

Wallace Hall Academy

NEWSLETTER

December 2011

Working Together to Achieve More



Top Results for WHA

Sunday Times Success



Once again, Wallace Hall Academy achieved success by being ranked at number 22 in the Sunday Times Scottish Schools of the Year list.

A delighted Mr Graham said: "I am very proud of the achievements of the students, staff and parents of Wallace Hall

Academy. Excellent results like this are produced when we all work together to achieve more. At Wallace Hall Academy we model, nourish and encourage an enthusiasm for learning. This is something that we must continue to develop as a whole school community."

SQA Stars

The Queensberry Initiative at Wallace Hall Academy was delighted to receive a trophy for Innovation (Highly Commended) at the Scottish Qualifications Authority Star Awards ceremony held on Friday 4th November in Anniesland College in Glasgow. This recognition was to acknowledge the Initiative's new ways of working with young people in the outdoor classroom and increasing their employability skills development.

The school was particularly pleased as Wallace Hall Academy

was the only school to be featured; the other awards were presented to individuals, partnerships and colleges. The Queensberry Initiative is partly funded by Dumfries and Galloway LEADER Programme, DGHP and the Holywood Trust as well as several local community councils.

Yvonne Gall, Depute Head Teacher, and the school's SQA Co-ordinator and Pat Kirby, Development Officer of the Queensberry Initiative, travelled to Glasgow for the gala dinner and awards ceremony. Head Teacher Barry Graham said: "Recognition from the SQA for our achievements through the Queensberry Initiative is something we can all be proud of. The

trophy shelf in my office is beginning to look somewhat crowded – but that is a problem I am happy to have on behalf of the school and the wider community." Photograph shows Pat Kirby receiving the Award from Graeme Ogilvy, SQA.



Excelling at International Education



Over the past few months Wallace Hall Academy pupils and staff have been busy meeting and collaborating with people from all over the world. Spear-headed by Alan Harley, one of our Social Subjects members of staff, our school is very much at the forefront of International Education.

In November, through the Comenius Exchange project, we welcomed 38 pupils and 7 members of staff from Belgium, Norway, Bulgaria, Hungary and Germany. Earlier this term, Mr Harley organised a week

long trip for Wallace Hall Academy pupils to Bulgaria. Mr Harley also accompanied four senior Wallace Hall Academy pupils, who took part on the excursion to China in the spring, to the China Day held at the Crichton Campus, Dumfries. It is hoped that these pupils will eventually become Ambassadors for British/Chinese education. Full reports on these activities and our very successful Battlefields Trip, led by Mr Turner, DHT, inside. Photograph on the left shows Mr Harley enjoying a rickshaw ride while on the China Trip earlier this year.

Working Together to Achieve More

Young Entrepreneurs



One of the most popular Personal and Social Education activities for our S6 pupils is Young Enterprise. Led by Mrs Griffiths, one of our Business Studies teachers, the activity is aimed at inspiring young people to create and market a product or a service that will succeed in a global economy.

This year's group, pictured left, have decided to compile and produce a recipe book with recipes gathered from some of "Nithsdale's finest cooks". This is a quality product with a range of recipe ideas suitable for all occasions and would make an excellent gift. The book will be available soon. Please contact the school for more details.

School Life in Estonia

by Kreete Sepp

The first things I noticed here that are different from an Estonian school is the school's "stage system" (here P1-P7 and S1-S6), the lengths of periods and breaks, homework and the students' ability to select his/her own subjects.

In Estonia you start school at the age of 7, sometimes 6. The first stage, which lasts for 5 years, is like Primary. Grades 6-9 are like Secondary and the final three grades (10-12) are optional, but most people choose to do them. At the end of 9th and 12th grade there are formal graduations and big celebrations.

A school year begins on the 1st of September (in Estonia it's known as Wisdom Day) and ends at the beginning of June. October and Easter holidays both last for one week only. Our normal schoolday starts at 8 o'clock and usually there are 6 or 7 periods a day. One

period lasts for 45 minutes and there is a 10 or 20 minute break after every period. There are three lunch breaks – one for every "stage" – 20 minutes each.

All subjects in Estonia are compulsory subjects. In 9th grade (which I just graduated from) you have to do the following subjects: Estonian, English, Russian, Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography, History, SE, Music, Art, Administration and PE. We study English from 3rd grade till the end of school (10 years) and Russian from 6th grade till the end of school (7 years). There are a lot of subjects you can do here but not in Estonia, such as Rural Skills, a hairdressing course and all kinds of topics through modules. The only subject we can choose is one language (Spanish, German and French are the most common) for our last three school years.

In Estonia we get much more



homework than here – loads every day. We have about 28 - 30 tests in different subjects every term (and these are serious tests!). The best mark you could get is 5 and the failing mark is 2. 4 is okay and 3 is quite weak.

It is a huge experience to study in a different country for a year and I'm sure I will leave with great memories.



Hospitality Hygiene

On the 4th and 25th of November S4, S5 and S6 pupils studying Hospitality worked through a Food Hygiene course lead by Matthew Aitken from Underwood Consulting. The course covered all aspects of safe preparation and storage of food which would be required in the

hospitality industry. Twenty eight pupils were successful in the assessment and have now been awarded a certificate from The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland. Some of the Intermediate 2 pupils are pictured here with their certificates.



On Friday the 30th of September S3 and some S4 Biologists had a trip to the Glasgow Science Centre to learn about Genetics, where we received a lecture on Genetics, followed by hands on practical activities.

We got there at 12pm and went straight to the lecture hall and listened to our lecturer tell us about Genetic Inheritance and whether things were to do with the environment or genetics for an hour which was very interesting.

After that we went to the lab where there were several plastic test tubes round the room with mutant drosophila flies in them and a microscope next to each of

Genetics at Glasgow Science Centre

report by Inga Hill

them. Then we had to go round them, examine them through the microscope and try to guess what their mutant gene was. After lunch we had time to go round the museum and see what else it had to offer.

It was a very educational day and gave us a very interesting insight into genetics. The hands on experiments were most enjoyable.



Promoting links between Scotland and China

Report by Eleanor Burns

Five pupils and three members of staff travelled to Dumfries and Galloway College on the 15th of November to attend a conference on creating links between China and Scotland. The event highlighted the importance of establishing educational and cultural links between one of the world's fastest growing economies.



Presentations by both staff and pupils, who travelled to China earlier this year, were well received by those present. The pupils gave a presentation to share their experiences and thoughts from the trip. It is hoped that the pupils involved will eventually become Ambassadors for British/Chinese education.

Mr Harley gave a talk on the pros and cons of travelling to and establishing a link with China, in particular between schools. Mr Harley's presentation was well received and will be forwarded to the Scottish Government by Judith McClure, Head of the Scottish/Chinese Education Network.

