



Christmas Newsletter

Madras College Newsletter

December 1995

Viewpoint

A School, especially one as large and as lively as Madras College, is a complex organisation and it is difficult within the restricted space of a termly newsletter to do full justice to every facet of its activity, whether it is the serious business of education or voluntary participation in its extra-curricular programme. In these days when schools are so often compared in official tables, it is fashionable to talk about the value added element which does not form part of the raw statistical data. There is no doubt that the richness of the other experiences available to pupils outside the classroom adds immeasurably to the value of the learning experience within it and in that respect, Madras can count itself singularly fortunate.

Accommodation

A block of six new hut classrooms was installed over the summer in one of the few available spaces at South Street. Although not quite complete by the start of session, it was operational within a few days and now houses the complete Department of Modern Languages and two overflow English classes. At a stroke, it relieves the pressure on space under which the school has recently worked and it frees some rooms for conversion to other very necessary purposes such as Computing and Business Studies. It is hoped that these other improvements will take place in the course of the coming session and when complete they will, for the foreseeable future, remove the need

for any further major extension. It is interesting to note that an analysis of accommodation, carried out for the Region by independent surveyors, shows that Madras has accommodation well in excess of current Scottish Office Education Department standards for school building. Even when compared with the more generous scale being used by the Region for the construction of the new Bell Baxter High School, Madras still comes out well ahead. Of course, like is not being compared with like. The comparisons are based on the figures for a single site and the effect of the distribution of pupils between buildings is not taken into account.

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Results

The standard of the school's academic results was once again gratifyingly high. In S5 out of 740 presentations at SCE Higher Grade there were 80.7% passes at A-C, with 26.4% of these at A. There were 2080 presentations at Standard Grade of which 48.8% were Credit level awards. A further 36.6% at General level brings the combined total to 85.4%. These compare very favourably indeed with national percentages of 69% for Higher and 74% for Standard Grade (Credit and General).

Some Concerns

Incidents of indiscipline on the buses still cause concern. Warnings from staff and no doubt also from parents go unheeded and too many pupils still do not seem to appreciate the risk to themselves and others of foolish and irresponsible behaviour. There are signs that the bus operators are taking a tougher line and increasingly their response is to involve the police. The system of colour coding was introduced to prevent overcrowding, but unfortunately the persistent failure of some pupils to observe it merely adds to the difficulties.

The chip vans which occupy the bus bay at Kilrymont during the lunch hour are another cause for concern. This is not because of the vans themselves, although one might question the nutritional value of the diet they serve, but because of the other problems their presence creates. Inevitably litter is left to the extreme annoyance of local residents. There is the danger of children running from behind the vans into the path of oncoming traffic. The vans hide smokers from view and it is a meeting place for various dubious and undesirable characters, former pupils and total strangers, who gather there for unspecified reasons. The school would welcome parental support in encouraging pupils to obtain their midday meal from some other source. As far as junior pupils are concerned, there is really no need for them to go out of the school grounds at lunch-time, unless they live sufficiently near at hand to go home for their meal.

Progress Report

Much academic ground is covered between August and December, each year group having its own special priorities. First Year Pupils have been coming to terms with the transition from the primary curriculum to the range of secondary subjects in the classroom. The process of integration is supported by their Guidance teachers, Miss Batchelor and Mr Tarvet, who will interview all pupils in small groups over the session, establishing relationships which will develop as they progress up the school. Second Year Pupils have just completed a very important term. In the New Year, their reports will form the basis for course choices for Standard Grade. Before these important decisions are made, all pupils will be interviewed individually by the Year Team, Mr Edgar, Mrs Towns and Mrs Rough. The parents of S2 pupils will also have an opportunity to consult Subject and Guidance staff at the Parents' Evenings on 22nd and 28th February and discuss the most appropriate choice of subjects. Third Year Pupils are well into their Standard Grade courses, aware that all work throughout the two years contributes to their final assessments. Fourth Year Pupils have now completed their Prelim exams and will be reflecting on their results. Parents' Evening for them takes place on 23rd January, as attention focuses on the completion of course work and folios which form a substantial proportion of the assessment at Standard Grade.

In Fifth and Sixth Year, where the pace of work on Higher courses is of necessity brisk, Interim Reports in October offered early warning of any problems. With the Prelims recently completed, senior pupils are facing up to their individual study challenges to achieve the results they require.

