

Personal Best



Issue 3 - Spring 2005

Park House School & Sports College Newsletter



PHOTO: Waddell Digital



AN ACTION PACKED ISSUE!

This is the most exciting edition of Personal Best yet, with everything from fire fighting to motorsport included! Read inside about our Year 12 students' involvement in the latest initiatives to reduce the amount of hoax calls made by young people from mobile phones.

FASTERHIGHERSTRONGER

Why Sports College status makes a difference - for everyone!

Welcome to the third edition of *Personal Best* - the first to combine news on Sports College developments with updates on whole school events and student achievement. As such this edition tells a very important story about Park House's development as a 'mature' Sports College, adding value to student learning and achievement in many different and innovative ways.

For us, Specialist Sports College status is not a 'bolt-on' extra, but is instead very much at the heart of our on-going commitment to improving standards of teaching, learning and achievement for all students, right across the *whole* curriculum. To adapt the Olympic motto, it helps us to improve **faster**, achieve **higher** standards and make our community links even **stronger**.

The *Leading Edge* programme featured in the last edition of *Personal Best* is a very good example of this approach. Here, an initiative started in PE in Sport to meet the needs of a smaller group of students has been broadened out to offer a much wider range of 'personalised' subject choices in Years 9 and 10, enriching the curriculum and offering more opportunities for individual students to excel in areas

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which match their interests. For example, our Year 9 students who move into Year 10 next year will be the first to have the opportunity to take a number of additional, 'enrichment' GCSEs in new subject areas such as Economics, Geology, Media Studies, Psychology and Spanish, offered in 'Period 6' - an additional teaching session immediately after school.

It is therefore very fitting that there should no longer be two separate newsletters but a single, timely, update on the wide range of activities which go on within and beyond the classroom. It is equally fitting that our commitment to *Valuing*

Success For All should also be reflected in the idea of encouraging each and every student to strive for 'Personal Bests' in their varied contributions to the life of the school. I am sure that you will agree that there is much to celebrate in the individual and collective achievements reported in this issue. Amongst many others, this term's highlights include reports on the latest Lakeside Trip, the Hoax Calling initiative, Inter-House Dance, the successes of our Equestrian Team and an update on our growing international links with schools in South Africa and the United States. ● D People



This issue we also feature a student profile on Max Anstie our very own up and coming moto-cross rider! Could he be a household name of the future? And for those who like their thrills at a slightly slower speed we have news about how you could join our annual trip to Lakeside in Cumbria.



Thank you for the music...

... to the whole of Year 7 for their part in the Christmas Concert. They performed the cantata, Sheik, Rattle and Roll, accompanied by the Swing Band and the Chamber Orchestra to a packed audience in the evening and to pupils from Falkland and Greenham Primary Schools in the afternoon. This had been rehearsed during music lessons, with members of the Year 7 Singers coming to additional rehearsals to practise ensemble and solo items. Nevertheless, performing in cramped conditions under the heat of the lights proved to be a real endurance test which they passed with true professionalism.

...to all the students who took part in the Music Department's lunchtime recital series. The following Sixth Formers all performed solo items during these Thursday lunchtime concerts to an audience of staff and students: Gaelle Beguin, Natalie Richardson, Karen Lewis, Ben Kane, Charlotte Smets, Richard Ballard, Naomi Giles and Megan Fennell.

...to the bands **Conscience** and **Killbaby** who won the annual Bands Week competition. All the bands taking part performed two songs, playing to a packed hall on Monday 28th February and Tuesday 1 March. The Year 12 Music Technology students, who were judging the bands, were so impressed by both these bands that they could not choose an outright winner. So Matt Bullivant on guitar, Josh Poole on bass and Alex Lewis on drums (for Conscience) and Jamie Masters and Richard Alderson on guitar, Daniel Oldring on drums and Dan Flynn on bass (for Killbaby) will shortly be recording CDs in the school's recording studio.

12 & 21 April
Composition Workshop

19 April
Year 12 & 13 Recital

28 April
Guitar concert

5 May
Chamber concert

12 May
Lunchtime recital

26 May
Lunchtime recital

8 July
Cabaret (to be confirmed)



Change in uniform hits the mark!

Following the closure of the uniform section of Camp Hopson in Newbury we have taken the opportunity to re-organise the way in which uniform will be purchased. We are delighted to now be working with Clive Mark as our sole suppliers of approved uniform at the school. We have also taken this chance to discuss uniform with the Student Council who have suggested some minor modifications that have been approved by the Governing Body.

These changes are designed to strengthen House identity within the school and to ensure a practical and comfortable uniform for the students. The uniform remains, however, traditional and formal, reinforcing our expectation of high standards of dress and behaviour and student pride in the school and what it stands for.

The changes are as follows:

- New school tie reflecting the house identity – this will be plain blue with our school crest in each of the House colours
- Standard **black** skirt for girls
- Specific girls' trousers
- Standard school scarf
- Navy blue blazer with **embroidered** badges.

All new Year 7 students will be required to wear the new standard uniform, purchased exclusively from Clive Mark through the school, from September 2005. **All current students will be required to wear the new school tie and girls will be required to wear either the standard skirt or trousers from September 2005.** As other items need to be replaced in the course of the academic year these will also need to be purchased from the standard listing using the order form available from the office or from the school website: www.parkhouse.westberks.org. From September 2006 all students will be expected to be in the full, revised uniform. At present the Sixth Form uniform remains unchanged.

Clive Mark will be in school on Wednesday 8th June from 4.00–7.00 p.m. supplying the new Year 7 intake and any existing parents wishing to purchase new items.

I should wish to emphasise that we carried out extensive research into uniform supply and interviewed a number of potential suppliers. We were greatly impressed by the service that Clive Mark can offer and the competitive nature of their prices. Further details on ordering procedures will be forwarded early in the Summer term. ● **D People**



SSCO UPDATE

SCHOOL SPORTS CO-ORDINATOR PROGRAMME

Gym Club attracts more pupils to join school clubs

Calcot Junior School, funded by the Big Lottery, have started a gymnastics club on Thursday evenings under the guidance of gymnastics club coach Louise Harman.

Initial audits by the school sports co-ordinator programme identified that in West Berkshire students in Years 3 and 4 had less chance to take part in physical activity after school than the older students and that most after school sport was heavily dominated by team sports.

The gym club aimed to address this problem by attracting pupils not inspired by team sports and give them a chance to get active by providing an alternative activity that was also linked to the national curriculum. The club has, so far, attracted around 30 pupils from Years 3 and 4 some statement pupils and many that do not normally go to clubs.

Through the funding two secondary school dance clubs have also been established attracting a further 50 pupils. A further 5 primary schools are also to benefit from the funding with similar targets of increasing participation through gymnastics and dance in the near future.

