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Dear Parents/Carers

It is hard to believe that we are nearing the end of another term. As you can see from the Newsletter it has been a term filled with a range of interesting and exciting activities for our pupils. It has also been a term in which there have been a number of notable achievements.

We were invited to showcase the school's excellent practice in Enterprise Education at the HMLe National Conference launching their new publication 'Improving Enterprise in Education'. Our Podcasters took the conference by storm getting a number of key interviews, not least Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning.

Our Senior Basketball Team, coached by Jay Lennartson won the Scottish Cup in a thrilling final against Falkirk High School. You may already be aware that Jay is moving to a new position in North Berwick. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his wonderful contribution to the school over the last 12 years and wish him well in his new post. Our Senior Debating Team and our Young Enterprise company Uniquenco have also reached Scottish finals which will be taking place in June. In addition our Concert Band are taking part in the National Concert Band Finals in Warwick on Sunday 20th April. I am sure you will join me in wishing them all well. I will keep you updated on their progress in future Newsletters.

Our Parent Council is playing an increasingly important roll in the life of the school. They recently organised a very successful presentation for parents on Child Protection and Internet Safety issues. The event was well attended and judged a great success by those present. I know that the Parent Council intend to organise more information evenings for parents in the future so please look out for the forthcoming publicity on these worthwhile events.

As you know things never stand still in the school and we are now preparing for the forthcoming SQA Exams involving S4, S5 and S6 pupils in May and June. We are also gearing up for the start of the new timetable for all pupils in early June. In addition we will be hosting our new S1 pupils for next session during two induction days at the end of May. This event is the centre piece of our extended transition arrangements that began this term and are designed to prepare the current P7's for becoming Mearns Castle pupils in August.

Finally two pleas. I again request that those parents transporting their child to and from school by car adhere strictly to the advice given on appropriate places to drop-off and pick-up pupils around the school. Some parents have been disregarding this advice causing a number of serious safety concerns both at the start and at the end of the day. In addition, I would ask that parents refrain from contacting pupils by mobile phone during class time. Pupils are required to have their phones switched off at these times and parents trying to make contact, have caused difficulty with this arrangement and disruption to lessons. If you require to make contact with your child in an emergency during class time please phone the school office who will take any action required. Thank you for your co-operation in these matters.

Finally school closes for the Spring break at the usual time of 2.45pm on Friday the 4th April. We re-open at 8.45am on Monday 21st April. I hope you and your family have an enjoyable Spring break.

Dean Smith
Head Teacher

How to contact us



0141 577 2300

08:20am - 4:30pm
(3.15pm Fridays)



0141 577 2314



SQA Exams

Spring has arrived and hopefully better weather is just around the corner. It won't be long now until the SQA exams take place so here are a few reminders.

- ◆ SQA exams begin for most pupils on Thursday 15th May with the English exams. [Music Intermediate and Higher Business Management are earlier.]
- ◆ Study Leave begins on Wednesday 14th May 2008.
- ◆ The last day in school for S4 and S5 classes is therefore Tuesday 13th May
- ◆ S6 pupils' last day in school is Friday 9th May when they have their leavers' ceremony. If any S6 pupils require special arrangements to be in school after this, they should see Ms Lewis.
- ◆ S4 and S5 pupils return to school for their new timetables as S5/6 students on Monday 9th June.
- ◆ Pupils should arrive in school at least 15 minutes before an exam is due to begin.
- ◆ If a pupil is unable to sit an exam please phone in and let the school office know. A medical certificate is required to cover absence from the exam.
- ◆ A full SQA timetable is available on the SQA website (www.sqa.org.uk) but pupils will be given a personal timetable detailing all their exams. There are some exams which take place on the May weekend holidays of 23rd and 26th May
- ◆ No electronic devices may be taken into an exam room, including mobile phones and I-pods. This rule is strictly enforced and if a pupil is found to have any electronic device, she/he could be disqualified by SQA from all their exams.
- ◆ Transport out with normal school hours is the responsibility of the pupil / parent but where an exam finishes shortly after the end of the school day, the school buses will be held back.

If you have any concerns or questions about the SQA exams please get in touch.
Best wishes to all our candidates - I am sure we will have another year of outstanding results!



