

Blackrock College Newsletter



Special points of interest:

- Boarding School
- Pastoral Care Programme
- Guidance and Counselling
- Science Department

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CHRISTMAS 2013

Dear Parents

“Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world”. Archbishop Desmond Tutu

The late **Nelson Mandela** spent his first night of freedom with his close friend and confidante **Archbishop Tutu**. **Archbishop Tutu** accompanied **Nelson Mandela** through the most difficult time in his long walk to freedom. Many described him as the moral compass of the anti-apartheid movement as he passionately declared that segregation and discrimination were against God's will. “Do your little bit of good where you are” – a simple message for us all especially at Christmas time. It is a reminder that it is small gestures that count, that make a difference.

I write this letter the day after our Carol service. Over 1,000 Blackrock boys – the Willow Park 1st Years were in attendance – gathered with their teachers in preparation for Christmas. An incredible sight. Their engagement in community singing, appreciation of our **Leman** and **Libermann Choirs**, rapt attention to our readings and prayers represented a community in harmony and peace.

Conn McCarrick (6th Year), Chairman of the Student Council, led us in our community prayer. **“The wonder of Christmas is not just that God gives us his Son but that God trusts us to take care of Him. God trusts us”.**

I say without fear of contradiction that at Blackrock we have trustworthy people, willing to make a difference, doing their little bit of good where they are, be it through the St Vincent de Paul Appeal, Pastoral Placements or engagement in community activity.

It is important that we celebrate times and places where the boys have been magnificent, be it at the Titanic Centre, Belfast, in Fiddler on the Roof, at M.U.N., Debating or on B.C.R., in the Sports Hall, on the playing fields, in the swimming pool, in the College Chapel and in the classroom.

Christmas is a reminder that our lives should be predicated on acts of compassion, sacrifice, courage and kindness.

In the words of the great **Nelson Mandela** whose legacy is the power of forgiveness, understanding and acceptance: **“A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination”**. Long may the heads and hearts of Blackrock – staff, students, parents and Spiritan Community - be inspired by the Christmas message.

Yours sincerely

ALAN MacGINTY
Principal



Second Year



The Second Year boys have now completed their first full term on the senior campus with a busy half term since Halloween. In the **House Competitions**, the Rugby Blitz was held with some of the most thrilling matches we have had in this event. De Valera and Leman were drawn at full time in the semi-final and also after extra-time; so the match was decided by golden try. It was maybe inevitable then that De Valera would go on to win the final against Duff in another excellent and hard-fought match. Congratulations to all the competitors.

The Swimming Gala is also counted for points on the on-going House Scoreboard in Second year, with De Valera winning here as well, with Leman and Ebenrecht coming second and third. Ben Hansen distinguished himself by winning the Second Year Open 50m and also setting a new record of 1:04.04 in the Junior Championship 100m. We wish him well on his return to Australia. Next term will see the conclusion of House Competitions in Chess and Table Tennis and the holding of the Cross Country event, amongst others.

The **extra-curricular activities** proceeded in the second half of the term, with rugby continuing to be the most popular, of course, but with great interest shown in rowing amongst others. Congratulations to all participants in these as well in swimming and water polo, orchestra and public speaking, chess and table tennis, squash and debating, cross country and Willow Wheelers, the science club and the art club, badminton and GAA. Each student must be involved in at least one of these events.

This was the first occasion when this group could enjoy the **College musical**, which this year was a wonderful production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Many of the Second Year boys participated with the College Choir in our Carol Service amongst other events. Hopefully they will also enjoy the stage of the National Concert Hall with their involvement next term in the *Leman Concert*.

Many congratulations to all the boys in Second Year for their contribution to the *Duck Race* for the **St. Vincent De Paul Society, raising nearly €3,000**. It is very much part of our Spiritan charism to have a concern for those less fortunate, especially at this time of year, and all of the boys reflected that in their efforts during the Advent season.

Third Year



It has been a busy time since our return after Halloween. The increase in the number of boys on the Principal's and Credit Lists is encouraging and an acknowledgement of a lot of very hard work put in by many boys. Where Application cards fall short of this standard we ask Parents to be proactive in encouraging/urging an immediate response. The extensive extra curricular programme is a wonderful antidote to the academic challenge and it is great to see so many boys engaged in a whole range of activities including Rugby, Rowing, Water Polo, Cross Country, Swimming, Debating, Cycling, Table Tennis, Chess, Badminton and Art Club. Many are also getting great fulfilment from the activities they are engaged in with Clubs in their own local communities. None of this precludes getting some valuable revision done over the weekends as we head to the Junior Certificate in just five months time. Balance and **Respect** for each other are key to their remaining time in Third Year.

As many boys in the Senior Years will testify their Day of Reflection with Mr. Gerry Keegan was an important part of their Third Year experience. The number of Sixth Years who every year apply to be part of the group he leads on their three day Retreat is indeed a signal for those that follow of the lasting benefit of such a day. Gerry has a unique way of connecting with the boys as he shares life experiences with them, his songs and guitar playing contributing very much to the day. Many of the challenges he faced are very real in the world our sons face today. His recall of the re emergence of the Eucharist in his life is powerful. May I suggest that as Parents we encourage our sons to share their experience of the day and topics discussed on their return home. **Please read the Letter enclosed for details**

Fr. John Delaney, Administrator of Blackrock Parish, was the Chief Concelebrant at the Third Year Family Mass celebrated on the Feast of Christ the King. He urged the boys to continue the great tradition in the College of service to, and care for others. He reminded the congregation that we are blessed with many gifts and talents and that we should be inspired by the good around us. In this regard he mentioned the TV programme Secret Millionaires where financial assistance is given to support the great work people are doing in their communities. Great credit and gratitude to all who contributed to a very prayerful celebration of the Eucharist.

Many thanks to all who supported the **Shoe Box Appeal** and the **Duck Race** in aid of the St. Vincent de Paul. It was great to see the number of Shoe Boxes build up in the Office in the second last week of term.

**Parent Teacher Meeting Thursday
23rd January – time to be notified on Return
to school**

Transition Year



Swimming Gala

To be ranked in the top six swimmers in the school is an amazing achievement. Three TY students - Christian McKenna, Matthew Long and Sean Hassett have achieved this standard. They participated in the hotly contested and very prestigious Principal's Trophy championship race in this year's swimming gala. Congratulations to all of you for your brilliant display of swimming prowess in the race. Particular congratulations to Matthew Long who came 2nd in the race.

We are delighted that a new 4th year record was set in the 4th year Freestyle relay by Ebenrecht House. The original record of 55.43 seconds was set in 2009. The new record of 53.92 will hopefully stand for some time to come.

