ERSKINE STEWART'S MELVILLE SCHOOLS

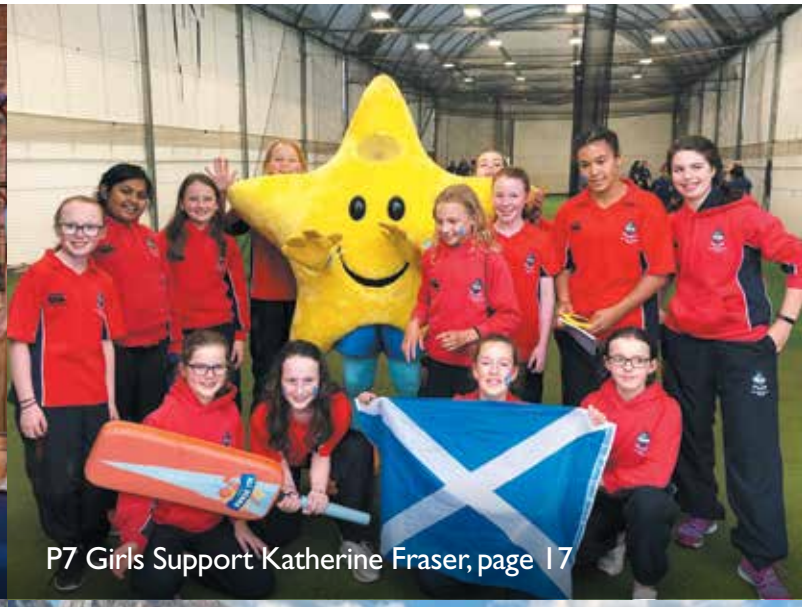
October 2019

News Update

ESMS

A unique family of independent schools for boys and girls

West Side Story, page 15



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Principal's Letter

Dear Parents, Guardians and Friends

A very warm welcome to all those parents and children who are new to the Erskine Stewart's Melville family of schools and welcome back to those who have been here before.

The summer holidays are a distant memory and the excitement of the new school year is in full swing. I am delighted to report that the school roll is very healthy at 2,761. In spite of the many uncertainties in our world at present, we shall continue to provide the children with an education which is first-class and rooted in strong values.

ACADEMIC RESULTS

Examination results at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher were very good. Boys and girls worked extremely hard in 2018/2019, aware of the significance of public examinations for entry to school courses they preferred and to university or college courses. Especially pleasing was the success of those who find academic study a challenge. Results at both senior schools are strong especially at Higher and Advanced Higher levels. At Stewart's Melville College there was an increase in the overall pass rate at National 5 up to 97.6% from 94.7%. At Higher level the A rate at The Mary Erskine School rose to 67.1% (from 59.2% the previous year) and the overall pass rate also increased from 93.2% to 96.2%. Following the publication of the SQA results, the outgoing Director of Sixth Form, Dr Iain Scott contacted Admissions Departments and as a direct result of his efforts, by the start of the term, all our students who had made a UCAS application were successfully placed. The final statistics make very pleasing reading – 95% of our S6 students were accepted by their top choice university and the remaining 5% got into their second choice or a better university than they had originally applied for. A more detailed analysis of the examination results can be found in the booklet which accompanies *News Update*.

Stewart's Melville College	Pass Rate	A Rate
S4 National 5	97.6%	70.7%
S5 Higher	94.2%	63.6%
Sixth Form Advanced Higher	92.7%	59.5%

The Mary Erskine School	Pass Rate	A Rate
S4 National 5	97.3%	72.7%
S5 Higher	96.2%	67.1%
Sixth Form Advanced Higher	95.8%	56 %

"95% of our S6 students were accepted by their top choice university and the remaining 5% got into their second choice, or a better university than they had originally applied for."

REVIEW OF THE THREE SCHOOLS' DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2018/2019

Review Nursery provision and e-Plus services at ESMS

The Headmaster of the Junior School chaired a working party composed of the Head of Nursery and the e-Plus Management Team. They considered ways in which we could better meet parental demand for e-Plus places both at the Queensferry Road site and at New Ravelston. The number of spaces we have available is defined by floor space requirements from the Care Inspectorate. Demand for places also fluctuates across the week and the staffing profile has to reflect these fluctuations. The working party looked at all the impacting factors and have put forward short term, medium term and long term considerations. One short term action is to make after school clubs' information available to parents sooner so that parents know their e-Plus requirements earlier and this should even out demand more at the start of session.

With construction of our new dining facility at Easter Ravelston now complete, we are delighted to be able to offer hot lunches to Primary 1 children from August and nursery children from half term. Given changes to Early Learning and Childcare provision throughout Scotland, we have also reviewed the timing and structure of our nursery provision from August 2020 when these national changes come into effect. We will continue to offer first class Early Learning and Childcare for parents and that will include an extension to nursery hours.

Review and assess Support for Learning provision at ESMS

The Principal chaired a three schools' working party to review and assess Support for Learning Provision at ESMS. A number of recommendations were put forward and have been implemented from the start of this session. These included changes to staffing provision, timetabling and assisted technologies. There will be a designated member of Support for Learning staff who will work across all three schools to ensure the smooth transition from junior to senior schools for pupils who receive support for learning provision. Specialist Support for Learning staff will prioritise in class support for Higher English sets. Support for Learning departments across the three schools will have a regular medley slot in the January INSET programme with a link to department developments plans for 2019-2020. Support for Learning will continue to invest in assisted technologies to support literacy.

Evaluate the current uses, capacity and potential of Firefly as the ICT platform at ESMS

Firefly was introduced to staff at ESMS in April 2016. Firefly is seen as the 'go to' place for information with links to software such as 3Sys and Office 365, as well as subject specific resources and more general school administration. Stuart Jackson, Director of ICT chaired a working party to consider how the schools make the best use of Firefly. The working party carried out a pupil and staff survey. The key questions were regarding homework and where homework tasks are recorded. The findings were:

- 90% of staff and 60% of students report they use Firefly daily
- Pages are being used for information, homework, teaching resources, planning and administration.

From the start of this session homework instructions for pupils in S1 and S2 will be delivered on Firefly with pupils having the option to write them down in their homework diary (homefile) if they wish to. Homework tasks for Primary 7 pupils are already posted on Firefly.

THE THREE SCHOOLS' DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2019/2020

1. To develop and promote the Outdoor Education programme for all children at ESMS.
2. To improve cultural literacy and knowledge.
3. To consider how the School Vision can be updated and articulated.
4. To consider responses to the key issues raised in the recent staff surveys.
5. To explore the re-introduction of the Middle School structure for S1 and S2.

SCHOOL TRIPS & TOURS

There were 11 exciting school trips over the summer holiday, all of which were very successful and notable for the impeccable conduct and spirit of good fun practised by all the boys and girls who participated. These included a Junior School cultural trip to Sorrento and Rome; CCF camps to Wathgill (Army) and Henlow (RAF) as well as the shooting competition at Bisley; the annual Stewart's Melville College trip involving S5 boys working in three schools with which we have links in Malawi; a 3rd XI cricket tour to Liverpool and the Cricket Festival at Inverleith; a kayaking trip to Speyside; a Biology trip to Thailand; SMC international hockey tournament to South Africa; MES hockey tour to New York and Philadelphia and the 1st XV rugby tour to Canada. 46 children from the Junior and Senior School formed the official choir in all 25 performances of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. I am grateful to my colleagues who organised and accompanied these fantastic educational experiences.

