

Strathearn News



CAROL SERVICE

This year the Carol Service took place on 18 December in Stormont Presbyterian Church. The soloists, the Penrhyn Choir and the Strathearn Junior, Senior and Chamber Choirs delighted the congregation. We would like to thank the Music and Religious Studies Departments and Penrhyn for once again bringing us an inspiring blend of music, which complemented the beautifully delivered readings and gave us a fresh appreciation of the Christmas story. Everyone who participated in the service deserves our thanks for leading us in a memorable evening of praise and worship. The retiring collection of £843.11 was dedicated to The Hospice Appeal and we would like to warmly thank all of you who contributed so generously to this!



GREASE

careers round-up

A sixty-strong cast of pupils, ranging from first form to the upper sixth, entertained over 1,000 guests in the second week of December with their rousing performance of the popular musical *Grease*. There were two matinee performances for local primary schools and three evening performances for the general public from 10-12 December. The audience loved the renditions of well-known songs such as *We go Together*, *Beauty School Dropout* and *You're the One*. Mrs McIvor's careful rehearsal of vocals made many exclaim that the singing was of West End standards! The Pink Ladies were portrayed in a sassy and admirable fashion by Jill Fergie, Charlie Aston, Molly Fairclough, Tilly Storey and Katy Anderson. Boys from Campbell College joined with the Strathearn girls to perform, with many being familiar faces from previous musicals including Sam Jordan, Andrew McKee and Ben Taylor. The chorus were beautifully dressed by Miss McFarland and choreographed to a really high standard by Megan O'Callaghan, Anna Wilson and Shauna Morrow. Behind the curtain a team of over twenty-five students was led by props mistress, Mrs Atkinson, technical director Mr Atkinson and back stage manager, Mrs Ingram.

My sincerest thanks go out to all involved in the show, including PR, box office and front of house. It was a great success and I will have fond memories of the production. JF



Autumn Musical Evening

The Autumn Musical Evening took place on 20 November, featuring performances by the school orchestra and the traditional group. A large number of soloists from the junior school and Form Five – including singers, pianists, a violinist, guitarist and Irish harp player – also performed. The audience enjoyed the varied and attractive programme, and the new Assembly Hall proved a very effective setting for the first big musical event of the year.

A lot has been going on in the Careers Department during this part of the term. Many girls in U6 are getting ready for university interviews and so we held our annual Mock Interview Evening on 24 November to allow our pupils to have the opportunity to have some interview practice. This was a most successful evening and we are indebted to all the interviewers who took time from their busy schedules to help our girls. All the pupils benefited from the expertise and advice given on the night. Girls applying to Oxford and Cambridge got an additional interview, and Mrs Hearst has been carrying out one-to-one practice interviews for anyone who wants one; she has also organised a series of interview workshops.

As always, we have a number of girls who are interested in STEM careers. With this in mind, four L6 pupils attended the GETSET into Engineering Programme for Girls, where they spent one day each at Queen's and the University of Ulster and two days on an industrial placement. This year our girls went to NIE, Northstone and Caterpillar. In addition to this programme, three girls attended a careers event at B/E Aerospace in Kilkeel, which was also a useful opportunity to find out more about careers involving STEM. As leading Civil Engineers in NI are expecting to see an increase in output from the construction industry in the coming years, we welcomed representatives from the Institute of Civil Engineers to talk to girls from Form Four upwards about opportunities in that profession.

As was the case last year, we were delighted to have a speaker from Trinity College, Dublin talk about opportunities there, and many girls attended another presentation on applying to universities in the Republic of Ireland. A representative from the University of Dundee also talked to girls in Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth. A representative from Queen's and our careers adviser from the Department for Employment and Learning both spoke to Form Three about choosing GCSE subjects. Mrs Hearst has also had Form Three classes visit the careers suite for question and answer sessions about subject choices.

Two girls from Lower Sixth attended a Physiotherapy Open Day at Musgrave Park Hospital, where they had the opportunity to talk to students and staff and learn more about the profession. Moreover, with Lower Sixth work experience coming up after Christmas, Lower Sixth attended a session on the importance of health and safety organised by the Health and Safety Executive for NI and another on Experiences of Work.

Former pupils also came into school to talk to the sixth form about their experience at medical schools and the University of Cambridge. Some Upper Sixth girls have already had conditional offers from UK universities and others can look forward to more offers in the New Year. As always, details of all our career events can be found on the careers section of the school website.

