

UPDATE Dyce Academy

ISSUE NO. 10

MARCH 1990

DYCE GLOBETROTTERS!



Our front page story in this issue concerns some of our pupils who are on their way to parts foreign in the coming months. Hilary (5B), Fiona (1B) and Shona

(3A) (pictured above) have recently won places in the Grampian Region Schools Orchestra. This talented trio auditioned at the end of last year and won their places in the face of very stiff opposition.

Hilary and Shona (violinists) both started music lessons in Primary 3, while Fiona - a viola player - has been playing since she was five. All three are at present members of the Dyce Community Orchestra.

As members of G.R.S.O., all three, with pupils from all over the region, will take part in a one-week residential course at the end of June in the Northern College of Education. The seven-day course will consist of day-long rehearsals, culminating in a concert performed in Aberdeen's Music Hall.

Fiona, in addition, is soon to play in Denmark as part of the orchestra for a production of the opera 'Aladdin', and later this year will also be playing in the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland.

Well done all three.

USSR HERE WE COME

Glasnost will reach out to pupils of Dyce and Bankhead Academies between October 13 and October 22 this year. A party of 25 pupils and 4 staff will be visiting Moscow and Leningrad to find out just what Mr. Gorbachov is up to. We don't know exactly what we'll be seeing - the Soviet Tourist Agency (Intourist) will decide that nearer the time. But we certainly hope to visit the Winter Palace in Leningrad and St. Basil's Cathedral and the Kremlin in Moscow.

We've seen a couple of videos and lots of photographs of the USSR, so we are really looking forward to finding out what it's like for ourselves. Unfortunately two pupils have had to back out of the trip because of changed circumstances. We are therefore looking another couple of would-be world travellers to take their places. You don't need to be able to speak Russian or know anything about politics to come. All you need is about £420 (maximum) and a taste for adventure. You also must be under 18 years of age.

If interested please see Mrs. Moir or Mr. Ferguson at Dyce Academy.

It's the chance of a lifetime!

THE OTHER DYCE GLOBETROTTERS

On Thursday 8 March Dyce had their first basketball match of the year v. Hazlehead. The height advantage of the opposition - our team's average height being around 4ft. 6ins. - combined with their athleticism, meant that Dyce lost 26-16. It is hoped to play a sponsored match against a staff team after Easter in order to raise money for strips.

In addition, congratulations must go to Amanda of 5B who has recently auditioned for and won a place in Laine Theatre Arts in Epsom in Surrey.

At the beginning of September Amanda will be fulfilling a lifelong ambition when she begins a three-year Professional Dance/Theatre course. The main emphasis of the course will be dance, but she'll also get some training in singing and acting. Teachers on the course are currently involved in choreographing productions in London's West End, so it may not be very long before we see Amanda's name up in lights!

The course includes training in Tap, Ballet, Modern, Jazz and Contemporary Dance. The working day lasts from 9am until 4.30pm, so Amanda will be putting in a lot of hard work. She's no stranger to this, though, as she started dancing lessons at the tender age of two and a half! This was with Edith Duncan's Dance School, transferring to the Rainbow Dance Centre when she was twelve.

Amanda's looking forward to starting the course, to have the opportunity to dance all day long and, of course, she's eager to see all the bright lights of London. She'll miss all her friends in Aberdeen though! I know everyone at Dyce Academy joins with UPDATE in wishing her a happy and glittering future!



TENTH YEAR EVENTS

We continue to celebrate our tenth anniversary. On the evening of Friday 23 February, 140 staff, former staff and their partners danced the night away at the Airport Skean Dhu. It was a great chance to get together with present and past friends, and most folk seemed to enjoy the evening. But now we're looking forward to our next event - our Fun Auction on the evening of Friday 25 May. It's an evening for parents, staff and friends and we hope some of our ex-pupils will come along too. If you are in contact with any of them - let them know.

