

LETTER FROM THE HEADTEACHER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Charities Week</i>	2 & 3
<i>School Fantasy League</i>	4
<i>Debating Matters</i>	4
<i>Eco Schools</i>	5
<i>GASET</i>	7
<i>Scottish Heritage</i>	7
<i>Maths Matters</i>	8
<i>S1 News</i>	9
<i>Poetry Competition</i>	10
<i>Citizenship Matters</i>	11
<i>Sports News</i>	13
<i>Modern Lang. News</i>	14

Dear Parent/Carer

I can hardly believe that we are now nearing the end of the first term. It has certainly been an action packed few months in the school.

As you can see from the Newsletter the school continues to be an exciting centre of learning with pupils, staff and parents demonstrating their considerable talents in a wide range of different activities. In particular I would again like to commend the whole school community for their contribution to what can only be called the Charities Week Phenomenon. A real team effort resulted in a record total of over £8500 being raised for good causes. This is a remarkable achievement and is a testimony to the care and compassion of the Mearns Castle community. The pupils, represented by the Pupil Council, will now decide on which charities will benefit from the money raised.

As a school this session we have been going back to basics as, in line with our Improvement Targets, I have been consulting with pupils, staff and parents on our Values, Visions and Aims. The purpose of this task is to ensure that as a school community we are clear about our purposes and ambitions for the school and that these underpin all aspects of our work. It is my intention to widen this consultation in the coming weeks. So please watch the website for more information.

On the subject of the website I would commend it to you for regular consideration. It is constantly updated with a lot of important information and will give you a real flavour of life in the school. Our Standards and Quality Report 2007—2008 has recently been added to the site and will provide you with a summary of the school's priorities and achievements from last session.

How to contact us



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



0141 577 2314



As you can see from the Newsletter we are continuing to develop as an Eco School. One aspect of this work is our involvement in the British Gas project 'Generation Green'. We would very much welcome your support in this initiative. Details of how you can support us and help us to earn 'leaves' towards our target are contained inside the Newsletter.

I enclose a letter from Susan Gow, Head of Service, relating to the arrangements for Parent Consultation Groups for the remainder of this session. I have also been contacted by Patricia Mathieson, the Area Clerk responsible for organising the Local Attendance Council Meetings for Barrhead. She is looking to recruit volunteers to sit on the panel at LAC meetings. If you are interested in helping with this important work please contact Patricia on 0141 577 3551.

Now two pleas. It would be helpful if you would support the school by encouraging your child to ensure that mobile phones and Ipods are switched off during class time. Equipment of this sort, if switched on, can cause a disruption to your child's learning and that of others. Mobile phones and Ipods should therefore only be used outwith class time. In addition can I request that parents refrain from parking in Burnhouse Brae at the end of the school day. Parking in this area causes residents problems with accessing and leaving their houses at this time. On grounds of Health and Safety please adhere strictly to the designated pick up areas when collecting pupils at the end of the day.

Finally school closes for the holidays at the usual time of 2.45pm on Friday 19th December. We re-open again at 8.45am on Monday 5th January 2009. I hope you and your family have a wonderful festive season.

Dean Smith
Head Teacher



Charities Week

By Mr V O'Donnell — Convenor, Charities Week



At the end of this year's Mearns Castle Charities Week some old hands were heard to remark that it was the best we've ever had. It's a moot point – how can we compare events from different years? – they are all outstanding in their own ways. Whatever way we look at Charities Week 2008, though, we can say definitively that it was a very good one indeed.

At £8,500 (at time of going to press), the total raised was the highest ever – remarkable, given how much of a financial squeeze we are all going through. It was not that surprising, however, when one considers the variety, breadth and sheer number of activities taking place in the school throughout the week: many indeed were the ways of getting people to part with their money!

The usual Lunchtime Shows, Non-Uniform Day and 'Look Back in Laughter' contributed the bulk of the takings but these were augmented in no small measure by the ever popular (at least with pupils!) Pie the Teacher Mafia, led by Mr (Don) Guidi, which contributed hugely to the enjoyment and atmosphere throughout the school, not to mention the grand total.

