

Madras College Newsletter : Easter, 1984

This session the Easter holidays have come round earlier than usual - a welcome relief to a hard-pressed staff. An epidemic of 'flu added to the demands of in-service training has meant a staff absence rate of about 12% for several weeks now. Staff have struggled manfully to maintain cover for classes, but last week for the first time we reached the point where a year-group had to be told to remain at home for a day in order to ease the pressure.

As part of the publicity programme on the introduction of the Standard Grade, I gave talks for S2 parents at Newport Primary School and at Madras College on the forthcoming changes. All pupils entering S3 in August, 1984 will take the new Standard Grade courses in English and Mathematics at one of three levels - Foundation, General or Credit. For those who choose Science as a single subject, study will be at either Foundation or General. These courses will lead to certification in May, 1986. In August 1985, a further eight subjects will switch over to S Grade courses, and in August 1986 all the remaining subjects in the curriculum will be offered in S Grade form. Preparations are being made for the introduction of modular courses with a vocational slant for S5 and S6. In order to give staff time to develop S Grade and modular courses, and write material for them, school will be closed for pupils on the following dates: Friday, 27th April, Friday, 1st June, and Monday, 25th June.

The Parent-Teacher Association has completed a very successful season which has included talks by pupils on their travels abroad, a presentation by Mr Trewartha of the work of the P.E. department, and a programme of chamber music by pupils of the Music Department. It is a pity that evenings of such quality do not get the size of audience they merit. In January, the Drama Club entranced us with its production of "Alice" written by Robert Bridges and produced by Mrs Ann Bridges. Speech, music, dance and song were combined in a fascinating manner which broke new ground for the Drama Club.

The Music Department has had an active term. Pupils have helped to provide music in the local churches and at the Cottage Hospital, and as I write they are preparing simultaneously for the Spring Concert on 21st March and for the summer production of the "Mikado". The Junior Choir conducted by Miss E. Kinnear, came first in the Scots song class of the Fife Music Festival. The first recipient of a new music scholarship at Madras College is David McCallum of S6 who expects to study Music at Glasgow University next year. The scholarship, which is for an outstanding music pupil comes from an endowment set up by a former pupil of Madras - Professor Frederick Newnham of Tacoma, U.S.A. - to mark the 150th Anniversary of the founding of the school.

Half-way through the term, pupils in each building ran a Charities Week which raised more than £1,000 for the hostel project for the mentally handicapped in the St Andrews area. It was splendid to see the young people organising themselves and others in aid of this worthwhile project.

On the extra-curricular side, the clubs have continued to flourish. The Debating Society again held a highly successful Burns Supper for senior pupils and staff. Parties of pupils have watched Scotland's historic games at Murrayfield, and have gone on a theatre outing to Dundee. The golfers are improving their swing under the tuition of Laurie Ayton.

Between house matches and fixtures with other schools, there has been much activity on the games field. In football, the 1st XI and the U/15 XI are lying middle of their league, while the U/14's tied for 1st place in their league and the U/13's won theirs. In rugby the seniors are currently engaged in a series of tournaments, and have made a good start in the Merchiston 7's. The coaching which parents and F.P.'s have been giving at the mini-rugby sessions has greatly helped the junior XV's to establish themselves as effective teams. The girls' hockey teams have had

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a successful run since Christmas. The seniors reached the semi-finals in the Woodmill 7-a-side tournament, and are hoping to improve their placing in the Perth 7-a-side tournament. The 3rd Year indoor hockey team were runners-up in both the Midlands and the Fife tournaments. Boys' hockey has developed strongly this season -the 1st XI have won all their matches since Christmas and are also through to the final stages of the Scottish Schools Indoor Tournament. The indoor squad won the Fife Schools Indoor Tournament. Angus and Ian Rust and William McKane have been chosen to play for Midlands District and for the Scottish Schoolboys squad this season.

In cross-country running, the boys' under-19 team won the Fife Schools Team Cup, while William Kay took first place. The same team came 4th in the Scottish Schools' contest at Irvine, with William Kay in 9th place. Murray Bremner was 4th in the Fife Schools' under-13 race, and Wendy Allison 2nd in the over-15 race. Volleyball is developing slowly and should go on doing so as the pool of players expands. Badminton has shown strength this season. In the U-16's, Karen Christie and Carol Davidson, were winner and runner-up respectively, and together were doubles runners-up, while Roderick Christie and Wendy Taylor were runners-up in the over 16's. All four, along with Gillian Stirton will play for Fife in the Inter-Regional Championships. Our Table Tennis team won the under-18 section of the North East Fife Tournament.

I take this opportunity of thanking Mr Adamson (Geography), Mrs Carstairs (Science), Mrs Geddes (French), Mrs Gray (Mathematics) and Mrs Oswald (P.E.) for the supply help they have given this term. It was with sadness that we learned of the death of Mr Lawson who taught in the Technical Department before retiring several years ago.

Parents may wish to note the following dates of holidays and forthcoming events:

Easter Holiday	-	Monday 26th March - Friday 6th April 1984
May Day	-	Monday 7th May 1984
June Day	-	Monday 4th June 1984
School Musical	-	19th - 23rd June 1984
Summer Holiday	-	Monday 2nd July - Wednesday 15th August 1984

I wish all pupils, staff and parents a very pleasant and recreative holiday.

W. Selway.

Rector