

LETTER FROM THE HEADTEACHER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|--|------|
| <i>College/University Applications</i> | 2 |
| <i>School Meal Price Increase</i> | 2 |
| <i>Virtual Job Fair</i> | 2 |
| <i>School Fantasy League</i> | 3 |
| <i>Eco News</i> | 3 |
| <i>Sports News</i> | 4 |
| <i>World Book Day</i> | 5 |
| <i>Debating & Public Speaking</i> | 6/7 |
| <i>Scottish Indoor Championships</i> | 8 |
| <i>Modern Language News</i> | 9/10 |
| <i>Scottish Heritage</i> | 11 |
| <i>Maths Matters</i> | 12 |
| <i>Stairway to Success</i> | 13 |

Dear Parents/Carers

The lighter nights and long awaited better weather heralds the approach of our Spring Break as another action packed term has flown by at Mearns Castle. As you can see from the Newsletter yet again it has been a term filled with notable achievements.

In the sporting arena our Senior Volleyball team reached the semi-final of the Scottish Schools' Cup and were only narrowly defeated. In addition a number of our athletes will be training with Scottish National Coaches and indeed representing Scotland.

Both our Junior and Senior Debating teams reached National Finals. Our Junior team were close runners up and the Senior final is still to come in the Debating Chamber of the Scottish Parliament in June. I am hopeful I will be celebrating the success of our Senior team in my next Newsletter.

As a school we continue to embrace the green agenda and our Eco schools group are thriving. We have just celebrated fair-trade fortnight and our two National Climate Champions have just attended their first official engagement at a British Council Conference in Birmingham. Mearns Castle has also been marking Homecoming Year with a wide range of Scottish themed events across the school. This activity culminated in a fabulous Burns Supper where pupils from a range of year groups fed, watered and entertained our guests in traditional Scottish style.

As a cluster along with our partner Nursery and Primary schools we were recently reviewed by the Local Authority Education Department's Standards and Quality Review team. The team were reviewing the schools' transition arrangements to ensure that the young people in the Mearns Castle Cluster are receiving a high quality and progressive educational experience from age 3 — 18. The verbal feedback following the review was very positive and the report will be published in the near future. I will share the findings of the Review team with you in due course.

As you know things never stand still in the school and we are continuing to work hard to prepare our S4, S5 and S6 pupils for the forthcoming SQA Exams in May and June. In previous years we have put in place special transport arrangements for our senior pupils during these Exams but for the most part the pupils have not utilised these. This year therefore we are planning to make some changes to our previous arrangements with the intention of continuing to meet our pupils' needs but in a more efficient and effective matter. I will write to you after the Spring Break with more details on the proposed transport arrangements for Senior pupils during the SQA Exam diet.

Our S2, S4 and S5 pupils have now completed their course choices for next session and we are now 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 earlier this term and are designed to prepare the current P7s for becoming Mearns Castle pupils in August.

Finally school closes for the Spring Break at the usual time of 2.45pm on Friday 3rd April. We re-open at 8.45am on Monday 20th 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



College and University Applications

By Mr H Cairney

A large number of our pupils are applying to colleges at present. If your child is considering applying then please encourage them to do so now as a number of colleges are conducting interviews at the moment.

We had a record number of university applications this session (over 180) and a large number of pupils have received conditional or unconditional offers. Decisions do not have to be made until the end of April and pupils will be given advice on this and on financial support during S6 PSE in school. S5 applicants should speak with Mr Cairney about this.

Some useful websites for advice for parents are:
www.ucas.com/parents & www.saas.gov.uk



Virtual Job Fair

By Mrs B Gardner

Careers Scotland is hosting a Virtual Jobs Fair via its website (see details below) between 23rd March and 3rd April 2009. As well as the opportunity to apply for real jobs with employers from across the country, the virtual jobs fair allows you to access many other useful features to support you in your job search e.g. labour market information, interview skills, help with application forms etc. There will also be access to expert, impartial careers advice and guidance from one of our qualified Careers Advisers.

