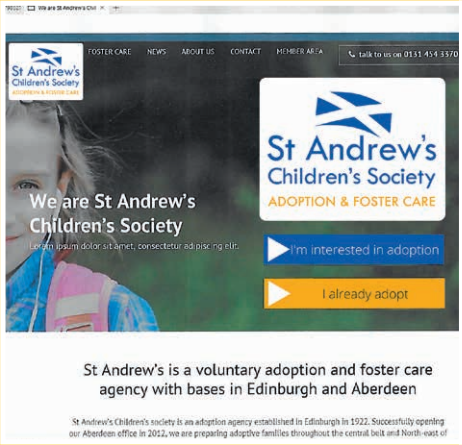
St Andrew's Children's Society
ADOPTION & FOSTER CARE

Reflections[16]

Newsletter of **St Andrew's Children's Society**

Summer 2017



Welcome to the Summer 2017 edition of the St Andrew's Children's Society newsletter, **Reflections[16]**.

In this edition we say a sad farewell to four members of staff, but hello to Milo and Mo, two puppet mice who will be assisting Rita!

We introduce you to our new website to be launched in May.

We welcome Pascaline Mollard to John's Place and Scotland's Adoption Register.

Did you know, this is the 95th anniversary of the formation of The Archdiocesan Social Services Committee, the forerunner of St Andrew's Children's Society. We are saving our celebrations for our 100th birthday in 2022 – lookout for the special edition of Reflections24! But to mark the occasion, Denise Burgess gives us a glimpse of her 30 years with the Society.

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News

Teddy Bears Picnic and Story Telling 2017

We are delighted to say Ailie Finlay will be coming back to us during the summer holidays with some more of her stories.

As in previous years, we plan to have a choice of times for families to come on the day. The date is Friday 11th August, with sessions at 1pm and 2.45pm.

All teddies and their owners are welcome! Bring your own picnic. We plan to eat in the garden if the weather is good, otherwise it will be an indoor picnic followed by stories. Some of you will know the drill from previous years.

A new face at Scotland's Adoption Register

Pascaline Mollard is the senior practitioner of Scotland's Adoption Register (SAR) based in the Society's offices, having joined at the end of 2016.

Pascaline, who came to the UK from Chamonix in the French Alps 17 years ago, completed her postgraduate MSc in Social Work at Edinburgh University in 2007 and then worked in a Children and Families practice team in Edinburgh City Council and Midlothian Council. After 6 years of child protection work she joined Midlothian's fostering and adoption team.

Pascaline is an independent Adoption Panel member for Scottish Adoption.

The SAR team is now consists of Pascaline and Jess Austin, with Robin Duncan sharing his time between John's Place (2 days per week) and as Executive Director of the Adoption and Fostering Alliance(AFA) Scotland (3 days per week).

Theraplay Level 1 training in March 2017

Annie Kierrmar, trainer from the Theraplay Institute Chicago, and Louise Howath from After Adoption Manchester, assisted by Rita Grant of the Society, delivered Theraplay training to a diverse group of over thirty people, at the Society's Edinburgh office.

It was a full five day week programme, focused on how Theraplay can help create more trusting and secure attachments between children and their care givers. Theraplay is proving to be a significantly positive experience for adopted families. It is no surprise that many social workers, educators, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHWS) workers, and independent therapists are seeking out this training in order to work with their families. A great atmosphere and enthusiasm lent itself to participants engaging in the training as much as they could… and they did! Plenty of laughter, play and imagination were in full flow, along with the serious side of addressing attachment, trauma and recovery.

A big thank you to everyone who attended.

The Society is the only agency in Scotland that hosts Theraplay training, and has developed a good working relationship with the Institute in Chicago. We look forward to future training events in the coming years.

Rita Grant, ADOPTION SUPPORT MANAGER

Parent and Child Theraplay Group

The Society is pleased to announce we are running another Parent and Child Theraplay Group in October/November 2017.

The group is aimed at families with children aged 2-4 years, and will meet on Tuesday mornings, in our offices at 7 John's Place, Edinburgh, EH6 7EL. The dates are:

Tue 24th October	Tue 14th November
Tue 31th October	Tue 21th November
Tue 7th November	Tue 28th November

Arrive 10.00am. Sessions will run from 10.15 until 11.15am.