Hospitality and Enterprise Event 5th March

By Mrs V Martin

The Intermediate 2 Hospitality group took part in preparing a banquet for 60 guests on Wednesday 5th March at

Williamwood High School. The group has been working with a chef all year to gain the required skills. The pupils worked from 3.00pm until 10.30pm both in the kitchens and setting up and serving tables giving them very valuable skills which they can put to good use in the industry in the future. The lucky guests were served the following menu

Cream of Celery and Potato Soup

Steak and Haggis Towers with Colcannon Mash and Honey Roasted vegetables

Cranachan and shortbread

Coffee and Petit Fours

Well done to the following pupils who made the night a great success;

Sarah Lockart, Susanne Sykes, James McShane, Amy McDevitt, Ross McDougall, Liam Horn,
Heather Graham, Claire Rose, Katrina McIntyre, Holly Coghill

Pen's Travels

By Emma Iddles S5

On the 25th February pupils from Mearns Castle were invited to attend the BBC Quay conversations in which BBC presenter Janice Forsyth spoke to the explorer Pen Hadow.

In 2003 Perth-born Hadow became the first man to walk unaided to the North Pole. Early next year he leads a landmark expedition to the North Pole to measure the Ice cap. The information he gathers will be crucial to our understanding of the impact of climate change.

The trip organised by the Geography Department was a unique opportunity for the pupils to participate in the discussions and hear about Pen's travels and his thoughts on the environment and on Scotland's place in arctic exploration.

I am sure the evening helped increase our understanding of the issue of climate change and its possible effect on our future.

Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award

By Mrs K Ward & Mr A Hutchison

This year we have 105 pupils taking part in the silver Duke of Edinburgh Award. To complete the Award pupils are undertaking a variety of activities in four sections—skills, service, physical recreation and expedition. Pupils in groups 1 & 2 have been taking part in training sessions on camp craft, navigation, map skills, route card planning and first aid. At the end of April they will complete a training weekend which will involve a 30 mile expedition. This is in preparation for their assessed weekend in June in Loch Lomond where they will carry out a 3 day expedition and camp for 2 nights.

S1 Ski Trip

By Michelle Latter, Jamie Laird & Marilees King

On the 18th and the 20th of March S1 went on Ski Trips. We got up very early in the morning and the buses left at 7.00am. On Tuesday the weather was good and we got to go on the slopes, however on Thursday the weather wasn't so good and the slopes were shut, but we still had fun.

Tuesday

Despite the cold we all had fun. We were separated into groups of different abilities and went on the slopes to have our lesson. Putting the skis on was the hardest part and after that it was all fun. We learned to stop turn and most importantly to stay on our feet. But after what seemed like minutes we had to go back down the slopes for the long bus journey home. After many DVDs and a dinner we finally arrived home, tired by the day's excitement.

Thursday

To the other half of the year's disappointment, the weather was too bad and so the slopes were closed. Fortunately they still got to ski on the dry slopes. They also went on nature walks and played games like hide and seek. The ski instructors tried to make the day as much fun as possible and it was probably better than struggling against very high winds and a temperature of -25°C

SPORTS AT MEARN'S CASTLE

By Mr C Giles

The sporting extra curricular activities up at Mearns Castle this term have been excellent as always offering a wide variety of sports to all ages. However, there are some particularly outstanding efforts.

BASKETBALL

Congratulations go to our Senior Boys' Basketball Team who were crowned Scottish Schools Champions on 17th March. They played an exhilarating cup final against Falkirk High. Despite our boys having a 17-point lead, Falkirk managed to rally a comeback and tie the game forcing it into overtime. Our seniors showed immense resilience and finished the game 3 points ahead winning 63-60. Involved in the team were:

Cameron Colquhoun, Ross McKechnie, Calum Bryson, Thomas Stuttard, Tom Craig, Greg Thain, Max Hutchison, Scott Campbell, Finlay Kelly, Andrew Russell, Matthew Shaw and Sam Stuttard.

Well done boys!

Calum McWilliam and Calum Firth both S1 competed in the indoor Athletics Championships at Kelvin Hall in February. Congratulations to both boys for winning a gold medal in the 4 x 4 200m relay. Both boys represented Giffnock North Athletic Club.



