

Fife Education Authority

MADRAS COLLEGE, ST. ANDREWS

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D.D. GALLOWAY, Rector.

J.L. HODGE, Depute Rector.



Newsletter: Easter 1986

Dear Parent,

For most of the term school was in the grip of winter, not just in the shape of a prolonged spell of bad weather, but also in the form of intensive strike action. Then, almost overnight, as it seemed, everything changed and it was suddenly spring. There was sunshine and snowdrops and crocus and, incredibly, no more strikes.

Equally suddenly the sunshine turned to sorrow with the unexpected death of Mr Broom. Although he fought the illness, which was foreign to his active nature, with great courage and cheerfulness, his long struggle against it was at an end. Over twelve years he gave the school loyal and devoted service and the best tribute to his work is the number and variety of extra-curricular activities which the pupils normally enjoy. Although the Assistant Rector (Leisure) post he held suited his talents particularly well, since it enabled him to combine his enthusiasm for sport with his keen interest in people, the breadth of his interests and his fine personal qualities gave him an influence and standing that went beyond the mere confines of the leisure remit and determined the true value of his contribution to the life and spirit of the school. The measure of the success of that contribution is the esteem and affection in which he was held by staff and pupils. As a teacher, as a colleague and, above all, as a friend he will be greatly missed by us all. To his wife and family we extend our deepest sympathy. Two members of staff, Mr Duff of the Art Department, and Mr Neilson of the P.E. Department, are taking early retirement this Easter after long and loyal service to the school. Mr Duff joined the staff in 1968 and many of you will have enjoyed, albeit unknowingly, Mr Duff's work on posters, programmes and school advertisements. His pupils have benefited from his considerable artistic talent and his ability to communicate his skills to them. Many other pupils outside the Art Department have come to know him well through his involvement in the activities of the Scripture Union. Mr Neilson has had an even longer association with the school, since he attended it as a pupil, returning from the Burgh School at the time of the amalgamation in 1964 to take up the post of Depute Principal Teacher of P.E. Generation after generation of pupils have gained both fitness and enjoyment from his work in the gymnasium and the games field. He will now be able to devote his unbounded energies to his work for the mentally handicapped. To both Mr Neilson and Mr Duff we wish a long, happy and productive retirement.

Mr McLachlan of the Physics Department left shortly after the beginning of term to take up an Assistant Principal's post in Woodmill High School, Dunfermline. We congratulate him on his well deserved promotion. We also send good wishes to Mrs Scott and Mrs McIntyre of the Kilrymont Road office staff, both of whom are now convalescing. Mrs Mackie and Mrs Stewart of the English Department are both on maternity leave. We congratulate Mrs Mackie on the very recent arrival of a daughter and we look forward to hearing similar good news about Mrs Stewart in due course. Mrs Harding, whom we welcome back to the Modern Languages Department, replaces Mrs Tait, whom we thank for the good service she has given during Mrs Harding's absence. Indeed, since staff absence is always with us, I would take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the large number of supply teachers whose generous help has enabled some continuity of teaching to be maintained.

Even though the events of the last few weeks are something everyone would wish to forget, it would be wrong not to make some comment on the industrial situation in this newsletter. Since the beginning of session there have been 16 days of strike action and out of the 12 weeks of this term, there have been only 5 complete weeks. The educational effects of that action will undoubtedly emerge more clearly as time goes on. Nevertheless, in my view, the school seems to have come through in reasonably good heart and I hope without too much lasting damage, so that it is appropriate here to acknowledge the support which has made that possible. I would thank parents for their co-operation and forbearance; staff for their sensible attitude which avoided difficulties encountered elsewhere and kept the school functioning as normally as possible; and senior pupils for adapting to unusual circumstances and behaving in unsupervised situations with a high degree of responsibility.

Although, for the present at least, there will be no more strikes and the threat to the examinations has been removed, it is by no means yet a return to normal working. Since conditions of service played as large a part in the dispute as pay, the ban on curriculum development and on extra-curricular activities will remain in force until agreement is reached on the findings of the committee of inquiry. It may be some time before the dispute can truly be said to be over. The universities have already made arrangements for supplementary reports to be submitted in cases where the action is likely to have affected the performance of applicants holding conditional offers. As yet, little is known about the Examination Board's appeal procedures, but you may be sure that the school will do everything possible to make the Board aware of the difficulties faced by our candidates.

The one bright spot in the long tunnel of banned extra-curricular activities was the Waid Academy Centenary Debate in which teams from Madras, Bell Baxter and Waid competed for a new trophy. Our thanks are due to the Rotary Clubs of St Andrews, Cupar and Anstruther for organising this event, and in particular we are indebted to Mr McKechnie of the St Andrews club for generously giving up so much of his time to coach the Madras team. In the event, the team trophy went to Bell Baxter, but Madras, represented by Jane Fraser, Ian Havard, Elizabeth Poole, Jamie Quinault, Anna Poole and Sebastian Coxon, with Gail Douglas and Lindsay Turner as tellers, spoke eloquently and well. Elizabeth Poole, who deservedly won the prize for the best opposing speaker, is to be congratulated on a speech which was one of the outstanding contributions of the evening. We look forward to this becoming an annual event with the trophy of course coming to Madras as soon as possible.

Many pupils and parents must also be grateful to the Rotary Club for the well organised and well attended Careers Convention recently held in the town hall. Apparently Regional funds no longer allow events of this kind to be held as often as they once were and the Rotary Club's initiative in trying to fill the gap is greatly to be welcomed.

I hope that Easter will provide you all with opportunities for relaxation and enjoyment.

Yours sincerely,



Rector.

<u>Easter Holiday:</u>	School finishes:	Thursday 27th March 1986
	School starts:	Monday 14th April 1986
<u>Summer Holiday:</u>	School finishes:	Friday 4th July 1986
	School starts:	Wednesday 20th August 1986
<u>October Holiday:</u>	School finishes:	Friday 17th October 1986
	School starts:	Monday 27th October 1986
<u>Single Day Holidays:</u>		Monday 5th May 1986
		Monday 2nd June 1986
		Monday 6th October 1986