

Blackrock College Newsletter



Special points of interest:

- Careers and Counselling
- Pastoral Care Programme
- Seachtain na Gaeilge
- Halls of Residence

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Easter 2012

Dear Parents

President Bill Clinton during the last presidential campaign reminded his fellow Americans that people were more impressed by “the power of our example than by an example of our power”.

Easter is the most powerful example of God's love for us. His only Son suffered on the Cross and rose from the dead to redeem us all. Easter is the season of hope. It is the strongest indicator that all adversity can be overcome. In his short book (an excellent read) **‘Where the hell is God?’ Richard Leonard, S.J. wrote that “the life, death and resurrection of Jesus shows us that God has grafted himself onto human history in the most intimate of ways”.** He goes on to state that **“God's Word and wisdom made flesh in Jesus Christ is about life, not death; construction, not destruction; a healing, not pain”.**

We live in an imperfect world. The challenge to each one of us is to find something inspiring and share it. We must look for the best in people and situations. The key to this is the realisation that we help ourselves by helping others. Often, we can feel empty, desolate and the cause of this, more often, is that we don't give enough, rather than we don't have enough. The power of example lies in the fact that good deeds are contagious. Community flourishes when we care. Then, honesty, decency, justice, integrity and authenticity are the values that are not just personal or interpersonal, but become institutional.

Evidence of these lived ideals abounds at Blackrock. Boys and teachers encouraging each other to be better than they think they can be. Inspirational teaching is commonplace.

The power of our example. In the 2011 Leaving Certificate, **‘Rock boys came 1st in Ireland in Applied Maths, Chemistry and Latin; 2nd Place was achieved in Spanish. 4 of the 40 Ad Astra Academic Scholarships also awarded by U.C.D. went to ‘Rock boys.**

A further 13 High Achiever Awards, also at U.C.D. were presented during the last week of this term. When added to the 4 Entrance Exhibitions to Trinity and 1st Place in Latin in the Junior Certificate, we have testimony of the academic excellence at Blackrock.

WITHIN THE LAST 6 WEEKS ...

Willow Wheelers have visited Vietnam. The **Senior and 2nds Soccer** Teams hosted St Bede's; the **5th Year Family Mass** highlighted the needs of asylum seekers in Ireland. Our **22nd Goal-Aidlink Badge campaign** was managed by our irrepressible T.Y. team; our **4th Year Dragons Den Final** was top-class; auditions for the Junior Musical **‘Waterloo High’** (written by **Brian Savage**) have taken place. Our **Rowing 8** competed at the UCD – Trinity Colours Regatta; the Library Design competition has been adjudged (results after Easter).

Selected highlights must reference the performance of our orchestra, choirs, bands, ensembles and soloists at the **Wesley Music Festival**, as well as squash, basketball, swimming, Seachtain na Gaeilge, the Addiction Awareness Day, pastoral placements, NUM, debating and E.Y.P. and, of course, mock orals, classroom activity and Easter Examinations.

And to come (at time of going to print) the **Castle 2nds** will play the **House 2nds** in the Leinster Schools' 2nds Premier Division Final with the **Castle 3rds, Colts, Junior 2nds, 3rds and 4ths** all in their respective Rugby finals. Our **Table-Tennis team** will represent Ireland in the world games in Sardinia over Easter.

Life at Blackrock is relentless. Everything we do, we do in His name. He is our mentor. This is the power of example.

I thank all in our school community who contribute to this example – our Spiritan Community, teachers, administration, maintenance, catering, grounds, household and medical staff; the students, past and present, the parents – who help us come alive.

ALAN MacGINTY
PRINCIPAL



Second Year



Application Cards

The boys have now finished their second term in the College. Each student can look back at his record of achievement as documented in his Application Cards. The number of Principal's Lists attained has improved noticeably since mid-term and the boys should continue this effort into the final term. Parents should play their part in this effort by reviewing their son's Card each Monday, encouraging good behaviour and challenging tardiness.

Parents' Events

The Parents' Committee in Second Year organised two excellent talks this half term. Owen Connolly spoke to Fathers about the vital importance of their relationship with their son in his maturing. Caroline Murphy spoke to parents about the need to recognise that what we say is not always the same as what is heard, especially by young people! The Committee also organised a most enjoyable Annual Dinner in Killiney Golf Club, which was well attended. We are grateful to the members of the Committee for these and for the service they provide throughout the year.

Ethos

The second half of the term began with our celebration of Ash Wednesday, with each Religious Education class attending the Distribution of Ashes in the College Chapel. The boys also attended Lenten Reconciliation Services in the Chapel, led by an RE teacher and facilitated by members of the College Spiritan community, where they

had the opportunity to attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In addition, the boys also began Lent with a talk from a representative of Trocaire, on the requirement for each Christian to reach out to those in need, and a talk from Dr Ann Buckmaster of Toranfield House on 'Addiction Awareness'.

House Competitions

The winner of the House Chess competition was Jamie Brindley with David Fenn in second place. The Draughts competition is turning out to be very popular and will finish after Easter, when we will also have the Swimming Gala, the Gold Medal for Debating, and the House Soccer Competition.

Sports

We compliment the Second Year members of the Junior Cup Team for their valiant efforts at retaining the Cup for the College. Congratulations also to the table tennis and Hurling teams and to the boys who have done so well in cross country and chess as well.

Other Second Year Activities

The half term began with Environment Awareness Week with a display of CSPE projects entitled 'Stewardship of the Environment' and ended with Seachtain na Gaeilge and a huge amount of singing, dancing and merriment, in Irish.



