



Madras College

Spring Newsletter

March 1992

Introduction

It is usual for the newsletter to contain some general comments on the wider educational scene. There is certainly no shortage of issues on which to comment, since a succession of government reports have descended on schools in recent weeks. Two in particular have attracted most public attention - government statistics on examination results and the report of the Howie Committee on the examination structure in S5/6. It would be easy to fill a complete newsletter with comment on either of these, but given the number of official documents which have recently appeared, perhaps the most appropriate comment is simply an expression of regret that the pace of educational change shows no sign of slackening. Possible political changes are another unknown factor. The present deadlock in national negotiations over teachers' pay and conditions of service could bring further complications. All in all, schools face a difficult and uncertain future.

Staff Notes

This term there are only two staff changes to report. The appointment of Mr. Alan Watson fills the one remaining vacancy from last session and is especially welcome, since it brings the Art department back to full strength. Although Mrs. Norma Brown has made a good recovery from recent ill-health, she has decided to retire at Easter after 18 years in the English department. She will be missed by colleagues and pupils alike, many of whom have reason to be grateful to her for her friendly interest and encouragement. We take this opportunity to thank her for the contribution she has made to the life and work of the school and to wish her well in her retirement.

Successes

The school's good fortune in attracting success is undiminished. In the Royal Bank /Royal Scottish Academy design competition three third year An pupils Claire Dewey, Nancy Greig, Julia Rogan gained merit certificates which were presented to them at a ceremony in school by Mr. Clark, manager of the St. Andrews branch of the Royal Bank.

For the third year in succession Business Studies pupils travelled to Wolverhampton to take pan in the national

semi-finals of the Beat the Boss business management competition.

Bob, the school's Young Enterprise company, continued to find their board game of St. Andrews an extremely marketable product and at their liquidation meeting they were able not only to pay shareholders a handsome dividend but also make generous donations to Ninewells Intensive Care Unit and Cancer Research. Their efforts were further rewarded by winning the national Young Enterprise photographic/publicity competition. The management of the Old Course Hotel acted as the company's advisers and our thanks are due to them for all their help.

In the Fife Schools Cross Country Championships our competitors did exceptionally well. Out of 36 pupils who took pan, 30 gained team medals. Bruce McIver and Ian Wallace, who were 1st and 2nd respectively in the U/17 event, received individual medals. The 1st year Boys won the Martin Shield, the team trophy for their event and the U/17 Boys retained for Madras the trophy won by last year's team.

Another of last year's successes was repeated in the Fife Schools Five a Side Football Competition when the U/ 16 team retained the Markinch Trophy. The U/18 team also reached the final. This was the first time Madras has had two teams in the final and the first time the school has won the trophy twice. It has easily been the best season ever for school football. The U/18 team who reached the quarter final of the Scottish Cup are undefeated in the Fife League. The U/13 team have lost only two games this season - one in the replay which would have taken them also to the quarter finals of the Scottish Cup, the other in the Fife League. Their most recent success has taken them through to the final of the Fife Schools Cup.

Outstanding results were gained by the school's debaters. In what the judges described as a telephoto finish, our junior team, Will Poole and Malcolm Broom, were runners-up to Auchmuty High School, Glenrothes, in the final of the TSB Courier Debate which was held in the Lower Parliament Hall of St. Andrews University. Their prize of a weekend in London was well earned. In the annual inter-school debate for the Rotary Club tro-

phy, Madras gave the home rule argument a new twist by debating the issue of independence for England. This was another close finish. A one point lead over Waid Academy gave Madras the trophy and four individual best performance awards (Edmund Brumfitt - chair, Stephen Kenicer- vote of thanks; Anna Scott and Catriona Chisholm - best seconding speakers).

The school has recently enjoyed considerable success in a hitherto untried form of sporting activity. A first year pop lacrosse team won the district tournament at St. Leonards and went on to win the national event at Murrayfield. Their next challenge is the British championships at Stockport in May.

In recent 7 a side tournaments the senior girls' hockey team won at Dunfermline and the 3rd year rugby team were successful at Balwearie.

Five of our senior hockey players were selected for the Midlands District School Indoor Hockey squad. To have five pupils from one school in a total squad of 12 from the whole district is a tremendous achievement. The senior rugby team also deserve credit for amassing a total of 362 points in 14 matches, winning ten and being defeated in four with only 92 points scored against them.