INDIVIDUAL'S SUCCESSES



Congratulations to...



Charlie Saunders, 1A, who passed her tap exam with a high Merit.
 Brooke Robinson, 2A, who will be attending the NI Rock Climbing Championships with Scouts.
 Lauren Clarke, 4H, who competed in the U15 Girls' category at the Ulster Irish Dance Championships at Dundalk on 21 November 2014. Lauren was placed fifth out of fifty girls and qualified for the World Championships which will take place in Montreal, Canada, at Easter.
 Bonnie Ramsay, 5T, who raised £800 for Marie Curie NI.
 Leah McClements, 2T, who has passed her Grade Five in diving.
 Zara Hamilton, 2T, who was placed first and second in two singing competitions in the Hollywood Music Festival.
 Nina Graham, L6R, whose short film *The Secret Life of Balloons* was shortlisted from a field of 200 in the AES Cinemagic Young Filmmaker competition and was shown in the Queen's Film Theatre in November. Her film is on the BBC Arts Extra website and has also been selected to play at film festivals in England and in India.
 Charlotte Crawford, 2H, who passed her Grade Two Singing Examination and received a Distinction in Grade Two Theory.

PUBLIC SPEAKING ECO-COMMITTEE



Rachel Cowan and Mehika Sood achieved commendations at the Edgar Graham Memorial Public Speaking competition held in the Senate Chamber at Stormont on 19 November. This placed the girls in the top six of a very competitive event, attended by twenty-two participants from schools from all over Northern Ireland. Most of the competitors were Upper Sixth, and so Mehika and Rachel did very well to get into the top six.

Five pupils from Strathearn participated in the local heat of the Soroptimist Public Speaking competition in Bangor on 26 November. Rachel Cowan spoke on the dangers and opportunities of the digital media age, Ella McAllister looked at the relative merits of degree courses and apprenticeships, Rebecca Murphy argued that sugar is the new tobacco and both Cathy levers and Mehika Sood considered the topic of international diplomacy. The girls deserve real credit for presenting genuinely detailed explorations of their chosen topics.

Three representatives of the Eco-Committee attended the RSPB, A Pledge for Nature event on 25 November at the Crescent Arts Centre, Belfast. The girls, Rachael Thomas, L6H, Emma Ferguson, 4H, and Rebecca McAlees, 3S, made a presentation to an audience including local business owners and government representatives about our vision for encouraging urban wildlife in Strathearn School.

The Eco-Committee has been working hard in recent weeks making bird feeders and planning nesting box sites as we seek to focus on supporting birdlife, especially house sparrows in the area.



Schlumberger Visit

Our recent trip to Schlumberger was focused around encouraging women into the field of engineering and STEM subjects. There were only girls schools present at the visit. Our activities included a talk with speakers from different departments across the company discussing their careers. We were taken on a guided tour all around the manufacturing floors and warehouses then we were escorted back to the room for lunch. Overall, we had a good time during our visit. We would like to thank Miss Stewart for the opportunity to visit Schlumberger.
 Rachel Elliott, L6



History & Politics

On 27 November, a small group of Lower and Upper Sixth History and Politics students went to *Let's Talk! Belfast*, held in the Long Room in the Stormont Assembly buildings.

Let's Talk events are days set up to help young people become more engaged and involved with Northern Irish politics. They offer the chance to question and debate with real politicians, as well as with students from other schools. Other schools represented on the day were Methodist College, Victoria College and St Malachy's.

The *Let's Talk* event began with a question and answer session, with a panel including MLAs and councillors from Sinn Féin, The Green Party, SDLP, Alliance and the Ulster Unionist Party. This session involved lively debates,

several controversial conversation topics and open exchanges between politicians and students. The afternoon included round table discussion in smaller groups, with politicians moving from table to table on a timed basis. This gave us the opportunity to discuss topics in further detail with individual politicians. The day finished with a mock election, which the Green Party won in a landslide majority.

Overall, we had an extremely informative and enjoyable day. My favourite aspect of the day was the freedom of discussion between the politicians and the students, and the number of difficult and controversial topics that were discussed. Joanna Hicks, U6T



Library News Maths Competition

Book Fair

The annual Scholastic Book Fair took place in the Library in November, and was a great success. The girls and staff enjoyed browsing the wide selection of books and stationery available and we gained an amazing £869 of commission for new books. Thank you to all staff and pupils who bought books, to the parents for their continued support, and also to all the pupil volunteers whose help was invaluable. The huge support given to the Library through the Book Fair is very much appreciated and the girls have been very excited to see all the new books arriving.

