# FROM THE GROUND UP

# **ISSUE 16**

W M Donald Magazine Summer 2024

# We speak to log about his

THE BIG INTERVIEW

We speak to Joe about his career in the construction industry, launching his own consultancy practice and the challenges facing the sector.

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# DOUBLE SUCCESS AT THE NORTHERN STAR AWARDS

W M Donald takes home the awards for '2024 Business of the Year' and 'Inspiring Futures' at the 20th anniversary Northern Star Awards.

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# EMPOWERING FUTURES: BARNARDO'S PARTNERSHIP

Discover more about W M Donald's partnership with Barnardo's in the Highlands to deliver work experience placements and opportunities.

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# **CEO Welcome**



As we reflect on the past year and look forward to the future, I am proud of the continued journey at W M Donald. Our commitment to our workforce and apprentices and sustainability has once again been recognised and celebrated in the construction industry.

I am delighted to recognise that W M Donald was also honoured with the Sustainability in Construction Award at the Trades Awards 2023 at the end of last year. We also won Best Large Trade Business, and congratulations to Joanne Riddoch, our Trainee Engineer, who won the Rising Star Award. A triumphant trio of awards, what a night!

April was a month filled with pride for us as we achieved great success at the Northern Star Awards. We had the honour of winning two awards. First, we won Inspiring Futures, which was down to Rachel's exceptional dedication in advancing our apprenticeship programme and our work in local schools. In addition, we were pleasantly surprised and thrilled to be named 'Business of the Year', surpassing some of the most outstanding businesses in the North East.

In addition to these remarkable accomplishments, we have also been named a finalist in the cHeRries 2024 for Wellbeing in the Workplace. This recognition highlights our commitment to creating a supportive, inclusive and healthy work environment for all our employees. We believe that our people are our greatest asset, and fostering a workplace where everyone can thrive is a core value at W M Donald. Being recognised in this category affirms our efforts to prioritise the wellbeing of our team.

To our team, Elaine and I thank you for your continued dedication and hard work, and to our clients, old and new, thank you for putting your trust in us to deliver your projects. Here's to another year of achievements and success.

Willie Donald Chief Entertainment Officer W M Donald

# **MD** Welcome



Welcome to the latest edition of 'From the Ground Up', your go-to source for all the exciting developments and achievements at W M Donald. It's great to bring the publication back with some design tweaks and updates, whilst ensuring all the same fantastic stories remain from our teams across Scotland.

Over the past months, our team has been hard at work on a variety of new projects. From Aberdeenshire, Highlands, Tayside, Fife and Perthshire, we've undertaken a diverse range of projects across multiple sectors. Diversification remains the cornerstone of our success, as highlighted by Katy Forbes, our Senior Commercial Manager, in her insightful article in this edition. It is our ability to adapt and expand into different areas that strengthens our portfolio and reinforces our resilience in a dynamic and challenging market.

Echoing the sentiments of our CEO, Willie Donald, I want to express my deepest gratitude to our teams. It is your dedication and hard work that drives our continued success. Each project we complete is a testament to the skill, commitment and passion you bring to your work every day.

As we look ahead to the next six months, I am filled with optimism. We have a strong pipeline of projects and opportunities that will further showcase our expertise and dedication to excellence. Let's continue to build on our successes, support one another and push the boundaries of what we can achieve together.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment and enthusiasm from our teams, suppliers and clients. Here's to another period of growth, achievement and innovation.

Yours aye,

Ewan Riddoch Managing Director W M Donald

# The Big Interview with Joe Boyle



In the evolving landscape of the construction industry, Joe Boyle stands out, not just for his impressive career spanning 27 years, but also for his commitment to sustainability and the community. Having recently launched his own consultancy practice Joe Boyle Ltd, after decades of experience including significant roles at Scotia Homes, Joe sits down with us to reflect on his journey, challenges and the road ahead.

We'd like to start by hearing a bit about your journey so far. Could you share some highlights from your career and what you are most proud of?

There have been loads of highlights over the vears, from what we've built, who I've worked with and the recognition we've achieved.

I'm particularly proud of seeing colleagues and staff develop and thrive with just a bit of support, encouragement and direction. Winning the CITB UK Apprentice Employer of the Year in 2013, plus various NHBC and Trades Awards, and all the Sustainability Awards last year nationally are among my proudest achievements. I am also extremely proud of the fact that I've never had to apply for a job - being recommended or approached for each position is a testament to my upbringing focused on hard work, respect, honesty and treating everyone equally.

#### What inspired you to pursue a career in the building industry?

I always knew I'd work in the building industry, inspired by my father who was a Commercial Manager for a local builder, and was the typical path for young men in Ireland into trades.

Though I initially planned to do a joinery apprenticeship, my academic success and a push from my parents led me to pursue higher education in Building Studies in Derry, before moving to Aberdeen to study for a BSc Hons in Building Surveying at RGU, setting the stage for my career.

#### Have you spent your entire career working in the north of Scotland?

Most of it! After completing my degree in '96, I was fortunate when my Course Leader recommended me for a graduate position in Project Management at Scotia Homes.

I stayed with Scotia until 2005 when the draw back home to Ireland was too great and I headed over to catch the Celtic Tiger - the name of the housing boom at the time. I worked for two housing developers, each with developments in NI and ROI, so I had to adapt to working in different currencies, regulations, local governments and authorities, and costs. At one stage I had 18 sites and a turnover of £60m on the go!

But then recession struck, so when Scotia offered me a director's position in 2011, I jumped at the chance. The North East has been home ever since.

#### Tell us about how your partnership with W M Donald came to be?

I've worked alongside Willie and Elaine for over 25 years, since my first days at Scotia.

Willie, Ewan and Alistair (RIP) have been great mentors. As a Project Manager at Scotia, I knew where the experience lay I never shied away from seeking advice, whether from them or the squads operating the diggers and doing groundwork.

I've always found that showing respect to everyone, along with genuine interest in what someone is doing, builds respect and willingness to share knowledge. Only then can you work together for the same goals and objectives - that's a true partnership.



# We've heard that you have a particularly special relationship with W M Donald, outside of work and the building industry, relating to their charity work. Can you elaborate?

I was diagnosed with head and neck cancer in May 2017 by Professor Ah-See at ARI. Fortunately, my cancer was detected early, thanks to an endoscopy camera available to Professor Ah-See. Thanks to this piece of kit, the time from my initial test to the formal diagnosis was only six weeks.

