



Easter Newsletter

March 1995

The end of another term is marked by the issue of another newsletter, which once again records the remarkable achievements of the school in an equally remarkable range of activities. Although it is the outstanding results which inevitably attract most attention, it is important to remember that they are built on a very solid base of staff commitment and pupil participation. Success is not just created by those who win on the day. Those who organise behind the scenes and those who simply take part week in, week out also deserve their share of the credit. The advantages are not confined to the extra-curricular arena. The more serious business of the classroom clearly benefits from the climate of cooperation which is established outside it and from the expectation that high standards of performance can be met and maintained. Independent confirmation of the view that the ethos of the school is good comes from Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools who have this session visited four subject departments: Drama, Maths, Home Economics and Art. Without exception the inspectors have commented in highly favourable terms on the quality of the teaching, the positive attitude of most pupils and the pleasant atmosphere which is evident in the school. The school's arrangements for Devolved Management were also the subject of a special HMI visit and it was gratifying to find our procedures for dealing with this new and important development appeared to meet with a large measure of official approval. It is still too soon to form any definite conclusions about the merits of Devolved School Management, but the evidence so far suggests that concerns about the increased burden of administration are outweighed by the clear advantages which are emerging from having greater local control of our finances.

Staff Notes

After a long period of ill-health Mr Ian Campbell retires this term from his post of Principal Teacher of Biology to which he was first appointed in 1972. For almost quarter of a century he has used his very detailed knowledge of his subject to pilot his department through the waves of educational change. When he came. Biology was widely regarded as a not very important adjunct of the other two sciences. It is largely due to Mr Campbell's quiet and unassuming leadership that the department has the equality of status which it now enjoys. He took a close interest in his pupils and their progress. He was always deeply concerned for the school and its reputation. We shall miss him for those qualities and for his friendly presence, but we thank him for the notable contribution he has made over so many years and wish him well in his retirement.

We congratulate Ms Allyson McGregor on her appointment as Assistant Principal Teacher, Department of Special Education. Her promotion is well deserved recognition of her devotion to the welfare of that small group of our pupils who require special care and attention.

Visitors

Two visitors from senior positions in education in Albania, Ms Dhamo and Mr Gumeni, joined us for the week of 27th February - 4th March. They were taking part in a six week course at the University of St Andrews run by the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum and sponsored by the World Bank to study the Scottish system of education, with a view to leading reforms when they return home to Albania. While Ms Dhamo and Mr Gumeni found their time spent in class and with staff very profitable and enjoyable, we gained quite as much from their perceptive insights into our daily routine. Their praise for the commitment of the staff at Madras was well received, while their amazement at the quality of our facilities and equipment served as a salutary reminder in difficult times of just how high the levels of resourcing are which benefit education in Fife.

On the weekend of 3rd - 5th March, pupils and staff from Kirkwall Grammar School, Orkney, spent a very enjoyable weekend as our guests. The highlight of this visit was a joint rugby fixture for both girls' and boys' teams. Mr Tarvet trained an enthusiastic squad of senior girls who, although defeated by their more experienced visitors, put up a spirited display and left the field saying they would welcome opportunities to play again. The 1st XV meanwhile, won a closely contested match.

Events of the Term

This is a busy term for major extra-curricular events for senior pupils. It began in mid January when the Quad Theatre Company staged their version of the *Merchant of Venice* at the Byre Theatre. Directed by Mrs Bridges, with Will Poole in the title role, Megan Reid as Portia and a strong supporting cast, the company's annual production was as well received as ever. The Burns Supper which followed on January 23rd, will be remembered as one where the speeches reached an exceptionally high standard, both in content and humour. Catriona Chisholm, a Burns Competition prize winner for the last six years, proposed the *Immortal Memory* delightfully in a mixture of prose, poetry and song. Kirsty MacCrimmon piped in the Haggis for the sixth time, while the School Pipe Band and Junior Strings contributed much to the musical tone of the evening. Kyla MacDonald and Malcolm Broom toasted the lads and the lassies with spirit and wit, and Mr Lindsay reduced his audience to helpless laughter with his annual offering which visualised an epic solution to the school's twin problems of overcrowding and commuting. Copies of his poem *Sic Transic Gloria Mundi* can still be obtained for a charity donation of 50p.

