

Challenges and opportunities

There are no impossibilities only challenges and opportunities.

Breadalbane Academy

An Academically High Achieving all
through School (3 – 18 years) – our
transition from a school to a full
community facility

Location : The Heart of Highland Scotland 55km North of Perth, Land area :5200km², popn 10,500



Vocational Education : The beginning

- When : 1997 – 1999
- What : Gamekeeping : 8 – 10 young people
- 4000 – 7000 Pheasants
- Vocational Qualifications including Game Bird Rearing, Pest and Predator control

Land Based Studies

Question : Why & how?

Answer : It was part of our community

Question : how was it funded?

Answer : The Headteacher managed the budget and made it work. Latterly ESF Objective 3 Funding, Local Authority, Local Community sponsors, Individual Supporters.

Our Vision

Nursery

Eco School
Community Links
3-5 Curriculum
Community Links

Community Learning

Community Library
Heartland Radio
T.V. Studio
Fitness Suite
Youth Facilities
Wrap Around Care

Perth & Kinross Leisure

Exercise
Community Events
Triathlons etc.

Rural Entrepreneurship

In partnership with the Sector
Skills Council

Pre-vocational support
Enterprise Courses
Talented Business Support
Entrepreneurial Skills
New Business Back Up
Support

Primary

With subject specialists
Enterprise
Eco-school
5-14 Curriculum
Community Links



Highland Perthshire

Sports Trust

Sports Development for all
Development Squads for individuals
Feeder for local, country and national
Sports
Hockey
Cricket
Rugby
Dance
Futbol de Salao
Outdoor Education

Secondary

Academic 5-14
Vocational SQ's
Skills 4 Work courses
Enterprise
Expressive Arts
Eco School
Curriculum Flexibility
Adults in classes
Community Links
Drama
Standard Grades
Higher Still

Further and Higher Education

Vocational
National Certificates
Higher National Certificates
Higher National Diploma
University of the Highlands
and Islands to degree level

What Vocational Courses did Breadalbane Academy offer?

Breadalbane Academy

Vocational Curricular Options

2006/07

- Agriculture
- Breadalbane Game Company
- Care (nursery based)
- Primary 1,2,3 Placements
- Chef Placements with Head Chef Mentors (full time)
- Construction
- Equine Studies
- Fisheries Research Services
- Forestry
- Gamekeeping
- Horticulture
- Outdoor Education
- Vehicle Maintenance
- Mandarin

The Breadalbane Way

The DVD 'Vocational Curriculum for the 21st Century - The Breadalbane Way' gives a valuable insight into the Breadalbane pilot programme and its successes. It aims to share best practice to enable the programme to be replicated across Scotland.

With a foreword by Ross Finnie, a range of individuals are featured in the DVD, including a number of students taking part in the programme who share their experiences of vocational training first hand.

Ross Finnie, Minister for Environment and Rural Development calls the Breadalbane project:

“a prime example of good educational practice”

"Land-based studies at Breadalbane have set a template for other schools to follow," says John Low, the Rector at Breadalbane Academy. "We hope that our pioneering work will encourage young people to consider a career in land-based industries. For us, this project has been a radical step in broadening the curricular opportunities for our pupils".

To order copies of the DVD, contact Mary Mitchell at Lantra: 01738 553311.

Alex Towns, Head of Land-based Studies at the Academy, firmly believes that:

“This project, and others like it, will ensure a successful future for Scotland's land-based sector.”

A real team effort

Jenda Westwood attributes the the success of the Breadalbane project to enthusiasm, commitment - and above all excellent teamwork. She says: "The project has been a successful partnership between a number of organisations - the Breadalbane Academy, Lantra (the Sector Skills Council for the environmental and land-based sector), Perth and Kinross Council and local employers with support from the European Social Fund - and of course the students that have participated in this programme. We'd like to thank everyone involved.

2 pounds of Breadalbane sausages please!

Soon you may be able to buy a selection of Breadalbane produce at your local farm shop.