Third Year

A Parents' Conference will take place on **Wednesday May 16th in the Lecture Hall at 7.30 P.M.** (please note change of date from School calendar). This evening will deal with the choice of subjects for the **Leaving Certificate 2015**. Please make a very special effort to attend. A further information evening will be held on Monday September 4th which will deal with other aspects of Transition Year, especially Co-Curricular and Extracurricular activities.

The significant role played by the Weekly Cards in affirming good work habits and indeed sometimes communicating the need for greater work effort in the run up to the Junior Certificate should not be underestimated by any of us. It is great to see over one hundred boys on the Principal's List in the run up to St. Patrick's Day. With **31 Class Days** and **6 Application Cards** remaining, we look forward to ever increasing numbers making the Principal's List.

Lost property is a big concern, not just in Third Year but throughout the school. The very high percentage of items of clothing handed into Lost Property without names, even a hand written version on some label, is quite astonishing, especially in the current economic climate. We urge immediate action to address this issue.

Richard Grainger came second in the Wesley Inter Schools Music Festival in the Under 16s Strings Competition, the other Third Years who participated over the weekend were Antoine Murphy, Robert Doyle and Ronan Hearne. Third Years entered

two debating competitions recently, firstly the St. Conleth's Mace Debate where our representatives were Rory McCluskey, Joshua Gorman-Climax, James Quinn, Joshua Kieran-Glennon and Louis Hoffman. James and Joshua Kieran-Glennon were beaten in the final by Coláiste Iognáid, Galway. In the second Competition, organised by UCD L&H and Law Society, we were represented by two teams from which James Quinn and Joshua Kieran-Glennon were selected to debate in the Quarter Finals as individuals. Joshua subsequently qualified for the Semi-Final, which has yet to take place.

The JCT, who have worked so hard throughout the season, were pipped by Clongowes in an absorbing match. We salute the character and whole hearted endeavour that Roghan McMahon and his team showed this year. As we go to press the Junior Seconds await the final following a fine win over St. Michaels. The Junior Thirds are off to Roscrea for a semi-final showdown and the Junior Fourths are due to take on Clongowes in the quarter final. In Squash Harry Lloyd, Stephen O'Connor and Ross O'Mahony got to the Quarter Finals of the Leinster Cup, while in Rowing Dougie Clinch, Ross O'Mahony and Tom McNamara were members of the Junior Squad that finished third in the Annual Lagan Head of The River Race held in Belfast. In Table Tennis the boys continue to make progress in the Cup. Finally Ben Lawlor was named Evening Herald Star of the week recently in recognition of his captaincy of the College Water Polo Team to Leinster Cup success.



Transition Year

GOAL/AIDLINK ST.PATRICK'S DAY BADGE PROJECT

The largest school fundraiser in the country looks like it is going to be a great success again this year. The boys have worked with great enthusiasm and energy in the hope of raising a significant amount of money for GOAL and Aidlink. They have also shown tremendous initiative in setting up a Paypal online account to promote and sell badges overseas. Over 170 students were involved in the project. They visited primary and secondary schools, approached businesses both in Ireland and abroad for support and distributed over 150,000 badges nationwide.

The campaign was launched in some style in the Jubilee Hall by Senator Darragh O'Brien and All Ireland-winning Dublin footballer Alan Brogan. After the speeches, the students were entertained by Ireland's premier classic rock band *The Classic Memories*. I am indebted to Mr Garry Sullivan for organising such a memorable and enjoyable launch. It really gave an impetus to the campaign.

The culmination of the fund-raiser was a city centre street collection on March 15th and 16th when shoppers were bombarded with a shamrock charm offensive. The boys raised €5,500.00 during the collection days. This was some achievement as the weather conditions on the 16th were appalling. The boys' generosity of spirit shone out as they gallantly and cheerfully sold badges whilst the heavens opened.

Mention should be made of Conor Nolan and Brian Furey who collected €433.00, followed closely by Oisín Flynn and Ben McQuaid with €418.00. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution made by Matthew O'Driscoll and the administration

team to the smooth running of the campaign. John O'Connor's amazing PR skills deserve recognition too. This year we got a tremendous amount of publicity for the badge campaign, due to John's hard work.

Special thanks to Mr Moran (father of Sean and Adam) who very generously allowed us to use a shop unit in the St Stephen's Green Shopping Centre as a base during the collection days. This made the organisation of the collection run like clockwork.

TRANSITION YEAR LECTURE SERIES

The lecture series continued this term with a lecture by Dr Ann Buckmaster (clinical psychologist in Toranfield House) as part of the school's *Addiction Awareness Day*. In March the boys were treated to two lectures by physiotherapists Ailbe Mc Cormack (formerly the Irish rugby team's physiotherapist) and Brian Greene (the team's current physiotherapist). Both lectures were most interesting and informative. The lecture series will continue next term.

FAITH FRIENDS

A number of students have just completed the *Faith Friends* programme with the Confirmation class in Willow Park. The boys trained with Ms Orla Walsh over 8 class periods since the 6th February. They then led teams of 6th class pupils through their preparation for Confirmation. The boys' commitment to the programme ensured that they made a deep impression on their young charges. The students involved will receive Faith Friends certificates in a special ceremony in Kimmage Manor in May. Six of them have applied to do the *John Paul II Awards* based on their involvement with

Transition Year Cont'd



Faith Friends. Many thanks to Ms Orla Walsh, Mr Myles Ryan and Mr Terry O'Reilly for making this important initiative so successful.

