



# TAIN ROYAL ACADEMY

## ACADAMAIDH RÌOGHAIL BHAILE DHUBHTHAICH



# Parents' Newsletter

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An Damhair 2007

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**OCTOBER HOLIDAY**  
school closes 5 October  
re-opens 22 October

### RECTOR'S COMMENT

As we approach the October break our pupils are now involved in many projects as part of the Highland Promise/Highland Year of Culture 2007.

Recently Gizzen Briggs had a very successful tour of our Primary Schools and on Thursday again played a sell out concert in the Duthac Centre. They were joined by the Junior Strings players and by the Craighill Gaidhlig singers. The young people were excellent.

Next Wednesday we have our Highland Games, followed by a ceilidh for pupils in the evening.

On Thursday our S2 pupils participate in the Food and Drink Challenge. A number of subject departments are working together to help the pupils produce a 'pakora' dish which will be packaged and tested, and tasted!

There are a number of other Year of Culture activities planned for next term which will involve TRA pupils.

Finally, our Buddies will join their S1 pupils on a visit to Rollerbowl after school next Thursday.

Our S1 pupils have settled in well. If any parents of any S1 pupils have any concerns please contact Mr Gray, Depute Rector or myself.

*Donnie Macleod, Rector*

**Euan Macrae** It was with great sadness that everyone in TRA learned of the death of our pupil Euan. Euan had a joy for learning, and had a great interest in reading. He had made a superb effort working for his Standard Grade examinations whilst undergoing treatment. Euan will be sadly missed by pupils and staff. Our thoughts are with his parents and family at this time.

*Rector*



### GIZZEN BRIGGS PRIMARY TOUR

As part of the 2007 Highland Year of Culture, Gizzen Briggs embarked on perhaps the smallest tour in history, at least in terms of distance. Our mission was to play a concert in each of the associated primaries in the local cluster. Being Gizzen Briggs however, we didn't do it the easy way of one concert each day, going rather for two or even three at a time. A hectic schedule ensued!

The decision was made to go out one day a week, and to go on a different day each week, to spread the load of disruption of classes.

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## GIZZEN BRIGGS PRIMARY TOUR

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The Gizzen Briggs staff would like to say a special thanks to our long suffering colleagues, who manfully (and womanfully) filled in for us while we were out. Our first visit was to Knockbreck Primary, where the weather was so pleasant that we were able to play outside, which allowed plenty of room for the audience to get up on their feet and dance, which the pupils in all the schools needed no encouragement from us to do so!

As well as Gizzen Briggs playing, all the visits involved audience participation, with some of the fiddlers in the primary schools joining the group to play a couple of tunes that they had obviously been working hard on. Then they learned a new dance, the Virginia Reel, under the expert guidance of Mr Jimmy McLean, well known ceilidh dance caller of this parish, and some of the GB members taking a break from playing the tunes. The pupils' enjoyment was wonderful to see. A number of youngsters then played a selection of percussion instruments with the group, again with wonderful enthusiasm and excellent senses of rhythm. If that wasn't enough, Laura, Imogen and Lindsay taught everyone a hand dance, involving chest slapping, finger clicking and hand rubbing, which was enjoyed by all, especially some of the teachers.

After the gentle start at Knockbreck, the next week saw us hitting the road to Hilton and

Edderton. By this time the "road crew" of Ross, Matthew and Keilan were getting very good at setting up and dismantling the sound gear, assisted by the rest of the band carrying all the gear into and out of the venues. The next week, we really went for it, playing at Milton and Gledfield in the morning, before making the short trip to Bonar Bridge in the afternoon for another outdoor performance. For me, that was a highlight of the tour, with the wonderful scenery providing the perfect backdrop. By this time we were starting to get the hang of it. That was followed by another trio of visits, this time to Tarbat Old, Inver, where we were joined by a "guest drummer", and Fearn. For these



performances, we were joined by the Craighill Gaelic Choir, which reduced the space for dancing in some places, but certainly added to the cultural experience. The last trip was the short walk to Craighill, where we played twice as the hall wasn't big enough to get the whole school and concert party in at once. This concert was followed by a re-enactment of the Battle of Bannockburn on the Craighill field. Anything can happen on a Gizzen Briggs tour!

The tour ended with a concert in the Duthac Centre on Thursday 27th September, with Gizzen Briggs joined by players from all the primaries, as well as junior Gizzen Briggs and the Craighill choir. Sometimes I'm glad we don't have a pipe band as well, there would be no room for an audience! Look for a report in the next bulletin.

*I Carlton*

### **VALUABLES IN SCHOOL**

Pupils should not bring valuable items, eg mobile phones, into school unless they are required. In PE, pupils should hand valuables to the teacher at the start of the lesson and not leave them in the changing rooms.

## NEW PARENT COUNCIL

The Parent Council of Tain Royal Academy met officially for the first time on the evening of September 11th at the Academy. The meeting was the Annual General Meeting and confirmed the appointment of the office bearers for the coming academic session. Chair is Paul Hoggarth, Vice Chair is David James with Andrea Mackintosh as Clerk/Secretary and Nikki Beesley as Treasurer.

The recently appointed School Captains, Graeme Morrison and Shaun Murray were welcomed and encouraged to participate in the meeting.

The Rector informed the Council that there would be no further visit to the Academy by H.M. Inspectors arising from the School Inspection of autumn 2005. A note will be going out shortly to parents to summarise events and progress since the inspection.

Current school events, pupil and staff achievements plus changes to personnel were also discussed with The Rector. As usual the fabric of the building featured with some good news on new toilets, gym roof, electrics and CCTV.

An interesting discussion involving all attending what was quite a large meeting spent some time on the subject of the pupil dress code. Pending further soundings amongst pupils, parents and staff on the future development of the code it was agreed that all parents should support the current code. The meeting agreed that standards of dress had improved since the introduction of the TRA dress code and this progress needs to be continued.

The use of the Homework Diary was highlighted during a discussion on homework. There is a facility in the diary for parents to comment and acknowledge homework. The Parent Council urged all parents to take a peek into the diary on a regular basis and familiarise themselves with how well their child is coping with homework.

Possible social and fundraising activities were the final item on a busy agenda.

The next Parent Council Meeting is on Tuesday, October 30th at 7.00pm in the Academy library. All parents and carers are very welcome to attend.

*Paul Hoggarth,  
TRA Parent Council*

## THE FOOTBALL FANTASY LEAGUE



starts in October so you have to be registered online before the October holidays start. To be part of it you have to pay £3.50 but as well as having the pleasure of taking part in the league and playing for trophies and medals, you get a free pack of Top Trumps. Nice one! (Ask the older folk about that one!)

It's good to see some parents getting involved and hopefully we can get more parents, uncles, aunts, grannies and grandads etc to join in and teachers even!

*M Jones*

## PHOTOGRAPHY/FILMING OF PUPILS

During class projects and school events, pupils may be photographed/filmed to record the occasion. Photographs may be used in the parents' newsletter or the local press. Should you have any concerns about this please contact the rector.

## CHRISTMAS SHOPPING EVENING

Your Christmas shopping worries could be over!

This year TRA is planning to host a Christmas Shopping Evening in the Assembly Hall on 29th November. This is to help raise funds for the School Fund which helps all pupils in the school in various extra curricular activities and also funds the school minibus.

It is hoped that many local business people/traders will manage to come along to sell their goods - cards, jewellery, gifts of all kinds. Anyone wishing to 'rent' a stall for the evening to sell goods can contact the school.

Do come along and support this evening. There will be a charge at the door, a selection of stalls to view and buy from, a raffle, and a chance to relax with a cup of tea/coffee and catch up with friends.

More news will follow about this evening in the next newsletter.....



**HIGHLAND ARCHAEOLOGY FORTNIGHT** - from 29th September to 14th October - lots of events taking place including some led walks. A few comprehensive brochures are available from TRACC for anyone who would like to study what's on.



Care Commission

**THIRD AGE FITNESS SUITE USE** - from Thursday 25th October (just after the October break) the Thursday Fitness Suite session will be from 10.00 - 11.00am. We've been asked to accommodate a TRA class in the 11.00 to 12.00 noon session and hope that the earlier start won't put too many people off!

**THANK YOU JANET** - Janet McKeachan left us recently after completing over 14 years' service with Highland Council. Janet will be sorely missed by all the TRACC staff, users and members of the school and community with whom she came into contact. We all wish Janet well with her new job with the

**WHO'S WEARING PINK?** - Friday 26th October, Breast Cancer Campaign is encouraging everyone in the UK to donate £2.00 and wear pink - it can be anything pink - socks, hair, t-shirts - your choice. Collection box at TRACC from Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

**LOCAL CHARITIES COFFEE MORNING AND SALE OF CHRISTMAS CARDS** - This will be on Saturday 3rd November this year. Please tell your friends and support local charities. Any local charity who would like to take a table, please contact the TRACC Office on Tain 893767.

**TUESDAY AND THURSDAY EVENING FITNESS CLASSES** - There is time still to get into shape and get into that special Christmas party dress! Tuesday Combat class and Thursday Balance both take place in the Games Hall at TRACC from 7.30 to 8.30pm. High Life applies - and there's even the chance to have a swim immediately after the session.

**OCTOBER HOLIDAYS** - Now booking pre-school and primary lessons in two weeks of crash courses. Because this is only a two week holiday, places are quite limited so early booking is encouraged. To find out more (times, prices, availability etc) please contact the TRACC Office on Tain 893767.

**CHILD PROTECTION AWARENESS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY GROUP** - advance warning of a short course on Thursday 1st November - to put your name down please contact TRACC.

*Catherine Morgan, TRACC*

#### **TAIN AND EASTER ROSS WARD FORUM**

The Highland Council's local Ward Forum had its first meeting in Balintore on Thursday 23 August at 7.30pm. The theme of that meeting was road and ground maintenance, but there was also a discussion about community safety and a public question and answer session at the end. Action notes from the meeting can be viewed on the Highland Councils Website at [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk)

The aim of the forum is to provide an effective scrutiny of the way the Council provides services in Tain and Easter Ross. All of the Ward Forums will be held in public and have a 20 minute session at the close of the meeting for the public to ask questions. **The meetings will be attended by the three councillors who serve Tain and Easter Ross - Councillors Richard Durham, Alasdair Rhind and Alan Torrance** - as well as representatives from community councils, initiative groups and the police.

The Tain and Easter Ross Ward Forum will provide an opportunity for community representatives and the public to raise local issues scrutinise local council delivery and performance and help make choices about local service delivery, where appropriate.

Two more Ward Forums have been arranged for 2007, they will be held on: **Thursday 4 October 2007 at 7.30 in the Assembly Hall, Tain Royal Academy, Tain** and Thursday 22 November 2007 the venue is still to be agreed

If you have a question you would like raised at the forum you can e-mail your question to the Ward Manager, Caroline MacAskill at [caroline.macaskill@highland.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.macaskill@highland.gov.uk). Alternatively, you may like to come along and listen or raise your question during the public question and answer session.

**For further details** about the Forum please contact your Ward Manager, Caroline MacAskill, Tain Service Point, 24 High St, Tain, IV19 1AEH or by phoning tel. 01349 886643 or by e-mail at: [caroline.macaskill@highland.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.macaskill@highland.gov.uk)