

# James Gillespie's High School



# Newsletter

## Message from the Head Teacher

January 2007

I hope you all had a very Happy Christmas and New Year and that 2007 will be good for all of us. The students and staff have returned refreshed and enthusiastic although the poor weather and dark mornings do their best to counteract these feelings.

As you will see inside, the PTA are holding what promises to be a wonderful Burns Supper on the 26th January. We hope you will support us by coming along and joining with the staff and sixth year students for an evening of "glamour and gaiety". That is not how the senior students would

describe the Prelim time but they should now be preparing hard for these important examinations which start immediately after the February break.

The School Board continues to work for the improvement of our buildings and a successful meeting with Andrew Burns, Executive Member for Children and Families, has taken place. He indicated that the refurbishment of the school was a Council priority and that we would be part of a £100 million bid to the Scottish Executive. The school is certainly looking tired and in need of an injection of cash. Our staff and students continue to create

a happy and successful school and we certainly are living proof that money is not everything. However, we have a right to a modern, well-equipped environment and so I ask you to support the Board in their endeavours. They are tireless in their campaign for an improved JGHS.



*Mr. A. Wallace*

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### Special points of interest:

- ◆ Why don't you join us on Friday, 26th January for the PTA Burns Supper. A night of glamour and gaiety is promised. Details on page 3.

## Evening News Gives Carol Concert A 4 Star Rating!

Journalist Sandy Scott gave our Christmas Carol Concert a glowing review in the Evening News of December 15<sup>th</sup> 2006.

He describes the concert as being special because "it went with a swing from the opening number right through to the last. It simply oozed with enthusiasm and the joy of performing to an audience, and it included an enormously high proportion of the school's population."

A number of items were given a special mention in the article including the guitar, clarsach and double bass ensembles; the opening quartet singing Prepare Ye; the flute ensemble; string orchestra and the S2/3 Choir's rendition of Freddie Mercury's Don't Stop Me Now as well as the Senior Choir's In Paradisum from Fauré's Requiem.

The readings were also given a mention, especially the broad Scots version of the Nativity and Suleman Bah's description of Christmas in Sierra Leone.

The recognition of the "well-coordinated team of workers" who reorganized the stage during the performance was a nice touch as these are the people who are often forgotten and they certainly ensured everything ran smoothly.

As Mr. Scott says at the end of his review – "a splendid effort by one and all".

# Music Department News

## Carol Concert

Congratulations to everyone involved in such a successful evening's entertainment.

There was a wide variety of music and groups performing, and each group deserves praise for their commitment and enthusiasm on the night, with thanks also going to all the efforts leading up to the concert.

Items on the night included senior choir, senior vocal group, S2/3 choir, P7/S1 choir, chamber vocal group, senior wind band, string orchestra, junior wind band, guitar/clarsach ensemble, flute ensemble and percussion ensemble.

In all, over 600 students performed on the night, which was a fantastic achievement.

Remember that CDs are still on sale which includes one item from most of the groups performing at the carol concert, so buy your memento now!

## 'Spring Fling'

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2007

Yes – it's the next concert already!!!

Rehearsals will start at the end of January for all the instrumental groups who played at the carol concert – details will be published in a music bulletin which will be read out during registration.

**Any student who receives private lessons and who would like to join any of our instrumental groups for the spring concert, please see Mrs O'Brien as soon as possible.**

## Singers, Dancers & Actors National Auditions 2007

The Youth Music Theatre UK will be auditioning in January & February for their 2007 Summer productions.

Auditions are open to young people aged 11 - 21 and involve a 2 hour workshop at a local venue. All projects are residential with full board accommodation.

Projects for this year are: 'Mort', 'Great Expectations', 'Without Borders & Frankenstein'. There will also be further opportunities offered to those selected from the auditions.

## Instrumental Lessons

A reminder that students who receive instrumental lessons in school must have their instrumental diary signed by their class teacher **at least 3 days before their lesson.**



Failure to attend a lesson due to not being permitted out of class will result in a referral which, on receipt of three or more, will lead to instrumental lessons being withdrawn from that student. There are waiting lists for every instrument in school, so please ensure that you do not enter this referral system as your place could be offered to another student.

