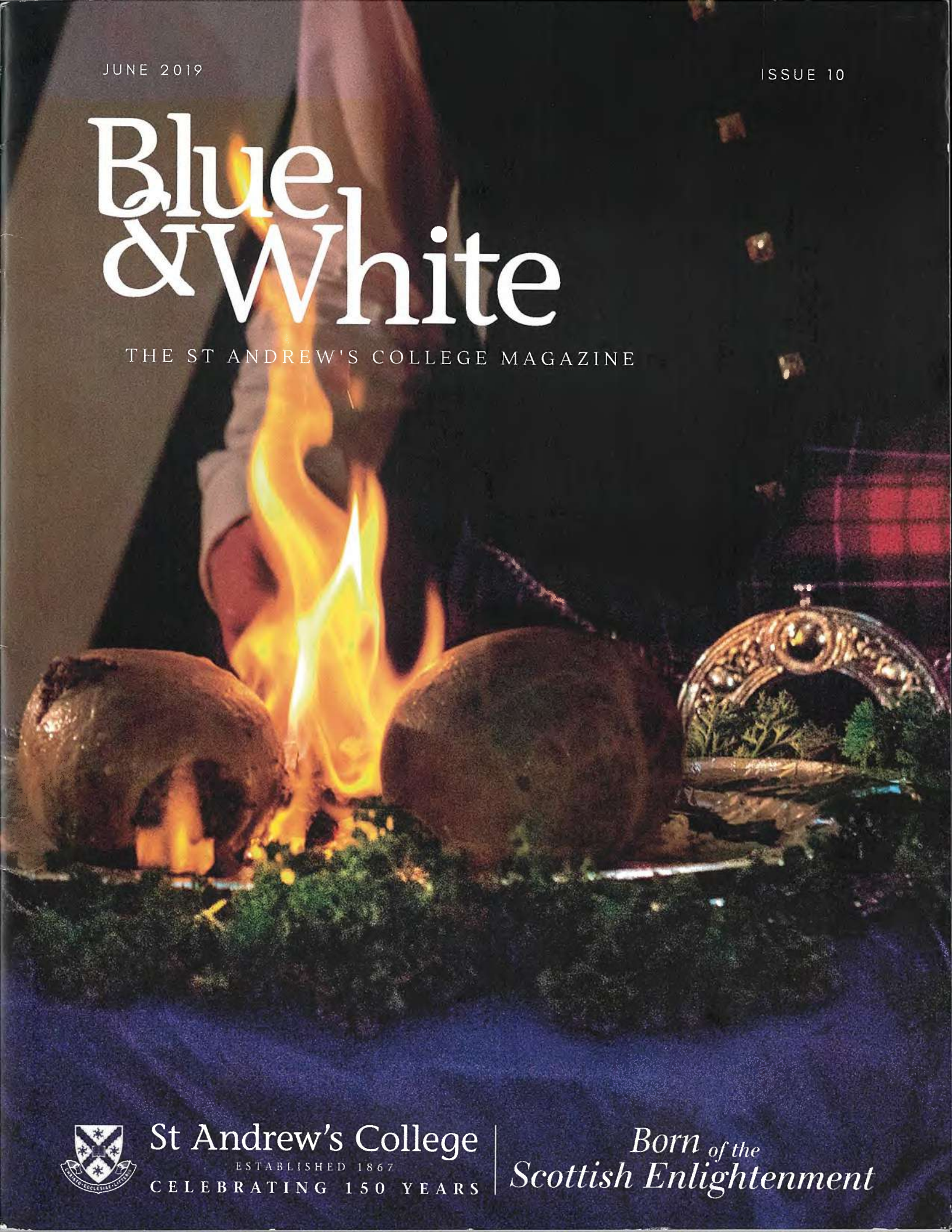


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THE ST ANDREW'S COLLEGE MAGAZINE



St Andrew's College

ESTABLISHED 1867

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

*Born of the
Scottish Enlightenment*

From the Archives

The Influenza Pandemic of 1919

The First World War had barely ended when another disaster struck. An exceptionally virulent form of influenza was first widely reported in Spain in 1918 and the disease spread around the world in 1919, killing four or five times as many people as had perished because of the war. Australia was partly sheltered by distance and quarantine. Nonetheless, 40% of the population was affected and 15,000 people died, 6,000 of these in New South Wales. This was a very substantial number, though four times more had died as a result of the war.

Residential institutions such as University Colleges were very vulnerable to the disease. The entire University of Sydney closed for six weeks in May and June 1919, while the medical faculty, including most of its students (many of them Andrewsmen),

led the fight against the disease throughout Sydney. The disease took a grip at St Andrew's by May 1919. Fifty six of the eighty one students were affected and the Students' Common Room, now the Reading Room, was converted into a temporary hospital ward. Nurses and a doctor were employed by College, while Royal Prince Alfred Hospital provided additional nurses, as it traditionally had for other extra-mural duties. John Stephens, son of the great editor of the Bulletin, was a fourth-year student at the time of the epidemic and took some marvellous photographs of the College under medical siege. Professor Ian Jack gained access to the Stephens' photograph album some thirty years ago and copied the contents for the College Archives.

Professor Ian Jack
Senior Fellow & Archivist

Alex Wright (Fr 2014)
Dean of Studies



The present Reading Room set up as a hospital wing, replete with tartan blankets and a copy of the Evening News shading the light (by all accounts a fairly grim little rag).



A group of recovering students and their nurses on the front steps of College, snug in quilts and dressing gowns.



Nurses with one who appears to be their rather stern matron under the Bowman Window on the front steps of College.



Convalescing students pose for a photograph with a bottle of whisky, the tried and tested nostrum of students at the Scottish College.