Innovations this year included visits from professional hip-hop dancers and cheerleaders who gave lunchtime classes and tutorials; a football rules quiz organised by our new campus police officer, Mr Davis; a raffle for golf lessons and driving range time at Mearns Castle Golf Academy and a very imaginative raffle, organised by three S3 pupils, which offered a free pass for two to the head of the dinner queue each day for the next six months. Add into the mix daily Fair Trade and Cake Stalls, Beauty Treatments, Henna Painting, Balloon Race, Sponge the Teacher, S6 *Slave for a Day* Auction, Library Quiz, the incredibly popular 5-a-Side Football Tournament and the ever-present hair raising Van de Graf Generator experience and you have some flavour of the fun and vibrancy experienced throughout the school during the week.

Too many are the people to acknowledge individually for such a magnificent collaborative effort but special mention must be made of the incredibly well organised and hardworking team of S6 pupils who made much of this possible. Their efforts, and the efforts of many other committed and dedicated staff and pupils have allowed the entire school community to contribute to a truly outstanding Charities Week. In giving, we are all the beneficiaries, and the ripples spreading out from the generosity of each person in the school will touch many this year.

Well Done to all !



Stop Press :

The results so far for the Great Balloon Race are as follows:

Leader at the moment is Matthew Campbell of S3, whose balloon was found in Surrey, after travelling for 428 miles. Matthew stands to win £25 .

The final results are displayed on the noticeboard.



Amanda Nelson & Samantha Ekins (both S3)



Pie Mafia

Trouble in the Maths Department — Guess the Teacher



Mr Davis (Campus Officer), with the S5 winners of 5 -aside Football Tournament



Sponge the Teacher

Guess the PE Teacher

**Charities Week
2008
All Money Raised**

Lunch Time Talent Shows	£2692.30
Non – Uniform Day	1346.15
Slave Auction	420.60
Golden Ticket Raffle	152.50
5-a-side Football	62.85
Computing – Pay and Play	68.15
Cake stalls	413.45
Cheerleading	35.00
Beauty Treatments	39.90
Library Quiz	14.00
Pie Mafia	761.00

Look Back in Laughter	£1867.16
Sponge the Teacher	60.00
Van de Graph Generator	60.00
Football Quiz	15.00
Henna Painting	25.00
Sweets in the Jar	20.00
Fair Trade Stall	120.00
Mrs McMahon's classes (Apple Dookin')	100.00
Other	234.04
Total	<u>£8507.10</u>

WELL DONE EVERYONE!!!

Schools Fantasy League

By Miss A Thomson

This year the Fantasy League has grown again, with even more pupil and staff managers. The competition started early this year and the first medal has already been awarded to Craig Lambie, S3, who topped the warm-up leader-board with his imaginatively titled team "Obi wan Kanobi nil".

The overall leader at the end of November is Darrell Henderson, S2, with his team "EK United". He is closely followed by Moray West, S3, and Kaleem Zaman, S2. Eight managers already have over 100 points this season which is extremely impressive. The top-placed teacher is currently Mrs Lindsay with her "Sham Rocks" although rumour has it she may have acquired some pupil "assistance" with her team transfers! Not so successful at the moment are Mr Smith and Mr Macfarlane who seem to have taken up residence near the foot of the table!

Mearns Castle are currently sitting in 35th position in Scotland but hopefully the festive period will bring some bumper points which will see us go up the national league.



Past Preservers Club

By Miss A Thomson

The Past Preservers continue to meet on Friday lunchtimes to look into all things historical. This term the group have followed on from their successful project on Mearns Parish Church graveyard with an investigation into Mearns Castle. The group hope to display their work on both of these projects on the school website very soon.

The group has also been researching Scottish inventors. The group is about to embark on a survey of all S1-3 pupils to see just what they know about this important aspect of Scottish history. The group plans to present their findings in the Social Subjects corridor and on the school plasma screens.

Douglas Academy Enterprise Day Debating Competition

By Mr J McGowne

Congratulations to Tahleel Lateef (left) and Alasdair Clarkson for winning the above competition held in Douglas Academy in Milngavie. Both Tahleel and Alasdair successfully opposed the difficult motion "*This house believes that continuing economic development will lead to the end of the world.*" Both debaters competed against 3 other teams and both spoke well in front of a partisan audience.