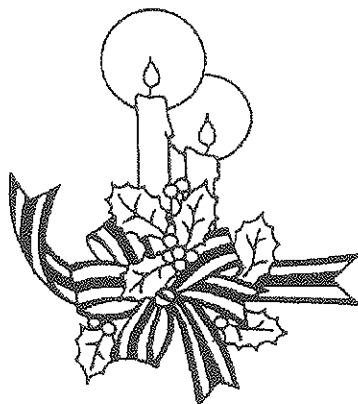
Applications to UCAS for University and College entrance were completed in good time for the December deadline. In the New Year, applications for Art and Further Education Colleges will be made. Writing over 150 reports is a lengthy but rewarding task for the year staff, Mrs Easingwood and Miss Jack, who interview all applicants individually and enjoy discussing their achievements, interests and contributions to school life before constructing a reference which is

as full, accurate and positive as possible.

With all this effort behind, the annual Christmas parties provide a welcome opportunity for pupils and staff to celebrate together. The hard work of the entire Guidance team, who organise no fewer than five separate events in just over a week, is much appreciated.

STAFF NOTES

The school has its full complement of 130 teaching staff, but in spite of that there are changes to record. Mr Smart makes a welcome return from absence. We congratulate two members of staff on well deserved promotion - Mrs Margaret Dixon takes over the vacant APT Social Subjects post here; Mr Alan Watson goes to Bell Baxter High School as APT Art. We have pleasure in welcoming the following new staff who joined us at the beginning of session: Mr Derek Young (Biology), Miss Karen Munro (History), Miss Alison Khan (Home Economics), Miss Juliet Presly (Modern Studies), Mr Keith Mackenzie and Miss Leah Hutchison (PE), Ms Susan Thirsk, (Woodwind Instructor); also a new Senior Technician Mr Brian Blacklaw; and three new members of the office staff Miss Jacqui Ritchie, Mrs Ann McGrory and Mrs Karen Shiels. They replace respectively Mrs Dawn Redman, who has gone to the University secretariat, and Mrs Barbara Scott and Mrs Aileen McIntyre, both of whom have given long and outstanding service to the school. They receive our warmest thanks for all they have done to ensure the efficiency of administrative arrangements at Kilrymont Road and our very best wishes for their retirement.



PTA

The school is justly proud of its extra-curricular programme, but the cost of it is considerable. All told, it amounts to £47000, of which only about 12% comes from regional funding. The rest comes from other sources such as pupils' contributions, the annual grant from the Madras College Trust, substantially increased following their recent successful appeal and various PTA fund raising activities. After such a fine summer, the PTA were unfortunate to suffer torrential rain on the day of their Bramble Bazaar, Saturday 2nd September. Those who braved the elements greatly enjoyed bramble muffins and coffee in the school hall, where they were entertained by the Pipe Band and by the Drama Module class, who presented "The Life and Times of John Knox". The addition of a number of stalls and side-shows led to the very creditable sum of £476.51 being raised for PTA funds. Thanks go to all parents, staff and pupils who contributed to the success of the day.

The next event is a Fashion Show scheduled for Tuesday 12th March 1996. However, it is possible for busy people to support school activities without the hassle of having to be present in person. For no more effort than it takes to write a cheque, you can contribute to the PTA 50/50 Club and may also be lucky enough to win one of the monthly prizes, not quite on National Lottery scale, but nevertheless well worth having. Winners to date are:

September 1995:

£20 : Mrs Williamson, St Andrews
£15 : Mrs H Norrie, Wormit

October 1995:

£20 : Mrs Doherty, Newport
£15 : Marion Wood, Ceres

November 1995:

£20 : Dr Milner, Strathkinness
£15 : Mrs R Greig, Newport

Entry forms are available from Mrs L Black, 01382 542306.

Expanding Curricular Horizons

It is a tribute to the staff of Madras College that despite the heavy burdens of preparation, administration, assessment and curricular innovation, they willingly offer their own time for activities and trips which do so much to enrich the learning experience of pupils. Sometimes, in praising the success of such events, the commitment which is so ably and enthusiastically given to bring them about is overlooked.

