

A Concert to Remember

By Lewis Stevens, Sam Thomas, and Jami Moat



A fundraising event was held in the Forres Community Centre to raise money for Quarriers, one of Scotland's largest social care charities. The concert was in memory of Angela Spalding, a member of Moray Quarriers who sadly passed away and was organised by Alaisdair Macphee (S4) who is one of the many pupils Angela helped. Alaisdair said: "The support from the community has been overwhelming and I hope everyone had an enjoyable night." The event featured a wide range of music and acts including 'Transition', 'Airrade', 'Civil Punk' and Cora Inkle-Sharpe. Lewis McFarlane (S3) performed in two of the bands, one of which is Airrade, and it was his first gig in this band. Lewis said: "there were good vibes and the audience was really appreciative." He also added

Charity Fayre a Success

Dominic Abbate, Kirsten Blanche and Lauren McLeod

All S2 pupils recently participated in a fun and informative charity fayre held in the school hall as part of their forthcoming Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) programme. The fayre was held to help establish a personal connection between pupils and local charities within their community, such as the Moray School Bank, Logan's Fund, CLAN Cancer Support and Quarriers, to name but a few. As part of the newly introduced S2 unit, all pupils will soon have to choose a local charity and show how important they are to the wellbeing of the community. Students will work in small groups to research the charity of their choice with the aim of delivering a presentation to YPI and even winning £3000 to help their charity. Religious Studies teacher Faye Cuthbertson said: "YPI not only encourages pupils in this school to consider others in need but it involves a variety of people in our community as well." Andrew McRitchie (S2) added: "I had a great experience; it was enjoyable and inspired us to help other people around and about us." Fiona Newcombe from Outfit Moray added: "I enjoyed meeting the S2s. I was very impressed with how articulate and enthusiastic they were – I don't think I could have interviewed a room full of adults at that age! It is a very good scheme and we have enjoyed being involved in the past."



Lights, Camera, Shakespeare!

By Rebekah Prentice and James Kennedy



Advanced Higher English pupils recently went on a trip to Eden Court Cinema in Inverness for a live streaming of William Shakespeare's 'Antony and Cleopatra' which was performed by The Royal Shakespeare Company from Stratford-Upon-Avon.

The event was organised by English Teacher, Helen Beaton who said: "It is beneficial for the pupils to see the play being performed before they study the text." Laura MacPherson-Zieger (S6) added: "It makes it easier to read and understand the text when we can visualise the characters and have a mental image of them from seeing the play."

Out with the old, in with the new

By Stan Whitmore and Anna Pritchard

As the new timetable has begun, it is also a time to reflect on classes gone by. Currently, all fourth year students have two periods dedicated to Wider Achievements, such as the Forres Academy News



Group. Christine Simms (S5), a previous member of FANG, spoke of the fun she had while in the group and the new skills she developed. She said: "FANG was the highlight of my week." We also picked up some tips from previous members to help us flourish in FANG this year. One of the main pieces of advice was the importance of accuracy and learning good interview skills.

An Active Transition

By Liam Young and Cameron Smith

P7 pupils from all primary schools within the ASG and as well as some who are coming from schools out-with our area had the opportunity to participate in a range of activities which helped them to socialise, develop personal and confidence skills. This came after their two day induction in the lead up to starting S1 in August. The pupils got a choice of eight activities, such as Cookery, Cheerleading, New Age Curling, Music Rock School, Mountain Biking, Badminton, Cricket and Tennis, all run and assisted by members of the local community. Many of these activities will be offered as after school clubs when students can choose to carry on the activity should they wish.



Senior Students also helped with the delivery and administration on the day, a great opportunity for developing the young workforce. Matthew Stephen (S4), one of the young tennis ambassadors who coached pupils, said: "The kids learned and developed valuable new skills". Sports Co-ordinator Ann Rossiter said: "It's a positive experience that builds on confidence from the two day visit using a different approach while still allowing the students to become more familiar with the school environment." Not only did the pupils enjoy the day but the coaches are all planning on coming back next year. For some pupils this day offered first-time experiences such as cooking.