Meanwhile, W M Donald was gearing up to celebrate their 40th anniversary. Throughout the year, they worked tirelessly to raise £60,000 for a local charity. Willie, Elaine and their team are known for their continuous charitable efforts, often flying under the radar.

During my recovery and remission period, I learned that W M Donald decided to donate the entire amount to Friends of Anchor, a charity that is a huge help to local cancer patients.

What truly moved me was seeing Elaine and Willie featured in a P&J article, presenting brand new endoscopy equipment to Professor Ah-See!

I must admit I burst into tears. To see such an act of generosity by such a humble family and their team, so others could have the same success and survive, it just blew me away, and is something I will never forget.

# Launching your own consultancy firm is a significant achievement. What motivated you to take this step?



After experiencing a brain haemorrhage last year, I realised the importance of taking things a bit easier. Well, that was the plan at least.

I needed to keep my mind active or I'd be climbing the walls. That's when I decided to explore more ways to use my experience to help other developers and landowners.

Following some advice, I decided to start my own venture properly. I got some help to set up my website and considered going solo. I chose the name Joe Boyle Ltd, figuring that using my own name would be more effective for attracting work than coming up with something fancy.

Since December, I haven't looked back! It's been busier than I had anticipated, but I'm really enjoying it. Same problems, different clients, same great consultants and contractors!

#### Looking ahead, what do you see as the most significant challenges the construction industry faces in 2024 and beyond? How should the industry prepare to address these challenges?

The industry has proven its resilience time and time again. Everything happens in cycles; this one just feels like we've never really climbed out of it.

Since 2008, it just feels like it's one thing after the other – recession, banking crisis, oil and gas downturns, pandemics, fuel shortages, geopolitical tensions, fluctuating material prices and economic uncertainty with a lack of government leadership.

A shortage of skilled labour is always going to be the biggest challenge, encouraging the next generation and career changers to join the industry, as well as embracing new technologies, like offsite manufacturing, automation and AI, can only help.

This year and the next will test customer confidence and economic stability. Factors out of our control may lead to some businesses not surviving, as we've already seen. Despite this, we continue to diversify, explore other opportunities and offer alternative solutions.

By encouraging more partnerships, early engagement and adopting a collaborative problem-solving approach, together, we can get through this and come out better on the other side.

# What are your aspirations for the future, both personally and professionally?

In recent years, I've been doing a lot of work in ESG, Net Zero and Sustainability, and I have recently qualified as a Chartered Environmentalist through the Society of the Environment.

With the move to Net Zero, there are many new regulations, such as the requirement for all new buildings to be heated using nonfossil fuels after 24th April and building to Passivhaus standard becoming mandatory beyond 25th April. The industry cannot ignore these shifts.

I aim to tackle it from a practical and deliverable approach and get rid of the jargon. We must find ways to implement these regulatory changes affordably and effectively.

And as for personally, my priority is the health and wellbeing of myself and my family. That's much more important to me than any completion date.



# How do you relax away from the stresses and strains of work?

I enjoy spending time with the family and our two rescue dogs. We make sure to do everything together, whether it's enjoying our garden in the nice weather or taking walks at Newburgh and Forvie Reserve.

My son and I have a routine of going to the gym three times a week with a personal trainer. We challenge each other at circuits, boxing and weights, while he trains for basketball.

My wife Bronagh and I are contemplating getting alpacas after a training course on breeding and keeping them – a beautiful animal, but a big decision!

Recently, I've also been exploring my ancestry using a DNA test kit and Ancestry. It's fascinating to learn about my family's origins and the places they've travelled to over generations.

#### l

# W M Donald Claims Top Prize at the Northern Star Business Awards 2024



We were humbled to pick up two awards at this year's Northern Star, including the top prize of the night, being named the '2024 Business of the Year'.

Celebrating its 20th anniversary, the awards welcomed over 850 people to the P&J Live for a glittering ceremony, hosted by BBC radio and television star Edith Bowman.

The awards, run by Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, recognise successful and growing businesses that make a positive impact on the North-east economy.

We scooped award wins in the Business of the Year category and the Inspiring Futures Award.

Elaine said, "We would like to thank all of the W M Donald team who, without their dedication, commitment and support, all of this would not be possible. The Business of the Year Award recognises our growth, but it is so much more than that. Our success is down to a real mix of factors, our people, our clients and, most importantly, the quality of our work and commitment to doing the best job we can do.

"I would like to also congratulate Rachel and her team for their hard work which delivered the Inspiring Futures Award. This award recognises our commitment and investment in helping to develop the young workforce where we are working in close partnership with our industry partners and North East Scotland College – it is a real team effort!"

Other big winners on the night included Amuse by Kevin Dalgleish, Balmoral, Duncan Farms, Grampian Housing Association, Load Monitoring Systems and The Archie Foundation.

Congratulations to all the other businesses on the night who are all doing their part to drive excellence in our region.









# A Shout Out to Our Own Social Influencer, 'Steve Earthmoving'

For anyone who hasn't yet come across Steve's social channels, we would highly encourage you to give them a follow and like. Steve joined the W M Donald team in 2021 and works as a 360 Plant/Tiltrotator Operator.

Steve's passion for driving tiltrotators takes him all over the world. As a Kinshofer demo driver, he has travelled to Bauma in Germany, Conexpo in Las Vegas and Intermat in Paris.

Steve created his Facebook Group 'Tiltrotator Operators Media' in June 2017, and the group has gone from strength to strength amassing over 50,000 members who engage with the page to share their experiences, the latest technology and more about all things tiltrotator operators! You can join the group here –

#### Tiltrotator Operators media

Not happy with just his Facebook group, Steve's Instagram page followed in 2018 and has over 2,600 followers –

#### @steve\_earthmoving

And last, but certainly not least, Steve joined TikTok in 2021 where his page has exploded. In his own words, if you are into 'videos of construction, agriculture, transport and cool s\*\*t' then get across to TikTok to give his page a follow –

#### @steve\_earthmoving

Steve's already amassed 12.7k TikTok followers and over 172k likes across his videos! Keep up the good work Steve, shining a light behind the scenes on life as a Tiltrotator Operator.







### **ISO Recertification Audit Success**

In May and June this year, the standards to which we all operate at W M Donald were put to the test when LRQA (Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance) carried out the certification renewal for ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015, ISO 45001:2018.

Two auditors spent nine days going through the policies, procedures and processes that operate within the Company, including visiting five of our operational sites across Aberdeen, Inverness

and Perth. The result is that the Company successfully demonstrated the standard to have our certification renewed.

