

DECEMBER 2012



THE JAMES GILLESPIE'S HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Reflections on 2012



As my first year at Gillespie's draws to a close I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on what has been a most enjoyable, successful and busy year. On taking up office in January I was immediately struck by the strong sense of community and unity of purpose that prevails in the school. Pupils and

staff are proud of the school and enjoy working together. Parents are engaged in the life of the school and they are quick to support when their child needs that little bit of extra encouragement to do his/her best. This united approach will ensure that our school will continue to grow and develop and overcome the challenges that lie in store.

The challenges overcome this year include the implementation of management restructuring and the continuing successful implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. The teamwork and unity of purpose I referred to earlier contributed significantly to us successfully completing the management restructuring before the summer holiday and ensuring the change of timetable in early June went ahead as scheduled. In June of this year our new S3 were the first to embark on the new Curriculum for Excellence courses that will lead to National 4 and 5 certificates. I am delighted at the progress they are making and am confident that they will be successful in the new exams in the summer of 2014. Our new Curriculum and Pupil Support Leaders have settled in well to their new roles and are working hard to ensure that our school continues to grow and thrive.

Towards the end of the summer we learned that our examination results were, once again, among the best in Scotland. From what I have witnessed as I visit classrooms across the school and talk to pupils, staff and parents, I am confident that next year's results will be equally as good, if not better. We will achieve this by continuing to work hard and having the highest expectations of each other.

After the summer we bade farewell to a number of long serving staff and welcomed several new staff to our wider team. As we prepare pupils for a world that continues to change it is essential that we continuously challenge, review and adapt the service that we provide. Throughout the year we have benefitted from the new perspectives and innovative ideas brought to the school by the new staff that have joined us.

Throughout 2012 we have continued to work towards making the necessary arrangements for the building of our new school, which is scheduled to begin on 1 July 2013, with an anticipated completion date towards the end of 2015. We are excited at the prospect of a brand new building with 'state of the art' facilities being available to us.

As we prepare to go to press, pupils in S4 are in the midst of their prelims and pupils in S5 and S6 are getting ready for their prelims which begin in the latter half of January. We wish them every success in these exams.

As a busy and productive term draws to a close we are all looking forward to a restful break over Christmas with our families. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff, pupils and parents for your continued hard work, support and endeavours throughout 2012 and I wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a prosperous and successful new year. (Bliadhna mhath ùr agus Nollaig chridheil dhuibh uile).

Donald J Macdonald (Headteacher)

Show the world what's important to you

On Wednesday 28th November I was one of around 100+ invited guests at the annual John Byrne awards to witness Cat Macdonald and Leanne Bell from Gillespie's being declared the winners for 2012. I felt so proud!

The John Byrne award offers S6 students a stimulus, and then challenges them to communicate the values it inspires in them through a painting, a poem, a play - or any other creative medium of their choosing. This year's stimulus was The Proclaimers' song, 'Letter from America'. In the year of the US election, this stimulus was intended to encourage the students to reflect on the relationship between Scotland and America, encompassing historical themes of displacement and present challenges to identity.



This is the third year of this competition and Gillespies have enjoyed success each year having been commended for their entries in both 2011 and 2010, so it was fantastic to go one better this year. Their winning entry was comprised of a painting by Leanne which depicted a range of characters from various sectors of our diverse Scottish society. Cat complemented this by writing a futuristic political play which, skilfully and insightfully for one so young, weaved these characters together in a way that brought out some of the social injustices and inequalities that occur in Scotland.

Of the winning prize of £7000, £5000 will be used for a community based project (to be decided by Cat and Leanne) and the remaining £2000 will be used by both girls to further their own education.

Donald J Macdonald (Headteacher)

News from the Modern Studies Department

In Modern Studies we were delighted to welcome former Lord Advocate, Lord Colin Boyd QC into the AH Modern Studies class in November. The S6 class are studying 'Crime and the Law'.

Many thanks to Lord Boyd for giving up his valuable time to be interviewed by our keen students.

Our MUN group continues to go from strength to strength in the Modern Studies Department and we will be participating in the next MUN Conference at George Watson's College in March. Many thanks to the students who run the club every Wednesday and to Mike Alexander and Laura Halliday for working as teachers in an advisory role.

A group of S2 students will be participating in the annual inter-school Modern Studies Quiz in December. Good luck to them and let us hope the trophy stays at Gillespie's in 2012-13.

