



Madras College Newsletter

March 1991

A hard-working term

Anyone reviewing the life of the school over the weeks since Christmas would rightly conclude that a great deal has been accomplished—much routine hard work by both staff and pupils, some notable successes and, hopefully, a firm foundation for good results still to come. Five out of six parents' nights have already taken place, course choices for next session are in their final stages, the investigations, folios and projects, which are now such an important element in the examination assessment, are being completed and collected. While these may be the most obvious examples, they merely represent a small part of what is actually happening. The newsletter provides the opportunity to paint a broader canvas.

The round of appointments which began this time last year is virtually complete. One vacancy in Learning Support remains to be filled.

Miss Barbara Halliday from Buckhaven High School took up her duties as Assistant Principal Teacher of English at the end of January. The two new Assistant Rectors, Mrs Claire Easingwood and Mr Jim Bennett both have previous Madras connections, Mrs Easingwood, who was APT English here some years ago, returns to us from Kirkcaldy High School, Mr Bennett, a geographer from Ross High School in Tranent, is a former pupil of Madras and a former captain of Madras FP Rugby Club. The two Principal Teachers of Guidance are Miss Ann Batchelor from our own staff who gains well deserved promotion and Mrs Fiona Towns who is the latest in a long line of incomers from Bell Baxter. We wish them all every happiness and success in their new appointments.

We would also take this opportunity to acknowledge the excellent work done by those who have held acting posts during this time. They have

carried out difficult and demanding duties in an exemplary fashion which has ensured the smooth running of the school and placed us all very much in their debt. Our thanks are due to Mrs Mobeck, Dr Waterston, Mrs Grant, Mrs Macgregor, Mr Nisbet, Mrs Anderson and Miss Keatch. To the supply teachers who filled these posts and to the many others who covered the inevitable gaps caused by staff absence and the demands of inservice training we extend our usual vote of thanks, Our good wishes go to Mrs Little who has been absent for much of the term. Mrs Welsh has given good service as acting APT Guidance in the absence of Miss Latto who has been attending the National Certificate of Guidance course. Mr Neil Todd has been appointed janitor at the Kilrymont Road Building and Mrs Dawn Redman has joined the office staff.

Room for Improvement

While the notes which follow are full of evidence of success in an immense range of activities, and this is a tribute to much hard work by staff and pupils, the life of the school has a less acceptable side. There are too many instances of habitual late-coming, of cutting classes, of failing to complete work, of arguing about instructions. This last is a fault to which Madras pupils seem especially prone. While the encouragement of a questioning attitude is entirely commendable, it can be particularly subversive if it is applied at the wrong time and in the wrong place, and young people do not always display discretion in its use. The situation is not improved by some parents—very much a minority—who increasingly seek to intervene, not just in matters of discipline, but also in other areas such as syllabus content and teaching methods which are not properly their concern. Few people would venture to tell their doctor how to treat a case of measles, but there are some who are not prepared to accord teachers an equivalent professional position, and see it as their prerogative to tell us how to teach and what to teach. Those who raise these issues further undermine the morale of staff in a profession which is already subject to a high level of stress. It is also regrettable that senior staff who have to spend so much of their time

dealing with pupil indiscipline are faced with additional burdens created by unnecessary correspondence about issues which should never have been raised when they could much more usefully be employed on tasks of management and forward planning which would directly benefit the education of every pupil. These pressures, which seem likely to increase, make the excellent support which the school receives from the vast majority of parents more necessary than ever.

