

UP D^{yce} Ate Academy

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❧ PITTODRIE AT CHRISTMAS ❧



You may have seen the recent 'Evening Express' article which featured Ryan of 1E. Ryan is a member of the Dons Youngsters Club, which entitles members to a monthly newsletter, as well as fun days, training, competitions, etc.

At the end of last year Ryan entered a club competition in which entrants had to design a Christmas card showing 'Pittodrie at Christmas' - Ryan's entry won. For this he received a £20 gift voucher and an invitation to Pittodrie on a match day.

On 8 January Ryan, accompanied by his parents, went to the Aberdeen v St Johnstone game. They watched the game from the directors' box after having tea and meeting some of the players, including Alec McLeish. Ryan was told that copies of his card, of which 2500 were printed, had been sent all over Scotland. He had his photograph taken with Alec McLeish and Eoin Jess, and received a framed copy of his card with the Dons' autographs all around it. Quite a day out!

Ryan will continue to be a member of the Dons Youngsters Club and is looking forward to still more competitions!

BADMINTON

A number of pupils from S1-S6 competed in the South Grampian Schools Badminton Championships recently.

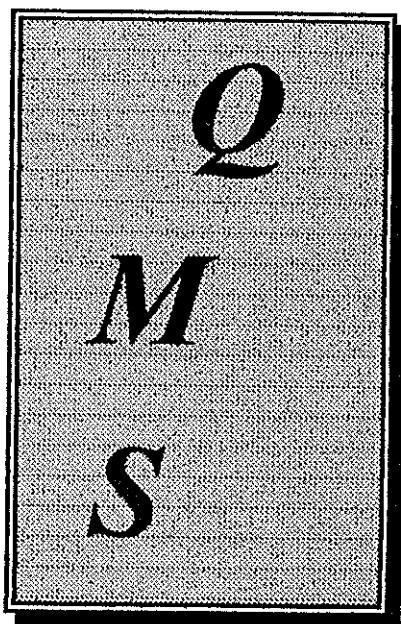
Dyce pupils did particularly well in the Under-13 and Under-15 age categories where the following results were recorded :

Under-13

Rob Morrice	-	Boys Singles Winner
Rhea Hussey	-	Girls Singles Runner-Up
Rob Morrice / Rhea Hussey	-	Mixed Doubles Winners
Rob Morrice / Steven Gordon	-	Boys Doubles Runners-Up

Under 15

Keith Hussey	-	Boys Singles Runner-Up
Keith Hussey / Lindsay Robertson	-	Mixed Doubles Winners
Keith Hussey / Kevin Mathieson	-	Boys Doubles Runners-Up
Jill Robertson / Lindsay Robertson	-	Girls Doubles Runners-Up



Technology, as we know, is ever-advancing and schools do not and indeed should not avoid this advance. In particular, video and computer equipment now exists in schools which most teachers and parents didn't even dream about when they were pupils themselves. One of the latest developments is the marrying of video and computer technology in the form of interactive video. This can take different forms and Dyce Academy is beginning to explore one of these systems, a system which links a laserdisc player and a computer. Various interactive video packages are becoming available for use by staff and pupils and recently Principal Teachers Morag (History) and Laurence (Drama) took a couple of days' development time to explore the two QMS packages on loan to the school.

QMS stands for Quality Management in Schools and is a new and flexible method of training which uses interactive video to allow schools to take an active part in the training of principal teachers. Its aim is to develop their ability to take part in whole-school management. It may be used by individual teachers or by groups and can be integrated into other training sessions or can operate independently within a school.

Continued on next page

The documentation accompanying the packages states that QMS has been specifically designed for heads of departments and those who hope to become heads of departments but we believe that the packages could also be used within departments, perhaps as part of a department audit or as an exercise to share perceptions, about the running and organisation of the department, by members of that department.