The aim of the auction is to get you to bid for goods and pledges of service in order to raise money to subsidise the Grand Fun Day we're intending to have in June for the children and adults of the Dyce community. (More details about that later!) So where do we get the goods and pledges of service? Well, already we've been in touch with businesses in Dyce and Newmachar and the response has been tremendous. Hair-dos, writing paper, a week-end's car hire, whisky, coffee mugs, meals for two, sweatshirts and lots more have already been offered. Members of the Ten Year Committee have also been busy writing to lots of celebrities and we've already received donations from Michael Crawford, Bob Hoskins and film director Michael Winner.

Staff at the school have already received a letter suggesting possible donations they might make to the auction and parents will be receiving a letter soon. If we all contribute and then turn up at the school on the evening of 25 May, we should be able to raise a fair amount of money.

We've managed to secure the services of professional auctioneer Alan Hutcheon from Aberdeen and Northern Marts for the evening, and having seen him in action at a similar Fun Auction in Inverurie last year, I can promise you a very interesting and entertaining evening.

Laurence Young

Regular readers of UPDATE will have noticed that we like to include articles on interesting things our pupils - or ex-pupils - are doing or have done. We have a reasonably good network for gathering information, but if anyone has any suggestions for future features, please pass them on to us.

PEOPLE

BIRTHS



Fiona, who is on maternity leave from the Drama department, now has another son. Robert Charles was born on 20 February and weighed in at 5lb 15ozs. The photograph shows the proud Mum and big brother Jamie.

Another new Mum is our School Librarian, Lynda, who had a baby girl, Alison, on Tuesday 13 March. Both are doing well.

STAFF NEWS

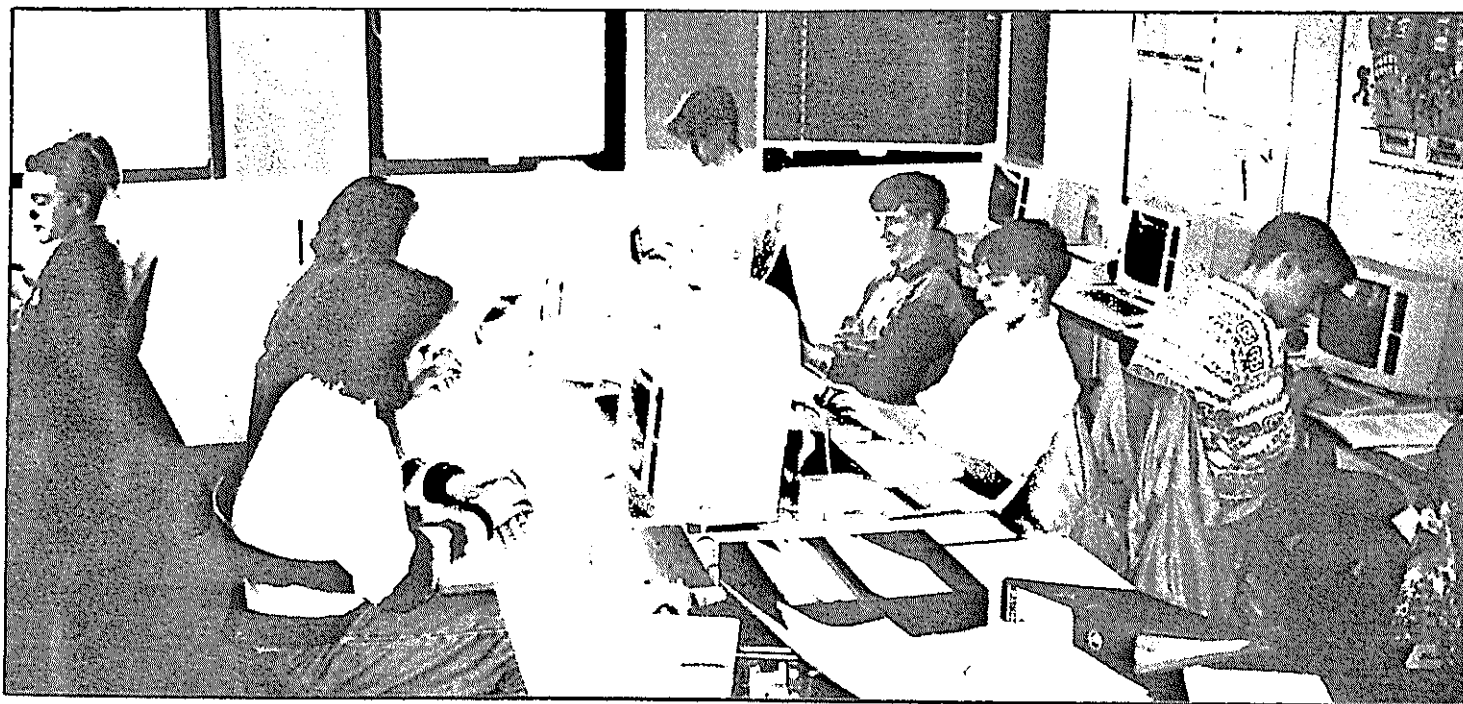
Two staff have recently moved on from Dyce Academy, and a number of Senior Teacher appointments have been made.

