



## Monmouth Comprehensive School SPRING NEWSLETTER 2012

'Learning to Lead our Lives  
Dysgu Trwy Arwain'

Dear Parent

We hope you enjoy reading our latest edition of our Newsletter. The purpose of the Newsletter is to inform you of some of the major events that have taken place at school, as well as what we have to look forward to in the coming months. We also include information about school life so that you as parents and the community can support and celebrate the success of our students.

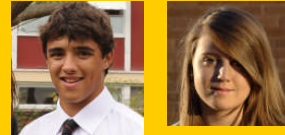
This is the time of year when we all look forward to warmer and longer days and there is a sense of anticipation in the air. For us, as a school, this anticipation is about the forthcoming examinations and the opportunity for our students to 'shine', in showing how hard they have worked and all their determination to succeed. Over the last term Year 11, 12 and 13 have been focused on preparing for their final assessments. Teachers and students have been working together to revise work, complete coursework and 'controlled tasks', as well as having the opportunity to practise with 'sample examination' papers. The Easter Holiday will be an important preparation time, as well as providing time to have a well earned rest.

To support students with their final preparations we have provided them with the following advice.

- Revise in short periods of time of no more than 30 - 40 minutes.
- At the end of each revision session give yourself a treat - perhaps one more piece of chocolate Easter egg. (It is always good to have something to look forward to)
- Be strategic in your learning - have examination papers and questions in front of you as you revise a topic so you know exactly what to learn.
- Be ready to learn - do not sit with distractions around you - focus. (You can do without your mobile telephone for 30 - 40 minutes)
- Talk about your learning - to parents or friends. Talking through what you have revised helps to consolidate learning. It also helps to let them know how hard you have been working.
- Revise during the part of the day when you know you work best. For many this is either early in the morning or the evening.
- Preparing for examinations can be an anxious time and the more work you do helps to relieve the anxiety. Build slowly and you will gain confidence and pace.

We would also like to say thank you to all parents in supporting students during this period of the school year.

Next term we are also looking forward to being part of the celebration of the Olympics. At school we have three students who are Olympic Ambassadors and two who are Olympic Torch Bearers (George Ryley and Megan Jephcote, pictured). We are very proud that our students have been honoured in this way and that they have been rewarded for their outstanding achievements. During the summer we will be hosting a number of activities to ensure every student feels that they have been part of this World event which brings us all together. You can follow all our Olympic activities on our website.



The work of our students and teachers knows no boundaries. This term our students have met with Princess Anne to talk about the ground breaking work the school has completed on how to build relationships. This work has been led by Mr. Andy Williams. We have also gone through to the next round of the Youth Speaks National Championships with our intermediate team, of Reuben Pierrepoint, Ellie Ashton and Harry Lloyd. Our rugby team travelled to Yorkshire for the quarter finals of the Rugby League competition. We won the Monmouth's Got Talent competition held between our three schools in the town. Ella Sutton and George Thomas won with their song 'Choice Notes' and have been given time to record at Wyastone Studios. Rowing goes from strength to strength and we have won more competitions than ever before. Without doubt we have a school full of talented, dedicated and successful students, of whom we are all enormously proud.

The Friends Association have again been very active this term in supporting the school. They have raised considerable sums of money, supported the curriculum through helping with setting up a Film Club and are always here at school events to support the work of the school. Their contribution is invaluable and they do much to help with improving and funding resources for all our students. They would like though more people to join them (as they are a relatively small group) and help. If you would like to join the Friends Association please contact Mr. M. Powell at the school or, alternatively, at [moncompfriends@gmail.com](mailto:moncompfriends@gmail.com).

With the holiday fast approaching and our thoughts on Spring and the good it does us, in bringing in warmth and energy, the students and staff wish you all a happy and restful holiday.