Indoor Caving?

Outdoor Adventurous Activity set to challenge schools

Teachers, parents and volunteers across 14 partner primary schools within the West Berkshire School Sports Co-ordinator Partnership have just received training and equipment to deliver Outdoor Adventurous Activity (OAA) in their schools.

Staff will go back to schools to deliver 12 weeks of on site activities. Indoor caving gives students opportunities to develop team work, problem solving skills and experience confined spaces in a dimmed environment whilst all the time developing upper body strength and body management skills. Introduced to the local area by School Sports Co-ordinator James Mandry the activity has already proved to be a great success in many local primary schools.

Staff also had training in orienteering from the Regional Development Officer Denise Harper and problem solving and team building activities from local trainer Linda Clarke. This will enable students to experience a varied and exciting programme in the terms ahead.

Pupils attending the school activities will then be given the opportunity to extend their skills at the outdoor adventure activity sights run by West Berkshire Council and Dolphin Adventure in Pangbourne, Hungerford and Newbury's Waterside Centre followed by an overnight camp at Ufton Court residential activity centre.



Staff try out indoor caving.

Hungerford Rugby Festival

Primary schools form the John O'Gaunt family of partner schools received specialist training sessions from their School Sports Co-ordinator and Hungerford Rugby Club Coaches before going on to compete in the inaugural Hungerford Rugby Club festival.

Hungerford Rugby Club chairman Jeremy Smeddle and his colleagues were keen to help develop youth sport in their local area and develop the awareness of rugby and strengthen the links between the club and local community. This has certainly been achieved by linking up with the SSCO partnership. Inkpen primary school came away as the tournament winners. Sponsorship gained by the Club for three years from Amtec secures the future of the tournament making sure that everyone involved wins from the success of the day.

The SSCO partnership would like to formally thank the club for the event and look forward to working with them in the future. It was a fantastic day supported by MP David Rendel, council chairman James Mole and the Major of Hungerford Roger Ballard.

Community Volunteering

12 students from Park House School and Sports College joined 60 other students from across Berkshire for the Step into Sport Community Volunteering programme. The 2005 programme started with a one day volunteering conference at Windsor Leisure Centre on the 1st March.

Step into Sport, a 5 stage national leadership programme, develops pupils through sport education, various leadership awards and practical opportunities to extend skills through organising TOP Link Festivals of Sport and the Community Volunteering Award scheme.

Students met top athletes and sports development officers from across the region to learn about the volunteering experiences that had led them on to their jobs and sporting success. They also learned about opportunities the scheme offers and new skills to help them in their placements based around team activities, fitness, safety in sport and child protection.

The students, linked with community clubs will go on to do 50; 100 or 200 hours of community volunteering throughout the year. They will gain valuable experiences provided by high quality clubs who provide mentors to help the students through their learning.

CLUB FOCUS

Team Kennet – Announced this month as winners of the South East

Newbury and Thatcham Hockey Club – Child friendly and enthusiastic. Newbury and Thatcham Hockey club have just received a double award of the Sport England Club Mark Award and Hockey Association Accreditation. The awards recognise the good practice of the club in management, coaching and development of the club.

Tadley Rugby Club – Have started a working partnership with the School Sport Coordinator programme with coaches from the club delivering Tag Rugby at Engerfield Primary school. The club are doing a grand job with development in the area and, like Hungerford, are due to run a local primary school festival in March.

Thatcham FC – Two coaches recently trained in disability sport from the club have volunteered to help with the KICIN Sports Club for the 5 week programme of football run at the school. The support of quality coaches is invaluable to the club and enables the coaches to put their training in practise.

The Reluctant Head?

“We have a difficult school that needs a head. We can't fill the post – you would be ideal for the job – you're doing it!” No, this wasn't an instruction given to our head Mr People before he joined Park House but an ultimatum given eighteen years ago to Mr Thusi before he became principal of Sithengile High School in Durban.

Mr Thusi, Principal of Sithengile High School in Durban, South Africa spent three days with us at Park House in February this year. Following Richard Jones' trip to Durban in 2004 (as featured in the last issue of personal best) this visit further cemented the relationship between our two schools.

Mr Thusi has been Principal of Sithengile High School for the past 18 years, although his appointment was not via the traditional job application route.

While teaching in the township of Kiramashu in 1986 Mr Thusi applied for the position of Head of Humanities in a neighbouring school. After the interview the Superintendent of Education told Mr Thusi that he had a problem with Sithengile High School in Clermont, which had been without a principal for over a year. Recruiting a principal was difficult partly due to the political unrest that had filtered into many schools in the run up to the release of Nelson Mandela. As a result, it was difficult to manage the school and impossible to predict what would happen from one day to the next.

Mr Thusi was told that he was the best candidate for the role of Principal of Sithengile and was instructed to take up the post. At times during the first six months, he admitted that he felt like giving up; but determination and commitment made him stay.

Management of the school was critical and Mr Thusi soon established policies to make the students understand the reasons for regular attendance. Rules had to be clearly spelt out, with initial emphasis on punctuality and attendance and the requirement to spend all day in school. The best way to implement this was to establish a leadership structure, which involved the students and teachers as well as the Principal.

With discipline issues being combated, it was possible to get the students to school on time and ensure that they stayed. Sithengile students begin school at 8am with a whole school assembly. The theme of the assemblies is very much like ours with the usual thought for the day, announcements and reminders about disciplinary issues such as wearing the appropriate school uniform!

In the past, schools in KwaZulu Natal were isolated pockets within the community and although they drew pupils from the community, the community felt it didn't have a say in what was happening in the schools. Previously, Principals would look for likeminded people to support them in their mission without involving the people who mattered – the parents and the students. When Mr Thusi joined Sithengile, he was desperate to make changes and open the doors to the community, allowing them to speak and to have some involvement in the running of the school. As a result, he and the school have become a major focus of the community.

At times during the first six months, Mr Thusi admitted that he felt like giving up; but determination and commitment made him stay.

Mr Thusi spoke to us with pride about various major achievements at Sithengile over the past 18 years since he became Principal. In particular there has been a restoration in the sense of self-respect and identity which has been instilled in the students. Pride in the school is now shared by students, parents and teachers alike. 18 years ago, Sithengile was at the



Mr People with Mr Thusi from Sithengile PHOTO: Waddell Digital

bottom of the examination league tables, but for the past 6-7 years, they have been leading the results for 17-18 year olds in their area.

Although politics are now more settled in South Africa, the effects of centuries of unrest cannot be resolved in 10 years and the state is very keen to accelerate learning in key academic areas such as maths and English. Consequently the Department of Education, much to Mr Thusi's disappointment, finds Sithengile's moves to encourage more sporting activities low on its list of priorities. With some rural schools still being taught in the open and facing teacher retention problems you can understand why sport is deemed as an extra-curricular luxury rather than a necessity.