While the new office in Aberuthven won't be added to the certificate scope just yet as we settle in and bring it up to compliance, all efforts were made across all the teams to step up and put their best efforts forward to demonstrate how we make it happen at W M Donald.

"I'd like to thank everyone involved in the audit who have helped make it a success, especially the Contracts Managers and teams on site who made sure everything was just the way it should be" Ricky Holtom – HSEQ Manager.



# **Building Business Resilience Not Just Surviving, but Thriving**



An insight from Katy Forbes, Senior Commercial Manager

W M Donald has played a major role in many housing developments across the North East and beyond with the housing sector having historically made up a significant part of our overall business. These projects have helped W M Donald grow into the major player it is today, but the recent housing sector turbulence has also made it a challenge for our business.

In recent years, we have made a strategic decision to actively diversify our project portfolio.

When the housing market showed instability, we strategically reduced our involvement in high-risk projects and reallocated our labour force to other ongoing projects. This not only ensured minimal disruption to our operations

but also safeguarded our workforce's employment.

From a commercial standpoint, we've undergone significant changes in how we manage our dealings, especially concerning debtors and the release of retentions. These adjustments are a testament to our commitment to protecting our business, adopting a proactive rather than a reactive approach.

Central to our culture at W M Donald is resilience. We've built our business on the foundation of anticipating and preparing for various market conditions, always with an eye on preserving interests while navigating external challenges. Our risk management strategies are thorough, reflecting our dedication to not just surviving but thriving amid adversity.

Our strategic move towards diversification reflects our ambition and commitment to growth. Recognising the need to broaden our horizons, we've ventured into more commercial projects, including distillery work, MOD projects, renewable energy and other initiatives, in turn adapting our business model and upskilling our team to meet new

challenges head-on. This diversification is not just about expansion but about reinforcing the robustness of W M Donald against market fluctuations.

We pride ourselves on being a 'one-stop shop' for civil works, offering an array of services that cater to various client needs. From geotechnical engineering, which allows us to engage with clients from the early stages of a project, to our technical and engineering teams that excel in innovative problemsolving. Our operational capabilities span multiple divisions, including tarring, utilities, and even CCTV and drainage, underscoring our comprehensive approach to civil engineering.

Looking ahead, we're setting our sights on becoming a main contractor, overseeing major projects from start to finish. This ambition is backed by a solid business plan that's currently in development, outlining the steps we'll take to achieve this goal. It's an exciting direction for us and one that promises to leverage our accumulated expertise and reputation for excellence.

The past few years have undeniably been challenging for businesses across the spectrum. Yet, through these trials, the spirit and resilience of W M Donald has shone brightly.

It's a personal honour for me to be part of this incredible team, driving growth and maintaining our commitment to excellence in every project we undertake. Our journey is a testament to the strength and adaptability that lies at the heart of our operations, ensuring that we not only meet but exceed the expectations of our clients.

The story of W M Donald is one of resilience, strategic foresight and adaptability. It highlights our commitment to safeguarding our business and our people against unforeseen market challenges, all while setting our sights on future growth and diversification.

As we continue to evolve and expand our services, our focus remains dedicated to delivering top-quality projects and maintaining our position as leaders in the civil works sector. The road ahead is filled with opportunities, and with the 'elite' team at W M Donald, we're prepared to tackle them head-on, ensuring a bright and successful future for our company, our clients and our community.

Katy

# Finalists at the cHeRries

Wellbeing in the Workplace of the Year, sponsored by Lang & Co

#### W M Donald is thrilled to be named a finalist in the cHeRries Awards, a testament to our commitment to employee wellbeing.

As we prepare for the awards ceremony on 13th June 2024, we reflect on what has brought us here: our dedication to creating a supportive, thriving workplace.

We believe a healthy, happy workplace is essential for our success. This recognition by the cHeRries Awards underscores our



efforts to ensure every team member feels valued and supported, both personally and professionally. Our holistic approach includes flexible work arrangements, health programmes and continuous feedback mechanisms, fostering an environment where our employees can excel.

We congratulate all finalists and look forward to celebrating our shared commitment to enhancing workplace wellbeing. Good luck to everyone!

# Recognising Excellence: The GEM Awards

At W M Donald, we celebrate excellence through our GEM Awards, honouring employees who consistently exceed expectations. The acronym stands for, 'Going the Extra Mile', reflecting our values of dedication, innovation and service.

Monthly winners are selected based on factors like productivity, customer service, creativity, proactiveness and mentoring, nominated by peers, supervisors, managers and clients. This inclusive process ensures deserving individuals are recognised for their impact.

Our recent winners in 2024 include Donald Mackie, Rachel Watson, Carl Stone, Mariusz Skuba and Alex Walker.

Additionally, we annually crown a GEM of the Year. This year, Alan Macintyre, who has been with us for 24 ½ years, received the honour for his reliability, diligence and invaluable contributions to the company. Alan, a family man with two children and a loving wife, Paula, embodies our ethos and is essential to our success.

To nominate someone for a GEM Award, simply reach out to your contracts manager or email Rachel at hr@wmdonald.co.uk. Let's continue to celebrate excellence together.











# W M Donald Apprenticeships Academy — A 2024 Update



#### The W M Donald Apprenticeships Academy was born in 2021 as a direct result of the challenges we faced, which included:

- Skills shortage
- Ageing workforce
- No apprentices
- Lack of funding
- COVID
- No local college
- Perception of the industry: cold, dark, dangerous

# To address these problems, we set our 2022/23 objectives which included:

- Set-up an apprentice academy
- Create training plans
- Collaborate with training providers
- Collaborate with the CITB
- Collaborate with Grampian Construction Training Group
- Change perceptions
- Upskill current workforce
- Community activity





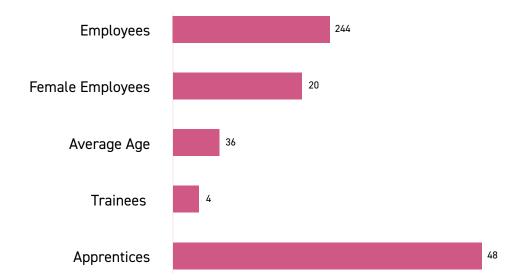
# Our HR Statistics in 2024

#### Our 2024 HR statistics:

- 244 employees our growth continues
- 20 female employees, 5 based on-site
- Average employee age 36
- 4 trainees
- 6 graduate apprentices
- 1 mechanic apprentice
- 41 apprentices
- We continue to be a multiple awardwinning company

We want to take the opportunity to recognise our graduates and apprentices, past and present, who are a core part of the W M Donald family and look forward to watching them grow and thrive within the business and throughout their careers.