Any pupils interested in leaving school to take up employment under a modern apprenticeship training programme should be actively applying for job at this time. Most large employers, including local authorities, will have information on their websites about their recruitment programmes and how to apply. Ever considered a career in the creative and cultural sector? There is currently a 12 month apprenticeship in Technical Theatre (theatre rigging, light and sound) being advertised at the Tramway Theatre in Glasgow (www.creative-choices.co.uk). Information about this and other apprenticeships are currently on the plasma screen, Careers Noticeboard, press and websites. Find out more at:
www.careers-scotland.org.uk/jobsfair

Jobs are regularly posted on the Careers Noticeboard (located outside the School Theatre) and further information can be obtained from the school Careers Advisers, Bev Gardiner (in school Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday) and Lyndsay Plews (in school Thursdays).

Facilities Management Catering Service School Meal Prices 2009/2010 From 1 April 2009

We wish to notify you of the increase in costs of school meals as of April 2009. The costs of school meals will increase as follows:

Primary Sector - £1.65 – Hot meal - £1.50 – Cold meal
Secondary Sector - £1.75 – Hot meal

Price lists of all foods will be displayed in the dining halls and further detail will be made available through the Diner's News leaflet and Homework Diary.

As you may be aware, one of the targets for outcomes from the Health, Nutrition and Promotion (Scotland) Act 2007 is to improve the uptake in school meals, therefore, we are keen to make improvements on the current numbers. An improvement in numbers also contributes in minimising the costs of the overall service.

Schools Fantasy League

By Miss A Thomson

The competition continues to be fierce in the Mearns Castle Fantasy League. The current overall leader is Alan Jacobson (S5) who is the first manager to break the 300 point mark this year with his team "We All Love Mendes". Ludovic Picard (S2) is in second place with 290 points and in third is our only female pupil manager, Amanda Hamilton (S4) who has 269 points. Mr Hutchison is the top placed teacher with 265 points. At the other end of the table Mr Calder has maintained his spot in last place throughout the season but has at least now broken the 100 points mark (although only just!!)

Manager of the Month certificates for February were presented to:

- S1 – Sam Cassie with his team "Coca Goala"
- S2 – Mohammed Mahmood and "Magic Warrior FC"
- S3 – Gabi Banks with his "millionaires"
- S4 – Fraser Paterson with "Pedro Mendes FC"
- S5 – Alan Jacobson and "We All Love Mendes"
- Staff – Mr Macfarlane with his team "DWN WTH VWLS"



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 News

By Miss F McCormick

Fairtrade Fortnight

Our pupils, from S1 to S6, did a fantastic job of fundraising for Fairtrade Fortnight! Pupils from the Water Works and Global Issues Eco Schools committees worked together (with a few extra helpers) to organise, advertise and run two events: a Fairtrade stall selling chocolate and bananas and a line of pennies, where pupils donated pennies and tried to create the longest line possible. In total they raised £90.77 – well done Mearns Castle!

Fairtrade Coffee

After the success of our Fairtrade Fortnight, I am pleased to report that the staff room will now use Fairtrade coffee. The Global Issues sub-committee put in a request to the Social Committee and the coffee was sampled. It was deemed a success and is now being sold at break in the staff room. Well done everyone involved!

Climate Champions – Convention in Birmingham

Our 2 Climate Champions, Emily Wolfson and Rory Buchanan, attended their first official engagement as Climate Champions. The British Council had organised a conference in Birmingham from the evening of 27th March to the afternoon of Sunday 29th March, where pupils had a chance to network and create contacts, receive assistance in project planning and implementation and learn more about environmental concerns.



Climate Champions

The British Council, an organisation which promotes international exchanges, recently launched a competition looking for 9 Scottish International Climate Champions 2009. After submitting a proposal for a project to reduce our impact on climate change and attending an interview in Edinburgh, two of our S3 pupils, Emily Wolfson and Rory Buchanan, were successful in their bid. This success is all the greater as originally we were told they would only accept one Champion per project and having interviewed nine candidates, the British Council only chose four. I accompanied Emily and Rory on their first official engagement as Climate Champions to a conference in Birmingham at the end of March for all the UK Champions. We all thoroughly enjoyed the exciting experience!



SPORTS AT MEARN'S CASTLE

By Mr C Giles

VOLLEYBALL

The Senior Boy's team had a tremendous battle against Stonelaw High School in the semi final of the Scottish Schools Cup. Unfortunately, Stonelaw took the deciding set in the hard fought match. Mearns Castle took the first set 25-22 with some great attacks through the outside. Stonelaw came back with some tough serves in the second set to win it 25-12. Despite an 8-6 lead half way through the final set, Stonelaw came out on top 15-12 after some fiercely competitive rallies. We wish them well in the final.