Science Week

November 11th -15th was the College's Science Week. Mr Gerry Aylward organised a trip out to Baldonnell for twenty physics students. There, they were addressed by a pilot who explained the physics behind aircraft construction and flight. It was a fantastic opportunity for the boys involved. On 9th November, Transition Year chemistry classes attended a demonstration and talk given by Mr John Daly (former Head of Science in the College and PDST Facilitator). The same afternoon, all Transition Year students attended a lecture given by Professor Luke O'Neill, Professor of Biochemistry in Trinity College and Ireland's leading expert on the immune system. Professor O'Neill, an inspirational and humorous speaker, is a winner of the Boyle Medal, TED Dublin Speaker and *Science Foundation Ireland* Researcher of the Year. What a marvellous opportunity for our students. Many thanks to the Science Department for organising such marvellous lectures.



TY Science visit to Baldonnell airport

Dragons' Den

Mr Cathal Copeland organised entrepreneurial workshops on 4th November for the boys interested in entering the Dragons' Den competition next term. Two other business workshops have been organised since then. One was run by Mr Patrick O'Neill and the other by Mr Frank O'Sullivan. I am indebted to Mr Cathal Copeland the Business Department for its enthusiastic support and promotion of the Dragons' Den project.

Lecture Series

On 25th October Dave O'Brien from the I.R.F.U. spoke to the boys about refereeing and the rules of rugby. It was a very interesting and informative talk. Dave showed video clips of some controversial refereeing decisions and talked the students through the rights and wrongs of each one. He also wanted to make the boys aware of the opportunities available to them if they wished to consider refereeing as a career choice in the future.



Transition Year

On 26th November Donnacha McCarthy, accompanied by his wonderful guide dog Holly, spoke to the boys about his own blindness and the work of the Irish Guide Dogs' Association. The fact that Donnacha is in his early twenties and lost his sight as a boy added to the power of his talk.

Blackrock College Radio 97.3 fm Nov. 18th – 22nd

Approximately 180 students took part in a very successful week of broadcasting. Guests during the week included An Taoiseach Enda Kenny, Sean Barrett, Richard Boyd-Barrett, Peter Mathews, Ruairi Quinn, Mario Rosenstock, Fiona Coghlan and many others. This unique project is a mammoth undertaking. The ability to broadcast programmes and live shows for 47.5 hours is the product of tremendous teamwork.

Congratulations to all the students who participated in BCR and a special word of thanks to Owen Brennan, Garry Sullivan and the many teachers who helped produce such wonderful programmes.

Soccer Marathon Nov 29th – 30th

The Soccer Marathon raises funds for the St Vincent De Paul Christmas hamper project. This year's marathon was a tremendous success, albeit many of the one hundred and five students involved complained of muscle strain and fatigue afterwards. Special thanks to Mr Owen Brennan for his organisation and running of the event. The students raised €16,500. This is a phenomenal amount of money. Well done to all involved!

Christmas Tree Project

This year I was inundated with applications from students who wished to get involved in helping to sell Christmas trees in the College car park (another very important St. Vincent De Paul fund-raising project). The boys' energy, good humour, enthusiasm and sense of fun are wonderful to behold. It never ceases to amaze me how they transform into connoisseurs of Nobilis and Spruce. They make wonderful salesmen! This year, the clement weather conditions added to the boys' enjoyment of the project.

Mince Pie Morning

The Transition Year Mince Pie Morning raised €378.00 in aid of the St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal. The event was held on Tuesday 10th December in the Home Economics Room. We were delighted to welcome parents and teachers alike to this most enjoyable annual fund-raiser. I would like to thank the parents who attended this unique event. I hope they were suitably impressed by the boys' culinary skills! Special thanks to Ms Karen Marren and her students for organising this very special event.



Dublin All Ireland winning player Cian O'Sullivan with Mark Savage & Alex Considine (TY)

Hampers

At time of writing, we are preparing for the culmination of the St Vincent De Paul Christmas project; the packing and distribution of Christmas hampers. This year we have committed ourselves to producing 220 hampers – no mean feat. On Friday 13th December, approximately 80 students will help with the packing and on Saturday 14th December, the hampers will be distributed to people in need. The boys will assist their parents in delivering the hampers and will therefore have the opportunity to witness personally the delight of the recipients. It is important for the boys to realise how their soccer sponsorship and other fund-raising activities really do make a difference to people! The support of parents and past students in helping us to deliver these hampers to Killinarden is always very much appreciated.

Leaflet Distribution for the St Vincent De Paul

On Wednesday 4th December, approximately fifty students were involved in a leaflet drop in the Booterstown/Blackrock area to publicise the urgent need for funds for the St Vincent De Paul Society this Christmas. They did a great job of spreading the word.

Holocaust Reminder

On Friday December 6th, we were greatly honoured when the Deputy Israeli Ambassador to Ireland invited our Transition Year students to attend a screening of a film *Adam Resurrected* and a talk by a survivor of the Auschwitz Death Camp, Mrs Bat-Sheva Dagan. It was an extraordinary day and the experience of listening to Bat-Sheva Dagan's account of her horrendous experiences was truly memorable. She emphasised to the boys the importance of always remembering that they are witnesses to a witness of what happened in Auschwitz. The boys' respect for the speaker, the many questions they asked her and their obvious admiration for her courage were indicative of the powerful impact she had on them. We are extremely grateful that we were given the opportunity to attend such a unique event.

Soup Run

Last year a group of TY students took part in a "soup-run" organised by the Legion of Mary and Sr. Consilio's 'Cuan Mhuire' Rehabilitation Centre. This soup-run operates out of Teach Mhuire 38 /39 Lower Gardiner Street and distributes hot drinks, sandwiches and other snacks to homeless men and women who are sleeping rough in Dublin city centre.

This year again, the Legion of Mary are willing to accompany our current TYs who would like to volunteer for this initiative. Ms Mary McMahon, chaplain to our 6th Year boys, will liaise with the Legion of Mary on behalf of Blackrock College.

Thus far, over 30 students in TY have expressed an interest in participating. We hope to begin our soup run when we return after the Christmas break.

The night in question is Thursdays 7.00pm – 10.30pm. No more than 4 boys will take part on any given night and they will be accompanied by experienced adults.

