

Dyce UPDATE Academy

ISSUE NO. 6

SEPTEMBER 1989

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Yes, folks - Dyce Academy is now in its tenth year. It's difficult to identify exactly when its birthday is: Mike Taylor was appointed as Rector in October 1979, principal teachers were appointed in February/March 1980, the building neared completion in June 1980 and the first pupils took their seats in August 1980. What we are sure of is that we are now into our tenth session, intend to celebrate and we want YOU to get involved - pupils, former pupils, parents, staff, former staff - everyone who is interested in Dyce Academy.

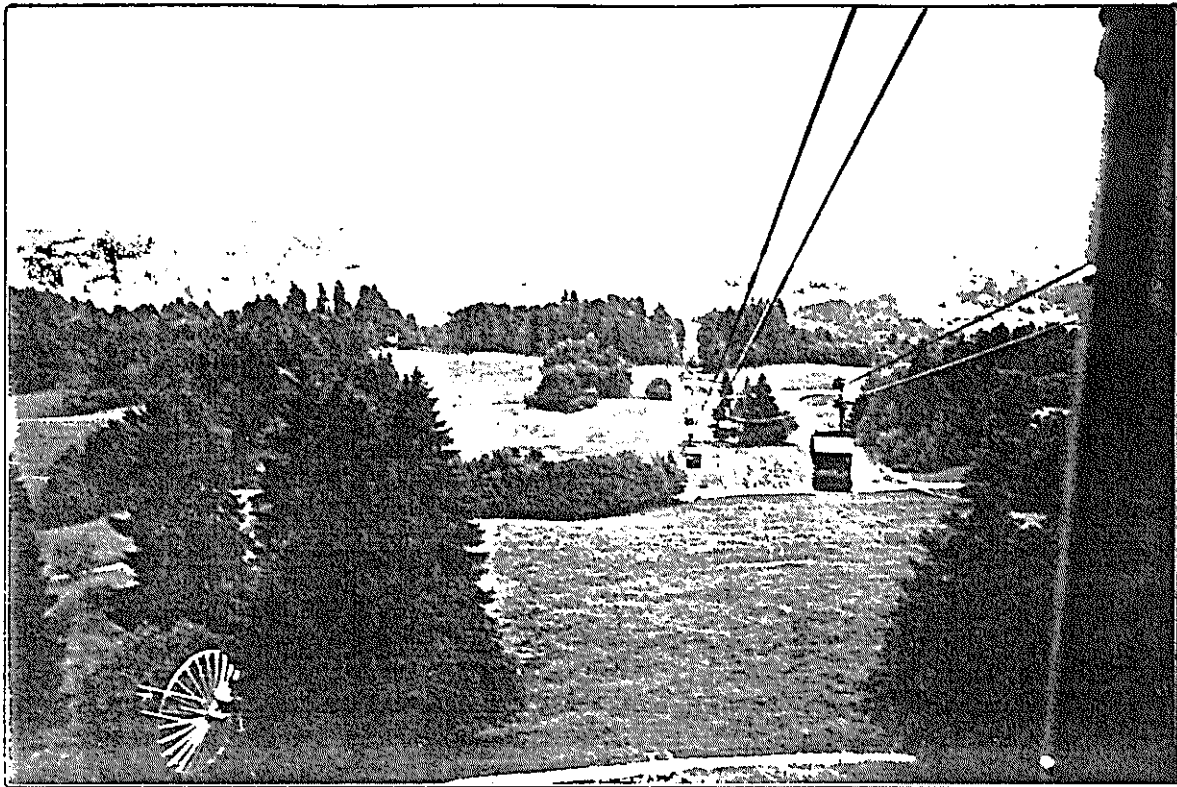
We've already formed a committee of interested staff and we're at the stage of planning our special celebration events. We have a number of ideas but would welcome more. If you have any

ideas or would be interested in becoming involved in any of the organisation of events, then you should contact Laurence Young, P.T. Drama at the Academy.

The thoughts we've had so far include a Quiz Night (staff), a Burns Supper (staff/parents/senior pupils/former pupils), a Dinner/Dance (staff/former staff), Discos (pupils), a concert by the Dyce Community Orchestra and Choir and the Academy Music Groups, a Fun Auction (staff/parents) and a huge Fun Day next June for everybody.

