

DINGWALL ACADEMY OCTOBER 2012 NEWSLETTER



CALENDAR DATES

Tuesday 30 th October	S6 and Prefect photograph
Wednesday 31 st October	S5 S6 Halloween Disco
Thursday 1 st November	S1 S2 Halloween Disco
Monday 5 th November	S5/6 progress checks posted home
Tuesday 6 th November 5.00 – 7.30	S3 Contact Evening
Friday 9 th November	S3 option forms to be returned
Monday 12 th and Tuesday 13 th Nov	S4 Tree of Knowledge seminars
Monday 12 th November 7pm	S4 parent information evening

STAFFING

Mrs Warde retired at the end of term after 22 years in the languages department. Mrs Warde has taken part in many school trips to France and Germany and she was also responsible for organising the lunchtime scripture union club. The school sends its very best wishes to Mrs Warde who is currently enjoying the sunshine in Australia!

Congratulations to Miss Rowe who has been appointed to the post of French/Spanish teacher. Miss Rowe spent her probationer year at Dingwall Academy and we are delighted that she is now able to join us on a permanent basis.

We also welcome Mrs Watson as Principal Teacher of Pupil Support. Mrs Watson will now take responsibility for Fairburn house. Mrs Carey has now taken up the role of Principal Teacher Learning Support.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT VISIT

On 27th and 28th September the school welcomed visitors from the authority Quality Improvement team. The team had been invited into school as part of the school's self-evaluation process. During the 2 days the team observed classes and spoke to pupil, staff and parent groups. The team identified some areas requiring attention but in general were very pleased with what they saw. They found the attitude and behaviour of the majority of pupils to be very good and in particular were very impressed by the standards set by senior pupils.

S4 STUDY SKILLS

During the 12th and 13th November all S4 pupils will be given the opportunity to take part in a seminar with the *Tree of Knowledge* Company. Pupils will be given advice and support as they move towards their prelim examinations. Pupils will also be asked to reflect on their progress in subjects and to set targets for their prelim exams. On 12th November at 7pm there will be an information session for S4 parents. This session will outline what pupils have worked at during the day and will also provide some advice on how parents can help pupils study and prepare for exams.

Further information on the Tree of Knowledge Company can be found at www.treeof.com

S4 prelim exams start on **Monday 19th November**. Pupils will be issued with timetables next week and the timetable can also be viewed on the school website.

SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHS

Individual photographs are available to collect from the school office. Family photographs can be taken during lunchtime on Tuesday 30th October.

HALLOWEEN DISCOS

Halloween discos will take place in the school at the following times

S5/6 Wednesday 31st October 7.30 – 10.00pm

S1/2 Thursday 1st November 7.30 – 9.30pm

UCAS Deadlines

All senior pupils applying for University this year should now be well into the UCAS application process. An information evening for parents was held during last term and pupils have all been issued with additional information and guidance. The deadline for completing final draft of personal statements is **Friday 30th November**.

S1 LUNCHTIMES

During last term all S1 pupils were asked to stay on school premises during lunchtimes. S1 pupils can now choose to go out of school on one day each week.

Brahan	Monday
Fairburn	Tuesday
Novar	Wednesday
Tulloch	Thursday
Wyvis	Friday

SCHOOL WEBSITE

Following recent problems the school website has now been moved and rebuilt. Parents can find most information relating to the school on the website. The website now includes a section on S5 and S6 Unit Assessments.

S5 S6 UNIT ASSESSMENTS

All pupils following Intermediate, Higher or Advanced Higher courses have to complete and pass a number of unit assessments – pupils will often refer to these as NABs. Where possible, the dates of unit assessments will be detailed on the website. However pupils must also take note of dates from teachers and be responsible for knowing when these important assessments will take place. Unit assessments are an essential part of the course and must be passed if pupils are to achieve an overall course award.

SPONSORED WALK

On the last day of term over 800 pupils and staff took part in the sponsored walk with 80 senior pupils helping to marshal the route. After the terrible rain we were fortunate to have a very pleasant Autumn day which helped keep the spirits up as pupils covered the 10 mile course. The school are grateful to members of the parent council who helped distribute much appreciated water and chocolate at the midway point. The total money raised is not yet known and any pupils who still have to return sponsored money are asked to do so as soon as possible. Part of the money raised will be donated to local charity 'Lucky2Bhere.' The remaining money will be put to the school fund and used to support extra-curricular events and activities.

LA TRAVIATA

S5 and 6 senior music students recently enjoyed a fantastic La Traviata workshop from Scottish Opera, prior to seeing the final live performance at the Strathpeffer Pavilion on Thursday 4th October. Erin Haslam 5N describes the experience: this had been her first experience of opera and she would certainly go back to see another.

She explains that "La Traviata" is a very sad and moving opera. Act one begins with the female lead Violetta hosting a party as she is a courtesan. Alfredo is a photographer who is madly in love with Violetta and tells her of his love. Three months later Violetta and Alfredo move in together. Alfredo's father then visits, telling Violetta to give up Alfredo and spare his family the shame. Violetta leaves and Alfredo is so

distraught he goes to find her. When he does find her he is too late and she is dying. Act three closes with Violetta dying. This opera was my first and I would certainly go back to see another. The Scottish Opera's take on Verdi's "La Traviata" was unbelievable. The music and singing were impeccable and when I met the cast afterwards they were genuinely nice people. I would definitely go back to see the Scottish Opera again.

Erin Haslam 5N

PUPIL ACHIEVEMENTS

David Kerr 6N has been awarded his 1st Dan (Black Belt) in Judo. This has taken a lot of hard work and dedication – congratulations to David.

Congratulations to Tom Hoffmann 5T. Tom has been selected for the GB Under 17 Fencing team and will represent GB at a tournament in Copenhagen in December. This is a tremendous achievement and we wish Tom all the very best in future competitions.

Congratulations to Brion McCloy 2N2 who has received a letter from the Queen! As part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations pupils were asked to enter a competition that involved writing to invite the Queen to Ross-shire. The English department were so impressed with Brion's entry that it was sent to Buckingham Palace and to Brion's amazement he received a personal letter of thanks. Well done Brion.

Congratulations to Sarah Jack 6F2 – Sarah recently entered a Scholar competition organised by Heriot Watt University and received the runners up prize of Amazon voucher and goodie bag.

Congratulations to Callum Russell S5 who recently represented the North of Scotland at the UK Inter-regional Youth Mountain Bike Championships.

The event involved teams of 8 (4 boys and 4 girls) from 14 regions around the UK racing on the Olympic Cross-country Mountain Bike course at Hadleigh Farm in Essex.

Callum's performance contributed to a magnificent 1st place overall for the North of Scotland. Well done!

Congratulations to David Laszkiewicz 3F2, competition winner -

The S3 pupils have been working on a project called 'Preparedness on the move'. This formed part of a competition that was run throughout the whole of Scotland and many schools participated. The class that entered from Dingwall Academy was 3K. Some of the pupils chose to have their drawings sent to be judged. The winning images will appear in a 'Ready for Emergencies' calendar 2013.

This project also includes designing and producing a bag depicting essential items that can be used in a car in case of severe weather. These items could include a torch, blanket, first aid kit, a map for planning alternative routes and reflective waterproof clothing. On the back of the bag we will put an essential checklist and will make it universal by putting symbols as well as the writing.

By David Laszkiewicz and Charlie Mack

DADS News...

A huge well done and thank you to all the pupils and staff involved in helping to put Dingwall Academy Drama Society's (DADS) first non-competitive production together. The performance of Michael Conyers' The Complete History of the World (abridged) on October 4th was a massive success with a full house and outstanding performances from all. The production could not have been done without the help of an army of pupils and staff behind the set, costume and props so a special thank you to them. The actors and backstage crew did themselves proud and fully deserved the applause they gained from the audience. Great thanks must go to the audience that showed on the night, Mrs Cormack and the local

businesses who donated raffle prizes. With their help the production raised over £400 for the club and will fund the One Act Festival competition taking place in March which everyone is invited to attend. Thank you to all who helped and supported us.

Mr Lyall

MOUNTAIN BIKE CLUB

The mountain bike club enjoyed a trip to Aviemore this month to ride the Burma Road with riders from Peebles High School. Four intrepid pupils took on the 27 mile route (with 15 pupils from Peebles) which included a brutal hour long climb, lunch in a remote bothy, river crossings and some secret single-track courtesy of George Reid, Highland Highlife's Outdoor Education Officer. The weather was cool but kind and the pupils rode fantastically!



It's great to see new riders coming to the club and we look forward to hitting the trails again this term.