Learning... Creatively

It is particularly fitting that a year of outstanding progress and achievement at Park House recently culminated in the excitement of ‘Creative Learning Week’. It is therefore also no accident that this, the last Personal Best of the 2008–2009 academic year should celebrate the creativity of students and staff working together on a fantastic range of new activities both within and well beyond the classroom.

As featured on the following pages, ‘Creative Learning Week’ brought together the different subject areas to offer an amazing range of cross curricular projects and inspirational learning. Alongside these activities, our Sixth Form students followed a week-long programme designed to prepare them for future university and career applications. As you will see, it is especially pleasing that so many of these inspirational sessions were led by our ex-Sixth Form students, who are now enjoying successful university courses or careers.

We want each Park House Student to be...

An Independent Enquirer

A Creative Learner

A Reflective Learner

A Team Worker

A Self-Manager

An Effective Participant

Miss Hayes finds out what differences these types of weeks can have by talking to a Year 7 student before Creative Learning Week.

Miss Hayes  What is a normal teaching day like?

Student  Well….. we go to lessons and Maths is taught by maths teachers in a maths room, the same for History, English and PE, in fact all subjects…. lots of lesson are exciting and we do things differently in each subject.

This is a very simple summary of how students learn at Park House School during most weeks of the year. Every subject is taught by the specialist department, in the specialist area of the school. Students will of course experience creative lessons.

Miss Hayes  What was different about Creative Learning Week?

Student  It was good being taught by different teachers and not sat down all the time. We were learning but in a different way…. we were busy working in teams to solve problems, did Maths outside using PE and had to present our work in front of the group.

The title of the week reflects the way in which teacher planning took place and the methods used for learning and teaching. The week was designed to link learning across subject areas so that students learn about a single topic through specialist teaching from a number of subject teachers. This provides students with the opportunity to develop a broad and in-depth understanding of a specific topic.

The Year 7 experience

• Sports Challenge

This involved sports analysis using practical Maths and ICT. Students developed excellent team work as they performed sporting skills, recorded, analysed and presented their findings to an audience. Groups then investigated the handicap system used in sport and compared their results.

• Energy counts

PE, Maths and ICT teachers explored the concept of health and well-being. Students investigated healthy lifestyles through the balance of diet and nutrition and physical activity. They improved their understanding of energy values of food and how much energy we use or store. The fun is trying to maintain the balance!

• It’s History! Do you know where you live?

A lesson in local history was delivered by the English and History departments. It explored Newbury’s history from 1066 to present day, ensuring that students have an understanding of their local surroundings and significant moments in history.

The Year 8 Experience

• Rangoli

Cultural awareness was delivered through RE, Maths, Dance, Art and Textiles. Students developed their understanding of another culture through the stimulus of Diwali – the Hindu Festival of Light. They explored the ceremonies and stories associated with the festival; took a journey through Indian History from Gandhi to Bollywood and choreographed and performed a Bangra dance.

• We are what we eat

Food testing experiments in science explored sugar and fat content of foods and the break down of proteins. Food Technology produced healthy, tasty savoury and sweet products, whilst the Business Studies and ICT departments focused on the marketing and advertising of these food products.

Elsewhere this issue highlights the wider creative learning opportunities and experiences on offer in so many different contexts – including our Creative Partnership programme, Art Exhibition, Music and Dance Festivals and Planet Science event just for starters!

Creativity in learning has therefore been a major theme of the last academic year, rightly reflected throughout this end of year edition of Personal Best. As we now look forward to even more exciting opportunities and achievements in the new academic year, I should wish to thank students, parents and staff for all their work and support over the last twelve months. It has been a fantastic year for all at Park House. With very best wishes for an enjoyable and restful summer holiday. • Derek Peaple, Headteacher
The Year 9 Experience

• Year 9 has got talent
This project by the English, drama and music departments combined Britain’s got Talent with The Apprentice. Students worked in teams to plan, manage, market and perform. A visiting poet was inspirational and provided an excellent stimulus for the project, as well as offering support and guidance for the teams.

• Chicken Run
Through Geography, Science, Citizenship and Textiles, students explored where and how foods are produced and how sustainable the production methods are. They also discussed the battery farming vs free range controversy and used poetry as a way to express their opinions.

• Heart Start
I am reassured to know that we are all now in safe hands! Year 9 Students worked with staff from PHSE and Drama and were supported by our family support worker, Rob Bruce to gain these potentially life saving skills.

This was a dynamic week of learning thanks to the hard work of all staff and students and can be summarised by the following quote from an anonymous member of staff: “Students developed excellent skills in cooperation and teamwork while putting together their video advertisements. They had to allocate tasks, share responsibility and be disciplined in working together effectively. All groups did well, with several students overcoming initial reservations about being filmed and participating very well. Students were very engaged with this activity and interaction with staff was good.”
Déjà Vu?

As is usual during the summer term’s Creative Learning Week the Modern Foreign Languages department take Year 7 students to Paris. This year we took 102 students some of whom recorded their thoughts and memories of the trip for us… • Ms S. Yahi

In theme week Year 7 had the chance to go to France. The evening we arrived we went on a boat trip in Paris on the River Seine. It was a tour of beautiful, historic landmarks including the Eiffel Tower.
The next day we went to Parc Asterix which we all enjoyed. We all went on many roller coasters and it was a theme park to remember, some of us even went on the biggest wooden roller coaster in Europe!
That evening we went to Paris again to go up the Eiffel Tower. A lot of us went up to the second floor and a few went to the very top. The views were amazing and unforgettable. But too soon it was time to go back.
The next day was the day we were going home and we went to City Europe on the way back to do some shopping, but eventually we had to face the long journey back home. We all thought France was brilliant and wanted to stay for much longer. • Grace Towey & Katie Pryor

I thought the French trip was amazing! I really liked it when we went on the boat trip because it introduced us to Paris and the famous monuments. I loved Parc Asterix and the rides were great! I also liked how we experienced a little freedom in the Parc. The Eiffel tower had great views and it seemed as if you could see the whole of France! I loved the French trip and I would go again anytime. • Harriet Gray

Celine Olivier’s Trip Diary – Day 1 Monday
As the coach left for Paris everyone waved goodbye to their parents. It was exciting to think what it might be like in Paris because you see it all the time in movies.
After about three hours drive we made it to the ferry queue in Dover. On the ferry there were lots of shops. After about another hour and a half we were on the road and heading to our hotel at Parc Asterix.
We then all unpacked and ate dinner which was an all you can eat buffet before the boat trip on the River Seine in Paris. When we were on the boat it started to rain, but the rain seemed to make the boat trip more fun. We saw the Eiffel Tower and many other great monuments!

Day 2 Tuesday
We got up early for breakfast then took a bus to the theme park. Once we were in the theme park we were given meeting places and times and then we could all go round wherever we wanted. I went round with a big group of girls and we went on all the water rides – it was so fun! The theme park was amazing!
We left the theme park and went back to the hotel to eat dinner and get ready to go to the Eiffel tower! When we got at the bottom of the Eiffel Tower, we had to stand in a queue then we walked all the way to the second floor. On the second floor we took a lift to the top. On the top the view was so beautiful it was a shame my camera ran out of battery!

Day 3 Wednesday
After we had finished our breakfast we had to pack our bags to go home back to England. On the way to the ferry we stopped at a massive shopping centre, called Cité de l’Europe. I bought a blue beret as a reminder that I went to France! We left the big shopping centre and went home. Au revoir la France, c’était super, je me suis bien amusée et bonjour l’Angleterre!
After an early start at 6 o’clock, we travelled down to the south of France and eventually arrived at our destination, in the Futuroscope Parc, near Poitiers, at 7pm. A programme full of activities awaited the students for the next couple of days. On the Tuesday we did some French speaking practise lessons in the sun and on the grass… Then we spent the rest of the day in the Futuroscope Parc – a theme park dedicated to cinema techniques and sciences. Some of the shows included IMAX films, 360 degree film, 3D glasses, extended screen right under your feet. We saw films on dinosaurs, planets, the first moon landing. According to the students the best attractions were the “Dance with the Robots” and the “Vienne Dynamique” where we could follow a car chase in moving seats. In the evening we visited the quiet town of Poitiers and had a look at its cathedrals. On Wednesday, we spent most of the day in La Rochelle, a beautiful seaside town and worked on our booklets to prepare for course work. Finally we had the chance to see the evening show at the park. Unfortunately we had to leave again very early on Thursday morning.

Students had a fantastic time there as well as the staff, thanks to the good weather and the excellent behaviour displayed by the students. Every one enjoyed thoroughly the trip with many trying on their French skills with the inhabitants and in the theme park. • Miss Trouset
“Really great fun and had an educational side, 10/10” Claire Whitworth

“We got to see a lot of different things. I liked visiting the galleries. PortAventura was a really good experience. Very good dance workshop” Amy Loughnane

“Barcelona fue estupendo! Pienso que fue el mejor viaje del colegio. He nos gustado todo las actividades, y he me encantado ir al port Adventura porque fue muy divertido y encontramos chicos españoles.” Hadas Labrisch & Amy Loughnane

“I learnt new things about Art and the Spanish culture” Lara Jones

“It was good that even though I didn’t take Spanish, we had a lesson and I learnt some” Lucy Radley

“Things I like about the trip – being able to see a different culture with my friends and learning about it at the same time as having fun” Amy Tennent

“We all had a good time here and we all had a good laugh even with the teachers!” Rebecca Canning
The Barcelona trip was full of amazing experiences – I sat on the longest bench in the world, learnt the basic steps of the Cha Cha, tried Spanish food, saw the art of some of the most famous artists in the world, polished up my Spanish and had a great time.

Although we had so much crammed into each day I never felt it was too much, there was always something else to see. Even when our coach broke down we still had a laugh, people were singing and we even got the teachers dancing!

The teachers were really great we all got to know them well by the end of the week. I think they had as much fun as we did. I would definitely like to go again, I can only think of one thing that would make it better…can we stay for longer? • Kiera O’Brien

Barcelona 15th–19th June 2009

Leaving England on a dreary Monday morning and arriving in a scorching Barcelona by Monday afternoon was an exciting way to start Creative Learning Week. The trip was planned as part of a cross curricular venture between Art & Design and Modern Foreign Languages.

On arrival we were greeted at the airport by our tour guide and taken straight to the Torres Vineyards, where we looked at wine production and enjoyed a tour of the estate by train.

After an early start we were all pleased to arrive at the Vilanova Park. The accommodation was a series of wooden chalets, clean, comfortable and air conditioned… perfect. Everyone, including each of the teachers, was delighted at the sight of the swimming pool, a perfect way to cool down at the end of the day.

The food was plentiful, starter, main course and desert (more like main course, main course, and desert) and amusing evening entertainment was provided. We discovered the new dance craze ‘aaaaazucar!’ which is yet to hit the British shores! If you are intrigued we are sure the Year 9’s will teach you some of the moves!

We experienced wonderful weather and a packed week of activities; Spanish lessons, Art Galleries, exploring local architecture, Montserrat, Latin American dance lessons and The PortaVentura theme park.

The theme park was a particular highlight for many, from the three hour queue to get on ‘Furious’ (I’m told it was worth it) to the Park House filled boat on ‘Tukituki Splash’. This was the only ride we could drag Mr Toner and Señora Nait-Ladjemil onto and, yes, we did all enjoy getting very wet!

During the week students were asked to capture memories by designing and writing postcards and as you can see from the pictures some excellent work was produced. The memorabilia, sketches and photographs will continue to be used by the students for their GCSE coursework.

A personal highlight for Miss Weeks was celebrating a very special birthday! Wonderful company, lots of presents, three birthday cakes and a pitch perfect rendition of “Feliz cupléaños” created a memory she will never forget (and not just because of her age!)

Thank you to students and staff for a wonderful week of cross-curricular learning and fun. • Miss Weeks & Señora Nait-Ladjemil
During Creative Learning Week twenty-two Year 9 Gifted and Talented students from Park House school joined five of St Gabriel’s Gifted and Talented students to participate in an amazing event at Oriel College. The students were also mentored by eight Sixth Form students considering Oxbridge applications in the autumn. Oriel was founded in 1326 by Edward II and is the fifth oldest of Oxford’s Colleges.