We've been an important part of the educational provision in Dyce for ten years - many of us are proud of that fact - help us to celebrate it.

CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN...



Photograph by Gayle Frew

Who was the wally of the day? What was the secret of the banana split? Why did they have 'the time of their life'? Where did Iain Simpson NOT have something to eat? When did Mr Littlejohn ever sleep?

If you were one of the 43 pupils or the 5 staff who took part in the Switzerland trip from 29th June - 7th July, you probably know the answers to these questions. If you weren't, then you probably won't and possibly never will. But then that's part of what going on a school trip is all about - an adventure full of shared experiences and in-jokes. Nevertheless we thought you'd like to hear a little about what we did in the land of William Tell.

In general I think it's fair to say that the weather was poor, the food was good and the excursions were brill! On the way to Interlaken, via England, France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany we had an overnight stay in the romantic and beautiful city of Heidelberg and passed a few hours of fun at the Europa Park, a theme park full of exciting and breathtaking

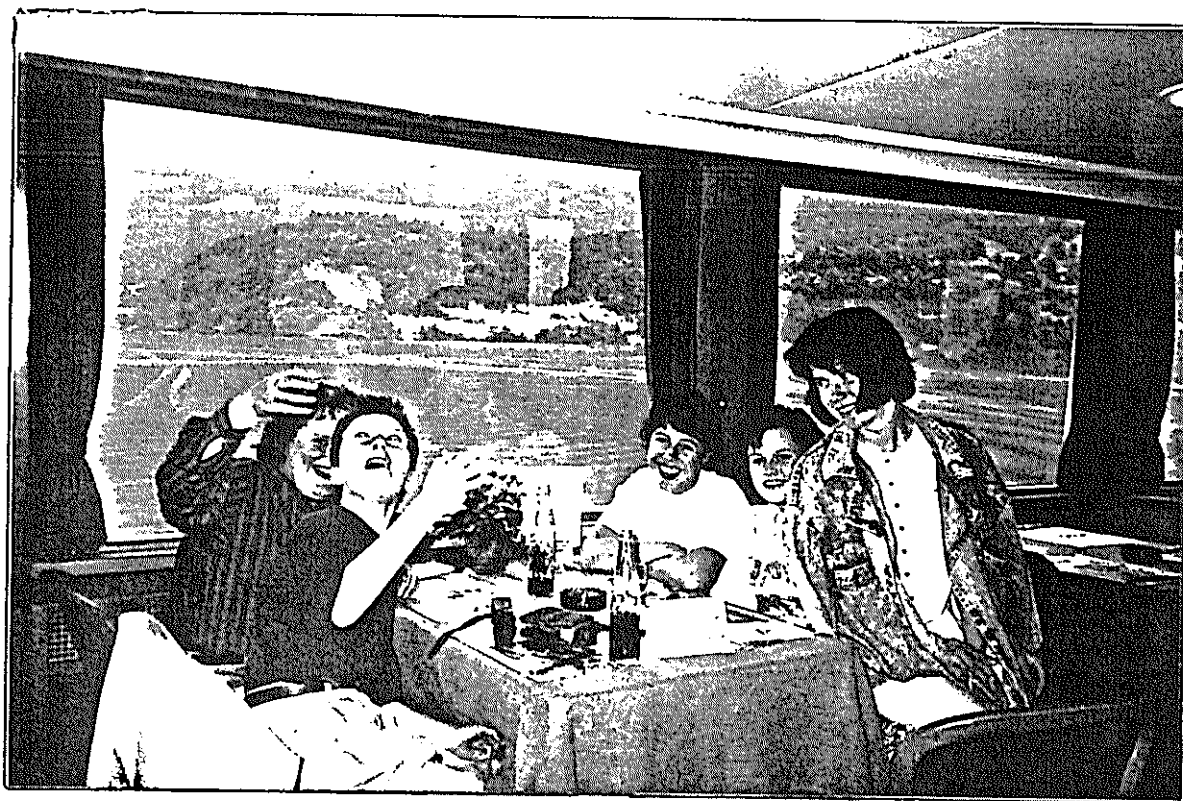
rides. I don't think Mrs Blackhall has recovered yet from her experience on the Loy Flume. In Switzerland itself we had three full, activity-packed days. Sunday saw us climbing the Jungfrau, one of the highest peaks in the Swiss Alps, not, I'm glad to say, on foot, but by rail through magnificent countryside, up and through the Eiger to the tourist facility and highest railway station at the top of the Jungfrau. Although the weather let us down and visibility at the summit was practically zero, it was quite an experience to step outside into ice and snow - in July. The visit to the Ice Palace will stay long in my memory - floors, walls, ceiling, sculptured models - everything was ice.

