

# BLACKROCK COLLEGE NEWSLETTER



## February 2020

Dear Parents,

The recently published **"My World Survey 2"** (MWS2), the national study of Youth Mental Health, reports that the number of young people drinking alcohol, being bullied in school and stressing about finances has dropped when compared to the findings in MWS1 (2012). It also reports that teenagers are now more likely to talk to their parents or 'a special adult', be it another relative, family friend or school counsellor about their mental health. Family, friends, school connectedness and attendance, physical activity and aspects of social media are confirmed as contributors to positive mental health and wellbeing.

On the debit side, it is a concern that the levels of 'protective factors' related to mental health such as self-esteem, optimism and resilience have decreased.

This is an excellent piece of research. However, it is a pity that it does not report on the positive influence that faith, the nurturing of the spirit, has on wellbeing. The recent Catholic Schools' Week, "Living in Harmony with God's Creation" challenged us to live in harmony with God, our Neighbours, all generations, with the earth and in our school. The emphasis is on harmony.

**"When you find peace within yourself, you can become the kind of person who can live at peace with others".** (Peace Pilgrim, Mildred Norman). In other words, in order to look outwards, we must first look inwards.

Self-esteem, optimism and resilience will develop if we put before the boys a pathway to a purposeful and meaningful life through Gospel values. Wellbeing is a consequence of the development of the body, mind and soul. It is cultivated in a milieu of care, respect, decency and forgiveness. Our community is built on understanding, acceptance, encouragement, support and love which helps us to manage both success and setback in a balanced way. It prompts our boys to act and react on instincts of generosity, to look outwards and experience the joy of service, the giving of self to others.

Connectedness to the school beyond the classroom strengthens self-esteem, builds friendships, inspires confidence and promotes resilience.

I am optimistic about the wellbeing of our boys as I witness them encourage, appreciate and care for each other on a day-by-day basis. Our Student Council and House Captains, our committees for Green Schools, Wellbeing, Development Education, CADLC, Debating, Model United Nations and our Cheerleaders provide a vital link between staff and students. The Leman Concert, RockMUN, Past v Present, MACE and Language Debates, The One Act Play, the Cup-matches and the numerous other activities across Academia, Sport, and the Arts have provided many moments of pride, fulfilment and connection over the last six weeks.

The reception in the College for the Senior Cup Squad after the defeat by Gonzaga is worthy of mention for it confirmed the spirit, empathy and loyalty within the school. This was **'Be There'** at its finest as large numbers returned to the refectory to welcome home Mark Morrissey (6th Year) and his valiant Senior Squad who gave their all.

I am optimistic about the heart of Blackrock. The commitment of so many of our boys to the St. Vincent de Paul, to the Soup Run, to faith friends, to the Pastoral Placements, the Auxilium and Machakos projects, as well as their concern for the environment and support for our Wellbeing Day, is indicative of their desire to make a difference in the lives of others.

I am optimistic about the faith of the boys. The reverence of our Ministers of the Eucharist, the enthusiasm at the 3rd Year retreats, the participation in our 5th Year Family Mass, the example of our Transition Year Faith Friends, the engagement with our liturgical services and the respect for our monthly exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is inspirational.

I am encouraged when the chairman of the Student Council, Tom O'Connor (6th Year) tells the Board of Management that not everyone is fulfilled at Blackrock and that we must seek ways to include the less engaged students and help them to feel more valued here.

Finally, I am grateful for the commitment of our Spiritan Community, my Colleagues and the Student Body to inclusivity both inside the classroom and beyond which adds value to the self-esteem, optimism, resilience and faith of your sons.

God Bless

**ALAN MacGINTY**  
Principal

Photos from L to R :

- a) Jamie Sood ( 6th Year ) performs at the Leman Concert
- b) Eoghan Walsh ( JCT V St Andrew's )
- c) John Huggard( 6th Year) at the Past V Present Pupils' Debate



# Second Year



Since their return in January, our Second Years continue to make great progress in their weekly **Application Cards**. This card, returned to each boy every Monday, provides an important opportunity for parents to congratulate their son on a good week's work and to reinforce good practice and organisation. It is worth noting the importance of setting goals and the Principal's List is a worthy goal because it compliments those boys who have achieved at least seven ones on their card for that week. A student who continually achieves the Principal's List gives himself the opportunity to be nominated for an Honours Award at the College Prize Giving in May.