Fund raising for charity has provided the focus for a series of events organised by sixth year: a St Valentine's Day Disco for pupils in S1-3; a Band Night in March where three rock bands drawn from the ranks of S4-6 performed (loudly and with some skill) to a select senior audience. On Comic Relief Day senior pupils performed numbers from Grease at South Street. While the pupils involved would wish to thank Staff for their support, it should be emphasised that the initiative and organisation came from S6. The Staff contribution to Comic Relief took the form of a fashion show at Kilrymont, in which they paraded the catwalk to the manner born in some very unconventional and imaginative outfits to the thunderous applause of a packed Assembly Hall.

There have also been junior contributions, for instance £35.00 raised for Amnesty International by Latin pupils in S2 who held a Slave Auction making bids for pupils to help them with that week's tasks. Stewart Dingle and Martin Best (S2) have made regular paper salvage collections in Kilrymont Road, collecting 4-6 bin sacks a week for recycling by Fife Regional Council.

On the topic of Fund Raising, this term saw the PTA setting up a 50/50 Club with the aim of generating revenue to support the wide range of extra-curricular activities which take place at Madras College, offering pupils so many varied and enriching opportunities. While the response to the letter sent to all parents inviting them to join the club before the first deadline of 9th March has been sound, a reminder is offered here that further applications are still welcome. The higher the membership, the larger the prizes and the amount generated for school funds. We hope that many more parents who wish to support the school, but who are not always able to attend fund raising functions will respond.

Competition Successes

In National Mathematics competitions, talent combined with much hard work and enthusiasm have earned excellent results for our pupils. In the National Maths Contest 1994, three pupils, Chris Irwin (S5), Lindsay Charles (S6) and Richard Campbell (S6) gained Gold awards, being in the top 5% of entry. Eight Silver and ten Bronze awards were also earned, amongst whom special mention should go to Graham Redman, Silver, (S4) and Neil Donaldson, Bronze (S3), who thus earned honours in a competition aimed at pupils in S5/6. In the UK Intermediate

Maths Challenge 1995, 115,000 entrants from 1,450 schools participated. The school's total of ten Gold, sixteen Silver and eleven Bronze certificates is therefore outstanding. Graham Redman and Richard Alexander (S4), have been invited to the next international stage of the competition in May, being in the top 1,000 entrants in the UK. Meanwhile, the top ten S3 winners have been invited to take part in a new contest, European Kangaroo. In wishing luck to these contestants, we also congratulate all entrants from the school for their fine efforts and achievements in these competitions.

Another busy and successful Debating season has just ended. Andrew Bell (S4) and Eleanor Winton (S4) gained a place in the National semi-final of the Edinburgh University/Bank of Scotland Debating Competition, narrowly failing to win a place in the final. They also represented the school in the Glasgow University/TSB Debating Challenge Competition, which is by invitation only to the "top twelve debating schools in Scotland". A group of supporters went along and Luke Taylor (S2) won a prize for the best floor speech. Malcolm Broom (S6) and Harold Raitt (S3) battled their way through to the Grampian/Tayside Area final of the ESU Debating Competition, winning the Tayside Trophy and again narrowly failing to win a place in the National Final. The inter-school Rotary Debating competition between Madras, Bell Baxter and Waid was held at Waid Academy this year where, despite stiff opposition and a high standard of speeches, Madras retained the Rotary Debating Trophy for the fourth year in succession. Malcolm Broom (S6) won an individual award as Best First Opposer, but above all this was a team effort by Will Poole (Chair), Lindsay Charles, Alison Henney and Rosalind MacLachlan (all S6) and Charis Melvin (S5).

In the Scottish final of the National Schools Environment Challenge, drawn from 61 schools, the Green Team from the Schools' Ecology Club were runners up, defeated only by a tie-break. Congratulations to Heather McCabe (S2) Wendy Norrie (S2), Juliet Kenicer (S2) and Jamie Young (S2). Heather Batchelor (S3) received a runners-up prize in the Post Office Poster Competition and her submission will be exhibited in the Kelvingrove Art Gallery, Glasgow.