Students Take the Lead

Katie Angell and Lily Carmichael

S6 pupils have been given the opportunity to become classroom assistants and experience their usual subjects from a different perspective. These budding teachers have been helping pupils during lessons and can offer some additional support with reading and writing. Nicole Hutcheson (S6) decided to become a class helper for English Teacher Helen Beaton and one of her S2 classes in order to help Nicole build her experience and confidence. Nicole said: "I definitely wanted to do something like this that will benefit me in the future as I would like to become either a History or an English teacher." Miss Beaton added: "Nicole has been a great asset in helping my class and I think she has built good relationships with the pupils already."

Time to Audition? Oh, yes it is!

*By Jenna Carty, Cora Inkle-Sharpe
and Lauren Bird*

The Varis Players are soon to be holding auditions for aspiring young actors and actresses in the Moray area. They have already put on some spectacular performances in the past and hopefully this year will be no different. Last year the drama group tackled 'Little Red Riding Hood' for their Christmas pantomime and this year the panto will be the great 'Wizard of Oz'. Holly Gray (S4) played 'Peter' in last year's show and said: "it's really great fun to be a part of this group and you begin to appreciate the players as a little family." With ex pupil, Katy Rodway Swanson as their new director and a new panto in the pipeline, the Varis players are starting auditions with the intention of putting on an excellent performance come Christmas time and we can't wait to see what they come up with.

Pupils Complete Duke of Edinburgh Award

By Freya Paterson, Lucy Evans and Niamh Young

Recently a group of S5 pupils were accompanied by Social Subjects teachers Tim Pott and Chris Horton to complete their gruelling Duke of Edinburgh two day expedition around the Glenlivet and Tomintoul circular route. As a part of their Bronze award the pupils had to master three components: a skill, a physical element and a volunteering opportunity. The pupils first took part in a trial run on the Dava Way to give them experience for the graded expedition. The pupils spent two days and one night developing their camp crafts, skills and teamwork. They had to navigate their way through different terrains to demonstrate that they were capable of achieving their bronze award and this was a stepping stone to their Silver award. Lauren Cameron and Dylan Chan (S5) agreed: "It was a good opportunity to develop previous skills and experience something new. It will help us greatly in the future by adding to our CVs."

An Exchange Across The Ocean

By Stan Whitmore and Anna Pritchard



Every year, our friends from Mount Dora in Florida visit Forres. This year Jollice Boyd and Angel Torres were fortunate enough to gain the opportunity to go on the exchange trip to Forres where they have been hosted by Campbell Kershaw and Laura MacPherson Zieger. The Mount Dora Exchange (organised by the sister city association), offers pupils a chance to move out of their comfort zone and try something new. Both girls are thoroughly enjoying their experience and can't get over how green everything is. They are finding their time at school a very different one to their own school in Florida commenting on the atmosphere being less intense. Angel added: "Every piece of work we complete at school is tested which means that there is more pressure." The girls are here for four weeks and during that time hope to see quite a bit of Scotland. Some of their favourite experiences so far have been visiting different beaches along the Moray coastline and going to local places around the area. The girls are hoping to go further afield once school is out to visit more places of interest. The Twinning Association recently organised a Scottish Ceilidh to raise funds for future Mount Dora exchange students.

And the next award goes to...

By Rebekah Prentice and Liam Young

The annual Senior Prize-giving Ceremony was held recently which saw many pupils rewarded for their hard work. Jack Noel (S5) and Pola Bartoszyk (S5) received the S4 Dux award. This award is given as recognition of pupils who have achieved the highest results in their subjects. Head Teacher Carol Stuart gave a speech and there were also musical interludes from James Kennedy (S4), Ella Robertson (S2) and Ellie Stone (S5). Emma Donald (S4) received five awards and said: "I felt encouraged to get more awards in years to come and ultimately aim for Dux." Laura Macpherson Zieger (S6) commented on her success of winning the Senior Dux. She said: "I was surprised about winning the Dux. I am delighted as it will look good on my CV and possibly help me in the future." The pupils all felt that it was a great experience and was rewarding to be commended for all of their hard work.

Army Recruits

By Joely Beal and Dominic Abbate

A group of S4 pupils from Moray recently experienced two days of Army training with the 39 Engineer Regiment at Kinloss Barracks, organised on behalf of the Elgin Rotary Club. They were given the chance to work in groups to improve and build important life skills such as leadership and teamwork.

Day one consisted of the pupils taking part in a challenging assault course and they were given an insight to what life is like in the Army from tours around the Barracks. Pupils were also involved in a demonstration on how to build a bridge used for bearing the weight of Army tanks.