A *Who said?* competition was held for First Form girls, with a number of famous sayings from literature, and a £5 book voucher was awarded to each of the following prize winners: Sorcha Corbett, 1S; Maya Renfrew, 1S; Elizabeth Walker, 1T; Darcey Jamison, 1T; Ruby McWhinney, 1R.

Pupil Librarians

The Library Assistant of the month award went to Jenny Wilson, 2H, in November and to Felicity Johnston, 1T, in December, both girls have worked especially hard in the Library during their lunch breaks.

The Student Librarian of the month award has been given to Sarah McCracken, 4A, for November and Neve O'Neill, 5S, for December, for their consistent help in the Library. Well done to the award winners and pupil librarians, who work hard to keep the Library running smoothly.

On 3 December, Rebecca Davidson, Chloe Rehill, Keziah Mercer and Hermione Anstey attended the *Maths Competition @ Queen's*. The day consisted of three demanding rounds of pure maths, the first of which was the most successful, as the team were initially in third place. However, as the maths became tougher their position fell - but lunch in Maggie Mays apparently livened the team's spirits... Despite not placing, the event was thoroughly enjoyable for all involved.



school formal

The school formal took place on Friday, 21 November at the Clandeboy Lodge Hotel! This was a glamorous highlight of the year and thanks are due to the Formal Committee and everyone who worked to make the occasion such a success. Photographs of the occasion can be viewed in the Gallery on our website.

Charity News

- The L6 Biologists study viruses as part of their course. The Ebola outbreak in West Africa was hitting all the news headlines, so they wanted to do something to help. For one break and lunchtime the girls dressed up as Ebola health workers and collected loose change around the school. Many thanks to all who donated. £186 was sent to the *Save the Children Fund*.



- On 2 December, 5H completed a sponsored *No Mobile Phone Day*. They were raising money to continue their sponsorship through Abaana of Eva Nanteza, a 13 year old pupil at Strathearn Primary School in Uganda.

Community Service Party

Every year Strathearn has put on a Christmas Party with a Christmas lunch and stunning entertainment - and this year was no exception!

Our guests from the Silver Threads Group and Age NI Wednesday Groups were warmly greeted by members of the Charities Committee and the piano-playing talents of Verity McGimpsey and Rachel Lemon. The pre-lunch entertainment continued with violinists Jessica Arbuckle and Emma Lennon. After the Christmas lunch, the entertainment was opened by the string quintet of Chloe Young, Kate Umphray, Poppy Gribben, Katie Gallagher and Suzie Griffin. A flute duet from Rose Templeton and Claire Whiteside followed. Bethan Jones treated us to an Irish dance and Molly Longstaff, played a recorder solo. Eve Elliott and Megan Adair performed a singing duet. Erin McConnell and Mia Wheatley took the stage for a poetry reading. Hannah Hornsby and Rebecca Welsh performed a contemporary dance and Rachael Bell played a clarinet solo. Tilly Storey treated us to *Freddie My Love* from *Grease* and Naomi Cochrane performed a beautiful violin solo. Proving their flexibility with a gymnastics act were Anna McCabe and Ashleigh Law. An ensemble from the Chamber Choir rounded off the formal entertainment and gathered everyone back on stage for a rousing rendition of *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*. Mia Mouron-Adams and Zara Hamilton delighted the crowd with their humorous introduction. Many guests remarked on their enjoyment and delight on being at our party... Roll on next year!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 5-9 January: Mock Examinations for Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth**
- 5-16 January: Mock Examinations for Form Five**
- 12-16 January: Lower Sixth Work Experience**
- 16 January: School ends at 12.50**
- 17 January: Transfer Open Morning**
- 2-4 February: Lower Sixth Biology Field Trip**
- 5-6 February: Drama Trip**
- 10 February: Parents' Consultation Evening for all of Sixth Form 7-9pm**
- 11-13 March: Lower Sixth Biology Field Trip**

SCHOOL RESUMES: 5 January at 8.40am



Swimming

The Ulster Secondary Schools' Gala took place on Friday 14 and Saturday 15 November at Ballymena Leisure Centre. Once again Strathearn swimmers performed really well, with the following results most notable:

Jenny Drennan (Senior) - Gold Medal in 100m Freestyle and Silver Medal in 100m Backstroke

Sam McCormick (Junior) - Silver Medal in 100m Breaststroke and 6th place in Butterfly

Helen Navalli (Intermediate) - 4th Place in 100m Backstroke

Amelia Kane (Junior) - 10th Place in 200m Individual Medley

Intermediate Relay Team of Victoria White, Ferne Blackstock, Kathryn Childs and Helen Navalli - Bronze Medals in both the Medley and Freestyle events.