Congratulations to the boys who got the team that far (**Grant Young, Calum Bryson, Andrew Campbell, Ross Atkin, Sam Green, Michael Murphy, Tom Craig, Fraser Hamilton, Daniel Stern and William Picard**)



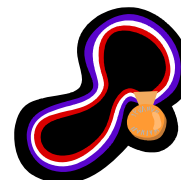
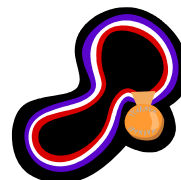
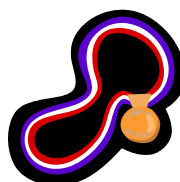
RUGBY

Congratulations to both **Adam Barnett** and **Nick McCaw (S4)** who were selected for the Glasgow Giants U16 squad this season. Adam has further been selected for the Glasgow District U16 squad and has been invited to participate in the Glasgow Thistles training camp near Perpignan in France this Summer. Well done boys!



CROSS COUNTRY

Catriona Lockie (S6) and **Luke Traynor (S4)** have been asked to represent Scotland. Many congratulations and best of luck to them!



CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Many of our pupils competed in the East Renfrewshire Cross Country Championships in February. All of our pupils gave superb efforts and managed to pick up several medals.

Congratulations to the following:

The **S1 boys team** (**Gil Banks, Frazer Robertson, Michael McDonald, Gary Bennett, Chris Naddell, and Darren Martin**) took the **bronze** medal – **Gil Banks** won **silver**

The **S2 boys team** (**Jamie Gemmell, Craig Morrison, Andrew Cunningham, Greg Jacobs, Ryan McGowan, and James Stirling**) took the **silver** medal – **Jamie Gemmell** won **gold**

The **S2 girls team** (**Caitlin McLaren, Gayle Haig, Erin Shearer, Eilidh Milne, Kirsty Slessor, and Laura McCracken**) took the **bronze** medal

The **S3 boys team** (**Fraser Walker, Chris Russell, Chris Owen, Andrew Kirk, David Clarke, and Adam Gray**) took the **silver** medal

The **S3 girls team** (**Connie MacKay, Stephanie Fairfield, Fiona Anderson, Jennifer Taggart, and Eleanor Lockhart**) took the **silver** medal – **Stephanie Fairfield** won **bronze**

The **Senior boys team** (**Luke Traynor, Jack Walker, Gordon Adams, Andrew Wilson, David Cairns**) took the **gold** medal – **Luke Traynor** and **Jack Walker** won **silver** and **bronze** respectively

The **Senior girls team** (**Catriona Lockie, Fiona Martin, Amelia Bury, and Emma Bruce**) took the **gold** medal – **Catriona Lockie** won **gold**

LIBRARY NEWS

By Miss K McEachern



Book Fair and Author Visit

The library held a very successful bookfair in December which made £650 in total, giving the library £354 worth of free books. The library will also be playing host to two author visits soon as part of the East Renfrewshire Storytelling Festival. Award-winning children's author, Catherine MacPhail will be talking to S1 pupils about her books and what inspires her stories and thriller-writer, Helen Fitzgerald will be talking to S5/6 pupils about her career and how to become a published author/writer.

Every year, the library book group shadows the Carnegie Children's Book Award. A short-list of books will be announced in April and the book group will then read the nominated books, discuss them with each other, write on-line reviews and attend the Carnegie Day in June where we will meet up with other East Renfrewshire schools shadowing the Award. It is always great fun and a chance to read new books and authors. Miss McEachern is looking for interested pupils (S1-S4) who would like to join the book group this year. Simply give your name to the librarian before Fri 24 April.

World Book Day

The library celebrated World Book Day on Thu 5 March with a variety of activities. Pupils were given £1 book tokens to spend on a new book, a photographic display of teacher's favourite books was mounted and over 300 pupils voted in the Ultimate Reader's Poll, which yielded the following results:

Best hero/heroine – Harry Potter

Best villain – Voldemort

Best scary book – Demonata series by Darren Shan

Best funny book – Georgia Nicolson's diaries by Louise Rennison

Best sad book – The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas by John Boyne

Best book made into a film – Twilight by Stephenie Meyer

Best book ever! – Twilight series by Stephenie Meyer

A winning voting slip was drawn out of the hat and Rachael Henderson (S1) was the lucky pupil who won a complete set of World Book Day books and an Easter Egg!

Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award

By Mr A Hutchison

As part of the Bronze Award we had 45 pupils undertaking a weekend expedition to Loch Lomond to complete a 20 mile hike on the 28th and 29th of March. The hike was a practise for their qualifying expedition which we will undertake in June. The pupils have all completed training in basic first aid and survival training during the last few months and are now fully prepared for the great outdoors.



We also recently had a number of pupils complete a qualification in Standard First Aid with Anaphylaxis. This is a demanding qualification and requires a great deal of time and effort. Well done to all of you. During the next month pupils from S3 will be invited to become involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. They will be addressed during assembly about the award and the important role it can play in their future job and university prospects as well as allowing them to experience many different challenges and make new friends along the way. If you require any information about the award then why not visit the school website and you will find lots of information regarding the award.



Debating and Public Speaking

A busy few months of debating and public speaking for Mearns Castle

By Mr J McGowne

Back in January, Mearns Castle hosted a very busy West of Scotland round of the Oxford Union Schools Debating Competition. The school was represented by Tahleel Lateef and Alasdair Clarkson in one team, Eilidh Clements and Natalie George in another and Andrew Ross and Imaan Gangi in the final team. The competition was fierce with some of the best debaters in the country taking part. A total of 8 schools from around the country took part. Despite not being victorious, a fun night was had by all. A special mention should also be given to Emily Wolfson and Rory Buchanan of S3 who stood in at the last minute when one team pulled out. They were not out of their depth and were commended for their debating on the night. Thanks also go to the pupils who came along to support the teams and contribute to the floor debates. Even more remarkable in that this event was held on a Friday night.



Rotary Club Public Speaking

Mearns Castle once again participated in the annual Rotary Club public speaking competition. The school was represented by Natalie George (speaker), Eilidh Clements (Chairperson) and Andrew Ross (Proposer). Natalie's chosen topic was '*The importance of History in the classroom*'. Mearns Castle competed well on the night despite losing out to the eventual winners from Barrhead High School. Many thanks also to the small band of S6 pupils who came along on the night to support the team.



Mearns Castle's Rotarians



Emma Robson, Gabriel Ross
and Callum Groom (S3)

English Speaking Union – Public Speaking Competition

Emma Robson (speaker), Callum Groom (Chair) and Gabriel Ross (Questioner) of S3 recently competed in the final of the ESU Public Speaking Competition at the ESU HQ in Edinburgh. All three pupils had earlier won the West of Scotland Regional final. Emma's topic on the night was '*All schools should make sex education compulsory in their curriculum*'. Mearns Castle were narrowly beaten by the eventual winners, George Heriot's school from Edinburgh, by a very small margin. However, it was a great achievement for the team to come so close in their first attempt at this competition. As this is a competition for S3 and S4 pupils, Emma, Callum and Gabriel will be eligible to compete again next year.

European Youth Parliament



Mearns Castle's EYP team with the main organiser of the event, Kenny Gray of Douglas Academy (back centre)

Mearns Castle once again competed in the European Youth Parliament (West of Scotland) Forum at the Kessington Hall in Bearsden on Friday 13th March. A group of ten pupils from S3 and S5 debated topics as wide ranging as Maritime Piracy, Separatist States and the EU's relations with South America. Mearns Castle represented the committee on Security and Defence. On the day the team were narrowly defeated with the eventual winners being Bearsden Academy. The judges at the event gave the school some very positive feedback however, commenting that it wasn't a unanimous decision. 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 many this will only be the first of many debating competitions in the future.

*A special mention should also go to the French Assistant, Shirley Tournier, who came along on the day to encourage the team and, in fact, to participate herself in the debate on Stem Cell Research which was conducted mainly in French. And finally, a mention to Imran Ahmed of S5 who started a mini debate in Urdu between himself and a fellow debater in an opposing team.

English Speaking Union Junior Debating Competition



Left to Right: Peter McKeeve, Fiona Keatings, Rory Buchanan and Megan Daly (S3)

Back in February, the school hosted the second round of the above competition. Mearns Castle were represented by two teams in what was a six team round. The motion on the night was *"This House would elect its Police Chiefs"*. In the end two teams progressed with St Columba's school in Kilmalcolm and Mearns Castle. Congratulations go to Fiona Keatings and Peter McKeeve who will now progress to the Regional Final to be held towards the end of April. A special mention also to Megan Daly and Rory Buchanan who narrowly missed out on progressing to the next round. The judges admitted that it was a split decision on which teams would eventually go through. As ever, the standard of debate on the night was first class.