Jim Cameron, who was PT Chemistry, has moved to Northfield as Assistant Head Teacher, and Ian Campbell of the PE Department has been transferred to Kincorth - a victim of our falling roll.

Our newly appointed Senior Teachers are:

Alison Cockburn, Senior Teacher PE, who comes to us from Kincorth
Joyce Giles, Senior Teacher English, of our own English Department
Elizabeth Duffton and Marjory Macdearmid, Senior Teachers Learning Support, of our own Learning Support team.

THE "NEW TECHNOLOGY" AND BUSINESS STUDIES



The introduction of new technology into Business Studies is not, as is sometimes thought to be the case, merely the replacing of manual typewriters with Amstrad computers. Whilst some typing classes may have been replaced directly by word processing and keyboarding classes, this view neglects the many more important changes that have and are taking place throughout the department. We all talk of the 'new technology', but it is not really new: what has happened is that the 1980s have seen the rapid advance in the use of computers, especially in the world of business and finance. This has been brought about by the development of cheaper and increasingly more powerful micro-processors. As a result, office work, already experiencing the effect of information technology, will continue to be increasingly affected by its continuing progress. Computerised stock records, accounting systems, personnel records, electronic communication systems and word processing facilities are now all accepted as being part of the 'electronic office' and although it has been argued that this is still not a commonplace reality, its evolution must continue at an ever-increasing rate.

Business Studies courses have had to take all this into account, and although school resource provision will never come near to matching the level of capital investment that has been and will continue to be injected into commercial activities, the development of cheaper and more efficient equipment has allowed Business Studies courses to be completely reconstructed - mainly to give pupils a knowledge and understanding of the new technology and its effect on the commercial world and of course the chance to develop the basic skills required by this new technology, with appropriate hands-on experience.

The new Standard Grade Office and Information Studies course introduces pupils to the functions of the office and to many aspects of information technology, concentrating on the flow of information through a business organisation and the key role the office plays in receiving, dealing with and transmitting information. The course is a practical one, with a hands-on emphasis, designed to appeal to both boys and girls. In the new Standard Grade Accounting and Finance course, the course highlights the increasing use of technology in processing, analysing and interpreting accounting information, with limited emphasis on memorised procedures and the mechanical book-keeping aspects and pupils have to apply knowledge and skills to process accounting information on the computer. In the new Standard Grade Economics, we see the computer having a vital role, as a tool in economic problem-solving and decision-making as well as allowing pupils to access national data bases for up to the minute information.

To sum up, all Business Studies courses have been or are being reconstructed or developed as a result of the "new" technology - CSYS in Economics (using a computer model of the British Economy) - the revised and new "Highers" to be introduced shortly - National Certificate Module Courses for the fifth and sixth years - the second year still play the Fitba Game and Invertattie but have to access data bases to obtain the vital information they need, and are now introduced to the electronic keyboard instead of that of the manual typewriter. The "new technology" has given birth to our newest "baby" (First year keyboarding) which is thriving.

