



Madras College

Christmas Newsletter

December 1994

Facts and Figures

Madras is now the second largest secondary school in the region with a total roll of 1,734, which exceeds the previous peak of 1,700 in 1984. With 1,013 pupils in Kilrymont and 721 in South Street, each building is as big as or bigger than many other secondary schools. Accommodation in the South Street building is already strained to capacity. If pupil numbers continue to increase as they are expected to do, there will be an accommodation crisis within another session, unless the problems of finding sufficient teaching space are immediately and urgently addressed. Whatever pipe dreams some may have about the ideal size and future location of schools in this area, the harsh reality of the present situation is that if it is allowed to continue, the education of pupils already at Madras will be directly and adversely affected.

Much as we may deplore the publication of league tables, they serve to remind us that a school's results are always under scrutiny not just from outside, but that each year a very detailed analysis of the school's examination performance is conducted within the school itself. That review shows quite clearly that the school has once again been successful in gaining results across the board which are of a very high standard indeed and in most cases significantly above national averages. 50.1 % of the pupils presented for Standard Grade obtained Credit level awards. A further 35% attained General level. In S5 there were 628 presentations for Higher Grade. This produced a pass rate across Bands A - C of 79.8%. When the results of appeals are taken into account the figure rises to 81.8%. Band A passes (pre-appeal) amounted to 27.1%. S6 results both at CSYS and Higher showed that contrary to what is often supposed, sixth year pupils had used their time effectively. It is interesting to note that some very creditable results were gained by pupils who had followed one of the new modular pathways to achieve Higher in two years.

These successful results could not be achieved without an immense amount of hard work by staff and indeed by the pupils themselves, the vast majority of whom, however much they may pretend otherwise at times, are keen to get on with their studies and obtain good qualifications for future careers. Sadly, however, there are always a few who do not share these aims or value education as they should, but create problems for themselves, for their fellow pupils, whose work they interrupt, and for staff, whose time is wasted in dealing with disruptive behaviour. The anti-social activities of the same small minority also give rise to an increasing number of complaints about unsatisfactory behaviour in the streets and shops at interval and lunchtime. Hopefully, the many positive features of the school, which form so large a part of this newsletter, show quite clearly that any negative elements are atypical and unrepresentative of the pupil body as a whole.

It costs over £4,000,000 a year to run the school and since August, Madras has been one of six secondary schools taking part in the pilot phase of the regional scheme for devolved financial management. In spite of massive difficulties recruiting the extra office staff essential to the successful operation of the scheme, preliminary indications suggest that there will be a number of advantages in having greater freedom to decide spending priorities at local level. However, the cost in time is considerable and an unwelcome consequence of the scheme is the increasing administrative demands it makes. It is not only the office staff who are affected, since the Rector and the Depute Rector are left with less time to devote to other aspects of school life.

Mrs Margaret Sommerville

Mrs Margaret Sommerville retires at the end of term after 20 years of loyal and devoted service. Although officially a teaching auxiliary, she will be far better known to several generations of Madras pupils in her role as school nurse and first-aid lady, the healer and comforter of countless pupils suffering from every conceivable ailment or injury, most of them fortunately of a minor kind. They will remember with affection and gratitude the kind and careful attention which she unfailingly gave them. In between tending the casualties she has played an important part in the school's administrative system, since attendance, registration, requisitioning and reporting procedures all came within her sphere. Her skill as a flower arranger brought an extra dimension to staff functions and other school occasions. Although much of her work has been behind the scenes, the qualities she has brought to it will make her extremely difficult to replace. We thank her for the outstanding contribution she has made to the life of the school and wish her every happiness in her retirement.

Visitors

Herr Klaus Spreitler from Kempten in Bavaria visited Madras for three weeks in November. He was the seventh teacher to come to Madras since the instigation of the E.U. exchange programme. Miss Dorothy Orem is spending a year on exchange teaching in a school in Austria, while at Madras we have welcomed Frau Maria Rauchenwald in her place.

In S5/6, our annual exchange partners from Great Valley High, Philadelphia are Annji Greenwood and Jeanne de Prince, and the international note is further enhanced by Flavia Morini and Laura Gaiga from Italy and Judith Rauchenwald from Austria.

