

# Dyce UPDATE Academy

ISSUE NO. 13

SEPT. 90

## CARETAKERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT


Over the past four years senior students and staff from the school have participated in conferences on environmental issues which are organised by Caretakers of the Environment - an international network of secondary schools. Dyce Academy was one of the founder members of this organisation which now involves schools from all corners of the globe. In the past three years the conferences have been held overseas (you may have read about last year's trip to Chicago in 'Update' last session) but this year's event was much closer to home as it was held in Bristol.

During the last week before the summer break a small group from the school travelled to Bristol to meet and work with students and teachers from thirty-five different countries. Other participants had travelled much further from as far as Brazil, the USSR, Zambia and India, as well as from more 'local' countries in Europe and North America.

In the course of the week small multi-national groups of teachers and students worked together to investigate some of the global environmental issues which face us today with the aim of trying to reach some consensus on ways of tackling them. The 'conference' actually involved a lot of field-work research into issues which affect the whole world but which could be studied locally in the Bristol area. The topics for investigation included - energy conservation, recycling and disposal of waste, use of resources, water quality and many others. One of the most interesting results of the investigation and group work was finding out how other people view an issue - for example, what might be waste or rubbish to us could be a valuable resource to some others!

In addition to the practical work a number of prominent speakers addressed the conference. These included Jonathan Porritt (former Director of Friends of the Earth), two government ministers and various experts in environmental education. A fascinating day was spent at the Slimbridge Wildfowl and Wetland Centre. Looking at the rare and endangered species of migrating birds which fly there each year from other continents really brought home the international nature of and need for co-operation on environmental issues!

There was of course time for some fun - events such as a barbecue, a sports evening and a banquet enabled us all to make new friends and provided the chance to find out how others live.



**Caretakers of the ENVIRONMENT INTERNATIONAL**

**PROGRAMME**

**Avon**  
FOR SERVICE  
TOO YOUNG

**CHURCHILL SCHOOL**

**NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL**

**UNITED NATIONS**  
PROGRAMME OF EDUCATION

**WOODSPRING**

**WWF**

We are all very used to lots of 'greenspeak' these days from politicians and the media and there is no doubt there was lots of this in Bristol. However, it is to be hoped that this is not the only result of the conference as the real aim was to encourage young people to take an active and genuine role in safeguarding the future of the environment.

Overall, the party from Dyce voted the week a great and lasting experience and would recommend students in S4-6 to watch out for details being advertised soon for the next conference. This is to be held next August in Peru!

R JOWETT

# COMMENT

The Inspector's Report on the school was published just before the summer holidays and has recently been made available to all parents.

Overall, we are pleased with what the Inspectors have to say about us.

For ten years we have worked at producing a good atmosphere in the school. It is, therefore, nice to read,

"The school provides ... a pleasant atmosphere in which good relationships between pupils and teachers flourish. Pastoral care in the school is very good, and the system of discipline promotes self-respect and respect for others."

We have also tried to ensure that pupils can achieve their full potential in their work in the school. It is, therefore, very satisfying to be told that,

in S1 and S2 ... "overall, pupils are highly motivated and achieve good standards."

in S3 and S4 ... "pupils achieve good standards in most subjects, especially at Standard Grade. Examination results are generally satisfactory."

in S5 and S6 ... "examination results are generally satisfactory to good."

A careful reading of the report reveals many examples of good practice and, not surprisingly in the real world, some - definitely fewer - examples of not so good practice. We are responding to the criticisms made in the report as best we can. It must, however, be said that the departments targeted in many of the examples used are somewhat arbitrary as the praise or criticism could often have also been directed at other departments. The detail of the report should be regarded as a 'snapshot' of the school at a particular time, rather than as a full picture.

We are criticised here and there in the report for not following National or Regional Guidelines. One particular instance of this is that we have not yet tackled what is called a 'balanced curricular experience in S3 and S4'. We have some disagreement with the Inspector's about what balance really means. Our S3/4 curriculum has been fully discussed at a meeting of parents and has the approval of the school board.

The report obviously suggests a number of areas for development. Two of these are particularly worthy of mention.

"The structure and methods employed should be refined to meet fully the differing needs of individual pupils."

This represents one of the aims of the school and is, therefore, something we are continually working to achieve. School education always has been, and probably always will be a balance between 'mass education', providing the same for everybody, and attending to individual needs. As more sophisticated techniques develop, we are tipping the balance more and more towards the individual but we, in common with all other schools that we know of, are aware there is more to do in this area.

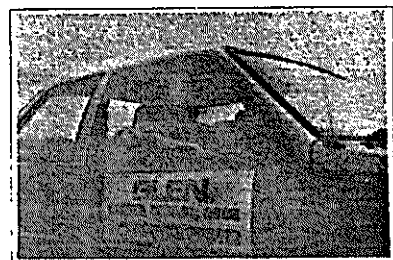
It is suggested in the report that, "the Head Teacher and Senior Management Team should now establish systematic means to monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching."

