



*School closes at 1200 on  
Tuesday 22 December 2015*

*Pupils resume on  
Thursday 7 January 2016*

## **Wester Hailes Education Centre News**

### **USA ambassador to UK speaks to senior students**

We were delighted to host a visit from the USA Ambassador, Matthew Barzun, to Wester Hailes Education Centre on Friday 13 November. In an interactive session with senior students, he asked them to think about good and bad outcomes when the United States gets involved in the world. His presentation was thought provoking and very much enjoyed by the students as they were able to reflect on their perceptions of the USA.

#### **Dress Code**

We are proud of our school community and students outwardly express this pride by following the school dress code. The uniform items are:

- white shirt and school tie
- plain black trousers, plain black skirt and black or neutral tights
- black shoes or trainers
- plain black v-neck cardigan or sweater.

Students should wear gym shoes or training shoes for PE.

A black blazer with our school badge is now available to buy please contact the school office for details.





*I am constantly impressed by the achievements and successes of the students at WHEC. This newsletter shares with you many of the exciting events that have recently taken place. I hope you enjoy reading this round up.*

*I have thoroughly enjoyed my first few weeks and months at WHEC. Parents and carers have much to be proud of in their young people. On a daily basis I am so impressed by the pupil's friendliness, their excellent manners and their commitment to learning. Our teachers continue to provide a high quality educational experience and we have a strong shared ethos of success.*

*We continue to value the opinions of our parents and carers and hope that we will continue to work together in partnership. A reminder that each Monday I host an open surgery where parents/carers can meet with me without appointment between 1530 & 1630. I wish you all a very enjoyable festive period.*

*Lewis Paterson - (Acting) Principal*

### **Sleep Out Challenge 2015**

Well done to our intrepid Team WHEC who for one night swapped their beds for a sleeping bag, survived snow, rain and a pretty nippy wind to raise £621.95 (and counting) for Rock Trust in support of homeless young people in Edinburgh and the Lothians. The students (Kenzie Leckie, Dylan Elliott, Teigan Geddes, Danica Skinner and Lewis Simmonds) were absolute troopers and dealt with the miserable conditions with good humour. Thank you to everyone who supported them.



### **First Minister Visits Wester Hailes Education Centre**

Chloe Tomany and John Gainford both S6 students welcomed the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon to the school on 18 August. The First Minister was here to launch the Scottish Government's Attainment Challenge. Chloe and John were able to share with the First Minister our continued success in the SQA examinations, in line with the Scottish Government's proposal we have improved attainment of all our students over the last four years. You can hear the First Ministers speech at <https://firstminister.gov.scot/a-world-leader-in-education/>

### **Creative Writing Workshops**

Senior students have been taking part in creative writing workshops funded by Kiran's Trust at the WHALE Arts Centre. As part of this project, Digital Sentinel, the community news website for Wester Hailes, have been showing students how to upload their work onto their site. Digital Sentinel is a great source of information on what is happening in our neighbourhood. Please take some time to read over some of their fantastic work, which really shows off some of the talent we have in our school you can see all their posts on the Kiran's Trust writing section of the Digital Sentinel website [www.digitalsentinel.net](http://www.digitalsentinel.net)



### **Project Narnia**

Project Narnia was an exciting adventure involving all S2 students and the Lyceum Theatre. After watching the Lyceums magical production, The Lion The Witch and The Wardrobe, S2 pupils had just 3 days to produce a living museum in response to the play. The 6 groups worked on various themes and strands from the play such as Good v Evil, Animals and Mythical Creatures, The Battle and Magic Door Stories. They created masks, dances, drama, sculptures and food, some of which had a real kick! On the Thursday evening, with the help of the practitioners from the Lyceum, the work was showcased and other students, parents and the general public came to see what was behind the wardrobe doors...



### **Edinburgh International Book Festival 2015**

All of our SI students, once again, had the opportunity to visit the Book Festival in Charlotte Square. Sunshine always makes these outings, even more enjoyable and allows students to have their break-time in a garden, on deck chairs! Over the course of a week, the young people hear various authors speak and get the chance to meet them afterwards, in the book signing tent. Author, Steve Feasey, enthralled his audience with talk of zombies and super heroes and answered some very interesting questions including several from our own SI students.