The school was recently greatly honoured to receive an entirely unexpected visit from his Excellency, the High Commissioner for India, Dr L M Singhvi and Mrs Singhvi. Being on an official visit to the area and intrigued by the name of the school, he decided to find out at first hand about the school's Madras connection. It is hoped that this contact will lead to other links with India being established.

Two Canadian Superintendents of Schools, the equivalent of Directors of Education here, visited the school to discuss differences between the two educational systems. They were particularly interested in our examination structure and methods of assessment.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to an initiative by Dr Riddell of the Community Council, which is in the process of establishing links between St. Andrews and Upper Arlington in Ohio, it is likely that Madras College staff and pupils will benefit from access to the CompuServe computer network which has its headquarters in Arlington.

We should also like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the St. Andrews Writers' Group for a sum of money to establish a new prize for Creative Writing; to Mr Ali of the Babur, Mr and Mrs De Angelis of Gentriss and Mr Whyte of G.B. Papers for football strips; to Mr Marini of Route 66 for football practice balls and Mr Moulds for helmet, chest guard and goal-keeping gloves for the S3 hockey team.

St. Andrews Rotary Club have agreed to sponsor two pupils to enable them to gain a Youth Leadership Award by undertaking a week's residential course at Abernethy Outdoor Centre in July, 1995. Interested pupils aged 16 or 17 years should indicate their interest by Thursday, 12th January. Further information about this and about international youth exchanges can be obtained from Mr Bennett.

Distinctions and Achievements

Joanna Scott (S6, 1993/4) won the distinction of the Lansdowne Prize, awarded by the Franco-Scottish Society to the most outstanding candidate in CSYS French. Or Swift of Stirling University presented the prize on behalf of the Society at a reception in school on Saturday, 10th December, attended by Cllr Joyce Smith, Convener of the Education Committee, and Mr Brian Welsh Director of Education. Over the last few years the school has regularly received national awards for outstanding SCE performance in various subjects and must have a fairly unique record in this regard.

Young Historian merit certificates were awarded by the Historical Society to four pupils for their Standard Grade Investigations, Madras being the only school in Britain to gain so many. Jamie Corner and Katharine Kennedy won highly commended certificates and Jamie gained the added distinction of a special prize of £30. Vicky Marshall and Jan Carruthers were awarded certificates for entries of merit. A certificate of merit was also gained by Katherine Keys (S5) for her entry in the Gilbert Murray Essay Competition organised by the Classical Association of Scotland.

In the 4th year of the Enterprising Mathematics Contest for the Fife Shield, the Madras Team won by a large margin, retaining the Shield for the third year in succession. The team of Jennifer Davie (S3), Neil Donaldson (S3), Richard Alexander (S4) and Graham Redman (S4) spent a morning battling it out at various mathematical contests: speed, team and relay. This year the National final, to which they would have gone forward, is unfortunately not being run, but the team is to be congratulated for their tremendous effort.

Neil Donaldson and Jennifer Davie, who qualified last session for the UK Junior Mathematics Olympiad, both gained Bronze medals. To put their success in perspective, in this National competition of 750 finalists, only 6 awards were won in Scotland from a total of just over 100 in the UK as a whole.

Jill Blair (S3) achieved another outstanding success in competitive cookery, when she won first place at the *BBC Good Food Cooking and Kitchen Show* in Birmingham. She was selected as one of 16 finalists from an entry of 600 in the Guild of Food Writers and the British Gas 1994 Schools Cookery Competition. Jill's challenge was to devise a recipe which could be cooked in twenty minutes for a family of four. Her *Creich Chicken and brown rice* won her the top prize of a £1,000 gas cooker and a set of Meyer saucepans for the school and £150 for herself. Jill is to be congratulated both on her culinary skills and her calmness under pressure!

Visits and Activities

Many pupils profit from trips and visits which take them out of school to follow up specialist areas of the curriculum. Some involve staff giving time in the evenings, for instance to accompany groups of pupils to the theatre. Since August, the English and Drama departments have jointly organised nine such outings, ranging from Shakespeare to the *Rocky Horror Show* and including a visit by over 100 S1 pupils to *Beauty and the Beast* at Dundee Rep.