• Field Trips

Geography Higher pupils went on a three-day residential trip to the Lake District in September, organised by Mr I Kennedy, assisted by Mrs S Thomson and Miss M Latta. This enabled them to carry out fieldwork which enhanced their understanding of the syllabus by first hand experience and, incidentally, produced a glowing tribute from the Youth Hostel Warden, who commended the pupils for their courtesy and the excellence of their behaviour. The Sixth Year Biology class, under the supervision of Dr A Rutherford and Mr D Young, spent a weekend at the school's cottage in Glen Tilt. Despite heavy rain, they also had a valuable experience to contribute to their course work.

• Theatre Visits

Evening visits organised jointly by the English and Drama departments have offered pupils a range of productions, from "Hamlet" to "Adrian Mole" and a party of 90 First Year pupils attended "Cinderella" at Dundee Rep. Classics pupils attended a conference at St Andrews University and a performance of "Oedipus" in the Crawford Arts Centre.

• Debating

Out-of-hours time spent preparing pupils and travelling with them to evening events is one of the keys to the school's success in debating. Winter-long commitment is given by Mrs G Macfarlane, Mrs A Baughan, Mrs M Fraser, Dr R Napier and Mrs D Lamb as pupils progress from round to round in a variety of national competitions. At this stage in the session, senior debating teams have reached round three of the English Speaking Union and the Edinburgh University debating competitions and the fourth round of the Public Speaking competition. Meanwhile, in the TSB/Courier debating competition, no fewer than three junior teams have progressed to the second round. Special congratulations go to these younger pupils whose debating skills are already so well-developed: Graeme Broom (S3), Luke Taylor (S3), Jonathan Dean (S2),

Graeme MacGregor (S2), Sally Greig (S2) and Jack Ferguson (S1). The annual Inter-House Debate produced the usual welcome involvement of the Rotary Club of St Andrews and keen competition with Priory retaining the trophy. Thanks are also extended to the Rotary Club for their assistance at the very successful Careers Convention, held in the Kilrymont Hall on October 5th.

• Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

Mrs F Towns and Mr G Dundee continue to organise this very worthwhile activity which involves ever-increasing numbers of pupils. Thirty-two pupils in S3 have now started work on their Bronze awards, while 26 pupils in S4, who attained that standard last year, are now working for their Silver awards. The organisers are grateful for the assistance of Miss A Khan, Miss K Munro and Mrs A Macfie as group tutors.

• Pupil Visitors

This year our partners from Philadelphia on the Great Valley High School Exchange are Johanna Arendt, Michelle Swanson and Katherine Pettiss, who have been studying in fifth year. In January, they will return home, accompanied by the Madras participants in the scheme, Alistair Mitchell, David Kenicer and Matthew Kirkhope, all of S6. Two Italian students, Maura Galero and David Strano, joined S6 for the Autumn months, while Lachlan Coventry has just joined us from Australia for a three month stay. All these pupils are to be congratulated on the willingness with which they have adapted and contributed to Madras: the perspective they bring adds to the experience of all.

• Visitors to Modern Studies Classes

Outside speakers who have enriched pupils' understanding of this subject this term have included Mr Kelly (Perth Prison Service), Sergeant Steele (St Andrews Police Station), Mr Heredia (Tayside Region, NHS Management), Ms S Wallace (Tayside Benefits Agency) and Mrs M O'Hara ("Concern

Worldwide", Africa projects). Fourth year pupils were also delighted when Councillor Joyce Smith, of Fife Education Committee, gave generously of her time, coming to be interviewed by them about Fife Region's provision for juvenile offenders.

• Maths

Last session, the school's team in the Enterprising Maths in Scotland competition narrowly defeated Bell Baxter High School in the Regional contest, although both teams qualified for the National final. At Dundee College on 27th October Neil Donaldson (S4), Susan Weatherstone (S4), Martha Neilson (S3) and Anne-Marie Wright (S3), together with the 29 other qualifying teams, were put through a variety of enjoyable and challenging events. Their mathematical capabilities and their stamina were tested before they emerged winners from a nail-biting finish to take the coveted National Trophy, nine points ahead of the runners-up, who were again Bell Baxter. Congratulations for all their hard work go to the team and also to Miss T Gillespie and Miss C Herd, who were the staff involved.

