



Madras College

Summer Newsletter

June 1995

The end of session newsletter continues the pattern of many previous editions by recording the remarkable range of school activities and achievements. It is interesting to see the way in which there is a very direct link between these activities and the aims of the school. It is clear that the aim of encouraging pupils to develop their full potential extends beyond the work of the classroom. Through participation in activities, personal and social development is encouraged, pupils learn to work co-operatively with each other and with staff and because individuals are seen in a different context, the whole aim of creating a caring environment within the school is more easily fulfilled. An increasing number of activities take pupils into the wider community and by encouraging the development of responsible and caring attitudes to society another important set of aims is realised. The essential work of the classroom is caught up in all these other elements and without their pervasive influence examination success, on which so much emphasis is rightly placed, would be much harder to achieve.

STAFF NOTES

At this time of year staff news, sadly, consists mainly of farewells:

Mr Swiffen's long association with the instrumental side of school music and with the Wind Band represents 27 years of outstanding commitment to his pupils. They owe him a debt of gratitude for giving them not only skilled tuition but much lasting enjoyment - an enjoyment shared by many audiences over the years who have been consistently delighted by Wind Band performances at concerts and other events.

Mr Casey came to Madras from Waid Academy 11 years ago, but in that time he has become an almost legendary figure - the archetypal school master, inspiring in his pupils awe and admiration in almost equal measure. His view of history demanded scientific precision which left no room for slipshod thinking. His senior pupils certainly recognised the value of being stimulated into thinking for themselves and thanks to his rigorous training, they not only gained excellent examination results, but in many cases went on to take history at university with distinction.

The History Department suffers a double loss this year with the departure of Mr Wemyss. A former pupil of the school he returned to teach in 1972 and was promoted to A.P.T. Guidance in 1976. For many years he managed the evening classes which preceded Community Use. In addition to his involvement in the more obvious activities of rugby and cricket, he instructed many pupils in the art of small bore rifle shooting. His wide ranging interest in history has been put to good use in his subject teaching. He was one of the first to see the advantages of the computer, both as a means of preparing classroom resource material and for monitoring pupils' attendance, which latterly became a major part of his Guidance work.

Mrs Scott, another former pupil and also a member of staff since 1972, retires from the P.E. Department. As a teacher her cheerful encouragement has helped several generations of pupils to improve their skills in a variety of sports. She has regularly and successfully coached hockey teams and throughout her career she has been much involved with swimming and athletics, both at school and regional level. She will be greatly missed, not least for her cheerful, friendly manner which has made her deservedly popular with pupils and colleagues alike.

Mrs Christie has given the school/

Mrs Christie has given the school 20 years of outstanding service as Senior Technician. Although much of her work has been behind the scenes, her skilful management of her small team of technicians and her meticulous attention to detail have ensured that teachers have had available to them all the equipment and apparatus necessary to support their work. Mrs Christie has done much to ensure a safe working environment for both staff and pupils and this aspect of her work deserves special acknowledgement, particularly because of the ever increasing amount of electrical equipment in schools.

Also leaving at the end of session are Mrs Unsworth of the Biology Department, who is going to live in New Zealand, Mrs Galloway, who has helped in the Classics Department for the last few years, Frau Rauchenwald who returns to Austria after a year's exchange and Alaena Darach, teaching auxiliary, who is returning to Canada and whose help in providing special support for an SI pupil has been invaluable. We thank them all for the contributions they have made in so many different ways to the life and work of the school and we wish them every future happiness.

Many supply staff have helped throughout the session and we are grateful to them all. However, Mrs Cundill, Mrs Gellatly, Mrs Methven and Mr Beaver, all of whom were with us on a long term basis, deserve our special thanks.

We welcome Ms Clancy who took up her duties as P.T. Biology at the beginning of June.

We congratulate:

Mr H Watson of the Physics Department on his appointment as A. P.T. Guidance to replace Mr Wemyss.

Mr Barile who has been appointed Acting P.T. Mathematics at St. Andrews High School, Kirkcaldy and Mrs Caldwell who replaces him here as Acting A.P.T.

Mr Hunt who has been appointed A.P.T. Modern Studies at Kirkland High School, Kirkcaldy.

SCHOOL CRESTS

Mrs Copland of the Home Economics Department has given the school two beautifully embroidered examples of the school coat of arms for use on ceremonial occasions such as the Awards Ceremony. They will undoubtedly be one of the school's treasured possessions and we are deeply grateful to her for the immense amount of skill and painstaking effort which she has put into their creation.

COMPUSERVE AND THE INTERNET

Following liaison with the Community Council and the Rotary Club, a very valuable link has been formed with schools in Upper Arlington, Columbus, Ohio. CompuServe are sponsoring Madras College's membership, giving supervised pupil access to CompuServe, Internet and the World Wide Web. This has allowed pupils currently in first and second year to send e-mail messages to electronic pen-pals in Upper Arlington. Departments other than Computing, for instance Mathematics and History, are now exploring the resources to be gained from access to these systems.