Amongst the many other successful visits were those by pupils in S4,5 and 6 to the Physics Department of St. Andrews University; a productive day for S5/6 Modern Studies pupils at a conference in Glasgow; and for five S6 pupils the experience of working intensively with a professional director on the Byre Theatre Arts week. On 19th December, the S5/6 Drama Module group will be taking their version of *A Christmas Carol* to Dundee as part of street entertainment for Christmas shoppers.

Three Drama Clubs now operate: Dance and Drama for SI-3; *After Hours* Drama for S4-6; and the Quad Theatre Company who are now in rehearsal for their forthcoming production of *The Merchant of Venice* in the Byre Theatre (18th - 21st January, 1995)/...

Junior Amnesty have been active with a sponsored letter writing event. Over 200 letters were written and £450 raised for this charity. The group are again taking part in the Christmas greeting card campaign, heartened by the knowledge that five out of the seven recipients of cards last year have now been released.

Junior pupils again took part in the annual Readathon, where sponsored reading of books raised money for the Malcolm Sergent Cancer fund for Children. Nearly £800 was collected, including an outstanding total of £90 by Rebecca Wilson in S2.

An innovation in S3 this year has been the use of volunteers to replace the traditional prefect system. Organised into a variety of groups, these pupils assist with the running of the Kilrymont Road Building in such areas as the lunch queues, tuck shop, corridors, stairs and notice-boards, as well as at Parents' Evenings and School functions. Amongst these, the Publications Group deserve special recognition for their quality production *The Courier*, a newspaper for S1-3 which maintains a high standard of topical comment and presentation. Six issues will have appeared by Christmas.

Pupils in S6 make their contribution to events in South Street through committees, such as those concerned with Charities and Social Events. The Sixth Year Consultative Committee meets weekly to discuss issues of concern to pupils and make proposals.

Many Sixth year pupils are actively involved in the *Two Buildings: One School* initiative to promote a more unified approach to the split-site. Pupils in S6 use study periods to assist staff and pupils in the classroom in a growing number of subjects including Biology, English and Modern Studies, as well as on the Paired Reading Scheme. Several also involve themselves in helping to coach and referee junior sports teams. Sixth year pupils help at all the Junior Christmas parties and next term will be involved in Social Education classes. Community service also offers a number of S6 pupils a weekly commitment in local primary schools and housing associations.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme in which the school has not been involved for some time, has been reintroduced and a group of 30 keen participants in S1 -3 are now working for their Bronze awards under the guidance of Mrs Towns and Mr Dundee.

Debating continues to flourish, with a very high standard at the Inter-House Debate, organised by the Rotary Club of St Andrews. For the first time in the history of the competition. Priory won the trophy. Teams have also progressed to the third round in the ESU and the second round in Edinburgh University Debating competitions. In the Junior Debating two teams have now progressed to the second round of the Courier/T.S.B. Debating competition.

Music

In a year that sees a massive increase in numbers of pupils engaged in SCE Music courses, it is not surprising that the performing groups are also large and buoyant. While it is encouraging that so many pupils wish to be involved in the extra-curricular musical life of the school, there is a price to be paid. There are ever-increasing demands made on music staff time and accommodation, extra music has to be purchased, and even the Pipe Band is having to contemplate the purchase of more kilts and instruments. This group provided stirring music at the Lawhead Primary School PTA Fayre in September and again at the Overseas Evening in the Younger Hall organised by the University. A trio of pipers played for the St Andrews Night concert at Langlands Primary School and preparation of new repertoire for 1995 is well under way.

Almost before the new session was under way, musicians from the school entertained delegates at a conference of Business Women held in St Andrews. Notable, later in the term, was the solo contribution by Megan Read whose singing enhanced the St Andrews Day service in Holy Trinity Church./...

Keeping their powder dry at the moment are the members of the Wind Band. However, in Mr Swiffen's last school session at Madras, large-scale preparations are being made for the forthcoming exchange with Langenes in South Norway.

Part of the growth of numbers has been in the area of brass tuition and Madras produced a larger-than-usual band for the annual Remembrance Day service in St Andrews. The *calls* were sensitively played by Simon Newton who braved the foul weather to play again at Moonzie Old Kirk later that day.

First mooted earlier in the year, October saw the fulfilment of a project involving choirs and dramatists from both Madras College and Waid Academy as they put on two productions of the popular *Ocean World*. Done on a shoestring of time but with a maximum of enthusiasm, these performances, one in Madras and the "away game" in Waid left their audiences humming the tunes of soloists and chorus and remembering vividly the well-rehearsed dance sequences which so poignantly pointed up the narration of the story. Profits from this educational venture go to the World Wildlife Fund.

Now, as term draws to a close, musicians in school are busy providing concerts and music for Christmas assemblies as well as the usual round of outside engagements in town and further afield.

Sport

Mid-way through the season, hockey, football and rugby teams at all levels from S1 to S6 are playing strongly. Enthusiasm and squad numbers are high and already there are some notable successes to record.

The Under-15 Road Relay team won the Scottish Schools' title. Congratulations to Craig Michie (S3), Jonathan Seeley and Andrew Lemoncello. In the Fife Schools Road Relay Championships the school maintained the successes of recent years. The Over-15 boys retained the Lockhart Trophy for the third successive year. The Under-15 boys won the new Balwearie Shield. Individual awards went to Craig Michie (fastest lap Under-15), Ian Wallace (2nd fastest lap Over-15) and Alastair Rough (3rd fastest lap Over-15). Craig Michie has been honoured with the award of a TSB scholarship for £100 by the Scottish Schools Athletic Association, in recognition of his fine achievements in athletics and to assist with further training.

The 1st XV Rugby Team defeated Perth Academy to reach the last 16 of the Scottish Schools Cup and on 13th December faced a distant away fixture at Annan, where their 51-5 win over Annan Academy took them through for the first time to the quarter finals. Peter Walker and Robbie Steven (S4) are playing in the Midlands Under-16 Rugby team.

The S3 Girls' Hockey Team won the Fife Schools 3rd Year Tournament and were runners up to St Leonards in the final of the Midlands Schools (Junior) Tournament. Zoe Ballantyne and Siobhan Grieve (S4) have been selected for the Midlands Under-16 Hockey squad and are having further trials for the Scottish School girls Under-16 and the Midlands Under-18 squads.

The Under-14 boys' football team have reached the quarter-finals of the Fife Cup and the Third Round of the B & Q Scottish Cup. A new activity is girls' football coaching for pupils in S1 and S2, with enthusiastic participation after school and plans for inter-school matches in the near future.

In the Fife 'A' Swimming Gala, Cheryl Christie won the girls' breast stroke while the girls' 12/13 free style relay team came second.

The Badminton Club (S1/2) is thriving and won its first away "friendly" match against Bell Baxter. The continued assistance of experienced coaching by Mr Ian Christie, formerly Principal Teacher of Chemistry, is gratefully acknowledged.

And Finally

As the term ends with the usual round of festivities and the holidays are no longer a distant prospect, it is time to extend to staff, parents and pupils the traditional good wishes for a **Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.**

Dates for your Diary

SCHOOL HOLIDAY DATES

Christmas Holiday:	Monday 26th December, 1994 to Friday 6th January, 1995
February (two days):	Thursday 16th and Friday 17th February, 1995
Easter Holiday:	Monday 3rd April, 1995 to Monday 17th April, 1995
May Day:	Monday 1st May, 1995
Victory in Europe Day:	Monday 8th May, 1995
June (single day):	Monday 5th June, 1995
Summer Holiday:	Wednesday 5th July, 1995 to Tuesday 22nd August, 1995

All dates inclusive

PRELIM EXAMS

S3 Exams:	Tuesday 2nd May, 1995 to Tuesday 16th May, 1995 <i>(provisional)</i>
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IN-SERVICE DAYS FOR TEACHERS

Tuesday 28th February, 1995 Wednesday 10th May, 1995

PARENTS' EVENINGS

S4	Wednesday 25th January, 1995
S2 (1)	Monday 13th February, 1995
S2 (2)	Tuesday 21st February, 1995
S3	Thursday 27th April, 1995
S1	Wednesday 7th June, 1995

PTA MEETINGS

Thursday 2nd March, 1995:	Health Promoting School
Tuesday 14th March, 1995:	Annual General Meeting