

**ST. MARY'S**  
**SCHOOL**  
MELROSE



**stmarys.mail**

*The weekly newsletter of St Mary's School*

**Edition No. 14**

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### FORTHCOMING FIXTURES/EVENTS

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

Staff inset

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January**

School resumes 8:25am

SMT Meeting 8:30am

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January (cont'd)**

Full Cast Rehearsal Middle School,  
'Porridge' - 4:00-5:30pm

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January**

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January**

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January**

### NOTE FROM THE HEADMASTER

Festivities were under way this time last week, with the Friends of St. Mary's organising a wonderful Winter Wonderland in the Morrison Hall. The sweet fuelled proceedings made me wonder if the ensuing Christmas tree lighting ceremony and Carols might be a bit raucous. However, despite high winds added to proceedings, we enjoyed our Carol Singing and well done to Lily J for successfully lighting up our Christmas tree. The Christmas tree was yet another fabulous contribution from the Friends of St. Mary's, which has adorned the front lawn for the past week.

Bocky and Callum, aided by a number of staff, then enjoyed an evening hosting our regular boarders, with a trip to McDonalds and then a film in Galashiels cinema. Despite the film being anything but a block buster, the pupils duly enjoyed their celebrations both during their outing and when they returned for a Friday night in the boarding house.

We celebrated a couple of achievements on Monday morning during assembly; Emma L was presented with a framed version of her book mark which featured amongst the prize winners of the Scottish Borders Council Design a Bookmark competition. I then had the pleasure of presenting Mhairi with her Grade 1 ABRSM Certificate for piano. I then went on to welcome Mrs Pippa Routledge who is currently serving in her 32<sup>nd</sup> year in the Royal Navy.



Mrs Routledge had come along to St. Mary's, volunteering her services in Maths lessons as she has spent part of her career teaching GCSE Maths to members of the armed forces. I then went on to tell the most amazing story of Major Brian Dennis who has been serving in the US Military and the wonderful bond he has struck up with "Nubs" a stray mongrel dog that he had found stabbed outside his military base in Iraq. The amazing story had a happy ending so do ask your children to recount it, if you are interested.

Forms 3, 4 and 5 enjoyed their Christmas party later on that day and well done to staff and pupils for making this a fun event for all.

On Tuesday morning it was a pleasure to be part of an audience listening to Pre-Prep Carols. Pre-Prep were then the lucky recipients of Chef and his team's fabulous Christmas lunch, the first of two major operations, on top of all the other hard work Chef and his team put in.

One of the highlights of the school year unfolded on Wednesday morning, with the Upper Kindergarten and Reception nativity play. Mary, Joseph, shepherds, wise men, angels and the conductor of the choir all put on a fabulous show with very few hiccups, much to the delight of their adoring audience. The following afternoon Forms 6, 7 and 8 headed for the Morrison Hall to enjoy some reels and party games as part of their Christmas celebrations.

A day finishing before 8:30pm seemed to be a rare thing over the last couple of weeks and Wednesday was no exception. Miss McRae had pulled together a brilliant cast of Pre-Prep and Prep School pupils to perform a nativity play in a barn at Greenend Farm on behalf of CLIC Sargent. Despite the severe weather conditions, it was incredible to see so many St. Mary's parents, staff and pupils taking part in the fund raising event, with the wind and rain bouncing off the roof of the barn. Thank you to all of you who played your part in the event and I am sure you will agree that the relentless energy of our pupils and staff was a major factor in making the event a great success.



Believe it or not, lessons continued whilst all the Christmas celebrations were taking place but the whole Prep School took time to enjoy Chef and his team's second Christmas lunch of the week as part of a sitting of 155. It was truly remarkable how Chef and his team still managed to maintain the high quality and with a packed dining room, quiet area and learning resource room of diners, it struck me that it is time for extension plans to be tabled. Form 8 capped off the celebrations with a fun version of "I'm a celebrity, get me out of here" and a cheerful Christmas song.

Prior to the Christmas lunch, we had gathered as a school in the Morrison Hall for Final Assembly, during which we celebrated the achievements of pupils during the term. We also wished Mrs Fresle all the very best as she heads off on maternity leave and we said an

emotional goodbye to Bocky and Callum, our loyal GAP students. I was touched to receive from them a wonderful ornamental clock in the shape of a ship's wheel, a gift presented to St. Mary's. This will be on view in the Hamilton Building. Though it is always sad to say goodbye to our friends from All Saints, we look forward to welcoming two more, and Emily Reynolds and Matthew Jones will be joining us prior to the beginning of next term. I then presented Izzy A with a book token for 5 book reviews.

