



# Easter Newsletter

Madras College Newsletter

April 2000

## Rector's Message

There is normally a familiar rhythm in the school calendar owing to the well-established cycle of activities and events. This session there seems to be a difference, especially in the senior years, with many changes to normal procedures brought about by the Higher Still programme. A recent headline in a national daily newspaper stated that 'Relaxed Scots feel cheery'. Apparently, despite some popular stereotypes to the contrary, we are healthier and suffer less pressure than many others in the UK, particularly Londoners. It has to be said, however, that relaxed cheerfulness was not the prevailing mood in Madras College towards the end of last term.

Most departments were under extreme time pressures to meet the new internal assessment requirements of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). The situation was exacerbated by the very early school holidays decided upon by Fife Council. To the great credit of all involved, including some helpers drafted in at short notice, the deadlines were met with the result that no pupil ought to suffer because of administrative failures or delays in the examination procedures. Senior school, especially fifth year, has always been very pressurised for pupils and their teachers. 'The two-term dash' to the old Highers was indeed one of the main weaknesses which led to the Higher Still reforms. It therefore surprised us all to find that the feeling of pressure, far from being diminished, was even greater than in previous years. For example, scarcely had last summer's holiday snaps been filed away than we were into the first 'unit assessments' in the new Higher and Intermediate courses. It has thus been pressure from the very start of session.

On the positive side the SQA has assured us that allowances will be made for the newness of many courses and that pupils

will not be at a disadvantage because they followed the new rather than old syllabus. Thus what is vital is that all concerned should remain calm and focussed on the tasks in hand. We also stand to learn much from our first year of Higher Still. To this end there will be several evaluations of the perspectives of pupils, teachers and parents.

We can be more unreservedly positive about another major initiative last term, the six-week evening study scheme for Primary 7 to S2 pupils in the Tayport area in February and March. The enthusiasm of the pupils, the commitment of the staff and the extremely high attendance rates spoke eloquently about how the experiment was viewed. Mrs Brown, Depute Rector, who co-ordinated this and other Study Support schemes last term, will carry out evaluations of their success.

Important developments there have undoubtedly been so far this session. The surface rhythms have been disturbed, will take some time to settle back. Yet this newsletter is full of references to the work and wider life of the school which seem to continue whatever changes or challenges are thrown at us. The deeper underlying beat of this school is as insistent and strong as ever, reminding us that the spirit of renewal which is often so powerful a feature of this time of year, as it has been through recorded history, may be not so much new life or rebirth as the recognition of strength within.

If that Easter thought makes us relaxed or cheerful, so be it!

*BB Matheson*

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## Non-Uniform Day

### 20th April 2000

As this Newsletter goes to press, the Interact Group are in the final stages of organising a non-uniform day in aid of charity. It is anticipated that this will provide substantial donations for relief work in Mozambique and Ethiopia. Offering an occasion on which pupils can wear informal clothing in support of a good cause, non-uniform days also serve to emphasise the importance of regular and correct wearing of uniform on the other 189 days of the school year.

In the evening, a disco for second and third year pupils should provide a further boost to funds, as well as an enjoyable occasion for pupils involved.

## STOP PRESS

### School Meals

Fife Council have informed us that as from Monday 10th April 2000, the charge to pupils for a standard school meal will be £1.20.

Any overall increases on snacks are displayed in the cafeteria.

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## Fife Schools Rock Band Competition

This annual competition, also known as the Donald Ferguson Memorial competition, started 3 years ago. It was organised as a tribute to a long established Fife guitar teacher by his colleagues in the Instrumental Service (Donald taught guitar at Madras and other Fife schools until his death in the summer of 1997).

Each secondary school is invited to enter one rock band. There are then two regional heats from which the best two bands from the East and West of Fife go forward to the final in the Lochgelly Centre. The incentive of finishing first in the competition is winning a recording session, air play on Kingdom FM, vouchers for themselves from Sound Control and the trophy for the school.

Madras College has many bands. This session seven entered the school lunchtime heat. Voting was carried out by every twentieth pupil on the senior school roll. The standard was high and the outcome close. The winning band

was Fiasco (Ryan Bald, Joe Davie, Jeremy Doherty, Duncan Giles, Andy Keir and Neil Lebetter), closely followed in second place by Illegal Tender (Jamie Bentley, Gareth Griffiths, Alex Magee and Struan Paterson). In third place were Red Fighting League (Jerome Dilley, Barrie Field, Andrew Shanks and Jonathan Wooldridge).