Tea and coffee will be provided after the session.

To secure a place, please let us know, as spaces are limited to six children and six parents. The group is small, as it allows for everyone to feel safe and secure, as they get used to the activities and have fun together.

safe base

We are running two programmes in 2017, May and November 2017. The May group will have already taken place, however if you are interested in a place for the November group, please get in touch with your social worker or the Society to see how you can attend, and what the process is.

SafeBase aims to run at least one programme in Edinburgh a year – if the demand is higher for a second programme we will deliver it. May and October/November are generally the times of the year we have found works best for this programme. More information can be obtained on the website.

Rita Grant, ADOPTION SUPPORT MANAGER

Reflections on 30 years of Service

Denise Burgess, Senior Practitioner, our longest serving staff member looks back.

Close scrutiny of the Society's records and files confirms the fact that it is the staff who are the Society's foundation for the care and support that has been given to families and the children placed with them, either for adoption or fostering. There have been many changes over the years and I have been present to witness many of them.

I started working with the Society in 1987 as a part-time social worker. I had come from Dublin where I worked as a social worker in an adoption agency. I joined the two other social workers, Jo Langrebe and Kim Shandley who were supported by one full-time and one part-time secretary. Thelma Dewar, later Hamilton, was our longest serving secretary and many people will remember her as her kindness and caring went a long way in making all who contacted the Society feel welcome.

Jo Langrebe managed the Society for many years, until her retirement left only me and Thelma as employed staff for much of 1990. I recall that this was a difficult time for the Society, but Thelma and I just kept working to ensure the throughput of families for children of all ages. We were later joined by May McGhee and then later by Shona Easton as Senior Social Worker. Shona had worked for Lothian Region and she was able to negotiate with that Council a succession of secondments from its Social Work Department to augment our small staff team.

I remember going to maternity hospitals to collect new born babies and take them to foster families who would look after them for six weeks to allow the birth mother time to reflect on her decision. I also recall that, until the mid 1990s, the Society had a flat in Meadowbank in Edinburgh, where up to three pregnant women at a time could stay before and after the birth of their children until they decided if adoption was what they wanted. This demonstrated to me that the Society really did have a caring attitude towards their welfare and offered them support that they could not get anywhere else.

Up until the 1980s, the Society worked mainly with Catholic women and their children. At its peak in the 1950s and 1960s, around 50 babies were being placed each year. During my early days with the Society, attitudes towards single parenthood changed significantly, reducing the number of babies available for adoption. This was the catalyst that gave the Society the opportunity to look at a much wider group of children. It would have been an easier option to end the Society's work at this point but the commitment to children was so strongly embedded and those working as staff and trustees had the courage to take the Society in a new direction. The late 1990s saw a major move in the Society's work towards the placement of older children, finding homes for sibling groups and young children with more complex needs.

My time with the Society spanned the period when we moved from the concept of 'closed adoptions' to one where the process has become much more open. This has been one of the most significant changes in a relatively short time and has underpinned our work in supporting birth and adoptive families.

It has been a privilege working for the Society during the period of many of these changes. Today, the Society is recognised as a major contributor to adoption practice in Scotland, where thorough preparation and ongoing support to adoptive families is an integral part of our work. It is so different to the Society I joined in 1987 but one thing has not changed – our commitment to children and families!

Denise Burgess SENIOR PRACTITIONER

I remember going to maternity hospitals to collect new born babies and take them to foster families who would look after them for six weeks to allow the birth mother time to reflect on her decision.

The Departure Lounge

Sadly, one member of staff has moved on and three are about to go!

Sarah Goulding

Sarah left us in March to take up a promoted Senior Practitioner post with Barnardo's. Sarah joined us as a social worker straight from University in June 2013, having been on student placement with us the previous year. In addition to her social work, Sarah has been at the heart of getting social media off the ground at the Society, in addition to masterminding some very effective information and adopter recruitment events around central Scotland. Sarah also managed to 'fit in' getting married last year!

We wish Sarah every success in her new role with Barnardo's.

We are about to say farewell to three senior members of staff. Two have decided that retirement beckons and one is branching out in a new direction.

