

Blackrock College Newsletter



Special points of interest:

- Boarding School
- Creative Arts & Digital Learning Centre
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- Guidance and Counselling
- Science Department
- Environmental Awareness Week

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Beannachtai
na
Cásca!

Easter 2015

Dear Parents

“We need a bigger beach” was the banner headline in the Daily Mail, the day after 3 million people thronged Rio de Janeiro’s Copacabana for the Pope’s World Youth Day Mass in the Summer of 2013.

Do we need a bigger heart, to find space for Christ in our lives?

Easter is a good time to consider this. In the risen Lord, we have a personal invitation to salvation, to rise above the challenging circumstances in our daily routine. We live in a world overwhelmed by anxiety. Our newspaper headlines, news bulletins, and Internet are dominated by hardship, suffering and despair. This can lead to discouragement.

Easter is not merely the anniversary of some historical event, but a celebration of Jesus living among us today, wanting to enliven us where we feel deadened or trapped by anxiety.

The Easter message is one of hope, that we are not on our own, that there is unique value in each one of us. In the Easter Triduum ceremonies we move from agony, suffering and pain through doubt and confusion, finally to hope and joy. Over and over again we face this trilogy in our own lives.

Our hope is more than wishful thinking. It is built on the real and tangible life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is an assured hope that addresses the longing of the human heart for meaning and purpose. It confirms our deep-seated need to believe that love is stronger than death and commits us to that love.

This is open to all of us. However, it is not forced upon us. Whether we see it or not might depend upon whether we can find space in our hearts. In that space, there is a standing invitation to each one to be part of something worthwhile and authentic. This same invitation is at the heart of our Blackrock educational design.

This term, we have had two excellent Family Masses for Transition and 5th Years – well attended as they were, it would be great if we needed a bigger Chapel! This coming together, this solidarity is at the heart of our hope for our boys, that they may see in the words of Pope Benedict, **“that being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction”**.

The boys respond magnificently to the different elements of the worthwhile and authentic programme put before them in His name. Classroom activities, games, the arts, the liturgies and social outreach are all an invitation to faith, to see Christ in each other. This deeper understanding demands effort, persistence and ultimately, decision. Solidarity requires choices, the giving up of something immediately pleasurable and fun for something more enduring and more valuable. Being hopeful demands application. In the words of G.K. Chesterton **“Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried”**.

Our faith is an invitation to a relationship between self and God. Like all living, vibrant, meaningful relationships, time and effort is required.

I thank our Spiritan Community, staff, parents, boys and past students, particularly the Union, for their leadership, decisiveness, optimism, drive, time, effort and of course, big heart.

Enjoy the Easter break.

ALAN MacGINTY
Principal

Second Year

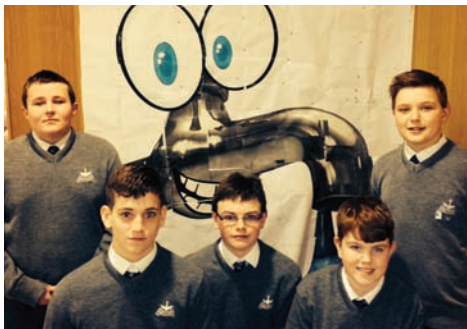


Application Cards

Our Second Year boys have now finished their second term in the College and each one should look back at his record of involvement and work-rate as evident in his weekly Application Card. This should provide some food for thought and reflection. The number of those cards achieving the Principal's List continues to be high for this group and the school very much wants this level of effort to continue into the final term. Parents can contribute to this on-going process by ensuring they ask to see their son's Card each Monday, using the opportunity to compliment good application and challenge areas of concern where required.

Parents' Events

The Parents' Committee in Second Year organised an excellent talk this half term for Fathers of Second Year boys. It was given by Owen Connolly who spoke on the vital importance of a Father's relationship with his son. The Committee also organised a most enjoyable Annual Dinner in Elm Park Golf & Sports Club, which was very well attended. We are grateful to the members of the Committee for these events and for the service they provide throughout the academic year.



2nd Year Members of the Green Schools Committee
Conor O'Neill, Rhys Rowlands, Michael Ryan,
Michael McDonald,
Drummond McGinn

Ethos

After the mid-term break the boys attended Lenten Reconciliation Services in the Chapel, each led by an RE teacher and facilitated by members of the College Spiritan community and clergy from our neighbouring parishes. The boys also had an opportunity to reflect on their responsibility for the world around them during

Environment Awareness Week, which included a talk by the leader of the Green Party Eamon Ryan. The boys benefited from presentations during Addiction Awareness Week on the topics of alcohol, drugs and supplements, and on gambling and the internet. The school finished the half term with a celebration of our culture during Seachtain na Gaeilge.

House Competitions

The House Chess competition literally ended in stalemate and points were awarded to each House for each one's level of participation and achievement. The House Art competition was won by Fergus Woods. The Draughts competition is turning out to be very popular and will finish after Easter, when we will also have the Gold Medal for Debating, the House Soccer Competition and Sports & Family Day.

Sports & Activities

Where do we start – in Rugby we wish the two Second Year members of the Junior Cup Team good luck in the Final, which has not been played at time of going-to-press; likewise good luck to the three Second Year members participating in the All Ireland Junior Water Polo Championships in Belfast. We compliment our Second Year boys involved in our Hurling team led by Stephen Dunne, our Basketball team led by Michael Ryan, and our Debating team and participants in the Model United Nations led by Drummond McGinn. Congratulations also to the Corless Choir for winning the Epworth Cup at the Wesley Inter-schools Music Festival, part of a unique treble for Blackrock; also to Gavin Jones for 1st Place in Classical Guitar U15 and Tom Dwan for 2nd Place in Solo Singing Popular U16, at the same event. And congratulations to all Second Year boys for contributing to the World's Largest Scrum, achieved by the school at the beginning of March. What world records will this fine group be setting in their final term in Second Year?