The Cubans

Are

Coming Meeting

By Mrs L McMahon

would talk about life in Cuba. One of these, Orlando Borrego, had been a close friend and colleague of Che Guevara so we had high hopes of anecdotes and inside information on Che. However, these hopes were dashed when Orlando Borrego stated that although this had been the topic of all the talks since the tour started in The House of Lords, he had been asked to talk at the Glasgow meeting about Cuba's relationship with Venezuela. While this is an interesting topic in itself, we all felt a bit disappointed when weighed against the opportunity to find out first hand what the Cuban Revolution had been like. Nevertheless, as usual, pupils were attentive and asked questions at the end which were praised by Orlando and indeed, in later events on the tour he frequently referred to the school group in Glasgow who had participated so well. Photographs were taken and some of the group were interviewed for the web diary being kept of the tour; these can be seen at : www.cubansarecoming.org

CROSS-COUNTRY

At the East Renfrewshire Cross Country Championships last month, our pupils did exceptionally well. Winning gold medals were **Jamie Gemmell** (S1 Boys Individual), **Fraser Walker** (S2 Boys Individual) and the senior boys won gold in the team event – **Mark McLennan, Murray Wallace, Stuart Whiteford, Craig Martin and Michael McGarrity. Mark McLennan** took a bronze in the senior boys race. In the S2 Girls Individual event, **Connie MacKay** won Bronze. There were also some great finishes from pupils who just missed out on medals: **India Love** (S1 – finished 4th), **Christopher Russell** (S2 – finished 4th) and **Murray Wallace** (S4 – finished 6th).

Well done to all who ran!

ROWING

Two of our senior girls, **Aileen Stirling** and **Claire Baillie**, have been part of the Great Britain U18 women's squad. On Saturday 9th February, the girls took part in the Scottish Indoor Rowing Championships. Aileen won Gold and in the lightweight category, Claire won Bronze.

Congratulations girls!

Schools Fantasy League

By Miss A Thomson

The competition continues to be fierce in the Mearns Castle Fantasy League. The current overall leader is Daniel Stern with his team "Turkleton United". Daniel has amassed an impressive 320 points and has a 13 point lead over his nearest rival Qasim Mohammed with his team "Fake Madrid". Andrew Kirk is currently in third position with his team "Real So-So Bad". The top teacher is still Mr Smith who has gained 295 point with his "Mighty Well" team.

Andrew Kirk is also leading a close FA Cup race followed by Zain Younis in second place and then Mr Stewart of Maths.

Managers of the Month certificates for February were presented to:

- S1 – Usman Mohammed and "Momo FC"
- S2- Craig Lambie with "FC Diabolical"
- S3 – Qasim Mohammed with "Fake Madrid"
- S4 – Craig Milligan and "Mid Table United"
- Staff – Miss Thomson and "Real Ginger"



Managers can still make transfers until the end of the season so the leaderboard could change before the trophies are handed out in May.

Eco School—Biodiversity

By Miss A Thomson, Tutor Group
& Mrs K Ward

An S1 Tutor Group volunteered to take part in a biodiversity audit as part of the Eco Schools Award. Biodiversity looks at birds, animals, trees and plants, soil, insects and rocks and how they interact. Two Ecologists from Edinburgh came through to help. The S1 Tutor Group did an audit of the school grounds, identifying trees, twigs, leaves, birds and looking for evidence of animal habitats. The group also took photographs, sketches and completed a survey. The group examined different parts of the school grounds identifying which areas were better for biodiversity. It is hoped that now improvements can be made to the biodiversity of our school grounds and we hope to raise awareness of biodiversity throughout the school. We plan to put together a biodiversity action plan. Some ideas we have are to hold plant sales, plant shrubs, make bird and bat boxes and bird feeders.

World Book Day

LIBRARY NEWS

By Miss K McEachern



Author Visit

The library celebrated World Book Day on Thursday 6th March. All S1 & S2 pupils received £1 book tokens to spend on a new book. The library also ran "The Ultimate Reader's Poll", giving pupils the opportunity to vote for their favourite books and characters in seven different categories.

The most popular answers in each category were as follows:

Best Hero/Heroine	-	Harry Potter
Best Villain	-	Voldemort
Best Scary Book	-	Darren Shan's Vampire Chronicles
Best Funny Book	-	The Simpsons Comic Books
Best Sad Book	-	The Diary of Anne Frank
Best Book made into a Film	-	Harry Potter books
Best Book Ever!	-	Divided City by Theresa Breslin

The winner of the poll was Ameer Khan in S1 who managed to match all seven top answers with his own answers!
He wins a set of World Book Day books.

The library hosted a visit from author/journalist Fiona Gibson in February as part of the East Renfrewshire Storytelling Festival. Higher English/Media Studies pupils enjoyed an interesting talk about Fiona's work and career path, which started at "Jackie" magazine and included editing many other popular teen titles. She is now a successful author and works freelance, writing a weekly column in the Sunday Herald magazine. A lively Q&A session followed her talk and all pupils found the visit informative and enjoyable.

Stock Market Challenge

A day of thrills and spills!

