ISSUE NO. 17

MARCH 'S'

SCHOOL DINNERS? GREAT!

Elma Murray has been a member of staff at Dyce Academy since the school opened in 1980, yet it's a name that I guess most parents aren't familiar with, even although most of the Academy's pupils come into regular contact with her. Elma has been 'head dinner wifie' or unit supervisor (to give her her correct title) since 1987 and is in charge of the school kitchen and the six kitchen staff currently employed by DSO (Direct Services Organisation) who operate the school's catering service for Grampian Region. Update spoke to Elma Murray recently about school meals.

We asked Elma if there had been many changes made since DSO had taken over. She told us that apart from an initial cut in hours which meant a reorganisation of schedules, few changes had been imposed. While DSO provide guidelines for menuplanning, individual unit supervisors have continued to be allowed to provide the range of meals previously offered, although any new additions to the menu have now to be vetted. The range of food available on any one day at Dyce is certainly impressive. A choice of hot and cold main meals, a vegetarian meal, usually a fish dish, hot and cold sweets, sandwiches and filled rolls, snacks of all sorts, bakery goods, fruit, soft drinks and milk and sweeties are all available. The pupils certainly seem to be pleased with this choice. Between 300 and 400 of them use the canteen facilities at lunchtime, whether it be to partake of a full meal or sample something from the Milk Bar.

It's not only at lunchtime either that pupils frequent the canteen. On offer at morning interval

are sandwiches, milk, fruit, sweeties, chips, hotdogs and bakery goods, while those feeling peckish half-way through the afternoon can tuck into a range of cold snacks.

Many pupils and staff have commented on the high standard and variety of food available. Staff often compare the service provided with what they have experienced at other schools, while many visiting teachers during in-service days have commented very favourably about the meals at Dyce.

We asked Elma to try to explain why we have this reputation for good food. While not wishing to comment on other establishments, she said she felt she had to pay tribute to her staff in Dyce.
"I have a willing staff and a staff who are

interested in the preparation and the presentation of what we offer. Presentation in particular is very important." Elma and her staff also believe in applying the same principles to their Dyce Academy cooking as they do to their home cooking. "We like to think that what we offer is good home cooking, not institutional meals. Part of the secret is cooking small amounts of a wide variety of meals each day. Balancing the books is important too, so that on one day you might have a more expensive meal such as roast beef on the go, along with a less expensive meal such as white pudding."

Does she get many complaints? Considering the amount of meals being sold, comparatively few. "If kids do come back because something is cold or they think it tastes odd, then there's no problem about giving them something else. And



to see any child go without a meal."

Elma enjoys her work but there is one thing in particular that really annoys her and that's the mess that pupils leave. Food often ends up on the floor and then gets trampled in, pupils don't always use the litter bins provided and some don't even return their trays and dirty dishes to the washing-up hatch. "If only they would try to treat it more like a dining room", says Elma, "We even get some pupils walking across chairs and tables. I often wonder what their parents would say if they could see that sort of behaviour." Elma believes that part of the problem is the canteen's multi-purpose use and she thinks the Region should consider employing supervisory staff, particularly at lunchtime.

Finally, officials from the Region recently came into school to carry out one of their regular inspections of the catering service and Elma and her staff received a 93% pass, with criticism only being made about two or three small things. Elma herself summed it up - "Anybody's welcome to inspect our kitchens and systems anytime - we've nothing to hide." You can't say fairer than that.

L YOUNG

AS EASY AS FALLING OFF A HORSE!

S4 pupil, Louise Parley, is a young lady with a passion - a passion for horses and, in particular, showjumping. Unlike most of us, however, Louise is not content with tuning into the Horse of the Year Show and admiring the skill and dedication of the For her dedication and skill are participants. real. Currently the holder of eight trophies and over three hundred rosettes, Louise has been riding horses since she was three years old, although she did not really start serious show jumping till she was ten. She's had her current horse, Belle, a chestnut mare, for just over a year and is looking forward to another successful season (between April and September) with this particular horse, or pony, as it should be more accurately described. When she reaches the age of sixteen in December, however, she will be moving into adult showjumping and so will need a larger mount. The secret according to Louise is not necessarily to buy the most expensive horse, but one that has the ability to be a reliable jumper. Acquiring and then training a young horse can also be advantageous.

