



# Christmas Newsletter

December 1992

With so much to say about the school it is difficult to know where to begin, but some facts and figures may provide an appropriate starting point. With 1,613 pupils the school is the fourth largest in the Region. With 346 pupils S1 is the largest for some years. The high return rate of senior pupils is reflected by the size of sixth year which has 151 pupils. There are 118 members of staff, but that is very much an operational minimum, since class sizes throughout the school are large with inevitable consequences both for learning and for discipline. Results of SCE examinations were excellent. 87.5% of those presented gained Standard Grade passes at either Credit or General level. Higher passes A-C were 82.3% with 30.7% at A. The A-C figure for CSYS was similar at 83.3%. Last year, 80.4% of S6 went on to higher education. Already this session 212 reports for universities and colleges have been completed. 1993 is the 160th anniversary of the school's foundation and also, by a curious coincidence, the 25th anniversary of the opening of Kilrymont Road.

Issues facing the school are the ongoing development of the 5-14 programme, with national testing at S2 level only a year away; the arrangements for devolved financial management; changes arising from the Howie Report on a new examination structure for the upper secondary stages, although professional opinion has swung solidly against the proposals in their present form; looking at ways of promoting positive behaviour in the classroom; and means of dealing with bullying, which one always fears is on the increase; concern over such matters as the exposure of young people to drugs, highlighted at a recent PTA meeting, and AIDS, which has been the subject of a dramatic performance for senior pupils by a professional company; obtaining details about S4 Homework with a view to issuing the information to pupils and parents early next term; setting up a computerised cataloguing and stock control system for the school library. These are merely a few of the plans, preparations and developments which, in addition to teaching, have formed part of the school's official business over the past term.

Each year prizes are awarded by the Institute of Physics for the best national performance in Higher Physics. The school has featured on the prize list previously and we

congratulate Chris Crowe on bringing this distinction to the school for the third time in five years.

## Staff News

Mrs. Gibbs, Mrs. Jocelyn Scott and Mr. Hamilton have all been absent for some time and we send them our good wishes. We welcome the recent return of Miss Jack from several weeks of absence and also welcome two new members of staff - Mrs. Alison Shields who came to the school in August as teacher of Religious Education and Mr. Paul Hunt who joined us in October from Buckhaven High School on his promotion to the post of Assistant Principal Teacher Social Subjects.

Promotion has claimed three highly regarded members of staff. Mr. Alan Strachan, Principal Teacher of Special Education, has returned to Buckhaven High School to take charge of the much larger department there. Mrs. Catherine Grant, Assistant Principal Teacher of Home Economics, has gone to Bell Baxter High School as Principal Teacher of her subject. Mr. James Keegans, Principal Teacher of Modern Studies, leaves at the end of term to take up his appointment as Assistant Head Teacher at St. Kentigern's Academy, Blackburn, West Lothian. All three have made an immensely valuable contribution to the life of the school, not only in the teaching of their respective subjects, but in a great variety of other ways. We are sorry to lose them, but wish them every success and happiness in their new posts.

In Miss Jack's absence, Mr. Wemyss took over as Acting Principal Teacher of Guidance and his duties as Assistant Principal Teacher were carried out by Mrs. Lamb. We thank them both for the very hard work they put into these temporary appointments. Mr. Michael Barclay (Art), Mrs. Rae Hannah (Home Economics) and Mrs. Allyson Bums (Special Education) have been appointed to acting Assistant Principal Teacher posts, pending a decision on whether there will be permanent promoted posts at this level in these subjects. Following the departure of Mr. Keegans, Mrs. Marlyn Brown will become acting Principal Teacher Modern Studies and Mrs. Sandra Thomson will replace her as acting Assistant Principal Teacher Social Subjects.