Mr Thusi does, however, see that with Life Orientation (LO) being added to the curriculum that sport could be incorporated into this, since exercise is linked to good physical and mental health in pupils, with less likelihood of absences from school and an increased chance of improvements in academic subjects. Fortunately Sithengile is in a position to run after school boys' and girls' football, volleyball and basketball. Cricket is played occasionally but like

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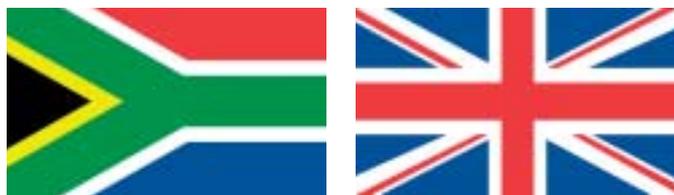
everywhere else football seems to be the major obsession!

Mr Thusi felt that his visit to Park House had been invaluable. In particular, he was impressed by the links that Secondary schools form with primary schools and felt that this early communication was vital to ease the transition from one to the other. We hope this was just one idea of many that Mr Thusi would find useful to take back to South Africa with him.

On a personal level, Mr Thusi's major interest is to one day fulfil his dream of being a high flyer in business. He joked about hoping to be "a Bill Gates one day". One could argue that Mr Thusi has already been successful and we wish him more success in the future. ●



Sithengile's Basket Ball Court PHOTO: Richard Jones



From Local to Global

Learning through PE & Sport

We are pleased to be developing the Curriculum Partnership between Park House School and Sports College and Sithengile High School. Our main objectives are to develop learning opportunities through two cross-curricular projects based on a Festival of Sport and the wider significance of PE and Sport in a global context.

We intend to support these projects in the form of student written newspaper reports reviewing the events; encouraging pupils to share and build on their experiences of the Festival and build their understanding of sport in cultural, social and economic spheres.

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE PROJECT

Promoting and reporting on the Festival of Sport

- Assemblies will be led by pupils to raise whole school awareness.
- Pupils will write reports on the festival of sport, reflecting their own experiences as leaders, participants or spectators.
- ICT – still images and video footage to be produced during the festival of sport. This will be collated into a presentation on video or DVD.
- Data collection and statistical analysis from the festival of sport.
- And of course we will use 'Personal Best', our termly newsletter, to feature the journalistic work of students from Sithengile High School and Park House School and Sports College.

We will encourage students to use their journalism across many subjects to capture the effect that hosting a major international event would have on each country e.g:

- **Economic Factors** (Business, Economics, Geography, Leisure, Vocational)
- **Geographical** (Geography)
- **Political** (Politics, History, Sociology)
- **Personal** (PSHE)

And, of course, Sithengile will be concentrating on the 2010 World Cup in South Africa while we will have our fingers crossed that our focus on the 2012 Olympic Games becomes fact not fiction!

So good luck to all our students from Years 7 and 10 who are working now, communicating by fax and phone with students in Sithengile High School. We will of course look forward to the results in next term's 'Personal Best'. ● **D People**



CAREERS LIBRARY

Parents, are you aware that the school has two well resourced careers libraries? The main one is situated in Room 4 and is open at lunchtimes and by request, after school. This facility provides:

- Up-to-date information on hundreds of jobs, giving more specific detail on:- the work involved, working conditions, work environment, skills and interests required, entry requirements, opportunities, prospects, other related jobs and, often, potential pay.
- Information on Further Education Institutions
- Computer software containing questionnaires which will suggest career paths, detailed job information and relevant contact and web sites.

Pupils, from the beginning of **Year 10**, are shown how to use these resources during specific careers lessons.

The sixth form common room, also, has a designated area for careers containing prospectuses for all of the Higher Education Institutions in the UK, plus, other helpful information about possible routes post sixth form.

Careers software within the school includes two programmes relating specifically to post-16 choices:

- "Higher Ideas" which shows how A' levels and higher level vocational courses can lead to specific higher education courses.
- Students can also refer to the UCAS website www.ucas.ac.uk which provides detailed information on higher education institutions.

We always work hard updating and referencing materials in both libraries – so, please encourage your sons and daughters to use the excellent facilities. ● **J Rasman**

Year 9

in their own words

James Nash
West Berks Youth
Parliament Cabinet

I have been involved with the Cabinet for the last month and a half. We have had one meeting last Thursday in Thatcham and the next will be in about three weeks. I decided to put my name down for the Cabinet as I felt I could make a valuable contribution.

Joe Pinfold
Team Kennet

Team Kennet is an athletics team and I have been part of it for one and a half years. I train and compete in competitions, more in the summer than the winter. My normal activities are discus 1500m, and 200m.

Luke Gulliver
NDSC Swimming Club

I am in Challenger Squad at NDSC. I swim 4-5 times a week. I have been swimming for 1 year and 6 months. My distance is 1.5 miles a session on average. I swam a PB 100m backstroke in 21.45 seconds (4 lengths of the pool). I have a platinum award in backstroke.

Jake Edginton
Amateur Boxing

I have been in Thames Valley Amateur Boxing Club for about 5 months now. I have learnt how to use combination shots, and also how to block shots. I had to use those skills in a sparing match. My coach, Paul Cook, has been a qualified boxer for many years.

Amelia Poulson
Drama Festival

My part in this was to develop scenes in a play called Frog Stomp. I helped in costumes and staging.

Alto Bass Singing

I have been in a number of different operas, theatre productions and plays including Elixir of Love and productions like the Vagabonds and Bugsy Malone. There are a number of different things I have been in. This year I am with Newbury operatic society involved in Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dream Coat.

Melisa Mason
Southern Counties
Swimming at Crystal
Palace and English
Schools Championships
in Coventry

I completed the southern counties in June 2004. I competed in the 200m butterfly, 100m butterfly, 100m backstroke, 200m backstroke, 200m freestyle and 100m freestyle. My best events were the 200m and 100m butterfly.

Before I went to the English Schools Championships in Coventry I had to go to the trials at Wycombe Sports Centre when I competed in the 100m butterfly, 100m freestyle, and the 200m individual medley. As I won the 100m butterfly I was then asked to represent Division 10 in the English Schools at Coventry. I also swam in the medley relays and got into the final of it as well as my individual event the next day.

Tom Sagueiz
Rookie Lifeguard course

I've been doing the lifeguard course since September last year. It's on a Thursday after school at Northcroft.

Luke Parker-Hodds
Maths Master Classes
at Wellington College

The Maths Master Classes was an enjoyable event that taught maths in an enjoyable way. It was on four consecutive weekends. There were many different subjects in which the maths is taught. However most of them were enjoyable. I would recommend it to anyone to go.