On the subject of expense, Louise does agree that it is an expensive hobby. Over and above the cost of the horse there's riding lessons, stable fees, food, clothes (for both horse and rider!), the cost of visiting the various showjumping venues and competition entry fees. It all takes up a lot of time as well and Louise is fortunate in having the very active support of her mother and father who drive her all over the North East to participate in showjumping events. This commitment is set to increase as Louise announces she would like to travel further afield in order to broaden her experience. Even out of season at this time of year there's a lot of hard work to be done. Every weekday morning before coming to school Louise has to visit Belle (she's stabled locally) to help her out of her 'pyjamas' and put her out in the park

groom her and bed her down for the evening. Weekends also see Louise out in the fields exercising Belle and hacking around Dyce.

I asked Louise what she enjoyed most about her hobby and there was no shortage of answers. "It's great fun", she said, "It helps keep me fi and I enjoy meeting up with lots of old friends the events. There's always the chance too, to n new friends at events such as the Keith and Turi Shows which attract many participants from outwithe area. As an active member of the Findon Ric Club there's also always plenty to keep me busy, particularly during the jumping season."

It hasn't been all plain sailing for Louise thou Last September she fell from her horse while attempting a jump, breaking an arm and spraining her neck. She admitted to being a little scared for a short while after but her enthusiasm scon returned and she says chirpily that you just put it down to experience.

Finally, does she have any advice for others who might be considering taking up this enjoyable ar consuming hobby? "A lot of people think it's judressing up in jodhpurs, boots and hard hard and riding about the countryside, but it involves a lot of hard work as well. It is great fun but you're not prepared to work hard and devote a lot of time to it - don't get a horse!"

We all wish Louise a successful 1991 showjumping season.

CUT! PRINT!

Just over a year ago, Laurence Young, Principal Teacher of Drama at the Academy, wrote an artic for 'Update' in which he outlined an argument f the school having its own video editing equipme Here is his update on that article:

"At last we've won the argument. The Region had decided that, due to the extensive use of vides in school and the number of educational video the produced 'in-house', the school should have its editing suite. It's not the full works like the have down at the Teachers' Resources Centre, but it will certainly make it much easier for us to produce quality video products.

The 'budget' edit suite consists of two synchrivideo recorders, an effects/mixer desk, a new corder and a couple of monitors. The effects/desk will allow productions to look a little m polished with its range of special effects, th ability to mix/cross-fade visuals and a compre hensive sound mixer. Two camcorders can be houp to this desk and you then have a basic tele studio set-up.

As well as helping us to produce our own televorogrammes, the editing suite can be used to ϵ down to shorter length programmes which have the recorded from broadcast television or to edit together sections from different programmes.

At the moment I'm the only member of staff to used the new equipment but a number of staff I expressed interest in undertaking in-service training in order to become knowledgeable in its use - and that's when the edit suite will really prove to be worthwhile."

L Y

DYCE ACADEMY REVISITED

Walking towards the school entrance, in steps I'd taken over seven years ago, the feeling that nothing changes was uppermost in my mind. Kids' voices, bells ringing, the sounds of shuffling and of modern doors creaking as they are squeezed to the walls, brought many memories back. Had the last few years been real? Had I really left? The faces around me looked familiar and I pictured the people of my era so vividly. Then I remembered my purpose.

