



THE JAMES GILLESPIE'S HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Pupils and staff are now well settled into their routines following the Christmas holiday. I take this belated opportunity of wishing everyone a very healthy and successful 2013..

2012 ended with our annual Christmas Concert at which over five hundred pupils performed in front almost two thousand people at the

Usher Hall. It was great to return to this wonderful venue after being elsewhere for a few years. Our pupils deserve to be in such a high quality venue so that their talents can be suitably showcased. Choirs from several of our local primary schools added to the richness and diversity of the performances. The finale of almost six hundred performers singing 'Ode to Joy' together rounded off a most enjoyable and memorable evening. Thank you to everyone including music staff and parents who, over the years, have supported the development of the hugely talented young people who performed on the evening. Our Former pupils' choir also contributed to on this night to mark the end of an era, as we prepare for July 2013 when it is planned for parts of the existing school campus to be demolished in preparation for the new school to be built. We have set a high standard for this year's Christmas concert but I am confident that our current pupils will more than rise to the challenge.

For pupils in S5 and S6 this is a particularly busy time of year as they are involved in their prelim examinations. The experience gained from these assessments in addition to the feedback from teachers provides excellent preparation for our pupils in the final months before the main exams take place in May and June of this year.

In the previous newsletter, I invited feedback on our proposed school values. In the light of feedback from pupils, parents and staff I can now confirm that our school values will henceforth be adopted as:

1. Respect
2. Equality
3. Inclusion

4. Honesty
5. High expectations/aspirations

With the continued support, dedication and hard work of everyone associated with our school community I am confident that we are well placed to continue to grow and to offer outstanding opportunities and experiences for all of our pupils. We will continue to place emphasis on valuing the diversity that exists in our community.

On the 7 of February I will be joining around 70 S6 pupils and 8 staff going to Durban in South Africa over the February break. I have never been to South Africa before and I am very much looking forward to being part of our 11th S6 visit to this part of the world. I am particularly looking forward to meeting and working with staff and pupils at Zwelibanzi High School, Dloko High School and Charles Memorial Primary School. All those who I've spoken to about their experiences over the years speak with considerable warmth about the impact that this experience has had on them. I am sure that this year's visit will similarly affect all of us who are involved. I am particularly looking forward to learning about what we have achieved there over the years and subsequently reflecting on what further we can do to enhance the experiences for everyone involved. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the very many of you who have generously contributed to the collection of items and funding that we will gift to our African friends whilst we are with them.

In recent weeks around the main entrance to our school in Lauderdale Street I have become aware of parents parking in restricted zones whilst dropping off and collecting children. I would request that parents arrange to drop and collect children in adjacent streets so that the risk of injury to others in this area are significantly reduced. Those carrying children with mobility difficulties are invited to enter the school car park and to do so either 5 minutes before or after the end of the school day when the crowds have dispersed.

And finally, having opened my letter to you by referring to the previous holiday I would like to close by wishing everyone a restful and rejuvenating February break.

Donald j Macdonald (Headteacher)

Outward Bound Residential, Nov 2012



It was a truly memorable experience for all of us students and staff alike. Outward Bound had created a really challenging and exciting course that included spending the first night canoeing across Loch Tay and then camping on an isolated beach on the other side in a pine forest.

For the kids who with the exception of only one – had never camped before and had never been in as isolated a location it was exciting and a bit terrifying. Because the canoe trailer had been delayed with a punctured tyre we were so late in departing across the loch that it was dusk by our arrival on the other side and so we were all putting up tents in the dim and dark. Luckily it was a starry night and the kids made their own fire and ate desserts and sweets as the main course had fallen in the sand...

The kids came into their own around the fire as some went off to collect varying sizes of wood/trees and keeping the wolves at bay and telling stories. The night was relatively peaceful except for the driving rain and wind that battered the tent from about 3am.