After a morning's shopping and sightseeing in Interlaken, Monday saw us climbing the Schilthorn with its revolving restaurant at the top. Some of you may remember it in the James Bond movie starring George Lazenby a few years ago - and we'll never forget Mr McLean's impersonation of 007 either. This time we had travelled by funicular railway, train, foot and

cable car to reach the summit and a series of cable cars took us down. Once again, by the time we had reached the revolving restaurant, visibility was very poor but many of us thoroughly enjoyed our summer snowball fight. The journey down was certainly exciting and for some of our party, frightening. It's quite an experience to come over one of those cable car towers and drop down - into nothingness! On our way back to our hotel we took time to visit the dramatic Trumellach Falls - seven glacier waterfalls inside a mountain - truly stunning! On Tuesday we took the steepest cog railway in the world up to the summit of Mount Pilatus and at last the weather was kind to us. Above the clouds and in brilliant sunshine we had magnificent views of the Swiss Alps. We travelled down to Lucerne by cable car and 'four-person' gondola (an interesting experience to say the least). Pedaloos on the lake, shopping, historical buildings, pavement cafes - the choice was ours in this beautiful city. Then it was back to the hotel via the Aasreschlucht Gorge, another of Switzerland's amazing natural wonders. Our evenings were spent shopping in Intelaken, at a bowling tournament in our hotel's bowling alley, at a local

disco and enjoying an evening cruise on Lake Brienz. In many ways the cruise was the most memorable of our evening activities - it was a pleasant, warm evening, good food was available and the Dyce Academy party led the outdoor dancing. Some of our girls even gave an impromptu concert to the accompaniment of the resident musicians, much to the delight of the other passengers.

All too soon though the trip seemed over and it was time to make our long way back to Scotland, but even then, one of the highlights of the week was still to come. We had an overnight stay in Valkenburg in Holland and on the Thursday morning we had exclusive use of the Valkenburg dry toboggan run - an experience which can only be described as exciting and exhilarating - hurtling at great speed down a winding and twisting track on your one-person toboggan towards the pile of tyres at the end, and hoping that your brake was going to work. It was a great trip and much of it was captured on video by Mr Young, nicknamed by the group 'Spielberg'. I'm sure there will be no shortage of interested pupils and staff for the next trip to Austria: watch out for the posters - SOLID!!



Photograph by C. Blackhall

THE ENGLISH DEPT.

As Mr Young's gun is now firmly pressed against my forehead I've decided it's finally time to come clean and spill the beans regarding the English Department.

At present our main focus of attention is the ongoing development of Standard Grade. Most teachers now feel fairly comfortable with the teaching material and the new streamlined system for recording and assessing is posing fewer problems than our original (and overcomplicated) method.

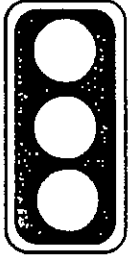
Sadly our former A.P.T. Mr Ken McIntosh has left us for the lush pastures of Hazlehead Academy where he is now Principal teacher. We wish him all the best in his new position. We welcome to the department Mairi Steele who is the school's new A.H.T. responsible for S1-3 and who also undertakes a considerable teaching load.

The other major development in the department is the advent of the new Higher course. It's been felt for some time that the old course was due for a major overhaul and the new examination certainly seems a move in the right direction.

The appointment of a new Senior Teacher (English) will, I hope, usher in a long period of staff stability and we look forward to welcoming him or her. Finally, I'd like to thank everyone in the English department for their relentless dedication and good-natured support and co-operation. The last sentence is a reasonable example of irony!

Myles Hardie

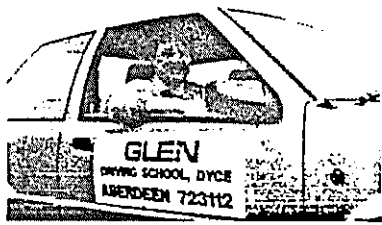




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POSTBAG

Do you have any comments or queries on articles in this issue of UPDATE? Are there any other topics you would like to see covered? Would you like a chance to air your views? If so, please write to:
The Editor,
UPDATE,
Dyce Academy,
Riverview Drive,
Aberdeen AB2 0NF.

