



PLUS

From the Head Teacher

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this new edition of PPlus, our school newsletter. Contained herein are articles and artefacts that demonstrate the work and achievements of our pupils in a wide variety of contexts. I hope that you will agree with me that the talents and expertise of Preston Lodge students are clearly in abundance within our school and illustrated within the pages of this current edition of PPlus. My thanks to Ms Ainslie, Principal Teacher of English and our enterprising students for compiling, editing and producing this edition of our student newsletter.

W.Galbraith, Head Teacher
January 2008

A big thank you and well done to this edition's S4 writing team. Emma Longmuir, Katie Hill, Iain Richardson, Connor Kelly and Taelor Heron have all worked hard to write articles, take pictures of artwork and attend every meeting.

If you have any comments about PPlus, or suggestions for future articles, please email them to jainslie@prestonlodge.elcschool.org.uk

Duke of Edinburgh Award

When we signed up for this, I don't think we really knew what we were letting ourselves in for... months of doing a service, a skill, and a sport were fine: it was the expedition that was the shock! The Duke of Edinburgh Award is an award which young people can do for several reasons: it can give you a real sense of achievement, you meet lots of new people and gain new skills, and it looks good on your CV! We did the Bronze Award which meant that we did two of either service, skill, or sport for three months, and one for six months. We also had a two-day expedition to look forward to at the end of it!

In order to achieve the award, you need to do three activities over a period of six months. One needs to be physical recreation; one needs to be a skill and the other needs to be a service. Examples of these activities in our group ranged from hockey to golf (physical recreation); helping at Rainbows, Brownies or Guides to cleaning a local church (service) and playing a musical instrument to touch-typing (skills). These enabled us to try out new things and improve other aspects of ourselves, such as working with others.

As well as these activities, we also needed to go on two practice expeditions and go to after school sessions at the East Lothian Outdoor Education Centre, with Mr Bill Stevens. Our first practice expedition was on 5th December (2006). For this, we went to the Pentlands for the day. There, we learnt and put into practise maps skills. We went in pairs and took it in turn to lead the group to certain points along the way. We only intended to navigate our way up one hill but because we were so fast and efficient we managed to climb two! It was a very cold day and we were all kitted out with bright red waterproofs. Our spirits, however, were not dampened by the weather and we all had a great time and learnt some maps skills!

Our second practice was on 24th April (2007). This time, we went to the Lammermuirs and also worked on map skills and our teamwork. We had to try and go at a pace that everyone in the group could manage. This didn't always work, but on the whole we did quite well.

In the spring, we went to several sessions after school at the Outdoor Education Centre. They included putting up and taking down tents; using the stoves we would take on the real expedition; making route cards for the expedition and planning the expedition, for example, preparing menus and going over what the expedition would consist of.

After what seemed like months of preparation with Bill, we were finally ready to set off on our expedition. This was perhaps the most exciting aspect of the whole Duke of Edinburgh experience, and we were all excited about it.

On the morning of the expedition, it rained. Not the best of weather for climbing hills, but hey, we live in Scotland - it was expected! We soon arrived at our location, were given the maps we had used to plan our journey, and set off with extremely (and we really, really mean

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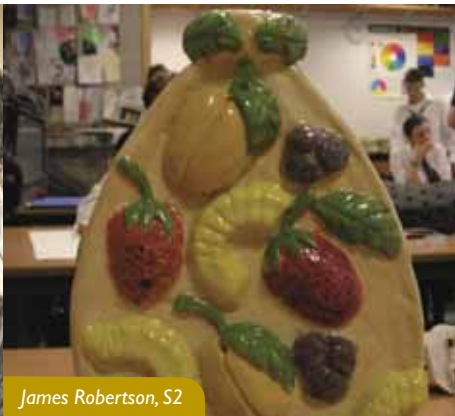
ARTWORK BY PL PUPILS



Karina Doran, S4



Neil Goodman, S4



James Robertson, S2



Lisa Noon S3

Beethoven vs. Beyonce

A parent's greatest dilemma when it comes to education: do you send your child into the real world, or to the material world? For most parents there is no choice: they know that private school fees are expensive, and have no option but to send their children to their local state school. For others, it may be the family tradition that their offspring attends a certain school, or perhaps parents have been scared off their local school by rumours of indiscipline or poor attainment.

One of the most common misconceptions is that you get a better quality education at a private school. We don't think this is the case. In both state and private education, you will find dedicated teachers, who are determined to see the pupils through their exams, and offer as much support as they can. Smaller classes in private schools may allow each pupil to receive more individual help, and some classes in state schools are big, but the advent of the maximum class size in English and Maths in S1/2 will certainly be a benefit for all pupils starting secondary at a state school. A lot of parents worry about indiscipline at their local school, too, and think that their child may go unnoticed if certain students feel the need to misbehave and need the teacher's constant encouragement, leaving those requiring assistance with course work practically invisible. While everyone at a state school could probably tell a story about a class that they've been in which has been difficult, our experience is that it hasn't

killed us and may just have taught us a vital life lesson – that you've got to learn to deal with people from all walks of life if you want to be a success in your own.