By S3 Business Management pupils

On Thursday 23 January, Mrs Hazlett accompanied us, a group of S3 pupils (Clare Irvine, Hassan Khan, Chelsea Hastie, Matt Grady and Marc Garside) to the Mitchell Library, to take part in the Stock Market Challenge.

As we left school snow was falling as heavily as the shares on the stock market this week, but our fortunes were soon to be on the up. Stock Market Challenge was an opportunity for us to learn how to work as a team, make decisions under pressure, take calculated risks and experience the excitement of the trading floor.

We started the day off with £15,000 and at the end of trading had £41,000 on the table. Not bad for a day's work! We all had a really successful day putting our Business Management skills to the test. We hope to return next year to lift first prize!

Rugby and Religion

By Mr G Stewart

Do rugby and religion mix? Some believe they can! On Thursday 6th March the Christian Union had a visit from Euan Murray the Scotland Rugby International.



Euan answered questions from the pupils on how his career is affected by his faith. The CU were very grateful to Euan for giving up time from his busy training programme to be with us. It was also great to see him play the following Saturday when Scotland beat England 15 – 9.

The Christian Union meets every Tuesday lunch-time in the Conference Room and all are welcome to attend.

Past Preservers

Social Subjects Department

The S1 and S2 Past Preservers Club have been researching the history of Newton Mearns. In December the pupils visited Mearns Parish Church graveyard to learn more about a Heritage Project currently being undertaken there. The photographs which the pupils took of the headstones are now being used to produce a small multi-media slideshow. The pupils followed up this research with a visit to the Heritage centre in Giffnock library where they were able to use maps, census data and other primary sources to build up an image of what life was like in Newton Mearns over one hundred years ago.

The club also recently attended a lecture on the link between Glasgow and the slave trade. The lecture included information about many Glasgow tobacco merchants and the history of Greenbank House. In particular, the pupils were astounded to learn about the use of black house slaves at Greenbank. The pupils are now working to create a corridor display to raise awareness about this topic around the school.



Food Lab 6th March

By Mrs V Martin

On 6th of March the whole of S2 took part in Food Lab. The focus of the day was to highlight how the over consumption of fats, sugar, salt and lack of fibre in the diet can effect health. Through some dramatic experiments the pupils got to see the effects of eating too much salt had on the body by simulating an aneurysm and they also examined how high levels of saturated fat can clog our arteries. Pupils also got the opportunity to help make good healthy burgers using only the best and healthiest ingredients, which the pupils could eat guilt free.

A thoroughly enjoyable day.

EUROPEAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT

West of Scotland Forum 2008

By Mr J McGowne

Mearns Castle once again competed in the European Youth Parliament (West of Scotland) Forum at the Kessington Hall in Bearsden on Friday 14th March. There were five main debates with topics including – the Star Wars Defence Initiative, the EU's role in Kashmir and the Future of Zimbabwe. Mearns Castle represented the Committee on Human Rights. On the day the team were narrowly defeated into second place with the judges commenting that it was tied until the very last debate of the day. This is an achievement in itself as the team were up against 9 others schools. It was also a brand new team of debaters who had never taken part in this competition before. All 10 pupils were a credit to the school with everyone taking a full part in the programme. Their standard of debating, speech writing and delivery were top class. The team also gave up a large amount of time prior to the competition at lunch times and after school to come prepared for the challenging motions. For most, this will only be the first of many debating competitions in the future.

The Team

S4

Rebecca Argo
Alasdair Clarkson
Erin Murtagh
Lorelle Orchant
Tahleel Lateef

S5

Emma Davidson
Andrew Ross
Ben Carroll
Imaan Gangi
Euan Ferguson

Maths Matters

By Mrs E Gibson

The department has enjoyed a number of successes in the past few months, at School, National and Global levels! In December, we held our "Who Wants to be a Mathonaire?"

competition for S1. Grant West was a worthy winner in winning the "million" prize for himself, along with numerous prizes for his classmates.

Eighty-eight pupils from S4 took part in the UK Maths Challenge – with sixty pupils gaining certificates as follows:

8 Gold 22 Silver 30 Bronze

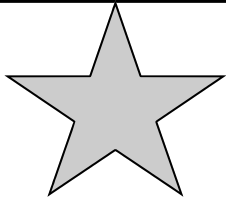
Congratulations are due to all competitors and in particular to Imran Ahmed in S4, who won the "Best in the School" award for achieving the highest mark.