For further information on academy opportunities, please contact rachel.o'donnell@wmdonald.co.uk



# Employee Engagement Day 2024

Our annual Employee Engagement Day was held on 8th January, returning for the first time post-COVID. This all-day event welcomed 217 employees and enabled everyone across all branches to come together as a team and for W M Donald to share updates, knowledge and incentives.

Our staff feedback and impact survey postevent helps us shape what the day covers each year.

Our 2024 Employee Engagement Day is also a chance to celebrate success and for our team to stand up and be appreciated in person. We covered financial support and advice for our employees, CSR and well-being and health amongst other topics.

Thank you to our guest speakers who included:

- Gareth Phillips of SYGMA
- Douglas Blease of Envirocentre
- Kevin Will of MCHB
- Nicola Campbell of Lighthouse Club
- Dr Scott of TAC





# A Good Catch Today Keeps Incidents at Bay!

To revolutionise and streamline key business processes and maximise safety, W M Donald introduced its 'Re-Flow' app in 2023. One of the benefits this custombuilt app brings is enabling the team to report HS&E accidents, near misses and non-conformances. The team took part in an initial trial, which proved successful, with a continual ongoing rollout as updates are made to the app. Continuous training is also provided to the team.

Reporting a 'Good Catch' has now become even easier for our workforce. At the touch of a button, the team now have the ability to share the things they can see which can cause incidents or are worthy of a good mention. Reporting a 'Good Catch' only takes a moment and could prevent injury to a member of the team or someone else on-site.

By touching the camera icon and following a form to submit an Unsafe Condition, Unsafe Behaviour or a Positive Condition/ Behaviour, the more 'Good Catches' the team submit, the more we can prevent incidents from happening.

We are always looking for lessons learned and look forward to reporting back on digital data gathered from the app and improvements we can make within our working day.





## Holding the Zero

At W M Donald, our vision and mission are underpinned by our core values, which have been with us since we started trading and are fundamental to everything we do. These are the values that define and set us apart.

One of these core values is 'Making Safety Happen' – we simply believe that no one should be harmed by our activities. We promote a culture where everyone is committed to the delivery of our work safely. We will never compromise on this value.

In 2024, we have had 128 zero-incident days and our goal is to 'hold the zero' throughout the year for individuals and groups. We take pride in that this is a team effort. Our



approach to safety is that everyone has a collective responsibility, and the use of the new 'Good Catch' report in our Re-Flow app means the more our team reports, the more we can all create safe workplaces. You can read more about Re-Flow in this section.

# Boots on the Ground



Ricky Holtom shares his 'boots on the ground' approach when it comes to engaging with the W M Donald team:

"Building a strong health and safety relationship with the workforce is key to both developing trust with the team and ensuring that they feel confident they are supported when it comes to reporting an unsafe condition or behaviour."

Ricky continues, "Boots on the ground is so important. I make a point of regular site visits so that people get to know me. I am a recognised face that they see regularly and that the team can feel confident when reporting a 'Good Catch'. I cannot stress enough how important reporting 'near misses' is. I am also keen to prompt the team to share positive conditions and behaviours. Yes, we should always be mindful of the harm which can be caused if a task is not carried out correctly, but we also look to recognise and commend the team when positive actions are being carried out.

"We have upscaled our H&S resource with the appointment of Ross Ferguson as HSEQ Advisor and are committed to the safety of our team and our clients on project sites. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the W M Donald team for their efforts to 'hold the zero' and for their ongoing commitment to safety."

# Welcome to the Team — HSEQ Advisor Appointment

We are delighted to welcome Ross Ferguson to the team. Ross joined on Monday 5th February 2024 as HSEQ Advisor and brings a wealth of experience, having served as a Lance Corporal and Royal Marines Gunner for six and a half years.

His dedication to excellence and extensive background in precision and discipline make him a valuable addition to our commitments to health and safety. Ross's appointment will undoubtedly contribute to enhancing the safety and wellbeing of our workplace.

# W M Donald Wins 'Sustainability In Construction' at the Trades Awards 2023

We are thrilled to announce that W M Donald was awarded the prestigious Sustainability in Construction Award, sponsored by Transform, at the glittering Trades Awards ceremony at the end of last year. This accolade is a testament to our unwavering commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility.

In 2023, we proudly marked three years as a carbon neutral company, a significant milestone in our journey towards becoming carbon zero. Our dedication to addressing climate emergencies, as declared by governments worldwide, is not only a core value but also deeply appreciated by our clients and employees.

#### Leading by Example in Sustainability

At W M Donald, we believe in leading by example. Simple yet impactful practices, such as waste elimination, reuse and recycling, are integral to our operations, both in the office and on-site. The introduction of electric cars and charging points has fostered a culture of open discussion about the benefits of sustainable practices among our staff.

For the 2023/24 period, we have set ambitious sustainability objectives, including:

- Reducing single-use plastics from our suppliers
- Sourcing all energy from guaranteed renewable sources under the REGO scheme
- Conducting feasibility studies for hydrogen production and HVO fuel use
- Active membership in the Supply Chain Sustainability School
- Implementing truck, van and excavator replacement programmes

#### **Innovative Approaches to Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions have led us to embrace digitalisation. In 2022/23, we made significant strides by developing and introducing the W M Donald app. This ambitious project aims to eliminate paper in the workplace, replacing all forms and documents with digital versions accessible via phones or tablets.

This digital transformation, supported by a robust design, build and training programme,



has already yielded leaner, paperless processes. Our initial five-year programme, with a capital investment of £180k, is projected to bring substantial environmental benefits in the first year:

- Scope 3 (freighting goods) emissions reduced by 10%, equating to two tons of CO2e
- Waste reduction by 50%, equating to 0.457 tons of CO2e

These improvements, while delivering significant carbon reductions in the first year, will continue to enhance our environmental performance annually. Encouraged by the early success of the W M Donald app, we are committed to exploring additional technologies to further reduce our carbon footprint.

#### **Continuous Improvement and Future** Commitment

W M Donald remains dedicated to measuring our environmental impact annually, ensuring that our sustainability benefits are realised, and we are continuously seeking innovative ways to improve our performance.

As a proud family company, we recognise the importance of protecting the planet for future generations. Our commitment to sustainability is not just about meeting current standards

but ensuring that our environmental legacy is one to be proud of.

Winning the Sustainability in Construction Award at the Trades Awards 2023 was an honour that validates our efforts and motivates us to continue our journey towards a greener, more sustainable future. Thank you to all our clients, employees and partners for supporting us in this crucial endeavour.