LIBRARY NEWS

By Miss K McEachern

Christmas Bookfair

The library held its Christmas Bookfair this year from 4th -11th December. There were over 200 titles to choose from (including many of this year's best teen fiction) as well as posters and stationery. All S1 & S2 pupils visited the Bookfair during English class and pupils from all year groups were welcomed before/after school and at lunchtimes. We managed to raise £644.00 which gave the library £354.00 of new books! The librarian also ran a competition during the week, with 5 lucky winners receiving a £5 token to spend in the Bookfair.

Happy Reading Everyone!

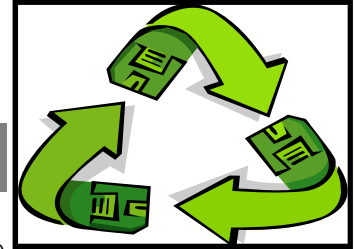
Remember for up-to-date school information, dates, events & news visit our website

www.mearnscastle.co.uk

Eco-Schools Scotland

By Miss F McCormick

Turning Over a Green Leaf



Mearns Castle has already gained Bronze and Silver Awards and this year we are going for gold! Well, Green Flag, actually!

Eco Schools is a prestigious international initiative, encouraging schools to work together with their local communities to improve both the local and global environments. This is certainly something our pupils seem to care deeply about, judging from the numbers who have joined up for the various sub-committees, including Health & Well-Being, Transport and Water.

Pupils are currently performing a review of the school environment in order to decide how we could improve as a school. Over and above this, the Energy sub-committee have applied to the Co-op for funding for solar panels, the School Grounds sub-committee is hoping to raise funds for plants to improve our living space and the Bio-Diversity sub-committee have been collecting vouchers from Morrisons for gardening equipment.

The Litter group are hoping to invite in a member of the council to talk to pupils at assemblies about litter in the future and Waste Minimisation will be coordinating with Erica Kemmet from the council to improve our recycling facilities. In the meantime, the Global Issues group will be encouraging staff to purchase their Christmas cards and presents from charity websites such as Oxfam, Save the Children, the Red Cross and World Vision and would like to take this opportunity to ask you to support those who are less well off. Charity gifts are available all year round and are an excellent gift for any occasion.

We have also signed up for the Generation Green project being run by British Gas. Please see the letter on page 6. Thank you all in advance for supporting our pupils in their work in the Eco Schools project.

The Law Society of Scotland

Donald Dewar Memorial Debating Tournament

By Mr J McGowne



The first heat for this tournament was held in the school on Thursday 27th November and both Mearns Castle's teams were victorious and will now compete in the next heat in the new year. Eventual heat winners will go on to the final competition to be held in the Scottish Parliament debating chamber. Both Mearns Castle teams opposed the motion *'This house believes that Scotland needs nuclear power.'* A special mention should also go to the large number of S3 Junior debaters who came along on the night to support the senior teams. Many of the Junior debaters also contributed greatly to both floor debates during the evening. Thanks also to Sally McKeeve (one of the last year's finalists) who Chaired the event.

Tahleel Lateef (S5), Alasdair Clarkson (S5), Imaan Gangi (S6), Eilidh Clements (S6)



Dear Parent/Carer

Help us sow the seeds for a greener tomorrow

I'm happy to tell you that Mearns Castle High School has joined Generation Green, a new programme from Scottish Gas to help our children do their bit to make the planet greener.

Greener at school

During the year, we will be undertaking green tasks to encourage us to save energy and cut our carbon emissions. Tasks can be as simple as appointing a lights monitor for each classroom or as complex as measuring our carbon footprint (this tells us just how green Mearns Castle High School is today).

Greener in the classroom

As well as tasks, Generation Green gives staff a wide choice of teaching materials we hope will make learning about green issues even more fun and inspire children to take an active role in protecting the environment.

Greener at home

Any support you can give us will be very welcome. For example, going along with your children when they ask you to do green things at home – like switching off the lights to save energy. Your own green actions could even earn Leaves you can donate to Mearns Castle High School to help us reach our goal. Getting household bills online to save paper is just one simple way to get Leaves. To find out more go to Generation Green website: generationgreen.co.uk on the friends and family page.

Thank you for your support. Here's to a greener tomorrow.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DS" followed by a stylized flourish.