Many thanks to the S6 students, Ellen Garland and Mairi Scott who are running a "Social Subjects" homework group on a Monday at 3:45pm in L14. This group is open to all years and has been well attended.

S4 Study Support continues to run with Miss Halliday in L14 on Thursday lunchtimes.

Many thanks to Edinburgh University Politics Department for allowing us to take around 40 senior students from the Modern Studies Department to the University of Edinburgh "Transatlantic Roundtable" Lecture in November. The lecture was hosted by Professor John Peterson, Dr Elizabeth Bomberg, Dr Robert Mason and Dr Chris Carman.

The S6 are preparing to wow the crowds at DiverseCITY with their salsa moves. Salsa class for S6 is every Monday in the gym at 4:45pm.

National Gallery Project



Maddie, Michael and Mikaela

Last year 2 pupils from each 1st year class were selected to take part in a fantastic project combining art and science.

We began with trips to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery and the Rosslyn institute. There we met some of the scientists who created the famous Dolly the Sheep and learned about the complicated process of cloning.

Up until the summer holidays we worked hard on producing different pieces of art including blueprinting, cartoon drawing and futuristic illustrations to put together in one big image of a Scientists lab.

All of this work can now be viewed by the public in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in the Cells exhibition which is on show from now until February 2013.

Phoebe Hyde 2K2

The following pupils were involved in the project:

Andrew Hadaway	Hamish Stewart
Mikaela Carmichael	Maddie Cassidy
Sophia Kaiser	Leora Wadler
Shoki Hidaka	Fenton Reid
Flora Flinn	Ellie Halligan
Jamie Clarkson	Michael Barker
Hasan Mohammed	Ruairidh Morrison
Ellen Ferrie	Amy Kerr
Phoebe Hyde	Lisa Thomson
Rebecca Isles	Numan Ali

Maisie Shaw

One of the 'Brodie crème de la crème' died on Nov 7th, aged 93.

Maisie Mallinson was a school girl protégé of Christina Kay at James Gillespie's High School, made famous in the 'Prime of Miss Jean Brodie' by Muriel Spark better known as a film starring Maggie Smith.

Maisie was one of the 'crème de la crème' favoured pupils of the unorthodox Miss Kay. Whilst acknowledging Miss Kay's affection for Mussolini and his ability in getting the trains to run on time in Italy, Maisie never forgot her maverick teacher.

In terms of career and life choices Maisie was clearly influenced by Miss Kay. From a young age Maisie showed talent in both drawing and in writing poetry. She went on study illustration and book production at Edinburgh College of Art, where she published her own book of illustrated poems.

In 1939 she met and later married Sax Shaw, who was a considerable force in Edinburgh's artistic circles, although he could never have been described as 'establishment' the very opposite in fact. Maisie went to Moray House and trained to be a teacher.

Sax also taught and had a tenure at Edinburgh College of Art which is where I met him, he was my tutor and mentor, and through his generosity I was a frequent visitor at their house where I also met Maisie and we also became close friends.

Sax and Maisie lived a truly bohemian lifestyle. Their house was filled with art and interesting people such as the film maker Jack Shea, Robin Philipson and Billy Connolly there was never a dull moment.

Both will be missed.

Jane Wood

Maths Department News

Congratulations to Alistair Miller and Jonny Scott in S6 who, having scored very highly in the UK Senior Maths Challenge, have qualified to do the British Maths Olympiad and the Senior Kangaroo respectively. They have a daunting three and a half hour written paper to look forward to.

Well done to all the other certificate winners. We got 3 golds, 6 silvers and 28 bronzes.

Also congratulations and commiserations to the Senior team, comprising the above two boys and Stuart Kumar and Kumin Kang of S5. They came 3rd in the UKMT Senior Team Challenge, being very narrowly pipped at the post by two private schools.



S5 YOUTH PHILANTHROPY INITIATIVE (YPI) FINAL

**Thursday 25th October
S5 pupil finalists and invited parents**

This session the S5 were taking part in the YPI sessions during personal and Social Education time (Aug – Oct). YPI is an international initiative designed to support young people in developing community awareness. Pupils were taught about philanthropy and charity through an experience of giving. They also learned about the positive impact they can have on their own communities.

The pupils were working in teams researching the needs of their community, and they had to identify a local charity which they believed was well placed to make a positive change.

