



# THE JAMES GILLESPIE'S HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

*Headteacher's Message*

*February 2014*



During the past three weeks, prelim exams have taken place for pupils in S4, 5 and 6 and, over the past week, we have held parent consultations meetings to discuss prelim performances. Those meetings have focussed on ensuring that pupils are aware of what they now need to do to achieve their po-

tential in the final exams and have the necessary support and resources to do so. Thank you all who have contributed to this process and we are sure that our continued support and encouragement of pupils bears fruit when the results are declared in August.

Many staff, as usual, are offering extra classes at lunchtimes and after school each week. Again this year, we are offering a programme of classes during the Easter Holiday. Details of these additional classes will be shared with pupils and placed on our school website.

In response to feedback from parents over the past 12 months we are currently setting up a database of email addresses for all of our parents. We will, in the next few weeks, devise a way of ensuring that all the addresses we hold are up to date and accurate. We will continue to use texting in tandem with our website to draw your attention to and share key

information. If any of your personal details, including email address or mobile number, has changed recently then please let us know either by emailing the school or sending a note in to the school office with your child.

In regard to feedback I would remind you to please complete the 'Annual Survey of Parents and Carers' which has a link on the front page of our website. This particular survey is being organised by Council Officers on our behalf and the deadline has been extended until **Friday 28 February**. Please take a few minutes to complete this anonymously: the information gathered is vital to ensuring that our school continues to grow and flourish.

As part of this newsletter we are, once again, hugely proud to highlight the many and varied achievements of our pupils. These successes are also highlighted on our school website. As parents and carers please continue to share news with us of our pupils' successes – it is really important that these are shared with our wider community. We are a high achieving school and it is good for us all to be aware of the incredible people we have in our school community.

During the February break this year's 90 strong delegation will, for the 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, journey to South Africa. We are enormously grateful to Mr McCallum for continuing to coordinate this excursion. Thank you to everyone who has contributed gifts that will be shared with our South African friends next week.

I am delighted to report that the rebuilding of our

new school continues apace. The programme is on schedule and we look forward to moving into the main teaching block in just over a year.

### **Responsibility of Valuables**

I take this opportunity to remind all our pupils, staff and visitors that they must keep valuables in their possession at all times. The school cannot be held responsible for the safety of personal possessions such as mobile phones, jewellery etc. unless a staff member has taken possession of the item.

Although the incidences of loss or theft in the school are low my advice is not to bring valuable items to school and if you must then to keep them with you at all times. Whilst at PE, staff offer a secure box in which valuables can be safely stored.

And finally, I take this opportunity of wishing you all a most enjoyable and rejuvenating February break.

*Donald J Macdonald (Headteacher)*

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## **Modern Languages Department**

### **Intercambio Escolar Edimburgo – Tenerife 2014**

We are fast approaching our second exchange with the prestigious Colegio Luther King in La Laguna, Tenerife. Open to all S3 students studying Spanish the exchange gives pupils the best possible opportunity to use their language skills in very 'real and relevant contexts' as well as the opportunity to make new friends in one of the most stunning cities of Las Canarias. Many of our pupils from the first exchange already have plans to go back to Tenerife this year in their own time to visit their new friends and host families. Important Dates for the calendar for this year's participants;

#### **Mon 10th Feb**

Information evening for all participants (hosting and going).

#### **Fri 7th – Friday 14th March**

Hosting Tenerife pupils in Edinburgh

#### **Wed 30th Apr – Wed 7th May**

Exchange to Tenerife (arrival in Edinburgh 00:50 Thurs 8th)



*P. O'Connor*

## Performing Arts News

### SENIOR DRAMA PRODUCTION – Drama Studio, Friday 6th December 2013

The production of 'The Ghost Train' by senior drama pupils was a huge success, with outstanding talent on display. Congratulations to all involved, and thanks to the Drama Department and all the pupils who contributed to this.

### JGHS CHRISTMAS CONCERT – Usher Hall, Tuesday 17th December 2013

Congratulations to everyone who helped make the Christmas Concert such a success. Over 600 performers were involved and the concert showcased their talents in many choirs, orchestras, wind bands, clarsachs, pipe band, accordions, and guitars. A huge thank you to everyone involved in this!



## **MUSIC SQA PERFORMANCE EXAMS - February / March 2014**

All pupils sitting National 5 and Higher Music will be visited by an external SQA examiner anytime between the end of February and the end of March. The examiner will assess pieces presented by all candidates on two instruments—this accounts for 60% of the National 5 and Higher Music course award. Pupils should be practising all pieces at home and at school on a daily basis in preparation for this final exam.

### **NQ MUSIC STUDY SUPPORT**

Support is available for all National 5 and Higher music candidates as follows:

*National 5/Higher performance support* - Tuesday after school

*National 5/Higher performance support* - Wednesday after school

*National 5/Higher performance support* - Thursday after school

Pupils are encouraged to drop in from 3.45-4.45pm during these days to practise their programmes of pieces and gain support from music staff.