Year 9 student Nasia Bruce writes: The trip to Oriel College, Oxford University, was a very enjoyable experience that we will all remember. Mostly because of how much hard work and determination we put in to meet the deadlines of the three presentations. With tasks set and groups established we began our hard work.

By 10 o’clock I had changed three times, much to everyone’s amazement. My group had split in two to get the work done faster; Ollie Hawker and I did the presentation on Olympic Energy and Beth Nichol and Ben Skuse did the presentation on Sporting Heroes of the Ancient and Modern Olympics. After both finishing our presentation we moved on to: Measuring and Explaining Olympic Success. We had only just started when the teachers told us to go to bed. The nerves kicked in.

The day of the presentations came. We had about an hour to finish off our presentations. My group all got stuck in getting ready for the presentations. When the teachers came in to tell us that we had about ten minutes left we had finished all the presentations and were rehearsing. Finally we were all called into the Harris Lecture Theatre. With a few words of encouragement, Beth and Ben got up and began their presentation. After all the presentations were finished, we all had refreshments while the judges made their verdict. We came second and received a silver ‘medal’. Ollie and I were very proud of Beth and Ben. The second round came and we got ready for our turn again. We presented our presentations but unfortunately didn’t receive an award. After lunch I had changed for the second time and it was the last presentations, meaning Ollie and me. It all went smoothly but unfortunately we didn’t get an award. The trip back home was enjoyable but we were all sad to leave as it was such a great experience.

I feel honoured to have gone and would like to thank all the teachers who made this possible and would like to thank Oriel College for welcoming us and giving us such a great time.

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House Public Speaking

House public speaking took place during Creative Learning Week and was a huge success; really putting the public speaking group on the map. Each house had a team to speak on a subject for seven minutes, with marks given for content, delivery and style.

Elm had two teams, one called ‘Nice Try’ – a pun on rugby scoring. This team had Nasia Bruce, Sam Forrest and Sam Storey. This was a good title as their team was arguing why rugby should be banned. They scared the audience with their pictures of cauliflower ears which did work temporarily!

The second Elm team’s subject was ‘Let Yourself Glow’ talking about why we should smile more, and warning against the epidemic of ‘evils’ which seems to be spreading through schools. They made great speeches which made a silly topic seem so serious. Then Beth, the proposer of thanks, finished it off by making us all smile. Her muddling up of Mr Miles’ and Mrs Dawes’ names made everyone smile – I certainly let myself glow!

Beech House spoke on the subject of ‘Pearly Girls and Green Guys’. This title was about colour distinction between genders. They only had two people on their team – Alon Labrisch and Sam Steele-Childe. They did a great back track through time of why we had colours which are gender specific. By the end the boys were no longer afraid to wear pink.

Oak’s team – Naomi MacIntyre, Kerin Osteritter and Holly Long – gave us ‘Laughing at Your Expense’ which focused on the issue of fraud in our government ie. the MP’s expenses. Their team talked about the weird and wacky expenses claims like the duck island and the man who cleaned his moat.

Cedar also had a single team with three members – Vertly Walker, Alex Morton and Frances Miller. Their speech ‘Take a Chance’ discussed gambling problems and was a true story of how much people spend on gambling which made me never want to gamble online.

After the event had ended Mr Miles and Mrs Dawes came back with hotly anticipated results! In second place was Beech and in first was Elm’s team comprising of Maddie Gilboy, Amy Loughnane and Beth Buckland (pictured above) with ‘Let Yourself Glow’. Mr. Miles said, “I am so happy that such a fantastic group was able to make such a great event happen.”

Everyone agreed that it was a fantastic event, and Elm are keen to retain their title next year; although I’m sure the other Houses will have something to say about that! • Sam Forrest Year 7
Year 12 student Katherine Estdale writes: I was delighted to be given the unique opportunity to spend two days living at Oriel College which is part of the world renowned Oxford University. The two day event provided the younger students with an invaluable experience as they got to work with university lecturers whilst the Sixth Form students had the chance to speak to current students who kindly gave up their free time to show us around and tell us about available courses and university life.

The visit included an overnight stay where we experienced the vast range of A* rooms complete with an en-suite and lounge. The experience left participants of all ages with a whirlwind of emotions ranging from intrigue to sheer exhaustion after being put through a gruelling two day Olympic workshop at the end of which, the seven groups of Year 9 students made three five-minute presentations, aided by a Sixth Form mentor.

It was an incredible experience for myself and my fellow sixth formers. Many students never get the opportunity to spend a night in a university before they move in to one. We realised small things like the quality of the food, how thin the walls are and how close we were situated in relation to the road could make a real difference to our experience at university.

It also allowed us to speak to several university lecturers and students, who could inform us on a range of subject areas from Bio-chemistry to English Literature. We felt honoured to have this opportunity to speak to them on a one-to-one basis, which is often hard during a busy open day with thousands of students.

One of the highlights was experiencing university dining and observing the determination of Mr Miles when it came to the opportunity of an extra sausage at breakfast!

Overall, it was enjoyed by all and I would like to thank all the members of staff who gave up their time to accompany us.
Park House Has Talent

Our recent talent contest held in Creative Learning Week had an extra bit of sparkle in the form of Liam Collins – one half of ‘Faces of Disco’ who made it through to the live semi-finals of Britain’s Got Talent this year. The double act, which also features Richard Edmonds, met at Loughborough University in 2004 and used to perform on streets around Britain to raise money for their ultimate goals of representing Great Britain in athletics.

Now somewhat distracted by the limelight they are also continuing to perform their hilarious show along with training. As well as judging the performances, Richard gave the students an inspiring speech, signed autographs and took questions from the audience. Finally, after pressure from all of the students (and staff!), Richard performed with one of our acts ‘Straight as a Roundabout’ wearing his obligatory Simon Cowell mask.

For our talent show itself students spent their time perfecting dance routines, practising juggling, singing and playing a variety of musical instruments from electric guitars to flutes. While students were eagerly supported by staff, a handful of lucky students were also expertly guided by performance poet Joe Coelho, creating their very own rap poetry ready for Friday’s ‘Live Final’.

As the semi-final approached, Park House School was snowed under with marketing materials created by students dedicated to getting their act through to the final round. Posters and banners displayed students’ creativity combining textile collages, painting and drawing as they decorated the hall ready for the arrival of the judges.

Friday’s semi-final rounds were a massive hit with audience and judges alike, with the acts each demonstrating a high level of talent and hard work. As the final six acts took the stage in the afternoon it was clear that the standards were high.

Finally, the moment of judgement came… The judges declared ‘Fusion’, an all girl singing and dance act, the winners with their performance of Car Wash that had the audience on their feet dancing. Their final victory rendition proved to be the perfect end to a week in which students celebrated each others’ creativity.

www.myspace.com/poetryjoe
www.facesofdisco.co.uk

Heart Start!

During Creative Learning Week Year 9 students were given the opportunity to learn the vital skill of saving a life and recognising many different medical emergencies. The day started with teaching the, apparently simple, procedure for dialling 999 and requesting an ambulance and ended with how to administer essential life-saving cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), with a lot of interesting and fun bits in between! One such ‘fun bit’ was ‘the challenge’, during which thirteen volunteers had to administer CPR for as long as possible under the watchful eye of Mr Bruce – one group managed to complete effective CPR for 21 minutes – a Park House record!

All students had to complete an assessment for each life-saving technique but rather than use the more formal modes of assessment Mrs McAuliffe had the fantastic idea to put the students into ‘real life’ situations about the school site, using actors to simulate each medical emergency. This was a complete success and I am very proud to report that every student passed with flying colours.

We have run the ‘Heartstart’ programmes for several years here at Park House and this year was outstanding in terms of the level of focus given by all students and in the quality of the techniques learnt. Some standout students who really deserve a mention are Mikey Ansell – truly professional, even in minute nineteen of ‘the challenge’; John Wall – hardworking and helpful to other students and, Jake Kierle – a real inspiration.

A huge special thank you to Mrs McAuliffe for her excellent ideas, Mr Bruce for his enthusiasm and great time-keeping skills for ‘the challenge’ and Miss Morgan for her fantastic support and added fun element! • Miss Vare, PHSE Co-ordinator
First of all, we would like to introduce ourselves as the new Senior Team of Park House School. After an intense selection process, Georgina Campbell and Samuel Tankard have been awarded with the title of Head Girl and Head Boy. Hannah Ralph, Hannah Cook, Michael Thatcher and Tom Hughes were given Deputy titles. Since then we have outlined our aims and plans for the next academic year which consist of the restoration of the current House system, continuation and growth of Student Council as well as Student Voice. We’ve already had independent meetings, organised a sixth form barbecue and assisted Mr. Peaple in acquiring student opinions on how we should learn in a school of the future. Representatives of the Student Council gathered with us and members of the Senior Leadership Team in the main library. Groups of students created presentations which demonstrated impressive and imaginative ideas in how we should be learning and making the most of Park House facilities. As a team we’re all very honoured and excited to have this opportunity and cannot wait to begin making our legacy in Park House School!

Ex-head boy James Hayward who was featured in Personal Best Issue 13 has just completed his second year studying Medicine at Bristol University and is still “loving it!” And, although he has another four years training James has recently won two anatomy awards.

His winning of the Edward Fawcett Prize involved naming and understanding of anatomical parts and only the top four of the year were invited to enter.

Forty medical students were also invited to enter a dissection competition and James has again proved himself exceptional by completing the best dissection. “I had to dissect a human elbow joint using the appropriate surgical tools and then clearly display and label the visible structures within.”

We wish James well and hope he enjoys his well-deserved summer break and looking forward to hearing from him again.

Current Year 13 student James Nash, who has been studying Biology, Chemistry and Geography at A-level, has received some excellent news ahead of the summer break.

Having performed ‘sufficiently meritoriously’ in the Entrance Scholarship Exam at Aberystwyth University, James has earned himself an Entrance Scholarship which gives some financial assistance to him in his first year and guarantees him an unconditional offer to the oldest established university in Wales.

James will be joining the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences to study for his Environmental Science degree. These studies will involve understanding the natural, human, chemical, biological influences which have and will continue to shape our planet. We are delighted for James on this notable achievement and hope to catch up with him in future Personal Bests.
The dedication, enthusiasm and talent of the students has been particularly high this year and the music staff are extremely grateful to all students who have participated in the music events over the past year. Particular highlights have been ‘Grease’ and the ‘Berkshire Music and Dance Festival’ for Year 7 students held in The Anvil. We look forward to welcoming the new Year 7 students to the extra-curricular music activities in September and to more excellent and exciting concerts.

At the end of another very busy year for the musicians at Park House School and Sports College we look back at some of the more recent standout moments... Miss van Kempen, Head of Music

The Spring Concert
The Spring Concert saw performances by Year 11 students which for many would be their last at the school.

On concert night a large audience gathered in the school hall for what was to become a highlight of the Music department’s calendar. All year groups were represented, from Year 7’s to Year 11’s and 13’s playing their exam pieces. The evening opened with the School Band in top form, illustrating the improvisation skills of several of the players. The Senior Singers aimed high with the top notes from popular arrangements, and later joined the Choir and Band in a ‘first’ joint venture, featuring a medley from The Little Mermaid. The orchestra performed three contrasting pieces which were well received. The evening was rounded off with the Year 11 band and a performance of A Little Help From My Friends. Many thanks must go to the technicians, Mr Barber, Mr Poad and George Wrightson for controlling the sound, and music teachers Mandy van Kempen, Brenda Rohweder, Andy Hunt and Sue Simpson along with all the students for putting on an excellent concert, and to The Parents’ Association for providing refreshments afterwards.

The School Choir, Band and Orchestra have performed throughout the year and have demonstrated the talent of the students at Park House. At the time of going to press, the younger students of the school are preparing for the Summer Concert.