For the last two years a team from the school has won the Luvian Trophy for the N.E. Fife District Council Sports Quiz. This year they won the Fife inter-district competition and went on to represent the region in the national competition which they also won.

In the Fife Festival of Music the junior choir once again carried off the top honours. They were adjudged the best junior choir overall, the best for Scots songs and retained the Saltire Society trophy which they have held with only one break since 1985.

Rosalind MacLachlan of S3 deserves special congratulations for her achievement in winning a poetry competition sponsored by Mrs. Greta Arnott. This was an open competition which attracted over 50 entries and Rosalind's poem *Sorrowing Moon* was described as a remarkable piece of writing for someone of her age.

In the British Maths Olympiad three of the eleven pupils from Scotland who qualified were from Madras. In the final result Colin Robertson and Tim Jupp, who shared third place, were only three marks away from the top Scottish score. In U.K. terms, where their position was 124th out of 630, they also did extremely well. For the last three years the school has entered the U.K. schools Maths Challenge, a problem solving

competition for pupils in the first three years. Results have always been good but this year they are exceptional. 80,000 pupils from 1,250 schools entered the competition. Awards are made nationally on the basis of 6% Gold, 12% Silver and 18% Bronze. The total number of awards gained by the school increased from 26 in 1991 to 45 this year, (11 Gold, 19 Silver and 15 Bronze). It is especially pleasing to see S1 pupils distinguishing themselves by gaining 1 Gold, 5 Silver and 3 Bronze Awards. Zoe Ballantyne, whose Gold Award is an outstanding achievement for an S1 pupil, and Lindsay Charles of S3 who was the best of the school Gold Award winners, deserve special congratulations.

A team of S1 pupils and their supporters travelled to Aberdeen to take part in the Grampian TV *Pick a Number* contest in which they defeated Invergordon Academy.

Activities

There are two groups of pupils abroad this Easter. The History Department are making another visit to the Battlefields of World War I and a party of skiers will spend a week on the slopes of Serre Chevalier.

Music has maintained its usual busy schedule. Concerts in St. Andrews Church and in Crail have preceded our own very lively and enjoyable Spring Concert. This year the annual Young Musician competition for the Bell Baxter Centenary Trophy was hosted by Madras for the first time. Anna Quinault and Jane Ballantyne represented Madras in the final. Many congratulations to Jane Ballantyne whose fine performance gave Madras its first win in this competition. Pupils from the S4 Standard Grade Music class and the Department of Special Education perform a piece of their own composition at a joint concert with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra later this week.

The general election has produced a flurry of political activity. In Kilrymont Road, S3 Modern Studies pupils have been taking part in a mock election which has all the trappings of the real thing - candidates, election agents, teams and a series of lunch-time meetings. In South Street arrangements had been made to invite the candidates for N.E. Fife into school to talk to Sixth Year pupils. A regional ban on this type of activity was lifted just in time to allow the event to continue and Sixth Year took full advantage of the opportunity to hear the candidates' policies at first hand and to ask them some very searching questions.

The Art Department has been establishing closer links

with the Crawford Centre. Nathan Coley, the artist in residence, gave a talk to senior pupils who have also visited the Centre several times. One exhibition which attracted particular interest was on the work of J. Douglas MacGregor, a former pupil of the school. Sixth Year pupils have been given an exceptional opportunity to put on an exhibition of their own work at the Centre and they are busily preparing for this event which is due to take place in May. The department is always looking for old picture frames and material suitable for still-life painting. Contributions from anyone spring cleaning attics, garages, cupboards, etc. over Easter will be gratefully received.

Drama has not been neglected. Seven S5/6 pupils took part in the Byre Theatre Arts Week and gained valuable experience from an intensive course which included acting, dance and technical work. The S5/6 Theatre for the Community class has been touring local primary schools with a production of *The Twits*, an adaptation of the book by Roald Dahl. The Junior Drama Club are rehearsing two one act plays, *A Memory of Lizzie* and *The Godmother*, for performance in June.

Away back at the beginning of term - how long ago that seems - The Quad Theatre Company maintained their usual high standard in a polished production of *The Lark*, Jean Anouilh's play about Joan of Arc. The various personal and political conflicts of the play were skilfully and sensitively brought out and given greater impact by a strong cast who successfully achieved an effective blend of humour and tragedy.