The pupils made site visits and had to assess the charities management strategy, staffing arrangements and services offered. The students then gave presentations on the reasons why their chosen charity was “the most deserving of financial support”. They were credited in their ability to utilise their skills of advocacy, data analysis, presentation and public speaking.

The team judged to have made the most compelling presentation was to be given a £3,000 grant to award their charity.

Present on the day were: Lynn Raynal - from the YPI, Gill Mitchell - Simpson’s Special Care, Susan Rae - Edinburgh Women’s Aid (gave apologies), Roberta MacKay - Hopscotch, Liz Fergusson - The Ripple Project, Andrew Grant - Children 1st, Val Cameron - Kinship Carers, Marcia McGuinness - “Wi Rascals” Western General Hospital (gave apologies) and Karen Taylor - ESDCS.

The judges were: Sybil Gray - Learning Assistant, Janis Croll - Acting DHT at JGHS and John Swinburne - CL Social Sciences.

THE LIST OF FINALISTS AND ORDER OF PLAY

1. SIMPSONS SPECIAL CARE (premature babies at Simpsons/ Royal Infirmary)

**Caitlin Donlevy, Ellen Crosbie, Kirsten Nicholson, Wil-
low Banks**

2. EDINBURGH WOMENS AID (domestic abuse concerns)

Emma Wilson, Bethany Sinclair, Huirong Piao, Louise Chan, Isabelle Burton, Emma Gray

3 HOPSCOTCH (hols for kids with disability)

**Eilidh Paul, Donde Thiam, Bethan Adair, Vicky Under-
wood**

4. THE RIPPLE PROJECT (supporting people with hardship in Restalrig area of Edinburgh)

**Struan Wilson, Harris Cunningham, James Young,
Connor Beckett**

5. CHILDREN 1st (phone line counselling help with family relationships)

Jen Lynch, Rebecca Connor, Ella Anderson, Amber Sharif

6. KINSHIP CARERS (Caring for family members who are disadvantaged)

**Eva Wiltshire, Annika Neilson, Rebecca Roddie,
Nashika Tettah’lartey**

7. YOUNG CARER CENTRE “Wi Rascals” (WESTERN GENERAL HOSPITAL)

**Rosie Kendrick, Beth Hegarty, Hina Anwar, Ailsa Fox-
Davies, Anna Nicholson**

8. EAST OF SCOTLAND DEAF CHILDREN SOCIETY (ESDCS)

Alexandra Blunt, Ellie Smith, Mason Reid, Jacob Wright, Erin Mackinnon

The winners were Hopscotch, as you can see in the photograph. The ladies from the Hopscotch Charity were delighted in winning the £3000 and a very well done to Eilidh, Donde, Bethan and Vicky, who gave an outstanding presentation!

We should also have a DVD of the whole event and will therefore have copies to give to all the finalists.

Thank you to all the participants on the day, it was a tough decision in the end.

Elayn O'Neill (Support for Pupils)

Concert, Ceilidh and Cakes! 14th December

Dear pupils and parents,

We are throwing a concert and ceilidh to help raise funds to support outdoor education in James Gillespies including supporting the Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme and assisting outdoor activity courses in the school.

It will be a fantastic evening with a concert in the first half by the award winning singer Mairi Campbell (Scots singer of the year 2007) whose hauntingly beautiful voice was the voice of 'Auld Lang Syne' in the block buster Sex in the City.

In the second half will be a fast and furious ceilidh with the school's own Mr Brice and his well known ceilidh band 'Auld Reekie'.

The refreshments will be cakes – more cakes than you could toss a caber at!! – as well as tea, coffee and drinks!

All this and more will be taking place on Friday the **14th of December from 7:30 pm** in the School Hall.

All friends and family members welcome – the more the merrier..

Tickets: Adults £8 / Pupils and younger £4

Tickets will be sold through classes or email:

ann.campbell@jamesgillespies.edin.sch.uk

with your ticket order and tickets will be made available on the door.

Hope to see you there!

Ann Campbell

Achievements at the National Mòd

Congratulations to all JGHS pupils who performed at the recent National Mòd in Dunoon. The following JGHS pupils have achieved bronze, silver or gold awards in this competition.