W M Donald also picked up two other awards on the night: Best Large Trade Business, and a great win for our Trainee Engineer Joanne Riddoch, who took home the Rising Star



# **Empowering Futures: Barnardo's and W M Donald** Partnership - A Success Story in the Highlands



Barnardo's Scotland has been running employability programmes in the Highlands for the past 16 years, working with young people post-education and readying them for the world of work.

The charity supports them to understand employer expectations and helps them build resilience so they are ready to cope with the pressures and demands of employers.

Just under two years ago, Barnardo's secured a contract with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) to help introduce people to construction-related jobs and, more importantly, to help them keep their jobs.

Barnardo's developed a mentor programme on the back of this partnership to support this goal. Through CITB, the charity secured funding to continue to run its employability programmes to get young people ready for the world of work in construction.

Through this programme, Barnardo's delivers SQA-accredited qualifications - Self & Work and The Principles of Money – including a one-day 'Health & Safety in a Construction Environment' course and preparation to carry out their CSCS touch screen test. This enables the participants to cover the basics before trying for a work experience placement under Barnardo's.

The charity then offers a one-week work placement with an employer to introduce them to working in the construction industry. If successful, they are then transitioned into employment, which is further supported through the mentorship programme.

Around a year ago, W M Donald was introduced to Patricia Anderson, the Employer Liaison & SACO Project Coordinator at Barnardo's. Following discussions, it was clear that there were synergies and aligned values in wanting to support and offer opportunities to young people into jobs.

Rachel O'Donnell, HR Manager, and Barry Smeaton, Commercial Manager North, both of W M Donald, met with mentor programme participants Johnathon Campbell, Kai Mulroy and Myles Fraser, who were offered two weeks of work experience. The trio worked hard, showed commitment and were all successful in gaining full-time employment.





Congratulations to Johnathon and Kai, who are now full-time apprentices, and Myles, who is now a Trainee Engineer. All have worked with W M Donald for almost eight months. Your hard work and determination have paid off. Well done!

Patricia Anderson, Employer Liaison & SACO Project Coordinator at Barnardo's, commented:

"What I love about W M Donald is that it is very much a family business, and it was so lovely to work alongside a business that I knew were going to treat people fairly and make them feel like they are part of the 'work family'."

Patricia continues: "Our mentees have been put through apprenticeships at college by W M Donald, and I am so proud of what they have achieved. I am also very grateful to Rachel, Barry and the team for fully supporting Johnathon, Kai and Myles in gaining and retaining successful full-time work.

"I can't say enough about the relationship with the W M Donald team and very much look forward to our ongoing partnership in getting more young people into construction-based jobs and helping them stay there."

To find out more about the Barnardo's Scotland employability programmes, please visit: www.barnardos-ets.org.uk

## **Our Current Projects**

The North team has been busy across various sectors with ongoing projects, including housing developments, whisky warehouses and supporting the formation of a new tree surgery. Here is a snapshot of some of their current projects:



#### **Invergordon Distillery, Invergordon**

Formation of 2nr new whiskey maturation warehouses for Whyte & Mackay

Main contractor: Compass Building & Construction Services.

Scope of works: Earthworks, sewers across the whole site, warehouse foundations and solums for both warehouses.

Completion due: October 2024

Earthworks ongoing with concrete foundations to start in May 2024 followed by sewers.



#### **Newton Tree Surgery, Elgin**

Formation of new tree surgery at Newton Surgery, Elgin

Main contractor: Morgan Sindall

Scope of works: Earthworks, sewers, roads, hard landscaping, services across the whole site, foundations and solums for all buildings, including new hub building, cold store, etc.

Completion due: November 2024

Earthworks complete, sewers, roads, landscaping and services ongoing with concrete foundations to all building complete.



# Housing Development at Ness Side, Inverness

Next phases of new housing development at Ness Side, inverness

Developer/main contractor: Tulloch Homes

Scope of works: Earthworks, sewers, roads, services, plotworks across the whole site.

Completion due: December 2025



Housing Development, Elgin South Phase 2

New phase of a new housing development, Elgin South Phase 2, Elgin

Developer/main contractor: Springfield Properties

Scope of works: Earthworks, sewers, roads, hard landscaping, services across the whole site. Upgrading of existing Birnie Road to facilitate the new development.

Completion due: March 2025

# **North Team Update**

A warm welcome to our new starts in 2024 at our North team! This year we have been joined by:



Amin Elsabry - Skilled Worker









# **Our Current Projects**

Learn more about the projects our teams have been delivering and that are set to get underway since our last issue of From the Ground Up.



#### **Barratt Homes - Mugiemoss 2G**

This project is a continuation of the site we have worked in partnership with Barratts on for some time now. The contract consists of 52 units including a block of flats, which is a mix of social housing and private housing. W M Donald is supporting with a combination of services including earthworks, roads and sewers.



#### CALA Homes - Grandhome Ph 4

Furthering the success of Grandhome where we have worked with various clients, W M Donald continues to provide infrastructure to serve different parcels of land being developed. We were recently successful in securing the next phase for CALA Homes at their Grandhome development. The works include surface water management, earthworks, roads, sewers and services which were closely tied into neighbouring developers, and 76 units are currently being constructed on this development.



#### L & N Scotland - St Fergus Gas Terminal

Moving away from the housing sector, the W M Donald team has been hard at work replacing plinths in the main gas terminal at St Fergus. With very limited access, this challenging project has required lots of 'outside the box' thinking from our experienced Technical and Operational team to allow these works to be carried out. No heavy plant is allowed within the vicinity of the terminal due to operational restrictions meaning new and innovative solutions have been required from the team.



#### Bancon Homes - Lochside of Leys Ph 1c

In the latest phase of the Lochside of Leys development, W M Donald has created a 'Value Engineered Earthwork' strategy to utilise remaining material on-site to soften the shortfall and save on the requirement of import and export. This wider project involves earthworks, sewers, services and junction adaptation as part of the construction of 31 units.

#### Aberdeen City Council - Pitmedden Road, Blackburn

Whilst the Pitmedden Road project may be smaller in value, it has been a challenging one for the team and a project that has allowed us to showcase our skills. This project was on a small road where a tree had collapsed during recent storms and had landed in the river, taking out some of the road with it. W M Donald was brought in to repair the road and ensure it was able to reopen again as quickly as possible.



#### AJC - Benton 20

Continuing our work at Elsick, where AJC is our client, W M Donald is tying into sewers by others and formulating a surface water management plan to operate as the site is progressing. This project involves some challenging ground conditions and large diameter sewers, earthworks, roads and 20 individual units being constructed.