At the time of her appointment to Bell Baxter, Mrs. Grant was acting Principal Teacher of Home Economics in the absence of Mrs. Kyle, whom we congratulate on the birth of a daughter. Mrs. Kyle's absence and Mrs. Grant's departure left the department without any promoted staff. To overcome this very unusual situation, Mrs. Sheila Blair was seconded to us from Bell Baxter and we welcome her as acting Principal Teacher of Home Economics until Mrs. Kyle's return.

We congratulate Mr. James Tarvet on his recent appointment to a permanent Assistant Principal Teacher of Guidance post.

## Out of Class

It is impossible in the space available to do full justice to the school's rich and varied programme of extra-curricular activities. The following is merely a brief survey.

The Art department gained a major success in the competition for the National Design Council Awards. Main McCrindle was highly commended for her entry in the jewellery section. Paul Massie's design also reached the final stages. Nearer home, several pupils received prizes from the St. Andrews Horticultural Society for flower painting and the Society's trophy for the best portrait of a flower was awarded to a Madras pupil for the second year in succession. This year's winner was Fiona McAlister. A member of staff, Mr. Alan Watson, was one of six British artists commissioned to design murals for British Rail's new headquarters in London and it is good to know that the teaching of the subject is not just a matter of theory, but is informed and enhanced by direct practical experience. The number of pupils who gained places at Art College was the highest in the Region and this perhaps demonstrates more clearly than anything else the quality of the department's work.

Mathematics is another area where the quality of the work is reflected in the results of national competitions. Fifteen schools took part in the Fife Enterprising Maths Competition. The Madras team (Lindsay Charles, Kate Steven, Jamie Comer and Chris Irwin) reversed last year's result and took the trophy from Dunfermline High School. The regional contest was a qualifying round for the National Event which was held at Meadowbank Stadium in Edinburgh. Although the Madras team were in a winning position, some parts of the poster which they were required to design projected. Because this was deemed to infringe the rules about size, they were relegated to sixth place which, out of 32 teams from all over Scotland, was still an excellent result. National Maths Contest results have just been received and these

also are excellent - 23,140 pupils from 780 schools in the U.K. took part. 56 entries from Madras produced 28 National Awards, 5 Gold, 9 silver and 14 bronze. Moreover, two of our contestants, Paul Phillips and Christopher Crowe did sufficiently well to be in the top 3% nationally, thereby qualifying for the British Maths Olympiad in January.

Musical activity continues with its customary vigour in spite of difficulties caused by the rearranged examination schedule, staff absence and reduced instrumental provision. As usual brass players participated in the Remembrance Services at St. Andrews and at Moonzie. The Piping Society, which is gaining in both skill and support, marched down South Street and played in Church Square as part of the Community Council's celebration of St. Andrews Day. The pipers also entertained the University Overseas Society.

Another community venture, greatly appreciated by the audience, was a concert which the Senior Choir recently gave for the Townswomen's Guild. Pupils and parents who had participated in last summer's Norwegian exchange held an enjoyable reunion. The results of Associated Board examinations, which have just been intimated, displayed the usual high standards achieved by the school's dedicated but diminishing corps of instrumental instructors. All 26 candidates passed, 2 with distinction and 9 with merit.

The Junior Drama Group are busy preparing for their first public performances at the Christmas Concert and End of Term Assemblies.

The choice of a later date for prelim exams brought the Quad Theatre Company's annual production forward to November. Although this restricted the rehearsal time, it in no way impaired the standard of performance and large and appreciative audiences enjoyed a lively, modern interpretation of Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*. An extensive programme of theatre visits has been organised and since August pupils from S3-S6 have taken part in no less than eleven outings to professional performances up and down the country.

The annual inter-house debate, organised by the Rotary Club of St. Andrews, was won by Blackfriars. Anna Scott, Vivienne Fraser and Imogen Ashcroft have reached the quarter finals of the English Speaking Union Public Speaking Contest. Two junior teams. Charis Melvin and Chris Irwin, Eleanor Winton and Harold Raitt were successful in the first round of the TSB Courier Debate. The Jimmie Thomson Trophy for Junior Public Speaking was won by Harold Raitt.