Dean Smith
Head Teacher



English Speaking Union - Junior Debating Competition 2008

By Mr J McGowne

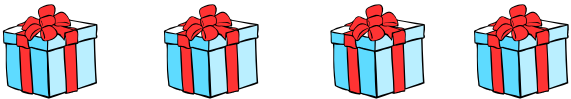
The first round of the above tournament was held on Monday 24th November in St Columba's school in Kilmacolm and both Mearns Castle's teams were victorious and will now compete in the next heat early in the New Year. The motion debated on the night was *'This house would make smoking illegal.'* Mearns Castle's standard of debating was first class with the presiding Judge commenting that it was one of the best first round ties he had attended.



Peter McKeeve, Rory Buchanan
Megan Daly & Fiona Keatings (all S3)

English Speaking Union - Mace 2008

The first round of the above tournament was held in St Columba's school, Kilmacolm on 4th November. Mearns Castle was represented by Tahleel Lateef and Imran Ahmed of S5 who competed against 3 other schools. The motion was *"This house would legalise cannabis"*. Both Tahleel and Imran debated well to propose the motion but only narrowly missed out on progressing to the next round. The judges took a long time to come to a decision. Here's to next year.



Go4SET Project

By Mr G Guthrie

Following the success of our Go4SET team who won an award (and £250) in the West of Scotland heat of the nationwide competition for their Innovation last year, we have started with a new group of eight S2 pupils this year. The new group recently attended the launch event at the University of Strathclyde on Fri 21st November. We had an action packed day taking part in the Bridge Building and Helipad Tower Construction challenges. In between times we received talks from the Dean of the Engineering Faculty and a PHD Engineering student at Strathclyde. We also had our first chance to meet our Mentor Company Glaxo Smith Kline who have very kindly volunteered to support us once again this year.

These pupils will be taking part in a 10 week project that will investigate innovative energy solutions for use in an Eco Hotel that we are to design. The aim of the exercise is to increase pupil awareness of how science, engineering and technology can be applied in a real life situation. The project will culminate in a Celebration and Assessment Day where they will present their proposal to representatives of the Go4SET organisation.

Celebrating our Scottish Heritage

By Mr S Gooch & Mrs Z Nicklin PT's Enterprise

With St Andrew's day just past and with the 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns coming up; we have decided to celebrate all things Scottish!

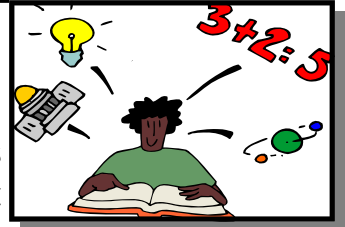
During the final 2 weeks of this term S1-S3 pupils will experience activities across the school that celebrate living in Scotland today. Each subject area will participate in incorporating part of their curricular expertise in supporting this activity – a first step towards the interdisciplinary aspects of A Curriculum for Excellence!

This includes: looking at Scottish history, celebrating Scottish success – film, literature and inventing, as well as past times and food! We are hoping there will be a real buzz around the school and that pupils will enjoy seeing what part each curricular subject can play in a whole themed activity. There will be quizzes in tutor groups and there has already been a piper in some assemblies!

We are hoping that this will be the first of many cross curricular activities at Mearns Castle.

Maths Matters

By Mrs E Gibson



In September, the maths department made its first presentations of the session – to three boys in S3. Andrew Paterson, Oliver Raine and Christopher Russell, who were all awarded Gold certificates in the Junior UK Maths Challenge, were invited to take part in the next round of this prestigious competition. Andrew and Oliver were awarded Certificates of Participation, while Christopher was awarded a Certificate of Distinction and a Silver Medal. This is an absolutely fantastic achievement as these Certificates were awarded to only 300 out of 250 000 entrants. For those mathematicians out there, this equates to 0.12% of the competitors. Our last medal winner was a Bronze medallist in 2005.

At the time of the June newsletter, we were awaiting the results of the Mathematiques sans Frontieres competition. The results are now through and the good news is that our S5 team took second place, again, another outstanding achievement for our students.

In October, our S1 and S2 pupils enthusiastically took part in the Scottish Athletics event. We enjoyed some wonderful successes: three first year classes were named in the top fifty classes in Scotland, the school came third in Scotland and Rohan Sant, S1 was the fourth pupil in Scotland after amassing an amazing score of 25036! As a result, the school was presented with a magnificent trophy by the organisers and it is now proudly displayed in the trophy Cabinet in the foyer.