John Duff

COMMENT

Watching, listening to or reading national news is a constant source of irritation, or even anger, to those of us who live in Scotland. Our population represents about 10% of the UK population. We have, for example, our own education and legal system. More often than not, however, our news is ignored or it is assumed that what applies in England applies here.

It is evident to those of us working in education that many parents and members of the public do not realise that information on education in national news often does not apply to Scotland. For example, much has been made of the recruitment of uncertificated, even foreign teachers to cover the teacher shortage - in London. In Scotland, all teachers have to be fully qualified and registered with the General Teaching Council. We have not allowed our professional standards to slip the way England has. You will have heard much about the 'national curriculum' - compulsory subjects up to 16 years of age. This national curriculum does not apply in Scotland! Recently, a national committee has recommended a national framework for the curriculum (see article elsewhere in UPDATE) but, at present, Scotland's schools, parents and pupils still have some freedom to choose their own curriculum. There are many other examples of English thinking being applied to Scotland. Much of the criticism of education doesn't ring true in Scotland; presumably it does apply to England. The 'staying on' rate in the UK is low compared to other developed countries. It is, however, significantly higher in Scotland than in England. In general, great care must be taken in interpreting national news in relation to education. There is, almost certainly, an effort being made to 'anglicise' Scotland, particularly our education system. If what we hear about England is true, do we really want this? Most of us in education do not. Public understanding of the differences and support for them, will help us preserve our freedom.

DYCE ACADEMY SCHOOL BOARD

Three meetings of Dyce Academy School Board have now taken place, during which we have been slowly coming to terms with our role as board members. However, one of our main concerns is, and will continue to be, setting up a strong link between parents, school and the community in general. We as board members have discussed this at some length already but would welcome any suggestions, ideas or thoughts anyone might have about how best we can establish a reliable means of communication between us all.

Board meetings are open to the public and anyone who would like to attend would be most welcome. The following is a reminder of the locations where the agendas and minutes can be viewed six days before the board meets:

Community noticeboard in Fintray
Post Office in Newmachar
Library in Dyce
Noticeboard at the swimming pool at Dyce Academy.

If you wish to contact any of your board members you can do so at the following numbers:

Susan Montgomerie - 724420
Isobel Dempster - Newmachar 2536
Anna Small - 723214
Gordon Skinner - 791270
Christine Rance - Newmachar 2826
Tom Ferguson
David Pyle } teacher reps - 725118

Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 17 April at 7.30 pm in the Staff Centre, Dyce Academy.

S3/4 CURRICULUM

Much attention has been given over the last few years to the courses followed by pupils in secondary school in general and, in particular, in the third and fourth years. The latest document on the curriculum - 'Curriculum Design for the Secondary Stages' - was published towards the end of last year by the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum as 'Guidelines for Head Teachers'. It is very difficult to summarise the fairly detailed document. What follows are some of the main points. General aims for the curriculum are identified and it is stated that to encompass these aims within planned curricula, schools need to take account of:

- key skills and elements which are essential to every pupil's personal and social development;
- modes or categories of activity and study which are necessary to the achievement of breadth and balance in individual curricula;
- optional activities which allow for flexibility of provision and the exercise of choice.

-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.

Holiday Inn®
Weekender
ABERDEEN
Riverview Drive, Dyce, Aberdeen AB22AZ

The key skills and elements are divided into two groups :

Process skills cover communicating and learning skills such as language, numeracy, processing information and also technological and creative thinking such as reasoning, problem-solving, designing and practical applications.

Key elements of personal and social development include health, rules, rights and responsibilities, equal opportunities, understanding and tolerance, care of the environment, critical appreciation of the media and guidance relating to everyday living and future employment.

It is emphasised in the document that these key skills and elements are part of the climate in which learning takes place and should be present throughout the curriculum as well as appearing as parts of courses and sometimes as courses in their own right.

