



*Madras College*

# *Summer Newsletter*

**June 1993**

The truth of the saying that nothing succeeds like success seems to be borne out by the events of this session. After two terms the school's record of achievement was already greater than anyone had a right to expect. To have added substantially to it this term is nothing short of spectacular. However, without commitment and hard work on the part of staff and pupils and without the support and encouragement of parents, nothing on a similar scale could have been accomplished and those are aspects of our success which we acknowledge with gratitude. Yet the glitter of success, pleasant though it is, should not blind us to the many serious issues which the school has to face. The effects of the government's 5-14 programme will become increasingly evident in S1 and S2, particularly in matters such as recording and reporting pupil progress. The outcome of the consultation on the Howie Report, which is promised for later this summer, will almost certainly mean rapid and possibly extensive changes to the existing post-16 provision. The uncharted waters of Devolved Management are likely to engulf us sooner rather than later. School Development Planning, which has been in place for several years in a fairly low key way, is to be given a much higher profile because of another recent government initiative.

Both these schemes envisage increased involvement by the School Board. In that context it should be noted that the procedures for new elections to the Board will begin early next session, since four of the seven parent members on the present Board are due to demit office in October. To ensure the continuity of the Board, it is important that sufficient parents respond to the opportunity to become directly concerned in the management of the school.

Another government measure which will take effect next session is the publication of schools' attendance statistics and absence rates. Like league tables of examination results, this is supposed to be one of the indicators of a schools' effectiveness. Clearly, the checking of attendance and of reasons for absence will require to be even more closely monitored than it is at present. While the school recognises that some parents are restricted in their choice of holiday dates, it seems that an increasing number of children are taken away on holiday during term time. It is a cause for concern that the effect of this form of absence on any published statistics could be considerable. The absence statistics which we keep at the moment are revealing. It is surprising that at a time of year when one might expect little in the way of illness, the percentage absence rates for S2 and S3 in the week ending 25th June are 12.1% and 14.2% respectively.

Bus behaviour, and in particular exposure to passive smoking, has been another matter of concern to many parents and the subject of representations to the Region by the school and the School Board. The decision by the Region to issue guidelines to pupils, parents and drivers about the standards expected on the buses will be generally welcome, especially as it is likely to be backed up by appropriate action in the event of non-compliance.

A completely different but also welcome piece of news is the possibility of an exchange with a school in France, the Lyce'e Fragonard in L'Isle Adam, a town about 35 km from Paris. The exchange would involve S4 pupils and it is hoped that the discussions which are currently taking place about suitable dates will soon result in a definite arrangement.

Five long-serving members of staff are retiring at the end of the session: Mr. Christie, originally on the staff from 1964-67, and subsequently Principal Teacher of Chemistry since 1970; Dr. Richardson, Assistant Principal Teacher of Biology since 1976; Mrs. Gibbs, also of the Biology Department who has been at Madras since 1975; Mrs. Dunne, first here from 1962-69, returned to the Maths Department in 1979; Mr. Hamilton, a mere stripling by comparison, who joined the Music Department in 1979. Their contribution in time alone has been massive, but we are indebted to them for many other reasons - the quality of their work, the range and variety of their involvement and not least the regard in which we hold them as colleagues. We are sorry to be losing them, but they go with our sincere thanks and very best wishes. Our thanks are also due to the many supply staff on whose willing help we have depended so much throughout the year.

## 2.

New appointments are in the process of being made, not just to replace those who are leaving, but to meet the substantial increase in the school roll which is expected next session. The post of Principal Teacher of Chemistry has already been filled and we offer our congratulations to Mrs. Marion Fraser, whose well deserved promotion will ensure that the high standards achieved by the department are maintained.

However, while the school will be employing more staff next session, it is disappointing to learn that financial constraints have forced the Region to reduce still further the amount of instrumental instruction available to pupils. The Primary Schools will be the first to feel the effects of the cuts, but in the long term the quality of music which we now enjoy is bound to suffer.

