

HIGH SCHOOL OF DUNDEE NEWSLETTER



November 2008

Dear Parents, Former Pupils and Friends of the High School

As we now move into the second half of the Autumn term I cannot quite believe how fast these first three months have gone since I first parked my car on the playground on 1 August. I am thrilled to be here and greatly enjoying the opportunities and challenges. What is clear is that this is a community of many talents, but it is one characterised most of all by its understated excellence, its natural friendliness and openness and its busy sense of purpose. I have been struck by the great sense of loyalty and have come to appreciate what I also like to refer to the High School family – the pupils, staff, parents, former pupils, Patrons and the Board of Directors – all of whom contribute substantially to the success of the High School.

It is a fascinating and exciting time to arrive on the Tay. 2009 will be a year of anniversaries. The High School traces its origins back to 1239 – 770 years ago - when the Abbot of Lindores set up a school in the city. The building of the Boys' School, now known affectionately as the Pillars, was opened 175 years ago in 1834. Finally 150 years ago, in 1859, the School received its Royal Charter from Queen Victoria which granted us the name the High School of Dundee for the first time.

We are therefore already planning a programme of anniversary events to mark these anniversaries next October.

This term I have been getting to know the School in as much detail as possible. I am in the middle of a programme of visiting every department and teacher in the school - senior and junior. I have been attending sports fixtures, musical events, even a theatre outing. As the season of Advent is almost upon us I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the months to come. In the meantime I congratulate all those whose achievements are noted in these pages. I am sure I will not have managed to include every instance of achievement here but hope that these pages give an impression of the nature of the past three months.

Yours sincerely
Dr John D Halliday
Rector

SCOTTISH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL OF THE YEAR 2008

As already intimated the High School has been given this accolade by the Sunday Times – a worthy recognition of the efforts put in by the pupils and staff over the past few years. The paper felt that the improvements and steady development as reflected in the SQA results and elsewhere over the past four years warranted this award. To read the full article go online to: http://www.timesonline.co.uk/parentpower/schools_of_the_year.php?p=scottish_independent_Secondary

Open Morning

This was a great success with 136 families registered as visiting the school. The weather was kind and the exhibitions and displays in many cases inspiring. All the pupils were as ever a huge credit to the School.

Developments

Astroturf Pitches

Planning permission is now being sought for the construction of initially one, then two multi-purpose astro-turf pitches at Dalnacraig. We need these as a matter of some urgency to ensure that we keep pace with developments in hockey and tennis in particular.

Exchanges

The first half of term saw Mr McKinnon take a group of 25 pupils to Spain, for the first leg of our exchange with the San Pablo CEU in Murcia. The Spaniards will be returning to Dundee in 2009. We also welcomed a group of German pupils from our long-standing exchange school the Christophorusschule, near Kassel in Germany, along with two staff. The return leg will take place next June.

Pupil Achievements

Congratulations to all the following on their many achievements:

Academic History

This year's top mark in the SQA Higher History examinations has gone to our Head Girl Lauren Pringle. Lauren's mark of 98% put her at the top of the 8,125 candidates who sat the exam in 2008. This is the fourth year out of the last five that the High School History Department has scored Scotland's top mark. Lauren's result follows on from the Department's best Higher mark in 2007 and 2004, and the best Advanced Higher mark in 2005.

Chemistry

6 pupils in the past 8 years have achieved the top grade in Scotland for Higher or Advanced Higher Chemistry.

Geography

Our top Higher student this year achieved 99% for the second consecutive year, but was just beaten into 2nd place nationally by a pupil elsewhere who achieved 100%!

Art & Design:

Each year the SQA chooses the best art work from all the candidates in the country and puts on an exhibition. Alasdair Campbell's (F6) work was selected for the exhibition currently running at the Scottish Parliament.

Nuffield Science Bursaries

Erin Middleton and Head Boy Sabraj Gill attended a reception in Edinburgh in recognition of the research work they had undertaken over the summer holidays. Each was awarded nearly £500 to work in labs alongside scientists, engineers and technologists. Sabraj worked at CXR Biosciences Ltd in Dundee on Identification of Basal and BNF-Induced Murine Arylhydrocarbon Receptor Expression as relating to the liver. Erin studied a biological project involving cells and nuclear receptors, whilst Erin worked with SELEX GALILEO on Test, the Discipline, Why do it, What do you need and How is it done in relation to AESA Radar, testing tested RADAR systems as an engineering project. Both are to be congratulated on achieving these prestigious and highly competitive awards.