Why interactive video as a delivery method? It is becoming more generally accepted that if schools are to have a coherent, co-ordinated management plan, then training principal teachers must be integral to that plan. Principal teachers however are numerically a large body. Traditional training which is organised away from schools can be, for a group of this size, both expensive and potentially disruptive to pupils' education. Furthermore, training which is school focused and school based is seen as potentially more beneficial. A method had to be found therefore which could be used within a school, would be cost effective, attractive to heads of departments and would build on their experience. The producers of QMS identify the following as being the valuable training characteristics of interactive video :

- the training materials are consistent
- it is flexible in use
- it is not directly threatening to existing staff relationships
- it may be used at any time suitable to the staff
- it may be used by staff either individually or in groups

Interactive video has also been found to be a very useful training tool in other occupations.

We spent two days familiarising ourselves with the operating systems of the hardware and software, investigating the contents of the packages, trying some of the exercises and identifying what we consider the most potentially useful parts of the packages.

There is not enough space in an article of this nature to cover both packages in detail but we can give a few brief examples of what is contained in the packages.

What Would You Do is a series of short video scenes under seven headings (eg Department, Curriculum, Pupils, Parents) in which the user is put into the position of a head of department having to consider possible courses of action. At the end of each scene the user is able to select one of the three possible courses of action, obtain a commentary on each provided by the software, or reject all the courses of action and write notes on what course of action they would take. This exercise could be used by a small group as a stimulus to discussion. The group could watch each video clip, discuss each of the three courses of action offered, view the comments provided and then suggest their own possible course or courses of action.

Departmental Meetings consist of video material of two departmental meetings. The software allows the users to analyse the video in great detail. QMS has selected three aspects of a professional approach to the conduct of a meeting.

1. Conducting a Meeting
2. Forward Planning and Budgeting
3. Building and Maintaining a Professional Team

For each of the three the user is presented with an interpretation - an audio and text explanation. The QMS materials provide an analysis of the meeting from each of these viewpoints and an analysis that the user may use to compare with their own. This type of exercise has a lot of scope for group discussion.

Moments of Truth contains eighteen short video scenes. Each scene is designed to illuminate one aspect of school life. The users view the scenes and are then asked to respond by answering the questions that follow. We once again see this being done most profitably by a small group working together. The aim of this section is to contribute to building up a picture of the school - a picture which should enable evaluation of how successfully the school is facilitating learning.

Advise Me is a video section which focuses on how a head of department might deal with the problem created by a member of his/her department whose professional conduct is falling below the required standard. This is an interactive tool which enables the user to view the video sequences and exercise some choice in deciding which course of action might be taken. Different paths can be taken through this material (different video clips) depending on the advice the user gives the teacher in the video.

Although the packages can be used by individuals, we believe that using the material as part of a group activity would be more productive and less threatening. After initial group work, interested individuals could then be encouraged to explore more of the material on their own. As with anything of this nature - time is needed: time to learn how to become familiar with the software and its manipulation and then time to explore the different aspects of the material. The most obvious use of time at present seems to us to be PPD time and/or in-service days. We believe we are already familiar enough with the software and the material to lead a group or set a group off in the right direction. Any volunteers?

GORBYMANIA HITS ABERDEEN - WE WERE THERE!

Imagine a Trivial Pursuits contest in the years ahead - "What do Nelson Mandela, The Queen Mother, Earl Haig, Winston Churchill and Mikhail Gorbachev have in common?" Of course, the answer is simple - they have all had conferred upon them the Freedom of the City of Aberdeen. At least six pupils and one teacher from Dyce Academy would know this one as we were privileged to be present at the grand ceremony granting Gorbachev the Burgess Ticket on Monday 6 December 1993.

The conferral of the Freedom of the City of Aberdeen is nowadays an honour without obligation but in days gone by Freeman or Burgesses were expected to take up arms to defend the city and swear allegiance to the monarch, amongst other duties. Isn't it ironic that the honour be conferred upon someone who, until recently, had the power to launch an attack to knock out not only the City of Aberdeen but the entire UK? Perhaps this gives us an idea of why the honour was conferred upon the man. He and his policies have made us feel more secure and contributed a great deal to the ending of the potentially destructive Cold War. To this end he

has already been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize which is at least equivalent to the conferral of the Freedom of Aberdeen. (I am sure "Scotland the What" will have something to say in their next show)

From an educational perspective I had mixed feelings. In front of me that day was the man who had made Modern Studies such a dynamic subject. But also his policies had rendered so much textbook and subject content redundant that I had to blame him for all the revision to courses which has been necessary as in turn I have tippexed out and written in USSR, USS, CIS and now fifteen separate republics. On balance I was prepared to forgive and forget.

