



# Christmas Newsletter

Madras College Newsletter

December 1997

## Rector's Note

Since Christmas is the season of Goodwill to all, it may seem inappropriate to open with unwelcome messages to those who have brought less than "Good News" to our school community in recent times, for instance by the sudden withdrawal of tuition fee payments for students in higher education. However, I do wish to pass comment on the large number of national statistical surveys about performance in our schools, which come to an annual peak in November. It is naturally gratifying to note that however the figures are presented, Madras College has a consistently high ranking in National tables of results. Our own internal tally of results over the last three years is:

	1995	1996	1997
Number of Standard Grade presentations with % Credit and General Grades	2082 Cr 49.2% G 42.0%	2493 Cr 52.0% G 35.3%	2426 Cr 53.2% G 35.8%
Number of Higher Grades (S5) plus % A - C Grades	740 82.3%	689 80.4%	788 86.5%

These are results for us all to be proud of: pupils, parents and teachers. They have been achieved because of much hard work by teacher and pupil and by cooperation between home and school. They are evidence of our common understanding that good examination results are not only a useful passport in themselves but also evidence of the personal qualities of effort and application so valued by society at large.

However pleasing the results, however, we as a school do not welcome the League Tables and similar comparisons. We would question their purpose as much as their significance. If a school is already thought to be doing very well, for example, how does it set realistic targets for the future? Conversely, if the school is trying its very best and still appearing to be doing badly, how does this help positive planning for the future? Comparisons are as odious as the people who have created a career by making them.

Yet given that maintaining standards is vitally important, what are we to do? In Madras, we are fortunate because we have our School Aims to guide us, so well set down by my predecessor Mr Galloway, emphasising the importance of every pupil being enabled to achieve their full potential in every aspect of school life. So we set our own standards and if we ensure every pupil individually achieves as much as they can, then we shall truly be virtuous and deserve our own reward, independent of comparative tables of results.

In all the welter of recent negative comment about Scotland's schools, an important fact seems to have been overlooked: that in levels of national funding for education, Scotland ranks 23rd out of 25 major states. What was it we heard in May of this year about "education, education, education"?

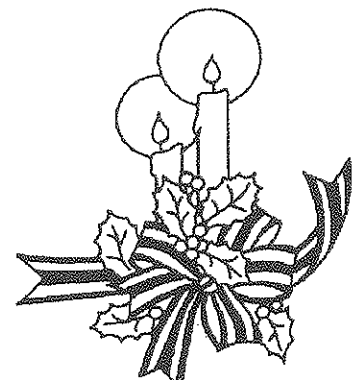
However it is, as I said at the outset, the season of Goodwill. I wish to end this commentary with a very warm thanks to all who have helped Madras College in 1997 - to parents, pupils, colleagues past and present, and to the whole community we serve. We trust that you have an excellent Christmas and we wish you a very good New Year.

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## DEBATING

Another busy and successful Debating session is in full swing. The progress of the teams so far follows, but is being continually up-dated. Jonathan Ervine and Michael Rossi (S6) have won the District round of the ESU Observer Mace Debating Competition. Chris Sinclair and Douglas Aitken (S6) are through to the 2nd round of the EUSA Bank of Scotland Debating Competition. In the ESU Public Speaking Competition, Jenny Shanks, Hazel Pearson and Jonathan Dean (S4) have reached the Area Final. In the younger age group, two teams have progressed to the 2nd round of the Courier/Royal Bank Junior Debating Competition: David Stephens (S2) and Jack Ferguson (S3) make up one team and Kai Hopkins and Shona Morrison (S3) the other. We wish all these contestants luck in their future ties.



# Staff Notes

Given by our own normal scale of change in such a large staff, the term past has been exceptional. The details of permanent and long-term temporary posts are given below in the approximate order in which they occurred.

- Mr W Kilgour was appointed as Teacher of Chemistry and Mr C Walker as Teacher of English.

- Mrs P Robertson's post of Teacher of Biology became permanent in September.

- Miss L Hutchison was appointed as Assistant Principal Teacher of Guidance and Miss L Watson replaced her as Teacher of PE.

- Mrs D Wyllie was appointed as Principal Teacher of Art at Queen Anne High School and Miss D Cunningham replaced her as Assistant Principal Teacher of Art and Design.

- Miss C McDonough was appointed as Assistant Principal Teacher of Science at Morgan Academy and Miss J Grant replaced her as Teacher of Chemistry.

