

UPDyce Academy Ate

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FIDDLING IN AFRICA

One of our S6 girls, Fiona Leggat, has recently returned from a three-week trip to Bulawayo in Zimbabwe. She was part of a group of Scottish fiddlers who had been invited to join in the centenary celebrations of that city, which is twinned with Aberdeen.

The flight out to Africa took many hours, with stops at various places en route. The party eventually arrived at Johannesburg, before flying on to Harare, the Capital of Zimbabwe. From there it was on to Bulawayo itself, landing in the hot, dry weather of late May.

Each member of the party was staying with a family in the city, which struck Fiona as wealthy, with many fine buildings.

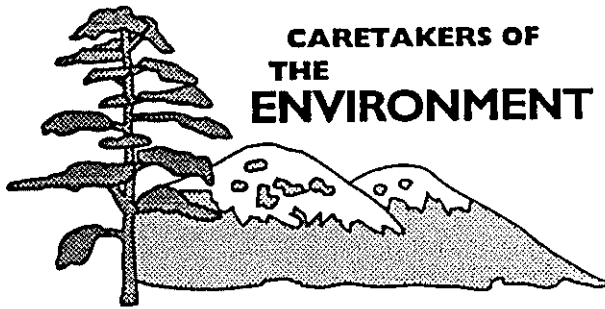
The celebrations included attending a barbeque with the Mayor of Bulawayo, and the group gave concerts in local

schools, a football stadium, and an old folks home which included many Scots among its residents. They also met the Lord Provost of Aberdeen at a reception - he had flown out to take part in the opening of a new theatre as part of the celebrations. Also in Bulawayo were groups from various parts of Africa, England and France.

In the free time which was allowed, the party visited Victoria Falls, some of the wildlife parks in the area and a bird sanctuary.

Fiona has many memories of her time in Zimbabwe, amongst them eating kudu (a kind of antelope) and finding it rather tough, and being offered, but refusing, snake. The weather was good throughout the stay, and Fiona looks forward to the possibility of the group being invited back to Zimbabwe next year, this time to take part in celebrations in Harare itself.

CARETAKERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT



The school was host to a major international environmental education conference for secondary school teachers and students from all around the world for a week in June. This was the eighth annual conference of Caretakers of the Environment. For the past seven years senior students and teachers from Dyce Academy have participated in similar events overseas but this year it was our opportunity to organise the conference.

The task of organising the event began two years ago. Fund-raising and organising the programme were the two biggest challenges. Grampian Region and Scottish Natural Heritage were our two biggest sponsors but in addition we had the backing of a range of other public sector and commercial organisations. Thankfully by the middle of June this year the programme and funds were in place.

The theme chosen for the conference was 'Sustainability'. This is one of the buzz words in the environmental debate, what we wanted to do was to get delegates to explore the way that people live and to assess whether or not the Earth can sustain our lifestyles. The schools who attended the conference prepared themselves by doing research into some aspect of Sustainability in their home environment. The results of each school's project was then displayed at the conference in Aberdeen. These projects formed a very impressive exhibition of school work from around the world.

The conference attracted delegates from eighteen different countries representing virtually all continents. These included - Canada, USA, Peru,

Ireland, Northern Ireland, Sweden, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Russia, Czech Republic, India, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Ghana and Scotland. The delegates were residentially based at Aberdeen University which provided excellent accommodation and other facilities for the conference.

During the week the students and teachers were organised into multi-national groups so that they would have the benefit of learning from each other's different backgrounds. The conference was not simply a lot of lectures, discussions and hot air. We organised a very task-orientated and practical programme which involved the delegates in a lot

of fieldwork at many locations in the North-East. Locations visited included - industrial sites, land use such as forestry,

Highland estates and farms, the city centre, rubbish dumps, sewage works, conservation areas and many more. Delegates travelled as far afield as Findhorn, Glen Muick and Peterhead so they had the opportunity to see what this area of Scotland is like.

The programme also included a number of lectures from famous environmentalists including Jonathon Porritt.

