

James Gillespie's High School



Newsletter

Message from the Head Teacher

November 2004

Welcome to our "Bumper Edition". As you can see a lot has been happening in school over the last month or so. Our projects, "South Africa" and "Friends of the Neighborhood", are going extremely well and as you will see from the letter we received, reproduced in this edition of the Newsletter, our neighbours are well pleased. We also intend to try to achieve Eco-School status as part of our "Friends of the Planet" and "Health" initiatives. We are committed to ensuring our young people become healthy, socially responsible citizens.

However, there is an issue I feel I must draw your attention to and

seek your support. It relates to our Dress Code. As you will remember, our consultation resulted in us adopting an "enhanced status quo" in terms of what our students should wear, preserving individuality but recognizing that there was also a requirement to dress appropriately for learning. Unfortunately a few students seem unable/unwilling to accept this which is causing unnecessary confrontations.

As a result of this we have decided to do the following. Where students are wearing tops which are unacceptable because of what is written on them or because they are too revealing, they will be given an al-

ternative top to wear throughout the school day. I ask that you give us your full support over this. The good will and cooperative behaviour of the vast majority of students is being compromised by the actions of a reluctant few. Thank you in advance.



Mr. A. Wallace

In this issue

Message from the Head Teacher	1
Attendance Monitoring	1
What's happening in school	2
Congratulations	3
Forthcoming Events and Opportunities	4
Events in the Community	6
South Africa Project News	7
Diary	8

Special points of interest:

- ♦ **A public meeting to discuss the Catchment Area Review will be held in the school on Thursday, 18th November. You are invited to attend to listen to the proposals and make a contribution to the process.**
- ♦ *Didn't they do well! Read how our former students have fared on page 3.*
- ♦ *Interested in The Arts? See pages 4 and 5 for some forthcoming events to attend and projects to participate in.*
- ♦ *Our concern for the neighbourhood makes us new friends, see page 6.*
- ♦ *Keep up to date with our South Africa Project on page 7.*

Attendance Monitoring

All parents and carers have an obligation to inform the school if their children are going to be absent. Equally, the school has an obligation, in the absence of any advice that a pupil will be absent, to inform parents and carers that their children are not in attendance. The school has a further obligation to pass on this information as soon as is reasonably possible.

For this reason the school will be running a trial of a product called Truancy Call during the

month of January. This product will telephone the parental contact number we hold to inform you of your child's absence.

You will have received by pupil post information about the system and a request to return to the school your preferred contact number. The school has been updating our records with the returns received. Unless we receive, in writing, notification of an alternative number we will be using the contact information we have on file.

If your child is absent you will receive a call from the Truancy Call system and given the option of responding immediately, to provide the school with the reason for your child's absence, or of calling the school later to tell us the cause of the absence.

We will evaluate the effectiveness of the system and if it proves beneficial we will install the system shortly afterwards.

Catchment Area Review Thursday, 18th November at 19:00hr in James Gillespie's High School (see page 6)

In School

SENIOR DEBATING CLUB

Hi all you wannabee public speakers out there! We are the senior debating club and we meet every Tuesday lunchtime in Mr. Swinburne's Room, L9. We are working towards participating in the European Youth Parliament and various other debating competitions. We are having lots of fun arguing in the process!

Feel free to come along and join us. It is lively, interesting and well attended and you never know you might just be starting a career as a famous and eloquent public figure!

Alison Sneddon 5G2

S4 Work Experience

190 of our Fourth Year students enjoyed a week of work experience from 11 to 15 October. They were placed all over Edinburgh and some went much further afield to find appropriate placements. Feedback from the students has been very positive and their Employer's Reports reflect their excellent attitude and effort while on this experience. Despite this becoming more demanding to organise each year, the unanimous opinion seems to be that it should continue to be offered to the Fourth Year next year.

K. Ferguson

A. McDougall

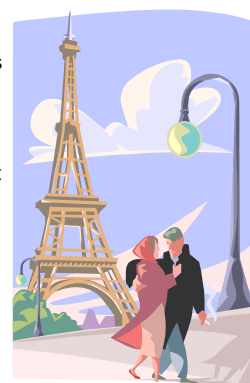
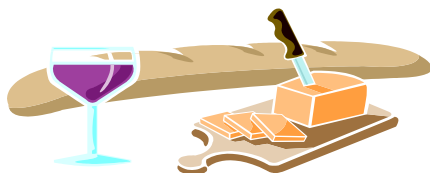
PTs Guidance

THE FRENCH EXCHANGE IS 25 YEARS OLD!