SUMMER WORKS

For many, the summer holiday is a time of peaceful rest or exciting adventures. At school, it is, for the maintenance and Estates teams, the busiest time of the year. Over 87 contractors were on site completing over 120 projects. In addition to the extension and dining facility at Easter Ravelston, a significant programme of classroom refurbishment took place at all three schools. Work was carried out in Dean Park House to accommodate girl boarders and a new sophisticated security system was installed.

"There will be a designated member of Support for Learning staff who will work across all three schools to ensure the smooth transition from junior to senior schools."

Construction work on the new classroom block at Queensferry Road is progressing well and the building will be operational from August 2020. The ICT department was also extremely busy over the summer. They transferred 2,800 pupil and staff accounts to Windows 10. The pupil accounts have been set up to allow saving to personal OneDrive accounts. Hence pupils are now able to access their documents easily from wherever suits them.

THE ESMS PRINCIPLES

A strong sense of community based on Christian principles within a non-denominational setting characterises the Erskine Stewart's Melville Schools. We pride ourselves on the excellence of the relationships which exist between staff, pupils and parents; the diversity of our community; the warmth of the welcome we extend to visitors and our shared values which underpin all that we do:

INTEGRITY	RESPONSIBILITY	GRACE
ENTHUSIASM	APPRECIATION	KINDNESS
COMMITMENT	RESPECT	CONFIDENCE

We are recognisable by:

- Our provision of a broad, balanced and stimulating education, aimed at the personal development of individuals, and sparking an enjoyment of learning which will last a lifetime.
- Our ambitions for, and expectations of, academic success for all who attend the schools, according to their ability.
- Our expectation that the schools produce good people who respect themselves and others.
- The preparation of our young people to be responsible citizens, through active involvement in service to the schools, and to the wider community.

STAY CONNECTED. You can find us at @esmsedinburgh on:

SCHOOL OFFICERS (2019-2020)

The Mary Erskine School
Head Girl – Emily Cooper
Deputy – Ariana Crolla
Deputy – Abigail Duncan
Deputy – Hettie Dunlap
Deputy – Neve Kennedy
Deputy – Jessica Smith

Stewart's Melville College
Head Boy – Joe Ewing
Deputy – Nelith Bandularatne
Deputy – Iain Hare
Deputy – Duncan Hood
Deputy – Jamie Grainger
Deputy – Peter Molloy

STAFF

ESMS

Miranda Banks	Head of Communications
Lesley McKay	Interim Finance Manager
Sandra Forbes	Interim HR Manager
Jonathan Naismith	Logistics Manager
Luke Brock	ICT Technical Support Analyst
Rachael Thomas	Sports Administrator
Alistair Digges	Visiting Music Teacher (Singing)
Laura Comini	Visiting Music Teacher (Violin)

Stewart's Melville College

Simon Nash	Head of Careers
Helen Bennett	Teacher of Mathematics
Kate Mathers	Teacher of Physics
Mitchell Tate	Hockey GAP
Nicholas Burt	Product Design Technician

The Mary Erskine School

Katy Robertson	Head of Biology
Erin Ross	Teacher of RMPS
John Lowrie	Teacher of Classics (maternity cover)
Stephanie Ferrington	Head of Ettrick House
Kara Henderson	Head of Kintyre House
Gillian Perris	S1 Tutor

ESMS Junior School

Emily Flanagan	Teacher of Music
Claire Leadbetter	Class Teacher in Primary 6 (maternity cover)
Alison Bosi	Early Years Lead Practitioner
Sharon Woodside	Nursery Nurse
Jane McCracken	Nursery Nurse
Dorothy Johnston	Early Birds Assistant, Teacher Assistant
Kelly Macdonald	Early Birds Assistant, Teacher Assistant and Bus Club Assistant
Callum Mackay	Teacher Assistant, Bus Club Assistant and Football Coach
Claire Miller	Teacher Assistant and Bus Club Assistant
Elmira Brown	Teacher Assistant
Sheila Watson	Teacher Assistant
Catriona Clarke	Digital Learning Assistant
Joanne Gaffney	Digital Learning Assistant
Heather Haynes	Digital Learning Teacher Assistant
Josephine Bruno	Food Service Assistant
Ona Cowan	Food Service Assistant
Angela Khaleeli	Food Service Assistant
Kirstie Ross	Food Service Assistant

NEW ARRIVALS

Andrew Brown and Julia Dawson, a son, Frederick on 7 August 2019

Lucy Macfarlane, a son, Finlay on 14 August 2019

Jenny Littlejohn and Dave Matthews, a son, Ruaridh on 25 August 2019

Fiona Levitt and Jonathan Muir, a son, Ernest on 3 September 2019

CONCLUSION

The new session has begun with boys and girls and staff full of enthusiasm and positive spirit. Our children embrace challenge and opportunity at every turn. The schools are buzzy and busy places filled with children who are eager to discover and learn.

I would like to wish all parents and children a happy and relaxing half term and thank everyone for their support at the start of the school year.

Linda A Moule
Principal

News

BBC ONE SHOW DEBUT

Noah McLean was at his normal Saturday morning dance practice at Edinburgh Dance School, when none other than Strictly Come Dancing's Oti Mabuse turned up to surprise him with a private lesson! Oti spoke about how rare and special it was to find a 'Ballroom & Latin Boy' of his age and gave him real encouragement to continue. She gave lots of pointers to Noah and his partner Isla ahead of their competition in Blackpool. The footage was scheduled to be on the One Show on the 31 July and Noah received a call the day before to ask if he would like to travel to London to appear on the show. Noah grabbed the chance and off he went with his dad, dance partner Isla Hynes and her mum on a train to London on the morning of the show. On arrival they were given true star treatment which included red carpet arrival, star dressing rooms, access to the star bar for refreshments, paparazzi and the luxury of being chauffeur driven back to their hotel. What an experience and we are sure it is one that Noah will never forget!

SUMMER IN HOME ECONOMICS

On 11 June, 12 of our S6 students returned to refresh their culinary skills before heading off to university. They had a fun packed day producing Chicken Nachos, Thai Green Curry, Singapore Noodles and Pasta Carbonara. They also learnt the art of food shopping without breaking the bank and how to negotiate the weekly pile of clothes while using washing machines at university.

Home Economics hosted the ESMS Bake Off Challenge on 13 June. All six houses entered a boy and girl to produce their signature bake. It was a very close result with each team rising to the challenge displaying an excellent range of skills and expertise. The winning team were Appin, comprising of Juliette Aitken 3A and George Farago 5A with Lamingtons. These were delicious sponges coated in chocolate/raspberry sauce and dipped in desiccated coconut…truly scrumptious!

S4 Health and Food Technology pupils were fortunate to receive a visit on 14 June from Angela Henderson who runs a cake decorating business. She demonstrated her artistry to the girls before they themselves had a go at decorating cupcakes with roses that they piped from butter icing.

Monday 17 June saw the culmination of the S2 Integrated Task project. Since Easter, the whole of S2 had spent their Home Economics and Product Design lessons working collaboratively as marketing, packaging and textile technologists. They were tasked with making a fashion accessory suitable for either 'Cool Britannia', 'Urban Street Style' or 'Designer Chic'. The textile technologists designed and produced a wide variety of products including make-up bags, belts, bum-bags, tote bags and beach bags. Pupil feedback was positive with the girls enjoying the process of research and working as a team to produce a top-quality product to fit the needs of the brief while designing a fashion accessory for a specific target market.

The S4 Health and Food Technology girls visited P3CH on Thursday 20 June. This was on the back of the P3 Health week. The Junior School pupils enjoyed playing an interactive computer game that the S4 girls had designed. Both age groups had an enjoyable time and it was lovely to see the pupils learning from one another. The Primary 3 pupils showed excellent knowledge and the S4 girls had a fantastic time working alongside the younger children.

