



Christmas 2006



Amnesty Group Started

By Lewis Wilson (S3)

A group of third year pupils has recently formed an Amnesty International group with help from RME teacher Mr A Johnstone, assisted by school technician Mrs M Arnold. They meet once a week during their lunch break.



The group has now completed its first campaign based on the Sudan crisis. This took the form of an exhibition that was held in the Academy's library from the 11th to 13th December. Badges were sold to raise funds for Amnesty. (See also page 3)

The exhibition was in conjunction with Human Rights Day, on 10th December. For more information on Amnesty International, log on to the website www.amnesty.org.uk



*Wishing You a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year
Card designed by Stacey Lappin (S2)*

University Entrance 2007

Forty-one of this year's school leavers have started university courses. The most popular destination was Glasgow University with 9 entrants. Queen Margaret University College, Strathclyde, Glasgow Caledonian, Stirling, Edinburgh and Aberdeen universities were all popular choices. This year's more unusual destinations included the universities of Chester, Surrey and Ulster.

Subjects chosen covered a very wide range. They included the highly competitive professional courses in Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Law, as well as creative subjects like Drama, Architecture and History of Art - and just about everything else!



Glasgow was this year's most popular choice.

Courses in Business/Marketing, Sports Studies and Sociology/Social Sciences were popular choices.

Probably the most unusual combination was that of Jennifer Fell who went to Glasgow University to study German and Music.

New Minibus for Aird Unit

As the result of very generous sponsorship from the Variety Club, in conjunction with Thomas Cook's, together with a successful fund-raising campaign by the Aird Unit, a new minibus for Aird pupils has been bought. The generous support of local businesses and individuals contributed significantly to the funds and was greatly appreciated.

Although the official presentation will not take place until January, pupils and staff of Aird have already started to enjoy the benefits of the new, specially adapted £38,000 vehicle.

Andrew is Scottish Champion

Talented athlete Andrew Holmes (S3) recently won the Scottish Cadets Cross-Country Championship (junior age-group) at a sports meeting in Edinburgh. Next year he qualifies for the senior age-group. His ambition is to win at this level too.



S3 Parents' Night will be on Tuesday 30 January in 'B' Block
NEW! S2 Parents' Options Information Night will be on Tuesday 6 Feb in 'B' Block NEW!
S2 Parents' Night will be on Wednesday 7 March in 'B' Block

Children in Need

This year's fundraising efforts for Children in Need were fully publicised in the Free Press. The final amount raised was over £1500. As a memento of the occasion, we print here photos of the boys and staff football teams, which were not available for the Free Press deadline, and also, by popular demand, another picture of Mr.Nimmo's moustache-shaving performance.



STRANRAER ACADEMY MALE STAFF

Picture by Sandra Beggs



SENIOR PUPILS

Picture by Sandra Beggs

Staff Team (l to r): Back— Billy.Blair (Coach), L.McCurry, D.Hyslop, A.Holland, T.Groat, G.Benson, D.Davidson, J.Stobo; Front— S.Binnie, C.Lowther, R.Lockwood, A.Richards, I.Watt (still with hair!)



Learning Centre Pupils try Yoga

The pupils in the Learning Centre recently had the privilege of trying out specially designed yoga sessions with Johnny Glover. The sessions were aimed at increasing concentration and reducing stress. Pupils had a great time and staff were impressed by the calm atmosphere in class after each session. Thanks to the PTA, who funded three sessions. We are seeking more funding to continue this worthwhile experience.

Helpers Sought

The Learning Centre are hoping to plan and create a small vegetable and flower garden. If any parents or other kind people can offer advice and help, we would be very pleased to hear from them. Please contact Mrs Brown at the Academy.

The Christmas **SNOWBALL** for seniors will take place on Thursday 21 December. Look out for a report and pictures in January.

New Community Police Officer

The Academy is pleased to welcome PC Lynn Fulton as the school's new community police officer. Lynn is an ex-Academy pupil. She aims to make herself known to pupils and staff by making informal visits to the school, and by dropping in on S1 and S2 PSD classes.

Correction

In September's Newsletter, we stated that Roslyn Henry was one of a group of last year's S4 pupils who came just behind top achievers Iona Paterson and Alan Baird. But we were wrong! To put the record straight, Roslyn's grade in Intermediate 2 Music was equivalent to a grade 1 at Standard Grade, so her overall performance matched Iona and Alan's 8 top grades. Well done Roslyn!

There is a large collection of lost property at Reception. If your child has lost anything lately, it would be worth checking to see if it has been handed in. It is recommended that parents/carers ensure that school clothing is clearly marked with pupils' names. so that it can be quickly returned if mislaid.