Ryan Fitzgerald & Stephen Dunne, winners of the Poc Fada competition during Seachtain na Gaeilge

Third Year



A most important Parents' Conference, at which it is expected that each boy will be represented, will take place on **Wednesday April 29th at 7.30 p.m.** in the Lecture Hall. The evening is given over to the choice of subjects for the Leaving Certificate 2018. An additional information evening, to be held on Monday the 7th September, will deal with other aspects of Transition Year and will cover the co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

A lot of good work has taken place since the return in the second week of Lent. With the introduction of the cashless payment system in the Dining Hall and the Secretariat we would urge parents to insist on their sons' using a wallet in order to reduce the loss of cash and damage to/loss of cards. The new system has many merits including much greater efficiency when paying in the Dining Hall and the opportunity to borrow books in the Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre, however taking greater responsibility for cards is imperative.



The Corless Choir, winners of the Epworth Cup at Wesley Music Festival

We've had many great weekly cards this term, however it would appear that some of these excellent cards are not being taken home. We respectfully ask all parents to insist on seeing weekly cards every Monday night, whether they have to be returned or not. For those taking bicycles to school, it is essential that they are locked securely, in other words through the frame and not just around the wheel. Recently a bike was stolen and a locked wheel was all that remained.

Congratulations also to the third year members of the Corless Choir on their outstanding success in their inaugural competition at the Wesley Musical Festival, and also the soloists who performed with great skill.

Great credit and congratulations are due to the Junior Squad for their tremendous victory over Terenure in the Junior Cup Final on Sunday 22nd March. They showed great character and perseverance to come away with a victory in the dying moments of the game.

Addiction Awareness Day

The boys were divided into four groups, each of which had two talks of 20 minutes duration. Feedback received clearly indicated that they found the presentations very challenging and thought provoking. Points made included the following: "The undisputed evidence highlights that the earlier young people start drinking the chances of becoming addicted increase enormously". "Underage drinking has a huge impact on the brains short term memory and long term cognitive function". "All efforts to postpone such activity should be encouraged and of course the best way to avoid addiction is never to start because the reality is that there's an addictive gene for alcohol in Ireland". "Substance abuse has a devastating impact on the individual as well as the family". This fact was highlighted by one speaker with the account of a person who was unable to settle a drug debt and ended up being forced to store a package. Following a tip-off to the Gardaí and subsequent court case he ended up with a mandatory 10-year sentence. The fact that people who experiment with drugs have in many cases first been introduced to them by their best friend should act as a reality check to all.

We draw your attention to the Academic Year calendar which highlights May 27th as the last day of class for Third Year, which leaves a total of 32 days until the end of the academic year. We urge parental support in ensuring attendance in class up to and including this final date. Any concession to this, we feel, will deny him the communal support in school and impact adversely on his academic performance in the Public Examination. This will still leave a full week at home prior to sitting the first paper.

Giro receipts for payment of Junior Certificate fee are due to be returned at check-in on Tuesday 24th of April.

Transition Year Cont'd



Goal Aidlink St Patricks Day Badge Campaign

On Monday the 2nd of March we launched our annual charity project with an attempt to reclaim the Guinness record for the world's largest scrum. As we await confirmation I would be confident the record has been broken as 1044 students from 1st – 6th scrummaged under the watchful eye of referee Alain Rolland. Despite the difficulties of coordinating the worlds largest scrum, there was a great atmosphere as we were joined by Anne Cleary (C.E.O of Aidlink), Barry Andrews (C.E.O. of Goal), rugby pundits Geogre Hook, Brent Pope, Jordi Murphy and Ian Madigan who came along to show their support. We were all delighted with the publicity achieved by the launch.

Transition years have been incredibly busy with this project, contacting local businesses, primary and secondary schools to distribute badges. We have also been out and about as a number of students braved appalling conditions before Ireland v England to sell badges. Next up was our **Cycle 4 Africa** in Dundrum where the students worked on a rota between cycling and collecting from 10am – 9pm. Finally, we hit the city centre for two days of street collecting on the 13th and 14th of March.



These collections have proven to be very successful as close to €5000 has been raised. An awful lot of work went into coordinating these collections and a big thank you goes to the Goal Aidlink administration team for all their work. I thank the many students who gave up their school and free time to collect, and in particular my colleagues Mr Smyth, Mr McMahon and Mr O' Sullivan.

Environmental Awareness Week

On March 3rd Transition year welcomed Mr. Eamonn Ryan (Leader of the Green Party) who gave a talk about environmental issues in Ireland and in particular the issue of water conservation and metering. Other highlights from the week included displays on St Patrick's Hall and an environmental themed debate. I thank the green schools committee and in particular our TY representatives Conor Bailey and Alex Noble.

Transition year tours

On Tuesday 24th we had our final set of Tuesday tours as students went rock climbing, visited Croke Park and Glasnevin and went to Sandyford for a bit of skiing!

On Wednesday 4th Mr. Aylward accompanied a group of physics students to Baldonnell aerodrome.

On Thursday 5th 24 business and chemistry students accompanied by Ms. Cullen visited the Tech Group Europe plant in Mulhuddart. Thank you to Mr. Don O' Callaghan and his staff for what was a very educational and enjoyable day.

Seachtain na Gaeilge

Another great week to promote the Irish language saw transition year girls from Sion Hill join us for our annual Céilí, it was a very enjoyable occasion. The week culminated in the staff v student Gaelic match on Friday 13th, which was to prove unlucky for the students. Despite their gallant efforts, they were simply no match for the staff team. Even though the staff eased up in the second half, in the spirit of the week, the students could not make a comeback. I thank my many colleagues who toggled out and in particular I thank Ms. Payne for her organization of the week.

Spirasi Fast

Immediately before the February mid-term break, seventy-nine 5th year students participated in the twenty three hour sponsored fast for Spirasi, the Spiritan NGO working with asylum seekers and victims of torture in Ireland. For their sacrifice, the students raised over €2150 for the



Tim Maguire, Shane Conlon, Kevin Moore and James Trueick presenting the proceeds of the 5th year Spirasi fast to Mr. Andreas Mokake

John Hooper Medal

Congratulations to Chris Aylward, Oisín McEnroe and Kevin O' Donnell who finished second in the John Hooper poster competition for statistics organized by the Central Statistics Office. Their prize of ?1000 - ?650 for the school and ?350 for themselves - will be presented in the D.E.S. offices during Maths Week next October.

M.U.N.