As we sat in the balcony of the Music Hall we got the feeling of a great sense of occasion. This was made greater when Mrs Gorbachev made her way to a seat on the front balcony only a few feet away from us. Her charm and presence made a great impression upon us.

As for the man himself, much of his personality and humour were watered down by the need for an interpreter. Yet, his eloquence was obvious and his ad-libbing impressive as with wit he compared himself with Winston Churchill when he eyed the ex PM's name on the Burgess Roll. To many of us there, standing in front of us that day was a great man whose statesmanship had such a profound impact upon the world we live in. Yet, from now on he was also just like one of us - an Aberdonian!

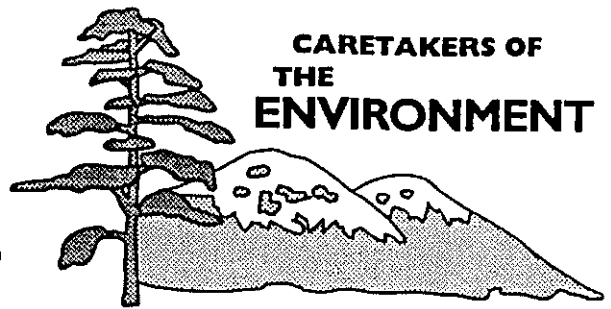
TOM FERGUSON

'BIG FAST'

A small group of senior pupils raised over £200 towards the end of last term by taking part in the Oxfam Fast.

CARETAKERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT
8th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
13-18 JUNE 1994
ABERDEEN, SCOTLAND

DYCE ACADEMY
RIVERVIEW DRIVE, DYCE, ABERDEEN, AB2 0NF, SCOTLAND
TELEPHONE - 0224 725118 FAX - 0224 772571



Regular readers of UPDATE will have noticed that each year the school participates in an international environmental education conference organised by Caretakers of the Environment, an international network of secondary schools. Over the past seven years many of our senior students have benefited from taking part in these overseas conferences.

In June 1994 however the annual conference of Caretakers is being organised by Dyce Academy. Around 250 students and teachers from all corners of the globe will be coming to Aberdeen for this event which is to be held from 13 -18 June. The school has the backing and support of the Education Committee in organising this event and plans for the week are now well in hand. The government environmental agency, Scottish Natural Heritage, are also providing considerable support to us, as are local industries including Arjo Wiggins Paper, BP and Grampian TV.

The school could not cope with another 250 people in the building in the first week of the new timetable (!) so the conference will be based at Aberdeen University. The conference programme will involve participants in a wide range of activities including fieldwork visits, discussions, lectures and social activities. Leading environmentalists will be addressing the conference and a wide range of industrial and environmental organisations throughout the North-East will be helping organise various parts of the programme.

The theme of the conference will be Sustainability. Delegates will be investigating whether or not the way in which we live and use the environment can continue. As preparation for the conference each school which attends will prepare a project on this theme in their home area. These projects will form a large display at the conference and will be a unique collection of school work from around the world.

We have received applications from schools in many different countries. These include a number of countries in the Developing World such as Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Peru, Kenya and Tanzania. We also

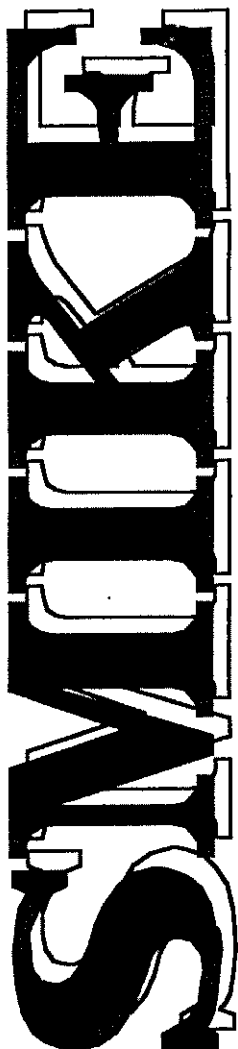
have applicants from a number of European countries including Portugal, The Netherlands, Eire, Turkey and Scotland as well as many Canadian and American applicants. Applications are still arriving so the conference promises to be a truly international event.