ENGINEERING THE FUTURE

Four pupils in S6, Graeme Heywood, Chris Marshall, John Riddell and Ian Roche, have been selected as a team to take part in a scheme organised by the Royal Society of Edinburgh to promote professional engineering as a degree and career choice. Under the guidance of Mr Bill Kay, from the school's Technical Department, they have started work on a project to design a programmable headlight. This is to fulfil a patent granted for the idea, in which the Ford Motor Company have already expressed a strong interest. This exciting challenge will involve the boys in working at Abertay University and a four-day residential period at Napier University, where they will be given technical help to build their prototype. In December, they will present the report they have prepared on their work to be assessed by professional engineers and managers in association with the Royal Society. This is an exciting project which should provide the participants with a clear idea of how real-life engineering problems are worked on and, hopefully, solved.

EXPERIENCES AWAY FROM HOME

The range and variety of residential trips during recent months illustrate well the enriching opportunities available to pupils at Madras, as well as the commitment of staff prepared to lead them.

This year's Third Year Three Day Activities saw over 200 pupils involved in residential trips, ranging from Duke of Edinburgh's Award Expeditions, activity holidays at Centre Pares and at Nethy Bridge, in the Cairngorms, as well as at the school's bothy in Glen Tilt. The Department of Special Education enjoyed their visit to Butlins, Ayr, during May. The annual Hadrian's Wall trip visited a new site at Maryport on the Cumbrian Coast and pupils again earned praise for their behaviour at Carlisle and Once Brewed Youth Hostels.

During the Easter holidays, a very successful visit to the Rhine area took place. Forty S1/2 pupils explored Koblenz, Cochem, the Rhine Valley and Siebengebirge from their base in Rhens. This trip was organised by Mr Donald Macgregor, Principal Teacher of German, whose skills and commitment were again in evidence when the 39th Exchange with the Kieler Gelehrtenschule was hosted by Madras between 2nd and 20th June. The 31 visiting pupils, under the guidance of their teacher, Herr Hans-Werner Suhr, stayed with their S4/5 partners. A varied programme was arranged for them, including visits to major Scottish cities and the St. Andrews Witches' Tour. In September, the school hopes to be represented at the German School's 675th anniversary, and certainly looks forward to the 40th exchange in Kiel next June.

On July 2nd, 34 pupils from Madras College will be joining up with 8 pupils from Kirkwall Secondary School in Orkney. Together with five members of staff, they will set out on this year's Art Trip to Barcelona. During the trip they will have the chance to visit galleries and see the work of Picasso, Dali, Miro and many more. They will sketch in the local fruit market, botanic gardens and harbour and study the Gaudi architecture. An exhibition of work from the trip is projected for next session.

SPORT -

Since the last Newsletter, Madras sports teams have achieved some notable successes: the 1st XV Rugby team. Under-16 and Under-14 Football teams all won their respective Fife Championships. The Girls' Hockey teams at 2nd and 3rd year levels won through to the finals of their Fife competitions, where both were narrowly defeated in penalty shoot-outs. In Netball, 2nd and 3rd year teams progressed to the semi-finals, their best performances to date. The Senior Girls' Tennis Team, mostly drawn from a new group of young players, has not yet acquired the match experience to equal the successes gained by their predecessors in recent years. However, they undoubtedly displayed their future promise by reaching the quarter finals of this year's Scottish Schools Championship. In the Fife Schools Athletics Championships the school came away with an impressive total of 13 firsts, 9 seconds and 9 thirds. A particularly pleasing feature of these successes is that they were gained in every age group and in a wide variety of events. In the Multi-Event Craig Michie won the S3 Boys' Championship and Jenny Farrow was second in the Senior Girls' Competition. Craig Michie is also the new Scottish Schools 800 metres champion.

Two Madras College Equestrian teams competed at the Scottish Championships in Gleneagles. Over forty schools took part, mainly drawn from the private sector of education. The Intermediate Team of Amy Bateman (S2), Heather McLaren (S2), Amy Palmer (S2) and Alayne Finlay (S3) rode extremely well in the Dressage section, won the Show Jumping and as a result gained the Scottish Championship for Combined Training. In the Senior Section, the Madras team again did extremely well, with Julie McLaren (S4) the individual winner in Show Jumping and the team, which also included Susan Bell (S5), Megan Dewar (S4) and Clare Dewar (S4) coming second in the event.

