



Christmas Newsletter

Madras College Newsletter

December 1996

Viewpoint

Many of the topics which have traditionally appeared in this section of the newsletter have been included in the letter recently sent out to parents through the post. While cost and the considerable administrative difficulties associated with this approach prevent it from being used more than once or twice a year, it seems to be the only reliable method we know of ensuring that information about the school's aims and policies reaches all parents. This first attempt was very much a pilot. It is already possible to see ways of refining and improving the system which will, hopefully, make it not only a useful channel of communication between home and school, but also a means of ensuring parental support on a wide range of issues.

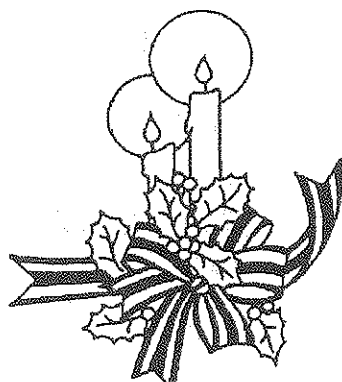
A subject which might have been included in the mail-shot, because it is a constant cause of concern, is the question of behaviour on the streets of the town at interval and lunchtime. Local residents complain about pupils dropping litter, smoking and causing obstruction by gathering in large groups. While there are difficulties for the townsfolk, there are also considerable difficulties for the school. At South Street 800 16 - 18 year

olds can not realistically be kept within the confines of the school grounds when they are not in class. There is no way in which the school can exercise effective control over widely scattered groups of pupils and, indeed, it simply does not have the resources to do so. The vast majority of Madras College pupils are responsible and well-behaved. It is very unfair that they should be blamed and that the reputation of the whole school

should suffer because of the irresponsible and anti-social attitudes of a small minority, who are of course least likely to respond to the advice and instructions given by staff. Complaints and criticisms are always quick to come. Sadly, the school's excellent record of academic and other achievement, of which there is so much evidence in this newsletter, does not gain the same recognition.

Question Time

On Friday 13th December Higher and CSYS Modern Studies pupils greatly enjoyed a visit from politicians representing the 4 main parties in North East Fife. Adam Bruce (Conservative), Menzies Campbell (Liberal Democrat), Charles Milne (Labour) and Colin Welsh (SNP) answered pupils' questions on a wide range of issues. We are grateful to them for giving up their time to contribute to a lively and thought provoking discussion.



STAFF NOTES

Mr Michael Barclay is Mrs Smith's successor as Principal Teacher of Art and we congratulate him on very well deserved promotion. Mr Calum Marshall, from Bell Baxter High School, is the new Principal Teacher of Technical Subjects. We welcome him and Mrs Dorothy Wyllie, from Buckhaven High School, who replaces Mr Barclay as APT Art. There are a number of other new members of staff across a range of subject areas and it is a great pleasure also to welcome: Miss Neil and Mrs Robertson (Biology), Miss Marr and Miss Scott (English), Mrs Aitken and Mrs Esler (Drama), Mrs Towler and Mrs Miller (Home Economics), Mrs Soares and Mrs Clark (Mathematics), Miss Mackay and Miss Dunn (Modern Languages) and Miss Watson (PE). Another newcomer, Mr Robert Thompson, who has come on a year's exchange from British Columbia to take Dr Rutherford's place in Biology, deserves a special welcome and our congratulations on having adjusted so quickly and successfully to the peculiarities of the Scottish system. Circumstances have created two acting APT posts in Science and, as it happens, two chemists, Miss McDonough and Miss Smith have been appointed to fill them.

Colleagues were saddened to learn of the sudden death of Mr Baldwin, since it was only in August that he retired from the staff, and we take this opportunity to record our sorrow and our sympathy.

As usual, there are two foreign language assistants, Mr Demontremy in French and Mr Schurmer in German, and although financial restrictions cause them to be shared with other schools to a greater extent than ever before, we are grateful to have them with us at all.

We send our good wishes to Mrs Kirk and look forward to her return from absence in the not too distant future.

Miss Young who joined the staff of the Modern Languages department in 1971 is now retiring after being absent for some time. Her outstanding commitment to her subject has been displayed in her regular participation in trips abroad and her willingness to undertake extra training to obtain a teaching qualification in Spanish. Outwith the department, the smooth running of staff common room arrangements was in her capable hands. We thank her for her dedicated hard work over the last 25 years which so often gained successful results even for those who were sometimes reluctant learners, and wish her well for the future.

DEBATING

Eleanor Winton was invited, as one of the 24 best schools' debaters, to take part in a selection day at Glasgow University on 14th December. Eleanor won through to become one of the four member Scottish Debating Team and will take part in the World Championships in the Bahamas in February 1997. Our congratulations go to Eleanor on this well deserved honour!