The Law Society 'Donald Dewar Memorial' Debating Competition

Since the last newsletter there have been two more rounds of the above competition. Tahleel Lateef and Alasdair Clarkson progressed to the Regional Final in their heat hosted by Marr College in Troon. Imaan Gangi and Eilidh Clements very narrowly missed out in the heat hosted by Mearns Castle. The motion for this round was *"This House would legalise Euthanasia"*. The eventual winners of this heat were Abronhill High School in what was a tough competition with some very experienced debaters in attendance.

Contd.....

Contd.....

Glasgow Regional Final

Tahleel and Alasdair competed in the Regional Final at the beginning of March in Balfour High School and were victorious on the night. Both debaters successfully proposed the motion *"This House would make National Service compulsory for school leavers"*. As such, both Tahleel and Alasdair will now contest the final which will be held in the Scottish Parliament Debating Chamber in June.



Left to Right: Tahleel Lateef (S5), Alasdair Clarkson, (S5) Imaan Gangi (S6) and Eilidh Clements (S6).



Scottish Schools' Indoor Track And Field Championships

By Mr I Macfarlane



Early on Thursday 5th February 13 athletes departed Mearns Castle High School, to compete in the Scottish Indoor Championships. Each year the number of athletes taking part has increased, with this being the biggest squad yet entered by the school. Mr Smith was there to wish all athletes the best of luck as they left for Glasgow's Kelvin Hall.

The day itself is a very long affair with heats, semi-finals and finals meaning that the competition starts at 11:00am and continues until 7:00pm. This involves a lot of waiting around, warming up and competing for the athletes. All the athletes involved not only competed superbly but were also completely professional in preparing for their events and their behaviour and support for each other throughout the day was, as always, exemplary.

The standard is always very high at National competitions and this year was no different. Many athletes gained personal bests or experienced this level of competition for the first time and three athletes won silver medals in their events; thus, special congratulations to Jack Walker (Under-16 800m), Andrew Russell (Over-16 High Jump) and Catriona Lockie (Over-16 800m). All the athletes should be very proud of their efforts and looking ahead eagerly to the Outdoor Championships in June.

Scottish Schools Athletics' Association Coaching Day

Congratulations to Stephanie Fairfield S3 (800m) and Andrew Russell S5 (High Jump) who have been invited to an elite training day working with the Scottish National Coaches. This is an excellent award for all their hard work.

News from the Modern Language's Department

By Mrs L Stewart

High School who are studying French at Higher and Advanced Higher levels went to Paris for a linguistic and cultural visit, accompanied by Madame Naddell and Mr Cairns.

They visited amongst other landmarks Unesco's Headquarters, the National Opera House, the delightful Musée de l'Orangerie and the Palais de Tokyo Modern Art Museum. They also enjoyed trying out their French as they carried out a survey of French students in the Latin Quarter – but they were a little dismayed about the French lack of knowledge about Scotland!. During one of their typical French lunches they generally agreed after their snail tasting session that snails are "délicieux"!

The linguistic aspect was quite challenging as all guided tours were in French without a word of English spoken! The pupils' response was very positive and their ability to focus increased as the days went by. They willingly listened to the French commentary during their river cruise, and on their last night thoroughly enjoyed the trendy French film they watched at the cinema – it seems teenage concerns translate quite well across countries!

All in all, it was an excellent trip, appreciated by pupils and teachers alike! Next year the Modern Languages Department is planning to organise an S5/S6 trip to Geneva, which will take place in November.

At the end of February, a group of 24 senior pupils from Mearns Castle and Williamwood



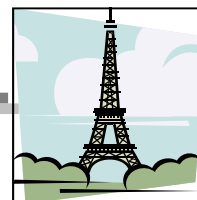
Le voyage à Paris

By Mme Naddell

The Fifth and Sixth year school trip to Paris was one of the busiest trips I can remember going on for a long time. It felt like an entire week's full of activities compressed into three days- stimulating, tiring, and immensely worthwhile. I can honestly say that most pupils on the trip have never done so much walking but the beauty of Paris definitely made up for any fatigue.

