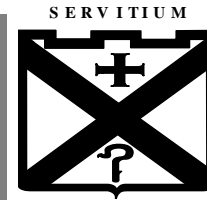


MEARNS CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL



June 2011

Issue 4

LETTER FROM THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Math's News</i>	3
<i>Humanitarian Project</i>	4
<i>Le Rencontres Théâtrales</i>	5
<i>Library News</i>	6
<i>Junior Debating</i>	7
<i>Marketing Society</i>	8
<i>S4 Work Experience</i>	9
<i>School Calendar</i>	10

Dear Parent/Carer

I can hardly believe that we are approaching the end of another session. Yet again I would like to take this opportunity to thank pupils, staff and parents for another wonderful year in the school.

As you can see from the Newsletter, this term has continued in the same vein as the rest of the session with a range of interesting and exciting activities for our pupils and yet more excellent achievements in a wide range of fields. As I write, over 700 pupils are involved in a variety of UPBEAT trips ranging from the Band trip to Belgium, to Watersports in the South of France to cycling in Millport and just about everything in between. A fabulous end to a busy session.

We recently said farewell to our S6 pupils at an excellent Prom and we wish them well for the future. We are now looking forward to next session. The timetable has now changed for the new S2 to S6 pupils and we are very much looking forward to welcoming our new S1 pupils in August.

You will hopefully be aware from earlier newsletters that as a school community we have launched our shared Vision, Values and Aims for our school. This will allow us to continue to offer an excellent experience for the young people at Mearns Castle. We had an HMIe inspection this session and they were very impressed by our shared Vision for our school. The inspection was an exciting time for the school and by the end of it the inspectors confirmed what an excellent school we have. I would like to personally thank you for all your support during the inspection.

The School House system was launched this session. Many events have been happening all year with points going towards the different houses. The last big event was the S1 and S2 Sports Days which were a great success. The points were added up and the results were announced to a packed Theatre (better than the X factor!) and Mrs Dalglish presented Wallace House with the Dalglish Cup. Thanks again to the Dalglish family for donating the cup. The final results were:

1. Wallace House	6480 points	4. Sutherland House	5807 points
2. Balmoral House	6277 points	5. Gleneagles House	5410 points
3. Ramsay House	6052 points	6. Caledonia House	5289 points

Look out for next year's event. Already Mr Cairney (Caledonia House) has set his house a challenge. Please look at the photographs on our website.

Contd.....

How to contact us



0141 577 2300
08:20am - 4:30pm
(3.15pm Fridays)



0141 577 2314



schoolmail@mearnscastle.e-renfrew.sch.uk
www.ea.renfrew.sch.uk/mearnscastle

Contd.....

As you would expect pupil changes at this time of year affect the composition of our Parent Council and PTA and some members, like their children, have now left. We thank them very much indeed for their excellent contribution to the school over, in some instances, many years. We are now, however, looking for new members. If you are interested in joining either of these important parent groups, please contact Anne Beattie in the school office in August for the date of the next meeting.

In addition to pupils and parents leaving, some staff are also leaving at the end of this session. I would like to thank Mrs Anne Hyman (Maths), Mr Eddie McDowell (Maths), Mrs Grace Hamilton (Music) and Mr David Hamilton (Technical) for their excellent contribution to the school and wish them well with the next stage in their life after Mearns Castle.

As our thoughts turn to the new session can I draw your attention to my comments below on school uniform. As I have said it is my ambition that our school is excellent in every dimension and school uniform has a part to play in this. We cannot achieve excellent school uniform without your help and support. It would be very helpful, therefore, if you could ensure that when your child returns to school in August they are wearing appropriate uniform and that they continue to wear it throughout the session.

In August the Local Authority are going to launch a new policy on uniform to achieve a more constant approach in all their schools. The young people I speak with will appreciate this consistency and will feel less peer pressure if all schools have a common policy.

As always I have included a calendar featuring some of the key events for next session on page 10 of the newsletter. I would also commend the School website to you for regular updates on school events. www.ea.e-renfrew.sch.uk/mearnscastle

The arrangements for the last day of term, Friday 24th June, are as follows:

- The school dining hall will only provide cold lunches on this day.
- Pupils having lunch in school should buy their lunch at the morning interval from the dining hall.
- Lunchtime will begin at 12.45pm at which point pupils will be able to eat their lunch in the dining hall.
- The school buses will be available at 12.45pm for pupils who travel home by bus.
- Lunchtime will then run from 12.45pm to 1.30pm. Finally school closes for the summer holidays at 1.30pm.