Fiasco have recently won through the area heat and now go on to the final to compete with Balwearie High School, Beath High School and Queen Anne High School in Lochgelly on Tuesday 25th April at 7.30 pm.

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## Promotions to provide equipment

Tetley Tea bags, The Express and Sunday Express newspapers are running a promotion called "Free Sports Stuff for Schools" in which tokens can be exchanged for sports equipment. Madras College are participating in this and your support in collecting tokens and sending them, via pupils to the PE Department, would be much appreciated.

The annual Tesco "Computers for Schools" promotion has now ended and the Learning Support Department would like to thank everyone who sent in tokens. Meanwhile, Walkers Crisp packets continue to be a useful route to free books and are welcomed by the English department. Special mention and thanks go to Heather Walker (S2) who gives truly outstanding effort to this campaign and has, to date, collected over 1000 packets!

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## Interact Group BAND NIGHT

A highly successful and well-attended Band Night in aid of charity was organised by the S6 Interact Group on March 17th. Hopeful participants submitted audition tapes, which impressed the selectors with their quality. From these, a selection of bands with the usual range of evocative names was selected: Wild Oats, Illegal Tender, Red Fighting League, Fiasco, Bog Snorkellers and Barley, all of whom performed creditably on the night.

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## Kiel Exchange

Plans are well-advanced for a Madras group to visit Germany at the end of the summer term on the "away" leg of our long-running exchange with the Kieler Gelehrtenschule. The party will consist of about of 20 pupils, those currently in S5 making the return visit to the families of the pupils from Germany whom they hosted last year. Those in fourth year will be making their initial contact with their partners. Organising and accompanying the group this year is Mr C Jessop, Principal Teacher of Modern Languages.

## Staff Notes

During a quiet term on the staffing front the following changes took place:

- Mr Airlie was appointed to the vacant post of Assistant Principal Teacher of Social Subjects;
- Mr H Watson became Acting Principal Teacher of Guidance for Third Year;
- Ms S Sanderson joined the Business Education Department;
- Mrs C Shanks, Clerical Assistant (Accounts) had two months of maternity leave;
- Mrs M Weir, Clerical Assistant (Phoenix) returned from a lengthy absence through ill-health;
- Mrs Houston (APT Art and Design) has also recently taken maternity leave.

We thank and say farewell to Mrs F Morrison (Art and Design) who has resigned her post to concentrate on her family.

A thank you is due to Mrs Cairns and Mrs Cox who helped out in the offices for most of last term.

Lastly, we thank Mr Wemyss for his service to the school as Chief Invigilator, a post he now demits.

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## Visit to Samye Ling

As part of their Higher RMPS course, 18 pupils visited Samye Ling Tibetan Monastery in Dumfriesshire, accompanied by Mrs A Shields, Mr and Mrs D Cleland and Mrs M Wilson. The group stayed overnight, so that they could participate in prayers and meditations in the temple. They were given a teaching by Clive Holmes, a lay Buddhist from the monastery, who patiently answered all the group's questions. For all involved, this was a very interesting and enlightening visit.

# PTA

This has been another busy term for the PTA, with its climax a Grand Buffet and Race Night on March 3rd, ably organised by a small sub-group of parents and staff. Their hard work resulted in a highly successful evening, when much money changed hands in an entertaining (even raucous) manner and a net profit of £1000 achieved for PTA school funds.

The AGM was held on 16th March. All out-going office bearers were sincerely thanked for their hard work and commitment over the past year. A large proportion of the present committee, both office bearers and members, changed at this meeting, with new volunteers taking up the challenge of sustaining this vital link between parents and school. All who become involved find it a rewarding and interesting experience and there is still room on the present committee for one or two more members. Parents who attend meetings invariably express their appreciation and enjoyment of them, and it is therefore disappointing that PTA activities do not attract wider support from the parent body as a whole.

The next meeting, on **Tuesday 13th June**, is concerned with **Raising Attainment**, while be an opportunity for parents to learn more about Madras College's approach to the challenges of learning for all pupils. All parents are warmly invited to this meeting, which starts at 7 pm in the Kilrymont Road Building.

## Top of the Bench Chemistry Quiz

Neil Porter (S2), Stephen Hassel (S3), Tony Gilbertson (S4) and Kate Thomson (S6) made a successful team who won their way through all rounds of this competition, taking part in the final held in the University of St Andrews.

