

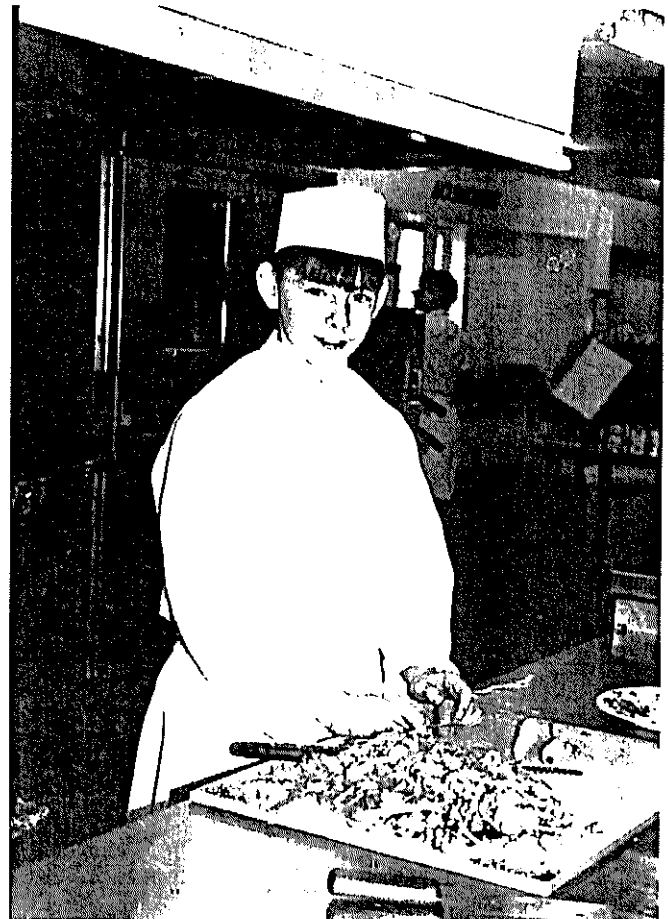
## WORK EXPERIENCE

Mid-November saw the second batch of S4 pupils venturing forth on their Work Experience placements. Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, local builders and joiners, hotels, various garages, day care centres, banks, travel agents, graphic design firms, nurseries and many more had agreed to accept our pupils for the week's placement.

The feedback from the firms and organisations involved has been very positive indeed, as has the reaction of pupils, even those who approached the week out of school with some nervousness. All agreed it had been an extremely rewarding week, with only the very rare bad experience.

This now means that all our current S4 pupils have undergone Work Experience, and it is certainly intended that this will become an integral part of the S4 curriculum. So now we start to prepare for next year .....

D PYLE



Lee

# QUALITY ASSURANCE IN GRAMPIAN EDUCATION

The Grampian Region document on Quality Assurance starts with this paragraph:

"School staff are accountable to their colleagues, to the pupils they teach and their parents, to the wider community and to the education authority. In order to ensure that the interests of these various parties are best served, and that education of the highest possible quality is offered in the Region's schools, it is essential that there should be an effective quality assurance programme."

There are a number of strands to this quality assurance programme; two are outlined in the following articles :

## Statistics, Exam Results, etc

Grampian Education's view of the use of statistics is expressed in a statement written for parents :

"Grampian Region welcomes the public discussion of information that can assist schools in the monitoring and improvement of their own performance, and assist parents in the support they can give to their children and to the schools that their children attend.

The Authority is seriously concerned that the information for parents currently published by the Government does not fulfil these criteria for publication and, indeed, works against them. The Government's published information misinforms parents about the quality of schooling on offer and misrepresents the efforts and achievements of schools and teachers alike.

The Government itself and its advisers are well aware of the deficiencies in the information they published but they have, to date, produced no workable proposals for improving the information.

Accordingly, Grampian Education Authority is itself engaged on an extensive investigation of how best to improve the information that now statutorily must be published, and how best to apply it to the improvement of schools and to supporting the decisions of parents and the public in general.

