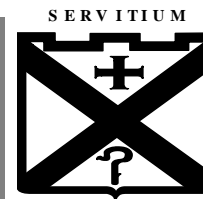


# MEARNS CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL



Issue 1

Work Experience	3
Careers Fair	3
Faculty of Design Exhibition	4+5
Geography Goes Grylls	6
Duke of Edinburgh	7
S3 Paris Trip 2012	8
Athletics News	9
Nuffield Science Placements	9
MCHS Has Got Talent	10
S4-S6 French Trip to	11
Paralympic Party	12
World Challenge Trip to Peru 2012	13
PTA Sound of Music Sing-a-long-a-night	14
Online Payments	15
School Calendar	16

## How to contact us

0141  
577  
2300



08:20am - 4:30pm



## LETTER FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Parent/Carer

I am delighted to contact you through our first Newsletter of the new session.

Following another set of impressive SQA results in S4, S5 and S6 the new session has got off to a flying start. As you can see from the Newsletter it is business as usual at Mearns Castle and our School continues to be an exciting hive of activity both in and out of the classroom.

The term started out on a really high note as the whole School community caught Paralympic fever. We were very excited indeed to be supporting Andrew Mullen (S5) in his quest for swimming success. Andrew qualified for three out of three finals recording personal best times in the process. He swam really well in all three finals only narrowly missing out on a Bronze medal in the 50m backstroke. Still only 15, Andrew clearly has a wonderful future ahead of him. He is a wonderful ambassador for our School and we are all enormously proud of his achievements.

Still on a Paralympic theme, we were delighted to welcome David McCrae as our special guest at our Senior Awards Ceremony. David has been involved in the Paralympics as a competitor and official since 1990 and it seemed particularly fitting to invite him as a guest to the Ceremony. The event was a wonderful success and it was with great pride that parents and staff celebrated the wonderful achievements of our senior pupils.

The celebrations continued with the presentation of our Eco Schools Green Flag. Dr Alasdair Allan MSP, Minister for Education visited the School along with representatives of Keep Scotland Beautiful and Scottish Hydro to present us with the 1500th Green Flag. This is a major achievement for our School. Credit is due to Eilidh Ferguson, Geographer Teacher, and the pupils and staff involved in our Eco Schools work. It is thanks to their wonderful efforts that we have been awarded the Green Flag, which will be proudly flying from our new flag pole outside the main entrance of the School.

[schoolmail@mearnscastle.e-renfrew.sch.uk](mailto:schoolmail@mearnscastle.e-renfrew.sch.uk)

[www.ea.renfrew.sch.uk/mearnscastle](http://www.ea.renfrew.sch.uk/mearnscastle)

You will be aware that we carried out a major consultation on School uniform standards last session with a view to improving our uniform for this session. I am delighted to say that from the start of this session the standard of School uniform has been excellent and everyone of our pupils is now wearing a Blazer. Our pupils are now looking very impressive indeed and I am confident that our high standard of uniform has contributed to improving our excellent School ethos even further. Thank you very much for your support in this matter. I am sure that if pupils, parents and staff continue to work together we can look forward to sustaining our current excellent standard of uniform.

As part of our new uniform arrangements we have put in place a Blazer recycling scheme. If you have a Blazer you no longer require we would be delighted if you could donate it to the School in which case we will find it a new owner or alternatively try to arrange an exchange for a more suitable alternative.

Can I take an opportunity to remind you about our advice in relation to pupils bringing valuables to School, in particular on days when they have PE. Our preference would be that pupils avoid bringing valuable items to School if at all possible. If this is not possible it is vitally important for pupils in PE to hand any valuables to their PE teacher at the start of the lesson for safe keeping. The valuables can then be collected again at the end of the lesson. It is important for security purposes that pupils follow this advice as due to pupil movement it is not always possible to lock the PE changing rooms during class time.