The modes or categories of activities are identified as follows (the subjects given in brackets give some indication of the Standard Grade courses which are regarded as fully meeting the requirements of the mode) :

Language and Communication
(English with a Modern Foreign Language)

Mathematical Studies and Applications
(Mathematics)

Scientific Studies and Applications
(Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Science)

Social and Environmental Studies
(Economics, Geography, History, Modern Studies)

Technological Activities and Applications
(Computing Studies, Craft and Design, Home Economics, Office and Information Studies, Technological Studies)

Creative and Aesthetic Activities
(Art and Design, Drama, Music)

Physical Education
(Physical Education)

Religious and Moral Education
(Religious Studies)

It is recommended in the guidelines referred to above that 'in the interests of a balanced curriculum that ...it is recommended that throughout the S3/4 years, all pupils engage in activities related to each of the eight modes set out.'

It is, however, recognised in the document that 'few courses, by themselves, would adequately fulfil all the requirements of a single mode and that frequently courses straddle more than one mode and contribute to several process skills and elements of personal and social development.'

The general thrust of the guidelines in relation to S3/4 is that all pupils should follow courses in all of the

modes for two years. For the majority of the pupils this is sound advice - to continue the broad education started in S1/2 and to keep their future options open.

It is, however, important to recognise that individual pupils' needs differ and in fact the guidelines do this :

'...to an increasing degree from S3-S6 there is a process of negotiation involving school, parents and pupils through which there is selected from the national network, and within local curricular provision, a programme appropriate to the needs and aspirations of each pupil as an individual...'; and

'the over-riding consideration is to achieve an appropriate curriculum balance for the individual pupil. Head Teachers and colleagues may require to exercise professional judgment in local circumstances or in the case of an individual with exceptional educational requirements. A curriculum which wholly fails to take account of the components recommended would be inappropriate; one which disregards special circumstances is equally inappropriate.'

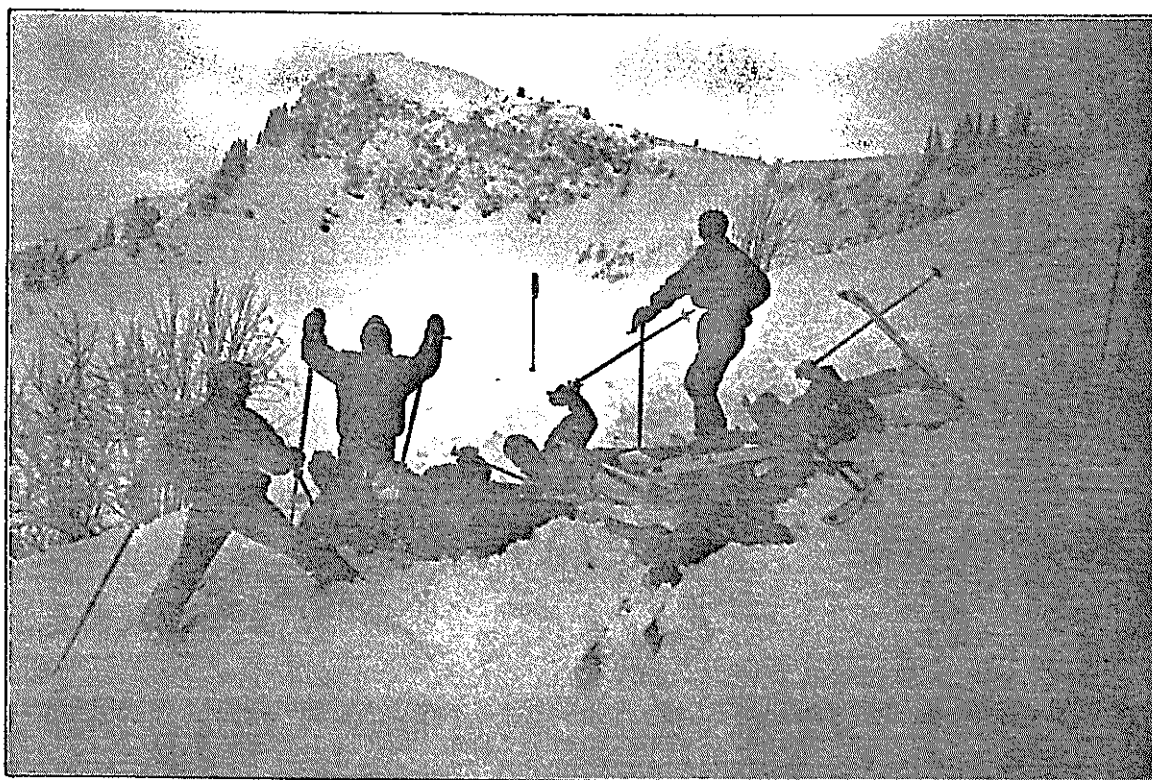
In Dyce Academy, we are somewhat concerned that an attempt to follow slavishly the guidelines for all pupils whilst at the same time trying to provide a reasonable degree of pupil choice in examination courses, would lead to pupils taking more examination courses than they can really cope with. We are also concerned that it is not really reasonable to expect a pupil to continue detailed study in every mode after the end of S2. For a number of reasons, pupils may want to cease study in certain modes and spend more time in other modes.