- Mrs AM Holmes left to move south to England and Mrs L Girdwood will replace her as Assistant Principal Teacher of Social Subjects at the beginning of the new term.

- Mrs A Macfie was appointed as Assistant Principal Teacher of English at Queen Anne High School and Miss M Scott replaced her as Teacher of English.

- Mr W Kay was appointed as Assistant Principal Teacher of Design and Technology in place of Mr A Smart who retired in June.

- Miss Y Neil was appointed as Teacher of Biology at Portobello High School and Miss M Russell will replace her as Teacher of Biology at the beginning of the new term.

- Miss K Lindsay will take up post as Temporary Teacher of Modern Languages at the beginning of the new term.

- Mrs J Dobie was welcomed back to the PE Department in October after a one year Career Break.

- Miss Jack - Principal Teacher of Guidance and Teacher of Home Economics - goes to Australia on exchange for a year, commencing in January. Mrs V Rough has been appointed as Acting Principal Teacher of Guidance (S2). An Acting Assistant Principal Teacher of Guidance post will be filled in January to cover Mrs Rough's present S4 remit.

This term saw the recent retirement through ill-health of Mrs Elinor Kirk who has finally had to accept that a freshness of mind and an indomitable spirit are not by themselves enough to sustain the rigours of an active teaching career. We thank Mrs Kirk for all she has done for the Drama Department and for the school as a whole. While she leaves Madras without having had the time to fulfil all her ambitions, she has nevertheless made her very significant mark on the school.

Another recent retirement through ill-health has been that of the school's Administrative Assistant, Mrs Jean McLean. She is replaced by Mrs Christine Noble, our Senior Clerical Assistant. We thank Mrs McLean for her 12 years of dedicated service to the school and wish her a long and happy retirement.

Other changes in non-teaching staff are:

- Mrs Val Weir took over from Mrs Janet Finlay at South Street.

- Mrs Pauline Gower has temporarily taken over from Mrs Elizabeth Higgins in the Library.

- Mr David Johnstone is assisting in the Library temporarily and Mrs Jill Chaplin in South Street Office.

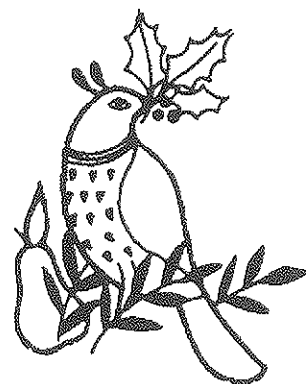
*Mr Matheson*

## Former Pupils Girls' Club

In November, 38 MCFP Girls' Club held their annual lunch at Rusacks Hotel and welcomed Mr Matheson as speaker. The issue of a school flag was raised and Mr Matheson learned that one used to exist, to be hung out of the gym window (the present library) when the School assembled in the Quad on Empire Day. A new flag and a flagpole to hang it on are seen as important needs at the present time and the Girls Club agreed to discuss the possibility of supplying one at their February meeting.

With experiences to share which go back to a time when the 6th year had 6 pupils - compared with the present 206! - interesting memories are always plentiful, but new members to carry on the tradition would be even more welcome. A warm invitation is issued to any former pupils reading this to attend the Presentation Party on February 12th at 7.15 pm in the South Street Staffroom. Alternatively, contact may be made through the Club's secretary, Mrs Isabel Dawson, via the South Street School Office.

We are delighted to include an item from Madras College Former Pupils Girls' Club in this newsletter for the first time and hope that it will become a regular feature.



## St Andrews Speakers' Club Competition



Winners from left to right: Graeme Broom and Alistair Brandie (S5) with Mrs Sylvia Donaldson of the St Andrews Speakers Club and Mr Matheson

## Panto Time

A large group of pupils in S1-3 have been working on a production of "Cindibella" with the Drama department, assisted by three pupils from S5/6. In this updating of the traditional story, the performers in a Talent Contest compete for the prize of a night out with "Elvis". Their performance, raising money for two charities - Cystic Fibrosis and Amnesty International, will take place at lunchtime on the last Thursday of term.



## Young Enterprise

The 1997/8 6th year group have formed themselves into a company called Madras in Business. They are making furry picture frames, bags and clocks to sell in school and at the Christmas Trade Fair in the Mercat Centre, Kirkcaldy.

