

# James Gillespie's High School



# Newsletter

February 2004

## Message from the Head Teacher

The staff of JGHS wish you all a very happy and prosperous 2004.

Our bicentenary year was a great success. All events were very well received and our final Usher Hall concert was a magnificent occasion symbolizing all that is good about the school: the celebration of diversity and the pursuit of excellence, two of the cornerstones of our ethos, came together in the performance in a thrilling way.

I have already thanked all of those who made our Bicentenary so special, the teachers and students who gave their time and talents, and the parents who supported us so willingly. However, a special mention must go to the School Board and the PTA for their commitment and support throughout the year. We rely very heavily on the wonderful backing we receive from these two organizations and we are very lucky to have such

devoted parents working in partnership with us.

The senior school is now, I trust, focused and working hard in preparation for the May examinations. The February break is longer than usual and, I hope, an enjoyable interlude for us all, but our S4-S6 students should certainly be using it profitably for serious studying.

We have been highlighting the need in school for good preparation for learning, holding special assemblies and increasing classroom visits by our Year Heads to emphasize the need for being "Ready, Willing and Able" to work. Please support us by insisting your children come to school with a bag, study planner, appropriate writing equipment and books.

Our next objective is to work at out-of-class behaviour. We want to further develop our ethos of caring for others and taking responsibility for the local

environment. We make a significant impact on the surrounding streets. We must ensure that, as far as possible, this impact is positive. Again I urge you to work with us and the students to recognize that how they behave is extremely important whether they are in class, in the corridors or playground, or in the surrounding streets.



*Mr. A. Wallace*

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Special points of interest:

- ♦ *Read about our success in the ICT enhancement award competition on page 2.*
- ♦ *Come along to the Higher Music Performance Evening. Details on page 2.*
- ♦ *Despite changes to the law the possession and use of cannabis remains illegal. Facts on page 2.*
- ♦ *Pupils help Royal Bank of Scotland with National Launch. Page 3*

## Gillespie's Scoops ICT Awards

**James Gillespie's High School** has won two prestigious awards designed to raise the profile of ICT within the school. Against impressive competition from schools all over Scotland teams from the school have been awarded money to develop two exciting projects.

Mr. Rae, Depute Head Teacher with

special responsibility for ICT development within the school said, "This is a wonderful achievement for the school and recognises the efforts put into the development of ICT by our staff and our pupils. These awards will gain the school national recognition for the quality of its ICT provision".

*Turn to page 2 to learn more.*

## Prestigious ICT awards won by James Gillespie's H.S.

Two awards have been made to James Gillespie's High School to enhance and encourage the use of ICT in the school.

The school has received £4000 from the ICT Enhancement Awards to make the First Year ICT Challenge available nationally on the Internet.

Mrs. Inglis, SLRC Manager said, "This cash will allow us to buy additional hardware and software to improve the content and delivery of the Challenge in subsequent years".



All presentation and teaching materials will be added to the Web and we hope that pupils will help with the design and data entry.

The second award was made to Mr. Brice, Department of Physics, who won an ICT Enhancement Award worth £5000 from Learning and Teaching Scotland to develop a package of

interactive, animated internet resources to support the teaching of sound and light in 2nd year science.

Once completed in June, the resource will be available on the NGFL

(National Grid for Learning) for all schools to use. Mr. Brice said, "This award comes at a particularly useful and exciting time. Science courses taught in S1/S2 are being overhauled on a citywide basis to bring them in line with the 5-14 curriculum. The ICT resources developed in this project will directly support a new S2 unit on Sound and Light for Edinburgh schools, being written by myself".

The project team also includes animator Jon Aird and illustrator Dave Sutton. The resources, which will be written using Macromedia Flash, will allow pupils to interact with the physics in the course and carry out virtual experiments.

## Higher Music Performance Evening

This event takes place in the school library on Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> March from 7.30 - 9.00pm.

The Higher Music Performance Evening gives the opportunity for Higher music students to perform one of their pieces from their final SQA performance programme to an audience of friends and family. For some students, this will be an invaluable experience as they have never performed to an audience before and thus will help prepare them for their exam.