We experienced all the wonders of Paris from seeing all of it in the sunlight from the top of the Eiffel Tower to sitting calmly on a bateau-mouche by night while it drifted past our eyes on the river Seine. The trip provided us with many opportunities to hear French from native tour guides and so to improve our understanding - despite the fact that I was at parts so tired I could hardly hear what was being said!

I felt immensely privileged to stand in the main conference hall of UNESCO where strange political goings on take place. The memories which stick most in my mind are the snails, the crepes, the symmetry of Le Louvre courtyard - rudely disrupted by a Richard Serra sculpture and of course the famous Orangerie Museum. I found myself furious that the tour guide only gave us minutes in each room!... I cannot wait to go back and stare for hours in fixation at Monet's Water Lilies (I may be one of the very few but there you go). Undoubtedly everyone got something out of the trip and we all want to go back to Paris - soon!



Tasting a little bit of France in Glasgow!

By Mme Naddell

In January this year, a group of S5 and S6 pupils studying French visited the Alliance Française in Glasgow to immerse themselves in the French culture - and the French language and prepare their trip to Paris. They were very attentive as the French librarian made his presentation about the facilities (they nodded at all the right places) and then had fun doing a fact finding quiz about Paris, using all resources at hand. They enjoyed a little relaxation at the Beanscene Café afterwards, they needed it after their hard work!

This was a great team building experience, and a good warm-up to what was to come in la Belle France a few weeks later!

MILTILINGUAL DEBATE

By Mrs L Stewart

The Advanced Higher French class visited Heriot Watt university on 25th February to attend a multilingual debate with live interpreting by senior students. This conference was subsequently featured in a Newsnight report about the teaching of foreign languages in Scotland.

The following motion was debated: *This house believes that we should seek to preserve language diversity rather than to promote one lingua franca.*

Contributions to the debate were made in French, German, Arabic, Chinese and Spanish, and the question and answer session that followed was also in several languages. Mearns Castle pupils were very enthusiastic about this conference which had given them an opportunity to experience languages beyond the classroom, in a very real and intellectual environment. They agreed that this kind of activity had boosted their motivation and given them further inspiration to continue with languages.

Further to the success of this visit, the Modern Languages Department is considering extending this opportunity to their most committed S5 linguists next year.



Industrial Awareness Day May 2009

By Miss S Oram

S3 pupils will be taking part in the annual Industrial Awareness Day enterprise Event. Pupils will work together in teams of 10 producing a product to gain an awareness of Production Management and Effective Teamwork. To ensure the success of the event and support the students in this venture, we need adult advisors to work with and support the groups on this activity. I would therefore be very grateful for volunteers from interested Mearns Castle Parents. It is an exciting and eventful day guaranteed to push pupils to achieve their entrepreneurial best.

Industrial Awareness Day — an interesting and fun experience for all participants.

If you are able to help, could you please contact Mrs Teresa Muir in our school office for further details. My thanks in anticipation.

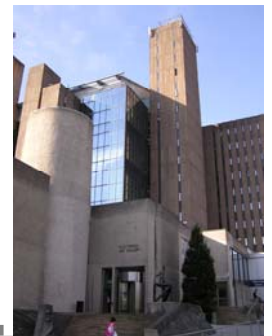
Report by Francis Kassatly S6

In February, the Advanced Higher French class was given the opportunity to attend a debate on the viability of a lingua franca, at Herriot Watt University in Edinburgh. This was a privilege in many ways: firstly the conference is often over subscribed so we were lucky to be given tickets; secondly, the event was televised and our faces were broadcast to millions of people on BBC 2! The multi-lingual and multi-cultural debaters discussed the most suitable choice for this universal language (ironically, simultaneous interpreting had to be provided for the various different nationalities). Many suggestions were made for the language of choice, from Catalan to Mandarin Chinese, but all proved irrelevant when the audience voted against the notion in a huge majority. The trip was both thought provoking and relevant, given that the majority of the class intend to continue language studies at university.

Glawsgow University

By Mme Naddell

In order to complete a piece of research for their Advanced Higher course, a group of S6 French pupils and S6 English pupils visited Glasgow University Library this year. They learned how to locate documents and were issued with a library card which they have since put to good use for their research. It was an exciting visit as it gave them a taste of things to come next year and made them feel much older right away!



