



Madras College

Spring Newsletter

March 1994

Although the main part of the newsletter is devoted, as always, to recording the many activities in which Madras College pupils take part, the opening paragraphs provide an opportunity to comment on some of the more serious issues.

The increasing exposure of young people to drink, drugs and, in some cases, solvents continues to be a cause for concern. Various measures to alert pupils and parents to the dangers are in hand. A PTA seminar on drugs is planned for 25th April. On 4th May a similar event, organised by the local Crime Prevention Panel, will highlight the problems which under age drinking may present for parents. Later in the term, a Catch Theatre company presentation on solvent abuse will form part of the Social Education programme for SI pupils.

Colour coding has been introduced on buses from Gauldry, Wormit and Newport but it is too early to judge the success of the scheme. Provided pupils carry their coloured pass and board the appropriate bus, overcrowding should be a thing of the past. Sadly, pupils still fail to appreciate the dangers and some are selfishly attempting to defeat the system, even to the extent of trying to forge coloured passes.

Madras is one of six Fife secondary schools which have been invited to take part in the first phase of devolved financial management. This means that up to 80% of the total annual expenditure will be school controlled as from 1st April. The most obvious immediate change will be a long overdue increase in office staff and greatly improved technology for administrative purposes.

The latest government document *Higher Still* is the long awaited response to the proposals of the Howie Committee which suggested sweeping changes to the present examination system and to the courses in the upper stages of the secondary school. While the decision to retain the Higher is welcome, many in the profession have reservations about other aspects of the new scheme, particularly the time-scale and the amount of development work required. Current concerns about class sizes and teachers' workload are also likely to have a bearing on the outcome.

At a recent PTA meeting in Leuchars Primary School, pupils from S1-S6 spoke about their involvement in extra-curricular activities. The value of these activities and the enjoyment which the pupils gained from them was abundantly clear. A high level of participation is matched by an equally large measure of loyalty, commitment and enthusiasm. Unfortunately, there is a cost attached and that cost is steadily increasing. A recent analysis of the annual cost revealed that it is taking about £34,000 a year to maintain extra-curricular activities on their present scale. About a sixth of this is provided by the Region. The rest is found in various ways by the school. One major source of income is the annual grant which the school receives from the Trustees of Madras College Endowment. Their Appeal, about which more details appear in another section of the newsletter, is aimed at increasing the funds available to the school for extra-curricular activities. It deserves the support of all who value the place of these activities in school life.

One item of staff news. We congratulate Mrs. Elinor Kirk on her appointment as Principal Teacher of Drama, one of only three such appointments in the Region.

UK Schools International Maths Challenge 1994

In December, the successes of Madras pupils in the Senior Competition were announced. Now it is the turn of those in S3 and S4, who took part in the Intermediate Challenge in February, joining 100,000 contestants from more than 1400 secondary schools. Amongst the



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top 6%, who earned Gold awards, were eight Madras pupils: Richard Alexander (S3), Saul Williams (S4), David Pearson (S4), Chris Irwin (S4), Graham Redman (S3), Yvonne Anderson (S3), Ailsa MacDonald (S3) and Jaime Douglas (S3). A further 11 Silver and 24 Bronze awards were earned in what was yet another highly creditable performance by Madras pupils, under the astute guidance of Mr. K. Nisbet, Assistant Principal Teacher of Mathematics. As the best-placed pupil in the school, it is hoped that Richard Alexander will be invited to take part in the next round of the contest, the International Intermediate Maths Challenge. In April, it will be the turn of pupils in S1 and S2 to compete in the Junior competition. We await news of their performances with some anticipation.

The Endowment Appeal

Much hard work by Dr. Archie Rennie and his committee has brought the Appeal Fund total to the £45,000 mark at the date of this newsletter. Several large-scale fund raising events have taken place this term. The next big occasion will be a Summer Fair on Saturday, 18th June.

The Madras Dinner in Kilrymont Hall on 12th February was a night to remember. Over 200 former pupils, friends and staff exchanged reminiscences and life stories while enjoying a fine buffet supplied by Direct Catering Services. The audience then settled back to savour the speeches: witty and nostalgic views of Madras College through the years from Former Pupil - Ted Brocklebank, former Depute Rector - Lindsay Hodge, Principal Teacher of English - Andrew Lindsay and Former Rector - Ian Gilroy. It was an evening which generated much warmth and pride, as well as a substantial contribution to the cause.

The musical talents of the school have also been harnessed. Together with Tayport Instrumental Band a successful concert was held at the Blyth Hall, Newport on 13th March. The proceeds from the end of term concert on 21st March will also be donated.

The Auction of Treasures and Promises, the result of much work and many generous donations, on 12th March, added a spectacular £4,285 to the total.

Our thanks go to all who have given so much time and effort in bringing the Endowment Appeal so close to its target.

The Performing Arts

On Wednesday, 16th February, a Senior Citizens' Entertainment Afternoon was offered by Senior pupils to residents from Craigmount and Balnacarron Nursing Homes, Gibson House, Kirkhill Sheltered Housing and the Sunshine Club. The varied programme included Highland dancing, poetry recitation, vocal and instrumental duets, after which the performers and guests alike appreciated tea and cakes. A cold snowy day was brightened by this successful event.

