



Produced by the Environment Group

Firrhill News

January 2015

Edinburgh's Christmas Light Night



On Sunday 23rd November 2014 a number of Firrhill pupils took part in performances at the Light Night event which preceded the turning on of the Christmas lights in George Street. There was dance, drama and music. Various local schools took part including Braidburn School.

Money was collected for Cash for Kids, a charity which helps children who are disadvantaged through poverty and are sick or disabled.





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The Opening of "The Long Steps - a walk with Robert Louis Stevenson"

On Saturday October 25th 2014 Firrhill pupils helped at the opening ceremony of "The Long Steps" three Firrhill pupils recited poems and others from the Interact Club acted as stewards.



The poetry trail is a Colinton Community Conservation Trust project which starts from Colinton Village through an iron archway "The Long Steps - a walk with Robert Louis Stevenson" and proceeds towards Colinton Parish Church to the Dell. The plaques are illustrated and have poetry from RLS's "A Child's Garden of Verses"



Merchiston Castle School Pipe Band gave an excellent performance



Thanks to Ms Sharp, Firrhill teacher and Catriona Luff, Firrhill Parent for these great photos!



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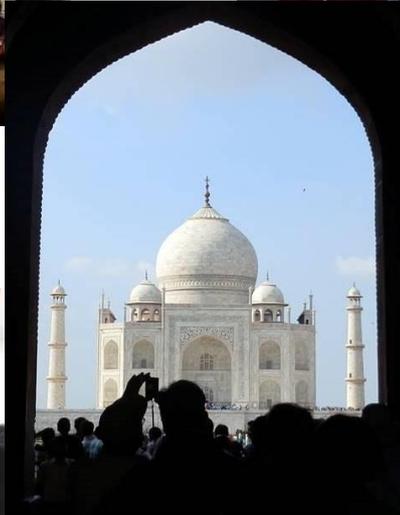
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Girlguiding Trip to India by Lily Raper S6

During the summer a group of Senior Section Girl Guides and leaders from across Britain took a trip to India. The group, which included Firrhill pupil, Lily Raper, stayed in India's World Guiding Centre Sangam, before touring India's most famous cities.



As well as enjoying the tourism opportunities offered, including the Taj Mahal and the Red Fort, the group also did voluntary work in slums, day-care centres and a school for blind children.



"We immersed ourselves in Indian culture, enjoying traditional meals and learning how to wear our Saris. Definitely worth all the babysitting, car boot sales and odd-jobs done to save for the trip!" says Lily Raper, S6





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Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Practice Expedition

Over 3 days from 30th September – 2nd October a group of nearly eighty S3 pupils accompanied by staff members Mr Boyd, Mr Bulik, Mr Cameron, Mr Isdale and with campsite support from Mrs Milner, Mrs Frew and Mr Archibald, accomplished their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze practice expedition.



The route taken started at the school and the teams of pupils walked over the Pentlands to Glencorse Reservoir before an overnight stay at the Bonaly Scout Camp. The second day included a long loop towards Balerno and back along the Water of Leith to the school.

The groups covered a total distance of 15 miles using their map reading skills to navigate their route along trails and paths. Groups investigated the wildlife and landscape along their routes and presented their findings after the expedition

The weather was dry and the main challenges were late night encounters with the Bonaly badgers.

The teams carried their own personal equipment and each day they cooked simple meals such as pasta and sauce on camping stoves.

Over all the expedition was very successful and all the groups are looking forward to the qualifying expedition in April 2015

by Mr Boyd, Firrhill teacher



Celebration of Achievement



Greg S3,
Taylor &
Lewis S4

Beside the
Anne Frank
Tree

On 22nd October the school had its annual Celebration of Achievement evening. Three pupils gained a special award for their hard work in helping to look after the school gardens. Well done!

New Litter Bins



Several new council litter bins have been provided in our local area to help reduce littering.

Thanks to the Parent Council, the Environment Group and Cllr Elaine Aitken who all wrote letters to the council and helped to ensure this successful outcome.

This new bin is located in Colinton Mains Gardens others have been placed on Colinton Mains Drive.

The positioning of litter bins is important and this will continued to be monitored to ensure the new bins are situated for optimal use as well as ease of emptying.



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The Bio Pond

In October Mrs Watson's S1 Enhanced Curriculum Class helped to improve the pond area. Some weeds, stones and litter from the pond and surrounding garden were removed. The S1 pupils dug holes for the new plants and added some compost before planting and finally watering the new plants. The remaining soil was distributed around the garden. Then the pupils enjoyed a cup of hot chocolate, back in the art department.



The pupils planted two ferns and, two hart tongue ferns, a blue iris and a hosta. These plants like damp and shade and although the ground was very hard and difficult to dig, due to a lot of stones, we hope the plants will grow well there. Later in the classroom pupils wrote about the autumn and what they had learned in the pond and celebration gardens.



"I had a great time, learning about plants and weeds" said Kyle Moir S1
"I liked the pond garden because it had a nice layout with the pond in the middle" said Sean Wallace S1

Thanks to Catriona Luff, Firrhill Parent for donating these lovely plants and to Mrs Hargest, Firrhill Parent for helping with gardening

We saw a lot of garden snails and great pond snails, which are useful as they eat algae. The pond water was lovely and clear and the water lily had a flower in bud.



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Book Week Scotland Interview

Thomas Hughes, School Librarian (temporary post) helped organise Firrhill High School's Book Swop event and kindly also as part of our Book Week Scotland celebration in November agreed to be interviewed and tell us about some books which he has enjoyed reading.

What was your favourite book as a child?

When I was a child, like most folk, I started off with Roald Dahl. I had particular affection for *Fantastic Mr Fox*, *Matilda*, *The Twits*, and *The Witches*. It was also around this time that I started reading comics. I loved and still love the Asterix books. The most recent one *Asterix and the Picts* is rip-roaringly funny. From then I moved onto the Choose Your Own Adventure Novels and was a big fan of The Fighting Fantasy series created by Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone. I was particularly fond of the book *Scorpion Swamp* - which I completed more than once.

Are there any books you would recommend to pupils?

Whilst I would be a bit afraid of recommending something wholeheartedly, normally anything recommended may be rejected out of hand. So my tactic is generally to ask what books they have enjoyed and take it from there. My top picks in Young Adult's Novels are: The *Artemis Fowl* series by Eoin Colfer; The *Harry Potter* series by J.K Rowling; The *Skulduggery Pleasant* series by Derek Landy; The *Earthsea* series by Ursula K. Le Guin; His *Dark Materials* Trilogy by Phillip Pullman

How do you choose the books you read?

mostly go by peoples' recommendations and I really enjoy reading graphic novels: *Kingdom Come* by Mark Waid and Alex Ross; *The World's Greatest Super Heroes* by Paul Dini and Alex Ross; *Martians* by Kurt Busiek and Alex Ross. I also ask pupils for their recommendations and try to read these and be up to date with 'the hip new thing'

What's the best non-fiction book you've read recently?

I don't really read non-fiction books as much, but some I have read and would recommend include: *The Good, the Bad and the Multiplex* by Mark Kermode; *Toast & Eating for England* by Nigel Slater
I am The Secret Footballer - by The Secret Footballer
Beware of the Dog by Brian Moore - is my favourite autobiography and is the one I would most recommend

What is the last book you read but didn't finish?

The Birth of Numbers is a massive 1800 page text book. It was a present for my fiancé and I occasionally like having a little dip into it.