Celebrating our Scottish Heritage – Part 2!

By Mr S Gooch & Mrs Z Nicklin

"Celebrating our Scottish heritage" activities took place during the final 2 weeks of last term. Each department developed a series of lessons that looked at and celebrated Scottish experiences, influences and people. The interdisciplinary activities were a huge success across the school and the displays and hard work by all staff were hugely appreciated.

In the last newsletter we gave you an insight into what MCHS was contributing towards this year's Scottish homecoming celebrations. Our

| Subject | Activity |
|---|---|
| HE | Made shortbread. Also S5 students held a Burns Supper for invited guests this month. |
| Past Preservers Group (History club) | A survey of each year group and their knowledge of Scottish inventors and inventions in Social Subjects. Display of the findings on a notice board in the E corridor. |
| Drama | The story of Burke and Hare - Scottish history explored through role play and drama. Display in the Drama corridor. |
| PE | Scottish country dancing - photos on display. |
| Library | Display of Scottish literature and authors; and also a display of Scottish inventors, explorers, scientists, historical figures etc. Pupils encouraged to borrow these books. |
| Modern Languages | S1 - Welcome to our school in French for the website S2 - Cross curricular projects - Display in corridor S3 - Welcome to our area / Newton Mearns in French for the website |
| Science - Chemistry & Physics & Biology | Research into famous Scottish scientists and inventors. Displays in the science corridors. |
| Music | Tam O'Shanter - Pupils listened to the music and then created sound pictures from an area of the story |
| Maths | Napier's Rods - Pupils learnt about Napier and his contribution to Maths by his method of using 'bones' to do complicated multiplication. Also his discovery of logarithms. |
| Art | Scottish banners - best designs to be picked and pupils will be working with an artist to make banners for the school. |
| Geography | Differences between Scotland and developing countries such as India and Malawi - display in the corridor |
| Admin | Marketing Scottish Tourism - mood boards and advertising material for Scotland. Display in Business Studies corridor. |
| Computing | Project on Scottish entrepreneurs in the IT world e.g. Red Lemon, Grand Theft Auto. Also pupil presentation on what are original or traditional Scots. |
| RMPS | Pupils learnt about St Andrew and then produced posters |
| English | S3 pupils were visited by the Scottish writer Catherine Macphail, whose book 'Tribes' they have studied. Also S1 classes have been studying Burns Poetry and are involved in a Scottish Poetry concert to perform as a talk assessment. |
| Tech | MCHS banner design competition - pupils are making MCHS banners for use at school events. |
| Modern Studies | Quiz on local MSP Ken Macintosh |
| Assembly & Tutor Groups | Promotion of activities to pupils' week beginning 1 st Dec and Scottish Quiz. |

Mrs Robinson and her Intermediate 2 Hospitality team provided a first class Burns Supper aided by chef Ian McCulloch. Entertainment was provided by Miss Borland and Mrs Baillie with the String ensemble and poetry readings from S1 pupils Mimi Black, Thomas Clark, Glenn Dickson and Rachel Harvey. Craig Morrison (S3) piped in the guests and the haggis and Emily Morrison (S4) performed her own award winning Scottish dancing. Finally Head Boy Leon O'Rourke addressed the haggis and Head Girl Gillian Elliot concluded proceedings with her vote of thanks. Guests from across our cluster group, adult mentors and various other individuals who support the work of the school all thoroughly enjoyed the evening. Big thanks to everyone who participated.

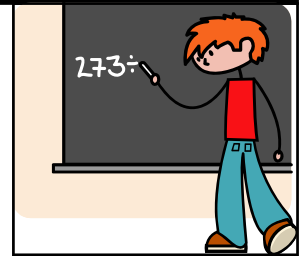
Report By Rebecca Jamieson, Jordan Maxwell and Rona Dalglish (S5)

A great night was had by all who attended with a lot of time and effort put in behind the scenes. Rona Dalglish, Sam Dalglish, Jordan Maxwell, Chloe Huggins, Claire Higton of S5 and Euan Davidson and Caroline Guthrie-Tate of S6 prepared, peeled, chopped and cooked all of the foods which were served to our guests by Amanda Simons and Rebecca Jamieson of S5. The guests were kept entertained by highland dancing, bag-pipes, poetry and music. It was a great evening and definitely something to put on our C.V's. The Intermediate 2 Hospitality team would like to say a special thanks to Ian McCulloch (the chef), Mrs Robinson, Mr Gooch and Ms Lewis for organising, helping and supporting us all evening.