Tim Bird & Vaughan Davies, Joint Headteachers



## Community Connections Befrienders Scheme

Our Sixth Form Health & Social care students have undergone specialist training for working with vulnerable members of our community in readiness to participate in the recently launched Befrienders Scheme, centred at the Bridges Community Centre. Volunteers, including our students, will be supporting members of the community in and around Monmouth doing odd jobs, shopping or just visiting for a friendly and comforting chat.

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

05 April - Welsh Culture Show  
 05 April - TERM ENDS - Non Uniform Day & Bake Sale  
 13 - 20 April - Spain Sports Tour  
 06 - 20 April - HALF TERM  
 23 April - INSET Day  
 24 April - TERM BEGINS  
 26 April - Y7 Parents' Evening  
 30 April - Extra curricular clubs start  
 04 May - Non Uniform & Bake Sale  
 07 May - May Day Bank Holiday  
 11 May - Y11 Leavers' Ceremony & Prom  
 14 May - Exams Start  
 17 May - Y7/8 May Ball  
 24 May - Y13 Leavers' Reception  
 25 May - Y13 Leave  
 04-08 June - HALF TERM  
 11 June - TERM BEGINS  
 18 June - Y7 Inter-Form Sports Day  
 19 June - Y8 Inter-form Sports Day  
 20 June - Y9 Inter-Form Sports Day  
 21 June - Summer Concert  
 25 June - 29 June - Summer Learning Week  
 02 July - Book Return Day  
 03 July - New Entrants' Evening  
 12 July - Y7/8 Summer Disco  
 06 - 09 July - KS3 Visit to Le Touquet  
 09 - 13 July - Y9 Visit to Belgium/WW1 Battlefields  
 16 - 20 July - Y7/8 Welsh Course, Llangrannog  
 19 July - End of Term  
 16 August - A Level Results  
 23 August - GCSE Results  
 03 September - INSET Day  
 04 September - Y12 Course Registration  
 05 September - Y7 & Y12 Induction Day  
 06 September - All Year Groups in School

**Extra curricular activities and transport will run from w/c 30 April until w/e 22 June. During Summer Learning Week (25 to 29 June) extra curricular transport will run on 28 June to support students travelling home after the Summer Fair. Please check letter for full details.**

### Bringing Personal Items to school

Whilst we do all we can to secure our premises and

on-site equipment, we cannot be held responsible for students' personal possessions. The school advises that mobile phones, iPods and other valuable items are either stored in school lockers or kept at home.



### Tidy Wales Award

MCS were runners-up in the Schools category for their community participation work during the Summer Learning Week at the Two River Meadow Project at the confluence of the Wye and Monnow rivers. Students, supported by members of the project and Tidy Wales, removed large amounts of the invasive Himalayan Balsam, litter and debris to enhance the locality for the community.

### Youth Rangers

Amelia Ralphs, Gregor Belcher, Olivia Farrow and Ella Rook were successful in their bid to become Wye Valley Youth Rangers. They have embarked on a schedule that includes kayaking, first aid, bushcraft, stone walling, hedge laying, archaeology, ecology and conservation-a fantastic learning experience!

### Welsh Baccalaureate goes from strength to strength

Students from Monmouth Comprehensive School have been achieving success both in the school and local community via the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification.

Over two hundred Year 10 students achieved Level 2 Essential Skills qualifications in both Communication and Application of Number recently. These qualifications enable students to develop and apply the skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening and numeracy, skills that underpin success in education, employment, lifelong learning and personal development.



In November, 253 Year 11 students participated in a week of working with an employer in both the local community and further afield. Year 12 students have also been following the Welsh Baccalaureate as an option in the school's Sixth Form for the first time. The various components of the qualification rewards students for their work both in school and the wider community. In depth articles will appear in the next copy of The Leader.

Education Minister Leighton Andrews said: "Unique to Wales, the Welsh Baccalaureate provides a Fantastic opportunity for young people to gain real life experiences alongside traditional qualifications. It's always encouraging to hear that the qualification is going from strength to strength and I congratulate Monmouth Comprehensive School on driving it forward and making it a success for the benefit of our learners."