DRAGONS' DEN

The entrepreneurial spirit which has been very much in evidence amongst this year's Transition Year students was put to the test on March 21st when, in the presence of an audience of 170 Transition Years, ten groups of budding entrepreneurs faced their very own *Dragons' Den*. We are indebted to the Dragons (Paul McGowan, Ronnie Delany, Stephen Kilroy, Derek Hughes and Andrew Mullaney) for giving so generously of their time and expertise. They subjected the finalists to very searching questions about their products and were most impressed at how well all the finalists rose to the challenge.



Dragons' Den Finalists

his innovative business idea called *I'm Irish*. In joint third place were Jack Callaghan and Ciaran Crangle with their *The Rock Card* and Tom Ennis with his potentially very lucrative project *Decalnation*. All ten candidates received certificates acknowledging their achievements.

The Dragons were most impressed by the standard of this year's entries and have kindly offered to mentor the boys for the rest of the year and help them to progress their business ideas. This is a fantastic opportunity for all involved. It is also planned to have a competition in fifth year to see how well the students' current business ideas have developed and grown.



Brian O'Neill Sec. PPU, Paul McGowan and Ross O'Leary, winner of Dragons' Den

The organisation of such a competition is naturally very time-consuming. The applicants attended three workshops on business and financial planning in advance of the final. These workshops were organised and run by Mr Frank O'Sullivan and Mr Cathal Copeland, Head of the Business Department. I would like to thank both of them for their enthusiasm and active encouragement and promotion of the Dragons' Den competition.

STUDENT ENTERPRISE AWARDS 2012 – COUNTY FINAL

Cormac Stafford and Tom Ennis, two Dragons' Den finalists, have been selected to compete in the Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Enterprise Competition on March 22nd. We wish them the very best of luck.

VISIT TO THE TECH GROUP EUROPE PLANT

On March 6th, 25 chemistry and business students (accompanied by Mr Flor Madden and Ms Sinead Nolan) spent a day at the Tech Group Europe plant. Tech Group manufactures medical and pharma devices and is at the cutting edge of new technology and research in these areas. The students were introduced to a wide range of professionals, work practices and technology and were thus given an invaluable insight into both the business and scientific aspects of such a huge company.

The day was brilliantly organised and no detail was overlooked. The students were kept on their toes and found the experience very rewarding. I am enormously indebted to Mr Don O'Callaghan who, for the third consecutive year, has invited us to visit his company. He ensured that the students had an unforgettable day.

VISIT TO HEWLETT-PACKARD

On 21st February, thirty students spent the day in Hewlett-Packard's Dublin headquarters. It was a fantastic opportunity to gain an in depth insight into the world of I.T.

IRISH ORALS

Irish orals were included in the TY Easter exam timetable again this year. In 2012, the weighting of marks for the oral component of the Leaving Certificate Irish exam will be **40%**. This is a significant increase in marks and underlines the importance of oral fluency in Irish. By including an oral component in the Irish exam this Easter, we are alerting students to the vital importance of improving their fluency.

SEACHTAIN NA GAEILGE

Seachtain na Gaeilge was once again a tremendous success this year. We were delighted to invite the Transition Year students from Sion Hill to join us for our annual Ceili. Needless to say, a great time was had by all.

One of the highlights of the week was the *Rith*. About 80 of our students joined hundreds of other Transition Year students throughout the country in this remarkable venture.



TY runners join the RITH relay

Many thanks to Ms Anne Payne for her tireless and enthusiastic organisation of a truly fantastic week of activities.

STUDYING EUROPEAN LANGUAGES ABROAD

Some Transition Year students might be planning to work on their European languages next term by spending time abroad. Please notify the Dean in writing if your son is going to be away next term. If your son is likely to miss his Portfolio Assessment at the end of term, please ask him to schedule an appointment to do his Portfolio Assessment in advance of his departure.

RUGBY

The Colts (under the guidance of Shane Murray, Steve Lambe and Ben Mannion) have had an excellent season. On 16th March, they defeated the Castle 5ths (15-0) in the semi-final of the East Coast League. They will face St Michael's in the Final. We wish them the very best of luck

We are also very proud of the HOUSE 2nds who defeated Terenure College in the Semi-Final of the Senior 2nds League on 20th March. An outstanding score of 27-3 speaks volumes about the strength of this team. The large number of Transition Years on the team made a great contribution to its success. Dillon Coghlan scored a try in this match whilst Zach O'Hagan scored two. A great team performance!

OTHER SPORTS NEWS

Nicholas Timoney and David O'Connor are members of the Leinster Under 18s team which will travel to France during the Easter holidays. They will be participating in a friendly international against the prestigious French side – Côtes Basques.

On 16th March, during the U.C.D. - Trinity Colours Event, the Blackrock College Rowing Club defeated U.C.D.'S Novice 3rds in a thrilling race. This was a truly memorable achievement. The team, captained by Transition Year student James O'Sullivan, had four other TY students involved – Eoin Gleeson, Edward Bickers, Luke Fitzpatrick and Chris Butler.

Congratulations to all!

COLLABORATION WITH MOUNT ANVILLE

For the third year running, our Transition Year students have been invited to participate in the Mount Anville *Such* show next term. It is sure to be a great night out.

SAFE PASS

I am hoping to organise a *Fas Safe Pass* course next term. This will be particularly useful for anyone who might be contemplating studying engineering or architecture.

GAISCE

I would like to remind parents that students need to have their *Gaisce* books signed and returned to Ms Nulty by the end of April/beginning of May. This year, we have had a record number of students involved in *Gaisce*. They will receive their bronze awards at a ceremony on their last day of term (May 30th)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

- Trip to China 11th – 19th April
- Modern and Classical Languages Week - 30th April - 3rd May
- 2nd and 4th year show will be staged 30th April - 3rd May. **Please note change of date from that printed in the official calendar.**
- Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela (Camino). 5th – 12th May
- Music, Art and Drama (MAD) Week - 8th – 11th May.
- Master Chef Competition – mid May
- Transition Year Day of Reflection – 22nd May
- Portfolio Assessments – 28th and 29th May.
- Class ends for Transition Year 30th May.

