

Fife Fife Education Authority

MADRAS COLLEGE, ST. ANDREWS

South Street Building
KY16 9EJ
Tel. No. (0334) 75733.

Kilrymont Road Building
KY16 8DE
Tel. No. (0334) 75777.

D.D. GALLOWAY, Rector.

J.L. HODGE, Depute Rector.



Newsletter - Christmas 1986

Dear Parent,

It is perhaps the greyness and wetness of the weather as much as anything else that has made the term seem long and tiring and the prospect of Christmas holidays more than usually welcome. The gloominess of the weather has been reflected in the gloominess of the industrial situation. The lack of extra curricular activities, particularly Christmas festivities which was something of a novelty last year, is now so much part of the established pattern that it is difficult to remember anything else. The Secretary of State's pull on the purse-strings effectively strangled the faint hopes which the publication of the Main Report had raised in October. For several weeks it seemed that the situation was about to deteriorate into unimaginable catastrophe. Fortunately both sides appear to have stepped back from the brink and are now at least talking to each other. In spite of the one day of renewed strike action, there are now perhaps greater grounds for optimism than at any time since the dispute began. If the present negotiations between government, unions and local authorities succeed in reaching agreement by the declared deadline of 23rd December, it could be like those real wars when all the fighting was supposed to be over by Christmas. If peace does break out, it will open the flood-gates of curricular change, but in my view the re-establishment of contact with parents through reports and meetings must be given even greater priority.

In the South Street building prelim exams for 4th, 5th and 6th year pupils have just finished. The main reason for the early timing of the exams is to provide an uninterrupted block of teaching between January and Easter. It is an opportunity to consolidate what has been achieved and remedy any deficiencies revealed by the results. If pupils are to benefit fully from next term's work, it is important that they plan and keep to a strict routine of study. Parents are always anxious to help with homework but rather than helping with the work itself, where both content and method may have changed considerably since their own school days, their greatest contribution to good results can be made by ensuring that a regular programme of study is maintained. Leisure activities which take a pupil out during the week should be kept to a minimum. The time for relaxation is the weekend and I would suggest that any more than one evening off during the working week is unwise. Preparing for exams demands hard and unremitting effort and for certificate pupils it is not unreasonable to expect 2-2½ hours to be spent on homework every night. It is of course easier if regular study patterns have been established in the first three years and it is in this area that parents of younger pupils can do much to lay the foundations of future success.

At the opening meeting of the Parent Teacher Association in November, Mr Michael Baughan spoke about the links between school and industry. His interesting and wide-ranging talk gave parents an insight into the various ways in which schools are interacting with industry to an ever increasing extent. In this connection it is appropriate to mention the Young Enterprise project in which a number of senior pupils, led by Mr Halliday, are involved in running their own company. It trades under the name of Scribbles and now operates from the paper mill at Guardbridge. The enthusiasm of the pupils together with the advice of Messrs Milne, Brown, Moffat and Whyte of G.B. Papers, to whom we are very grateful, means that things are going very well. Extra meetings have been necessary recently to keep production abreast of orders - a good omen for a successful year.

The school was recently invited to send a senior member of staff to liaise with R.A.F. Leuchars and Mr Hodge undertook this task. His visit to the base was a valuable exercise. It was a means of establishing a point of contact where mutual difficulties could be discussed. It also served to make the school more aware of the pressures that service life imposes not only on the personnel themselves but on their families.

2.

It is gratifying to record several gifts to the school. At the annual dinner of the F.P. Girls' Club the president, Mrs Thomson, handed over to the Rector an old silver medal originally awarded in the school in 1866 for distinction in English. Thanks to the generosity of Mrs Jean Carmichael of Glasgow, an award for creative writing, open to pupils in S5 and S6, has been established. The Muirhead Award, as it is to be known, commemorates the association of Mrs Carmichael's family with the school since its foundation. The Rotary Club of St Andrews have given the school a handsome trophy to be awarded for inter-house debating. It is hoped that the first competition for the trophy can be staged early in the new term and will provide useful training for the subsequent inter-school debate.

As if to show that the school's links with the East are not just in name only, a group of Indonesian teachers attending a course at Dundee College of Education spent some days in school to observe our methods of teaching Mathematics, while a visit by Dr Mithrah G. Augustine, the Principal of Madras Christian College in India, was a particular source of pleasure.

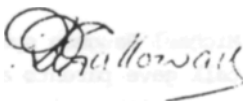
Groups of pupils represented the school at the Armistice and St Andrews Day services in Holy Trinity. Their bearing and appearance were a credit to school and home and the subject of well deserved complimentary comments. On the other side of the coin I have received complaints from the Director of Environmental Health about Madras College pupils leaving litter on the streets of the town at lunch time, although I am well aware that it is not always pupils who are responsible for creating the problem. Pupils are encouraged to play their part in keeping St Andrews tidy by being reminded from time to time at morning assembly and in social education classes about the importance of a responsible attitude to litter. Added support from parents on this point would, I am sure, be helpful in preventing future complaints of this kind.

I would make an appeal for similar parental support on an entirely different problem. Although improvements to the school building are virtually at a standstill because of the restrictions on local authority spending, quite a lot of work has recently been done to replace old and worn linoleum in the Kilrymont Road building. Unfortunately, many of the shoes worn by the girls have heels which damage the linoleum. While the magnificent response of parents in providing uniform continues to be appreciated and I have no wish to impose unnecessary restrictions, it would certainly save wear and tear and might even leave money available for other purposes if parents with daughters could persuade them to choose shoes for school wear which are hopefully not too unfashionable but are without the sort of heels that cause damage to the floors.

There is only one staff change to record. Miss Liddell, who joined the Music department in August to teach piano, leaves again to be replaced temporarily by Mrs McManus. The services of supply staff continue to be in demand and we are, as always, grateful for the help they give. We send our good wishes to Mr Graham Taylor of the Print Room, who has been absent for several months and is now making a good recovery from a serious operation, and to Dr Soulsby who, to our great regret, still remains on the sick list.

Finally, it only remains for me to wish staff, parents and pupils a merry Christmas and a good New Year.

Yours sincerely.



Rector.

Holiday Dates

School re-opens after the Christmas break on Monday 5th January 1987.

Easter: Monday 6th to Friday 17th April 1987 (inclusive)
May Day: Monday 4th May 1987
June: Monday 1st June 1987
Summer: Monday 6th July to Tuesday 18th August 1987 (inclusive)