

# up *Dyce Academy* Date

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## ACTIVITIES DAY - ALTON TOWERS



**One hundred and seventeen** pupils and **nine** staff took the overnight route by coach to Alton Towers on Thursday 23 June. This *day trip* was one of 15 different activities available.

Despite the long journey, all participants seem to agree that the day was quite a success.

We cannot wait till next year for a repeat performance!

More photographs available in the next issue.

## WRITE ON

Laurence Young brings us another in his occasional series of profiles of former pupils who have gone on to be successful in fields other than further education.

"I recently spoke to former pupil Jane Duncan who left Dyce Academy in 1989. Towards the end of her school career she read Scottish playwright John Byrne's 'Slab Boys Trilogy'. She enjoyed it so much she thought - 'I'd like to try that' - and instead of like most of us consigning such an idea to the back burner - she did something about it and so launched herself into playwriting.

It seems that Jane had a natural flair and talent for it and her early efforts were rewarded by 'Comin Up a Treat / Changing Scenes - 1966' being performed as part of the 1989 Scottish Youth Theatre Young Playwright Festival. This gave Jane the chance to spend two weeks at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama working with a professional writer, director and actors. She feels it was a wonderful opportunity for a person setting out on a playwriting career. Not only did she learn from the experience of these people but she made contacts - vital in the world of theatre and television. One such contact paid off a few years later and led to her play 'Full Board' being broadcast on Channel 4 as part of a She-play series.

In 1990 'Never Say Noir' was placed third in the Woolwich Young Radio Playwright's competition and a year later won Jane the bronze medal for best writing at the New York International Radio Festival. Jane's link with the Woolwich Radio competition has been a fruitful one. In 1992 'A Certain Way wi' Women' once again won her third place and she is in the top ten this year with 'Someone Else's Kid' about a young girl who discovers she is adopted. When I spoke to her she had just returned from London where she was involved in the recording of the play. BBC Radio Scotland might use this recording later this year.

Jane has lots of other work waiting in the wings including plays for television. She has a four part series, a fifty-minute piece and a half-hour play, all of which are being looked at by Yorkshire Television and BBC Scotland.

So is she ready to give up her day job - working in her father's nursery at Swailend, Newmachar? Well, not quite. Jane is well aware that a writer needs a few substantial commissions a year in order to be able to become a full-time playwright. Either that or get involved with a regular writing team. At present she has been invited to submit some sample material for ITV's police drama, 'The Bill'. Something like this could be the break she has been waiting for.

Although much of her work is for radio and television she is also interested in writing for the theatre - that's what got her started after all and she has subsequently written for Scottish Young Theatre - 'Tickets Only' and her play about Elvis, 'The King is Dead', which was performed by Strathclyde Theatre Group during Mayfest 1992. She also did a theatre directing course with SYT in 1991.

Does she have a writing preference? Well, not really, she likes the atmosphere of live theatre but with radio and television you can let your imagination run away a bit more and make use of radio and television 'effects' in your writing - and the money is much better.

Are there any frustrations when it comes to being a playwright? The worst, according to Jane, is the waiting. Television companies, in particular, are very slow to make decisions about work you submit or about following up discussions about possible commissions and Jane admits to sometimes getting frustrated at the fact that once your material is handed over to be produced, you don't have much say about what is actually done with it. She adds, however, that sometimes if you speak loud enough and make enough of a fuss then 'they' will listen to you.

Comedy, drama, plays for theatre, radio and television, plays set in Scotland, plays not set in Scotland, plays written using her own experience, plays written entirely from her imagination - Jane is a talented lady who could be on the verge of breaking into the big time - and she's not the least bit big-headed about it. We wish her well and we will follow her continued success with interest. Watch this space."

## LEAVERS' LUNCH

On 2 June between 12.00 and 1.00 pm about 100 staff and ex fourth, fifth and sixth year students shared a buffet lunch in school. This was our second Leavers' Lunch.

This event is organised to provide an opportunity for students leaving school to say goodbye to each other and to the staff they have known for a few years.

It is difficult for students to decide exactly when they leave school.

Is it at the start of their last exam leave?

Is it after their final exam?

Or, is it the date when those leaving fourth year can legally start work?

- This year 2 June.

