



FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Parent/Carer

Welcome to what is our first newsletter of 2020 and what a 2020 it has been! We were delighted in August to be able to reopen Mearns Academy to staff and pupils. We also however recognise that with reopening came a lot of challenges, concern and anxiety. Both our staff and our young people have coped remarkably well with the large number of changes which have had to be made and we have worked together as a school community to ensure we reduce risk and keep each other safe.

This term we have welcomed to the school several new members of staff:

- Mr Atkinson, Cluster Business Manager
- Mrs Bradley, Office Team
- Mr Pollock, Maths/Science
- Miss Geoghan, Art & Design
- Miss McGlashan, Social Subjects
- Miss Langton, Physical Education
- Miss Kennedy, ASL
- Mr Coutts, ASL

We wish all of our new members of staff good luck and I am sure they will very much enjoy being part of our team here at Mearns Academy.

While there have been many challenges over the last few months this newsletter will highlight some of the positive work which has been taking place across our school.

As always we fully appreciate the support of parents/carers and wider community and I do hope this finds you safe and well. Please do not hesitate in contacting us on either our new phone number: 01561400700 or email: mearns.aca@aberdeenshire.gov.uk should you wish to do so.

Gareth Campbell
Headteacher

VIRTUAL KILT WALK

In September our Senior Leadership team (SLT) took part in a 24 hour walk / cycle relay as part of the Virtual Kiltwalk. The annual sponsored walk is our main fundraiser which like many things had to be cancelled this year, so the event was held to raise money to support school funds. They raised over £3,465 which was then topped up by the Hunter Foundation to over £5200. A fantastic effort and a great amount of money towards the school fund. (more pictures on pg 2)



VIRTUAL KILT WALK



SCHOOL DAY 2020-21

We will be continuing with our two-week model for the remainder of the session, running 3 double periods a day. Interval and lunch will also continue to run at separate times for Junior and Senior School. Please find below our finalised times for the school day, effective week commencing Monday 26th October.

	S1-S3 Times	S4-S6 Times
Block 1 0900-1105	0900-1005: Period 1 1005-1020: Interval 1020-1105: Period 2	0900-1050: Period 1/2 1050-1105: Interval
Block 2 1105-1330	1105-1210: Period 3 1210-1245: Lunch 1245-1330: Period 4	1105-1255: Period 3/4 1255-1330: Lunch
Block 3 1330-1530	1330-1435: Period 5 1435-1445: Interval 1445-1530: Period 6	1330-1340: Interval 1340-1530: Periods 5/6

Rationale

- Consistent lesson timings regardless of time of day
- Regular breaks throughout day for S1-3 classes (break in middle of all 3 doubles)
- Slightly longer lunch than current model while still allowing us to stagger lunchtimes
- Return to all pupils and staff receiving 1 hour of breaks over the course of the school day

	9am	9.30am	10am	10.30am	11am	11.30am	12pm	12.30pm	1pm	1.30pm	2pm	2.30pm	3pm
	Block 1: 0900-1105				Block 2: 1105-1330				Block 3: 1330-1530				
Senior	1 1 0				15	1 1 0				35	10	1 1 0	
Junior	6 5		15	4 5		6 5		35	4 5		6 5		10 4 5

COLOURS AWARDS

Congratulations to all of the following pupils for achieving their colours awards:

Full Colours

Molly Gowans-Ouvray	Arts
Soraya Hossainpour	Citizenship
Ella Bruce	Citizenship
Lauryn Bruce	Sport
Grace McArthur	Arts
Grace Lamb	Arts
Helena Ross	Academic
Helena Ross	Citizenship
Karen Thompson	Sport
William Milne	Citizenship
Innes Kelly	Sport
Katie Sanderson	Academic
Emily Baird	Academic
Emily Baird	Citizenship
Jack Dias-Harrison	Citizenship
Karen Thomson	Citizenship