Soon after the final assembly, we heard of successes in ABRSM singing exams for Jess W, Georgia, Dicken and Willa. Miss McRae was beaming having just received the news and well done to all four pupils.

A mysterious call to the Morrison Hall for the pupils resulted in a "talent" competition put on by some courageous, musical and not so musical staff, ably judged by "pantomime villain" Dr Morgan, the ever positive Madame Syme and the superbly eloquent Miss Simpson. I am tempted to describe what unfolded in front of the audience, but am sworn to stay loyal to the staff mantra "what happens in the Morrison Hall, stays in the Morrison Hall"! Suffice to say, no staff are likely to be heading for a career in the music industry in the near future!

Our usual extensive preparations had gone into making this morning's Carol Service a great success and well done to the choirs, the orchestra, the readers and once again Miss McRae and her team for pulling together a lovely Carol Service to conclude the term. I made a sharp exit in order to represent St. Mary's at the funeral of Spencer Pitman at Melrose Crematorium and was most touched to see many St. Mary's parents, amongst a very large congregation both inside and out. I am sure you will all join me in wishing Pooee, Mimi and Ruby as happy a Christmas as they can have under the circumstances.



Finally, I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and I look forward to welcoming the children back to school on the morning of Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January.

## **MUSIC AND DRAMA**

### **Internet safety – advice**

We have received information from SCIS (the Scottish Council of Independent Schools) this week regarding a new app designed to help protect children and their use of personal images taken on smartphones or devices. The text below has been taken from the advice document.

**The new app “SelfieCop” is the first parental-control to focus exclusively on deterring Sexting by tracking kids’ camera activity. It works in 2 ways:**

- 1- Every time the camera is activated a message appears to remind kids that any photos they take may ultimately be seen by anyone.
- 2- SelfieCop also sends parents a copy of the photos & videos that are taken by the camera, so they can review them for safety (until their children are older).

I would encourage parents to read the terms of use document which you can find at [www.selfiecop.com](http://www.selfiecop.com) before downloading as there are legal implications with its use. However, you may find that this is a useful tool in protecting your children in our digital world. Any feedback would be appreciated on its usefulness.

### **Code Club**

We are delighted to announce that Code Club will be open to all pupils in Forms 4 and 5 from Thursday January 14<sup>th</sup> 2016. Please let Ms Birdsall know if you would like your son/daughter to join this free after school activity in the ICT suite. It runs between 4 and 5pm on a Thursday afternoon.

*Pupils in Form 4 who have attended this term must register their interest again if they wish to continue after the Christmas break.*

### **Middle School Production**

Rehearsals for the Middle School production of ‘Porridge’ will continue after the Christmas break. All rehearsals will be for the full cast and will take place on a Tuesday afternoon between 4 and 5.30pm. Pupils will be given snack before the rehearsal starts and should be collected from the **Sanderson Building** at 5.30pm.

Miss McRae

## **SCHOOLSHAPE - FORMS 3, 4 AND 5**

Over the holidays, would pupils please log on and tidy up their home page by reading any "Feedback" for previous tasks and then making sure they "File and Finish" so that they have a clear home page ready for next term.

Merci bien et Joyeux Noël à tous!  
Madame Hutchison.

## KINDERGARTEN NEWS

*Carol Concert 2015*



On Wednesday afternoon, we invited mummies, daddies and other family members to come along to Kindergarten to watch a carol singing performance from the children. After choosing their favourite costume, the children sat beautifully shaking their bells as they sang 'Twinkle, Twinkle', 'Away in a Manger', 'Jingle Bells' and 'We wish you a Merry Christmas'. Well done everyone! Afterwards, Santa arrived and handed out presents to the children. Thankyou Mr Bell!

### *Christmas Party*

This morning, the children in Kindergarten danced and happily took part in many games and party fun! Thank you to Mrs Wright for bringing in extra goodies for the children to eat.....cheese string snowmen along with a fruit and vegetable tree went down a treat.

Mrs L Berni



### **RADIO BORDERS – MISSION CHRISTMAS (insert photo)**

The broad casting team at Radio Borders would like to thank all pupils and parents for their very generous donations. The presents will be collected next week so there is still time to donate something if you have not already done so.

Many thanks

Mrs F Bell

### **MISSING**

Navy blue towel – named Charlotte L

Tracksuit bottoms - Caelan's

School jacket – Rudi B

Base layer – Amelie G

Tracksuit top – Adam B

If you find an item that does not belong to you, please email the school office so that parents can be informed.

Thank you

**FRIENDS OF ST. MARY'S**

The Friends of St. Mary's would like to wish you a Happy Christmas. A welcome back coffee morning will be held week commencing 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016.