We have had an exchange link with the Collège Beaussire in Luçon, France for 25 years. Many hundreds of pupils have had the opportunity to experience family life in France over the last quarter of a century, and we have provided a similar number of pupils from Luçon with a taste of life in Edinburgh. This year we hope to mark our 25th anniversary by making the exchange extra special.

Students in S2 and S3 who take French will have received a letter with more details about this year's trip. It may not be too late to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity. Please contact me if you would like to find out more.

D R MacLeod



Swimming Gala



swam well...including those who had never dived off blocks before!

Congratulations to Polly Burns, Iselin Shaw, Rachel Fisher and Ramsay MacMahon who competed in the Edinburgh Schools Swimming Gala in October. All



Success for Physics Students



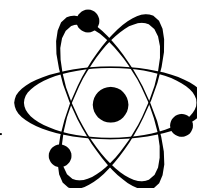
Congratulations to Ruth Yates (S5) who has been invited to attend the NASA Space Camp at the Johnson Space Centre Houston and Hannah Wright (S5) who has been invited to attend a residential summer school.

2004 S6 Leavers' Book.

There are still a few copies of this excellent publication available at £20 (a bargain!!) from Mr Caddell. This would make a first class Christmas gift.



Also congratulations to Jan Gondzio (S6) and Alex Mclver (S6) who have qualified for the second round of a national Physics competition, "Physics Olympiad".



Congratulations

...To our Former Pupils

The following former pupils have graduated this year.

Russell Phillips	University of St. Andrews	Mediaeval History
Sarah Bonsall	University of Edinburgh	Diploma of Higher Education
Kate Campbell	University of Edinburgh	Master of Arts (General)
David Farmer	University of Edinburgh	Bachelor of Science (Hons.) Sport & Recreational Management
James Forsyth	University of Edinburgh	Master of Arts (Divinity) with General Honours
Ian Gibson	University of Edinburgh	Bachelor of Laws (Hons.) Law
Rachel Hamilton	University of Edinburgh	Master of Arts (Hons.) English Literature
Heather Kelly	University of Edinburgh	Batchelor of Science (Hons.) Computer Science & Physics
William Leith	University of Edinburgh	Master of Arts (Hons.) Business Studies
Fiona Masson	University of Edinburgh	Master of Arts (Hons.) History & Sociology
Gemma McLean	University of Edinburgh	Master of Architecture, Design
Christopher McMillan	University of Edinburgh	Master of Arts (Hons.) History
Roxanne Mosavar-Rahmani	University of Edinburgh	Master of Arts (Hons.) International Business
Catriona Scott	University of Edinburgh	Batchelor of Science (Hons.) Biological Sciences
Lianheng Tong	University of Edinburgh	Master of Physics (Hons.) Mathematical Physics
Sean Wilson	University of Edinburgh	Batchelor of Engineering (Hons.) Software Engineering
Jiexin Zhao	University of Edinburgh	Batchelor of Science in Medical Sciences (Hons.) Molecular Biology
K.M. Mason	University College London	Batchelor of Law (Hons.) Law with French Law
Mark Anderson	University of Glasgow	Master of Arts (Hons.)
Emily Aylett	University of Glasgow	Master of Arts (Hons.)
Sarah-Jane Ball	University of Glasgow	Master of Arts (Hons.)
Andrew Donald	University of Glasgow	Batchelor of Law (Hons.)
Michael Hamilton	University of Glasgow	Master of Arts (Hons.)
Robert Harkiss	University of Glasgow	Batchelor of Science (Hons.)
Ruth Lewis	University of Glasgow	Master of Arts (Hons.)
Robert McMinn	University of Glasgow	Batchelor of Science (Hons.)