Marie Hindmarsh and Christine Hamilton

Marie Hindmarsh has been with the Society since 2008 as a senior manager, while Christine Hamilton, Senior Practitioner joined us in 1998. Both Marie and Christine are retiring after long and successful careers in adoption and foster care.

Sylvia Buick

Senior Practitioner Sylvia Buik, has decided that retirement can wait. She is leaving us to undertake a training role with the Children 1st Safeguarding Panel. Sylvia came to John's Place in 2007.

Best wishes from all of us to Sylvia in her new appointment and to Marie and Christine for a long and happy retirement.

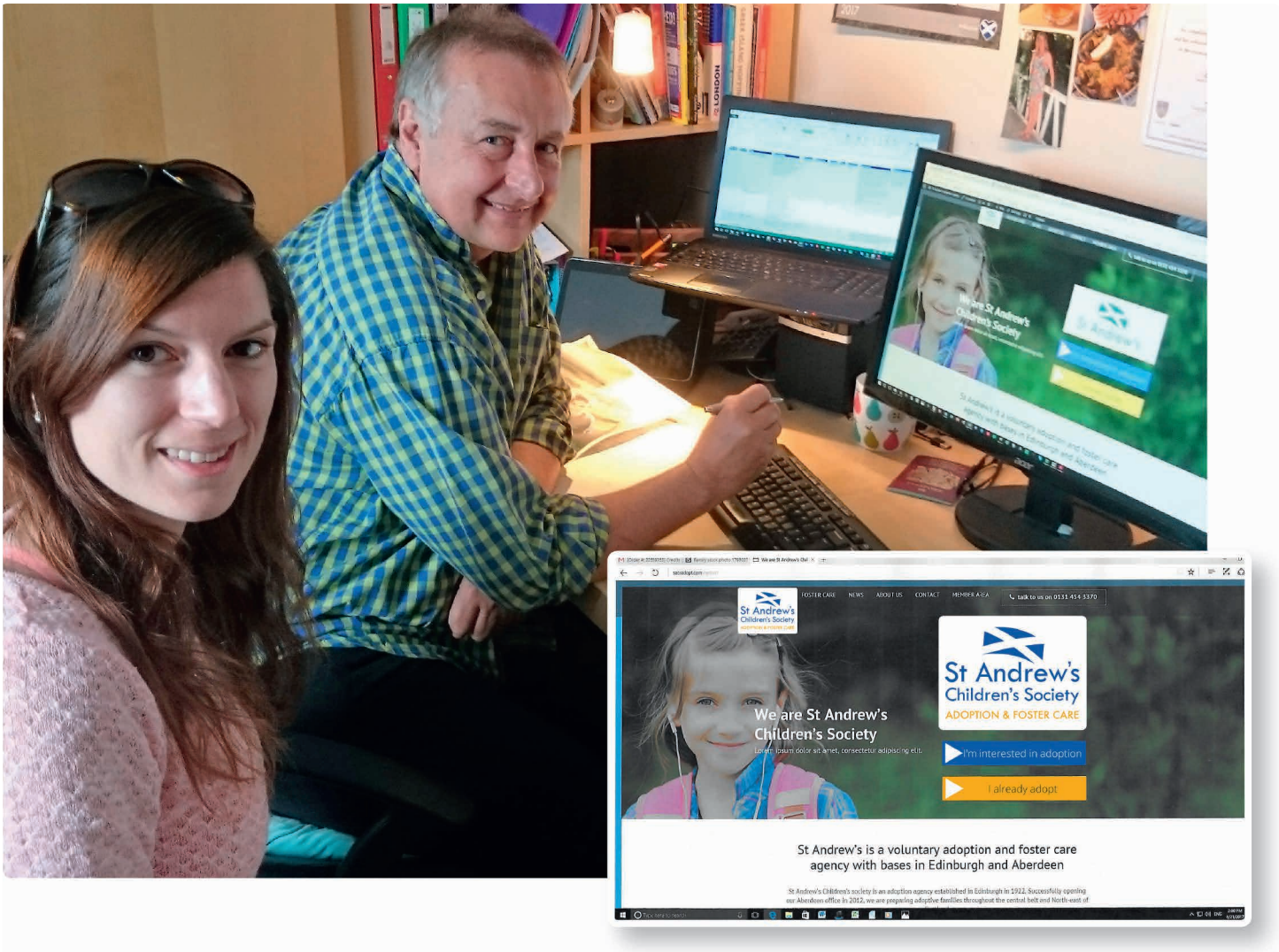
Stephen Small, DIRECTOR

(right) Sarah Goulding;
(below) Christine Hamilton, Marie Hindmarsh and Sylvia Buick.