Ali Greenwood
Duke of Edinburgh
and MOD Schools
Presentation Team

For the Duke of Edinburgh we have to pick a service (e.g. first aid), a skill (e.g. clarinet), a physical activity (e.g. swimming) and an expedition. We are currently working towards our expedition by learning to use a trapeze to cook, basic first aid and how to set up camp. The expedition takes place later in the year in Newbury and Hungerford.

As part of the MOD schools presentation team I was chosen to attend the official launch at the MOD building in Whitehall. We were able to sleep on the HMS Belfast and see the Royal Hospital Chelsea and the National Army Museum. Also we met MP, Geoff Hoon and the Education Secretary.

Ed Robbs
Youth Theatre
at the Watermill

At the Youth Theatre we improve our drama skills and boost up our confidence. At the end of each school year, in

May, we do a performance that has been rehearsed for about a month. We meet every Tuesday but do more often when it is close to a performance. The show lasts about four days. On the Tuesdays we act scenes from plays and improve techniques. I enjoy it a lot and I will continue doing it.

Matthew Beadle
Duke of Edinburgh
and Army Cadets

At Duke of Edinburgh we are taught how to pack a bag, put up tents and first aid. I also got a certificate for completing a training course with St John's Ambulance in First Aid.

In Army Cadets we are practising drill and to shoot. We are also getting ready to go on a weekend exercise over Easter to do more shooting and an obstacle course.

Natalie Browne
Golf

I started golf 3 years ago and since then have taken part in many Berkshire Girls matches and won the Berkshire Girls Championship in 2004. I enjoy this sport because it gets you fit and is also very sociable. One of my friends, Alex Roberts, also plays and we are currently on the same handicap. In April of this year we are representing Park House in an inter-schools golf competition.

Jo Wilkins
Sponsored swim
for the Tsunami

My involvement in the tsunami appeal was raising money and swimming 250 lengths at Northcroft pool. I enjoyed it very much and raised a lot of money.



Max powers his way towards the top!

With his father Mervyn being a former 500cc British Champion, Year 7 student Max Anstie was bound to have racing in his blood.

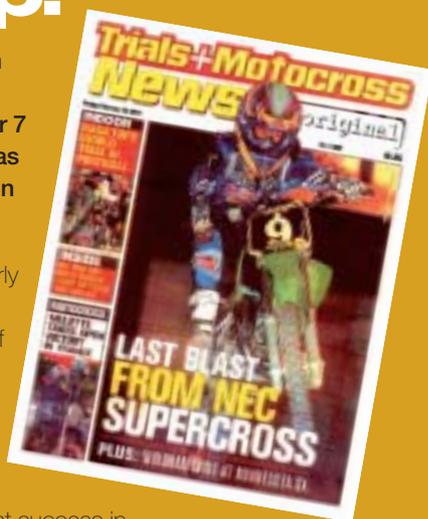
Max, who is now nearly twelve, started riding motorbikes at the age of three and is currently the youngest member of Kawasaki Team Green UK.

Max has enjoyed great success in Motor Cross already winning British Auto Champion (50cc) in 2002, finishing 10th in the World Mini Bike Championships in Las Vegas in the same year. In 2003 Max progressed to winning UK International Supercross on a 65cc bike. The opening round of the UK Ken Winstanley Championship saw another win for Max in 2004.

Max says that his most admired riders are Bubba Stewart and of course his dad Mervyn! Good job too, as Mervyn runs the training academy where Max practises on a purpose built track. In fact Max has trained so well, here and in the United States, that he now has the technical ability to ride almost any track from sand to SX and US outdoor

Physical conditioning is of course essential and the PE department are now monitoring a personal fitness programme for Max as part of the Junior Athlete Education programme which supports gifted and talented sports people.

We have been pleased to support Max through a flexible and personalised timetable at Park House to enable him to combine his intense training regime and school work. We are especially pleased that his success on the race track is reflected in his progress at school!



JUMP TO IT!

Formed in October 2003, the Park House School Equestrian Team entered its first event in January 2004. Competition is fierce and many fee-paying schools enter at least two teams in each class of up to 15. During the past year's competitions Park House have done well, coming away with rosettes almost without fail.

The team is always well turned out with personalised saddle cloths from our sponsors Hamstead Growers Equestrian and browbands in school colours kindly donated by Mr Jon and Mrs Penny Ryder-Phillips parents at the school.

Mr Ryder-Phillips will also be involved with the Inter-Schools Competition at the Royal County of Berkshire Show at Newbury Showground on September 18th 2005, which Park House will have the honour of hosting.

We are always looking for new members; so if you can jump a minimum 2ft course and have access to a horse or pony and transport, please see Mrs Brown in School.





PHOTO: Matt Gouldstone Year 12



Students helping to prevent hoax calls...

Imagine calling 999 to report a genuine road accident or house fire and finding that the fire and rescue services are slow in responding because someone else has made a hoax call? Hoax calls waste the emergency services' time and funds and more importantly could cost somebody their life!

Hoax Impact was set up by Vodafone UK Foundation, West Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service and West Berkshire Education Business Partnership to combat the menace of hoax calling among 5-18 year olds in particular. Vodafone's commitment came when it was realised that with the growth in mobile phone usage that hoax calls could potentially be coming from its network.

Students from Park House, Theale Green and Mary Hare have been asked to produce photographic images that communicate the problem of hoax calling. These images will eventually be exhibited in a number of shows including one at Vodafone's headquarters in Newbury sometime this June.

Our photography students were initially invited to Fire Brigade Headquarters at Dee

Road in Reading to find out first hand what brigade personnel have to face day to day.

It was here that we saw the horrors of a chip pan fire and we were shown that pouring water on a burning chip pan is most definitely not a good idea! You can see the after effect above. Did you know that chip pan fires cause a fifth of all accidental house fires in the UK?!

Fortunately we were in safe hands at Dee Road. Later in the year we went to the International Fire and Rescue Training Centre in Moreton-in-the-Marsh – an honour indeed as we were the first members of the public ever allowed on-site! Again we were treated like VIP's with the Education Business Partnership covering the costs of the trip. I am pleased to say that Park

House students were singled out for congratulations about their conduct and enthusiasm.

At the Training Centre we were treated to demonstrations of new fire fighting techniques including new methods of controlling airflow to a fire to quickly remove smoke from a building.

Having photographed Fire & Rescue crews in action the students are now working on their final pieces which will be submitted for the exhibition and AS course work. The major plus is that students have also had advice from professional photographer David Hatfull on how to respond to the original brief so we hope to see some great final pieces. ● L Waddell

For fire safety information go to: www.firekills.gov.uk



Our students were congratulated on their enthusiasm and conduct!