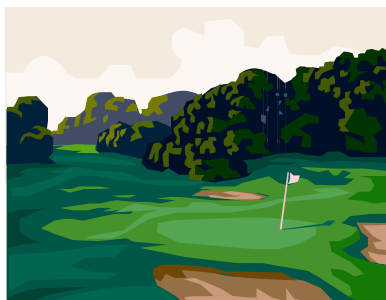
...To Our Staff

Nikki Dallas	Promotion to Principal Teacher of Guidance (S1)
Cait Duthie	Joining us as Principal Teacher of Guidance (S5)
Deirdre O'Brien	Promotion to Principal Teacher of Music
Jill Pringle	Joining us as Principal Teacher of Physics
Mike Johnson	Joining us as Principal Teacher of Religious and Moral Education
Carol Robertson	Joining us as Welfare Assistant



...and a very fond farewell to...

Sheila Mann, who retired after over 18 years in our Chemistry Department. Sheila's enthusiasm for her subject will be long remembered by all, especially by her students. Every day Sheila was a breath of fresh air to the staff, her enthusiasm for life kept us all going on those cold dark mornings.



True to style and in a manner appropriate to her calling, Sheila's retired

with a **BANG!** Sheila, her husband Ian, and friends among the staff (both former and present) joined together for a wonderful retirement party. If Sheila is wondering what to do in her retirement we can certainly recommend a career as a stand-up comedienne!

Everyone at James Gillespie's wishes Sheila and Ian a long and very happy retirement.



The Arts

Usher Hall Carol Concert - Thursday, 16th December 2004

The rehearsals are now well underway for this festive event. Rehearsals for all choirs and instrumental groups are as follows:

Senior Choir
S2/3 Choir
S1 Choir
Senior Vocal Group
Senior Wind Band
Junior Wind Band
Flute Ensemble
String Orchestra
Guitar/Clarsach Group
Senior Jazz Band

Thursdays @ 3.45 - 5.00pm (Hall)
Tuesdays @ 3.45 - 4.45pm (B2)
Mondays lunchtime (B1)
Tuesday lunchtime (B1)
Mondays @ 3.45 - 5.00pm. (Hall)
Wednesdays @ 3.05 - 4.00pm (Hall)
Tuesdays @ 3.45 - 4.30pm (B1)
Fridays @ 12.15 - 1.30pm (Hall)
Wednesdays @ 3.05 - 4.00pm (B3)
every Monday lunchtime (B2)

With only a few weeks until the concert, attendance at these groups is absolutely essential for all students involved. Tickets available from the Usher Hall from the end of November.

Visit from a Star

Higher Media students had a chance to quiz one of Scotland's top film actors at the beginning of November when Ewan Bremner, star of such films as *Trainspotting* and *Black Hawk Down*, came into class for a question and answer session. Ewan took time off from his busy schedule - he's off to Samoa later this month to film a programme about Robert Louis Stevenson - to give students an insight into the world of film making.

National Youth Choir of Scotland

This is a great opportunity for all students interested in developing their singing skills and be part of a prestigious vocal choir.

Entry is by audition and the closing date for application forms is Friday 4th February 2005, so plenty of time yet to practise!! Please see Mrs O'Brien for an application form.

Edinburgh Secondary Schools Orchestra (ESSO)

The music department would like to congratulate those students who represented JGHS at the very successful concerts in Glasgow and Edinburgh in September, the culmination of a week's hard rehearsals at Biggar.

The following students did the school proud!
Pearce Cusack, Stefan Ebmeier, Hannah Hampson, Jocelyn Hannah
Megan Hurst, Patrick Kenny, Hannah Luqmani, Anna Roberts
Kirsty Blackhall, Sarah Karlsberg-Schaffer

Clarsach Players

Congratulations and massive thanks go to Eilidh MacLeod and Miriam Clark in 1st Year who successfully performed at the National Mod in Perth in October and also at a training day for music teachers - a daunting experience by any means!

Congratulations and massive thanks also to Alicia Dawes Salazar and Bridget Bradley in 4th Year who gave their time unstintingly on a Sunday to perform at a service at St. Giles Cathedral in aid of education.

The above students also performed along with Cairistiona MacKinnon - also in 4th Year - and Ramsay MacMahon in 5th Year at a 'Thinking Skills' conference at Heriot Watt University on 2nd Nov. and also at the Education Conference at the Edinburgh Conference Centre on 5th Nov. These students are all heavily involved this term in exams and assessments and we very much appreciate their commitment and enthusiasm in representing the school at events like these. Thanks to them all.