Music and Dance Festival 2009 (Main Picture)
Earlier this term 25 students from Park House School joined fifteen other schools in Berkshire to perform in the Music Festival at The Anvil in Basingstoke. After months of preparation, the selected Year 7 students sang to an audience of 3000 people, including the Mayor of Newbury. They sang two songs with students from Theale Secondary School and joined the children from the 14 primary schools in the performances of ‘As Long As I have Music’ and ‘Put on a Happy Face’.
The second half of the concert saw the area premier performance of ‘Jake and the Right Genie’. Special congratulations must go to Matt Lawson for performing the part of Jake, Alex Jordan for her part as the Genie, Ginnie Breakwell for performing the part of the Mayor and Jake’s mum, and Saskia Marshall for her part in Jake’s band.

Alex’s song had the audience in awe and Matt filled the large auditorium with laughter. A huge congratulations to all students involved – your hard work and commitment has been greatly appreciated.

**Park House Recital Review**

The diverse – and accomplished – level of school music-making was demonstrated at the Park House Sixth Form recital evening on April 27th, which showcased the talents of four performers from the school. It also pointed out the benefits of continuing contacts with professional musicians through Southern Sinfonia.

Two extended recitals by final year students, forming an important part of their A-level work, were at the core of the evening. Joshua Poole, accompanied by Daniel Nichols at the piano, provided an illuminating tour of American Saxophone Sonatas. His programme notes highlighted the different approaches adopted by four twentieth century composers, while also tracing shared influences. These features were displayed with verve and subtlety of tone colour in his playing, which the audience much enjoyed.

The other recital, by Ed Robbs on electric guitar, was an intriguing journey through the heavy metal tradition, using what Ed described as an “influential timeline”. The music was more familiar to some of the audience than to others (!) but proved a fascinating listen. The session demonstrated the performers’ technical skills as he brought out the variety of the four pieces as well as their relationship to each other.

Double slots each for two Year 12 students, first as performers and then as composers, sandwiched the two longer recitals. Joe Overend demonstrated his command of the bass guitar first, followed by Katrina Cotter-Stone performing three songs from the music theatre. The evening ended with two new compositions, one song each by Joe and Katrina. These were performed by Martin Riley and two Southern Sinfonia colleagues who had earlier worked with the composers on the pieces. Martin works on creating new music with the full range of local schools, and both he and the students had no doubts about the value of the contacts. Certainly the two compositions were attractive and sophisticated, reflecting well on all concerned, as did the whole lively and satisfying evening.

**Helping Young Musicians at Castle School**

Four Year 7 students from Park House (Sarah Cornforth, Beth Buckland, Tesni Fakes and Chris Head) and five students from Trinity School helped Miss van Kempen to run a series of samba workshops for the students at Castle School in Newbury.

We performed on a variety of percussion instruments such as the snare drum, cow bells, shakers and tambourines.

When we first met the students on Wednesday 10th June we helped them to familiarise themselves with the instruments they were going to play in the performance on 8th July at their sports day. We also had a go at playing the instruments ourselves – Chris played the snare drum, Beth and Tesni played the agogo bells.

On the day of the performance, we played at the opening of their musical garden with solos on the various instruments in the garden as well as the start of their sports day. During the sports day performance we helped the Castle School students to play their instruments. Chris was helping Yasmin on the drums, Sarah was helping Terry on the tambourines and xylophone, Beth was helping Michael on the shakers and Tesni was helping Tiana on the agogo bells.

It’s been a really worthwhile experience and we feel that we have benefited enormously. We have learnt how to help others who do not have good mobility or who have a special need and we have started to work towards our Arts Award qualification.

• Beth, Tesni, Chris and Sarah.
Quantum Leap VI
July 2009

In days gone by the phrase “six of the best” was often heard in educational circles as an answer to the worst of student misbehaviour. On Thursday 2nd July the same phrase re-emerged, but this time in relation to the very best of student behaviour with the sixth performance of Sue Llewellyn’s Quantum Leap, a dance extravaganza that has consistently dazzled and delighted the audiences in the Corn Exchange. Sue’s productions have indeed been “six of the best”, always fully appreciated by the proud and eager audiences of family and friends.

The main enjoyment of all the Quantum Leaps is in the sheer number of people involved, coming from all local schools and dance groups throughout West Berkshire. To have such talent in such larger numbers is amazing and reflects greatly on the expertise, effort, energy and enthusiasm of all the staff and students involved. This was Sue’s last production and it was only right and fair that her efforts were recorded at the beginning with the presentation of her lifetime achievement teaching award (see page 26). What came afterwards showed exactly why it was awarded, over 200 dancers expressing their delight in dance and by doing so thanking the lady who started it all. There could not have been a better and more resounding “thank you”. • Doug Cook

Sixth Form Leavers’ Ball

The Sixth Form Prom was held at Sandford Springs and proved a fitting finale to the end of exams and life at Park House. Well over one hundred students and their guests arrived to a reception of Pimms and relaxed after one of the hottest weeks of the summer in the beautiful grounds of the golf course just outside Kingsclere.

Students and staff enjoyed a spectacular buffet, chocolate fountain and disco amid exploding balloon decorations which added to the festivity of the evening.

All the staff at Park House wish students the very best for their futures and look forward to return visits from them in the future. •

Park House School Association

Since the last edition of Personal Best we have continued our fundraising and are already planning events for next year:

Our second car boot sale in April was another success. Despite the threat of heavy showers, which did appear early in the morning but held off for the duration of the sale, the sellers turned up in earnest. It was great to see the car park bustling with activity on a Saturday morning. We made approximately £300 for school funds and hope to build on this in the future.

Thanks as always to all committee members who contributed to the day and also to their children who willingly gave their help and a special thank-you to Jo and Peter Brunsden for donating our new sign which can be used for future occasions.

A huge thank you to all the parents and friends of the school who came along to the Mamma Mia Abba Night and dressed up (some totally unrecognisable!), and boogied the night away. It was really entertaining with impromptu karaoke and Greek dancing in between the tables, luckily not on them! We are already gathering ideas for another party night in the autumn which will hopefully encourage more of you to come along.

The final figures are not in yet, but with our two Vodafone matching parents, we hope to have made somewhere in the region of £1500 – which is absolutely fantastic!

PHSA were also actively involved in co-ordinating the Greenham Gift application which resulted in us reaching the final eight and being allocated £8000 towards the new Wellness centre. Many thanks to all involved.

Social events already planned for the autumn term.

• Saturday 26th September – Car Boot Sale in school carpark
• Tuesday 6th October – New Year 7 Meet and Greet
• Wednesday 14th October – PHSA AGM
• Friday 16th October – “Bollywood of Hollywood” Adult disco evening with Curry Buffet
• Friday 13th November – Family Quiz Night
• Friday 4th December – Ladies Night – A chance to have a night out with your friends before the Christmas rush

Details of these events will be posted on the website and feature in the weekly parents’ newsletter and around the school. If you haven’t already done so register your e-mail address with the school and you will receive the weekly parents’ communication every Friday.

Have a good summer and we look forward to seeing you at our social events. • Angela Jenkinson, Chair PHSA
Top Facilities for a Top Sports College

Many of you will recall that double Olympic Champion and National School Sports Champion Dame Kelly Holmes described Park House as ‘a top Sports College’. We are now delighted that the school will soon be able to boast facilities to match Dame Kelly’s glowing assessment.

This summer has seen two very exciting developments in state-of-the-art school and community learning facilities at Park House which signals fantastic news for Park House students and other local primary schools and clubs.

Astroturf

Last year, we were successful in securing £475,000 from the £10 million announced by Prime Minister Gordon Brown to ensure that students from the country’s most successful Sports Colleges also had access to the very best facilities. Reflecting the long-expressed wishes of many students, the focus of our bid was the establishment of a state-of-the-art all weather pitch on the Czerpak field.

The pitch will significantly enhance the PE Department’s ability to offer a wide and varied curriculum throughout the year and will also enable the further extension of extra-curricular club-school links through out of hours community use.

Building work is set to commence once term ends and will also include new and resurfaced tennis and netball courts.

Wellness Centre

Our plans to develop an integrated all-round approach to physical and health education through a combined Technogym Fitness Suite, ICT monitoring room and Food and Nutrition base was of course recently given a major boost by the award of £8,000 through the Greenham Trust Greenham Gift.

We are extremely grateful to all of you who supported our plans for a ‘Wellness Centre’ as part of the public vote to shortlist local community projects. This support enabled us to present to an audience at the Corn Exchange on 17 June. The senior students – Georgina Campbell, Sam Tankard and Hannah Ralph – presented superbly and were simply outstanding ambassadors for the school, securing one of the £8,000 Gift awards. • D People

Going Live with the Life Channel

Students puzzled by the sudden appearance of a number of large plasma TVs in the corridors and Dining Hall will not have long to wait until the mystery is solved!

The plasma screens form part of a new communication system which should go live by the end of the Summer Term. Developed by the media company ‘Life Channel’, the system will enable us to keep students fully updated on daily events and activities, as well as providing information on a range of local services and clubs available to young people.

Once the system is established, we will want to actively engage students in the management of content and information through the School Council. •
Ex-Park House Student Joins London Irish Academy

London Irish has recruited another exciting group of students to join the club’s successful Academy this summer.

Jonathan Joseph, who plays at centre, is one of eight students who went through a rigorous selection procedure undertaken by Neal Hatley and Barrie-Jon Mather, the Academy Manager and Assistant Manager respectively. Jonathan has also represented England at under 18 level.

Commenting on the new intake, Neal Hatley said, “The Academy plays a crucial role in the club’s player development process. It has been remarkably successful to date producing outstanding players not just for London Irish but also for England. We believe we’ve recruited another group of talented students with the potential to succeed at the highest level.” We hope to see Jonathan match the success of our other old-boy....

As previously featured in Personal Best, Tom Croft’s star continues to rise in the world of international rugby. Although the recent Lions’ tour could at best be described as disappointing from a fan’s point of view it would be fair to say that Tom’s extensive press coverage was more than well-deserved!

Epic comeback brings hope to the Lions

Tom Croft

Teams England & Leicester
Caps 13/1
Two tries, 10 strides forward, hello world-class and well done for his courage and his engine. Must be used more in the lineout

Alex throws to success

Alex Wallace from our current Year 12 is looking to improve on his current successful series of competitions with an eye on more national and international judo events.

Alex has been a ‘judoka’ or ‘judo practitioner’ since the age of seven and has always had a passion for training and competing far and wide in the UK and across Europe. Alex has trained in Bracknell for the last four years at the renowned Pinewood Judo Club under Sensei Don Werner who is himself 7th Dan. The Pinewood club has produced World and Olympic champions and typically wins over 1000 open competition medals annually.

Alex has added to that haul with a recent bronze at a national team event in Sheffield in the U18 under 60kg class. This on top of 30 other medals since joining Pinewood plus his first Gold in Europe in 2007 means that Alex will continue to be a “judoka” to watch.
Josh Poole – Young Musician of the Year

In March 2009, I entered into the Reading Symphony Orchestra, Young Musician competition. Having entered the competition in the previous year, I was placed third. However, as I entered late into the competition this year, I only had about two weeks to prepare. The main problem I encountered was getting an accompanist that could make the date. After having tried about 25, I found one accompanist that was willing to accompany me on one of my two pieces. As this was the day before the competition, I was forced to change my programme to include an unaccompanied piece.

The event took place at Bradfield College, where I played Where Spirits and Demons Dance, by Nigel Wood; and the second movement from Deux Caprices en Forme de Valse, by Paul Bonneau. Facing 10 other high standard competitors and having been less prepared than I would have liked, I did not expect to be placed highly in the competition, if at all. However, I managed to gain first place!

I was surprised to discover at the end of the event that I had been awarded first place. For this I was awarded £100 of vouchers for Hickies music store (the sponsor), a trophy, and the opportunity to play a concerto with Reading Symphony Orchestra as a soloist in their 2009/10 season. I will be playing the Ibert Concerto for solo saxophone and orchestra on 7th November.