Solas Prison Rugby

Organised by Mr Owen Brennan, the Solas Prison Rugby project is a unique pastoral experience in a very challenging environment. It is of enormous benefit to the inmates involved. Seven Transition Year students played their first match of tag rugby against inmates of Wheatfield Prison on Wednesday 12th December. In what was a pulsating match, the Transition Years were unlucky to lose by a score line of 21-19. The team was captained by Stefan Doyle. Other members of the team were Stephen Connolly, Shane Fenelon, David Fenn, Tadhg Fergus, James Toner and Shane Whelan. We would like to thank the team for their respectful engagement with the programme. Next match February 12th

Work Experience

As you are aware the first Transition Year Work Experience will take place from 10th-14th February 2014. The latest date for returning details of this placement was **Wednesday 11th December 2013**. However some students have failed to meet this deadline. The deadline is essential to facilitate the extensive administrative workload that this project requires. Work Experience Details Forms are available on the TY web site: www.Rockty.com

User name: ty

Password: rock.

Gaisce

About one hundred and twenty students have signed up to work towards achieving their bronze Gaisce award. Many have already completed their Gaisce adventure component, having participated in the hike and retreat run by Mr John Forrest in the wilds of Wexford. They should be working hard at the moment doing their community service and other tasks in order to attain their award.

Young Scientist Exhibition

All Transition Year students will visit *The Young Scientist Exhibition* in the R.D.S. on **Thursday, January 9th**. That morning the boys will go directly to the R.D.S. and check-in there at 9.30 a.m. They will return to school for afternoon classes. The entrance fee of €5.00 will be collected when the boys return after the holidays.

Evening Courses

A new series of evening courses including Legal Studies, ECDL, Driver Education, Yoga and First Aid will run again in the second term. Application forms will be available in mid-January.

India

Nine Transition Year students will be travelling to India with GOAL in January. This is the third time Transition Year students have been lucky enough to make this trip to see some of GOAL's projects in Kolkata. The boys will be accompanied by Ms Anne Payne and Alan Vard (from GOAL). I know this is a trip that will transform the boys' lives. We wish Ms Payne and the boys lots of luck.

Transition Year Parent-Teacher Meeting

This very important event took place on 5th November and was very well attended. It gave parents an opportunity to meet their sons' teachers and discuss their progress before their forthcoming Christmas exams.

Other News

On 5th November Transition Year students went on field trips to places like Croke Park, *Awesome Walls*, Dublin Bay Cruise and a skiing centre. I think I can safely say that they had a great time.

On 13th November, fifty students attended a ceremony in the Helix where DCU honoured Brian O'Driscoll with an honorary doctorate. The boys' enthusiastic response to one of their own was appreciated by the legendary rugby player.

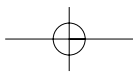
I would like to congratulate the Arch Club on celebrating its tenth anniversary recently. The club does tremendous work and was recently honoured by DLRCC. Quite a few boys from TY do their Gaisce community service with the Arch Club and have been enriched enormously by this experience.



Christmas Carol Service 2013

Transition Year Parents' Social

The Transition Year Parents' Social will take place in the College on **Friday, 31st January**. This is always a most enjoyable night out and a great opportunity to meet the parents of other boys in the year group. An acceptance sheet for the Social is enclosed with this newsletter.



Fifth Year



Fifth Year students continue to make significant contributions to the extra-curricular life of Blackrock College in many diverse fields as the second half of the first term draws to a close.

There are currently eight players from 5th year on the **Senior Soccer Squad**. With victories over Drimnagh Castle (2-0), Pres Bray (4-2) and St Joseph's Fairview (7-0) they have made their way through to the semi-finals of the Leinster Cup which is to be completed after Christmas. The hard work in training has shown on the field and they hope for continued success after Christmas.

Between the 18th and 22nd of November, the talents of 5th Year students made a highly significant contribution to the success of this year's musical **Fiddler on the Roof**. Their professional performances impressed and entertained many of the audience.

The musical talents of this particular year group were also very much in evidence during the **College Carol Service** on December 10th when many 5th Years were part of the choir that led the assembled school community in song. Well done to all!

The Libermann Choir and Ms O'Connor performed superbly in the **Final of the All Island Schools' Choir Competition** held in the Titanic Centre, Belfast on Sunday evening last, 24th November 2013.

Fifth Year was well represented at the **Swimming Gala** which took place at the end of October. Leman came first followed by Ebenrecht in second place and Duff in third place. David O'Reilly won the Open 50m race.

The Blackrock College **Rowing Team** had an excellent start to the season at Neptune Head of the River, which took place on the Blessington lakes. They were very happy with this event, coming out with wins from the men's junior 18 four, and the men's novice quad, also great performances from everyone involved. The next big competition attended was The Irish Indoor Rowing Championships, which took place in the University of Limerick. Overall there were very good results from everyone involved. The team are putting in a huge amount of work, training 6-7 times every week. They will continue to work hard and they hope to achieve many more good results as the year goes on.

The **Basketball Team** trains every Wednesday and Thursday, and their victory against Newpark, where Blackrock scored a record 50 points, and victory against Clonkeen College earlier on in the year reflects the hard work and dedication put into each training session. We wish them well in the New Year.

It has been a hectic November for the **Senior Squad** as always with plenty of games so far this term including wins against Clongowes, St. Michaels and Pres Cork but a loss to a Belvedere side away in Cabra. Other games include an excellent 41-0 win against Dr E.G. Jansen (South African touring team), and a fixture overseas in Cardiff where they were narrowly defeated. We wish them the best of luck with the remainder of their games and the rest of their season.

House Rugby: The House Teams have had a busy term, with matches against RBAI Ulster, CUS, Navan RFC, and Wesley College. Winning three of the four fixtures, with a narrow defeat by Wesley, we look forward to the start of the House League campaign in January.

Model United Nations: Four delegations, a college record, took part in the Model

United Nations conference in Rathdown School on the 23rd November 2013. The delegations consisted mainly of 5th year students and represented France, India, Colombia, and DR Congo. They made a great contribution to the conference, winning numerous Distinguished Delegate Awards and drafting over four successful resolutions. Congratulations to all the boys for taking part and for their continued support of our rapidly growing MUN society.

The Senior Debating Society has been very active in this half term. A series of in-house debates has taken place on motions ranging from the outlawing of gambling to the rights of the LGBT community. A debate with the Junior Debating Society held at the end of November was very successful in building links between the two societies and saw Joshua Gorman-Climax named as best speaker. Externally, Joshua Gorman-Climax, Joshua Kieran-Glennon and James Quinn have all qualified for the second round of the prestigious Leinster Senior Schools Debating competition. Joshua Kieran-Glennon also qualified for the national trials for the Irish National Schools Debating Team, which will take place early in the New Year. The next in the series of public lunchtime debates is planned for soon after Christmas and all are encouraged to attend.

A number of 5th Years are involved in **Senior Golf**. The boys were involved in interprovincial and national stroke-play and match-play events. With wins over CBC Monkstown and St. Conleth's the team prepared themselves for tough encounters against St. Michael's and St. Andrew's College, losing both by the narrowest of margins.