Our transition year model united nations team continues to go from strength to strength. At the Wesley M.U.N. John Heavey and Scott Donohoe won a Highly Commended Delegate Award and Mark Heavey a Commended Delegate Award. All three were also members of the French Delegation who won a Commended Delegation Award



The Arts

Jack Crowley, Harry Doherty, Scott Rolland and Jack Stacey were involved in a very successful run of the musical *The Wiz* which was staged in the Pavilion theatre by the Dun Laoghaire music and dramatic society. It was a very enjoyable show.

64 students have signed up for Strictly Come Dancing in Mount Anville to be held on the 29th and 30th of April. I never realized we had such an abundance of dancing talent in the year. I wish them well and Thank Ms. McWilliams in Mount Anville for organizing what promises to be two great nights.

Our school did fantastically well at the recent Wesley inter schools' music competition. I must mention Oisín McEnroe of transition year who finished 1st place in the strings Over 16 competition. Well done!

Colts Rugby

As we go to press the Colts are preparing themselves for the final of the East Coast League against the House 5th. This follows their hard fought victory over St Michaels in the semifinal, with scrum half Mark Phelan and centre Sam Murphy playing particularly well. I wish Captain Harry Norris and coach Mr. Murray all the best in the final.

Water polo

Congratulations to Robert Sheedy who captained the U16 team to second place in the Junior Water Polo All Ireland held in Belfast on Wednesday 18th. Transition year had a great representation with Joe MacIntyre, Lorcan Dunne, Mark O' Connor, Jonathan Hoey and Ronan Mullen on the team.

Work Experience

The feedback received from the February placements was excellent. The students really were a credit to the school and their families. A reminder that the next week for work experience is May 11th – 15th so they need to secure their placements soon.

Gaisce

There are 6 dates available for the Gaisce retreat. Students should see Mr. McMahon to sign up for one of these hikes.



organisation. We commend and thank all those involved and all those who generously supported the fasters. Spirasi Director, Greg Straton has written to the students highlighting that their generosity will facilitate Spirasi to continue to offer essential care for victims of torture as well as educational services for refugees and asylum seekers.

Family Mass

On Sunday 1st March, Fr. Billy Cleary, CSSp, Ethos Officer with the D.E.A. and a member of the Spiritan Provincial Leadership Team was chief celebrant at the 5th year family mass. The 5th year students were very active in their mass; serving on the altar, reading the liturgies, singing in the choir and much more, successfully generating a wonderful atmosphere of community and celebration. Fr. Billy Cleary reminded all to



Fifth Year Cont'd



remember that "the stranger is the friend that you have not yet met." Amongst the many families in attendance we were delighted to welcome Mr. Andreas Mokake and his family. Mr. Mokake works with Spirasi and was proudly presented with the proceeds of the 5th Year Fast and spoke to the congregation with heartfelt gratitude and appreciation of their efforts.

CAT testing – Careers Guidance

As part of the Career Guidance Programme almost all students have completed the Cognitive Abilities Test this term. These tests facilitate the College to further identify students' needs and strengths so that they can be further guided in realising their full potential. Remaining students will be tested after Easter and students are reminded that Career Guidance appointments are available by request.

Environment Awareness Week

The fifth members of the Green Schools Committee were hard at work this term, engaged in a wealth of activities to promote water conservation. We commend them for their tremendous effort and commitment.

Seachtain na Gaeilge

5th years students were very active in this year's Seachtain na Gaeilge celebrating our language, culture and heritage. Table quizzes, bingo, debates and a highly contested Poc Fada were just some of the week's highlights.

Addiction Awareness Week

As part of Addiction Awareness Week students were encouraged to make wise choices in their lives in order to avoid the potentially devastating harm that can be caused by dependency. Students' attitudes to gambling, alcohol, drug taking and internet usage were challenged by a range of speakers, generating much meaningful thought and discussion.

French debating

A team of 5th year students: James Huggard, Matthew McKenna, James Cronin, Marcus O'Faoláin and Bernard O'Sullivan recently met St. Andrew's College for a friendly debate in French. They eloquently proposed the motion: *La Liberté d'expression est un droit absolu* which unfortunately was defeated. James Cronin was named best speaker on the day and the team looks forward to a return visit from St. Andrew's College.

GOAL – AidLink

Fifth years were delighted to partake in the renewed attempt to enter the Guinness Book of Records for the World's Largest Scrum that was the official launch of this year's GOAL-AIDLINK St' Patrick's Day Badge campaign.

Chess

Fourth in the Leinster Senior League was this year's award for Pengbo Wu and the other members of the Senior Chess Team. We congratulate Pengbo and wish them well for next season.

Rugby

The House Fifts, it could be said have had a roller coaster season. A technicality, walk overs, a couple of injuries and victories in two tough matches against Wesley and Gerard's have earned them a place in the upcoming final against the Colts and we wish them well.

The House Fourths had a great and promising start to their season in the Forrester Cup, with a number of comprehensive victories. However, disappointment came in the final group stage when they unfortunately lost to a stronger Presentation College, Bray side who they wish well in the group stage.

The House Thirds are undefeated in their cup so far and were particularly delighted with a last play try that confirmed their place in the final against the Castle Thirds on the last day of term which we look forward to.

The House Seconds have had a frustrating season overall, losing their initial matches against St. Michael's and Clongowes. Following on from their subsequent victory against St. Michael's they are hoping for victory over Clongowes so they can secure a place in the final. We wish them well.

A panel of seventeen players from the Thirds and Seconds will travel to Sedbergh, UK at Easter to take part in a Super 10's competition. We wish them and their coaches safe travels and the best of luck.

Ten 5th year students were members of this year's Senior Squad. They were disappointed to lose to Roscrea but congratulate them on their Cup win. All are continuing to train and are already looking forward to next year. They were delighted with and wholeheartedly appreciate the support and encouragement they received from their peers. Congratulations to Stephen Kilgallen who has been selected in the "Irish Independent Top 15 players 2015."

Swimming

We congratulate Sean Hasset who travelled to Hamms, Germany this term with his swimming club to take part in the Hammer Sparkassan Cup. Sean placed 2nd in the

200m Butterfly and 5th in the 200m Freestyle race. Well Done Sean.