Although games have been badly hit by the weather, the usual table of the season's results for all school Rugby, Hockey and Football teams is given at the end of the newsletter. However, a number of notable achievements deserve special mention. A major success was gained by the Under 16 Football team who won the Fife Five a Side tournament. The Football 1st XI has been unbeaten in the Fife League. The school's performance in the Fife Schools' Cross Country Championships was also outstanding. The under 15 Boys, the under 17 Boys and the over 17 Boys all won the team trophies for their respective events. The 1st Year Girls' team finished in second place. There were 6 individual awards. There were good results in the Scottish Schools' Cross Country Championships. The under 15 Boys' team was 2nd and the over 17 Boys were 4th. In the Fife Schools' Badminton Championships Madras players reached no less than five finals, winning the girls' doubles and being runners up in the girls' singles, the mixed doubles, the boys' doubles and the under 16 boys' singles. Katie and Aline Hill, Kevin Ross and Dorian Coxon represented Fife in the Scottish Schools' Championships. Kevin Ross and Dorian Coxon are to be congratulated on reaching the semi finals of this event. In the North East Fife Sports Council Quiz—A Question of Sport—the Madras team retained the trophy they won last year. Claire Hunter and Fiona Cameron have been selected for the Midlands Schoolgirls' under-18 indoor hockey squad. In the Midlands District Rugby trials, the school was represented by Allan McAndie, Mark Ballantyne and Derek Brown. The 1st XV reached the semi-final of the Perth Academy 7s, winning all three games in their section, before losing to Dundee High School.

Other Achievements

Successes have not all been in the sporting arena. A team from the Bridge Club came second in the District Schools' Bridge Competition. A team from the Business Studies Department travelled to Manchester to take part in the national semi final of the Beat the Boss business game competition. It is the second year running that Madras has reached this stage and this year it was the only Scottish school to do so. Three young artists from S2, Alison Story, Jamie Hogarth and Samantha Gardner, gained the first three places in a competition to design a new logo for the Crawford Centre. A team from the Physics Department enjoyed some success in the Campus Radio School Quiz, scoring maximum points until finally defeated by a rapid response question to break a tied result,

On a high note ...

In the Fife Festival of Music our choirs swept the boards with first places in every event. (1st Junior choir; 1st Junior Choir, Scots singing; 1st Senior Girls' Choir; 1st equal Senior Mixed Choir). They were commended by the judges not only for the high standard of their performance but also for their manner and appearance. Jane Ballantyne won the intermediate classes of the Scots song and female vocal competitions, in the latter event against adult opposition. Out of the six finalists in the Bell Baxter Centenary Music Competition, three were from Madras (Roddy Burnett, Karina MacKinnon and Anna Quinault). Bell Baxter retained the trophy, Anna Quinault shared second place. We look forward to the Spring Concert when we welcome among our guests many of the employers who have taken pupils on Aware placements during the session.

English Speaking Union

The debaters have also produced an impressive series of results. Brian Logan and Stephanie Wiens won the Tayside final of the English Speaking Union/Britannic Assurance Debate and went on to the national final in Edinburgh where they were narrowly beaten into 3rd place by strong competition from Robert Gordon's and Merchiston. As this was from an original entry of 118 schools, it is a

considerable achievement to have gone so far and done so well. Brian Logan, Timothy Jupp and Kenneth Cobb reached the semi final of the English Speaking Union Public Speaking Contest and were unlucky not to proceed further in this event. These competitions demand a very high standard and the members of both teams are to be congratulated on the quality of their preparation and presentation.

Rotary Inter-School Debate

There was another close result in the Rotary Inter-School Debate. The liveliness of Madras just failed to carry the day against Bell Baxter's solidly argued case, although Brian Logan and Tim Jupp gained well deserved individual awards for best proposer and best opposer. The St Andrews Speakers' Club Shield for Public Speaking produced some excellent speeches and, surprisingly for Madras, an all male entry. Kenneth Cobb was a worthy winner— Chris Crowe and Tim Jupp shared second place.

...not forgetting the Juniors !

Amidst all this high-power oratory the Junior Debating Society must not be overlooked. They brought a successful season to an end with the Inter House Competition for the Craig Buchanan Trophy. The overall winners were Castle with Priory second and Blackfriars third. The individual awards went to David Pearson, best chairman; Will Poole, best 1st proposer; Catriona Chisholm, best 2nd proposer; Chris Irwin, best 1st opposer; Malcolm Broom, best 2nd opposer. The interest and ability shown by first year debaters has been especially encouraging.