#### **Barratt Homes - Cordyce**

Located at the former site of Cordyce School, W M Donald will be forming a new entrance and carrying out a range of earthworks, roads and sewers at the development for Barratt Homes. The development will see the construction of 87 units, which includes provision for social housing. This site is due to commence end of June.

## An Update From WMD Drainage



Here at W M Donald Drainage, we pride ourselves on our workmanship to ensure best possible results when keeping sewers flowing correctly for our clients. Some factors can be outwith our control and can hinder our performance or the results of our work, but we don't give up. We don't like to let our customers down, and so we adapt and overcome, finding a way to get the job completed.

This attitude and mindset has been key during a recent project in Bridge of Earn. This project involved all lines to be cleaned and surveyed with manhole card reports and some remedial patching works to bring the sewers up to Scottish water standard.

We want the best results from our engineers to pass to the clients. Small props, such as these lightweight tents, make all the difference to the operative's working conditions and keep them warm and dry to be able to produce the best results come rain or shine.







Our most recent additions to our plant all have one thing in common, a drive to deliver maximum efficiency, which helps to reduce the impact of our operations.

#### **EC140E Medium Crawler Excavator**

The Volvo EC140E crawler excavator has been designed to deliver every function with superior efficiency. This machine not only produces maximum uptime, it also incorporates the latest fuel efficiency technology, to reduce emissions and consumption, while increasing productivity.

#### **EC300E Large Crawler Excavator**

A replacement of the same model after 8800 hours. This new machine has also been fitted with Boom float and was the first model to be delivered in the UK to be fitted with factory joystick steering.

## **Hear From Alan Dunning, Plant & Transport** Manager on the Latest Additions to the W M Donald Fleet

As we continue to grow, and as part of ongoing plant and equipment upgrades, it has been a busy start to 2024, with a range of new plant arriving and more on the way. Below is a recap of the most recent additions and what we can look forward to arriving soon!

#### **EC250E Hybrid** Large Crawler Excavator

The EC250E Hybrid crawler excavator utilises pioneering Volvo hydraulic hybrid technology to improve fuel efficiency by up

Using the boom down motion to charge the accumulator, the excavator uses this stored energy to drive the assist motor which powers the engine system.

#### Other additions to our fleet:

4 x Electric Vehicles underpinning our commitment to sustainability 10 x 24 Plate Vans to update our fleet 1 x CCTV Camera Van to support our drainage division

#### We also have a number of exciting additions coming very soon!

RSP Suction Excavator - due June/July Scania Bitumen Sprayer - due June/July 2 x Volvo 8x4 Tippers - due June/July 1 x Transit Custom - due July

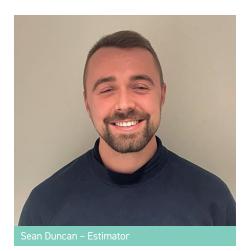


# Meet the Tayside & Fife Team



Mark has been with the business for nine years, joining back in June 2015 as a Quantity Surveyor and has progressed through the ranks over that time period.

As the business looked at different regional offices within the Tayside area and with Mark being from Dundee, this provided the perfect opportunity for him to drive and progress the business within the region.



Sean has been with the business for 15 months and has settled in fantastically well with both the team and the business dynamic.

Sean has worked within the construction industry for nine years and brings a wealth of knowledge to the business and region specifically.



Caleb has been with the business for nearly two years. Caleb's role is to ensure all site engineering requirements are provided for the teams on-site and to ensure works are carried out correctly. He ensures all teams have the relevant information to allow them to be as productive as they possibly can be.



Molly recently joined the team as Trainee Technical Engineer to the region and has, like others, become a valued asset to the team and the region as a whole.

Molly joined on completion of her Bachelor's Degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering at Abertay University in Dundee.

Euan has come to the business as a Trainee Site Engineer and will be both assisting and learning from Caleb as he progresses into the role. Euan has shown a good attitude to learning and will be a real attribute to the team as the months progress.



Adam has been with the business for verging on 18 years this August. Adam began his journey with the business as a labourer, progressing to the installation of sewers, Site Supervisor, Contracts Manager and has now been in his current role of Senior Contracts Manager for two years.

Adam is an integral part of the Management Team in Tayside. With his renowned and methodical planning has transformed the business dynamic and will be a key driver in ensuring the success going forward.



Following his release from Dundee United Football Club, Nathan started his career with W M Donald as a labourer, looking to kickstart his working career.

After a period of time on-site, Nathan grasped the basic knowledge and understanding of what is required to succeed with W M Donald. When the opportunity arose to join the Tayside team as a Trainee QS, Nathan took the chance and applied. Nathan is currently attending Fife College to gain his qualification in Quantity Surveying and will be a valued asset to the team.

# **Our Current Projects**



# **Newtyle Blairgowrie**

New 39nr. unit development for Hadden Homes, another new valued client within the region.



## **Bullionfield Junction**

Installation of new junction off A90 to facilitate a proposed new solar farm array. This solar farm is to facilitate the existing James Hutton Institute within the local village of Invergowrie. Another new client in Munro Wilson, who will be carrying out the solar install. The project has been a great success and has been completed on time and on budget.



## Leslie **Glenrothes**

Comprising of 44nr. affordable housing for the end user, Kingdom Housing Association. W M Donald was contracted by Campion Homes to carry out the full civil engineering packages to facilitate these works. Works are ongoing with 40nr. foundations/floor slabs near completion. Campion Homes are yet again another new client and proves our commitment to both the region and growing our client base.

# Latest Contract Wins

#### Viewfield **Glenrothes**

We have recently been successful in the contract award with Robertson Partnership Homes to provide full civil engineering requirements for the development in Glenrothes. The works will provide 54nr. affordable units and consist of the initial bulk earthworks, along with the installation of sewer and road infrastructure to facilitate the new development. W M Donald will also be contracted to carry out the installation of all plot foundations, floor slabs and hard landscaping works.

Robertson Partnership Homes are a new client for ourselves in the region, so we are keen to impress with the quality of work and work ethic of our dedicated individuals.

#### **Care Home** St Andrews

Another new client and contract award, this time with CHAP Group. We have been successful in the award for providing all infrastructure works to facilitate a new 40nr. bed care home within the Bell Brae Development of St Andrews. This job had a challenging earthworks, but with the skillset of all involved, we overcame the issues and works are progressing well. Due to the span of the floor plan, etc, we have various concrete pump pours planned for June for the installation of floor slab, etc.