The preliminary results from the first survey of the investigation, which has been carried out by the Centre for Educational Sociology (CES) of the University of Edinburgh, have been extensively discussed with the Authority and each of its schools. The following are among the conclusions that have emerged :

- Raw examination results for schools are a grossly misleading indicator of the quality of schooling on offer.
- Parents cannot rely on raw examination results to give an accurate prediction of how well their own son or daughter will do at a particular school.

A school's examination results are influenced to some extent by factors other than the school itself - social background and education level of the parents. If these factors were discounted and only the influence of the schools in ensuring pupil progression from S1 to Standard Grade or Highers were considered, this would amount to showing the 'value added' that the school had been responsible for. The CES survey is attempting to show more clearly the value added by each school.

Because schools vary so much in their circumstances and pupil intakes, a 'value added' approach gives a better indication of some aspects of the quality of schooling (ie in relation to examination outcomes).

Applying a value added approach to SCE results in Grampian schools shows :

- The examination results of the large majority of schools cluster around the average for Grampian Region as a whole - ie there is nothing of significance to choose between them.
- There is evidence of a year-on-year 'wobble' - a school that offers above average value added one year may not do so the next.

The Authority is one-third of the way through its project with the University of Edinburgh. Work in

the two remaining years will give it a better understanding of the quality of performance indicator measures, of their usefulness and of their potential contribution to maintaining and improving the quality of education in the Authority's schools."

## Triennial Reviews

You may have heard from pupils in the school that we had a visit a few weeks ago from a team of advisers from the Education Department.

Each year about twelve secondary schools are involved in what have come to be called 'triennial reviews'. The Education Department expects the schools to continually evaluate the work going on in the school. The Triennial Review is an opportunity for education authority staff to check that we are making realistic evaluations of our work. They do this by reading documents produced by the school, interviewing staff and pupils and visiting some classrooms. They focus on two 'focus areas' which are agreed by the review team and the school staff.

In our case these areas were,

- Subject Choice in third and fourth year, ie the process of choosing subjects and the nature of the curriculum offered.
- A school project on "monitoring and evaluating the pupils' learning experience". Over the last few years we have spent some time building up a description of what we believe to be the ideal learning environment and then evaluating the classroom experiences we provide compared to this ideal.

The full report of the review is not yet available. The outcomes of the report will be reported in a future edition of 'Update'.

## COURT REPORT

Dyce Academy's basketball teams re-entered the 'big time' after a year's absence from the Under-16 and Under-18 leagues. As one might expect, team performances have been a bit rusty because of lack of competitive matches but both teams have made a reasonable start with the senior team achieving a win and a

draw and the Under-16 team suffering a narrow defeat.

The seniors started off in early November with a sound win at home against Oldmachar. Having been

behind for the early part of the match, they came on strongly to snatch victory by a ten point margin, the final score being 55 - 45. More recently, the seniors fought their way to a credible 42 - 42 draw away to Ellon against stronger opposition. Indeed,

this was a match which should have been won given Dyce's half-time lead but they dropped back a bit in the second half and the match finished even. With court time running out, the teams elected to play one minute's extra time in which Dyce took the lead immediately but allowed Ellon to reply. Two further chances for Dyce were not taken and a rematch at Dyce has now been arranged for the end of January as a winner must be found in

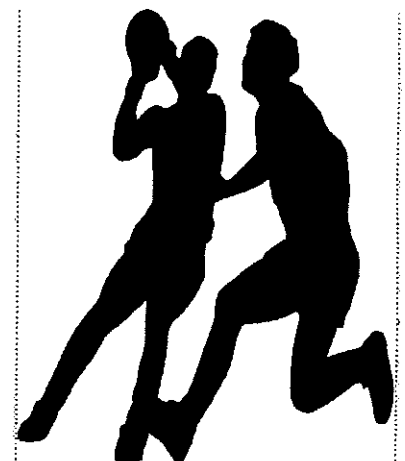
basketball matches. Top scorers to date have been Gordon Orr (43 points) and Ross Penman (13).