COMMENT

The few parents who attended the meeting on school boards at the end of last month were no doubt impressed by the slick presentation. Parents were told that £750,000 will be spent in Grampian Region on launching and setting up school boards. Throughout Scotland, including TV and newspaper advertisements, the cost must run to several million pounds. This vast sum of money is being used to sell and set up something for which there would appear to be very little demand, since only 200 out of a possible 4,000 parents attended the meeting referred to. This at a time when the education service is suffering from a serious lack of resources.

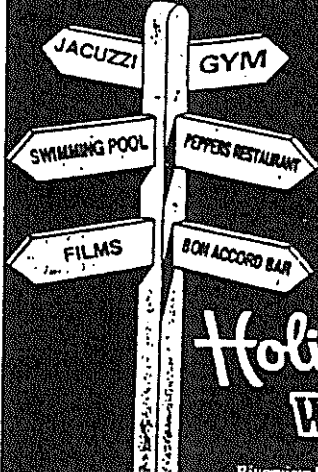
Most people who work in education are becoming increasingly irritated by the Government's contemptuous attitude towards the electorate. They spend a great deal of time 'rubbishing' state education. Their 'solutions' are, however, superficial and inappropriate. Government ministers are not qualified to decide on syllabuses, parents have neither the qualifications nor the experience to run schools. Yet, the 'solutions' offered are national syllabuses and curricula, and school boards. The real 'problem' in education is lack of funds, particularly to provide enough teachers to keep classes to a reasonable size and to give teachers enough time to prepare and assess pupils' work. The Government seems to be determined not to provide adequate funds for these purposes.

Does the Government really believe that we are not clever enough to see through their smokescreen of persistent and irrational criticism of the state education system and unnecessary new 'initiatives', which is supposed to cover up their determination to starve the state education system of the resources it needs?

We are told that school boards will give power to parents, presumably so that they can take over from the educational managers who are judged to be incapable of running the education service. When school boards discover the financial constraints which are at the root of state education's problems, will the Government provide the necessary resources? Or will they simply encourage schools to opt out and raise their own money?

What are you doing this weekend?

If the prospect of mowing the lawn on Saturday afternoon and washing the car on Sunday morning doesn't exactly fill you full of anticipation, why don't you give yourself a well deserved break.



With either a "Family Weekender" where children under 19 stay free,* or "Two's Company," where couples can enjoy a romantic "get away from it all" weekend. Just imagine one or two nights accommodation in a four star Holiday Inn with full breakfast. Plus use of all the facilities and entertainment offered by Aberdeen's leading hotel.

* Children stay free if they share your room. Maximum 2 adults, 3 children per room.

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ICE SKATING

had been unheard of in Aberdeen since the closure of Donalds Ice Rink seven years ago, but with the change of policy of Aberdeen Curling Rink ice skating has returned. Although the temperature outside was in the sixties, work had already begun by lowering the temperature inside to the low forties. The sheets of ice were laid and the hire skates made ready for the youngsters to 'try their hand' at skating.

The doors were opened on 19th August and as expected queues formed quickly, with many disappointed latecomers having to be turned away as skates were no longer available. They were back the next day in plenty of time to hire skates - ice skates would be top of birthday and Christmas lists this year!

The everyday disco now became 'Diceco' with 300 teenagers trying hard to skate in time to the latest sounds of Quartz Disco. A few went home with sore bones and lots of blisters as a result of not wearing correct socks, but all said they would be happy to return the following week for more punishment!

So remember the motto:

**BRING A MATE TO SKATE
ON THE ICE AT DYCE!**

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

Mr Hardie, P.T. English, recently (and against his better judgment) took a group of Dyce Academy staff to the Festival for a week-end. Below are several extracts from the diary he kept.

Friday 4.00p.m.

Everything fine so far. All safely on board. I'd feel a bit more secure if the coach driver stopped saying things like "Now, Edinburgh - that's just outside Glesca, isn't it?" or "Maybe I should only hiv hid six or seven pints instead of fourteen."

Friday 6.30p.m.