Fifth year group, "Ginger Monkey Productions", are selling jewellery and the school newspaper, "Volte Subuto". These will be on sale in school and at school productions.

## Fife Schools' Cookery Competition

Congratulations go to Zoe Nisbet and Claire Barrett (S3) who gained 4th equal in the Fife Schools' Cookery Competition held in Glenrothes College on 12th November with their "Healthy Scottish meal for two". The delicious menu consisted of Smoked Salmon Omelette with New Potatoes in a Dill and Lemon Putter Sauce followed by Bramble Syllabus with Shortbread Fingers.

## 1997 UK Senior Maths Challenge

The school has a very high reputation to maintain in this contest, entered this year by over 40,000 students from 950 secondary schools throughout the UK. The paper was generally acknowledged to be tougher than usual, yet Madras pupils equalled their record of six Gold awards (set in 1991) and with a total of 31 awards, (10 Silver and 15 Bronze) surpassed all previous performances. To set the results in context, the first 6.5% of entrants are awarded Gold certificates, the next 13% Silver and a further 20% Bronze.

First in Scotland and 3rd in the UK overall was Luke Halliwell (S6): a stunning achievement. Neil Donaldson

## Art News

This department now runs two very busy and successful lunchtime clubs. The Art Club, run by Mrs J Dunlop and Miss F MacDonald, helps to provide artwork and displays anywhere in the school. The new venture is the Clay Club, recently started by Miss D Cunningham and is proving equally popular.

In the recent St Andrews Horticultural Society competition, "Best Portrait of a Flower", Jennifer Andrews (S1) and Kim Millgate (S3) both won first prize in their respective age groups. Other prize winners were Alisha Farmer (S1), Hannah Hutchison (S3) and Alice Carradice (S3), who was also awarded the Babington Smith Trophy.

## Physics Lectures

On September 15th, over 100 Physics pupils in S5/6 attended a most stimulating lecture given in school by Dr Haldeman of the Mars Project at Cape Kennedy, USA. The school was exceptionally privileged to receive this distinguished visitor, who was lecturing at only two other locations in Britain, because of a connection with the school: his wife is a former pupil.

Further exciting insights were gained when sixth year studies pupils joined third year undergraduates from St Andrews University for a NATO demonstration of micro-oscillation systems on Station Park.

(S6) was 6th and Alan Riddell (S5) 7th in Scotland, with Alex Godwin (S6) close behind. These four qualify to go forward to the British Maths Olympiad, held in mid-January. Also awarded Gold were Martha Neilson (S5) and Jennifer Davie (S6). The Silver medalists were Jonathan Hine (S4), Brian Hutchison, Michael Brownlie, Tim Kerby, Gordon MacLachlan, Colin Malcolm and Annemarie Wright (all S5) and David Bell, Tim Schmitz and Susan Weatherstone (S6).

Congratulations go not only to them, but to all our contestants for their fine results and effort.

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# AWARE

## Work Experience Programme 1997

The Aware programme in Madras took place during the three weeks from 17th November to 5th December, when 299 of the 311 pupils in 4th year went out on work experience. Many were placed in and around St Andrews; others travelled to Glenrothes, Dundee, Cupar, Leuchars and surrounding towns. There they joined workers in banks, shops, garages, factories, animal centres, schools, hotels and on farms to learn the ups and downs of working life. Our sincere thanks to all these local businesses who support the Work Placement Programme.

Overseeing the operation and putting in a tremendous amount of effective hard work, is Mrs M Kyle, Principal Teacher of Home Economics. Mrs M Wilson organises operations from the South Street Office, doing a magnificent job coping with the daily stream of pupils who want to change their placements, find out about their travel arrangements and claim expenses, borrow and return equipment, or enquire anxiously how they will get fed while out on placement!

We are grateful to the Education Industry Liaison Group at Fife Council, who have the difficult job of matching the available placements to the choices pupils request. Some placements, such as those with

Vets and Lawyers, or work involving computers or sport, are always over-subscribed. As the staff who went out on Outreach visits to the placements will agree, pupils also deserve praise for the excellent way in which the vast majority carry out their work, ensuring a welcome back for next year's group.

Many pupils found their placement very interesting and worthwhile; others at least discovered a job they definitely do not want to do! A special thank you to those who gave their placement a go, even when they were not sure they'd enjoy it; many were proved wrong! Also to those who took the initiative and found their own placements. How about cleaning

the Dunfermline Athletic 1st team's football boots for a week?