The official opening of the new sports turf area at Kilrymont Road was performed jointly by Mr. Robert Gough, Convener of Fife Region, and Mr. Michael Bonallack, the Secretary of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club.

As we say goodbye to another group of pupils and wish them well for the future, we hope they carry away with them not just their learning and examination passes, but a full and varied experience of school life. So often an appreciation of this richness is one which grows with the passing years - a fact which was amply demonstrated on May 8th when members of Madras College, past and present, celebrated 160 years of South Street and 25 years of Kilrymont at the P.T.A.'s *Anniversary Anecdotes*. The opportunity to relive memories by touring the buildings, by looking at an exhibition of memorabilia and enjoying a fine buffet laid on by Direct Catering Services, framed an evening of excellent and varied entertainment. Between fine musical interludes provided by present pupils, those whose time at Madras College spanned the years from the First World War to the 1990s engaged us with their memories. They recalled their school days with warmth and respect as well as humour and brought the large audience together in shared pride in Madras College and its long tradition of excellence. Speakers were Mrs. Fletcher (1915-20), Mr. Ian Johnstone (1947-53), Mr. Ross Napier (1963-69), Dr. Charles Allison (1963-^9), Mr. Kenneth Cobb (1985-91), Mrs. Cathy Grant (1967-73), Dr. Archie Rennie (1937-42).

This term has brought a further series of sporting and other successes at Regional and National level. In a closely-contested final in driving rain, the Under-14 football team won the Scottish Schools' Shield by defeating Holy Cross High School (Hamilton), 2 : 1 at East Kilbride. The goal scorers were Graham Anderson (S3) and Graeme Nicoll (S3). This is only the second time a Fife team has won the competition in its 36 years. The squad was treated to a celebration meal at Ziggys by G.B. Papers, when Mr. J. Whyte of the company was present, as well as staff, parents and the team's dedicated and ecstatic coach, Mr. Harvey Munn.

The Scottish Schools' Lawn Tennis Championship was won by the Madras College girls' team for the second year running. Morag Campsie (S5), Captain, Eilidh Smith (S5), Nicola Payne (S4), Siobhan Grieve (S2) and Siobhan McGuire (S2) are to be congratulated on their fine victory against opposition of a high standard. The school had another very successful day at the Fife Schools' Track and Field Championships, returning home with four trophies. In the 13-15 years age group, both the boys and girls' teams came first. There were many good individual results, including wins for Alastair Rough (S4) (400 metres 15-17), Russell McFarlane (S5) (3000 metres 15-17) and Siobhan Lees (S2) (Discus, 13-15). Michael Bruce (S3) gained the trophy for the *Most Meritorious Performance* of the day. He won the 100 metres in a new Scottish Schools' record time and he also won the 200 metres, as well as being a member of the winning relay team.

### 3.

A very encouraging sign for the future is the large number of pupils (over 60) who have turned out regularly for Athletic practices this summer.

In the Fife Schools Junior Golf Strokeplay Championship at Leven, the school team of Ryan Lumsden (S2), Ruairidh McQueen (SI), Allan Smith (S2) and Craig Mackie (S3) won the event, with Ryan the overall individual winner.

Pupils from Madras College again did exceptionally well in the Annual Scottish Maths Challenge, earning seven prizes and eight highly commended awards, more than any other school. Two particularly noteworthy performances should be mentioned. Paula Starritt, who now bows out of the contest, has won prizes five times in the past six years and Neil Donaldson who, although only in SI, gained a prize in the junior section. In the U.K. Maths Challenge, Jamie Corner (S3), Saul Williams (S3) and Richard Alexander (S2) scored highly enough to proceed to the Junior Maths Olympiad. Richard Alexander deserves special congratulations on winning one of the five medals (all bronze) which came to Scottish schools. In the Scottish Maths Council's Secondary Schools Maths Project Competition Lindsay Charles, Kate Steven and Alison Story won the top prize in the S3/S4 category for their project *Squaring circles and Circling squares*. Catriona Chisholm was awarded a certificate of Honourable Mention for her project *Gray Codes*. Kate, Catriona and Lindsay have now established a most remarkable track record in this contest. Last year all three girls collaborated on a prize-winning project while two years ago Catriona and Kate entered a project which won the S2 category prize.