Debating

The HSD Debaters continue to live up to their reputation as consistently the best in Scotland over the past decade.

Lauren Pringle (F6) was a member of the Scottish Schools Debating Team that reached the Semi-Finals of the World Schools Debating Championships in Washington in September, losing to New Zealand. Mrs Irene McGrath, our debating coach, was the team manager. However, to cap that next year's Scotland team will have two HSD representatives out of the team of five for the first time ever!

Lauren Pringle is joined by pupils from George Heriot's, Morrison's Academy and St Columba's. In addition, Rachael McLellan (F5) is first reserve and Mrs McGrath is team manager once again!

The team of Lauren Pringle and Scott Ralston recently won the Glasgow University Union Mace this term, one of the most prestigious tournaments in the calendar and as a sign of the depth of debating the 2nd pair (James Wood and Rachel McLellan), finished 5th, missing out on the final by one point.

Lower down the School debaters have also had success in their respective competitions.

In the English Speaking Union competition the F3 teams both won through to the 2nd round with both teams (Joanna Tait, April Shepherd, Zara Evans and Joanna Tinson respectively) discussing making smoking legal.

In the Courier Schools Junior Debating two teams made up of Adam Powrie and Megan Wallace, and Hannah Thomson and April Shepherd respectively, have also progressed to the next round speaking about Scottish Independence and nuclear power stations.

WATCH OUT FOR XMAS CONCERT TICKETS

ON SALE NOW !!!!!!!

Intrepid!

James Wood (F6) spent six weeks in the summer in Ladakh with the British Schools' Expeditionary Service, climbing a number of Himalayan peaks, including a hitherto unconquered summit, as well as working with local people.

Meanwhile Iona Innes (also F6) spent a similar time in Peru along the Amazon with a group of 40. She lived on a boat, trekked, canoed and lived in the jungle before working on a bio-diversity project with the University of Iquitos, studying caymans and macaws etc.

Henry Rymer and Finlay Redford (F4) made headlines in the summer holidays for rescuing another boy from drowning in the Tay at Broughty Ferry. They were genuinely and modestly heroic.

Music

Two of our F5 pupils, Anna Burns and Amy Grieve, have been successful in gaining a place on Scottish Opera's new initiative, "Scottish Opera Connect". There are only 20 places available.

The String Ensemble has been invited to play at the Whitehall Theatre Club's St Andrew's Night on Wednesday 3rd December.

Christmas Card

Congratulations to Emily Culross (F1A12) on the selection of her design for the Rector's Christmas Card for this year.

Sport

Fashion

Yasmin Mselli (F5) one of the Higher pupils independently entered a fashion competition organised by the BBC and is one of the finalists which means that her design will be printed and worn on the catwalk at London Fashion Week in October. A link to her design is:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blast/showcase/fashion/labelled/yourlabelcomp08/37585>

Athletics

Scottish Schools Biathlon Championships (run/swim event) Westhill Academy, Aberdeen

All 7 HSD entrants came home with medals from this competition, with two emerging as champions:

Gold:

12/13s Alex Sharpe (S2)

13/14s Callum Rennet (S2)

Silver:

11/12s Euan Rose (P7)

12/13s Georgina Black (S2)
(also best run)

Others achieved minor placings but those mentioned above will probably be picked now for the UK event in Bath in the spring.

Scottish Schools Road Relay Championships – Grangemouth

Our L7 boys finished a steady if unspectacular 10th best team in Scotland at the Scottish Primary Schools Road Relays in Grangemouth in September (Euan Rose/Andrew Guest/Ruaridh Baxter/Euan Strachan).

In the Senior Championships this month the Boys team was very young so did well to finish 15th.

The Girls were a very creditable 10th, again with a very young team who have great potential for next year where they may finish in the top three. Girls were Kirsty Reynolds (F1) Hannah McCollum (F2), Maddie Adamson (F4) and Helen Coleman (F5).

Golf

Jemma Chalmers (F4), playing off nine, had a very successful season, winning the Downfield Ladies Open, the King James VI Perth Junior Open, the North of Scotland Championship and Cooper-Hunter trophies and junior opens at Brechin, Carnoustie and Downfield.