• Internet

Now that Madras College has access to the Internet through the CompuServe network and the Community Council's link with Upper Arlington, pupils and staff alike have been benefiting from the sort of technology which is likely to play an ever-increasing part in the normal routine of study. The CSYS Geography class, for instance, have been making extensive use of it in their search for information for their Dissertations on North America. Mrs Mason's third year problem-solving short course class are taking part in the Math Magic activity on the Internet, in two teams of four pupils each. Problems are received from the Math Magic co-ordinator and will be worked on with a partner team from another school. One team has already been paired with a team from Lewiston High School, Lewiston, Idaho; the other awaits a partner.

College and Community

• AWARE

During November and early December, Fourth Year pupils took part very successfully in the AWARE Scheme, which provides them with five-day placements to experience the world of work. The reports from employers have been favourable and in some cases outstanding: the pupils have been good ambassadors for Madras College. On return to school, they present their own reports. These demonstrate not just the wide range of interesting work they have taken part in, but the insights they have gained into the realities of employment. Our appreciative thanks go to all the employers who give time and thought to their participation in this scheme and to Mrs M Kyle and Mrs M Wilson, who put so much time and effort into running the Scheme in school.

• Community Service

Many Sixth Year pupils opt to spend their Wednesday or Thursday afternoons in community service, for example in local Primary Schools, the Veterinary Surgery, Charity Shops and assisting with the care of a young boy suffering from Cerebral Palsy. On Saturdays, Sixth Year pupils have helped with charity collections such as Barnardos and the Cruise Bereavement Trust. Others are involved at the Leisure Centre, helping at special swimming classes for the disabled. Within school Sixth Years are also involved with younger pupils in Paired Reading, Scribing and Taping Books. A group of 30 volunteers has just been trained in Peer Counselling and Tutoring on a new initiative run by Mrs I Bletcher in the Support Centre. Their enthusiasm and willingness to help others by sharing their experiences will be well used in S1-3. A current project initiated by S6 pupils led by Lara Hilditch is the collection of used stamps to raise funds for the AIDS charity Mercury Phoenix.

Amongst younger pupils, The Amnesty Group has worked hard to contribute more than 100 letters to the sponsored letter writing campaign and is sending greeting cards this Christmas to prisoners of conscience and the families of people who have "disappeared".

• Art

Pupils contributed to the North East Fife District Council Environment Painting and Photography Competition, with Sarah Winter (S5) Kimberley Robb (S4) and Fiona Robertson (S3) winning prizes. A Story Board Competition run by the North East Fife Crime Prevention Panel was won by Karen Whyte and Nicola Gourlay (S2). Their story board will be made into a video to be used in schools by the Fife Police Film Unit. Two Sixth Year Art pupils, Elizabeth Scott and Laurie Ledingham, are painting a mural in the waiting area at St Andrew's Cottage Hospital.

• Music

This has been a busy Autumn for the Music Department with a strong emphasis on service to the community. However, before the session even started the Pipe Band were active. The march down Princes Street in Edinburgh with an estimated 3,500 other players of many nationalities must rank as something to remember for many years. The occasion was a march in aid of the Marie Curie Cancer nurses and the day was one of the hottest of a sweltering summer. In contrast, the evening spent in Ceres only a few days later to provide stirring music for the annual road-race must count as one of the most dismal. Despite the miserable weather the event was a success, raising money for charity. The band has also played at the Lawhead PTA Fayre and at Guardbridge Primary School when roses were planted to commemorate the battle of Culloden. Finally, the band played at the University Overseas Society annual reception in the Younger Hall. Forlana (the Early Music Group) made an appearance at a centenary event organised by the Women's Guild of Elie Parish Church and will again appear in concert with the East Neuk Ladies' Choir. Brass players once again provided music for Remembrance Day services in St Andrews and Moonzie. The boys of the Senior Choir will soon join with pupils from St Katherine's School in a special end-of-term Christmas Service in the University Chapel. Susan Bell (S6) was soloist in the Fife Youth Choir Carol

Concert. A promising addition to activities this term, underlining the high standards that are achieved, was a senior music class providing a musical entertainment for the Womens' Guild of Martyrs Church. In October the choirs were invited to help record a service at Hope Park Church and this was later broadcast throughout the area covered by Grampian TV. Earlier in the month, the forces of the Music Department joined in concert with the Choir of Dale Church, Norway, on the occasion of their all-too-brief visit to St Andrews. Many will remember Eoin Hamilton who retired from the department a couple of years ago. His connection with school music is still maintained and we are delighted that members of the senior choir have been invited to give the first performance of a new work of his, "Carmina Gadelica", in the fine setting of the University Chapel on Sunday, December 17th.