Amnesty Exhibition a Success

The Amnesty Group's exhibition in the school library (see page 1) attracted much interest. 66 people completed campaign postcards that have been sent to international governments pressing for action on Darfur.

The exhibition also helped attract new members from other year groups. As a result the group is now going to agree a constitution and elect of-fice-bearers.

A new awareness-raising campaign will be launched in the new year.

LATE NEWS!

First Year Pupils Get a Pizza the Action



Why is Memet Guner, owner of a local restaurant and takeaway, delivering pizzas to a 1st Year class? Where did the recipe come from and why will its

designer soon be a household name? No room to tell you here, but keep looking out!



Heads down! Prelim exams for 4th year took place at the beginning of December. The 5th and 6th year prelims are at the end of February. We hope the photograph does not bring back uncomfortable memories for any of our readers!

Education Minister Visits Stranraer Academy

Scottish Education Minister Peter Peacock visited Stranraer Academy on 6 November. He toured the school where he saw recent improvements in the building and other work in progress, and spoke with numerous pupils and staff.

During the visit Mr Peacock attended a meeting of the Student Council and had lunch with a group of teachers in their first year of teaching. The Minister was appreciative of developments in the school since the HMI report and commented that he was very pleased with the progress so far.

The Newsletter is sorry to hear of Mr Peacock's retirement from ministerial duties as a result of ill health, and we wish him a speedy return to good health.



Mrs Pallett and local councillors show Peter Peacock round the school

Inspectors' Return Visit 'Constructive and Helpful'

As part of the follow-up process to last year's HMI report, inspectors spent 2 days in the school at the end of October. They described this visit as 'constructive and helpful'. A report of their findings will be published early in the new year. This will be followed by an open meeting to give parents an opportunity to hear more details of the progress made and to question Mrs Pallett and authority personnel.

The next stage of the follow-up process will be a further inspection after 12 months.

A COLLECTION IN THE SCHOOL DURING POPPY WEEK RAISED £75

Praise Postcards

A system of 'praise postcards' has been introduced this year for S1 pupils. A piece of especially good work, or some other notable achievement, is rewarded by the subject teacher sending one of the postcards home. Postcards have been specifically designed for each subject. An example is shown below. Plans are now underway to extend this praise system to other year groups.



Art and Design visit to Glasgow

At the end of November a group of 5th and 6th year students of Art & Design and Graphic Communication spent a very worthwhile day in Glasgow.

They visited the recently refurbished Kelvingrove Art Galleries, where the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Room and the Scottish Colourists Gallery were of particular interest to the Art students.

The Graphic Communication students also spent time looking at aspects of transport design in the nearby Transport Museum. They were impressed with the comfortable design of prisoners' seating in the 'Black Maria'.

The Art students were also given a presentation from staff at Glasgow School of Art on how to prepare a portfolio if applying for entry.

The students were accompanied by Mr G Bennie (CDT) and Mrs A Henderson (Art).

The post of Head Teacher was advertised nationally at the start of December. It is expected that the successful candidate will be in post in the Academy in August.



Sports Report

Boys Football

Stranraer Academy football teams have made a successful start to season 2006-07 in both regional and national competitions. The U-13, U-14 and U-16 teams are all placed favourably in the regional leagues with three fixtures completed, but over the last month the bad weather has caused several games to be cancelled and because of this all teams will face a busy league programme in the New Year.

Under-13 Scottish Shield

2nd round:

Stranraer Academy 5 Cumnock Academy 4

3rd round:

Saltcoats 4 Stranraer Academy 1

Under-14 Scottish Shield

Beat Cumnock Academy 18(eighteen)-0 in 2nd round and also won 3rd round match. Due to play 4th round before Christmas.

Under-15 Scottish Shield

2nd round:

Holy Cross HS 2 Stranraer Academy 1

Under-16 Scottish Shield

2nd round:

Stranraer Academy 7 Holy Cross HS 1

3rd round:

Grange Academy 4 Stranraer Academy 5

4th round:

**Selected for
Regional
Under-15 team:**

**Adam Dougan
John Lowe
Ian Miller
John Paterson
Rhuri Paton**

Eastbank Academy
(away, 21 December)

Under-18 Scottish Shield

4th round: v Ardrossan Academy

(Fixture postponed until January.)

Girls Football

Not to be outdone the girls U-15 team have progressed to the 3rd round after a good 4-1 away

win against Hamilton Grammar. They now have a home fixture in the 3rd round against Williamwood High or Kings Park. Twenty girls from S1 to S6 recently travelled to Belfast, where they played 5-a-side friendly matches against teams from Dunmurry High School, winning two out of three. The girls are looking forward to hosting the Dunmurry teams in June, in what has become established as an annual two-leg fixture.

