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# life.

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## notification centre

We get your diary sorted for the week ahead - so you don't have to



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### BOWLING FOR SOUP

ENJOY some turn-of-the-century American alternative rock delights with the return of Bowling for Soup, who are playing the O2 Academy.



wed

### FILM FESTIVAL

IT'S just two weeks until the Glasgow Film Festival returns and tickets are selling fast. Snap up briefs for great movies such as Our Ladies, Flint and How to Build a Girl.



thu

### GRANITE LIGHT SHOW

SPECTRA, Aberdeen's festival of light, returns - bringing illumination artworks on the theme of Scotland's national year of "Coast and Waters".



fri-sun

### SCI-FI CONVENTION

EDINBURGH becomes Scotland's geek capital as the Capital Sci-Fi Con brings guests from film, TV and comics to the Corn Exchange, in aid of charity CHAS.



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### VALENTINE'S DAY

GET the pottery wheel ready for romance as Ghost makes a 30th anniversary return in cinemas for Valentine's Day.

### FROM being a bullied schoolboy to becoming a leading gay rights activist, Philip Baldwin has dedicated his life to fighting homophobia.

The 34-year-old - who suffered verbal, physical and emotional abuse over a seven-year period at Edinburgh's Fettes College - is now an ambassador for LGBTQ equality charity Stonewall.

Philip, who boarded at the prestigious £27,000-a-year institution from 1996 to 2003, now travels around schools sharing his story in a bid to halt homophobic bullies in their tracks.

The campaigner, who has degrees from both Oxford and Cambridge universities, says his story of hope and his achievements is proof a negative can be turned into a positive with a little bit of courage.

Philip, who lives in London, said: "My years at Fettes were the most miserable of my life. The homophobic slurs began the moment I opened my eyes at 7am until long after lights out in the dorm. It was relentless.

"Homophobic language was widespread among pupils. The phrase, 'That's so gay' was used to describe anything derived to be negative so when at the age of 12, I realised I was gay, I concluded it was a secret I would have to hide forever.

"When I was about 13, I can remember one incident on the sports field where I was subjected to insults around how gay I looked and how gay I played rugby.

"As I approached sixth form, the remarks about my sexual orientation increased.

"On one occasion, I was attacked and pushed to the ground. Another time, my phone was stolen and a text from a guy I'd been dating outside school was discovered."

He added: "The worst thing was teachers not challenging homophobic remarks in the classroom or within boarding houses. It was really damaging to my self-esteem.

"I can vividly recall the humiliation of being taunted in front of teachers regarding my sexual orientation.

"Every time one of my teachers failed to intervene, it empowered the bullies.

"By my final year there, I



**ON A MISSION** Philip Baldwin has had a successful career despite being targeted by bullies at school

# Have courage to be yourself

## A man bullied at school became a campaigner against homophobia and tells Heather Greenaway how change can happen

was spending all my time in the library. I knew bullies couldn't attack me with the librarian there."

Philip, who was diagnosed with HIV in 2010, said: "Ultimately, my story is one of hope. I escaped the bullies at Fettes and went on into further education, where I finally felt I could be myself.

**"I'm now a writer and campaigner on a range of LGBTQ issues and visit schools to discuss sexuality and bullying."**

Fettes has previously expressed its regret about the bullying Philip suffered and invited him to the school in 2016 to speak to

pupils. A survey by Stonewall revealed 48 per cent of Scots LGBTQ students are bullied for their sexuality, compared to a national average of 45 per cent.

It also showed more than two in five LGBTQ young people who were bullied in Scottish schools skipped classes because of issues about their sexual orientation.

From 2021, all Scottish schools are required to embed

LGBTQ-inclusive teaching across the curriculum, not just within sex and relationships education.

Scots education bosses took the decision in 2018 thanks to a TIE (Time for Inclusive Education) campaign and the UK Government followed suit in March last year.

Philip, who is a Christian and worked as a lawyer before becoming a full-time activist, said: "What is taking place in Scotland is really important. The work the TIE campaign and other organisations such as Stonewall have been doing with the Government is outstanding.

"The Scottish legislation goes much further than the

UK's but there is an opt-out clause for faith schools and private schools, which could mean many kids could miss out on learning about equality - in the very places it is needed the most.

"It can be difficult for people from faith backgrounds as they can experience rejection not just from parents but also their faith communities.

"I do a lot of work with youth homeless charities and, shockingly, a quarter of young homeless people in the UK are LGBTQ. A lot of it is because they are rejected by their parents and faith communities, and lose their support network."

Fettes College was contacted for comment.



**HIGH ACHIEVER** Philip at university