The Under 14 Football team have won 8 out of 8 matches and are in the last 16 of both the Scottish Schools Under 14 Shield and the B and Q Under 14 Trophy. This week they play in the second stage of the Scottish Schools Under 14 Five a Sides. The Under 13 team reached the 3rd Round of their Scottish Cup competition, but lost to Old Machar Academy, Aberdeen. Neil Lumsden has played for the Fife Schools Under 15 team. Because of cancellations, the Under 18 team have had few games this season, but two players, Edward Lee and Gavin Aitken, have both represented Fife Schools.

Golf Championships were completed in spite of bad weather throughout the final stages. Winners and runners up (in brackets) are Senior Matchplay: Darren Liddle (Ross Duncan), Senior Strokeplay: Darren Liddle (David Crichton). There is no previous record of the same player winning both competitions in the same year. Intermediate Matchplay: Neil Steven (Richard Bunch), Intermediate Strokeplay: Neil McGrory (Neil Steven).

The Hockey 1st XI has reached the semi-final of the Midlands District Schools Tournament. The 2nd Year Hockey team won the Fife Schools Tournament. Katharine Farally and Eilidh Smith have been selected for the Midlands District outdoor teams at Under 16 and Under 18 respectively. Elizabeth Orr and Katharine Farally are in the Midlands District indoor squad.

The very good results of recent years were repeated in the Fife Schools Road Relay Championships at Kirkcaldy. Both the Under 15 Boys and the Over 15 Boys' teams gained first places. In the Scottish Schools Championships at Grangemouth the Under 15 Boys (Christopher Seeley, Ian Rough, John Berry) finished third and won Bronze medals.

The Rugby 1st XV reached the quarter finals of the Scottish Schools Cup, but lost to former finalists, Galashiels, in a keenly contested encounter. Anson Martin, Dugald Thorn, Craig Trewartha and Tom Heathcote were selected for the Midlands District trials. Anson Martin gained a national trial and is one of the reserves for the Scottish Schools team against France. Support has increased to an extent which now allows a second XV to take the field for regular matches and the excellent results being obtained by 1st, 2nd and 3rd Year teams confirm the healthy position which the game now enjoys in Madras College. One of the first inter-school rugby matches in Scotland took place in November 1867 between Madras College and Merchiston Castle School. That event was commemorated by a return match at

Station Park in October against two teams from Merchiston. Sad to say, the result was the same as it had been 125 years before. Merchiston won on both occasions, although this time by a larger margin. Nevertheless, even in defeat the Madras teams acquitted themselves well and it was an enjoyable and worthwhile experience for all concerned. Thanks are due to the Madras F.P. Rugby Club for their support and assistance.

## **Buses**

Bus problems are always with us and as usual they take two forms, overcrowding and indiscipline. As far as overcrowding is concerned, regional surveys have established that there is adequate capacity on all routes. If problems occur, it is because pupils do not board the correct bus at the correct stop. One way of dealing with this situation would be to adopt the system of colour coding which is used in some other areas. Each pupil is given a coloured card and can only travel on a bus which displays that colour. The system solves problems of overcrowding, but it has one major disadvantage. Pupils who forget or lose their card or are late for their bus are not allowed to board any other bus and that rule is rigidly enforced. There are already problems when pupils who have forgotten their bus pass are not allowed on the bus and have either to pay to travel on a later service bus or take a day off school. While the system of colour coding has its attractions, even parents who are understandably concerned about over-crowding, may well have reservations about such a drastic solution. Comments would be welcome.

The problems of indiscipline are equally intractable. The school attempts to deal with them, but the amount of senior staff time spent on investigating bus incidents is considerable. Enquiries are often unproductive, because of the wall of silence with which they are met and it is questionable whether the results justify taking staff away from other tasks more directly related to education. Information is probably no substitute for supervision, but it might at least help to speed up the process of identifying the troublemakers.