The **House Competitions** in Second Year continue with great participation in the current Chess competition and the boys will have an opportunity to add to the scoreboard with the Soccer Blitz which begins after Mid-Term. Also, this term, all Second Years visited the **BT Young Scientist Exhibition**, providing an opportunity to view the excellent projects on display.

In January the boys embarked on their **Auxilium** Programme and already they are showing enthusiasm and commitment in their service. Sincere thanks to all, parents, family members and friends, who support this excellent work and provide guidance and opportunities for the boys. We encourage each boy to challenge himself to make a positive difference in the world and we look forward to reading about these activities and to seeing some examples of service in action.



**Wellbeing Day** took place on 20th January and incorporated a variety of activities. Students were greeted with motivational speech bubbles decorating their lockers and they were presented with a prayer card on arrival in the morning. Their first class of the day began with a meditation session and our House Captains, along with members of the Student Wellbeing Committee, distributed fruit at lunchtime, to reinforce the benefits of healthy eating. Congratulations to Hubie McCarthy and Nicholas Cronnelly who helped to organise these activities.



Lochlainn Maher and Harry Dixon  
(\*Rock V Gonzaga)

The theme of this year's **Catholic Schools' Week** was 'Living in harmony with God's Creation' and the programme for the week included a Treasure Hunt for Second Years, who, guided by their religion teachers, had a walking tour of the campus, while identifying elements of creation and biodiversity in our midst.

## Extra -Curricular

Many Second-Year boys have achieved in the area of extra-curricular involvement. A few highlights include some excellent **Rowing** and **Rugby results** as well as great involvement in athletics, squash, badminton and table



Second Years at the Cup Rally



Hugo Redmond and Adam Deegan-McGovern  
(\*Rock V Gonzaga)



Michael Curley  
(Junior 2nds v Portadown College)



Daniel Cheung  
(\*Rock V Gonzaga)

tennis this season. In **Basketball** the Second-Year team, under Captain Cormac Morris, have won each of their league matches so far and in **Gaelic**, the Under 14 team is unbeaten to date. We also have some talented Second Years playing in the Under 16 Gaelic football league and in Rugby, well done to Jack Angulo on a terrific contribution to the **JCT**.

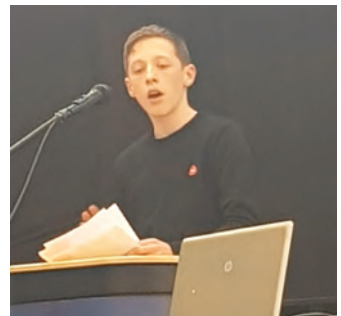


Back Row (L to R) Cormac Morris, Oscar Mannion, Luca Knierim, Michael Cherico, Matthew Govan

Congratulations must go to **Sean O'Nuallain (2nd Year)** who won the Irish National Indoor Tennis Championships (Under 14s Singles) in Riverview in January. He's the number one ranked player in the country in this age category.



In **Debating** we congratulate all Second Years on their excellent performance in the Castleknock Community College Matheson MACE Debating Competition held in January. It is great to see so many involved in this activity. At the Coláiste na hInse MACE in February Gregory Quinn qualified for the final and was voted one of the best speakers. Well done to Gregory. Congratulations also to Amlan Parida, Harry Pierce, AJ Adoghe, Luca Kenny and Patrick Hayden who qualified to compete in the Leinster Finals at the end of the month. We wish them well. One of eight teams who qualified to represent Ireland at The ICYD in Oxford University in May.



Gregory Quinn

Finally, the Leman Concert was a wonderful display of musical talent amongst the boys and congratulations to all Second Years in the orchestra, the Corless Choir, the Jazz Band and Ceoltoiri Carraige. A truly memorable evening.



(L to R) Patrick Hayden and Luca Kenny



Robert MacHale performs with the Jazz Band at the Leman Concert

## Dates for your Diary

2 March – Modern Language Easter Aural

3 March – Irish Easter Aural

5 March – start of Lenten Reconciliation Services

10 March – House Examinations begin

16 March -Class suspended & 17 March Public Holiday.

23 March – Classes recommence



# Third Year



It did not take the year group long to get back into the academic swing of things. With focus turning to reviewing and correcting Christmas exam scripts it was straight down to business on our return in January. But as the Easter exams creep up there has been plenty going on to offer a nice distraction from studies.