The delegates had been given the task of coming up with answers to a number of key questions about Sustainability by the end of the week. The final afternoon saw the presentation of these by each of the small working groups which the delegates had been divided into. The experience of working together with others from very different backgrounds together with the practical activities of the programme resulted in some very interesting conclusions being drawn. Those of us who heard what the students came up with will certainly be questioning our attitudes and lifestyles! The conclusions of the conference will shortly be published as a report which will be distributed to all those who attended and to governments and international organisations such as the United Nations. The major impact of the conference however will be on those who were fortunate

enough to attend. Mixing with so many people from such diverse backgrounds so intensively for a week has a lasting effect. You certainly come to realise that the world is a big place and that people have different problems but that as human beings we all have a lot in common despite our many differences. If this message of the need for mutual understanding and respect for the environment stays with those who attended the conference then it will have been a success.

The unique nature of the conference attracted a lot of media attention both from the local and national press. Grampian Television even used the conference as the focus for a special programme about Sustainability called "It'll Cost the Earth" which involved all of the delegates and was broadcast in the week after the event.

Apart from all the hard work, the conference of course had a social programme. Our visitors learned what a ceilidh involves and we learned a lot about the cultural habits of others! There were many late nights as students shared experiences and teachers discussed educational methods! The week ended with a formal dinner in Elphinstone Hall addressed by Chairman of Scottish Natural Heritage, Magnus Magnusson, and former

Director of Education in Grampian, Jimmy Graham.

We have received a lot of positive feedback from those who attended the conference and believe that the event was a success. This was in no small part due to the effort made by many organisations in the North-East to help us with the conference programme and to those who ensured that the programme ran smoothly. Thirty-two senior students from the school and some former students played a key role in this, as did a number of staff from the school and from other schools and organisations in Aberdeen.

All that remains now is for the conference report to be written and for the video to be edited. Organising the conference was a unique and major challenge for the school. It involved a lot of hard work but is an opportunity that we were delighted to have had.

Next year the Ninth Caretakers of the Environment Conference will be held in Russia, in the Arctic city of Murmansk. We will shortly be looking for senior students who are interested in participating. This is a unique chance which we are pleased to be able to offer. If you are a senior student and are interested then watch out for the announcement about this in the school bulletin very soon.

RAYMOND JOWETT

WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE !

Some parents may have seen a little green booklet in schoolbags recently. This was one of the results of some discussions we had in school on 'Language Across the Curriculum'. This is an attempt to ensure that all teachers promote and encourage good use of English, both spoken and written, at all times.

The little green booklet provides advice for pupils on such matters as how to set out written work and homework and what they need to bring to school. Parents may be interested to read the booklet and find out what we are expecting;
ask your son/daughter for a look!

In addition to producing the booklet, our discussions on Language Across the Curriculum have led to staff in all departments, not only the English Department, agreeing to promote good use of language and, in particular, to comment on the literacy aspects of pupils' work as well as the subject content.