Works also consisted of the external drainage works along with the installation of attenuation tank, which was carried out in partnership with our subcontractor, GRAF. A successful install due to the collaborative working between both parties.

#### Mill Brae **Stanley**

Our Commercial team have been working hard in the background securing this contract, with works now due to start, on-site 27th May 2024. Our dedicated team have already

commenced and completed the complex offsite sewer upgrade and installation of rising main along the existing Mill Street. Due to the working area, the interaction with existing properties, members of the public, etc, these works took a lot of planning and interaction with the local council to ensure as little disruption to the residents and surround area as possible. This wouldn't have been possible without the commitment of our in-house Technical team, working processes on the site and interaction with our traffic management subcontractor, Contraflow.

As on-site works commence, this site again comprises of the full earthworks, including topsoil strip and initial cut and fill. Our Drainage team will be carrying out the full installation of on-site sewers to facilitate the new 81nr. unit development along with the full road construction and associated tarring works. Works also include the installation of SUDS Drainage and Pumping Station.

Stanley is situated on the outskirts of Perth, just off the A9, and is an ideal rural location still within a commutable distance to and from the local towns/cities, and this will become more accessible on the completion of TLRC (Tay Link Road Crossing).

# W M Donald and **Bancon Homes Inspire Next Generation of Talent**

On 17th April, we partnered with Bancon Homes for an inspiring site visit, welcoming Foundation Apprentices from Nescol Fraserburgh Campus. This collaboration underscores our dedication to nurturing talent and advancing innovation in the industry.

This initiative highlights the importance of industry partnerships in providing aspiring professionals with real-world exposure and opportunities. As we continue to work together, we are confident in our collective ability to drive positive change and cultivate the next generation of skilled professionals.

Such hands-on experiences are invaluable in shaping the future workforce. We extend our sincere gratitude to Bancon Homes, Joanne Riddoch and Aaron Brebner for their support and active participation. Together, we are not just constructing buildings but also moulding the future of our industry.







## **Inspiring Grammar School Students to Explore Careers in** Construction





**During Apprentice Week at Grammar** Academy, tailored for S3 and S4 pupils, W M Donald participated in the Grammar Technical Day, conducting an immersive session aimed at providing pupils with valuable insights into construction careers. Focused on practical experiences, our goal was to ignite students' interest in pursuing opportunities within the industry.

Alexis Malcolmson, Employer School Coordinator, commented, "Your contribution, including the effort and energy that you have put into making this happen for us, is very much appreciated. It is a testament to have pupils return to ask for your contact details. A brilliant day!"

The overwhelmingly positive feedback from both the school and the students underscores the significance of initiatives like these in nurturing future professionals. W M Donald remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering talent and playing a pivotal role in shaping the future of the construction sector through impactful engagements.

By delivering enriching sessions and providing engaging experiences, we continue to inspire and guide the next generation towards rewarding careers in construction.







# Fostering the Future: Our Commitment to Apprenticeship and Innovation

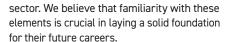
At W M Donald, we believe in the power of collaboration and the vital role it plays in shaping the future of the construction industry. In partnership with North East Scotland College (NESCOL), we recently held an Apprentice Day – an initiative that not only highlights our commitment to nurturing talent but also demonstrates our dedication to supporting and developing our local community.

This special day brought together 16 apprentices from various respected companies within our network, including JKR, Leiths, Hunters, Nicol of Skene, AA Civils and Chap, alongside our own team. Thanks to the generous support from our suppliers, we were able to provide a comprehensive display of both small and large plant machinery. This was not just an exhibition, but a handson learning experience designed to give the apprentices valuable insights into the real-world operations of the construction industry.

Our approach is simple: by integrating these eager learners into the heart of our operations, we allow them to engage directly with the tools and technologies that define our







Rachel O'Donnell, our HR Manager, encapsulates our ethos when she says, "By partnering with NESCOL and working with the support of our suppliers, W M Donald is not only investing in the future of the industry but also reinforcing our position as leaders in fostering innovation and growth within the local community."

The collaboration between W M Donald and NESCOL is a prime example of how industry-





academic partnerships can bridge the gap between education and practical application. These efforts are essential in developing a skilled workforce that is equipped to tackle the challenges of the construction industry with confidence and expertise.

We are proud to lead such initiatives that not only enhance the skills of young apprentices but also contribute to the broader goal of advancing our industry and supporting our community. Our commitment to these future professionals is unwavering, as we continue to invest in their growth and watch them become the innovators and leaders of tomorrow.

## Unlocking Potential: Ryan Simpson's Journey With W M Donald



Here at W M Donald, we take immense pride in our foundation apprenticeship programme, which has recently paved the way for a remarkable career transformation for Ryan Simpson, a 4th-year pupil from St Machar Academy. Over a six-month period, this program has opened up a new world of possibilities for Ryan, shifting his career trajectory from joinery to engineering – a change sparked by his hands-on experience with our team.

Initially drawn to joinery, Ryan's apprenticeship at W M Donald allowed him to explore various facets of the construction industry. It was under the mentorship of our site engineer, Joanne Riddoch, that Ryan discovered a burgeoning passion for engineering. Working closely with Joanne, he gained invaluable insights into the complexities and challenges of the field, which ignited an unexpected enthusiasm for engineering.

Reflecting on his experience, Ryan shared, "I always had an interest in construction, but it wasn't until I started working with Joanne and the team at W M Donald that I realised the full scope of opportunities available to me."

Our foundation apprenticeships are designed to give students like Ryan a taste of professional life while they are still in school. These programmes blend academic learning with essential on-the-job experience, providing students a day a week for six months to engage directly in industry roles. This

approach not only enhances their learning but also offers them a clearer perspective on potential career paths.

As Ryan approaches the end of his apprenticeship, we are thrilled to offer him a permanent position as a Trainee Engineer, commencing in June 2024. This opportunity is not just a milestone for Ryan but is also a testament to the success of our apprenticeship programme in discovering and nurturing new talent.

At W M Donald, we are committed to investing in the future by providing young individuals with the guidance and opportunities they need to find their passion and excel in their chosen careers. Ryan's story is just one example of how we are actively contributing to shaping the skilled workforce of tomorrow, ensuring that each apprentice receives a strong start in the professional world.

# **Creating a New Learning Environment** at Orchard Brae School

Earlier this year, W M Donald was delighted to be able to support Orchard Brae School with the development of a new outdoor classroom. Our own Willie Donald took on the role of Project Manager with the support of some of the W M Donald team including his grandson Liam Dawson.