On Friday 21 June, S3 – S6 pupils studying Health and Food Technology enjoyed their annual trip to the Royal Highland Show. This allowed them to enjoy tasting a wide variety of Scottish foods and gain first-hand information from the farmers and food producers.

PRIMARY 2 MINIBEAST HUNT

The children of Primary 2 are currently learning all about different types of insects as part of our Minibeast topic. Each class, with the help of parent helpers, had a fabulous morning searching for minibeasts in Ravelston Woods. Organised with wellies and waterproofs, we headed up to the woods with magnifying pots and trays to look for different insects. Mrs Welensky was our minibeast expert and gave us lot of interesting facts about what we had found. We learnt to be respectful of these tiny creatures and made sure that we returned their homes and habitats back to the way we found them by putting rocks and logs back afterwards. We had lots of fun looking at beetles, millipedes, slugs, snails and even a frog! Thank you to the parent helpers that allowed this adventure to go ahead.

FUNDRAISING FOR FINLAY'S FRIENDS by Lily Kemp (P6RG)

Finlay's Friends is a charity that gives boxes full of important things to Mums and Dads who have had to rush into hospital with a sick child.

The boxes contain things that you might not have time to think about when going into hospital like toiletries, a notepad and pen and a mobile phone charger. Last year as part of my Bronze JASS Award I helped write cards that go in the boxes and packed the toiletries. Lots of pupils at ESMS raised money for the charity last year and on Saturday 17 August, Mr Kane and I accepted an award on behalf of the whole school at the Finlay's Friends Awards Dinner. The award was for the biggest fundraiser of the year. The school raised over £15,000! It was a lovely evening and I hope to do more for Finlay's Friends this year.

S2 INTEGRATED TASK

This year's Integrated Task project took place in Term 3 instead of Term 1 this year. This inter disciplinary project enables S2 girls to use their Home Economics and Product Design skills during their lessons to work as members of individual design teams. This year's brief 'Stepping Up', was focused on the production of a Textile Accessory that could fall within one of the following fashion styles: Urban Design, Designer Chic or Cool Britannia.

The girls adopted the roles of Marketing Managers, Textile Designers and Packaging Designers. Everyone worked extremely well throughout, with the best pupils producing work of an outstanding quality, in what was a very busy time of the year. Our external sponsors and judges this year were Rachel Scott from Rachel Scott Couture and Vicki Allen, Graphic Designer; Creative Director of 'Word of Mouth'. Both judges commented on how genuinely impressed they were with the high quality of work produced by everyone and how it allows the girls to learn many practical skills that will stand them in good stead for future work. Not only does it give the experience on how to design and construct a product, but how that product would actually be used, packaged and sold to customers, not to mention the Collaboration, Teamwork and how within a team environment, the girls manage themselves through design problems.

Many congratulations to the individual specialist winners who were:
Petra Pender 2K (Marketing Manager)
Samara Kamath 2G (Packaging Designer)
Eleanor Wolesley 2G. (Textile Specialist).

The overall winning team was Bag Your Life:
Lydia Hallewell-Pearson 2A (Marketing Manager),
Sophia Hutt 2A (Packaging Designer)
Georgina Campbell 2A (Textile Specialist).

ARKWRIGHT SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year, the Arkwright Scholarship Trust, supported by the Smallpiece Trust, awards scholarships to students around the UK who show potential in the engineering, computing and technical design fields. They help to inspire and support the scholars through higher education by partnering each scholar with a sponsor and presenting them with a financial award. Alice M, Cara R, Cameron A and Aaron N each passed the national aptitude test last session before preparing an interview design portfolio prior to an interview at Heriot Watt University. They also received some pre-interview advice from Callum Martin 6DKB who is now an F.P and who was also an Arkwright Scholarship in 2017/18. The school was informed at the end of June that both Alice and Cara had been successful in being awarded an Arkwright Scholarship for the next two years. Both Alice and Cara will be attending the 2019 Award Ceremony at the International Conference Centre in Edinburgh on the afternoon of Friday 8 November.

DISGUSTING DIGESTION WITH THE GLASGOW SCIENCE CENTRE

Primary 6 were treated to an exciting visit on Tuesday 9 and Wednesday 10 September from the Glasgow Science Centre.

The Science Centre Team brought their Disgusting Digestion Show and Workshops live to the TFC. Using video clips, on stage demonstrations and audience participation the boys and girls were guided through the journey of digestion from start to finish. The children were encouraged to participate throughout – offering answers, providing necessary sound effects and encouragement for their classmates completing a cream cracker challenge.

The biggest applause (and laughter) was saved for the final challenge completed by a teacher volunteered by the audience. Following the show each class took part in a follow up workshop. Here the fantastic Science Centre Team were able to guide us through the range of activities on offer before allowing the boys and girls to try them all out for themselves. Some of the children's favourite activities included the 'Ten Year Ageing Machine', 'Musical Note Memory Game' and the 'Body Heat Camera'.

PRIMARY 4'S FIRST WEEK

We have had a very busy and enthusiastic start for the children in Primary 4. Moving up from Ravelston to the Queensferry site has meant finding their way around, learning different routines and making new friends. To help them settle in, we held an Activity Afternoon during the first Friday of school. We joined up classes so we could get to know the children from different class groups and they completed a rotation of three different activities. Working in teams, the children were challenged to build the tallest tower possible using only plasticine and dry spaghetti.

We looked at famous towers around the world, such as the Eiffel Tower, for inspiration and thought about what shapes would be strongest for the base of their tower. The tallest tower built was 58cm! Outside, the children had fun playing traditional playground games. We shared some new ideas for games to include all their friends during break times. The children also took part in a quiz about the different members of staff and buildings which make up the ESMS Queensferry Road Site. This was an opportunity for them to show off how well they have been listening during assemblies and tours of the school. What a brilliant way to end our first week in Primary 4!

MES SUCCESS AT THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT NATIONAL FINALS

For the fifth time in eight years, the MES EYP team has triumphed at the European Youth Parliament finals in Liverpool and will now represent the UK at an international session in Milan in 2020.

The Mary Erskine team consisting of Emily Cooper, Karis Dlodlo, Jessica Donaldson, Mia Findlay, Mary Horne, Iona Lindsay, Jessica Smith and Thea Tjolle, beat off competition from the 14 regional finalists from around the UK and will now work collaboratively with the national winners from over 30 European countries in Italy.

The girls impressed the judges with their contribution to the committee work and resolution writing stages as well as their in-depth knowledge in the nine debates over the four days of the competition.

In the General Assembly, they made a number of impassioned speeches and showed their skill in following the line of each debate and making spontaneous, well-informed points form the floor.

The topics the girls had to research were wide-ranging and often very complex, including the problems associated with microplastics in the sea, AI, the militarisation of space, balancing free- trade agreements with human rights, mental health issues and FGM. The girls also made an impressive contribution to the Eurovillage and wowed delegates by their performance at the Euroconcert.

The Mary Erskine School is arguably one of the most, if not the most, successful schools in the history of the EYP competition. MES has previously represented the UK at EYP International Sessions in Greece, Turkey, Latvia, the Netherlands and Italy.

HILLWALKING CLUB

A small group of S1 pupils enjoyed an excellent introductory walk in the rolling, green hills of the Borders on the first day of Autumn. The plan to head south and east worked well as, apart from a five minute hailstorm, we enjoyed a whole day of sunshine and the decent breeze just made the fresh air even fresher. The dramatic thunder in the distance added to the experience of the day – thunder and lightning are always best when the minibus is in sight and you are safely down in the valley!