Metal for Mencap

Since September 2008 brothers Will and Ed Brunsden have organised three events called “Metal for Mencap” to raise money for West Berkshire Mencap. In total they have raised £405 for their chosen charity. From booking the hall, PA system and bands to sorting out prices for refreshments the boys have taken the whole job on board with a little bit of help from willing parents! The audiences have enjoyed music performed by students from Park House School and other local bands.

Ed who is in Year 10 is enjoying being in his band Flaming Rebellion and looking forward to doing more local gigs in the future. Will has now finished A levels and in September he has a place at ACM – Academy of Contemporary Music – in Guildford to fulfil his ambition of becoming a session drummer. Watch this space!

Over £700 raised by one tutor-group

Last year, my family and I went to visit Zenzele orphanage in Johannesburg, South Africa that my mum had helped set up as a charity.

I was quite moved by what I saw, so when we got back and my form at school, 7 Theta, had to choose a charity to support, I put Zenzele forward. We went ahead with that as our charity and started fundraising as soon as we could. On the 26th of June 2009, we put on a quiz evening for our parents, with cocktails, cakes and different topics for the questions.

It was a massive success, everyone had lots of fun and by the end, we had raised a whopping £391.62! We hope to get some matched funding from Vodafone, which brings our total up to £741.62.

Year 7 students bury time-capsule for future generations

The youngest students in Year 7 were chosen this year to bury a time capsule under the new ‘Wall of Inspiration’ at Park House. The students put in items of everyday school life from copies of timetables to school equipment such as pencils and drawing pins. Each student also donated a strand of hair. The Wall is in fact four brick ‘benches’ which will be used in lesson time as an outdoor area for performing poetry or music or any other use that teachers and students choose. There will also be a performance area of decking beside the ‘wall’. As Park House enjoys an attractive site teachers use appropriate opportunities to take students out of classrooms and this will hopefully be the first of a series of “performance pads”.

The Wall of Inspiration is a part of a programme supported by Creative Partnerships. Over a three year period the school has access to £45,000 of funding. A poet, Joseph Coehlo, has also worked in the school with Year 8 and 9 students. His inspiration has led to exciting new approaches to writing poetry which are proving very effective. There is also a science project under way and other departments will be involved in the programme from September. Perhaps the great-grandchildren of these students will be at Park House and may use their science and history lessons to explore what is in the time capsule if and when it is recovered!
LAND ROVER JAGUAR APPRENTICESHIP

Year 11 student Nicholas Pass has, from an early age, shown an interest in cars and motor bikes and from an even earlier age he enjoyed taking things apart to find out how they worked but not always putting them back together right...

So, in 2007 following their own research, and with a mind to ensuring Nicholas stayed focused on his studies during his GCSE years, his parents approached Park House School with the idea that he might have a day release from school to attend Sparsholt College in Winchester to complete an apprenticeship in motor mechanics. The course for 14-16 year-olds also had the added bonus that it was backed by Land Rover Jaguar.

After some further research by Park House the school approved Nicholas’s application and, with the proviso from Sparsholt that Nicholas prove himself worthy of attending the course with a trial session, a series of tests and interviews, he gained one of only 300 places on the Land Rover Jaguar course in the UK.

At the end of the two years all fourteen apprentices passed the course with flying colours. The course leader described the group as outstanding in all aspects. He said that, “they have all worked very hard and knuckled down to the course with great results that have exceeded the results of many older students currently at the college.”

At the presentation evening the head of the Apprentice Centre for Land Rover Jaguar and other representatives were equally praiseworthy and noted that the group had managed to complete the course in just one day a week while older students took three days a week to cover the same ground.

On completing the course Nicholas said, “being at Sparsholt College has been a great experience for me. The NVQ2 in motor mechanics is a one day a week course which you would normally take after leaving school and usually takes three days a week. There was a lot of work to be done each week and I covered all aspects of vehicle care in the two years – everything from washing cars to stripping engines. During the course I also completed 50 days work experience which I did at the Jaguar garage in Reading where I worked on Lamborghinis as well as Jaguars. Now that I have finished my course I am hoping to continue my training with either Jaguar or Honda.” Well done Nicholas!

A student’s view on the recession

On Wednesday 6th May seven Year 9 students (Amy Loughnane, Maddy Gilboy, Hannah Green, Joe Scaplehorn, Ben Skuse, Michael Anderson and Andrew Jenkinson) along with Mrs. Langford-Holt set forth to investigate the effects of the recession on retailers in Newbury.

After a casual stroll down the hill, we reached the top end of Bartholomew Street and began our quest for bankrupt shops, the first of which was a hairdressers. Continuing along Bartholomew Street, we noticed many other small businesses were holding unusually timed sales.

Entering Northbrook Street the effects of the recession were much clearer. Big businesses, such as Woolworths and The Works, have already closed and shops such as Monsoon, Clarks and The Edinburgh Woollen Mill were all holding sales. We then thought it was very important to check out the prices of drinks in McDonalds by buying them! After our quick (and tasty) break, we headed towards the Kennet Centre.

Adams children’s store, Martin’s newsagents and a few other stores were closed down and even Poundland has reduced its prices, with offers such as “Buy One Get One Free” and “Buy Four for a Pound”.

Our conclusion was that there is definitely a recession in Newbury. However, good comes out of bad; and as Hannah commented on the sales: “I can now afford to shop in Monsoon!”

• Amy Loughnane, Year 9
In January 2009 a group of four Year 8 students and student manager Mr Colin Waters set about restoring a former cottage garden on the school site with the aim of developing a fruit and vegetable growing area in school.

The four students – Josh Stephens, Andrew Smith, John Megarry and Chris Drake constructed raised beds and planted their first crops of potatoes, carrots, beetroot and parsnips.

Then this April, volunteer parent, Ms Kay Finch, joined the project and she now supports the students one day a week to develop this project further. The first crops were harvested in June and the students sold all their produce in a very short space of time and are now eagerly awaiting summer salads to promote healthy eating in school.

We are hoping to build up a range of tools and other gardening equipment and items such as a garden shed and a walk-in polytunnel so that the students can continue their project during the winter months. If you have any items to spare, please contact Ms Finch at the school.

We would like to thank Ms Finch for being out in all weathers and for her commitment to the learners and this project.

Ms Finch told us that, “the students are keen and they have enjoyed themselves. They are committed and learning a lot about Horticulture such as single digging, beds and planting.” We look forward to more crops boys! • Mrs Robinson-Slater

“Can you dig it?”

“This gave us a break from normal lessons. It was good to help the school as we raised money from selling plants which will help buy more tools,” John Megarry

“I really liked digging and making the flower beds,” Andrew Smith

“I really enjoyed learning how to grow vegetables. It was also nice to be outdoors. I also like making the flower beds and looking at the wildlife,” Josh Stephens

“I really enjoyed digging and building the flower beds and I would like to continue next year,” Chris Drake
Ex-Park House student, Head Boy and Young Sports Ambassador
Matt Green writes:
I am studying Sport and Exercise Science at Birmingham University and have just completed my first year and thoroughly enjoyed it – especially as the pressure is not too intense in the first year with most modules not counting towards the final degree although I am sure the pressure will certainly increase next year!

For the first year, my course was split into six modules; Anatomy and Biomechanics, Psychology, Biochemistry, Human Physiology, First year practical’s and Methods and Skills.

The study of Anatomy and Biomechanics for example involves amongst other things using maths skills to investigate the optimum angle of release would be required for the furthest distance when throwing a cricket ball. Studying Psychology has expanded on what I had already learned in A-level PE and Biology, as did Biochemistry and Human Physiology. My favourite module was the first year practicals, this was an entirely coursework based module, focused, not surprisingly around practical lab experiments. Some examples of the practicals we conducted included a study on thermoregulatory responses to exercise i.e. how body temperature, heart rate, and oxygen consumption change with exercise. For this experiment I was the subject and cycled on a bike while breathing into a special bag called a Douglas bag which collected all of my expired air which could then be analysed!

In terms of 2012 preparations, I haven’t been as heavily involved with coaching sport as I was at Park House; I have however joined the group of sports volunteers at Birmingham University, and have volunteered at several events including the Indoor Rowing Championships, held among local primary schools in the Birmingham area. This involved around 30 rowing machines all connected up to a big screen at the front of the hall displaying who was in the lead throughout the race! It was very interesting to watch each team of three swapping with each other, whilst still maintaining a constant speed. My role on the day was to set up before, support and encourage during, and then pack up afterwards.

Another key volunteering opportunity that I participated in was the Zone Hockey tournament involving a range of disabled children. Zone Hockey is a 5-a-side game that can be played either indoors or outdoors. The pitch is divided into three zones, which cater for children with differing impairments, enabling the players to be matched in their abilities within the zones. The middle zone is for electric wheelchair players while the other zones are for children who require pushers or have limited mobility. Players are restricted to playing in their zone thereby ensuring they are matched with a competitor of a similar ability. This event was a little closer to home as the other volunteers at the event were sports ambassadors for the Birmingham school sports partnership, a role that I had previously held whilst I was a student at Park House. My role in this event was again to set up before the children arrived and then umpire the matches during the event.

Whilst at university I have continued my passion for long distance running and competed in the Birmingham Half marathon in October 2008 as well as the Reading Half Marathon in March this year. I currently hold a personal best of 1 hour 25 minutes 37 seconds, a time which I aim to beat as I train towards this year’s Birmingham Half marathon. Whilst at university I have joined the Birmingham University Athletics squad and have run for the university in the Midlands league cross country at Coventry and Senneleys Park, Birmingham. I also travelled up to Aberdeen in February as part of our athletics squad to race in the annual BUSA cross country championships. However, due to heavy snow, the race was cancelled. We still had a great weekend however, and as Birmingham University had taken around 90 runners we still organised an impromptu ‘banter race’ with any of the other universities that managed to make it to the event. This was great fun and a good experience to be running in snow for a change. Of course, after the race we then proceeded to pelt fierce sporting rivals Loughborough with snowballs!

In terms of the social life, I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year, as to be expected, and have made many new friends. The range of people that you meet at university is amazing, and I have learned a lot about myself in the past year. Obviously, whilst studying in a big city like Birmingham the nightlife is brilliant with a new place to go every night, and being part of a sports team means that sports nights and end of year socials are fantastic. We are also the only University in the country with our own University train station, so access to the centre of Birmingham couldn’t be easier.

I have a house for next year which I am sharing with four other mates from student halls, and this is around a ten-minute walk from university, so I can’t wait to move in there and experience what it is like to live in my own home! • Matt Green
Luke Wakefield’s letter from America

I joined Park House School in 1999, and during my time there I was in the 1st XV Rugby and Trampoline teams. Park House was a huge part of my life and I still stay in contact with all of my friends and many of the teachers too. I am particularly grateful that during Year 11, my PE teacher Miss Gibbs helped me to get in contact with other schools where I would be able to continue my swimming career. Also during my time at Park House I swam on the Newbury District Swimming Team, where I was the senior captain.

After leaving Park House in 2004, I went to Kelly College in Devon on a swimming scholarship and sat my AS and A-Levels. I graduated in 2006 with three A-levels in PE, Biology and Maths. My original plan after sitting my A-levels was to go to the University of Swansea to study exercise Science, however, in the meantime I was recruited to join the swim team at the University of Louisville, Kentucky.

I arrived at The University of Louisville in 2006 on an Athletic scholarship for my swimming. As well as swimming, I am taking a four-year Bachelor of Science degree in Health and Human Performance with a concentration in exercise science.

I have just finished the third year of my degree and am currently completing my internship working with many of the nationally ranked sports teams of the university in the weights room. Once I have finished my degree I plan on staying in the USA for a few years to work as a strength coach for a university to gain more experience. After this I would like to return home to England and work with a professional sports team.