Madras acquitted itself well in the Greek and Latin Speaking Competition organised by St Andrews University, being the only school to have finalists in all sections. There were many good results, including Rosalind McLachlan (S4) winning the Greek Cup and the S3 Team sharing the Winners' Shield for their project about Roman cookery (with samples). In the Gilbert Murray Essay Competition run by Glasgow University, Lindsay Charles (S4) won a prize for her investigation about Roman Public Buildings. The Bell Baxter Young Musician Competition was won by Will Poole (S4) - Viola, while David Martin (S6) - French Horn, was runner-up. The Junior Choir received a Certificate of Distinction at the Annual Saltire Scots Singing Competition at Stirling. Among the thirty passes by pupils in Associated Board Music examinations, Anna Quinault's Distinction at Grade 8 Singing deserves special mention. Chess continues to flourish. At Easter, Jamie Morgan (S2) represented Scotland in the Under-14 team playing Wales. In June, Alan Cundill (S3) and David Robertson (S3) were members of the winning East Fife with Tayside team at the Inter-Regional Chess Jamboree.

Jamie Lee (S5) is to be congratulated on being accepted for the summer course with the National Youth Theatre.

The schools' entrants performed very well in the Young Enterprise competition, Karen Innocent coming third in Fife and earning a Distinction, as did Martin Burkinshaw and James Mullan for their work with their company, *Fresco*.

This June it was our turn to be the hosts in the two-year cycle of exchanges between Madras College and the Kieler Gelehrtenschule, now in its 37th year. 30 pupils from each school enjoyed a full programme organised by Mr. Donald Macgregor, which included excursions to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Perthshire, a Sports Competition and a farewell party on 18th June.

A group of senior pupils and staff from the Art Department spent a long weekend of culture and sunshine, in London at the beginning of June. The programme included visits to the National and Tate Galleries, the National Theatre and the musical *Buddy*.

#### 4.

The annual trip to Hadrian's Wall involving a weekend of Roman exploration organised by Mr. David Cleland was as successful as ever. He reports that the trip was enjoyed by staff and pupils alike, accommodated together in Youth Hostel dormitories, like Hannibal sleeping on the ground with his troops and quite as well-disciplined, to judge by the special commendation they earned from the warden of Once Brewed Youth Hostel.

A group of fifteen S6 pupils attended a Maths workshop at Stirling University, exploring computer simulations of queuing at supermarket checkouts and other practical aspects of Maths. Other groups of pupils have attended lectures and day conferences on Geography at St. Andrews University and Physics at Dundee University, while a series of University Open Days have helped S6 pupils to find out about courses and campuses and gain fresh motivation for the work of the year ahead.

Mrs. Alison Shields of the R.E. Department took a first year class to visit the Glasgow Mosque and St. Mungo's Museum of Religions. Our thanks go to Mr. Hussain of the Babur Restaurant for his sponsorship of this trip.

Groups of pupils from all years have attended theatre visits, ranging from Shakespeare to the Chinese Opera and including participation by S2 at a Byre Playday.

The Junior Choir and the Boys' Chorale (S1 and S2) participated in a day of excellent choral training at Lochgelly High School, co-operating with pupils from two other schools under the direction of Mr. Michael Brewer from Cheetham's Music School.

And finally, our thanks to all who have supported the school in so many ways throughout the year and our best wishes for summer holidays and good weather in which to enjoy them.

#### *Some Dates for Your Diary*

School resumes on Tuesday, 24th August, 1993.

There is a single day holiday on Monday, 4th October, 1993.

The October holiday runs from Monday, 18th October to Friday, 22nd October, 1993.

In-Service Day for teachers Monday, 23rd August, 1993.

*A fuller list of dates will be issued separately early next session.*