With another trip to Beijing and Shanghai in 2013 already organised, the event gave an insight into how Wallace Hall and Dumfries and Galloway, as a whole, could improve on the links already present within the region.

Earlier this month Mr Harley also visited Dumfries German Club and gave a presentation on the Wallace Hall Academy pupil exchange visit to Germany earlier this year.

My World of Work



Juliet Campbell is the Careers Adviser at Wallace Hall Academy and will be in school every Monday. Juliet works for an

organisation called Skills Development Scotland.

Skills Development Scotland has launched a new web service called My World of Work. The web service is full of self-help features and valuable advice. It's designed to help find out what you're good at and then match it to the types of learning and jobs which will suit you best. You can create, customise and store CVs, search for jobs and courses, find out what employers are looking for, watch job related videos, get interview tips and much, much more.

The web service can help you:

- ◆ choose the right training
- ◆ understand what you're good at
- ◆ learn more about careers that interest you
- ◆ build and customise your CV
- ◆ search for jobs

◆ interview skills

Why not see for yourself? www.myworldofwork.co.uk

Career appointments can be made for S4, S5 and S6 pupils on a Monday in school. Pupils can request an interview with Juliet, either by asking their PT Pupil Support or a member of the SMT to arrange an interview or by contacting Mrs Menzies in the Library.

Juliet's contact details are as follows: Juliet Campbell, Careers Adviser, Careers Scotland Centre, Loreburne Centre, High Street, Dumfries, DG1 2BD. Tel: 01387 272500. You can email Juliet direct on: Juliet.campbell@sds.co.uk.

Information about all of Skills Development Scotland's services can be found at www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk.

The Blue Balloon by Josie Fairley Keast



At the start of our first term at Wallace Hall Academy we discovered that two periods a week, we would be doing something called S1 Project. That Friday, we met Mrs Robinson and learnt that our S1 Project would be 'Young Apprentice'.

We discussed what to do and eventually decided to split into four teams and decide what to sell from there. There were two girl teams

and two boy teams. I was in a group with Bryony Martin, Grace O'Sullivan and Caitlin Harley. We named Grace as team leader and decided on a group name - The Blue Balloons! We were going to make bracelets out of scoobies and wool, to sell to pupils in the school. We searched for some wool on the internet which we could afford for our budget of £10. We also found some beads to weave into our bracelets.

Just before interval on the 30th of September, we set up tables in the Street and sold our bracelets at breaktime. We were up against 3 other teams: Cupcakes 'R' Us, Supersub and King Tablet. We were worried at first, because the other teams were selling rapidly. But suddenly King Tablet ran out of tablet, soon followed by Cupcakes 'R' Us. While they were counting up their money, Supersub ran out of rolls. We were the only team left, but some of the other teams had a pretty large pile of cash. However, there was still lunchtime. Grace and Caitlin took some bracelets round the staff bases, and when they came back Bryony and I took some round the playground, as it was a sunny day and most of our potential customers were outside. As the bell went for the end of break, we packed up and went to Design and Technology, hoping we'd done enough.

During Maths, Mrs Robinson told Caitlin and I that we'd won, and raised £70 for charity altogether. We were really happy and let Grace and Bryony know as soon as we could. Thank you to anyone who bought one of our bracelets. We had a great time and we hope that everyone else did too.

I started playing the violin when I was four and a half. I remember being very excited when I got to play my first concert with the Galloway Suzuki Group in Castle Douglas.

The first tune I played was "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" which at the time I probably thought I sounded great but looking back at DVDs I am not so sure - perhaps I sounded more like a strangled cat! I am lucky to have the same teacher who taught the internationally famous Nicola Benedetti whom I have met.

I am so pleased that I have been able to play grand venues such as the Usher Hall, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall and Wellington College in London with the National Children's Orchestras of Scotland and Great Britain. I enjoy playing in big orchestras as you make new

Imogen's Inspiration by Imogen Gordon

friends as well as getting to play great pieces of music such as William Walton's "Spitfire Prelude and Fugue" and Mussorgsky's "A Night on the Bare Mountain". "Saint-Saens Danse Bacchanale" from Samson and Delilah is also one of my favourites as it is such a dramatic piece.

I am hoping that our school can start its own orchestra and get more people playing music.

Stop Press: It is hoped that a school orchestra will be formed in the very near future. If you are interested and play an instrument suitable for an orchestra ensemble, please speak to a member of the music staff or add your name to the list in the Library.



Iona Strikes Gold

In a recent photography competition held to select photographs taken by amateur photographers of any age, S6 pupil Iona Brown was chosen as the overall winner. Pho-

tographs entered had to feature a sculpture by Andy Goldsworthy, locally-based International land artist. Iona's photograph will appear in Andy's next book and is currently to be viewed in the Gracefield exhibition of his work.





On Thursday the 29th of September the music students of Wallace Hall Academy were in for a rare treat. Ben Bryden, one of the biggest names in jazz, came to our school for an exclusive concert and workshop.

He brought with him a diverse group of musicians from across the globe to help with the action packed day. Between them there was a drummer, guitarist, double bass player and two saxophonists. Ben and his band have a unique playing style and throughout the afternoon we students got a little taste of what it was like.

First we all enjoyed listening to Ben and the band play some

Ben and his band visit WHA

report by Oliver Rideout

songs - some of which Ben had composed himself, others timeless classics including an interesting take on the Flintstones Theme Tune. Next we students had a bash at inventing and improvising ourselves in a great workshop put together by Ben. This has definitely helped me to have confi-

dence in giving my own compositions a go and has motivated me to keep on practicing my instruments.

We are all very thankful to the Music Department for organising the event and hope that Ben and his band will be able to visit again sometime in the future.



Rotary Interviews Prepare Students for Life Beyond School

Over 80 sixth year students from Wallace Hall Academy were recently put through their paces in Thornhill and District Rotary's annual Mock Interview programme for schools.

This year the event was organised by Wallace Hall Principal Teacher Kerry Fraser and Thornhill Rotarian Stan Young. Stan said: "Once again we were most impressed by the way in which the Wallace Hall students presented themselves at interview. I am sure all of them will do well when the 'real thing' comes along. I am also most grateful to Rotarian Peter Charlesworth of Thornhill-based

Replay Learning who 'lent' us two of his staff as interviewers."

S6 pupil Craig Musher commented: "I found the whole process very helpful. We were given very constructive feedback on our personal statements and learned how to conduct ourselves in a formal interview. Thank you to the

Rotarians for giving up their time to help us."

Picture below shows S6 student Laura Kennedy being interviewed by Rotarian Jack Buchan. Looking on are Wallace Hall students, Thornhill Rotarians and Replay Learning's Lyndsay Anderson and Roxane Edwards.





