



English-Speaking Union Scotland NEWSLETTER

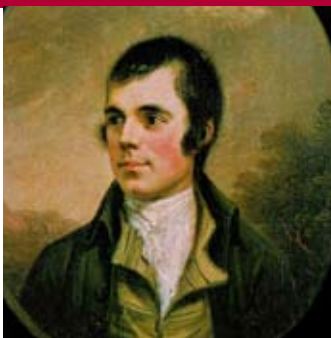
February 2010

- Argentina
- Armenia
- Australia
- Austria
- Bermuda
- Bhutan
- Brazil
- Bulgaria
- Canada
- Chile
- China
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- England & Wales
- France
- Georgia
- Germany
- Hong Kong
- Hungary
- India
- Japan
- Korea
- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Lithuania
- Madagascar
- Malaysia
- Mauritius
- Mexico
- Moldova
- Monaco
- Mongolia
- Morocco
- Nepal
- New Zealand
- Nigeria
- Norway
- Pakistan
- Philippines
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Russia
- Serbia
- Sierra Leone
- Sri Lanka
- Tajikistan
- Thailand
- USA
- Vanuatu
- Yemen

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WELCOME!

We have been really busy recently, with the first rounds of the Juniors and the Schools Mace debating competitions almost complete, despite the terrible weather, and lots of events coming up. We look forward to seeing you soon...



The ESU **John Smith Memorial Mace**, the most prestigious intervarsity debating competition will take place at the Glasgow University Union on Saturday 13th February. The Scottish competition has moved to a one-day event, starting at 11am and lasting all day with the final in the early evening. Former winners include the late Donald Dewar and the late Labour leader, John Smith, in whose honour the competition was renamed. Please come along and support the teams, in what will certainly be a day of debating of the highest standard. The competition is generously sponsored by **Baillie Gifford**.



The John Smith Memorial Mace

The **Atholl Crescent Debating Society** starts 2010 with two excellent events. The first is an **Open Panel Discussion** with the Howard League for Penal Reform. The subject will be Criminal Justice, and the panel will include John Scott from the Howard League and leading representatives of the legal field. It will take place on 10th February at 7.00pm. The second event is a **debate** co-hosted with Heriot Watt University on minimum alcohol pricing, taking place on 12th February.



International Council Meeting
Dartmouth House, London

Our **Inspired? Get writing! Creative Writing Competition**, with the National Galleries of Scotland, and the Scottish Poetry Library, has now closed, with over 800 entries, from as far away as Hong Kong and Germany as well as from all over Scotland. Judging takes place in March and the winners will be announced in early April.



ESU Burns Supper

Our annual **Burns Supper** will take place on Saturday 6th February with a 3 course dinner and entertainment. This is one of our most popular events, so please get in touch to book a place. It costs £15 for dinner (BYOB) and there will be a raffle, so any prizes donated will be gratefully received.

Glasgow University Union Debating Chamber



Founded over 90 years ago by Sir Evelyn Wrench, the ESU has spread to over 50 countries on all five continents. Most recently ESUs have opened in Estonia, Bordeaux, Cyprus and Albania. **ESU Bangladesh** was launched on 25th January. **ESU Malta** will launch on 28th May, with **ESU Turkey** launching on 4th June. ESU Scotland would like to welcome all new ESUs to the international ESU family.



In focus...

Karen Archer, a teacher at Carnoustie High talks about her experience of debating in the classroom...

I have always been enthusiastic about debating. As a pupil I was a keen debater and since entering the teaching profession I have been involved in my school's debating club. However, it was only recently that I began to appreciate fully the benefits debating can bring to the classroom. Attending the ESU's 'Debating in Schools' workshops provided an insight into the ways in which debating can be used in the classroom and highlighted the links between debating and *A Curriculum for Excellence*.

In my classroom I have found various ways to include debating and use debating techniques to enhance the pupils' learning and overall classroom experience. My classes have argued who is the Greatest Scot of all time; used an alley debate to evaluate the significance of a character in a novel; and used the 'making it REAL' format to develop ideas in essays. I can see other areas of potential for debating in my classroom this term: using alley debates to discuss moral issues raised by current events in Form Time; getting pupils to give Points Of Information during talks to build pupils' confidence in their ideas; teaching pupils to disagree in a respectful way by considering appropriate language structures for a class debate.

The most successful use of debating in my classroom so far has been a class debate to determine whether the film version of 'Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' is better than the novel. The debate was a success on a number of levels. Firstly, pupils engaged more with the task than if asked to write their ideas up in an essay or give their opinions in a class discussion. There was a real passion behind their words because they had carefully considered the points which supported their argument and were ready and waiting for the counter-arguments! The pupils worked collaboratively, first as two big groups then were twice divided into smaller groups, which developed their team work skills and highlighted the benefits of working together. The speeches themselves were cleverly crafted using a variety of persuasive language structures and delivered with enthusiasm. The team advocating the merits of the film won the vote of the judges despite the teachers judging having a bias towards the opposition! But it proved to the pupils the power of persuasion and now they regularly ask 'what are we debating next?'

While debating could be argued to fit quite nicely (and more easily) into the English classroom, I strongly believe it has potential in all classrooms, across all subjects and all sectors. In Geography pupils could debate the biggest threats to our environment, while in Art the most influential artist of all time could be a debate topic, and in Science the ethics of cloning could be argued. Debating in the classroom should not be underestimated as a learning and teaching tool. Debating develops skills in critical thinking, evaluation, organisation, communication, citizenship, analysis, research, active listening; all of which are critical, transferable skills our pupils need to be successful in school and beyond.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

FEBRUARY

■ Friday 5th February
10.00am-12.00pm
International Coffee Morning
23 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh, £2

■ Saturday 6th February
7.00pm for 7.30pm
ESU Burns Supper
23 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh
£15 for dinner BYOB
Please contact the office to book

■ Wednesday 10th February
7.00pm
Panel Discussion with The Howard League for Penal Reform on Criminal Justice
23 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh

■ Friday 12th February
6.30pm for 7.00pm
ESU & Heriot Watt University Debate on Minimum Alcohol Pricing
23 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh

■ Saturday 13th February
11.00am - all day
John Smith Memorial Mace
Glasgow University Union
Final to be held early evening
Please contact Jack for details

■ Thursday, 25th February
12.30pm-2.00pm
Edinburgh Branch Lunch
Caroline Hoy
Public Health Adviser, NHS
The Silk Road in Central Asia; Past and Present Glories
Overseas House, 100 Princes Street,
Edinburgh **£12 for 2-course lunch**

MARCH

■ Thursday 4th March
6.00-8.30pm
Creative Writing Group
23 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh

■ Friday 5th March
10.00am-12.00pm
International Coffee Morning
23 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh, £2

For more details of these events, please contact Suzanne in the office

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