Drop off Mr Young's kids in Dundee. Perhaps we should have got the driver to stop the bus. Still, young bones (get it? YOUNG bones) heal quickly.

Friday 7.30p.m.

Arrive Pollock Halls. Staff enthusiastic over accommodation etc. Cries of "OOH" and "AAH" coming from one particular room. They've obviously found the bottle opener!

Friday midnight

Our first show - 'Bouncers' by the Hull Truck Theatre Company. Generally speaking a pretty impressive and thought-provoking production. Hull Truck seem to be able to do so much with so little. Teachers can identify with this.

Saturday 7.30a.m.

What fun arousing the staff. Unfortunately I knock on the wrong door and Yorkshire's answer to the Incredible Hulk growls, "I'll knock on t'bloody door. I'll knock on 'is 'ead."

Saturday 10.00a.m.

Gallery of Modern Art - Scottish Art in the 20th Century. A slab of culture for one and all. Mrs Martin singularly unimpressed by a rather challenging piece of conceptual art - 'Huh! Jist a pile o' aul' bottles'.

Saturday 11.30a.m.

The Spiegel Tent - lots of "ooohs" and "aaahs". The tent is an art nouveau construction of wood and glass and the general reaction is very favourable. Michael York, the actor, is spotted by one of the group. He doesn't seem too upset by shouts of "Cooee Mikey" and "We think you're brill".

Saturday 6.30p.m.

Loon Fung Cantonese Restaurant. Mrs Teehan's birthday, so we all sing "Happy Birthday" (Mr Young has to be helped with the words!)

Saturday 8.30p.m.

Circus Archaos. The staff love it. It's a cross between Swan Lake and Mad Max. The fire-eating is incredible. Val Moir keen to run away and join the circus. Unfortunately there isn't a tutu in her size so another career move is blocked.

Saturday midnight

The Fabulous Singlettes. June Smith is worried as we're going to a show about vests. Singlettes a fabulous trio of Australian singers. Everyone liked it, and Mr Young got a free bag of crisps (refused to share).

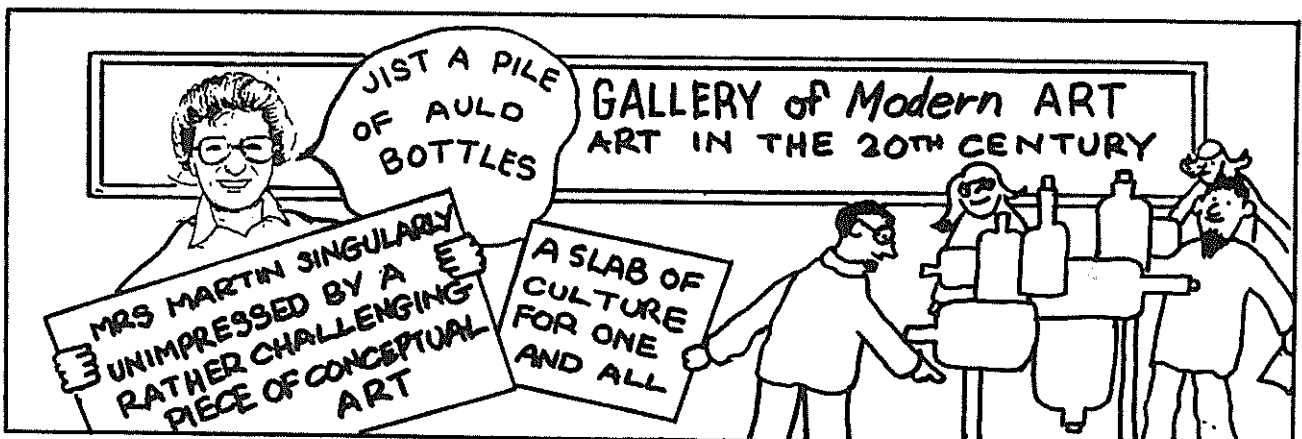
Sunday 1.30a.m.

Mr Niven gives helpful advice to a couple of lost wandering sailors. Mr Hardie's years of experience invaluable here!

Sunday lunch

Arrive home, tired but happy. Will we do it again next year? Probably. Next week - the pupils! At least they can cut up their own food. I wonder what kind of medicine Mrs Martin kept taking - it looked like Lucozade - poor soul!