Fifth Year



Lent 2012

Fr Peter Murphy (Class of 1977) National Chaplain of ACCORD, the Catholic Marriage Care Agency was Chief Celebrant at the 5th Year Family Mass on 11th March.

In his homily, he reminded us that we are all called to witness Christ's message in some unique way and he urged each one of us to be open to His presence in our lives.

We should disturb the peace (status quo) if it is not underpinned by Christian values, be it in our own families, amongst our friends, in our school or neighbourhood.

A cheque for €2,200 was presented to Mr Greg Straton, Director of Spirasi by Jack Donnelly, the proceeds of the 21-Hour Fast organised by the 5th Year boys earlier this term.



Mr Greg Straton, Director of Spirasi receives cheque from Jack Donnelly with Dylan O'Reilly and Raymond Crotty (5th Year)

The Mass was also attended by the St Bede's, Manchester, party of 58 students and 7 staff led by their Headmaster, Mr Dan Kearney and Governor, Mr John Byrne. St. Bede's had played our senior soccer teams and U14S C rugby team on the previous day.

Rugby

All four house rugby teams have been busy this term as the Leinster League commenced. House Seconds were victorious against St. Michael's and Clongowes, and are currently preparing for the semi final against Terenure. Commiserations to the House Fourths who were narrowly defeated in the semi-final against St. Mary's.

Model United Nations

Patrick Lavelle (5th Year), along with a number of 4th Years, entered the Model United Nations arena representing Argentina at the Conference held in Wesley on the weekend of 24/25 February 2012.

500 delegates from Ireland and the U.K. participated. A number of issues were debated ranging from disarmament, security, economic and social committees.

Seachtain na Gaeilge

During Seachtain na Gaeilge in March, all the students doing Irish in Fifth Year participated in a 'Trath na gCeist' and independently produced films competed in the second 'Oscar na Carraige'. The annual Poc Fada competition was keenly contested with Ryan Conlan and Neil Gorey prevailing as the winners for this Academic Year. Many thanks to Ms. Payne and the Irish Department who co-ordinated this most entertaining of weeks.

Golf Team

The Blackrock Golf season was finally brought to an end in March with a narrow defeat to St Collumcilles School, in Greystones Golf Club. This was their final game in what was a very adventurous season reaching the Leinster Matchplay Semi-Finals and reaching Leinster Quarter Finals of the Fourball event. Well done to Ray Crotty, Alex Campbell, Dylan O'Reilly and Daniel O'Byrne (all 5th Year) for their part played on the team.

Fifth Year Parents' Association

On Friday 2 March, parents of 5th Year students attended a social evening in Dun Laoghaire Yacht Club. It was a very enjoyable evening and many thanks to the 5th Year Parents' Association who organised the event.

Addiction Awareness Day

Blackrock's first Addiction Awareness Day was organised to highlight how easy it is to Lose Control. There are both substance (Drugs, Alcohol) and behavioural addictions (Gambling, Facebook, Gaming, Mobile Phone).

Dr. Ann Buckmaster, Clinical Psychologist with Toranfield House, addressed the boys on the danger of addictions, the early warning signs and the associated trauma.

The European Union Science Olympiad

The European Union Science Olympiad (EUSO) is a team competition for EU second-level school Science students who are 16 years of age or younger on the December 31st, prior to the competition. Congratulations to David Kelly (5th Year) who has been selected to represent Ireland in Vilnius, Lithuania from April 22-29, 2012.

Table Tennis

Congratulations to Jack Donnelly and Daniel Webb, on the College Senior Table Tennis team, who have had recent victories against St. Tiernans, Gonzaga and Deansrath. We wish them the best of luck in their cup semi-final and final, which will take place on the 27th of April, and in their league campaign in which they will play St. Fintans (last years Leinster cup and league runners up). We would also like to congratulate Jack Donnelly (Captain) and his Junior team from last year for qualifying for the World Schools. It will be held in Sardinia, Italy, on the 29th of March.

Rowing

The rowing team has, improved hugely this term, with many students showing an impressive commitment to the programme. 5th year boats competed in the Lagan head of the river in Belfast and a head to head event with Coláiste Chiaráin, who travelled from Limerick. These events gave invaluable experience to the team. The focus is on the School Championships, which will take place in Cork in April. The team will also be competing in the Colours (UCD vs. Trinity) event, the Trinity regatta and the Dublin and Skibereen Heads of the River, which are expected to go well. Also a big thanks to the coaches, Laura and especially to Eugene who is moving to London, thanks for all the help over the years.

Swimming/Water Polo

Several 5th years participated very enthusiastically in the swimming program this term. The senior swimming team was well represented by Max Gueret and Vinóg Leavy at the Irish national schools event held in the Aer Lingus pool in February. The team placed 3rd and 4th in the freestyle and medley relays respectively. Well done to Max for claiming 2nd prize in the 100m breaststroke at the same event. Max also finished 4th in the 100m freestyle. Max swims at national level for Trojan Club and qualified for 3 semi-finals and 1 final at the National Long course Championships & Olympic Trials.

The 5th years were also very active in their participation in water polo. The senior team bounced back after defeat in the senior cup to secure a place in the Conaty cup final which will be played in the coming weeks.

