

Up Dyce to Academy

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ARRIVADERCI, RICCARDO



At the beginning of February, Assistant Head Ricky left us to take up the post of Depute Rector at Mintlaw Academy. Ricky was one of the 'originals' of Dyce, having been appointed Principal Teacher of Maths in 1980, after spells at Powis Academy, Bankhead Academy and Mackie Academy. He led what was to become a widely respected department, and it was one of the first in Scotland to become involved in S Grade Maths. Renowned for his hardworking attitude, he expected no less of his pupils, and it was rumoured amongst Higher candidates that no-one from his class was 'allowed' to fail, or even think of it. Statistics confirm this.

Promotion to Assistant Head at Dyce followed in Session 1985-86, and Ricky claims never to have shouted at pupils who were trying their best. No doubt students, past and present, would agree.

A man of many sporting talents, Ricky became the first member of staff to break a leg while playing football - this after only two weeks of our first session. He is currently a member of Aberdeen Athletic Club, and trains regularly at lunchtime. His determination to run in all weathers frequently causes mystified shaking of the head from both staff and pupils. Ricky is also a terror of the golf course, and has never been known to concede an opponent's putt of less than two inches. However, he remembers one school Excursion Day with pride, when a first-time pupil achieved a hole-in-one - this entirely due to Ricky's advice and instruction as leader of the golf trip.

His contribution to school has gone far beyond the areas already mentioned - Crathes training weekends with senior pupils, staff representative and Vice Chairperson of the now defunct College Council, Scottish Examination Board work, school production stage crew director - the list is almost endless.

Pupils too, will remember his school assemblies with wonderment - Jack the baboon, the man who had memorised most of a telephone directory; witches in Sixteenth Century Aberdeen - these became part of the mythology of Dyce Academy.

Both staff and pupils will miss 'Mr' and he carries with him our best wishes in his new post.



ES LEBE SCHOTTLANI



VIVE L'ECOSSE!

At present in the Academy we are fortunate to have two foreign language assistants working in the Modern Languages Department - Christine Lucas from the town of Lorient in the south of Brittany, and Christina Janik from Hamburg in Germany. They have become good friends since working here and Update caught up with them recently to have a chat.

Christine has a degree in English/Spanish and decided she would like a year away from France to take stock before finally deciding on her future. She believes that visiting a foreign country will allow her to view things from a different perspective. She also sees her time here as being invaluable as far as improving her English is concerned although I'm sure most of us wish we could speak a foreign language half as fluently and confidently as Christine does. At present she is considering following a two-year teacher training course on her return to France, which would enable her to teach English, but she does not believe that the teacher training system in France is what it could or should be.

Christina, however, is still studying and has taken a year away from her German and Russian studies to improve her English and to find out if she would like to make teaching her career. She is finding that the break from routine and the experience of helping Scottish children understand her native language has remotivated her whole approach to her studies. She thinks that she may eventually go to Russia to teach German as a foreign language.

So what do they think of the Scottish people? Both girls are agreed that people in general have been extremely welcoming and friendly. Christina has particular praise for our local bus drivers. She has a number of stories

which reflect their helpfulness and nature. One cynical member of staff suggested it was only because she was young and blonde but as Christine herself pointed out, "I'm young and blonde in Germany and it doesn't make any difference with German bus drivers. The cynical member of staff was heard practising to speak with a foreign accent."

Christine has noticed quite a difference too between the Scots and the English. She says most Scots folk tend to be quiet and reserved at first but once she has made the first move to chat she found them opening up and becoming warm towards her, whereas the English she says, tend to make the first approach but that it's all superficial and short lived. I'm sure some of our readers might want to respond to that. While Christina agrees with this she feels that when she and Christine are together people are generally friendlier towards the French. Christine believes that this might be because of people's perception of Germany being a dominant country in the EC and as a result of the reputation that the Germans have (unfairly, she believes) for being arrogant and powerful. She also genuinely thinks that there is a legacy from the two world wars that many British people still consider the Germans to be 'the enemy'.