We have decided that the best date for our informal leaving ceremony is the 'official' leaving date. Exams are over and students who are leaving are unlikely to be back in school after this date.

On 2 June, the school canteen provided an excellent buffet and everyone seemed to enjoy the occasion.

We wish our leavers well and hope they are successful in the wide range of ventures, and adventures, which they are embarking upon.

**M TAYLOR**

## CONGRATULATIONS.....

.... go to two of our S6 students who have had success in the University of Aberdeen Bursary Competition.

Joan Edwards came 15th, sitting papers in Chemistry and Geography, and winning a bursary of £200. Next year Joan will study Biochemistry at Aberdeen.

Abigail Mavor came 52nd, sitting papers in Chemistry and Biology, and winning a bursary of £100. Abigail will also study Biochemistry at Aberdeen next year.

Well done again!

## ENDANGERED ANIMALS - ART COMPETITION

Late last Autumn, Michelle Tough, then in 3B, won a prize in an Endangered Animals Art Competition sponsored by London Zoo and Tipp-Ex. Apart from a selection of books and Tipp-Ex products, Michelle was given the chance to enter the next stage of the competition, along with a small group of classmates -

Erika, Linda, Louisa,  
Patricia, Caroline,  
Emma

Their Brief was to design an enclosure at London Zoo, for a family of Golden Lion Tamarins - South American Monkeys. Working over lunchtimes in school, and in evenings at home, the team researched all aspects of the project. This included sending and receiving faxes from other zoos, such as the world acclaimed Jersey Zoo, founded by Gerald Durrell. After much discussion and debate, a solution was agreed that solved all specific aspects of the Brief. It was clever and original.

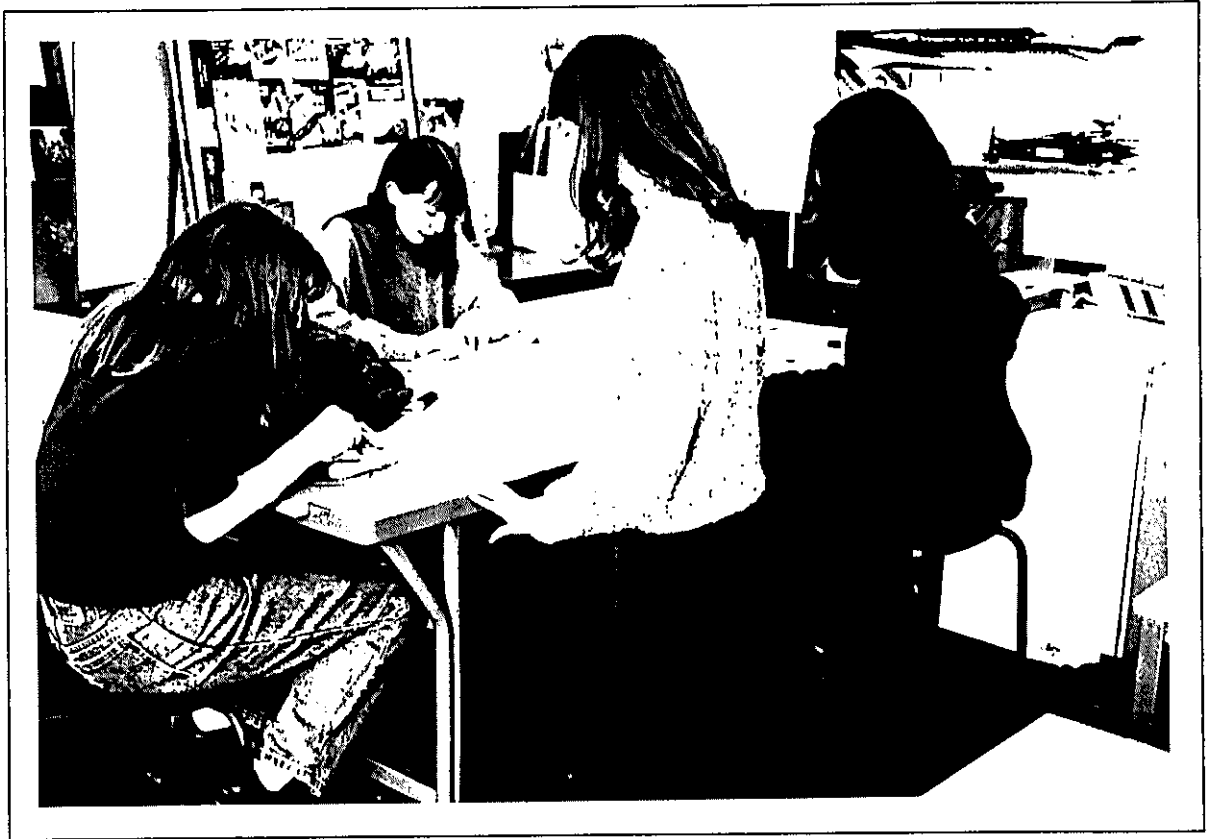
Plans and elevations were produced, a 3-D scale model and artist's impressions of the enclosure were produced in the Art Department. This information, along with photographs of the model and the team at work, were carefully presented on large sheets of card and sent off to London Zoo.

Word arrived the following week - that the entry was Highly Commended by the Curators and Keepers at London Zoo but the winning school in the age group was from Basildon in Essex. We had always felt that schools closer to London had an advantage, as part of the prize was a trip to the Capital to see the enclosure being built.

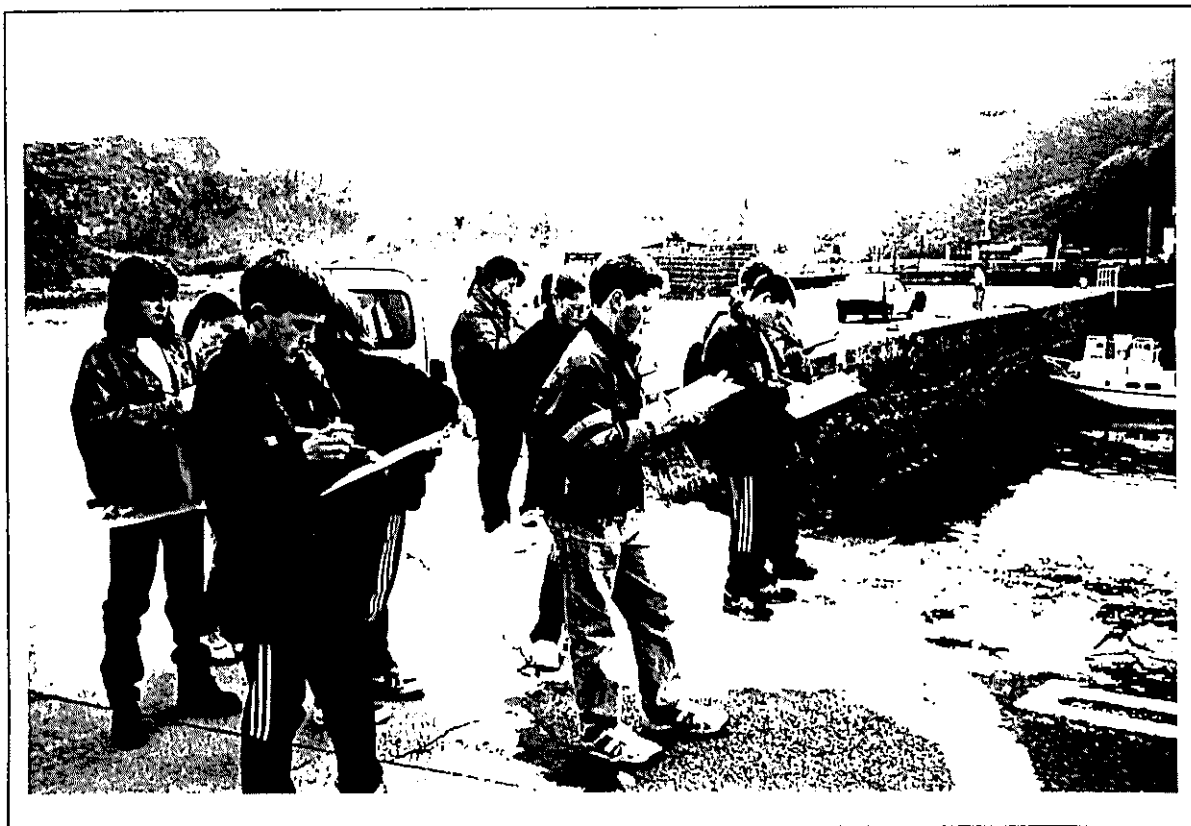
Despite the team's disappointment, they have the consolation of knowing they produced some excellent work. This was acknowledged by Simon Tong, Curator at the Zoo, who said, "The school has shown such incredible commitment and I was amazed at the quality of the entry and the ideas put forward - they are all to be congratulated. WELL DONE!"