The 5th March saw frenzied activity around World Maths Day. This is a global competition, which sees pupils competing with classmates from around the world. In the two weeks prior to the competition our pupils answered an astonishing 330500 questions correctly – and this was just in practice! During the event itself, which actually lasted for forty-eight hours, they amassed an amazing score of 159867, answered correctly by 453 pupils. Together they spent 8786 minutes competing on the live "Mathletics"

Many pupils and classes deserve a mention – too numerous to mention – however the pupils and classes that led the field were:

Melissa Guilian (S4) 5404 - Tahleel Lateef (S4) 3735 - Jasmine Lattter (S4) 3411
Team 3 Johnston 36120 - Team 4 Gibson 21695 - Team 1 Gamble 13483

The clock has been re-set and the countdown is on for World Maths Day 2009.....



Young Enterprise

UNIQUECO



Euan Cannon, Andrew Maxwell, Anmol Gangi, Mark Stern, Danel McKirdy, Paul Livingston, Sean Winston, Jordan Paterson, Daniel Caplan, David MacDonald, Lisa Catterson, Martin Beeny, David Stewart & Sandy MacNiven (Business Advisor)

The Young Enterprise Company Uniqueco achieved great success last Thursday at the Renfrewshire Finals. At this event they were competing against other schools from Renfrewshire and were awarded 3 trophies out of the 4 presented. These awards were for the best presentation, best product and overall best company.

Uniqueco now go forward to the Scottish Finals for the Young Enterprise Company Programme, where they will compete against schools from all over Scotland in the City Halls on the 17th of June.

My Experience of being a Business Advisor

By Mr Sandy MacNiven

This is my second year as a Business Advisor at MCHS and I have found the experience very fulfilling. I volunteered initially on the traditional basis from the exposure to/awareness of the business environment. I'm now more than ever convinced that this is true and I have become increasingly aware that many of the experience pupils gain are relevant to employment in general, not just to a business related employment.

I am fortunate in that I am seconded to a school with high academic performance and one where all the YE participating pupils anticipate going on to University or equivalent of tertiary education. I'm also lucky that the relationships between staff and pupils in the main seem to be happy and that discipline in the YE environment has never been a problem. Also, the pupils are frequently very innovative, capable of hard work (although usually in frantic spasms!) and a pleasure to be with. The gaps lie elsewhere!

I have found that the aspects where pupils are less competent and where the YE payoff is most relevant are those which involve co-operation situation, they struggle to perform as a team, to take decisions as a group and eventually to take co-ordinated joint action to get a task done within a particular timescale. Also they admit to finding it difficult giving and taking instructions gracefully from those they consider their peers (or worse!). All this is perhaps not surprising if one considers that throughout school the pupils is primarily motivated to achieve his/her own goals, not those of a group.

Work in the adult world requires in most cases a different balance of interpersonal skills and attitudes. I have found it encouraging to see that throughout last year and this pupils gradually latch on to what is required and begin to operate at a different level.

Enterprise News

Pod Cast

By Ms A Lewis

Last session we had a number of visits from various organisations viewing our enterprise practice in the school. One of them was from HMIE (Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education) who were researching the impact of enterprise in the education sector. This led to us being invited, as one of only 9 educational establishments across Scotland, to attend an HMIE conference in Edinburgh on 27th February for the launch of the new publication "Improving Enterprise in Education".

With Mr Gooch (PT Enterprise), I decided to take our Podcasting Team who had worked so well to produce a podcast for a recent Enterprise Challenge. The pupils involved were Richard Freed and Katy Mitchell (S5); Emma Ferguson, Seona MacKenzie and Amanda Simons (S4); Josh Clark (S2). Special thanks are due to Mr McGowne (History department) for all his work with the team. I know how much his support and encouragement has meant to the group.

The pupils were fantastic, an absolute credit to the school. They interviewed several delegates including Fiona Hyslop (Cabinet Secretary for Education), as well as pupils and staff from the other schools. Currently they are editing a podcast of the event which will be circulated to all the delegates from the conference and may even appear on the HMIE website. It will also be added to the school website in the near future. At the HMIE conference we also displayed the excellent work being done in Young Enterprise, Stairways to Success and the Cluster Fashion Show.

However I would say that the hardest part was choosing **what** to display as there is so much good practice going on all over the school. I would like to thank all staff for their efforts over recent sessions to develop an enterprising ethos throughout the school; from classrooms, to year group events and the wide range of other opportunities that come our way. I know how much our pupils enjoy this aspect of their school experience and the impact it has on their wider development as we prepare them for life beyond school. Watching those podcasters in action was a shining example!