### Restorative Practices

Student wellbeing is central to our vision. Expectations are made clear and students are supported in meeting these expectations and taking responsibility for putting things right when they do not. This restorative approach is key to the students learning to lead their lives, taking responsibility for themselves and caring for others. Our core values of; Respect, Freedom with Responsibility, Independence, Security and Success act in many ways like invisible yet palpable force fields that really influence behaviour. Through this approach we become a listening school that respects each other's uniqueness; this leads to better relationships and it is the quality of relationships that is the key determinant. We will be holding open evenings to discuss our approach and answer parental questions in the summer term. In the meantime if you have any questions regarding our restorative practices please do not hesitate to contact Mr A. Williams (Deputy Headteacher) at the school.

### Duke of Edinburgh Award

Year 10 students are well into their expedition training that includes basic first aid, safety outdoors, navigation and camp-craft and they are looking forward to their practice and assessed expeditions in May and June. One of the largest groups (98 students) for some time are completing their Skills, Physical and Volunteering sections of the award learning new skills increasing confidence and learning a great deal about themselves.

Year 11 students are completing the award in increasing numbers- currently 25 students have received their well-deserved lapel badge and certificate whilst twenty two students have progressed to the Silver Award run by Monmouthshire Youth Service.



### IT Update

Many of you will know that our school was selected as the 'pilot' in Monmouthshire to roll out new technologies to support learning. This term we have received over 500 Laptops so that students in every area of the school can be connected 'digitally' to their learning. We have also installed 'Wi-Fi' throughout the school. It has been an exciting time but also a frustrating time. We are sure that many of you at home when you have had to set up a digital system know that it can be exasperating in getting the technology to work, especially the endless conversations with the host server provider. We are nearly there now and the technology will support students in communicating their learning in a variety of ways, creating their learning, being more independent and accessing authentic learning by going out into the real world (albeit virtually). We are hoping for more investment and throughout the summer term we will be continuing to explore how we can develop technology and learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### Holidays during Term Time

Continuity in learning is important at Monmouth Comprehensive School. When a student misses school, it can create difficulties both academically and socially. Wherever possible, term time absence should be avoided (especially during GCSE & GCE years). In exceptional circumstances Parents/Carers may apply to the school for term time absence. An application form will need to be completed (these can be downloaded via School Website or via School Reception) and returned to the school at **least two weeks** before the start of the proposed time of absence. Permission should not be assumed.

### A group of enthusiastic volunteers from the Sixth Form of Monmouth Comprehensive School are preparing themselves for the challenge of a lifetime.

In July of this year, 28 adventurous 16 -18 year olds will embark on an expedition to Northern Morocco under the leadership of World Challenge. Whilst there, they will spend time engaging with local communities and help with building projects and teaching at the local schools. World Challenge works closely with the communities to ensure that help is offered where it is most needed, so the students can be sure that their efforts really will make a difference.



World Challenge is a fantastic organisation that really does 'challenge' young people. On the expedition they will have great independence in terms of budgeting, organising transport, cooking, pitching tents and getting stuck in!

Part of the 'challenge' these young people face, is that they are required to raise the fund for the trip themselves. The total they require is £1349 each, and then they will need to buy the relevant equipment for the demanding expedition. Students have already arranged bag packing services in local supermarkets, sold handmade Christmas crafts, been busking in the local town centre and sought part time working opportunities. They are working tirelessly to raise the required funds.

It is inspiring that so many young people in our local community are willing to give up their time to help those less fortunate – it is a daunting and challenging undertaking that they have embarked on. The team has great spirit and determination and is excited about gaining valuable experiences, helping others and making memories and friends that will last a lifetime.

If anyone in the community feels in a position to help the team in some way; donating a raffle prize, offering sponsorship or part time work please contact Miss Hannah Feldon at Monmouth Comprehensive School.