We re-open for pupils at 8.45am on Wednesday 17th August. I hope you and your family have an enjoyable summer holiday.

Jim McKenna

Depute Head Teacher

SCHOOL UNIFORM

- Black blazer and badge
 - School tie – appropriately tied
 - School shirt or blouse – white
 - Plain black V-necked cardigan or pullover
 - Formal trousers – black
 - Belt must be black
 - Formal skirt – black of a suitable length
 - Shalwar Kameez – black
 - Headscarf – black
 - Shoes – black shoes should be worn (trainers are not permitted)
 - Jacket – must be black and should have no obvious logo or advertising. Outside jackets should be removed in the school building.
-

Maths Matters

By Mrs Gibson

Here is a brief summary of the successes enjoyed by pupils in the maths department during the session:



110 certificates awarded for the UK Maths Challenge – seventeen Gold, thirty six Silver, fifty seven Bronze

Andrew Kirk (S5) invited to spend a week at a UK Maths Trust Olympiad Initial Training Camp at Queen's College, Oxford, as a result of his excellent performance in the Senior Maths Challenge (please see an extract at the foot of this article from the email that we received)

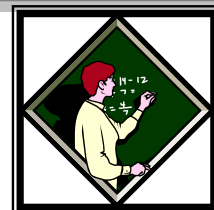
Both S4 and S5 teams came third in their categories in the Mathématiques sans Frontières competition

All S1 pupils had a great time at our annual "Who wants to be a Mathonaire?" competition in December

125 000 questions answered correctly during the World Maths Day Challenge

Congratulations to all pupils who have taken part in the competitions!

Additional Maths News



I am writing to let you know that we have invited ANDREW KIRK to a UK Mathematics Trust Olympiad Initial Training Camp at the Queen's College, Oxford, Sunday 28 August – Saturday 3 September 2011.

The main purpose of this camp is to offer a week's intensive training in mathematics outside the conventional syllabuses to a few of the ablest young mathematicians in the country. It will also be used to identify potential members of a squad of students who will continue training throughout the year with a view to representing the UK in one of the future International Mathematical Olympiads.

There will be an emphasis on problem-solving and clear mathematical exposition: the course is designed to encourage students in the field of mathematical problem-solving, to introduce them to new ideas, and to stimulate them by giving them the opportunity to meet and work with others who have similar interests and exceptional abilities.

There will only be 22 pupils on this camp and they will receive some invigorating and challenging training. The camp will be led by Dr Peter Neumann, the former chairman of the Trust and an emeritus fellow of The Queen's College, Oxford, and by Dr James Cranch, the UK Team Leader for the IMO.

Humanitarian Project

Written by Chris Park
Edited by Zahra Ahmad

On the 17th of January 7 pupils from S5 and S6 with Miss McLaughlin went to the Hilton Hotel to attend the Red Cross "Awareness to Action" conference. Our assignment? To educate the rest of our school on an important humanitarian issue that affects today's world.



The conference introduced us to the important work the Red Cross do across the globe; whilst also giving us some good ideas for the project. It was almost impossible to choose a topic to base our project on but after much debate we chose child labour. This meant the young people of our school could get an insight into the lives of other young people living in different parts of the world.

Work began immediately and we had regular meetings. We decided to target the junior school and we knew we had to try and engage them as much as possible if they were to learn anything. Therefore we let them get creative by making posters and t-shirts with anti child labour messages. The best posters were awarded prizes and displayed around the school; and the best t-shirt designs were even made into real t-shirts! In addition to that we also had a notice board displaying information about the project; our school debating team debated whether or not companies exploiting children should be banned from the high street; there was a conversation about it on the school radio show; and we spoke at assemblies.

I think after all our endeavours we have a very good chance of going far in the competition because our activities targeted over half the school. However myself and my team mates also learned so much: we ameliorated our group work skills as well as increasing our confidence. Most importantly we learned the lamentable reality that there are still over 250 million child labourers forced to work in sweatshops, mining, prostitution, child soldiers and agriculture. That's why projects like this are crucial to help inform people, who would otherwise be oblivious; of course we will not change the world but raising awareness is the first step.



All members of the group should be praised for their hard work: Chris Park, Zahra Ahmad, Fiona Keatings, Ian Monaghan, Ali Khan and Zara Mohammed, and of course not forgetting Miss McLaughlin for leading the team and offering help and support. There is a page on the school website dedicated to our cause with our presentations, winners and photos. Please spare a few minutes to read our information and see how important stopping child labour is.