Half Colours

Nick Pavlantis	Arts
Molly Gowans-Ouvray	Academic
Catriona Bird	Arts
Jess Cordiner	Arts
Megan Smith	Citizenship
Ciaran Love	Academic
Lauren Baker	Arts
Soraya Hossainpour	Arts
Soraya Hossainpour	Academic
Billy McBain	Arts
Joanne Riddoch	Arts
Aimee MacDonald	Arts
Ben Anderson	Academic
Jakub Gryla	Academic
Ross Craik	Academic
Ross Craik	Sport
Maria Wotherspoon	Citizenship
Zoe Nelson	Citizenship
Sophie Johansen	Sport
Corrine Turner	Citizenship
Sophie Adair	Sport



EXPRESSIVE ARTS

Art & Design

Our S1 pupils have started Mearns with a bang! We have been really impressed their Leonardo Da Vinci drawings! Keep up the good work!

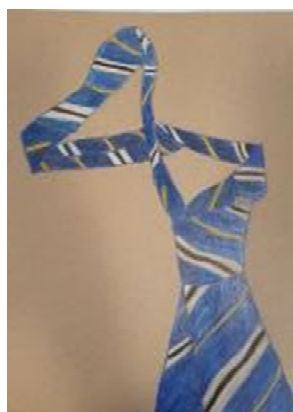
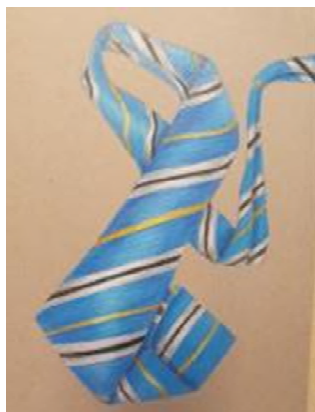


This term our S2 pupils have been back into the swing of things and working on their painting skills. Here are some examples from their built environment and landscape projects.



EXPRESSIVE ARTS

The S3 pupils have been very busy this term. They have completed a design for Scotland's Baby Box, and they have shown some school spirit in their fantastic tie drawings!



Unfortunately, last session many of our senior pupils missed out on sending their art and design work to SQA.

Here are some examples of the excellent work that was created! We are very proud of all our senior pupils.



EXPRESSIVE ARTS

Music Department

BGE MUSIC

In preparation for the start of the session the Music Department has had to be even more organised than they usually are!! As a department we were keen for our young people to experience Music in the usual way with practical experiences at the heart of our classrooms. For this to happen we created 'bubbles' of instruments, we are in a fortunate position at Mearns Academy with the resources we have and because of this we were able to avoid any sharing of instruments within an individual class. S1 have just completed a unit of work on tuned percussion and S2 on ukulele.

Unfortunately, we had to abandon our usual start to the term with S1 which would have included singing based on government guidance on aerosols. Where possible we have also had some young people bringing in their own instruments which has helped us greatly. Each classroom instrument has been labelled with a number and each number applies to an individual within each class for the duration of the unit.

From S3 upwards we have been able to allocate an instrument and resources to each young person for sole use. This has meant that courses in S3 and upwards can continue as normal in preparation for Senior Phase and SQA qualifications.

Moving into Term Two I would like to encourage S1 pupils, if they have a guitar and/or ukulele to bring them into class during Music, again this will help to free up resources for those that need it. We have asked our S2 pupils to choose two instruments that they would like to specialise in for the remainder of the year and we will look to identify instruments for their sole use. Again, I would encourage parents/carers to discuss this choice with their child and if they have the instrument at home would ask them to bring this in if possible. Headphones will also be needed, across all year groups, and again would like to ask that pupils get used to popping a pair of headphones/earphones into their school bag on the days in which they have music.

Expressive Arts

Dates for Your Diary

- NPA Photography Trip - Week Beginning 2nd November (tbc)
- Expressive Arts Virtual Showcase - Thursday 10th December
- Young Musician 2021 - 10th February (tbc)
- Art Mount-Up day - 20th April 2021 (tbc)
- Instrumental Music Service Cluster Concert - 10th June 2021 (tbc)



BEEKEEPERS

Last years bee keeping class were very successful and we had 2 pupils complete all three units before lock down with a further 3 pupils completing at least the first unit in this qualification.