It is recognised in the school that everyone, not just the Head Teacher and Senior Management Team, could benefit from more systematic monitoring and evaluating of the quality of learning and teaching. This is easy to say; it is much more difficult to do. We are, however, planning to try to find some sensible way of evaluating the quality of the learning experiences going on in our classrooms so that we can provide an even better environment for the pupils in the school.

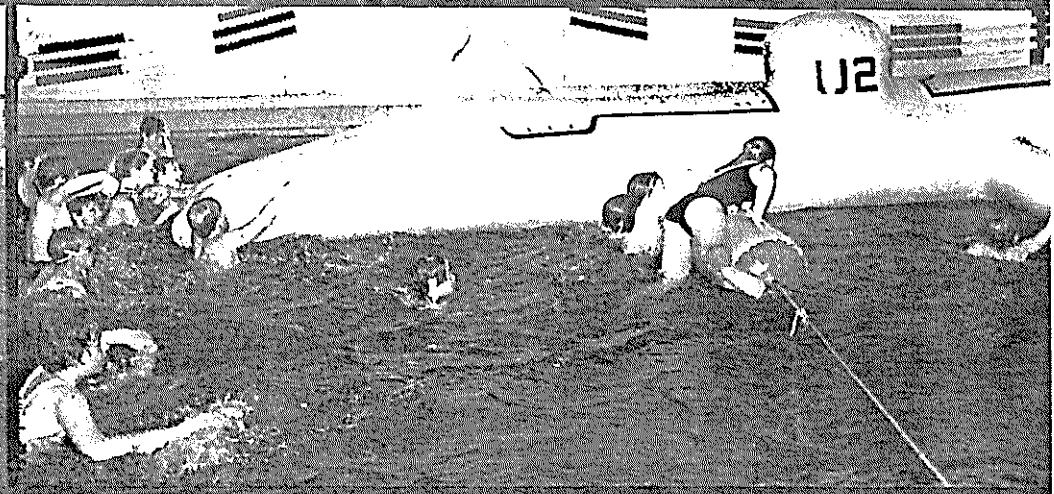
Even though we are generally satisfied with the report, we have no intention of becoming complacent. We know there is still plenty of work to do to ensure that we continue to,

"provide an environment which stimulates learning and encourages pupils to take responsibility."

  
**GLEN**  
DRIVING SCHOOL



**Proprietor: Ian McLean**  
**tel: 0224 723112**





# AUSTRIA '90



A bleary-eyed collection of pupils gathered at Dyce Academy on 26 June at the ungodly hour of 6.15 am, all bound for Austria. A cheer went up when the bus, an elegant vehicle from the Cruickshank of Ellon fleet, swept up. Loaded, boarded and settled in, we set off for Hull and ultimately Kitzbuhel.

Our journey to Hull was not without its excitement, namely a puncture, to be later mended in Belgium, but still allowing us to arrive in ample time for our ferry. Everybody enjoyed a very calm and pleasant crossing and after a good night's rest we were ready for an early start.

First an impromptu and unscheduled tour of Bruges to get the tyre fixed, then off on our journey proper and by 2.00 pm local time we had crossed into Germany at Aachen. 8.00 pm saw hungry Caledonian hordes descend on Heidelberg's local haute cuisine - MacDonald's. We had had a long day of travel, crossing the Rhine at Mannheim and the River Neckar at Heidelberg and so we felt the need to let off some steam. Having explored the beautiful Bavarian town, our conga line back to the hotel turned into a rendition of 'Flower of Scotland' which set the buildings quaking and we soon found ourselves at the head of a Pied Piper of Hamelin procession, swelled by other tourists. By the end of our trip the staff were to know 'Flower of Scotland' very well indeed!

The afternoon of Thursday 28th was spent sampling the delights of Munich and especially the mechanical wonders of the marvellous clock on the Marionplatz whose revolving figures some S5 pupils were convinced were recruited locally.

Their ability to revolve while maintaining a fixed expression was a great source of fascination for some! Our tour of Munich concluded with an intimate knowledge of the traffic system and we headed off on the last leg of our journey to Kitzbuhel, our home for the next five days.

We woke to glorious sunshine on Friday 29th. As our fellow students at home in Dyce Academy feverishly prepared for end of term (sob, sob!) we indulged in all the delights Kitzbuhel and the Austrian Tyrol had to offer - picturesque and awe-inspiring views, elegant shops and diet-defeating patisseries. It was a perfect day for our first experience of the Austrian Alps - the Kitzbuheler Horn, ascended via the cable car (lazy people). This, however, was novice territory in the light of what was to come. In the afternoon we enjoyed the dry toboggan run at nearby St Johann. Despite being quite exciting enough for some of the more mature members of the party, one S5 student felt the need to add to the sensational occasion by completing the run on the point of her chin.

