

# Update Dyce Academy

ISSUE NO 20

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## Many Strings To Her Bow



At Dyce Academy, we are fortunate to have a pupil who is already making a name for herself in musical circles.

Fiona, of our third year, started playing violin when she was 8 years old. Having reached Grade 4 standard within 2 years, she then took up the viola - a more difficult instrument to play. Success was just around the corner, when she won the 'Vivaldi Cup' for her performance on violin at the Aberdeen Music Festival, two years running.

Orchestral playing is good and necessary experience for any young player, and Fiona was soon asked to join the Aberdeen Chamber Orchestra and also the University Orchestra, where she played viola.

Saturday mornings spent rehearsing in Belmont Street, at the Music Centre, soon had their reward - Fiona was amongst a group of players who were asked over to Denmark to play with an Opera orchestra. This involved 3 trips across for rehearsals and performances. Other orchestral experience has been gained through NYOS Repertoire and Grampian Regional Orchestra.

Another string to Fiona's bow is her Scottish fiddle playing. She plays with Banchory Strathspey and Reel Society, and has won various competitions in this area too.

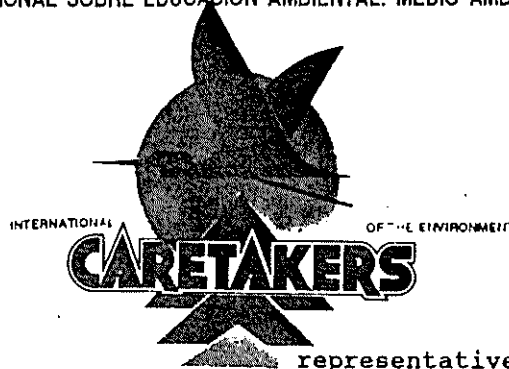
In 1990, Fiona competed in the Audi Young Musician of the Year but was unsuccessful in reaching the finals. This year, though, on 5 October, she will make her way to Glasgow to take part in the Scottish Finals of the competition. If she wins, she will go to London as Scotland's representative in the UK Finals.

5 October is going to be a busy day - up early to catch the first train to Glasgow where, at the Royal Academy, she will have her first lessons from some of the best instructors Scotland can offer, both on strings and piano. This came about through Fiona winning a scholarship which means weekly trips to RSAMD - a busy schedule for any 14 year-old!

We all wish Fiona the best of luck on 5 October and Update readers can find out how she gets on in the next issue.

Agosto 27 - Setiembre 01 - 1991

Cusco - Peru



Two teachers and two pupils were fortunate enough to spend the end of the summer holidays and the beginning of term at an Environmental Conference in Peru. This is the fifth year running that Dyce Academy staff and pupils have represented Scotland at the annual international conference of 'Caretakers of the Environment'. The conference moves around the world. It has been held in Holland, Spain, USA and England, and this year in Peru. The conference organisers were keen to have a 'Third World' venue to demonstrate in a practical way the global concerns of 'Caretakers of the Environment' - Peru volunteered.

The previous conferences have been made up of secondary school teachers, secondary school pupils and 'experts' in roughly equal numbers from as many as thirty different countries. Each conference has discussed environmental issues from an international perspective. This year's conference was different. It was organised by the University of Cusco and staff and students from this university tended to dominate the conference activities. Also, Peru has so many environmental and political problems that discussions tended to focus on Peruvian problems from a Peruvian point of view - interesting but not the wide perspective normally taken by the conference.

Many of the problems of Peru are similar to those of other Third World countries, eg migration from country to towns leading to poverty in the towns, an enormous national debt, exploitation by multi-national companies, etc. Two recent problems have made life particularly difficult in much of Peru. Terrorists are very active in much of the country. We were in what was regarded as a relatively safe area but were conscious of a definite tension; armed soldiers were guarding many facilities, not just banks and government buildings, but also such things as our hotel and, on one occasion, the bus we travelled in!

Over the last year or two, particularly in the cities and lowland areas, the country has suffered a major cholera epidemic.