On day two they completed five leadership games, challenging different people to leadership roles under timed conditions before a final orienteering game and learning about various navigational techniques. The group also had to spend a night under canvas in the woods near the base and, luckily, the weather stayed dry. Connor Scott's dedication and hard work saw him being awarded the 'Best Boy' trophy out of the whole Moray group. Peter Cannard (S4) added: "It was a good socialising event that was fun, enjoyable and it helped me build my confidence."



Fond Farewell to a Familiar Face

By Freya Paterson, Lucy Evans and Niamh Young



A long serving and much loved member of Support for Learning, Fiona Dow (second from right), is retiring after fifteen and a half years of working as a very valued member of class support for pupils. Mrs Dow originally started out as a hair dresser before moving onto childcare. She then spent some time working in Maclean's Bakery before finally ending up in the Academy. As well as helping pupils in class with work and learning, she has also provided fellow staff members with her delicious bakes such as fruit cakes, chocolate cakes and many other tasty treats. Deputy Head Sandra McCulloch said she is widely known as a "fabulous baker!" As well as this, Mrs Dow is an excellent

support to pupils going through difficult times in terms of their education and contributes to ensuring they receive the same opportunities as everyone else. She said: "I feel that I have helped pupils to reach the best of their ability." She is now looking to move on into a happy retirement where she will be able to spend more time with her grandchildren.

More Studies for Moore-Bridger

By Jami Moat and Sam Thomas

R.M.P.S teacher Paul Moore-Bridger is leaving Forres Academy to go back to University. He is going back to study for a Masters degree in the Philosophy of Education at Edinburgh University. One of his favourite moments in the school was when he teamed up with the English department to teach pupils about Chinese New Year, which partly involved making a traditional Chinese dragon. Mr Moore-Bridger admitted he doesn't really have a plan for his future so he isn't yet sure if he'll go back into teaching, a career choice he's made already for the past fifteen years. He finds the subject of Religious Studies endlessly fascinating and enjoys "exploring the deep mysteries of learning" whilst putting his "own stamp on the subject." Mr Moore-Bridger said his colleagues were wonderful and the students were very interesting to work with.

Good Luck Mrs Green!

By Kayla Spence and Lauren Buchan

Pupils and staff are sad to announce the departure of teacher Susan Green, who for the last year has been a teacher in the Support for Learning Department. Mrs Green will soon be moving on to Lossiemouth High School to take up the position of PT Guidance, a role she has had three years' acting experience in already - one at Elgin High School and two at Forres. However, for the vast majority of her time at Forres Academy, she was a member of the English Department. Mrs Green admits that she will very much miss Forres Academy as she is so familiar with the surroundings and has made many close relationships with pupils, colleagues and parents in the twenty three years that she has worked here. Mrs Green said: "I've seen lots of changes but change is a good thing!"

New pupils enjoy fun day out

By Lauren Buchan, Kayla Spence and Laura Sutherland



Primary schools from the Forres ASG have recently taken part in their S1 transition days at Forres Academy. As part of this, Active Schools Moray organised a cycling event for Primary Seven pupils who travelled together to Culbin Forest as part of a team-building exercise. They all started off in their own school groups but were then organised into their future S1 classes for a variety of activities to help them meet their new classmates. Moray Council Science Transition Education Support Officer Janey Irving had the pleasure of putting together the science aspect of the event this year. One of the activities that took place involved creating a rocket out of paper and writing their aspirations for the Academy on them. Other events that took place on the transition cycle included mountain biking, orienteering and a science observation session. Science Teacher Jackie Barrère, who usually organises the science part of the event, said: "It is a good fun day outside and the pupils certainly enjoyed themselves."

Budding Cadets in Barry

By Liam Young, Rebekah Prentice and Lauren Buchan

During the summer, some pupils made the trip down to Barry Buddon as part of the 1st Battalion the Highlanders ACF. The Army Cadets got to experience lots of activities, with the highlights being weapons firing and a full day of clay pigeon shooting and paintballing. Cadets from all over Scotland joined them and their goal was to pass and achieve a higher star level, which elevates their position in the cadets. They met lots of new people and developed their teamwork skills through a range of group work involving other cadets from other companies. The cadets all put in lots of hard work, waking up at six thirty every morning and doing a range of cadet training until 5pm. The trip lasted two weeks and S4 pupil Holly Gray said: "It was really fun but you needed to be careful about homesickness." Mia Bremner (S4) added: "I liked how we did everything we usually do, like field craft, but in more in." Despite it being hard work, the cadets still had lots of fun and they are all looking forward to the same opportunity next year.