Wesley Inter-schools Music Festival

There was a strong 5th year representation at the Wesley Inter-schools Music Festival on the 2nd/3rd of March this year, both in the group and the solo categories. While the atmosphere was pleasantly relaxed, the competition was fierce, with schools from all over Ireland competing. Congratulations to Patrick Keegan who won the 'Rock Guitar' competition, with Mikey Browne in close second, and Paul Kieran getting first class honours. Mikey and Patrick, along with fellow 5th years Max Gueret and Tim Crowley, were also part of the College's first ever entry into the chamber orchestra competition, and got 1st class honours for their arrangement of Vivaldi's 'Summer Storms'. Well done also to Ryan Conlan who was highly commended for his solo singing performance.

All in all, a great effort from this year's 5th years, which greatly contributed to Blackrock's impressive 17 awards.

Football

Two teams are competing in this year's Millennium League. The teams are made up of 5th and 4th years. The A team started the campaign with an unfortunate 4-2 loss away to Belvedere, with Shea McDermott scoring twice. But they recovered well to beat Wilsons Hospital 2-0 with goals from Fred Kenny and Rob Love (both 4th year). The B team meanwhile played St Michaels and won 4-1 in a comprehensive victory with goals from Alex Campbell and Aaron Pisarnick (5th year). Both teams have a few games left and will hope to meet each other in the final.



Sixth Year

Lent 2012:

The start of Lent on Ash Wednesday was marked by a liturgy, led by Fr. Malachy Kilbride in the College Chapel, where students were given the opportunity to receive blessed ash. During the season of Lent, sixth year students were also presented with the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to support the Trocaire Lenten Box Campaign with its focus on Uganda this year. Many thanks to Mr. Myles Ryan, Fr. Hyacinth, Mr. O'Reilly and the RE teachers for providing these opportunities for the students to celebrate and reflect on their faith.

Lectures:

Since February the year group have been addressed by Dr. Ann Buckmaster, Clinical Psychologist with Toranfield House who addressed the students on the dangers of Addictions (Feb. 23rd); by Judge Catherine Murphy who outlined in a very clear manner how young men can end up in difficulty with the Laws of the State (Mar. 1st); and by Ciaran Spillane who spoke to the Business and Economics students about the opportunities offered by the European Union (Mar. 2nd). Many thanks to Mr. McMahon, Ms. Sweeney, Mr. Copeland and the 6th Year Parents Association who made these forums possible.

Mock Orals:

Between March 5th and 9th, a week of mock oral examinations in Irish, French, Spanish and German took place. These mocks presented the students with a most valuable opportunity to prepare for the State orals which begin on our return on April 16th.

Extra Curricular Activities:

Music: There was a very strong 6th Year representation at the Wesley Inter-Schools Music Festival on March 2nd and 3rd. While there were many prize winners over the weekend, we offer particular congratulations to Cillian Copeland winner of the Robertson Cup (O16s Piano Solo), Peter Ryan winner of the Rice Cup (O16 Wind and Brass Solo) and the Cillian Copeland (Piano) / Billy Griffin (Saxophone) combination, who won the Senior Chamber Music Cup.

Rugby: We congratulate all four Castle rugby teams on a most successful term. At the time of going to print, all four sides were preparing for semi-final matches in their Leinster Leagues. We wish them well and thank Mr. Savage, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Fawsitt, Mr. Scott-Lennon and Mr. Keogh for all of their work on behalf of Castle rugby this season.

We thank also the cheerleaders, under the leadership of Robert Walsh, Jack Dempsey and Joseph Scott-Lennon, who gave their time and efforts on behalf of both Cup teams this season. The support in the stand at our Cup matches was a testament to the excellent work done by the cheerleading team.

Swimming: Dean Smal was a member of the Senior Freestyle Swimming Team that took Bronze at the Irish School's Championships in February.

Powerlifting: In the All-Ireland Single Lift Championships held in Gorey, Simon Keartland set a new National record in winning the U.18-19 (U110kg) class. Eoin

Moran also won his (U90kg) class.

Pool: In the final of the 6th Year Inter-House Pool Tournament, Ben McAuley (Shanahan) defeated Tomas Basquel Fahy (Ebenrecht) by 3 frames to 1 in the final. Many thanks to the House Representatives and students involved for the smooth running of this tournament.

Soccer: In the annual soccer matches between Blackrock and St. Bede's College Manchester, our second XI won 3-0 thanks to a hat trick from Mark Gannon and in the first XI game, Blackrock under the captaincy of Mark Stephens, lifted the trophy for the first time since 2006, winning on penalties after a 1-1 draw.

Debating: A packed Lecture Hall on March 1st witnessed the SCT team of Conor Kilcoyne, Fergal Bolger, Chris Stack and Killian O'Leary successfully propose the motion that 'This House would ban Rugby at Blackrock'. The Senior Debating team of Edward Kevin, Jack Shipsey, Diarmuid Hickey and Daniel O'Toole contributed hugely to a most entertaining occasion. Many thanks to Ms. Wallace for her work in organising this event and for her commitment to 6th Year Debating throughout the academic year.

Table Tennis: Congratulations to Matthew Finlay, Will Gallagher, Mark Kelly, Adam Keogh and Karl Murphy who have qualified for the Leinster League Final after Easter. Will and Matthew will also represent the College in the Leinster Schools Cup semi-final next term.

6th Year Parents' Association:

The Parents' Committee is continuing its excellent work and much effort is being directed towards fund-raising for the trip to Kenya this Summer. The DVD committee have sent an order form home with the boys; they would welcome any video material which parents might like to submit for inclusion on the disc. Finally, the Graduation Committee is working hard on the planning and organisation of the Graduation Lunch in the Pavilion in Leopardstown.