In Golf, this has been a full and successful season so far. The Girls' team came third in the Fife Schools competition, while the Boys were runners-up; the school won the three-cornered Dunhill Cup, defeating Waid and Bell Baxter. On an individual level, Jamie Farmer (S3) won the Under-14 Boys Championship at the Elie Tournament, while Hannah Nome (S3) became the Girls' Champion. In the Scottish Boys Championship at the Balgownie Links of Royal Aberdeen, Jamie Farmer, the youngest competitor, reached the last 32; Ryan Lumsden (S4) reached the last 16 and Neil Steven (S6) was a beaten finalist who then went on to win the Scottish Schools Stroke/Play Championship at Carnoustie. Neil and Richard Bunch are currently competing in the Buick Junior Open Championship in Michigan, U.S.A.

This session has also been notable for the development of Girls' Football, with over 70 pupils training regularly through the winter under the coaching of Mr Peter Finnigan. This term, teams from Madras competed very successfully in 7-a-side fixtures against Glenwood, Inverkeithing and Bell Baxter High Schools. Not to be outdone, the Staff Football team (male) has reached the final of the Fife Staff Cup by defeating Kirkcaldy High School on June 22nd.

- AND OTHER EVENTS

Ten pupils, who had progressed from the U.K. Intermediate Mathematics Challenge, represented Madras in the largest ever Mathematics contest, the 1995 European Kangaroo, in which 830,000 pupils took part. To be invited to take part was a fine achievement in itself. Further honours were won by Harold Raitt, 1st in Scotland and 100th in the U.K., and Susan Weatherstone, 2nd in Scotland and 156th in the U.K.

The Junior section of the U.K. Schools Mathematics Challenge was held in April, and once again pupils from Madras College achieved outstanding success. Approximately 105,000 pupils of first and second year age from secondary schools all over the U.K. took part. Twelve Madras contestants earned Gold awards, coming in the top 6%. Four of them, Gordon MacLachlan, Anne-Marie Wright, Louise Rolfe and Martha Neilson (all S2) will progress to the next round, the Junior Mathematics Olympiad. The other S2 Gold award winners were Sharon Black, Brian Hutchison, Timothy Kirby, John Whamond and Heather McCabe. Special commendation must go to the three members of SI who also achieved Gold: Iain Mitchell, Olga Fitzroy and Imogen Tricker. With a further 14 Silver and 15 Bronze awards, the school's future in Mathematics competitions appears to be assured for some years to come.

In the Tayside Latin Speaking Competition, the* Second Year Team of Graeme Broom, Susan McKay, Dorothy Laurenson and Alice Kennedy won the Junior Cup. Rosalind MacLachlan, who came second in Greek Speaking, has also won a bursary to read Classics at St. Andrews University.

New recruits to debating took part in an SI Inter-School event on June 13th at Bell Baxter High School, where first-time speakers Richard Crichton, Sally Greig and Graeme MacGregor all acquitted themselves well in the friendly atmosphere. Meanwhile, seasoned debaters from the outgoing and incoming Sixth Years have drawn crowds at two lunchtime debates held in the South Street Quad: a fine forum for light-hearted but telling disputes on a sunny day.

In Art, Craig Amy and Susan Lerski (S6), who have places to study Architecture next session, have painted the mural for the New Links Clubhouse, whose official opening will be televised worldwide. Posters for the Golf Open and this year's St. Andrews Crime Prevention posters have been designed exclusively by pupils from SI/2.

Three former pupils from the Art Department have won honours: Malcolm Burkinshaw in the final selection for the prestige Fashion Award and Charlotte Rougvie, who gained a Scholarship for travel abroad in connection with her prize-winning fabric design. Both are studying at Edinburgh Art College. Meanwhile, Avril Jackson, studying at the Mackintosh School of Architecture, used a travel grant from the Madras College Endowment Trust to make a study trip to New York. She was a member of the winning team in a competition promoted by the Glasgow Junior Chamber of Commerce to design a new building for Glasgow College of Art. Progressing to the international event, AvriFs team came third and she was awarded second place in the "Best Individual Architect" section.

Three senior pupils, Andrew Bell (S4), Lindsay Gillan (S4) and Rowan Gillespie (S5) have gained places on this year's Scottish Youth Theatre Summer School.

In the Osmiroid/B.C.C. Education Schools Writing Competition 1995, Janet Robinson won second prize in the 12-14 age group, earning writing equipment and a book voucher.

A very successful Science outing for the whole of SI to the Physics Department of St. Andrews University saw pupils engaged in activities, lectures and demonstrations covering liquid air, bubbles and telescopes. This stimulating and educational visit was enjoyed by all. Our thanks go to the P.T.A. for meeting the cost of transport.

MUSIC

The Bell-Baxter Centenary Music Competition between the three North East Fife secondary schools was held at Madras this year and, exceptionally, both winner and runner-up came from the home team. They were Megan Read, S6 (voice) and Lesley Bell, S4 (clarinet), who both performed outstandingly on an evening notable for the all-round high quality of musical entertainment.