Saturday - back over the border into Germany to visit Berchtesgaden, well-known for its salt mines and more infamously as the site of Hitler's retreat - the Eagle's Nest. Our visit to the salt mines involved a little fancy dress - the uniform traditionally worn by the miners including a little leather apron to protect tender parts on the long and very steep wooden chutes down into what seemed the bowels of the earth. This occasioned what was to become the 'battle cry' of the trip - ootcha!

Sadly by Sunday 1 July the weather had broken so our journey over the loveliest Alpine highroad - the famous Glockner (Big Bell) commenced in a

thunder and lightning storm. With 24 numbered hairpin bends, this was challenging territory for our drivers and the brakes! Past the snowline and the rain turned to sleet. Suddenly Aberdonian summers didn't seem so bad. Finally sun broke through and we could enjoy the Alpine gentians and a walk on a glacier, all at almost 3800 metres.

Perversely our last full day in Austria was spent in Italy, crossing the Brenner Pass to Vipiteno in Northern Italy. By now border crossings had become passe and many border guards had stared fascinated at the Lion Rampant on the back window of the bus. Later that afternoon Innsbruck, Capital of the Tyrol, spread itself out at our feet as we gazed down from the top of the Olympic ski-jump.

Laden with many happy memories of Austria and even more souvenirs of various shapes and sizes including some very life-like trolls, we set off on the long journey back to Germany. Crossing the Danube near Ulm, we spent our last evening in

Koblentz. Our action-packed holiday ended with a leisurely but enjoyable canal tour of Bruges, planned this time.

Our rather more energetic participation in the ferry's entertainment facilities on our return journey included Craig Duncan winning the jackpot on one of the video machines, and the senior boys doing their bit for international relations by establishing an 'Entente Cordiale' with some French students. They did, however, require some basic linguistic assistance from the staff.

Exhausted but happy the group that clambered off the bus at 6.30 pm on Thursday 5 July was but a shadow of the energetic crew of 10 days previously. Welcomed by doting parents, all proclaimed their pleasure at being home but also their thorough enjoyment of Austria '90.

R TEEHAN

## THE CULLEN EXPERIENCE

Question : What do a rope, a mermaid, a spooky graveyard, various smelly shellfish, a pair of buried bodies, a tonne of sausages and the best ice-cream in the world have in common?

Answer : They all featured very prominently in LB's pre-Academy 'Cullen Experience' before the summer holidays.

As the riddle suggests, the class had a very varied and exciting time during their 2½ day stay in the picturesque Moray coastal resort. Accompanied by Mr Mike Taylor, Mr Alan Thorn and Mrs Val Moir, LB were the last group to hit Cullen and all the tips we got from the previous group on how to work the cooker and where to find the drying room came in very handy. The facilities at Cullen Residential Centre are superb and we soon settled in.

The class soon divided themselves into groups and a healthy competition soon developed to see who could score most points for the table setting and rinsing the grease off the dinner plates. LB also proved to be enthusiastic fillers-in of the worksheets and some of the field sketches were particularly interesting!! The art work proved a bit difficult to do in the monsoon-like downpour, but keen as ever, some of LB modelled their soaking, soggy drawing paper into abstract papier-mache sculptures and drew their patterns and shapes on the sand instead. And that's where the mermaid comes in !!

The spooky graveyard was where we crept about at dead of night - well 10 o'clock or so - finding out about the dead of Cullen from their gravestones. But the buried bodies weren't to be found there.

They belonged to senior pupil, Judy Murison, who valiantly let LB boys bury her on the rain-soaked beach, and young Paul Thomson who rashly followed her example.

The rope featured heavily in the tug-o-war competition at the mini-Olympics on the Thursday night. The staff and senior girls put up a brave fight but were soon outpulled by the combined weight of LB. And the performance of Mr Taylor and Mrs Moir in the three-legged race was, shall we say, slightly below Olympic standard.