## Standard Grade and Higher Music Students

All students sitting Standard Grade and Higher Music will be sitting their FINAL performance exams in March.

The music department are currently offering additional support classes during lunchtimes for the following:

Vocalists	Monday and Tuesdays	1.15pm
Keyboard players	Wednesdays	1.15pm
Tuned Percussion	Thursdays	1.15pm

We hope that students take this opportunity to rehearse their final programmes with the music staff during these lunchtimes in order to help prepare them for their final exam.

## Academy of Music & Sound Edinburgh

The Academy offers private lessons, part time courses and full or part time BTEC National award & certificate programmes.

They are holding an Open Day on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January, an opportunity to see the facilities and teachers, see teacher performances and demonstrations and to discuss options available.

## Eton Choral Courses

These courses were set up to offer coaching and advice to prospective Oxbridge choral and organ scholars but are of valid benefit to anyone who enjoys singing whatever their goal. The age range is 16 - 20 and courses lasting a week in summer involve sight-reading, aural tests and consort singing; as well as choral music students also receive individual singing lessons.

## CONCERTO COMPETITION

Auditions will be held during the week commencing Monday 23 April 2007, allowing our pupils the opportunity for intensive practice during the Easter holidays. The successful applicant will perform in the forthcoming Festival of British Youth Orchestras in August 2007. He/she will be presented with the Christine Dingwall Memorial Trophy, which they can hold for one year. A cash prize will also be presented.

This opportunity is open to students of **all** disciplines, and should not be viewed as simply an "orchestral concerto". All appropriate repertoire will be considered, the



**For further details and application forms for any of these opportunities please see Mrs. O'Brien in the Music Department**

## Depute Head Teacher News

### Learning and Teaching Update

Last term at a successful Parent Forum session, we looked at how parents could support learning at home. This term, an interesting project with our cluster primaries takes place. We were fortunate with our bid for national funding which will allow us to enhance engagement with parents on Learning. The project details will be announced across the cluster later this term.

### Curriculum

School managers have been meeting regularly this session to review curricular provision at all levels in the school. The consultation process will include all students, through Student Council representatives. Feedback from S1 and S2 students at a recent meeting was very positive.

### IT

The school has now completed an upgrade of its IT estate. Whilst this was challenging at times last term, we look forward to the improvements the new technology will bring. We will also be installing two new Smartboards later this month.

### S4 Parents

I hope you found the message, reminding you of the forthcoming Parents' Evening, useful and that you already had plans to be at this very important meeting.

Apologies to those parents who have not yet registered their new Xmas mobile numbers with us. Please do so, so that we may remind you of other important S4 deadlines coming up soon.

promising glamour and gaiety all night long  
at the JGHS PTA

# Burns Supper and Ceilidh



Friday 26 January 2007  
Doors open 7pm  
JGHS Hall

*£15 includes delicious three-course meal and glass of wine  
music by Lothian Schools Strathspey & Reel Society*

*Dress: Glamorous*

pre-booked tickets only, email [pta@jghs.co.uk](mailto:pta@jghs.co.uk)

## Shakespeare Schools Festival



Shakespeare

Some of our year 3 Standard Grade Drama students will be taking part in a production of William Shakespeare's, *The Merchant of Venice*, as part of the national Shakespeare Schools Festival. The festival runs from 29<sup>th</sup> January – 10<sup>th</sup> February 2007. Our performance will take place on **THURSDAY 8<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2007** at the Traverse Theatre (Edinburgh) at 7.00pm.

The students have been working really hard during rehearsals and would love it if you could come along to the Traverse Theatre and show your support on the night. Tickets will be on sale at the Traverse Theatre box office in the new year. See you there.

## University Success

Two former students of James Gillespie's High School have recently graduated from the University of Glasgow;

**Alice Miranda Flatman - M.A. (with Merit)**  
**Katherine Anne Hopkins – B.N.**

We wish them every success in their careers.

### Communication Between Home and School

We are very keen to maintain effective communications between parents and teachers so that we can work in partnership. However, there are increasing difficulties for staff with heavy teaching loads, marking and preparation and other duties finding time to respond quickly to parental phone calls and e-mails.