Pipe Band

The music department are initiating this new venture with the massive support of a bagpipe tutor. We are urging any students who learned chanter at primary school - especially from Bruntfield - to come along to these rehearsals. The group meet every Wednesday after school in B1. Any interested students please see Mrs O'Brien for more details.

The Arts

Music Department Info & Events 2004/5

All the information you could possibly want for the year ahead is now included on the school's website. Any parents wishing a hard-copy of the booklet please contact Mrs. O'Brien.

'Young Musician of the Year 2005'

This event is open to all musicians at any age from secondary schools in this area of Edinburgh and is a fantastic and very worthwhile opportunity. It is open to solo vocalists (any style) and all instrumentalists - the choice of instrument and music is open for the competitor to choose and an accompanist is permitted.

Cash prizes will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd placed competitors in both the voice and instrument categories and the judges will be able to forward up to 2 competitors to the district semi final to be held in February 2005.

Entries are invited to be submitted no later than 15 December 2004. More information and entry forms can be received from Mrs O'Brien.

The National Youth Orchestra of Scotland

Applications for this orchestra are invited from instrumentalists aged between 12 and 21 of Grade 7/8 standard. Again, entry to this is by audition.

Any interested students please see Mrs O'Brien for more details and application forms. Closing date for applications is Wednesday 30th November.

Mystery play

S6 students are producing a re-imagined version of the medieval mystery play "The Nativity".

The play moves from the creation of the universe to the birth of baby Jesus. The roots of the Cycle plays date back to Medieval times and at its core is the idea of theatre by the people for the people. 'The Nativity' will be performed on Friday 10th December and tickets

New Play developed

Senior students were involved with theatre professionals in helping develop a new play based on a novel by Muriel Spark at the beginning of November. The author, director and members of the cast of "Stellar Quines", a theatre group based at the Lyceum, spent a day in school with twenty senior students. This was to contribute to the company's rehearsed reading of the 'work in progress' on Friday November 5 at the Traverse theatre. The play is based on Spark's novel "Girls of Slender Means", set in London at the end of World War 2. Students were involved in acting, audio visual work and stage lighting. An excellent experience for all involved.

SCOTTISH MUSIC CENTRE launches Composition Chart for young musicians

The Scottish Music Centre has launched a Composition Chart. The chart, part of the Centre's Education & Outreach Programme, will champion composition by encouraging young composers to share their original music with others. It is currently open to young writers across an age range of 12-19 both within and outwith educational establishments and there are plans to extend the age range in the near future to include the creative work of younger and older composers.

For more information on this, please visit their website:
Scottishmusiccentre.com/education/compositionchart

Round and About

Friends of the Neighbourhood

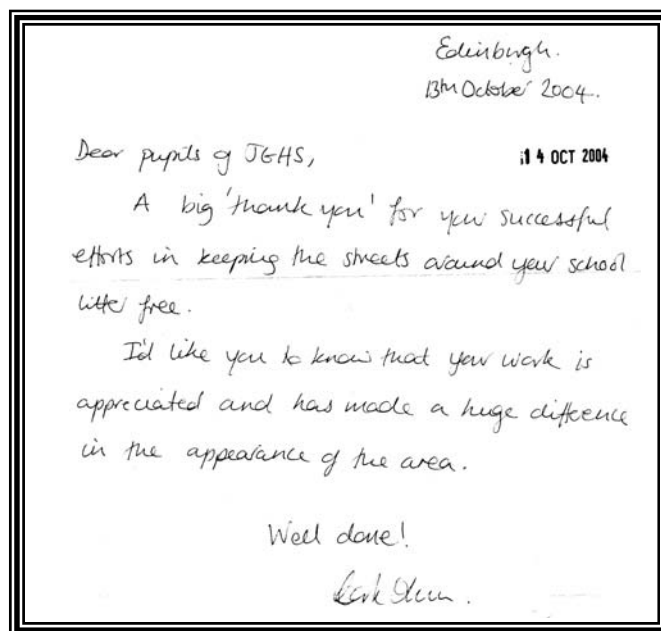
As part of the school's participation in the life of our local community our "Friends of the Neighbourhood" programme has kicked-off. Classes will in turn go out into the surrounding streets and pick up litter.