Some argue that private school funding allows for more opportunities to be granted to the students, such as trips, specialist visitors, better equipment and facilities. No one could argue that some private schools have excellent facilities, but state schools offer their students a huge number of opportunities, too. At Preston Lodge, we have very committed teachers who run all sorts of clubs, from sports ones to music, debating and chemistry. We also know that certain students that attend state schools achieve just the same grades as they would in private education because ultimately if you are being taught the right curriculum and you want to learn, you will – wherever you go to school.

We think it's unfair that newspapers publish the league tables for schools' results without providing information about the context of each school. Private schools use entrance tests to filter out those who don't match their standards, so by selecting the academically gifted and well-motivated youngsters, the public gets the impression that students in private schools are receiving a better education. Because of this, state schools are reputed for lower grades. We believe that it would be much fairer to publish statistics on the difference that schools make to all their pupils' attainment and life opportunities, not just what qualifications they leave school with.

'On Our Doorstep'

Preston Lodge Home Economics department has started 'On our Doorstep', an after school cook club for S2 and S3 pupils. The aim of the club is to allow pupils a more relaxed environment to create a variety of dishes. The emphasis is on the use of local produce, and each recipe used will contain ingredients sourced from East Lothian suppliers. The pupils will develop an awareness of what is available on their doorstep and link in well with our whole school project in 2008. At the end of January the pupils attending the club will take part in a competition involving the creation of dishes from what they have discovered in the local area. We aim to involve local food experts in the judging. Who knows, we may even see a recipe book emerging from their culinary creations!

Mhairi Angus



We think that private education could be described as 'sugar coated' whereas a state school education provides life lessons as well as a quality education. Children, through being in contact with all types of young people from different backgrounds, build character and develop the skills to deal with all sorts of situations throughout life. Pupils from state schools are better prepared for the outside world after learning how to achieve success through their own motivation. Perhaps private education suits parents who don't quite trust their child to be his or her own person and work hard...

Taelor Heron, Connor Kelly, Iain Richardson

Soc Voc Group

It's been a busy few months for the Social and Vocational Skills groups. We have been studying communication, both in formal and informal settings, and the associated skills. We have kept a daily diary, logging the things we have done. This helps to provide evidence but also helps us to remember the range of interesting and enterprising activities we have completed. We have had visits from the RNIB and The Scottish Sensory Centre helping us to understand the needs of people with impairments and disabilities. It was great fun practising Braille and using a cane to walk about the class, and really helped us to appreciate the difficulties faced by visually impaired people.

Also, the pupils hand-produced many items which were sold at our Christmas fair to raise money for local groups and perhaps a trip away in 2008. With the great ideas and support of Mr Fulton and the Art Department the decorations and candle holders that had been produced sold like hot-cakes!

A new initiative this term is selling organic 'veggie' boxes. The boxes cost £5 and the SVS pupils take orders from staff and then arrange for the distribution of the boxes, with the help of the Home Economics department.

Dylan Bell

Debaters Win First Round...

Sean Gaffney (S2) and Calvin MacDonald (S5) beat two Sixth year pupils from Craigmount High School in the first round of the Donald Dewar debating competition run by the Law Society. The boys spoke brilliantly, working well as a team and coping with some difficult questions thrown at them by the opposition. They won through to the second round which will take place in February at Inverkeithing High School in Fife. Good luck!

Ms Maconkey

Preston Lodge High School: a Health Promoting School

Schools can make a significant contribution to increasing the quality of life for their students, staff and wider community by becoming health-promoting schools. Becoming a health promoting school provides a way for each school to listen to, and take account of the views of pupils, parents and staff. A positive, health promoting school ethos can influence health, attainment, achievements and expectations. *A route to health promotion*, HMIE, 1999

The Scottish Executive undertook the challenge to actively promote the development of a holistic approach to education, health and care of Scotland's children & young people in early 2002. To create the focus they announced the intention that every school should become a Health Promoting School by 2007. Preston Lodge achieved level 1 by summer 2006.

We are now working towards level 2, which should be achievable by summer 2008 if we all work together to achieve the goals. An online questionnaire has been created to allow consultation with all school stakeholders. The results of this will form the priority areas to take forward over the next period of time. There are six capacities which require attention:

- Curriculum, teaching and learning
- Organisation, ethos and climate
- Physical environment
- Health & Welfare of Staff
- Links with family & community
- Role of specialist services

Each of these areas will be tackled over the coming months to achieve progress and positive outcomes for all involved. Please take time to fill in the questionnaire which will be available as a link on the school website. Updates on progress will be circulated at appropriate times. If anyone is interested in joining our Health Promoting Schools committee, please contact Liz Nicoll (HE dept) for more information. We would welcome any new members from the school community.