Les Rencontres Théâtrales

By Miss McCourt

Bravo et félicitations! Well done and congratulations to the 14 pupils who took part in *Les Rencontres Théâtrales* national drama competition organised by the *Institut Français d'Ecosse*. The group were awarded the *Prix de la Créativité* in their category on 6th June for their play entirely performed in French.

Sana Ahmed, Emily Barber, Daniel Cohen, Catriona Cook, Alana Daly, Amanda Dundas, Katrina Eves, Joy Fitzpatrick, Ross Hunter, Elliot Linden, Sara Kay, Jenni McCallum, Laura Miller and Hannah Whyte wowed the international judging panel with their interpretation of *Le Déjeuner du Matin*, a poem by Jacques Prévert, as well as their technical skill in sound, lighting and stage management.

Pupils began work in January this year. They collaborated to create a storyline and plot based around a poem describing an uncomfortable breakfast eaten in silence. What happened before and after for there to be this tension between the two people in the poem? Could it have been a comedy situation where an employee had tried to impress the new boss and it went horribly wrong? Was it a tragedy where princes vied for the crown and poisoned their rivals? Or, our final option, was it a drama where a couple win the lottery and argue over who gets to keep the money?

The theatre company developed a huge range of skills including technical skills (operating sound and light equipment), stage craft and French language skills with a little advice from teaching staff from Modern Languages and Drama. They brought boundless enthusiasm and dedication to the project, rehearsing up to four times a week. After a technical rehearsal in front of family and friends, the pupils travelled to Whitehill Secondary School to perform for an international panel and other competing schools from around the country. Then, to showcase the creative and enterprising activities pupils can take part in at Mearns Castle High School, the group performed to their most impressive audience: the pupils who will join the school in August in S1.

Ideas are already being put forward for next year's competition entry however they will remain secret until after the summer holidays!



Gleneagles News

By Mr Gooch

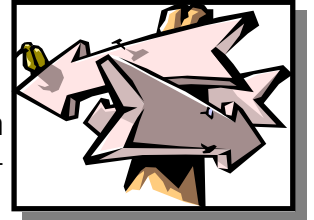
As of August Mr Gooch will take over head of Gleneagles house until Mrs Goodwin returns from maternity leave. This affects all pupils with the surnames G H I and K. Mr Gooch is very much looking forward to working with both pupils and parents over the course of next session.

Careers Fair

By Mr Cairney

Our annual Career's Fair will take place on Wednesday 2nd November from 6.00pm—

8.00pm. All pupils will be given a letter with more details nearer the time.



It promises to be an interesting and informative evening with representatives from University and colleges and from many diverse careers such as the Armed Forces, Beauty Therapists and Medicine. In order to cope with the large number we expect to attend, we would ask that pupils and parents from S2 and S3 attend from 6.00pm—7.00pm and S4, 5 and 6 from 7.00pm—8.00pm.

The event will comprise of stands for each of the represented organisations where pupils and parents will be able to collect information and ask questions of the representative. This is an invaluable opportunity to obtain information about courses and choices and career options.

Library News Carnegie Book Group

By Miss McEachern

Happy Summer
Reading Everyone!



The Carnegie Book Award is presented every year to the most outstanding book written for young people. A short-list of six nominated books was chosen and the eventual winner will be announced on June 24th 2011. Schools around the country are encouraged to shadow the award and read and discuss the books on the short-list.

This is exactly what we have been doing in the Mearns Castle Carnegie Book Group. Sixteen eager readers from S1-S3 joined the Book Group this year and have been busily reading as many of the nominated books as they can. The group meets regularly at lunchtime to discuss the books and review them online. They have also been winning valuable House Points as they read – with each book earning them 20 points.

We will also be taking part in the Carnegie Award Activity Morning on 14th June when we will travel to Woodfarm High School to meet up with book groups from other East Renfrewshire secondary schools. We will have a morning of fun book-based activities including a Carnegie Quiz, performances of dialogues from the books and voting for our overall favourite.

All the books on the short-list this year have been challenging, thought-provoking and enjoyable titles, written by some of the best authors for young people. They are:

Prisoner of the Inquisition by Theresa Breslin

Out of the Shadows by Jason Wallace

The Bride's Farewell by Meg Rosoff

Monsters of Men by Patrick Ness

The Death Defying Pepper Roux by Geraldine McGaughrean

White Crow by Marcus Sedgwick

The Carnegie Book Group is always good fun and we wait with baited breath to see who wins on the 24th June!