BALLROOM CLUB FALKIRK COMPETITION by Lucy Holt (S1)

The ESMS Ballroom and Latin dancers have been busy over the summer taking part in competitions in Manchester, Perth and Falkirk.

All of the dancers have been performing extremely well and have brought home handfuls of medals. For example, at the recent Dance Sport Scotland competition in Falkirk, Isla Hynes (S5) and Noah McLean (S3), who were the youngest competitors in the Youth Section, won 1st place in all of their dances – as did Finlay McLean (S1) and his partner in the Juvenile section. My partner and I came first for our Latin dancing in the Junior section – we were really lucky as it was our first competition in this section, and we were competing against much older dancers. Caitlin Turnbull (P6) is our youngest dancer and Falkirk was only her second competition, so she did really well to come away with two medals as well. Thank you to Mrs McLean and Max Ivlev for teaching us wonderful routines and helping us to do our best.

PRIMARY 1 RAISE OVER £35,000 FOR 'THE YARD'

For many years, Primary 1 have been supporting the very worthwhile Edinburgh charity, 'The Yard'. The Yard is an award-winning charity running adventure play services for disabled children, young people and their families in the east of Scotland. They offer disabled children and their siblings the chance to experience creative, adventurous indoor and outdoor play in a well-supported environment. Over the last ten years of supporting The Yard, we have managed to raise a staggering £36,226.72!

SCOTTISH MATHS CHALLENGE PRIZEGIVING by Caitlin Wright (2LA)

On 31 May we attended the Scottish Maths Challenge Prize-giving which was held at Heriot Watt University. At the beginning of the prize-giving every year there is an intriguing lecture on a topic related to Maths. This year the lecture was about game theory, and how we could use strategies to help win a game. After the lecture every pupil got a mug and gold or silver certificate.

VICTORIAN WALK

by Sam Drummond-Murray and Andrew Whyte (7LG)

Primary 7 girls and boys have been enjoying a Victorian Walk around the Dean Village and Dean cemetery. Some 7LG pupils recently completed the walk with Miss Greig and Mrs Johnston. We were able to see graves of some very famous Victorians including Elsie Inglis. In the Dean Village we saw where the old tannery and mills would have been. We also learned about where the factory workers would have lived. We got to see a Victorian Postbox and found out that it was so important because post boxes and stamps were invented during the Victorian era. It was also a nice sunny day which made it a lovely walk for everyone!

SUCCESS FOR SOPHIE IN 'CYBER DISCOVERY'

Cyber Discovery is HM Government's online programme turning teenagers across the country into cyber security experts. They seek tenacious problem solvers aged 13 to 18 to crack codes. Over the course of the program, they learn how "white hat hackers" keep the country safe from cyber terrorists. Over the course of the year there are four stages and students learn skills way beyond the scope of the national curriculum.

This year Sophie Sinclair (4G) had enormous success in all three online stages, becoming one of the top performing students in the country. She was invited to attend CyberStart Elite, a summer residential camp in London, reserved for the most talented students, where she met industry experts, heard talks from specialists and took part in hands-on activities investigating real vulnerabilities.

Sophie says, "I didn't have much experience in this field, but it was relatively easy to get my head around as lots of it used logic rather than computer knowledge. The camp was extremely full on! We stayed in University accommodation and each day were taught by experts in the field on techniques used to hack into systems. The whole course was an extremely steep learning curve for me, but I'm so glad I took part in it as it's shown me a whole field which I previously overlooked and has taught me so much!"

Cyber Discovery has started up for the year this week, and Sophie's success has encouraged more ESMS students to take part. We wish them good luck in their learning!

MES NATIONAL 5 GEOGRAPHY ASSIGNMENT FIELDWORK

In mid-September a group of nearly 50 Fourth Year MES Geographers headed out to the Lammermuir Hills in East Lothian to collect river data ready for their SQA Assignment.

In spite of getting a day of grey skies and light rain, the girls were in great spirits and thoroughly enjoyed their day out learning in the great outdoors! Working in small groups along the Whiteadder Water, girls collected numerous sets of data about river characteristics including channel depth, sometimes above their wellies; not that this deterred some from edging further across the stream to study erosion processes on the ever changing river banks. During an intense day of fieldwork, a brief lunch was taken in the shelter of a farmers barn which seemed to sustain the light hearted but productive mood into the afternoon.

PUSHKIN PRIZE WINNERS

Congratulations to Tibby Elliott (S3) who won an international writing prize, the Pushkin Prize. This is an accolade awarded to ten top writers in Scotland, from S1 and S2. Her anthology is printed on their website, so she is now officially a published writer! Her prize was to attend the Pushkin Prize-winners' Week for ten Scottish writers – along with two Russian winners from the parallel competition in St Petersburg. The creative writing course was held at a Writers' Centre near Inverness, where Tibby got the chance to work with two professional writers. Sadly, this is the last year of the competition which ran for 33 years. We have four Pushkin Prize winners in the school pictured here: Tibby Elliott, Beccie White, Iona MacLaren and Mia Findlay.

RAVELSTON DINING FACILITY

Monday 19 August saw the very first children eating in our brand new Dining Rooms.

With a menu of chopped vegetables, vegetable soup, pasta Bolognese, apple crumble and fruit, over 100 Primary 1 children sat down together in their own special class spaces to share their delicious meal. Our newly appointed Food Service Assistants and Class Teachers enthusiastically served the children at their tables whilst encouraging good manners, better cutlery use and initiating conversation in a family style environment. Having a special space for each class to eat in has ensured lunches are calm and it has been lovely watching children become a little bit braver and trying different foods. The children also enjoy a quick chat with the chefs who have been surprised by the amount the children eat! We can't wait for our Nursery children to be offered this experience too.

THEOLOGY ESSAY COMPETITION

Congratulations to Matthew Madeley on being selected as a finalist in the 2019 John Locke Institute Theology Essay Competition.

Matthew's essay has been chosen as part of their shortlisted finalists, with the competition receiving entries from across the globe. As a result, Matthew has been invited to Oxford to participate in an academic programme with the other shortlisted candidates from around the world. Matthew is the only Scottish student to have been selected in this category, and will join finalists from countries including the Philippines, Pakistan, America, China and Singapore.

FORMER PUPIL GIFTS THE SMC ARCHIVES UNIFORM PIECES

On Friday afternoon, David Fraser, President of the Aberdeen branch of the Former Pupils Club paid a visit to Stewart's Melville College. He saw our pipers rehearse, visited the archives and presented the school with two pieces of Daniel Stewart's memorabilia. The first was the very last Daniel Stewart's cap, bought when the schools merged, and the second was a button from a Daniel Stewart's hospital uniform, which is now the earliest piece of uniform in the archives, dating from around the mid 1850s. Thank you for coming to see us David!

SCHOOL PHYSICIST OF THE YEAR

Last session Matthew Zahra was nominated by the physics department for the S3 School Physicist of the Year award presented by the Ogden trust. This is an award open to all S3 students across Scotland. We were delighted that he was successful in gaining this prestigious award. Matthew was presented with his prize at a ceremony at Edinburgh University in June.

Congratulations Matthew!

Development News

THE MES 325 REUNION

This very special event attracted about 200 former Mary Erskine pupils and staff, as well as plenty of parents and children, to the National Museum where we had organised a display of MES archives with the support of Dorothy Sharp and Christine Collingwood, respectively archivists for the school and the FP guild. Refreshments were available throughout the day and walking tours, including a quiz for children, were enjoyed by many of our guests as they visited Mary Erskine's grave in Greyfriars Churchyard, the first three sites of the school in the Old Town and other notable landmarks. The Mary Erskine School is the oldest girls' school in Scotland, and it was a privilege for the Development Office to organise a very successful and popular event which reminded all our guests of the richness of the long and distinguished history of our school.