PHOTO: Edward Scott Year 12

Sprechen Sie Deutsch?

Mein Betriebspraktikum in Deutschland

von Amy Pontin

Vom 12. bis 19. Februar habe ich und zwanzig andere Leute in Deutschland gearbeitet. Die Reise hat ungefaehr 15 Stunden gedauert. Endlich, um 11.30 Uhr waren wir in Koblenz, eine kleine huedsche Stadt in der Naehе des Rheins und der Mosel.

Am Sonntag mussten wir unsere Arbeitsplaetze finden. Fuer die Meisten, die in einem Kindergarten gearbeitet haben, war es sehr weit von dem Hotel entfernt und sie mussten mit dem Bus fahren. Ich hatte Glueck, der Kindergarten (St. Elisabeth) war nur 10 Minuten vom Hotel entfernt!

Am Montag waren wir alle sehr nervoes. Ich musste frueh aufstehen, weil ich um acht Uhr im Kindergarten beginnen musste. Von Montag bis Mittwoch war es sehr schwierig die Kinder zu verstehen, weil sie sehr schnell und auch mit Dialekt gesprochen haben. Aber am Freitag war es dann schon einfacher sie zu verstehen.

Die zwei Kindergaertnerinnen, mit denen ich gearbeitet habe, waren sehr nett und haben mir geholfen! Sigrid sprach ein bisschen Englisch, aber Petra hat gesagt "Ich kann nur Deutsch sprechen!"

Abends sind wir in einen "Irish Pub" gegangen und es war super! Am Mittwoch wardort'Karaoke-Nacht' und viele von uns haben Songs gesungen, leider gab es einige, die nicht so gut singen konnten!!

Mein bester Tag war Freitag, weil ich viel gemacht habe. Erstens, im Kindergarten habe ich im Turnraum gespielt und wir haben gespielt, dass es ein Feuer gab-Leider habe ich auf dem Feuer gesessen.

Im Allgemeinen hat die Woche sehr viel Spass gemacht und es hat sich gelohnt. Ich kann es nur weiterempfehlen. Es hat mir viel mehr Selbstvertrauen gegeben und jetzt kann ich mehr Deutsch sprechen und verstehen. Ich freue mich, dass ich an dem Betriebspraktikum teilgenommen habe, weil es mir viel gegeben hat und ich moechte es wieder machen, vielleicht in Frankreich!

My Work Experience in Germany

by Amy Pontin

From the 12th – 19th February I, and twenty others, worked in Germany. The journey lasted approximately 15 hours. Finally at 11.30 a.m. we arrived in Koblenz, a small pretty town by the Rhein and Mosel.

On the Sunday we had to find our places of work, for most people who were working in a Kindergarten, it was a long way from the hotel and they had to go by bus. I was lucky, my Kindergarten was only 10 minutes from the hotel.

On Monday we were all very nervous. I had to get up early, because the Kindergarten began at 8 o'clock from Monday to Wednesday. It was difficult to understand the children because they spoke very quickly and with a dialect. But on the Friday it was already easier to understand them.

The two ladies who worked at the Kindergarten, with whom I worked, were very nice and helped me. Sigrid spoke a little English but Petra said "I can only speak German!"

In the evenings we went to the 'Irish Pub", it was great. On Wednesday it was 'Karaoke night' and lots of us sang songs, unfortunately there were some who couldn't sing so well!!

My favourite day was Friday, because I had lots to do. Firstly I played in the gym at the Kindergarten. We were pretending there was a fire – unfortunately I 'sat on the fire'!

In general the week was lots of fun and was worth it. I can really recommend it. It gave me lots more self-confidence and now I can speak and understand more German. I am pleased that I took part in the Work Experience, because it was great and I'd like to do it again, perhaps in France.



SKI TRIP 2005 AOSTA VALLEY ITALY

A truly successful trip with students being nominated for scholarships and Park House nominated for Interski's 'School of the Season' award.



With suitcases packed and piled high a buzz of excitement could be heard as parents dropped off their potential Eddie the Eagles. Saturday 12th February saw the departure of the Ski Trip to the Aosta Valley in Italy. Forty four students and five members of staff were off to find some snow!

As we passed over the border between France and Italy hopes were suddenly raised as snow began to fall and it was clear we were due perfect conditions.

On the first morning after a ten minute (400m!) walk to the gondola we were on our way to dust off the skis and snowboards. The temperature had significantly dropped; so much so that the helmets were greatly appreciated for keeping the warmth in. The six

groups were introduced to their instructors; the girls in the top ski group looked particularly pleased with theirs!

The morning saw the beginner skiers trying to impersonate Bambi with Mr Jones spending more time helping students up than on his skis. At lunch a variety of stories were swapped with tales of people 'stacking it' and 'wiping out'. The beginner boarders were not much better and Miss Mumford had to retreat to the nearby café to warm up as she had spent so much time standing in the snow helping her fellow boarders.

By evening there were more tales about people skiing into others and taking out whole groups, but the progress that had been made meant the next few days were filled with lots of adventurous skiing and snow

boarding; Matt Rawlings was wildly adventurous – trying somersaults after just four days. (A visit to the medical centre was later required!)

Amongst the array of après-ski organised for us, one of the highlights must have been the disco. Over 600 twelve to eighteen year olds congregated in an Italian nightclub and strutted their stuff to all the latest tunes, some more appropriately dressed than others!

Swimming was also a relaxing evening – apart from when Mr Jones and Mr Pryor jumped in the pool and nobody was safe from the flying foam balls. Bowling brought the competitive side out of people and a few quirky celebration dances were seen, Andrew Stephenson for one! Holly Dixon is worth mentioning as she beat most of the boys and even Mr Jones and Mr Mather

were left in her shadow. We were also treated to the sight of Mr Pryor in his tight yellow vest this evening!

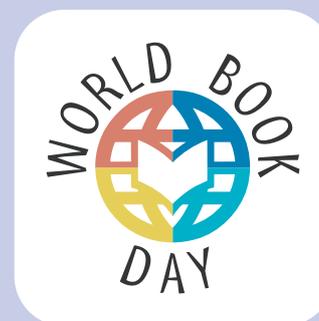
So an eventful week was had by all; lots of great skiing and boarding, lots of crashes and falls (and that was just the teachers!) lots of laughter and happy memories. But what an impression we made on Pila. Jack Shackleton, Asa Oldring and Len Ascroft Leigh being nominated for snowboarding scholarships, and due to the positive attitude and excellent behaviour of all the students, a nomination for Interski's 'School of the Season' award. ● R Jones

Next year promises to be a great trip, when we will tear up the slopes at Sunday River, USA. If you would like to be part of the 2006 trip, see Mr Jones in the PE Department as soon as possible to reserve your place.