I left Dyce Academy after my Higher exams in 1983 and several months later started my nursing training. I did complete it and worked as a staff nurse for about eighteen months. Nursing is enjoyable but I didn't feel I wanted to settle down doing it for the rest of my life and so I'm now at Stirling University studying History, English and Education with the view of being a teacher. Stirling University, through one of its alternative options, allows me to do part of my Education degree whilst doing my main degree. Consequently these last three weeks, though officially part of my holiday, have been spent doing 'Teaching Observation'. Suddenly I've to be on the side of the teachers and learn to control my laughter, like a 'true adult'. Thankfully I do feel I am quite a different person from the one who left here those few years ago and so taking on a more teacher like role doesn't feel so alien ... Perhaps I have crossed that invisible line of becoming a less carefree, conforming adult!!

Throughout my three-week stint at Dyce I was frequently asked if I saw many changes and how I felt about being 'on the other side'. To me many things hadn't really changed at all. Yes, there are new buildings and more facilities, the canteen for instance is even more user-friendly with its sandwich bar and milk-shakes. And yes, among the teaching staff there are also many changes, but I found the ethos of the school much the same, and that was pleasant.

Being 'on the other side' was very much a new experience and certainly not something I would ever have believed I'd do when I was here as a pupil. Learning to use teachers' first names, particularly those who had taught me, was something I preferred to avoid and caused me some teasing when my brain switched back to pupil mode.

It was also very reassuring to see as a prospective teacher myself, how normal the teachers are when in in the more natural surroundings of the staffroom!!

Another aspect of 'being on the other side' in my own old school was that I wasn't so lenient or soft with the pupils as I might have been. I remembered the innocent faces of my time often concealing some mischievous intent, too well.

Much of my experience here as a pupil planted those seeds in my mind that it would be a challenging but worthwhile job to be a teacher and now as student teacher, both the pupils and teaching staff of Dyce Academy today have done a good job in making me realistic but still keen.

Thank you for having me.

HEATHER STRACHAN

GUIDES LOST IN WONDER AS BRITISH RAIL GETS THERE

Three of our senior girls, Fiona D'Arcy, Caroline Mowat and Lesley Somerville, were recently among 91 Young Leaders and Rangers who travelled to London in February to take part in the Guide Movement's 75th Anniversary celebrations.

After arriving at their accommodation—
a Methodist Church—they took part in the
special service in Westminster Abbey, which was
attended by many people connected with the Guide
Movement. The service was followed by a 'free'
afternoon—shopping at Harrods—and a disco in
the evening. They slept that night in the church,
by the altar—rather a creepy experience,
according to Caroline. The following morning
was to have been given over to a regatta, but
the Serpentine was frozen over, and so other
activities were arranged.

The girls had an adventurous journey back to Aberdeen, courtesy of British Rail. Their original train was cancelled because of flooding at York. A different train was just caught, but this one was heading for Glasgow. En route they were told to get off at Carlisle to catch a connection to Edinburgh. After two hours in Edinburgh, with the train at one point heading backwards towards Carlisle again, the girls finally arrived in Aberdeen at 3.40 am after a fourteen-hour journey, tired but determined to get up again for school at nine o'clock. Whether or not they made it remains a closely guarded secret. So, an exhausting, interesting and 'far-RANGING' weekend.



GENERAL STUDIES

One of the fairly unique features of the third and fourth year curriculum in Dyce Academy is what we call our General Studies Options.

This is included in the curriculum because we believe that, as well as giving pupils the opportunity to gain qualifications, it is very important to provide a sound general education, and in particular, to help pupils cope with the demands of life in modern society both at present and in One aspect of this is the need for the future. a range of interests to follow in the increased leisure time available to us. Our General Studies courses exist to give pupils the opportunity to develop interests they already have and to sample possible new interests.