Fifth Year Parents Association

A wonderful evening was had by all at the parents' social evening held in Elm Park Golf Club in early February. Many thanks to Committee Chairperson Mrs. Ursula Grogan and the 5th Year Parents Committee for their organisation of this memorable event.

Lourdes

Twenty-two fifth years applied to be student helpers on the Dublin Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes in Sixth Year. There are commended for their quality of application and interview where they all presented themselves as talented, honest and articulate young men. We wish those who have been selected; Conor Gallagher, David Hardiman, Tim Maguire, Jordan McDonald, Ross O'Toole and Rory Patterson all in best with their preparations for the Pilgrimage next September.

Soccer

Following on from their very close semi-final victory against Wexford CBS the Senior Squad members travelled to Manchester for the eagerly awaited annual matches against St. Bede's and thoroughly enjoyed the weekend despite defeat in both matches. They were very grateful of the warm hospitality of the host families and have made valuable friends for life. The weekend was followed by the semi-final of the Dublin Metropolitan League. A final score of 4-1 sees the squad progress to the final against St. Fintan's, Sutton. We wish them well.

Cross Country

After a hugely successful year so far, we congratulate the fifth year members of the Senior Cross Country Squad who battled the demanding Santry course in the Leinster Championships to finish second and thereby qualify for the All Ireland Championships where they finished 5th in the team event. We commended all participants on their team spirit and individual placings.

Wesley Festival

Fifth years were strongly represented at the annual Interschools' Music Festival this term participating in rock and trad. bands, choirs and orchestras. We are proud of the fifth year successes of the Liberman and Leman choirs, winning the Frank Hughes and Marathon Cups. The fifth year bands *Jumpers for Goalposts* and *Binary Sunset* competed in the band competition and the former were delighted that their vibrant performance of the Rolling Stones song *Jumpin' Jack Flash* earned them second place, while Shane Fenelon, Ross O'Reilly and Matthew Long's traditional music group were awarded third place. Well done to the many involved in the resounding success at the festival.

Model UN

Marcus O'Faoláin, Stephen Rooney and their delegation of five others were delighted to win a Commended Delegation Award at the Wesley MUN meeting this term. Meanwhile, James Huggard's delegation representing the Republic of Korea won the award for Best Delegation in the General Assembly. We wish them all well as they continue to learn about international relations, diplomacy and the work of the UN.

Debating

Congratulations to Stephen Rooney who progressed to the semi-final of the Leinster Schools Debating Competition in UCD debating the motion "This House would legalise surrogacy for profit."

Stephen Alger

We are delighted that Stephen Alger's iRevise Geography revision iBook is continuing to grow in recognition and popularity. As well as representing himself, his family, his business and the College at numerous events including the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Student Enterprise Awards 2015 and the METS Carnival of Creative Learning in NUI Maynooth, Stephen has won the Griffith College Business Enterprise Competition 2015, a fabulous achievement.

Fifth Year students are once again commended for their courteous and cooperative nature, together with their excellent contribution to and involvement in extra-curricular activities and their continuing strong academic focus. We remind all of the value of the weekly Application Cards to monitor effort and to measure the effectiveness of students' goal setting and time management. As we begin on the final term of this first leg of the marathon to the Leaving Certificate, all students and parents are encouraged to view and discuss the cards weekly both to affirm good practice and offer direction where needed.



Stephen Alger receives the Griffith College Business Enterprise Award 2015

Sixth Year



Easter is upon us and the class of 2015 have completed their final house exams in preparation for the Leaving Certificate. The major events since February are outlined below,

Environmental Awareness

Environmental awareness week was held from March 2nd to 6th. The main theme of the week was water conservation. At the start of the week, the Blackrock College Green Schools' Committee participated in a *Water Forum* hosted by Belvedere College. On Tuesday 3rd March the Sixth years participated in 'Blue day' to help raise funds and awareness. A special thanks to Richard Grainger (Chairman), Joshua Gorman, Daniel Dunleavy, Tom McNamara and the Green schools' committee.

Reconciliation services

Reconciliation services were held from Monday 9th to Friday 13th of March, we thank Mr Tom Ryan for his organisation of the services.

Rugby

In a closely fought encounter the SCT were very unfortunate to concede an injury time try to Roscrea, leaving the final score 17-13. We congratulate Roscrea who very recently won their first Senior Cup. A special thanks to Hugo Kean and the senior squad on all their efforts and commitment during the year.

The Castle Seconds continue their league campaign with good wins over Belvedere and Terenure. The final group game is against Belvedere, knowing a win for the Castle will see them qualify for the final of the Leinster Premier League.

The Castle Thirds have qualified for the Leinster division one final after an entertaining win against Wilson's Hospital, (43 – 31). They face the House Thirds in the final which will hopefully be played before Easter. We wish the squad well.

The Castle Fourths finished their campaign with a win against St Gerard's, leaving them second in the group to Clongowes. We congratulate Captain Lars Jager and the squad on a great season.

Soccer

A Squad of 28 boys travelled to Manchester for our annual challenge matches with St. Bede's. The result did not go our way, the first team lost 0-4 and the seconds lost 1-3. Aside from this, it was an excellent weekend. After the trophy presentations the Squads travelled to the DW Stadium to watch the Wigan v Leeds game, much to the delight of Sean O'Dowd!

The senior soccer squad have qualified for the final of the Dublin Metropolitan League and are also in the Semi-final of the Leinster Champions League, we wish Captain Sean O'Dowd and the squad all the best.

Water Polo

Our Senior Water Polo Squad won Silver at the All-Ireland Championships held in the Trinity College pool on Wednesday 11th March 2015. We congratulate Captain Ben Lawlor and the squad on reaching the final.

Music

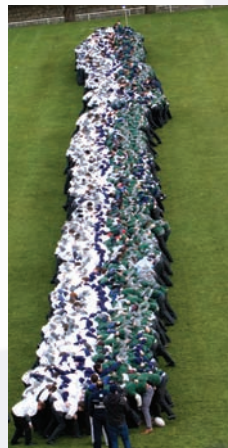
The annual Wesley Music festival took place on the 6th and 7th of March. We congratulate all our students who participated in the weekend where they managed to win, a hugely impressive, 22 awards. We thank Ms O'Kane, Ms O'Connor, Mr Grumley-Traynor, Mr MacDonald and Mr Cavanagh for all their support and efforts over the weekend.