During the lockdown period our bees were very busy and produced over 25L of blossom honey. This was helped by the lockdown as there were lots of wild flowers growing in and around the school which would normally have been cut back with the grass. We currently have 3 of the school beehives in Glen Esk at the heather and we hope to have these back with approximately the same amount of honey again.

We have now started to sell the honey through our contact at 'The Spud Hut' on the Auchenblae to Fettercairn road. They were delighted to be in partnership with the school beekeepers and sales are going well. We will be using any profits we make to buy winter feed for the bees (yes we need to feed them when there are no flowers for them or if it is too cold for them to get out and about). We will also be investing in some more equipment and hives as we expand this course to allow more pupils the chance to participate in this activity.

This years swarm of pupils are already confidently opening up hives, checking that the bees have stores i.e. honey and nectar to feed their young as well as checking for diseases. We have also been practising catching and marking the queen bees, this was however performed on the male Drone bees just in case!

Over the coming weeks we will be preparing the hives for the winter ahead and looking forward to next spring.



HEALTH & LEISURE

Home Economics

It has been fantastic being able to welcome pupils back into the Home Economics Department and even better is the fact that all pupils will be able to take part in practical cookery activities from next term.

All pupils are expected to bring a suitable container (to take their food home in) and a clean apron; failure to do so may result in that child not taking part in practical activities. If you have any issues providing the above, then please contact the appropriate guidance teacher.

The first term has been busy and here is a summary of what each year group has been learning:

S1 - How to work safely and hygienically when preparing food. Pupils have also practiced washing dishes following the washing up routine - it would be fantastic if they were 'encouraged' to practice this at home. The washing up routine is available in Google Classrooms which all pupils have been asked to sign in to using the unique code for their class.

S2 - Food poisoning and how to prevent it, with a focus on bacterial growth and how to prevent it. Pupils have also learned about food spoilage bacteria and how they know if their food has been affected by it.

S3 - Pupils have been working extremely well on their REHIS Elementary Food Hygiene course. They are learning about bacteria, food poisoning, food and chemical storage and generally how to produce food safely in order to prevent food poisoning. They will sit a multiple choice exam next term and success will lead to a recognised National Qualification that is recognised by all food producers in Scotland - good news for those looking for a part time job in a café, or similar.

S4/5/6 Practical Cookery - Pupils have had a busy term learning about cookery techniques and processes, food hygiene, food preparation techniques and effective knife skills using a vegetable knife and chef's knife. Practical lessons have seen the pupils being able to put the theory into practice and they should all be practicing their practical cookery skills at home as much as possible to help prepare for practical cookery assessments.

Some examples of the dishes that pupils have made so far using their newly learned skills are shown here.



HEALTH & LEISURE

Physical Education

Throughout this term all PE has taken place outside and it's been fantastic to see pupils back in the department with a smile on their face. Our focus has very much been on the role sport and physical activity has to play as pupils return to school. The pupils have been brilliant and it's great to see everyone embracing our adapted curriculum and turning up to lessons with the appropriate kit. As we start to plan ahead to term 2 there's still a lot of uncertainty about when we will be allowed back inside for PE and also what activities we will be able to offer. Once the picture becomes clearer we will use our Mearns Academy Health & Leisure Facebook page along with school's social media accounts and email facilities to get this information home to parents/ carers. Until you hear otherwise pupils should continue to come to PE on the assumption that we will be working outdoors and as we approach the colder months it's imperative that pupils turn up with suitable clothing (jackets, hats, gloves, etc).

Extra Curricular

We are optimistic that we will be in a position to start our extra curricular sports clubs in term 2. We are in the process of working with Active Schools and further information will be issued in due course. Keep a look out on our social media accounts for further information.