Chanter Champion

by Mhairi Prentice

On the 3rd of September 2011 I travelled to the Theatre Royal Dumfries to take part in the Robert Burns' Festival Under 14 Chanter Competition. I have been learning the chanter for 2 years. My first tutor was Bill Clement but, following his recent retirement, I am now taught by Hugh Drysdale. The tune I played for the competition was

"Teribus".

It was quite nerve-racking but fun at the same time. The judge, Pipe Major Niall McNaughton from Campbeltown said that I gave a good, confident performance. I was very pleased and proud of myself when I heard that I had won. I was presented with the Ian Holmes Cup for my achievement. Two other Wallace Hall pupils were also competing in the competition: Fraser Morton who came 3rd and Ted Boyd who came 4th. Overall it was a great day.

Alton Towers Physics Trip 2011

report by Katherine McNeil, David Kilgour, Cameron Scott and James Wright



On the 23rd of September forty pupils from the S3 Physics classes and five Advanced Higher students went to Alton Towers for a day of physics and fun.

The bus arrived at Wallace Hall Academy at 4:20am and then at Dumfries White Sands at 4:45am to pick up the remaining pupils and Dr

Fulton. We arrived at Alton Towers and spent the day enjoying the rides before we attended a lecture on the physics of the rides at the amusement park. After the talk we had several hours of free time to sample even more of the rides and attractions. Some of the fabulous rides we took a ride on included: Air, Nemesis, Rita, Thirteen, Sonic

Spinball and Oblivion.

We all enjoyed our day learning about the physics of amusement park rides and found it very educational. We were all very tired after a long day out and we would like to thank Mr Jack, Dr Fulton and Mrs Dalglish for taking us.



S1 Pupils Read for Pleasure

The English Department works very closely with the Library to encourage literacy. All S1 pupils spend one of their English periods each week in the Library working on the Silver Reading Award Scheme.

John Docherty, one of the English staff at Wallace Hall Academy, said: "There are few things more satisfying than seeing a child completely lost in a book. The Reading Award scheme encourages more and more children to lose themselves in literature." English Teacher Hayley Whyte added: "The Reading Awards play a huge part in pupils' first year at Wallace Hall Academy and encourage both reading and critical thinking. Many pupils achieve the Silver Award with some making it on to try the Gold but all feel a sense of pride in what they accomplish."

In addition, as part of the P7 Induction Days, all P7 pupils are timetabled for one period in the Library where the Reading Award

process is started at Bronze level. During this induction day period pupils are encouraged to take home a reading book to enjoy over the summer holidays and then complete two activities: write a short letter to the author of their chosen book and design a new front cover for the book. The completed worksheets are then handed in to Mrs Menzies after the summer holidays with Bronze certificates, prizes and house points awarded for the best entries. Almost half of our new S1 pupils handed in completed Bronze Awards, a fantastic response to what is a voluntary activity.

Mrs Jane McMillan, Learning Leader with responsibility for Literacy, said: "Our new S1 have been very keen to engage in this activity and many of them obviously enjoy reading. The standard of the entries this year has been very high and it was great to see the effort that the pupils had put in over the summer holidays." Bryony Platt,

one of our new S1 pupils, said: "The Reading Awards are good as completing the activities helps you understand the book that you are reading. Reading a book is a good thing as books can both entertain and educate us. I love getting lost in a good book; it is a great way to pass the time and further educate yourself." Head Teacher Barry Graham, who presented the prizes for the Bronze Reading Awards, said: "Reading Awards are used to encourage all of the pupils to find books that they are interested in and to develop an enjoyment of reading for life. We feel it is so important that all the young people read as it can have a positive effect on their achievement and attainment outside of school."

Overall winners were chosen as follows: Deri Ronan, 1.C1, Lucas Sale, 1.C2, Zara Eastwood, 1.N1, Lorna Rideout, 1.N2, Aaron Tyler, 1.S1 and Demi Brown, 1.S2. Drew Thow, 1.S1, was awarded the prize for the best entry completed on a computer.

Pictured below are the S1 pupils with their Bronze certificates.



1.C1



1.C2



1.N1



1.N2



1.S1



1.S2

Vacancies on Invigilation Team

We are looking for a couple of new members for our friendly invigilation team to work mainly during the month of May. Hours are flexible and during school time. If you would like to find out more please contact Liz Simmonds, Chief Invigilator, on 01848 330001.



Book Recommendation by Josie Fairley Keast

"Sickened" is the true story about a girl called Julie. Since she was a small child, her mother insisted she was ill and has dragged her in and out of different doctors. She even suggested open heart surgery to 'get to the bottom of this'.

When Julie grew up she discovered Munchausen by Proxy. It is one of the

world's most hidden and dangerous forms of child abuse and is usually about the mother of a child being convinced her child is ill and is furious at various doctors and nurses for saying that there is nothing wrong.

I found this book interesting and I felt very sorry for Julie. I'd recommend it to people who like autobiographies.

Front Page News by Niamh Snailham

One of our homework exercises for Modern Studies last year was to design a newspaper front page. I completed this and handed it in just before I moved into S2.

Recently, Mr Graham approached me to ask if it was ok for him to submit this piece of work into a national competition. I agreed and he sent it away. To my surprise just last weekend, I received a letter from the

Modern Studies Educational Trust (sponsored by Hodder Education) telling me that I had won this competition. They said that my work was "well presented, well researched and very informative." I was awarded a certificate and a cheque for £20.

I am exhilarated to have learned about my win and I am preparing to spend my money soon.



S1 Project - Famous Mathematicians

report by Dougie Greatorex 1S1

As part of our S1 project this term we looked at the History of Mathematics with Mrs Robinson.

In the first lesson we looked up old measurements of length then after that we explored famous mathematicians. We were put into groups and asked to investigate a famous mathematician of our choice and then do a presentation on our findings in a style that we wanted.

My group was Sam Hall, Brodie Hall and me. We chose to do a Powerpoint presentation about Fibonacci and explained the Fibonacci Sequence. There were another three groups; two of them also did Fibonacci but the third chose Isaac Newton. It was close and all of them were really good. (I didn't think we would win but we did!)

I think everyone enjoyed this and hope the other S1 projects were as much fun as our one.



Forensic Fun at WHA



Young scientists at Wallace Hall Academy recently had the chance to learn more about forensic science. Organised by Mrs Catherine McNay, Learning Leader, the pupils looked at how a crime scene is investigated, how the evidence is traced and how all of this information is brought together to provide answers about how and why a crime is committed. All of the pupils taking part really enjoyed the activities.

Hallowe'en Disco

As ever, the Hallowe'en Disco at Wallace Hall Academy was a resounding success. There were some fantastic costumes on display with pupils and staff putting in a lot of time and effort into their outfits. The event was organised by the S6 Social Committee who really got into the spirit of the night and made sure everyone had a good time.