This term has been very successful for the **Water polo Team**. On the 27th of November the junior team won the Leinster schools junior cup. The team also played St. Mary's Drogheda in the final beating them 6-3. They are now through to the All Ireland Tournament which is scheduled to take place in January in Belfast.

Congratulations to Andrew Ryan and Niall Wilson who received their **Pope John Paul II Gold Medal Award** at a ceremony in St Paul's Church on 27th November. To achieve the award Andrew and Niall completed a 1500 word project, 20 hours of social outreach and 20 weeks of Faith Community Work.

Annual & DVD: During the last week of November, the 2012/13 Annual and Showcase DVD were distributed to all. Many thanks to Mr. Vanstone, Mr. Keogh and Mr. Aylward for all their hard work.

Congratulations to many 5th Year students on raising just over €3,400 on 2nd December through the organisation of a Poker Classic, FIFA World Cup Competition and Raffle in aid of **St. Vincent De Paul**. 90+ boys played in the Poker Classic with Ross Finnegan finishing 1st and Crohan O'Shea coming 2nd. Over 30 students participated in the FIFA Championship, with Marcus McCabe and Andrew Hickey taking 1st Place in the FIFA, with runners-up Shane Donnelly and Keith Barry. Many thanks to Mr. O'Farrell for his help in organising this event. A special thanks also to the many families who donated spot prizes on the night.

Important Dates for your 2014 Diary

- 5th Year Parent Teacher Meeting – Thursday, Feb 6th
- 5th Year Family Mass – Sunday, March 9th at 11 am
- Over two Saturdays in January- 11th and 25th, in the morning, the Career Talks are scheduled for the 5th year students.



Sixth Year

The second half of Term 1 has been a very busy and productive period for the class of 2014 who continue to show excellent leadership in all aspects of life in the College...

General:

The application to study has progressed well with Credit List numbers, while slightly lower than before mid-term remaining at encouraging levels; as they enter the New Year the Class of 2014 have been encouraged to press ahead with their study plans and schedules.

The 2012/2013 Annual and showcase DVD were distributed to all 6th Year students recently and on Tuesday 26th November, all of the Class of 2014 group and individual photographs were taken for the 2013/2014 Annual. Any student who missed the individual portrait photograph will be facilitated later in the year.

Outreach:

As part of the college's annual Christmas fund-raising for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the 6th Year House Representatives organised a 24-hour sponsored fast between the 28th and 29th of November. Alongside this, the 6th Year Parent's committee under the leadership of Mr John Sheehan and Mrs Avril Dowley held a Parent's Raffle. 102 students participated in the fast and both events raised €4220 in total. The ending of the fast was celebrated with a special meal in the College Dining Room for those who participated, during which the Raffle was held. The parents of Paul Murray were winners of the first prize. Many thanks to Albert, Catherine and their team for the wonderful meal that they served up.

On 10th December, Mr Ian Hunter organised an information evening for parents and students interested in travelling on the immersion trip to Machakos / Sultan Hamud next summer. It is requested that those hoping to travel would leave a non-refundable deposit of €500 at the College Reception by December 18th. We wish this group well with their fundraising efforts in the New Year.

Extra-Curricular:

Fiddler on the Roof: A total of 22 sixth year students took part in this year's musical **Fiddler on the Roof** between the 18th and 22nd of November. All dimensions of the

production i.e. cast, crew and band were represented and the performance of David Roper Nolan as Tevye deserves particular mention in what was a wonderful and moving production.

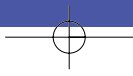
Libermann Choir: Many of these students ended the week with fellow members of the Libermann Choir (23 sixth year students involved) who performed magnificently in the All-Island School's Choir Final in the Titanic Centre, Belfast on Sunday 24th November. Just pipped by Presentation College Ballyphehane, Cork, the Blackrock Choir won many and some very 'influential' admirers within the Belfast audience.

Rugby: We wish Nick Timoney and the rest of the SCT squad well as they prepare for their opening Cup match against CBC Monkstown at the end of January. The Cheerleading team for 2014 will be led by Alfie O'Sullivan, with assistance from Jeff Burke, David Carr, James Fox and Andrew Hally-Doody. The Castle rugby squads have enjoyed success during their first term of fixtures and are planning for their league campaigns after Christmas. We hope that many 6th Year students will play for the Castle in January, their last term of rugby in the College.

Soccer: The Senior Soccer squad under the leadership of Fred Kenny have enjoyed a most successful term. An excellent win over St. Joseph's of Fairview qualified the team for the semi-finals of the Leinster Senior Cup, and at the time of going to press they are still unbeaten in the League. We wish them ongoing success.

Basketball: Our Senior Basketball squad exited the All Ireland Cup with a defeat to a very talented St. Munchin's of Limerick side. However, they responded in excellent fashion with Tom Ennis (defence) and Mark Twomey (15 points) helping the U19 team to a victory over Newpark in their most recent league match.

Rowing: On November 9th, our first ever Rowing pennants returned to the College as James O'Sullivan and Eoin Gleeson (Coxed 4) and George Brassil (Novice Quad) both emerged victorious from their events at the Neptune Head of the River Festival in Blessington. Congratulations to all.



Sixth Year Cont'd



Swimming Gala: Just before mid-term the Class of 2014 competed in their final Swimming Gala. On a most enjoyable and competitive evening, Duff House captained by Jeff Burke and Simon Curran emerged victorious. Congratulations also to Frank Vaughan who won the prestigious President's Trophy on the night.

Senior Science Team: Simon Curran, Kevin Heavey and Jonathan McDowell (Team 1) and Jonathan Hunter, Cormac Berkery and Karl McCabe (Team 2) represented the College at the ISTA Greater Dublin Regional Senior Science Quiz in TCD on November 14th. In an extremely tight final round, Team 1 qualified for the All-Ireland Final while Team 2 missed out on a tie-break. Many thanks to Ms. Kelly for her facilitation and organisation of the Senior Science Teams.

Individual Achievements: Congratulations to Karl McCabe who became the first current student in Blackrock to receive the Gold Gaisce Award. He received his award from President Higgins at a ceremony in Dublin Castle on November 12th. Congratulations also, to Conn McCarrick who chaired Dáil na nOg (the National Youth Parliament) on the theme 'Let's talk about Mental Health' in Croke Park on Friday 15th November, a wonderful honour.

Careers:

On Tuesday 5th November, Ms. Carleen McGee gave a most informative presentation on



Jeff Burke (6th Year) at the Christmas Carol Service

the CAO process to the 6th Year Parents. Information presented on this night has been made available to the students and is also available online via the College website.