Many of the same performers will have been in evidence when the school held its annual Bums Supper on 24th January, including the winners of the Burns Singing Competition: Catriona Chisholm and Susan Bell, first and second in the Senior Girls; Harold Raitt, Senior Boys winner; and the Junior winners: Zoe Ballantyne (First), Clair Speed (Second) and Glyn McCrickard, the Boys Winner. *The Immortal Memory* was ably toasted by Mr. David Robertson, while Mr. Andrew Lindsay's expected poem in the style of Burns reflected this year on the topical subject of *Back tae Basics*. Other speakers from the senior school were Alison Henney, Will Poole, Catriona Chisholm and, especially appreciated, contributions from Sophie Morelle and Margit Aufterbeck, French and German Teaching Assistants at Madras this session.

Meanwhile, in the Drama department there has been much activity. Class performances play an important part in certificate course assessments. Parents and friends enjoyed the S4 Standard Grade group's presentation *Myths and Legends*. The S5/6 Activities group took the theme of

teenagers who run away for their presentation, while the Scotvec Module Group toured local primary schools with their production *Curiouser and Curiouser*, based on *Alice in Wonderland*.

Twenty-two members of the Junior Drama Group and two staff had the experience of filming with the BBC for the *Megamag* programme. Their performances will be seen on television later this year. Standard Grade Drama and PE pupils took part in a Dance Workshop run by the Dundee Rep Dance Company.

A wide variety of theatre visits organised by the English and Drama departments have taken place, while *The Actors of Dionysus* came to the Quad Theatre to perform Euripides' *Electra*. An excellent performance was supported by the assistance of five pupils from the Drama department acting as stage crew.

Lyndsay Duckett (S5) has gained a place at the Musical Theatre School, London while amongst the 26 pupils who were successful in the recent AB Music Practical examinations, three earned distinctions: Jill Douglas, Grade 8 flute, Kirsty MacCrimmon, Grade 7 flute, and Katie Bradshaw, Grade 6 violin.

Debating

Madras achieved the notable distinction of having two teams in the final of the TSB/Courier Debate: Eleanor Winton (S3) and Harold Raitt (S2) made up one, Andrew Bell (S3) and Simon Newton (S3) the other. As all who witnessed the event either on the night, or later when the debate was shown on television, will agree, these pupils deserve the highest praise for their skilful and mature performances. The Madras teams were perhaps unlucky not to have their efforts recognised by prizes, but should take lasting satisfaction from the level of debating they demonstrated.

It was Madras's turn this year to host the Inter-School Debate, when Waid, Bell Baxter and Madras compete for the Waid Academy Centenary Trophy. This keenly-contested event took place on 10th March and was remarkable for two reasons. Madras retained the trophy for the third successive year and for the first time in the event's history the home team of Anna Scott, Alison Henney, Lindsay Charles, Will Poole, Malcolm Broom and Jane Ballantyne were the well-deserved winners. Especially fine performances by the first three named also earned them individual prizes, but thanks are due to all who helped and supported as well as the participants.

Visit by Belgrano Day School

The weekend of 15/16th January was a memorable one for many senior pupils, when they hosted an extremely successful visit for the Belgrano Day School, Buenos Aires. Thanks to much generous support from parents and staff, a splendid international programme was staged, including an evening of traditional Scottish entertainment enthusiastically enjoyed, a stimulating historical treasure hunt around wind-swept St. Andrews and much cultural and social exchange. Our Argentinian visitors left us with a high respect for their skills on the Rugby and Hockey fields. The Madras 1st XV Rugby and 1st XI Hockey teams played very well indeed, suffering honourable defeats in their respective internationals, but ending the weekend with contacts and friendships which they will also remember. Our special thanks are due to Miss Robertson and Mr. Tarvet, who organised the visit, and the members of staff, especially from the PE department, who gave so unstintingly of their time and effort catering so deliciously for all the hungry players.

The Multiple-Sclerosis Society in Scotland wrote to the school to thank the group of sixth year girls who made such a valuable contribution assisting in the Collection Day in December which raised over £450 for the Society.

Music

Although one might be forgiven for thinking that, after Christmas, the Music Department would be having a quiet time, that is quite far from the truth. First, however, information which missed the December Newsletter. Profits from the Christmas concerts and the Senior Choir Carol Singing were added up to reveal a figure of over £700 which will go to charities. The prizewinners in the annual carol composing competition were Katie Hogarth, Caroline Royds and Paul Skelding (Junior), Laura Bums (Senior).

Once again, music featured on the bill of fare at the school's *Burns Supper* and pipers were in demand at local events during the same week in January. This term also saw the return to competitive piping with entries to the Arbroath and District Festival.