Boy's hockey at Monmouth Comprehensive is going from strength to strength with a number of players being selected to represent their local county, Wales and even at International level. Jacob Draper-Stone has been selected to play for Great Britain U16 even though he is currently an U14. Jacob has travelled to numerous destinations around the world to represent both Wales and Great Britain. George Goldsmith is playing in goal alongside Jacob in the U16 Welsh team. Edward Goldsmith, Matthew Goldsmith and Marcus Hutchinson have all received county honours with Edward also playing for South Wales alongside Jacob.



MCS Y12 student Angharad Williams, taking part in the 'Eco-Warrior' themed fashion show at the Royal Forest of Dean College with her dress made of 300 crisp packets

**"Thunderbolts and Lightning, very, very frightening" – FarrokhBulsara (Freddie Mercury). On average, every year every single aircraft in the skies is hit by lightning.**

On the afternoon of 23<sup>rd</sup> March an engineer visited the school from a company called EADS. He engineers solutions to carbon fibre aircraft being hit by lightning. He spoke to Y7, who are studying aircraft and flight as part of their 'Stop Press' unit of work which investigates air pressure and the power of air, and showed us some demonstrations of the effects of the technology he has developed. The Y7 students all agreed it as a really interesting and exciting way to about this.



### Tremendous effort by Y11 Rugby Players

Our Y11 teams played their hearts out recently in both the Carnegie Rugby League tournament against Brooksbank in Yorkshire and Maesteg in the Welsh Rugby Union Cup tournament. In spite of tremendous performances, we failed to go through, but our teams were outstanding in their fighting spirit.



### Sport Relief at MCS

Sports Relief 2012 in MCS was a fun and successful day of fundraising. The Charity Committee organised a non-school uniform day with a sport idol theme, a coin mosaic competition, a flash mob and 'Just Dance' on the Wii at break time and lunch time! It was a fantastic day where staff and students were able to have fun and get into the spirit of fundraising for a worthy cause. Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 had a competition to make a sporting mosaic out of coppers. These were judged in registration and 7NC were announced the winners!

At break time, the quiet zone was mobbed with students from all Years, dancing to various songs with the groovy moves led by the Charity Committee! It was a brilliant atmosphere and it was great to see students and staff getting involved.

The fun continued at lunch time when keen dancers were able to show off their moves using 'Just dance' on the Wii. The hall was lively and full of laughter and donation buckets were slowly getting heavier and heavier.

So thank you to everyone who donated! The Charity Committee will continue to work hard for the rest of the year and keep everyone posted with forthcoming plans!

### Success for Ella & George

The immensely enjoyable Monmouth's Got Talent took place in March, when students from MCS, HMSG and Monmouth School competed for recording time at Nimbus Studios. With an extremely high standard of competition, the prize was taken by Ella Sutton and George Thomas. Eleanor Dow and Freya Johnson (below) were also offered recording time, following an impressive performance. The final total raised for Monmouth Aid and Bridges was £2,260.



A full report will follow in next edition of The Leader.



#### Kymin Biathlon - Rowing

This year's annual fundraising activity saw all rowers complete a run all the way to the top of the Kymin along with a 10km bike ride to the picturesque Symonds Yat. This year's event raised a massive £4,000 with the possibility of more to come! This money is vital for the Club's continued success by paying the expensive race entry fees, the maintenance of equipment and saving up for new equipment. The money the Club receives, not only from events like this, but also from various grants, has already paid for a new single scull to add to the fleet! The boat has been named after former Captain Dave Harris.



#### Careers and Higher Education Fair Success

Monmouth Comprehensive School's annual Careers and Higher Education Fair took place recently, to huge success. The event featured over one hundred industry experts and Higher Education professionals, offering advice on careers, work experience opportunities, apprenticeships, subject choices and progression into Higher Education. Despite being one of the coldest nights of the year, record numbers of visitors attended the Fair, which is now a firm fixture for both the school and the local community. One delegate stated that 'it was larger, better organised and better attended than any Regional Fair they attend'.

