

MADRAS COLLEGE, ST. ANDREWS



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D.D. GALLOWAY, Rector.

J.L. HODGE, Depute Rector.

Dear Parent,

Newsletter - Summer 1988

Although matters such as Mr Forsyth's bill will no doubt return to centre stage all too soon, the term has been refreshingly, if temporarily, free from the impact of national decisions on the local educational scene. Nevertheless, within the school itself several important changes are being made next session and much time has been spent in preparation for these. The proposed changes in the timing of the school day, mentioned in the last newsletter, are being put into effect. From 18th August; each day will begin at 8.50 a.m. and finish at 3.30 p.m. As the grid below indicates, lunchtime has also been altered slightly and it will be from 12.50 to 1.45 p.m.

	Reg.	1	2		3	4		5	6
K.R.	8.50	9.00-9.55	9.55-10.50		11.05-12.00	12.00-12.50		1.45-2.40	2.40-3.30
S.S.	8.50	9.00-9.50	9.50-10.50		11.05-11.55	11.55-12.50		1.45-2.35	2.35-3.30

Bus timetables, which are a matter for the Region and not the school, are still being finalised, but I am assured that the changes are unlikely to cause difficulties for pupils resident within the official catchment area. Rescheduling the service buses used by those pupils who come from outside our own area is much more complex and although every effort will be made, it may be that some awkward timings prove impossible to overcome. The opportunity has also been taken to introduce changes in the internal structure of the school day, and next session the school will move from an eight period to a six period day. The longer unit of time is better suited to many of the recent educational changes such as Standard Grade and it is hoped that it will also have advantages in reducing time-wasting movement between classes. For pupils entering S3 the introduction of new Standard Grade courses across a much wider range of subjects is another major change. In addition to the courses already operating in English, Maths, Science, Computing and Contemporary Social Subjects, Standard Grade will be offered for the first time next session in Art, Craft and Design, Technological Studies, Home Economics, Latin, French, German and Music, with the last two beginning a year ahead of schedule. Social Education is now being extended to include all pupils from S1 - S6. It was not previously part of S2 and S5 timetables, although both are at stages when advice about such matters as course choice and careers is particularly vital. Starting with S1 next session, changes are being made in the first two years of the Science course. Partly this is looking ahead to the demands of Standard Grade, but by developing a more practical and investigative approach to the subject, the changes are also designed to allow pupils to learn in a much more individual way. As you know from the recent requests to up-date information, school records are being computerised and this represents another significant change in the school's way of working, although it will be some time before the administrative benefits of the new SCAMP system will be apparent.

changes on this scale cannot take place without the expenditure of a great deal of staff time and effort. That time is now a statutory part of teachers' conditions of service and Planned Activities Time, to give it its official title, will, next session, amount to 50 hours which teachers have to spend in school beyond the normal working day. The time has been arranged so as to conflict as little as possible with extra-curricular activities for pupils which are not included in the 50 hours and are still entirely voluntary. Pupils who sometimes express regret that the school's extra-curricular programme is not what it once was should remember that the official demands on teachers' time are greater than ever before and that Madras College is singularly fortunate in having staff who are prepared to support a programme of extra-curricular activities which many other schools would envy.

On an entirely different topic a recent report highlighted the increasing level of violence in schools. Again Madras College is fortunate in being relatively free from incidents of this kind. However, there seems to be a tendency for pupils, even in good tempered conflicts, to use neck-locks and other holds which are potentially dangerous. The effects achieved by the TV fight arrangers are not for casual imitation by the inexpert. As younger pupils, especially, are often unaware of their own strength, a timely word of warning from parents about the dangers of a thoughtless blow or grip might not come amiss. For its part, the school will continue to take a very serious view of such incidents if they occur.