ASL

In ASL a group of pupils are organising an enterprise activity as part of their SQA Personal Development Award.

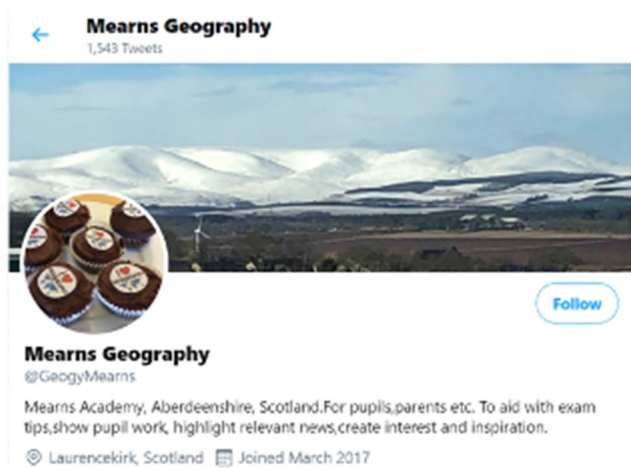
Using beeswax from our resident beehive the group have been busy making beeswax wraps. They have also been collecting wild flowers from the school garden to make pressed flower bookmarks. They are planning more products with a view to selling them all at a Christmas stall in the staffroom in November. All profits will go towards a new beehive for ASL! Appropriately, the group named themselves 'Love the Bees'.



SOCIAL SUBJECTS

Learners have produced some excellent work within Social Subjects since August. Below are some highlights of some of the fantastic work and lessons being delivered within the faculty. Each subject has an individual Twitter page - Mearns Geography, Mearns History and Mearns Mods.

Geography



GE066LEBOX! [#MearnsGeog](#)

What can I watch to improve my Geography knowledge & understanding?
Week beginning **Monday 7th September 2020**

The show	Channel	The day-time	The weekend	Catch up?
This Farm's Country Showdown	ITV TWO	Monday - Friday 16.30 - 17.00	Series celebrating independent farming families and the rural events where they showcase their hard work, as they try to win the top prize.	BBFC Page 1
Africa with Ade Adepitan	ITV TWO	Monday 20.00 - 21.00	The last leg sees Ade travelling from the beaches of Mozambique, through South Africa, to Botswana. Ade finds an abandoned herd of...	BBFC Page 1
Africa Time the Page: The Islands that Shaped a Continent	ITV TWO	Monday 21.00 - 22.00	(Watch-outside!) David Chang looks at how African islands became the conscience of their continent.	BBFC Page 1
This Farming Life	ITV TWO	Tuesday 20.00 - 21.00	Emma Ramsdale takes the bull by the horns to save a poorly deer off. And it's then made an important decision, and Emma tries to get the best price for her sheep.	BBFC Page 1
Islands Central: Britain	ITV TWO	Tuesday 21.00 - 22.00	First in a new series following the staff and passengers of Britain's Central station. This episode sees the train deal with chaos on the concourse caused by heavy rain.	BBFC Page 1
Railway Swans with Chris Tarrant	ITV TWO	Wednesday 19.00 - 20.00	Chris Tarrant embarks on a journey across Spain's complex rail system, discovering how Spanish became a world leader in rail technology.	BBFC Page 1
Britain: A Year in the Wild	ITV TWO	Thursday 19.00 - 20.00	Following Britain's flora and fauna through a year. A look at the rolling hills of Britain's countryside and the vast array of creatures that call them home.	BBFC Page 1
Coast	ITV TWO	Thursday 21.00 - 22.00	(Watch-outside!) Nick Crane explores the wealth of wildlife and industry that are attracted to the Firth of Forth, the mighty estuary of the River Forth.	BBFC Page 1
Atlantic: A Year in the Wild	ITV TWO	Friday 19.00 - 20.00	Documentary series exploring the wilderness and wildlife of the Atlantic Ocean. Water brings further stories, suffering and conflict, while most are looking to survive.	BBFC Page 1
Our Yorkshire Farm	ITV TWO	Saturday 18.30 - 19.00	Documentary series set on a remote family farm in the Yorkshire Dales. A return to a hill sheep, Chris and Emma's family farm that they run with their new children.	BBFC Page 1
Secret Scotland with James Colman	ITV TWO	Saturday 19.30 - 20.00	Comedian James Colman uncovers the weird tales behind some of Scotland's iconic locations. From the tales of Scotland's stunning islands - Orkney, Shetland and Arran.	BBFC Page 1
Pale to Pale: Ancient Seals	ITV TWO	Saturday 20.00 - 21.00	Our war and peace conditions bring a seal to a great hall in the ancient ruins of a 14th-century castle. James Colman travels just 60 miles to the coast near the Orkney Islands.	BBFC Page 1
Countryfile	ITV TWO	Sunday 18.00 - 19.00	Discovers current issues affecting our rural communities in the UK.	BBFC Page 1
From Scotland with Love	ITV TWO	Sunday 19.15 - 20.00	Exploring Scotland's past through its food. A film making. Images of ordinary people from the past are edited together and soundtracked by the music and lyrics of King Creosote.	BBFC Page 1