I am delighted to see the bike shed at the front of the School recently contained the first bike of the new session. If cycling to School is an option perhaps you could encourage your child to travel by this method when the weather is appropriate. Another alternative, if appropriate, would be to encourage your child to walk all or part of the way to School. As well as being a healthy option both of these alternatives would help to ease the congestion around the School. Thank you for your support in this matter.

Can I draw your attention to our School website as an ongoing source of valuable information on events in the School, including our calendar for this session. The address for the website is shown on the front page of the Newsletter.

Finally, we always welcome feedback on the Newsletter or indeed on any other aspect of the School. You can share your views with us via the return slip at the back of the Newsletter, via email at the address on the front of by any other means of communication that suits you. I look forward to hearing from you.

I hope you and your family enjoy the long weekend and the forthcoming October break. The next Newsletter will be published prior to the Christmas holidays.

Dean Smith  
Head Teacher

## Mearns Castle Twitter Feed

Mearns Castle is using TWITTER to inform parents and pupils of upcoming events.

To follow us choose @mearnshigh

# S4 Work Experience 8th—12th October 2012

## by Mr Cairney

All S4 pupils will be out of school on a Work Experience Placement from Monday 8th October until Friday 12th October.

Congratulations to the vast majority of S4 pupils who have now arranged their work experience placements on their own.

However, there are still a few who have not yet completed this process.

It is now too late for self found placements to be checked by the company employed to carry out Health and Safety checks.

As a result pupils currently without a placement will either require to choose something from the WORKIT website or go to the School Office and speak with Mrs McKenzie or Mrs Steen.



# Careers Fair— Wednesday 24th October 2012

## by Mr Cairney



Our annual Career's Fair will take place on Wednesday 24th October 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 Universities, Colleges and from many diverse careers such as the Armed Forces, Royal Navy/Royal Marines and Occupational Therapists. 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, S5 and S6 from 7.00pm—8.00pm.

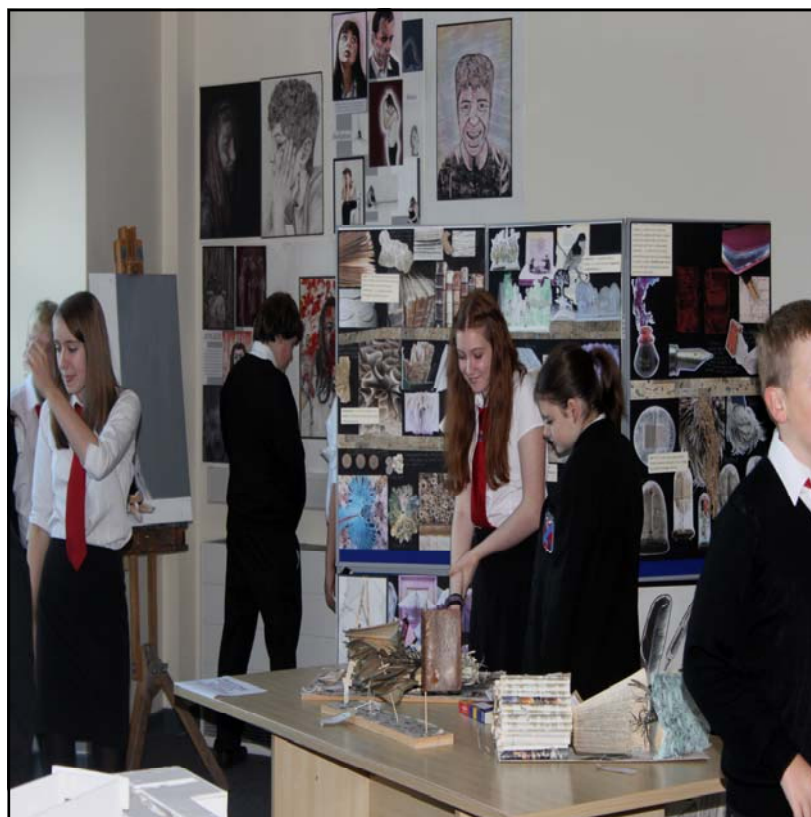
The event will comprise of stands for each of the represented organisations where pupils and parents will be able to collect information and ask questions of the representative. This is an invaluable opportunity to obtain information about courses and career options and choices.