My time on the swim team here at Louisville has given me some of the best moments of my life. Our team is very diverse – I have team mates from all over the world. Being on the team has allowed me to travel all over the country to compete against many different world class athletes. In my first year we were an unranked team, in my second year we were ranked in the top 25 in the nation, and after my 3rd year we finished 13th in the nation. Five of my team-mates, all of whom I train with every day, were lucky enough to compete in the 2008 Beijing Olympics. My busy schedule is pretty intense with swimming two hours in the morning and two in the afternoon plus one hour of lifting weights four times a week, and as well training I have to fit in classes and studying.

Being on a highly ranked team in the nation means that many people within the local community look up to myself and team mates as role-models. So to give something back, our team performs many service work hours. We help under-privileged children learn to swim, we help each Christmas with the Salvation Army gift service, and we help to organise and run many competitions. I also work as a swim coach for our local swim team, because I know that without my coaches in the past I wouldn’t be where I am right now.

I am currently living in my own apartment with one of my team-mates. In my spare time I enjoy cycling, listening to music and painting although I don’t get enough time to fit in too much of any of those.

If any one is interested in pursuing a career in sports or wanting to travel abroad to study, I would definitely recommend it. I have gained so much experience and knowledge from my time here in the United States that I wish everyone could get the opportunity to do it. If sport is something you have a talent in, then don’t give it up. > Luke Wakefield

University of Louisville web site : www.uoflsports.com

Luke’s Lifetime Bests:

- 50m Freestyle 21.4
- 100m Freestyle 46.5
- 200m Freestyle 1:43.2
- 200m Individual Medley 1:54.14
- 400m Individual Medley 4:04.31
Shine a light...

With greater numbers of students than ever taking art, textiles and photography we were bursting at the seams with this year’s AS and A-level exhibition held in the Sixth Form Common Room. As usual the standard of our students’ work was varied and amazing with many visitors describing it, yet again, as the best selection of work they had seen. One visitor in particular commented to Mr Peaple that “much of the work was above and beyond A-level standard”.

It was lovely to see that more students had produced sculpture and installations alongside avant-garde textiles, stunning photography as well as painting and drawing. Of course we cannot be sure of our results but we are quietly confident that our students will certainly have achieved their potential. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my department and especially Mrs Skuse – this will be her last exhibition at Park House. This is just a small selection of the work that staff and students can justly take pride in. • Mrs Wadell
On 11th June over 50 Year 9, 10 and 12 students to a trip to Earls Court to experience Graduate Fashion Week 2009. The show is aimed at 14-18 year old students studying fashion and textiles at school or college.

The students were provided with a unique opportunity to meet 50 of the best universities from around the country offering degree and higher education courses in all areas of the fashion industry. We browsed through the portfolios and sketchbooks and were able to discuss the work with the students.

The highlight of the trip was being able to watch the fabulous Gala Showcase, a catwalk show featuring the best collections from the week’s shows. Due to the number of Park House School students attending the show the organisers offered us complimentary tickets to the ‘Careers Clinic’ led by Carolyn Franklin, a Fashion Writer and Broadcaster. The panel consisted of leaders, educators, designers and students in the industry including Richard Bradbury, CEO of River Island and Fashion Designer Mark Eley of Eley Kishimoto.

Since visiting the show the students have been eager to put their experiences into practice and have produced work inspired by what they saw. Elle Neal contacted Miss Angela Kelly MVO Personal Assistant to Her Majesty The Queen asking her advice about a career in fashion. Elle received a reply from Buckingham Palace and they are putting together an information pack for her.

It is great to see our students feeling comfortable approaching individuals and companies outside of the school and the hype since the show has got the students thinking about their own PHS Fashion Show.

For those wishing to go into fashion at Sixth Form or University the trip enabled them to prepare and make informed decisions about their future careers. Who knows we may have the future Vivienne Westwood or Alexander McQueen studying Textiles at Park House School! • Miss Atkinson

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For those wishing to go into fashion at Sixth Form or University the trip enabled them to prepare and make informed decisions about their future careers. Who knows we may have the future Vivienne Westwood or Alexander McQueen studying Textiles at Park House School! • Miss Atkinson

GRADUATE FASHION WEEK

On 11th June over 50 Year 9, 10 and 12 students to a trip to Earls Court to experience Graduate Fashion Week 2009. The show is aimed at 14-18 year old students studying fashion and textiles at school or college.

The students were provided with a unique opportunity to meet 50 of the best universities from around the country offering degree and higher education courses in all areas of the fashion industry. We browsed through the portfolios and sketchbooks and were able to discuss the work with the students.

The highlight of the trip was being able to watch the fabulous Gala Showcase, a catwalk show featuring the best collections from the week’s shows. Due to the number of Park House School students attending the show the organisers offered us complimentary tickets to the ‘Careers Clinic’ led by Carolyn Franklin, a Fashion Writer and Broadcaster. The panel consisted of leaders, educators, designers and students in the industry including Richard Bradbury, CEO of River Island and Fashion Designer Mark Eley of Eley Kishimoto.

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For those wishing to go into fashion at Sixth Form or University the trip enabled them to prepare and make informed decisions about their future careers. Who knows we may have the future Vivienne Westwood or Alexander McQueen studying Textiles at Park House School! • Miss Atkinson
This year the students in Year 11 of Park House School decided to take a more practical approach to their Enterprise Day where they not only planned a wedding but made some of the items that would be required.

Students had a busy day baking a number of wedding cakes which ranged from the traditional square fruit cake with fondant icing, decorated with ribbon and iced flowers to a selection of sponge cakes with different shades of fondant icing layered with ice ribbons with one cake containing a bride and groom moulded from icing. Others took up the challenge of designing and printing the wedding invitations, making floral decorations and undertaking the mammoth task of designing and making the wedding outfit. Over 40 metres of white net, 200g of glass beads and over 150 flowers were cut, stitched and attached to the ‘alternative wedding outfit’ that consisted of a dress, veil and top hat for the groom.

At the end of the day the students presented their work in the hall to their excited year group. Everyone had a very enjoyable, if not very hard working day! • Julia Langford-Holt
Our very own ‘Dancing Queen’, Mrs Sue Llewellyn received the Distinction Award in the Lifetime Achievement category of the South East Teaching Awards held in Winchester on 3 June. This prestigious award is a thoroughly deserved recognition and celebration of her outstanding contribution to Dance education over 21 years of inspirational service to Park House School.

Sue’s dedication, skill and commitment to young people have made the school an internationally recognised centre of excellence for Dance. Her influence and passion is also acknowledged and deeply valued by sources as diverse as the students that she has supported in successful applications to specialist colleges such as The Rambert and London School of Contemporary Dance and current England and British Lions rugby international Tom Croft who, as a former Park House student, attributes his strength and athleticism to Mrs Llewellyn’s Year 11 Dance lessons!

Her passion, drive and energy has inspired a generation of young people, firing their own creativity and passion, and building self-esteem and confidence. She is a truly remarkable teacher whose lasting legacy is a sustained love for dance and dance education amongst students and well beyond Park House School.

I am also delighted that Sue’s son Will has been kind enough to report back to us on his exciting life and career progress from the wonderful city of Kyoto in Japan.

**Derek People**

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**SAKURA KISS**

Kyoto, Kyoto, Kyoto – described to me by all of the Japanese I have met as “The Heart of Japan” and right now it is beating as if in preparation for the main event. The City’s winter is over and it is slowly building up to Sakura (Cherry Blossom viewing). If you have ever seen Bansai or Takashi’s Castle, you are looking at a little piece of Nippon Haru – Japanese Spring.

Sagei, Saiko, Miryokuteki – Great, Awesome, Luscious – please excuse any over enthusiasm, but it is absolutely breathtaking.

Arriving just in time for last year’s Sakura was an amazing start to my Japanese life. After seeing all these awe inspiring sights I decided to stay and prolong the experience and to see if summer and winter were as exciting. I moved to Kyoto, found myself a job and started to learn the “thinking of Budo” (Japanese Martial Arts).

I then auditioned for an avant garde performance for the biggest international art exhibition in Japan – The Yokohama Triennale. Yokohama, the old Japanese port, made famous in the film and book “Shogun”. For the next few months I worked for an artist called Tino Sigal and with a very beautiful Japanese girl, performing a dance piece called “Kiss” (inspired by the famous sculpture by Rodin) in a place called The Sankaien Garden in Yokohama.

I really enjoyed admiring these beautiful gardens, with a lake that was both calming and yet at the same time
about everyone in Japan owns at least one bike as well as their cars and while watching the “Nihongo Oiwai” (Japanese Celebrations), which they seem to have at least once a month, I am munching on a fried chicken, mayo and a chilli “Onigilli” (rice ball) and believe it or not it is one o’clock in the morning!

Life in Japan is scary, different, fast, clean, polite, but most of all exciting and stimulating and I wouldn’t be anywhere else in the world right at this moment in time.

Kyoto, Kyoto, Kyoto (a city situated in the centre of the main Honshu island of Japan) described to me as the “Nippon Kokolo” (Heart of Japan), “Watanabi” (Japanese soul), “Anami” (animations) everywhere symbols and “Kangi” (character writing), my heart still beats for all things Japanezey… • Wills
Pathways to our Future

During activities week the Year 12’s were visited by a number of guest speakers to talk to them about post-Sixth Form opportunities. They attended a number of talks and workshops throughout the week, with sessions ranging from gap years and charity work to completing the Year In Industry programme (YINI).

Possibility Snapshots

Throughout the Sixth Form careers and opportunities week, the students were able to really get a taste for university life and advice from several ex-Park House students who willingly gave up their time, to share their experiences. From working on cruise ships to geology in South America, these ex-students gave engaging presentations from a wide range of different ‘Uni-experiences’.

Their presentations showed more than just the pre-conceived image about university; they delved further into the opportunities you can benefit from the path you choose. The Year 12’s were fascinated to discover that as part of some courses you have the opportunity to study and research abroad in continents as exotic as Asia and South America. The honesty of these presentations from the ex-students opened the eyes of many of our current Sixth Formers into realising that independent learning and living was certainly appealing and the ability to study a subject you were passionate about for three years, broadened perspectives.

We would like to thank those students displayed around the page for their enthusiasm and giving the Year 12’s a snapshot of the possibilities open to them in the future.

Holly Simpson
Royal Holloway London
BSc Management & International Business

Matthew Gouldstone
2nd Year Student
Nottingham Trent
BA in Product Design

Jake Noden
1st Year Bristol
Aeronautical Engineering

Helen Bate
1st Year Student Bath
Psychology

Matthew Green
1st Year Student
Birmingham
Sports Science

James Neal
1st Year Westminster
Film Production

Not pictured:
Louise Shepherd
Canterbury Kent
Takes up First Teaching Post in September

Paul Shepherd
Marine Operations
**Gap Year on a Shoe String**

To demonstrate to the students the many alternatives to attending University a number of speakers were invited from various organisations including volunteer work at Mencap and Latitude as well as a presentation by YINI (Year In Industry) which outlined the available gap year opportunities for working in IT, science, technology business studies or engineering.

We were lucky enough to be visited for the second consecutive year by Hektor Krome who brought us slides detailing his gap year experience which lasted for some thirty-six years to date!

Many of the students had considered taking a gap year to travel, but were put off by the thousands of pounds it usually entails. Hektor regaled them with tales of his experiences of teaching English in schools across the world and going on safari for just fifty pounds.

Another of the highlights of the week was an interactive presentation on ‘The Mind of the Machine, Artificial Intelligence’ by Jonathon Black which explored what computers can or cannot do during a riveting interactive workshop where students competed against a computer at noughts and crosses and discovered the similarities between our minds and a computer.

**Southampton Speaks**

This week also included exceptionally helpful talks from Southampton University covering topics like choosing a higher education course, and how to finance it once you have. For example looking at what careers can be pursued as a result of studying certain subjects. It was also reassuring to learn just how much financial assistance is available. This year Southampton had thousands of pounds worth of bursaries they were unable to give away, just because nobody claimed them! With financial aid it is now possible for anyone to attend university and open up endless opportunities in life. The talks were invaluable and provided a unique insight into the challenges and rewards of a university education. So a big thanks to the university representatives for giving up their time to come and speak to us!