In November, our Enterprising Maths team competed against fifty schools from across Scotland. The team, comprising Eleanor Lockhart and Michael Dawson-Bowman, S3, and Nicholas Black and Euan McGonigle, S4, came 17th. Well done to everyone.

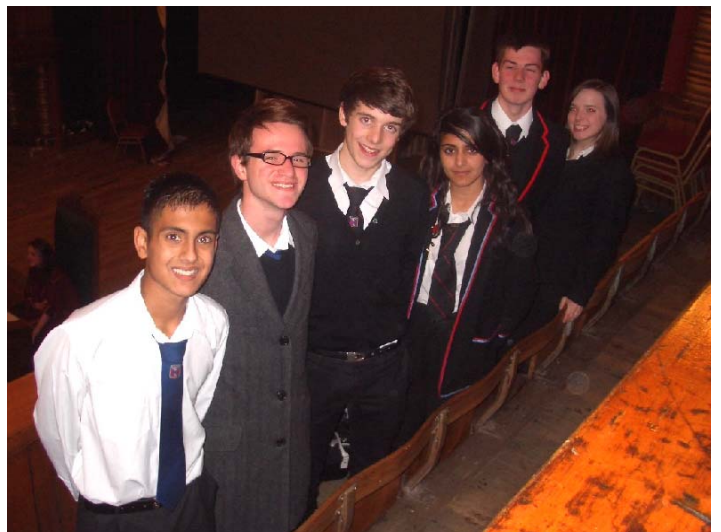
Also in November, students from S5 and S6 entered the Senior UK Maths Challenge competition. In all, twenty five certificates were awarded – six Silver and nineteen Bronze – another excellent result!

As we approach the end of term, S1 pupils are preparing to take part in our ever popular "Who wants to be a Mathonaire?" competition. A fun time is guaranteed for all, while at the same time we hope to raise a little bit of money for a children's charity.

Glasgow University Union Debating Competition 2008

By Mr J McGowne

A group of 6 intrepid Mearns Castle debaters competed long into the night at the annual GUU debating competition on Friday 31st October. Over 40 schools attended on the day with motions being debated on topics as wide ranging as *creationism*, *extremist political parties*, *social networking sites* and *the future of Zimbabwe*. Although not victorious, all three Mearns Castle teams competed to a high level with some notable victories along the way. Here's to next year.



Taheel Lateef (S5), Alasdair Clarkson (S5), Ben Carroll (S6), Imaan Gangi (S6), Andrew Ross (S6) & Eilidh Clements (S6)

S1 News

Fun Run

By Bosire Oroko (S1)

The S1 Fun Run was on Thursday 25th September. On the run we made over £3000 for the school funds. We all made a great effort and it was lots of good fun as well. The parade had really good costumes like fairies and superheroes. Speaking on my account, the actual run was pretty tiring but it was great exercise. The Fun Run was also a good way of showing that the younger part of the school are as capable as the other year groups at raising funds. It was a great moral booster.

Settling In

By Caroline Bury (S1)

When I first came to Mearns Castle it looked big and scary, and I thought I'd never find my way round, but now that I have been here for nearly 4 months it isn't that big and scary anymore; it is really quite a fun school.

I am sure on behalf of all the first years I can say that Mearns Castle already has given us some of the best memories we have ever had and I know that all the great times we have enjoyed like Charities Week, Enterprise Day will stay with us for the rest of our lives.

Making sure we fit in has been great, all the teachers and pupils have been very helpful. Mrs Lewis has been great at all of our Assemblies making sure we know what to do and what not to do. For the pupils who have one of the S6 buddies this has been fantastic.

Overall Mearns Castle has been a great high school to come to and I know that we will all enjoy it for years to come.



One of the most memorable stalls was the Julie & Jaxx snacks, they sold great cakes and also sweets that everyone enjoyed and all the homemade baking people did. The funniest lunch time show that everyone is still talking about is the PE teachers' dance. They did so well that people are really still talking about it.

Charities week was a new thing for all the first years and when they came to school it was already in motion. All the first years thought it was a great success and to help them out lots of them bought a sixth year Slave to carry all their heavy bags!