On the Tuesday, Thursday and Friday of the second week back, 3rd Year students travelled with their houses to the Disciples of The Divine Cross on Newtownpark Avenue for a day of **reflection and prayer**. A timely opportunity to take time out of schoolwork, to reflect and take stock. The students reported that they enjoyed the day and had taken something from it. The Days of Reflection were followed closely by the school Wellbeing Day on Monday 20th January. Third Years began their day with a meditation in their RE classes reminding them of the importance of allowing some quiet time and stillness in their lives. I hope the meditation techniques the boys practised will be of benefit as the exams approach.



The Choir and Orchestra perform at the Leman Concert

On Sunday the 19th of January the annual **Leman Concert** showcased the musical talent in the school and of course 3rd Year - and what talent. It was inspiring to see so many 3rd years involved in both the orchestra and choir. In particular we got to see *The Definite Article* perform their catchy version of Shakes. Well done to Luke Carroll, David Doyle, Jonathan Hoffman and Ethan Leon Ryan. Sticking with contemporary music Joseph Gibney, Finn O' Hara and Sean Treacy were soloists as the choir performed *Dreams* by the Cranberries. Sean also sang solo on the Florence Medley performed by choir and orchestra. Finally, the Jazz Band featuring Gavin Bowen O' Connor, David Doyle, Harry Fitzpatrick and Ruairi Stephens got everyone's feet tapping. It was a hugely enjoyable and uplifting evening's entertainment.



David Doyle performing at the Leman

Well done to the junior **debating** team including Jack Dempsey Salley, Conor Hughes, Daniel Keely, Ben Kieran Glennon and Alec Linklater who performed really well in the Castleknock Community College MACE debating competition. Ben and Conor emerged as the winning team with Ben also picking up an individual award. The team now prepare for the next round which takes place in Colaiste na hIlne.

On the final weekend in January the school hosted the annual RockMUN which saw 170 delegates from 14 schools take part. Gavin Bowen O' Connor and Jamie Starr Bourke were delegates representing Iran for the weekend. A big thank you to Conor Casey, Fionn Graham James Lee, Ben Loughrey, Frazer McGinn and Aaron Murtagh who were part of the administration team over the course of the weekend.

## Sports

In Basketball it was great to see Eric Brandt, Tom Cherico, Maitiú Heckmann and James Sheridan involved in a combination of the U-16 and U-19 squad in their opening victory against Templecarrig in the Inter Schools' Invitational. In golf congratulations to Jake Foley who is part of the senior golf team that has retained the Leinster title and qualified for the All Ireland semi-finals to be held in Macroom Golf Club in April. In athletics our Intermediate Team featuring James Carroll, Harry Flynn, David MacHugh Jack McGlone, Ruairi McIntosh, Liam Norton and Finn O' Neill finished third overall in the East Leinster Championships held in Santry. We wish them well in the upcoming Leinster Competition.

I am delighted that we have two Third Years featuring in our schools UI6 **football** side playing in the Dublin Schools' Gaelic Competition. Both Thomas Downey and Joey Quirke have played a big role in the teams advance to the final, featuring in both the QF victory of Clonkeen College and a big win over Lucan Community College.

Finally, in **rugby** all five junior teams are up and running in their respective competitions. The junior 5ths were drawn in a very difficult group including St Columba's JCT. We opened with a strong win over Gonzaga, followed by a tough home game to Pres Bray. Despite being up against it playing Columba's the J5ths, under the leadership of Max Mullen, fought heroically and never gave up - a true Blackrock performance. We wish Max and team all the best in their final group game against CBC Monkstown. The J4ths, playing in the same league, have notched up two victories in their opening games. Captained by Rory Kelly they prepare for Highschool in the next group match. The J3rds, under the stewardship of Ryan Keogh, were up against it losing their opening game against Gonzaga, but their talent and determination saw them emerge victorious in two tight games against very strong Templeogue and Pres Bray sides. Jody O' Carroll and the J2nds are going well in their league winning the opening two matches. As we go to print, the team is preparing for Clongowes. The school from Clane will be our opposition for the JCT in the next round of the cup after Greg Barron and the squad won their opening game against a very determined St Andrew's side. I wish all the teams the best of luck in the coming weeks.