Maths Olympiad

The last newsletter mentioned that three of our pupils had qualified for the British Maths Olympiad. This placed them in a select group of 430 from the whole of Britain and involved them in sitting an arduous three and a half hour paper. At this level of competition the 61st place gained by Andrew Priest was a very creditable result. If the results are restricted to Scotland, it emerges that Madras was the only state sector school to qualify and out of the twelve Scottish places from three schools, our pupils were 2nd (Andrew Priest), 4th (Colin Robertson) and 10th (Claire Dumbleton). The junior version of

the contest is the UK Maths Challenge and 60,000 S1 and S2 pupils compete. Out of this number gold awards go to 6%, silver to 12% and bronze to 18%. These bands are set on a national basis and not within each school. This makes our total of 1 gold (William Poole), 13 silver and 12 bronze a remarkable achievement. It is even more remarkable that three S1 pupils (Chris Irwin, Jamie Corner and Saul Williams) gained silver awards.

Caring

The members of the Ecology Club are developing a pond and marshland habitat at Kilrymont Road. They have designed and are still working on the site which it is hoped will provide a sanctuary for wildlife as well as interesting material for the Biology and Art departments.

The school has maintained its usual good record of charitable activity. Sponsorship from the inter-staff football match against Waid Academy went to Heart Start and Cancer Research. Proceeds from the Christmas Concert went to the Blue Peter Romanian Appeal, The Tayside and Fife branch of the RSSPC, Dundee Women's Aid, the Disfigurement Guidance Centre, Support for Deaf Children in Fife, RAF Leuchars Families' Welfare and for the purchase of an asthma nebuliser for use in the Newport area. Final totals for Comic Relief Day are not yet available, but are already over the £1,300 mark.

Two January events – Quad Theatre & Burns Supper

This year the Quad Theatre Company's production was *Oh What a Lovely War*. Coinciding as it did with the start of the Gulf War, the play gained added point and poignancy which was enhanced by the sensitive and forceful acting of a talented cast.

The annual Burns Supper lived up to its reputation as a thoroughly enjoyable social, musical and gastronomic event with vegetarian haggis on the menu for the first time. Another departure from tradition was the toast *To the Laddies* who were reduced to a proper sense of their own inferiority by Beth Marshall's eloquence, while Mr Lindsay's talent for parody once more delighted the audience with

his mock-heroic solution to the problems of inter-building travel. We were fortunate to have Menzies Campbell QC, MP as our principal guest. His *Immortal Memory* was one of the highlights of the evening and we very much appreciate his being with us at a time when parliamentary business was pressing. We also thank the officials of the St Andrews Burns Club who gave us their support and presented the singing and recitation prizes. Senior winners were Anna Quinault, Karina MacKinnon and Beth Marshall, juniors were Jane Ballantyne, Alex Cole-Hamilton and Alison Smith.

Parent Teacher Association

PTA meetings have been interesting, as always, and better attended. The term began with the usual dessert party in the Byre Theatre after the Friday evening school drama performance. A very successful meeting was held in Newport Primary School when a team of teachers involved in the school's Social Education programme explained the way in which the school sought to develop pupils' personal awareness and improve their decision making ability. The speakers also dealt with some of the programme's special features including Study Skills and Health Education. Introducing the theme of *Modern Languages for All*, the two Principal Teachers, Mr Wills and Mr Macgregor, stressed the many difficulties which the new policy would present and sparked off a lively discussion, much of which centred on the problem of achieving basic competence in a foreign language with large mixed ability classes.

The question posed by the last meeting of the session—*How Green is Madras?*—was answered by a large number of subject departments who put on display an impressive range of work that was directly concerned with environmental issues. A Physics department presentation tackled energy conservation. Two S6 pupils, Joanna Newton and Oliver Morris, spoke of their involvement in ecological research projects at Cameron reservoir and the Eden estuary. A green trail took the members of the audience to classrooms to see demonstrations and displays and to take part in surveys on everything from healthy living to the habits of the hedgehog. We would take this opportunity to thank the PTA Committee for its support and hard work during work during the session and pay special tribute to those members who are retiring after several years of loyal service.