As a prime example of vocational training being a practical way of getting young people into employment, Breadalbane are expanding their gamekeeping activities. In a commercial project involving the whole school, the students are going to produce their own food. They've already bought a sausage stuffing machine, and they'll also have to think about how they can market the products, package them - and find outlets to sell them.

The project will give them all kinds of enterprise skills - and they can't wait to get going!

VIP support for the classroom in the hills

When NFU Scotland President, John Kinnaird and Lantra's National Director of Scotland William Fergusson visited West Park Farm, home to the classroom in the hills, they were suitably impressed.

With Sandy Thomson, owner of West Park Farm, as their guide, the visit gave them an opportunity to see the work and activities that pupils undertake as part of the land-based curriculum for schools project.

On the day, Sandy Thomson, and Alex Towns, Head of Land-based Studies, Breadalbane Academy, were presented with instructor certificates to signify completion of their Instructional Techniques training.

"This is an excellent project which closes the gap between town and country" said John Kinnaird. "It goes a long way towards showing students that there are good careers in the land-based sector."

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Summer 2005



The Sector Skills Council for the
Environmental and Land-based Sector

The Breadalbane Land-based Vocational Curriculum

The pilot vocational curriculum at Breadalbane Academy has given pupils a valuable insight into working within land-based industries and enabled them to develop a range of skills which employers need. The success of this project proves that vocational training really does work.

A flexible curriculum - better career opportunities

The 'Land-based Curriculum for Schools' pilot project, run by the Breadalbane Academy in partnership with Lantra, has been operating for two years - and it's been gaining more and more momentum, thanks to the enthusiasm and commitment of all involved in it.

Initially set up to encourage young people to recognise their career opportunities within the land-based sector and provide them with on-the-job skills training, it's gone from strength to strength as more industries have been added to the curriculum.

When the programme first started, the school only offered training in gamekeeping. Since then, agriculture, environmental conservation, equine studies and horticulture have been added to the curriculum, doubling the number of students on the programme and even attracting external students who want to gain these skills.

The results have been impressive. The pupils have been given hands-on training and acquired skills that employers really need. Many pupils have been enthused to pursue a careers in their chosen industry - some who have already completed the programme have been motivated to get further training whilst others have already successfully gained employment in the area. Which is great news for rural businesses in Scotland. Even the employers who've become involved have learned from it - helping their personal development too.

The programme has proved that vocational training is a practical way to get young people into employment. It gives them the skills they need to find and keep a job - and helps them to learn about the varied opportunities within the Scottish environmental and land-based sector.



Employer, Sandy Thompson of West Park Farm, impresses upon the students working for him that they are doing...

“Real jobs for real people and learning real skills that will allow them to get a job anywhere”





**The students gain practical skills and employment opportunities...
... employers have also realised that learning is a two-way process!**

Student benefits...

“You can learn much more easily with hands on training”

Isobel Scrimgeour, Breadalbane Academy

"I decided to choose the equine management course as part of my school curriculum. I thought it sounded interesting and I liked the idea of getting out of the classroom for an afternoon during the school week.

It's gone into much more detail than I expected. I'm learning about horse care, stabling and dealing with clients and it's definitely been more interesting than I thought it would be. It's hard work, but very rewarding and I really enjoy it.

I'm going to take an HNC in Equine Studies because I've realised that I could have a really interesting career with horses."

Employer benefits...

“It's helped my personal development greatly”

Sandy Thompson, West Park Farm

Sandy has realised that working with young people eager to learn helps improve not only their skills - but also his own. On the farm, he trains them to shear sheep, mend fences and maintain farm equipment.

As part of the programme Sandy was sent on an Instructional Techniques course, which has made him feel far more confident engaging with the students. He thinks the vocational training programme is a great idea.

"It equips students with the skills they'll need out in the real world, and also gives employers a chance to get involved with training the land-based workers of the future."