In February the largest recorded number of Madras pupils so far attended the Fife Festival. Altogether, some two hundred Madras pupils took part in the Festival in both competitive and non-competitive classes. Notable performances were given by the Boys' Chorale and the Senior Choir who were unopposed in their classes, the Senior Girls' Choir who won their class and the Junior Choir who contested three classes, winning the first of these. Entries by recorder groups large and small, Forlana (the early music group), Wind Band, Wind Ensembles and Junior Strings produced excellent performances throughout the week. Out of nine major classes contested, Madras musicians produced five performances judged to be *outstanding, artistically and technically* (the top category at the Festival). The Senior Girls who had won the Ladies' Morning Group Quaich were invited to take part in the Festival Gala Concert.

Already, this month, the Music Department has undertaken a major concert in the Blyth Hall, Newport, in aid of the school Endowment Appeal. This community venture involving Tayport Instrumental Band, the Junior Choir and Wind Band with Elizabeth Kinnear as soloist was well-received by the audience. At the time of writing final touches are being put to the programme for the annual Spring Concert and the end-of-term assemblies which keep musicians and staff busy right to the last day.

Sport

Running

This term, the performances of school teams and individuals in Cross Country Running have been outstanding. In the Fife School Championships, the boys Over-17 and Under-17 teams finished first, while the boys Under-15 and Girls 1st Year teams came second.

Individual winners were: Vincent McPherson, S6 (Over-17), Chris Seeley, S4 (Under-17) and Craig Michie, S2 (Under-15) with excellent supporting team placings by Ian Wallace (S5), Russell McFarlane (S6), Sean Berry (S3), Ian Rough (S3) Donal Henretty (S3), Lindsay Buntin (S2), Amy Bateman (SI), Joan Henretty (SI) and Edward Napier (SI).

Madras athletes then went on to achieve further success in cold blustery conditions at the Scottish Schools' Championships at Irvine. Craig Michie (S2) is to be congratulated on winning the Under-14 Boy's title and with J. Seeley (S2), E. Napier and N. Nicholson (S2) leading that team to second place. The Under-15 Boys team of R. McQueen (S2), O. Greene (S2), J. Kilpatrick (S3) and S. Newton (S2) came third; the Under-17 Boys came fourth, the Over-17 Boys sixth and the Under-14 Girls ran valiantly, though unplaced. Vincent McPherson, who came third in the Over-17 race, has now been selected to represent the Scottish Schools at the International against Wales to be held at Tal Garth, Powys, on 10th April. Craig Michie has also gained a place in the National Team against England.

Meanwhile, on the running track, Michael Bruce (S4) continued on his winning way, achieving Gold in the 200 metres at the Scottish Schools' Indoor Athletic Championships in

Glasgow, Silver in the 60 metres and representing Scottish Schools in Birmingham in the Indoor Match with England, Ireland and Wales. Sean Berry (S3) also finished a creditable 9th place in the Scottish Schools' 1500 metres.

Hockey

The S3 Girls' Hockey team won the Midlands Indoor Tournament and were runners up in the Fife Schools' Outdoor Tournament. Zoe Ballantyne, Julie McLaren, Jenny Farrow and Siobhan Grieve, members of the S3 team, attended a weekend coaching course at Dunfermline sponsored by the Hydro Electric Board. Katherine Farrally (S6) was selected for the Midlands Indoor Hockey team in the inter-district tournament. The Under-16 team won their area 5-a-side competition and have qualified for the Fife Schools' Finals at Glenrothes.

Swimming

Madras was well-represented at the Fife Schools' Swimming Championships, where amongst the many fine results were David McFarlane, S1 (6th, Under-11 50 metres Freestyle; 3rd, Under-11 50 metres Butterfly); Cheryl Christie, S2 (1st, 12/13 100 metres Breaststroke) and Neil Whittaker, S3 (2nd, 12/13 100 metres Freestyle). These pupils went on to compete in their respective events at the Scottish Schools Swimming Championships, David coming 9th, Cheryl 7th and Neil 4th.

And finally

Staff and pupils are looking forward to the Easter holiday after what is generally reckoned to be the hardest term in the school year. To everyone associated with the school our good wishes for an enjoyable holiday.

/Some Dates for Your Diary overleaf

Some dates for your diary

School starts:	Monday, 11th April, 1994
May Day:	Monday, 2nd May, 1994
June Holiday:	Monday, 6th June, 1994
SCE Exams:	Begin Tuesday, 3rd May and end on Tuesday, 7th June, 1994
SCE Study Leave:	Begins Wednesday, 4th May and ends on Thursday, 2nd June, 1994
New Term for S5/S6:	Wednesday, 8th June, 1994
S3 Parents' Night:	Thursday, 28th April, 1994
S3 Examinations:	Begin Tuesday, 3rd May and end on Friday, 20th May, 1994
S1 Parents' Night:	Monday, 23rd May, 1994
Summer Concert:	Monday, 27th June, 1994
Awards Ceremony:	Friday, 1st July, 1994
PTA/Endowment Appeal Fund Raising Event:	Saturday, 18th June, 1994
PTA Seminar on Drugs:	Monday, 25th April, 1994
Crime Prevention Panel Under Age Drinking:	Wednesday, 4th May, 1994