Hockey

The hockey results have been very good. The 1st XI, captained by Vicky Emslie have won all but one of their school matches in normal time, their only defeat coming against Glenalmond to date. In the tournament format the team reached the finals in both cases at Madras and Strathallan respectively, where they lost on penalties after extra time. The other teams have also achieved very pleasing results and I have received many plaudits for the excellent spirit present in the senior and junior house matches this term.

Hockey cont'd

The following girls were selected for the Midland Hockey Union teams for the Scottish inter-district tournament on 8th and 9th November 2008.

Under 18: Vicky Emslie

Under 16: Lauren Clayson, Jaimie McGregor, Heather Pringle, Ailsa Summers

In the Under 20 tournament: Lindsey Docherty (F5) and Lauren Pringle (F6) were both playing in the Under 20s Scottish tournament at Forthbank Stirling on 16.11.08 for Midlands which they won.

Senior Girls Hockey House Matches

Winners: Aystree, followed by Wallace, Lindores and Airlie

Junior Girls House Hockey Matches

Primary winners	Airlie
Form 1 winners	Wallace
Form 2 & 3 winners	Airlie
Overall	Wallace

Tennis

Jack Paladini in Form 2 won the Boys U14, U16 and U18 singles in the Dundee Confined Tennis Tournament which took place 6 September last week.

Rugby

The first half of term is a tough fixture list for all teams. The inexperienced 1st XV, captained by Max Paladini, won the early season Madras School's tournament, defeating Strathallan in the final.

In full schools matches results have been mixed with a win against Dollar and draw with Strathallan but they lost narrowly to Gordon's, frustratingly to St Aloysius and fairly to a good Edinburgh Academy side.

The 2nd and 3rd XVs have played with spirit but have been outgunned so far, whilst the 3rd Year teams have also had a tough time. The latter have fared better in the Cup so far. Having defeated Grove Academy easily in the first round the 3rd Year XV defeated Morrison's 53:0 in the second round.

Unfortunately they lost in the next round to Portlethan/Mackie. The 2nd and 1st Year sides have fared best, with the 1st Year A undefeated until 15 November when they went down to George Watson's.

Skiing

Two Scottish Champions at the Scottish Schools' dry slope slalom championships on 26 October 2008: Fraser Buchan (P7) 1st junior boy, following on from his success at the Scottish downhill championships at Hillend earlier in the term, with Christopher Guest in 8th, Duncan Leese 44th and Callum Rennet 45th. The team finished 4th. Kirsty Guest (P7) was 3rd Junior girl followed by Kirsty Gray 33rd and Sarah Emslie-Smith 35th.

The senior boys team of Ross McDonald, Robert Houstoun and Matthew Emslie-Smith battled well to

finish 16th whilst in the Senior Girls Charlie Guest (S4) was crowned Champion.

The Girls Senior team (with Charlie, Katie Guest 6th, Kirsty Kilpatrick 46th and Rosie Gray 48th) was 4th despite 2 falls and qualified for UK championships in a couple of weeks where they are genuine gold medal contenders if they stay upright!

Charities

Mrs Val Vannet and Dr Philip Taylor plus 24 pupils took part in the Cyclathon (26 miles around Dundee) under the auspices of the Interact Club in September. All bar one finished. A great day out was had and they raised £1733.

The majority of this has been donated to 18 and Under, a local charity that provides support for young victims of domestic abuse.

Strowan Scholarship

Katherine Millar from St Andrew's College, Christchurch, New Zealand, joined us for the first part of her Strowan Scholarship tour on Monday 22nd September.

Swimming

Tayside Schools Swimming Championships saw a fine collection of medals of all three colours:

Gold

Boys 13-14 Relay Harris Brown, Callum Rennet, Alex Sharpe (All F2) and Jamie Mather (F1)

Girls 15-16 Relay Claire Stirling (F5), Eilidh Campbell, Claire Dobson (Both F4) and Barbara Shaw (F3)

Girls 200M Freestyle Claire Dobson (F4)

Girls 100M Freestyle Claire Dobson (F4)

Boys 100M Freestyle Josh Rowley (F6)

Silver

Boys

50M Backstroke Alasdair Rennet (L7)

100M Backstroke Harris Brown (F2)

100M Freestyle Harris Brown (F2)

400M Freestyle Alex Sharpe (F2)

200M Backstroke Alex Sharpe (F2)

100M Breaststroke Glen Milne (F4)

100M Breaststroke Josh Rowley (F6)

Girls

200M Breaststroke Marianne Dobson (F6)

100M Breaststroke Marianne Dobson (F6)

Bronze

Girls 12 & U Relay Olivia Ritchie, Olivia Wight, Catherine Allan and Molly Duncan (All L7)

OTHER NEWS



HSD Christmas Charity and Craft Fair Trinity Hall Sat 8 November

This was a most successful event that we hope will be repeated next year. It raised over £2000 for a number of local and national charities, including a silent auction for a sapphire necklace and silver earrings. The sapphire had been found left in a sheepskin coat being converted into gloves for orphaned children in the Ukraine by Home Economics teacher Gill Madden.