Since mid-term, speakers from the Business and Science Departments in UCD and Engineers Ireland have visited the College to speak with students who have expressed an interest in these fields of study and many of the year group have availed of the Saturday Open Days in UCD, TCD and DIT. The HPAT preparation course has also continued on Saturday mornings.

There will be an opportunity for up to 90 sixth year students to participate in mock interviews in a career area of their choice in January. These interviews are arranged by the Blackrock PPU. Students will have to prepare a letter of application and curriculum vitae that must be submitted in early January. These 'mock' interviews have proved to be a most valuable learning experience for Leaving Cert students in previous years and we recommend them very strongly. Places will be limited.

Liturgical:

On Tuesday December 10th, the 6th Year students led the School Community in the celebration of the annual Carol Service for Christmas. The event was marked by wonderful communal singing as well as beautiful seasonal pieces performed by the College Choir under the direction of Ms. O'Connor. Many thanks to Jonathan Hunter and Evan Holland for the wonderful rendition of 'O Holy Night' and to the 6th Year readers who set such a respectful tone for the event. Another treasured memory to store during this final year in the College and a challenge too from Fr. O'Brolchain to the Class of 2014 when he invited us to say 'I love you' in both words and deeds to those who mean most to us.

Important Date for your 2014 Diary

Thursday 9th January - 6th Year Parent / Teacher Meeting
TIME: T.B.C.



Boarding School

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 to celebrate Christmas, but also to recharge the batteries for the next term.

The following activities are taking place throughout each week/term: TEFL class for foreign students, public speaking, Wednesday evening Mass in the Oratory, Boarders' Choir, Boarders' Book Club, and Boarders' Cookery Class for 5th and 6th years. Thanks to all the adults who help organise and oversee the continued success of these activities.



The Boarders Liturgical Choir have put tremendous effort, under the expert tutelage of Fr. Ó Brolcháin, into their performances at our weekly Sunday 10am Mass (to which everyone in the College is invited). This choir is bolstered by Dane Fitzpatrick, Geoff Wheeler and Jay Dolan, all of whom took part in the recent All-Island Choir competition. They were fantastic!

We must also congratulate Karl McCabe on his Gold Gaisce Award. He was recently presented with his

medal by President Higgins in Dublin Mansion House. This is a tremendous achievement and we are immensely proud of Karl and his award.

Weekend activities have seen the boys visit numerous museums throughout Dublin, attended the cinema and the bowling alley and even had time to do a spot of shopping for

Christmas.

The Boarders' Parents had a social night at the College Musical, Fiddler on the Roof was truly a great show and appealed to all ages. Mr O'Brien directed another superb show and there was a good representation of boarders in the show which was very well received by the Boarders parents who travelled from all over the country to attend.

The Carol Service for the boarding school on Sunday 15th December was very well attended by parents, colleagues, community and of course the boys. The night was a very peaceful and enjoyable evening for all as they were entertained by the boarders' choir. Thank you to everyone who helped in the organisation of the night.

We decided this year to take the boys to the Gaiety Christmas Pantomime "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" on Tuesday 10th December. It was a great show and was made all the more enjoyable when past boarder David Glynn Crowley gave us all a shout during the show.

The boys' Christmas dinner took place on Monday 16th December in the dining hall. The boys were served the annual feast of food which was prepared by the wonderful catering staff. Catherine Scott and Albert Beattie's catering team ensured the dining hall looked particularly festive and enhanced the atmosphere of the event. The boys and the housemasters enjoyed the singing in particular and all exchanged presents during the evening. Spot prizes, donated by local businesses, enhanced the evening further.

Thank you to all the staff in the Castle over the 1st term for all their hard work, encouragement, care and thoughtfulness to all the students.

We would like to Wish Everyone a Joyful and Peaceful Christmas and look forward to seeing you all in the New Year. The Boarding School will reopen at 7pm on Sunday 5th January 2014.



Libermann Choir



Libermann Choir

Blackrock to Belfast

Whoa. What a time that was. From our humble beginnings as a rag tag group of 6th and 5th years, to proud champions of Leinster, the choir's epic odyssey from Dublin to Belfast is something that will stay with us for the rest of our lives. Though we may have been pipped at the post, we soon learned that our true achievement was far removed from the realm of mere materialistic prizes. In the space of a few months each of us had come on an incredible journey, a life changing experience

that few will get the privilege of knowing for themselves. We made new friends, and learned new things about the friends we already had. Most importantly, we were blessed with the opportunity to make an indent on the history of the College. An endless amount of thanks to Ms O Connor, whose tireless devotion to the choir has paid off with one of the proudest moments that the College has ever known. Through good times and bad, she never gave up on us. It would be remiss to not mention the sincere contributions of others to the success of the choir: Una O Kane for stepping in when Ms O Connor needed a helping hand, Eoin Conway and William Woods for accompanying us across our different pieces, the infinite support from school staff who came to see us on the night of the final and for our many practice performances, our friends and family for their constant encouragement, Angela Feeney for calling us "captivating", and of course, the boys who comprised the choir. You guys rock!

Tum a lack a daisy with a tum a lum a lay!



Pastoral Care Programme



During the month of November R.E. classes remembered the dead of their families, some with prayer services in the chapel, and all were invited to have their loved ones remembered at the College Mass of Remembrance on Wednesday 27th Nov. On that evening bereaved families associated with the College were invited by the Community to the College Chapel to give thanks to God for the lives of their loved ones, to seek strength and support in the faith of the community, to be uplifted and comforted by the Church's Liturgy. Fr. Malachy Kilbride acted as principal celebrant for this emotional but consoling occasion. As in previous years the congregation appreciated the contribution of Fr. Tom Nash in ensuring a prayerful and appropriate occasion.

The preparations for TY pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela continue. Unfortunately only twenty places are available and so disappointment for some of our thirty four applicants was inevitable. The fairest way to make our final selection was to exclude those boys who had already been accepted for the TY trips to India and China and to hold a draw of the remaining names. Before Christmas we hope to have the flights booked. In the New Year we will alert the boys to dates for preparation walks and opportunities for reflection.

Some of the Fifth Years who were involved with the Young Social Innovators last year have been out on the Friday night soup run again during this half-term. Hugh Mohan and Joshua Gorman Climax addressed a TY assembly about this work and thirty TY boys have volunteered for the city soup run organized by the Legion of Mary and the Cuan Mhuire Centres for people with addiction. The Legion of Mary has generously offered their assistance with the boys in this. It is hoped they will get involved on Thursday nights after Christmas. Mary McMahon, our new Leaving Cert. chaplain will liaise.