To a 'tache

In response to our Movember Motivators (below) Alice Howdle, one of our ASL teachers, adapted Rabbin Burns' words as follows:

Wee sleeokit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in my breastie!
Thou need tae gae awa as hasty,
As humanly possible!
I wad be first to rin an' shave thee
Wi' murd'ring razor!

I'm truly sorry man's hirsuteness,
Is just no a match for female cuteness
An' justifies that ill opinion,
What makes us startle
At thee, thy poor, testosterone-born companions,
On' our colleagues' faces.

But 'Tachie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving not-shaving may be in vain;
The best-laid schemes 'o razors an' men
Gang aft agley,
An' lea'e us nought but joy an' anticipation,
At thy removal.

Movember Motivators

The male staff at Wallace Hall Academy have been doing their bit recently for male health. **Movember (the month formerly known as November!) is a world-wide moustache growing charity event held during November each year that raises funds and cancer awareness in men.**

At the start of Movember men register with a clean shaven face. The Movember participants known as Mo Bros then have the remainder of the month to grow and groom their moustache and along the way raise as much money and awareness about male health issues as possible. Going by the photograph on the right the event has been taken very seriously indeed at WHA with a variety of facial fuzz styles on display – some more successful than others! Well done to our very own Mo Bros.



Everything will be rosy in the garden!

Wallace Hall Academy has been delighted to receive the generous donation of a large garden shed which is sited near the PE block in the school gardens.

The Wallace Hall Academy Parent Council kindly funded the full cost of the shed, its base and fixings, ensuring that all the gardening tools and equipment now have a home which can be accessed by class groups for a variety of activities. Prior to the receipt of this gift, tools were lurking in Science laboratories, Pupil Support offices and many other dark corners of the school. Now we all know where the tools can be found and we have a site for all the additional recent donations of usable tools.

If any parents or other members of the community have tools which they would like to donate, they would be most welcome.



Please contact Mr Riley, Learning Leader, if you are able to help.

On behalf of the school, Mr Riley would like to thank the Parent Council for the gift of the shed and all of those who have contributed tools or other gardening

equipment. Hopefully our garden will flourish next spring!

The photograph above shows Mr Riley (dressed to compliment his new Movember look!) with some WHA pupils outside the new garden shed.

Wallace Hall Academy Battlefields Trip 2011

by Emma F Sloan



Just after midnight on Tuesday 27th of September, thirty-eight young historians accompanied by five members of staff set out on a long awaited journey to the Battlefields of the First World War in France and Belgium. Our five day trip was enriched with emotional experiences as we visited museums, trenches, cemeteries, battlefields sites and memorials of all shapes and sizes.

Thrown straight in at the deep end, we made our first visit to Vimy Ridge, France where the French and German trenches were just fifteen metres apart and the tall white marble towers built as a memorial are engraved with the names of over 11,000 soldiers whose bodies were never found.

On Wednesday we travelled to Lissjenthoeck military cemetery which is the largest Commonwealth cemetery in the world. There, we paid our respects to Nellie Spindler, who was a nurse in a field hospital and was one of the few women to be buried abroad during the war. Later that day, we visited Talbot House in Ypres, Belgium where soldiers had lived and socialised when not on the front line which portrayed to us a different side of their lives. Here students were allowed to play a piano once played by the soldiers of the First World War and visit the chapel where they prayed.

On Thursday we visited the Somme sector of the battlefields in northern France. At Contelmaison we visited the Hearts Football Club memorial which was built in memory of the Hearts football team who joined up for the war and the 500 fans who followed them. Later that day we arrived at Thiepval memorial, which took 17 years to build and is engraved with the regiments and names of 72,811 men who died during the Battle of the Somme but who have no known grave.

On Friday, we visited Sanctuary Wood where we were allowed to walk through original first world war trenches and see bunkers and tunnels, which had been preserved and allowed us to have a real insight into the conditions the soldiers had worked and lived in. Later

in the afternoon our trip took us to Langemarck Cemetery, one of the few German cemeteries in Belgium. The contrast between this and a Commonwealth cemetery was undeniable, with flat graves built from dark stone and surrounded by tall, sheltering trees. Despite this it was still very clear there was a certain amount of respect for these soldiers.

On the last night we visited the Mein Gate in the centre of Ypres, where a ceremony is held every night of the year to commemorate soldiers from the First World War. Here four Wallace Hall pupils, dressed in their uniform, laid down poppies during the ceremony on behalf of Wallace Hall Academy, the local British Legion and the community of Thornhill and surrounding areas.

Throughout the trip we paid our respects to the relatives of several of the students on the trip, and of some teachers who were not able to join us, as we travelled across France and Belgium to visit their graves. Overall, the trip was one of the most thought provoking and emotional trips many of the students had embarked upon. It was an experience like no other. As well as expanding our historical knowledge it gave us a real insight to the vast numbers of men and women who gave their lives for our country in the First World War.





Bulgaria Bound

report by Amy Hollingsworth



Very early on a cold Sunday morning, five Wallace Hall Academy pupils – Amy Hollingsworth, Iona Anderson, Hamish Brown, Bethany Ransom and Fae Treadaway – and our teacher Mr Harley made the long trip up to Edinburgh airport to begin our week in Bulgaria. After a long day of travelling, we arrived in Kazanlak, along with Hungarians, Germans and Belgians. We met our host families and got to know everyone and then went to bed as we were so tired.

The next day we all got up early and were met by a traditional Bulgarian breakfast, before heading to school to begin our project work. We split into 4 different groups and each covered a different topic, such as National Identity, Social Identity, Environment and Economy. We spent most of the day in school developing our presentations and, after school ended, we went with our host students to explore Kazanlak, visit the local pool club and take the chance to get to know everyone on the trip.

Tuesday morning started the same as the day before. However, we had until lunchtime to finish our presentations before we presented what we had discovered to everyone. After a quick bite in an American style restaurant, we had to go home as all of us were asked to prepare a traditional Bulgaria meal to take to the concert that the Bulgarians had kindly organised for us

on the Tuesday evening. The food was absolutely delicious and everyone really enjoyed getting to know one another.

After we had finished eating, each school was asked to perform something for everyone. The Germans did a version of Britain's Got Talent, which was absolutely hilarious and they asked a pupil from each school to perform. Hamish from our school played "Blackbird" on the guitar, which was very well received. Unfortunately, he was pipped to the post by the German Show Boys, who charmed everyone with their completely ridiculous dance that got everyone on their feet. The Hungarians performed a national song for us, while the Bulgarians and Belgians taught us dances, performed with varying degrees of success. Finally it was our turn and we had decided to perform two dances for them – Gay Gordon's and an improvised version of the Dashing White Sergeant. We got everyone up and dancing the Gay Gordon's and they were very good at it – almost better than us! To finish off Bethany and Hamish performed "Auld Lang Syne" for everyone. It was a fabulous night and everyone really enjoyed themselves.