All Ireland Science Olympiad

Congratulations to Joshua Gorman Climax who received a bronze medal in the All-Ireland Olympiad held in DCU on the 7th March. Thanks to Ms Cullen for helping Joshua in preparation of the event.

World record scrum attempt

To mark the launch of Goal-Aidlink 1,044 boys from first to sixth year attempted to



World's largest scrum,
2nd March

break the world's largest scrum, currently held by the English RFU. On hand were referee Alain Rolland, scrum half Charlie Rock and current Ireland internationals Ian Madigan and Jordi Murphy. We await confirmation of our record attempt.

Chess

Our Senior Chess team including Andrew Ryan, Brian McMahon, Chris Collins and Peter McKenna finished an admirable 4th in the Leinster League.

All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad (AILO)

Congratulations to Rory McCluskey, Joshua Gorman Climax and James Brandon who have qualified for the AILO final to be held in D.C.U. on March 25th, 2015. We wish them well in the final.

Lectures

We were again very fortunate to have Oisín McConville address the 6th year students. Oisín spoke very openly and honestly about his gambling addiction and how it

affected all aspects of his life. A huge amount of positive feedback was received from the students.

We also had Dr Fergus Heffernan address the parents about Family dynamics and relationships. A special thanks to the 6th year Parents for organising the evening.

Sixth Year Parents' Association

If you have any material for the 6th year DVD then please drop them into the College reception, FAO of Orna Cassidy. Order forms have been posted out with the last newsletter; if you wish to still order a DVD please fill out the form and drop it into reception.

The Graduation committee are working tirelessly on the planning and organisation of the Graduation Lunch. Any outstanding booking forms should be returned as soon as possible.

Leaving Certificate Payment

Each student has been given a Bank Giro to take home.

The forms can be paid at your local bank or post office.

Please return the top half, on Monday 13th of April, to Mr Kehoe.

Important Dates

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|---|--|
| Easter Study Times | Tuesday 7th to Friday 10th April 9:30 am to 12:30pm 1:30pm to 4:30pm |
| Leaving Certificate Orals | Modern Languages 13th – 17th April Irish 20th – 24th April |
| Leaving Certificate Music Practical's | 20th- 21st April |
| Vaccinations for those travelling to Machakos | Wednesday 29th April @ 12:45 |
| Sports and Family Day | Sunday 10th May |
| Graduation Day | Sunday 17th May |
| Prize Day | Saturday 23rd May |



Science Department

Valencia Science Centre:

Fifteen Second Year Science students who were unable to be included in last October's trip were given the opportunity to visit the Science Centre in Valencia Spain during the mid-term break, 16th to 20th March. Accompanied by Mr Aylward and Mr Rowsome, they enjoyed an exciting time in the Science and Adventure centres.

Air Corps Baldonnell: On Wednesday 4th March – Mr Aylward brought seventeen TY Physics students on a fascinating tour of the Baldonnell air base. Capt. Murphy gave an excellent lecture on 'The Physics of Flight'. The students then were brought to the aircraft hangar and each one flew in the simulator.

Tech Group: On Thursday 5th March – Ms Cullen brought a group of TY Chemistry students on a tour of Tech Group facilities.

Chemistry Olympiad

Congratulations to Joshua Gorman Climax (6th Year) who participated in the Chemistry Olympiad in DCU on Saturday 7th March, 2015 with 150 other students from both the north and south of Ireland. He came third, winning a bronze medal. Very well done!

Creative Arts & Digital Learning Centre Co



Writers@Rock

The final author in our writers@Rock series this academic year was Paul Howard AKA Ross O' Carroll-Kelly. We held Paul's talk in the lecture hall to accommodate the 120+ students who came to hear him talk, on 9th February. We were lucky enough to have Paul not only read some excerpts of his books to us, but also to discuss the character of Ross and the books as snapshots of social history (charting the rise and fall of the Celtic tiger). Paul fielded many questions from our students including his literary influences, his methodology when writing and the difference in writing novels and plays.



World Book Day

On 5th of March we celebrated World Book Day in the Creative Arts & Digital Learning Centre. We had a literary table quiz for 2nd year English class, our winning

team was "Keeping up with the Shakespearians" who each received a €10 book token. A huge thank you to the students and their teacher Ms Nulty for participating. We had a book sale in aid of St Michael's house with some books donated by members of staff.

A number of students took a chance on our 'mystery' books and borrowed from our "Don't Judge a book by its cover" shelf display – the aim was to try to get students to take a chance on a book that they might not ordinarily read.

We had a display of our staff questionnaires, where a number of our staff answered questions based on their reading habits as children and on their favourite books.

And lastly we had a 'Vote for your favourite book', where students & staff voted for their favourite out of 12 titles. The top 5 winners were:

1. **The Hobbit by JRR Tolkien with 80 votes**
2. **Cherub Series by Robert Muchamore with 27 votes**
3. **Harry Potter series by JK Rowling also with 27 votes**
4. **Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde with 25 votes**
5. **The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins with 15 votes**

Pastoral Care Programme



Lent 2015

This year Ash Wednesday fell during mid-term but sixth year students who were availing of the opportunity for study in the College were facilitated by Fr. Hyacinth who visited the Study Hall with ashes for distribution.

During the third week of Lent, from March 9th to 13th each of our students were offered the opportunity to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. During the course of this week, there were 19 celebrations of Rite 2 of the sacrament in the chapel. These services were led by members of the RE Department and Chaplaincy Team and supported by members of the Spiritan community and priests of the Dublin diocese. We thank all who contributed their time, talent and ministry during the course of what is a very important and prayerful week in the life of the College.

Pilgrimage

Since February mid-term, the word 'pilgrimage' has featured very prominently on notices both on the Transition and Fifth Year corridors...

In Transition Year, preparations for Camino 2015 are gathering momentum. Four practice walks have been arranged before the twenty students and four adults depart on May 2nd. The first of these involved a trek through the pathways of Kilmashogue and Ticknock forests in pleasant sunshine on March 11th. The pilgrims were guided by Fr. Marc Whelan C.S.Sp, who is travelling as chaplain with the group. Mr. Patrick O'Neill led the second walk on the Bog of Frogs loop around the Hill of Howth on March 25th. Pre-departure hikes in Glendalough and to St. James's Church where the credentials will be collected and stamped for the first time, await the group after Easter.