## Debating & Public Speaking

### • Courier/Royal Bank of Scotland Junior Debating Competition

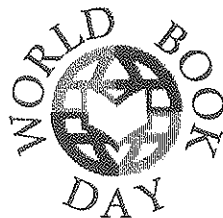
Stuart Bell and Thomas Foster (S3) reached the national final of this competition, held in Lower Parliament Hall, St Andrews. Much hard work had gone into the preparation for this and earlier rounds and although they did not carry off any prizes on the night, the team put up an excellent performance.

### • Rotary Club Inter-School Debate

It was the turn of Madras College to host this annual three-cornered contest with Waid Academy and Bell Baxter High School. Emerging overall winners of the Waid Centenary Trophy, for the tenth time since the inauguration of the competition in 1986, the Madras team put up a strong performance. Individual prizes went to Kai Hopkins, best 1st Proposer; Chris Beaton, best 1st Opposer; Colin Crooks, best 2nd Opposer and Shona Morrison, best Chairperson. Our thanks go to the Rotary Club of St Andrews for their support of this enjoyable event.

### • Public Speaking

The school team of Julia Higgins, Neil Wright and David Stephens won the regional final of the English Speaking Union Public Speaking Competition and progressed to the Scottish final, held at the High School of Dundee in March. Speaking on the topic of world poverty, the team performed very well and ran a very close second to the eventual winners, the High School of Dundee. Congratulations both to the team members and to their coaches, Mrs M Fraser and Mrs A Baughan, whose hard work and support led once again to this very creditable result.



10th March

As ever, Mrs J Scott ensured that this was a high-profile event in school. Pupils had opportunities to view and purchase from a selection of tempting books, with the cost reduced by their £1 World Book Day vouchers. Staff generously offered books from their own collections to add to class book boxes, earning the title of "Angel" or "Devil" by their choice of offering. Books were discussed and reviewed and a competition to produce the most interesting review held. The winners in their respective year groups were Sarah Wilson (S3), Rachel Chimiak (S2) and Tom Kinnear (S1).

## Scottish Parliament Visit

Standard Grade Modern Studies pupils all had the opportunity to visit the Scottish Parliament this term. They were given an introductory talk by the Education Office and a visit to the chamber itself, where pupils had the opportunity to watch MSPs questioning and debating. Pupils also met the North East Fife constituency MSP, Ian Smith and were able to raise with him a range of contemporary issues. Pupils and staff agree that the experience was enjoyable, interesting and enhanced their understanding of the political process.

## Overseas Art Exhibition

Cultural links established with Upper Arlington in Ohio have led to an exhibition of pupils' work in the United States. A selection of work from S1-S6 was displayed in Upper Arlington throughout March.

### NEW web-site address

<http://www.madras.fife.sch.uk>

### NEW e-mail address

[enquiries@madras.fife.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@madras.fife.sch.uk)

# EASTER Trips

No sooner had the bell rung for the end of term on 24th March, than coaches began to arrive at school and large groups of pupils laden with luggage assembled in the playgrounds. The later date of this newsletter allows us to report on the three very successful European trips which took place during the recent holiday.

## • Spain

Mr M Barclay, assisted by Miss A Williamson, Miss L Dewar and Mr P Finnigan, led a party of 38 Art and Design pupils from fifth and sixth year to Barcelona. They spent time drawing, painting and taking photographs; studying the work of such artists as Picasso, Salvador Dali and the great Catalan Art Nouveau architect, Antoni Gaudi and savouring the varied street life of this vibrant city.

## • France

Mr C Jessop once again took his well-established French trip away. Assisted by Mrs C Harvey, Mrs L Caldwell and a group of sixth years, 40 pupils from S3 were introduced to the sights of Paris and Brittany A busy and fulfilling time was had by all.

## • Germany

This trip gave 39 pupils in second year the opportunity to visit the Rhine land, staying in the little town of Bad Salzig. Led by Miss S McKay, assisted by Mrs C Easingwood, Miss E Buckler and Mr R Bell, with great support from a hard-working team of sixth year helpers, Cologne and Koblenz were visited, the Rhine cruised, a Chocolate Museum and a Vineyard sampled, and many incidental cultural and personal experiences gained along the way.

While the co-operation, enthusiasm and good behaviour of the pupils themselves contributed greatly to the success of these trips, such worthwhile experiences for so many are only made possible by members of staff being prepared to give generously of their time during their holidays. Special thanks should go to the three leaders of the parties: Mr Barclay, Mr Jessop and Miss McKay. It was their meticulous planning and organisation which ensured that all ran smoothly and that over 120 pupils amassed so many enriching experiences.

## BCG

### Immunisation

Due to a national shortage of vaccine, the School Medical Service will be unable to carry out the normal immunisation service this year. Pupils who were due to receive the BCG injection will be called when supplies become available.