• Drama

The Quad Theatre Company's annual production at the Byre Theatre (January 17th - 20th 1996) will be "The Rover", written in 1677 by Britain's first major female playwright, Mrs Aphra Behn. Described by director Mrs A Bridges as "a dashing romantic comedy of sexual politics", an evening of the usual entertaining high standard is clearly in prospect. In October, the Junior Dram Club (S2-3) presented an engaging production of "Yoshi" in the Quad Theatre, directed by two members of last year's S6. In December, approximately 70 pupils from S1-3, aided by the Dance Club, will take part in Christmas Cabaret performances for pupils in aid of charity. Thanks to a generous donation from the R & A in recognition of school's litter picking efforts at the Open Championship, the South Street drama area, 'The Quad Theatre' has been greatly enhanced by the provision of new fold-away seating. A fascinating end of term lecture for the Science pupils, which was given by Dr Ian Carradice, Keeper of the University Collections, on the subject of Science and Scientists at St Andrew, inaugurated the new seating. It is hoped that an end of term lecture may become an annual event.

Sports Round-up.....

The activity on Station Park and the Kilrymont Road sports fields on Saturday mornings is testimony to the exceptionally wide range of team events which involve a large number of pupils of all ages. This could not be sustained without an immense amount of staff commitment, not only for matches but also in after-school practices, lunch-time coaching sessions and team meetings.

The first major sporting success of the session came on September 1st, when the Staff football team won the Fife Staff Cup, defeating Fife Primary Staff 2:1 after extra time. The scorers were Mr M Latona and Mr H Munn.

The Centenary Tournament : was held on a fine afternoon in September when teams from Fife and Tayside competed at Rugby, Football and Hockey. The large scale event ran smoothly thanks to the expert management of the PE department and was a great success, especially for Dunfermline High School, who won all three trophies.

The girls' 1st XI Hockey team won the Dunfermline High School annual tournament in October, while the Under 16 football team have progressed to the Fife final of their event. In Rugby, the 1st XV reached the third round of the Scottish Cup before an away tie with Jordanhill proved just too much for their injury-dogged team. The Second Year Rugby team, however, have reached the third round in their Scottish Cup and play Montrose Academy next.

In Road Running, the school did well in the Fife Schools Road Relays. The Over 15 Boys 'A' team of Craig Michie (S4) Stuart Latimer (S5) and Ian Rough (S5) came first, retaining the Lockart Cup for the fourth successive year. The Over 15 'B' team came fourth, the Under 15 Boys 'A' team

came second and the Under 15 Girls 'A' team fourth in their respective events. Individual achievements included Craig Michie, 2nd, Ian Rough, 3rd and Andrew Lemoncello (S2) 2nd. In the Scottish Schools Road Relays, the Under 15 Boys 'A' team of Andrew Lemoncello, Paul Marroney (S2) and David Dowie (S2) came 3rd. Creditable results were also achieved by the teams who took part in the Arbroath High School Invitational Cross Country, with a total of twelve team and five individual shields being won.

Madras teams took part in the Fife Schools 'A' Swimming Gala, where Alistair Hood (S1) and Rachel Hood (S2) won Bronze medals, as did the Girls 12/13 Relay team. Sean Carl (S1) has represented Scotland at Ice Hockey. As part of their Higher PE Course, the group hosted a volleyball match against a student league team from Moray House. Andrew Hunter and Stuart Braid (DSE) won gold and silver medals respectively for the 60 metres at the Indoor Track and Field Championships in Glasgow in September. Andrew also represented Fife in the 1995 National Swimming Gala for Pupils with Learning Disabilities, and won another gold medal. In Hockey the following girls have all been selected to play at Midlands level : Frances Rossi (S2) and Melanie Christie (S2) at Under 14; Fiona Winter (S4), Lindsay Buntin (S4), Zoe Ballantyne (S5), Caroline Moulds (S4) and Siobhan Grieve (S5) at Under 18. Siobhan and Caroline have also taken part in Scottish Under 18 trials. In Fife Schools teams, Christine Naysmith (S4) is playing netball with the Under 16 squad, Chris Seeley is in the Under 18 football team and Paul Broadfoot has represented the East Midlands at Under 16 football. In Midlands Rugby, Robbie Steven has played for the Under 18 team, Geoff Crowe for the Under 16 team and Euan Bennett was selected for the Under 16 squad.