Our policy for the next session is to continue with a core in S3/4 which addresses the process skills and key elements referred to above and includes a number of courses which give pupils some experience in each of the modes described above. Thereafter, we expect all pupils to follow certificate courses in English and Mathematics, but they are then free to choose a further five certificate courses. We recommend that they choose these in line with the guidelines, i.e. they choose a foreign language, a science, a social subject, a technological subject and an aesthetic subject. Our arrangements for pupil choice allow them to do this. If, however, for any reason, what is regarded as a suitable curriculum cannot be obtained by following the guidelines, pupils are free to choose courses which suit them better.

The over-riding view in the school is that the most important consideration in pupil choice is that the curriculum a pupil chooses suits his/her abilities, interests and future requirements. Whilst we would obviously take account of national and regional guidelines, until these become totally prescriptive, we shall allow pupils as much choice as we reasonably can.

M. Taylor

LE SKI-ING



Photographs by Malcolm Thom

On 26 February at noon, 12 excited pupils and 2 teachers, Mrs. Urquhart and Mr. Thorn, along with 20 Bankhead pupils and 2 teachers left for the 1990 Ski Trip to Les Carroz, France.

After a journey of almost twelve hours we finally got settled and had a little sleep. Everyone was up early the next day, ready to see what the week had in store for them. And what a week!

The skiing was great, with only a little rain on the first day. It snowed solidly for three days, which meant no shortage of snow and plenty 'off-piste' skiing for the brave, stupid or 'out of control'. Just to top off the week's weather we had two final days of sun to bring us back with a tan.

As well as the wonderful skiing, we had a wide range of night activities ranging from the 'tension' of the bingo on the first night to the hilarity of

the disco on the last night - courtesy of our D.J.-in-the-making from Bankhead. We also had skating and the silly quiz night.

For any veterans of last year's trip there was the fun of meeting the same instructors and staff. Unfortunately they weren't able to teach us but they helped along all the fun and the French instructors 'did the job'.

There were no major accidents: only one person flew into a tree and another got lost for a while - or should we say 'misplaced'? But it all adds to the trip. For a group of eight of us there was the chance to try snowboarding (very like skateboarding) on the last afternoon. That was a real novelty and rounded off another very successful trip. All the Dyce pupils who took part would just like to thank the staff for making the week such a memorable one. Roll on next year!

Ingrid Taylor

STAFF SKIING WEEKEND FEBRUARY 1990

Every year a group of staff and friends head off for the sunny, snow-covered slopes of the Cairngorms for a weekend skiing. This year was no exception, the only problem being the lack of snow at the beginning of the year. However, it looked as though we were going to be lucky as reports indicated suitable conditions for skiing.

Most of our party travelled by coach, some members of the party choosing to drive. The coach left the school around 6.00pm on the Friday evening. We arrived at the Ben Mhor Hotel, Granton-on-Spey, hungry and thirsty from the journey, and were soon tucking into soup and sandwiches. In anticipation of a full day's skiing the next day most of our party adjourned quite early to bed.