### **NQ DRAMA STUDY SUPPORT**

*Higher Drama Support* in G20 with Mr Hardie - Tuesdays from 3.40-5.00pm

*National 5 Drama Support* - Wednesdays lunchtime (Focus on Logbook and Written Paper) in G20 with Mr Hardie

*National 5 Drama Support* - Wednesdays 3.40-5.00pm (Focus on Added Value Unit - Performance) Exam in G20 with Mr Hardie

### **NQ MEDIA STUDY SUPPORT**

Study support for Media will be offered at the following times:

*National 5 Media* - Tuesdays 3.40-5.00pm

*Higher Media* - Wednesdays 3.40-4.40pm

Further support will also be offered through EDMODO.



# SPRING FLING CONCERT

**Wednesday 26th March, Marchmont St Giles on Kilgraston Road at 7.00pm**

Rehearsals are now well underway for the next concert, which again will feature senior and junior string orchestras, senior and junior wind bands, accordions, pipe band and chanter group, clarsach ensemble, guitar ensemble, Gaelic choir and junior and senior choirs. A few senior pupils will also perform solos and in small groups. More information regarding tickets will be posted on the school website in due course. Put this date in your diary now!

## LIST OF MUSIC REHEARSALS

The following is a list of all the groups currently rehearsing for the Spring Fling concert on 26th March. We are now offering a JUNIOR CHOIR for pupils in S1 to S3 who enjoy singing and who participated in the Christmas Concert. This will start on Tuesday 4th February at lunchtime in B1. No auditions necessary and new members welcome. New members are also welcome for all the groups listed below:

### Monday:

Junior Wind Band at lunchtime in B3 (for any woodwind or brass player of grade 1/2 level)

Senior Wind Band after school in B1 (for any woodwind or brass player of grade 3 level or above)

### Tuesday:

Chamber Strings at lunchtime in S16 (Grade5+ string players)

Clarsach Ensemble after school in B13

Junior Choir at lunchtime in B1

Senior String Orchestra after school in B1 (for any violin, viola, cello or double bass player of grade 4+ level)

Training String Orchestra after school in S16 (for any violin, viola, cello or double bass player of grades 1-3 level)

Chanter Group after school in B3



### Wednesday:

Percussion Ensemble at lunchtime in B17

Gaelic Choir at lunchtime in W1 (for all year groups, non-Gaelic pupils welcome)

### Thursday:

Chamber Choir after school in B3 (for all keen and experienced singers from S3 – S6)

Guitar Ensemble after school in B1

Accordion Club at lunchtime in W1

Pipe Band after school in B3

## **Diversecity 2014**

Rehearsals for Diversecity 2014, James Gillespie's annual celebration of the "diversity that exists amongst us" are now under way with students meeting every Thursday after school in the Drama Studio (G20) in Darroch to share their progress and rehearse larger elements.

Diversecity 2014 will be taking place on Fri 13 & Sat 14 July. The venue is still to be confirmed, so please watch this space for updates.

## **BBC Alba - Film G Young filmmakers competition**

For the 6th year in a row since the competition was launched, a joint project between Gaelic and Media has led to 4 films being entered into Film G. They can be watched online if you follow the link [www.filmg.co.uk](http://www.filmg.co.uk) and look for the 'Ard-sgoil Sheumais Gilleasbuig' entries. Voting for the people's choice awards is now taking place, so have a look and vote for your favourite film.

## **Scottish Chamber Orchestra — free music course!**

SCO Vibe is a new fusion orchestra led by internationally renowned guitarist Paul Griffiths, and this is open to all young musicians aged 11-18 living in Edinburgh. This group meets during holidays to work with players from the SCO and tutors from City of Edinburgh Council to write and perform their own music.

The next SCO Vibe course will be in the February half term from 19th-21st February 2014. Any interested pupils, please see Miss Millar for an application form.

For more information, please see the website: [www.sco.org.uk/education](http://www.sco.org.uk/education)

## **Big Big Sing**

Do you love to sing? Always liked the idea of being in a choir? The Big Big Sing is for YOU! Join the crowd at the Usher Hall on Sunday 16th February from 12-5pm for an afternoon of song and fun, including brilliant workshops with inspirational choirmasters Stephen Deazley and Eugene Skeef who will have you singing Commonwealth style! Brilliant sounds from Africa, the Caribbean, Samoa, Canada...start your celebration of this summer's Commonwealth Games in Glasgow right here.

Tickets are free for pupils and £5 for adults.

Everyone is welcome – you don't need any singing experience and you don't need to read music – just come along, join in and sing up.