In Fifth Year, twenty two students applied for the six places made available to Blackrock College on the Dublin Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes in September 2015. The applications and interviews were of an extremely high standard and it was noted by Fr. Damian Farnon, a member of the interview panel, that every applicant from the Class of 2016 would have made an excellent contribution to the pilgrimage. A most encouraging sign of the leadership that this year group will bring to the College next year! At the end of two days of interviews, Conor Gallagher, David Hardiman, Tim Maguire, Jordan McDonald, Ross O'Toole and Rory Patterson were selected to travel. Preparations for this pilgrimage will begin with a meeting for all second-level pilgrims in Belvedere College on April 21st. We wish our students well with this undertaking.

5th Year Family Mass & SPIRASI

On Sunday March 1st, the second Sunday of Lent, the Fifth Year Family Mass was celebrated in the College. Fr. Billy Cleary C.S.Sp., the Spiritan Mission Co-ordinator in Ireland who led the Spiritan ethos team on their visit to Blackrock in February, was

the main celebrant. In his homily he reminded all present of the value of the pathways of prayer, fasting and justice that we can follow through Lent, in enhancing our celebration of the great Christian feast of Easter.

The fifth year community was also joined in this celebration of the Eucharist by Mr. Andreas Mokake, the Integration Co-ordinator for clients of Spirasi, and his family. SPIRASI is the Spiritan Asylum Services Initiative and at the end of Mass, Shane Conlon and Kevin Moore handed over a cheque for 2,122 euro to assist the mission of Spirasi. This was the proceeds of the recent 5th Year Fast undertaken by 79 students and their Dean Ms. Dobbyn. Congrats and many thanks to all.

A word of thanks and congratulations also to Ms. O'Kane, Ms. O'Connor, Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Grumley-Taylor for their musical contribution to the College liturgies since the start of the year. Their work on the liturgical music programme with each year group contributes enormously to our family liturgies and the 'triple crown' success of the Corless, Libermann and Leman choirs in the Wesley Feis this March provided a fitting tribute for both their tireless dedication and wonderful talent. Well done to all.

In Conclusion...

Since mid-term many other pastoral activities helped focus the minds, hearts and hands of our students on the presence of the Kingdom of God among us...

Each week, the TY soup run under the guidance of Ms. McMahon and Mr. Walsh continued to visit the homeless on the streets of Dublin; RE 46 spent two weeks in twelve separate Pastoral Placement venues where they engaged with the issue of disability on many levels; as part of Addiction Awareness Day, Mr. Conor McMahon arranged for each student in the school to be addressed on the many forms that addiction can take and the accompanying damage that it can cause and Mr. O'Reilly and Mr. Goan facilitated the ongoing meetings between the Blackrock TY Faith Friends group and the Willow Park 6th class confirmation candidates in the lead up to their celebration of sacrament of Confirmation in Blackrock Parish Church on Saturday 21st March.

However, even in the Pastoral department, with an eye on the Camino, arrangements for a post-confirmation gathering to conclude the Faith Friends programme and preparations for Graduation Day in May, there is a danger that we can overlook the importance that the season of Easter holds for our lives. As Pope Benedict noted 'The Christian faith stands or falls with the truth of the testimony that Christ is risen from the dead'. Hopefully, all will find some time over the next few weeks to reflect on the events of Easter and to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus with joy.

'Christ is risen, Alleluia!' 'He is risen indeed, Alleluia! Alleluia!'... A happy Easter to all.



Careers and Counselling

All Leaving Cert students have now submitted a CAO application. A number of 6th years have also submitted their portfolios for relevant courses like architecture, art and design while others applying for music and drama related courses are awaiting auditions. As well as this some students have applied for scholarships in a range of different third level institutions. CAO will also allow students to use the Change of Mind facility to finalise their third level choices from May 5th until July 1st 2015 at 5.15pm. With this facility students can change their course order as well as adding in new courses to their course lists. Students however, cannot add in restricted courses

at the Change of Mind stage. There is also a Late Application deadline to CAO of May 1st 2015. The message to all CAO applicants, even in these challenging economic times is still to apply for third level courses which are of interest to them and consequently they will be motivated to engage with these courses and find satisfaction and success.

A number of 6th year students have also made DARE applications this year. As well as this a number of 6th year medicine applicants sat the HPAT test on February 28th.



Careers and Counselling Cont'd

These students will receive the results of their HPAT in late June after the Leaving Certificate. Some Leaving Certificate students have also firmly accepted offers through UCAS in Great Britain while others still attend interviews and await final offers.

Open days continue for Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses and a number of students have submitted applications for these courses. There are an ever increasing number of PLC courses, Level 5 and Level 6 FETAC on offer at present. Exciting opportunities are available to students when they do a Level 5/Level 6 FETAC course, which allows them the freedom to progress to Level 7 and Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. This progression can take place from one college to another or to a university. If a student receives a level 5/6 FETAC award he can use the result in place of his Leaving Certificate results. It is very important for all students to understand this progression and its implications. Further information is available from the career counsellors in the college.

At present many 6th years have completed and are busy completing field studies in Geography, research documents in History and Religion, notebooks in Home Economics as well as practicals in Art, Construction Studies and Design and Communication Graphics. These students find it comforting that they have already completed work worth 20-40% of the Leaving Certificate examination in particular subjects. The Leaving Cert students are also busy preparing for their Leaving

Certificate oral examinations which take place immediately after the Easter break. Three 6th year students, James Brandon, Joshua Climax and Rory McCluskey recently competed in the final of the All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad which was held in Dublin City University on March 24th. This is a contest in which students develop their own strategies for solving problems in fascinating real languages from around the globe. Students must use their ingenuity to solve puzzles such as deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics; interpreting Tenji, the Japanese equivalent of Braille; and writing the names of football teams in Chinese. No prior knowledge of linguistics or a second language is required: even the hardest problems require only logical ability, patient work, and a willingness to think around corners. The goal is to develop students' problem solving skills and to inspire them to consider the fascinating range of careers at the intersection of language, linguistics and computing. The students that partook in this competition are now awaiting the results of the final. A number of 6th year students also attended the Computer Science Department in Trinity College on March 16th where they got the opportunity to shadow a Computer Science student for the day to attend lectures and workshops and to find out more information about this particular area.