Our own Andrea Douglas of the Art dept then decided to convert it into a piece of fine jewellery to be auctioned off. This wonderful story encapsulates so much that is great about the High School: Staff from two different Departments working creatively together for the good of the wider community.



Staff News

Congratulations to Mrs Val Vannet on her appointment as Deputy Head. She takes over the position left vacant after the departure of Colin Allison in the summer and will take a lead on ICT in learning and teaching as well as staff review and development. We are advertising for a successor.

Sarah Fletcher, Head of Physics and Principal Assessor for the SQA, held a presentation and workshop on 11.11.08 on Secondary Assessment – do you pass?, for the Association for Science Education Scotland which will be held at the High School.

We are currently seeking successors to three popular and successful teachers at Christmas. In the Junior School, Mrs Michelle MacIntyre and Ms Angela Wheatley are both leaving us at the end of this term, the former to go on maternity leave. Mrs Pauline Stott, our very successful hockey coach has been appointed Director of Sport at Kilgraston School, also to start next term. They will be missed.

Former Pupils

Rugby playing Former Pupils have been making their mark at international level recently. Congratulations to Richie Vernon who made a try-scoring debut for Scotland A v Georgia on 14 November. The next day Alistair Dickinson was in action for the full national team coming off the bench in the narrow defeat to the Springboks. The Scotland team is of course coached by Frank Hadden (FP) and BBC television viewers will have heard Andy Nicol's (FP) commentary.

BBC Scotland political journalist Brian Taylor (FP) was honoured with an Honorary Doctorate of Letters at Napier University recently. After leaving the High School in 1972 he studied at St Andrews before entering journalism.

SCHOOL OFFICIALS 2008-2009

Head Boy: Sabraj Gill

Head Girl: Lauren Pringle

Dep. Head Boy: Matthew Powrie

Dep. Head Girl: Kirsty Morrison

AIRLIE

House Captains: Guthrie Batchelor and Marianne Dobson

Vice Captains: Allan Drysdale and Amy Bryan

AYSTREE

House Captains: Josh Rowley and Rona Leese

Vice Captains: Iain Kennedy and Laura Sim

LINDORES

House Captains: Thomas Thomson and Emma Scahill

Vice Captains: Liam Eyles and Kate Foubister

WALLACE

House Captains: Danny McGuff and Amy Watson

Vice Captains: Alistair Brown and Rachel Jones



CHRISTMAS CONCERT

HIGH SCHOOL OF DUNDEE



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT

CAIRD HALL

10 DECEMBER 2008

Tickets available now!!!

SESSION DATES 2008-2009

SPRING TERM

Start of Term	Monday 5 January 2009 Tuesday 6 January 2009	Pupils
Mid Term Return	Monday 16 February 2009 Monday 23 February 2009	
End of Term	Friday 3 April 2009	

SUMMER TERM

Start of Term	Monday 20 April 2009	
May Day	Monday 4 May 2009	
Mid Term	Friday 22 May 2009 Monday 25 May 2009	Pupils
Term Ends	Thursday 25 June 2009	
In Service Days	Tuesday 26 August 2008 Wednesday 27 August 2008 Friday 10 October 2008 Monday 5 January 2009 Friday 22 May 2009	
Start of Session 2009/2010	Thursday 27 August 2009 (provisional date)	

DETAILS OF NEXT SESSION'S DATES WILL BE AVAILABLE BEFORE CHRISTMAS



REMINDERS FOR PARENTS

The PA would like to ask parents to continue to help in reducing the ever growing quantity of lost property in the school. Please ensure that all clothing is properly labelled which will ensure that items are returned to pupils without delay.

Regular updates, news and information are available on the PA website.

Please help to alleviate congestion when leaving Mayfield Car Park at busy times. Drivers may wish to consider turning left.