Saturday began with breakfast at 7.30 am - no-one slept in. Breakfast over, we immediately left for the hills. After a short delay, due to the road being blocked, we arrived. The coach was quickly emptied of people and skis as everyone headed off for the slopes. The only blot on the horizon was the rain. At 4.30 pm it was time to go back to the hotel. Were we all on the coach? No, one member could still be seen skiing. Would he come off the slopes of his own free will, or would he have to be dragged off?

Everyone had had a pleasant, although wet, day's skiing - some people exerting more energy than others. The beginners

group had worked hard all morning, and decided to sample the apres-ski in the afternoon, just in case they were too tired in the evening.

Back at the hotel, there was a rush to see who could get to the bath first, to soak the weary limbs, and put some heat back into the cold bodies. Then it was time for dinner and some thirst-quenching drinks, with most people heading off to bed at a reasonable hour in anticipation of another day's skiing - or to watch the football.

Sunday morning began like Saturday - except it was snowing rather than raining. When we reached the slopes we were met with poor weather conditions - heavy snow and gale force winds. Only the hardy (or mad) members of our party ventured further than the cafe, with two people deciding it was safer to walk down the slope rather than ski. (This was after they had discussed hiding behind a rock, or building a shelter.) We left the ski slopes early because of the weather, and spent a couple of hours in Aviemore, before heading for home. After a chip shop stop, we arrived back at school.

The final note on this weekend has to be a thank you to our driver who was good-natured, considerate, helpful and very capable.

Susanne Henderson

FIVE-A-SIDE HOPES DASHED BY FARCICAL FAUX PAS

Saturday 24th February should have seen a team from Dyce Academy competing in the Regional Qualifying Round of the Scottish U-15 Indoor 5-a-Side Competition. However, because of the failure of the organisers in Dundee to get their act together, our lads didn't even get to change into their strips.

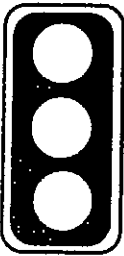
Dyce Academy, along with other Grampian schools, only received notification of the competition in Dundee three days before it was due to take place, even although the organisers had known who the competing schools were - since September! Nevertheless, Raymond Littlejohn (P.T. PE) got a team together, some of the lads pulling out of Youth League matches in order to represent the school. The organisers in Dundee were notified that our team was coming and although the competition was due to start at 9 am, the arrangement was that the local teams would play first, allowing Dyce's first game to be played at 10.30am.

Our team set off, hopes high of qualifying, and they arrived at Linlathen High School in Dundee at 10.15, to be met by a locked gate and a bewildered janitor. The competition was over and everyone had gone home. It seems we were the only Grampian school able to go at such short notice and then we were just forgotten about. The Dundee organisers couldn't be contacted and our team along with Raymond Littlejohn could only get back on the bus, puzzled and extremely disappointed.

Raymond Littlejohn has written a strong letter of complaint to the national organisers and has asked that the school has its travel costs refunded.


CALENDAR

- Fri. 30 Mar: Term ends at 3pm.
- Tue. 17 Apr: Summer Term begins.
- Wed. 25 Apr: S.C.E. exams start
- Wed. 16 May: S1 Parents' evening
- Wed. 16-Sat 26 May: West Coast Expedition
- Fri. 25 May: School In-Service (No school for pupils)
- Tue. 29 May: S3 Parents' evening.


GO
with

GLEN

DRIVING SCHOOL



Proprietor: Ian McLean
tel: 0224 723112

GLASGOW'S MILES AWAY

On Friday 9 March the Scottish Schools' National 5-a-Side Finals took place in the magnificent surroundings of the Kelvin Hall, Glasgow. In the U-14 competition Dyce, as winners of the Grampian/Highland/Tayside section, were presented by Craig Cook, Keith Mathieson, Paul Matthews, Craig Duncan, Scott Crabb, Derek Reid and Brian Dawson. The eight teams taking part were split into two groups with the winners of each to meet in the final. Dyce achieved a very creditable second place in their group by defeating Holyrood Secondary, Glasgow (1-0) and Kirkcaldy High, Fife (3-2; mention must be made of Craig Duncan's hat-trick), losing only to the eventual winners, Caldervale High, Airdrie (0-3).