Competition has been very much in the air for the Music Department this term with two new composing events, one to write a Burns' song and another to write a Valentine's Day offering. As with the annual Christmas Carol competition, they have provided a welcome stimulus to young composers. Despite the very short turn-round time between Christmas and Fife Festival, Madras College musicians were there again this year in strength and gained several notable successes. The Junior Choir once more took the Saltire Trophy for their fine Scots singing and also won the Junior Choir competition. The Senior Choir shared the honours with Lochgelly this year, the adjudicator praising our fine tone. There were also some fine individual performances; in the Violin Open Class, Anne McElligot of S1 was an impressive winner. The qualifying round of the Bell-Baxter Centenary Trophy competition maintained the competitive atmosphere. This round, judged within each of the three North East Fife secondary schools, involved thirteen Madras competitors, the largest field so far, from whom three finalists were selected. The final takes place in the South Street Hall, Madras College, on Thursday 30th March, at 7.15pm. The Wind Band, under the direction of Mr Swiffen, have taken part in concerts at Hope Park Church, on behalf of the Women's Guild there, and at Kingsbarns Parish Church. Final preparations are under way for the Spring Concert and end-of-term assemblies. The estimated number of young musicians involved is more than three hundred - over 17% of the school population.

Conferences, Visits and Activities

The Easter term is one of intensive work for Senior pupils, with many deadlines for submission of course work, folios, investigations and projects occurring during February and March. Special events play an important part in supporting and enriching their studies. One example of this is the very successful Modern Studies Conference hosted by Madras on 9th March, when pupils from Waid and Bell Baxter joined us to hear an excellent series of speakers giving first hand information relevant to the skills and content of their Higher examination. On this occasion, we also welcomed Councillor Joyce Smith, Convener of the

Education Committee and Mr John Travers, Senior Depute Director of Education, to the conference. Outside visits also contribute. Higher Geography pupils learned much on their day study trip to Dundee, investigating its growth from medieval walled town to modern commercial city. Pupils studying Higher Latin, Classical Studies and Drama attended workshops at St Andrews University in Virgil and Greek Drama.

Many subsidised theatre visits have taken place over the winter season, including this term *Pendragon* (S2), *Trainspotting* (S5/6), *Love's Labours Lost* (S3-6) and *Bold Girls* (S3-6). Pupils from the Dance Club are participating in the Fife Schools Dance Festival in March, while Standard Grade and Senior Drama Groups have given performances to audiences of families and friends.

This year's Young Enterprise Group Nova, YESC have made a good team under their Managing Director, Danny Oswald (S6), attending seminars run by Glenrothes College and participating in the Young Enterprise examination organised by Strathclyde University. They have produced and marketed juggling balls and stationery and traded Madras mugs, selling their goods at Parents' Evenings and at a trade fair in Glenrothes. The result when they presented the Company report at their AGM was to declare a 10% dividend to Shareholders. The team would like to extend their thanks to their business advisers, Mr W Beck, Mr I Campbell and Mr D Bradbury.

St Andrews Rotary Club are sponsoring two fifth year girls, Jennifer Bennett and Joanna Kilpatrick, to undertake the Rotary Youth Leadership Award at Camp Ryla, Nethybridge in the Cairngorms in July.

All of the 19 pupils who applied for places on the exchange with Otawarha City in Japan presented themselves well and the independent judges from the New (St Andrews) Japan Trust faced a very difficult decision. The four successful candidates who will host a Japanese visitor this summer are Zoe Ballantyne, Fiona Spence, Gregory Gifford and Finlay Green.

Sport

In February, the school competed successfully in the Fife Schools Cross Country Championships. For the fifth year in succession, the Under 17 Boys Team won Gold Medals and retained the Downie Trophy: Ian Rough (S4), Individual Champion, Chris Seeley (S5), individual second place, Stuart Latimer (S4) third and Dona! Henretty (S4), fifth. The Over 17 Boys team achieved fourth place: Ian Wallace, Individual Champion, Neil McGrory, Ronnie Wells and Martin Shiels (all S6). Andrew Lemoncello (S1) and Craig Michie (S3) were also the individual champions in their respective age groups. In the Scottish Schools Under 15 Cross Country Championships at Irvine on March 12th, Craig Michie (S3) retained his individual title and led Jonathan Seeley (S3), Edward Napier (S2) and Niall Nicholson (S3) to Madras' first ever team title. In the Under 17 event, Ian Rough, Chris Seeley, Donal Henretty and Stuart Latimer also ran extremely well to earn their team the Bronze award. All 30 competitors from Madras are to be congratulated on fine performances, finishing mainly in the first hundred in races of up to 300 competitors.