The **Hip Hop Club** which started last year continues to be popular on a Tuesday and Wednesday after school, with around 40 pupils attending. It is hoped that the girls will be able to produce a couple of items for this year's Stranraer Academy Showcase in March.

The **Badminton Club**, which runs every Thursday, is also proving very popular with around 30 pupils attending every week.

Girls into Sport

A presentation of £700 from the National Lottery was recently made to support the Academy's 'Girls into Sport' initiative. Part of a government programme to increase the uptake of sport by girls, the money will be used for equipment and to encourage girls in both curricular and extra-curricular sporting activity. Some of the money has already been used to buy fitness equipment.



A further bid for up to £10,000 National Lottery funding has been made by Sports Coordinator Ms C Taylor. Ms Taylor is cautiously optimistic that this bid will be successful, although amounts awarded to schools are not due to be announced until the end of January. Any money received from this source can be used, for example, to pay for specialist coaches or to help with travel costs.

Learning Centre and Aird

The Learning Centre joined the Aird Unit for a Halloween party. Pupils and staff had great fun playing games, getting wet dunking for apples and sticky from treacle scones.

Later in the term, the children got together again, along with children from Belmont Learning Centre, to be entertained by Stripy Dog, an African drummer and storyteller from Dumfries.

Thanks

Thanks to the following members of staff who contributed to this Newsletter: Mr A Johnstone, Mr S Flower, Mrs C Galloway, Mrs A Brown, Ms J Poustie, Mr G Clyne, Miss A Irvine, Mrs A Henderson, Mr S Binnie, Ms C Taylor, Thanks also to Stacey Lappin (S2) and Lewis Wilson (S3), and to Mrs S Beggs (parent)

Swimming



Qualifiers for Scottish Championships (Glasgow, January)

Fiona Murdoch
200 metres back crawl

Hugh Parker
100 metres breaststroke

Campbell Reid
50 metres front crawl

New School Office

The new Reception currently under construction at the main entrance, McMasters Road, should be completed in January. After furnishing and moving from the three current locations, the office should be in use early in the new term. All school admin staff will be based there and parents and visitors should use the McMaster's Road main entrance to sign in and receive their visitor's badge when visiting the school.

This development will also see, on the first floor, a staffroom created in the New Building for the first time.

Other recent improvements have included the fitting of new external panels and new internal fire doors in 'B' and 'C' blocks. New external doors in the old blocks will complete the programme of improvements. These are expected to be fitted early in the new year.



Work progressing on the new Reception and Staffroom, due to be ready in January

Meanwhile, the outcome of the tendering process for Phase 2 of the New Building is expected to be known next term.

Stranraer Academy :: Dates for Your Diary

JANUARY

Monday 8th January	Start of Term
Tuesday 16th January	School Board meeting
Monday 22nd January	Start of work experience for remaining S4
Friday 26th January	S4 reports posted home
Tuesday 30th January	S3 Parents' Night

FEBRUARY

Thursday 1st February	Intermediate Maths Challenge (S3/4)
Tuesday 6th February	S2 Options Night
Monday 15th - Friday 19th	Pupil holiday
Monday 19th February	S5/6 prelims start
Tuesday 20th February	School Board meeting

MARCH

Friday 2 March	S2 reports posted home
Wednesday 7 March	S2 Parents' Night
Tuesday 20th March	School Board meeting
Tuesday 27th March	Showcase concert
Friday 30th March	S5/6 reports posted home / End of Term

Reports and Parents' Nights 2006-07

	Full Report	Parents' Night
S1	14 May 2007	<i>Took place in December</i>
S2	2 March 2007	7 March 2007
S3	15 June 2007	30 January 2007
S4	26 January 2007	<i>Took place in October</i>
S5/6	30 March 2006	<i>Took place in November</i>

Parents' Nights—Change of Venue

This year's S4 Parents' Night took place in and around 'B' Hall, rather than in the New Building. We did this to try to reduce the amount of moving around. An evaluation carried out on the night suggested that the change was largely successful. We had over 40 responses and 73% preferred the new location. As a result it was decided to hold the rest of this session's Parents' Nights in 'B' Block. Because of a prior booking, this was not possible for the S5/6 night, but the S1 night on 13 December did take place in 'B' Block. One especially gratifying point from the 4th year evaluation returns was that 100% agreed or strongly agreed that teachers' comments were informative and helpful. So full marks to the teachers!

Visiting the School

The new Reception, at the McMaster's Road entrance, is due to be completed in January. We will then have a single point of entry—'B' Office and the old Reception will no longer operate. We will inform you as soon as we have a confirmed date for this change.

There is a large visitors' parking area close to the main entrance at McMaster's Road.

Stranraer Academy Newsletter—Published September, December, March, June
Comments and suggestions welcome—contact Mr. M. Warren (Depute Head Teacher)