A few tasters to whet your appetite for The Leader in the summer.....



#### Charity Committee



#### Eisteddfod



#### Youth Speaks Competition



#### Iceland



**The warmer weather is coming – please remember to send your child to school with a refillable water bottle.**

#### Eco Council - Green Week



#### UNIFORM CLARIFICATION

We would like to take this opportunity to clarify some questions we have been asked by parents about uniform and also to thank parents for their continued support in making sure students are dressed in the correct uniform.

- Uniform is compulsory and should be worn appropriately. (Skirts to the knee and no jeans. Formal tailored trousers only)
- Shoes should be leather (or equivalent synthetic material). There should be no trainers, boots or canvas type shoe. **Some laboratories and workshops require appropriate footwear in order to be safe.**
- Coats or jackets should be plain and suitable to keep in the warmth and fend off the rain and wind.
- The school will check uniform regularly and parents and students will be contacted when there are discrepancies.

#### Extra-Curricular





#### TRUTEX UPDATE

The current rugby shirt and socks are being discontinued by Trutex. Consultation has taken place with students through our School and Year Councils and the overall choice from the Form Groups was the reversible Sector top, shown below. This has now been ratified by Governors and will be available for students starting in September 2012. Parents will not be required to buy a new shirt until the current one has been outgrown or has worn out. The same applies to the new socks.



Both items will be available from Trutex and Labels, Ross on Wye.

The Friends Association (FA) comprises of parents, teachers and students who support MCS on a voluntary basis to further the work of the school. We meet monthly for an hour during term time and there is a warm welcome for new members. Please check the school website for times and dates.

Providing a link between home and school, the FA is an excellent way to bring staff, governors, parents and friends together socially in support of the school, working towards a common goal. We also raise funds for equipment and resources to enhance the students' learning and social environment.

The FA plans a number of events throughout the year. For some, we work closely with the school's Charity Committee so that our work reflects the priorities of the students and the school. Not all events are run as fundraisers; some – for example, quiz nights – aim to give those in the school community the opportunity simply to socialise. We intend to build on the links with the local community which have been developed by the school, and look forward to the support of local businesses.

The money the FA raises is used to benefit the students directly; spending priorities are agreed at FA Committee meetings, following consultation with the Head Teachers, who in turn consult teaching colleagues. We have recently bought a much-needed PA system for the school, which is now in frequent use at both FA and school events. We are currently raising funds to purchase mountain bikes, which will be used both for lessons and by the extracurricular mountain bike club.

We are setting up a system where good-quality secondhand uniform items can be purchased via the Friends section of the school website. We are also looking into establishing an Easyfundraising account: as you shop online at your favourite stores, you also raise money for the school, at no cost to you.

If you would like any more information about the FA, please look at the FA section on the school website, or contact us at [moncompfriends@gmail.com](mailto:moncompfriends@gmail.com).

#### The National Junior Sculling Head

Following the success of a record 24 wins for the season so far, 36 students travelled to the 2012 Olympic rowing venue near London to participate in this year's national end of Winter event. This is the height of Head racing in our calendar and is the best measure of how winter training has gone before taking up the challenge of side by side regattas. This year's junior sculling head had us setting off from Monmouth at a demanding time of 5.30am although, after a sleep on the bus we arrived to sunny weather and calm water. The amazing weather saw fantastic rowing with all crews representing the school with prime performances giving two top 10 finishes with our crews beating some of the country's biggest schools. With the winter season now over we look forward to this summer's regattas where we hope for plenty more top end performances and lots more success!



**Don't forget to top up your child's account. This can be done by Parentpay via the internet or by cheque - made payable to Redcliffe Catering. If you have not received details to access Parentpay please contact Mrs C Williams - [charlotte.williams@monmouthcomp.monm.sch.uk](mailto:charlotte.williams@monmouthcomp.monm.sch.uk) or 01600 775230.**

**Just in case you need it...  
The number for the  
Absentee Line is  
01600 775284**