Golfing Down to a Tee

By Stan Whitmore and Lauren McLeod

Matty Wilson (S6) recently attended the Scottish Boys' Area Golf Team Championships in Stranraer. Each area was represented by their four leading under-18 boy players, with Matty being invited to compete for the North District. Sixteen districts were represented from across Scotland with four people in each team. Each team played two rounds of golf and the local team did very well coming 4th overall. Matty, as an individual, came 2nd out of 64 participants, an excellent result. He has played golf since he was around 5 years old and is clearly very talented at what he does. He said: 'I enjoyed the weekend and it felt good to represent the North District.'

Physicist Goes Out with a Big Bang

By Jami Moat and Sam Thomas

Physics teacher Dave Baker will soon be leaving Forres Academy behind for a well-earned retirement. Mr Baker came to the school for the first time on a teacher placement in 2000. Since then he has remained at Forres Academy and has taught and inspired many budding physicists. When asked about the highlights of his career he replied in his usual humour: "I've always considered lunchtime and 3.20pm highlights." Mr Baker plans to spend his retirement going on holiday! He said that the school: "will be a noticeable absence in his life" and he'll "miss his colleagues in the science department."

Pupils Pipe in Forres

By Lewis Stevens and Lily Carmichael

Several pupils took part in the European Pipe Band Championships recently as part of the Forres and District Pipe Band. The band's day started at nine o'clock so they could tune up and get ready for their performance before they entered the ring at 10:56. The band had to perform four two-four marches – Walter Douglas, Piper's Cave, Haughs of Cromdale and The Seventy-seconds Farewell to Aberdeen. The band was also up against an ensemble judge, a drum judge and a piping judge as part of the competition. Piper Emma Lawrence (S6) said: "Even though we didn't do as well as we hoped, the day was still a massive success and an enjoyable experience." Fellow piper Lauren Bruce (S5) added: "I was obviously gutted with the result but when we marched back into the arena at the end the cheering from the crowd put a smile back on my face."



FORRES ACADEMY NEWS GROUP - FANG

PE Teachers Put through their Paces

By Freya Paterson, Lucy Evans and Niamh Young



PE teachers Kirsty Deans and Hailey Currie both recently participated in Tough Mudder and the Crossfit Charity Challenge respectively. Both teachers were under physically demanding conditions but each did exceptionally well in their events. Miss Currie's challenge involved swimming, running and cycling around Inverness. Miss Currie said: "It was nice to have all of the Crossfitters come together for a good cause." Miss Dean took a different track and completed the Tough Mudder Challenge at Drumlanrig Castle, Galloway. Consisting of eighteen different obstacles and a gruelling ten mile course, it was definitely a challenge for everyone no matter what fitness level. Miss Deans completed the physically demanding event within four hours, one of the toughest events she has ever participated in. However, the challenge didn't dampen her spirit completely. She said: "It was the most fun I have had in a day ever. I thoroughly recommend it". It was also used as a fundraiser to help buy a defibrillator for the local community to have in case of an emergency. Although £100 away from their target, they have aspirations to complete another challenge to make up the difference and fund something else for their community.



Saying "Hi" to Pi

By Lewis Stevens and Lily Carmichael



S3 and S4 pupils, along with pupils from other Moray secondary schools, recently attended the Regional Enterprising Maths Competition in Elgin. Heats are held throughout the country and the winning teams are then invited to take part in the National Final which is hosted by the Scottish Mathematical Council in Glasgow. Our participants had to take part in three rounds – a problem solving round, a maths relay and another problem-solving round. The team were off to a great start when they came joint-second in the first round. Pupils were then tasked with completing a series of puzzles, maths and logic questions, all under the pressure of a timer. David Scott, being the keen runner that he is, even changed into his running shoes at this point! Although the group finished in sixth place out of eight they would be happy to attend again in the future. Hannah Cox (S4) said: "The event was very enjoyable. It was challenging and had a wide range of topics covered."