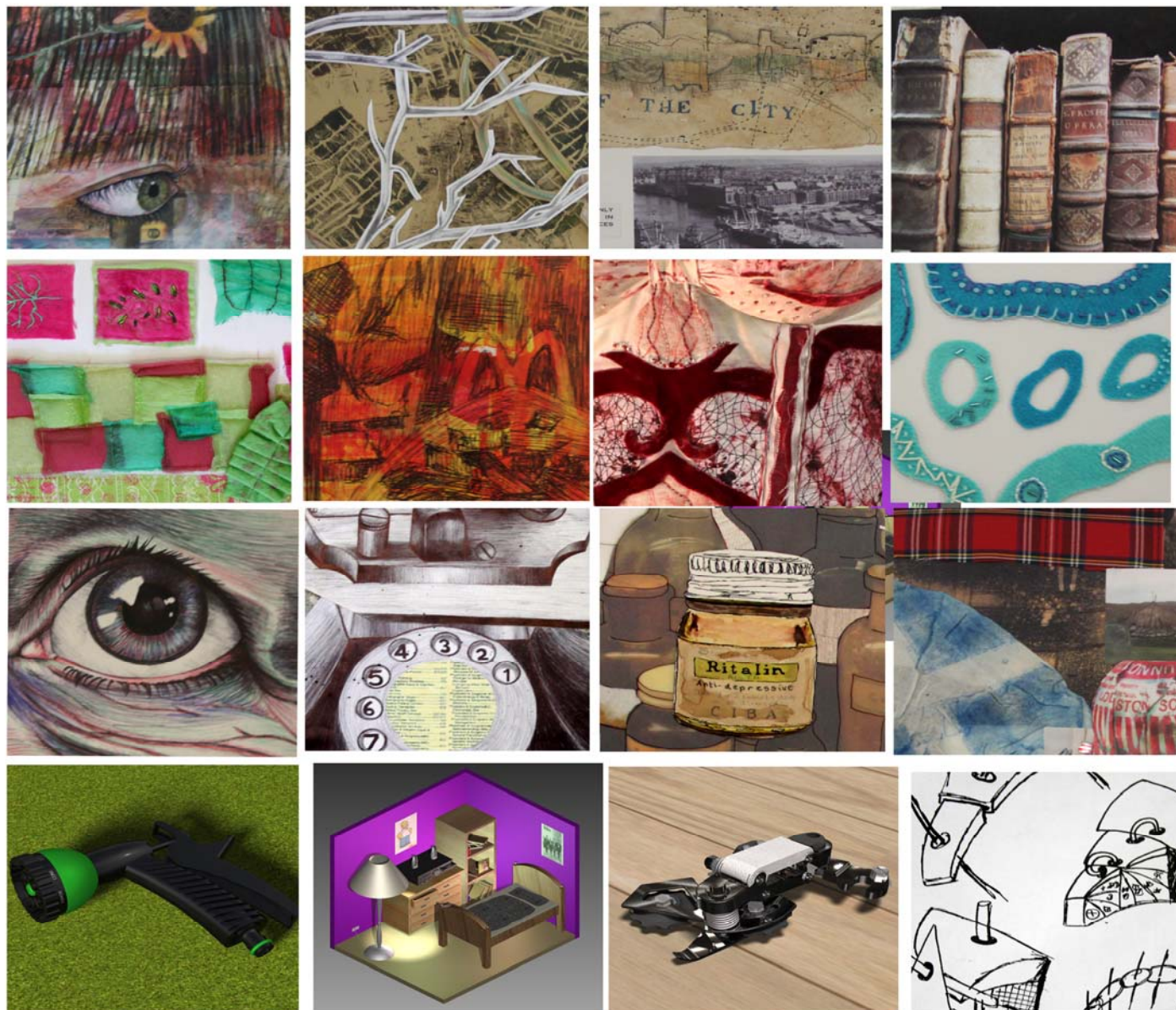
## Faculty of Design by Mrs Lightbown

The Faculty of Design held an Advanced Higher Exhibition (Art & Design/Graphic Communication) for a week within the School. The opening night was very successful and parents, visitors, staff and pupils commented on the high standard of work that was exhibited from last year's talented and creative seniors pupils. This was an exhibition of painting, sculpture, fashion design, architecture and graphic communication folios which illustrated the commitment, creativity and imagination of our Advanced Higher pupils within the Faculty of Design.

There was an announcement made during the evening to congratulate the six pupils whose work was picked by Advanced Higher Art & Design markers to represent the best folios of work nationally. This was a major achievement to be selected and to have six of our pupils representing Mearns Castle High School Art & Design Department is outstanding. Well Done! The pupils selected were Emma Graham, Nadia Malekianpour, Rebecca Catterson, Katy Noble, Jennifer Taggart and Mhairi MacKay.



# Faculty of Design by Mrs Lightbown



## Advanced Higher Exhibition

Art, Design & Technical

10th -15th of September

**“Celebrating Creativity”**

Location- Conference Rooms

## Geography Goes Grylls

This term a range of year groups within the Social Subjects department are heading on the road and learning out of the classroom.

S2 classes were visited by a range of animals and insects from the Amazon Rainforest. Pupils had the chance to hold snakes, spiders and frogs they had been studying.

In the coming months S3 pupils will participate in a coastal walk at Culzean Castle to identify the features they have been studying in class and then have the chance to hear about the work of Christian Aid from a guest speaker from the charity.

S4 intermediate pupils are visiting Loch Lomond to carry out a wide range of field work techniques and at the end of September will take part in an interactive workshop in the School hosted by British Heart Foundation as part of their case study in the Development and Health unit.