M. Hardie



THE CRATHES/FINZEAN EXPERIENCE

Each year all 81 pupils go through our induction course, which involves a residential stay, this year at Finzean, with work based on Crathes.



The visit starts for the pupils at 9 a.m. as they converge on the school with sleeping bags and holdalls, but much work has already been done by staff and senior students. Senior students have been put through their paces in May at a training weekend under the watchful eyes of Messrs Marioni, McLean and Urquhart. Worksheets have been prepared, food has been bought, delicious mince has been prepared and a big bottle of energy tablets purchased. The bus eventually arrives and is loaded. A check is made that nothing has been left behind - in the past, vital material has been forgotten: frozen food, mince, toilet rolls...

At Finzean, our base for the next two days, the bus is unloaded and the bunk beds in two large dormitories are allocated. Some groups of pupils set about preparations, while others have some time off.

After a delicious packed lunch, it's time to get ready for the 'Finzean Frolic' - a guided/misguided tour through Finzean Estate. Cries of "I'm sure we should be out of the forest by now" and "I hope we don't reach Aboyne" are heard, but eventually all return after a couple of hours in some beautiful countryside. There are games before tea, which is lovely mince and tatties. (You'll notice how important food is to the success of the venture.)

After tea, the slide show: a preview of some of the next day's events at Crathes, which is followed by supper. After numerous final warnings, everyone settles down to sleep.

Next morning we leave for Crathes and a tour round the castle. We have the place to ourselves, and during the tour, have the details of the Orkney Bed, Mousie Thomson and the Green Lady

explained to us. This is followed by some work based on what we have just seen and heard about.

After all this hard work, time for the Treasure Trail, which takes us round the estate before lunch. The promise of lunch ensures that no-one is lost for too long!

The next two hours are taken up with a tour of the estate itself, led by the National Trust Rangers. In two groups we explore insect life, tree and plant life, and even eat some of the leaves: quite tasty. (Food again). We learn what they are doing to protect and extend the gardens and woodland area, and realise just how much effort goes into this task.

Next, orienteering and two hours in the forest. The afternoon will decide whether you can read a map, find the signposts, and find your way round, or simply become hopelessly lost. This gets the vote as the most exciting, but also the most exhausting, activity. Anyone with any energy left after this can try the Garden Quiz, which takes you through the lovely landscaped gardens.

On returning to Finzean, more food (sausage, beans and chips this time) and games before turning in and settling down, usually more quickly than the previous night.

The next morning starts very slowly, with everyone still feeling the effects of the day before. But the building must be cleaned, swept and disinfected before the arrival of the next group, so it's all hands on deck to get this finished on time.

About mid-morning our bus arrives to take us back to Dyce. We are thankful to be back, having enjoyed the experience, but looking forward to a long sleep.

R. Marioni

CHICAGO

Dyce Academy is a member of an international network of secondary schools called 'Caretakers of the Environment'. The network aims to foster the development of environmental education and one of the ways this is accomplished is by holding an annual conference for senior students and teachers. The conference usually focuses on a specific environmental theme or issue and involves the participants in preparatory work before the event and a wide range of practical and other activities during it. Students from the school have travelled to conferences in The Netherlands and Spain in previous years. Each conference is a great opportunity for the participants to meet young people from around the world, to work with them on matters of concern to all of us and, of course, to make new friends.

This year's conference was held in Chicago in June and was attended by three students and two teachers from Dyce. What follows is an account of the conference as experienced by the three students - Timothy Palmer, Kirsten Taylor and Pamela Young.

The five of us set off at 3 a.m. on the 24th June on a very long and tiring journey to Chicago, arriving at the Oak Park River Forest High School, Illinois at 9 p.m. American time (24 hours later). There were 260 people representing 34 countries at the conference, from as far off as Czechoslovakia, USSR, Peru, Nigeria and the Phillipines. We were split into 8

groups of 30 which ensured that we quickly made new friends. The theme of the conference was 'Technology and the Environment', so the next five days were taken up with a number of visits to places of relevance to the theme:

Chicago Museum of Science and Technology, with exhibits ranging from the Space Shuttle to antique cars;