Rolling the Dice to Success

By Jenna Carty

A few years ago, every school in Moray was tasked with creating a board game based around the GIRFEC initiative (Getting It Right for Every Child) and the SHANARRI well-being indicators (Safe, Health, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Respected, Responsible, Included). The game which was created by pupils from the school is now being introduced to other Moray schools for them to enjoy. The pupils involved were Stan Whitmore (S4), Jenna Carty (S4), Liam Young (S4), and Kamil Klonowski (S4) who were all filmed recently playing the game and telling people about it. The game has been tested out with other pupils from the school and proved to be a success. The pupils are going to be throwing a small party in celebration of their success with the prize money they won!



Pupils Try on their Medical Gloves

By Laura Sutherland

A group of senior pupils recently attended a talk in the school library from staff members who work at Dr. Gray's hospital in Elgin. This event was organised by Support for Learning teacher Susan Green who runs the S6 Leadership programme in the school. This programme helps S6 pupils with work experience as it encourages them to volunteer around the community. The talk was aimed at people interested in medical work and many of them left with application forms in order to apply to volunteer in the hospital. Over 16's found out they would be able to help in four wards throughout the hospital and under 16's were able to volunteer to work in the shop and reception within the hospital. This opportunity will also help students develop new skills, qualities and confidence for any future careers they may wish to pursue. Mrs Green said: "Even if the students don't go into the medical field, volunteering at the hospital still gives them a good opportunity and experience." Niamh Young (S4) added: "it will open up opportunities for my future pursuit of a career in medicine."

Blowing the Competition Away

By Lauren McLeod, Kirsten Blanche and Lily Carmichael



Recently the Forres Pipe Band headed to the Nethy Bridge Highland Games for one reason only: to win. They played as part of the massed bands and then prepared for the competition. Forres were the last band to compete and were all waiting nervously to perform tunes, such as 'Piper's Cave', 'General Seymour's', 'Farewell to Camrol' and 'Scotland the Brave'. While waiting for the results, the band put two teams in for the Pipe Band Tug of War and one of their own teams came Third. The band then played as part of the penultimate massed bands and they came away with the 'Abernethy Highland Games' shield for the first time

since 1950. S6 pupil Emma Lawrence said: "When they announced that our band had won I couldn't believe it, I was so happy." On the way home the band also surprised a couple at their wedding to play a few tunes. Emma added: "Overall the day was really fun and I am really proud to be part of this band."

Fresh Start for First Years

By Lauren Bird, Jenna Carty and Cora Inckle-Sharpe



The summer holidays are over and we are ready to welcoming a new school year, as well as our new S1 pupils. The new cohort is mostly made up of pupils from the Associated School Group (ASG) in Forres. Josh Murray, Shannon McNally, Neo Hatch and Charley Locking were just a few of the new S1s who shared their thoughts with us and their favourite subjects included Maths, Home Economics and P.E. Some pupils were also looking forward to trying out Woodwork for the first time. Many were excited to join the various extra-curricular and sports clubs such as Swimming, Football, Music and Chess.

Thanks to the support from current pupils and staff, the new S1s have seldom gotten lost and have so far enjoyed their time here. All the pupils agreed with Shannon when she said "it's a lot different to primary school but it's really good and I'm looking forward to my time here."

Salut, Mrs Millsopp

By Jami Moat, Laura Sutherland and Sam Thomas

The Modern Languages department have recently welcomed new French teacher Lorna Millsopp.



Originally from Fife, Mrs Millsopp attended Bell Baxter High School and developed her love for foreign languages from

a young age. After partaking in many jobs, such as bar tending and waitressing, she finally decided to become a secondary school teacher. She said: "[she] loves working with young people and loves French". She attended Strathclyde University and got a degree in French before living in France for 4 years. She has taught at many other schools, including Milne's High School in Fochabers. Outside of work, she looks after her two young children and said she doesn't have much time for hobbies. Mrs Millsopp said Forres Academy has been great so far and has found working with the pupils an enjoyable experience.