All year groups have now sat and received their Easter exam results. Counsellors in all year groups continue to monitor the academic attainment and extra-curricular involvement of all students in the college.



Halls of Residence

The Boarding School has had a very busy term in all aspects of school life as a boarder. It has been a very positive and enjoyable experience for all concerned and we are all looking forward to returning to our families for the Easter Break.

The following activities are taking place throughout each week: Public Speaking, Tuesday evening Mass in the Oratory, Boarders' Choir and Boarders' Book Club. Thanks to all the adults who help organise and oversee the continued success of these activities. The Boarders' Sunday Mass, thank you to the Spiritan Community and as always, their sermons were engaging and relevant to their lives.



The Wesley Music Festival followed the following week and a number of Boarders were involved in the winning Choir (Jay Dolan, Hanyu Zhang, Andrew Gardiner, Elan Richardson Omamo, Rory Patterson, Matthew Long, and Hugh Egleston) congratulations to all involved.

In sporting matters, it has being a very busy term for our Boarders, we have representatives on most teams from Senior Cup Team to the Under 13 C's to the 2nd

Year Basketball Team. We wish all our boys every success and fulfilment in their upcoming endeavours.

Since the February mid-term the boys have been on a number of trips including Trinity College, Aviva Stadium, SCT Cup Final, Ireland v France, and Ireland v England matches.

The Castle is undergoing some refurbishment, the recreational area is upgraded, and corridors are complete with photographs showing all the wonderful activities that go on in the school throughout the year. Thanks to Andrea Fitzgerald, Fintan O'Connor and his team, Alan Sheridan and his team, and all the housemasters and of course the boys for all their help to have the Castle looking so well each day. Well done!



Thank you once again to all the Castle staff for their sterling work throughout the year. The Castle is a vibrant and wonderful environment, thanks to enthusiasm and care the staff and boys show for their home.



Environmental Awareness Week -



Environmental Awareness Week - March 2nd to 6th

The main theme of the week was water conservation with recycling, energy conservation and biodiversity also promoted. A wide variety of events and activities took place to raise awareness about these environmental issues. It was particularly encouraging to see so many students and teachers collaborating and the week was very much a cross curricular effort. Highlights of the week included: guest speaker Mr Eamon Ryan (Leader of the Green Party) who spoke to 2nd Year and Transition Year groups about the issue of water charges; participation in a Water Forum hosted by Belvedere College; an entertaining debate on the motion 'This house would become vegetarian to save the

environment'; Blue Day in 6th Year to raise awareness and collect donations for the work of Fr Pat McNamara in Brazil and a series of environmental workshops facilitated by Ms Emily Robyn Archer of Cre8 Sustainability.

The events and activities held during the week are listed below:

Water Forum in Belvedere College

Guest Speaker Mr Eamon Ryan

Debate between Green Schools Committee and the Debating Society

Environmental Workshops on water and biodiversity

Blue Day in 6th Year

CSPE projects

Model United Nations (MUN) projects

Displays on St Patrick's Hall

TV Monitors Presentation on water conservation

Presentations at 3rd and 6th Year assemblies

Dendrochronology display

Word of the Week featured a water related word Fracking

Water Mascot

The Green Schools Committee would like to thank all the students, teachers and subject departments that helped organise the events and activities. The committee also appreciates the support of the maintenance, housekeeping and grounds department. Thank you to Mr Dean Eaton, Green Schools' Officer at Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, for his enthusiastic support of Green Schools' initiatives. The environmental issues raised are important in a school, local, national and global context and the Green Schools Committee urges us all to be aware of our 'environmental footprints' so that we can become more environmentally friendly in our daily lives.

Include Photos of mascot and workshops

Sport



Badminton

Badminton competitions have finished for this year's season. All of our teams represented themselves and their school very well in all age categories. We look forward to next year's competitions. The boys continue to train and play in-house matches on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. We have also been fortunate to have had a badminton coach (Niall Reynolds, who has represented Ireland in the past) join us for this term on Tuesday evenings which has been a great help to the boys.

Basketball

The 2nd year Basketball season has only recently ended but it has been a season that Michael Ryan (Captain) and his squad can look back on and be extremely proud. Having won one and lost one of the first two matches in the group, Blackrock showed excellent progression in winning the two games to win the group, beating Drimnagh Castle 26-8 with a superb defensive performance and then St. Conleths 25-16. Unfortunately in the East-Leinster Quarter final against Adamstown Blackrock came up just short losing 18-16. Reaching the Quarter finals was a fantastic achievement for this team considering the inexperience of the panel at the start. Next season can be looked forward to with much optimism.

Rugby Senior

The Senior Cup Team's involvement in the 2015 Leinster Senior Schools Competition ended on the 11th February against Roscrea. An intense and tightly fought encounter, with the result at issue until the final play of the game. That last play saw Roscrea maul over the line to come from behind and win the match 17-14.



Giuseppe Coyne evades a tackle, JCT final

While being disappointed and for a time "crestfallen", as the principal commented in his notice to the school, all can reflect well on their endeavours. The spirit in the stand and back in the school refectory further enhanced the 'Fides et Robur' ethos and demonstrated the appreciation for the squad's efforts on the day and throughout the entire season.

Roscrea following on from their win against Newbridge College in the semi-final replay, defeated Belvedere College on St Patrick's Day to claim their first ever senior cup title.

Junior

The junior squad have continued where they left off last term with further victories at both levels. The Junior League team's campaign has been accelerating of late with excellent victories against St Michaels and Clongowes and most recently against Belvedere (48-0) settings them up for a potential final before the end of term.

After progressing into the Junior Cup quarter-finals at the expense of a gallant Clongowes side last term, our JCT were drawn against an equally talented and hard-working Gonzaga side. The game remained in the balance right up to the end with our boys running out 21-12 victors.



James Bourke, 3rd Yr, wins a line-out in JCT final

Semi-finals are tough occasions at the best of times, but when coming up against our great rivals and fellow finalists for the past two years, Belvedere, this was going to be more difficult still. And so it proved to be. The team showed incredible belief and a never-say-die attitude to score a try in injury time and deservedly make the schools third junior final in a row.