So well done is due to everyone - it is a considerable achievement to have been identified as an enterprising school whose good practice is worthy of sharing nationally and it is due to all staff and pupils for their hard work and interest.

On the next page is a report from Katy about their experiences at the HMIE event.



MCHS Cluster Fashion Show

By Mr S Gooch

London, Paris, Milan and New York are normally the international cities that hold fashion shows; on the 19th of March Newton Mearns joined these capitals as it hosted its first MCHS cluster fashion show! Pupils from Kirkhill, Eaglesham, Calderwood lodge and Mearns Primary as well as some pupils from Hazeldene nursery have been working since last November along with some 70 of our S5 pupils to create outfits. Each school worked around a theme; we had Recycling at Mearns Primary, the Vikings at Eaglesham, the Victorians at Kirkhill, Scottish wars of independence at Calderwood Lodge and finally Peter Pan at Hazeldene. Our S5 pupils spent an afternoon with each primary to help them design the outfits on paper. They then returned in January to help make the outfits from a variety of materials and using not much more than their ingenuity and some safety pins to fit the selected models into them! Each afternoon culminated in a fashion show at the primary where outfits were selected by the pupils and teachers to go forward to the final show.

The S5's then returned for the final show to support the models and presenters as they strutted their stuff down the catwalk in front of parents and invited guests. The experience has been great for all pupils involved and demonstrates the excellent relationship we have with our cluster primaries.

Huge thanks to Miss Booker at Calderwood Lodge, Miss Leitch at Mearns Primary, Miss MacAulay at Kirkhill, Miss McDonald at Eaglesham, Mrs Meikle and Mrs Moore at Hazeldene. Also Mrs O'Donnell, Ms Davis, Mr McGowne and Miss Lewis at MCHS.

Podcast

By Katy Mitchell (S5)

On the train back to Glasgow Queen Street, Mearns Castle High School's Podcasting team reflected on their time in Edinburgh and their involvement in the HMle Enterprise Showcase. The team made up of Emma Ferguson (S4), Josh Clarke (S2), Amanda Simons (S4), Richard Freed (S5), Seona MacKenzie (S4) and Katy Mitchell (S5), not forgetting Miss Lewis and Mr Gooch. We all reminisced and laughed about our night in a 5 star hotel in Edinburgh and we were all as equally disappointed it had come to an end....

It all began on Tuesday 26th February and after a full day in Mearns Castle the whole team rushed home, changed, grabbed their suitcases, tried desperately not to forget their allocated equipment and headed for Glasgow Queen Street Station. After almost everybody arriving on time and the teachers purchasing a vital latte from Costa Coffee, the troops piled onto the 6pm train to Edinburgh. After a very cramped train journey we arrived at Haymarket. Two taxis then took us to our hotel for the night. The Sheraton Grand Hotel & Spa. Everybody's jaws hit the floor at the sight of the hotel, it was out of this world. About an hour later after check in and dinner the setting up began. After cutting what seemed like thousands of pieces of Velcro and sticking them to our signs, we were ready to go onto our display boards. After what seemed like no time at all it was 11.30pm and everybody realised how tired they were. However this didn't stop the many hours of laughing and chatting that followed but eventually it was time to go to bed and prepare for the next day.

Everybody rose early, excited about the day ahead and we headed down for breakfast which was nearly as good as the meal the previous night. Many cups of tea were drunk, mostly by Josh, while we checked out the competition at breakfast. However it was soon time to go and put the finishing touches to our stand. Almost as soon as this was done, the conference began and the hall was full of delegates and other schools. The team spread out to interview as many people as possible including Fiona Hyslop (Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning), Bill Geddes (HMle) and Eric Burton from Learning and Teaching Scotland. We were all so busy it seemed it was over before it had begun and we were packing everything back up. Last treat was a lovely lunch and then it was time to wave goodbye to our hotel and head back to Edinburgh Waverley. We caught a train just in time and arrived back in Glasgow later that afternoon. The trip may have been over but the laughs and memories would continue.

Enterprise Events

By Mr S Gooch

Enterprise challenge 2008 – MCHS Pod cast

East Renfrewshire Enterprise coordinators set us and our associated primaries a challenge last November during enterprise week – to make a 7 minute pod cast around the theme "A week in the life of our school". Mr McGowne led a dream team comprising of Richard Freed and Katy Mitchell (S5) Emma Ferguson, Amanda Simons and Seona Mackenzie (S4) and not forgetting Josh Clarke (S2). Collectively they wrote, interviewed, recorded and finally edited the pod cast down to a very slick and entertaining 7 minutes. The pupils used all their enterprising skills to produce a fantastic piece of work, which has led them on to training members of staff on pod casting; as well as participating in the HMle showcase.