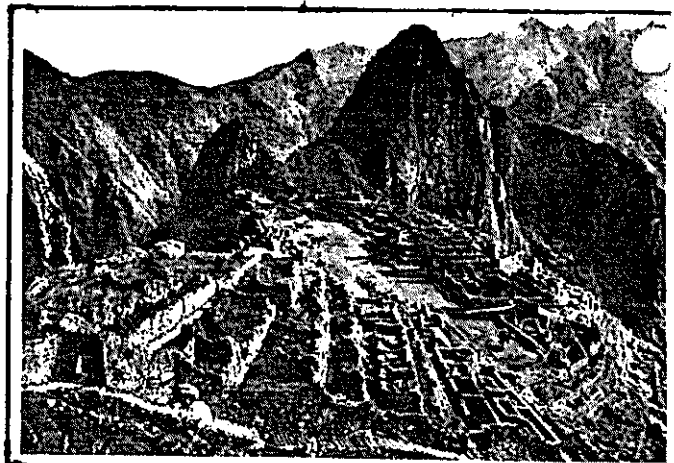
We saw plenty evidence of Peru's attempts to build up a tourist industry and, apparently, until a few years ago, many tourists did visit Peru, particularly from North America. The two problems mentioned have, however, driven most tourists away. Many of the tourist sites we visited were just about deserted. The worries that have persuaded tourists not to visit Peru also persuaded many countries who normally send

representatives to the conference not to come this year, or at least not to bring youngsters. There were only nine secondary school pupils at the conference; at previous conferences there have been as many as a hundred. The countries represented were - Scotland, Northern Ireland, The Soviet Union and Spain.

Whilst the conference itself was not as engaging as usual, the four of us did learn a great deal from the people we met informally from all over the world. There is something very satisfying about sitting down to a meal with people from as wide a range of countries as the USA, USSR, South Africa and Holland.

As well as attending the lectures, discussion groups, etc at the conference, we did have time to travel around a little and meet a number of local people.

There is a lot of Peru. It is located in the tropics and has land from sea level to 7000 metres. All climatic types are, therefore, represented in the country. We did not have time to visit more than a small sample of the country around Cusco where we were staying. This is a town of about a quarter of a million people, 11000 ft up in the Andes at the centre of what was the Inca Empire. We did see the Andean glaciers above us and did just manage to visit the tip of the jungle.



We visited many of the remains of the Inca Empire and were impressed by the building and agricultural skills of a so-called primitive race which, 500 years ago, had not discovered the wheel and had no written language. Machu Picchu - see photograph - is regarded as the main tourist attraction of South America. To experience it was a great privilege.

cont opp

We found the local people whom we met very pleasant and friendly. They were genuinely grateful to us for travelling so far to visit their country. Many of the people in the Cusco area are pure-bred South American Indians, although the bulk of the Peru population are of Spanish or mixed origins. The Indians have their own language and their own charm. I suppose the country folk were poor by our standards - I am sure car, TV, telephone ownership is fairly low - but most of the people we met appeared to be well fed, healthy and generally happy with life. Whilst this was the impression we gained of the country areas which we visited, the opposite was the case in the large cities. Lima, the Capital, was quite frightening. Here there is a lot of poverty and a lot of violence. The rich live in barricaded floodlit palaces whilst a kilometre or two away the poor live in shanty towns.

All in all, a fascinating trip. Peru is a beautiful country with a lot to offer but with a lot of problems to resolve before visitors will come in any real numbers. wish we could find a way to help them.

M TAYLOR



This scheme is a programme of leisure time activities designed to challenge young people aged between 14 and 25 to learn new skills, experience adventure and serve others. Anyone who joins the scheme chooses activities which suit their own particular interests and talents.

A group has been operating in the school for a few years now. Anyone interested in becoming involved should give their name to Mr Taylor. A meeting will then be arranged to provide more information to the interested pupils.

## SCHOOL SHOP

At the start of a new school session, it's a good time to introduce the School Shop to new pupils and their parents and to remind established pupils just what it's all about.

The School Shop exists as an ongoing fund-raising project in Dyce Academy. Most Tuesdays, you'll find myself and Fiona Fennell of the Drama Department setting a range of stationery and novelty items in the Drama Studio at lunchtime. School sweatshirts can also be ordered through the School Shop.