Both Christine and Christina have praise for our pupils. Christina found that the Scottish pupils she teaches here and at Oldmachar Academy are friendlier and more open than their German counterparts. Christine has noticed a difference between the pupils here and at Ellon Academy, where she teaches for part of the week. She finds Dyce pupils warmer. She says the Scottish are livelier and more outgoing. She wonders if it has something to do with the English children coming from a more rural background. In general, however, Christine is saddened that Scottish

pupils do not appreciate how important it is to be able to speak and write in a foreign language. She would also like to see more emphasis placed on the written word in our teaching of foreign languages.

One area in which Christine feels that we could learn from the French, is in the way we dress. She feels the French are more stylish, that they have a better sense of colour co-ordination and that they take greater pride in their appearance. She does, however, confess to finding the kilt very sexy. On the question of clothes, Christina approves of the no school uniform policy at Dyce Academy. She believes that it is far more natural and that the pupils seem more relaxed and comfortable than they do in schools where uniform is worn.

And what do they do when they're not teaching? Both girls spend a lot of time exploring, what they agree, is the spectacular and beautiful countryside of Scotland. They both enjoy visiting Scottish pubs where they claim there is usually a welcoming atmosphere, much more welcoming than at home, where it is less accepted for women to drop in for a drink and a chat. Christine is also finding time to continue her studies in English with a course at the university while Christina has joined the Aberdeen Bach Choir and plays the flute. She is learning to play the chanter at Oldmachar Academy and she would like to move on to trying the bagpipes.

Both Christine and Christina are certainly enjoying their time in Scotland and I only hope they continue to be made welcome wherever they go and that they continue to look upon us as one of the friendliest and warmest people of Europe.

LAURENCE YOUNG

SCHOOL SHOW

It has been put to us that the school support of the production of the Christmas show - 'The Call of Nature', which included a bomb threat in the plot, could be taken as an indication that we suggest that a threat of a bomb is a valid way to deal with serious issues in society.

The two fifth year authors of the show were not seriously suggesting that they believed bomb threats to be a way to resolve problems, nor does the school condone bombing or the threatening of bombing as a way of dealing with disagreements of the type portrayed in the show.

COMMENT

It has now been confirmed that there were no nominations for the vacancies on the Dyce Academy School Board and that the School Board is now disestablished.

For the first time since the school opened in 1980, there will be no 'formal' group on which parents and teachers meet.

Between 1980 and 1989, the College Council provided this opportunity, as did the School Board for the first two years of its existence. A Dyce Academy Association also existed in the earlier years of the school's life.

School Boards have not proved very popular throughout Scotland and most of us will not mourn their passing.

I am, however, concerned that I will not have the opportunity to share concerns about education in general and education in Dyce Academy in particular with parents on any regular basis. Obviously, I shall meet parents in a variety of circumstances, but the opportunity to meet groups of parents on a regular basis will be missed.

I would, therefore, like to try to form some organisation through which I, possibly along with some other staff, could meet with parents a few times a year to discuss issues of common concern. This need not necessarily be a PTA in the usual sense. I am more interested in the sort of get together at which parents have the opportunity to share their concerns about education with us and we have the opportunity to explain what we are doing, why we are doing it and what our worries are, to parents.

Is anyone interested? If so, please drop us a line or telephone me at the school (725118) with your thoughts on the matter or just to register your interest.

S3 CURRICULUM

National guidelines for the secondary curriculum were published by the Scottish Consultative Committee on the curriculum in 1989, 'Curriculum Design for Secondary Schools', and it is now regional policy that we follow these in designing our S3/4 curriculum.

As with any guidelines, this document is open to a range of interpretations. Dyce Academy staff have given the guidelines a great deal of thought and we believe the essential features to be as follows :

1.

All pupils should follow a course throughout S3 and S4 in each of the following curricular areas (the subjects in brackets are examples of the S Grade courses which are taken as belonging to this curriculum area) :

Language and Communication Native Language (English)

Language and Communication Modern Foreign Language (German)

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 & Design, Home Economics, Office & Information Studies, Technological Studies, Graphic Communication)

Creative & Aesthetic Studies (Art & Design, Drama, Music)

Physical Education

Religious and Moral Education

Some 'subjects' can be taken as contributing to more than one curricular area, eg Physics to Science and Technological Activities.