Dates for your Diary

School Holiday Dates

Christmas Holiday

Monday 25th December 1995 to
Friday 5th January 1996

February (two days)

Thursday 15th and Friday 16th
February 1996

Easter Holiday

Monday 1st April 1996 to Friday 12th
April 1996

May Day

Monday 6th May 1996

June (single day)

Monday 3rd June 1996

Summer Holiday

Wednesday 3rd July 1996 to Friday
16th August 1996

In-Service Days for Teachers

Wednesday 14th February 1996
Tuesday 21st May 1996
Monday 19th August 1996

PTA Meetings

Madras on the Move
Thursday 1st February 1996

Fashion Rules!

Tuesday 12th March 1996

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 19th March 1996

Quality Matters

Wednesday 8th May 1996

Prelim Exams

S3 Exams

Monday 29th April 1996 to Friday
17th May 1996

Parents' Evenings

S4

Tuesday 23rd January 1996

S2 (1)

Thursday 22nd February 1996

S2 (2)

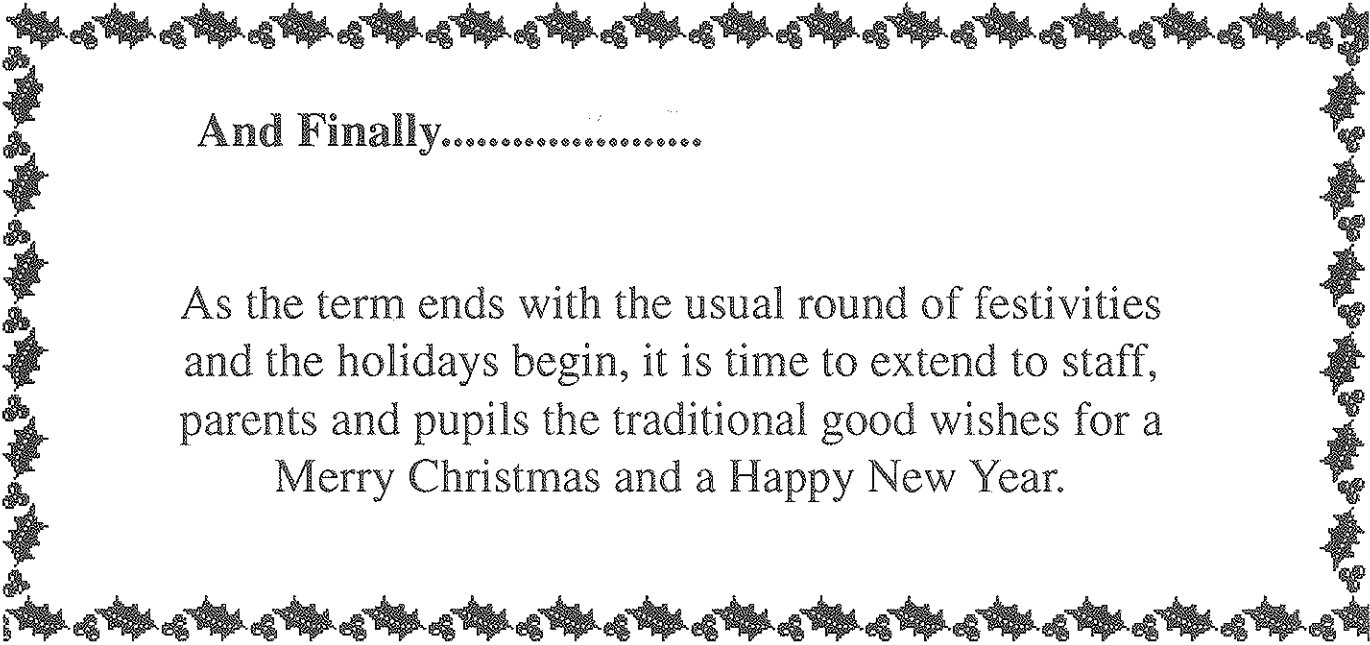
Wednesday 28th February 1996

S3

Thursday 25th April 1996

S1

Wednesday 5th June 1996



And Finally.....

As the term ends with the usual round of festivities and the holidays begin, it is time to extend to staff, parents and pupils the traditional good wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.