



English-Speaking Union Scotland NEWSLETTER

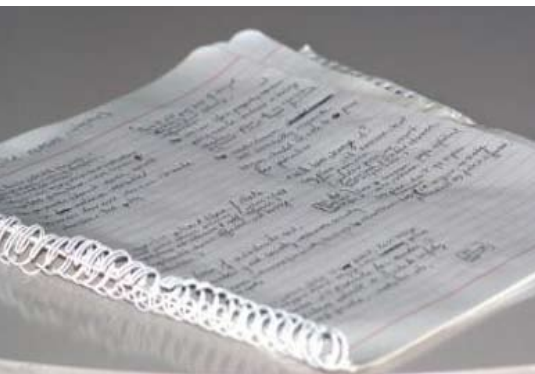
January 2011

Happy New Year from all of us at ESU Scotland! We hope you had a wonderful Christmas and we wish you a happy and healthy 2011. Due to the snow in December we had to cancel a number of events, which will now take place over the next month. As ever, we are always looking for people to help out with anything from judging debates to helping at events so please do get in touch with us to get involved!



Atholl Crescent in December

The postponed ESU Scotland **Vice-Presidents' Cup** will be held at the ESU on Friday 28th January at 7pm. This competition is for schools that have participated in our debates outreach programme, which is generously funded by the Williams Trust, the Roberston Trust and the MacRobert Trust. It is an excellent opportunity to see the positive impact of debate on young people so please do come along to support them.



The **ESU Scotland Creative Writing Group** takes place from 5.15-7.15pm on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month. The group is growing and producing excellent work. Over the next few months we will be looking at effective beginnings, poetry and lyrics, science fiction, and research. The group is open to all writers who are interested in developing their skills.



St. Andrew's Day Debate 2009

Our annual **Burns Supper** will take place at 7.30pm on Saturday 29th January with a yummy 3-course dinner and traditional entertainment. This is one of our most popular members' events, so please get in touch as soon as possible to book your place. It costs £15 for dinner (BYOB) and there will be also be raffle, so any prizes donated will be gratefully received. If you have a secret talent for recitations and you would like to do a "turn" then please contact the office.



ESU Burns Supper

The **St. Andrew's Day Debating Tournament** at the Scottish Parliament has been re-scheduled for Monday 7th February. We are pairing the brightest and best debaters across Scotland for a full-day competition with a number of heats before the final at 4pm. This is the only competition for school pupils and university students and the motions all relate to young people in Scotland. Let us know if you would like to attend or are interested in judging heats during the day.



The 6th **Inspired? Get writing!** creative writing competition closes on 21st January, so if you'd like to enter, now is the time to put pen to paper. Entries can be poems or prose inspired by works in the National Galleries of Scotland's permanent collection, many of which are online on the National Galleries' website. Last year we had 900 entries so we are hoping that this year's will be even bigger. All competition details are on our website. So far we have published two beautiful books with winning entries from past years. Who knows? Yours could feature in the next volume. Good luck!



Spohie Brown, winner 2009
(Photo Alicia Bruce)



In focus...

Brian Monteith, Chairman of ESU reflects on 2010 - a year of challenge, experiment and achievement...

Well that's the old year out and the new year in. Here we are in January 2011, all bright-eyed and bushy-tailed looking forward to what it throws at us and what we make of it ourselves.

Looking back on my first year as Chairman of ESU Scotland I can sum it up by describing it as a year of challenge, experiment and achievement.

The challenges included the continuing search for efficiencies in the teeth of a recession that undoubtedly impacted on our revenues as it has for other charities: the increased demands on our organisation from schools, pupils, students and coaches in the field of debating that are a direct repercussion of our success in the past; the need to find new talent for judging, running committees, voluntary work and the heavy lifting that needs doing on occasions; and just keeping up with the pace of the ESU's activity as the year whizzed by almost in a blur.

I'm pleased to say that those challenges were all met.

Our finances have undoubtedly improved, by battening down the hatches and also through much improved commercial and social activity generating healthier receipts. Despite the inclement weather causing many debating ties to be cancelled at short notice, we managed to complete all of our debating competitions and deliver our outreach programme to teachers and pupils hungry to learn the skills required. New members have joined and new faces have been recruited to help with our work and the new social programme being run from Atholl Crescent.

Many challenges still remain, such as revitalising the work of the Thyne Trust, raising the activity in the gallery even further and building on a very good year for our 'English as a Foreign Language' courses.

We have experimented with a number of new social activities both to raise money and provide more opportunity for membership interaction – some worked, some didn't, and we need to learn from these outcomes as we plan for this year. We shall certainly have another Summer Garden Party and Hallow's Eve Ghostly Dinner, and we shall continue with the established Race Night and Burns Supper – but new ideas are welcomed.

Personal highlights for me include my trips to the launches of new ESUs in Malta and Turkey and the Scotland students' debates team winning the Mace in Cardiff – the first such victory for ten years.

So now it's time to look forward, finalise our plans and drive forward. I hope to see you at the Burns Supper on the 29th January.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

JANUARY 2011

■ Thursday 20th January 5.15-7.15pm
Creative Writing Group
 23 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh
£3, free to ESU Members

■ Thursday 27th January 12.30pm
Edinburgh Branch Lunch
Dana Linnet, Principal Officer of the US Consulate General
 Royal Overseas League, 100 Princes Street, Edinburgh
£12 for lunch. Please book in advance

■ Friday 28th January 7pm
Vice-Presidents' Cup
 23 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh
 All members welcome

■ Saturday 29th January 7.30pm
Burns Supper
 23 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh
£15 for supper (BYOB) Please book in advance

FEBRUARY 2011

■ Thursday 3rd February 5.15-7.15pm
Creative Writing Group
 23 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh
£3, free to ESU Members

■ Friday 4th February 10am-12 noon
International Coffee Morning
 23 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh **£2**
Members welcome!

■ Monday 7th February all day
 Final 4pm in Debating Chamber
St. Andrew's Day Debate
With debaters from schools and universities across Scotland
 The Scottish Parliament
Tickets through the ESU office

■ Thursday 24th February 12.30pm
Edinburgh Branch Lunch
Speaker details to follow
 Royal Overseas League, 100 Princes Street, Edinburgh
£12 for lunch. Please book in advance

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