ROYAL EDINBURGH MILITARY TATTOO RECEPTIONS

In August we once again hosted two receptions for almost 100 guests who joined us for refreshments in either the REMT Boardroom or in the Royal Gallery on the Castle Esplanade before watching a performance of this year's Tattoo which, of course, once again included a very significant contribution from our young ESMS Tattoo choir, some of whom mingled with our guests before the performance.

DSC CLASS OF 1969 REUNION

On Friday 20 September, we welcomed around 20 alumni from the Class of 99 for a tour of the schools. Coordinator Gordon Campion organised a lunch at the West End prior to the tour and a dinner afterwards. The 'boys' were delighted to welcome their former technology and rugby teacher, Pete Stoddart, still very sprightly and full of memories, as their special guest.

JANET (NETTA) MACWILLIAM LEGACY

Over the summer, we received a surprise piece of news about the generosity of a former member of staff, Netta MacWilliam, who passed away earlier this year. Netta very generously left £10,000 in her will to Access to Excellence to help pupils without the means to attend ESMS. Netta started teaching in the Junior School of Daniel Stewart's College in the 1960s and, having taken early retirement after her marriage, returned as a supply teacher throughout the 70s and 80s.

Always immaculately dressed and presented, Netta was a very cheerful and friendly colleague, very popular with the pupils she taught. Netta was also involved in and committed to local politics until her final retirement in 2011. Netta and her husband were very generous supporters of local children's charities. Netta is a shining example of a member of our community whose kindness and support for so many children over the decades will prove a fitting memorial of a much-loved and respected colleague and friend.

ESMS PARENT COFFEE MORNINGS

These took place on Friday 6 and Friday 20 September at the Modern Art Gallery Café. Oana enjoyed meeting lots of parents both new and returning, hearing all about everyone's travels and adventures over the summer break and sharing information about upcoming community events at ESMS.

A VERY SPECIAL HARPSICHORD EVENING

Almost 80 guests enjoyed a rare treat in September when they joined us for a wonderful recital performed on the schools' recently acquired harpsichord by Scotland's pre-eminent harpsichordist, Dr John Kitchen. John had earlier given a masterclass to three of the schools' most advanced pianists who were experiencing a harpsichord for the first time! The purchase of the harpsichord was funded jointly by a very generous former pupil of the Mary Erskine School and by a grant from the surplus generated by the ladies who give so generously of their time to run the Thrift Shop, a true labour of love for which we are most grateful.

ACCESS TO EXCELLENCE

We are very grateful to everyone who reflects their commitment to broadening access to our schools by their generous support of our means-tested bursary charity, Access to Excellence.

Your support is very important to us as we continue to work hard to build up the value of the capital fund, income from which is used to fund an increasing number of bursaries each session.

Each of you who reads this report is a valued and respected member of our ESMS community who will has benefited, and continues to benefit, in different ways from your association with our schools.

It is only through your support that we can together help to ensure that children from a very wide range of backgrounds can enjoy the same benefits for generations to come. If you would like to make a donation please visit community.esms.org.uk/donate

UPCOMING EVENTS: STEINWAY LONDON & MES LONDON BRUNCH

At the time of writing we are looking forward to welcoming almost 40 members of the ESMS Community to a short recital performed by some of the schools' top pianists in Steinway Hall in central London on Friday 11 October.

Guests will range from very recent leavers who are still studying at University to retired guests travelling to London from surrounding areas for what will be a very special experience in an iconic venue. Some of our guests are planning to join us for an informal meal after the concert at a local Italian restaurant!

On the following morning Bryan will host our second informal brunch gathering in Pancras Square for MES alumnae in London and the surrounding areas.

We are looking forward to welcoming up to 30 guests to the brunch which we are expecting to be as relaxed and noisy as our first brunch in April proved to be!

THE ANNUAL ESMS INSPIRE LECTURE (MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER)

Our Inspire 2019 speaker is Ben Heason, a Welsh-born professional climber, adventurer and coach. In 2005, Ben was a lead climber on an international team that made the first free-climbed ascent of the main wall of Angel Falls in Venezuela, South America. As the highest waterfall in the world, Angel Falls stands at a colossal height of 979 metres (3,230 feet), overhanging virtually throughout.

To secure your tickets, please visit our ticketing website at www.trybooking.co.uk/KQD. Tickets are £9 for adults and £6 for under 18s.

PARENT CHAMPIONS

Our Parent Champions programme is back for a fifth year and we are already working with this session's Parent Champions to organise a number of year-group events throughout the year.

Please look out for invitations to Christmas gatherings, shopping events and family days in your inbox throughout the session.

ESMS FAMILY QUIZ

Almost 50 parents and children joined us in the Grosvenor Hotel last month for a very enjoyable family quiz, accompanied by excellent food. Judging by the amount of chat and laughter the evening was clearly enjoyed by everyone, whether they were serious or occasional 'quizzers'. The quiz is modelled on the annual Staff Quiz which is much more competitive! Prizes were given to each team for their participation.

Stay in touch:

www.community.esms.org.uk
0131 311 1131
development@esms.org.uk

Trips

S2 ALPS TRIP

During Projects Week this year, a group of 37 S2 students ventured to Morzine, in the French Alps. The weather was kind and we were able to make the most of what the stunning region has to offer. The itinerary included a spectacular cable car climb above Chamonix to view Mont Blanc from the Aiguille de Midi, a funicular rail journey to the Mer de Glace glacier and a walk into an ice cave, visits to a local Alpage and cheese farm and a trip to the United Nations Head Quarters via a cruise on Lake Geneva. The pupils also took part in a thrilling aerial ropes course in Morzine, as well as white water rafting on the Dranse River, which proved to be quite a highlight. Mr Williamson would like to thank all pupils for their enthusiasm and cooperation on the trip.

THAILAND BIOLOGY TRIP by Grace Drummond (Q6MTG)

This year, a Biology Trip took the S4/S5 girls to a town called Ao Nang in Thailand.

The first couple of days were spent completing the PADI diving course, in the pool and then in the waters surrounding Phi Phi Island. We saw many beautiful sea creatures, such as sharks, stingrays, sea snakes and sea turtles, which was an amazing experience, and not one that will be easily forgotten. At the end of our first week we visited a sea turtle sanctuary, where we attended a lecture about the effect of plastic on the animals in the ocean, which had a profound effect on all of us. We then helped clean out the injured turtle's enclosures and watched as two of the turtles were set free, which was a rewarding experience. Our first weekend in Thailand was spent visiting tourist attractions such as the Emerald Pools and Tiger Temple. We also helped out with mangrove plantations, after learning of their importance in Thailand. Later that week, we spent a couple of hours at a school, teaching the children about sharks and why they are nothing to be afraid of. We played games with them, painted with them and taught them a few English words along the way. The last two days were spent in Bangkok, shopping and visiting the Grand Palace.

SENIOR HOCKEY TOUR TO PHILADELPHIA

Late on 10 August, 29 girls from S4-6 along with four of the PE Staff left MES for the senior hockey tour to Philadelphia.

After a long journey, on the first morning the girls ran the jet-lag out of their legs with a training session – the teams bonded well together and coped playing in the Philadelphia heat. Two squads would each play five matches in as many days against Club and High School teams in an area renowned for its excellent field hockey. In our first matches vs Philly Hockey Club there was a 3-1 victory for the Senior 1's team and a successful 1-0 victory for the 2's. After the matches the girls were kindly welcomed by all of the opposition families for a 'tailgate' dinner – a tradition after hockey matches. The opportunity to socialise with new American friends was a lovely and important part of hockey tour.

