

Fife Education Authority

MADRAS COLLEGE, ST. ANDREWS

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D.D. GALLOWAY, Rector.

J.L. HODGE, Depute Rector.



Dear Parent,

NEWSLETTER - CHRISTMAS 1988

At this point in the school year finding time to write the newsletter is more difficult than finding items to include in it. Glad as we are to have a full programme of Christmas events, it is important to remember that the serious business of education goes on not merely in the actual work of the class-room but in the time spent by staff at all levels in planning ahead. As we wait for further details of the new legislation, which became law on 15th November, there is understandable concern in many quarters about its possible effects on the distinctive character of Scottish education. Even though these reforms are still an unknown quantity, there are other changes taking place which will have a more immediate impact on the school. Plans for the introduction of TVEI next session are already well advanced. Most of the remaining 'O' Grade subjects are preparing to move over to the new Standard Grade courses with revised Highers soon to follow. In conjunction with that, an increase is envisaged in the number of modular courses being offered in order to provide pupils at the 16+ stage with a much wider range of opportunities, not all of an academic kind. The need for this particular change is clearly illustrated by comparing the percentage of the year group returning to S5 and S6 in 1980 with the present position. In 1980 the percentage returning was 59.8% to S5 and 48% to S6. The corresponding figures now show a return rate of 73.3% for S5 and 64.8% for S6. I would like to think that this striking increase is not wholly dictated by the employment situation but rather by the genuine desire of many young people to take advantage of the opportunity to further their education. Technologically, the changes have been similarly dramatic as another comparison with 1980 demonstrates. Then the school was thrilled to have one micro-computer. Now there are at least 45 in use throughout the school without taking into account 16 word processors being installed in Business Studies.

However, to turn from the general educational scene to more specific matters, it is pleasant to begin by again giving our congratulations to Helen McGill whose award from the Royal Society of Chemistry was mentioned in the last newsletter. She has now been selected by the Fife Industry Committee to represent the Region at the Australian Industry Development Corporation National Science Summer School and she will shortly be flying out to Canberra to attend this event.

Since October senior pupils have been much occupied with prelim, exams, but that has not prevented both parts of the school from participating in the Sportsman's Aid Society's 10 x 10 Teenage Cancer Appeal. This combined fun with fund raising and involved converting £10. of sponsorship into at least £100. There were five team initiatives, all of which handsomely exceeded their target. The outstanding achievement was the sponsored spell which raised over £1,000. The trolley push (£350.) the disco (£250.), the staff pupils netball match (£152.) and the Madras version of 'Blind Date' (£150.) also did extremely well. Quite apart from the amounts raised, the initiative displayed by the pupils in responding to this kind of challenge was particularly impressive.

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The work of the term has also had a number of interesting features. The short courses in S3, introduced for the first time this session, are proving a worthwhile addition to the range of options, although there is scope for further development and improvement. Another new course, the S2 Local Studies unit, has produced some interesting fieldwork involving individual research into tourism, housing and local amenities and including a visit to the 1888 exhibition in the town library on St. Andrews Day. History also took advantage of St. Andrews Day to visit the New Picture House and see the films on 'Old St. Andrews' and 'Building of the Tay Road Bridge'. The Social Education programme benefited from a Theatre in Education Workshop in which 50 S2 pupils took part in sessions on gender stereotyping and from a lively and thought provoking discussion for seniors on equal opportunities which was ably led by Dr. and Mrs. Collinson whose help is gratefully acknowledged. Department of Special Education pupils received a visit from the Fablevision Theatre in Education and greatly enjoyed their production of the play 'The Wild Garden' which was also attended by pupils from SI and from Canongate's P7. Two other items are worth mentioning. A school/industry link has been established with BP in Dundee and we look forward to developing the variety of opportunities it provides. The library in South Street, which has been a cause of concern for some time, has now been re-catalogued and re-arranged and we are now in a position to make further improvements, particularly by extending and up-dating stock. Thanks to a very generous donation to Library funds from Mrs. Ishbel Rathie, a former pupil and a former member of staff, which we take this opportunity to acknowledge, that process of improvement will be able to start much sooner than we expected.

Staff

We welcome back Dr. Soulsby, Principal Teacher Geography, who returns after a long spell of absence. We congratulate Mr. Watson, Principal Teacher of Business Studies, on his appointment as Curriculum Development Officer for his subject, although that means losing his services until the end of 1990 at least. Mr. Beck, the Assistant Principal, takes over the department as Acting Principal and the appointment of an acting APT is in hand. Mr. Cuthbert, Principal Teacher of Art, retires in January. We thank him for his work in the department, which has maintained high standards over many years, for his contribution to extra-curricular activities, particularly golf, and for his loyalty to the school of which he is a former pupil. We wish him health and happiness in his retirement. Pending a permanent appointment, Mr. Buchanan becomes Acting Principal with Mrs. Jones as acting APT. Mrs. Carmichael, the school's Administrative Assistant, retired at the end of October. To the demanding task of school secretary she brought, efficiency, tact, patience and an unfailing supply of good humour, whatever the circumstances. We all, and not least myself, have good reason to be grateful to her for the vital part she played in the smooth running of the school. However, we can be confident that we have found a worthy successor in her assistant, Mrs. McLean, whom we congratulate on her promotion. The end of term brings another change to the school secretariat with the retiral of Mrs. Dingle. Her energy, her helpfulness, her skill in tackling complex tasks and her cheerfully relaxed Australian manner have made her a tower of strength in the Kilrymont Road office. When her two daughters were pupils, she also gave the school excellent service as president of the PTA. We are sorry to lose her, but she takes with her our thanks and good wishes.