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**A starter for 10...**

One of the highlights of the week was the much anticipated final of the Inter-Tutor Quiz. During tutor times a weekly quiz has been completed by each tutor group, and this event culminated with Omega and Sigma competing for first position. The event was very similar to the popular television programme University Challenge, the quiz master Mr Peaple wearing an academic gown.

After some close rounds and some truly imaginative answers concerning the British Monarchy. To the mortification of the teachers Sigma declared that Queen Victoria reigned for 97 years and the Queen Elizabeth’s son is William! Omega were the eventual winners with a margin of just three points, leaving the scores at 21-18.

So congratulations to Emma Wood, Zara Wright, Callam Fry, Georgina Campbell, Hannah Ralph and Toby Thorne.
**Gifted & Talented – Butterfly Translocation**

A scientific study of the habitat of the rare Silver Studded Blue butterfly was the focus for our Year 9's in the Food, Environment and Sustainability competition. Nine students completed two days of fieldwork at Silchester Common, where the butterfly is found, and at Greenham Common. This species is a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species in national decline. The aim was to recommend actions which might allow for the successful translocation of the butterfly to Greenham.

The students studied the plant and animal life on both commons. Experts from the Hampshire Wildlife Trust and the Thatcham Nature Conservancy were on hand to support and advise the group. The students found that the soil analysis showed very little variation between the two sites. They did discover that Bell Heather, which was widespread at Silchester was much less prevalent at Greenham. As the butterfly thrives on this plant this fact was clearly important. They concluded that although the two commons were very similar there were key differences which would make an attempt at translocation quite complex.

The group – Joy Archibald, Harry Belcher, Jack Liddiard, Joe Scaplehorn, Lucy Kay, Lorna Beeley, George Chaffey, John Buckland and Hannah Green presented their findings at the competition final at Sheepdrove Organic Farm. Although they did not prove to be winners they thoroughly enjoyed the project and particularly the excellent lunch at Sheepdrove.

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**Success at Kielder Challenge Heats**

On Thursday 7th May, eight Park House Year 9 students headed for the Black Park Country Park near Slough to undertake the annual Kielder Challenge Heats.

The Kielder Challenge is an inclusive team event which puts the teams through tasks that require much thought and planning to achieve.

Teams are assessed on their planning, evaluating, performance with the highest marks available for teamwork. This is where the Park House team excelled, working fantastically as a group to achieve excellently in their tasks.

Each of the students (and staff) had a really enjoyable day topped off at the end when it was announced that we had won our heat with 267 points, more than 40 points ahead of the second placed team. We now face an anxious wait until the end of June before we know if our score was one of the top three in the region to qualify us for the National Final and a weekend in the Kielder Forest in Northumbria in September and more of the same.

Congratulations to all eight participants: Oli Keeves, Callum Radford, Brodie Wood, Keryn Osterritter, Lauren Manderson, Clarissa Barnes, Betsy Hart and the inimitable Mario Jones.

Thank you all for making the day so much fun and so successful.

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Our second spring visit was run jointly with the Art department and involved taking another 150 students (this time from Year 7) to The Living Rainforest at Hampstead Norreys. Our tour of the rainforest focused on plant adaptations and sustainability. The students were then given the opportunity to sketch the various rainforest plants as an introduction to an ongoing classroom-based graphics project to produce posters, T-shirts and other materials to increase awareness of the issues surrounding climate change and its impact on the planet. • Mr Davis

For more information visit: www.livingrainforest.org
From 5th to 8th April, Joseph Barlow took part in a unique learning opportunity at the University of Oxford. The Smallpeice Trust was able to provide this experience with the assistance of the Oxford Materials Department and financial support from the Gatsby Charitable Foundation. Materials Science has been called “…the most important subject no one has ever heard of”. David Hutton of Oxford Materials said, “We relish the opportunity to introduce students to a subject that contributes towards solving some of the most important problems facing the world today”.

Joseph along with the other selected students were put through their paces on a series of practical engineering problems. These included exploring the physical and chemical properties of modern materials and how they determine their application – all under the watchful eyes of young professionals from industry and experts at the University of Oxford. Research facilities visited included microscopes used to see features smaller than light waves and even one capable of seeing on the atomic scale. Lab classes gave insights into properties of materials at an appropriate level for GCSE followed by an Industrial visit to the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory. A competitive design and build project gave an insight into how real science and development is funded behind the scenes.

Materials science influences every aspect of engineering and life as we live it today. It has shaped the creation of new products and even entire industries. Only by understanding materials and their properties can engineers drive the future. This four-day experience is designed to give students a practical insight into Materials Technology and inspire them to consider rewarding careers in this area.

This course which is linked to the National Curriculum gave students the opportunity to take part in practical design and make projects. Students also extended their personal skills in team building, communication, problem solving and delivering presentations. Over the four days students were given an insight into university life and work which will accelerate their personal development and their potential for greater academic achievement.

Bookings are being taken for summer residential courses. Visit www.smallpeicetrust.org.uk or telephone 01926 333200 for full timetable.

Gold certificates were achieved by

Year 8
Harry Powell
Anna McDonald
Alex Munell

Year 7
Samuel Forrest
Joseph Tallyn Hancock

Silver certificates were achieved by

Year 8
Alon Labrisch
Bradley Day
Sam Storey
Robyn Smith
Rowan O’Laughter
Josie Merchant
Emma Hygates
Elliot Laker
Sophie Wells

Year 7
William Matthews
Matthew Lawson
Elliot Page
Bradley Agar
Kane Voss
Wojciech Klimowicz
Kai Campbell Warner

Bronze certificates were achieved by

Year 8
Jack Bolton
Rachael Green
Verity Walker
Natasha Stacey
Harry Barlow
Katharine Smith
Frances Miller
Hannah Buckingham
Jack O’Donnell
Louis Kendall Ford
Rose Maher
Caitlin Brine
Joshua Danielli

Year 7
Beth Buckland, Harriet Gray
Gareth Carless, Tom Hali
Heather Barr, Isobel Hawker
Katie Morton, Grace Towey
Sarah Corrington, Stephany Restivo
Xavier Evans, Harry Kansius Pocock
Samuel Steel Childs, Josh Wilkinson
Alex Steven, Karolina Pyrzaniowska
Chris Sharp, Marcus Davies
Reece Day
Science Day

Thursday June 25th was a very exciting day. Radio Berkshire had decided that our ‘Science Day’ was worthy of some attention so a few brave souls were ready for the media spotlight by 7.00am. When the BBC people arrived the Science Dome team were already erecting their planetarium in the hall.

By 7.15am Mr Slevin had been interviewed by Maggie Philbin and Frances Miller and Keryn Osteritter had completed experiments on friction and air pressure. By the time the majority of students had arrived Mr Lockhart, our creative partner had also been interviewed and Mr Dack was working with some boys who could not resist experimenting with soap bubbles. Just before 9.00am Maggie called Dan Holloway, from Year 8, to the microphone. To his pleasure and surprise he found that once he put on the headphones he was talking to his father. As his father is working in Nigeria at the moment it was the last thing he was expecting!

Mr Lockhart, a visual artist, had been working in the school for some weeks exploring ways of making science more accessible to students as part of the Creative Partnerships programme. His ideas led to an exciting science Museum trip for some Year 9’s and 10’s and some very creative artwork which is part of a plan to ‘re-brand’ of the science department as ‘Planet Science’. However, his best idea, according to Year 7, was the planetarium show. During the day Year 7 students were treated to an exploration of our solar system and the story of black holes in the Science Dome. As word got around the school we even had to squeeze in some Sixth Formers.

In the evening over thirty-five students from Years 7-9 were presented with prizes for their work in science during the year. Solar-powered Yellow Sun Jars were presented to five ‘Science Oscar’ winning students, Sarah Cornforth and Lawrence Maidment – Year 7, Katherine Smith – Year 8 and Jack Bailey-Bale and Ben Skuse – Year 9 – four of whom are pictured below. • Mr Slevin
Park House Pirates on the High Seas!

On Monday 11th May 2009 nine Year 8 students, and two slightly worried teachers, travelled to Universal Marina near Hamble to set sail on a seven day voyage aboard the Thermopylae Clipper, a 62ft yacht chartered by the Ocean Youth Trust. After meeting with the crew – Nic, Liz, Ben and Pete – and everyone collecting all their, it would prove, essential wet weather gear and life jackets, all transferred to the yacht and after a brief safety chat, cast off from the mooring to begin the voyage. The initial hope had been to possibly venture to the Channel Islands, but unfortunately predicted wind direction and force (possibly Gale Force 8 – eek!) meant the plan was to set off towards the South West coast of England, and in Skipper Nic’s words “See how far we get!”

Ship’s Log – Monday – 11th May
A slightly windy and wavey short hop across to East Cowes on the Isle of Wight (rather than Yarmouth on the South West of the island as there were six foot waves breaking against harbour here!). Introduction to the delights of harbour life and the necessary tasks to moor the boat properly, with the words bowlines, springs and fenders mentioned a good deal. Early to bed, due to an early rise the following morning to commence the voyage.

Tuesday – 12th May
5.30 rise with cast off by 6.30, to try and “cheat the tide” going out of Southampton Water. Year 8 learn the importance of team work to allow the boat to cast off smoothly with Port watch responsible for the bow (front) lines and Starboard watch responsible for the stern (rear). Once out of harbour we realise the wind and waves had quite a lot in store for us, with our first extremely wavey davey experiences. Due to the wind direction, North Easterly, we set sail towards the South West only ever having to gybe, rather than tack. Once out into open water we start to experience Sea Sick Tuesday, with buckets in constant use. In between sickness though, crew members got their first experiences of steering the boat, whilst others helped hoist various sail and to fill in the hourly log, which detailed the conditions during the voyage. At one point the conditions were Gale Force 8 with sea state hitting us from all sides! Sailed into the night and arrived in Brixham at just after midnight, feeling extremely tired, wet, worn out and windswept. An extremely memorable first day! Straight to bed.

Wednesday – 13th May
Late start, after yesterday’s experiences. We all went up to Brixham Yacht Club for a welcome shower, with some time available to wander around Brixham town. Land legs were a bit of an issue, but back on the boat to cast off about 12’ish for a short hop further west into Dartmouth. Bit rainy, during a much calmer voyage, but arrived in Yarmouth to the appearance of the sun, which was an extremely welcome relief. A few hours wander around Dartmouth before a meal, games and chatter back on the boat and bed.

Thursday – 14th May
Awoke to a misty, extremely calm morning, so once out of harbour had to use the motor to keep us moving. The sea looked extremely surreal and almost snake-like as we voyaged East back towards Weymouth. Students spent the voyage at the helm of the boat or spending some time learning knots and names for different bits of the boat. Great fun was also had deciding on Superhuman names for all of the crew members, and so the era of Bellow Girl, The Sloth and Waterboy, amongst others, commenced. A fairly short trip across Lyme bay and round Portland bill into Weymouth. A fairly good trip (okay very good!), because on Starboard watch we saw these little black things in the water. They swam closer and there was the realisation they were dolphins and there were five of them swimming towards us.

For tea we had Nick’s speciality butterbean and chorizo sausage casserole. I swear that my tongue still hurts from it! Then there were some nice showers and all in bed by 10pm.
Friday - 15th May
Today we were off to Poole. We had two hours shore leave before we set off, and we decided to buy something for the crew of Thermopylae Clipper to say thank you. We bought them a bar of chocolate each, with their names on, except Ben who had 'Water Boy!' on it (his superhero name). The only way to get the chocolate in without it being seen was through the window, or hatch ‘skillage’. When we did set off the trip was only four hours long, with three of them on Starboard’s watch! It was a bit cold then, but we were wrapped up! When we got into the harbour it was huge! I mean really big, really, really huge! One of the largest in England! It was pouring with rain and there was enough wind to lean on it! Tea was good. Not much happened after that as when we got in it was already late.