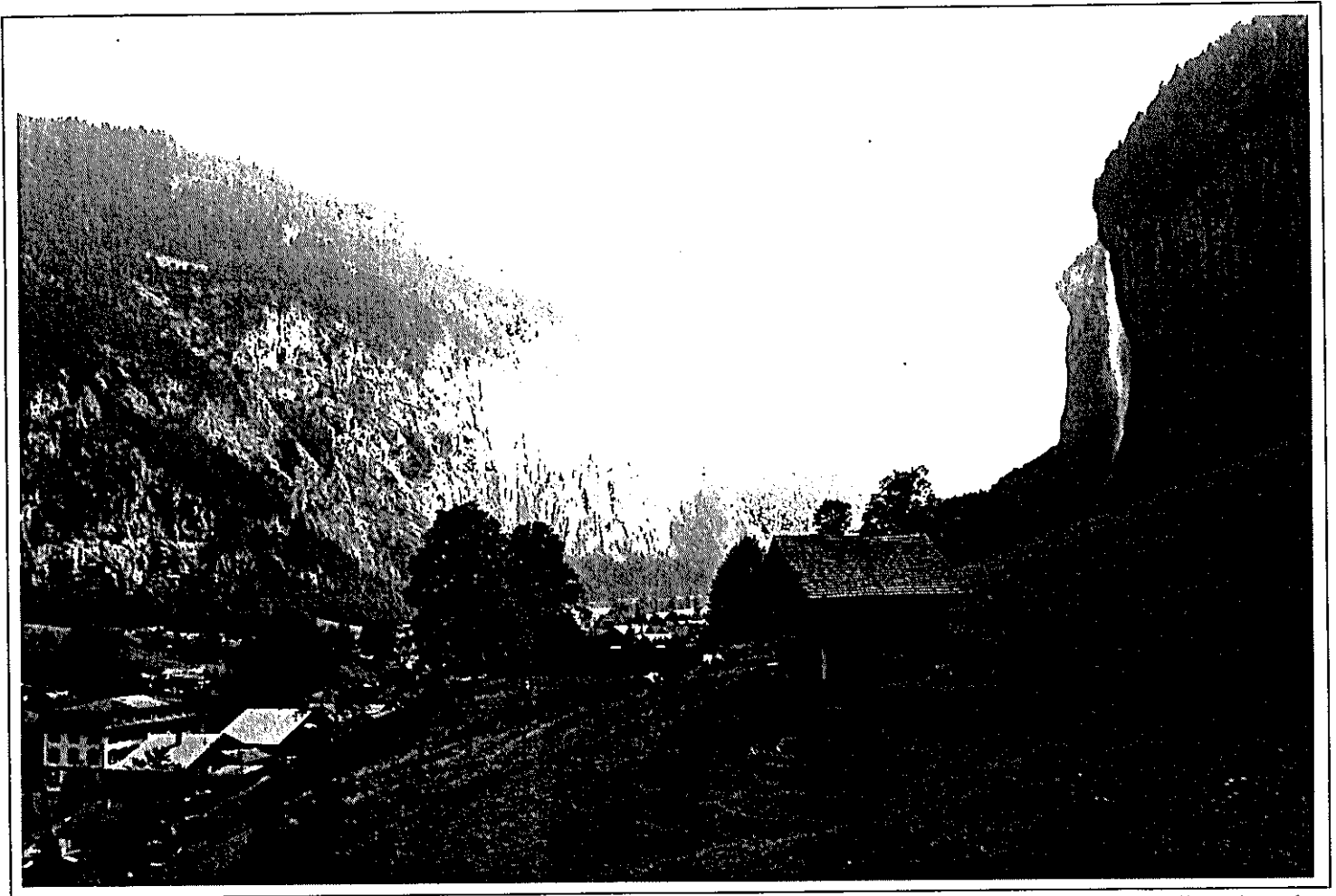
The younger generation is frequently criticised for its poor use of English, often unfairly as poor use of English is widespread across the population. We do, however, want to ensure that we do everything possible in Dyce Academy to promote good use of our language.

M TAYLOR

CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST!

On the warm sultry, summer evening of 30 June, 42 excited and expectant pupils along with 5 term-fatigued members of staff set off on the annual marathon bus journey through Europe - destination Switzerland. Travel pills were at the ready, earphones in place and all were supplied with essential provisions that would be needed for this nine day tour! The scenic route to Dover included an enforced stop in Gorebridge to enable Messrs

Only complaints at this time - weather too good, temperature too high, Colin too sick and Miss Forrest too talkative! Several comfort stops later and approximately 26 hours after our departure we were tucking in to Wiener schnitzel and frites at the Hotel Wacker. A restful evening in Lahr culminated in the Black Forest conga, danced in the main square and led by Kath Thomson. On Saturday morning the nearby church bells boomed out an early morning call at 6.00 am. Surprisingly,



Allan & Co to replace the alternator in the coach and swap drivers. Two comfort stops later the party checked in at P & O's Eastern terminal in ample time for the 0545 sailing to Calais. The brief crossing only allowed for a sumptuous continental breakfast on board ship (eat your heart out, Mr Littlejohn) and an extra five minutes' sleep for those who still felt weary!

With steel radials back on terra firma, and Billy the driver at the wheel, we set off on the long haul through France, Belgium and Luxembourg en route for Lahr in the Black Forest in Germany.

only fifty per cent of our fellow travellers heard this fanfare. Was the excitement too much for them?

Ten miles south the Europa theme park beckoned. Amidst brilliant sunshine and high temperatures we took advantage of the many attractions available including the log flume, the runaway train, the wild water rafting, the Swiss bob-run, the pirate ship and many more. After lunch we faced a comparatively short three-hour drive to the Bernese Oberland in Switzerland via the

picturesque city of Berne. No trouble to our seasoned coach travellers!

The Hotel Balmhof in Brienzwiler is a traditional wooden chalet building. We felt quite at home there - even the four available showers seemed quite welcoming despite the queuing and the early rise required each morning to take advantage of them! The promise of a good weather forecast for Sunday, the next day, was sufficient for Mr McLean to make a reservation for our group to visit the Jungfrauoch. Mr Erwin '**Happy Mountain**', the local representative of the Swiss Railway Company, also worked in the hotel and was delighted to be of service.