Staff Notes

One of the saddest features of recent years is that the number of staff leaving at the end of session is always greater than the list of new appointments. This year there are six staff who will not be replaced. Although that brings the total staffing into line with the Regional allowance for a school of this size, the overall effect is to limit course choices in certain subjects and to create larger class sizes. Mr Robert Harkins is coming to us in August as Principal Teacher of Physics and Mr Derek Scott from Bell Baxter will take up his appointment as one of the two Assistant Principal Teachers of Social Subjects. We welcome them both to the school. We also welcome to the permanent staff three teachers who have served us well in a temporary capacity. They are, Mrs Susan Unsworth (Biology), Mrs Grace Wright (Business Studies) and Mrs Isobel Bletcher (Learning Support). We congratulate two members of our own staff on very well-deserved promotions to Assistant Principal Teacher posts within the school. Mrs Isobel Macgregor joins the Guidance team and Mr Alan Barclay has been appointed to the other Social Subjects post. Mr Cleland, Principal Teacher of Classics, takes up new Regional duties as part-time Curriculum Development Officer in Latin. Four members of staff, Mr Monteith (Geography), Mrs Casey (English), Mrs Currie (Biology) and Mrs Reid (Art) retire at the end of the session. They have all given the school outstanding service over many years, although Mr Monteith deserves special mention, since 20 of his 23 years have been spent as Depute Principal in the Geography department. We shall greatly miss their unique blend of experience and commitment and the contribution they have all made to the work of their subject departments and to the wider life of the school. We thank them most sincerely and wish them abundant time to enjoy a variety of interests. Mrs Stockton (Home Economics) is leaving for a teaching post in her native Suffolk, Mrs Willis (Department of Special Education) and Mr Sproson (Technical) are leaving teaching for other careers. Miss Wiseman (Biology), now Mrs Callaghan, is going back to New Zealand and is to be congratulated on winning not only a husband, but a Scottish Education Department award for her exchange year research project. Our good wishes go with them all for every future success. A special word of thanks is due to Mrs Alma Smith of Bell Baxter for her sterling efforts to help the Art Department through a difficult time and to Mr Pearce and Mrs Fraser of our own staff for the extra responsibilities they have undertaken in the Science department this session. Since in-service training is increasing and staff absence through illness does not seem to have decreased from its winter level, we are more than usually indebted to the very large number of teachers who have helped us to fill these gaps this term, and throughout the session.

Finally, I would also express our thanks to Mrs Gilroy and her team of invigilators for supervising the SCE exams in their usual impeccable fashion.

Activities

As far as intellectual activities are concerned, it is the Maths department which has been in the limelight. A team of S4 pupils, led by Rhoda Weatherill, took the school to the final of 'The Times' newspaper's Tournament of the Mind contest in which questions were set by 'Mensa' (the high I.Q. Society). Nearly 300 schools from all over Britain entered this contest. The first 20 rounds were worth 1000 points. Madras with a score of 992 (only 2 questions wrong out of 180) was one of only 3 Scottish schools to gain a place in the final in which 11 teams took part. This consisted of a further 5 rounds of 9 questions each which, by this stage, had become extremely hard. For instance, the team had to decide which of the following jumbled words was the odd one out: Cubekey, Chubrus, Clabiem, Ramsoag, and this, unfortunately, was one of the questions that defeated them. The fact that our team was less successful in the final, finishing in 5th place, does nothing to detract from an outstanding achievement, especially as some of the other teams were older and not involved in the 'O' Grade exams which happened to coincide with the contest. In the Scottish Mathematical Challenge contest for pupils from Fife, Central and Tayside schools, Madras were clear winners with 5 prizes and 5 Highly Commended certificates. In the senior section, prizewinners were Peter Craik and Kandy Mitchell. Certificates were awarded to Michael Campbell, Brian Logan and Nicola Starrit. In the junior section, prizes went to Aline Hill, Ruth McGill and Paula Starrit and certificates to Timothy Jupp and Colin Robertson. In the Fife Regional Maths competition for SI pupils, the Madras team did well but narrowly missed a place on the official list of winners.

In the annual Latin and Greek verse speaking competition at St Andrews University, the Classics Department not only gained an impressive list of successes, but also managed a week-end visit to Hadrians Wall in the midst of their preparations for the contest. Winners were: Senior Latin - Sara Smith (1st). Intermediate Latin - Eve Poole (1st), Katie Craik (3rd), Elaine Hammond (Certificate of Merit). Greek - Rosalind Ashcroft (1st), Lewis Brown (2nd). The Junior Latin 'B' team won the Junior Cup for their dramatic efforts and the Madras entry for the project, a Roman kitchen complete with stuffed dormice, gained 2nd prize with individual Certificates of Merit going to Joanna Newton, Jenny Martin, Lorna Malcolm and Rosalind Green.