Credit to [@BBCGeography](#) for the original spreadsheet



Higher geographers really working hard today... I wonder why?! 🌞🌞🌞🌞 Part 1



Higher pupils Glaciation work...



Highers working well today... part 3 🌞🌞🌞🌞



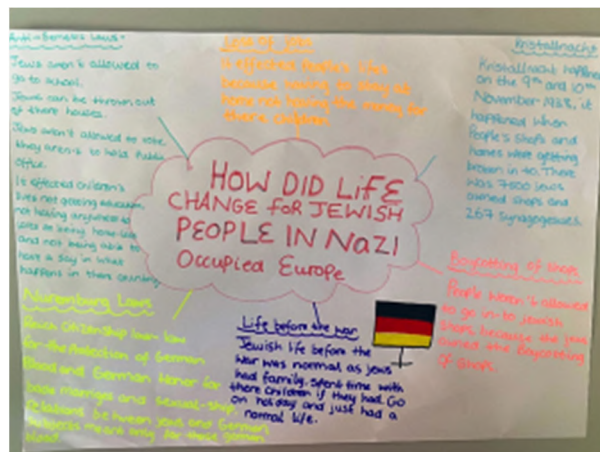
Creating geographical diagrams to show the formation of corries, aretes and pyramidal peaks.

SOCIAL SUBJECTS

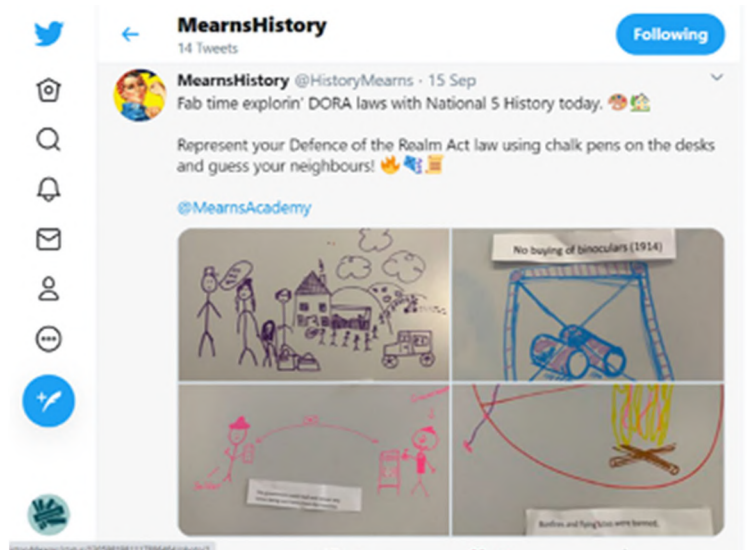
History



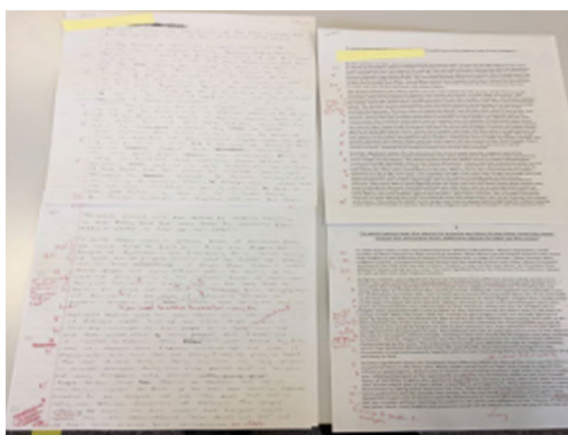
S3 History have been learning about the American Revolution