Charities Week was so much fun and loads of teachers were even so happy about it too!. One of the things to end the Charities Week was the incredible Pie Mafia. Don Guidi rules Ok!

S1 at Mearns Castle

By Ms A Lewis DHT

S1 have now been here for four months and are already playing an important part of school life.

Interim Reports were issued on the 14th November and I am very pleased at the excellent effort and attitude from our newest pupils.

Below are a few brief reports from pupils on some of the recent S1 activities.

Enterprise Report

By Darren Martin (S1)

On Thursday 9th October S1 had an Enterprise Day. All S1 pupils were split into two groups. One group went in the morning and the second group went in the afternoon. Once we got to the old gym hall we were split into groups and put with an S6 helper. We were given different puzzles to think out. After the puzzles (that were very puzzling!) we had to make a balloon sculpture out of balloons and only balloons. It was really hard. Then we had to make an oil rig out of two wooden rods, newspaper, string and sellotape. The oil rig had to be able to hold two bottles of water. It was very hard because the paper was quite weak. A teacher had to measure it to check it was one metre high and then he had to check if it was strong enough by hitting it with a stick. Overall the day was about making friends, having fun but most importantly getting us to work in groups.

Charities Week

By Laura Young (S1)

Charities Week was a lot of fun and there was a lot to do. There were stalls with cakes and sweets, which were amazing and there were incredible lunch time shows which carried on to Look Back in Laughter.

S1 Poetry Competition

By Mrs D Ferguson

Congratulations to Bethany Dawson-Bowman S1 who won first prize (£25 Waterstone's Gift Voucher) in a poetry competition organised by Miss McEachern in the library and the English Department. The competition was part of the activities which took place in English classes to celebrate National Poetry Day in October.

Bethany's poem is about a problem all writers' experience – looking for inspiration.

Second prize went to Shweta Shewale (£15 voucher).

Third prize (£10 voucher) went to Mhairi Strang.

The following entries were highly commended:

Katie Agnew, Olivia Gray, Jodie Hudson,
Christopher Lochhead, Rosanna Sanderson,
Gregor Falconer, Hannah Quinn, Eilidh Murray,
Sophie Gardner, Ludovic Picard.

Duke of Edinburgh News

By Mrs K Ward & Mr A Hutchison

Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award



We currently have 80 pupils completing their Silver Duke of Edinburgh



Award. They all successfully completed their expeditions and are currently involved in a range of other activities. Some pupils are helping at a local nursery and sunbeam groups. Others have been helping out with hospital radio, in charity shops, old people's homes and working with a disabled scout group. Pupils have also taken up a range of new skills including photography, learning a new language, cooking and sign language.

First Aid Course

A group of 30 pupils have successfully completed a First Aid course. Many of the pupils were doing the course as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Inspiration

The sound of others writing,
makes me eager to start
but my mind,
is like a newly emptied bin.
The damp, stale smell,
lingers in the air around me.
I look around the room for inspiration,
only to find,
magnolia walls,
plastered with ancient plays,
and rows of wooden tables
and grey chairs.
The midday sun,
shines through the window,
turning my attention to the world outside.
There's a single buttercup,
sitting alone,
amongst an army of green.
A kindred spirit,
of sorts,
as I see the ocean of school jumpers,
surrounding me.
Enclosed by conformity,
I am inspired....

Name: Bethany Dawson-Bowman

Class: 1B.3 Mrs Kaliski

Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award

A group of 70 enthusiastic pupils from S4 have started their training for the Bronze Award. They have been coming into school on Saturday mornings to practice their map and compass skills. They have also been doing First Aid training and learning what to do in an emergency situation in the hills. They are looking forward to undertaking more training before going out on their first expedition in Spring.

Pupil Council

Citizenship Matters

By Mrs J Herald

Our school Pupil Council has met 4 times already this session. Initial meetings have centred round an exercise where pupils have discussed their Vision, Values and Aims for the school. Staff have completed a similar exercise and we are now in the process of collating all our results.

The second task for this session is to participate in a review of the school's Behaviour Management Policy. This will be done over the next few months when pupils will complete a survey and take part in focus groups.