Although the activities of the Music Department have been somewhat limited by exams, the windband, the junior choir and the boys' treble choir combined with the Tayport Instrumental Band to produce a most enjoyable concert before a packed audience in St Andrews Town Hall. The concert raised £376 for the Scottish Society for the Mentally handicapped. Of all our musicians, the junior choir have perhaps had the busiest schedule of the session, singing with the Fife Youth Choir in Britten's 'St Nicholas' in December and taking part in a range of school and other concerts. Their efforts culminated in the Saltire Society's national competition in Stirling where, competing against senior choirs, they repeated last year's achievement of coming second and gaining a certificate of distinction with honours. During the session the department presented 51 instrumentalists for the practical exams of the Associated Board and achieved a very high standard with 5 distinctions, 21 merits and 23 passes. This year, the Professor Newnham Scholarship for Music is shared by Helen Mouat and Anna Poole, while Neil Cockburn received the TSB Award for Music. Helen Galbraith, Anna Poole and Claire Sykes receive Muirhead Awards for Creative Writing. G.B. Papers have once again shown their excellent support for the school by very generously giving a new award for Art, Science and Technology. The first winners are Emily Cook (Art), Margaret Sinclair and Gillian Mackintosh (Science) and Peter Bone (Technology). Awards to sixth year pupils were presented by Councillor Mrs McFee, Chairman of the St Andrews School Council. Merit Certificates and the awards for pupils in other years will be presented at the end of session closing ceremonies. The full list of the year's awards will be published as usual in the local press.

Sport/

Sport has been mainly a matter of athletics, tennis and golf. In the triangular athletics match with Auchmuty High School and Waid Academy. Madras emerged as winners of a closely fought contest. In the Fife Schools' Championships, Madras gained seven 1st, eight 2nd and six 3rd places. The annual sports, held in near perfect weather conditions, produced keen competition and several new records. Priory with 722 points won the House Championship from Castle (582) and Blackfriars (442). Individual champions were: 1st Year Girls - Claire Douglas, Boys - Dugald Thorn; 2nd Year Girls - Claire Hunter, Boys - Fraser Dowie; 3rd Year Girls - Jackie Paul, Boys Gary Thompson; Senior Girls - Catriona Lumsdaine, Boys - Neil Greig.

In the Midlands Schools' Senior Boys Tennis Tournament, the Madras team reached the final where they were narrowly beaten by Grove Academy. Gillian Charnock of Class 1A has been awarded 'Dates' for her tennis in recognition of a remarkable series of successes. She is the reigning British Under-12 grass court champion, she is the Midlands Ladies champion, she is the best female Player of the Year, she won the Mortonhall Under-14 and Under-16 championships and she has played for Scotland.

In golf at a national level the school team, (Michael Braidwood, Martin Hastie, Philip Lawrie) lost by one stroke in the Aer Lingus tournament over the Old Course. In the Scottish Schools Golf Championship at North Berwick, Martin Hastie won the title for the second time in three years, making it the third year in succession that the winner has come from Madras College. Along with Michael Braidwood he was the second Madras player in the Fife team of three which won the team event by 25 strokes. Both boys have gained places in the Scottish team. 34 pupils from the school took part in the Elie Open Golf Tournament, and although no one won, the school was represented in all four finals of the senior and junior boys and girls events with all four matches not decided until the 17th or 18th greens.

The Hill Walking Club has resumed its activities. Some climbs have already taken place in central and northern areas. This year's expedition will be based in Glencoe where the emphasis will be on developing skills in more demanding climbs. Further outings to the Cairngorms, Ben More and Lochnagar are also planned. The party of 38 skiers, who went at Easter to Les Croisets in Switzerland, enjoyed excellent snow and found it an ideal holiday area in other respects. This year it was the school's turn to visit Kiel and the three weeks which our pupils have just spent there on the 32nd Exchange seem to have been as harmonious and as successful as ever. A group of 4 staff and 26 pupils from the Modern Studies department have left for a fortnight's stay in the USSR. They will be visiting Moscow, Tbilisi, Sochi and Leningrad and should gain a very comprehensive impression of the Soviet way of life. We must record our thanks to the PTA without whose generous support the very serious difficulties, which arose at the early stages of planning through no fault of the school, could not have been overcome.