James O' Sullivan, Federico Mei and Oliver Coffey (JCT V St Andrew's)



Luke Kritzing (Rock V St Andrew's)



JCT V St Andrew's



Patrick O' Donnell, Joseph Carroll ('Rock V St Columba's')



Greg Barron (Captain of the JCT) at the Cup Rally

## Dates for your Diary

2nd March – Modern Language Easter Aural Tests  
3rd March – Irish Easter Aural Tests  
10th – 20th March – Easter exams  
3rd April – Easter Holidays

# Transition Year



## Holy Ghost Prep School Visit

Immediately after Christmas we were delighted to welcome staff and students from our fellow Spiritan school, Holy Ghost Prep (HGP), Philadelphia to Blackrock. This is the second Holy Ghost Prep visit. Having arrived Thursday 2nd of January, spent a number of days in the Boarding school and visited various attractions such as the Cliffs of Moher, the 14 students then met their 14 Blackrock students and host families beginning with a wonderful mass put together by Fr.Cormac and celebrated by Fr Paddy Dundon. We thank the community as always for adding so much to what we do.

It was an action-packed week from start to finish. The tours and activities included Croke Park Skyline Tour, The GPO Tour, The Three Musketeers' Panto, The Vaults Live Interactive experience, the EPIC Ireland Interactive Museum tour, amongst others. We hope that our boys got just as much out of the trip as our American friends.

The reason for the establishment of this programme in the first instance was to offer the two sets of students an opportunity to explore Spiritan identity; for the boys to identify what it means to be a Spiritan school and the active role they can play in ensuring this ethos always remains at the core of what we do. On Wednesday 8th January Ronan Barry from the Spiritan Education Trust (SET) facilitated a superb workshop looking deeply at the meaning of Spiritan identity and asking the boys in their groups to imagine and design their own Spiritan school of the future. This was one of the highlights of the week. It was wonderful also to welcome students from St.Michael's, St.Mary's and Tempogue College to the workshop.



Blackrock and Holy Ghost Prep Students on the Croke Park Skyline Tour



Students from each of the Spiritan Schools engaged in a workshop activity

A fantastic week all round and I would like to thank Mr. Toirleac O'Brien and Ms. Emily Ryan for giving so much of themselves to the week. We look forward to the return trip during the Easter Break!

## Leadership programme

All TY students attended the second part of the Self Leadership programme given by Mr Denis Hevey in early January. Given the hugely busy lead up to Christmas in TY, the break offered students time to reflect on their TY experience thus far. The leadership programme offered the perfect opportunity for the boys to channel the lessons learned from this kind of reflective practice and begin the term with a renewed motivation for the rest of TY. Mr Hevey encouraged students to examine a multitude of critical areas including personal motivation, attitude, maximising their potential and much more. He also looked at techniques to develop resilience and manage moods. The course was extremely well received as always, and we thank Mr.Hevey for continually going above and beyond for the boys.

## Lecture Series

The Transition Year lecture series continued with the students attending two talks. We had the annual Dell workshop on Tuesday 28th January with the focus of the talk being on the variety of career paths open within an IT company; a career with Microsoft/Dell etc is not solely the domain of those who are particularly au fait with technology. On the 4th of February, the inspirational John O'Shea, spoke to the boys about social entrepreneurship. The core of John's message was the incredible capacity of the boys to make a difference to others, both locally and beyond, and John reminded them of the famous Thomas Edison quote "If we did all the things we were capable of doing we would literally astound ourselves".

On the 9th March the boys will be collecting on behalf of the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland specifically for the funding of Blackrock Social Club. We also have a couple of excellent speakers (hopefully!) lined up for the boys in advance of the Easter break.

## Pastoral Programme

Since Christmas two more groups have gone out on pastoral placement with the Matthew 25 programme. We thank Mr. Madden for his continued preparation of the boys in advance of placement and support during their placement. This is not an easy endeavour or challenge for the students but the feedback from the boys and parents alike continually places it as one of the most impactful of their TY experience. Our faith friends' group (a religion class helping with preparation for the Willow confirmation), under the expert guidance of Mr. O'Reilly had their first session down in Willow on Tuesday 4th February with more upcoming after the February midterm. We wish them well.

## AIB Build a Bank and Bank of Ireland School Bank

What was once the Blackrock College Radio studio has now been commandeered by a group of TYs and is now the headquarters of the AIB Build a Bank team. The bank is an 'Ecobank' and the boys plan to plant a tree for every account opened. The boys involved continue to prepare for the National Finals in the RDS at a date to be confirmed. Competition is never too far away in the banking world and a Bank of Ireland School bank has recently been opened!