The priority for all teachers, when timetabled for a class, is the needs of that class. They are also called upon regularly to cover for absent colleagues so their time to deal with requests for information about students is very limited.

We therefore must ask you in the first instance to direct all enquiries through Support for Pupils (aka Guidance) and to allow a minimum of two days for response unless it is an emergency. This will allow us to manage your requests more effectively and to direct them to the appropriate member of staff. It also allows us to have an overview of each student's needs or issues and can therefore be more strategic in our provision of individual support.

Mrs. O'Brien will, however, continue to take calls or e-mails related to instrumental lessons.

We hope you will understand why it is necessary to adopt this system. We wish to be responsive but our resources are finite. Please get in touch with me if you wish to discuss this matter.

# James Gillespie's High School

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## JGHS Diary

Thursday, 18th January 2007  
Friday, 19th January 2007  
Tuesday, 23rd January 2007  
Wednesday, 24th January 2007  
Friday, 26th January, 2007  
Tuesday, 6th February 2007  
Friday, 9th February 2007  
Monday, 19th February 2007  
Tuesday, 20th February 2007  
Tuesday, 27th February 2007  
Wednesday, 28th February 2007  
Friday, 2nd March 2007  
Tuesday, 6th March 2007  
Wednesday, 7th March 2007  
Thursday, 15th March 2007  
Friday, 16th March 2007  
Tuesday, 20th March 2007  
Friday, 30th March 2007  
Tuesday, 17th April 2007  
Wednesday, 18th April 2007  
Thursday, 19th April 2007

Parent Forum No. 3  
S4 Reports Issued  
JGHS Trust Meeting  
S4 Parent Consultation Evening  
PTA Burns Supper  
School Board and PTA Meetings  
Mid Term Holiday: School closes at 12:00 hr.  
Staff and Pupils Resume  
JGHS Trust Meeting  
S4/S5 Coursing—Parent Information Evening  
S2 Coursing—Parent Information Evening  
S2 reports issued  
School Board and PTA Meetings  
S2 Parents' Evening (non practical subjects)  
S2 Parents' Evening (practical subjects)  
Deadline for S2 & S5 Course Choice Forms  
JGHS Trust Meeting  
Last day of term  
Staff and Students resume  
Parent Forum 4  
"Spring Fling"

## Sports & News Round-up

### Football (Boys)

S1: Running 2 teams in S1. Both doing well. Any new players interested in joining, training is on Wednesdays (15:35—16:45) in the Games hall.

S2: Successful season so far. Now through to the fourth round in the S.C. Training on Mondays (15:35—16:45).

S3: Having a good season so far, although a few injuries have hit the squad hard. Training is on Mondays (16:30—17:15). New players welcome.

S4: Having a good season. Through to the Q.F. of the Lothians Cup. Training on Mondays (16:30—17:15).

Seniors: having a good League season so far.

Representative Honours  
Congratulations to David Cran in S6 for making it into the Edinburgh and Lothians U18 squad.

### Football (Girls)

S1: Training on Wednesdays (15:35—16:45).

S2: Training on Mondays (17:15—18:30).

S3: Training on Tuesdays (15:35—16:30).

Seniors: They are still in the S.C. 3rd round. Training on Mondays (18:45—20:00).

### Basketball

U14 Boys: through to S.C. Q.F.

U15 Boys: K.O. S.C. to St. Tams 4th Rd. Edinburgh League Leaders.

Senior Boys: K.O. S.C. Q.F. to Porty 57-53 Edinburgh League Leaders.

U15 Girls: In the S.C. (Plate) 2nd Round home game in Arbroath. Performing well in Edinburgh League.

### Representative Honours

Daniel Oxenham Anderson and Calum Crofts (both S2) in Edinburgh U14 Squad.

**P.E. Department**

### Tom Sparks (S4)

Tom won a competition run by the Scottish Executive. He has secured £10,000 funding to implement the environmental project he designed entitled "pedals not petrol".

**Ms. L. Halliday,**  
**PT Modern Studies**

### Calling All Parents



We are still looking for help with scribing for students who need this support for SQA exams.

**The JGHS Trust is seeking the skills of an Accountant. If you can offer any help please get in touch.**