Debating News

By Mr McGowne

Glasgow Bar Association - Junior Debating Competition

Congratulations go to both Mearns Castle Junior teams for reaching the final of the Glasgow Bar competition. Team A were Hayley Russell and Olivia Gray (both S3), Team B were Catherine Marney (S3) and Jane Cameron (S2). Both teams had to come through two rounds of debating to get to the final. The final itself was held in Glasgow Sheriff Court on 15th June. The motion on the night was "This House would name and shame". Both teams did extremely well to prepare for the debate as both were on opposite sides of the argument. Both teams also contributed to a debate against some very experienced debating schools and in front of a large audience in the court. In the end the decision narrowly went against them. The eventual winners were Douglas Academy from Milngavie.



Mearns Castle's debaters; Hayley Russell, Olivia Gray (far left), Jane Cameron and Catherine Marney (far right) and their supporters Hannah Quinn and Priya Gill (Centre) at the final in Glasgow Sheriff Court.

A special mention also to the large group of supporters who came along to support the debaters on the night. Many family members and friends were in attendance and this only added to what was a great night of debating.

Finally, thanks also to all the Mearns Castle debaters who competed this year. This year also saw the debaters receive some expert debate training from the Stylus Communication Company back in February. This will be of great benefit for all in the years ahead and for those who will represent the school in the large number of competitions that take place throughout the year. Below is a list of these competitions. Three more will be added to the calendar for next year.

***A reminder also that the school runs 2 debating clubs throughout the term. Junior Debating (S1-3) takes place on a Monday after school, Senior Debating (S4-6) on a Thursday. Here's to next year!!!

The Competitions: (existing competitions)

- Donald Dewar Memorial Debating Competition (run by the Law Society)
- English Speaking Union Mace
- ESU Junior Debating Competition
- Glasgow Bar Association Junior Debating competition
- European Youth Parliament
- Glasgow University Schools competition
- Oxford Union Schools competition
- Cambridge Union Schools competition
- West Coast Worlds trial
- St Andrew's day debate
- The Hot Air Cup

Coming soon:

St Andrew's University Union Schools
Edinburgh Union Schools
Durham University Schools

Marketing Society Scotland Competition

By Mrs Hamilton



Four dedicated S5 students (Sam Morris, Gabriel Ross, Sam Rosenbloom and Ailsa Stephen) were selected to represent the school as a part of the Marketing Society Scotland Star School of the Year Competition.

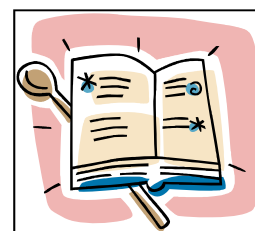
This year's brief, as set by the Scottish Government, saw the team design a strategy to encourage school children, their parents and teachers to participate in an hour of physical activity a day (on top of any in school PE classes). This challenge required them to carry out extensive research into what motivated (or de-motivated) people with regards to physical activity.

In the end the team came up with some innovative ideas incorporating the design of a new website and activity logging 'App' to lure our technology obsessed youngsters into action.

The team's idea was selected as a finalist for the national round of the competition and preparation involved the team in working with a marketing agency (The Bridge, Glasgow) and Radio Clyde to prepare professional materials to showcase their ideas. As last year's winners of the national competition, the team were disappointed to be awarded runners up this year, but received excellent feedback from the judges and enjoyed a well-deserved evening out at the Marketing Society Scotland awards ceremony.

Connecting Classroom Recipe Book

By Mrs Thomson



Next term our Connecting Classrooms project will be focussing on a joint enterprise activity.

We, along with our partner schools in Delhi will be compiling our favourite recipes, which we will share with each other and then publish to sell in our community.

What do we need from you?

Recipes!

We are looking for your favourite recipes; they can be your best Scottish meal, a family favourite of any origin, a festival or celebration food.

Basically, anything you like to make and eat!

The closing date for entries will be in the autumn term. Send in your recipe on paper or electronically via school email (and if you can, a photograph of your delicious dish, although this is not necessary) to Mrs Thomson.

Happy Cooking

S4 Work Experience 10th - 14th October 2011

By Mr Cairney

Your son/daughter in S4 should be currently preparing for their pending S4 Work Experience placement next session. Mearns Castle High School has been allocated the time noted above and we aim to ensure all pupils are allocated a placement for the given week.