In the morning it was a battle with the driving wind and rain to fight our way back across the Loch to the centre where we eventually got all the gear and canoes back up to the minibuses and off to the Stanley Nairn centre at Dalguise. Here everyone dried out and tried with varying degrees of success to beat me at pool. Spirits were high after the previous night's adventures and after showers and food it was a lovely afternoon. The youngsters helped make the food and were great at the washing up. That evening the youngsters – slightly reluctantly donned their waterproofs and headed off for a night walk in the Hermitage at Dunkeld where they braved caves alone in the dark and shouted off any werewolves that might be lurking. Next day after a marathon cleaning session we headed off to climb a hill. The sky was clear and

the views were stunning. The boys decided to do some army manoeuvres and stalk us for an hour. Unfortunately we weren't so confident about their whereabouts as they were and ended up being a little late back!

But the whole experience was so memorable and influential for us all. There was plenty of laughter and a few tears. All of the staff including the Outward Bound staff felt that the experience gave us such an important and intimate insight into the resilience and adaptability of the youngsters. Already we have laughed and remembered our adventures.

A. Campbell

South Africa 2013 Update

It's not long before our S6 pupils embark on our South Africa trip 2013! Pupils and staff are due to fly out on Thursday 7th February for what promises to be an incredible experience working with Zwelibanzi High School, Dloko High School and Charles Memorial Primary School.

A huge amount of effort has gone in to raising money for the trip, through bake sales, charity basketball matches, bag packing and many other ventures. So far we have approximately raised £4000, and there is still more to come!

On Thursday 24th January, James Gillespie's hosted 'Stars in their Eyes', aimed at raising money for the South Africa project. Thanks to everyone who supported the event and congratulations to the winning contestants, Cliona McCabe and Tuesday Rose McDonough.

Pencil Case Appeal – Every year a group of S6 students from James Gillespie's High School go to South Africa to visit and help in Dloko High School, Zwelibanzi High School and Charles Memorial Primary School. The children in these schools live in poverty and suffer from a severe lack of food and education so JGHS carry out projects such as setting up a sustainable soup kitchen and setting up a Library. This year, the pupils held a 'Pencil Case Appeal' aimed at providing the children with the equipment needed to support their education for at least a year. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this appeal.

F. Carstairs

Interested in joining the pipe band?

"I am in the pipe band because I learned chanter in primary school and was going to be given my dad's old bagpipes. It's good fun and you get to play at all kinds of things"- Finlay, S2

"The pipe band is fun, the pipes are hard to blow and loud, and we get to go to a lot of places to play in concerts"- Euan, S1

Tachartasan Gàidhlig!

Gaelic @ Àrd Sgoil Sheumais Ghilleasbuig

The Gaelic department has been **trang trang** (busy busy). Just before Christmas the entire Gaelic Medium cohort joined with our friends from Tollcross Primary for Holy worship to celebrate **Nollaig** (Christmas) in Greyfriars Church. This was the first time in many years that the whole Gaelic Medium cohort in the city had been in one place and it was a great delight to see the strength in numbers of Gaelic Medium in our Capital City.

The **coisir Ghàidhlig** (Gaelic choir) were an undoubted highlight of the vastly successful Usher Hall Christmas concert and **taing mhòr** (big thanks) to Gillie MacKenzie for her expert steering of this talented group. Rehearsals continue every **Diciadain** (Wednesday) at lunch times and the choir is always looking for new members, whether they speak Gaelic or not.

Further to this, Mr Neithercut and Mr Charity have been providing taster inserts for S1 & S2. By the end of this session all pupils in the junior school will have received six lessons of Gaelic and we will be offering Gaelic (Learners) at National 4/5 to these youngsters from S3 as well as Higher and look forward to uptake of these courses.

Thanks to Keir Greatorex who has taken a lead with **na sgoilearan beaga** (junior pupils) in producing three fun films for the annual **FilmG** competition, as well as his own excellent work. JGHS has a great record in this competition and we hope to do well again this year. Many of the videos are open to the public vote and we may be calling on your support soon.

The most recent highlight has been the celebration of **Oidhche Challainn**, the Old New Year, which according to the old Julian calendar, the Gaels continue to celebrate on the 12th of January in many areas of the Gàidhealtachd.