Another class of Transition Year boys continued the Pastoral Placement Programme and received high praise from directors of centres where they worked. The boys visit the various centres for two weeks, meeting the people with disabilities, growing in understanding of their needs and in appreciation of the care given by staff. The boys' comments afterwards are always worth reading. A sample: "My attitude to working in such an area has definitely changed. Prior to the placement I wouldn't have even considered it, but now I am much more fascinated by a future in this area". "I didn't think at the start that I would have the skills to help all of the clients but I learned that I helped a lot more than I thought I could".

"My Pastoral Placement could be described as a spiritual experience because I felt that in helping, I was living out the Kingdom of God".

"My attitude towards people with disabilities has really changed. Before I would hesitate to go near them but since doing these two weeks I would be very comfortable and happy to interact with them".

"One of the women I was wheeling around said something that turned my day around. She said it more than once. 'Are you getting paid for this?' 'No'. 'God will reward you greatly'. This really inspired me to keep going".

"It made me feel like a happier person because I saw how happy and content they were with their lives".

"This has made me realize how little I see my grandmother. As a result of this placement I will be working to try and visit her more often".

"The dedicated staff carries out the work of St. John of God by offering the clientele quality care, training, treatment and assistance yet still respecting their inherent dignity".

Fr. John Delany, Administrator of Blackrock Parish and with involvement in the adjacent local parishes, generously took time to preside at our Third Year Family Mass. He took the trouble to visit the school beforehand, meeting the Dean and Pastoral Director, ensuring that his homily was relevant and inspiring. Even though the Mass was brought forward to facilitate other events of the day the families responded enthusiastically and we had a packed Chapel for the occasion. The boys had put in time practicing their roles and were a credit to all. Many thanks to Father Cormac for stepping into the breach and directing the singing. Mr. Andre Cavanagh must be thanked too for taking the musicians under his wing. [Ms. Patrice O'Connor and Ms. Una O'Kane had travelled to Belfast where our Choir acquitted themselves in a manner of which we are rightly proud]. Thanks also to Ms. Carole O'Connor, organist, for the professional presence and sensitivity to the liturgy that she brings to all of our Family Masses and many College occasions.

The Faith Friends Programme is underway. Thirty four Blackrock lads have begun preparations with Ms. Orla Walsh. They will visit the Willow Park Confirmation boys next term sharing their Faith and encouraging the youngsters prior to their reception of the Sacrament. Mr. Terry O'Reilly has been the main mover on the Blackrock front, enlisting volunteers and liaising with their Dean and the Willow teachers. We are indebted to Ms. Orla Walsh, Faith Development Officer with the DES, who initiated this programme in the Spiritan schools and continues to be the facilitator and motivator for the boys and the schools. This year the first beneficiaries of the programme in Willow all those years ago, now TY boys, will deliver the content to the current sixth class. Full circle. God bless the work!

The Carol Service, celebrated with customary enthusiasm on Tuesday 10th Dec. continues to be a significant annual event as we prepare to celebrate once again Emmanuel, the Christ-child, God among us. It is the final event of the term before the regulation exams and only the second annual occasion when the whole school assembles as a single body. Congratulations to all on preparations and participation. It was an uplifting moment of music, reflection and prayer. It delivered a lovely Advent atmosphere of anticipation and hope. I finish this brief review with the prayer-reflection from our Carol Service spoken by the full congregation together:

"The wonder of Christmas is not just that God gives us his Son
But that God trusts us to take care of him.
God trusts us.

After all that has happened,
all that has been done,
despite our failings,
we are trustworthy.

As we approach another Christmas
Help us to live each moment gratefully.
May we have faith to trust in the gifts you have given us.
May we have hope to overcome dark thoughts that cloud our vision.
May we have love to be caring, to make our world a better place.

When we live up to the trust God has placed in us,
We bring the gift of Christmas into our time, our generation.
The wonder of Christmas is that we can be trusted with a child's heart.
Give us courage to live up to that trust now and forever.
We make this prayer through Jesus our brother,
born for us again in our time, in our place.
Amen.



S n Dilchuimhne

It was with a great sense of loss that we heard the news of the death of College Archivist and Historian Fr. Seán Farragher, CSSp. Fr. Seán had been a member of the College Community since 1949. He will be best remembered for his prodigious work as an author, his article on the history of the College in the Annual each year since 1954, an incredible camera club that spanned four decades, the 8.25 am Mass each school morning and his notice board that provided a pictorial record of every event that happened on the campus.

Most of all, he was a great Priest for whom everyone counted.

Our deepest sympathies are extended to his family, Fr Nash and the College Community.

Solas na bhFlaitheas dá anam uasal



Fr. Seán Farragher (R.I.P.) and Fr. Norman Fitzgerald with the Sam Maguire Cup (Oct. 2013)



Guidance and Counselling Contd

The current 6th years are seriously researching their CAO options and in particular their order of preferences. Students are encouraged to use www.qualifax.ie and www.careersportal.ie to aid them with their course exploration. Each 6th year has received a CAO handbook and a talk from Ms McGee detailing the application process. A CAO information talk was also held for parents in early November where CAO and UCAS applications were explained. The majority of students will apply online at www.cao.ie. It is important to remind all 6th years that a reduced fee of ?25 applies to all who make their application online before January 20th 2014. The regular fee of ?40 applies to applications made between January 20th and February 1st. If any student has a learning disability or a medical condition it is important to tick the appropriate box on the CAO application and if a DARE/HEAR application is appropriate then apply as soon as possible. Students can find out more regarding the DARE/HEAR schemes on www.accesscollege.ie. Students with exemptions must also take necessary action to notify the relevant HEIs of their exemption and to submit any supporting documentation the HEIs require. Please refer to the relevant individual HEI websites for further information.

Furthermore, it is necessary for students applying for entry to medicine in 2014 to register for CAO to receive their CAO number so that they then can register for HPAT-Ireland. HPAT-Ireland registration will close on January 20th 2014 with the actual test taking place in various centres on March 1st 2014. 6th year students have been taking part in a HPAT preparation course on Saturday mornings in the school and have had the option of sitting a practice test. RCSI are holding an open day on January 2nd 2014; any student wishing to attend must register online via the RCSI website.

A number of 6th years have completed their UCAS applications for a range of universities including Oxford and Cambridge. Some have already attended for interview while others are currently making preparations. Any other 6th year who is considering making a UCAS application should indicate this to Ms McGee as soon as possible as January 15th 2014 is the final deadline for applications.

6th year students will have the opportunity to partake in Career Interviews/Coaching which will be held in the College on Wednesday 29th January 2014 at 7.30 p.m. These interviews will be conducted by professionals (many past students), in specific career areas chosen by the students. In addition to facilitating individual interviews, these professionals will also give feedback to students immediately after the interview. Students are

encouraged to participate in the interview programme as it has proved in previous years to be a very valuable experience.