### Standard Grade and Higher SQA Performance Exams

These will take place during March for 140 students from S4 - S6 and we would like to wish them all the very best of luck. Keep practising!

Instruments will range from vocal

pieces, to guitar, saxophone and keyboard pieces.

It will be an informal musical night's entertainment, with wine and soft drinks on sale during the evening.

Entry is free and open to everyone - we hope to see you there.



## Cannabis Remains Illegal

You may be aware, from recent information in the press, that Cannabis has been reclassified to a Class C drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

The Scottish Executive has embarked on a campaign to inform the public of the change and what it means in effect in order to correct any misapprehension, particularly among young people. Information which has recently appeared in the press has been somewhat

confusing and misleading for young people and some sections of the public.

*Further information on Drugs can be obtained from Edinburgh Drug Action Team (Tel: 553 8364/ 8476/ 8314) or Know the Score (0800 587 5879) or [www.knowthescore.info](http://www.knowthescore.info)*

**Cannabis is still a controlled drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act.**

**Therefore, possessing, using or supplying the Drug is a criminal offence. Offenders are likely to be charged by the Police and reported to the Procurator Fiscal.**

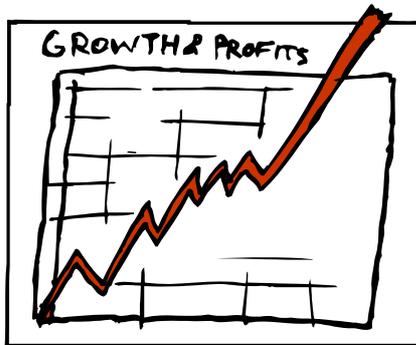
# JGHS Selected for National TV Launch

A group of 20 Third Year students took part in a Financial Capability exercise on Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> February in our library as part of The Royal Bank of Scotland's Face2Face with Finance launch on 9<sup>th</sup> February.

This was a very high-profile event and was featured on BBC Reporting Scotland and in the newspapers on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> February.

Our S3 students worked in teams of 5, each group representing a catering company tendering for the contract to supply food and drink to a Tennis Club Annual Dinner. Their teamwork skills and presentation skills greatly impressed all the in-

vised guests who were there on the day.



## S2 Course Choice

The coursing support for pupils begins after the February break. The PSE programme will support pupils in a variety of ways: discussion of booklets, completion of a "dummy run" with option sheets, research in library and access to careers staff expertise. The course choice information evening for parents takes place on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March at 7.00p.m in the school hall. The option sheets will then be completed after the two S2 parents' consultation evenings in March. The final part of the process will involve a coursing interview with a member of the S2 sup-

# School Library News

## Extended Hours



Starting on 1 March the School Library will extend its opening hours.

On Monday, Tuesday and Thursday the

Library will stay open until 6pm. During this time pupils can access all resources: book stock for revision and leisure reading and research.

The Library will be staffed and there will also be access to computers for word processing, research access to school network and e mail.

We hope that this will allow opportunities for pupils to access the excellent facilities here to help them catch up, get ahead or extend their learning opportunities.

These extended opening hours will continue until May when we will review its usage.

## Author Events

We have been very lucky to get the opportunity to participate in several promotional events for some excellent authors.

In October a group of S3 pupils went to Ottakkers to hear Nicola Morgan speak about her superb new book "Fleshmarket". Set in the Edinburgh of Burke and Hare, this book is a riveting read about poverty, medical research and 19<sup>th</sup> century Edinburgh.



Jack Gantos jetted in from Boston (USA not Lincolnshire) to talk to another S3 group about his controversial new book "Desirelines".

He was a fascinating and amusing speaker who kept his whole audience enthralled for an hour and a half.

Watch for an interview with him and reviews of his book in the next issue of Teen Titles\*.



In the week leading up to World Book Day (4<sup>th</sup> March) Catherine McPhail will visit the school to speak to an S1 audience. She is a West

coast author who has written many challenging books: Catherine will be enthralling...guaranteed!