Social Service

Increasing emphasis is being placed on the involvement of senior pupils in some form of social service. Partly, this has a direct link with various career intentions, but it is also connected with the individual's personal development. It is therefore gratifying to note that 30 pupils are now participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. This provides a vast range of activities, as it can be tailored to suit individual needs. Basic expedition training has begun this term to enable the pupils to adventure safely in the widest sense. Small groups of pupils have also been helping in a project in Greyfriar's Primary School and greatly enjoying the experience of working with very young children. It is hoped that next session it will be possible to extend opportunities of this kind for S6 pupils, but it would be useful to have more contacts with local organisations, especially those concerned with helping the very old, the very young and the handicapped. Suggestions and offers of places will be very welcome.

Community Use

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Community Use of the school will soon be a reality. The new offices in Kilrymont Road are virtually complete. Staff appointments are proceeding and it is expected that the process of making the school more widely available to the public will begin, at least on a limited scale, fairly early in the new session.

HMI Report

It had been hoped that the report on the Inspection of the school which took place last term would be available before the end of session. However, publication has been delayed and the report is not now expected until September.

Family Holidays During Term

Each year at this time a considerable number of pupils are absent because of family holiday arrangements, but the school recognises that this is a situation which it is sometimes impossible for parents to avoid, although this should be a very small minority of cases. This year parents of senior pupils have made very few requests for leave of absence, but Kilrymont Road has been badly hit. I would ask parents of pupils at all stages not to interrupt the routine of study unless it is absolutely unavoidable. May I also remind parents that if leave of absence for holidays during term has to be requested, letters should come directly to Mr Hodge or myself as far in advance as possible. I may say that I am always happier about granting requests of this kind if I receive some assurances that care will be taken to ensure that school work does not suffer.

Uniform

In spite of the school's excellence in so many fields, there is still some reason to believe that it falls short of its neighbours and rivals in the matter of the appearance of its pupils. The school is perhaps the victim not only of its proximity to a casually attired student community but also of its own fairly tolerant policies on uniform. The virtual disappearance of the blazer is understandable, though regrettable. However, its replacement by the washed-out blue denim jacket does nothing for the image of the school. Skirts, supposed to be a moderate length, are too often either excessively short or exceptionally long. Shirt tails hang out. Trendy trainers in unsightly bright colours look totally out of place. Black, intended as alternative for the few who might not have navy, is worn by some on a scale and in a style reminiscent of the left bank. These current fashions detract from a business-like appearance and from the idea of identification with the school which is the main object of the exercise. In his vote of thanks at the joint concert with the Tayport Instrumental Band Councillor Neilson paid the pupils taking part a well deserved compliment on their smart appearance. It would be good for the school if that standard could be achieved and maintained as a matter of course. When new clothes are being bought for next session, it would be greatly appreciated if some thought could be given to choosing items and styles which are in keeping with the school's guidelines on uniform.

The session has made great demands on both staff and pupils, but it has, nonetheless, been a good year. Whatever concerns staff or pupils may have about the HMI Report or SCE results will not, I am sure, be allowed to interfere with well-earned rest and relaxation.

I would take this opportunity to thank you all for your support throughout the session and to wish staff, parents and pupils a most enjoyable summer holiday.

Yours sincerely,



Rector.

Forthcoming Events

School Holidays

The school re-opens for pupils on Thursday, 18th August 1988

October Holiday Monday, 3rd October 1988

Autumn Holiday Monday, 17th October 1988 to Friday, 21st October 1988

Christmas Holiday Thursday, 22nd December 1988 to Friday, 6th January 1989
(All dates inclusive)

In-Service Day Wednesday, 17th August 1988

PTA Meeting Tuesday 20th September at 7.30 p.m. in the Kilrymont Road
Building. "Healthy Eating" by Home Economics Department.