## **Beyond the Gates**

At the annual service of Remembrance at the War Memorial, Lucy Fraser and Gavin Legg laid the wreath on behalf of the school. Wendy Macfarlane and Nicholas Goldsmith represented the school at the ceremony in the Town Hall to confer the Freedom of the City on Councillor David Niven. In addition to his many other public duties, Mr. Niven was Chairman of the Madras College

Trustees for many years and it is appropriate to thank him for his prudent management of that aspect of our affairs and to acknowledge his service to the school of which he is a former pupil.

On St. Andrews Day, Higher and SYS History pupils attended the annual service in Holy Trinity to hear the address by the Historiographer Royal about the way in which beliefs about St. Andrew have influenced the Scots' perception of their national identity. In the afternoon S6 pupils provided an entertainment for over 40 of the town's old folk. This very practical way of marking the occasion was enjoyed by the old and young alike and is another facet of the increasing amount of Community Service in which S6 pupils are involved.

Alone of all the public buildings in the town centre, the school does not have a flag-pole from which to fly the Saltire. One friend of the school has promised us a flag. Perhaps there is someone else who might like to provide us with a flag-pole!

As part of what we hope will become a regular exchange programme, two pupils, Kelly Brown and Alison Yaunches, from Great Valley High School, Philadelphia have spent the term at Madras. Penny Graham and Sarah Gregor are returning with them to the United States to spend the second half of the year at Great Valley.

Adriana Cicoti and Simona Gocan from the Fine Art School at Cluj in Romania, with which the school has had previous links, spent most of November at Madras as the guests of four S6 pupils. Their visit was made possible by various fund raising activities, including a non-uniform day.

Many S3 and S4 pupils have enjoyed the opportunities provided through the Aware Scheme to experience a real work situation, but their choice has been limited, because the number of places in and around St. Andrews is not large. However, places in Dundee have now been made available to the school and this offers a whole range of new and exciting possibilities from which S3 pupils will be the first to benefit when their Aware programme begins in February. The positive response from firms and organisations in Dundee is a tribute to the respect in which the school is held and the pupils who take part will have a key part to play in promoting that image still further.

### *and finally*

Our very best wishes to staff, parents and pupils for a happy and enjoyable Christmas and a good New Year.

## *Dates for your Diary*

### SCHOOL HOLIDAY DATES

#### **Christmas Holiday:**

*School finishes*—Wednesday 23th December 1992 at 12.30p.m.

*School starts*—Thursday 7th January, 1993

#### **February (two days):**

Thursday 11th and Friday 12th February, 1993

#### **Easter Holiday:**

*School finishes*—Friday 26th March, 1993

*School starts*—Tuesday 13th April, 1993

#### **May Day:**

Monday 3rd May, 1993

#### **June (single day):**

Monday 7th June, 1993

#### **Summer Holiday:**

*School finishes*—Friday 2nd July, 1993 at 12.30 p.m.

*School starts for pupils*—Tuesday 24th August, 1993

### PRELIM EXAMS

#### **S5/S6 Prelim Exams:**

Wednesday 13th to Friday 29th January, 1993 (inc).

### IN-SERVICE DAYS FOR TEACHERS

Wednesday 3rd March, 1993

Tuesday 11th May, 1993

### PARENTS' EVENINGS

**S4** Wednesday 2nd December, 1992

**S2 (1)** Thursday 18th February, 1993

**S2 (2)** Thursday 25th February, 1993

**S3** Wednesday 28th April, 1993

**S1** Tuesday 18th May, 1993

### PTA MEETINGS

Tuesday 9th March, 1993:

'5-14' (*Venue:* Wormit Primary School)

Wednesday 17th March, 1993:

Annual General Meeting

Friday 7th May, 1993:

'Anniversary Anecdotes'