John O'Shea, speaking to TY Students on Social Entrepreneurship

## 5k Rock Run

**SAVE THE DATE – SUNDAY 29th MARCH!** The annual 5k Rock Run will take place in the grounds of the College starting at 11am with onsite registration from 9.30am and will be in aid of Goal and Machakos. The year has been divided into groups for the event; School Sales, Corporate Sales, Launch Team, Prizes and Logistics and has already had preparatory meetings for the busyness of the build-up post February midterm! The promotion will really kick into gear post midterm with the event itself being formally launched in the College on Wednesday 4th March.

## Leman Concert

The Leman concert was simply incredible. It was great to see so many students involved in orchestra, choir, backstage, Ceoltoiri Carriage, the Jazz Band amongst other performances. Congratulations to 'Rebound' and 'Electric Ski' who represented TY phenomenally well. A huge well done to the many talented TY students involved in any way in the concert!



Stephen Wong, Adam James and Joshua Fitzpatrick perform at the Leman Concert

## Trips abroad

In advance of the February midterm we unfortunately had to cancel the China trip on account of the concerns over the coronavirus. As I write this we are looking into alternative possibilities for tours and hope to have had positive news before midterm for the 45 students who were unfortunately left disappointed by the China trip situation.

Over the course of January, the Tropical Medical Bureau has been in to administer vaccinations to both the 28 students travelling to Kenya. As you read this there are 28 students visiting our sister school in Machakos and another six TY students visiting Kenya with the Willow Wheelers. Equally important to the trip itself has been the many preparatory workshops so kindly facilitated by the charity Aidlink in advance of the trip. The immersion trip in conjunction with Aidlink will also take the students to Kaijado County, home of the Masaai tribe where they will visit some of the Aidlink projects, part funded by previous fourth year charity collections. There will be a debriefing workshop on the boys return which is an important part of the overall experience.

## Other News and Extra-Curricular

The Barista Course is hugely popular with the boys with two more groups taking the course post new year. Auditions for the Junior Musical took place over the course of this term and I would encourage any student who would still like to be involved but isn't as yet, irrespective of whether they auditioned or not, to apply to be a part of the crew for what is a wonderful experience for all involved. Several students are abroad busy becoming fluent in French or Spanish! A number of students are working busily down in Willow on the set design painting for the upcoming 5th Form Musical. A group of students, with an interest in photography, is working on the Graduation Video 2022 group. A reunion committee has been set up to assist with the preparation for the various reunions in the coming months, amongst many more activities. We look forward to seeing many of our students perform in the Rathdown School production of 'The Addams Family' taking place on Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th March.

In other news congratulations to Adam Allabachani and Matthew O'Brien on their Leinster Finals' victory with the Blackrock Senior Golf Team in the Irish Schools' Senior Matchplay Championship. We wish them well in the All-Irelands.

Well done to Richard Ainsworth also on his selection by the Snowsports Association of Ireland (SAI) to ski for Ireland in the 28th Trofeu Borrufa International Competition from 22nd January to 31st January. More than 30 nations took part in the Championships (with over 120 ski race athletes) and included teams from USA, Chile, Austria, Italy, Germany, Russia, New Zealand, Argentina and the UK. As expected, the host nation along with those countries sharing the 'Alps' took podium positions, but Ireland fought hard – Richard was placed 10th during one of the competitions. Best of luck also to Federico Mei and the JCT in their cup campaign.



# Transition Year Cont'd



## What is there to do in TY in the new year?!

A huge amount would be the broad answer but to be more specific there have been 33 different offerings of activities over the last five weeks alone since we came back in January and I don't include Work Experience in that list for example. The year is absolutely flying by so I would urge all TY students in the strongest possible terms that if they have had a slow or relaxed start to the new year to come back post midterm ready to maximise the unique year that is TY! In the time period post midterm and Easter exams we still have amazing activities such as the 5k Rock Run Launch, the 5k Rock Run itself, The 2nd Year & TY Musical, Dragons Den preparation workshops and final, Cloughjordan Cookery school trip, MasterChef heats and finals, Music Art and Drama (MAD) Week, Guest Speakers, TY Days of Reflection, TY Work Experience II, TY Portfolio Assessment and Interviews – and that is just some of the major events. There will be lots more happening day to day and week to week besides.

