

S1 DROPS THE DEAD DONKEY !!!



The top floor Computer Room takes on the atmosphere of a busy news office as teams of S1 reporters put the finishing touches to their newspaper project. The work follows on from a computer game "Fleet Street Phantom" which forms part of the S1 English course.

DOWN ON THE FARM

Principal Teacher of Drama, Laurence Young, writes about an unusual but exciting teacher placement.

Work experience has rapidly become an established cross-curricular education/industry link activity in secondary schools in Grampian. Now subject departments are looking at ways to develop their own links with employers. Departments have freedom to and are being encouraged to set up such links as they think would be beneficial to their departments and the pupils who spend time in these departments.

As the Head of a Drama Department who also has a responsibility for media education in the school, I was interested in having a look at the production of television drama. Most television drama of course is not produced on an ongoing basis - it is either produced as a one-off play, a series or a limited run serial. This naturally makes it more difficult to get access to, when as a teacher you have to fit in any such visits/placements with a crowded timetable and the many commitments you have to pupils and the school. Questions like - when is a supply teacher available to cover my absence, when can I go that will cause the least amount of disruption to other developments I'm involved in and how easy will it be to convince a television company that such an exercise will be worthwhile? - all have to be addressed. If you were going to observe how a local theatre was run, the management techniques employed by Marks & Spencer or how computer technology is used in a particular industry, these are ongoing round the year activities that are therefore perhaps easier to gain access to. All this then led me towards a branch of television drama that is

ongoing - the television 'soap' - a branch of television drama that sadly is undermined by a great deal of snobbery. Many people, unjustifiably I believe, talk about 'soaps' as the poor relations of the television drama family and of course 'hardly ever watch them', yet many of these same people can suddenly become surprisingly knowledgeable when the conversation of others turns to the latest episodes. Why there should be this stigma attached to Emmerdale, Coronation Street, Eastenders and the like is not for this article to explore but having now witnessed the dedication and professionalism of a hard working 'soap' team in action, I can say that most of the criticisms are unfair and obviously uninformed. Certainly as a teacher of drama I regularly use 'soaps' as examples when talking about characterisation and plot development and, whatever they say, millions of people do tune in regularly - it's maybe just time that many of them ignored the television snobs and admitted it.

But back to my own department link - a decision having been made to try to get access to a production unit, the next question was - which one? I watch one particular 'soap' regularly - Emmerdale (formerly Emmerdale Farm) and so that was the obvious choice. Much better to get involved with something familiar, after all. A letter to Producer, Morag Bain, followed by my being interviewed by her over the telephone and I was invited to travel to their production centre just outside Leeds to spend two weeks watching four episodes being produced. It wasn't something they'd done before but it seems my initial letter and interview had convinced Morag Bain that I wasn't just coming as a 'tourist' but that I was genuinely interested in the production of their drama on a number of different levels. Head Teacher Mike Taylor's approval, finding a mutually suitable two-week slot and funding for the project all followed and so on Sunday 7 March I headed south for Leeds, the idea being to spend some of the first week on location and the second week

observing the studio-based production.

Sadly, due to a family bereavement, I had to return to Aberdeen at the beginning of the second week but I have been given the opportunity to go back in May to complete my placement. Here then, are some extracts from my diary during my time at Emmerdale.





DAY 1 - MONDAY 8 MARCH

Meeting with Producer, Morag Bain, and introduction to Emmerdale Production Centre. (Morag very welcoming and friendly - of course, she's a Scot. Has couch in office!! Could this be the famous casting couch? Will I have the cheek to ask her when I get to know her better?)

Attended storyline conference with producer, story editor, script editor and eight writers who were planning 'stories' to be recorded in July/August and broadcast five or six weeks later. (The plot developments I could tell you about - but I can't - I'm sworn to secrecy - but keep watching - some really juicy stuff coming up). Unfortunately, they're not going to take up my suggestion of an SAS style assault on The Woolpack when Alan Turner cracks and holds Frank Tate and the Pollards' cat hostage - oh well!! After lunch - tour of studio sets, dressing rooms, make-up and costume departments and then back to storyline conference.