Important Dates for Term 3

Tuesday 24th April
Tuesday 8th May

Sunday 13th May
Sunday 20th May
Saturday 26th May

Swimming Gala @ 6pm
6th Year Parents Conference (incl. Ceremony of Light) @ 7.30pm
Sports Day @ 2pm
6th Year Graduation Mass @ 12noon
Academic Prize Giving @ 10.30am.

As the sixth year students approach the final term, they should rest assured that they can make significant academic progress in these final weeks and that there are support systems and help available to them within the College in the run up to the Leaving Certificate. We wish the Class of 2012 all the best with these final preparations.



Careers and Counselling

A number of Leaving Certificate students have firmly accepted offers through UCAS in Great Britain: one to study Medicine at Cambridge University; another to study Medicine at Kings College London; another to study Music at the London Guild Hall. Others await final offers through UCAS.

Twenty six 6th years applied for D.A.R.E. this year; however these students will only know if they qualify for entry to college through D.A.R.E in June 2012.

Eighteen 6th years took the HPAT test on February the 25th, but this year students will be informed of their percentile rank and mark on the HPAT in April 2012.

A number of other 6th years have submitted their portfolios for relevant courses while other students hoping to study music or drama have already had auditions for their preferred courses.

Already open days have begun for Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses and a number of students have submitted applications for the PLC's. There is 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 cert 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. Two Leaving Cert students have already secured

places on FETAC courses in sport and exercise studies.

Many 6th years 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, Design and Communication Graphics and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. These students find it comforting that they have already completed work worth 20-40% of the Leaving Certificate examination in particular subjects. Of course all Leaving Cert students studying languages will have Orals immediately after Easter.

Some 6th years have applied for AD ASTRA, sporting and academic as well as choral scholarships. Academic scholarships are of course awarded on the basis of Leaving Certificate performance.

CAO will allow students to use COM (Change of Mind) facility from May 5th until July 1st 2012 at 5.15pm. Late application deadline to CAO of May 1st 2012 maybe be of interest to present third level students who wish to apply to CAO in order to change current course of study. The message to all CAO applicants, even in 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.

Academic attainment of all students in the college as well as their extracurricular involvement is constantly monitored by the counsellors in each year and appropriate advice given. Hopefully all students are happy with their involvement.

Pastoral Care Programme



This half term saw the beginning of Lent and Ashes were offered to students and staff throughout Ash Wednesday.

The following day saw the introduction of a new initiative: Addiction Awareness Day. Thanks to Ms. Siobhan Sweeney and Mr. Conor McMahon who arranged for speakers from Toranfield House to address each Year of the school. A general overview outlined the many types of addiction and the devastation that can result but showed how help can be called on in even very difficult situations.

The Pastoral Placement programme continued from the first day back. By now all but one of the T.Y. classes have participated in this valuable exercise.

The practice walks for the Camino pilgrims began on the 26th of February, the third of which goes ahead on Sun. 25th March. Meanwhile preparations for another pilgrimage swung into action. Each year a group of Leaving Cert students heads out to Lourdes on the Dublin Diocesan Pilgrimage with a mission to serve, to the very best of their ability, the needs of the sick and disabled pilgrims from all over the Dublin Diocese. Interested boys from 5th Year make application and follow this with interview. At this stage the selection process is in its final stages. The pilgrimage takes place next September.

Reconciliation Services were held during the third week of our return and every boy had opportunity to avail of the sacrament. It is always very edifying to see how the boys respond so respectfully on these occasions.

It was during this same week that Fifth Year made preparation for their Family Mass. On the day Rian Murphy gave a welcome to all: "Before we begin our Family Mass, I am happy to welcome Fr. Peter Murphy, who will act as Principal Celebrant, of our Eucharist this morning. Father Peter is National Chaplain to "Accord", the Catholic Marriage Care Service, and is also Executive Secretary of the Commission for Pastoral Care of the Irish Episcopal Conference. He is also a past-pupil and it is always especially pleasing to welcome home one of our own.

As you can imagine Fr. Peter is a busy man and we are very grateful to him for being with us this morning, his first time to celebrate a Blackrock College Family Mass.

A special word of welcome goes to Mr. Greg Straton, the Director of Spirasi, who facilitated our Day of Reflection last October, along with other Spirasi personnel. They explained to us the work that

Spirasi does. On that day, a victim of torture, now an asylum seeker in Ireland, told us of his difficult life. It was only because of the help he got from Spirasi, that it was possible for him to come to terms with, and speak about, his experience. That day was the inspiration behind our recent fundraiser.

Blackrock College has developed a close relationship with St. Bede's College, Manchester and we are delighted that our annual soccer matches have resumed this year. It adds a valuable dimension to the visit when we celebrate this Mass together after yesterday's meeting on the pitches. We welcome the Headmaster, Mr. Daniel Kearney; former Headmaster, Mr. John Byrne, who was instrumental in bringing the two Colleges together; their teaching colleagues and of course the boys of St. Bede's.

I welcome too, Mr. David Harvey, President of the College Union, his wife Siobhan and their children. The Union continues to play a very active and supportive role in the College and the work of the President is demanding and time-consuming. You are very welcome and we thank you for coming to celebrate with us at our Family Mass.

Finally, and especially, welcome to all the families of Fifth Year, as we celebrate Eucharist together, on this the Third Sunday of Lent."

The many boys who participated were congratulated by so many on their ministries of welcome, music and singing, readings and processions. At the end of the Mass Jack Donnelly presented Spirasi with a cheque, the proceeds of Fifth Year's sponsored fast.