In the Cup Final, played in perfect conditions on 22nd March, Liam Turner's JCT managed to turn around a 13-5 deficit to beat a very talented Terenure side in an incredibly entertaining contest.

A try from Michael McGagh with 12 minutes to go brought the score to 13-12 and the tremendous pressure the team then managed to apply to the Terenure line resulted in a penalty in front of the posts, which Joey Caputo slotted

over with great composure to bring the Cup home for the 49th time. A tremendous achievement by all involved.

Chess

The Senior team travelled to Gonzaga to play their last league match against Gonzaga B on Wednesday 25th January. This was the Senior team's last match in the Leinster League. The senior team consisted of: Andrew Ryan, Brian McMahon, Peter McKenna, Chris Collins, Pengbo Wu and Patrick Hasset. The final score was 3-2 to Gonzaga; with Brian and Chris winning their matches. Patrick Hasset had a very close match. The 2 points were very important and helped the team to come 4th in the Senior School Leinster League. Congratulations!

The junior team, consisting of: Steven Ryan, Michael Ryan, Michael McDonald, Fergus Woods and Patrick O'Connell, travelled to St. Brendan's in Bray for their last league match. The team won 4-1 with Michael Ryan losing a very tight game. Unfortunately the team did not make it through to the semi-finals but finished in a well-deserved 4th place in a very tough group. Well done.

Cross Country

All teams performed very well against some very tough competition at the Leinster Championships in Santry. Our Junior Team of Richard O'Farrell (33rd), Tim D'Arcy (36th), Max McKenna (45th), David Fitzgibbon (56th) came in 8th place.

Our Inter team of Mark Dignam (29th), Conor Halpin (35th), Edward McKenna (40th) and Patrick Fahy (50th) came in 6th place. Our Senior team of Luke McCann (7th), Christian McKenna (12th), Aengus Meldon (29th), and Brian McGlone (30th) won silver and came in second place, automatically qualifying them for the All Ireland Championships on March 7th, a fantastic achievement!

Our Senior team ran an excellent race at the All Ireland Cross Country Championships held in Clongowes Wood and were unlucky to come in 5th place. The team consisted of Christian McKenna (9th), Luke McCann (14th), Brian McGlone (50th), Aengus Meldon (51st), Declan Norton (63rd), Bernard O'Sullivan (73rd), Jack Stokes (76th) and Matthew McKenna (79th).

It has been a fantastic achievement for the boys to qualify and race in the All-Ireland Championships and we're all very excited to see how they fare next year.

Table Tennis

Blackrock Junior A and Blackrock Senior A have sealed the Leinster League Junior/Senior double for the 5th year in a row, while the Blackrock Minor A League win means Blackrock complete the Leinster League treble for only the 4th time ever.

Blackrock Senior A/Senior B have for the 6th year in a row taken the Kemp Shield for the Leinster Senior Division 1 title, with only the match between the two teams remaining to decide the title.

In Leinster Junior Division 1, Blackrock have taken the NC Mahony Cup for Junior League Champions for the 5th year in a row. Minor A have also sealed their title, and regained the Sean Egan Cup which was narrowly conceded in 2014, taking the Leinster Minor Division 1 crown for what is both the 4th time in 5 years, and also only the 4th time ever.

Junior B & Junior 2A have the match between them to decide the Leinster Junior Division 2 title, while the Junior 2C team came from behind to take the win in their last match and are in the hunt for the Runners Up spot in Leinster Division 4. Minor B are awaiting other results, to see if their already confirmed top 2 finish will turn into a League win in Leinster Minor Division 2, or if they will have to settle for an excellent silver medal finish.

Senior A, Senior B and Minor A are all through to the Cup Semi Finals, with Minor B, Junior A & Junior B at Quarter Final stage, as the A teams chase their own respective Leinster League/Cup double titles, while their League victories qualify the Minor and Junior teams for the 6-man playoffs to earn the Leinster place at the All Ireland Schools Championships in May, with the Seniors already through to All Ireland Finals

Senior Soccer

The senior soccer team have had a busy schedule since the last mid-term. A friendly defeat to Mount Merrion over mid-term was a good test for the team and stood them in good stead against Wexford CBS in the ? final of the Leinster Champions League. A very good Wexford side took the lead early in the first half however a spirited response from the team saw the soccer team win the game 2-1.

That weekend the team travelled over to St Bede's, Manchester for the annual game. It was a great weekend enjoyed by all. However the results of the two games did not go our way the weekend as a whole was a huge success. We are already looking forward to next year's return fixture.

On our return from Manchester the team had to get ready for the semi-final of the metropolitan league against Malahide CS. In a tight first half a Mark Gordon penalty saw the team take a 1-0 lead into half time. An excellent team performance from start to finish showing the battling qualities that have saw the team progress so far this year helped the team get a 4-0 lead. A late consolation goal from Malahide was deserved as they played excellently up until Blackrock's 2nd goal.

Upcoming fixtures include the Dublin Metropolitan Final V. St Fintans, and the Leinster Champions League semi-final also against St Fintans.

Hurling

The Second Year hurlers had a great win over Oatlands (4-5 vs 3-6) in the first round of the championship. The team captain, Stephen Dunne, played a key role in securing victory. First half goals by Dylan Connaughton and Ross Barron ensured Blackrock had a comfortable lead at half time. Despite playing against a strong breeze in the second half, Blackrock held on to secure victory thanks to some excellent long range points from Stephen Dunne and great defensive work by Alex Carroll and Daniel Kelly.

In the 2nd round of the championship Blackrock defeated a highly fancied Clonkeen side (6-6 vs 2-4) Blackrock made the most of a strong breeze in the first half as they led 5:6 to 1 point, thanks to some great long range points by Stephen Dunne and opportunist goal taking from Ross Barron, Dylan Connaughton, Tim Darcey and Donal McKeown. Playing Against a gale force wind in the second half, Blackrock's backline stood strong to the Clonkeen revival. This was an excellent all round team performance by Blackrock playing with great skill and spirit. They will now play Lucan in the next round.



Jubilant JCT squad after their cup win

Photos courtesy Rock Photography www.rockphotography.ie