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. Bosire Oroko was a worthy winner, winning the "million" prize for himself, along with numerous prizes for his classmates.

Eighty-three pupils from S4 took part in the UK Maths Challenge – with twenty-nine pupils gaining certificates as follows:

4 Gold 7 Silver 18 Bronze

Congratulations are due to all competitors and in particular to Euan McGonigle, who has been invited to take part in the "Pink Kangaroo" round of this competition. Special mention must also be made to Christopher Russell, of S3. Last session, Christopher won a Silver Medal in the Junior Competition. He has been invited to take part in the Junior Olympiad – a most prestigious National competition.

4 March saw frenzied activity around World Maths Day. This is a global competition, which sees pupils competing with other pupils from schools around the world. This is the second time we have entered our pupils. During the event itself, which actually lasted for forty-eight hours, they amassed an amazing score of 256 520, (it sounds better if we say "more than a quarter of a million!). To accumulate this total, 458 Mearns Castle pupils spent 13263 minutes competing on the live "Mathletics" site – very impressive indeed!

We would run out of paper if we mentioned all the pupils who excelled in the competition. Here are those who led the field:

| | | | |
|----------------------|------|-----------------------|------|
| Michelle Latter (S2) | 8317 | Rabiha Nazir (S1) | 7695 |
| Rohan Sant (S1) | 6784 | Jemma Grace (S5) | 6405 |
| Jasmine Latter (S4) | 4660 | Fraser Proudfoot (S3) | 4143 |

The clock has been re-set and the countdown is on for World Maths Day 2010.....

March also saw some of our senior pupils entering the Mathématiques sans Frontières competition. This year, for the first time, we had three teams – one from S4 and two from S5. The winners will be announced in June.



Towards the end of February, the RAF paid a visit to the school and organised two maths workshops for S3 pupils. The activities related to real life situations that face RAF personnel and helped to emphasise the importance of maths. An enjoyable and informative morning was had by all who attended.



Stairway to Success

By Mrs R Emans

On Tuesday 17 March 2009, seven S1 and S2 pupils took part in this year's East Renfrewshire's 'Stairways to Success' Enterprise event at Barrhead Council buildings. The group sold handcrafted jewellery, key rings and handmade T-Lights. The expert sales team made an excellent profit which will help towards their next in-house venture coming soon. Alongside sales, we had administration, finance and marketing. Mrs McKeeman, Mrs Emans and supporting staff worked extremely hard in school with all of the 15 pupils belonging to the Stairways group in preparation of their products for sale.

The experience allowed the pupils to meet pupils from other ERC schools and those from Young Enterprise Scotland, Learning Teaching Scotland and the camera crew.

The day's authenticity gave us a good idea of what we may encounter if we were thinking of entering a profession that requires enterprising skills. It also required us to act in a friendly and professional manner when dealing with the public. In the end our genuine approach and well prepared team were successful in their profit margin.

Here is a list of the S1 and S2 pupils involved:

- | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Tracy Matheson | Paul Garrett | Sarah Levine | Abbie Bauld |
| Sunnah Mohammed | Scott McFarlane | Scott Nealis | |
| Charmaine Lizeray | Catherine Rough | Heather McMurdo | |
| Emily Laird | Robert Williams | Cameron Murphy | Beth Ferguson |
| | Abbie Lunan | | |

Thanks to Mrs McKeeman who organised and supported us throughout this great experience.



Catherine Rough (S2), Paul Garret (S1), Emily Laird (S2), Sunnah Mohammed (S1), Tracy Matheson (S1), Scott McFarlane (S1), Cameron Murphy (S2),

Report By Emily Laird S2 Enterprise Group

The Mearns Castle Enterprise Group – Eco Friends went to the Barrhead Council Offices for the Stairways to success annual trade fair. We had to have products that were environmentally friendly and something imaginative to sell. There were other schools selling their products too. We sold candle holders, jewellery, soaps and bathbombs, we raised £30 in that one day. So thank you to all of the teachers that helped us raise all of the money and for letting us have the Enterprise Group because we got to learn business skills and we all enjoyed it very much.

✂

I have received a copy of the Parents' Newsletter

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

Parent's Signature:.....

Comments: