

## ***A night to remember***

What a night to remember! No, not Inverness Caledonian Thistle football club beating Celtic 3-1, but a night not so many miles from there.

In June of this year I was privileged to take Four of Banff Academy's Young Engineers away to the annual showcase event in Glasgow - an event that attracts the crème de la crème of Young Engineers clubs. In Scotland alone there are over 280 Young Engineers clubs of which 60 clubs battled it out for the top prize of club of the year. This was the 3<sup>rd</sup> time that Banff had competed under the guidance of Mr Flett and me. This time it was 3<sup>rd</sup> time lucky for us and one of our prizes was 6 tickets for the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Gala Dinner hosted by Scottish Council for Development and Industry and it really was a night to remember.

We left the academy at 1pm on Friday to travel to Glasgow for the dinner. We thought that this was ample time but roadworks outside Dundee held us up. A mad dash at 62 mph down the motorway saw us arrive at our hotel just 30 minutes before our taxi was due to take us to the Hilton hotel for the gala dinner. After a quick change we were all kilted up and ready to go. We owe a big thank you to Soy Kilts from Portsoy who stepped in as official clothing sponsors, something that was mentioned at the dinner.

We arrived at the Hilton hotel and were treated like stars from the minute we arrived until we left. On arrival we were ushered into the exclusive Scottish Council for Development and Industry lounge where a pre dinner buffet was provided. Mrs Jane Martin took great pleasure in introducing us to various dignitaries including Jim Mather MSP. We were then shown to our table. We were surrounded by 70 other tables but none of the guests were so well dressed. Principal partner for the SCDI Gala Awards, Scotland's leading business awards dinner, was The Royal Bank of Scotland, with associate partners Determined to Succeed, Envirowise, Gillespie MacAndrew, Glasgow: Scotland with Style and Scottish Power Renewables.

Seven hundred guests packed the Glasgow Hilton Hotel for this year's Arabian Nights-themed event with entertainment from writer and comedienne Jo Brand and news presenter Isla Traquair.

There were 12 awards including the one for Young Engineers Club of the Year. We received our award from Jim Mather MSP. On the way up for the award a video of our club and some of the 12 accolades that we have won were shown. As we approached the stage Isla Traquair announced to the audience that we were the first young engineers club to have sponsored kilts. Having had our photo taken with Mr Mathers we made our way back to our table for the meal. With free drink provided our club managed to polish off 42 bottles, but I should say at this point that it was 42 bottles of cola!

After our meal Miss Traquair came to our table to congratulate our club which the pupils thought was fantastic and we all got our photo with her. After a short break we were treated to a 45 minute stand up show by the legendary Jo Brand. Once the clock struck 12 our carriage took us back to our hotel and it was all talk of how we will win this again as we all want a repeat. Every single person commented that it truly was a night to remember, another great trip out for the Banff Academy young engineers.

David Pirie  
Club Leader  
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