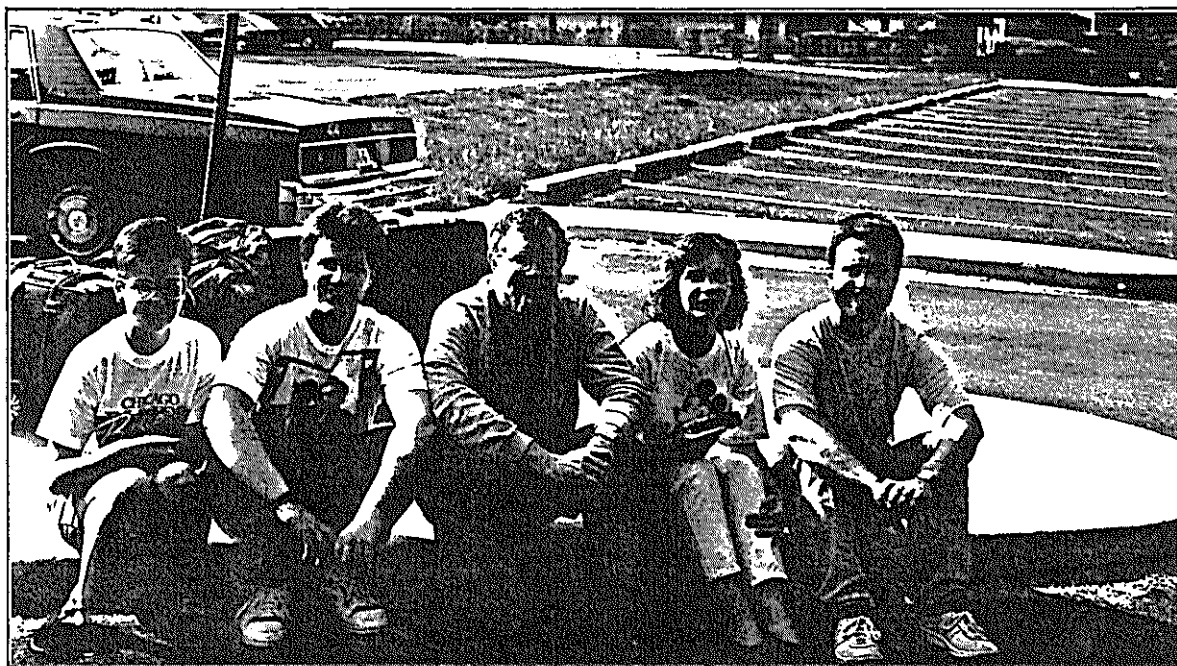
Indiana Sand Dunes, where we discussed the conflict between recreation and conservation;

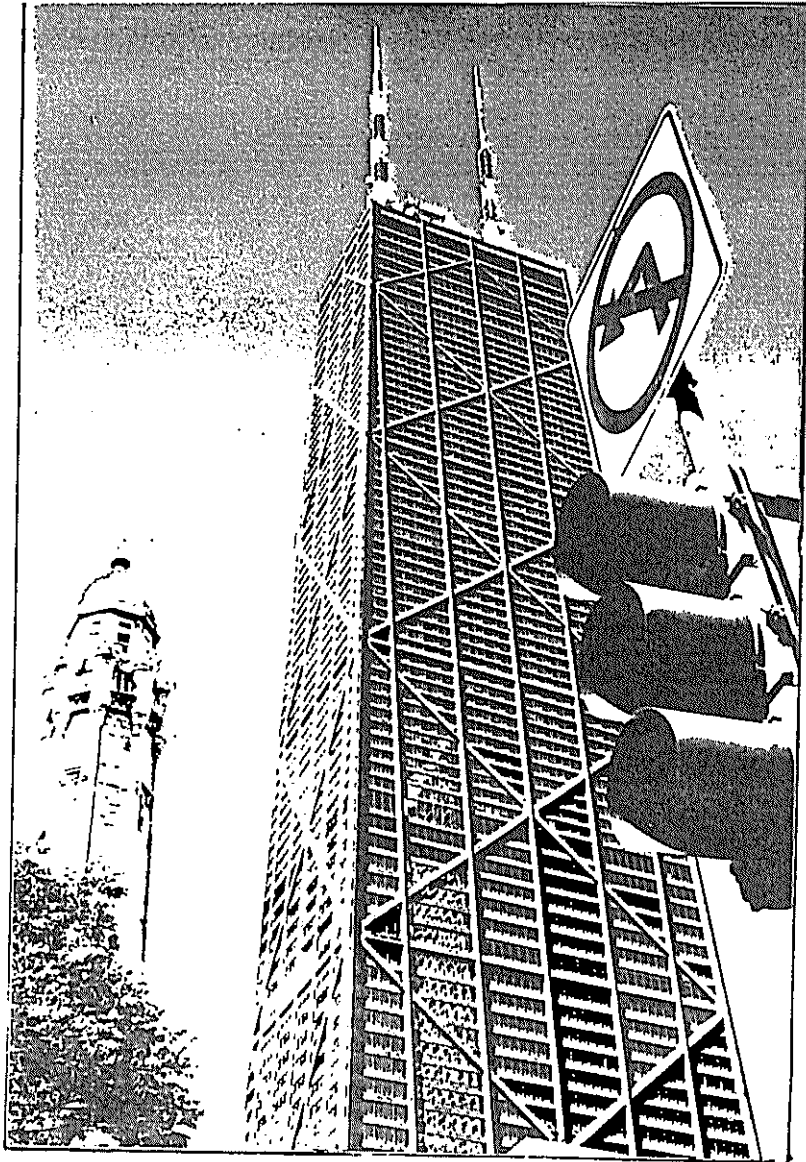
NALCO Chemicals, who specialise in products for treating water;