At 11333 feet above sea level we were not disappointed with our visit to Jungfrauoch, the highest railway station in Europe. The views are magnificent and the scenery is simply breathtaking!

On Monday 4 July, the morning was free for shopping in the elegant town of Interlaken. Sun tan lotion and Swiss francs were both required in abundance. Temperatures were again sky high. After lunch we took a short drive to Lauterbrunnen where we ascended the Schilthorn via cog railway and cable car. The views from the summit did not displease. The producers of James Bond movies certainly knew how to select appropriate locations for their films. The descent to the valley floor at Stechelberg proved to be quite interesting. The shrill screams of the pupils and staff signalled that we had dropped over the cliff edge towards the waiting coach in the valley below. After dinner a bowling competition held in a nearby hotel in Innerkirchen was won by Billy the driver's group.

Tuesday 5 July was a special day, not least for Laurence Young. Forty years of age and still going strong! With coach bedecked in balloons and posters proclaiming Mr Young's happy news to the world, we made our way over the Brunig Pass to Lucerne. This journey was not without incident. A close shave with a passing lorry resulted in a broken wing mirror as we manoeuvred around one of the hair pin bends. The morning was spent sightseeing and shopping in

Lucerne. The return trip back to the hotel took us over the Susten Pass. The debt owed from an exhilarating snowball fight at the summit has not yet been repaid. Watch out Susanne!

On Wednesday 6 July we bade farewell to Switzerland as we made our way north towards the Dutch town of Valkenburg. This journey proved to be long and difficult. Billy, our stalwart driver who had become very much part of the trip, became unwell on this journey. He developed an allergic reaction to an insect bite, but must be greatly commended for the determination he showed in ensuring we arrived safely at the Hotel Limburgia. On Thursday morning we experienced one of many trip highlights. A new dry toboggan run had been opened just a week before our arrival. We spent a fantastic time on this attraction before a shower of rain stopped play. After lunch, we set off for Calais. George, our relief driver, had been flown out from Edinburgh that morning and took over from Billy. All were relieved to know that Billy was fine but not yet well enough to drive the coach.

In Calais, a real meal at the Flunch restaurant made a welcome change from the accustomed packed lunches. Once across the Channel we cleared customs by 10.00 pm and settled back to watch the video film shot on the trip. There are so many memorable moments to recall from this tour - Ruth Teehan's dulcet voice bringing the coach to a dead stop, the romantic friendships which were struck up, the wonderful statue/plaque of Sherlock Holmes that we made a pilgrimage to visit in Meiringen, the highly sensitive smoke alarm in the Swiss hotel, the winner of the wally of the day competition and many more!

At 11.00 am the next day we arrived back at school. Exhausted, elated and all agreed that this had been a fantastic experience. Just wait till next year!

CONGRATULATIONS

The following universities have sent us information
on former pupils of Dyce
Academy who graduated in June '94 :

Aberdeen

Iona Fleming BSc (Honours)
William Hunter B Eng (Honours)
Malcolm Imray MA (Honours)
Lesley Nicoll BSc Agr (Honours)

Edinburgh

David Boyle BSc in Geology
Charles Donald B Eng in Electronics

Leicester

Christopher Smith BSc in Physics with Space
Science

Loughborough

Ingrid Taylor BSc (Honours) in Physical
Education, Sports Science and Recreation
Management

RGU

Carron Arkley BSc in Technology and Business

Alison Auld BA (Honours) in Business Studies

Gary Bennett HND/BSc in Electronic and
Electrical Eng

Eric Digweed HNC in Architectural Technology

Stuart Donald BA (Honours) in Business Studies

Neil Farquhar B Eng (Honours) in Electronic Eng

Brian Fraser BSc (Honours) in Quantity
Surveying

Andrew Hempseed HNC in Civil Engineering

Louise Hunter BSc (Honours) in Nutrition

Paula Leask BA in Business Administration

Duncan Marjoribanks HND in Hospitality
Management

Gail McKay BSc (Honours) in Pharmacy

Nicole McKnight BA in Design and Craft

Kathleen McRobbie BA in Commerce

Stuart Milton BA (Honours) in Public Policy and
Management

Hazel Pirie BA in Commerce

Graham Reid BA (Honours) in Business
Studies

Darren Ross HNC in Architectural Technology

Roy Smith BSc in Computing

Russell Taylor BSc in Computing

Carole Tewnion PG Diploma in Personnel
Management

Kevin Tosh HNC in Applied Chemistry

Strathclyde

Ingrid Corse BSc (Honours) in Biotechnology

GREASE CRUISE TO ST KILDA

This June I took part in the annual GREASE cruise to St Kilda (or the Grampian Region Environmental and Scientific Expedition to give it its 'posh' name). Every year twelve senior pupils from throughout the region