During one afternoon per week in each of the third and fourth year, pupils are invited to choose from a range of ten-week courses. Some of these courses run for a whole afternoon and others for half the afternoon, enabling pupils to follow two different activities on the same afternoon. The range of courses offered varies from year to year as staff and facilities change but includes, for example:

Whole Afternoon activities -

Community Involvement

Golf

Hill-walking

One-Off Productions

Orienteering Ski-ing

Single Period activities -

Acting Aerobics Badminton Pasketball Canoeing Craft

Electronics Entertainment Cookery

Fabric Crafts

Football Foreign Fare **Hockey** Home Baking Jewellery Life-saving Music

Squash Traffic Education

One of the difficulties we have in organising this programme is the cost. If we are to offer a good range of activities we need to make use of facilities outside the school, for example, for golf, ski-ing, squash, etc. Transport has to be provided to enable pupils to take part in these activites and fees sometimes have to be paid for the use of the facilities. Unfortunately, the allowance given to the school to run courses is

not sufficient to enable us to fund all of these activities without courses at other stages in the school losing out. Additional funds do, therefore, have to be found to support the General Studies programme.

Two ways of raising funds were considered a number of years ago:

- to charge for the activities which involve transport and/or fees;
- to ask parents to contribute a fixed sum each year to support the programme.

After discussion in school and with the College Council, it was agreed that the second option was preferable largely because it made all activities equally accessible to pupils. In reality all

the cost of school-based activities is not obv We do not have to pay for the use of the swimm pool or games hall but we do have to pay for t use of a golf course or squash courts. If we did not have a swimming pool in school we woul obviously have to pay if we were to provide wa based activities. The decision to raise a 'le was made with the approval of the College Cour back in 1983. The minute of the relevant meet records that "the meeting commented favourably the aims and structure of the general studies syllabus and gave unanimous support to the pro to raise a levy". Since this time, costs have risen somewhat and some very expensive activit do in fact make a surcharge.

A few parents have recently complained about 1 asked to contribute £4 per session to support General Studies Programme. Hopefully, this as may help such parents to understand the reason the request for money. In any case, I intend put the issue before the School Board in the : future to seek its view on the General Studies Programme and its funding.

Dyce Academy staff held their second Quiz Nigh the evening of Friday 22 February. As before, atmosphere in the staff centre on the evening itself was one of tense intellectualism - unti the team found out their names. Rag, Tag and Bobtail had to face The Three Degrees, the Three Vices didn't like the look of the Three Bears, nor the Three Musketeers. Everyone was worried - Allan Thorn (PE) was wearing glasses a sure sign of serious intelligence.

However, with Brenda Urquhart and Myles Hardie acting as hosts and 'quiz-persons', the evening ot under way with rounds on 1990, Sport, Countries, Music, TV adverts, Miscellaneous and a special 'Blockbuster' round.

Here the normally cool Brenda Urquhart lost control slightly. The exchange went scmething like this:

B Urquhart : What 'B' is part of Spain with a strong separatist movement?

A Thorn : Pass

B Urquhart : Correct! - Eh, did you say 'Ba

: I can't remember A Thorn

B Urquhart : Stop the clock! Stop the cloc

: It's a fix! Audience

However, apart from the odd mistiming, things smoothly, food and refreshments being provide the hardworking Social Committee. The winnin was eventually adjudged to be the Three Bears rejoiced in the usual way with a lap of honou holding their trophies aloft. The Wooden Spc prizes went to the Three Musketeers, with tea member, Laurence Young, insisting on giving a demonstration.

A good night, making one proud once again to working with such minds.

NEIBALL

Dyce Academy's newly-formed Netball Club has got off to a promising start. Initial response to the call for budding netball players was very good, attracting girls and boys of all age groups. However, the numbers have dwindled, leaving a core of about sixteen S3-S6 girls.

The job of coaching the team has been relatively easy as the talent, skill and enthusiasm was already there, leaving the task of refining these skills and helping the team to mature tactically.

After a few lunchtime training sessions, a practice match against the Dyce Academy All Stars (the PE Department and Mrs Dewhurst, Home Economics) was arranged to 'gently' break-in the girls, but those of you who know the PE Department will know that they are not known for their gentility. In fact, although the staff won convincingly, it should be noted that Mr Thorn was knocked about a bit as Gillian Aitken forced her way into the shooting area and Vanessa Lea twice used Mrs Cockburn as a landing mat which caused her neck considerable pain for a few days.