By mid-November all of our first year classes will each have taken a turn. Resplendent in their bright yellow, high visibility jackets, and under the watchful eyes of our staff, our students have shown outstanding enthusiasm for their task. Using the litter-pickers provided by City of Edinburgh Council the classes have each filled several bags of litter on each outing.

While we will never be able to keep the streets free from litter we are playing our part in keeping our community neat and tidy. Our efforts have not gone unnoticed and, as the letter opposite demonstrates, our neighbours appreciate everything our pupils are doing.



Look out for our second year students from mid-November.



Edinburgh Schools Catchment Review

You will have received by pupil-post the first communications about the Edinburgh Schools Catchment Review being undertaken currently by The City of Edinburgh Council. This is a city wide review that has been taking place for some time and the latest stage involves James Gillespie's High School and our neighbouring secondary schools, Boroughmuir and Tynecastle. We appreciate that this is of major concern to our parent body and we will keep you informed of all opportunities for consultation and for every development as it happens. See the accompanying press release for the latest information.

To ensure you have every opportunity to keep up to date we have added links to the schools Website to allow you to get to the Catchment Area Review website easily. Here you will be able to keep up to date with developments in the review process.

You should be aware that the school cannot enter into discussion with members of the public or of our parent body about the details of the catchment review. We will continue to keep you up to date. If you have any views on the matter you may send them in writing to the Director of Education.

Future consultation dates;

11th Nov.—Royal Mile Primary

15th Nov.—Bruntsfield Primary

18th Nov. James Gillespie's H.S.

(all 19:00hr start)

Press Release—29th September 2004

NEXT PHASE OF CATCHMENT REVIEW TO COMMENCE

Edinburgh's Education Department will shortly be commencing the third stage of its city-wide catchment review by focussing on the catchment areas for Boroughmuir, James Gillespie's and Tynecastle High Schools.

Boroughmuir High School's current catchment area is unique in that the school is located outwith its own catchment area and that the catchment area is split in two. Currently Boroughmuir is located within the James Gillespie's High School catchment area which results in a large number of placing requests each year by Boroughmuir parents for their children to go to James Gillespie's as this school is nearer to them. In addition, Boroughmuir's current catchment population has risen by almost 11% since 1981 which means each year the school has difficulties providing places for its pupils.

To address these issues the following changes are being proposed.

Bruntsfield Primary School will feed into Boroughmuir rather than James Gillespie's High School.

Preston Street, Sciennes and the Royal Mile Primary will feed into James Gillespie's rather than Boroughmuir.

Since Tynecastle's current catchment area meets its population needs, the report is recommending there are no changes to the Tynecastle High School catchment area.

Councillor Rev Ewan Aitken, Executive Member for Children and Families, said: "When we launched our catchment review last year we said our key aim was to ensure we had the right number of places in the right locations for pupils across the city. We believe the proposals we are putting forward are the best solution for the schools in this area.

"Our longer term aim is to provide a new school to replace the existing Boroughmuir school building and we have kept this in mind as we've worked up our proposals, ensuring if the school is to move to one of the locations previously identified we will only need to make very minor, if any, changes to the catchment areas.

"Throughout the catchment review process we've received a high response from the school communities and this has led to some changes to our previous proposals. I've been encouraged by the response to date and I'm keen to hear what people think of our latest proposals. I would like to encourage the school communities to come along to our public meetings and/or send their views in writing to the Director of Education".

Press Contact: Joyce Nisbet, Communications Manager, Tel: 0131 469 3134



South African Project

Latest Fund-raising Activities



Soweto Gospel Choir

Fund-raising activities continue unabated at the school. In the last Newsletter you read about the visit to the school by The Soweto Gospel Choir who were one of the hits of the Edinburgh International Festival. The Choir kindly agreed to visit to the school to perform for us. Our Head Teacher Mr. Wallace presented the Choir with a framed copy of the poster created by Sam Dunne (S6) to publicise the visit.



We raised enough money at this event to afford the purchase of a return air ticket to South Africa to allow us to continue our support of Zwelibanzi High School.

Fancy Dress Day

On Friday, 15th October, the last school day before we broke for our October Holiday, the school held a Fancy Dress Day. Large number of pupils and staff dug deep into their wardrobes and unearthed things best forgotten. Those clothes we kept hoping the would come back into fashion—still have not!

