

PE pair look back on their years of service

School sport by Pat Scott

TWO PE teachers who between them have given 78 years of service to The Gordon Schools will hang up their tracksuits and trainers when the school bell rings at the end of the day.

Graham Allardice and Matt Donaldson will both retire after 40 and 38 years respectively in the teaching profession. Both men have seen an enormous step forward taken in the importance of PE on the school curriculum during their careers and have been so influential that several of their former pupils have followed them into the teaching profession.

Aberdeen-schooled Mr Allardice completed his diploma in physical education at the Scottish School of Physical Education at Jordanhill and began his teaching career at The Gordon Schools on his 21st birthday.

In 1984, he added a Bachelor of Education degree to his qualifications and soon afterwards was promoted to head of the PE department at The Gordon Schools.

It was around the same time that PE became a recognised qualification and The Gordon Schools was chosen to pilot the standard and higher grade courses which Mr Allardice says marked a huge change in the way in which the subject was delivered.

“PE was always an important subject but it now has the status of being accepted as a university qualification,” he said.

Mr Allardice is rightly proud of The Gordon Schools’ reputation for sport and



has made it his personal mission to encourage all kinds of sport from hill-climbing to clay pigeon shooting.

Considerable success has been achieved by pupils in traditional sports and athletics and he is proud of the straight five out of five triumphs in the North Aberdeenshire Schools Sports Association overall trophy by what is the second smallest school in the group. Schools teams, boys and girls, have played in finals at Murrayfield.

“The school has made a name for itself through sport and is very much on the map for it, Scotland-wide. The whole PE department has been well supported by senior management and investment made in sport,” said Mr Allardice.

Mr Allardice is also proud of the strong traditions which exist within the school and has made his own contribution through the programme of Scottish Country dancing lessons held each year in advance of the school dances.

For 24 years in a row, Mr Allardice led watersports trips to the south of France.

In his retirement, Mr Allardice hopes to have time for golf, hill-walking and fishing, and to build on his skills as a piper but may also undertake some supply teaching.

His son lives in New Zealand and a trip to visit him is marked on the calendar.

Timetabling retirement for the future is fellow PE teacher Matt Donaldson who as well as teaching in The Gordon Schools has taught in primary schools throughout the network.

“I have taught in good schools with nice kids and could not have been happier. I

taught more than one generation from the same family and have enjoyed being part of The Gordon Schools team.

“The games hall is close to unique and the layout of the playing fields and the beautiful campus cannot be beaten,” said Mr Donaldson, who also studied at Jordanhill College.

A keen cyclist, Mr Donaldson will be taking up a part time position at the Bike Shack and hopes to continue the mountain-biking club he ran at school.

Colleagues and a number of former pupils attended a ceilidh last week to send the two teachers off into retirement.

■ **A former pupil of the two retiring PE teachers will step up to the post of Faculty head of health and wellbeing with responsibility for PE.**

Diane Harper, who has been teaching PE at The Gordon Schools for a number of years, has been promoted to the post. Mrs Harper is a former pupil of Kennethmont Primary and The Gordon Schools.

The photograph on the left shows retiring PE teachers Graham Allardice, at the rear, and Matt Donaldson with Diane Harper who has been promoted to take responsibility for PE as Faculty head for health and wellbeing. Picture: Lyn MacDonald. Image No. V5-23-5694.

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