S2 History have been learning about the Holocaust and how life changed for Jews in Germany after 1933.



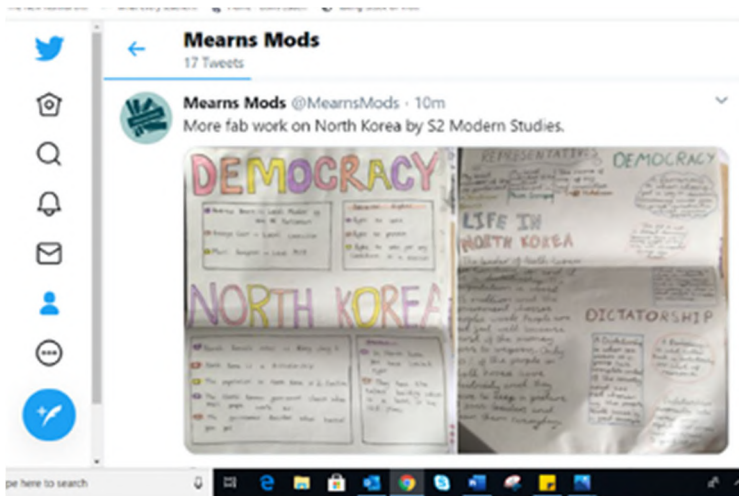
National 5 History have been creating images on desks. Classes have been learning about the impact of the Defence of the Realm Act on British life during WW1.



Higher History have been learning about the causes of the Crusades. The class have produced a number of detailed essays

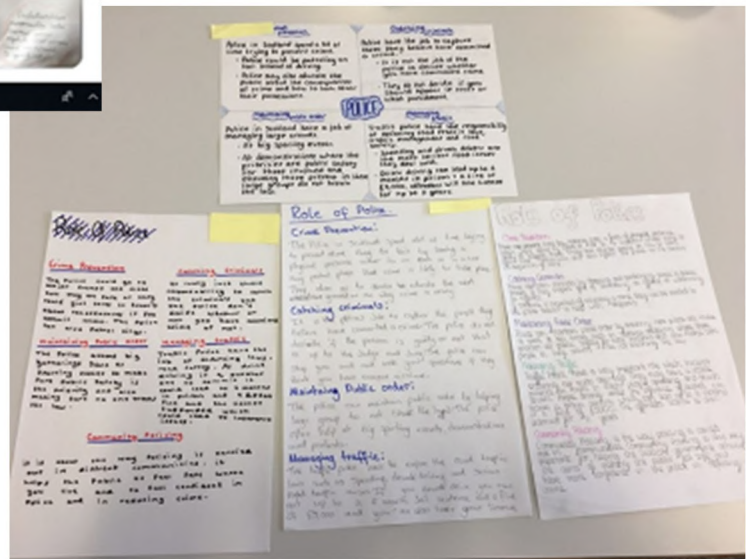
SOCIAL SUBJECTS

Modern Studies



S2 Modern Studies have been learning about differences between a Democracy and a Dictatorship.