Five schools have formed a 'friendly' league to encourage and promote Netball within schools. Dyce Academy's team which consists of S3 girls (the league is only open to S3 and under) have played all their matches. Their first match was a group of players playing under the Newmachar title. This team consists mainly of Sl Dyce Academy girls who have chosen to 'stay' with their primary school club. As this match can be considered to be the local derby, both teams were nervous and excited. The Newmachar team got off to an excellent start, scoring two very fast goals. However, as this was Dyce Academy's first real match it took them a few minutes to settle down and play together as a team. By half-time the Dyce team were winning by a couple of goals and they managed to hold on to their lead until the end of the match. I believe that the Golder and Taylor sisters are still friends, despite the younger sisters playing for Newmachar and the older playing for Dyce.

The second game, an away match to Ellon, saw a convoy of cars making their way cross country to Ellon. The Ellon team although enthusiastic were considerably less skilful and the Dyce team won 21-4. It must be noted that the Ellon team are not coached by a PE person, or a member of staff, simply an Ellon housewife with spare time on her hands who has volunteered her services.

Dyce's third game was to be their greatest test. They were to play Hazlehead Academy away from how Hazlehead have been renowned for their netball teams for many years, the Dyce team coach being a former pupil and a netball team captain of Hazlehead. The teams were closely matched, but despite a reshuffle of the Hazlehead team the Dyce Academy shooters were unstoppable. Both teams had their share of problems - Dyce losing Laura Park half-way through the first half to 'flu type symptoms, and the Hazlehead goal shooter having a severe nosebleed (Jill Taylor swears blind she never touched her).

Dyce's last game against Torry was probably their hardest, not because of the Torry team's netball ability but because of their ability to shout, scream and whistle louder than a capacity crowd at Hampden! The practice game against the staff was good grounding for this game as the Dyce players discovered a new meaning of the word 'friendly' as they picked themselves up off the floor.

Not to be outdone, the Dyce cheerleaders led by Mr Littlejohn (Head of PE) attempted to outshout, outscream and outwhistle the Torry team until the caught sight of their coach's "You are giving me a migraine" look. Despite playing under these conditions the Dyce girls remained calm and composed, played skilful netball and won the match 21-15.

The senior team who were playing a friendly continued the success of the first team with a 15-13 win. Credit must go to this team as it was their first game and the first time they had played as a team.

The friendly league is now over for Dyce but I hope to arrange some other games for them against some of the adult 3rd Division teams. Next year hopefully the friendly league will continue and we will enter a Dyce team. For those who are too old to play in that team, we are setting our sights at the adult 3rd Division - who knows, we might be as successful.

A final word must be thanks to Mrs Golder and Mrs Aitken who supported the team and helped transport them to their away matches.



BASKETBALL

On Friday 8 February a team from Dyce Academy took part in the Beacon Shield Tournament, a basketball competition held at the Beacon Centre.

The Dyce team were drawn against the Beacon and then Garioch, and, having beaten both these teams, met Culter Boys' Brigade in the semi-finals. Having beaten them in a difficult game we then went on to play Peterhead in the final. In an extremely tight game, two last-minute baskets saw our team emerge as 20-16 winners.

Unfortunately, most of the present team will be unable to defend their title next year as they will be too old but there are plenty up-and-coming S1 pupils to carry on the good work! Congratulations to all who played.

Team : M Hoggins

J Reid

P Chapman

R Robertson

F Coleman

J Golder

S Douglas

K Murray

C Wilson

J Caird

DYCE GUBBED!

Eight S3 boys faced the might of Robert Gordon's College in the Academy's first ever badminton match last month. Unfortunately, the opposition's experience in this sport meant that Dyce only succeeded in winning one of the nineteen games played. Congratulations are therefore due to Mark Tewnion and Bruce Robertson as the sole victors, especially as at one stage they were 1-12 down before valiantly fighting back to win 15-12.