For those who do not know Orchard Brae, it is an incredible facility that has been specially designed to meet the needs of the children and young people who attend. It has a range of fully accessible specialist teaching areas that accommodate the sensory requirements of pupils and is a very important facility for the area. When W M Donald was approached to support this project, we were only too happy to help.

Speaking to Willie about the project, he said it was a real 'Challenge Anneka', a reference that may be lost on our younger readers... The hit 90s show followed Anneka Rice, who would be set tasks to accomplish in a set period with the support of others. For this project, the W M Donald team knew they had a very short timetable as the programme of works had to be completed during school holidays and, let's just say, weather was not on their side!

It proved to be a highly challenging project to complete with a range of works including the main classroom space, power, paths and landscaping all to be completed against a deluge of rain and at times a river running through the site. Challenges aside, the team dug in and got to work knowing they didn't want to let the students down who were very excited about the new classroom they would be coming back to. It has been great to be a part of such a rewarding project.









# **Supporting Our Communities - Round Up**



#### WMD Continues Support of WKC **Scotland**

W M Donald is proud to support WKC Scotland and their flagship event, The WKC Scottish Open, which took place at the Braehead Arena in Glasgow in April.

The martial arts event really drew a crowd with over 2,000 people in attendance. These events cannot happen without the support of many volunteers and, of course, the competitors. Well done to everyone who helped to make it such a memorable event.



#### WMD Reach the Semi-Finals in the KR **Group Charity Tournament**

In May, we were delighted to join other local businesses who swapped a day in the office for a day of footie, all in a bid to raise cash for young families in the North-east. KR Group invited clients and associates to a five-aside football tournament at Strikers Indoor Football Club in Aberdeen.

W M Donald was delighted to support this event, and well done to Alex, Danny, Gav, Liam and Marc who put in a great performance on the day. The team made it all the way to the

semi-finals, with the trophy being lifted by the team from Scotia Homes.

KR Group absorbed all costs from the day, ensuring all proceeds went to local charity AberNecessities. The event raised £960 as well as gathering over £500 worth of essential items for babies and children. Well done to everyone involved!



#### Stonehaven Youth Take Home the U13s **League Cup Trophy**

A huge congratulations to the Stonehaven Youth U13s who took home the League Cup after a hard fought victory over Mintlaw at Cormack Park on 26th May.

W M Donald has been shirt sponsor for the team since 2020, and we were over the moon to see the team take the trophy home. Well done to everyone involved!

#### **Bervie Caledonia** 2017 Looking the Part in New **Training Jackets**

We are proud to support a range of sport teams across the region and none more than the Bervie Caley 2017s.



We loved receiving this picture of Zander Easton, son of Adam Easton who is a Senior Contracts Manager at W M Donald. Go Bervie Calev!

# W M Donald is Proud to Support Befriend a Child's Enchanted Forest Ball

This May, members of the W M Donald team were joined by hundreds of other guests at the Befriend a Child Enchanted Forest Ball, which was held at the Chester

We were immersed in a world of storytelling and magic with fabulous performances from Mark Cameron Dance and hosted by the incredibly talented performer Kevin Littlejohn from Right Here Productions.

We also heard on the night from Charmaine Brown who shared her inspiring experience of befriending with the charity. Having started her volunteering journey in 2018, Charmaine has befriended Mackenzie for the past six years and said befriending is the best thing she has ever done. Her emotional speech highlighted the difference she has made to her befriendee and how befriending has positively impacted her life. A truly inspiring story.

W M Donald supported Befriend a Child as the Platinum sponsor, and we were delighted to hear an incredible £40,964.50 was raised at the event for the charity. Well done to all involved!





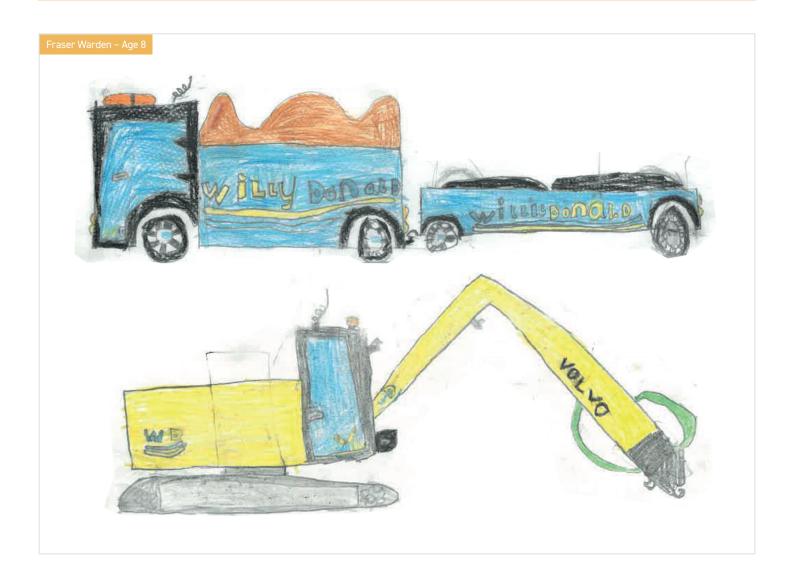
# Brave, the Friends of **ANCHOR Event That Always Delivers**

On 16th & 17th May, Brave took place for the first time at Aberdeen's P&J Live in what became to memorable nights of inspiring fundraising. Twenty-four gents, each of whom has faced a cancer or haematology diagnosis at some point in their lives, whether they're currently receiving treatment or have done in

the past, took to the stage to raise money for this incredible charity.

The shows help to raise vital funds for the ANCHORED Together appeal, which will provide £2m for additional enhancements to The ANCHOR Centre, which will provide outpatient cancer and haematology care to 65,000 North-east people every year.

W M Donald has been supporting the ANCHOR unit and Friends of ANCHOR for many years and was delighted to support Brave as a Gold sponsor. Keep up the inspiring work!



# **Unlock your creativity!**

Ahead of this issue of From the Ground Up, we loved receiving these drawings from Fraser Warden, son of our own Chris Warden who works as an Excavator Operator for our team out of Netherley. Fraser is only eight-years-old and we were really impressed by the level of detail in his drawings – well done Fraser!

Ahead of the summer holidays, we thought we would share some excavator drawing templates that you can print off at home and collect from our main reception. We would love to see what your families (young and old!) can create, and we will share these in the next edition of From the Ground Up.

Please share your completed drawings by emailing a photo to karen@wmdonald.co.uk

#### **Scan to Download**









