



Young film enthusiasts Marcin Mazurek and Lewis Collins from Lisburn with Puss in Boots at the recent Cinemagic Gala Preview screening of Puss in Boots 3D from DreamWorks Animation, in Omniplex Kennedy Centre, Belfast. The special preview marked the closing night of the 2011 Cinemagic Belfast film programme.

## Council seeks meeting with Minister over hall listing

COUNCILLOR Pat Catney has urged Lisburn City Council to meet with Environment Minister Alex Attwood to discuss controversial proposals by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency to list Glenavy Protestant Hall.

Trustees of the Hall have expressed grave concern about the proposal, fearing it will make it difficult to obtain grants for the maintenance of the building.

At a recent meeting of Lisburn City Council's Planning Committee, Mr Catney proposed the council meet with the Minister to discuss the matter. He also proposed writing to the NIEA asking them not to make a decision until the meeting had been held.

Mr Catney's proposal was seconded by Deputy Mayor Alderman William Leatham, who said: "It is more difficult to get grants for buildings once they have listed status."

The committee agreed to seek a meeting with the Minister and write to the NIEA on the matter.



Preparatory and Pre-Prep Departments

### Open Morning

Saturday 14 January 2012  
10am - 12 noon

6 Magheralave Road, Lisburn, BT28 3BH  
Tel: 028 9266 9198

Wrap around care provided includes:

- Breakfast Club from 8am
- After School Club until 6pm
- Summer Scheme (August)
- Sport for All Scheme (Easter)

The school offers:

- Wide range of Extra Curricular Activities
- Use of AstroTurf pitches, Sports Hall, ICT Suites, Athletics track and Sports pitches

"The quality of the children's achievements and standards is outstanding"  
Education and Training Inspectorate, March 2011

Friends' School is the Sunday Times Northern Ireland Secondary School of the Year 2012

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# Reality of motherhood

## Teacher's new book on how not all new mums feel full of joy

BEING a mother can be the most joyous yet demanding job a woman will ever have to do, yet for some like part-time Lisburn teacher Helen Bell motherhood can be a time of negative feelings and despair.

Helen struggled with both Pre-Natal PN and Post-Natal Depression PND for almost two years from the moment she found out she was pregnant with her son David who is now two and a half years old.

She is not alone. According to a new report by 4Children up to 35,000 mothers each year face PND without diagnosis or treatment and 105,000 mothers were diagnosed with PND in 2010.

Helen (35) who is now off anti-depressants has written a book about her experiences with motherhood which she feels is a realistic picture and one that can help mothers and would-be mothers.

'The Mother of All Journeys - Coming to Terms with Having a Baby' deals with her thoughts and feelings and how she overcame mental illness to return to the loving happy positive woman she once was.

Helen had her son David in June 28, 2009 while living in England. It was a planned pregnancy. She had already researched pregnancy and spoken to other mothers about their experiences and her head was filled with images of happy pregnancies and births.

But Helen soon found out many people were not being truthful about this so called 'precious time of their lives'.

She found out she was pregnant at the end of 2008. But from the moment of conception she began to have feelings that were alien to her.

Normally a bubbly, happy and positive person she had negative feelings and was at an all time low. On top of that she battled 20 weeks of morning sickness.

"Being a teacher I loved children, loved to play with them and my husband and I always knew we wanted to start a family," said Helen. "I had always wanted a child. But when I found out I was pregnant I was not filled with the joys and

wanted it out of me.

"My husband was great and knew there was something wrong. He would hold me and was really loving but I could not get these feelings out of my head. I could not even tell people I was pregnant. If I did I began to cry.

"I had this rosy picture of pregnancy in my mind and that was not what I was feeling at all. I felt dreadful and really down. "I feel looking back that my feelings should have been picked up on at this stage," she said. "I am normally a bubbly person anyway but this was so out-of-character for me. I knew something was wrong but I just kept going and struggling on."

She gave birth to her son David in London on June 28, 2009 after ten hours of labour and a forcep delivery.

"I bonded with David straight away," said Helen. "There was no question I loved him but I still felt in the depths of despair. I felt my life was over and regretted having a baby.

"My husband was very supportive. We knew that a baby was something we both wanted but he knew what I was saying was out of character. I was not the person he had married.

"He was very good and did not push things. But there was no question it did take its toll on our marriage."