Saturday - 16th May
A voyage to West Cowes in order today, with more strong winds and big waves, but at least the sun was shining for most of it. After a slightly shaky start, when stern ropes didn’t slip quite as smoothly as expected and we almost yanked the pontoon away, back out of Poole Harbour and a return to the Solent. The waves were really tall but not choppy. A Queen CD was put on and we all sang… then we yelled abuse at the waves after they decided to splash all of our sandwiches and make them salty. We tried to dry them out, but it didn’t work. Once we were in the Solent it was a little calmer and we watched all the racing yachts zoom past. Then we got our chance to work as a team and try tacking into the mouth of Cowes. Every time we tacked we had to let out the boom and wind it in the other side, all extremely quickly in high winds – so much work! Once in West Cowes we had to take out all the floor boards and scrub the boat clean inside. Even by the toilet tanks – wonderful! But at least there was time to go ashore to get some edible treats and superb chips!

Sunday - 17th May
Awoke to a beautiful morning and some more cleaning duties, before setting sail just as a squall blew up, so had to sail back towards the Hamble under power, due to another force 8 gale blowing, bah humbug! We also had a comedy moment, suddenly there was a *******SHHHHHH!!! We all looked up and saw Freddie sitting very still with his life jacket puffed up. At first the conclusion was that someone had pulled the cord but no, it had got so wet from the rain it had set itself off, so Freddie had to walk around with a huge life jacket on. We arrived back at Universal Marina just as it cleared with beautiful blue sky. This at least meant the final cleaning tasks were completed in the dry, (although Jack managed to drop his pillow in the Marina, so not completely dry), before Year 8 said a sad goodbye to the fantastic crew and their home for the week, the Thermopylae Clipper. One last picture then back on the minibus to school and land that was moving from the time on the boat.

We all loved the time on the Thermopylae Clipper. It was fun but hard work all the same time. Sorting out the sails every day became nearly normal for us before we had to leave. It was the best week of school I’d had in ages!

If you are currently in Year 7, going into Year 8 in September 2009, The Park House Pirates High Seas Experience will be running again in May 2010 aboard John Laing, the OYT’s 72ft yacht (so bigger than this year!). If you are up for team work, lots of laughs, getting a bit wet but being involved in lots of new experiences then please e mail one of the following:
emather@westberks.org or whayes@westberks.org
A deposit will be required during September/October 2009 to secure your place on the trip.

Ship’s Log written jointly by
Emma Hygate Year 8
and Mrs Hayes
West Berkshire Children & Young People’s Trust Annual Conference

Park House School and Sports College is an organisation that demonstrates good practice for Children and Young People and so along with West Berkshire School Sports Partnership were invited to showcase their successes at this event.

The conference focused on the Every Child Matters Agenda, which is central to the education and welfare of all students and covers the five following areas: Be healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Make a Positive Contribution and Achieve Economic Well Being. The event was attended by public sector workers and voluntary organisations. Of course, the best way to support the future development of young people is to engage young people in this process. I was therefore very excited that Park House students were in a privileged position of being actively involved in this consultation process by representing the view of children and young people of West Berkshire.

On arrival the Year 8, 9 and 12 students headed straight for the refreshments! You can’t work at your best if you are hungry! They wandered around the display area talking with representatives from various organisations who support the development of young people in West Berkshire. They returned to me excitedly, making suggestions of additional information that they believed should be shared with all students.

The most challenging part of the day for adults and young people alike was the discussions of how West Berkshire could support the Every Child Matters Agenda. Issues such as reducing childhood obesity have no easy solutions, but were on the agenda. Park House students were divided across the 10 workshops and encouraged by the facilitators to share their experiences, opinions and suggestions. They were enthusiastic, articulate and confident.

It is always a pleasure to leave an event having received positive feedback and once again Park House students were commended by many adults on their maturity, positive attitudes to overcoming the issues and good communication skills. They were true ambassadors! • Miss Y. Hayes, Director of Sport

Year 7’s unfazed by Public Speaking

As part of the Gifted and Talented Mentoring scheme, a number of Year 7 students impressed staff and peers with outstanding public speaking skills.

The students were asked to research the ‘Best Country in The World’ and justify their argument in a PowerPoint presentation.

Observed by Mr. Hammond (Gifted and Talented coordinator) and Mrs. Bestwick (Mentor) the standard was extremely high as students exuded confidence, humour and strong academic skills with William Matthews coming in first place.

Well done to you all and thank you for taking the time to prepare such exciting and professional presentations. • Mrs. Bestwick, Gifted and Talented Mentor

Marcus Davies, William Matthews, Jake Lee, Robert Hammond, Gareth Carless, Elliot Page, Bradley Agar, Matthew Penlington
Marathon Man

PE teacher Tim Cook is a new convert to marathon running and he writes to tell us of the new found inspiration he has for running:

I never liked running when I was younger, I couldn’t see the point. Even when we went out for a walk as a family, I was the one who had to take a football to kick or a tennis ball to throw because I thought just walking for no reason and with nowhere to go was really boring! So when my wife announced that she was going to run in the London Marathon I thought, “Rather you than me”.

Being a sports fan I had watched the event many times on TV but that was from the comfort of my sofa with a cup of tea, having just rolled out of bed late on a spring Sunday morning. I always watched the array of people dressed in brightly coloured running vests or incredibly hot and sweaty fancy dress costumes with a burning question running through my head, ‘Why are they all smiling? They seem to have been jogging around London all day and that can’t be fun.’

When I went to support my wife, from the moment we joined the train full of runners at Surbiton station, I began to see what all the fuss was about. It was tremendously inspiring to see thousands of ordinary people, of all shapes and sizes, taking up the challenge. The smell of ‘Deep Heat’ muscle rub hit us as we arrived at Greenwich for the start. It was an amazing place to be with about 40,000 people all sorting out their kit and warming up. When they all stood together as the race began, the line stretched back out of sight. It took some people twenty minutes just to cross the start line!

After the runners had set off, I remember feeling a little guilty as I took a short cut across the park and joined the crowd at the six-mile mark. The racers went by first, determined concentration on their faces, chasing the runner in front or checking their watches to see if they were on course for the glory of beating their personal best. As I stood in the crowd I loved the fact that people were shouting encouragement to runners they had obviously never met before in their life. “Go on Nick”, was the cry as a runner with his name printed on his running vest went by and Nick broke his concentration for a fleeting moment to wave his thanks to the sea of faces by the side of the road. As the relentless river of pounding feet continued to roll past, it was the charity runners that really caught my eye. These runners may not have their name on their vests, but had their reason for running on their backs. Lots had made T-shirts with photographs and messages – “Running for Sam, we miss you” or “For Rachel, our beautiful baby girl”. I thought the crowd had been loud before but it seemed that if any of these runners looked like they might be struggling they were picked out for extra words of encouragement. People in the crowd were offering jelly beans and chocolate to runners for energy with a big smile and a, “Keep going John, you can do it”. The whole atmosphere was incredibly positive and very infectious. It made me realise everybody there had a story to tell and the London Marathon was much more than a bunch of people jogging around London. I was immensely proud of my wife when I met her at the finish and, as she showed off her finisher’s medal, I knew that I had a new ambition to do the same and run in the event.

When I eventually took my place on the start line I had covered a lot of miles during my training and discovered the enjoyment that ‘just running’ can bring. Everyone runs for different reasons but for me, as well as helping to keep me fit, I have found that it can be very relaxing to put some music on and switch off while I run. On other days I found it amazing what I could think of as I was running. Things that were very confusing had sometimes become a great deal clearer at the end of my run.

I also found that I may be thinking of something as I start a long run and it would occupy my mind to the point that I would reach the end and wonder how I got there and where I had been.

And my reason for running, for spending hours training and clocking up a few fair miles trying to prepare for what was probably the hardest thing I have ever done? My two boys and the fact that the generous donations of all the people who sponsored me meant I raised nearly £1800 for Asthma UK. It was a great occasion to be part of and I’m looking forward to doing it again! I just wanted to say a very big thanks to everyone who sponsored me.

I am still collecting sponsor money for Asthma UK so please contact me at school if you would like to make a donation. Alternatively, you can do it online at www.justgiving.com by clicking on ‘sponsor a friend’ and typing in my name or go straight to www.justgiving.com/timcook2

Please tick the Gift Aid box then Asthma UK gets an extra 28p for every £1 you donate and it doesn’t cost you any extra.
The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award

The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award is a voluntary, non-competitive programme of activities for anyone aged 14-25. It offers an individual challenge and encourages young people to undertake exciting, constructive and enjoyable activities in their free time. Just over 7% of those in the UK aged 14-17 participate in the Award, through Award Groups in youth clubs, voluntary organisations, Open Award Centres, schools, colleges, young offender institutes and businesses.

The Award has three progressive levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold with sections involving: Service (helping the community); Skills (a hobby, skill or interest); Physical Recreation (sports, dance, fitness); Expeditions (on foot, cycle, horseback, or water) and a Residential Project for the Gold level only (an enterprise with people not known to the participant). Each year, Award Participants provide over two million hours of service to the community whilst, in the Expeditions Section, they collectively covered over three million miles.

Two groups from Park House have recently been successful in gaining their Bronze Award Expedition certificate. This counts as one of the four sections of their Bronze Award. They had the benefit of walking in a beautiful area – around Savernake Forest near Marlborough. However it was also on some of the hottest days of the year. As well as fighting off some very large insects and carrying heavy rucksacks, the groups navigated their 25km route, over two days through forest and over hills and camped overnight. Throughout the expedition, team morale was excellent and both groups met all the challenges. • Alona Fletcher

Tirabad Trip June 2009

This year, we had another very successful, stimulating and challenging time at Tirabad Residential Centre in mid Wales. The Year 8 students definitely loved the experience. Activities included hill walking in the Black mountains, caving in the biggest cave in Wales, extreme tree climbing with harnesses, archery, orienteering, team building tasks such as rope walking blindfolded and canoeing in Brecon. The gorge we swam and launched ourselves off its waterfalls must have been one of the most exciting activities. Eating ice cream at the specialist shop in Brecon was also a highlight! The ‘Tirabad Revue’ performed by the students on Thursday night showed that there is some fine, hidden talent. • Alona Fletcher
What another good year for SOS Kit Aid at Park House. Again staff and students have risen to the challenge and donated vast amounts of kit and boots for this worthy cause.

A big thank you must go to Ralph Grooves coach of the Newbury Colts and to Gareth Lewis and Toan Dieu of Newbury based Toga Sports for their generous donation of over a large number of socks, shorts sports tops. Check out www.togasports.com for all your football kit needs.

Remember in an age of the three R’s – Reduce, Recycle and Reuse – we should be encouraged to do what we can not just for the environment but also for students who want to play and learn the beautiful game.

So in addition to donating kit in good condition SOS are looking for unwanted sets of school or club shirts and shorts to start up new teams abroad. In addition the following has been found wanted by teams: –

- Rugby boots, Rugby shirts / Shorts / Socks (for 8-18 year olds, in team sets if possible)
- Training shoes / Tackle shields / bags / Tracksuits / Sweatshirts / Wetsuits / Head and Body protection.
- Rugby Balls all sizes and bags.

Contact Mr G Jones at school to arrange a drop off on gjones@westberks.org or ask your son or daughter to bring kit into school and hand in to Mr G Jones directly, for more information on SOS IRB KitAid check out the website www.sosirbkitaid.org • G Jones

Leading the Way

A class of Year 10 Sports Leaders were instrumental in the success of the Year 1 Multi-skills Festival in May. Twenty-eight leaders from Mr Tree’s class led fun agility, balance and co-ordination activities for over 170 pupils from St. Joseph’s Primary School, John Rankin Infants, The Willows Primary School and The Castle School. The leaders represented Park House fantastically with staff and parents of the Primary School pupils raving about how good they were. Well done guys, you were a credit to your school! • Mr Tree.
The Physical Education Department’s approach to sport is in line with the School’s belief that education is concerned with valuing ‘Success for All’, and that every student has the ability to achieve something worthwhile or even to excel in some field. The main objective of our physical education and sports programme, therefore, is to identify and develop a skill in every student, because achievement in one area so often proves to be the key to success in school life as a whole.