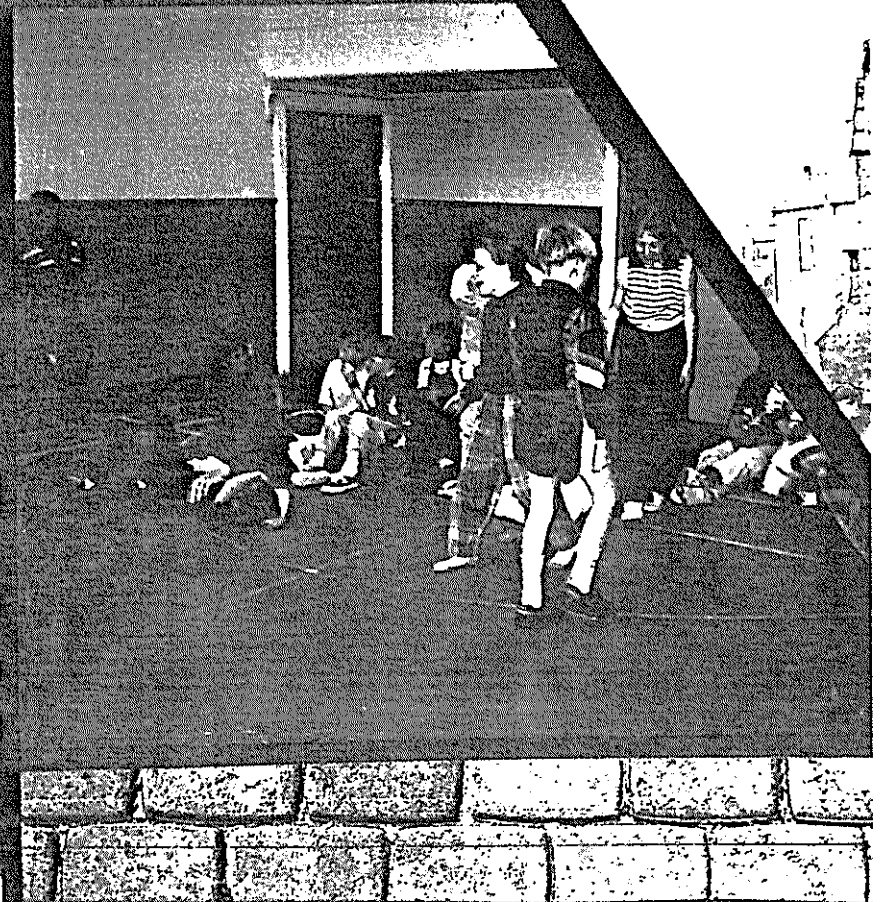
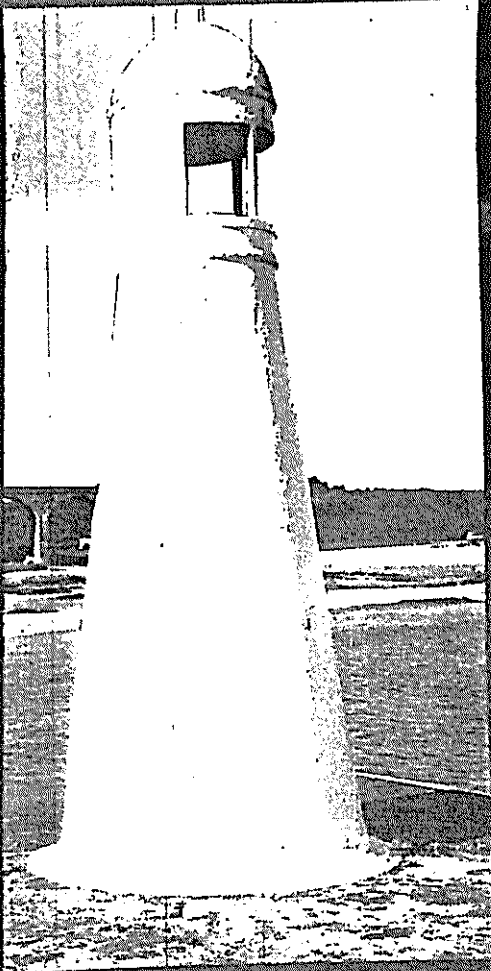
One of the highlights of the visit (apart from the celebrated local ice cream) was our walk along the sea-shore and up the cliffs. LB identified a huge variety of marine species and Wendy Horne convinced everyone that she also was a sea creature, so daring were her exploits on the rocks.

No article on LB's stay at Cullen would be complete without a big mention of the work done by our four senior girls. Claire, Debbie, Judy and Kim coped heroically with the tonnes of sausages, oven chips and other delicacies, supervised dish-washing and worksheets, yet still found time to boost Cullen's economy and buy out most of the antique shop. Well done, girls.

So, all in all, LB had a great time. They learned a lot about Cullen but, more importantly, they got to know each other and how to work together before coming to the Academy. There was one low point - having to watch Scotland being knocked out of the World Cup - but apart from that LB's 1990 trip to Cullen was FANTASTIC (and good fun for the staff too).