## World Book Day, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2004

We hope to have several events and displays to mark this 'once a year day'. Every pupil should get a £1 off any book purchased during that week. The library and several of the English teachers will be setting up displays and events in class plus a repeat of the popular Literary Treasure Hunt.

Parents: Prepare to be quizzed on your reading expertise!

\* Teen Titles is the magazine produced by Edinburgh school libraries.



It includes approx 80 new book reviews by the children themselves and interviews with popular authors. It is published 3-4 times a year and is well worth a glance if you are looking for new titles with which to tempt your children to read. All children who contribute reviews will receive their own copy. Otherwise it is available in the School Library or through the Publications Unit.

## James Gillespie's High School

Lauderdale Street,  
Edinburgh, EH9 1DD.

Telephone: 0131-447-1900

Facsimile: 0131-466-7035

Email:

Admin@JGHS.edin.sch.uk

Website: www.jghs.edin.sch.uk

### New Telephone System

The school has installed a new call management system. This allows callers to direct their calls to where they need to go, or to hold for an operator.

At present, the system allows callers to connect to their child's Guidance Teacher if they need to inform the school of their child's absence or have other Guidance-related queries.

Holding for our operator gives you access to the full range of services we provide.

# JGHS Diary

Thursday, 12-Feb-04

Friday, 13-Feb-04

Tuesday, 24-Feb-04

Wednesday, 25-Feb-04

Wednesday, 25-Feb-04

Thursday, 26-Feb-04

Monday, 01-Mar-04

Thursday, 04-Mar-04

Friday, 05-Mar-04

Tuesday, 09-Mar-04

Wednesday, 10-Mar-04

Thursday, 18-Mar-04

Friday, 19-Mar-04

Saturday, 20-Mar-04

Wednesday, 31-Mar-04

Friday, 02-Apr-04

S3/S4 Valentine Disco.

School closes for mid-term at 12:15 hr.

Staff return to school.

Pupils return to school at 08:30 hr.

S5/S6 prelim exams start. They run until Friday, 5th March. S5/S6 pupils will be on study leave during this time.

S4 Parent's Invitational Meeting.

Extended library hours begin.

Higher Music Performance Evening at JGHS. 19:30 - 21:00 hr. Entry Free.

S2 pupils receive reports

S2 Parents' Evening (Practical Subjects)

Course Choice information Evening for S4/S5 parents with pupils moving into S5 and S6 at JGHS at 19:00 hr.

S2 Parents' Evening (Non-practical Subjects).

"DiverseCity V" at JGHS at 19:30 hr.

"DiverseCity V" at JGHS at 19:30 hr.

Music Department Spring Fling at JGHS at 19:30 hr.

School closes for Easter at 12:15 hr.

## Sports Round-up

The concerns expressed by the Scottish Executive on a strategy to counteract the "couch potato syndrome" which exists in Scottish youngsters, are being faced by the after-school sports programme at James Gillespie's.

As if on cue, things are starting to buzz. For the first time in many years we are now competing with other schools in basketball with our U/14 boys in the semi-final and girls in the quarter finals of the Scottish Basketball Cup.

On Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February, our second Lacrosse match took place, with a win against St. George's School.

Badminton matches with recent wins over Boroughmuir and George Watson's are happening, but still retaining the chance for

pupils to play for Badminton.

Boys football of course has always flourished, but it is the girls who are heading for silverware, by having already qualified for regional finals at Tynecastle park.

There has been a huge demand for self defence classes following taster courses in the P.E. curriculum.

Priority is being given to girl's self-defence, but we hope to be offering marshal arts classes to all pupils.

Thanks to finance from the Scottish Executive activities are free. Even though they are not involved any pupil can still take part in our wide selection of after-school sport.

H. Thom / N. McCallum

## What's On

The JGHS Theatre Group has arranged with the Lyceum Theatre to hold twenty tickets for students for the play, "Death of a Salesman". These tickets are available to pupils over the age of 16. The performance will be on Friday 5th March and will cost £5.50.

Pupils interested in attending this performance should contact Mrs. Hyde, Head of English, for more information.