Jenda Westwood, Business Manager, Breadalbane Academy:

“It's been a roaring success for the students, employers and the community as a whole. The students really enjoy getting out of the classroom and learning practical skills. It's led to many of our students deciding to take further skills training and they've learnt that interesting and varied jobs do exist in the countryside. Some of our students have already been offered jobs as a result of their vocational training.”

Breadalbane produces television stars!

Last October, land-based curriculum pupils starred in Landward, BBC Scotland's rural affairs magazine programme. A film crew visited Breadalbane in September and filmed the pupils being trained at West Park Farm. The final programme showed the students learning new skills on the farm - and thoroughly enjoying themselves in the process.

Everyone was excited about the presence of a television crew - and the weather even stayed fine for their visit!

Double the value!

Since the scheme started in 2003, the number of students taking part in land-based training has doubled. 40 students now get out of the classroom and follow a structured training programme in gamekeeping, environmental conservation or agriculture.

A typical day on a farm might involve mending fences, building bridges or even learning traditional rural skills like how to build a dry stone wall. Students are also shown how to work with animals - giving injections, shearing sheep and scanning sheep for lambs.

Success stories from the Breadalbane pilot project

A change of heart...

Before Christopher Grant took part in a land-based study programme in 2003/2004, his intention had been to leave school as soon as possible. However, he enjoyed it so much, he decided to stay on and continue his studies last year.

He found the programme helped him to gain confidence, and he enjoyed helping and supporting the younger pupils, so he developed his skills in mentoring, as well as gaining All Terrain Vehicle and Manual Handling certificates.

... and a new job for ex-pupil

Alex Towns, Head of Land-based Studies, was so impressed with his progress and enthusiasm that when he was approached by local farmer, Callum McDiarmid from Mains of Murthly who was looking to take on a farm worker, he had no hesitation in recommending Christopher. After some unpaid work experience and a successful trial period, Christopher began full-time work earlier this year.

This is the second time Callum has successfully recruited a farm worker from Breadalbane and he's very happy with the results. Christopher is a great example of what can be achieved with application and determination and we wish him every success in the future.

Four students have their future mapped out

Four, ex-land-based curriculum pupils have just finished their 1st year at Oatridge College. John Calder sites the Breadalbane project as his primary reason for undertaking a National Certificate in Agricultural Engineering. "I hadn't considered further education before taking part," he says.

Alexander Marshall and Craig Robertson have followed Higher National Certificates in Agriculture and Alan Gudmundsson is working to achieve the National Certificate in Agriculture.



Breadalbane pupils, March 2004, left to right: John Calder, Craig Robertson, Alexander Marshall, Sam Jacobs, Cameron Head, Christopher Grant

Pupil gets first award

Sam Jacobs received the first Donald Thomson Memorial award and a bursary from Lantra for his outstanding performance.

Sam specialised in gamekeeping during his time at Breadalbane, and since then, has added further qualifications to his CV. He now holds certificates in Chainsaw Operation, First Aid, All Terrain Vehicle and Manual Handling. "Being able to learn about this at school has been really useful," Sam says."

He left the Academy in 2004 to pursue his ambition to become a gamekeeper, and has almost completed his first year as an Under-keeper on the Glenlyon Estate, Aberfeldy.

The Donald Thomson Memorial award was kindly donated by the Thomson family in memory of their son who died tragically.



Pupils receiving certification for their achievements.

Partnerships

- Lantra the Land Based Training Agency
- Perth College/UHI
- Edradynate Estate – sponsorship and joint working on the Estate
- West park farm – Trainers and community partners
- National farmers Union of Scotland – Vocational Qualification (VQ) Support
- The Machinery Ring – VQ support

How successful was it?

- National recognition across Scotland and the UK
- Copied by over 40 schools in Scotland
- Winner : Scottish Qualification Authority Award 1999
- Winner of the Confederation of British Industry Award 2001
- Winner : Scottish Qualification Authority Award 2006

Curricular Design

- Bespoke for the rural community we served
- Aimed to support all ages to maximise their potential
- Aimed to help retain talented young people within their community
- Based on a belief that there are many routes to success
- Based on the principal that education is a driving force for social and economic success