Philadelphia is home to the US National Womens Hockey Team who train at the Spooky-Nook facility. The girls enjoyed a tour of Spooky-Nook – the largest indoor sports complex in the USA – and received a much needed stretching and recovery session from a National coach. Both squads enjoyed excellent matches against Germantown Academy, Perikomen Valley and FSC Hockey Club, before finally playing the six-time National Champions WC Eagles. Our final days on tour included a visit to Drexel University to hear about life as a student athlete, watching a baseball game and a visit to New York City. The girls returned to Edinburgh tired but having achieved a great deal – and ready and raring to go with the new hockey season.

SOUTH AFRICA HOCKEY TOUR

Mr Brogdon would to thank all the 36 boys who accompanied himself Mr. Constable, Mr Williams and Mr Dodge on a truly memorable hockey tour of South Africa at the beginning of the summer holidays. Off the pitch the boys attitude, behaviour and manners were exemplary whilst on the pitch they stepped up the mark technically, tactically and physically when coming against their more physically dominant South African counterparts. Away from the hockey the boys enjoyed some outstanding experiences; Robben Island, The Cape Canopy Tour and the Garden Route Game Lodge to name but a few. All in all a fantastic experience for all the those concerned. It certainly has whetted the appetite for another exciting season with SMC Hockey.

CCF ARMY CAMP 2019

On 30 June, the CCF Army Section undertook a week of military and adventure training in Wathgill North Yorkshire to enjoy fresh air and army lifestyle. Cadets started the week at Adrenaline Adventures, heading high up into the trees in a series of team building activities before completing a tough-mudder style assault course. The next day saw the cadets receive instruction from the Cadet Military Training team, revising patrolling and section attack drills before taking on the paintball jungle lanes through the woodland before a two day exercise, Lions Leap, in which they faced a series of nine challenges whilst navigating a 24km route. Highlights included a section attack with a hidden in-depth position and our illustrious S6 mistaking a Regular Unit for Cadets and bombarding them with all manner of imaginative greetings. Thankfully, all sections were successful in gathering enough intelligence to crack the final code in order to defeat the enemy.

For our penultimate day, the cadets were treated a day at a specialist TIBUA (Training in Built Up Areas) facility; covering a range of skills from patrolling streets to building clearances with grenades. Training continued that evening in preparation for the final Range Day. After an early start the cadets completed a series of challenges on the Live Range, as well as enjoying a Clay Pigeon Shoot with Rifle, once again impressing the Training Team Staff with their skill, enthusiasm and determination to succeed, despite creeping exhaustion.

RAF SUMMER CAMP

19 RAF Cadets spent the first week of the summer holidays attending Annual Summer Camp at RAF Henlow in Hertfordshire, together with 15 Cadets Kelvinside, Robert Gordon's School and Albyn School.

The Cadets enjoyed fine weather throughout the six days of exciting activities.

These included visits to the American war cemetery at Maddingley, the RAF museum at Duxford, the Centre for Aviation Medicine and the Shuttleworth Collection. They also sampled fire-fighting equipment at the station fire station, fired laser SA80 rifles on the DCCT, made home movies of helicopter marshalling drills, practised firing drills on a Bofors anti-aircraft gun, participated in a drill competition under the watchful eye of the Station Warrant Officer and spent a day of Adventurous Training indoor sky-diving, climbing, and jumping off a VERY high tower.

All in all, it was a highly successful camp. Thanks are due to the officers from the other schools, our own 2nd Lt Scott, Mrs Hamid and Lt Col Hamid and of course the Cadets for making it such an enjoyable trip.

LINLITHGOW PALACE TRIP

As part of their 'Mary, Queen of Scots' topic Primary 5 visited Linlithgow Palace, toured around by local children from Linlithgow Primary School. Having learnt about Mary's birthplace, the children were delighted to see the location for themselves. The children look forward to sharing their learning with parents in their classrooms on Tuesday 10 December at 3pm.

Trips continued

ST ANDREWS GEOGRAPHY TRIP

On Friday 6 September, the S4 Geographers travelled to sunny St Andrews to go about collecting fieldwork for their N5 assignment. The aim of the day was to establish the impact that tourism is having in the town. The boys worked well to create land use maps, environmental quality surveys, and traffic flow counts. They particularly enjoyed conducting questionnaires of inquisitive members of the public as well as the odd FP! The hard work was rewarded at the end of the day with a competition on the Old Course.

JUNIOR SCHOOL ITALY TRIP

After smooth travel and a good night's sleep we embarked on our itinerary stepping back in time at Pompeii. We took the Circumvesuviana railway and met our guide for a morning of expert story telling around the archaeological site.

To follow, freshly squeezed orange and lemon juice in the garden of Hortus and the train ride back to Sorrento to swim and take the evening stroll – the Passeggiata. Next up, our SS Valentina cruise day visiting Positano and Amalfi with glorious views of the coastline, islands and super yachts. The next two days were spent in Rome with highlights such as the Catacombs of San Callisto, Piazza Navona, wood fired pizza at Da Francesco, late afternoon pool time, fried calamari at La Nocetta and a balmy night-time private Open Top Bus ride around the floodlit city.

We arrived early at St Peters Basilica to climb the dome and explore the historic centre and factored in a refreshing swim before travelling back to Sorrento, breaking the journey with Loredana and Massimilio's feast of southern Italian delicacies, at Cassino. In the morning an entertaining gnocci class with Chef Carmen was a hit providing a delicious 'Prima' for us all for dinner. Our last excursion day was by hydrofoil to Capri with a beach morning at Marina Picollo, snorkelling, paddling and fishing, lunch at Isidoro and presents for home at Carthusia. We took to the Piazza Tasso on our last evening for sundown and gelati in Sorrento. This was a wonderful week with a great group of children.

SMC CANADA RUGBY TRIP

46 SMC U18 rugby players travelled to Ontario, Canada over the summer holidays to be part of the SMC pre-season rugby tour. The tour presented an opportunity for the coaches and players to get to know each other on and off the pitch as well as an opportunity to prepare for the exciting season ahead. We took two teams; SMC Red and SMC Black and each team played four games each vs Ontario Blues, Central Ontario, Eastern Ontario and Oshawa Vikings. Away from rugby, the touring party travelled over 1,700km throughout Ontario and were fortunate enough to take in some amazing sights such as the CN Tower, Niagara Falls, Geneva Park, visit a MLS football game as well as Blue Jays baseball game. Mr Edwards would like to thank all coaches and players who made this trip such an amazing experience for all.

SMC MALAWI TRIP

At the start of the holidays, ten boys, accompanied by Mr Park and Mr Johnston, travelled to Malawi for three weeks of travelling and voluntary work. After their 26-hour journey, they arrived in Blantyre, Malawi's biggest city, to visit the Open Arms Transition Home and paediatric hospice, where they spent time playing games with the 30 children currently accommodated there.

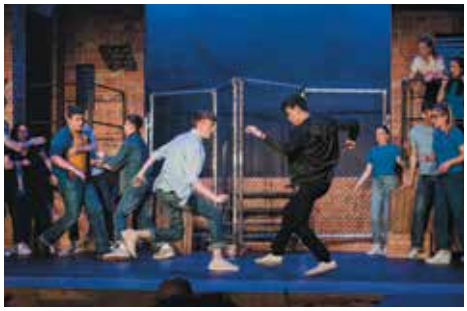
The group then travelled to Mulanje Region for 12 days where they taught and played football with the children of our three partner primary schools: Samson, Pasani and Namindola. The boys also met with the Director of the Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust and visited the Green Malata Entrepreneurial Village which provides vocational training for orphaned and vulnerable young people. Towards the end of their time at Likhubula, the boys climbed Central Africa's highest mountain, Mulanje, in only two days.