We're always on the lookout for new ranges to sell and welcome suggestions from pupils, parents and staff. We'll soon be able to put one such suggestion into operation when we start to sell a range of 'cruelty-free' and 'animal-free' body products through mail order. We're also willing to sell items made by pupils, so if any of you have any ideas, then let us know.

Prices in the shop are very competitive and all profits are ploughed back into the school fund for the benefit of the pupils. Although we have many regular pupil customers and most staff are generous supporters of the enterprise, many pupils never give the shop a visit. This is a pity as we cater for the needs of all pupils from S1-S6. So why not pay us a visit, especially if you haven't done so for a while - you might be surprised at what we have for you.

L YOUNG

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# Comment

In the June edition of 'School Boards News', Michael Forsyth wrote, "School Boards have been established for almost two years. In that short time they have achieved a great deal. For the first time, parents and the local community are being given a real say in the running of their schools. At the end of the school session the time is now right to look forward to see how School Boards might develop over the forthcoming months and years." He goes on to say,

"I also hope that School Boards and education authorities will start preparing for the election of parent members which are due to be held in all schools in the autumn. These elections will give the opportunity for new blood to be brought in where necessary and for Boards to be formed in the relatively small number of schools which do not yet have them."

After two years, the intention was that two of the five parent members of Dyce Academy School Board would stand down. As it turned out, two additional members also resigned, leaving four vacancies. I have been told informally that no nominations at all were received for these vacancies.

I wonder why.

Dyce Academy School Board worked quite well. The atmosphere was positive, we had some interesting debates on educational issues and I believe the parents learned quite a lot about the issues involved in running a secondary school. In general, the Board seemed quite happy to support the policies and practices of Dyce Academy. The Board members did, however, become quite frustrated when they realised that School Boards views were not really considered by the local education authority; in fact, the Board's views were generally ignored.

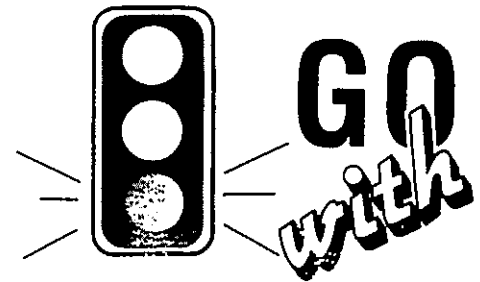
When the achievements of the Board were discussed at our last meeting, I was left with the distinct impression that members were dissatisfied. Not much had been achieved. Not because of lack of interest or commitment but because of the system.

Two years ago when School Boards were about to be formed, I wrote in an editorial,

"We are told that School Boards will give power to parents, presumably so that they can take over from 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?"

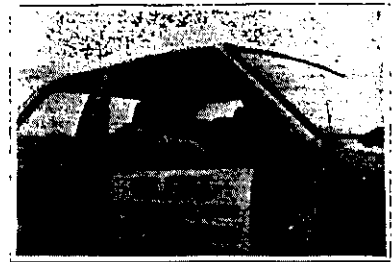
I believe our School Board did discover the root of State education's problems and realised that they could do little through the School Board to change this. I think the number of resignations and the lack of nominations for the new board is sending an important message to the government.

Parents do not want superficial solutions to our problems. They want adequate resources to be provided to enable teachers to carry out their work more effectively.



# GLEN

## DRIVING SCHOOL



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

## STAFF CHANGES

The following staff changes have taken place around the summer holidays :

Beth Bown of the Maths Department and Stewart Gall of the Learning Support Department retired at the end of last term.

Carol Park of the Science Department was transferred to Northfield Academy at the same time.

Ishbel Murray of the Art Department moved to Milan in September to start teaching English to Italians.

Sandra Hutcheon joined the technicians just before the summer holidays.

At the beginning of the summer term Kathleen Thomson joined the Maths Department and in September Fiona Michie joined the Art Department on a temporary basis.

## GRADUATIONS

Congratulations go to the following ex-Academy pupils who have recently graduated:

Jacqueline Crabb (BSc, Edinburgh), Nicola Bartlett (MBChB, Dundee) and Jennifer Howitt (Dip. Legal Practice), Dawn Nolan (MA) and Tanya Stephen (MBChB), all Aberdeen.

# Holland '91!



Over the past number of years, the end of the summer session has seen a group of Dyce Academy pupils accompanied by staff heading off to explore parts of Europe. This year was no exception. Only the destination was different and this time round it was the chance for Holland to welcome 'The Dycers'. The group was based in the tourist resort of Valkenburg in the south but there were visits to Alkmaar with its famous cheese market, cosmopolitan Amsterdam, Dreilandpont (where Holland, Belgium and Germany meet), Maastricht and the amazing man-made St Peter's Caves, De Eftling Theme Park and over the border into Germany to the historic city of Cologne and Phantasialand Theme Park.

There were many highlights during the trip and of course everyone has their own favourite memories. Who could forget Mrs McIntosh's death-defying ride down the dry toboggan run? Many of us will long remember the excitement of the Wild Water Rapids Ride and the Corkscrew Rollercoaster. For others (including Mrs Cockburn) the memory of 'the darkness' in the St Peter's Caves will be vivid for a long time. One could only be impressed by the magnificence of Cologne Cathedral and the view over three countries from the top of a very tall (and moving!!) steel tower at Dreilandpont. For those interested in things culinary, the meals aboard the overnight ferries to and from Hull were certainly memorable as were the packed lunches from our hotel!! If it was thrills anyone was after, then the go-karts in Valkenburg or the rollercoaster ride in the dark were hard to beat. Some of us experienced a stunning laser show at Phantasialand while others cemented Scottish-Irish relations in Valkenburg. Some went shopping in Cologne for the latest in European fashion, while Mr McLean bought a lot of beer from a Dutch supermarket. Mr Young ran about with his video camera causing hilarity and not a little embarrassment and I think everyone enjoyed the visit to a cafe in Valkenburg when we ordered 48 banana splits. It was, without doubt, a trip with something for everyone.

By Our European Correspondent 5

## MOCK INTERVIEW PROJECT

"It may be of interest to you that all three interviewed well enough to have been presented for short list consideration by management."

"All were advised to do much more research in the future prior to job interviews."

"She has an excellent character and would fit in well with our current workforce."

"A well-judged interview; responded to questions freely and with the right amount of detail, I enjoyed talking to him."

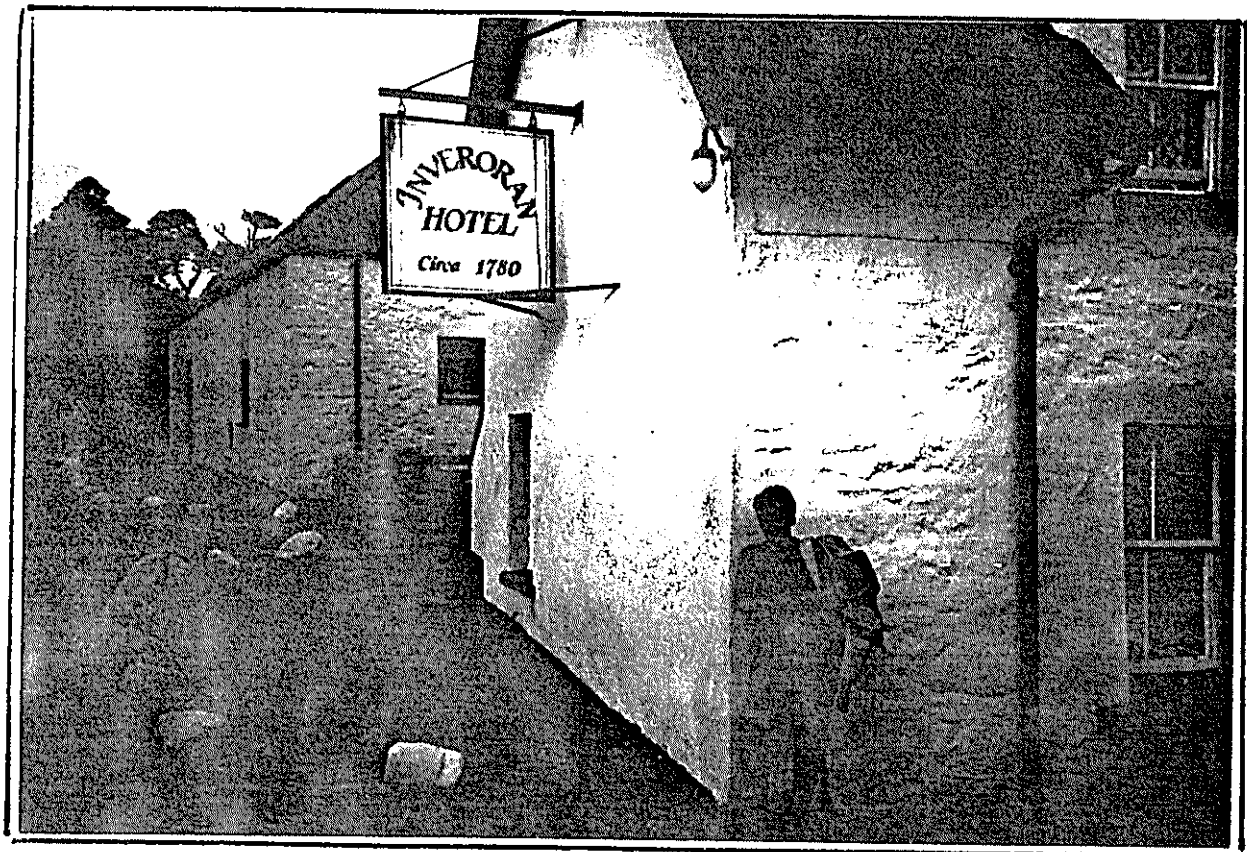
"I was impressed by all three's approach to their interview and their positive attitude to the project."

Just some of the comments from colleges, oil-related companies, small firms and large organisations who took part in our Mock Interview Project in March 1991.

The whole exercise is designed to give our S4 pupils the experience of applying for a job and being interviewed, in circumstances which are as real as possible.

Normally 'employers' involved have processed the applications and carried out the interviews on their own premises. Feedback is provided after the interviews so that pupils have an opportunity to learn from their performance before going for an interview for a 'real' job or course.

If you have not been involved in the past and feel you could contribute, please contact Mr Marioni, Assistant Head Teacher, at school.



During the summer holidays, our clerical assistant Pat and her husband walked the West Highland Way for charity. The walk of 95 miles stretches from Milngavie to Fort William, and took Pat and her husband a full week to complete. Happily the weather was kind, with only one rainy day, and although other walkers were seen, the way was not 'crowded', as can sometimes happen. In any case, Pat shows no signs of any ill-effects after the long walk.

It was all in a good cause - through their efforts, £522 was raised for GRID (Grampian Research into Intestinal Disorders). This is a relatively new charity set up to support work being done at the Rowett Institute, which is entirely dependant on voluntary contributions. Already over £7000 has been raised. Any volunteers to follow in their footsteps?

## Basketball

At last, the Under-15 Basketball League has got underway. Unfortunately, it means that Dyce has 10 matches to play before Christmas! The good news is that most of our younger players will probably get to play in at least one of the matches but with an average weekly turnout to the Basketball Club of about 40 pupils, patience would be greatly appreciated! Your turn will come!

If anyone is a qualified referee in Basketball, I would be most grateful if they could get in touch, especially if they would be willing to referee home games.

A McIntosh

## FOOTBALL NEWS

So far only the U-13 team has been in action. Largely composed of S1 boys they have equipped themselves well often against older and bigger opponents. At this stage of the season they require two points from their next two games to qualify for League A.

Results :

- (L) V Kemnay 0-1
- (L) V Oldmachar 4-3  
(Moncur 2, O.G., Steven Wood)
- (L) V Cults 6-3  
(Moncur 2, Orr, Stuart Wood, O.G., MacAndrew)
- (L) V Northfield 2-5  
(Hutcheon, Pirie)
- (L) V Westhill 2-4  
(Hutcheon, Orr)