Our Head Teacher, Mr. Wallace, rather flattered by a poster advertising the Fancy Dress Day which showed him as a very close likeness to Arnold Schwarzenegger in the film "Terminator" (Mr. Wallace's words, not ours), played the part to the full and spent the day dressed in leathers and cool shades, only the Harley-Davidson was missing. Well that and an robot. Mind you, some of the disguises looked like they were from another time.

The outstanding generosity of the staff and the pupils of the school allowed us to raise enough money for another return ticket to South Africa.



Placement in South Africa

This summer I spent 6 weeks working in a school in the Eastern Cape in South Africa. The school Luqoqweni Junior Secondary School is a rural school with 850 pupils from age 6 to 22. The school has no electricity, no running water and no proper toilet facilities. There were virtually no books and the younger pupils had to sit on the floor as there were insufficient desks and chairs. There was no provision made for staff, no staffroom and no administration facilities. Some of the learners had to walk up to 5 miles to school over rough terrain some carrying their own chair!

I lived with a local Xhosa family - Masabella Njongo and her six children. The family were very poor, living in traditional mud huts (Rondival) with nothing but essential items such as pots and pans. The family were all up at dawn



(around 4.30 am) to begin the days tasks of collecting wood, water and feeding the animals.

HIV/AIDS is a very serious problem in the community with funerals every weekend. Unemployment is around 85%.

This experience was one the most inspiring of my life - everyone made me very welcome. I was treated with enormous respect which was quite humbling!

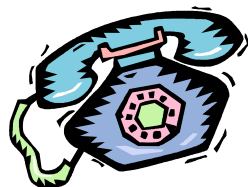
I spent a large part of my time working with the senior management team looking at development planning and school improvement. We produced a plan for improvement this included developing closer links with the school community through a shared event on World Aids day - 1st December.

I intend to continue to work with Luqoqweni JSS and hope to return next year.

Simon Rhodes (Head of Design and Technology)

James Gillespie's High School

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JGHS Diary

Thursday, 18th November 2004

Thursday, 25th November 2004

Friday, 26th November 2004

Tuesday, 7th December 2004

Monday, 13th December 2004

Thursday, 16th December 2004

Wednesday, 22nd December 2004

Wednesday, 5th January 2005

Friday, 21st January 2005

Thursday, 27th January 2005

Catchment Area Review meeting at
JGHS, 19:00hr.

S5/S6 Parents' Consultation Evening
S3 Interim reports issued

School Board and PTA Meetings

S1 & S2 Parties

Carol Concert, Usher Hall at 19:30hr

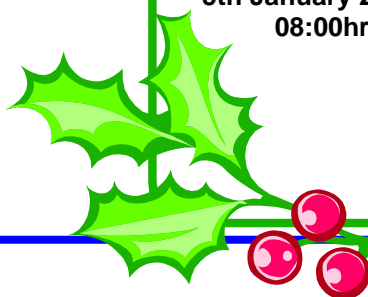
School closes for Holidays at 12:55hr

Students return at 08:30hr

S4 reports issued

Instrumental Instruction Parents'
Consultation Meeting

The school office will
be closed from
12:55hr on Wednes-
day, 22nd December
2004 until Wednesday,
5th January 2005 at
08:00hr.



Odds and Ends

Importance of Good Nourishment

A well-balanced diet is essential to the health of the body and brain. As the weather becomes colder so the body's need for increased energy becomes more apparent. We are concerned at the number of students who do not eat anything before arriving at school. A significant number of those also do not eat lunch. In the afternoons therefore, we have a few students who cannot get through the day because their energy levels are too low.

The school cannot provide food for these students so it is important that parents discuss with students the need to have a properly balanced diet.



Festive Fun



Come along to the PTA Festive Fun Evening on Tuesday, 14th December at 19:00hr.

There will be displays of crafts, activities to participate in and entertainment to enjoy. All washed down with mince pies and mulled wine.

Parents Message Board

We invite all parents to make use of the JGHS school website Parents Message Board by contributing to our online discussion forum. We would like your feedback on the value of a Parents Message Board and if you consider this online forum helpful. Also please e-mail us topics you would like aired during the rest of the session 2004/2005.

You will find a link to the Parents Message Board on the JGHS website Home Page, Parents' Page and Enquiries Page.