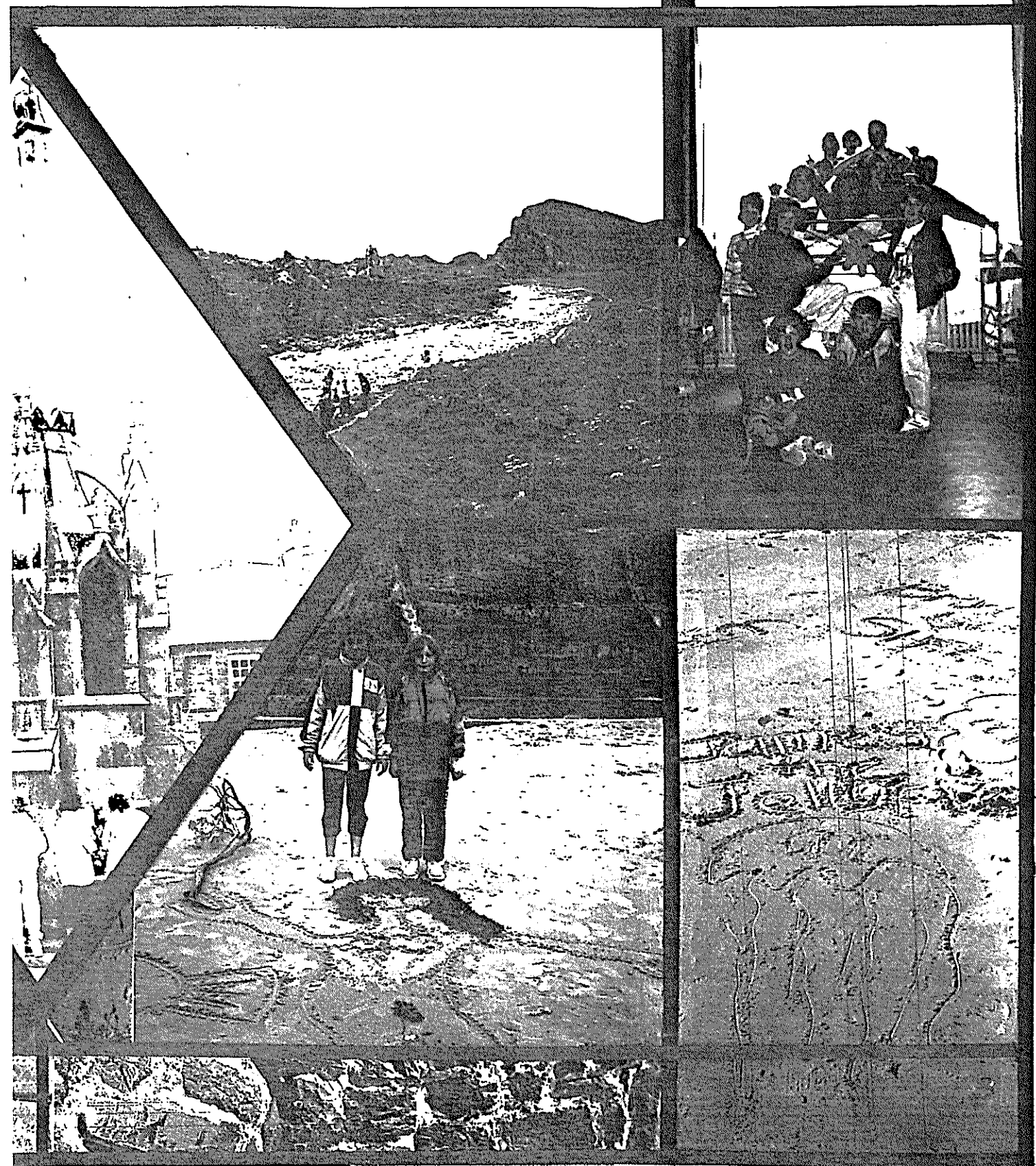
V MOIR

# CULLEN.





JUNE 1990





Early this term we said goodbye to Judy Palmer, one of our Technical Assistants. Judy has recently completed an Open University degree and has just begun a course at Northern College of Education which will lead to a Post Graduate Certificate of Education. She hopes to return to the education system to work - but this time as an English teacher!

Judy started work at Dyce in August 1980 - just a week before the school opened. She began as a part-time general assistant in the Art Department, but this soon expanded in both time and scope and she found herself working with various departments including Social Subjects, Science, Reprographics and, of course, Photography - her skills in this area being of great use both to our Media Studies course and to 'Update' itself.

Judy has, over the years, been involved in many areas of school life. She has been on the committee of 'Update' since it began in 1988. She was props manager for many of our school shows, was a member of the staff social committee, designed the school's 'Charlie' Awards and organised the teas for parents' evenings.

A school technician's job can be more varied than you might think - helping out in Media Studies, for example, Judy has been - to name but a few - an airport manager, a medical expert, a regional councillor and a 'friendly teacher'! She was also called on to do some rather unusual work in the school shows, for example, teaching a fifth year boy how to 'wiggle like Elvis', giving remedial lessons to the back end of a camel and giving Cockney lessons to the cast of 'Oliver'!

Speaking of the job of Technical Assistant, she says she enjoyed the variety, being able to work with the kids and the way in which technicians are treated as part of the team by other members of staff. She's had a lot of laughs and learnt many new skills - shes thrown pots (at Sandy!), made batik pictures, screen-printed t-shirts and improved her photography skills.

She'll miss the friendly staff and pupils and the happy atmosphere at Dyce.

She's looking forward to teaching and to the challenges of a new career, even though she's been told by many people she's mad to do it. We wish her all the best in her new career.