Vaccination against Meningitis C has been offered to all pupils during this session.

# Maths Competitions

## • UK Schools Maths Challenge 2000

The Intermediate Section of this national competition was held in February, with around 150,000 pupils from all over the UK taking part. Of these, the top 6% gain Gold Awards, the next 12% Silver and the next 18% Bronze.

Madras College entered 62 pupils from S3 and S4 and 8 pupils from S2. They achieved an amazing total of 53 awards, nine ahead even of last year's excellent result: 11 Gold, 22 Silver and 20 Bronze. Special congratulations go to David Stephens and Toby Gilbertson (S4), who have qualified to progress to the prestigious International Invitational Intermediate Maths Challenge in May. Two second year pupils, Iain Brodie and Natalie Jackson are also to be congratulated for gaining entry via their high scores to the 2000 European Kangaroo.

Well done to all who took part for their effort and enthusiasm. The complete list of Gold medal winners is: David Stephens, Toby Gilbertson, Duncan Knowles, Steven Anderson, Andrew Farmer, Joseph Humfrey, Robert Collins and Donald McCabe (S4); James Milne and Joe Neilson (S3) and Iain Brodie (S2).

## • Mathematical Olympiad

Our student Sue Liu (S5) was selected along with 19 other students from the UK to attend a residential Mathematical Olympiad Training course at Cambridge during the Easter holidays. The selection was as a result of her success in the British Maths Olympiad Rounds 1 and 2. Congratulations to Sue on this great achievement.

All our Maths contest results and some of the contest papers are available on our Maths Website:

<http://www.madras.fife.sch.uk/maths>

## S1/6 Link Club

Every Tuesday after school an enthusiastic bunch of first year pupils arrive at the computing room in Kilrymont Road to enjoy a session of computer games and chess, organised by three sixth year pupils. David Halliday, Tom Mortimer and Euan McIntosh are to be commended on their initiative in setting up this club and on the skill and commitment they have demonstrated in sustaining it.

## 'Heads in the Clouds' Disco

This highly successful evening on February 25th was organised for first year pupils as part of their Social Education programme by Mr C Mackay and Mrs V Rough, assisted by sixth year helpers. Two hundred and sixty pupils attended and enjoyed supporting over 60, who performed on stage, miming to their favourite bands. The Vital Spark disco provided the music and a wide range of lively acts were judged by a combined panel of staff and sixth year pupils.

# Sports Update . . . . .

## • Badminton

The school Badminton champions are: Junior Boys, Chris Birrel (S1); Junior Girls, Fiona Bennett (S2); Senior Boys, Michael Armit (S6); Senior Girls, Lindsay Adams (S4).

In the staff v pupils match, using all their advantages - age, experience and tricks of the sunlight - the staff squeezed a victory - 10:6.

## • Senior Rugby

The senior rugby season finished with an exciting 41:19 victory over local rivals, Howe of Fife. This match brought to a close a long and hard season where the 1st XV played 25 full matches, winning 14 and losing 11. Match highlights were the double win over Queen Victoria School and an away win at Jordanhill. The 2nd XV has a tougher season, playing against mainly older teams and of their 9 games, they won only 2, the second a fine performance against Linlithgow.

The 7-a-side squad retained the Waid Centenary Tournament trophy. The same squad were silver medal winners of the Perth 7's, going down valiantly to the much-fancied Dundee High School in a close final.

## • Swimming Champions

In the school Swimming Gala, the individual Junior Champions are Rhona Bagnall and Jack Medrum, the Senior Champions Melanie Christie and Ashan Jayasekera. In the first two years, the champions are: Alison Clark and Ian Clark (S1); Zoe Murney and Steven Paul (S2).

## • First Year Football

The First Year Sevens team have won two trophies this term, without conceding a goal. Victory in the D Garland Shield, at Glenrothes High School, involved overcoming teams from five other Fife schools. In the Fife Shield, Madras won their preliminary league and two more rounds, before meeting Auchmuty High School in the final and defeating them 3:0.

## • Yachting

Alasdair Young (S5) continues to achieve great things in his chosen sport of yachting. He was the leading competitor in his section of the Scottish team which won the Four Nations Cup in Ireland last autumn, and he regularly figures in open events as one of Britain's most promising talents.

