

Madras College Newsletter Christmas 1984

You will hardly be surprised if I begin this newsletter with a reference to the disruption that has already occurred in Scottish schools this term, since it is, or should be, a matter of concern to all. What has happened must be seen against a background of greatly increased workload and stress for teachers coinciding with a long period of erosion of salary levels until they are some 30% below those of comparable occupations. The action that led to the closure of the school on 5th and 11th December arose through the absence, after nearly four months, of any reply from the Secretary of State to a request for an independent body to be set up to review teachers' salary levels. Now that the Secretary of State has finally decided to reject that request, it seems inevitable that there will be further dislocation next term.

I have never known morale in the teaching profession as low as it is now; and it is a matter of considerable personal concern to me as Rector to see staff who have given a great deal of commitment and dedication to their profession brought to the point where they feel that the only way in which they can have their case fairly judged is to take action that they regard as a last resort. I sincerely hope that a speedy solution can be found before irretrievable damage is done to Scottish education at a critical stage in its development.

In spite of these difficulties, the work of the school has gone on. Second year will have received their report sheets by the end of this term, while S1 and S3 will receive theirs towards the end of January. It is hoped that S4, S5 and S6 will receive their reports early in January. Throughout the term, the alterations have gone ahead in both buildings. The locker areas in the Kilrymont Road building have been greatly improved, and a computer room and additional classroom have been provided. At last, the Games Hall has been refloored, giving an enormously improved playing surface. In the South Street building the rewiring is almost complete; a new maths room, a new science lab, a new computer room and a new technical drawing room have been provided through alteration of existing accommodation; the three rooms on the east side of the quadrangle which were created out of the former music department are ready for use; and work is well under way on the staffroom area, the extension to Mr Cuthbert's Art room, and in the Home Economics rooms. It says much both for Fife Region Works Department and for our staff and pupils that all of this has been carried out with the school operating more or less as normal.

You will have become used to my reporting the arrivals and departures of staff. This term we have been joined by Mrs Brown (Modern Studies) and Mr Beck (A.P.T. Business Studies), while Miss Robertson (P.T. History) and Mrs Christie (Business Studies) will take up post after the holidays. To Mrs Oliver and Mrs Stephens, on maternity leave, we send the good wishes of staff and pupils. During the term we said goodbye to Miss Sheila Young (A.P.T. Guidance) who has retired to live in Pitlochry. For many years Miss Young has done careful, thoughtful and conscientious work in the Business Studies Department, and as A.P.T. Guidance has given friendly counsel and firm guidance and support to many girls. Mrs Brighton, whose sprightly bearing and enduring cheerfulness have put many of her younger colleagues to shame, has brought to her work in the Special Education Department a considerable gift of being able to work with young people. Her pupils and colleagues in the Special Education will greatly miss her when she retires at Christmas, as will those pupils and staff throughout the school who have enjoyed her yoga lessons. On behalf of the school, I should like to thank both of these ladies for their work over the years. I am greatly indebted to those who have, and in some cases still are giving us supply help to cover absences and gaps due to staff movement - Mr Adamson (Geography), Mrs Anderstrem (English), Miss Currie (History and Business Studies), Mrs McLean (Art), Mrs Toms (Art), Mrs Kirk (English), Mrs McDonald (Modern Studies), Mrs McManus (Music), Mrs Oliver (Maths) and Mr Simpson (History).

The musicians in school have had a busy term. In October, the composer, Peter Maxwell Davies and Stephen Carpenter representing the Scottish Chamber Orchestra,

spoke to senior pupils about their work. A lunch-time concert organised by SVI raised money for Ethiopian relief. The Brass Ensemble provided music at the St Andrews Remembrance Sunday wreath-laying and at Moonzie Old Kirk. At this year's dedication of the Rotary Club Christmas tree at Holy Trinity Parish Church, the music was provided by the Senior Choir, Senior Orchestra and Brass Ensemble together with St Andrews Operatic Society. A recording will be broadcast by Radio Tay on Christmas Day from 5.30 to 6 p.m. At the time of writing, preparations are under way for the annual carol concert in the Kilrymont Road Hall, and for participation in services in St Leonard's and Hope Park Churches.

Last week ten pupils visited the BBC Glasgow to take part in the T.V. "Open to Question" programme at which the guest was the Bishop of Durham.

Madras College was well represented at the Chess Olympiad in Salonika, Greece, where the Scottish teams raised their ratings considerably. Alison Coull of S6 joined former pupils Helen Milligan (see Scott) and Tim Upton, who captained the Scottish men's team.

The start of the school cottage off-season was marked by two weekends of hard work in dreadful weather by Mrs Bridges, her husband and a group of senior pupils who installed a new cold water supply line and set up for the first time a hot water supply unit. We are grateful to them for their sterling work and to the P.T.A. who generously met the cost of the installation.

The school has received a very handsome gift in the form of a sculpture by the well-known artist Scott Sutherland, RSA who died earlier this year. In cold-cast patinated bronze, it is a half-life-sized figure of a girl athlete entitled 'High Jump'. It had been the intention of Mr Sutherland's widow that the school should have a piece of her husband's work in recognition of the education that two of their family, David and Catherine received at Madras College. Tragically, Mrs Sutherland died as a result of a fire in her home before she could carry out her wishes. It is hoped that the figure can be put on display in the South Street building once the alterations are complete.

I wish all parents, pupils and staff a very happy Christmas, a pleasant holiday and all good fortune in the coming year.

L.D. Selvy.

Rector

Holidays and Forthcoming Events

Christmas Holiday	- Monday 24th December - Friday 4th January 1985
Dessert/Theatre Party	- Thursday 17th January 1985
PTA Meeting	- Tuesday 19th February - the work of the Home Economics Department
Easter Holiday	- Monday 25th March - Friday 5th April 1985
May Day	- Monday 6th May 1985
June Day	- Monday 3rd June 1985
Summer Holiday	- Wednesday 3rd July - Friday 16th August 1985