Travel and Tourism are travelling to Edinburgh for a visit to some key tourist attractions in the city.



Amazonia Visit

Culzean Castle



## Duke of Edinburgh by Mrs Ward and Mr Walker

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award continues to be extremely popular amongst pupils in S4-S6.

Eighty six pupils in S4 have just completed their Bronze training expedition in the New Lanark area. They walked 15 miles following route cards and map tracings. There were a few navigational detours, the odd bog and rather a lot of blisters. However, the weather was kind to us and the midges stayed away. The pupils improved their camp craft skills, they are now experts at putting up tents and they learnt how to cook on the camping stoves, although there were still a few too many pot noodles! The bacon sandwiches smelt great in the morning! The pupils will be completing their qualifying expedition on 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> September in the Dumfries and Galloway area, we wish them the best of luck! Remember to make those backpacks a lot lighter!!

To complete the other sections of the Award pupils have taken up volunteer work within the local community. Examples include working in charity shops, Marys Meals fundraising, helping with the elderly, in local nurseries and at brownies to name just a few. Many pupils have also taken up a new sport and hobby for their skill section.

In October there will be a group of 50 pupils undertaking their Silver Expedition in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs area.



## S3 Paris Trip June 2012 by Miss Hastie

Eighty-seven S3 pupils and nine members of staff left Mearns Castle on 20th of June to spend a week in Paris. As usual the journey down through England was wet but it certainly didn't dampen the pupils' excitement. We did a lot of walking and stair climbing so that everyone arrived home tired but definitely fitter. We walked up the stairs of The Eiffel Tower, we climbed the Arc de Triomphe, we walked along the Champs-Élysées but we did take the lift to the top of the 59-storey Montparnasse Tower!