Johnsons Wax, who pointed out that they had stopped using CFCs in aerosols in the USA as early as 1973.

and, believe it or not, a golf course on top of a rubbish dump - officially known as a landfill. At these places we discussed how the technology they used was helping or harming the environment and what could be done to improve the situation.

Each school had prepared a project related to the conference theme and much of the time was taken up looking at and listening to presentations of these projects. We had studied the three local paper mills and their impact on the River Don, and took our turn to present our findings to the rest of the group. The project we presented is on display in the School Library at present.





Photograph by Tim Palmer

Of course, it wasn't all work. We had a Beach Bar-B-Q followed by a tour of Chicago by night. We also spent an evening at 'Great America' Amusement Park, which has six rollercoasters; between us we tried them all. On the last evening we had a banquet where each group presented their declaration, explaining their solutions for environmental problems. We were also presented with our certificates.

On our extra day we explored Chicago - reaching the 94th floor of the third highest building in the world in 32 seconds, and admiring the view for 59 miles around (it took only 20 seconds on the way down!) During our week in Chicago we had a great time, making many new friends, learning a lot and exchanging ideas on how to tackle environmental problems. Next year's conference is in Bristol and we hope that the people who attend gain as much from it as we did - (by the way, in 1991 it is being held in Peru!).

P.S. Students in 84/5/6 who are interested in participating in next year's conference should watch out for details to be advertised in school soon.

STAFF CHANGES AT DYCE ACADEMY

A number of staff left Dyce Academy at the end of last term.

The following left because the falling roll means that the school is entitled to fewer teachers: Anne Boyle (Biology) moved to Oldmachar Academy, Jenny Shar (Music) to Harlaw Academy, Morag Tamasari (Modern Languages) to Cults Academy and Susan Wood (Physics) to Kincorth Academy.

Jessie Milne (English), who had worked in the Academy since its opening, retired.

Kenny McIntosh (English) moved to Hazlehead Academy to become Principal Teacher (English).

Kenny also married Anne Cattanach (Music) during the summer holidays - we now have a Mrs McIntosh in our Music Department.

One member of staff joined the school after the holidays. Mairi Steele has taken over the AHT post left vacant when David Pyle was promoted to Deputy. Mairi comes to us from Keith Grammar School where she was also Assistant Head.

PUPILS RAISE MONEY FOR CHARITY

Innes Henderson presents a cheque for £640 to Mr Stuart Cronie of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, watched by fellow pupil council representatives (l. to r.) Kerry Wilson, Kerry Montgomery, Angela Barber and Arwena Valentine.

The money was raised by pupils throughout the year at events such as the Little Angels rock concert, the Christmas Disco, a Christmas collection (when Santa and his helpful elf toured the school), Swim into Spring and the Summer Show.

DIARY UPDATE

Mon 25th Sept : Occasional Holiday
Sat 14th Oct- Social Subjects Trip
Thurs 19th Oct: to London
Mon 16th Oct- Holiday
Fri 20th Oct :
Mon 23rd Oct,
Tues 24th Oct : In-service Days

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