The Choirs continue to be active through the summer months. In addition to the Summer Concert, the Juniors competed in the Saltire National Choral Competition in June while both Senior and Junior Choirs will participate in an International Singing Week in St. Andrews during July. Anna McElligott (S3) was chosen to represent Fife at a special musical celebration of V.E. Day in Hampshire when musicians were drawn from all over Europe.

The Wind Band made another musical tour to our friends in Langenes, Norway, during June, taking part in concerts in Kristiansand, Vagsbyged, Risoya, Willesand and Landbruksskolen, and being described as a credit to their school and country.

FAREWELL TO S6 1994/95WELCOME TO S6 1995/96

The Sixth Year rounded off their time at Madras with an exceptionally successful Sixth Year Ball on April 26th. Over 80 staff and friends chose to share this occasion with the pupils: a testimony to how well they have fulfilled their responsibilities and developed their relationships with staff, teaching and non-teaching, this year. With speeches, toasts, a buffet meal and dancing to two excellent bands. *Lights out by Nine* and *Stolen Moments*, the Sixth Year celebrated in style. This splendid evening was built on much hard work by Guidance Staff, supported by Office and Janitorial Staff who all contributed generously with time and effort. While the Rector toasted the Sixth Year in humorous vernacular, portraying them from the point of view of their contemporaries elsewhere in Fife, Miss Ann Batchelor, Principal Teacher of Guidance, recalled for S6 some of their exploits during their years here. For her there was the satisfaction of having over-seen their personal development since their arrival in SI. The pleasant, confident but considerate image which the year group has projected, is in no small measure due to her hard work. Alison Henney and Malcolm Broom, who used their accomplished debaters' skills and took up the challenge of toasting the staff in verse, exemplified this spirit. We wish them all well as they set out on their separate paths in life and look forward to hearing of their future successes.

No sooner has one S6 left in May, than it is time for the next fifth year group to make the transition. Sixth Year Induction, held on June 1st and 2nd, was aimed at giving them an understanding of their position in the school: its privileges and responsibilities. While a Sixth Year at school offers opportunities to improve examination qualifications and prepare for entry to higher education or work, it should also be a time for contributing to the school community. The challenge to volunteer and participate has, even in these first few weeks, met with an excellent response from the new S6. Pupils are already busy taping books, being trained as scribes and paired readers, helping to organise the refurbished school library and willingly taking on many duties around the school. A three-day campaign to raise a school subscription for the *Big Issue*, including a presentation at senior assemblies, has been ably organised by the new Sixth Year Consultative Committee. Their energy and enthusiasm promise well for next session.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE?

What priority does school have? This is a question that has to be asked in view of the exceptionally large number of requests for early holidays that the school has received over the last few weeks. Each individual request is made for the best of reasons. Parents, however, see the situation only from their point of view and fail to appreciate the overall impact of so much absence on the work of the school. It is readily accepted that there will always be unforeseen and exceptional circumstances which oblige some families to take holidays during term, but one might expect such cases to be few and far between. The actual figures contradict that view and with over 300 requests for holidays during term being made and an absence rate of 20%, the problem has now reached epidemic proportions. At the moment holiday requests are treated as authorised absence, but, given the present scale of the problem, it is doubtful if the school can continue to be so accommodating to every request.

BRAMBLE BAZAAR

The P.T.A. has always had a major part to play in raising funds to support the school's rich and varied programme of extra-curricular activities. This year the P.T.A. are holding a Bramble Bazaar in aid of school funds on Saturday, 2nd September. In addition to musical items by the Wind Band and the Piping Society and a small exhibition of Art work, there will be all the usual stalls. The admission charge of £1 will include tea and bramble muffins. Contributions for the stalls are required and parents who are willing to help or wish further information should contact Mrs E McGregor, Chairperson of the P.T.A. Even if you are not in a position to help in this way, please note the date for your diary and support the event by coming to enjoy all the fun of the fair.

50/50 CLUB

It is also possible to support the P.T.A. and school activities by making a contribution to the recently established 50/50 Club. This may appeal especially to those who find direct involvement difficult because of other commitments. A contribution of £10 secures entry to the monthly draw. Proceeds are divided equally between school funds and prizes for those who have contributed. The first draw takes place at the Bramble Bazaar on 2nd September. Further information will be available early next session.

AND FINALLY/...

With the hope that the present glorious weather continues to make the next seven weeks of freedom from school even more pleasant, the newsletter ends with the usual good wishes to staff, parents and pupils for a happy and enjoyable summer holiday.

Some Dates for Your Diary

Bramble Bazaar - Saturday, 2nd September, 1995

In-Service Day for teachers Wednesday, 23rd August, 1995

School resumes for pupils on Thursday, 24th August, 1995

There is a single day holiday on Monday, 2nd October, 1995

The October holiday runs from Monday, 16th October, 1995 — Friday, 20th October, 1995

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