



# Madras College Newsletter

June 1991

## Introduction

Newsletters tend to have two recurrent themes. One is the continual process of educational change. The other is the continuing success of the school achieved by a high level of pupil participation in a wide range of activities and the willing support which is given to them by staff. The record of these achievements forms a large part of what follows, but first a comment about change. This session has seen almost all subjects presenting candidates for the new Standard Grade examination. Several Departments are already presenting for the Revised Higher. These changes began as far back as 1978, and few would now question their value. If proof is required, it is provided by a staying-on rate which will give us a sixth year of 170 next session. It would be fine if that was the end of reform, but further major changes lie ahead; the 5—14 Report; modern languages for all; the Howie Committee's report on post-16 examination structure, and elaborate and time-consuming schemes of staff development and appraisal. All very necessary, no doubt, but more than anything else, schools would welcome a slackening in the pace of change to provide some much needed time for consolidation and review.

## Staff changes

The Easter newsletter indicated that all the outstanding staff vacancies had at long last been filled. However, no sooner had stability been reached than the whole process began again. Two changes are the result of promotion, Mrs Macgregor has been appointed Principal Teacher of Guidance at Bell Baxter and Mr Scott Principal Teacher of Geography at Kirkcaldy High School. Although the suddenness of their departure is unexpected, the excellent work they have done here meant that we were certain to lose them sooner rather than later. We congratulate them and wish them every success. Mrs Unsworth is leaving the Biology Department to spend a year in Australia and although she will return, it may not be to Madras College. We are grateful to her for the time and energy she has devoted to the Ecology Club and to making Madras a greener place. Miss Keatch, who has given valuable service to the Mathematics department, is going to Togo in West Africa to take up a teaching appointment there. Both Miss Keatch and Mrs Unsworth take with them our very best wishes

for success and happiness in far-off places. Also our good wishes to Mr Lake who is leaving to take up residence in France and our thanks for the notable work he has done with the brass group. Three members of staff are retiring. Mrs Aitken, whose unobtrusive help has enabled a profoundly deaf pupil to cope successfully with mainstream schooling; Mrs McGhie Smith, to whom many Department of Special Education pupils owe a debt of gratitude for her devoted efforts to help them in overcoming severe learning difficulties; and Mr Close who, apart from a brief interlude at the Burgh School just prior to the amalgamation, has been at Madras since 1958 as a technical teacher and since 1975 also as APT Guidance. His contribution to both these areas has been considerable and the school has benefited greatly over the years from his knowledge, experience and conscientious hard work. We wish all three many years in which to enjoy their well-earned leisure.

To our great regret we are also having to part with several members of staff who have given the school excellent service in a temporary capacity. We would express our very sincere thanks to Mrs McCance (English), Mrs Harkins (Mathematics), Mrs Cundill (Biology) and Miss Kyle (Music) for all they have done to help us in overcoming staffing difficulties this session.

Miss Jack who has been absent for some time has been greatly missed by her colleagues and the pupils in her Guidance group. We send her our good wishes for a speedy recovery from the major operation she has undergone.

Two other items of staff news are the appointment of Mr Mackay to a two year term of office as President of Fife Schools' Football Association' and an invitation to the Rector to attend the Royal Garden Party at the Palace of Holyroodhouse on July 4th.

Over the past few years staff cuts brought about by falling rolls have been the norm. Last session the roll took a noticeable upward turn and the projection for the year ahead suggests that numbers have stabilised. Because of this, a further reduction in staff was not expected. However, difficulties over local government finance have affected the situation and although Fife Region is not one of those worst hit, all schools are having to face quite severe reductions in their staffing levels. In our case, three vacant permanent posts are not being filled and any part time staff who are re-employed

are on a reduced allocation of time. While the strenuous efforts which have been made over the last few weeks to minimise the effects of the cuts on Madras have met with some success, one unpalatable consequence which cannot be avoided is larger class sizes throughout the school.

## Successes

The term has brought several other notable achievements to add to the impressive total of successes which the school has already gained this session.

A group of S3 pupils from the Modern Studies department produced an audio tape on the pros and cons of restoring the rail link to St Andrews. Their tape entitled *Locomotion Commotion* won the Scottish section of a national competition organised by BBC Local Radio and the Hansara Society. An informal celebration in the Library for the team and for the other members of the class was attended by Menzies Campbell MP who presented a framed certificate and a cheque for £100 which will be used for the benefit of the whole school.

It has been an especially successful season for school tennis. The girls' tennis team won the Midlands Schools' Championships, overcoming strong opposition from St Leonards, Morrisons Academy and Dundee High School on the way. Further successes against Dollar Academy and Cults Academy took them to Craiglockhart as the North and Midlands representatives in the finals of the Scottish Schools' Championships. With one of their most experienced players out of action, the team faced an uphill struggle and it is no discredit to them that they finished third.