Although a great deal of work is involved in organising the Aware programme, there is no doubt about the benefits it gives to pupils, who return with a whole new perspective on school. When making applications for College and University entrance in 6th year, many pupils mention their Aware experience as the time when they first discovered a sense of direction, and a significant proportion actually identify the career or academic area which they will eventually enter at this time.

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## INTERACT CLUB NEWS



Pictured receiving their Award from Mr Charles Alexander, President of St Andrews Rotary Club are Jacqui Hunter and Alistair Irwin with Mr Bennett

The Rotary Youth Leadership Award was gained by 4 Madras pupils last session after surviving a week at an outdoor centre in the Cairngorms. Applicants for Camp RYLA in July '98 should contact Mr Bennett for details. Interviews will take place in January.

The Interact Group is having an active session, selling Dunblane Ribbons to raise £150 for Save the Children and holding a very successful Halloween Disco to send £100 to CHAS and £200 to the Clean Water Project. Jennifer Higginson and Kimberly Robb have spoken at the St Andrews Kilrymont and North Fife Rotary Clubs giving the targets of the club for this session.

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## Parent Teacher Association

The Committee of the Parent Teachers Association gives much time and effort to preparing a programme of events, both informative and social, where parents can learn more about their children's experiences and support fund-raising activities. While appreciating that we all live very busy lives, the continuing low attendance at events is disappointing.

An excellent meeting on Support for Learning, held in September was much appreciated by the small but involved group of parents attending. Sadly, the main social and fund-raising event of the term, a Ceilidh planned for November, had to be cancelled at a late stage in the organisation because of lack of support. Any suggestions about meetings which would prove popular would be welcomed by the Committee.

Meanwhile, another invitation to participate in the 50/50 Club will be offered at the Christmas Concerts. This is an easy (and occasionally profitable) way for parents to show their support for the school.

# Musical Activities

The Music Department, always busy, has been exceptionally active during the period since the last newsletter.

In August, the Senior Choir performed for the first time at the Edinburgh Festive of Youth Chamber Choirs and then at an open-air celebration at Balmerino Abbey of the 1400th anniversary of the death of St Columba. A trip to Glasgow in early November to sing Brahms' Requiem on a British Federation of Young Choirs Singing Day with Philip Ledger and the RSAMD Orchestra was followed two days later by a schools' performance of Carmina Burana. Madras choir members joined with pupils from Bell Baxter and Waid Academy for a series of stimulating and enjoyable workshops and rehearsals with Christopher Bell, Chorus-master of the RSNO and Director of the National Youth Choir of Scotland. The involvement of 160 young voices, including 40 from 1st year, with 15 percussionists and supporting adults from

local choirs, produced an appealing final performance. Indeed, in some ways it was even more enjoyable than the subsequent visit to the Caird Hall, Dundee, to hear the professional performance.

The annual Burns' Song Competition was held on the first-ever Scottish Night, with a full supporting programme of clarsachs, fiddles, recitation, solo piping and the College Pipe Band. The winners, who will perform at the Burns Supper on January 23rd, are Rowan MacKinnon-Pryde (Junior Girls), Glyn McCrickard (Senior Boys) and Kirsten McNeill (Senior Girls).

This Autumn has seen the establishment of a new and prestigious award for piping funded by an anonymous donor in memory of Pipe Major Bert Barron, who taught piping at Madras for many years. The winner for 1997/8 will be announced in early Summer. Now that funding for

tuition of piping and pipe-band drumming has been withdrawn by Fife Council, an appeal has been launched to raise a fund to support these activities and there have already been generous donations from parents and other local people. However, much more will be needed to secure the future as replacement equipment is also an urgent need.

In November, also, the brass band played as usual at the Remembrance Day Service at the War Memorial in St Andrews and at Moonzie Old Kirk, Cupar. The Wind Band is to appear with the St Andrews Chorus in "Carols for All" in the Younger Hall, while the full range of musical achievement in the school was on display, as ever, in the Christmas Concerts on December 15th and 16th.