SCRIPTURE UNION

On Sunday 3 March the Scripture Union groups from Dyce and Bankhead Academies came together with the Brimmond Association of Churches to stage a Christian Youth Event in the Stoneywood Scout Hut. Around 100 young people enjoyed Stonehaven-based band 'Prism' as they played their own brand of music aided and abetted by sketchboard artiste, Gary Smith. Centre spot, however, belonged to Aberdeen FC and Scotland star, Brian Irvine, who spoke on the importance and fulfilment that he had found in following Jesus - even better than the thrill of scoring the winning penalty in last season's cup final!

At the interval, whilst he was surrounded by autograph hunters, the tuck shop was besieged and the bookstall almost ran out of badges. All in all, a good night out and hopefully a similar event will be held in the area in the not too distant future.

CONGRATULATIONS

..... go to one of our ex-pupils, Colin McGeechan, who has recently graduated B. Eng. (Hons) in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from RGIT.

FOOTBALI

Two games were played at Mintlaw recently, The U-13s improved on their previous result but Chris Page's goal was not enough to prevent a 5-1 defeat. In the Regional Cup, the seniors scored an excellent 5-3 victory (after extra time) over their country counterparts with goals from Andrew Fraser (2), Brian McBeath (2) and Drew Weaver. Raymond Littlejohn, team coach, described the nine-man Dyce display as probably the most impressive performance that he had seen in the school's existence.

Footnote:

Dyce's opponents in the next round were to have been Milne's High, Fochabers, but due to injuries, suspensions, and other call-offs, Dyce were unable to raise a team and have had to scratch from the tournament.



U - 13

Congratulations are due to S4 pupil, Allan Maitle who recently captained the Scottish Boys' Club's U-16 football team in their match against Northe: Ireland. Although the Scots lost 3-1, Allan wil have a further opportunity to display his talent: against Wales in May.

SCHOOL DUMAD

This is the first article for 'Update' the Board has submitted since the distribution of its Annual Report at the end of January.

The report was written to hopefully remind everyone of the Board's responsibilities and of the items which we have discussed during the past year.

As yet we have received only a few comments, criticisms and suggestions from those who have seen the report. However, we would still welcome any comments on the contents of the report or indeed on any matter which might be seen to be within the remit of the School Board's business.

To do so, Board members can be contacted at the following numbers:

Isobel Dempster - Newmachar Susan Montgomerie - Aberdeen Christine Rance - Newmachar Gordon Skinner - Aberdeen Anna Smail - Aberdeen

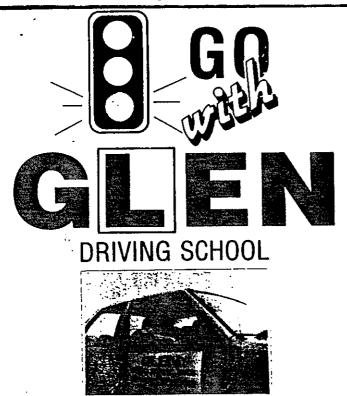
Tom Ferguson) _ Teacher Representatives
David Pyle) Aberdeen

In conclusion, we would like to remind people that Board meetings are open to the public and agendas and minutes can be viewwed six days before the Board meets at:

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

Date of next meeting -

Wednesday 17 April 1991 at 7.30 pm in the Staff Centre, Dyce Academy.



Proprietor: lan McLean tel: 0224 723112

CUMMENI

We know that both pupils and parents often wonder what we get up to on our 'in-service days'; two took place recently on 14 and 15 February.

On these days some of the time was spent by all staff within their departments - planning new courses, producing materials, etc. In addition a number of group activities were arranged.