S3s get a taste of College

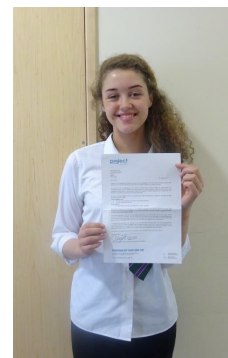
By Anna Pritchard and Niamh Young

S3 pupils recently paid a visit to Moray College in Elgin to take part in a range of activities as a taster day. The purpose of the day was to introduce pupils to the different opportunities and courses within the college and how these can benefit individuals regarding their transition into adulthood or further education. The courses also offered hands on experiences in areas such as Beauty Therapy and Car Mechanics. Pupils selected three course experiences for the day and rotated around each one every two hours. Rob Bichan chose to do: Sport, Brickwork and Health and Social Care with sport coming out as his favourite. He said: "The experience was valuable and showed the different possible pathways in college, but I want to keep my options open for the future." Fellow pupil Kylah Ottaway added: "It helped me make up my mind about my options for next year and the future as a whole."

Pupils join Project Trust

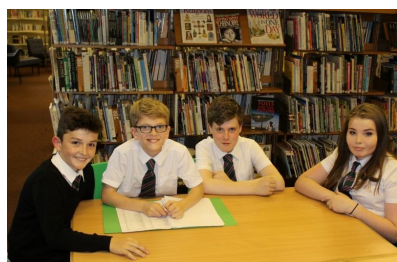
By Cora Inckle-Sharpe and Lauren Bird

Holly Gray and Sophie Matheson are just two of the S6 pupils who took part in Project Trust, along with Charlotte Ogilvie-Richards and Kern MacKenzie. Project Trust is a UK based organisation that gives young people the opportunity to volunteer abroad during their gap year and there are a number of different roles that the charity offers, including teaching English and a variety of subjects to children in other countries, or being involved in social care with children who have special needs. Holly and Sophie attended a selection course on the Isle of Coll where they did various activities including team building exercises, presentations and a community project while in Coll. This project aims to help less privileged children and to give them an education. Before Holly and Sophie can volunteer abroad they must first raise £6,200 to cover the costs of travel. Holly has already received her acceptance letter and is planning to teach English in China for 8 months.



Pupils reading from same page about Library

By Jenna Carty

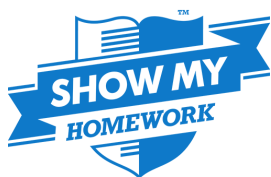


Our new S1s were shown how to use their school library recently with an induction from librarian Mrs Ailsa McDowell. These always take place within the first few weeks of the term so our new pupils can get into some new books straight away. First, Mrs McDowell gets the pupils to find an author with the same surname before getting them to work out where to find a certain book in the Dewey Decimal system. The pupils get an in-depth tutorial of how to take out books from the school library's extensive collection with help from the computer search system. Mrs McDowell aims to teach students more about how to use the library

as few people use the public library as it is and trying to get people interested in reading through the school library is crucial. Bruce Evans (S1) said "the induction was fun. The school library is a lot different to Forres Public Library but I'm going to use it, especially when it comes to studying". Rhianna Dawson (S1) agreed: "It was good. It was really interesting and made me want to listen. It's a lot bigger compared to the library we used at my old school and I'm definitely going to use it."

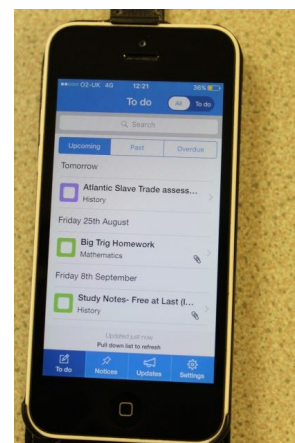
Show My Homework

By Jami Moat, Laura Sutherland and Sam Thomas



'Show My Homework' (SMHW) has now well and truly launched, meaning pupils, staff and parents are getting to grips with the website. Show My Homework is an online tool where students can access their homework from their home computers or their mobile devices. The responses from students and staff through-

out the school have been positive so far and any pupils that have not been logged on so far are encouraged to go to the school office so they can get the information to log in. Depute Head Mike Burchell has been the leader in integrating the system into the school. He said: "As with all new systems it takes a bit of time to get used to but I'm sure as we learn to use SMHW it will make life a lot easier for pupils parents and staff." Students Casey Rowe and Cara Mackintosh (S2) seem to like the new system and favour it over the old system of paper homework planners. They said: "It's very easy to access and teachers can put notes about what to do when they set the homework." Erin Harper (S4) added "I prefer it more than the planners." Any parents or pupils who continue to have problems logging in can also go onto the school website and click on the 'SMHW' logo to be taken to the school calendar of homework.