## Dates for your Diary

### HOLIDAYS

#### Christmas

Monday 22nd December 1997  
to  
Friday 2nd January 1998

#### February (two days)

Thursday 12th February 1998  
and  
Friday 13th February 1998

#### Easter

Monday 30th March 1998  
to  
Monday 13th April 1998

#### May Day

Monday 4th May 1998

#### June (single day)

Monday 1st June 1998

#### Summer

Monday 29th June 1998  
to  
Friday 21st August 1998

### 9N-SERVICE DAYS

Monday 16th February 1998  
Tuesday 26th May 1998

### EXAMS

#### S3

Tuesday 5th May 1998  
to  
Friday 15th May 1998

#### SEB

Friday 1st May 1998  
to  
Friday 5th June 1998

### SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

Thursday 12th March 1998  
Further dates still to be agreed by  
board

### BURNS SUPPER

Friday 23rd January 1998  
(Provisional)

### PARENTS' EVENINGS

#### S4

Tuesday 3rd February 1998

#### S2

Thursday 26th February 1998

#### S3

Tuesday 28th April 1998

#### S1

Wednesday 3rd June 1998

#### P7

Monday 25th May 1998

### PTA MEETINGS

Wednesday 4th February 1998  
Madras College - The 21st Century

Thursday 12th March 1998  
Annual General Meeting

Thursday 23rd April 1998  
Showcase! An Entertainment!

# *Sporting Round-up*

## • Football

The Under-18 team, undefeated in the league to date, reached the fourth round of the Scottish Cup, the final of the 5-a-sides and still have to play in the quarter-finals of the Fife Cup next term. Steven Ellwood, Gareth Clark and Craig Michie (all S6) are regular members of the Fife Under-18 squad, with Steven and Gareth nominated to attend Scottish trials.

The 1st year team have won their sections of the Fife Schools at both 5 and 7 a-side to qualify for the next round of these competitions.

## • Hockey

The Senior Girls squad, whose captain is Linsay Buntin (S6), is having a very successful season so far, winning the Madras Centenary Tournament, the Dunfermline Tournament and being runners-up to Bell Baxter in the Fife Cup.

Jacqueline Harkins, Fiona Winter (S6) and Leanne Lumsden (S5) have all been selected for the Midlands Under-18 squad. At Under-16 Midlands level, Frances Rossi (S4) and Linsey Thomson (S5) have been selected, while Linsey also received a trial for the Under-16 Scottish squad.

## • Rugby

The Senior squad have had a mixed season so far, with fewer players than usual in the pool. Individual honours, however, have been high. Colin Reid (S4) was selected for the Midlands Under-15 team. At Under-16 level, David Robertson and Michael Steven (S4) have played for Fife and Rory Jeffrey (S5) for the Midlands. The Fife Under-18 side includes David Bell, Euan Bennett, Simon Dodd, Ronald Phillips (S6) and Stuart Nicoll, Ross Methven (S5). Alistair Irwin (S6), together with David and Euan have also played at Midlands level. Euan Bennett achieved the honour of a Scotland trial; David was a reserve, and both were replacements on the bench for the Scottish Schools "A" v Scottish Under-18 "B" at Murrayfield on 1st December.

The 2nd year team has qualified for the final stage of the SRU Jubilee Tournament by reaching the last 16 and will play at Murrayfield on 15th March 1998.

Both Rugby and Hockey squads are looking forward to hosting a visit from St Luke's School, Argentina in January and playing their touring sides.

## • School Swimming Gala

Congratulations to all the individual swimming champions: S1 Rhona Bagnall and Stuart McGregor; S2 Helene Oliver and Ashan Jayasehere; S3 Morna Bagnall and Barrie Field. The overall Junior Champions are Helene and Barrie. The Senior Champions are Melanie Christie (S6) and Stuart Nicol (S5).

## • Road Relay Running

In the Fife Schools Road Relay Running Championships, Madras maintained their exceptional record when the Over-15 Boys' team of Owen Greene and Johnny Seeley (S6) and Andrew Lemoncello (S5) won the event for the 7th year in succession. The Under-15 Boys' team: Ben Pippard and Andrew Shanks (S3) and Andrew Murphy (S2), were also winners of Gold medals and the Shield. In the 1st year Girls' event, Catherine Aitken, Alison Rowe and Fiona Thomson were the Silver medalists. Progressing to the Scottish Schools Road Relays, the Under-15 team won Bronze, the Over-15 Silver.

In the school's Inter-House competition, the individual winners to be congratulated are: S1 Jamie McQueen and Alison Rowe; S2 Andrew Murphy and Jayne Digby; S3 Thomas Greene and Emma Stewart; Seniors Owen Greene and Melanie Christie.

Congratulations go to all participants on these fine results.