The finished pod cast can be heard on our school website now, East Renfrewshire Enterprise website and soon on the Young Scot website.



Congratulations to all S4 and S5 drama students who starred in **David and Carrie's Pop Shop** on 18th March. The filming took place on a very sunny day in September and features S4 and S5 boys and girls playing football. The director and crew were very impressed with how professional and attentive all the pupils were during the filming.

Remember for
up-to-date school information
dates—events — news
visit our website

www.mearnscastle.co.uk

The Law Society of Scotland

Donald Dewar
Memorial Debating
Tournament 2008

By Mr J McGowne

Since the last newsletter there have been two further rounds of the Donald Dewar Memorial Debating tournament.

Greg Cunningham and Rhea Wolfson of S6 were unlucky to be knocked out in Round Two. The Judges had a difficult decision to make as Greg and Rhea put on another top class debating performance. It was a close call but unfortunately the decision went against them.

Congratulations go to Paul Livingston and Sally McKeeve who came through both rounds and will now be the first Mearns Castle team to have won a place in the Final. This will take place on June 12th in the Scottish Parliament debating chamber in Edinburgh.

Great credit must go to all four debaters who have worked extremely hard in recent weeks. The judges have commented on the high standard of debating from Mearns Castle throughout the competition. Not only have they been competitors but have frequently been on hand to support and offer advice to the junior teams. They have also taken on the roles of Chairperson and Timekeepers in support of the junior competition.



Paul Livingston (S6)
&
Sally McKeeve (S6)

To date there have been two rounds of the

English Speaking Union

Junior Debating Competition

ESU Junior Debating competition.

By Mr J McGowne

Cameron Shaw and Jennifer Gilbert of S3 debated well in the first round at Marr College in Troon. This was a difficult heat against some very experienced debating teams and both pupils narrowly missed out on going through. This will hopefully only be the first of many debates for Cameron and Jennifer over the next few years.

Congratulations go to Megan Daly and Peter McKeeve of S2 who were successful in both rounds of the ESU competition. Both Megan and Peter will now compete in the Regional Final to be hosted by Mearns Castle on Thursday 1st May.

Similar to the senior debating team, all four junior debaters deserve great credit for the hard work that went into preparing their cases for two challenging motions on the use of performance enhancing drugs in sport and the re-nationalisation of the railways.



Peter McKeeve (S2) & Megan Daly (S2)

Environmental Awareness

By Shona Gunn & Siobhan McCulloch (S2)

Recently in geography our S2 class has been studying the Amazon Rainforest and the issues concerning today's wildlife and trees. We wrote a letter to Gordon Brown, the Prime Minister, about the subject of the Guyanas Rainforest in Brazil. Their government wanted to stop cutting down their forest and asked for the UK's protection of it and its habitats.

The Direct Communication Unit at 10 Downing Street replied to us saying that they take the threat of world's wildlife and the people who live in forests seriously. He also gave us a Politics answer saying "no single action can stop illegal logging".

Also when studying the Tropical Rainforest topic S2B raised enough money to buy 2 acres of Rainforest through the charity 'Rainforest Concern'. This is protecting the land in Ecuador Rainforest Corridor Project.

By Ross McLarty (S4)

Over the course of 8 weeks our S4 Geography class raised a total of £32.00 to send to an E.L.D.C country. With that amount of money the locals have bought a coop of chickens from which they can receive numerous eggs for eating and selling. They also managed to grow an acre of mangoes with the rest of the money.

Our operation to raise money for the developing world was a great success and the charity was extremely thankful.

Arts and Crafts Club

By Siobhan McCulloch & Nicole James (S2)

Miss Finlay and Miss McFarlane run the Art and Crafts club after school on a Monday. Most Mondays we bake but now we have started designing our own t-shirts and we also started to make items associated with special events such as Halloween or Easter

To: All parents of pupils in East Renfrewshire schools

Dear Parent

Black and Minority Ethnic Parents Meeting – Change of date and venue

As attendance at the last meeting of the group was very low, it has been decided to change the date and time of the next meeting, to see if this would be more convenient for parents. As a result, the group meeting planned for 7.00 p.m. on Wednesday 23 April 2008 in Woodfarm High School has been rearranged and will now take place at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday 29 April 2008 in the Ballroom at Eastwood House, Eastwood Park, Rouken Glen Road, East Renfrewshire G46 4UG.