R SMITH

## EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

Once again two groups (one student, one staff) took the narrow road to the broad south for an annual visit to the Edinburgh Festival. The group of teachers attending the Festival were fortunate enough to share 'digs' with the Okinawa Theatre Company and the Bolshoi. Despite this, Glasnost and Anglo-Japanese relationships seem happily intact. One of this year's highlights was undoubtedly the sight of a scantily clad performer from Circus Archaos vaulting over to Ms Steele, planting a kiss on her cheek and inviting her to dance in the ring. Sensibly she declined! Solo audience participation is every festival-goer's nightmare and one of our unfortunate sixth year girls was a victim twice. The sight of her trying to 'shuffle' a large sliced loaf was something that will stay with those present for a long time. She coped wonderfully well and left the stage to thunderous applause. Other highlights included 'The Karamazov Brothers' - a group of wonderful jugglers from California, 'Single Again', 'The Como String Quartet' and 'The Three Girls with the Great Xar'. Both weekends were successful and enjoyable (although the pupils were marginally better behaved) and we'll probably all be daft enough to do it again. Who knows? Kay may have perfected her 'fan' by then and Ms Steele may be ready to cavort with the clowns.

M HARDIE



# JANE DUNCAN

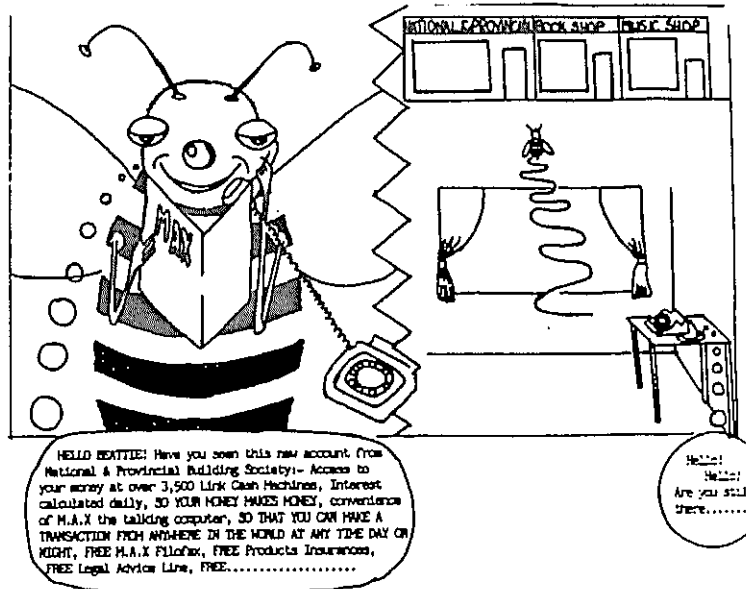
Ex-Dyce Academy pupil, Jane Duncan, who left school last year has launched into a career as a scriptwriter. Her first radio play - a Raymond Chandler spoof entitled 'Never Say Noir' - is to be broadcast by LBC later this year, with the possibility of further broadcasts by other radio stations.

She entered the script for 'Woolwich Young Radio Playwrights' earlier this year. Ten finalists were chosen, of whom Jane was one. Later this year three winners will be announced at a presentation attended by all finalists. Prizes will be presented by Melvyn Bragg of the 'South Bank Show'.

Jane has already seen some of her other work in performance though. Last year she entered the Scottish Youth Theatre's Young Playwrights Festival and there entrants were allocated a 30-minute slot for a part-performance of their play.

At present Jane is attending a Media Studies course at Aberdeen College of Commerce which may lead to an HNC in Broadcasting. She is also working on a new play for the theatre, which she will enter in this year's Young Playwright's Festival in Glasgow later this year.

R SMITH



## M.A.X.

MULTI ACCESS EXPENDITURE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE TELEPHONE ABERDEEN 644154 OR CALL INTO THE LOCAL OFFICE.

National & Provincial Building Society, 230 Union Street, Aberdeen AB1 1TL

MAKE A BEE-LINE TO M.A.P



## GRADUATIONS

The following ex-pupils have graduated from Aberdeen University :

Robert Barron	-	MA Honours
Jennifer Howitt	-	LLB Honours
Megan McLeod	-	BSc Ordinary
Debra Murdoch	-	BSc Honours
Alison Rae	-	MA Honours
Alexander Strachan	-	BSc Agriculture Honours

# TRIP TO FRANCE AND BELGIUM - A THOMSON HOLIDAY

It was 5.00 am. It was the first Monday of the summer holidays. Alarm clocks rang as 47 pupils and 5 staff from Dyce and Bankhead Academies awoke wondering what they had let themselves in for. Eight days in France and Belgium. Would they cope? Would anyone be sick on the coach before it reached the Bridge of Dee (it has happened). Do they really eat horses in Belgium? And how do you say to a French waiter : "Gads! This is nae fine!"

However, we all assembled in the cool clear light of dawn in Dyce Academy playground. Suddenly, it all seemed even worse. No matter. The luggage was stowed, Michael Rait, our diplomatic representative, checked his French phrase book one last time; Campbell Dey waved his Scotland hat ... we were off. To Hull'.

