

‘We are now working in Bangladesh to help farmers grow food with seawater on land that has been destroyed by salinisation and rising sea levels,’ says Yanik. ‘This is in the hope that we can prevent mass migration of farmers to cities, further destabilising the political situation in these regions. Already the movement and forced migration of millions of people globally because of climate change and the loss of ecosystems has created conflict and instability. That’s a massive reason why we are looking for solutions to these threats. We don’t have long before our nature is history – and that’s what motivates me.’



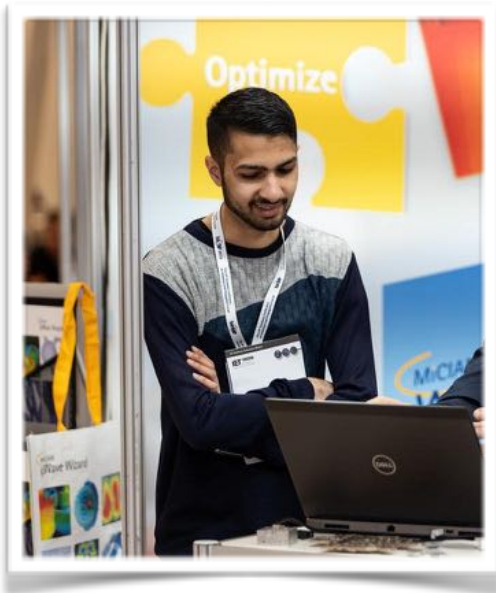
Andrew Robb (29)

Since winning first prize at the European Society of Bassists Jazz Competition in 2018, Andrew has established himself as one of the most versatile and talented young double bass players in Europe. He started playing at the age of seven – his father played a bit of double bass, his sisters played violin and cello. Music was part of family life. He admits that he was ‘never a massive practiser’ but went on lots of courses and had plenty of opportunities to play with amateur orchestras. By the age of 10, he was playing with the National Children’s Orchestra of Scotland.

It was when he was at high school that he started to become interested in jazz and, with some friends, started an ensemble. At the age of 13 he also started to play with the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland – it was important to him to continue with a classical music repertoire too and he would go on to lead the double bass section.

He graduated with a B.Mus Jazz from The Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London in 2012. During his time in London he won the BBC Radio Scotland Young Jazz Musician of the Year 2009. He then had the opportunity to live in Bergen, Norway, so Andrew took the time he spent there to study for a Masters in Jazz Performance at the Grieg Academy of Music, qualifying in 2018. While he was there he also co-founded the trio *A Northern Code* with Mathias Marstrander and Sigurd Steinkopf, who released their debut album in late 2019 and are planning a series of tours across the UK and Norway.

Andrew was appointed Head of Jazz at St Mary's Specialist Music School in Edinburgh in 2018. He is also a guest instrument tutor at Edinburgh University and lecturer of Jazz Bass at the Leeds College of Music. He has played with many bands at many venues over the years but is now also keen to create an online learning jazz course and to develop jazz education at St Mary’s. ‘I want to write music and perform too,’ he says. ‘But it’s important that you keep on playing.’



Zain Shafiq (22)

The Milan senior welfare organisation was set up in 1991, in conjunction with the Pilmeny Development Project and Lothian Racial Equality Council, to offer support and activities for people aged 50 and over who belong to Edinburgh's Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian and Mauritian communities. Milan is a word common to all four cultures and languages, meaning 'rendezvous' or 'meeting place'.

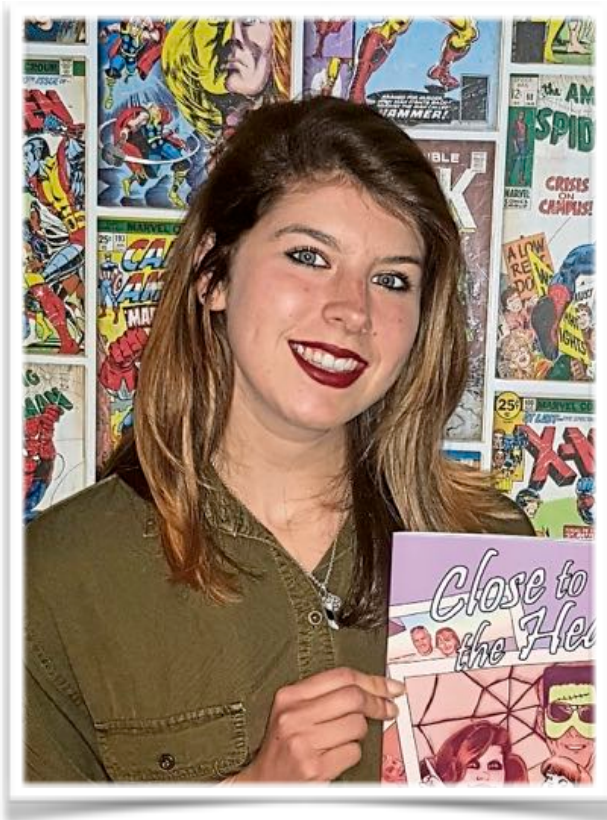
Zain had been helping out there for some time but, over the past three or so years, he has become more involved, especially assisting with IT. 'I help buy new computers and set them up, transferring the data to the new computers,' he explains. 'I also help to trouble-shoot when there is an issue, such as with a faulty computer. In the past, I have also helped with fundraising, putting up leaflets around Edinburgh, sourcing equipment for events and even building marquees.' As an Urdu speaker, he has occasionally helped out with translations.

He has also been caring for his grandmother since he was just 12, helping with shopping, paying bills and general daily chores including dusting and Hoovering. 'I have a very close relationship with my grandmother,' he says. 'Probably due to the fact that she often babysat me when I was young.'

Zain relishes the caring role. 'Working with Milan reminds me that we will all, some day, get old and that I need to take every opportunity I am given to get the most out of my life,' he says. 'Caring also gives me a positive outlook on life and has taught me to be patient, which has to be a good thing.'

He completed his degree in engineering at Heriot Watt University and was then offered the chance to do a joint PhD with Heriot Watt and Edinburgh universities and with Leonardo Selex, one of the UK's leading aerospace companies and one of the biggest suppliers of defence and security to the Ministry of Defence. 'I work with antennas,' Zain explains. 'Antennas are used throughout everyday life – whether it is a phone accessing the Internet or playing the radio in the car. My main job is to design the antennas and understand how they work for specific applications. I especially look into antenna calibration – over time an antenna's performance will deteriorate due to many factors, especially weather conditions. Antenna calibration looks at how to retune the antenna so that it works at its best capability.'

His work is important and time-consuming, but Zain has no intention of giving up his caring roles. 'I am completely passionate about caring,' he sums up.



Megan Sinclair (26)

In 2014 Megan's father died, very suddenly, from a heart attack. In a bid to cope with her grief, Megan began to record her thoughts, memories and feelings in a diary, recording what had happened exactly as she remembered it.

A few years later, when she was studying for her Masters in Comic Studies at the University of Dundee, she started to turn this diary into a script, doing some sketches and creating a first-person narrative. *Close to the Heart* was the result – a 64-page autobiographical comic, with drawings by Gary Welsh and other artists on the Dundee comics course. It was launched in 2018, with the support of the British Heart Foundation.

Megan decided to undertake a PhD in comics and education, looking at the representation of trauma and loss in comics and the potential of the medium to approach such themes in a unique way. She has worked closely with nursing and healthcare students at the university to create a comic about suicide prevention – *Let's talk about suicide* – and contributed to a comic about organ donation – *The Gift*.

But it was while she was attending a comic conference in San Diego that she found herself in a queue for a talk next to a young man called Danny, who was dressed as Batman. 'Danny was there on a make-a-wish trip, having survived childhood brain cancer,' Megan says. 'He always wore a Batman t-shirt to his treatments and the doctors and nurses named him Batman Danny. Batman was his childhood hero who gave him the resilience to go on.'

Megan worked with Danny to create a comic strip about his experiences and her classmate Elliott Balson did the drawings. *Batman Danny* was launched with funding from the Scottish Centre for Comics Studies and her experiences have now given Megan the taste for further exploring the comic genres of 'graphic medicine' and 'superhero healthcare'. 'Comics are accessible to all ages,' she points out. 'Even if you are too young to understand all the content, you can appreciate the imagery. When my PhD is finished I hope to keep working in this area.'

Greg Stark (26)

The fact that you can turn on a tap anywhere in the country and have safe clean water still boggles Greg's mind. So, while he was studying mechanical engineering at Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh, Greg applied to the Scottish Water graduate scheme. 'The attraction was to get involved in some pretty big engineering projects,' he explains, 'while also being part of all the unseen work that goes into treating and transporting water and wastewater'.



Since then, he has had the opportunity to take part in 'various and wildly different' projects ranging from designing future strategic water mains, investigations into future population growth in Scotland and how existing, ageing assets can be best upgraded and modified to accommodate this growth while protecting the environment, and how to reclaim and remove grit from sewage and sludge using innovative technologies.

Greg was also seconded to work with global engineering and development consultancy Mott MacDonald. 'This gave me great experience in designing wastewater pumping stations in Iraq for an oil camp in Basra,' he says. 'I was working with multi-disciplinary teams to design, from scratch, a whole camp, including water supply, wastewater supplies, power, accommodation and mess facilities. The work also encompassed flood protection pumping stations, treated water pumping stations on islands, and sludge pumping treatment works.'

Working remotely from Scotland, Greg was able to design and select packaged pumping stations which reduced on-site construction time, minimised health and safety risks and improved the quality of the asset. He also tried to make sure that the majority of work went to local contractors and he recommended and implemented the use of British Standards to ensure the quality of the project. As a result of this work, Greg won the Young Engineer of the Year award with The Pump Centre in 2018/19, having previously been awarded the Youth Award at Scottish Water.

His immediate goals are to become a chartered member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers and to gain as much knowledge and experience as he can, ultimately hoping for a leadership position in his industry. For anyone interested in following in his footsteps he says: 'The only advice I can give is to try new things that challenge you. Say yes to opportunities and don't be afraid to ask for help, or to ask for experiences you think will develop you.'



Reegan Stevenson (21)

When Boccia Paralympians, Stephen and Peter McGuire, went to Ashcraig School in Glasgow to talk about their sport, they certainly fired the imagination of one of the pupils that day. The brothers made a huge impression on Reegan, who decided that he would like to have a go. He did so – and he proved to be so talented that he could even become a member of the British team for the Tokyo Paralympics next year.

Boccia is a target ball sport for disabled athletes, similar to boules and from the same sporting family as bowls and petanque. Each player has six leather balls, slightly larger than a tennis ball, which they have to get as near as possible to a small white jack. It can be played as a team sport – teams of three – but also in pairs and as an individual sport.

Reegan started playing boccia around six years ago but the progress he has made during the last year has been particularly significant. To compete in boccia at national or international level, athletes must be in a wheelchair as a result of cerebral palsy or another neurological condition that has similar effects, such as muscular dystrophy or traumatic brain injury. There are four classes to which each athlete is assigned, according to their functional ability.

Reegan has cerebral palsy and is in the BC1 class – players in this class throw the ball with the hand or foot and may compete with an assistant who stays outside the competitor's playing area but can help to adjust their playing chair and give the ball to the player, if requested. This year, Reegan has been selected for a number of BisFed (Boccia International Sports Federation, the game's governing body) events with the most high profile being the European Championships in Seville in August, where he won a bronze medal as part of the BC1/2 team (this means one player must fit the BCI class and two must fit BC2 – players in this class throw the ball with the hand and are not eligible for any assistance). He also won a gold medal as part of the BC1/2 team at the European Open in Zagreb in March – his debut as a member of the Great Britain team – and a silver medal at the Czech International Open in June.

Currently he trains three to four times a week and also keeps fit in the gym and hydrotherapy pool. Reegan is also studying for a qualification in sports coaching at Ayr College. 'It would be a really big deal to get to Tokyo,' says Reegan. 'And I will certainly be doing my best to get a place on the team.'

Colleen Welsh (27)

It was an accounts and finance teacher at school who inspired a love of accounts in Colleen. 'She was a great mentor and friend to me,' says Colleen. 'I also liked the sound of becoming a chartered accountant – it sounded fancy!' She chose not to go down the university route into the profession, instead she left school at 18, joined an accounts firm and worked for her advanced diploma and chartered accountancy qualifications.



After eight years in practice, Colleen is now working in industry for the first time but remains very involved with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (ICAS). 'I am immensely proud to be part of ICAS,' she explains. 'I worked hard to become a member so it seemed natural to be involved with them. It was also a great opportunity to meet and engage with members from different backgrounds.'

While working in practice, Colleen was also a member of the Members in Practice Advisory Board for a year. This involved looking at a variety of things which were impacting members in practice, from staff retention issues to Making Tax Digital, and working to provide solutions to the problems. She was also involved in projects surrounding mental health. 'Anyone who knows me will tell you that being an advocate for mental health and mental health awareness is something I take very seriously,' says Colleen.

'At a previous firm I noticed students becoming stressed, anxious and depressed in the run-up to exam session and I was concerned that not enough was being done to support them. I reached out to my partner group – thankfully I worked with a great bunch of people – who were very understanding and truly cared about their staff. We decided I would train as a Mental Health First Aider and then worked to create a culture of being open and honest about mental health, the kind of culture we need to break the stigma. I've mirrored these dynamics in each of the firms I've worked for since, so it feels great to have made even a small difference.'

Colleen also recently won a Top Young CA award in the Trust category. This recognises work done by an individual to help restore public trust in the profession – a difficult category to compete in, given the public perception of the profession over the last 20 years, Colleen points out. 'I feel really passionate about this and work hard every day to challenge the stereotypes people have around what a chartered accountant is,' she says. 'It means a great deal to me for this to be acknowledged.'

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