Organising an event of this type is a big job and one of the major tasks is the raising of funds in order to keep the conference costs for delegates as low as possible. Indeed we are trying to raise funds to subsidise the travelling costs of delegates from the less well-off nations. Their participation in the conference is vital to its overall success. We have secured the sponsorship of local industry for some delegates; however, we would like to find more. If you know of any sources of help with this we would be very pleased to hear from you!! We would also be interested in any other form of assistance, eg sponsorship of social events, printing of posters and T-shirts etc. If you feel you can help in any way please get in touch with the school.

Senior students at Dyce Academy are invited to volunteer their services to assist with the many things that have to be done in preparation for the conference and to take part during the conference, both as 'local experts' and as conference participants. If you are interested in this unique opportunity then see Mr Jowett or watch out for the notices in the bulletin.

More information about the conference will be published in future editions of Update. There will be an opportunity for parents and pupils to come along and take part in one of the evening events during the conference. Considerable media coverage has been planned, including news coverage on Grampian TV. If you would like to know any more about our plans then please get in touch with Mr Jowett, Mr Taylor or Mr Presly at the school.

RAYMOND JOWETT



Sitting in the MPA sorting through the debris of the last night, it always strikes me how the pupils of Dyce Academy manage to transform the less than opulent surroundings of one Multi-Purpose Area with their energy and enthusiasm for the Christmas Show.

This year past our production was "Smike", a musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' study of Victorian schooling, "Nicholas Nickleby". Perhaps especially appropriate in the current political climate, reminding us of what Victorian 'back-to-basic' values really were.

Casting began in early September and the team, June Smith and Ruth Teehan, were not as overwhelmed by prospective thespians as is usual. Nevertheless, the main parts were eventually cast and the work began in earnest. Our lead role was Nicholas Nickleby played in an admirably superior way by Beverley Nicolson. The villains of the piece, the dastardly headmaster, Mr Squeers, and his heartless wife, were played by Graeme Veitch and Nikki Hanton. Long nights were spent training Graeme how to thrash pupils effectively! Carole Somerville and Lisa Ross played Fanny Squeers and Wackford Jnr. Finally, we uncovered two hitherto unknown stars - Smike, the poor, forgotten orphan portrayed very convincingly by Kevin Littlejohn of S1 and Tracy Cosgrove, our Boulder, whose rock n'roll number brought the house down.

This particular show was very demanding as it was unusually for us, a full-length production and was quite complex musically. However, our little unloved ragamuffins rose to the occasion and the challenge and proved our week of panic before the show was all for nought.

And now already, with the smell of greasepaint hardly gone from the MPA dressing rooms, some of the cast are already asking, "What's next year's show?" and we count the grey hairs!

LETTER TO EDITOR

Dear Editor of 'Update'

We read with some concern the 'Netball Update' article in the December issue, and in particular the paragraph describing the game against Newmachar II.

It was stated that 'this was a fairly easy game to win' and although the score may reflect this, we feel that such comments were uncalled for. It must be remembered that the majority of Newmachar II's players attend Dyce Academy and show complete dedication and enjoyment in their netball.

The reporter suggests that the game gave less experienced Dyce players a chance to play and boost their confidence. Although this may be true, perhaps we should consider the confidence of the Newmachar II players after reading such an article. It was a very biased report and because of this many people took offence.

Newmachar and Dyce are very fortunate to be able to field teams of players willing to try their best, so surely we should be congratulating all the players for their effort and sportsmanship.

Finally we think congratulations are due to Joanne Golder, Sheana Taylor and Jill Reid (all of 4A) who have also been selected for the Aberdeen District U-16 squad again this year.

Yours faithfully

Pupils of Dyce Academy and Members of Newmachar Netball Club