With so many new developments taking place, more and more staff have to be released for in-service training. The annual attack of winter ailments seems to have struck rather earlier than usual. Thus, our cohort of supply teachers has become a legion, and our indebtedness to them increases as staff absences rise. While the school is fortunate in having so many supply teachers on whom we can rely, there have been times recently when the reserves have been strained to the limit. Additional names are always welcome and we should be glad to hear from any qualified teachers willing to help and not already on our list.

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One temporary but very welcome addition to our staff was Frau Dagmar Langner who came from West Berlin for three weeks to observe teaching methods. Her visit arose from a European Community scheme which it is hoped will lead to increasing contact between the teachers of member countries.

Activities

Saturday morning games of rugby, football and hockey are once again a regular feature of school life with the three sports fielding at least twelve teams between them. So far, the weather has been kind and no fixtures have been cancelled. There is the usual pattern of wins and losses, but results are generally good. 1st and 3rd Year hockey teams both reached the semi-finals of their respective Midlands tournaments and one of the 1st Year rugby teams has the distinction of having lost only one game up to this point. The enthusiasm, which is particularly evident at first year level, is a good omen for the future. However, since school games last operated on this scale, transport costs have increased considerably without any corresponding increase in the funds available. At the moment costs are being absorbed, but this may well become an area of potential difficulty. A number of individual players have done well. Neil Greig and Craig Boath played for Fife in Midlands District rugby trials. Michael Gray and Simon Kerr have also played for Fife in the under-18 football team. Paul Martin reached the final trials for the Scottish under-16 football team and, although not selected, he can take pride in the fact that he is only the third Madras pupil to reach that stage. Six Madras hockey players gained places in Midlands District teams, four went on to national trials and three of them, Hilary Blair, Kandy Mitchell and Susan Morris have gained places in the final pool of players from whom the national teams are selected. Our congratulations to them on their success.

There has been a lull in debating since the Rotary Club Inter-House Debate in October. This produced three very good debates and some promising new speakers. Castle, represented by Ben Ashcroft, Joanna Gascoigne, Craig Buchanan, Lee Ingham and Rosalind Ashcroft, were winners for the third year in succession. Subsequently, Ben Ashcroft, Joanna Gascoigne, Jessica Crowe and Peter Hamilton were guests at a Rotary Club lunch at which they each gave a short talk on the subject of debating.

At present, musical activity centres on rehearsals for the carol concert, but that is only one of a whole series of events since it is at this time of year that the department's links with the community are well and truly forged. These began as early as November with a well attended concert given by the senior choir in St. Andrews church. Our brass players took part in the Remembrance Day Services in St. Andrews and at Moonzie Old Kirk. Our pipers played the congregation, including a large contingent from the school, into Holy Trinity Church for the St. Andrews Day service. The orchestra and senior choir are providing music for the Community Council's Old Folks Treat. Another group is playing in appropriate costume from the minstrels' gallery at a meeting of the St. Andrews Preservation Trust in its North Street museum. The senior choir will be carol singing for charity in Market Street and Bogward. However, it is the windband who are most in demand. They are playing for the Women's Citizens Association in the Town Hall, at the dedication of the Rotary Club Christmas tree at Holy Trinity, at morning service in St. Leonards Church and at a carol concert given by the Baptist Church in the Town Hall. All this is over and above their commitment to the school concert and to the end of term assemblies. They, and their conductor Mr. Swiffen, deserve a very special word of thanks not only for their time and effort but for the pleasure they are giving to so many people. There are also some individual successes to record. In last session's Associated Board examinations, Neil Cockburn won the Alice Calder Memorial Prize for piano and two drummers, Iain Jackson and Keith Cuthbert, have recently gained exceptionally high marks in the Guildhall School of Music examinations.

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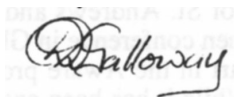
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Parent Teacher Association

The November meeting of the Association heard about 'Madras on the Move'. Staff and pupils used a variety of techniques to display and describe trips and excursions in which they had taken part. Again, it was disappointing to see so few parents giving this excellent evening their support. The next event is the Dessert Party on 20th January after the Friday evening performance of the school Drama Group's production of John Arden's comedy, 'The Royal Pardon', probably in the Crawford Centre, although the venue has not as yet been finally decided. An extra meeting is planned for February 7th to provide information about the school's programme of Health Education and give parents an opportunity to view the AIDS video produced by the government for use in schools. At the regular meeting on 22nd February, the subject will be TVEI and the speaker Mr. Douglas Hill, Senior Assistant Director of Education. It is becoming increasingly clear that there are areas of the school, such as the Library, which would benefit from extra resources and, with this in mind, the PTA are planning a number of fund-raising events for the spring and summer. A letter giving further details will be going out to parents early next term.

Finally, my good wishes to staff, parents and pupils for an enjoyable holiday, a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Yours sincerely,



RECTOR

Christmas Holidays

School Closes Wednesday, 21st December, 1988 (12.30 p.m.)
School Starts Monday, 9th January, 1989

Easter Holidays

School Closes Thursday, 23rd March, 1989

School Starts Monday, 10th April, 1989

Mid-Term Holidays

Monday and Tuesday, 13th and 14th February, 1989

In-Service Day

Tuesday, 28th February, 1989 (No pupils in school)

Parents' Nights

S5/6	Tuesday, 24th January, 1989
S4	Thursday, 2nd February, 1989
S2	Monday, 20th February, 1989 (½ Year Group)
	Tuesday, 28th February, 1989 (½ Year Group)
S1	Wednesday, 15th March, 1989

Examinations

S3	Monday, 23rd January, 1989 to Tuesday, 7th February, 1989
S2	Monday, 13th March, 1989 to Friday, 17th March 1989