This session's year group representatives are already showing enthusiasm and commitment for the role they play in the school. The Pupil Council members are:

S1	Bosire Oroko Hazel McArthur Darren Martin Laura Young	S5	Laura McMurdo Christopher Whitelaw Tahleel Lateef ane Shearer Alasdair Clarkson Andrea Mathieson Lesley McBride Jamie Stirling
S2	Max Durrant Sandy Gibson Hannah Inglis Holly Webster	S6	Gillian Elliot Natalie George Adam Hunt Leon O'Rourke
S3	Megan Davies Calum Groom Claudia Kirkwood Andrew Paterson		
S4	Shaun Alexander Valerie Coid Kyle Maxwell Rebecca Reid		

Director of Education Pupil Council

In September, Mr Wilson, Director of Education for East Renfrewshire, invited 3 pupils from each secondary school to attend a meeting of ERC Pupil Councils. Pupils discussed the Eco - schools project, school transport and fundraising projects. Mearns Castle was represented by Natalie George S6, Andrew Paterson S3 and Bosire Oroko S1.

Mr Wilson invited senior pupils to attend another pupil focus group on Tuesday 2nd December in Barrhead. Our representatives for this meeting were Natalie George and Leon O'Rourke both S6.



Towards Harmony With our Planet Conference

On Tuesday 11th November, a group of S4 and S5 pupils attended the above Conference in Strathclyde University. The Conference was organised by Queens Park Rotary Club and featured lectures by two university professors, John Robertson MP for Glasgow North and the director of the Scottish branch of Friends of the Earth. The topics discussed were Global Warming- Is this part of a Conspiracy Theory ? ; Our Water Footprint; Nuclear Energy and Renewable Energy.

A lively question and answer session followed in which our pupils asked some very relevant and challenging questions. John Robertson commended them for their input and encouraged them to take an active interest in the future of their planet!

Rabbi Gross from Giffnock Synagogue hosted a very enjoyable lunch for our Jewish pupils on Friday 21st November. Pupils from S1 – S6 attended .

Poland Visit

A group of S4, S5 & S6 pupils visited Poland at the end of October where they spent time in former ghettos, visited Schindler's factory and visited Auschwitz and Birkenau. Their experience made a profound impression on them and they will share this experience when they deliver a presentation at assemblies in January

Performing Arts News

By Miss A Borland

Senior Concert Band - Going for Gold!

Once again our Senior Concert Band conducted by Mrs Hamilton have won another Gold at the Scottish heat of the National Concert Band Festival!

On a cold and frosty Sunday morning in early November our pupils and music staff made their way to the RSAMD to be the first to perform in the competition. They were cheered on by a large audience made up of many parents and staff. Once again our band treated us to an exciting and very musical performance that wowed both the audience and more importantly, the judges!

The band have now been invited to perform at the National finals of this competition which will be held in Wales during the Spring Break. This is a remarkable achievement and thanks must go to all music staff for supporting and working with the pupils. Our thanks must also go to all the parents who support us at every event - we couldn't do this without you!

Winter Concert

Over 120 pupils took part in our annual concert and performed to a packed theatre. Leon O'Rourke and Gillian Elliot were our hosts for the evening and guided us through an exciting programme of musical and drama items.

Pupils from Miss Devon's S3 drama class devised and performed their own version of Cinderella throughout the course of the evening and really enjoyed playing to such a large audience.

As well as solos from Elisabeth Ferrell in S4 and Kelsey Hunter in S5, all the music groups were given the opportunity to perform: Junior Vocalists, Junior Jazz and Concert Bands, Senior Jazz and Concert Bands, Chamber group, String Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble, Guitar Ensemble, Woodwind Ensemble and Senior Vocalists.

We also heard a performance of a piece composed by Seona MacKenzie in S5 for Woodwind Quartet. Well done to all pupils and staff who took part and who made the concert such a success!

Silverburn - A Musical Extravaganza!

By Miss A Borland & Helen Fletcher (S6)

Shoppers were treated to an array of Carols performed by some of our S6 musicians on Tuesday the 9th of December. Pupils demonstrated their outstanding musical talents; Sion Goodwin, Emma Davidson and Ellie Angel dazzled with vocal solos and Kelsey Hunter treated us to a number of stunning performances on voice and guitar.