Daniel slowly put the phone back on its receiver. The call had changed his life completely...

What happened next? To help celebrate World Book Day on March 3rd an English class from Year 8 have considered just that while contributing to an E-book project. Five different schools are taking part, each writing a chapter of the story.

Fortunately we were the first school and had to continue on from this intriguing opening. Students had to write between 300 and 600 words of the opening chapter and then forward this on to a new school to complete. We will get the final result when all the schools have finished. The students whose chapter is chosen will be given the opportunity to meet authors Chris Riddel and Paul Stuart. ● L Herbert



Lakeside

“ I wasn't going to come but I thought I would give it a try and I'm glad I did; I got loads out of the course! ”

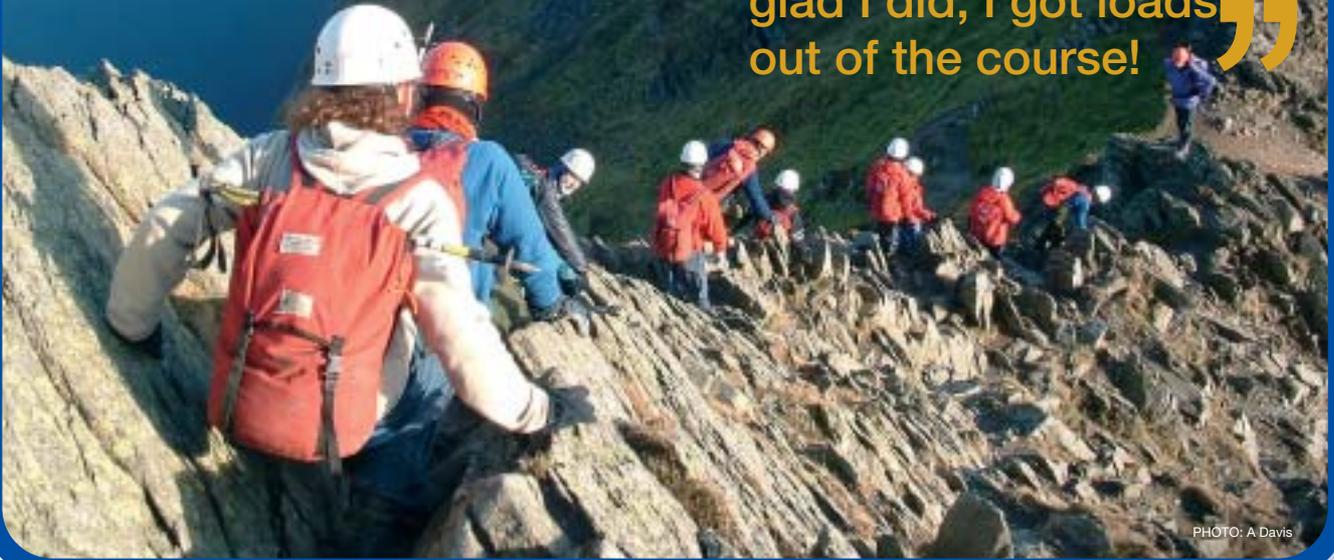


PHOTO: A Davis

Every winter for the past thirty years we have organised an eleven day outdoor pursuits trip for Year 10 pupils to the YMCA National Centre at Lakeside in Cumbria. Every year we fine-tune activities to suit the changing needs of different generations of pupils.

For the past decade we have had an average of 50 pupils attending with over 70 pupils on two occasions.

Qualified outdoor instructors put pupils through an intensive but rewarding series of activities from basics such as navigation to a 3-day mountain hut excursion. Students even have an options day during which they can cover one of the activities to a more advanced level if they wish.

Pupils from **Year 9** should start thinking about this year's trip which will run from **Saturday 10th December to Tuesday 20th December 2005**. Further information will be given later this term and you should budget for fees of approximately £500 which covers everything from transport to specialist equipment hire. ● **Mr J Rasman**



PHOTO: A Davis

“ It was the best thing I have ever done. I had a brilliant time and would love to do it all again! ”

The course includes:

- Navigation
- Mountain Walking
- Canadian Canoeing
- Caving
- Full Day Team Project
- Rock Climbing
- Abseiling
- Night Exercise
- Various Challenge Courses
- Search & Rescue
- Homing Exercises
- 3 Day Mountain Hut Excursion
- Options Day



PHOTO: A Davis

“ Even though the course has been very tiring and hard work, it has been extremely worthwhile and great fun; climbing mountains and canoeing rapids. Even if you don't like the outdoors it's a course that anyone should do! ”

All quotes from students who have been to Lakeside.

Around the Houses

Park House School has a long tradition of 'House' spirit and House competitions. In the last few years the House system has undergone a number of significant changes in order to provide students with a greater sense of ownership and identity. We are now pleased to announce that we have a team of Staff House Lead Tutors, House Presidents (Sixth Form students) and House Captains (Year 11 students) for each House.

The House system creates a sense of community spirit and competition among the students and provides a wonderful opportunity for individuals to demonstrate their talents and try new sporting, creative and academic activities. Our main aim is to encourage maximum participation in events.

In February we had a very successful House Dance evening (see feature article opposite). The quality of the competing teams was outstanding and our congratulations go to Beech House who were the overall winners. The success of Beech House was due to high quality entries, a high level of participation from all year groups and the determination and hard work put in by Hannah Metcalfe

and Lisa Marriott-Reynolds. Many thanks to the Dance Department for organising this event.

On March 9th we had the annual House Quiz and are looking forward to House football and netball, which will take place just before Easter.

Important House information including a calendar of events and running total for the 2005 House Championship is available on the school website and new suggestions are welcomed in the student forum.

Thank you to the House Captains for all their hard work this year. They will be handing over to Year 10 students when they leave to begin their exams in May. Congratulations to the new Year 12 House Presidents, I hope this will be a productive and rewarding year! ● Miss Burnett

Current Totals 2004 – 2005 Championship

1st	Beech	830 points
2nd	Elm	779 points
3rd	Oak	768 points
4th	Cedar	688 points

- House Lead Tutor
- Miss Mumford
- House Presidents
- Hannah Metcalfe
- Lisa Marriott-Reynolds
- Sports Vice President
- Richard Clarke
- Dance/Drama Vice President
- Charlotte Lewis
- House Captains
- Victoria Noble
- Stephanie Jones
- Vice Captains
- Lea Canning
- Jo Sampson



Left to right
Hannah Metcalfe, Richard Clarke, Charlotte Lewis, Lisa Marriott-Reynolds

BEECH

- House Lead Tutor
- Mr Lardner
- House Presidents
- Ann Midgely
- Jon Butler
- Sports Vice President
- Peter Baston
- Music Vice President
- Natasha Bell
- Drama/Dance Vice President
- Harriet Collins
- Captain
- James Cousins
- Liam Lockhart
- Vice Captains
- Mohammed Hussain
- Alistair Widdop