The Under-16 team are relatively young and inexperienced - most of them are only 14 and this will help them stay together for two years. They put up a good show against an older Portlethen team before going down narrowly by a 29 - 26 margin. At the end they were only one long shot basket away from a draw and

they should be encouraged by this result. They now await their next match against Garioch early in January. Top scorers so far have been David Orr (10 points) and Stuart McCulloch (8).

Training takes place most Thursdays after school and is open to boys and girls in any year.

**TOM FERGUSON**



# THE CHANGING FACES OF TECHNOLOGY

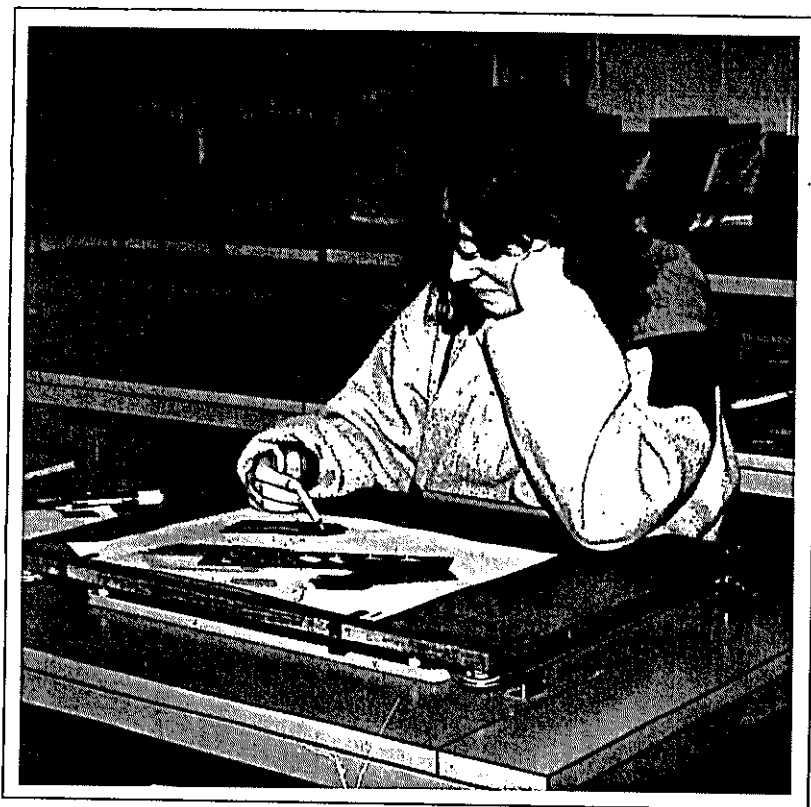


We live in an age when modern technology has permeated into every area of our lives bringing ever increasing change. Industry, and commerce, medicine and leisure have all experienced rapid transformation. Cash dispensers, word processors, heart pacemakers and video recorders are part and parcel of today's society.

But not everyone has reason to view these changes with gratitude. Many workers have found their traditional skills are no longer required. Their jobs can be done faster and more cheaply by computer-controlled machinery. Older people, too, whose education did not include modern technology for obvious reasons, often regard change with suspicion and steer clear of 'gadgets' wherever possible. Such is the rate of change many of this 'older' generation are still in their thirties.



Their children, however, not only accept that they live in an age of change but positively welcome it. Boys and girls, far from turning their backs on technology, take to it with enthusiasm and confidence, which is just as well because the skills and experience they gain in school will soon be put to use in the workplace - no matter what their occupation. Parents who, for whatever reason, are uneasy with technology should ensure they do not, perhaps subconsciously, influence their children against it.



And this may be particularly true of parents of girls and very important towards the end of the second year when young people make their course choice for further study. Remember - your child will be studying for tomorrow's world, not yesterday's.

# NETBALL UPDATE

Since the start of the 93-94 season a few weeks ago, Dyce Netball Club has shown it is continuing to improve by winning its first three matches.