Since September a number of guest speakers, professors and lecturers from UCD, TCD and Engineers Ireland have visited the school and given talks to the 6th years regarding courses offered in their third level institutions and careers. Students attended talks in the areas of Business, Science, Computer Science, Law and Engineering. Students have also attended the Higher Options as well as other open days at UCD, TCD, DCU, NUIM, DIT, IADT and NCAD.

Fifth year students have now settled well into their studies after their creative involvement in the transition year programme. Fifth year students will have the opportunity to partake in the Model Parliament hosted by the Department of Law at NUI Maynooth after the Christmas break. A sign up list will be posted in the fifth year area for interested students. The event is a simulated sitting of the Dáil and will be chaired by An Ceann Comhairle Sean Barrett T.D. Last year over 60 school students from all around Ireland took part in the event.

Fourth year students have received the results of their EIRQUEST and Cambridge profiles and are reflecting on these at present. Third and second year students are engaging well with their academic subjects as well as partaking in a range of extra-curricular activities.

A number of students from second to sixth year will attend the Cycle Against Suicide Student Leaders Congress at the RDS next January, an initiative started by Irish entrepreneur, Jim Breen, as a result of his appearance on RTE's The Secret Millionaire programme. The 2014 Student Leaders Congress is aimed at promoting positive mental health, help-seeking behaviour in young people and the message that it's ok not to feel ok and it's absolutely ok to ask for help. The Congress is run/delivered by the Cycle Against Suicide Charity and is endorsed by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC). Ninety five schools (2,700 students) have already signed up for the event and it is hoped that our own students who attend will become leaders at promoting mental awareness in the college when they return.

Regular counselling continues for all students from second to sixth year and preparations for the school's second Bullying Awareness Day in January are well under way.



Science Department

40TY Physics students visited the Higgs Exhibition in the new UCD Science Centre. Whilst there they attended a fascinating lecture on Particle Physics by Dr. Ronan McNulty. Congratulations to Joshua Gordon Climax who won a gold medal for Chemistry at the Irish EU Science Olympiad held on Saturday 26th October in DCU. He came first in this All Ireland competition, which is a brilliant achievement.

The following events were held during Science Week:

Monday 11th Nov Bebras Contest (an International contest on Informatics and Computer Fluency) was held in the Senior Physics lab.

Tuesday 12th Nov During the morning an explosive (!) Lecture/Demonstration was given by Mr John Daly for TY and 5th Year Chemistry students. Fifth Year Agricultural Science students visited a farm in 5th year Ag science trip to Borrisokane, County Tipperary. In the afternoon a fascinating lecture was given to all the Transition Years by Prof. Luke O'Neill, Professor of Biochemistry, T.C.D. He spoke passionately about why he chose Science for his career and the very interesting discoveries about cancer that he and his team of researchers have been making in Biochemistry.

Wednesday 13th Nov

A group of twenty TY Physics students went on a tour to the Irish Air Corps Flying Training School, Air Corps College, at Baldonnel airport. Lieutenant Odhrán Murphy captivated the students with an excellent presentation on the 'Physics of Flight'. This was followed with a guided tour of the hangar where the students got a close up view of some of the aircraft. Next up was the flight simulator where every student got a chance to take the controls and fly!

Thursday 14th Nov

6th year students interested in a doing Science at Third level were given a lecture on possible science career paths by Dr. Orla Donoghue. In the afternoon a Science Table quiz was held for four Third Year classes. The results were as follows: 1st: Sam Murphy, Kenneth Lyons and Joseph O'Donnell. 2nd: Ronán Mullen and Alex Noble. 3rd: Eoin Joy, Charlie Lawless and James Kelly. In the evening our two senior science quiz teams participated in the Regional I.S.T.A. Table Quiz held in the Edmund Burke theatre in T.C.D. Team A, comprising Simon Curran, Kevin Heavey and Johnathan McDowell qualified for the All Ireland final. This was held on Saturday 30th November. The quiz went very well for them. After round 7 they were in joint 4th position but sadly they dropped back to 5th in the eighth round. There was only 4 points between them and the winners.

Friday 15th Nov

In the afternoon the second part of our Science Table quiz was held for three more Third Year classes. The results were as follows: 1st: Ross Deegan, Rhys Macken and Liam Keane. 2nd: James McEvoy, Oisín Kavanagh and Daniel Houlihan. 3rd: Brian O'Doherty, Max McCloskey and Jack Millar.

SciFest Competition

All Second Year students participated in this year's SciFest competition, producing 114 projects on a very wide range of topics. Five external judges, Sheila Porter, Cynthia Ceillier, Siobhán Sweeney, Rory Geoghegan and John Daly, interviewed the students about their findings.

The results were as follows:

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

FIRST: To investigate whether operating a phone affects our reaction times
Conor Halpin Josh Warren

SECOND: To determine if whitening toothpaste actually works on stains
Tony Smurfit Philip Maguire Sean McCann

JOINT THIRD: Can Hydroelectric wave power be efficiently created?
Conor Little

JOINT THIRD: To investigate drag and centres of gravity.
Hugh Kelly Harvey Gallagher

LIFE SCIENCES

FIRST: Does age affect memory
Michael McGagh Matt Curran

SECOND: Does 'Fifa 14' improve your football skills?
Cian Mahon

JOINT THIRD: Does solving a Rubric's Cube increase your brain power?
Eoin O'Meara

JOINT THIRD: To investigate how physical endurance is affected by distraction
Eoin Fuller

Our successful entrants for the 2014 BT Young Scientist competition are:
Transition Years: Rory Patterson – 'Why do we laugh at others in pain?' Declan Norton: 'A Comparison of a single-lift hovercraft vs. quad-lift hovercraft.'
Second Year: Oisín Ryan – 'To investigate subconscious bias in children.'
We wish them the very best for the competition in January.

Sport



Basketball

Under 19 - Since the last update the U-19's have had a very busy time and all the hard work and training has been turned into some very important victories. Clonkeen College were beaten in the All-Ireland Schools Cup which led us into an All-Ireland Quarter Final against St Munchin's of Limerick. The U-19's fought their hearts out against St Munchin's but unfortunately this wasn't enough against a top side containing an Irish International. Back into the South Dublin League the Rock U-19's have responded excellently to getting knocked out of the cup, having qualified for the Quarter Finals of that competition which will come after Christmas. Captain Séafra O Faoláin and his team can be very proud of their efforts so far this year.