The Midlands Junior Boys' Doubles was nearly an all Madras affair. Luke Williams and Andrew Jarrert were runners-up, while Alan Henderson and Kevin McColm lost the other semi final to the eventual winners. Nicola Payne has been selected for training with the Scottish under 14 tennis squad.

James Bunch and Sally Dowie represented Fife in the Scottish Schools' Golf Championships. North East Fife Schools' Badminton team, consisting of seven Madras and three Waid Academy players, won the Fife Schools' Intermediate Badminton Shield. Two of our pupils, Joanne Gifford and Michael Willis, have been selected by the New St Andrews Japan Golf Trust to visit Japan this summer to take part in the Trust's exchange programme with Oktawara City.

At the regional sports for pupils in Departments of Special Education three gold medals were won for Madras by Leann Jordan, Caroline Duncan and Stuart Hobbs. In the Fife

Schools' Athletics Championships, the school was placed first in five events, second in eight and third in six. The Group B Girls' relay team won the FSAA Trophy. John Michie was awarded the W. Livingstone Trophy for the 100m Hurdles. In the Fife Schools' Multi Event John Michie was second and in the Scottish Schools' Pentathlon he was fifth. Along with several of our other athletes he took part in the Scottish Schools' Athletics Championships and although there were no outright winners, there were a number of very good results.

In more academic pursuits our Mathematicians have again done exceptionally well. In the annual Mathematics Challenge Competition for Schools in Tayside, Central and Fife, Madras won seven prizes and eleven Highly Commended certificates, more than any other school. In the Enterprising Mathematics Contest a team of four S2 pupils, having first won a school elimination round against another eleven teams, went on to win the Fife Regional Heat. They now go forward to represent Fife in the national final in November. In the Secondary Mathematics Project Competition our entries gained two of the four prizes and one honourable mention. The Latin verse speakers, though unavoidably short of rehearsal time, still managed to carry off two of the trophies in the annual inter-schools competition.

The school's instrumental instructors and their pupils are to be congratulated on another very successful set of results in the practical exams of the Associated Board. Out of 35 pupils presented there were six distinctions, 16 merits and 13 passes.

Six pupils have gained places on Scottish Youth Theatre courses, but Beth Marshall's National Youth Theatre place is a considerable and much rarer distinction. We congratulate her on this well deserved success.

## Events and Activities

Although Certificate exams take the seniors out of circulation for a month or more, there has been no lack of activities and events. The Sixth Year Ball and the 3rd Year's Three Day Activity Programme are by now well established features and as successful as ever. Although it has hardly been the ideal summer in which to take the field, competitive cricket has resumed. The players have shown a high level of commitment and enthusiasm and all four elevens have had an unbeaten record. The East of Scotland under 16 district team was captained by a Madras player, Craig Trewartha. Another new activity is the Mountain Bike Club. Its members have already shown the stuff of which they are made by completing a 37 mile run up Glen Tilt and round the Benn A'Ghlo range. This epic journey of six and a half hours which involved an ascent to

2,500 feet over rugged terrain took place in the pouring rain so typical of a Scottish June. Hill Walking also remains popular and several walks and camping expeditions are planned. Among visits and excursions worthy of note, Department of Special Education pupils spent four enjoyable days in York; the classicists made their annual pilgrimage to Hadrian's Wall; S3 Geography pupils undertook a field trip to Pitlochry and the Highlands, while, much closer to home, over 80 Higher and SYS pupils attended a Geography Conference in St Andrews University. Ecology Club members have been active in various ways: propagating cuttings in the greenhouse; taking part in a beach clean up for National Environment week; maintaining their new pond at Kilrymont Road and stocking it with tadpoles in the hope that future generations of frogs will return to colonise the area. However, they are disappointed to notice a decline in the aluminium can collection and an increase in the litter in the burn and look forward to better support for both these causes next session. Another good cause in which staff and pupils took part was the Save the Children appeal to Skip a Lunch and Save a Life. A staff soup and bread lunch and a range of other activities by pupils raised £610 for the appeal, an excellent result which is a tribute to some very hard work by S1 and S2 pupils.

## *School trips*

Three school trips abroad were scheduled for Easter, but in the event only one took place. This was the Geography Department's second field study trip to the Rhineland which proved just as successful as it had been the previous year. Sadly, the other two—a skiing holiday to the French Alps, and a football trip to Andernach—had to be cancelled on the very last day of term because of the sudden collapse of the travel companies involved. Given more time, a salvage operation might have been possible, but it was considered safer to cancel than to proceed on the uncertain basis of some hastily patched-up last minute arrangement. The youngest pupils suffered the greatest disappointment and, as some slight compensation, the footballers were given a day out of school, all expenses paid, for a morning's coaching at St Johnstone FC followed by a visit to the Perth Leisure Centre.