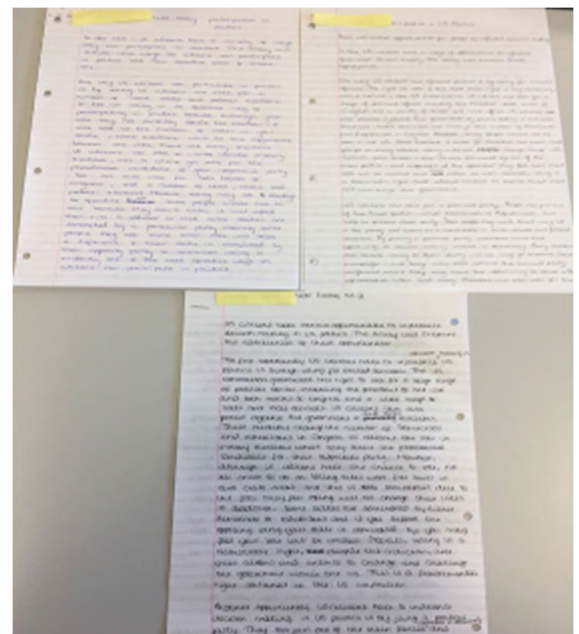
National 5 Modern Studies classes have been learning about the role of the police and the different methods used to cut crime.



National 5 Modern Studies classes have also learned about the role and work of Scottish Courts.



Higher Modern Studies students have learned about US politics. Both classes have completed detailed essays on the powers of the US President and how US citizens can influence politics.



ENGLISH

The English Department had some very prestigious wins when out of more than 200 aspiring poets, aged 11 to 17-years who took part in the national 'In my country...' competition, Ngaire Barr was placed in the top 3, and Orla Faherty was highly commended for their respective poems about Scotland. The winning entries were selected by the acclaimed Scots Makar, Jackie Kay MBE, and award-winning writer, Malika Booker. Both pupils received a prize and their poems can be read here. <https://outofbounds.digital/#/competition>

In the absence of our Creative Writing Club, the English Department are feverishly (minus the cough) entering many Junior hopefuls into several writing competitions which include The Canterbury Tales Short Story competition and The Walter Scott prize for historical fiction. The latest addition to our portfolio of writing competitions is Trading Places, inspired by work manual magazines produced by Victorians! Watch this space...

It has been a very bust term in the Faculty. We have been busy with Library Introduction visits for all our BGE classes. Over the course of the term Mrs Fiona Dakers has visited classes to introduce them to:

- e-books, e-audiobooks and the digital library
- Finding the digital library
- Use Libby (Overdrive) to find an e-book by browsing and then find an e-audiobook by searching, showing them how to sample a book and borrow it
- Tell them what else they can do, where to get help, and encourage them to try the other digital services
- Familiarise them with the log in process

Creative Writing

As a Faculty have promoted and encouraged our pupils to engage with the growing number of National Writing Competitions.

Across the Faculty we are currently writing and preparing for the submission of entries to:

<https://www.youngwriters.co.uk/competitions/>

"Trapped" - a creative piece told in 100 words for 11-18-year olds

<http://chaucer.org.uk/the-canterbury-theses-writing-competition-2020-21>

THE CANTERBURY TALES WRITING COMPETITION 2020/21: BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR!

Intermediate - 11-14 years old - Choose **ONE** of the following:

1. A poem or story about wishes coming true
 2. A poem or story about wishes going wrong
 3. A description of a character who grants wishes
- 500 words max.

For our Seniors we are encouraging submission to:

Scottish Schools Young Writer of the Year 2020/21

Entries must be non-fiction and in the style of a column/article for a serious newspaper or magazine. Word limits 900-1200.

Writefest 2020.

On the 7th October our Advanced Higher English Class took part in the annual Aberdeenshire creative writing workshop. This year the event was virtual but just as engaging and helpful in the development of the creative writing portfolio.