DAY 2 - TUESDAY 9 MARCH

First day on location - at studios for 7.30 - taken to 'Tate's Haulage Yard'. Met the crew (very friendly, lots of irreverant banter - just like being back in the staffroom!!), had breakfast (location catering amazingly good - and lots of it!!), spent the day watching filming (a lot of hanging about in the cold - should have had school shoppie thermal socks on but Myles Hardie bought them all). Found everyone very open to questioning and met some of the actors in their caravan (a pretty basic portacabin actually - no Hollywood glamour here) - Diana Davies (Mrs Bates), Peter Amory (Chris Tate), Malandra Burrows (Cathy), Norman Bowler (Frank Tate) and Frazer Hines (Joe Sugden). Finished work at

6.30 pm.

DAY 3 - WEDNESDAY 10 MARCH

On location in 'Beckindale' for 8 o'clock this morning. Taken out in 'Frank Tate's' Range Rover and had breakfast with the very charming Richard Thorp (Alan Turner). Not taking any chances today (wore a vest for the first time in 15 years). Watched crew set up for the morning's filming, then went with Rod, the property buyer, to a props warehouse in Leeds. (Fascinating place, fascinating man, fascinating stories/information). More incredibly good location catering at lunchtime and then off to 'Home Farm' for afternoon filming. Crew very accommodating with extensive answers to all my queries, assisted sound crew (well, wore a set of headphones and carried some cables) and met some more of the cast - Leah Bracknell (Zoe Tate), Cy Chadwick (Nick Bates) and Morag Forest's heart throb, Stan Richards (Seth). Finished the day by watching Claire King (Kim Tate) and Frazer Hines (Joe) do a couple of scenes.

DAY 4 - THURSDAY 11 MARCH

At studios for 7.15 today to go out on location to new farmhouse - magnificent views although I didn't realise that for a couple of hours until the mist lifted. Was personally fitted for a pair of wellies by a tall, blond, attractive costume girl. (Eat your year out, Mr Hardie). Picking up lots of filming and technical tips by watching and asking questions (Media Education at Dyce will never be the same again - but wait till Mike Taylor sees my shopping list!!). The crew have obviously taken to me (they've started to be as abusive to me as they are to each other) and they really like it when I carry their equipment for them. Met more actors today (and no, they don't all go about saying "Lovey, Lovey, Darling,

Darling!!"). Very impressed with cast - because of tight schedule, all location filming for four episodes is done in one week, which means no real rehearsal time - and you've got to remember they're not actually recording their scenes in the order they'll appear on our television screens - impressive stuff.

DAY 5 - FRIDAY 12 MARCH

Day spent at production centre. Opportunity to have close look at studio sets and to talk to producer, production supervisor, story editor, production researcher, production publicist, various technical staff and a director, his production assistant and his unit manager who were working on the pre-production stage of the next block of four episodes. Also had the opportunity to watch an editor doing some off-line video editing of the material I had watched being filmed earlier in the week. Everyone is so helpful and co-operative. (Almost forgot - had a pint or two with 'Seth' in the pub across the road - very interesting and entertaining man).

DAY 6 - MONDAY 13 MARCH

Rehearsal day for studio filming. Opportunity to watch rehearsals interspersed with chats with members of the

cast. A time of concern for them - it's contract renewal time!! Will they have their contracts renewed or are they to be written out? Spent more time learning about editing and observed another director involved in post-production work. (He even asked by advice about something - now I feel really important!!) More interviews with production personnel.

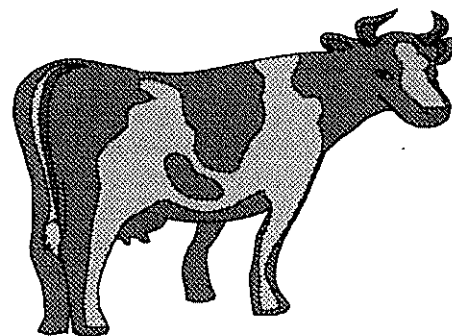
DAY 7 - TUESDAY 14 MARCH

Watched some more studio rehearsals followed by chance to sit in on commissioning meeting with writers. Following on from storyline meeting of last week, storylines for eight future episodes have been determined by story editor and writers are finalising details and preparing to go off to write first draft scripts.

Sadly, had to leave Emmerdale today at lunchtime.

To be continued

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MEDIA STARS

The school entered a team in the 'Northsound Radio / Hydro-Electric Schools Challenge', a music and general knowledge quiz which it is hoped will become an annual event and which is broadcast on Northsound. Our team, comprising of Tony Wells, Richard Smith, Alison Edwards and Kris Duthie, romped home to an impressive victory in the first round against The Gordon Schools, Huntly. Unfortunately, they were beaten by a team from Cults Academy in the quarter finals. Although the music knowledge of the Dyce team was impressive, they were outclassed by the Cults pupils in the area of general knowledge.

On a related theme, on the afternoon of Tuesday 27 April, 46 pupils from S1 were auditioned for the popular Grampian Television game show 'Pick A Number'. After being put through their paces for an hour by programme presenter Phil MacKay and Production Assistant Heather McDonald, two teams of three and a reserve were picked to represent the school in programmes to be recorded during the last week of term and broadcast after the summer holidays. The pupils chosen were - Joanne Cormack, Kris Duthie, Russell Gibb, David Harrison, Kevin Mathieson, Natasha Mayfield and Steven Smith.

THE PLAY'S THE THING a theatrical update!

LOCAL THEATRES

Regular trips to the theatre continue to be a popular 'curriculum enrichment' at Dyce Academy for pupils of all ages. An afternoon with "The Witches", for 150 S1/S2 pupils in January was followed by outings to "Macbeth" and "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie" for senior pupils, all courtesy of the English Department.

February also saw the Culture Vultures heading for the musical "Dracula Spectacula" at Haddo which, according to one satisfied Drama teacher, 'had us all in stitches!' - not too gory we hope!

DRACULA SPECTACULAR

LES MISERABLES

The highlight of the past few months however (no offence to other trip organisers!) has to be the Laurence Young Theatrical Enterprises epic 800-mile round trip to the acclaimed production of "Les Miserables" musical. Who better to sum it up than our resident impresario, Laurence himself, who, along with the rest of the Young family and nine Standard Grade Drama pupils, set off on 12 February for MANCHESTER !!! .

"The party stayed in the Four Star Britannia Hotel in the centre of Manchester. On the Friday evening some of the group visited a local cinema while the others made use of the hotel's excellent leisure facilities. Saturday morning was free while the afternoon saw the Dyce party attending a performance of the world-famous and highly acclaimed musical, Les Miserables, at the Palace Theatre. With its stirring, exciting and at times heart-rending music and lyrics, its impeccable performances and its stunning visual effects, it was an emotional and unforgettable afternoon. After the performance I had managed to arrange a backstage tour which I had kept as a surprise for the pupils. The tour, led by stage manager Jonathan Woolf, was the icing on the cake of what everyone agreed had been a wonderful theatrical experience.

Saturday evening was spent at leisure in the hotel and Sunday was taken up with a Granada Studios Tour. The group arrived back in Aberdeen tired but happy very late on Sunday night (or was it early Monday morning?) very glad that Monday was a school holiday!!

PS The trip was organised before it was known that Les Miserables was coming to Edinburgh later this year but it had been such an enjoyable weekend that nobody minded and most of the pupils so enjoyed the show that they can't wait to sign up for a trip to Edinburgh in the autumn!

NUMBER ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Over the last two years in Dyce Academy a group of teachers has been meeting with the aim of finding out which mathematical topics are used widely across the school curriculum, how they are taught and at what stage in the years. The group, or working party as it was known, contained a number of staff from different subject departments and met under the leadership of Mr Ian McLean, Principal Teacher of Mathematics.

Many adults, including teachers and parents, don't appreciate how much Maths teaching has changed since they were at school. The group therefore hoped to be able to produce policy statements which would encourage departments to co-ordinate the timing and teaching of mathematical skills used.

The first action of the group was to carry out an audit of what mathematics was being taught by other departments in S1/2 courses and when it was being taught. Departments were asked to give examples of particular aspects of mathematics which

arose in their subject area. These were discussed by the group and 'standard solutions' put forward in policy statements.

It is perhaps surprising how often mathematical skills are required in the teaching of other subjects and the different ways in which these can be tackled. Both Social Subjects and Science, for example, used negative numbers, the former in historical timelines and Science when looking at temperature.

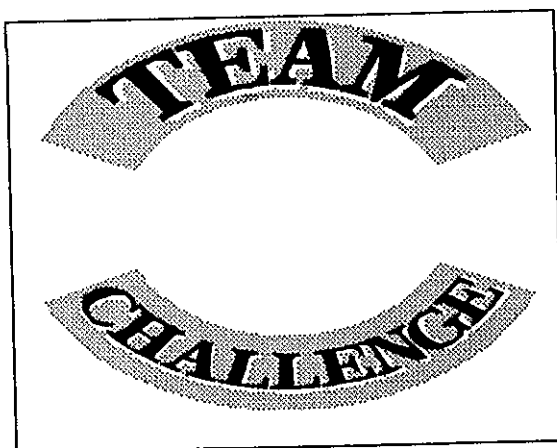
Percentages were covered by a whole host of departments with their use being divided into different categories, eg Percentages and Pie Charts - used by Social Subjects, Biology, Science and OIS. These, it was recommended, could be constructed using computer software - and a specific package was recommended - or by using traditional methods which were detailed for departments and a common 'help card' produced for those having difficulties.

Pupils also had to be able to calculate a percentage of a given quantity. Although it was agreed that calculators could be used,

pupils should understand how to do the calculation, not just press the appropriate % button on the calculator.

In order to help pupils cope with mathematical problems in other subject areas, the Maths Department intend to teach some skills using worksheets consisting of examples from a range of subject areas. Also, pupils will be able to consult standard 'help cards' to solve particular types of problems whichever subject they are doing.

The work of the group is by no means finished. Its latest task is to look at the use of the calculator across the curriculum and produce a policy statement on this. Through the continued efforts of this group of teachers it is hoped to make both pupils and teachers' lives easier in the learning and teaching of Maths across the curriculum.



This June, S4/5/6 (and possibly younger) will get the chance to try their hand (and feet) and something different on Activities Day.

Called a team challenge, pupils will experience something which might be explained as a cross between "The Crystal Maze" and "The Krypton Factor".

A team of organisers from Edinburgh will arrive the day before to set up a variety of challenges - both indoor and outdoor - including a mobile climbing wall probably.

On the day, pupils will be allocated to a team, then the fun commences! Around six challenges will be set - all of them having a time limit. Amongst other things the team members must be prepared to - think carefully; use their initiative; get wet!

The activities are not only fun but devised or sound, recognised principles used in management development and training.

The organisers have all the necessary qualification including First Aid and Life Saving! Obviously everyone taking part is fully insured.

Finally, the exact nature of the challenges is closely guarded secret. However, such words as scaffolding, puzzle courses, canoes, blindfolds might give clues.

ROBERT GORDON'S UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

The following former pupils of Byce Academy graduated from RGU in Summer 92:

Richard Addison	-	BSc (CNAAB) in Electronic & Electrical Engineering
Steven Addison	-	HND/BSc (CNAAB) in Electronic & Electrical Engineering
Graeme Buchan	-	HNC in Civil Engineering
Jacqueline Buchan	-	Diploma in Physiotherapy
Lawrance Chessor	-	BA (CNAAB) in Hospitality Management
Mhairi Hardie	-	BA (CNAAB) in Librarianship & Information Studies - Honours
Bruce Henderson	-	HND in Hospitality Management
Malcolm Hendry	-	BA (CNAAB) in Hotel Catering & Institutional Administration
Audrey Laing	-	Post HNC in Chemistry
Scott McGillivray	-	BSc (CNAAB) in Electronic & Electrical Engineering
Jennifer Moncur	-	Diploma in Diagnostic Radiography
Joanne Rennie	-	PG Diploma (CNAAB) in Personnel Management - Distinction
Stewart Ritchie	-	B Eng (CNAAB) in Electronic & Information Engineering
Jacqueline Simpson	-	BA (CNAAB) in Hotel Catering & Institutional Administration
Shirley Smith	-	HND in Hotel Catering & Institutional Management
Heather Stewart	-	PG Diploma (CNAAB) in Librarianship & Information Studies
Russell Taylor	-	HND in Computing
Karen Thomson	-	BA (CNAAB) in Business Studies
Warren Wattie	-	BSc (CNAAB) in Quantity Surveying

COMIC RELIEF

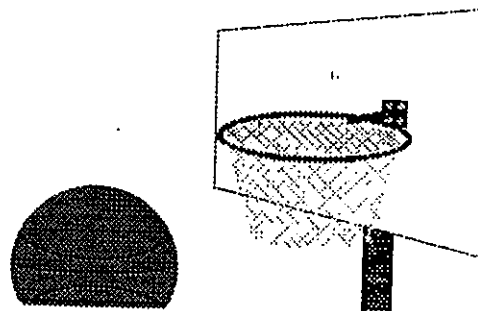
**CLOSE CONTEST AS STAFF BOX
OUT PUPILS IN BASKETBALL
CHARITY MATCH**

As a contribution to Comic Relief, the staff and pupils played a seriously fun match on Thursday 11 March. The staff were represented by a very strong and experienced team made up of Alison Angus, Alan Thorn, Tom Ferguson, Brenda Urquhart and Mike Taylor. In addition, we introduced our guest secret weapon, Don Hawthorn, who was 'on loan' from Northern College of Education. This all proved to be too much for a valiant pupil team who soon found themselves behind to explosive speed and accurate shooting from the staff.

The pupils seemed to be hampered by their tendency to keep to the rules and willingness to change the team at any opportunity but did manage to plug away and score a few baskets. Indeed, towards the end of the game the score was being rapidly narrowed as the pupils senior team exploited the staff's age disadvantage (a dirty trick if ever I knew one). At the end, however, the staff held on to a narrow victory (26 - 20 though this is disputed) and continue their unbeaten run to two matches.

More importantly, to date, the event has raised over £130 for Comic Relief and the initiative of the pupils in presenting this challenge must be applauded. Well done and better luck next year!

PS A group of senior pupils managed to extort a further £201 from staff and pupils on Comic Relief day.



SWIM TEAM RESULTS

Dyce Aberdeen ASC won the Forres Trophy at a recent meet and Dyce girls retained the Golspie best girls team trophy for the 7th year in a row. Some swimmers also swam well at Banff and Whitburn.

FORRES WINNERS

GOLD Kerry Wood 100 m free
 Scott Shand 100 m free
 Carole McKenzie 100 m fly
 Richard Douglas 100 m breast

SILVER Carole McKenzie 100 m breast
 Kerry Wood 100 m fly
 Denise McLennan 100 m free
 Carole McKenzie 100 m back

BRONZE Denise McLennan 100 m back
 100 m breast
 Linda McGregor 100 m fly
 Karen Urquhart 100 m free

GOLSPIE WINNERS

GOLD Linda McGregor 100 m IM
 100 m back
 100 m fly
 100 m breast

Sandra McGregor 100 m fly

Kerry Wood 50 m breast

SILVER Kerry Wood 100 m breast

BRONZE Kerry Wood 100 m fly

Alison McKenzie 100 m back

Sandra McGregor 100 m back

Linda McGregor 100 m free

Scott Shand 100 m fly

Carole McKenzie 100 m free

BANFF WINNERS

SILVER Carole McKenzie 200 m IM
 Alison McKenzie 100 m breast
 Karen Urquhart 100 m free
 Alison McKenzie 100 m back
 100 m fly

BRONZE Sandra McGregor 200 m IM
 Alison McKenzie 200 m IM

WHITBURN WINNERS

6th Sandra McGregor 100 m breast
 100 m free
 100 m fly
 1st Carole McKenzie 100 m breast
 2nd Carole McKenzie 100 m free
 5th Carole McKenzie 100 m breast
 4th Alison McKenzie 100 m back
 6th Alison McKenzie 100 m back

Linda McGregor also received a trophy for the best girl in her age group at Golspie.



Back Row - Kerry, Richard, Alison
 Middle Row - Denise, Diane, Carole, Alison, Scott
 James Mearns, Linda McGregor
 Front Row - Dawn, Karen, Sandra