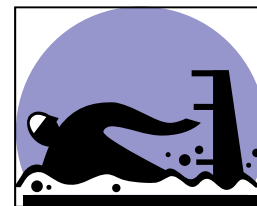
Well done to everyone involved - a huge amount of money was raised for a very good cause. An army of S6 pupils accompanied by Mr McKenna, Mr McGowne and Miss Borland made their way down to Silverburn last Tuesday to collect for the Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice. This charity is one which Mearns Castle has become closely affiliated with.

Special thanks go to the teachers involved. Mr McKenna, Mr McGowne and Miss Borland for making this day such a success.

Sports News at Mearns Castle

By Mr C Giles

Swimming



Many congratulations go out to our talented swimmers. At the East Renfrewshire Swimming Gala last month, Mearns Castle performed superbly with the following results:

Alisdair Stirling	-	1 st place in Men's 15/16 in both 100m Butterfly and 200m Freestyle
Rachel McDonald	-	1 st place in Women's 15/16 in 100m Butterfly
Michael McGarrity	-	1 st place in Men's 17&over in both 100m Breaststroke and 200m IM
Callum MacIntosh	-	1 st place in Men's 15/16 in both 100m Backstroke and 200m Backstroke
Connie MacKay	-	1 st place in Girls 13/14 in both 100m Freestyle and 200m Freestyle
Nicola Shaw	-	3 rd place in Girls 13/14 in 100m Freestyle
Jamie Laird	-	5 th place in Boys 13/14 in 100m Freestyle

An outstanding performance by all pupils and in particular, taking nine 1st places out of eleven events!

Athletics

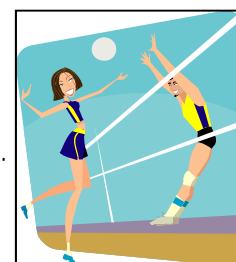
Many congratulations go out to our talented athletes. There have been various events over the last couple of months which I'd like to summarise for you:

Cross country league	-	1 st place at the S1/2 team event at Mugdock Country Park. The Runners were Jamie Gemmell, Murray Donaghey and Gil Banks. Jamie Gemmell took 2 nd place.
Scottish Road Relays	-	5 th place for the team event last month. The Runners were Connie MacKay, Stephanie Fairfield, Helena Brown and Catriona Lockie
Other events	-	David Cairns took 2 nd and Luke Traynor took 3 rd at an S3 – S6 individual event 1 st place in another S3 – S6 team event. The Runners were Chris Russell, Fraser Walker, Andrew Wilson and Jack Walker

The athletics club will start again in the new year and training will begin for the Scottish Indoor Track and Field event in February. We wish them luck for that.

Volleyball

Congratulations to the Senior boys team who defeated Williamwood 2-0 in the 2nd round of the Scottish Cup last month. The boys play away to Lesmahagow in the next round so good luck to them!



The Senior Girls take on favourites Prestwick Academy on Thursday 18th December. We wish them good luck for that too.

Young Enterprise 08/09

Urban Sole

Mearns Castle's Young Enterprise Group has come up with a product and a name! We decided on the name "Urban Soles" and will be designing and selling plimsoll shoes. As you can see in the picture, in order to raise money for our business we recently held a Halloween dance which went extremely well. We also took part in a fair at Braehead where we had a stall set up and we were able to launch our product to the general public. The shoes will soon be on sale during school for pupils so keep a lookout and help support Urban Soles!



Modern Language News

By Miss A Hastie

S2 French Breakfast

Our S2 pupils, while studying the topic of food, enjoyed a French breakfast earlier this session. The pupils had assorted "French" items to eat and orange juice to drink. Tesco has never before had to order so many croissants, pains au chocolat or baguettes! The pupils were very well behaved throughout their breakfast and many of them requested items of food in French.

Higher/Advanced Higher

Once again Madame Naddell is organising a visit to Paris for the French students in S5 and S6. The visit will take place immediately after the prelim exams and hopefully will be as successful as all the previous trips. Our students should have the opportunity to really use their French which will be of great assistance to them as their oral exams will take place shortly after they return home.

Advanced Higher

Our S6 French students have had two very successful outings recently. They visited the Alliance Française in the city centre to find out how this French centre could help them in their studies. They also visited the Glasgow University library, along with students from our English department, to find out how to make best use of the resources there.

Please return the tear-off slip to the blue boxes at the Main Office

I have received a copy of the Newsletter

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

Parent's/Carer's Signature:

Comments: