

GRAMPIAN SCHOOLS 1993 RIVER SURVEY

Many pupils from schools all over Grampian are presently taking part in the 1993 Grampian Schools River Survey. Dyce Academy was asked to investigate biological and geographical aspects of the River Don at Parkhill Bridge. For example, the bird life around the river and the depth and speed of the water.

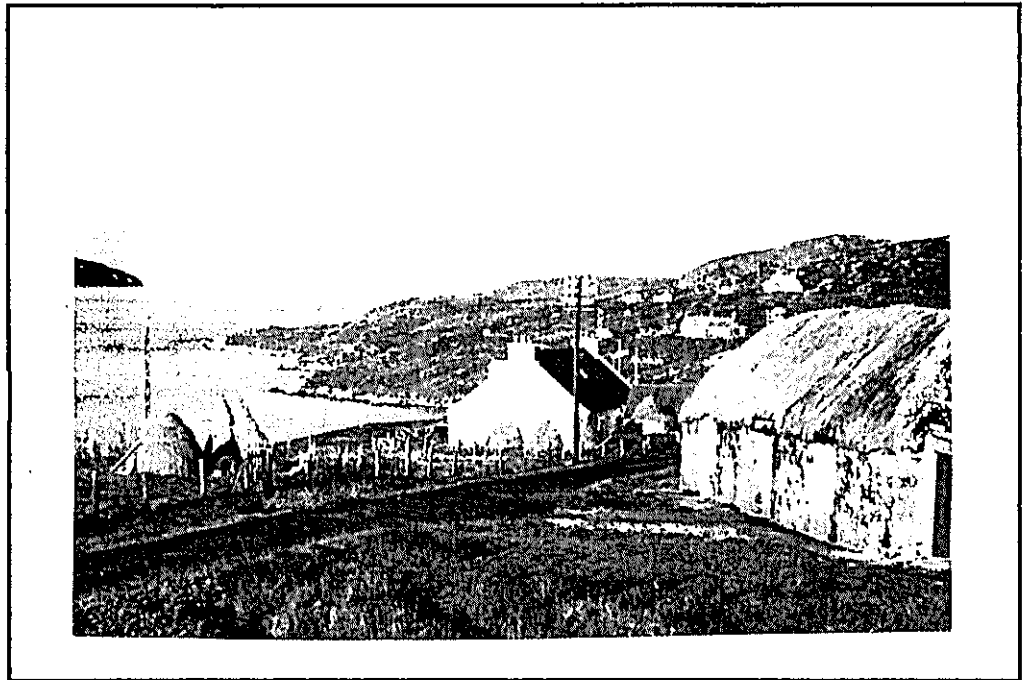
Both Geography and Biology classes participated in this River Monitoring Survey and arranged a date on which to complete all the work but, unfortunately, on the chosen day it was cold and pouring rain which made it impossible for the experiments to be carried out accurately.

The weather was not to stand in the way of my Geography class though and we set off, armed with our umbrellas, to the Parkhill bridge. Here we made attempts to measure the depth of the water and get an idea of the shape of the river bed. To do this we threw a weighted rope over the bridge counting the metric measurements along the rope as it submerged. We also checked the speed and width of the river but all this was very difficult due to the river being in spate. Another of the geographical tasks was to study the types of land use around the area which we later transferred onto a map.

Since Biology had to study things present 'in' the river itself, going on the previous day would have been too dangerous and pointless, so another day was arranged which wasn't really much better. However, the 'biologists' donned their wellies and Mr Large his waders and set to work checking pH levels, temperature changes and signs of pollution. We also took kick samples to see exactly what lived in our river and recorded our results back in class (out of the rain).

Now all our results have been put together and last minute arrangements have been made to prepare for the 1993 River Survey Conference where we will find out from other schools about the rivers Dee, Findhorn, Spey, Deveron and Bervie. Also on the agenda for the conference is an introductory talk from the Director of Education and guest speakers are also to be present.

All in all our river is quite healthy and I found the results quite encouraging as far as pollution is concerned. Let's hope it stays that way! I know that everybody enjoyed taking part in the survey. Even though it was wet, after the work was done we had great fun splashing in the puddles!



This year's West Coast Trip moved off the West Coast to the Western Isles, to explore some of the hills of North Harris. We had been warned that it always rained in the Outer Hebrides but we knew that the West Coast Trip always attracted good weather so were not to be put off.

After travelling from Ullapool to Stornoway and spending the night at an 'official' campsite, we spent our first day visiting some historic sights on Lewis - the Callanish Stones, Carloway Broch and a Black House. We then walked into the wilderness of North Harris with all our gear. It was overcast and sort of raining, but not seriously. We had a night of serious rain and wind and awoke the next morning to rain and wind. Nobody was too worried about having to stay in 'bed' in the tents for the morning. It cleared at lunchtime so we managed to fit in a good, if windy, walk for a few hours. By the time we returned to the tents it had started raining again, and was still raining at mid-day the next day. So, another morning had to be spent 'in bed'.

Everyone had managed to keep sort of dry so far. This wasn't going to last. The burn running past our tents

looked about to burst its banks, the lochan nearby was getting closer and our campsite on a rise above the burn was becoming a bog - many of us were relaxing on water beds! So, we decided to move and walked out with our very wet tents and then drove to the Youth Hostel at Stockinish where we were booked in for the following night - fortunately, there was room for us. The hostel was very basic - an old school with outside lavvies - but was dry and windproof.

Our last day gave us a little taste of Harris in good weather. We had a beautiful walk along the coast which included a visit to a village deserted about 30 years ago and to another village which has only had a road to it for 2 or 3 years. The walk had some interesting scrambly bits and included climbing the equivalent of a 3000 ft mountain.

I suppose it did rain most the time, but we did manage to fit in two very good walks in the only two dry spells we had. We also thoroughly enjoyed ourselves; everyone was very relaxed and determined to enjoy the experience of looking after ourselves in a very remote part of the world. Harris certainly does have the magic I had been told it had. It has an atmosphere all of its own: the emptiness; the Gaelic road signs; the incredibly rocky, almost lunar, landscape; the well constructed footpaths joining the tiny, or sometimes deserted, communities, and so on.

It is different and, if possible, will be visited again - without the rain?

MIKE TAYLOR



As you read this edition of UPDATE, a small party of senior students and staff from the school will be attending an environmental education conference in Nova Scotia, Canada.

Students and staff from the school have attended these annual events for the past seven years. The purpose of the conferences is to bring young people from different cultures and backgrounds together to discuss the environmental issues which affect us all and to try to develop a shared understanding of them. Sharing experience and understanding in this way also should help the participants to understand what needs to be done to secure the future.

In Canada this June we will be considering the theme of 'Environment and Natural Resources', the aim of this being to increase awareness that everything we need comes from the Earth and will return to it once we have finished with it. It is therefore important to understand that we must use the resources wisely and in a sustainable way. The future of the human race as well as all the other equally important living things on the planet depend on how we use the resources which nature provides. No doubt there will be many thought provoking excursions and discussions during the course of the conference.

The party from Dyce have done a lot of research into use of two major resources in the North-East (agriculture and oil) and will be presenting their findings at the conference.

Apart from the formal conference programme, attending an event such as this is a great opportunity to meet people from many different countries in both the developed and developing worlds. Students from the school who have attended previous conferences have



always thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

In June 1994, however, pupils and teachers from Dyce will not be travelling far to attend the Caretakers conference. In fact we will be organising it! It is our turn to host the conference and this means that between 200-250 delegates from all over the world will be coming to Aberdeen to continue the work of Caretakers of the Environment.

Organising an event of this type is both a great privilege and a lot of hard work. Planning is already well under way: accommodation for the delegates has been booked, a theme chosen and a programme has been planned. Grampian Region have agreed to support the event and are providing considerable sponsorship for it. Support has also come from Scottish Natural Heritage. One of our biggest tasks however is raising the additional funding necessary to cover our costs. We are hopeful that some support may come from industry and commerce in the Aberdeen area.

We are confident that the Aberdeen area offers a good location for an environmental education event of this type and that the delegates will enjoy being here. It is also a great opportunity for the school to be involved in a major international event. During next session there will be regular reports in UPDATE about the progress with our plans. There may even be requests for help of various kinds from the school community!

RAYMOND JOWETT

FROM OUR FILM AND TV CRITIC ... A STAR IS BORN

Laurence Young's recent guest appearance on 'Emmerdale' left Dyce Academy staff and pupils stunned. Generation would not be an inappropriate word to describe the general reaction to Larry's deeply moving and subtle re-orientation of the bandit player/walk-on beer swigger. The energy and universality of Commedia dell'arte combined with the bleakness of post-war German expressionist cinema to produce a dramatic tour de force unlike anything seen on British screens in recent years. Larry ran the gamut of emotions from A to B and this critic was reminded of the primitive energy of the young Marlon Brando. Significantly, he eschewed any crude use of language. He preferred to let the fluid movement of his own body express the inner torment he clearly felt.

Representing both Eros and Thanatos, his agonising journey from one-armed bandit to bar counter is surely one of the landmarks of British television drama. In preparation for this challenging part, Mr Young has clearly suffered - now it was the turn of the audience! One was reminded of the torment in King Lear, the confusion of Estragon and Vladimir or, perhaps, to be more specific, the agony experienced by Sharon in 'Eastenders' on hearing that her toy noodle had been crushed by a passing delivery van.

□L'enfer c'est le Woolpack.□

I look forward to Mr Young's next performance - rumoured to be Sinbad's replacement in 'Brookside'.

John McTigue (TV Critic)



S3 FURTHER EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

During the month of May some twenty-eight S3 pupils from Dyce Academy spent three days in the various Aberdeen Further Education colleges. This was financed under the TVE initiative with the aim of making school pupils aware of what FE colleges can offer them, either immediately on leaving school or as a place to retrain sometime in the future.



A variety of different subject areas were attended including Art, Engineering, Secretarial, Catering, Agriculture, Building, Computing and Hairdressing. For such a wide range of subjects pupils had to attend the various campus sites in and around Aberdeen at Ruthrieston, the Gallowgate, Linksfield, Balgownie and Clinterty.



The general consensus from the group on their experience was that it was interesting and most were able to have 'hands on' experience. This involved working on car engines, computers, developing photographs, creating meals or even tractor driving.

The only aspect of the experience which caused some concern was that in some cases the reception staff at the colleges were not informed of the pupils' arrival, but once they found their respective departments they enjoyed being treated like college students.



The Dyce pupils were congratulated on their punctuality and sensible, enthusiastic approach to all tasks given. All felt that they had taken part in a valuable learning experience.

A TRAINING COURSE FOR BUSINESS

The school has established many links with local business. Businessmen and women are frequently in school to speak to pupils, support our careers convention, etc. Pupils and staff often go out of school to visit local businesses - just to find out what goes on or, more specifically, for Mock Interviews or Work Experience.

In our discussions with these business people we are frequently asked for information about the 'new exams' - especially Standard Grade. These exams are not really so new now but are still a bit of a mystery to most adults. A range of leaflets are available for distribution to employers and, when the new courses were introduced, a few information sessions were provided. To really understand the courses leading to Standard Grade, however, people need to experience them.

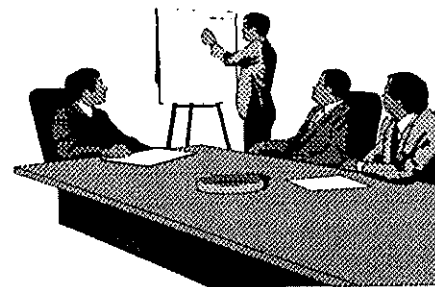
The school, with some financial support from Grampian Enterprise, put together a day course on Standard Grade - 'S Grade English and Maths for Business' - to address this problem. The aim of the course was to actively involve those taking part in doing some Maths and English - not just being told about it. The morning would be devoted to Maths and the afternoon to English. We sent out about 100 invitations; about a dozen people from a wide range of 'business' backgrounds took up our offer.

The day was a great success.

Ian McLean from the Maths Department and Joyce Giles from the English Department had put a great deal of work into providing a range of activities which gave a good insight into how S Grade courses are taught and assessed, and kept everyone busy.

Our visitors were a little apprehensive at the start of the day - were they going to be able to cope with any demands made on them? They all, however, appeared to enjoy the day and left with a much better understanding of 'these new exams' and, I believe, a respect for what Standard Grade is trying to achieve.

MIKE TAYLOR



SOUTH GRAMPIAN SCHOOLS ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

DATE - Wednesday, 9 June 1993

PLACE - Chris Anderson Stadium,
Aberdeen

TIME - 1230 hours

TEAM - Douglas (

Stuart

Mark

Scott

EVENTS - 100 m, 200 m, 800 m, 4 x 100 m

Relay, Shot Putt

Dyce Academy pupils were extremely successful in their individual events, but as a 4 x 100 m relay team, they were:

First in their heat and

Third in the final in a time of 55.3 seconds.



Down on the Farm and in the Pub

Principal Teacher of Drama, Laurence Young, completes his 'Emmerdale' diary following his second visit to the Emmerdale Production Centre near Leeds.

Day 8 - Monday, 10 May

Returned to the Emmerdale Production Centre for a 'studio' week, the opportunity to watch the studio filming for the four episodes which went out on 15 / 17 / 22 / 24 June. Once again made very welcome. Spent the day watching various scenes being locked (the actors being given their moves which the director had previously worked out based on where he was to position his cameras and how he was to use them) and rehearsed. This was done in a large rehearsal room with the different studio sets marked out with different coloured tape on the floor. Opportunity to talk to cast members and production crew (some of whom I had not met during my last visit).

Day 9 - Tuesday, 11 May

More blocking and rehearsing. Very interesting to watch a different director from the one working during my last visit. Quite a different approach to rehearsals. Creates an added complication for actors having to work with a number of different directors and their distinctive styles. Another example of their supreme professionalism in that they just get on and do it. Sat in on another commissioning meeting with writers. (Once again had the opportunity to find out what's going to happen months from now. Like to find out? Fivers in a plain brown envelope to Dyce Academy Drama Department!!). After lunch (short visit to the pub with 'Seth') spent time with audio dubbing engineer and video editor. Was presented with a number of video tapes containing the rushes (raw video footage) of some of the location scenes I had seen videoed during my last visit. (This will allow pupils to edit together their own versions of the scenes and allow me to enhance my video editing skills - eat your heart out Spielberg!!). Watched Producer's Run. All studio scenes for the four episodes were rehearsed on the appropriate sets with the producer in attendance. Also gives cast opportunity for last rehearsal and crew the opportunity to see what the director is planning.

Day 10 - Wednesday, 12 May

First day of studio recording. Spent most of the day watching scenes in 'Mill Cottage' being recorded. Twenty scenes in all recorded for the four episodes. Watched some of it from the studio floor and some from the production gallery. Spent some time today with crew from wardrobe and make-up departments.

Day 11 - Thursday, 13 May

On location this morning. (I'd forgotten how good location breakfasts were - makes up for having to get up early). Chance to watch a third director at work in 'Beckindale' recording materials to be screened at the end of June/beginning of July. Scenes being filmed outside 'The Woolpack' and at 'Nick's Cottage' made difficult by busloads of sightseers who had turned up to see the locations used in the programme. Tourists obviously thrilled to be lucky enough to be visiting during a filming day but, of course, not really aware of the need to keep quiet and out of shot. Cast very accommodating with photographs and autographs during breaks in filming - it is their public after all. Returned to studios with 'the Pollards' to watch scenes in 'Pollard's cottage' and 'Pollard's office' being recorded as well as scenes in 'Nick's cottage' and 'Home Farm kitchen'.

Day 12 - Friday, 14 May

Recording of 'Woolpack Bar' and 'Wine Bar' scenes. MY BIG CHANCE!! Invited to be an 'extra' in one of the 'Woolpack' scenes. If you were watching on Tuesday 15 June and looked really carefully you may have seen me playing the bandit in the corner and coming to the bar to order a drink. (Autographed photographs will be available from the school shop next term). Last chance to talk to production crew, in particular, cameramen and stage manager. Farewell drink in the pub over the road.

My industrial placement at 'Emmerdale' during my two visits was certainly everything I'd hoped for and more. My knowledge and understanding of how television drama is put together has certainly been greatly enhanced. I've gained first hand experience that could not have been replicated by any amount of book reading. Armed with a notepad and a small portable audio recorder, I was able to record, on paper and tape, my experiences, interviews with key personnel and my thoughts as I went along. I hope that my skills as a director of drama and producer of video programmes will be enhanced as a result of what I witnessed and learned. As well as coming home with this wealth of practical knowledge and experience, I was also fortunate enough to be given video material, rehearsal scripts, camera scripts, location schedules and promotional material which will be useful in a number of ways.

I hope that now we have made this link with 'Emmerdale' we will be able to develop it in future in some way. It was a pleasure to spend time with such a hard-working and professional television unit and I would like to thank the many people, both here and in Leeds, who made the visits possible and so personally and professionally profitable.

NETBALL

As we prepare for our last match of the 1992/93 season, Dyce Netball Club looks back on a fairly eventful year.

In August '92 we had enough members to field two teams in the Aberdeen District Netball Association, with a few extra per team as reserves. As the season wore on the numbers started to fall until we were finding it difficult to find seven players to complete a team. I'm sure Dyce II never played with the same seven players for two games in a row, which can be very disheartening. However, through the determination of one or two players, Dyce II managed to stay together and finally ended up third in the Fourth Division, being beaten only by Aberdeen University (a very experienced and exceptionally talented team) and Beacon, an older, stronger and very aggressive team. Dyce II convincingly beat Juniors B, Kemnay II and Portlethen B in both halves of the season.

Dyce I were not as successful in Third Division, winning only two of their matches each half of the season, namely Ernst & Young and Newmachar II. However, as a team whose

average age is 16, they held their own in most matches against older and more experienced players. Unfortunately, during Dyce I's last game against Royals, one or two of the girls were 'poached' by the Royals coach, who is also the coach for Mairs, a First Division team. I think the thought of playing First Division Netball turned the girls' heads and within a week of their last match Dyce I no longer existed. I think the girls who were not asked to move teams felt left out and instead of standing by their club, or what was left of it, they decided to hand in their kit. The attitude of some of the players in Dyce I almost caused the entire club to fold but all of Dyce II and Arwenna Valentine from Dyce I have decided that it takes a lot more than that to keep a good team down. Recently we have recruited some new members from the school and for the last few weeks we have been having 'practice matches' against a Second Division team, which has greatly helped to improve the play of Dyce II.

We are confident that Dyce Netball Club will survive and continue to grow and play good, positive netball. If any girl from school or former pupil wishes to join DNC, she will be made more than welcome, regardless of ability, as the emphasis is on having fun and enjoying our netball.

PS As a fund-raiser we are holding a Car Boot Sale in the Academy car park on Saturday 26 June (10.00 - 2.00). We would be grateful for any old junk to sell and why not come along - you might pick up a bargain!

AUDREY INNES