At junior level, the Courier Royal Bank of Scotland Debating Competition is underway once again. Jack Ferguson and Jonathan Dean S2, have won through Round 2, while Megan Greene and Julia Higgins S1, made a very creditable first round appearance against much older opposition.

At senior level, Graeme Broom S4 and Eleanor Winton S6, have reached the third round of the Edinburgh University Bank of Scotland Debating Competition. Emily Fraser S6, won the St Andrews'

Speakers Club Competition. Priory were the overall winners in the Rotary Inter House Debate, where the individual trophy winners were Graeme Broom, Emily Fraser, Eleanor Winton, Avril Wheeler S6, and Douglas Aiton S5.

A lively debate between the staff and pupils saw Mr M Barile and Miss K Munro defeat Sean Kennedy and Adam Reed S3, on the topic of whether Gascoigne should have been selected to represent his country.

Musical Notes

The school brass band played as usual at Remembrance Services in St Andrews and later in swirling mist at Moonzie Old Kirk outside Cupar.

The Senior Choir were chosen to record two Christmas Carols in Edinburgh for a programme broadcast on Radio 3 on 13th December, when the soloists were Clair Speed, Roy Verner and Kirsten McNeill, all S5.

Mrs Bridges' Finale

For her final production with the Quad Theatre Company at the Byre Theatre, Mrs Ann Bridges returned to the play with which she had opened in 1971: Dylan Thomas' "Under Milkwood".

The cast of pupils drawn from S3 to S6 marked the occasion with a quite outstanding performance of this poetic and entertaining piece, saying goodbye at the same time to the present theatre.

Our thanks and those of generations of pupils and parents go to Ann Bridges, whose energy and inspiration have provided us with so many fine productions over a period of 25 years!

Mathematics Competitions

Although results have not yet arrived for the Senior Maths Challenge Contest, we already know that four pupils have qualified for Round 2, The British Maths Olympiad: Luke Halliwell and Neil Donaldson S5, Graham Redman and Richard Alexander S6.

The Enterprising Maths Team were placed 4th in the National Final, a very creditable result against strong opposition

CLUB NEWS

The Art Club in the Kilrymont Road Building is proving very popular, with pupils coming along at lunchtimes on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The Amnesty Group has been actively involved in the Amnesty Campaign against torture, by writing letters and collecting signatures for a petition to be sent to the President of Turkey. The senior group have participated in an urgent action on behalf of refugees in East Africa.

In the Horticultural Club Painting Competition, successes were achieved by Natalie Burniston S6, Hannah Hutchison and Lindsey Robb S2 and Susan Field S1.

SOME STATISTICS

The school roll, which at one point was projected to reach the 1800 mark, stabilised at 1761. That makes it still the second largest school in Fife and amongst the top three or four biggest schools nationally. At opposite ends of the scale there are 334 pupils in S1 and 178 in S6. Both buildings are full to capacity with 966 in Kilrymont Road and 795 in South Street. Although the total teaching force, including Learning and Behavioural Support staff, amounts to 130, class sizes, particularly in the senior years, are much larger than is desirable. With the ever present threat of further cutbacks in local authority spending, the future looks increasingly bleak.

On a more cheerful note, it is a tribute to much hard work by pupils and staff that the school has once again produced an excellent set of SCE results. In S5, out of 689 presentations at Higher Grade, the A-C pass rate was 79.1% with 23.2% of those passes at A. There were 2493 presentations at Standard Grade, of which 51.7% were Credit level awards. When General (35.1%) is included, the total over the two levels is 86.8%. This is not only the best set of Standard Grade results to date, but it is also the largest presentation.

National comparisons are 69% for Higher A-C and 75% for Standard Grade (Credit and General).



Sports Round-up

Hockey

Representative honours so far include Midlands Under 18 squad: Zoe Ballantyne and Siobhan Grieve S6 and Fiona Winter S5; Under 16 Squad: Jacqueline Harkins, Lynsey Walker S5, Linsey Thomson S4 and Frances Rossi S3. The Under 18 Squad are to be congratulated on winning the Fife Tournament, the Centenary Tournament and on reaching the final of the Midlands Cup, which is still to be played.

Congratulations on selection at national level go to Zoe Ballantyne, Scottish Under 18 Squad and Linsey Thomson, Scottish Under 16 Squad.

The Third Year Girls team won the Fife Tournament and played in the final of the Midlands tournament.

Cross Country

At Under 15 level, Madras teams swept the board in the Fife Schools Road Relay, with both the Boys' team (Andrew Lemoncello S3, Andrew Shanks S2 and Andrew Murphy S1) and the Girls' team (Karen Lee, Angela Frame and Linsey Allison all S2) winning cups for first place. The Over 15 Boys' team (Ian Rough S6, Owen Greene and Jonathan Seeley S5) also won their event and both boys' teams went on to win silver medals in the Scottish Schools' Competition.