## Dates for your Diary

### HOLIDAYS

#### May Day

Monday 1st May 2000

#### Summer

Monday 3rd July 2000  
to Friday 18th August 2000

#### October

Monday 2nd October 2000  
Monday 16th October 2000  
to Friday 20th October 2000

#### Christmas

Monday 25th December 2000  
to Friday 5th January 2001

#### February (Two Days)

Thursday 15th February 2001  
and Friday 16th February 2001

#### Easter

Monday 2nd April 2001  
to Friday 13th April 2001

*(All dates inclusive)*

### IN-SERVICE DAYS

Tuesday 9th May 2000  
Monday 20th August 2000

### EXAMS

#### S3

Tuesday 16th May 2000  
to Tuesday 30th May 2000

*Dates may be subject to minor variations to suit the needs of subject departments*

#### SQA

Tuesday 16th May 2000  
to Monday 12th June 2000

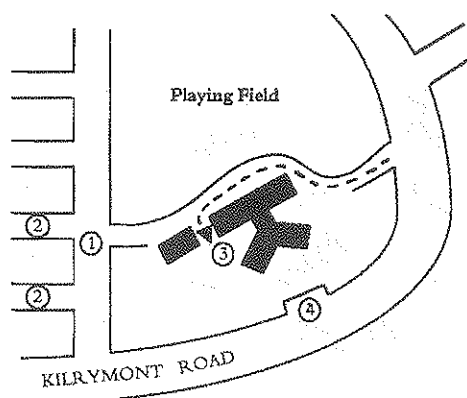
### SQA STUDY LEAVE

Tuesday 16th May 2000  
to Monday 12th June 2000

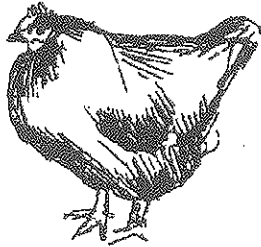
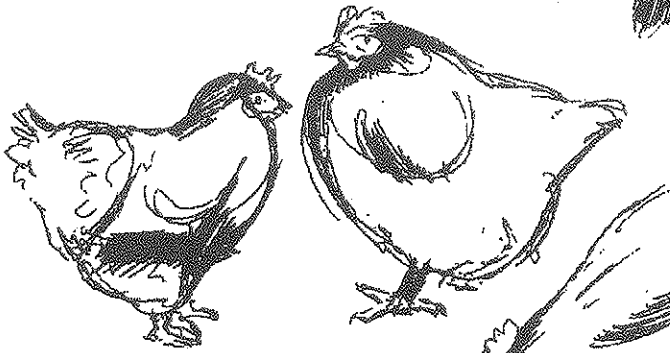
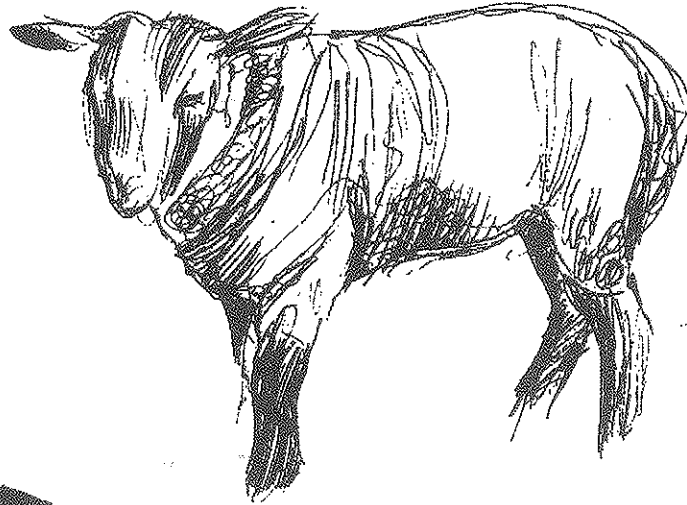
## Kilrymont - Collecting & Delivering Pupils

To assist in managing the ever-increasing movement of vehicles and people at the Kilrymont Road building parents are asked to follow the system outlined below. The numbers are shown on the sketch map.

- 1 Pupils may normally be dropped off at the rear entrance in Roundhill Road at the start of the school day. This avoids cars mixing with buses and pedestrians at the bus lay-by.
- 2 At 3.30 pm parents collecting pupils could do so at any agreed point near the rear gate. Again this will greatly decrease congestion of traffic on Kilrymont Road.
- 3 Parents attending for an appointment or collecting sick pupils should use the present Community Use car park.
- 4 Parents collecting or delivering pupils at other pre-arranged times may use the bus lay-by on Kilrymont Road.



SKETCHBOOK PAGES



9/400

by Janet Robinson  
(CSYS Art & Design)