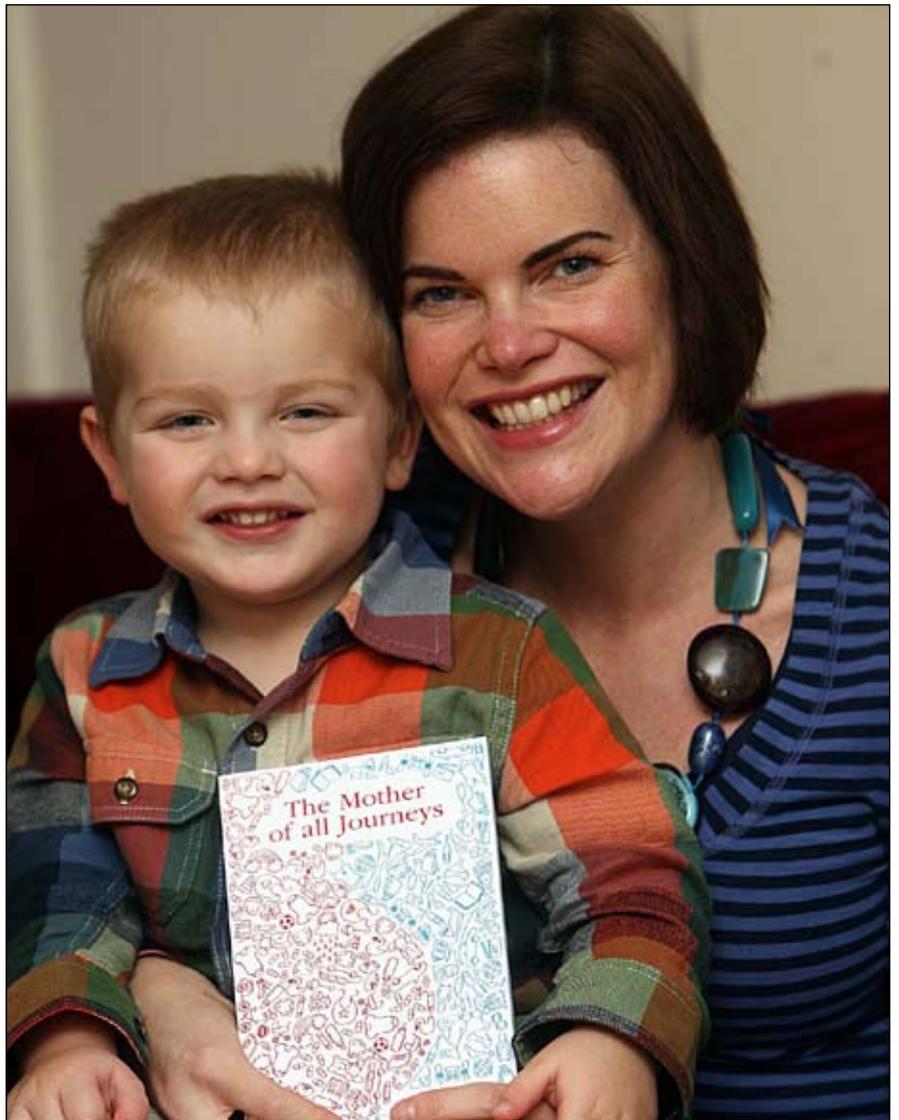
When she moved to Lisburn motherhood was not getting any more enjoyable. She was low and the monotony of her life got her down.

"I was getting these cards from wellwishers that were saying 'congratulations on your bundle of joy' and I was thinking is this some sort of sick joke how can this be so joyful?" she said.

"There was no question I loved my son but I just found the whole thing monotonous - washing out bottles, bathing and clothing my baby - everyday was just the same and felt my life was in a rut. It was relentless and boring."

She eventually went to her GP who put her on a course of anti-depressants which she admits helped, but only after three weeks. She remained on them up until three months ago.

Now that her life is back to



Helen Bell with her son David. US0212-105A0

normal she wants to share her feelings about the difficulties of motherhood with others. It was her husband who encouraged her to write.

"The thing about it was I was depressed but I felt that I had nothing to be depressed about," she said. "I had a loving husband a baby I always wanted but I was in the depths of despair."

"The support I had from the health visitor was great but I feel that more could have been done during my pregnancy. I think early symptoms of mental illness should have been picked up. I think that doctors can be too quick to hand out anti-depressants and though they helped me I feel that I should have been given another option.

"If I had heard of mothers who said that they struggled then I would have been more prepared. I asked women about pregnancy and their babies and they kept saying how fantastic and how fulfilling their lives were. I wish people had been realistic. I felt that

people were not always honest. I found the whole time dreadful."

Helen now feels more positive about her outlook on life, and even plans to become a counsellor for the Association for Postnatal Illness. She hopes that in the future she will even have a sibling for David.

"I wish someone had told me that I might not enjoy being a mother, that there would be times I would feel like a failure, that I might hate my 'new' life, but nobody did," she said.

"That is the reason I wrote the book, in the hope that by sharing my experiences I can help others in similar circumstances and show them, however they are feeling, that there is light at the end of the tunnel, that they are not alone."

'The Mother of All Journeys - Coming to terms with having a Baby' is published by Author House and available from March at most bookshops at £5.99

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## Laurelhill pupils enjoy a visit to Kilwaughter quarry

THE Vocational group from Laurelhill Community College's Year 11 were accompanied by Mrs McIlwrath and Mrs Simpson recently and enjoyed a fun and informative morning visiting Kilwaughter Limestone Quarry.

Pupils had been studying the formation of limestone, its importance in our everyday lives and the environmental consequences of extracting this natural resource through quarrying.

After an initial safety briefing pupils were taken to see the quarry face before a tour of

recently installed milling and processing plants.

All product leaving the site, mostly to be used as render, must be quality assured to meet the standards expected by the highly sought after kite mark the product bears, pupils were shown the testing laboratory and also able to try their hand at pebble dashing a wall before being given a series of talks by employees in different roles within the organisation who shared their career paths to date.

A relevant, interesting and enjoyable time was had by pupils and staff.



Laurelhill Community College Year 11 during their visit to Kilwaughter Limestone Quarry