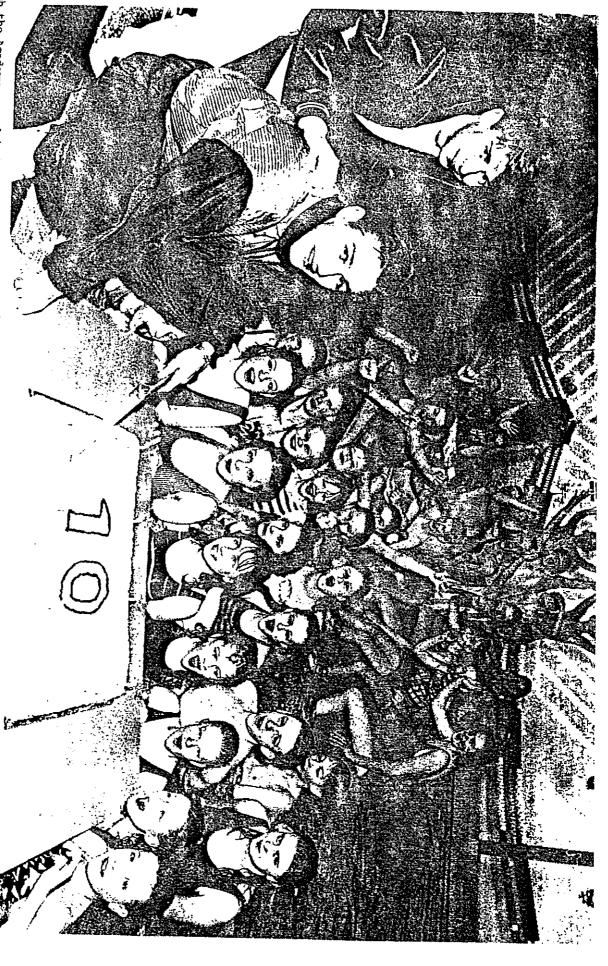
All staff in small groups spent some time discussing and trying to reach agreement on what is the 'ideal' learning environment for pupils. We tried to build up a picture of the 'ideal classroom'. You may think that this should be well known and established but, in reality, it is not. Society is developing very rapidly at present and education has to try to keep pace with this change. In particular, views on the content of school courses and the way this conten is presented to pupils are continually changing. It is, therefore, important every now and then fo all the teachers in the school to make sure that they agree on some basic principles. what we were trying to do on the in-service days. Once these principles are established, the next step will be to decide which of these are part of our work at present and which are not. We sha then have to find the time, resources and trainir necessary to do something about these.

Another activity in which all staff were engaged what we call 'departmental sharing of experiences As I am sure most of you know, the school is organised in departments based around subject areas. There is a lot of co-operation between departments, particularly in our General Studies courses, but it is useful now and then for departments to be 'forced' to sit down and talk to another department about issues of common concern For example,

- The English, Drama and Modern Languages Departments discussed the teaching and assessment of 'talk'.
- The Social Subjects, Chemistry and Business Studies Departments discussed the place of economic awareness in the curriculum.
- The Maths, Biology, Physics and Music Departments discussed mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- The PE and Home Economics Departments discuss the assessment of practical skills.

Straight 'training' sessions were also organised in the management of group discussion and the strategies for 'teaching' problem-solving. All staff took part in one or other of these sessions and some very interesting arguments/discussions were had about the nature and relevance of these activities in different subject areas.

In general, staff find these in-service days ver useful for catching up on development work, discussing issues with other staff and for developi their professional skills. These are essential activities if the quality of education we offer is to continue to improve and keep pace with the demands of modern society.



though the Academy opened in 1980 the pool was completed and opened to the public until February 1981.

our picture (courtesy of the Evening Express) ws, Dyce Academy pupils celebrated the 10th liversary of the pool's opening in style. seems likely that at least some of them came

along to swim, listen to the disco and play on the inflatable and other play equipment.

However, there is no doubt that a sizeable number of girls actually came along to celebrate St Valentine's Day in the company of Aberdeen Football Club's young stars, Eoin Jess and Steve Wright. One wonders if Eoin and Steven had ever had so many Valentines and so many requests for kisses

and autographs. Our thanks are due to both players for their good-natured tolerance of all that adulation!

The massive birthday cake, baked by the Academy School Meals staff, which had previously been cut while floating in the pool, was still dry enough to be enjoyed by pupils, pool staff and footballers alike.