Mr Charity's S1 class wrote some **Duain Challainn** with the assistance of Dr Martainn Mac an t-Saoir and Coinneach Peutan from *Tobar an Dualchais* who educated them about the surviving Old New Year's tradition in **Uibhist a Deas** (South Uist) and **Eirisgeidh** (Eriskay). These were then performed at the Storytelling centre on the Royal Mile as part of a concert which also featured the JGHS Pipe Band and acclaimed Gaelic musicians, Griogair Labhraidh, Ailean Dòmhnallach and Kathleen MacInnes amongst others. This was part of **Am Bothan**, (The Bothy) a monthly Gaelic socialising and music event held in the Canon's Gait on the first Friday of every month. Everybody is welcome.

The Gaelic Department, as part of the Modern Languages Faculty, continues to be at the forefront of developments in Gaelic Medium Education in Scotland and looks forward to the New Year with expectation. Mr Stewart is currently looking at options to run a Gaelic trip before the summer holidays and we will be launching a blog with podcast soon.

Bliadhna Mhath Ùr Dhuibh Uile.

Eòghan Stiùbhart

CHINA TRIP JUNE 2013!

I would like to announce that a blog has now been set up on the school website to share news and updates about this trip.

2013 is finally here and preparations are now well underway for our Beijing trip in June.

Please check the bulletin for regular updates and useful information. There will soon be an opportunity for all parents to come in to school to hear more details about the trip and ask questions.

Regular lunchtime meetings are now being held in school for students.

Lots of more information to follow! *Mr. RPR. Irvine*

Bake off (S1/S2)

From now until the Easter Break.

Bake Off group meeting in S3 every week until the Easter Holidays. Bring 80p and your lunch and come and learn some new skills!

See you there! *F. Osborne-Smith*

Invigilators

We are looking for people to join the Invigilation Team to supervise exams. If you can commit to either some morning, afternoon or whole day sessions from the end of April until early June, in return for the satisfaction of ensuring our students can operate in the best examination environment (and a small fee) please contact the Chief Invigilator, K Woods for further details, either by email at Georathy@gmail.com or in writing through the School Office.

Immunisations: Diphtheria/tetanus/polio and MMR immunisations will take place, in school, on Wednesday 6th February. *L. Summers*

Recycling: The recycling site on Warrender Park Road has now closed. The nearest site is now at Potterrow, or local residents can contact the council to obtain recycling boxes - www.edinburgh.gov.uk/recycle

Pupil Support & Pastoral Care

Current Events:

We have been fortunate to have a number of guest speakers join us in PSE classes over the last several weeks. 6th Year have benefited from the expertise of financial education instructor Roddy Macfarquhar whose 4-session presentation 'Money Matters' is preparing our young people for smart money management once they leave school. Our 5th Years were visited recently by representatives from Edinburgh Napier University who presented on general student life in Higher Education as well as courses specific to Napier. We have also had presentations from LEAPS (Lothian Equal Access Programme) to provide 5th Year students with an awareness of support they could receive in making an application to university next year.

Personal & Social Education

January

- S1: -Relationships (Friendships)
- S2: -Coping with change & loss
-Sexual Health
- S3: -Sexual Health & Relationships
- S4: -Disability & Equality Issues
-Mental Health
- S5: -Further & Higher Education
-Prelims
- S6: -Personal Finance
-Prelims

Deadlines!

Pupils hoping to enrol in college courses for August/September 2013 should be making applications from the end of January! Information on attending college courses while at school during S5 & S6 will be available in February/March.

www.edinburghcollege.ac.uk

Careers Information

We are pleased to welcome our new Careers Adviser, Paula Jack from Skills Development Scotland. Students wishing an appointment with Paula should contact their Pupil Support Leader for further discussion and referral.

J.E.T. Programme

The Jobs + Education + Training Programme continues through until April. Pupils involved have been attending work placements every Friday in addition to working towards accreditation in Employability Skills and managing the rest of their subjects. Information on next year's programme will be available by March. Please speak to Mr Warden for further details.