Many of our pupils arrange their own Work Experience posts and your son/daughter has been given a peach coloured Proposed Placement Form that can be handed to any company or employer, who may offer a suitable placement. Placements can be found through family contacts, checking the yellow pages or local knowledge of businesses, then a letter, telephone call or personal request should be made to the employer. It is important that these forms are returned to the school as soon as possible.

For those pupils who are unable to secure their own placement, the school will also have a database with a variety of opportunities that have been sourced by Gateway and your son/daughter will be able to apply for these limited posts in September. However, I have to stress that these posts are limited and as such should only be used as a last resort.

The school's yellow coloured Parental Consent and the peach Work Placement forms for Work Experience have been distributed and we would ask for this to be returned as soon as possible. The peach Work Placement forms are also available on the school website and can be printed, completed and handed in to the school office over the holiday period.

Work Experience is a very valuable week for S4 pupils and we appreciate your support in helping your son/daughter to meet deadlines and return paperwork.

If you have any questions please contact the school and ask to speak to Mrs McKenzie in the school office or Mr Cairney.

Parents Feedback

Pupil's Name _____

Year Group: _____

We Welcome any feedback on the content of the Newsletter or indeed any other aspect of the work of the school. If you wish to make an electronic reply please do so by following the link below;

<http://www.ea.e-renfrew.sch.uk/mearnscastle/contactUs/newsletter.asp>

Comment

Parent's Signature:.....

Parents Name (please print):.....

Calendar of Events 2011 -2012

2	February	S1 Parent Meeting
3	February	S4 Reports issued
3	February	HPV mop up & DTP vaccinations
6 – 17	February	S5/6 Prelims
6	February	S4 Option Evening
10	February	In Service day
13 & 14	February	Mid Term break
20	February	S2 Reports issued
23	February	S2 Option Evening
27	February	S2 Parents' Meeting
12	March	S5/6 Reports issued
13	March	HPV 3 rd dose
13	March	S3 Parents Meeting
30	March	School closes for Spring Break
16	April	Pupils return 08:45am
23 Apr – 3 May		S3 Exams
3	May	S6 Leavers' Ceremony
4 – 7	May	May week end
4	May	Start of SQA exams
11	May	S3 Industrial Awareness Day
21	May	P7 Induction Day 1
21	May	P7 Parents' Evening
22	May	P7 Induction Day 2
30	May	S1 Reports issued
30	May	S2-S4 New Timetables
31	May	In Service Day
1-5	June	May Weekend and Queen's Jubilee
6	June	S5 & S6 New Timetables
16 & 17	June	Award Ceremonies
27	June	School Closes 1:30pm

2011		
15 & 16	August	In Service Days
17	August	Pupils return 08:45am
5	September	Senior Awards Ceremony
12	September	S5 Curricular Evening
19	September	HPV 1 st dose
20	September	S4 Parents' Meeting
23-26	September	September Holiday Weekend
29	September	S6 Curricular Evening
4	October	S1 Open Evening
5	October	S2 Tracking Report issued
10-14	October	S4 Work Experience Week
14	October	In Service Day
31	October	S5/6 Tracking Report issued
10	November	S5/6 Parents' Meeting
18	November	S4 Tracking Report issued
21-22	November	Look Back in Laughter
23	November	S3 Curricular Evening
2	December	S3 Tracking Report issued
5-14	December	S4 Prelims
13	December	S1/2 Christmas Dance
15	December	S5/6 Christmas Dance
19	December	S5/6 2 nd Tracking Report issued
19	December	S3/4 Christmas Dance
20	December	S1 S Factor
22	December	School closes for Christmas and New Year
2012		
9	January	Pupils return 08:45am
20	January	S1 Tracking Reports issued
23	January	S1 Curricular Evening



Name:

Year:

Celebrate Success!

Enterprise

Citizenship

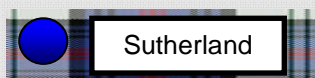
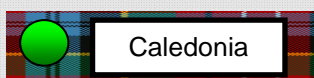
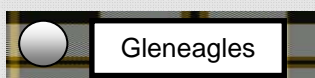
Sport

Expressive Arts

Tell us about it by completing this form.

We want to celebrate ALL your achievements in school and outside of school! Have you won any awards, passed exams or participated in a worthwhile activity or hobby?

It could count towards points for your House!



Please return to Mr Gooch in Pupil Support