New Addition to the Maths Department

By Jenna Carty, Cora Inckle-Sharpe and Lauren Bird



The Maths department gained a new member at the change of timetable this year in the form of Miss Chloe Hunter. Born in Northern Ireland, Miss Hunter enjoys horse riding, golf, cooking and music and would love to go some festivals or concerts this year. She loves Forres and the surrounding area because it reminds her of where she grew up. Miss Hunter studied Maths at Strathclyde University and Edinburgh University where she also got involved in the LEAPS Outreach groups there who work with secondary school aged children, encouraging them to go to university. She enjoyed this work and therefore decided that she would like to go into teaching. She said: "it's really good and I am looking forward to getting stuck-in." We wish Miss Hunter the best of luck at her new job and hope she enjoys her time(s tables) here.

Welcome, Mr Reid

By Cameron Smith and Lewis Stevens

The Support for Learning Department (SFL) has recently welcomed Graeme Reid, who officially started his new post this term. However, Mr Reid has not always worked in education and has experience in a variety of other backgrounds. He is currently a power-lifter who has also trained in Ballet. He also played rugby league before acquiring a strength and conditioning role within the Scottish Rugby League. An ex-pupil of Forres Academy, Mr Reid remembers Mr McFarquhar, ex-Modern Studies teacher, as being his main influence. He said: "I wanted to become a teacher because when I was in school one of my teachers turned my life around and I wanted to do the same for others." Mr Reid studied at two different universities and got two degrees - one as a primary school teacher and one in teaching PE. He explained how he felt the school has changed quite a bit since he was a pupil but it still has a good atmosphere for learning, including friendly staff and pupils. It's always nice to welcome another teacher to Forres Academy!

YPI Launch

By Lauren McLeod and Kirsten Blanche

All S2 pupils participated in the recent Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) launch held by Anne Sim, the Moray representative for YPI. The launch was held to help the S2 classes get underway with choosing a social issue and a charity that helps with this issue. They will research their chosen charity and deliver a presentation to a panel of judges, competing with other S2 groups to win £3000 for their charity. They were able to see how creative other schools in Moray and Scotland were when presenting their ideas, while learning different things about some of the charities mentioned. The project is beneficial in many ways to the individual pupils, the school as a whole and the local community as well. Depute Head Mike Burchell said: 'It was clear that the S2s were up for a challenge and they will enjoy carrying on the project.'

Geo-tastic Trip to Inverness!

By Lauren Buchan, Liam Young and Rebekah Prentice

The National 5 Geography class were recently taken on a trip to Inverness by teachers Christopher Horton and Calum Simpson. The class visited the High Street and the Eastgate Shopping Centre to conduct questionnaires, environmental quality surveys and pedestrian counts. This data will then be processed and converted into graphs and thematic maps to support their compulsory assignment, while also giving them some experience of carrying out independent research.

Peter Cannard (S4) said: "The trip was very insightful. For example, we noticed that the older generation seems to prefer the High Street whereas younger people use the Eastgate more. We also noticed, in our pedestrian count, that more females were out shopping than males." Pupils enjoyed the day as it was an opportunity to use skills developed in the classroom and apply them to the real world and work towards their N5 grade. Mr Simpson said: "The day itself was relaxed and the pupils conducted themselves fantastically. The quality of their work and research was very thorough."

Bada-Bing, Bada-Victory!

By Freya Paterson and Lucy Evans

Recently a team of four senior students took on the gruelling Badaguish Challenge. The team consisted of Lauren Cameron (S5), Kathryn Barr, Alistair Bonsall and John Bonsall. They competed as 'King Harry's Followers' in homage to Harry Hurst, the previous winner and team from the school. The team underwent many different activities which included running with a map and a hamster ball, which then led them to their victory in a very quick time. The team's aim was to raise money for the Speyside Trust, a charity who helps disabled people enjoy the outdoors. They raised a grand total of £130 between them and the winners were all gifted with a voucher for a wigwam holiday each, which they hope to use soon. Lauren said: "It was a great experience to meet new people and I would definitely go again. I would thoroughly recommend it."