2.

Key elements of Personal and Social Education and Process Skills should also be included in the curriculum. These key elements are described as - health, rules, rights and responsibilities, equal opportunities, understanding and tolerance, care of the environment, critical appreciation of the media and guidance related to everyday living and future employment.

The process skills cover communicating and learning skills such as language, numeracy, assessing and processing information, learning strategies. They also cover technological and creative thinking such as reasoning, problem-solving, designing and practical application.

We have had to try to translate these features into a curriculum and have done so the following way :

A wide range of different types of courses will be offered to pupils in S3/4. One distinction between these courses will be that some lead to an external certificate and others are internal, non-examined courses. Certificates are required for qualifications but it is our view that certain features of the curriculum, particularly the elements of Personal Social Education and certain aspects of the process skills, are better 'taught' through school-based, non-examined courses free from the restriction of external syllabuses.

The certificated courses are of two main types,

- Standard Grade SEB courses which generally run for 160 minutes per week (2 periods at Dyce Academy) throughout S3 and S4.
- Short Courses normally certificated either by the SEB or Scotvec which run for 1 period per week for 1 year only.

It will probably be possible to take a cluster of four associated short courses instead of Standard Grade in some curriculum areas.

Non-examined courses vary from those which run for 1 period per week throughout S3 and S4 to courses which will run for 1 period per week for 10 weeks only.

The basic requirement of pupils in S3/4 will be that they follow a compulsory personal and social education course for 2 periods per week and that they choose courses which will involve them in at least 1 period per week of study in each of the nine curricular areas given above.

Pupils in S3/4 will be expected to make course choices as follows :

Certificated Courses

All pupils will be expected to follow full Standard Grade courses in English and Mathematics for an average of 2½ periods per week throughout S3/4.

It is then expected that most pupils will choose an S Grade course or cluster

CONT. PS.

of short courses from each of the curricular areas given above which offers a range of such courses.

Pupils may, if they wish, choose only to follow full S Grade courses in four of these areas or to follow two S Grade courses in any one area. Such pupils will be expected to follow short courses in the curricular areas in which they are not following full S Grade courses, in order to meet the basic requirement given above.

Pupils will, therefore, spend between 14 and 16 periods on this examined part of the curriculum.

This would mean that most pupils will be following seven S Grade courses, with the possibility of following a minimum of six.

Non-Examined Courses

The non-examined courses to be followed will be as follows :

1 period throughout S3 and S4 of a course entitled 'Beliefs and Values' which will cover the curriculum area of Religious and Moral Education.

An average of 1 period per week of Physical Education. A wide range of physical activities will be on offer from which pupils will be expected to choose.

2 periods per week of Personal and Social Education. One of these periods will be a Social Education period taken by Guidance staff; the other will be made up of a series of short courses including the following :

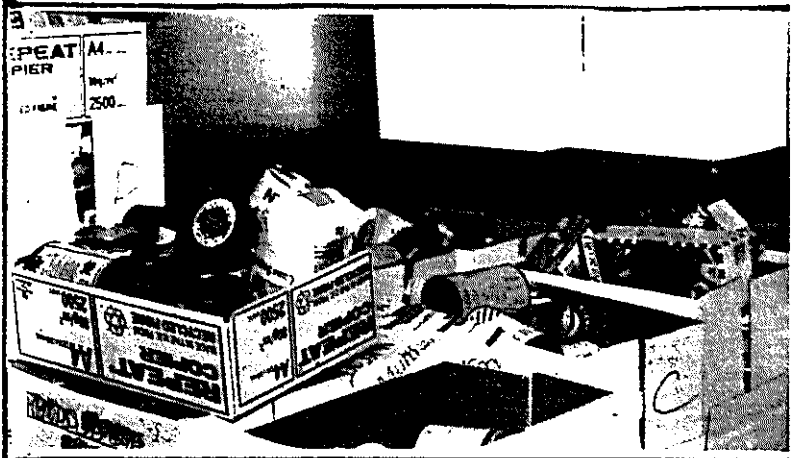
Environmental Education,
Media Education, Economic Awareness,
Thinking Skills, First Aid.

Pupils will be invited to choose up to 2 periods of General Studies (depending on the choice of certificate courses) from a wide range of courses on offer. These courses are made available in an attempt to widen interests of pupils, particularly in recreational activities.

Pupils will, therefore, spend between 4 and 6 periods on the non-examined part of the curriculum.

Those of you who are still reading this article will have realised by now this is all very complicated! We are now working on the production of a clear set of instructions for pupils and parents to follow when making their choice of S3 courses next year. Also, a parents' information evening has been arranged for Wednesday 26 February at 7.30 in the school. All parents are invited to this meeting but S2 parents in particular should make every effort to attend as the procedure for choosing S3 courses next session will be explained in detail.

CHRISTMAS APPEAL



Tins of shortbread, packets of mince pies, tins of salmon and ham, boxes of chocolates and fudge - no, not a gastronomic tour of Asda, but examples of the goodies stacked around me in my office during December.

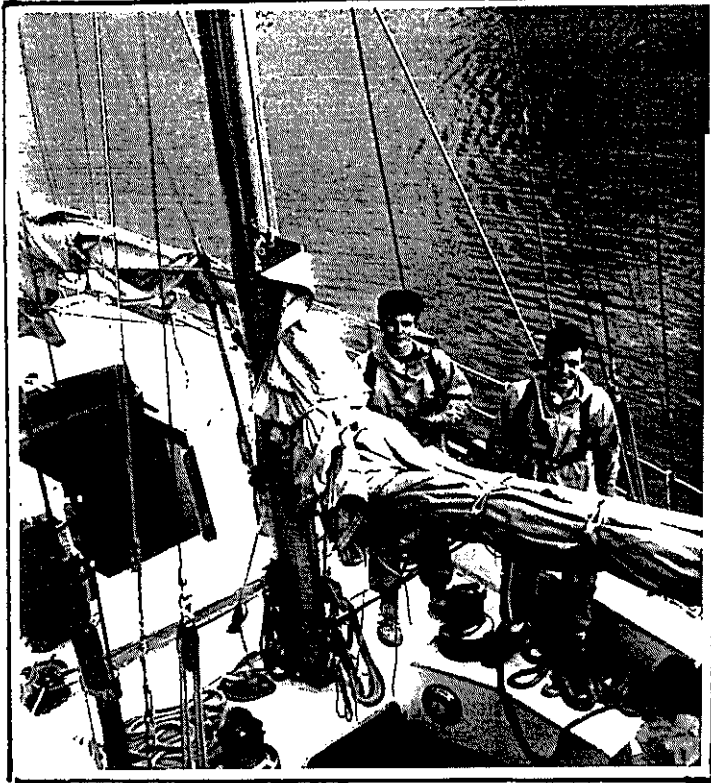
This was the second year that we had responded to the Northsound Appeal for goods to be made into parcels for local housebound people. Last year, pupils handed the items in to the office. This year, register teachers suggested that each class might like to have its own box to fill. The change was a success and on the due date pupils from each register class carried heavy boxes downstairs.

Members of the Pupil Council then gave up a lunch hour to repack the boxes and vary the contents. Some pupils had been thoughtful enough to bring along Christmas cards and notes, so these were included.

Eventually we had twenty large boxes, which were collected from us by the WRVS. They told us that our packages were too heavy and too generous to go out as they were. They would be divided up to give parcels to forty or even fifty local people who might otherwise have missed out on the seasonal treats that most of us take for granted.

MAIRI STEELE

THE TALL SHIPS 1992



Andrew and Graham on board
James Cook in June 1990

Last year the visit of the Tall Ships to Aberdeen created great interest in the city. This year, two of our current S6 students will actually take part in the Tall Ships Race. Here Graham Orr describes what will happen :

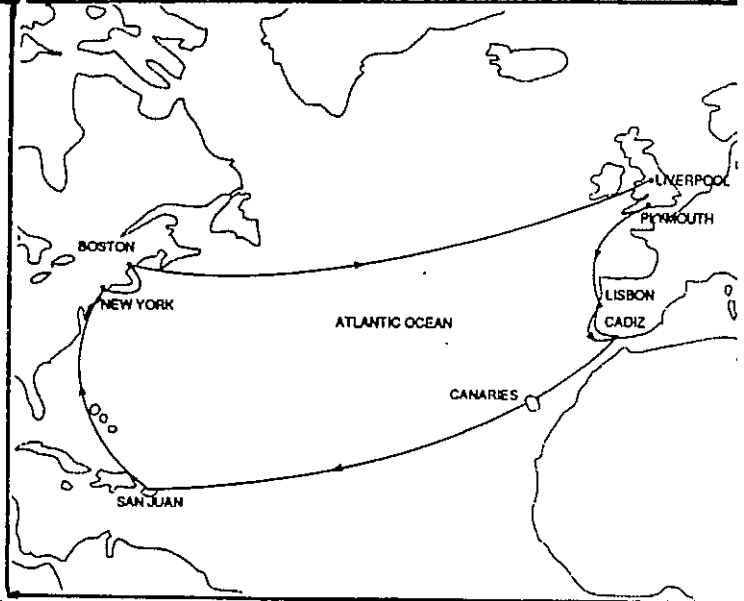
"This year is the quincentennial anniversary of Christopher Columbus making his voyage to the New World. To commemorate this, a Tall Ships Race is being held, approximately following the route taken by Columbus. The race will leave Spain in early May, sailing to Puerto Rico across the Atlantic with a crew changeover in the Canary Isles. The race continues from Puerto Rico, cruising up the Eastern seaboard of America, visiting some of the Caribbean Islands and New York on Independence Day, before halting in Boston for another crew change, prior to the start of the fourth and final leg of the race across the Atlantic with a possible stopover in the Azores, before finishing in Liverpool in mid-August. The whole race will last almost four months, with each crew being at sea for almost one month. This Tall Ships Race is set to be the largest ever, with approximately twice the number of ships participating as visited Aberdeen last year.

Another sixth year pupil, Andrew and I are participating in this race through The Ocean Youth Club. We both became interested in sailing through a

school-organised trip to Norway, whereby we sailed to Norway with The Ocean Youth Club and then went hill-walking for one week. This was in June 1990 and was similar to the annual West Coast of Scotland expeditions. We both enjoyed the sailing very much and when it was announced that The Ocean Youth Club was to enter two boats in the 1992 Tall Ships Race and were looking for crews, we decided to apply. We were both very fortunate to be accepted as in total there were only 96 crew berths available and many hundreds of applicants.

The boat we are sailing on is 'The Francis Drake'. This is a seventy-foot long ocean-going ketch, crewed by twelve youngsters along with five trained afterguard. Everyone is involved in the sailing of the ship and its maintenance along with cooking and cleaning duties.

Andrew is participating in the third leg of the race, from Puerto Rico to Boston while I am participating in the final racing leg, across the Atlantic to Liverpool.



To take part in this adventure we both had to pay The Ocean Youth Club approximately £2,000. We raised this through part-time jobs and general sponsorship from charitable organisations and local businesses. We are still raising money towards new equipment for the boat as it requires £28,000 of new sails and rigging, but now that we have raised our personal fees we are most definitely looking forward to our 'once in a lifetime' experience."