Another event from the earlier part of the term was the annual Burns Supper. Although somewhat hastily put together, it was as enjoyable and as entertaining as ever. Music, recitations and speeches were all of high quality. We are especially indebted to Mr. Bill Marshall for *The Immortal Memory* in verse and for his unforgettably brilliant rendering of *Tom O Shanter*.

This and That

The Standard Grade and Revised Higher examinations require a considerable amount of project work as part of the final assessment. Preparing this for submission to the Examination Board in advance of the actual exam has made the last few weeks of this term especially demanding for senior pupils. The timing of prelim exams and various other events in the school calendar is to be reviewed to see whether anything can be done to reduce some of the pressure experienced by certificate pupils at this time of year.

S2 pupils participated in a Health Board survey on the subject of smoking. The results, which have now been received are encouraging. 63% of the 288 pupils surveyed had never smoked, 22% had only tried once and 9% used to smoke. The number of those who actually smoked, mostly on a very limited basis, was a mere 5%.

This year Kilrymont Road pupils are to be congratulated on their smart appearance and high standard of uniform. Although the uniform of South Street pupils is also quite good, it is inclined to be too much influenced by trendy student fashions. With the disappearance of the blazer, the emphasis has shifted to the sweater, preferably the official V-necked version with the school crest and not the round necked Pringles, which unfortunately seem to become increasingly prevalent from S3 upwards. Last session, sweaters were available for purchase through the school and in spite of some difficulties, they were generally good value. Discussions are in hand with the suppliers with a view to repeating and hopefully improving on this arrangement which was especially advantageous for the larger sizes required by older pupils.

Because of the economic situation several planned alterations and improvements, including the development of a Drama studio in Kilrymont Road, have not so far taken place. However, extensive and very necessary repairs have been carried out to the exterior of the Science block at South Street. That part of the building is more commonly known as *The Celtic Block*, but alas that title is now just a fragment of tradition. Its green and white colour which gave rise to the name and made it a landmark for miles around has been replaced by a sombre brown. Someone has suggested it should be renamed *The Chocolate Block*, but readers may have other ideas. Answers on a postcard, please!

School Board

Although the results of elections were not given much publicity at the time, it is pleasing to note that Madras College succeeded in gaining a full complement of School Board members.

Mr. Alan Milne joined the Board as a co-opted member. New parent members are Mrs. Dorothy McClymont, Professor Richard Olver and Mr. Reg. Whittaker. We extend a warm welcome to them.

P.T.A.

There have also been changes at the top in the P.T.A. Mr. Colin Mitchell retires as President and we gratefully

acknowledge the constant support he has given the school and all the time and effort he has devoted to the affairs of the Association. We welcome Mr. Ray Mackie as his successor. Our thanks also to Mrs. Ardley who has been an efficient and hardworking Secretary and to the other committee members who are retiring. Please make a special note of the Association's next event. *A Race Night*, for fun and fund raising, to be held on Friday, 8th May. Watch out for further details early next term.

and finally

Many staff and pupils will remember Stephanie and Susanna Wiens who spent last session at Madras before returning to Canada. In a recent letter to her Guidance Teacher Stephanie mentioned the good progress she is making at school this year and added *Three cheers for Madras and for the Scottish education system*. That seems a most appropriate note on which to end and it only remains to wish everyone an enjoyable holiday.

Some dates for your diary

Good Friday 17th April, 1992

May Day Holiday Monday 4th May, 1992

In Service Day Tuesday 12th May, 1992

June Holiday Monday 1st June, 1992

SCE Examinations begin Tuesday 5th May
and end on Tuesday 9th June, 1992

SCE Study Leave begins Tuesday 5th May
and ends on Wednesday 3rd June, 1992
(both dates inclusive)

S3 Parents' Night Wednesday 22nd April, 1992

S3 Examinations begin Tuesday 5th May
and end on Friday 15th May, 1992

S1 Parents' Night Tuesday 26th May, 1992

Art Exhibition Friday, 8th May,
(Crawford Centre) to Sunday 31st May, 1992

Summer Concert Monday 22nd June, 1992

Awards Ceremony Thursday 2nd July, 1992