A fine performance by the Madras 1st XV Rugby team saw them defeat cup holders Marr College, from Troon by 13 : 7 in the quarter-finals of the Scottish Schools Cup. Bad weather cancellations brought the team to their semi-final against Queen Victoria School, Dunblane, on March 13th, short of match practice. They were defeated 20 : 7 by a team who performed better on the day, but should still take pride in a season which has seen some outstanding performances. In the Perth Academy Sevens Tournament the previous week, for instance, they had reached the final and were only defeated 26 : 19 by British Schools Champions, Merchiston Castle School. The Fife Schools Cup remains as a target: the team reached the final by defeating Dunfermline High School 31:29 and now play Bell Baxter in the final.

The 1st XI Hockey team hosted a highly successful visit from Sussex High School, New

Brunswick, Canada over the weekend of 10- 13th March, the climax of which was a match on Sunday 12th. Skills on both sides were well balanced, but superior team cohesion produced a narrow 1 : 0 victory for the Canadians.

In swimming, Cheryl Christie (S3) and Lauren Donaldson (S1) both qualified to swim in the Scottish Schools Gala.

At the time of going to press, the Under 14 football team has reached the quarter finals of the B & Q Scottish Cup and the final of the Fife Cup after a season which has seen only one defeat in fifteen fixtures. The Under 16 team have reached the final of the Fife Cup. While Paul Broadfoot (S4) and James Martin (S6) have represented Fife Schools for football at Under 15 and Under 18 levels respectively.

Uniform

Uniform has not been mentioned in this newsletter for some time and that perhaps reflects the generally good standard of dress which prevails within the school once the motley assortment of outdoor gear has been removed. The rules here are far less prescriptive than in many other places, but unfortunately there is a tendency for some pupils to take advantage of the tolerance extended to them. The less than positive image which they present is unfair to the many pupils who turn out immaculately and are a credit to the school and to themselves. Parents, who are generally very supportive and well aware that uniform is less costly than many of the more fashionable alternatives, are sometimes manipulated into believing that 'no one bothers' or 'everyone is wearing'. All such statements should be treated with great caution, especially if they refer to sweatshirts or to 'Umbro' tops, both of which are more appropriate as leisure wear. Similarly, the present fashion for shirt tails out, especially if they appear as an untidy fringe below a sweater, is as unsightly as it is unbusinesslike. When pupils are asked, the most common excuse for not having a school sweater or shirt is that the garment in question is 'in the wash' or 'was not laid out the night before'. It is very seldom that anyone does not have the appropriate item. Parents support the school by providing uniform. It would be appreciated if they could also circumvent some of the attempts which pupils make to avoid wearing what they have been given. Uniform is part of the business of setting standards, of giving the school a pride in itself which it can use as a springboard for other achievements. If too many variations are allowed the value of the overall impression is lost

School Board Minutes

As part of the process of keeping parents informed, arrangements have been made for the minutes of Madras College School Board to be available in the following locations: St. Andrews Public Library; Newport Public Library; Tayport Public Library; Madras College Community Use Office.

And Finally.

For staff, pupils and parents our best wishes for an enjoyable Easter and a welcome and well earned break from normal routine.

Some dates for your diary

School starts:	Tuesday, 18th April 1995
S3 Parents' Night:	Thursday, 27th April 1995
SCE Exams:	Begin Tuesday, 28th April and end on Friday 2nd June 1995
May Day:	Monday, 1st May 1995
S3 Examinations:	Begin Tuesday, 3rd May and end on Tuesday, 16th May 1995
SCE Study Leave:	Begins Tuesday, 2nd May and ends on Wednesday, 31st May 1995

VE DAY:	Monday, 8th May 1995
In-Service Day:	Tuesday, 9th May 1995

June Holiday:	Monday, 5th June 1995
New Timetable for S5/6:	Tuesday, 6th June 1995
S1 Parents' Night:	Wednesday, 7th June 1995
Summer Concert:	Monday, 12th June 1995
Award Ceremony:	Tuesday, 4th July 1995