The Faith Friends Programme was completed during March. On Sun 10th, six of our students joined with Willow Park students to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. A truly joyous occasion.

As the half term drew to a close we heard the very sad news of the death of Mrs. Margaret Herlihy, mother of Mr. Brian Herlihy our Deputy Principal. The sincere outpouring of sympathy to Brian from all quarters of the Blackrock College community is a measure of the high esteem in which he is held. We pray that The Lord in his mercy, give Margaret Herlihy a safe lodging, a holy rest and peace at the last. And we pray God's blessing on all the Herlihy family.

Seachtain na Gaeilge



Tá an chuma ar an scéal go bhfuil Seachtain na Gaeilge ag dul ó neart go neart gach bliain. Bhí atmaisféar spleodrach le brath timpeall na scoile i rith na seachtaine agus ba léir go raibh sult agus spraoi le baint as na himeachtaí go léir a bhí ar siúl i rith na seachtaine.

B'iad buaicphointí na seachtaine ná na ceardlanna Hip Hop agus an Sean Nós le Tura agus Brónach, an céilí leis na cailíní ó Chnoc Shíón agus an rás sealaíochta 'Rith' ar an Luan. Agus, arís i mbliana, bhí bua iontach ag Na Múinteoirí ar an Idirbhliain. Bhí go leor imeachtaí taitneamhacha eile ar fáil, ina measc Tóraíocht Taisce, Tráth na gCeist, Peil, Poc Fada agus Scannáin agus ghlac formhór na ndaltaí páirt go fonnmhar iontu.

Míle Buíochas le Roinn na Gaeilge as ucht na himeachtaí go léir a eagrú dúinn. Táimid ag súil go mór le Seachtain na Gaeilge 2013.



Na Múinteoirí - Buaiteoirí an Chomórtais Peile

Halls of Residence



It was a very busy and fulfilling half term in the boarding school. As we approach the key exams of the year at Easter the boarders have still have time for other activities.

In February all years, bar fifth, went to an excellent production of 'Da' in the Gate Theatre featuring a former

pupil, Tadhg Murphy. The fifth years went to see 'Macbeth' in the Helix, another fine production.

The Wesley music festival featured a good turnout by boarders – congratulations to J. O'Sullivan, H. McGuinness, B. McKenzie and T. Crowley and also to the many

boys involved in the choirs.

On Saturday 3rd March, a group visited the 'Human Bodies' exhibition. While most found it fascinating some thought it a bit gruesome!

On Friday 2nd March, Mr. Denis Heavy gave a speech which, while covering many topics, really focussed on positivity: Making the Best of Life. It was an inspiring occasion and many thanks to Mr. Rogan for organising it.

As we go to print the various Castle, House and Junior Teams are competing in the Final League stages – as always all teams have significant boarder involvement.

Finally, congratulations to Francesco Escudero, Donal Di Luicia, Bryan Mollen, James Fox, Shane Maughan and Declan Kelly all of whom were confirmed recently. Many thanks to Fr. Hyacinth for facilitating.

Sport



The College Swim Team continue their impressive run of success in the Irish Schools' Swim Championships over mid- term. Despite missing a couple of our top swimmers, our relay squad performed very well with the Senior Medley Team of Vinog Leavy and Max Gueret (5th year), Dean Smal (6th year) and Matthew Long (2nd year) taking fourth place and the Senior Freestyle - Vinog Leavy and Max Gueret (5th year), Frank Vaughan (4th year) and Dean Smal (6th year) earning Bronze. The Highlight of the weekend was undoubtedly Max Gueret's Silver medal in the 100m Breaststroke and fourth in the 100m Front Crawl. The Junior Boys Relay Team of Robert Sheedy, Mark O'Connor, Ian Leavy (1st year), Christian McKenna (2nd year) finished fifth in the Medley and sixth in the Freestyle. The Inter Boys Relay Teams of Christian McKenna (2nd year), Robert McKenna (1st year), Matthew Long (1st year) and Frank Vaughan (4th year), Ian Leavy (1st year), Christian McKenna (2nd year) and Matthew Long (2nd year) finished sixth and seventh respectively. Well done to the boys and coach Carole Walsh. Top level swimming requires hours of selfless training and it's great to see the boys get the reward and recognition they deserve.



Gavin Thornbury supported by Jack Burke v.Terenure

We salute the gargantuan efforts of Roghan McMahon (3rd year) and his Junior Cup Rugby Squad who lost to Clongowes in the Junior Cup Quarter Final of the Leinster Schools Cup. They gave their all, as they have done throughout the year. A close match such as this tantalises and the 'what might have beans' frustrate us. However, we should stick with the positives of which there are many -

wholehearted endeavour, great team spirit, courage, determination and tenacity were in evidence in all facets of the game, across all

positions, admirable qualities which a scoreboard cannot and does not diminish. I thank the coaches, Mr John Ryan, Mr Daly, Stephen McIvor (Class of 1987), Conor Barry (Class of 2009) and Physio Seamus Toomey - they gave their all. As the cup season ends, I thank Robert Walsh, Joe Scott Lennon, Jack Dempsey (all 6th year) and their team of cheerleaders. They did a superb job not just in the stand but also in galvanising support for the Cup Teams throughout the school.