## *Primary-Secondary liaison*

In order to prepare the way for next session's new intake, this is the season of much official contact with our associated primary schools. However, there have also been some valuable links of a less formal kind. The Early Music Group provided Lawhead PTA with an unusual but much appreciated musical evening. Several primary schools have been given Athletics coaching and this has resulted in some

keen competition and friendly rivalry. Some S1 pupils visited Langlands Primary School to demonstrate the sign language used to communicate with the deaf. After spending a fascinating morning exploring rock pools on the beach Guardbndge primary pupils visited the Biology and Physics labs to examine some of their finds under the microscope and to experience the wonders of the static electricity machine.

## *Exchanges*

The Kiel Exchange was memorable for its happy atmosphere, which uniquely bad weather could not dampen, for the excellence of its farewell party and for the official celebration of its 35th Anniversary. All the Kiel pupils and four representatives from Madras were honoured by an evening reception at Fife House. Gifts to mark the occasion were presented to Herr Suhr by the Convenor of Fife Region, Councillor Robert Gough and by Mr Magnus More, Director of Education. Dr Thompson, former Rector and founder of the exchange, was among the guests. The official proceedings in the Council Chamber were followed by a buffet which was much enjoyed by all concerned.

## *Art Exhibition*

The first leg of another exchange is already taking place. The members of the Madras Wind Band are acting as hosts to the Langenes Wind Band from the Kristiansand area of Norway. The Norwegian visitors, to whom we extend a very warm welcome, have already made their musical mark in St Andrews with a Sunday afternoon concert at the Bow Butts bandstand, and we look forward to their participation in the school's summer concert.

Of all the term's events, pride of place must go to the Art Exhibition. Over 1000 pieces of pupils' work were on view. As one entered a transformed Kilrymont Hall, the visual impact of the display was breathtaking. The quality and range of the work attracted widespread admiration, and the colour and variety delighted the eye. The principal guests at the private view were Mr More, Director of Education, and Mrs More. A framed painting of a lily, the work of S6 pupil Jenny Robertson, was presented to Mrs More by the artist herself.

## *And finally . . .*

Thanks to the support of staff, pupils and parents, the school has come through a difficult and demanding year with flying colours. It will be the final achievement of the session if everyone can enjoy a long and carefree holiday in real summer weather.

# Some dates for your diary.

## School resumes

for pupils on Thursday, 22nd August 1991.

There is a *single day holiday* on

Monday, October 7th 1991.

The **October holiday** runs from Monday 21st  
—Friday 25th October 1991.

## In-service days for teachers

1. Wednesday, 21st August 1991
2. Thursday, 21st November 1991
3. Friday, 22nd November 1991
4. Tuesday, 4th February 1992
5. Tuesday, 12th May 1992

## Parent Teacher Association

Thursday, 19th September 1991  
**Fashion Show**

Wednesday, 16th October 1991  
**'Pupil for an evening'**

*An opportunity to experience new classroom techniques and use materials*

Tuesday, 12th November 1991  
**'The Community in the School'**

Tuesday, 28th January 1992  
**'The Next Step'**  
*Careers; vocational-guidance; equal opportunities*

Thursday, 13th February 1992  
**'Into Europe'**

Wednesday, 4th March 1992  
**'Madras College — a school and its character'**  
*Venue: Leuchars Primary*

Thursday, 12th March 1992  
**AGM**

*Staffroom, Kilrymont Road Building*

## School Uniform

For many parents and pupils, the school jersey provides a smart and serviceable alternative to the school blazer. As you may be aware, some items of school uniform can be obtained from Keith's Outfitters in Market Street, St Andrews. However we can now offer parents the opportunity of purchasing the jersey directly from the school. These are available in Super Acrylic (from £8.50); Wool and Acrylic (£15) or Lambswool (£19). You should recently have received a letter about this, together with an order form; and we hope that this will make it easier for you to select an appropriate jersey which will be acceptable to the school, and popular with pupils. We hope that this facility will be successful since we regard the wearing of school uniform as a visible sign of the pride pupils have in being a member of the community that is Madras College.

### For your reference, this is a summary of the basic requirements of school uniform:

#### Boys

Navy blue V-necked jersey with school badge; dark grey or navy trousers (not denim); white, grey or blue shirt; school tie; dark socks; dark shoes.

#### Girls

Navy blue V-necked jersey with school badge; navy skirt (of moderate length); white or blue blouse; school tie; navy or black tights or white socks; dark shoes.

'Trendy' fashion items (such as shell-suits; denim jackets; designer trainers, etc) are **NOT** acceptable as schoolwear.

### Parents' Nights 1991-92

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| S1   | Tuesday, 26th May 1992   |
| S2   | Thursday, 20th February <i>and</i><br>Thursday, 27th February 1992 |
| S3   | Wednesday, 22nd April 1992   |
| S4   | Wednesday, 27th November 1992                                      |
| S5/6 | Tuesday, 21st January  |