Left to right
Peter Baston, Natasha Bell, Ann Midgely, Harriet Collins, Jon Butler

ELM

- House Lead Tutor
- Miss Vare
- House Presidents
- Ben Matthews
- Holly Simpson
- Dance Vice President
- Emma Groves
- Sports Vice President
- Stefan Marcello
- Art Vice President
- Tatiana de Norman
- Captains
- Andrew Stevenson
- Richard Askey
- Vice Captains
- Chris Obin
- Tim Hunt



Left to right
Stefan Marcello, Holly Simpson, Tatiana de Norman, Emma Groves, Ben Matthews

OAK

- House Lead Tutor
- Mr Norris
- House President
- Lucy Colquhoun
- Sports Vice President
- David Livings
- Music Vice President
- Kathryn Overend
- Drama Vice President
- Nikki Goodall
- House Publicist
- Louise Shepard
- Captains
- Emily Hurley
- Richard Sheircliff
- Vice Captains
- Clare Badley
- Pip Holloway



Left to right
Lucy Colquhoun, David Livings, Louise Shepard, Kathryn Overend, Nikki Goodall

CEDAR

Focus on Cedar House

Cedar House – Under New Management

The start of the year saw the appointment of a new, fresh and motivated team running Cedar House. The new team are featured in the line-up opposite.

Overall Cedar was a disappointing fourth in the house dance competition. We simply did not achieve the goal we had set ourselves i.e. two dances per year group. Unfortunately, we only had three dances in total! The first was from Year 7 with a group called Gangsters. They were Emma Stafford, Portia Wiltshire and Samantha Morrell. The 2nd group was from Year 8 and called Red Hot Chili's. They were Hannah Ralph, Ally Withers, Emma Wood and Lucy Rawlings. The 3rd was a senior group which consisted of your very own House President and Vice Presidents. All the groups performed magnificently and a massive thanks goes out to all of them for taking part and getting the points that Cedar desperately needed and still need.

Some Notable Cedar Successes

After an excellent start from the Christmas Card competition, Cedar has slipped down the table and is now, sadly, behind the other houses in the House Points table.

Those people who have taken part in house events have done brilliantly. Unfortunately, we need greater participation if we are to move up the table and win the house cup this year. However, among many recent highlights for Cedar House are;

Luke Austin

Winner of 6th Form House Chess

Chris Harper

Silver in the Senior maths challenge as a Year 10

Matthew Dickson

3rd in Year 7 House Chess

Lucy Rawlings

Katherine Ho

Winners of house badminton in Year 8

Sophie Mason

Ashleen Cousins

Winners of house badminton in Year 10

Well done to everyone who represented Cedar in a house event. Your support and enthusiasm is very much appreciated! ● Mr Norris

HOUSE DANCE REVIEW

What an amazing night! Certainly one of the best house dance competitions we've ever seen, full of excitement and surprise, not least Beech House's pre-show sabotage decoration of the stage, suggesting more than a little confidence!

However the standard of dance and choreography outshone everything else, with each dance being different from the last. It was also great to see so many boys taking part, especially in the lower school, and the excellent standard at which they performed. Rarely have we seen such variety and confidence in the performers and it was an absolute joy to watch!

Chris Scott's choreography won the junior section prize, displaying a medley of styles,

from street to ballet and tap to contemporary. Three A level dancers, Charlie Ashwell, James Cousins and Sarah Martin won the seniors (with a near perfect score I might add). Special mention should also go to Will Smith who performed a solo in the junior section and received one of the loudest and longest ovations of the evening.

The night was ended by ACE Dance Co. with a performance of their new piece 'Bedlam', followed by the nervous wait for the announcement of results with Beech being named overall winners. A big thank you and well done should go to everyone involved in making this night such a roaring success. Roll on House Dance 2006. ● Tom Pritchard

Have you enjoyed Personal Best?

Do you run a business which could benefit from advertising to the parents and families of over 1300 students, plus staff and other associates (a print run of at least 2000)?

If so, you could help us fund the cost of production by advertising in Personal Best.

We are offering quarter page spaces at excellent rates in the summer term issue.

Call Sue Fatcher on
01635 573947 for more details
on rates and other requirements.



Farewell from this year's Head Boy and Head Girl

Stepping into Tom and Jasmine's shoes this time last year was always going to be a difficult job. They made a huge contribution to Sixth Form life and we wanted to live up to the reputation they had created.

Our first aim was to increase the role of the Student Council within the school, and make the whole student body see what a huge difference they can make. We also introduced a new Year 12 Council which meant it wasn't just Year 13's who had a say in Sixth Form life. It made us realise that the new Year 12's could see things from a fresh perspective, and hopefully the responsibilities that these students took on could help lay the foundations for a Sixth Form where everybody's opinion counts. We discussed matters such as future management, organisation and cleaning of the common room and also the idea of installing lockers (a plan which has now materialised - we are expecting the lockers any time now!).

Open evenings gave us an opportunity to share our aspirations, which Mr.Slevin and Mr.People always supported so wholeheartedly, with prospective students and their parents - hopefully we made a positive impression with as few cheesy jokes as possible!

Outside of our responsibilities within the Sixth Form we got involved with other initiatives and the Fairtrade committee that our year group

founded, with Mr.Schofield as our mentor, managed to obtain a 'Green Machine' which stocks organic and Fairtrade foods. Our involvement with Barnardo's also led to a non-school uniform day, raising over £700, and discussions of other charity events. The time we've spent with the Student Council has also been very rewarding. Some of the members have met with the school Governors on several occasions to put issues such as curriculum and uniform under the spotlight. Indeed, the latter is now undergoing a change as we write.

However, it hasn't just been working hard within the Sixth Form - we've all played hard, too! We've had several parties which have been brilliant for mixing the two years, and sometimes even people from other schools. Our final task as Head Boy and Head Girl has been organising the prom, and it looks set to be another fantastic event and a well-deserved farewell for everybody in our year.

The last year has been a lot of work and responsibility yet extremely enjoyable, and we hope that our work has made a positive impact on the school. Hopefully we can help our successors to settle into the job, because we've certainly gained a lot from our role and want to share this with them. It has been a pleasure to work with the student council, who have achieved so much, the Deputies (Emma, Megan, Alex, Jack, Chris and David), and anyone else that has contributed along the way.

● Richard George & Hannah Cooper



First XV Rugby Dinner

The Inaugural Dinner was held at Newbury Manor Hotel on Wednesday 15th December. This dinner was organised by the Park House PE Department in recognition of the achievements of First XV Rugby team.