GRAHAM

DENMARK EXCHANGE



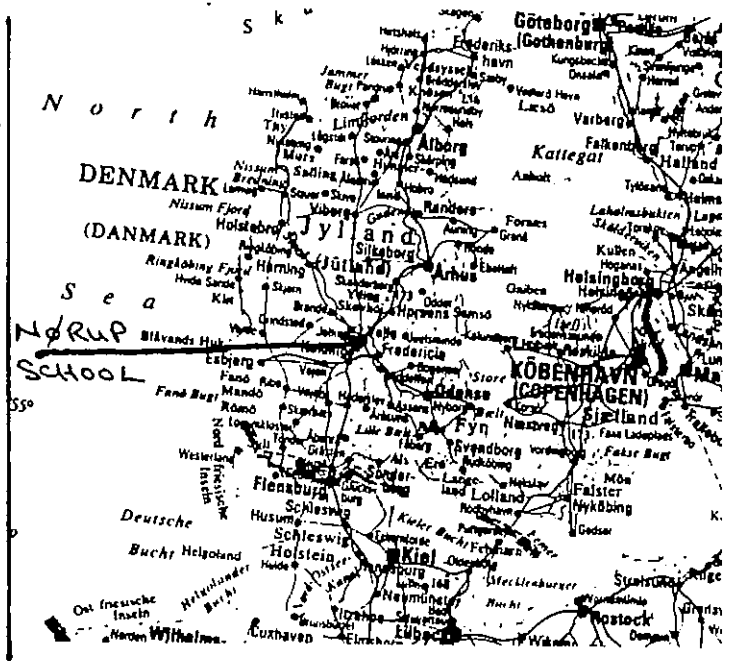
The letter writers

At the end of last term a letter was received from a school in Denmark. A class of their pupils wanted to correspond with pupils in Scotland.

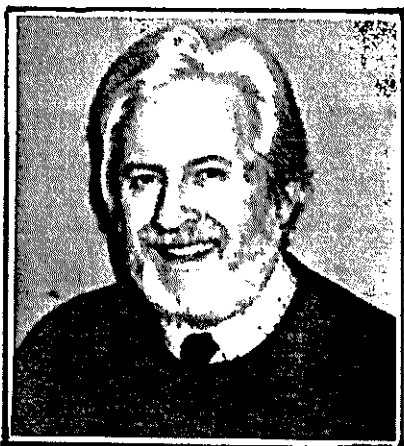
The offer was opened to the fourth year and a group of girls volunteered to write letters. Meantime some back copies of Update were included in an acceptance letter to Denmark.

Since then we have found out that the Danish school is also corresponding with Inverurie Academy and a school in Glasgow, which is probably just as well as only one of our pupils has actually put pen to paper so far.

KAY MORRISON



STAFF Ph.D.



Gerald Dyce, who teaches part-time in Dyce Academy Religious Education Department, was recently awarded a Doctor of Philosophy degree by the University of London.

Gerald came to Dyce around three years ago after a career spent mainly at Bedford College of Higher Education where, as well as RE, he taught some Humanities and Sociology. In addition to this he spent some time in both primary and secondary schools in Leicestershire and, more exotically, four years teaching in Bedford Prison.

Gerald's Ph.D. thesis is mainly concerned with looking at the influence of school experiences on pupils. He feels that in recent times there's been a noticeable shift away from the more liberal educational philosophies of the 1960s which emphasised all-round personal development. In England and Wales now, where the development of the National Curriculum has shifted the emphasis to more academic achievements, education now seems to be (in his words) 'more about winners and losers'!

HELLEN MATTHEWS

WHIZZPOPPERS GALORE!



The crowd gathering

Do you know what a 'whizz-popper' is? Have you ever tasted a 'snozzcumber'? Or experienced the amazing after-effects of a bottle of 'frobscottle'?

If you've never heard of any of these things, just ask S1 and S2 pupils at Dyce Academy to enlighten you!

On 24 January, one hundred and fifty-five S1 and S2 pupils, and attendant staff, went to a matinee performance of the BFG (Big Friendly Giant, to you!) at H M Theatre.

Both staff and pupils enjoyed this unusual adaptation of the Roald Dahl story. The acting was of a very high standard and sets and wonderful special effects captured everyone's imagination - in particular the sparkling dream bottles which really looked as if they contained beautiful dreams and terrifying nightmares.

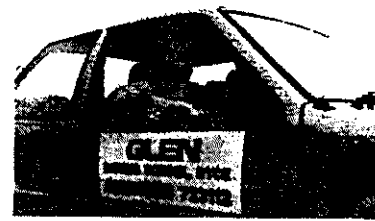
Sets were used imaginatively - Buckingham Palace being particularly impressive - and the full-size model of the BFG was very effective.

All in all, well worth going to see; giving pupils the opportunity to experience a novel in a way that we can't do at school.

Thanks to all staff who attended the performance. And a pat on the back for S1 and S2 Dyce Academy pupils who happily continued the Dyce Academy tradition of civilised theatre-going!

RHONA SMITH

**GO**
with
GLEN
DRIVING SCHOOL



Proprietor: Ian McLean
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