SVS pupils' activities



Le petit déjeuner Français!

All S2 pupils have been studying Food and Drink, a very popular S2 French Topic! One part of the course is to enjoy a French Breakfast. The French breakfast is the first part of a series of activities taking place in Modern Languages, Home Economics and P.E. Between the three departments, pupils will be looking at the importance of having breakfast, at the calories involved, as well as ways to use up these calories.

All pupils were invited to participate and there was a variety of food available, such as croissants, pain au chocolat, brioche and petits gâteaux called madeleines. To drink we had apple or orange juice. We all enjoyed the breakfast and had a lovely time, and we are sure the French teachers enjoyed it just as much as the pupils! It was a good lesson all round.

Thank you very much to all the staff who made this fantastic lesson possible.

By Rachel Murdoch and Samantha Cunningham (S2)



MORE ARTWORK



James Robertson, S2



Katie Bremner, S6



Satu Virtanen



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extremely) heavy bags in tow. It didn't seem so hard at first; once you got used to the bags it was bearable and the map reading got easier as we could actually see these lines and masses of green in real life. The rain went off for a while, and most of us seemed to be having fun! We had planned times for set distances, and managed to either meet these or beat them.

After what seemed like days of walking, we finally reached our destination of the van in the pouring rain. We were all soaking, tired and absolutely freezing cold, but at least we had managed the first day of walking! Heading for the van, we could put our feet up for a while until we reached Innerleithen, where we would stay on a campsite.

After carrying our heavy weights so far, we could finally take the tents and stoves out of them to set everything up for staying over. The cooking was perhaps the part that took us (okay, well just Katie and me then...) the longest! Because of the rain the flame for the stove kept going out, so Katie worried about dying from spaghetti-poisoning, and I just got annoyed that the matches were too soaked to light! We eventually managed to eat our tea though, and then got ready to go to sleep... in the freezing cold tents, in the rain.

The next day, we all had sore shoulders from the bags. Apparently the second day was meant to be easier, but whoever thought that missed out the beginning of the journey which was extremely difficult as it was all uphill! After that bit was eventually over, it got easier from there. It was much like the first day, apart from it was a lot windier as we were higher up in the hills, and we were allowed to walk a lot of it by ourselves.

It was quite a relief when we finished our walking, but we did all seem to find it fun. It was a challenge but in the end it was worth it!

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has been a good learning and team building experience. It was challenging, especially the expedition, but the Award gave us something to aim for over the period that we worked towards it. Most importantly, it was great fun and very enjoyable. Roll on the Silver award!

Emma Longmuir and Katie Hill, S4



Twelve lucky Preston Lodge pupils and Music department staff were treated to a two-day djembe and African drumming workshop by Moctar 'Mockoulo' Sawane, from Senegal.

The students learned traditional rhythms and songs of the Malinke people as well as learning about the history and significance of the drums to the Mandinka culture.

The students thoroughly enjoyed the experience – PLHS West African Drumming ensemble has taken root and we now offer lessons on a Friday after school which have proved popular with both teachers and pupils.

Mr Smith

Preston Lodge Pupils are the best in East Lothian!

On the 2nd November two teams from Preston Lodge took part in a Modern Studies Quiz against all the other East Lothian secondary schools. Our groups came first and second. Preston Lodge hasn't won the competition since 2003.

The S2 team, 'PL Dodgers' were: Gavin Cumming, Morgan MacColl, Stephanie Harkes and Katie Lynch. The S1 team (Brodie Sandilands, Rebecca Muir, Cameron McSorley, Adam Vince and Clara

Owen) named themselves 'Superheroes in Training'. Another member of Preston Lodge, Brandon Falconer, helped out a Ross High team, who were one person short.

The teams answered questions on the Scottish Parliament, US Politics, Aid to Africa and recent films. The two Preston Lodge teams shared the lead all through the contest, but ultimately the 1st years came out on top, with the 2nd years a very close second. Perhaps Cameron McSorley's

photographic memory had something to do with it – the teachers from the other East Lothian schools were very impressed by his ability to list virtually all the American states, in alphabetical order!

Apart from being a great success for Preston Lodge, the quiz was also fun to take part in. Both teams received HMV vouchers and a trophy for the school. As winners, Preston Lodge will be expected to host the Modern Studies Quiz next year.

by Morgan MacColl, Katie Lynch and Steph Harkes, with assistance from Hannah Goodman