

# ARRAN HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

School Website: [www.arran.n-ayrshire.sch.uk](http://www.arran.n-ayrshire.sch.uk)

Email: [arran@ea.n-ayrshire.sch.uk](mailto:arran@ea.n-ayrshire.sch.uk)

Follow us on Twitter: @arranhigh

March 2015

## *Dear Parent/Carer*

Once again it has been an exciting few weeks in the life of the school, with a great deal happening both in terms of the lead up to our SQA examination diet and also with our extra-curricular programme. Our prelim examinations are now complete and our S4-S6 students have all be given feedback from staff in relation to what is required for success in the final exams in May. As previously reported, there will be no study leave for S4 students and S5 and S6 students will have study leave from 5 to 29 May inclusive.

I am delighted to report that the difficulties we had been experiencing with the network connection have been vastly improved since the most recent intervention by engineers who visited the school. This is particularly welcome at this crucial time for our students.

Our young musicians have been a credit to themselves and the school with their recent endeavours in the various Young Musician competitions. On 4 March we hosted a very successful Primary Burns Competition for all of the primary schools on the island and we took a large group of youngsters, of both primary and secondary age to the recent 'Tradfest' in Kilwinning last weekend.

We are delighted to be hosting the Cold Water Islands Tourism conference on 18 & 19 March ([www.cwit2015.com](http://www.cwit2015.com)) and many of our youngsters will be taking part, both from an organisational and hosting perspective, but also as interested delegates in some of the sessions.

Our High School Mountain Bike Club has successfully bid for £10,000 from Awards for All to purchase new mountain bikes and increase the opportunities for access to mountain biking for the young people in our school. Mr McNeice and his team of enthusiastic students should be commended for all of the hard work they have put in thus far in developing mountain biking in the school.

## *The Slab Boys*

On the Wednesday, 25 February, Miss Nicol's Higher English class and Ms Cook's Drama class attended the Citizens Theatre in Glasgow to see John Byrne's play "The Slab Boys".

The Higher pupils are currently studying this play as their set text and the Drama group found the live theatre experience incredibly beneficial to their studies. We thoroughly enjoyed this riotous comedy (set in post-WW2 Paisley in A.F. Stobo carpet manufacturers), which deals with issues such as social inequality; the stigma of mental health issues; and ambition and its associated frustrations when dreams don't come true.

*Playwright John Byrne with actor David Hayman*



Thanks to Mo McKenna of Argyll College for all her help and a very special thank-you to the Arran Society of Glasgow for their funding – a very generous gift, which enabled us to let the pupils experience "a bit o' culture" with not much expense to themselves.

## *NAC Young Musician Competitions*

AHS competitors in the recent NAC Young Musician competitions:



*Emily Divine, Young Rock & Pop Musician*



*Asha Simpson, Young Singer*



*Iain Clarke, Young Musician*



*Bethany Walsh & Fraser Blain  
Young Traditional Musician*

## *St Ayles Skiff Project*

Pupils and staff from the Technology Department are currently at the beginning of the process of building a St Ayles Skiff, with the assistance from Lamlash Yacht Club volunteers.

The preparation work is mostly being done in the Technology Workshop but the actual build of the boat will be in the school garage formerly used by NAC Children's Services as the skiff has a length of nearly seven metres and a beam (width) of 1.75 metres.



Materials for this boat were funded by the Yacht Club. The parts of the boat are made from marine plywood and are supplied as a kit, with every part machine cut by a CNC Router. The parts come in a 1220 x 2440 x 12 mm sheet and all we have to do is carefully cut the tabs to release the parts from the sheet, similar to some toy kit dinosaur models etc.

A jig has been constructed to form the skiff around and pupils have laminated sections to form a frame. The process of manufacturing the frame has begun and parts are being assembled on the jig. The project is planned to finish before July and hopefully the yacht club will find additional funding in order to construct another skiff next year.

## *Comic Relief Cake Sale*

It's the time of year when people put others first and the S3 Hospitality (elected) pupils sold cakes to raise money for Comic Relief in the school canteen at break time on Tuesday, 10 March.



The sum of £72 was raised. Thanks to all who contributed.

## *Dining Hall*

Catering staff has requested that pupils ensure they have sufficient funds on their accounts before purchasing food. Money can be paid in via the Reval machines in the dining area, direct to catering staff (not during lunchtime) or online.

## *AOEC S1 Week*

Oh what a week!

The weather forecast a decidedly miserable week ahead when a brave and excited group of S1 pupils set forth from Arran High School to face the outdoors with Arran Outdoor Education Centre. Little did they know how busy a week they would face.

On Monday morning, after a record breaking turn around at the Centre (never before have the instructors seen a group so anxious to get outside), the pupils headed to Kings Cave for an 'eggcellent' challenge. After gathering firewood on the walk, pupils were split into groups and each had to light a fire and boil an egg, surely a simplistic challenge for the S1s of Arran High? After a demonstration on fire lighting the groups set at their task skilfully (admittedly some groups more skilfully than others...) concluding it by smashing (thankfully boiled) eggs over one another's heads as a test of their cooking abilities! On Monday evening the pupils enjoyed an introduction to Orienteering picking up skills they would need later in the week.