The only thing that was calm about the Hull - Zeebrugge crossing was the sea. Frenzied disco activity followed the four-course dinner on board - not perhaps the best combination but no one was sea-sick.

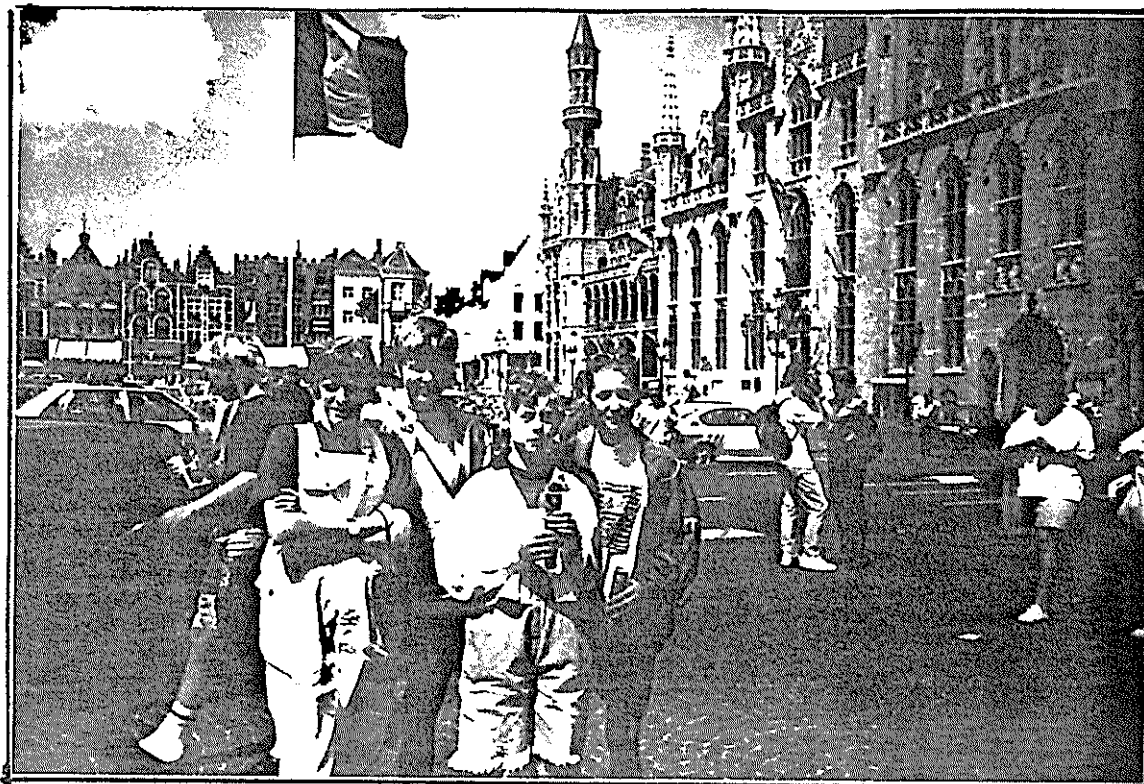
Our first resort, Blankenberge, was ten minutes down the Belgian coast from Zeebrugge. The weather was warm so we had what the tour operators call 'a morning at leisure' - not so leisurely for the innocent Belgian motorists overtaken by Jackie Barbour and Kirsty Hale driving a six-man pedal vehicle up the main street. The prom and beach were attractive and clean. In the afternoon we visited the beautiful medieval city of Bruges, taking a trip round its famous canals.

Our Blankenberge hotel was 'family run'. This normally means you have a wardrobe door which falls off as you open it. No so on this occasion. The rooms were clean and reasonably comfortable. The food was good. Anyone who didn't like the hotel was asked to discuss the matter further (in Flemish) with the owner's very large Alsatian dog.

Next day, the weather broke. We drove south to Ypres, passing through World War I territory where so much human slaughter had occurred. We visited World War I trenches briefly and passed through the Menin Gate where the names of countless numbers of dead soldiers are listed.



Michelle      Kelly      and Karin  
in Bruges



Lynsey  
Karen  
Rachel  
and Alison  
in Bruges

To cheer ourselves up after an interesting if slightly sombre morning, we went to a theme park at Bellewaerde. Mr Cormack insisted that the staff went on every ride. The whole place was plastic, expensive and in dreadful taste. We loved it. Especially the water-splash and loop the loop roller coaster.

On Day 4, Ronnie, our battle-hardened coach driver (he had taken a Philpy tour), drove us to Holland to visit the market town of Middelburg and do some shopping. Mr Cormack had fun changing sterling to guilders, guilders to Belgian francs, Belgian francs to French francs .....

And so to France.

By contrast with Belgium, our Paris hotel was very modern and really tres posh. The receptionists had lovely hair and oozed sophistication. The women were nice too.