On the Wednesday we found out we were visiting a guitar factory and Shipka Peak. The guitar factory was amazing, seeing all the intricate work and the designs, although the dust was slightly annoying! Then we all got on the bus and travelled to

Shipka Peak. Thankfully we all managed to climb the thousand steps to the top of the Shipka tower, where the Battle of Shipka Pass took place in 1877-78. The views were absolutely breathtaking and even though some of us were scared of heights, we all appreciated the beauty of it. On the way back from Shipka Peak, we visited a church that had the most beautiful architecture. We got the opportunity to go inside and light a candle for people who had passed away, or to make a wish for something we wanted to happen. After we got back, we had dinner before heading out to a local café to get to know everyone better and have some fun.

Thursday morning, our last day in Bulgaria, we arrived at school wondering what we were going to be doing. To our surprise, the school had organised a talent show, displaying traditional Bulgarian song and dance. The first performer was a little girl, who sang beautifully, followed by an older student who performed "Tonight I'm Loving You". Next some folk singers performed a local folklore tale, followed by a drama production by the students, which was so funny, especially as Martin – Hamish's host – was in a dress and pulled it off rather well. We then got on the bus and travelled to Plovdiv, which was so full of history and was just amazing to look at. We visited a coliseum and then were meant to go shopping, but we went bowling instead at a local shopping mall.

Since it was our last evening, everyone met up in the local pool bar as a last goodbye. Everyone was talking and mingling and we managed to beat the Germans at table football, thanks to Mr Harley. Finally, exhausted, we went home to get what little sleep we could, before getting up and going to school to be taken to the airport. As the bus drove us away from the madly waving Bulgarians we had got to know so well, all of us agreed that this had been an amazing trip. As we settled down to go to sleep, we dreamt of the memories of the week that had passed and the friends we had made and that we would never forget.



The Scottish Experience

Thank you very much for a wonderful week in Thornhill!



On Sunday 6th of November 2011 students and teachers from all over Europe started their trip towards Scotland to visit their Scottish partner school in Thornhill. They came from Kazanluk in Bulgaria, Sykkylven in Norway, Waregem in Belgium, Budapest in Hungary and from Schelklingen in Germany and all were welcomed by their Scottish host families where they would stay for a week.

This was going to be a week full of new and wonderful experiences in a country many of them hadn't seen before.

Guests and hosts started on Monday with a tour of the school followed by project work in groups of mixed nationality on changing borders since the Roman times until today, a comparison of social security systems in their countries

and many other topics, which we presented on Tuesday afternoon to the other groups.

One of the highlights of our visit was definitely the evening event on Tuesday: hosts and guests met for a delicious buffet provided by Wallace Hall Academy which was followed by brilliant performances by the Scottish students. Then it was our turn to present something to the audience and we had much fun with the ideas the groups came up with.

And now a new challenge was presented to us by our hosts: taking part in the typical folkdances of Scotland – it looked easy but it was quite complicated – but with the help of our Scottish friends we managed to overcome the obstacles and felt like great dancers afterwards. It was a pity, the evening ended so soon ...

On the next days we got the

opportunity to see more of Scotland and to learn more about its history while visiting the parliament and the National Museum in Edinburgh and Caerlaverock Castle and the Vindolanda site of the Hadrian's Wall complex.

Those of us who were lucky enough to stay a bit longer went to Ayr and had a family day on Saturday.

We all have to say a big "Thank you" to our wonderful and friendly hosts who made us feel at home in their families and in Scotland and to all the staff in Wallace Hall Academy for everything they did for us, especially to Alan Harley. We believe he didn't sleep during the whole week with all the events he organised for us! We will always remember the week in Thornhill.

Report by Inge Banholzer



Our Comenius Counterparts report by Beth Muirhead, Emma Greenlees, Iona Anderson and Rosie A Sloan

The date was the 5th of November, a cool autumn breeze was blowing in from the west. As the clock struck 4.44pm 7 Belgian students found themselves stranded in the wake of Wallace Hall Academy, eagerly awaiting the week ahead, of traditional Scottish dance, cuisine and banter. They were greeted by their Scottish hosts and shipped off "home", venturing as far as Dumfries, Dunscore, Moniaive and Ae, admiring the beautiful views and being assured that they were not in the middle of nowhere.

That night many trekked back to Thornhill to share the traditions of fireworks, bonfires and stories of Guy Fawkes.

Sunday was a family day for all the Belgian students, watching fireworks, visiting hosts' relatives and doing the week's food shop) as more students descended from Germany, Norway, Bulgaria and Hungary.

The Monday and Tuesday were focused mainly on the project work which included research on the

European justice systems, health care, common roots, how those with disabilities are treated in different countries and producing a charter highlighting what students in the Comenius project viewed as a common policy that should be adopted by all our countries. We intend to present this to the European Parliament at our final meeting in Belgium. We also compared the political systems of each country and decided on the perfect democracy.

Tuesday night was a cultural buffet for students and our host families with a traditional Scottish meal and tasters of food from all of our guests. The meal was followed by a performance by each of the visiting schools topped of by a rendition of the Gay Gordons and an Orcadian Strip the Willow, exhausting both students and teachers.

On Wednesday we embarked on a day trip to Edinburgh, touring the Parliament where we were shown round by our local MSP. We then visited the Royal Museum of Scotland, where the exchange students were given the chance to really



explore Scotland's past. After this we visited the Gyle Centre for some shopping.

Thursday was a trip to Vindolanda, part of Hadrian's wall, to show our visitors the old Roman borders of Scotland and England. There was a tour and then we were all given the chance to explore for ourselves. On our way home we visited Caerlaverock Castle for another exploration, (or a cheeky game of hide and seek). Once back at Wallace Hall Academy we had an international football tournament with our pupils, Comenius pupils and staff which was a great success.

The Friday morning was an early one for the Hungarians, Bulgarians, Norwegians and their hosts as departures from the school were as early as 4.30am. For those few students left, it was a trip to Ayr for Laser Quest and bowling, but first, we went to the beach, to pay our respects in a two minute silence to the soldiers lost in war from all countries. We had a great day just hanging out with our new friends.

We have had a great week with our Comenius counterparts and were sad to see them leave.

Comenius is funded by the British Council and this support is invaluable in supporting international co-operation.



Charli and Lauren's Charity Concert



Supporting charities through fund-raising has always been a key feature of pupil life at Wallace Hall Academy. This year two Wallace Hall Academy senior pupils, Charli Kennedy and Lauren Dalgleish, organised a concert to raise money for Meningitis Research and the

Lymphoma Association. These charities are close to the girls' hearts as they have both known people affected by meningitis and leukemia.