After leaving Likhubula, the group headed North to Cape Maclear on the Southern shore of Lake Malawi, the eighth largest lake in the world and then on to the Liwonde National Park for a two-day safari which included a close call with a crocodile!

Mr Park would like to thank Mr Johnston and the boys for their hard work and for being such good travelling companions.

Music, Drama and Dance

WESTSIDE STORY: A REVIEW by Addy Robertson (S6)



After the high drama of last session's musical, the cast was given an ambitious challenge – to pull off Bernstein and Sondheim's technically demanding and vocally challenging West Side Story.

Set in the working class and diverse Upper West Side neighbourhood of New York City in the 1950s, it is a riff on Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet and mirrors the tragic story of star-crossed lovers. Montague and Capulet become America and Puerto Rico with the gang rivalry between the Jets and the Sharks. White American Tony (played winningly by the wistful and world-weary Nico Hann-Rengifo) has founded the Jets with Riff (the experienced and self-assured Alex Dingley in swan-song mode) whilst the rival Sharks are led by the passionate and irascibly Latin Bernardo (a feisty and sustained portrayal by Daniel Terrett). Maria is the Juliet figure which Mariam Metreveli played with charm, sensitivity and genuine grief as the tragedy unfolded. Tony, who has distanced himself from the Jets is drawn back in as Riff wishes to settle scores with the rival gang. This then compromises his new-found affection for Maria and, as he tries to break up the 'rumble', he ends up killing Bernardo and the denouement, whilst it does not quite mirror Shakespeare, still emphasizes the waste and futility of the inter-racial, generational and factional tension.

But there were some great songs ('Maria'…'Tonight'… 'Gee, Officer Krukpe'…'America') and some superb set pieces and the boys were full of surprises. Nico sang the famous solos and duets with great conviction and variation and both Kathryn McLaren (Rosalia) and Olivia Hemmati (Anita) were vocally assertive and dynamic in their own mature compelling performances. However, although the boys were exposed to scrutiny, their dance moves were slick and expressive (here Matty Moore was notable as the boisterous Action): Alex was loose but precise and the apogee of 'cool'. Huge tribute should therefore be paid to Kara Henderson, the choreographer, who more than put the boys through their paces, whilst allowing the girls to showcase their very considerable talents. The ensemble singing was tremendously confident and tuneful (and Bernstein's music is tricky with all its raucous syncopation) which itself was a great testament to Jason Matthew's months of preparation through the gruelling dark winter nights.

Diane Sobolewska as director produced another triumph – her commitment, enthusiasm and belief in the cast enabling them to present something of professional quality which will last long in their memories and ours. Once again the set was clever but simple – suggesting the uptown New York cityscape and providing quick switches to both balcony and bedroom: another cunning construction by Liam Boucher which allowed a large cast enough space to demonstrate their talents. Carrying the show, undoubtedly, was the 28-piece band which, though full of pupils, was stunningly professional in its music-making and visibly lifted the cast and the audience.

The senior musical is always a blue-riband ESMS event and every year staff and pupils meet a new challenge. West Side Story was yet another milestone in this remarkable tradition and an equally marvellous night out at the theatre!

P7 MUSICAL: MARY POPPINS

On 12, 13 and 14 June, the P7 performed their annual musical, Mary Poppins, in The Tom Fleming Centre.

The children performed brilliantly and kept their audiences entertained and certainly brightened up the final weeks of term with a supercalifragilisticexpialidocious performance.

Music, Drama and Dance continued

THE ROYAL EDINBURGH MILITARY TATTOO

We would like to say a huge well done to the 46 children from Primary 6, Primary 7, S1 and S2 who performed as the Choir in the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo this summer. Delivering 25 performances during August the children, led by the ESMS Director of Music, Sandy Chenery, have had an incomparable musical experience, mixing with performers from all over the world, from China to Trinidad and Tobago. Not content with singing in the Tattoo every night, groups of the children also performed each evening at one or more of the pre-show dinners which take place on or close to the Castle Esplanade. Thank you for all your hard work and for being fantastic representatives of ESMS and of Edinburgh!

Sport

HEAD BOY BECOMES SCOTTISH CHAMPION

Congratulations to Joe Ewing, our new Head Boy for the upcoming 2019/20 session, who ran the U20 800m in a time of 1.55.46 to become Scottish Champion at the Scottish Athletics age-group championships at the beginning of August.

P7 GIRLS SUPPORT KATHERINE FRASER

At the beginning of September, 15 Primary 7 girls enjoyed cheering on S3 pupil Katherine Fraser at the Cricket Scotland Women's World Cup Qualifier against Bangladesh! The girls saw Katherine take the first wicket in the match with a diving catch, as well as meeting new friends and playing their own match in the rain with chairs for stumps! Thanks for a great day, Cricket Scotland.

ARCHIE GOODBURN VISITS THE JUNIOR SCHOOL SWIM TEAM

Former Pupil and national and international swimming champion, Archie Goodburn visited our ESMS Junior swim team to share his swimming insights and his medal!

CANOEING ON THE RIVER SPEY by Vaig Mehra

We set out early on the morning of Thursday 15 August for the River Spey to enjoy a weekend of canoeing and the great outdoors.

Having shopped for food in Aviemore we set up base at our camp site in Balliefurth then headed out to Loch Morlich and spent some time just gently paddling around the still lake to get accustomed to how the canoes manoeuvred. After we got used to their handling we tried our hand at some calm streams and also attempted using long poles instead of paddles to turn and propel the boats. We then retired back to our campsite, set up our tents and some hammocks to sleep in and fired up our large campfire before nightfall. We ate a scrumptious barbecue of sausages and burgers to get fuelled for Friday's canoeing.

The next day we woke up on a chilly morning to head out and take on some faster flowing rivers and some mild rapids to put our skills to the test and try to sate our appetite for adventure: this proved to be much more enjoyable than patrolling the still waters of the Loch and heightened our technical skills as well as confidence on the water. We were on a tight schedule on the last day but regardless, we still managed to squeeze in a couple extra hours in the canoes, although short, these few hours spent were extremely eventful. Most of the river we were traversing was made up of very rough rapids and technical sections, needing constant diligence and strong control.

Our trip ended with a bang by conquering the infamous "washing machine rapids", leaving us completely drenched while the howling wind and a heavy downpour only added to our discomfort. A brave few of us decided to tackle the "washing machine" without a canoe by just lying down at the mercy of the current: definitely not for the faint of heart. Overall our few days spent in the wilderness were very physically demanding but extremely rewarding leaving us with much improved canoeing skills and even some newly gained knowledge about camping in a hammock. By the end we were all exhausted, ready for our own beds and a warm shower.

ESMS MURRAYFIELD GOLF TOURNAMENT

The ESMS Murrayfield Invitational Golf Tournament was held on Friday 21 June 2019. The event included an 18-hole competition with over 80 participants from different schools across Scotland. Participants who were new to golf entered the 9-hole competition – for many players, their first ever golf tournament experience. Once the golfers finished their round, a very competitive putting competition awaited them delivered by Mr Bowen. The critics named the competition 'impossible' with 10 incredibly hard putts (all competitors gave it a go with nobody managing a 10/10 score) Tom Blain (SMC) won first place and ESMS tournament runners up included: Robbie Spears, Jake McGlynn, Charlie Campbell and winners: Lucy Fraser, Adam Hawthorn and Jack McGlynn, well done!

SMC ATHLETICS

As the summer athletics season was drawing to an end, the Scottish Age Group Championships took place at Grangemouth during August.