In Paris we did all the usual things. We went up the Eiffel Tower, of course, though perhaps we saw

the tower at its best during an evening boat trip along the Seine. The air was warm and the illuminated tower stood out like gold against the deep blue night sky. Equally impressive was an evening trip to the top of Montparnasse Tower. From the 59th floor (the lift takes only 38 seconds) we watched the city glitter beneath us.

Trips to the Arc de Triomphe, the Sacre Coeur and Montmartre followed. Some of the group had their portraits sketched by the local artists. We saw artists of a different kind in Pigalle.

On our last night, some of the party watched the World Cup Final in their hotel rooms, while those with enough energy left went to a fun fair in the Tuileries Gardens (of all places).

All in all, a good trip. As they used to say in French essays -

Tout est bien qui finit bien.

D THOMSON



# EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

At the last school board meeting, the provision and support of extra-curricular activities was discussed. By extra-curricular we mean taking place outside the normal timetabled school day, such as music groups, sports teams and lunchtime clubs. During the discussion, it became clear that at least some parents were unaware of the status of extra-curricular activities in the school.

Many people seem to be unaware of the fact that schools are not obliged to provide any extra-curricular activities and that these are not supported financially by the local education authority. That is, no staffing nor funds are provided.

Dyce Academy is reasonably well provided for in this respect. The Inspectors commented, "Pupils participate in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities." This range obviously depends upon the interests of the staff who are willing to become involved. During the school board discussion it was suggested that the Head Teacher could force or blackmail staff to become involved in extra-curricular activities so that a full range could be offered. It was suggested that this is the way things are done in industry and commerce, that is whatever the boss wants, he gets! Perhaps, if this is so it explains the country's very poor record in industrial relationships. I certainly know many industrialists who have left such simplistic attitudes behind long ago. In any case, education in common with most other forms of employment, defines fairly clear conditions of service. Nevertheless, many teachers are prepared to carry out work not defined in these conditions. The teachers, however, decide whether or not to do this; they cannot be bullied into working outwith conditions of service. Head Teachers can certainly encourage, by creating a feeling of corporate identity, but they cannot force. Most teachers, like most other adults, have many things to do in their non-working hours - household responsibilities, family activities and leisure activities. How many people are willing to give up this time for additional work with voluntary groups? A few certainly do; quite a lot of teachers do.

Raising funds to support extra-curricular activities is not easy. The funds given to the school by the local education authority are intended to support the formal curriculum. The school fund, financed by our own fund-raising efforts, is not very large and has to be used to support a range of activities - including extra-curricular groups. The main responsibility for finance falls, therefore, on to the extra-curricular groups themselves. They can fund-raise, have a subscription system, appeal for donations, and so forth. This, after all, is the way most voluntary groups operate.

It was suggested at the school board meeting mentioned earlier that schools are judged by the range of extra-curricular activities they offer and that it was deplorable that insufficient staff could be found to manage a full range of football teams and that the school could not provide money to clothe football teams. Extra-curricular activities are regarded as a very important part of school life and we shall continue to offer as wide a range as possible. It is, however, important for parents to recognise the voluntary nature of these activities and to be grateful for what is offered rather than to complain about what is not.

## SCHOOL BOARD NEWS

Dyce Academy School Board has been meeting now for nearly a year and as it is the beginning of a new session, it might be helpful to remind school and parents of some of the issues which we have discussed at our meetings so far :

- capitation allowance for Dyce Academy
- S3/4 curriculum
- school lets
- school trips
- extra-curricular activities

More recently, the proposal for a four-term year has been given some publicity in the media and we as a board discussed this at length, sending our comments to Grampian Regional Council Education Department. If any parent would also like to make comment on the proposal, please feel free to contact any board member (names below).

An example of the proposed four-term year for session 1992/93 is :

First Term	-	3 August	-	2 October 1992
Second Term	-	19 October	-	22 December 1992
Third Term	-	6 January	-	19 March 1993
Fourth Term	-	5 April	-	18 June 1993

It would be helpful to have comments by Friday 28 September.

In addition, we as a board are keen to establish links between school, parents and the community and in doing so would encourage people to read the minutes, come along to board meetings which are open to the public, contact us on topics of interest or concern and generally make your views known to us.

The agendas and minutes can be viewed six days before the board meets at :

Community noticeboard in Fintray  
Post Office in Newmachar  
Library in Dyce  
Noticeboard at Dyce Academy Swimming Pool

Board members can be contacted at the following numbers :

Isobel Dempster	-	Newmachar 2536
Susan Montgomerie	-	Aberdeen 724420
Christine Rance	-	Newmachar 2826
Gordon Skinner	-	Aberdeen 791270
Anna Smail	-	Aberdeen 723214

Tom Ferguson	)	-	Teacher representatives
David Pyle	)	-	Aberdeen 725118

Date of next meeting :

Wednesday 3 October at 7.30 pm in the Staff Centre, Dyce Academy.