This year we have celebrated a variety of achievements, both individual and group, as our students continued to be at the forefront of sporting success in West Berkshire and beyond. Together with our rich history of success in traditional activities like Rugby, Netball, Football, Hockey, Cricket and Athletics, we have continued to develop a reputation for maximising the potential of all students in other areas such as Tennis, Badminton, Basketball, Cross Country, Dodgeball and Karting! Finally of course, it is perhaps Dance and the work of our excellent Dance teachers and students which we continue to celebrate every year. Park House continues to lead on best practice and performance, not just within our local area, but also on a national stage.

Some of the specific achievements of our school teams and individuals are covered in this issue of Personal Best. We are very proud of all of them. The best reward for any Physical Education teacher or coach is to see individuals participate in sport and realise their potential. These achievements have been made all the more enjoyable when those involved can reflect on how much commitment, dedication, enthusiasm and enjoyment has been shared between student and staff alike.

As we eagerly anticipate the redevelopment of our sports facilities over the next twelve months to include a full size floodlit 3G Astroturf pitch and an innovative new fitness suite, designed around the concept of a ‘Health and Well Being’ Centre for not just Park House School students, but the wider community too, we hope that many more of our school community will find the opportunity to participate regularly and enthusiastically in physical education and school sport, both within the traditional curriculum and beyond.

I hope to be able to update you all again in the autumn term on our imminent Rugby, Hockey and Netball Tour to South Africa, the fundraising for which is also covered in Personal Best. We leave Newbury on 22nd July, visiting Cape Town and Pretoria. We have five fixtures arranged against local schools and the whole party of 39 Year 10 and 11 students and five staff are excitedly preparing to experience participation and achievement on an international stage. This tour will be a fantastic conclusion to what has already been a wonderfully successful year for Park House physical education and sport. Hopefully this will continue throughout the summer and beyond! Perhaps the most famous South African of modern times summarises our philosophy in these words and will inspire our Touring party:

“Sport has the power to change the world, the power to inspire, the power to unite people in a way that little else can. It speaks to people in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where there was once despair. It is an instrument for peace, even more powerful than government. It breaks down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all kinds of discrimination. The heroes sport creates are examples of this power. They are valiant, not only on the playing field but also in the community, spreading hope and inspiration to the world.” Nelson Mandela.

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After the success last year of our girls winning the Yellow Pages Trophy we knew that the pressure was on this year for both the boys and the girls. The competition consists of three matches against others schools over three weeks and then a finals day. After the matches the girls made it into the cup final and the boys went into the plate final. The finals day arrived – and what a day it was!

Codie Burnett (150m), Brandy Funderburk (80m) and Shannon Burnett (1200m) all finished in first place in their individual races and each received a trophy for the best performance. Just before the relays were about to start, the scores were announced, Park House was in first place by just four points! The pressure was on for the girls to perform! The first of our relay teams which consisted of Brandy Funderburk, Codie Burnett, Jess Greenwood and Stella Chandler came home in first place, and again their performance gained them a trophy for the quickest time. The second of our relay teams came third, another great result which lead to Park House Girls being crowned Yellow Pages Cup Champions for the second year running – what a great achievement!

In the boys competition there were again many great achievements and trophies gained. Jack Hatton Johnson (80m hurdles), Harry Powell (800m A), Josh Danieli (46.6) and Luke Angel (Javelin) all achieved first place in their individual events. Jack Hatton Johnson and Luke Angell both received trophies for the best performances in their individual events. Again, it all went down to the relays and both Park House teams came second resulting in Park House Boys becoming the Yellow Pages Shield Champions! Another great achievement! A great day by all, lots of trophies to take home and a very noisy bus!  

• Miss Smith & Mr Jones
South Africa Tour 2009

As Personal Best goes to press we are making final preparations for a sixteen day sports tour to South Africa from the 22nd July–6th August with 39 students from the current Years 10 and 11.

Following the success of our Australia tour in 2005, this tour will also be taking our U16 Rugby, Hockey and Netball team away on what, for some, will be a once in a lifetime trip.

For the past year and a half, all 39 students and staff have been working hard to raise as much sponsorship as possible before the tour whilst continuing their studies and exams. Balancing their studies and fund raising events, the students have worked hard to raise money to pay for their kit and other additional items required for such a tour.

The group are split into fundraising teams. These teams have all completed a variety of activities to raise this money such as cake sales, back packing in Sainsbury’s, sponsored fancy dress fun runs, primary sports festivals, and raffles. Individually, the students have also sought part time employment such as gardening, selling tea, coffee and bacon rolls at events and many other things! We look forward to letting you know how we get on! • Miss Marshall

County Trampolining Final Results

Years 7&8
Grace Towey
Sophie Smith
Abigail Butler

Years 9, 10 & 11
Flo Hirons Palmer
Ben Scott
Tom Metcalf
Georgia Presland

Having got through to the finals of the county competition, the three teams achieved the following results.

In their section:
Calum Campbell 4th
Flo Hirons Palmer 6th
Pippa Dixon 6th
Alex Creamer 7th
Tom Metcalf 9th
Sophie Smith 11th
Grace Towey 17th
Abi Butler 20th

Years 9, 10 & 11 Elite
Alex Creamer
Rosie McCarthy
Calum Campbell
Pippa Dixon
Cheerleading

Our first full season is drawing to a close and what a season it has been! Throughout the year the girls have faced many challenges, overcome injuries and conquered fears. All the hard work and dedication was put to the test back in April when the girls travelled to Telford to compete in their first competition. Despite the very early start and the strange mixture of excitement and trepidation the girls shone through. In the face of strong competition from a variety of university squads the Park House High School came away with a very respectable ninth place and their heads held high.

This success gave everybody the drive and desire to do better at the next competition, and the following week the squad were back in the gym training hard to make improvements to the routine. We worked to develop the existing skills and learn new ones to make the performance even more exciting.

Over the course of the 4th and 5th July Brighton found itself overrun with cheerleaders. Over the weekend around 11,000 cheerleaders took part in numerous events in several venues. Once again this was a weekend to remember in more ways than one. The level of competition was even higher than it had been in April but everyone was still excited and raring to go. On the mats the girls looked confident and gave it their best, most of who came off wanting to do it all over again. The energy and enthusiasm that the girls showed earned them seventh place.

In amongst the training we have also been lucky enough to do several public performances which have not only raised the profile of cheerleading in Newbury and he surrounding areas but to once again show off Park House’s dedication to sports both new and old. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the friends and family who have supported the squads training and fundraising efforts. Without them it would have been much harder to create this fantastic squad. The girls would also like to thank the dedication, and patience of head coach Paul Butler and tumble coach Gareth Green, without whom none of the success and fun we have had would have been possible.

If anyone is interested in seeing what it’s all about then we will be recruiting new cheerleaders of all ages and abilities at the beginning of next year. • Miss S Morgan

Adam Maher aims for International Ten pin bowling success

I have been bowling since I was 7 years of age. I practise at Newbury Lakeside and I am coached by one of the Welsh national coaches.

In 2003, my doubles partner and I broke the doubles record which had been held for 10 years. Our record still stands. I have had a lot of success, with bronze, silver and gold medals in regional, national and European championships with my highlight being the winning of all three Golds in the National Championships, in 2007 and three Golds and one Silver in the European Open in 2008 – the year I was selected to train with England.

This year I have made the Under 16 England team to play in Scotland for the Triple Crown, plus I have been selected to bowl for the Under 18 squad to go to Vienna to play in the World Sports Festival. After making the England squad I was overwhelmed. At first it didn’t really sink in but by the next day it had. When I received the letter telling me I had been selected for the England squad to travel out to Vienna I went absolutely mad! It was such a relief that after all those hours of practice I’d put in I was rewarded with selection. Knowing I am going to be representing my country is a huge thing to take in.

I hope in the future to be able to play in the European tour, to continue making the grade for future England squads and to make the European squad. My longer term ambition is to win a scholarship in Bowling, and attend a University in the United States. • Adam Maher
Staffing Update

The success of the school and the ‘personal bests’ that we so proudly celebrate throughout this magazine are based on the fantastic working relationships that are developed between students and staff. I should therefore wish to take this opportunity to thank both the teaching and non-teaching staff for their work throughout the last year.

Of course, the summer term edition of Personal Best inevitably reports on a number of changes to our outstanding staff team at Park House. The following staff will be leaving the school at the end of the academic year, and I am sure that you will join me in thanking them for all that they have contributed to the school and their excellent support to our students:

- Mrs Julie Askey (Head of Learning Year 10, Geography)
- Mrs Sam Clifford (GTP Maths)
- Miss Jan Coles (Health and Social Care)
- Miss Hannah Curtis (Teaching Assistant)
- Mr Andrew Dack (Head of Science)
- Mrs Teresa Dawes (English)
- Mr Jack Fish (Teaching Assistant)
- Ms Alona Fletcher (Science/Chemistry)
- Miss Georgina Gillyon (Teaching Assistant)
- Mr Ray Hopgood (History)
- Miss Suzie Jasper (Teaching Assistant)
- Mr Ben Marshall (Teaching Assistant)
- Miss Katie McCarthy (Physical Education)
- Mr Alex Miller (Maths)
- Mr Alistair Mitchell (Teaching Assistant)
- Mr Roy Pembroke (Site Team)
- Mr John Rasman (Head of Careers / English)
- Mrs Jo Skuse (Head of Learning Year 11 / Art)
- Mr George Slater (Teaching Assistant)
- Miss Katie Stenning (Teaching Assistant)
- Miss Alice Goodwin-Self (Modern Foreign Languages)

This year sees a number of particularly long-serving colleagues leave us, and my special thanks and best wishes therefore go to:

- Mrs Julie Askey, who joined Park House in 1996 and has provided outstanding care, support and guidance to many cohorts of students in her role as a Head of Year and Head of Learning.
- Miss Jan Coles, recently recognised as one of the country’s Excellent Teachers by the DCSF and who joined Park House as a ‘Home Economics’ teacher in 1984, subsequently working as part of the school’s Senior Leadership Team during the 1990s and most latterly leading our outstanding Health and Social Care Department alongside her role as a Local Authority education consultant.
- Mr Andrew Dack, Head of Science – the largest Department in the School – since 1993.
- Ms Alona Fletcher, who joined the Science Department in 1997 and has led the very successful development of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme at Park House.
- Mr Ray Hopgood, who was appointed to Park House as a Newly Qualified Teacher in 1972 and has subsequently dedicated his whole professional career to the school, leading both the History and then RE/Citizenship departments during his 37 years of outstanding service at Park House.
- Mr John ‘Raz’ Rasman who, like Mr Hopgood, also has the outstanding distinction of having worked exclusively at Park House for the entirety of his teaching career – a career which began in 1973 and has seen him teach PE and English, as well as leading Careers Education and Work Experience and, of course, establishing the now legendary Lakeside/Towerwood trips every December.

Projecting forward to September, I am delighted to inform you that we are fully staffed for the 2009-10 academic year and look forward to the following new colleagues joining us at the start of term:

- Mrs Grainne Barber (Maths)
- Miss Adella Buckland (Science/Biology)
- Miss Rebekah Burniston (Teaching Assistant)
- Miss Laura Clintworth (Learning Supervisor)
- Miss Alice Goodwin-Self (English)
- Miss Emma Langford-Holt (Psychology)
- Miss Hannah Liddle (Learning Supervisor)
- Mr David O’Neill (Maths)

I am also pleased to advise you that Mr Ed Mather, currently Head of ICT and a Year 10 tutor will take over from Mrs Askey as Head of Learning for Year 11 in September.

D Peaple

We need the help of staff and students to produce Personal Best – thank you to all those who have contributed to this issue and we’re sorry if your story couldn’t be included this time.

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

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

A fond farewell to (from left to right): Ms Alona Fletcher, Mr Andy Dack, Mr Ray Hopgood, Mrs Julie Askey, Mr John ‘Raz’ Rasman & Mrs Jan Coles (not pictured)

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