The evening was a resounding success with a variety of acts entertaining the capacity audience. From sensitive vocal solos and up tempo group numbers through to a demonstration of Highland dancing, there was something for everyone to enjoy. Head Teacher, Barry Graham, said: "I thought the whole event was very slick and well organised. Charli and Lauren have both put a fantastic amount of effort into ensuring that the audience has had a good night while raising money for two very good causes. Well done to them both."

Photographs left, below and on the right show Charli and Lauren and some of the acts taking part.



Study Skills Day at WHA

report by Kai Ferguson

On the 5th of October Matthew Macrae came to Wallace Hall Academy to help the First Years study more effectively.

At the start of the session he gave us a useful booklet and then he taught us about the brain and briefed us about the session. He moved on to showing us different ways to study. We then were taught the steps vital

for revision: understand, condense, memorise and review. First we read a passage about the human heart and we were asked to extract the vital information but very few people managed this task. Taking the vital information we explored different ways to revise it.

The best way to revise for me is 'mind mapping'. This is where you use your subject and associate information relevant to the subject and sort the information into corresponding categories. I find it easy, fun and very helpful.

I think the day was very en-

joyable and educational and I learned many new study techniques and how to absorb information. I gained new knowledge about how we learn. Revision has become a lot easier.

Later that day, Matthew Macrae delivered a study skills session to S3 pupils and their parents. This was a good chance for parents to learn how to support their child in the approach to their formal SQA examinations. Thanks to Mrs McMillan, our Learning Leader and English teacher, who organised the event.

Hitting all the right notes



Local farms provide practical opportunities for Rural Skills

Sinclair Barbour, Queensberry Initiative Strategic Group founder member, has been instrumental in involving several local farmers in Wallace Hall Academy's Rural Skills courses.

Sinclair has been organising a rota of willing volunteers who are expanding the opportunities for pupils to be involved in hands-on agricultural tasks. The sessions, arranged during the Friday practical periods of these courses, dovetail well with the practical lessons offered for these groups on the Queensberry Estate. Leanne Peoples, Project Officer for the Initiative, commented: "We are delighted that local farmers are opening their doors to us this winter. We hope to make partnerships with these farms which will continue for many years to come."

Any other farmers interested in joining in should contact Leanne Peoples or Sinclair Barbour. Photographs below and right show pupils taking part in QI Rural Skills activities.



Zambian Links

report by Robert Guthrie

It was a treat for Standard Grade Modern Studies pupils at Wallace Hall Academy (WHA) recently when Stephen Simumba, a Christian church minister from Zambia, came to speak to us about aid and how countries like Britain can help people in small African communities to afford the bare necessities that we take for granted every day.

In class, Steven explained to us many things that will help with Unit 4 of the Modern Studies syllabus, in particular offering aid to other countries. For a country like Zambia, aid is vital in providing clean water and sanitation. Stephen said that the UK is one of Zambia's biggest donors and stressed that these donations are vital to both health and education in his country. We learned about how the UN runs programmes to help developing countries, providing food and assistance where possible. He stressed how important it is to help people who are less fortunate.

As a church minister, Stephen believes that faith can help people when times are hard. He said that a strong faith helps people focus on the good rather than the bad and his church offers physical, spiritual, moral and social counselling for those in need.

Stephen said that earlier this year two senior WHA pupils, Ben Lord and Adam Swift, and two former WHA pupils, Lewis Ferguson and Rory Goddard, visited Zambia to work with him as part of a larger group led by Youth Worker, Dean Goddard. On their arrival in Lusaka Stephen organised a welcome by The Boys Brigade Brass Band, The Girls' Brigade baton twirling team and over 500 representatives from the church. The boys spent 10 days living and working in the community, a humbling experience where they stayed with



very kind and generous families who have very little but who are happy to share it. This was a life-changing trip for the boys and one they will always remember.

While Stephen was at Wallace Hall he met up with Ben to relive memories of their trip and discuss future plans. Head Teacher Barry Graham said: "It was an honour to have the Reverend Stephen Simumba visit us. I am sure our pupils will have benefitted greatly from meeting Stephen and will have learned a lot about his Christian faith and how life in Zambia differs from life in Scotland."

Stephen's visit was very informative and helped us understand more about life in a community less fortunate than ours. Thanks go to Stephen, Dean from DG Youth Work, Miss Stuart, our Modern Studies teacher, and Mr Graham, our Head Teacher, for allowing Stephen to come and speak to us.



Natasha Completes the Challenge of the "Long Way Round"

One of our S6 pupils Natasha Moss has recently completed the journey of a lifetime: driving her motorbike to the North of Africa and back raising money for Children in Need, Cash for Kids and Yorkhill Children's Hospital.

Natasha's journey was inspired by "Long Way Round": a documentary of Ewan McGregor and Charley Boorman taking a life changing adventure around the world on their motorbikes. On her journey Natasha visited fifteen different countries including France, Spain, Africa, Italy, Switzerland and Germany. One of the highlights of Natasha's

visit was her time in Rome where she visited the Sistine Chapel and the Colosseum. Full details of Natasha's trip can be found on her website www.scotlandtoafrika.com.

To date Natasha has raised over £1000 for her chosen charities and she is now in the early stages of planning her next trip – which includes persuading her mum that it is a good idea!

Congratulations to Natasha on this fantastic achievement. All at Wallace Hall wish her well on her future fund raising ventures.

Pictures on the right show Natasha at various points on her journey.



A Challenging Climate

report by Deri Ronan



On the 20th to the 23rd of September Wallace Hall Academy held environmental days for all S1 pupils. Six activities were held over these three days all of which helped teach pupils about tackling climate change. The activities included pond dipping, MUNGA, carbon foot printing, food miles, re-cycling and science experiments.

The first activity my class participated in was the science experiments with Mr Bell. We learned what global warming was and how it hap-



pened. We did experiments to show how the earth is slowly getting warmer and why. I enjoyed this activity because it gave us a lot of information which would help us over the next few days.

The next activity was carbon foot printing with Mrs VanDyke. In this session we did an activity which showed us just how much energy we use in a day and how we could save it. This activity was quite shocking because it showed us just how much energy we use doing things we take for granted.

We moved on to our next session which was about food miles with Mrs Weir. During this activity I learned that to make a simple meal food needs to be transported from thousands of miles away. To prove how we could stop this happening we

made omelettes with all the ingredients sourced locally. This was my favourite session because afterwards we got to eat the omelettes and they were delicious!

The next day my class gathered in the Bailey Hall for our session about re-cycling with Mrs Black. This



activity was to teach us that in other countries some people aren't as lucky as us and they don't have the same toys and games as us and to never take them for granted so we got to work and made some toys out of aluminium cans. I enjoyed this



activity because it was different to all the others and taught us about climate change in a fun way.

After break my group went pond dipping. The point of this session was to point out that if global warming continues to happen then some of the bugs and creatures will not be there anymore so we set off in the pouring rain to find some bugs. I enjoyed this but I think it would have been more fun if it wasn't pouring down with rain so we were all glad to get back to school and out of the rain.