SMC were strongly represented in the U15, U17 and U20 age groups. The following athletes performed with merit, gaining a place on the national podium: Callum Holmes, Bronze in both the U17 100m and 200m, Isaac Johnston, Bronze in the U17 High Jump, Rob Henderson, Silver in the U17 Long Jump and Joe Ewing, who impressively fought off former pupil Sam Brown to become the Scottish U20 800m Champion. Benjamin Rodger also performed with merit gaining 4th in the U15 300m and 5th in the U15 200m. Two former pupils also gained podium places in the U20 Championships, with Calum Henderson taking Silver in the Long Jump and Billy Doyle was crowned U20 Scottish 400m Champion.

Well done to all our SMC athletes who competed over the summer.

ALMERE CHALLENGE EVENT by Kieran Ngwenya (S6)

Late this summer, on the 16 August, I travelled to the Netherlands with Aberdeen FC to compete in the Almere Challenge Event.

The tournament took place in the town of Almere, which is located just outside of Amsterdam. It was a very early start for the team, meeting at the airport at seven o'clock in the morning. After a long morning of travel, we arrived at our hotel in Almere tired yet excited for the challenges we would face over the next two days. Dinner on the first night was something every player was looking forward to. Each team gathered in the dining area wearing their full team tracksuits and taking the opportunity to scout out the opposing teams. Considering we were entering a tournament for 2001 born players, it came as no surprise to us that our team consisting of 2002s and 2003s was considerably smaller than our foreign counterparts were.

The tournament was officially opened following a speech made by the Chief Executive Officer of Almere City FC.

The next morning, the boys and coaches were up early for a brief tactical meeting and some final pre-match preparations before setting off on our way to the pitches, headphones on and mentally readying ourselves for the test ahead. The opening match, as you might expect, is always nerve racking. Getting off to a good start is so important in tournament football. Luckily, our hard work had paid off and we beat Helsingborgs IF one goal to nil. Due to the height and strength of our Swedish opposition, it was a very tough physical battle, but our skill and determination was enough for us to come out on top.

That same afternoon, we faced AZ Alkmaar, a team who play their football in the Dutch first division. This was a massive challenge for us. Despite losing the first goal, we stayed strong, fought hard and eventually earned our equaliser through an amazing passage of play. Unfortunately, for us, we were unable to hold the game at one all and AZ Alkmaar clinched the victory with a last minute winner. This game ruined our chances of winning the tournament, however, AZ were the team who did go on to claim the trophy. The following day, we arrived back at the pitches knowing we could not win but still determined to play for the badge and to fight to redeem ourselves. That day we faced the Italian team, Parma Calcio 1913 in the final group game and the home side, Almere City FC in the playoff – in which we came out victorious. Overall, it was a fantastic experience for my teammates and I and I hope for many more similar opportunities in the future.

S2 LEADERS IN SPORT

This year's annual S2 Sports Leaders' Project saw 29 girls participate in an action-packed day. They played fun, interactive games which challenged their communication and decision-making skills and helped to facilitate their learning in leadership abilities. After a fantastic morning of team building activities, lead by the very talented British Judo Women's Team, the pupils set their minds to planning and organising an event they would later run during a school lunchtime. Their aim would be to raise money for The Edinburgh High School for Girls in Malawi.

Pupils were tasked with specific roles within their groups, for example, to be the accountant or group leader. They enjoyed the challenge to their creativity and problem-solving skills as they designed a range of fun and engaging activities. Many girls were attracted to pop down and have a go at winning an obstacle course with the prize of being allowed to 'pie' each other in the face with shaving foam! Others tried to knock down as many hockey sticks as possible from the goal in an attempt to win sweets.

On a lovely sunny day, the event was a big success, with the girls raising lots of money. Well done S2!

CRICKET REPORT

Over the first few days of the summer break, the Schools 1st XI hosted Strathallan School, Hymers College and Pocklington School to compete for the David Gray Cup in the annual cricket festival which is in its second decade.

We were blessed with some uncharacteristically sunny weather over the three-day tournament and with it, some brilliant performances in three closely contested matches in which we won two matches over Strathallan and Pocklington and lost one against Hymers College who were to be eventual winners of the cup. The team were fantastic representatives of themselves and the school and it was pleasing to see some brilliant performances, both individually and collectively.

The 3rd XI travelled down to Liverpool to take part in their annual cricket festival against St Mary's College and Merchant Taylors who proved to be tough opposition as we ran out third best over the two days. Thank you to Mr Higgins for organising the trip which is always enjoyed by the boys involved.

Outside of school a number of SMC pupils have been involved in club cricket this summer, many of whom have played men's 1st XI, 2nd XI and 3rd XI for Stewart's Melville CC and Grange CC. Many of these pupils have also played regionally for the Eastern Knights in their respective age grade. Congratulations to Harry Hawthorn (3A), Daniel Burgess (3L) and Hamish Murray (4K) who represented the U14 side and to Harry Johnstone (S6), Charlie Peet (5A), James Gordon (4L), Dylan Davidson (5T), Joe Newman (5A) and Achyut Aniruddhan (5K) who represented the U16 side over the course of the summer season.

As well as their regional selection, both Charlie Peet (5A) and James Gordon (4L) represented Scotland at U19 and U15 level respectively with James' highlight being his 3 for 12 against Ireland in the Celtic Cup and Charlies' being his 7 for 12 against Jersey. Charlie capped off a remarkable summer with the part he played in the World Cup Qualifiers earlier this Summer, ending up the leading wicket taker in the tournament which Scotland won, therefore qualifying for the U19 Cricket World Cup in South Africa which will be held next year in South Africa. We wish Charlie the best of luck in his preparations for this event. More recently, Charlie capped off a remarkable summer of cricket where he represented SMC as part of the MCC Schools XI against an E.S.C.A XI (English Schools' Cricket Association) down in London at Lords, the Home of Cricket.

Thank you to all the boys, staff and parents for their contribution to the programme last session. Despite some poor weather in which the rain seemed to always schedule itself on a match day, SMC teams still managed to complete 72 fixtures from 1st XI right down to U10's. There were some fantastic highlights from all levels and anyone who is interested can look up the 2019 season honours board on the SMC sports twitter page.
Mr Beharrell will be sending out some details over the next few weeks regarding next summers preparations where winter nets will kick off after the October break.

Boarding

BOARDING UPDATE by Abbie Barclay-Carr and Duncan Adamson

Boarding is one of the many strengths of the ESMS community. At Dean Park House we now have an even closer-knit group of both girl and boy boarders since the recent move to a co-educational boarding structure all under one roof.

There is a caring team of staff who put a massive amount of time and effort into making the house a happy and friendly environment to live in.

The move to co-educational boarding from single sex boarding is the most significant change to have happened in the history of ESMS boarding. Much-loved staff members have moved on and we have had to adapt to our new environment and surroundings. However, after almost a month of living together for the first time, it is evident that all the boarders from S1 to Sixth Form have had a very positive experience. Everyone has worked together to help each other settle and had a very encouraging outlook towards this new venture.

The staff have been hugely supportive and integral to the big changes the house underwent this past summer.

As we move further into the session the boarders all look forward to creating lasting relationships on the daytrips throughout the year as well as during all the free time they spend together away from school. 2019-2020 looks to be one of the most positive years for ESMS boarding to date.

ESMS

Sports Centres

Based at **Stewart's Melville College** and **The Mary Erskine School**, ESMS Sports Centres offer a wide range of facilities for hire for a variety of activities. Open from 5pm weekdays and from 9am at weekends.

Games Hall
Tennis Courts
Gym
Holiday Camps
Astro Pitches
Swimming Pool
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