[www.bigbigsing.org](http://www.bigbigsing.org)

*D. O'Brien, M. Hardie & M. Conroy*

# Sporting Success from Active Schools, Physical Education and the Health and Well Being Faculty

## Active Schools Sporting Celebration

Please keep Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June free in your diaries for our annual Sporting Celebration. Come along and hear how all our Sports Teams and Clubs have performed throughout the year before we award our Junior and Senior Boy and Girl Sports Personalities, Young Leader of the Year and Special Contribution to Sport Awards. You may even get another chance to beat Mr. McDonald at Table Tennis again this year!

## A Short Round up of All Things Sport @ Gillespie's

### Basketball

Congratulations to many of our senior Boys who triumphed with their club, Boroughmuir Blaze, in the recent Scottish Cup Final for the second year in a row. Look out for these boys making another run at the School Scottish Cup this year!

Good luck to our Under 15 Girls and Under 15 Boys Schools Basketball Teams who have progressed to the semi finals of both their Scottish Cups. Congratulations for progressing to the last 8 and fingers crossed for another final appearance.

### Judo

Good luck to **Adam Wadler** who will this year represent James Gillespie's High School at the British School Judo Championships in England. Another fantastic achievement, well done!

### Swimming

Congratulations to **George Clough** on his selection to the Scottish Swim Team to compete in the Annual Celtic Nations Meet in Bangor, Northern Ireland. Another excellent string to George's bow and a superb achievement to represent Scotland in this Commonwealth year. Please look out in the next newsletter for results from our team of 8 swimmers competing at this year's Scottish Schools Championships at the beginning of March.

Well done **Taylor Finlayson** on picking up a bronze in the 100m Fly, 200m IM, 200m Freestyle and a silver in the 200m Medley at the East District Long Course Championships at the Royal Commonwealth Pool. Another great meet for one of our schools many swimmers!

## **Rugby**

Another great international performance from **Arthur McIntosh** who played for Boroughmuir Rugby Under 13s at a recent International Tournament in Bishop Stortford. Arthur competed against teams from England, Wales, France and Italy.

## **Volleyball**

Good luck to our senior Boys Volleyball Team who have progressed to the semi final of this year's Scottish Cup. For their first year in the competition this has been a cracking run at the title, well done!

## **Ice Hockey**

Well done **Michael Ireland** on representing Scotland Under 17s in the UK Ice Hockey Conference Finals - fantastic!

## **Badminton**

Well done to **Alex Gough, Adam McDonald, Rory Allardice, Ben Williams** and **Leon Williams** who competed in the recent Edinburgh Badminton Championships.

Alex walked away with the U19 Singles Title, beating Adam in the final with Ben winning the 3<sup>rd</sup> place playoff. A clean sweep! Rory and Ben also took silver medals in the U19 Boys Doubles with Adam and Alex finishing in Bronze medal position!

Leon put in a great performance in winning the Under 14 Boys C Knockout!

Congratulations to all!

## **Lisa Thompson**

Congratulations to **Lisa Thomson** (3M3) for being selected to play cricket for Scotland in the under 17s team. She played in England in July then in Ireland during the first week of this academic year and she has a summer season of games in England this coming year.

Also, just before Christmas, Lisa found out she has been selected for the Scotland under 15 basketball squad. She has already played basketball for Scotland against an Irish team in January and she is hoping she will be selected for a tournament in Europe at the end of May. Not many people manage to achieve international standard in one sport; to achieve this in two is quite special.

## **Georgia Young**

Congratulations to **Georgia Young** (5R1) who has achieved huge success in taekwondo. As well as winning multiple national titles in 2012 she won Gold at the 2013 British Championships (women's

over 18 blue belt). She was also a double Gold medal winner (tag teams and individual) at the 2013 World Championships (green belt cadet).

## Gymnastics

Congratulations to the JGHS gymnasts who have been selected to represent Scotland at the forthcoming UK Championships. The team members are **Amy Heron & Caitlin Hayes** (S4), **Amy Chambers** (S3) and **Olive Walker** (S1).

Finally, **congratulations to former pupil Damien Hoyland** who has signed a professional Rugby contract with Edinburgh. He also currently plays for Scotland's U20s. Damien's success is highlighted in a recent Scotsman article at:  
<http://www.scotsman.com/sport/rugby/latest/damien-hoyland-earns-two-year-edinburgh-deal-1-3301868>

## Around the school . . .

### Fundraising for Children 1st

Well done to all involved in the fundraising that took place in December to support *Children 1st*. A cheque for £329 was presented to the charity which provides support to vulnerable children and young people in Scotland.



*Louisa Helfer presenting the cheque*



*Charlie Stanford, Amrou Motawa and Bhuvan Bezawada*

### First Lego Robot Competition

Congratulations to pupils involved in the Scottish heat of the First Lego Robot Competition. The JGHS team took part in a very tense and exciting semi-final and a fabulous day was had by all!