Golf

Senior Girls Champions are Kathryn McCartney S4 (Match play) and Hannah Norrie S5 (Stroke play). Senior Boys' Stroke play Champion is Richard Alexander S6 and at Intermediate level, Jamie Farmer S4. The Junior Stroke play Champions are Sarah Copland and Barrie Field, both S2.

Gymnastics

The school team won gold medals at the Fife Schools Competition in November and go through to the Scottish Finals in February.

Football

At Under 18, Craig Michie S5 has been selected for the Scottish team, and together with Donal Henretty and Paul Broadfoot S6 represented Fife Schools. The 1st XI were the winners of the Centenary Tournament.

The Under 16 team has reached the Semi-Final of the Fife Cup and the Quarter Final of the Scottish Cup.

At Under 15, Gareth Clark S5 has represented Fife and reached the last 32 in selection for the Scottish Squad. Aaron Lofting S2 also represented Fife Schools. The Under 14 team have reached the Quarter Final of the Fife Cup and won the Fife Fives Section of the SSFA Competition. The Fives Squad, who now represent the Region in the East of Scotland Section are: Michael Armit, James Aird, Daniel Hubbard, Michael Latto, Craig Edwards S3, Kevin McMullan, Sean Howie and James Keegans S2.

Swimming

In the Fife Schools 'A' Gala, Helene Oliver S1 achieved first place in the Breaststroke and Second Place in Butterfly at Under 11, while Melanie Christie S3 was second in the 14/15 Breaststroke. The Girls' Relay teams came third at Under 11 and second at 14/15.

Andrew Hunter from the DSE won a bronze medal at Backstroke in SSSA National Gala for Swimmers with a Learning Disability at Tollcross, Glasgow.

Rugby

The following boys have been picked for Midlands Squads: Euan Bennett S5 at Under 18; Daniel Riach S4 at Under 16 and Ross Methven S4 at Under 15, who has also been selected for the Scotland squad at this level. Rory Jeffrey, Daniel Riach, Ross Methven, all S4 and Ronald Phillips S5 are also members of the Fife Development Squad.

OUT AND ABOUT

The Department of Special Education has enjoyed two excellent trips recently. Their visit to the battle of Britain Air Show at RAF Leuchars was courtesy of the Variety Club, while thanks go to St Andrews Rotary Club for the visit to Edinburgh Zoo.

Anne-Marie Brimley S4, attended an evening at the Crawford Arts Centre with Iain Crichton Smith and gave a reading of one of her poems.

This month, senior pupils in Physics have been benefiting from events organised by St Andrews University Physics Department: the Sixth Year attended a Conference while Higher pupils attended the annual Christmas Lecture.

Art Competition

In the Art and the Environment competition, Barry Field S2 won second place in the Rural Scene Drawing section, with his piece "The Quarry View", while Andrew Crome S2, with "Abandoned", came third in the Urban Photography section.



Dates for your Diary

School Holiday Dates

Christmas Holiday

Monday 23rd December 1996 to
Friday 3rd January 1997

February (two days)

Thursday 13th and Friday 14th
February 1997

Easter Holiday

Monday 31st March 1997 to
Friday 11th April 1997

May Day

Monday 5th May 1997

June (single day)

Monday 2nd June 1997

Summer Holiday

Monday 30th June 1997 to
Friday 15th August 1997

In-Service Days for Teachers

Wednesday 5th February 1997
Friday 30th May 1997

School Board Meetings

Thursday 6th February 1997
Thursday 20th March 1997
Thursday 22nd May 1997

PTA Meetings

Annual General Meeting
Thursday 13th March 1997

Dance Festival

Wednesday 19th and Thursday
20th March 1997

Partnership with Parents

Thursday 8th May 1997

Summer Fayre

Saturday 14th June 1997

Exams

S3 Exams

Monday 28th April 1997 to
Friday 16th May 1997

Parents' Evenings

S4

Tuesday 4th February 1997

S2

Thursday 27th February 1997

S3

Tuesday 29th April 1997

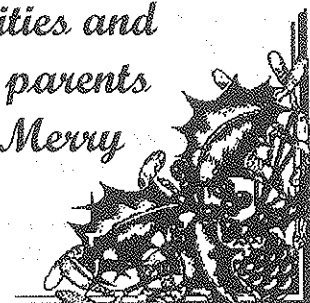
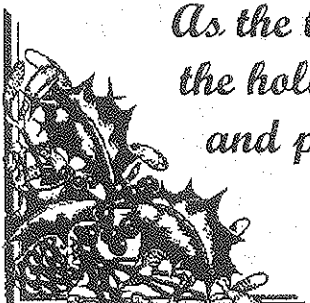
S1

Wednesday 4th June 1997

P7

Monday 26th May 1997

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.