As well as visiting the Palace we managed to sample the lovely fresh fruit at the market in Versailles and the delicious cakes in the Pâtisseries; the visit to the Louvre had been greatly anticipated but it must be said that the Mona Lisa was disappointingly small; the guided tour of the Stade de France was both informative and fun; and the river boat trip provided everyone with a final view of all the famous sites before we headed off to the Astérix Theme Park.

The pupils proved to be great ambassadors for their School and their country. Their behaviour was excellent at all times and it is to be hoped that they enjoyed the visit to Paris as much as the staff enjoyed their company.

## Senior Awards Ceremony



Head Girl and Boy at Senior Awards Ceremony

David McCrae  
Special Guest at Senior  
Awards Ceremony



## Green Flag Ceremony



Members of the School's  
Eco Committee

Dr Alasdair Allan MSP  
Minister for Education  
presenting school with  
1500th Green Flag





## Athletics by Mr Macfarlane

Congratulations to Calum McWilliam who won Silver in the 400m at the Young Athletes League Final in Manchester on Saturday 1st September, with a superb time of 50.94 (a personal best) and achieving an National Standard Grade 1, for the under 17 age group. Calum now also holds the club record for Giffnock North Athletics club.

Well Done Calum

Congratulations to Laura McCracken (S6) who recently took part in the Scottish Under 18 and Under 20 Track and Field Championships.

In the under 18 competition, Laura won gold in the 100m and bronze in the 200m. This is an outstanding achievement, reflecting all the hard work and dedication Laura puts into her athletics. However, she has also recently competed in the Under 20 championships, against much older athletes. Again Laura competed superbly, gaining 3rd place in both the 100m and the triple jump.

Well Done Laura.

Congratulations also to former pupil Jack Walker who is currently ranked No 1 in Britain at Under 20 for the 800m with a fantastic time of 1min 51.5 s.

Well done Jack!

## Nuffield Foundation Science Placements By Mr McGarry

Congratulations to Heather Cunningham (placement at University of Glasgow School of Geographical & Earth) and Caitlin McLaren (placement at Glasgow Caledonian University Department of Vision Sciences) who successfully completed their four week placements over the summer and were able to celebrate their work at the Royal College of Physicians on 31<sup>st</sup> August. If your son or daughter is interested in applying for a placement (£80 per week!) then they should speak with Mr McGarry .

## School Ties — Price Increase

Please note that due to price increase from supplier, School ties purchased from the School Office will now cost £8.00.

## **Mearns Castle High School has got talent!**

### **By Mr Gooch**

Over the last two years the House System and Colours recognition scheme has gone from strength to strength. We pride ourselves in recognising and celebrating the achievements of pupils across all year groups. Colours acknowledges these achievements through personal success - house colours, representing the school - half colours and at national level - full colours. Full details of the Colours criteria can be found on the School web site along with the Colours referral form.

It is easy to let us know what your son or daughter is doing:

- Print off the form, or collect one from the Pupil Support Office.
- Complete in as much detail as possible.
- Add some evidence - reference, photos, certificates etc
- Return to either the School Office or Mr Gooch in Pupil Support.

The Colours Committee meet once a term and the deadlines for referrals this year are the weeks commencing:

- 22nd October
- 10th December
- 18th March
- 20th May

Successful pupils will be given a certificate, badge and allowed the relevant braiding on their blazer. Certificates will be given out at their House assembly and points added towards this year's House Cup.

## **S1—S3 Profiling**

### **By Mr Gooch**

Another way in which we are recognising and celebrating achievement is through e-profiling. S1-S3 pupils are able to "blog" what they are doing in school and outwith school. Through Glow they are able to access their e-portfolio and update their profile with interesting and exciting posts about what they are most proud of achieving!

E-profiling is a National priority and we are supporting pupils this year with updating their profiles through our PSE programme in school. The blogs are only for the individual pupils use; however staff can access them and add comments. As they move through the School there will be a record of academic achievements and personal successes.

As well as blogging they can add photos, film clips and sound bites to personalise it to their own taste! Pupils have already started updating their profiles in PSE but we encourage them to blog from home - why wait if you've achieved something you are pleased with??

## Modern Languages S4-S6 French Trip to Strasbourg by Madame Naddell

The Modern Languages Department is organising a trip to Strasbourg for S4 to S6 pupils in February. This trip will provide the pupils with an opportunity to widen their knowledge of French culture and improve their listening and speaking skills in French. The language content of the visits means that this trip is more suited to S4 pupils intending to study French at Higher next year.

We will visit Strasbourg from Sunday 17 February to Wednesday 20 February 2013 and will travel with Easyjet from Edinburgh to Basle. We intend to stay in the Strasbourg CIARUS Centre, a residence with restaurant for evening meals located in town. We will have a packed programme of sightseeing and visits; we are currently devising an itinerary which, whilst it includes touristic staples such as Strasbourg old town and a river boat trip in La Petite France, we will also offer visits of cultural interest – the European Parliament, a visit to a French High School after a pen friend exchange, a tour of a gingerbread factory, a visit to the cinema, etc..

The cost is expected to be around £430 and includes three nights accommodation, transport, entrance fees to all the above mentioned places, all food, drink and insurance. A staged payment schedule will be available.

If your son/daughter is interested in taking part in the visit he/she should request a letter from Madame Naddell in the Modern Languages Department.



## Paralympic Party By Ms Lewis

On Friday 7<sup>th</sup> September the school hosted an event attended by 270 staff and pupils to celebrate Andrew Mullen's last swimming event in London 2012.

It was a fabulous evening and everyone enjoyed the great atmosphere as we all cheered Andrew on in the 50m Butterfly final. Entertainment was provided by the Jazz Band and there was also a chance to see key moments from the Paralympics and Andrew's involvement during the games. Thanks go to Sainsbury's (Darnley) for providing decorations and refreshments for the party.

The whole event captured the imagination and support of the whole school community with many staff and pupils contributing to the organisation so thanks to everyone who contributed to making it all a night to remember!

For Ms Lewis, Mr McKenna and Mr Gibson there was a very fortunate late chance of tickets for Andrew's final swim. To be able to witness Andrew swimming at the Paralympic Games and give him a very special Mearns Castle cheer was an amazing experience – the noise supporting Andrew in the Aquatic Centre was incredible.

Andrew's success and achievements are already well documented. As the youngest member of Paralympic GB Swim Team (just 15 years of age) he showed great determination in reaching all three finals in the events where he was competing; 50m Free-style, 50m Backstroke and 50m Butterfly. He also reached 4<sup>th</sup> place in the latter two events and was close to achieving a Bronze Medal on Thursday night, missing out by only 0.7 seconds in the Backstroke. We'll just have to wait for Rio in 2016!

Andrew also achieved 'Personal Best' times in all his events and the whole school community is very proud of his success. It has been a fantastic achievement and one that we have all been privileged to be involved in, either through supporting him during his heats or cheering him on (very loudly!) during his finals.

There has been such a positive energy in and around the school over the last few weeks. Much has been said about the legacy of the Olympic and Paralympic Games – well you only needed to be here during all the activities to see that in action. And it goes beyond sport, encouraging everyone to focus on what can be done rather than thinking too much about what difficulties or hurdles may arise.

We look forward to hearing of all of Andrew's future successes – and we're sure there will be many of them.

**GO ANDREW!!!**



# World Challenge Expedition to Peru

By Carly Duckett & Laura Gourlay (S6)



On June 18th 2012 we departed from Glasgow Airport and began the best experience of our lives. A team of 18 arrived at Lima Airport on our World Challenge expedition, incredibly excited about the month that awaited us. Amongst sightseeing and exploring South American culture came some of the best challenges anyone our age could face. We ate Guinea Pig and Alpaca whilst passing Llamas on the street, something none of us could ever have imagined! We travelled the South of Peru by bus and saw some of the most beautiful parts of the country. Visiting the floating Uros Islands on Lake Titicaca was an eye-opening experience for all of us, meeting people that live on the bare necessities, and do so happily made everyone appreciate our lives in Scotland. We interacted with the children, and were introduced to the President of the floating island who explained how they create floating islands to us, as well as introducing us to the local people. Later on we travelled up to the incredibly famous Machu Picchu, something we had all been anticipating since we signed up for the trip. Reaching Machu Picchu was definitely a highlight for everyone. The views were breathtaking, and watching the sunrise was a sight we will never forget. We went on to climb Wayna Picchu, and saw Machu Picchu from a whole different perspective. As a team we spent the night under cover from our first (and last) rainfall of the month and then went on our way to our project site in a small impoverished village called Yanque. Whilst in Yanque we worked closely with a woman named Gloria and around 80 of her students (aged 0-6). The children introduced themselves to us through traditional Peruvian dance, song and food, something we all embraced. Gloria explained to us the difficulties the school face, and that she often has to go without food as she brings food from her home to feed the children at the Saint Erblon Francis school where she works. We worked together as a team to paint murals for the children. The main murals of a world map showing links between Scotland and Peru, and the other with world flags showing links between Mearns Castle and Saint Erblon Francis. An enriching experience for every single one of us. We worked with the children and presented them with many gifts from us personally. We also built them a puppet theatre, gave them a puppet show and taught them a few words of English as well as a couple of Scottish songs. We spent our last day with the children doing Scottish country dances and singing Auld Lang Syne! After our project we moved on to our trek in the Colca Canyon. Although physically demanding everyone felt the sense of achievement after each day, especially at dinner time! We learnt to appreciate everything around us, and kept our spirits high by singing together during the steep uphill treks. Some days were worse than others but being such a strong team we supported each other through the tough days, and enjoyed the good days together. By the time we managed to complete our trek we were more a family than a group of challengers and the sense of achievement then was greater than ever. White water rafting was something the group invested our own spending money on and for many of us was one of the highlights. It was without a doubt the most enriching, eye-opening and life-changing experience of our lives, and would absolutely encourage everyone to apply for a World Challenge Expedition, and hopefully have as amazing an experience as we did.



# Mearns Castle

# PTA



Do you have a some time to spare and looking for an activity to help you get to know other members of the parent body of Mearns Castle High School?

Why not come along and join the Mearns Castle PTA?

We meet once a month to plan fundraising events and organise teas and coffees for Parents Information Evenings and Celebratory Events in the school calendar.

If you are keen to help out, even if it's only to help make coffees and teas, get in touch at [schoolmail@mearnscastle.e-renfrew.sch.uk](mailto:schoolmail@mearnscastle.e-renfrew.sch.uk) and mark the subject as PTA

## Sing-a-long-a-

Talking about upcoming fundraising events:

After the positive feedback from our Sing-Along-a-Mamma-Mia night last year, we have decided to plan "Sing-a-long-a-Sound-of-Music"

Prizes for best fancy dress costumes, especially play clothes made out of your old curtains or as lonely goat-herders!

BTO Picnic



## -night

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2012**

**Open Area - 7.00pm**

**£5.00**

*Prizes for best costumes*

**BYO Picnic**

Tickets from School Office

# ONLINE PAYMENT FACILITY PAYMENTS REMINDER



East Renfrewshire Council has developed an online payment facility to make it easier for parents to pay for school trips, school meals etc. With the 'Payments 4 Schools' service, you are able to pay online via the School or Council website instead of sending your child to School with cash or cheques.

The 'Payments 4 Schools' service is part of the Council's wider public service excellence programme aimed at offering an increasing range of services online. In addition to giving access to services at a time that is convenient to all, it will also help to save money.

To use the online payment facility, simply visit the School or Council website and click on the 'Pay' icon, school meals online, school payments. The system will then take you through the payment process. All major credit and debit cards are accepted, with the exception of American Express (AMEX) and Diners (DINE) cards. **NOTE: There is no administration charge for Switch/debit transactions however a 2% bank administration charge will be added to all payments made by credit card.**

To make a payment you will need to know your child's Scottish Candidate Number as this is the number that is needed for the field 'please enter a pupil reference' on the payment page. If you do not know your child's SCN please contact the School Office who will be happy to help (0141 577 2300).

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:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/MearnsCastle/contact-us/>

Comment:

Parent's Signature:.....

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

WC	Mbn	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	WC	Mbn	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
13-Aug-12	IS 1	IS 2	Pupils return 8.45 am			07-Jan-13	School re-opens 8.45am				
20-Aug-12						14-Jan-13	S5/6 TR 2 issued				
27-Aug-12						21-Jan-13		S1 Curricular Evening			
03-Sep-12						28-Jan-13	HPV Mop Up & DTP				S5/6 Prelims S4 Report issued
10-Sep-12		S1 Open Evening				04-Feb-13	S4/S5 Option Eve	5/6 Prelims		CFEIS 1	IS 4
17-Sep-12	HPV 1st dose MMR			S8/S6 Curriculum Evening		11-Feb-13	HOL	HOL		S5/6 Prelims	
24-Sep-12	HOL			S1 Fun Run	S4 TR issued	18-Feb-13			S2 Report issued	S2 Options Eve	
01-Oct-12				S4 Parents Meeting		25-Feb-13	S2 Parents Meeting				
08-Oct-12		S4 Work Experience				04-Mar-13					
15-Oct-12			<b>OCTOBER HOLIDAY</b>			11-Mar-13	HPV 3rd dose MMR				
22-Oct-12	School re-opens 8.45 am		S2 TR issued Careers Fair			18-Mar-13	S5/S6 Report issued				
29-Oct-12		S3 Curriculum Evening		S5/S6 Halloween Dance		25-Mar-13		Spring Concert		Sched closes 2.45 pm	HOL
05-Nov-12	S5/S6 TR issued HPV 2nd dose			S5/6 Parents Meeting		01-Apr-13		<b>SPRING BREAK</b> (Good Friday 29 March, Easter Monday 1 April)			
12-Nov-12				S6 Photo		08-Apr-13					
19-Nov-12	Look Back in Laughter	Look Back in Laughter			S3 TR completed	15-Apr-13	School re-opens 8.45am			S3 Exams	
26-Nov-12		S3 TR issued		S3 Parents Meeting		22-Apr-13				S3 Exams	
03-Dec-12	Winter Concert			S4 Prelims	S1 TR issued	29-Apr-13			S3 Exams	S6 Leaves Ceremony	S45 last day in school
10-Dec-12		S1/S2 Christmas Dance	S4 Prelims	S5/S6 Christmas Dance		06-May-13	HOL			Stat of SQA Exam Leave S4/5/6	
17-Dec-12	S3/S4 Christmas Dance				School closes 2.45 pm	13-May-13				Walk to School Week	
24-Dec-12		<b>CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY</b>				20-May-13	S1 Sports Day	S2 Sports Day		S1 Report issued	HOL
31-Dec-12		<b>CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY</b>				27-May-13	HOL	IS 5	CFEIS 2	S1 Parents Meeting	
						03-Jun-13		S2-S4 New Timetable			S5/S6 New Timetable
						10-Jun-13		S3 Report issued			
						17-Jun-13		School Show TBC	School Show TBC	School Show TBC	
						24-Jun-13		UPBEAT Day Out 1pm	School closes 1pm		
	In Service			Parents Meeting			Parents' Evening			Year Group Report	
	Options Evening						TR = Tracking Report				