Under 16 - The U-16's have continued their excellent form as a whole. Unfortunately in the East Leinster Final we fell just short against an excellent Kings Hospital side. Despite the narrow loss in the East-Leinster League Quarter Final the side have had two excellent victories in the All-Ireland Schools Cup against Larkin Community College and Clonkeen College, and now have an All-Ireland Semi-Final to look forward to in January in the University of Limerick arena. Along with the Cup the Blackrock Under-16's have progressed to the South Dublin League Semi Final which will take place in January also. One of the most pleasing aspects of the Under-16 Basketball programme has been the introduction of a Second team into competitions. This has led to us developing a squad with much greater depth for the Cup and it has created an extremely competitive level of basketball in the school. It has had a great impact for many players in the age group. Well done to Captain Rob Somers and his squad.

Badminton

The Under 19 Badminton season commenced in October with Blackrock being drawn in a challenging group consisting of Terenure College, Gonzaga College, Wesley College, St. Andrew's College and High school. It is the first year that the college has entered a badminton team into competition and it was a tough start with some losses against some of the other more established badminton schools. Our own players showed a great level of commitment throughout the season and many improvements have been made. It is hoped that we can progress further in the competition next year by gaining from our experience this year. The U14 Badminton season commences in January. We look forward to watching the second and third years in action after they have spent the last number of months training.

Table Tennis

The table tennis teams have got off to a successful defence of the 2012/2013 'Treble-Treble' winning season. Senior A and Senior B both recorded 6-0 victories over St. Conleth's to get off to a great start in Division 1; Junior A also recorded a whitewash in their first league match, 6-0 against St. Fintans; Minor A got under way with a 6-0 league win against Gonzaga, followed up by a 4-0 win against Marian in the U13 Cup 1st Round; while Junior B also got their Cup campaign going, with a 4-1 win over Gonzaga. Congratulations must go to Charlie Fitzgerald (3rd Year) and Geoffrey O'Connor (5th Year) who have been named in their respective age group teams to represent Ireland.

Soccer

The senior soccer team continued their good start to the year with qualification through to the semi-finals of both the Leinster Cup and the Metropolitan League. Victories over Drimnagh Castle (2-0), pre-tournament favourites Pres Bray (4-2) and St Joseph's of Fairview (7-0) have secured their passage through to the semi-finals of the Leinster cup. A 2-1 home victory over Collinstown CS secured an away semi-final against Templeogue College after Christmas in the Metropolitan League. Hopefully the team can continue their undefeated run after Christmas.



Gavin Hartnett (5th Year) in action against St. Joseph's, Cabra

Chess

The chess club meets twice a week after school and is open to students of all year groups. In November the team travelled down to St. Kieran's in Kilkenny. In a tight contest Blackrock Unfortunately lost 3-2. On Monday 2nd December both teams travelled to Coláiste Éanna in Rathfarnham where both the junior and senior teams gained good victories. The senior team consisting of Andrew Ryan, Brian McMahon, Chris Collins, Ronan Hearne and Joshua Kirwan-Glenn won a tight contest 3-2. The junior game was more one-sided winning 4-1 with the junior team consisting of Stephen Ryan, Pengbo Wu, Patrick Hasset, Conor Barry and Gavin Kildea. The third game in the competition saw a reversal of fortunes with both teams losing to St. Bendilus. Both squads look forward to the remainder of the season after the Christmas break, and we welcome Ivan Baburin who has recently joined us and will be coaching both squads in the New Year.

Rowing

Numbers for rowing have grown enormously over the last year and to grow with this a number of new rowing machines have found their way into the rowing training centre in the castle gym. Building on from all the hard training the rowing team had an excellent start to the season at Neptune Head, coming out with wins from the men's junior 18 coxed four, and the men's novice quad. The college was represented by 3rd years, 5th years and 6th years at this competition and although not winning their races great performances were shown by all the crews. The next big competition that the Blackrock College rowing team attended was The Irish Indoor Rowing Championships, which took place in the University of Limerick. The college was represented by 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th years. James O'Sullivan (6th year) came 12th out of 61 competitors with a time of 6:42.8 for a 2km race, the best time in Blackrock. Andrew Ennis (3rd year) took home a bronze medal in the junior 14 men's 500m sprint. The rowing team are looking forward to more competitions in the New Year and we wish them every success.

Rugby

Since the last newsletter the rugby fields of Blackrock have been busier than ever. The under 14's have continued their rich vein of form sweeping all before them, whilst the Colts and House sides are building towards the culmination of their seasons which are the Leinster Leagues after the Christmas break. The junior firsts and second's rugby teams have continued their good form this term and both remain unbeaten to date in friendly matches. Notable wins include those against Methody, Terenure, Belvedere and Ballymena. The draw has now taken place and CBC Monkstown will be the JCT's first round opponents. This will be a tough, physical encounter, for which the whole panel will be preparing very hard over Christmas. Since the mid-term break the SCT have had a very busy period. Victories over Clongowes Wood College, Presentation Brothers Cork, St Michael's College and a South African touring side were the highlights. The side suffered two losses against Coleng Morgen and Belvedere College, demonstrating the size of the task facing the squad over the coming months. The Senior Cup Draw was made on Monday and we look forward to our match against CBC Monkstown in late January. To complete the term six of the squad (Dane Fitzpatrick, Jack Dwan, Nick Timoney, Conor Oliver, Sean Kearns & Joey Carberry) have been selected to play for Leinster Schools against Australia, whilst Jeremy Loughman and David O'Connor have been selected to play for Ireland U 19's against the same opposition. We congratulate them and wish them luck.



World's Largest Scrum, 25th Oct. 2013

Cross Country

Our long distance runners are training very hard for their competitive season. This was evident when Blackrock hosted a Leinster league meeting in November. With 14 schools turning up to partake, we had over 500 students running! The Blackrock students did us proud. Willow Park came second in the minor boys' race with Conor Halpin from second year winning the individual trophy for first place. The Blackrock intermediate team won the team race, led by Luke McCann winning individual first place and followed very closely by Christian McKenna taking second place (both 4th year students). Unfortunately due to injury we didn't have enough athletes to make up a senior team but individually Aengus Meldon (5th year) and Mark Gordon (4th year) claimed second and third place respectively.

TY GAA

Our junior footballers have progressed nicely through their group with victories over James' St. CBS and Marian College. Mr O'Connor's boys face Rathcoole HFCS in next week's semi-final. We wish them well.

Water Polo

Well done to our Junior team, captained by Ben Lawlor, who won Leinster schools cup on Wed 4th December - Defeating St. Joseph's Cabra and St. Mary's Drogheda. Thanks to Coach Kevin Healy for all his work with the boys.

Photos courtesy Rock Photography
www.rockphotography.ie