The evening proved to be very successful with the students being a credit in both dress and behaviour. During the after dinner presentations, 1st XV Ties were awarded to; T Hunt, R Askey, L McRae, C Hawkins, P Lister, M Hall, T Shackleton, A Cannock, J Moore, A Widdop, C Smith, N King, B Little, T Gibson, M Spencer and J O'Calloghan. The 'Most Improved Player' of the season went to Nathan King along with 'Player of the Season' going to Andy Cannock.

The PE department would like to express their gratitude to all the boys who have trained and played this season and hope to see continued commitment and hard work throughout the forthcoming matches.

The Falkland Surgery TEENAGE HEALTH CLINIC



We are now running a teenage health clinic at The Falkland Surgery, every week. Everybody is welcome and we are happy to talk about anything, from problems with general health and hygiene to contraception or just someone to talk to.

Everything is strictly confidential, no-one will ever know you've been.

**EVERY MONDAY AT 4PM
NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED**

Use the back door, ring the bell and we'll take you to your own waiting room.

**PLEASE CONTACT LISA OR JACKIE
ON 01635 279972**

Everyone's a winner!

Just in case you thought we'd forgotten, here are some of our recent sporting highlights. Unfortunately we can't fit all our results in each issue of Personal Best but we do publish all of the team results in our weekly school bulletin "In Touch".

Badminton Revival

Park House has been at the centre of a revival in competitive badminton in West Berkshire. This year we have organised 4 very successful tournaments for U14 boys and girls and U16 boys and girls. We used facilities at St.Gabriels for the girls' events and Park House for the boys' events.

Park House won the U16 girls' tournament and the U14 boys – fantastic results!



U16 Girls' Football success

On Thursday 10th February West Berkshire 5-a-side Football Tournament took place. Park House entered a year 10 and a year 11 team into the competition. All the girls who took part played extremely well and showed excellent team spirit.

The year 10 team had previously played in their own tournament, but were pleased to have an additional opportunity to play. The year

11 team list had changed several times during the week, due to players not being available to play. This was quite unsettling for the girls, but it did not deter them. The whole team continued to play with great determination and team spirit; they went on to become West Berkshire Champions. Congratulations to Chloe Hunt, Kirsty Wood, Sarah Williams, Pip Kennaugh, Chloe Coxhead.



Determination pays off!

U15 South West Berkshire Netball Tournament

– after 3 years of very close tournaments and many runners-up medals, the Year 10 Netball team really wanted to win the trophy! The section games started well with a 6-0 win over Theale Green which was an excellent result, each match only being 5 minutes one way.

The next game was against one of our main rivals Downe House. The team didn't play to their full potential, but managed to keep their cool after some bizarre refereeing decisions, the match ended up a 3-3 draw. Next we played St Bart's and once again did not play to our full potential, but won 2-1.

The final game of the section was against St Gabriels who were previous winners of the tournament. It was only earlier on in the season that we beat them in a friendly match so that gave the team a little confidence. The team played superbly well, with

Jess and Helen showing impeccable shooting skills as were the interceptions down the court from Emily, Alex, Gillian and Kerry. For once, when playing against St Gabriels our goalkeeper Emma had little to do, the score was a 4-0 win which was a superb and thoroughly well deserved result.

The semi-finals proved a little easier than anticipated, we beat Clere 11-1 which placed us in the final against Downe House. The score was 5-3 and we won the trophy! ● Year 10 Reporter





The Head and Carol Cook present Park House old boy Les Armstrong with a cheque for £1454

Ex-pupil helps us target Tsunami donations

When the Disasters and Emergencies Committee closed its Tsunami Appeal on February 25th due to an overwhelming response (close to £300 million) we were left wondering how to pass on funds of nearly £1500 raised by the school.

In fact our finance manager Carol Cook was worrying about that, just two days later when she attended the Mayor's Tsunami Concert at the Corn Exchange. Thankfully it was here she heard that local couple Les

and Sheila Armstrong were using the concert to raise money to give to The Salvation Army who in turn would be helping victims of the Boxing Day Tsunami in Sri Lanka.

Les Armstrong was thrilled when Carol offered the money from Park House to his local appeal, especially as he had been one of our first ever pupils in 1948! Les and Sheila Armstrong's involvement is doubly significant as they were on the coast of Sri Lanka when the Tsunami hit. In fact if they had two lucky escapes –

first they left their hotel late at 8.30 for a trip to a Dutch Fort at Galle which was hit at 9.00am before they managed to get there. Then when they had left the Yala Lodge Hotel they found out later that it too had been totally destroyed with the loss of 250 lives! Les and Sheila realised that they were lucky to be alive.

On reaching their next hotel just north of Colombo they found yet more locals and tourists had lost their lives. Homes and businesses were destroyed – in particular fishing villages lost their boats which were smashed by the waves.

After 2 days witnessing scenes of utter devastation, Les and Sheila were evacuated back to the UK and immediately started an appeal which led to the concert at the Corn Exchange in Newbury.

The concert directly raised £816 with an additional £2846 in ticket sales being given completely by the Corn Exchange. So with the donation from Park House included Les can now give The Salvation Army over £5000 to go towards a project in Sri Lanka where they are building a new town of 1000 houses with all the essential amenities.

Les and Sheila Armstrong will return to Sri Lanka sometime in the Spring to help with this project and would like to pass on their thanks to all at Park House who contributed!

We need the help of staff and students to produce Personal Best – thank you to all those who have contributed to this issue.

Do you wish to say something positive about school life? Please submit ideas and stories for future issues to Headteacher Derek People.

Don't worry if you're not sure what to supply the production team can help you make the best of what you have to say and any photos that you supply.

COMPETITION!

Open to all Park House Students. We need an image for the front cover of the summer issue of Personal Best. It needs to have a sporting theme and can be in any media – drawing, painting, photography or even a piece of sculpture (we will photograph it if it's suitable.) The only other requirement is that the piece of work must be A4 in size (or suitable for A4 dimensions if a sculpture). Don't forget to put your name on the back!

There are three age groups: Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 & 9); Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11) and Key Stage 5 (Sixth Form) with prizes in each:

**3RD PRIZE
IN EACH AGE
CATEGORY**
£5 W H Smiths
Vouchers

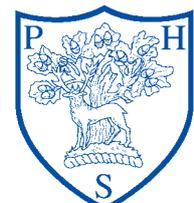
**2ND PRIZE
IN EACH AGE
CATEGORY**
£15 W H Smiths
Vouchers

**1ST PRIZE IN
EACH AGE
CATEGORY**
£25 W H Smiths
Vouchers

**OVERALL
WINNER**
Additional £25 worth
of vouchers, plus a
chance to have your
work in print!

Reminders will be given out by tutors, and the art department and we must have entries in to Mrs Waddell in the art department by **Friday 10th June** latest!

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