Senior Relay Team of Jessica Fairclough, Georgia Gallen, Jenny Drennan and Anna Heyburn - 4th Place in both the Medley and Freestyle events. Particular congratulations to both Georgia and Anna who are Junior swimmers, but on this occasion helped the Senior girls to make up a team when other Senior swimmers were unavailable.

Junior Relay Team of Rebekah Burrows, Rebecca Callaghan, Amelia Kane and Sam McCormick - 6th Place in Freestyle Relay.

Junior Relay Team of Eve McKibbin, Sam McCormick, Amelia Kane and Rebekah Burrows - 7th Place in Medley Relay.

Congratulations to all the swimmers who competed in this event. All the remaining individual results are posted on the Swimming Notice Board in the Sports Hall.

Hockey



It has been extremely busy for all those teams competing in their respective Cup competitions and results have been mixed. The 2B XI, playing in the Gibson Cup, completed their league programme with resounding wins over Ballyclare HS, Victoria College and Carrick Grammar and now go through to the quarter-final. At this stage of the competition, the format changes to knock-out, so we wish the girls every success in their efforts to retain the Gibson Cup, having won this trophy last season.

The 2A XI Team, playing in the McDowell Cup, has also reached the quarter-final. The team was drawn away to Bloomfield Collegiate and won 1:0 and then away again to Dromore HS, where a 3:0 victory ensured Strathearn continued their run in the competition. Good luck in the next round!

Unfortunately, the 1st XI made their Senior Cup exit in the second round. A first round home tie against Coleraine High School saw Strathearn dominate play and emerge winners by one goal to nil. The team then met the Royal School, Armagh in round three and with home advantage again, hopes were high. As in the Coleraine game, Strathearn had the lion's share of the play, but inaccuracies in front of goal and a problem converting their penalty corners, meant opportunities were squandered. The Royal School got their break through a goal midway through the first half to take a 1-0 lead. Strathearn continued to play much of the better hockey, but Armagh defended resolutely and were visibly relieved to take the victory.

The U14A XI started off their Junior Cup campaign with a 1:0 extra time win away to Regent House and then played the Royal School, Armagh in round three. This match was one of the best performances of the season so far, and one that the players will hopefully remember in terms of skill level and teamwork. Despite losing 3:2, the winning goal being scored cruelly with 40 seconds left on the clock, Strathearn played a great match and perhaps on chances created should really have won the game. However, sometimes an element of luck is needed, and this time round, it was Armagh who managed to squeeze through.



Netball Sporting Successes

Congratulations to Eve Elliott, Grace Hutchinson and Grace Ruding on their selection for the U13 Belfast Regional Development Academy. Also, congratulations to both Alanna McHugh and Natalie McHugh on their selection for the U15 Belfast Regional Academy. The girls will be involved in monthly training sessions from now until April 2015 in preparation for the Regional Development Games. Well done and Good Luck!



Congratulations to ...

• Erin McConnell, 3H, Olivia Nelson, 3H, and Sam McCormick, 3A, who competed in the Ulster Open Championships in Swimming from 28-30 November. Erin achieved a personal best in all swims, Olivia was placed third in the Back Crawl and achieved a personal best in all other swims and Sam was placed fifth in the 200m Breaststroke. Erin and Olivia then both competed in the Irish National Open Championships on 12-14 December and achieved personal bests in all swims. Olivia Nelson also deserves praise for winning the All-Ireland U15 Age Group Cross-Country Championships in Dublin.

• Bonnie Ramsay, 5T, who was one of thirty chosen from 1100 applicants to be a Barclay's Ball Kid. Bonnie attended a training camp in Southampton during the Halloween half-term, which was followed by eight days at the O2 in London, where the top ten men in the world battled it out in a week-long tennis tournament. It was hard work, but was the experience of a lifetime working as a team, using initiative in a stressful situation and being 'live' on television for a week. Out of all the tennis tournaments on the circuit, the Barclays Ball Kids were voted the best in the world!



Please note that all after school sport will recommence on Monday 5 January

MERRY CHRISTMAS