DAVID NIVEN





# SOCIAL SUBJECTS FIELDTRIP - STONEHAVEN



## A CHANGE IN DIRECTION



This month, one of our Assistant Head Teachers, Mairi , takes early retirement. She has been at Dyce since she transferred from Keith Grammar School in 1989. Before that she has been involved in education in a wide variety of situations from a junior secondary inner-city school, to a girls' boarding school. She has also spent time teaching in Services' schools in Germany and Cyprus.

She talks with enthusiasm about her work in Dyce Academy but feels that she has been in teaching for long enough and it is time for a change of direction. She has no intention of being idle however and is considering part-time work.

Mairi has strong family connections with the West Coast of Scotland, so she intends to strengthen these links by spending more time there. However, most of her time will be in Aberdeen; no doubt many of us will see her around town.

Finally, she assures us that she'll be thinking of all the staff and pupils on 23 August!

## ENTERPRISING MATHS DAY

This is a competition held every year for all the schools in Grampian Region. With the bribe of a day off school and free food we managed to organise a team of two 3rd years and two 4th years :- Ryan Imlah, Clarke Cooper, Richard Morrice and team captain Kellie Johnstone.

The competition was held on Tuesday 20th June at Bankhead Academy. After juice and biscuits the team got down to the serious task of trying to beat the other 32 schools taking part.

The first event was the poster contest. The team had spent ½ hour each lunchtime the previous week planning and preparing their poster. The hard work paid off as their poster was the **overall winner**.

Next came a speed contest where the team completed a variety of practical tasks as quickly as they could. Again Dyce Academy were the **overall winners** of this contest.

Before lunch there was a team contest that consisted of 16 (very hard) questions to be completed in 50 minutes. After lunch the team played 2 games, Nim and Hex, against pupils from other schools.

The last contest was the relay where the team had to run and collect a question, answer it, then run back and collect another one as quickly as they could. The better the team was doing, the farther up the hall they sat - so Dyce found themselves at the very back. At the end of this round there were a few tired team members!

The pupils had an enjoyable day out, and were **runners-up** in the competition as a whole, only being beaten by Inverurie Academy.

For their efforts they received a £10 gift voucher and will compete in the Scottish finals of the Enterprising Maths Day in Dundee in October.

## SO FAREWELL, MARJORY.....



Marjory came to the Learning Support Department in August 1982. A native of Dundee, she had followed a degree at St Andrews University with the post-graduate Primary Certificate, and arrived at Dyce Academy via teaching posts in Switzerland and in a well-known girls' school in Aberdeen (not a lot of people know this!), to say nothing of several years spent raising a family and running the Whiterashes Store! Perhaps it was in the Whiterashes Store years that Marjory perfected her great competence at sums, an attribute which the Maths Department was not slow to make the most of!

Over the years Marjory has worked in many departments in the academy - English, Home Economics, Social Subjects and Business Studies for example. In Maths in particular she has made a continual valued contribution to curriculum development and teaching. She has also participated in cross-curricular initiatives such as Profiling.

Even so, the academy is only one aspect of Marjory's work: as 'float' teacher at Newmachar

and Fintray she has provided a superb learning support service, particularly for pupils with reading difficulties. There must be many parents and former pupils in these two communities with reason to be grateful for Marjory's presence over the years.

We who remain in the Learning Support Department will miss Marjory very much -for her extensive knowledge of her field, for her support, and for her friendship and good company. I am particularly indebted to her for her willingness, as the timetable has become more complex, to work single-handed at Newmachar and Fintray, taking on, as a Senior Teacher, a high level of responsibility.

Everything Marjory has done, whether in our primary schools or in the academy, has demonstrated the same commitment to providing the best possible learning experience for our pupils through informed, imaginative and patient teaching. We wish her well in her retirement, knowing that she will be a hard act to follow.

**HELLEN MATTHEWS**  
Principal Teacher (Learning Support)