The agenda is as follows:

1. Anti-racist Education – Staff and pupils from Braidbar Primary School and Eastwood High School
2. The role of the Bilingual Support Worker – Jasmine Ahmed
3. Consultation on Pupil Support Policy – Charlie Johnston

I do hope you will be able to attend this meeting and I look forward to seeing you there.

Yours sincerely

Susan Gow
Head of Education Services
(Children & Young People)

Did you go to Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre between 1973 and 1996?

COULD YOU SPARE 15 MINUTES TO FILL IN A QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT YOUR TIME THERE?

I'm carrying out a research project into what you remember about your experience at Ardentinny and whether you think it has influenced you in any way in your life.

Loved it? Loathed it? Can't remember a thing about it? It would all be helpful to me. I'm trying to find out whether outdoor education has any long-term impact and, if so, what that is.

Perhaps you didn't go yourself but you know someone who did. Please tell them about this project!

You can find the questionnaire and more information at:

<http://web.mac.com/jonnytel/iWeb/Ardentinny%20project/Welcome.html>

or by contacting John Telford at:

University of Edinburgh, Moray House School of Education,

St. Leonard's Land, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8AQ

Tel. 0131 6516353

Mob. 0775 3966157

john.a.telford@education.ed.ac.uk

Any help you are able to give would be very useful and greatly appreciated

Important Dates For P7s Going into S1

By Ms A Lewis

There will be an opportunity for parents of P7 pupils to purchase Mearns Castle uniform. Date for the Uniform Evening will be confirmed later via a letter to parents.

Laura Ormiston (S3) won the **Sporting Achievement Award** for her success in National Life Saving Competitions. She has been competing in competitions since the age of 11 and this year alone has won gold medals in the Scottish Regional Finals. Laura then attended the British National Finals in November 2007 where she was a gold medal winner. Laura maintains a rigorous training programme which involves swimming sessions very early in the morning and week-ends.

We are looking forward to welcome our new S1 pupils for their Induction Days on Thursday 29th May and Friday 30th May. S6 pupils will help to make the pupils welcome

An Information Evening for parents will be on the evening of Thursday 29th May

ERC International Woman's Day Awards

As part of the International Woman's Day celebrations East Renfrewshire presented awards to young women of secondary school age for their commitment to the wider community. Mearns Castle is delighted that of six awards presented in the 12-18 category, our girls won two.

Emma Ferguson (S4) won the **Community Spirit Award** for her work with the Youth Action Group in East Renfrewshire. Emma was instrumental in starting up a youth club in Eaglesham to give young people something constructive to do with their free time. This venture was a great success and Emma was asked to join the East Renfrewshire Young Action Group. With this group she has been involved in making a film about youth stereotyping.

Congratulations to both girls for achieving this recognition for their commitment and dedication.

CITIZENSHIP MATTERS

By Mrs Herald

Visit by the Moderator of the Church of Scotland

On Thursday 13th March pupils from all seven secondary schools in East Renfrewshire attended this event at Eastwood High School. The visit was arranged to highlight an anti-sectarian project being conducted by Crookfur and St Cadoc's primary schools. The secondary schools were asked to produce a display of the faiths which are celebrated in individual schools. S6 and S4 pupils prepared a power point presentation detailing aspects of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The RE department provided a visual display to illustrate facets of different faiths.

During the visit the Moderator, along with the Provost of East Renfrewshire and other Councillors and religious dignitaries, spent time with each group of pupils. The Moderator commented on the fact that Mearns Castle pupils were articulate and knowledgeable not only about their own faith but also that the pupils reflected a real sense of an integrated community.

Thanks go to Tahleel Lateef S4, Jordan Paterson, Paul Livingstone, David Smith and Nick Wright of S6 for their very confident and enthusiastic contributions and to Mr Johnstone and Mr Stewart for their assistance with the presentations.

Youth Participation Event

On Friday 28th March Pamela Barr and Max Hutchison S6, Elizabeth Ferrell S3 and James Stirling S1 are attending a Youth Participation event in the new extension at Fairweather Hall – The Edge. This event has been arranged by the Community and Leisure section of East Renfrewshire Council and will allow young people to discuss issues which affect them in the community and to suggest ways in which facilities can be improved. This is another instance of our young people being involved in decision making processes.



Charities' Fundraising

The Pupil Council and year group Form Captains are in the process of making final decisions about how to allocate the money raised through our fundraising this session. The charities will be announced in our final newsletter of the session.

✂

I have received a copy of the Parents' Newsletter

Pupil's Name:..... Class:.....

Parent's Signature:.....

Comments: