



The Banter



Issue 18 - April 2017

The Newsletter of Keith Grammar School, School Road, Keith, Moray, AB55 5GS

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ROVer and out, to California!

Over the course of the year, in successive issues of the Banter, we have seen how our ImpROVise group have worked together to design and produce their Remotely Operated Vehicle, ROV. With support from Mr Tubbs and industry mentors they have developed their ROV and their skills in operating it to tackle a series of challenges in the MATE ROV Scotland competition, consistently performing at the head of the field.

On Wednesday, 19th April the team again did themselves proud by winning the final round and being crowned champions of the MATE ROV Scotland Challenge for 2016-17. As well as taking home another shiny trophy, the team have won themselves the right to represent Scotland in the MATE ROV International Challenge in California in June, the only European team competing. The prize pays for 6 students and an accompanying adult to attend. As our team has 12 members they are now busy fundraising to cover the costs for the whole team and, if possible, to extend their stay to allow networking opportunities.

The team are already taking advantage of their own contacts to attract commercial sponsors offering exposure to a worldwide audience. They have also set up a "just giving" page, <https://www.Justgiving.com/crowdfunding/impROVise>, which at time of writing had already raised £1745. If you would like to support the whole team to have the opportunity of a lifetime please visit the page. For any businesses wanting to discuss any sponsorship/advertising opportunities please get in touch via email at improviserov@gmail.com.



Message from the Rector...

Despite this being a short month in terms of school time you will see our young people have been as busy as ever, making us proud whilst developing skills that will be useful as they progress towards life beyond school.

The weather remains as unpredictable as ever but school life continues regardless. As always at this time of year we wish our Senior students well with their exams, whilst reminding them that effort and perseverance will bring greater success than luck alone.

As one group look at leaving another are preparing to join us. This month sees the extended induction programme continue for those P7s most likely to be concerned about coming to The Grammar. It is good to meet them and see them becoming more confident. Also this month information about the transition process will be issued to all P7 pupils with a series of visits by our Pupil Support team to all the associated Primaries. Planning for the transition days in June is well in hand as we look forward to the buzz and excitement that each S1 intake brings.

Whilst thinking about next session, could I take the opportunity to remind all parents of the agreed uniform prior to shopping for clothes. For all students we ask for black footwear and smart black trousers (not denim or leggings)/skirts/shorts. We would encourage all students to wear a white shirt with the school tie along with a navy blue jumper for S1-3 and black jumper for S4-6. Jumpers and sweatshirts with the school logo are available at reasonable cost from the school office but an appropriate coloured jumper (not hoody) would be acceptable as long as there are no logos or slogans on them.

As always I appreciate the support of parents, local businesses and our community to help us provide the best possible educational experience for our young people and to help prepare them to be successful adults, able to contribute towards enhancing our community. I hope that you all have a nice May Day weekend.

Jamus Macpherson

Battle of Arras Centenary Commemoration

Lynsey Walker, Ethan Henderson, Courtney Metcalfe, Sway Moggach and Lewis Matthew accompanied by Mr Wilson had the honour to be invited to attend a ceremony in Cooper Park to commemorate the centenary of the Battle of Arras. They, along with students and staff from all Moray Secondaries, joined Councillors, military personnel and other local people in recognising the sacrifice made by many young men from our area in this key engagement from 9th April until 16th May. 44 Scottish battalions were involved throughout the operation, the greatest concentration of Scottish forces in any set battle throughout the war. The campaign proved effective playing a key part in hastening the end of the war but came at a huge price with 159,000 British and Imperial casualties, one third of whom were Scottish. The students helped place 250 wooden crosses to represent those from Moray who lost their lives in this engagement. All were moved by their participation as it really brought home the impact war has had on our communities.



Study Leave/SQA Exams

Study Leave for SQA exams starts on Tuesday 2nd May, following the May Day Holiday. Details of formal Masterclasses to help prepare for exams have been shared with all S4-6 students and are available on the school website. In addition study facilities are available throughout the exam period and teachers will generally be available at normal timetabled periods for additional support. Students should be in school uniform and sign in, and out, at the school office for fire register purposes.

As long as our young people are prepared to put in the effort there is still time to make a significant difference in order to gain the grades required for the next step in their pathway whether that is in school or in opportunities beyond school.

Students leaving this summer will be able to collect their leaver's form after their final exam or, for S4 who are entitled to leave, from 31st May.

Those coming back to school next session return from Study Leave on Tuesday 6th June. With the new timetable for younger students starting on 22nd May, anyone who has finished their exams may join their new classes early, particularly where they are picking up a new subject. Just let us know.

YPI @ Keith Grammar School

The Youth and Philanthropy Initiative started by Sir Ian Wood is now in its fourth year at Keith Grammar School. S3 pupils during Universal Pupil Support classes have been considering the values and issues that are faced in society and how this affects their community. Each group then chose a charity that they felt represented their values and researched the work that this charity did. Each group then presented their findings with a judging panel deciding on three finalists who presented at the school final on Thursday 20th April in a bid to win £3000 for their chosen charity.

The judging panel was made up of our Head Prefects, Kayleigh Tidball and Jessica Watson, with the chair of the Parent Council, Laura Simmers, and Nicola Winton representing Diageo. The finalist did not make the judging easy. Making up the audience were some representatives from the finalist charities, the rest of the S3 pupils as well as S2 pupils who will participate in the initiative next session.

The finalists presented their findings and bids for 1st Keith Brownies, Multiple Sclerosis and Guide Dogs for the Blind. After much deliberation the judges announced the winner.....



Mrs Neish, Brown Owl of the 1st Keith Brownies collected the cheque on behalf of the winning charity.

Career Ready at KGS

Wednesday 19th April 2017 marked the end of our first cohort of Career Ready Students' journey. Niall Selby, Rachel Carstairs and Jamie Theodoreson graduated from the Career Ready Programme after two years of hard work. Jamie Theodoreson was unable to attend the ceremony in Perth due to work commitments. All three pupils undertook regular mentoring meetings, internships, masterclasses and industry visits to ensure that they are Career Ready.

Niall also won the Sir Win Bishop award for student of the year across Moray and was narrowly defeated in the Scotland wide category. This secured him a prize of £1500 which he can spend on materials that will aid him in the next step in his career.



The Keith Grammar School Career Ready story does not stop there! We currently have 6 students on the programme who are planning for their internships over the summer. The local businesses currently supporting our Career Ready students are Diageo, Chivas, Johnston's of Elgin, Springfield Properties and the Chamber of Commerce. The students and Keith Grammar are immensely grateful to the individual mentors and their employers for supporting our young people and the wider programme. Any employer interested in being involved in the programme should contact June Buchan at the school for more details.

Just as one group finish we are collecting applications for the next cohort. The school deadline for applications is Friday 28th April.

Head and Senior Prefects

Following a gruelling process of applications, interviews and presentations, the Pupil Leadership Team for 2017/18 has been appointed. Head Prefects for the session will be Hannah Gill and Kevin Duncan. They will be supported by Senior Prefects, Rachel Morrison and Josie Greensill. Congratulations to them but thanks also to all who applied and ensured that the process was a real challenge. I hope you all feel that you benefitted from the process even if you weren't successful.

Following these appointments, House Captain and Prefect applications have been issued. Students should make sure they return these to the school office by Friday 5th May.



Kurtis gets into gear

It is always a pleasure to see pupils experiencing new things and being successful. Kurtis McQuade has recently started stock car racing at Crimond Raceway. He has been encouraged in this by his step-father, Will Youngson, who is also an enthusiast. Kurtis loves racing and appears to be a natural at it. In his first race, on 9th April, he gained a second place out of a total of seven drivers. Kurtis says, "It was a fun thing to do and a great experience."



As well as being an enjoyable hobby, Kurtis feels that car racing has increased his skills as he is getting hands on experience at driving whilst being in a supported environment. Over the last few months, he has been busy getting the car ready for racing and this has included stripping lights, flooring, seats and re-spraying the paintwork. This shows a high level of commitment and dedication. Whilst at the event, several cars went off the track and were damaged. Kurtis feels that this is all part of the experience and he says that he would feel annoyed if his car had been damaged in this way.

Kurtis' next race is on the 21st May, again at Crimond. He expects to be racing against the same people again and will be trying to get more points under his belt. Look out for an up and coming star on the stock car racing circuit.

Moray Spelling Bee

On 30th March our team of Bent Michielsen, Caitlin McDougall, Andrew Comrie and Reece Mackie took part in the first Moray Schools' Spelling Bee. The competition at Speyside High School was between teams from Speyside High School, Elgin Academy and Forres Academy.

Following some rather challenging words in the elimination process, the final round was between Caitlin and Andrew. Andrew won through to be crowned Spelling Champion. With Bent taking 3rd this meant Keith Grammar School scooped 1st, 2nd and 3rd places in the individual contest and the trophy for best school. Congratulations to all team members for doing us proud. At least I now know who to go to when I need The Banter proofread before publication!

Responsible Citizens

I reproduce, with some pride, a note received from The North Kirk office: -

Whilst on the way to the funeral last Tuesday lunchtime an elderly gentleman fell at the crossing on Banff Road. As our church officer was informed and made her way to the gentleman she was delighted to see that he had been assisted to stand and was being helped towards the church by a number of male Keith Grammar School Pupils. She is sorry she did not get any names, as the gentleman commented on how lovely they were. What a great impression of the school those boys gave to the community, not even thinking before carrying out such a good deed. As our church officer put it, "those loons get plenty bad press, time they got some good". As far as we know the gentleman was a bit sore but otherwise made a full recovery.

Well done KGS!

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday
16th
May
7 p.m.

We warmly welcome all parents and carers of KGS pupils, as well as teachers and any interested persons from the Keith area, to attend our meetings. **Our next meeting is on Tuesday 16th May 2017 at 7 p.m. in Staff Lounge.** (Please use entrance which faces Keith Primary School.) We are welcoming Ruth Jenkins, Principal Teacher of Physics, who will tell us all about the S2 Build a Microscope challenge. We are also welcoming Moira Stickle, Manager, Developing the Young Workforce, Moray. Also on the agenda will be the consultation on proposed changes to the Secondary School Week. If you'd like a particular issue raised then please email laurasimmers@btinternet.com.

200 CLUB

Well done to our March winner Francis Farquharson (number 15) who won £88.50. We have now sold 178 tickets which means that **the lucky monthly draw winner will receive £89!** The next draw will take place on Friday 28th April. Good Luck!



RAG BAG - Ongoing Fundraiser – please donate at any time!

Since the last newsletter we received £134 for our most recent collection! Thanks to all of you who donated!

We participate in the Rag Bag textile recycling scheme which provides regular fundraising and raises awareness about recycling. Please bring good quality clean Men's, Ladies and Children's clothing, belts, bags and paired shoes (tied together) in a securely tied plastic bag to our outdoor textile bank. It is located in the fenced off area in the Community Centre car park where the Community Centre links with KGS.

Leavers' Ceremony

Family and friends of students leaving school this Summer joined us for our Leavers' Ceremony on Friday 28 April. This, the 8th Annual Ceremony, gave us the opportunity to celebrate our students' time in KGS and to share their aspirations for the future. This was past the publication deadline for April's Banter so article and photos to come in May.

Restructuring of the Secondary School week

Currently each secondary school in Moray operates a 30 period week with a common school day across all 8 schools.

Headteachers have had discussions with Authority Education Officers regarding different timetabling options in order to:

- Strive for excellence and equity by raising attainment and closing the gap
- Have greater flexibility to develop and enhance the curriculum for all learners
- Increase the variety of opportunities for learning and teaching
- Improve the flexibility to work with a range of partners
- Increase options for wider achievement

As a result of discussion it is a shared view across Head Teachers and Education Management that the 33 period model would be the most effective model to achieve the above. Many authorities now operate in whole or part on the basis of an asymmetric model and others are planning to make the change or are engaging in consultation to change.

During April and May 2017 Headteachers are engaging in discussions with staff, pupils and parent councils regarding this with an opportunity to gather opinion in moving to the 33 period week. Should the 33 period week be favoured, the model which would be implemented is shown below. Views will be sought and reported back to the Director of Education and Social Care who will make the final decision on the implementing a 33 period week from session 2018/19.

You are invited to attend the Parent Council meeting on Tuesday, 16 May at 7pm in the staffroom where you will be able to ask any questions or share your thoughts on this proposal.

Period Time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
8:45-9:35	1	1	1	1	1
9:35-10:25	2	2	2	2	2
10:25-10:40	Interval	Interval	Interval	Interval	Interval
10:40-11:30	3	3	3	3	3
11:30-12:20	4	4	4	4	4
12:20-13:10	5	5	5	5	5
13:10-14:00	Lunch (50 mins)	Lunch (50 mins)	Lunch (50 mins)	Lunch (50 mins)	Lunch (20 mins)
14:00-14:50	6	6	6	6	
14.50-15:40	7	7	7	7	

Staffing

Return to school saw Mrs Bain stepping up as Acting DHT until a permanent appointment is made. Mrs Souness has taken over as Acting PTG for Ogilvie with Mrs Jex increasing her time in school to support Smith House.

Mr Shepherd will not be returning to school for at least another year. To ensure continuity for our young people whilst Mr Paterson continues as Acting PT Physical Education the Authority has allowed us to make a permanent appointment for a Teacher of PE. Following interview we were delighted to appoint Mr McRitchie after his highly successful temporary position with us.

We look forward to welcoming Mrs Beadle to the Maths department on Tuesday 2 May. She joins us from Banff Academy having had previous experience in Moray at Milne's High School. Our thanks go to Mr Rose and Mrs Linden for their input since Mr Jagger left, as well as to members of the Science department who have helped out with a number of classes.

Miss Hannam will be leaving us at Summer following her husband's posting with the RAF whilst Mrs Whitley will be taking up a post at Elgin High School. Adverts for their replacements as well for a Teacher of English have already been posted. This should allow successful applicants to start with us in August.

Communication with school

Many of you will have received the latest edition of The Banter by email. This means you get all the important information and news without delay and don't have to rely on schoolbag post and the risks of non-delivery that this brings. Those not yet signed up and who would like to receive communications regarding their child by email should contact the school office with their details.

Equally if there is anything concerning you about your child's progress or wellbeing in school please do not hesitate to contact us by phone or email, details on the first page. The sooner we know about a potential issue the sooner we can deal with it and hopefully avoid situations developing and impacting on our young people.

School Calendar – 2016/2017

Day/Date:	Details:
Monday, 1 st May 2017	May Day Holiday
Tuesday, 2 nd May 2017	SQA Exams begin
Wednesday, 10 th May 2017	Grampian Children's Book Awards
Tuesday, 16 th May 2017	Parent Council Meeting/Consultation 7.00pm
Thursday, 18 th May 2017	In-service
Friday, 19 th May 2017	In-service
w/c Monday, 22 nd May 2017	S1 Long Reports issued
Monday, 22 nd May 2017	New Timetable starts
Monday, 5 th June 2017	Occasional Day Holiday
Tuesday, 6 th June 2017	Seniors return from Study Leave
Wednesday, 14 th June 2017	P7 Induction and Parents' Information Event
Thursday, 15 th June 2017	P7 Induction
Friday, 16 th June 2017	P7 Induction
Friday, 30 th June 2017	End of term, 2.20pm