As Tuesday dawned, the group got ready for a day few expected would be as extreme as it turned out. The group set out for a day's walk around the Cock of Arran in what can only be described as challenging conditions. The groups were treated to some excellent views during the breaks in the weather and had their mettle tested through horizontal hail. Despite the conditions the groups powered through with nary a complaint to complete their adventure round the north end of the island.

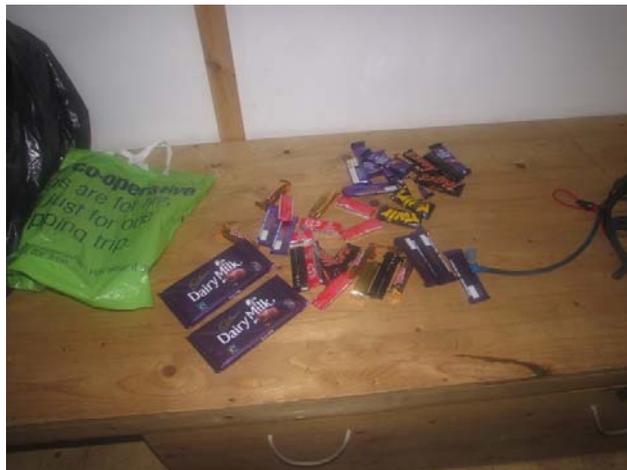


Wednesday saw the groups splitting up for some exhausting and jaw dropping experiences. The groups had the opportunity to abseil from Blue Rocks (a full 80 foot vertical drop) and to test the new Orienteering course at Brodick Castle. The groups thoroughly enjoyed both activities, even setting some record breaking times in the Orienteering course. AOEC will retain the records until the end of the year when we will find out how AHS compared to the other groups who visited the island.

Tuesday and Wednesday nights involved a combination of team games at the Centre and indoor kayaking at the Auchrannie pool. These evening sessions had pupils embrace their sense of competition; participating in kayak-bound water polo, competing at bridge building or taking part in Mr Donlin's (now infamous?) pipe game.



As the halfway point of the week came and went, the group were kidding themselves if they thought the pace would drop even a little. Thursday involved a full day's mountain biking at locations across the island: Brodick Castle; Merkland Woods and the Roots of Arran walks behind Brodick. The day was a mud splattered affair with all of the pupils finishing with happy faces, despite the sore legs. Thursday night saw the pupils venture to Cloud Base for an evening totally away from modern comforts, until an unexpected Art related visitor popped up to make an 'emergency' delivery of supplies that certainly pleased the group!



As Friday dawned, the group set out from Cloud Base sad to see their week ending. They knew they had a walk back to reality ahead of them via the Giants Graves. After a break at the Centre to clean kit they said their sad goodbyes and grateful thanks after a week well spent with the AOEC.



## *Arran High School Parent Council Update*

The Parent Council continues to meet monthly and all parents and carers are welcome to attend meetings. Dates for the next few months are 23 March, 27 April, and 25 May at 7:30 pm in the school library.

John Butcher, Executive Director of Education for North Ayrshire Council, attended our January meeting and talked about the curriculum, 'high quality' learning and teaching, and that all children are encouraged to achieve to the best of their ability.

Topics which have been discussed in recent meetings include:-

- Concern about poor internet provision at the school
- Staffing in English and Music Departments
- Options for S3 to S5
- Work placement programme
- Bid requests for equipment from departments within school and obtaining possible grants for these
- School improvement plan: Visions, Values and Aims working group
- Parent Council meeting with Pupil Council to listen to their issues
- House Competition for charities mentioned where each house is given £8 to build on for their chosen charities: Alzheimer's Scotland; Help the Heroes; Cancer Research; Red Cross. The aim is to develop skills outwith the curriculum.
- The School Fayre was a great success – the Duke of Edinburgh group raised £230 and the Fayre raised £1,000 for school funds.
- Parent Council Constitution
- Funding for Parent Council meetings

The Parent Council has a website (<http://ahspc9.wix.com/ahspc>) where you can see minutes of meetings, etc.; please have a look. We also have a Facebook page where you can follow us.

We are trying to make available to parents other helpful information. If, for instance, your child is going on a residential course for music or sport, which can be quite expensive, North Ayrshire Council has grants available to help. For more information follow the link: <http://ahspc9.wix.com/ahspc#!/c1ghi>.

## *Lost Property*

Please ask your child to check lost property as any items not reclaimed by the Easter holidays will be sent for recycling.

## *Tradfest!*

Well done to the 22 pupils from AHS and Lamlash, Corrie & Whiting Bay Primaries for a great performance at Tradfest! A thoroughly enjoyable weekend was had by all.



## *Euroscola 2015*

Last week, S6 student, Fraser Blain attended the Euroscola event at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France. He was one of 27 Scottish students who had been selected to represent the United Kingdom, alongside more than 600 pupils from 23 EU member nations. During the week the Scottish group took part in street questionnaires, French language challenges and the Euroscola day itself, with the week culminating in a ceilidh, where the Scottish group were joined by French students. The week was a fantastic opportunity for Fraser to use his French language skills and develop his political awareness of the work and responsibilities of the European Union and Parliament.



*Euroscola delegates – Fraser is second right on the top row*

*Barry R Smith  
Head Teacher*