We made a round trip that began and ended at Oban, on the mainland's west coast. We sailed to Castlebay, on Barra, on the first day, then up the inside of the Outer Hebrides, through the Sound of Harris and west to St



spend ten days aboard the Ocean Youth Club ketch, Taikoo. The object of the expedition is not only to reach St Kilda - no mean feat in itself - but to carry out a scientific investigation into the geography, ecology, etc of this unique group of islands.

St Kilda is a small group of islands situated about 50 miles west of Harris. It belongs to the National Trust for Scotland and is a National Nature Reserve. It is used by the army as a tracking base for the North Atlantic. St Kilda is famous for its bird life; it is the world's biggest gannetry, and thousands of puffins, fulmars, great skuas and manx shearwaters breed there every year. Some of the species there are unique to St Kilda, the St Kilda wren for example. There is also a breed of wild sheep, Soay sheep, which are primitive ancestors of our modern domesticated sheep. St Kilda is isolated by its position in the middle of the Atlantic, the sheer cliffs which surround most of the islands (rising to over 1000 feet in places), the limited potential for vegetation, and the harsh climate.

Kilda. We spent the best part of two days at St Kilda, then we set off to the north-east making for the Isle of Lewis. We sailed around the Butt of Lewis in near gale force winds so we were very glad to stop in Stornoway the following day. Next we sailed down through The Minch, past Skye, during which time we saw dolphins, porpoises, seals and otters. We then went via the Kyle of Lochalsh round the top of Mull to Iona. We went ashore at Iona to visit the abbey founded by St Columba. Then we continued around Mull back to Oban, where we spent the last day cleaning the boat in preparation for the next crew. In total, we had sailed about 565 miles.

The entire cruise was very enjoyable and interesting. The weather varied from howling winds and pouring rain to blue skies and sunshine; we saw some spectacular scenery and visited some interesting places; we made lots of new friends with the other people on the boat and, most importantly, we went to St Kilda, one of the most inaccessible parts of the British Isles and a place few people ever get the chance to visit.

ISLA SMAIL

LUCKY NUMBERS !!

We know that many copies of Update are never seen by parents or are even thrown away.

In an attempt to ensure that Update gets home we are organising a lucky number competition.

There is a number printed on the back page of this copy of Update.

A few days after the issue of Update to pupils, a number will be announced in the school daily bulletin.

The parent who writes to the school enclosing this lucky back page will receive a £10 prize.

This rather complicated lucky number competition has been designed to encourage pupils to take Update home and show it to their parents.

STAFF MATTERS

The following staff changes have taken place over the last few months.

Ruth Teehan of the English Department has moved to a Senior Teacher post at Bankhead Academy. Jane Brown has taken over Ruth's post at Dyce.

Sandra Merrilees has joined the Learning Support Department - she takes over from Jennifer Clark who left us last session to become Principal Teacher (Learning Support) at Torry Academy.

Elizabeth Meiklejohn has joined the Music Department on a part-time basis - she takes over from Jane Evans.

Isabel Masson, Principal Teacher (Religious & Moral Education) has returned from her secondment and is joined on a part-time basis by Patricia Findlay.

Fiona Michie, who has worked as a relief teacher in a number of departments, is not working with us this session.

THEATRE VOUCHERS

For a number of years now Grampian Region has operated a Theatre Voucher Scheme for GRC pupils. It means that for most productions at His Majesty's Theatre we are able to take groups of pupils at a reduced rate over and above any reduction that the theatre itself is making for school pupils. The reduction is between 50 pence and £2.

What is less well-known is that the Voucher Scheme can be used by pupils going to the theatre on their own or with parents. The school has to issue you with a voucher **before** you purchase your tickets. These vouchers are available from Mr Young of the Drama Department. He can also provide you with details of which shows are included in the Voucher Scheme.