Finlay Cunniffe S4: Silver Award in the Advanced Clarsach solo class

Sean MacPherson S5: Bronze Award in the Advanced Clarsach solo class

Simon and Cameron MacDonald S4/S1: Gold Award in the Clarsach Duets over 14yrs

Romy Byron and Martha Cunniffe S1: Silver Award in the Clarsach Duets under 14yrs

Jenny MacDonald and Tuesday Rose McDonough S1: Bronze Award in the Clarsach Duets under 14yrs

Tuesday Rose MacDonald S1: Silver Award in Clarsach self accompaniment

Anna Mackenzie and Catriona Macgregor S3: Bronze Award in the Clarsach Duets over 13yrs

Ceitidh McLuskey: Bronze Award for Intermediate 1 Solo Clarsach

Finlay Lawson: Silver Award for Intermediate 1 Solo Clarsach

Piping: **Alexander Sime Scott** S5: Gold Badge (Royal Highland Fusiliers Cup), March, Bagpipes 16-18 years and Silver Badge, Strathspey & Reel, Bagpipes 16-18 years.

In addition to performing at the Mòd, Alexander made an appearance at the 13th Children and Families Achievement Awards Ceremony at the Assembly Rooms on 21st November.

Singing: **Mikaela Carmichael & Duncan Carmichael** S2 & P7 Toll-cross: Gold Badges, Singing Duet, Fluent 13-15.

Mikaela & Duncan featured on the BBC Winners Programme.

Clarsach performing exam success

Our pupils performed very well and have received the following awards for their performances:

Grade 2

Tuesday Rose McDonough - Distinction, **Morag Morrison** - Distinction, **Jenny Macdonald** - Distinction, **Romy Byron** - Merit

Grade 3

Samuel MacLeod - Merit, **Cara McLuskey** - Merit, **Orla FitzGerald** - Merit

Grade 4

Leonore Stahl - Merit, **Mary Flinn** - Merit

Congratulations to them all.

Fanfare Concert

Congratulations to the many pupils who represented JGHS by performing at the 'Fanfare Concert' on Friday 16th November at St. Paul's and George's.

Miss Millar

S3 Design a cupcake fund raiser



The S3 pupils in Food & Health Technology designed some fabulous cupcakes to raise funds for Sick Kids Hospital. They sold them at lunch-time to both staff and pupils and raised £66.46p.

Congratulations to them for both their hard work and fabulous creations, with interesting flavours from cinnamon & apple to Oreo cupcakes.

First Aid Training

The Food & Health Technology Department have been busy training our S3 & S5 pupils in First Aid. Congratulations to the following pupils -

Chilcare & Early Education - Skills for Work

The following S5 pupils have completed a Baby & Child First Aid Course -

Willow Banks	Ruary Mitchell
Brandon Blair	Saba Shafiq

The following S3 pupils have successfully completed a Kitchen Emergency First Aid course -

Forida Begum	Namra Rizwan
Sameeha Iqbal	Rosa Tonks
Valerie Jimenez	Chloe Barron
Eva McLaren	Amy Morrison
Isla Panton	Ryan Massey

Both courses are valid for 2 years, so will be useful to have at home and school.

Allison Briggs

S3 Biology Global Classroom Conference and Workshops

20 students from different classes in S3 represented JGHS in this event at Edinburgh Zoo on 14 November. The students took part in four different workshops designed to highlight the work of modern zoos, with particular reference to conservation, research, captive breeding and education. This all led to a debate as to whether zoos should have a place in the 21st Century.

Despite being the youngest group in this Scotland-wide event, the JGHS students contributed fully to a lively debate and represented the school with considerable distinction in all aspects of the day. Seeing the pandas in fairly active mode at the end of the event rounded off an excellent experience.

H. McDougall

School Values

In the past few weeks pupils, staff and parents (Parent Council) have been involved in discussions on what values we should adopt as a school community. These values and principles will form the basis upon which we make decisions, relate to each other and continue to grow as a school in the coming years.

The values and principles that have emerged most strongly from these discussions are:

Respect

Inclusion

Equality

Honesty and

High expectations and aspirations for all.

We would welcome comment from any member of our school community on these. Responses please, by email (admin@jamesgillespies.edin.sch.uk) or by mail to arrive no later than midday on Friday 15 December.

Donald J Macdonald (Headteacher)

Newsletter competition

The deadline for the Newsletter competition has been extended until the end of term. To be in with a chance of winning, come up with a new name for the newsletter and complete an entry form (available from the Library). The winner will receive £20. Good luck!

Remember to buy your Christmas Concert Tickets!

Tickets are available from the Usher Hall box office and are priced at £6/£8/£10. Support this great tradition and help JGHS make magic once again in this wonderful venue.

*Date of the concert:
18th December, 7.30pm.*