This year Authors:

Zoe Venditozzi - Creative Writing (live event)
Cal Flynn - Factual Writing/Journalist (live event)

Ryan Van Winkle - Poetry (live event)
James Robertson - Editing (pre-recorded event)

MODERN LANGUAGES

Term 1 in MFL has flown by with all pupils working hard and producing some fantastic work.

S1 pupils have invented a new member of a band and have learned how to describe them in French. They are presenting their new band member to the rest of the class during their lessons this week (in French, of course!).

S2 pupils have been working on their short essay writing skills in French as well as paying homage to David Attenborough. They have researched an animal and written about their chosen animal in French. They are now in the process of producing posters about their chosen animal to show what they have learned.

S3 pupils have been busy starting working towards gaining their National 4 in French. We have done a Speaking assessment on the topic of Holidays that shows how they are beginning to learn how to manipulate tenses in French.

N5 French continued their excellent work from lockdown and have written a critical essay in French on the film *Les Choristes*. We are now working towards building up their language in preparation for the prelim exams at the end of next term.



PUPIL LEADERSHIP TEAM

Our new Pupil Leadership Team for 2020 - 2021.

Mitchell Stuart, Katie Cochrane, Amy Waddell, Joanne Riddoch, Lexie Cochrane, Shannon Brown, Soraya Hossainpour, Jack Dias-Harrison, Maria Wotherspoon, Emily Baird



MEARNS COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Since school started back in August, all of us in the library have been doing our best to meet pupils and support their reading and learning. Although public health guidelines have meant restricted physical access to the library for our school community, library staff are operating REQUEST + Collect for all pupils, a type of “personal shopper” service that lets us choose and deliver a selection of books to individual pupils based on what they tell us they like to read. We’ve also been delivering book bundles to classrooms in the English Department, something that is great fun for us and makes books accessible for pupils.

All pupils and community library members have free access to Aberdeenshire’s [digital library](#) of e-books, e-audiobooks, e-magazines and e-newspapers. Our new network librarian, Fiona, gave S1 - S3 pupils a demo of how to access and use the digital library along with pupils’ log-in details. If parents and families want to use the digital library, you can [join the library online](#). If you’re already a member, [contact us](#) for a reminder of your log-in details.

To support learning, Fiona has been developing a wee website on Glow just for Academy pupils where you’ll find online resources to support specific topics within year groups as well as some broader senior phase research resource links and general study and revision skills links. We’re also planning a Book Lovers’ Reading Booth and will be adding pupil content to this. It’s a developing, “watch this space” space!

Since late September we’ve also been the venue for an S1 lunch club twice a week, led by some of our S6 friends. Our lunch club provides a safe space for pupils to meet and socialise with games and activities.

Christmas Scholastic Book Fair

Our regular December Scholastic Book Fair is going online! Buy through our Scholastic Book Club and you can get your Christmas stocking fillers while doing something to benefit the school. For every £1 spent through our Book Club, Scholastic donates 20p in FREE books back to the school. The Club will be open for orders throughout November with delivery in December. Exact dates and links for your shopping are coming soon.

To keep an eye on this and all our other activities, follow our [Mearns Community Library Facebook](#) page.



2020-2021 DIARY DATES

Term 2

- Monday 26th October 2020 - start of term 2
- Friday 20th November 2020 - in-service day
- Friday 18th December 2020 - end of term 2
- Monday 21st December 2020 to Monday 4th January 2021 - Christmas holiday

Term 3

- Tuesday 5th January 2021 - start of term 3
- Friday 12th February - Occasional day
- Monday 15th February 2021 - mid term holiday
- Tuesday 16th February 2021 to Wed 17th February 2021 - in-service days
- Thursday 1st April 2021 - end of term 3
- Friday 2nd to Friday 16th April 2021 - spring holiday

Term 4

- Monday 19th April 2021 - start of term 4
- Monday 3rd May 2021 - May Day holiday
- Friday 25th June 2021 - end of term 4
- Monday 28th June to Friday 13th August 2021 - summer holiday

CONTACT DETAILS

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