The first two, both against Portlethen B, played at Stonehaven at 8.15 on a Sunday night (a definite disadvantage to Dyce) produced exactly the same score, 29 - 24 in Dyce's favour. The first of the meetings was a cup game where Dyce gave Portlethen B a 3 goal start, but in the second, a league match, the teams started level.

Our third outing which was against Beacon II saw Dyce convincingly beating them 36 - 18, despite Arwenna, one of our experienced players, missing the match due to a family illness. Audrey Innes was chosen player of the match proving that there's still life in her yet, despite being at least twice as old as the other players.

Unfortunately our next match against University II was our first defeat. One umpire failed to turn up, leaving a brave Kemnay umpire to officiate on her own. As a team this is not a good situation to be in as many fouls go unnoticed. However, Dyce did their best and in my opinion did not deserve to lose 26 - 21.

Our next victory was over Newmachar II whom we met in the cup which is a handicap competition. As Newmachar II are in Division III and Dyce are Division IV we were given a

lead of 7 goals and went on to win 44 - 19. As this was a fairly easy game to win, it gave Dyce the opportunity to play their less experienced players which obviously boosts their confidence. Gail Angus was substituted as a goal shooter and scored a goal with her first touch of the ball.

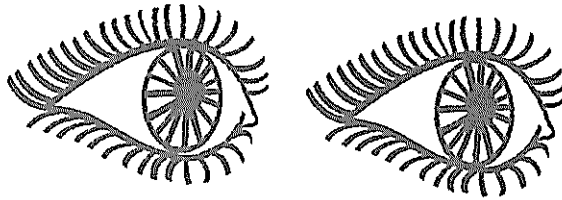
Our most recent match against Mairs II has been our greatest victory to date. Despite an 11 goal start to Mairs, and one of our players being held up in the Aberdeen V Turin traffic and missing the first quarter, Dyce won 29 - 20. This is the equivalent of a 29 - 9 win if you take away the handicap. In the third quarter, thanks to the excellent defending of Arwenna Valentine, Kyla McLeod and Vicky Gordon, Mairs II failed to score.

Dyce are happy with their success so far this season but are glad simply to be playing and enjoying a good game of Netball. We are always playing or training on Mondays 6.00 - 8.00 pm in the school games hall if anyone, past or present pupil, would like to join us.

Finally, congratulations to Donna Cowie (3A) and Laura Brand (3C) who have been chosen for the Aberdeen District U-16 squad. No doubt the extra training and experience they gain from this will be of great benefit to our club.

## CONGRATULATIONS ...

to Lindsey Macdearmid who graduated B.Acc from Dundee University in June 1993.



**THE 1993 OLD-FASHIONED EYE-SPY QUIZ**

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Valuable prizes! No Expense Spared! Equal Opportunity!  
Two Winners in every year S1-S6 Hurry! Hurry!

The answers to the following questions can all be got by looking carefully at the pictures, photographs, writing etc on the display boards along the top corridor of the teaching block.

1. Where did the Modern Studies Field trip go in May 1993? - - - - -
  
2. How much did an AMNESTY BARBECUE ticket cost in 1993? £ \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Which Islands did the Sailing Trip go to? - - - - -
  
4. Which building at ADEN is shown on a drawing made in the S3 History Field Trip?  
- - - / - - - - - / - - - - -
  
5. What do the two postage stamps shown on the Art Department board commemorate?  
- - - - - / - - - - -
  
6. What colour is the gem stone in the Modern Art Nouveau jewellery? - - - -
  
7. What creature inspired Carol's jewellery? - / - - - - -
  
8. What colour is the word FISH in the graphics frame? - - - - -
  
9. What material was used for the sculpture in the photographs? - - - - -
  
10. What form of dance is shown in the drawings? - - - - -

Fill in your answers, add your name and class, fold your entry and post it in the competition box in the Library by Monday 20 December. Winners announced by Christmas!

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_