New Society Website

We're getting a new Website!

From the early part of this year, a small group of amateurs have been working with two people who know a thing or two about website design.



Our web designer, Chas Macintosh, submitted the successful tender and began work in putting the Society's team through the gruelling process of deciding what we wanted. Simplicity was what Chas was able to deduce from our ramblings.

Very soon, the basic design began to take shape, but when it came to content, we needed more help. Enter Natalie Moffat, marketing professional who helped to ensure that we stayed focussed on simplicity but effectiveness.

We plan to launch the new website in mid-May, to coincide with a wee celebration at John's Place of the 95th anniversary of St Andrew's Children's Society.

A lot of thanks go to Chas and Natalie, but also to the Society team of Claire McMahon and Lorna Macfarlane.

The photo shows Chas and Natalie at work, and the illustration is one of the home page design options.

Dan Docwra, FUNDRAISER

Fundraising and Marketing Report

Here's a round-up of how staff have been raising the profile of the Society and what fundraising our supporters have been up to.

In April, we received the final quarter £10,500 of our first year funding from Children, Young People and Families Early Intervention Fund (CYPFEIF). Trust donations have been £2,000 from The John Gordon Charitable Trust, £400 from The Iain Stewart Foundation, £3,000 from the James Weir Foundation, £1,000 each from The CPF Trust and The Tay Charitable Trust, £1,500 from The Clipper Foundation and just in, £6,000 over two years from The Hugh Fraser Foundation. Many thanks to these supporters.

Iska and Chris Birnie from Aberdeen are undertaking the 26 mile 'Mighty Stride' Aberdeen Kiltwalk on 4th June this year, raising funds for the Society. You can help them by going to **www.virginmoneygiving.com** and making a donation towards their target of £500.

In addition to work on our new website, our marketing efforts have been directed at publishing three new marketing brochures, 'Thinking of Adopting?', 'Thinking of Foster Care?' and 'Adoption Support Services'. These will be available as hard copy brochures and also available to download from our website

Dan Docwra, FUNDRAISER

Our new marketing brochures

www.standrews-children.org.uk

Visit our website, find us on Facebook or follow on Twitter, for all our latest news.

@StAndrewsChildrensSociety **@sacsadopt**

Milo and Mo: An assistive communication project

We have acquired two furry little friends – mice. Don't panic… Milo and Mo are of the puppet variety! They will be helping the Society with some of our work with children over the coming months.

(main) Ailie Finlay with puppet 'friend'; (inset) Rita Grant, our Adoption Support Manager, trying out the puppets.

Milo and Mo come with helpful and interesting backstory experiences, which children are able to identify with, such as feeling upset/angry and then knowing what they can do to feel better. Essentially the puppets enable children to identify and name feelings and experiences, and learn some ways of managing them.

Milo and Mo came to us a few weeks ago, brought along by Ailie Finlay. Ailie has been working with similar puppets for some time now and they have proved very helpful in a joint project with Puppet Animation Scotland and Pinkie St Peter's Primary School in Musselburgh. The project was aimed at improving relationships, speech, language and communication, in the Early Years and on into Primary through the use of puppets.

The puppet mice were designed and made by Puppet Animation Scotland and the teachers at Pinkie St Peter's received training in their use by Ailie, a skilled storyteller and experienced puppeteer. Each class had a mouse which would appear at appropriate times to create a learning environment to deal with simple problems.

Evidence gathered throughout the project showed that children who did not speak within nursery at all communicated with the puppet and through that, with the teacher and others.

One early example of success was the case of two boys who had not spoken throughout pre-school. In P1, the puppet trained teacher used the puppet mouse to communicate with the children, leading to both of them beginning to talk to the mouse, then directly to the teacher and other children.

Rita Grant, ADOPTION SUPPORT MANAGER