Impressive victories in the semi finals of the Senior Seconds League Division I from the House 2nds over Terenure College and The Castle 2nds over Clongowes Wood College mean an all Blackrock College final. A fantastic achievement by both squads and what promises to be an exciting occasion. The Castle 3rds continue their impressive string of victories by qualifying for the final of the Senior Seconds Division 2 and The Castle 4ths look forward to a semi final clash with Gonzaga in the 3rds League. Hard luck to the House 4ths whose season came to an end with a narrow loss in their semi final to St Marys. The team lead by captain Simon Leonard (5th year) lost 10 - 8. The Colts defeated the Castle 5ths in what was a hard fought battle on the College's House Pitch and now play St Michaels in the Final of the East Coast League at UCD. The Junior 3rds look forward to their Final against CBC Monkstown at St Mary's while the Junior fourths look forward to what will be a tough Semi Final fixture with CUS. We wish all the teams the best of luck for these big matches and as the season draws to an end a big thanks to all the boys and coaches for their endeavour over what was another exciting year for Blackrock rugby.

We were pleased to welcome St Bede's College, Manchester to Blackrock College on the occasion of the Annual Soccer matches. Our 2nd XI, captained by Robert Kelly (6th year) won 3 - 0 with a hat trick from Mark Gannon (also 6th year). The 1st XI, led by Mark Stephens (6th Year) won a much closer affair on penalties. The game on the front lawn ended 1 - 1. Stephen Boyce (6th year) was the Blackrock scorer. Sam Walsh (5th year), Michael Murphy and



Aaron Pisarnik battling for the ball against St. Bede's

Sport



Harry Crowe (both 6th year) scored the penalties to ensure Blackrock's first win since 2006. I thank Mr O'Nuallain, Colm Dolan (Class of 2009) and Ian McHugh (Class of 2008) for the preparation of the boys.



Jeff Landers saves the day

St Bede's also brought their U14 Rugby side that played our U14's C team captained by Cillian Daly (2nd year). In an open game excellent rugby was played by both sides, our U14's C won 55-10. The St Bede's party led by their Headmaster, Mr Dan Kearney attended our 5th Year Family Mass on Sunday morning before returning to Manchester. It was a fantastic weekend of sport.



Stefan Boyce prepares to shoot against St. Bede's

The College Rowing Club continues to develop under the guidance of coaches Eugene Coackley and Laura Gannon. Three Blackrock Crews took to the water in the Annual Lagan Head of The River Race held in Belfast. Our Junior Squad of Doug Clinch, Ross O'Mahony, Tom McNamara (3rd year) and Will Heavey (4th year) finished 3rd, while our Senior 8 of Crew 1 Adam Keogh (Cox), Mark Kelly, Jack Horan (all 6th year), Philip Spain, Dean Somers (both 5th year), James O'Sullivan, Eoin Gleeson and Mark Twomey (all 4th year) and Crew 2 Sean King (5th year), Max Nolke, Oisin Flynn, Cormac Fenton, Luke Fitzpatrick, Frank Vaughan, Evan Coughlan and Jack Murphy (all 4th year) were 5th and 6th respectively. As a prelude to the UCD - Trinity Colours Event, UCD's Novice 3rds challenged the Blackrock Senior Eight to a Race. In a tremendous race, our boys won by a foot. Well done to Adam Keogh, Mark Kelly (both 6th year), David Somers and Jack Murphy (both 5th year), James O'Sullivan, Eoin Gleeson, Edward Bickers, Luke Fitzpatrick and Chris Butler (all 4th year). I thank Ms McCann, Laura Gannon and Eugene Coackley for their organisation of events and the parent body for their support of the Club.

In the Leinster Table Tennis Cups, seven out of twelve semi final slots

will be taken by Blackrock at Cup Finals Day in Clontarf. Two out of four semi final slots in the Leinster U13 Cup will be filled by Blackrock and there will also be a Blackrock team in the Leinster U13 Cup Final for the first time. Three Blackrock College Junior Teams have qualified for the semi final slots in the Leinster Junior Cup guaranteeing representation in the Final. Two Senior Teams progressed to the semi finals in the Leinster Senior Cup but unfortunately were drawn against each other so only one will make the Final. We wish all the boys involved the best of luck for their big cup matches and particular mentions to the Blackrock Junior A who play Salesian College for the Junior League Title and Blackrock Senior A who play St. Fintan's for the Senior League Title. Many thanks to coach Richard Butler for his continued hard work and endeavour and we wish the team luck on their travels to the World Schools Championship in March.

Congratulations to our U19 Squash Squad who finished Runners-Up to Belvedere in the Leinster Schools Squash League. Well Done to Karl McCabe and Johnny O'Leary (both 4th year) and Matthew Kinsella and David Harte (both 5th year). A spirited effort from the U17 team consisting of Harry Lloyd, Stephen O'Connor, Ross O'Mahony (all 3rd year) and Johnny O'Leary (4th year) who were unfortunate to miss out in the Quarter Final of the Leinster Schools Cup. We congratulate the squads for their successful seasons and thank Ms McCaffrey for her efforts.



Junior Cross Country Team

A notable year for schools' cross country as our Junior Cross Country Team qualified for the All Ireland -Country Championships in Galway. Luke McCann (2nd year), Captain and individual qualifier, lead his team consisting of Declan Norton, Conor Burke, Brian McGlone, Conor Murnane, Christian McKenna, Brian Masterson (all 2nd year) and Chris Aylward (1st year) to a spirited and respectful 5th overall. Andrew Cullen (5th year) also qualified as an individual in the Senior Event and put in an impressive performance amongst some of the country's top competitors. A special mention to Ms Fraser for her continued hard work and organisation over what was a successful season overall.

A good year for the Blackrock College Water Polo Junior Cup Team who were superbly lead by captain Ben Lawlor (3rd year) in their successful bid to win the Leinster Schools Cup this year. A fantastic achievement by Ben's team and many thanks to Kevin Healy for his role in preparing the squad.

All photos courtesy of www.rockphotography.ie