Our next activity was MUNGA. During this session we were put into groups, each group representing a certain country. In our groups we had to research our country and learn about its views on climate change, all of this was leading towards a debate we would have the next day. Our groups had to choose a group member to write a speech



about its country's views on climate change. Also a negotiator was chosen. All of this lead towards the final debate which was held the next afternoon. See the next page for a full report on the debate.



MUNGA Mediators

report by Lucy Doig

On the afternoon of Thursday 22nd September 2011, all S1 pupils joined the S6 Modern Studies class in the Bailey Hall.



The purpose of the afternoon was to allow the pupils to debate climate change and the different opinions held by the member states of the United Nations General Assembly.

The two days before, S1 had taken part in various activities to help them understand what climate change was and why they should be interested in its future.

For the purpose of the debate



we were divided into 24 groups representing member countries of the United Nations. Each group had learned facts and political viewpoints about their given countries stance on climate change.

The debate got off to a great start with Imogen Gordon deliver-



ing a speech on behalf of Great Britain, which brought a contradictory response from Lucy Doig on behalf of the Peoples' Republic of China.

The remainder of the afternoon was taken up by each group delivering details of their countries posi-



tion regarding climate change. This included how much the country believed it was contributing to global warming and what measures it was putting in place to help the global reduction of green house gas emissions.

The debate ended with individu-



als being able to vote for the most favoured strategies and policies relating to the reduction of global warming.



It was a great way for us to learn about the very real and sensitive issue of climate change. Everyone was involved in the process and as a result I am sure we will question our own actions and how they will impact on the future.

Thanks to all of S6 and members of staff for helping to make the project a great success. It was a fantastic way to learn more about climate change.

Chemistry Trip

Report by Freja Grant and Beth Johnstone



On Wednesday 23rd November, most of the Standard Grade Chemistry students went on a trip to Glasgow Science Centre. When we got there, we were put into groups. Group A were first to try the iodine clock experiment whilst group B looked around the Science Centre. Once group B had explored the centre and group A had completed their experiment, we watched a show called 'Combustible Chemistry'.

The show was all about combustion which we had already covered in class, giving us an edge over the other schools when it came to answering questions. After the show, group A had a look around the centre and group B completed the experiment. At the end of the day, everyone got the chance to go to the gift shop. Everyone had a great time and enjoyed seeing what the Centre had to offer.

Welcome to Wallace Hall

Report by Grant Thorburn and Matthew Adkin

In November, Wallace Hall Academy welcomed all prospective new S1 pupils and their parents to our annual P7 Evening. Imogen Gordon, one of our talented S1 musicians, performed in the Bailey Hall at the start of the evening to entertain our visitors.

Following an opening address by Head Teacher Barry Graham, the parents were divided into five groups and escorted to a variety of presentations on topics as follows: What makes Wallace Hall Academy a good school?, Curriculum for Excellence and Numeracy, Queensberry Initiative Transitions - Outdoor Activity Groups and the Outdoor Classroom, Pupil Support and Transition to Secondary school and Encouraging and Recognising Achievement

and Participation.

The children were also split into groups with a variety of activities organised for them including making penguins out of sugar paste; definitely a favourite with those who visited Home Economics. Craig Mshet, one of our S6 helpers on the night, said: "I think it was a good night and I hope that our P7 visitors will have had a flavour of our school and will want to return." Another of our S6 helpers, Grant Thorburn, commented: "The activities on offer for the children were great fun. We had a treasure hunt, a getting to know you activity, games in PE, geography activities, scientific experiments, a guess the person game, sugarcraft, maths games and a Beetle Drive in the Library – it was non stop action with activities organised to suit all tastes."

Our S1 House Captains were on hand and delivered presentations as follows: Lorna Rideout and Robert Ponton on being Pupil Council representatives; Caitlin Harley on becoming a House Captain; Niall Holden,

James Robertson and Cameron Robertson on the various S1 clubs and activities on offer during the week at Wallace Hall Academy, Imogen Gordon on the life of an S1 pupil and Lucy Doig on the S1 trip to the Outdoor Education Centre at Hexham.

At the end of the night parents were given the opportunity to meet staff and ask further questions. The feedback from both the children and their parents was very positive and it is hoped that this event will have helped our prospective new S1 feel confident about the transition to Wallace Hall Academy.



Pupil Council Update report by Grant Thorburn and Matthew Adkin

The Pupil Council has had four meetings this session and one of the topics for discussion has been how to improve the quality and quantity of clubs available to all year groups. The newest members of the Pupil Council, Lorna Rideout and Robert Ponton, have learned a lot from their experiences. Lorna and Robert said: "We have become more confident and our communication skills have improved. We feel we have become more aware of other year groups' issues and have learned to work together with others." Two more experienced members of the Pupil Council, Robert Guthrie and Elsbeth Nicholson, said: "Joining the Pupil Council has allowed us to have a voice alongside teachers. We are proud to be Pupil Council members and enjoy acting as a representative for our year group."

Rugby Report

Report by Ian Carlisle

The season got off to a high with a great game against St Joseph's College. This was a tough first game but everyone played well, resulting in a 30:15 victory for Wallace Hall. The next game of the season was against Dumfries High School. After Wallace Hall scored four tries the game was called off due to a torrential downpour. Dr Ful-

ton, our coach, said: "Someone might have drowned!" Although it was undoubtedly wet, this comment might have been a slight over exaggeration!!

The next game was against Dumfries Academy. Wallace Hall played well with good handling skills. The final score was a resounding 57:15 win for Wallace Hall.

The next game for the under 14s was against Annan Academy at Dumfries Academy for the Regional Schools' Cup final. This was the toughest game the under 14s played this season. The game was very evenly contested but ended with Wallace Hall being narrowly beaten 19:17 by Annan Academy.

The under 13s had a game against Maxwellton High School. Our boys played well showing some great handling and tackling for their first game, coming out with a 4 try to 2 try win.



AML Transport supports Wallace Hall Academy S1/S2 Rugby Club

A smart set of new rugby strips was recently donated to Wallace Hall Academy S1/S2 Rugby Club by local business AML Transport. Over 30 boys from S1 and S2 attend the Rugby Club on a regular basis with training sessions taking place every Thursday night at Wallace Hall Academy.

The boys are coached by three keen members of staff, Dr Fulton, Mr

Graham and Mr Mack, all with a keen interest in rugby. This year the club has had an excellent start to the season winning matches against teams from St Joseph's College, Dumfries High School and Dumfries Academy.