### **John Byrne Award 2015**

Congratulations to Chloe Elvin (S6) who reached the final of the prestigious John Byrne Award. The John Byrne Award finalists are recognised as those young people across Edinburgh who are able to eloquently and thoughtfully express their values in response to a chosen stimulus. Chloe produced a fantastic script inspired by Jimmy Reid's inauguration speech as Rector of Glasgow University in 1972, the stimulus for the competition this year. Reid's speech, entitled 'Alienation' was printed verbatim in the New York Times and described as "the greatest speech since President Lincoln's Gettysburg address". Although Chloe was not named as an overall winner she gave a fantastic performance and her entry was incredibly well received and widely praised.



### **Parent Council**

The Parent Council meet regularly to discuss issues that are important to parents/carers and support the school in its work with students. This session the representatives on the Parent Council are: Jackie Smith (Chairperson), Ollie Clegg, Amanda Campbell and Ken Campbell. Why not consider joining or come along to the next meeting? Contact us at [parentcouncil@whec.edin.sch.uk](mailto:parentcouncil@whec.edin.sch.uk) for more details.



### **Heriot-Watt Sports Union Fundraise for Wester Hailes Active Schools**

Heriot-Watt University Sports Union (HWUSU) has agreed a fundraising partnership with Active Schools within the Wester Hailes Cluster, which will see £400 raised across the year for the Active Schools sports programme. HWUSU students will have opportunities to coach pupils from the Wester Hailes Cluster, which includes Clovenstone Primary, Canal View Primary, Sighthill Primary and Wester Hailes Education Centre. This partnership will not only allow for the pupils of these schools to benefit from increased sporting activity, but will provide them with more information on the opportunities higher or further education can offer. Additionally, this partnership will also allow HWUSU students to have the opportunity of improving their University experience and future employability through these coaching opportunities.

Michael Webster (HWUSU President) and Danny McCormick (HWUSU Community Co-ordinator) presented Leanne Longmuir and Nicole Hume, S5 Young Ambassadors from Wester Hailes Education Centre with a cheque for £400 outside the school and shook hands to formalise this new and exciting partnership.

### **Football Winners**

Well done to the WHEC Under 16s who took part in the Street Soccer Scotland National Youth Cup held at Toryglen Glasgow on Saturday 24 October and were 1st and 3rd - winning medals and a cup. There were 32 teams from all over Scotland taking part in the 5-a-side tournament organised by Street Soccer Scotland and over 120 matches throughout the day, lots of goals and lots of fun!





### Modern Studies Students London Visit

In October senior Modern Studies students were given the opportunity to travel to London to visit Parliament and participate in an election workshop. They were able to meet our local MP, Joanna Cherry, to hear about her work in Parliament and discuss issues with her. Former pupil, Ian Murray, MP, also met the students and treated them to refreshments on the House of Commons terrace. Before leaving Westminster, the group was allowed access to Downing Street to pose for photographs outside the famous No 10 door. Other visits made in a packed 2 days included Tower Bridge, Buckingham Palace, Madame Tussauds and shopping at Harrods and Piccadilly Circus.

### Edinburgh University Lloyd's Scholars Programme

Ten of our S2 students participated in Edinburgh University's Lloyd's scholars programme, last session. This programme encourages students to consider careers that would require them to study at university. The course lasts ten weeks and includes visits to the Vet School, Physical Education gym, the Law courts, Dance Theatre etc. The students then present their experiences at a celebration evening in June. However, the course does not finish there. The students were then given the responsibility of spending £500 to buy books for their school Library. In October our students were ably assisted by the staff at Waterstone's Bookshop in Princes Street, who directed them to the correct shelves. Afterwards the students were treated to a mug of hot chocolate in the Bookshop cafe! The students made excellent book choices, considering the likes and dislikes of their friends back at school as well as what they would enjoy reading. Thanks to a generous discount from the staff at Waterston's, the afternoon's book selection added around 75 new titles, plus one or two extra free books, to the school library's stock!



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### Edinburgh Festival Fringe Binge

17 senior students experienced a Fringe Binge on Friday 21 August, visiting 5 venues and experiencing 5 different genres ranging from Dance Drama to Shakespeare. Fantastic street performers and a 1st prize win of a free lunch for 2 won by Sam Carroll in a lucky dip topped off the day!

### Debate Mate!

This term saw the launch of another excellent extra-curricular activity - Debate Mate! Debate Mate is an award winning organisation that promotes debating skills to young people of all ages across the UK. Their innovative approach aims to:



- improve speaking and listening attainment of students
- develop soft skills such as leadership, teamwork and confidence
- raise pupils' aspirations and expectations through sustained contact with successful university students.

We have really enjoyed our first few sessions and working with our awesome Debate Mate coach Katie. We are one of only a handful of secondary schools across Scotland to be selected for the programme and we are looking forward to our first debate in February.