School Board

The School Board has met twice during the term. At the January meeting a report on the Board's first year of operation was presented to parents. This meeting was attended by Mr Angus Gallon of the School's Inspectorate who was observing School Boards in action on behalf of the Scottish Office Education Department. At its most recent meeting the Board approved the school's spending plans for Session 1991—92 and went on to discuss a number of important school issues such as class sizes, accommodation and the shortage of clerical and auxiliary staff which is causing considerable difficulty. There are two changes in personnel. Because of her appointment as Assistant Rector, Mrs Easingwood can not continue as a parent member. The ensuing by election, scheduled to take place in May, requires the updating of the electoral roll and this is proving to be a task of massive proportions and complexity. Dr Anna Spackman replaces Mrs Easingwood as Vice Chair-person. There is also a vacancy for a co-opted member as Mrs Reta Russell has resigned from the Board because of other commitments. As founder members both Mrs Easingwood and Mrs Russell have been active in shaping the Board. We take this opportunity to thank them for the valuable work they have done and the interest they have taken in the school.

And finally . . .

At the end of a very demanding but very successful term, we wish staff, parents and pupils an enjoyable Easter holiday.

Easter Holidays

School closes—Thursday 28th March, 1991
School resumes—Monday 15th April, 1991

Summer Holidays

School closes—Tuesday 2nd July, 1991
School resumes—Thursday 22nd August, 1991

House Matches

Team Results

		<i>Blackfriars</i>	<i>Castle</i>	<i>Priory</i>
1st year	Rugby	9	15	3
	Hockey	3	15	9
	Netball	9	3	15
	Football	6	15	6
2nd year	Rugby	15	9	3
	Hockey	12	12	3
	Netball	9	9	9
	Football	9	9	9
3rd year	Rugby	3	15	9
	Hockey	3	9	15
	Netball	15	9	3
	Football	15	9	3

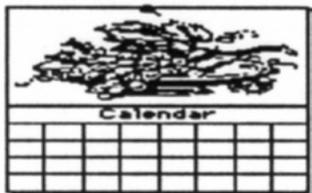
<i>Rugby</i>						
	P	W	L	D	For	Against
1st XV	10	5	4	1	140	161
3rd year	11	5	6	0	236	298
2nd year	13	6	5	2	222	256
1st year	12	6	3	3	216	162

<i>Hockey</i>				
	P	W	L	D
1st XI	16	10	5	1
3rd year	14	10	2	2
2nd year A	17	4	8	5
B	5	1	3	1
1st year A	11	3	6	2
B	2	1	1	0

Seniors		<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
Rugby		<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
Hockey (Girls)		<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
Netball	6	18	30	
Football	6	30	18	
Hockey (Boys)	18	6	30	

<i>Football</i>						
	P	W	L	D	For	Against
1st XI	11	6	4	1	28	17
Under-16s	3	0	3	0	7	13
Under-15s	10	5	4	1	25	16
Under-14s	10	5	4	1	51	29
Under-13s	9	3	5	1	28	29

Some dates For Your diary



- May Day holiday** Monday 6th May, 1991
- In-Service Day** Wednesday 22nd May, 1991
- June holiday** Monday 3rd June, 1991
- SCE Examinations** begin Wednesday 1st May
and end on Friday 7th June, 1991
- SCE Study Leave** begins Tuesday 7th May 1991
and ends on Friday 31st May, 1991
(both dates inclusive)
- S3 Parents' Night** Wednesday 24th April 1991
- S3 Examinations** begin Wednesday 7th May and end
on Tuesday 21st May, 1991
- Art Exhibition** 18th-20th June, 1991
- Summer Concert** Wednesday 26th June, 1991