Barry Graham, Head Teacher at Wallace Hall Academy said: "I am delighted with the level of participation and interest in rugby at Wallace Hall Academy. Our S1/S2

team has been performing well in the Regional League and the new strips donated by AML Transport have encouraged an increased sense of team identity and pride for our players. I would like to thank Mr Andrew Lethardy of AML Transport for this generous donation and for his continued support of our club." Photograph above shows Dr Fulton, Mr Lethardy and the S1/S2 rugby team in their new strips.

A variety of extra curricular activities take place at lunchtime and after school in the P.E. Department. These activities include Badminton, Basketball, Dance, Football, Gymnastics, Hockey, Rugby and Table Tennis. If you would like to take part in any of these activities please speak to a member of the PE staff for further details.

Drumlanrig Races



What a turnout for only the second year of this event! The numbers had almost doubled from last year and we attracted many excellent runners including a couple who chose this as their very first half marathon.

Once again we suffered with the weather. It rained constantly and a fine mist clouded the stunning views around the course. However, the runners appeared to be unaware and their spirits were high, buoyed on by cheery encouragement from the marshals. The races began with piper Emma Sloan leading the runners to their respective start lines. The sound of the drums reverberated around the Lime Tree Avenue.

The changes to the Half Marathon course from last year have met with approval from those returning although it is still a challenge. There were mixed reviews about the changes to the 10k course, with faster runners finding it more challenging and the rest finding it a little less gruelling!

The fun run was very well attended, more than trebling numbers from last year. The winner was Gavin Hogarth, second was Fraser White and third was Craig Jardine.

The victor of the Queensberry Half Marathon was Casey Morgan from Shettleston Harriers with an impressive time of 78:44 and the Drumlanrig Demon 10k was won by David Parrish of Dumfries Running Club with a time of 37:36.

Other notable local runners in the Half Marathon were Damian Scott from Penpont in 15th place; race committee member and Thornhill lady, Sally Coombs was 2nd lady home. Head Teacher, Barry Graham, looked a lot healthier as he crossed the line than he did last year, whilst staff member Ray Fulton, by his own admission, hadn't prepared himself well enough!

In the 10k Thornhill boy and Wallace Hall pupil, Chris Ponton, was second overall and took the Junior prize. Former Wallace Hall pupil and committee member, Stephanie Lawrie was the first lady home. Stuart Bell, Chemistry Teacher at Wallace Hall, Lorraine Harris, Attendance Liaison Officer, former pupils Ross Wylie and Graeme Lawson and local ladies Shona Weir, Gill McNeil, Kerry Bowie, Elaine Watson and Shona McWhirter are all commended for their efforts and for at least looking like they were enjoying themselves!

Former PE teacher, Ian Wilson, made a grand job of starting the races and presenting the prizes, as well as encouraging runners towards the finishing line.

Wallace Hall Academy Head Teacher, Barry Graham, said: "This was our second go at running such an event and I was very pleased with the progress we have made in one year. The feedback from runners and supporters was excellent. This was a big triumph for the school and the community and I would like to thank everyone who helped to make it such a success. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of the race committee and thank them for their efforts over the last few crucial months."

Our thanks go again to the Duke of Buccleuch for allowing us to use his grounds for the event and to Richard Riley, Head Ranger, for supporting us with our plans throughout the year. On the day rangers Richard Clarke and Brian Hammond were on hand to lend their advice and support.

Events First Aid and Raynet provided an excellent service for which we are very grateful. Thanks go to our sponsors, E4D&G, John Miller Transport Ltd, BluApple, Dumfries Limos, Tesco Dumfries and the Thornhill Co-op. Your support is much appreciated.

A special thanks must go to Danny Queen, organiser of Dumfries Half Marathon. He worked very closely with us over the past few weeks, advising and encouraging us and taking a huge role on the day as head marshal in front of the castle. He even brought along his wife, Beatrice, who was invaluable in Margaret Miller's highly efficient timing team.

Last but not least, a huge thanks go to the marshals and volunteers who gave up their Saturday to help and got cold and wet in the process. Staff, pupils, parents and members of the community were well represented in this group. The feedback we have had from runners has been so positive, many even saying we have the best marshals ever and we agree with that! Well done to you all.

WALLACE HALL ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL NEWS



At our A.G.M. in October I was delighted and privileged to be appointed Chairperson of the Parent Council. First of all, I need to pay tribute to Anne Stoddart, our outgoing Chairperson for her very hard work and dedication over the last two years. I am pleased that Anne is continuing in the Council.

We held our first meeting of the new year on Wednesday the 9th of November 2011. This had an excellent attendance and there was unanimous agreement that the Parent Council and its members should be as active as possible and in particular encourage contact and communication with parents, pupils and the wider

community.

Our meetings are always attended by either the Head Boy or Head Girl. They give a presentation on a number of pupil matters and in particular on achievements of individual pupils and groups over the recent months. Usually one or more of our local regional Councillors also attend. With the parent members and school staff including the Head Teacher there is a very wide representation. I would like to stress, however, that each meeting is open to any parent to attend. All of the Council members e-mail addresses are published on the school's website and we really want to hear from anyone who has an interest in or a matter to raise regarding the school. I have already heard and noticed personally very many positive things about Wallace Hall. We have a great school and it is exciting to notice the energy, interest and enthusiasm which exists.

At our last meeting we discussed topics and projects which we will work on for the year ahead. Among those identified so far are:

- ◆ A presentation for parents on **Curriculum for Excellence**. This will take the form of an information session at the presentation to be held very early in 2012.

- ◆ **School Trips and Visits.** The Parent Council will receive a presentation from senior staff on these and we will also discuss the advantages and outcomes of school trips and visits generally.

- ◆ **Queensberry Initiative.** The Parent Council is enthusiastic about this project and we are to hear an update presentation on this.

We are also planning to discuss possible twinning and links with other schools.

I would be very pleased to hear of other topics which you would like the Parent Council to address, discuss, or take forward.

Our first big event of 2012 is our **Burns Supper**. Arrangements are well advanced for this event which will take place in the School in the evening of Friday the 20th of January 2012. An interesting and knowledgeable set of speakers has been sourced as well as musical entertainment and a well stocked bar is being planned which will be staffed by Parent Council members. Tickets are now on sale and can be obtained by contacting the School or any Parent Council member direct.

Brian Johnstone

Olympic Flame

Maili Mackenzie, S6, is currently training with the Modern Pentathlete World Class Talent Programme where she is on track to hopefully be in line for selection for Team GB in the 2016 Olympics.

Through her sponsorship with the Royal Bank of Scotland, Maili was recently invited

to promote the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay. The Relay will see communities across Dumfries and Galloway welcoming the Olympic Flame as it passes through the region.

Maili was tasked with promoting the nomination procedure for torch bearers and she has herself successfully made the short list for this. She hopes to be granted the honour of carrying the flame on its journey to the Olympic Stadium in London. All at Wallace Hall Academy wish Maili well with her Olympic hopes.