## Dates for your Diary

Environmental Awareness Activities – 24th – 28th February  
Transition Year Tours – Tuesday 03rd March  
Addiction Awareness Day – Thursday 05th March  
Easter Exams – 10th – 20th March  
Monday 16th March – Free day, class suspended  
5k Rock Run – 29th March  
Lenten Reconciliation Services – 30th March – 03rd April

## Fifth Year



As term two continues, we encourage all Fifth-Year students to maintain their momentum in relation to academic progress. As reinforced for many at the well-attended Parent-Teacher meeting on 30th January, the value of the weekly Application Cards and monthly Progress Cards cannot be underestimated. They provide clear indicators of the levels of overall effort and academic progress. Students are continually encouraged to be proud and accountable and to show their cards at home.

### Leman Concert

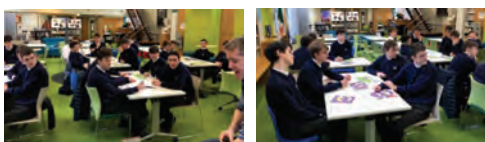
On Sunday 21st January the Fifth-Year presence in the Leman Concert was outstanding. Their contribution and enthusiasm in the Leman and Liebermann choirs as well as the orchestra was tremendous. Alex Kelly gave an outstanding solo performance on the piano while there was a polished performance by 5th Year band Paradox. These together with the lively performances of the Fifth Year Jazz and Trad Band members added greatly to the overall variety. Congratulations to all those involved including those in the Boarders' Choir and all backstage.



Paradox: Robbie Gallagher (Bass), Sam Loscher (Drums), Oscar Bourke Mullaney (Vocals), Sean Probert (Guitar) and Alex Kelly (Piano) (Not in shot)

### Study Skills' Seminar

On Saturday 11th January over 70 Fifth Years attended a study skills seminar in the CADLC, organised by the Fifth Year Parents' Committee. The students who attended the course, run by Examcraft, found the experience both instructional and highly motivating.



Students attending the Study Skills' Seminar

### Fifth Year Family Mass

The Fifth Year Family Mass was celebrated in the College Chapel on Sunday the 2nd of February, the anniversary of the death of Venerable Fr. Francis Liebermann CSSp. Both Mr Flor Madden and Fr Myles Healy spoke about his life and how he is an inspirational figure, being a source of both wisdom and love. The boys reflected on the R.O.C.K. (Reach out with Caring and Kindness) project run the previous week to remind each other to be kind to those around them and in this busy life, to be kind to themselves.



Fr. Cormac O'Brolchain, Jamie McMahon, Adam Patterson, Seamus Ennis, Milo Byrnes, Harry Whelan, Jack Fitzpatrick and Celebrant Fr. Myles Healy.

### Lourdes Pilgrimage

Congratulations to all those who interviewed to volunteer for the Dublin Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes in September 2020. We wish Darragh Dempsey, Robbie Gallagher, Matthew Gibney, Rory McGuire, Adam Patterson and Jack Roche well as they prepare to be leaders on this special journey.

Training, leagues, tournaments and competitions are in full swing across all extra-curricular activities. Students are encouraged to get involved and stay involved not only as part of a healthy body-health mind drive but also to build much needed

interpersonal, teamwork and time management skills. Some of the most recent Fifth Year activities are detailed here.

### Badminton

Commiserations to the senior badminton team of Colm Kelly, Darragh Harrison (Fifth Year) and Zitong Pang (TY) on their 4-2 defeat in the U19's Division 2 Dublin Final. However, as finalists they still qualify for the Leinster Final. Best of luck to Mr Kehoe and the team.



Jack Fitzpatrick and his parents at the Fifth Year Family Mass

### Basketball

Congratulations to Captain Nico Coll (Fifth Year) and his squad on their victory in a new competition that includes St. Michael's, Newpark and De La Salle Churchtown. The squad is a combination of the U16 and U19 panel as they focus on the development of next year's senior team.



David Nagle and his parents at the Fifth Year Family Mass

### Cross Country

The senior cross-country team took gold at the East Leinster Championships in Avondale, Co. Wicklow in January, fending off Gonzaga College and Colaiste Eoin, retaining the East Leinster Shield for the third year in a row. The senior team (Eoin Kelly, Scott Graham, James Crowley, Nathan Van Steenberge, Liam McLaughlin, Mathew Keeley, Colm O'hAonghusa and John Daly (all 5th Year) and Cormac Fahy (6th Year)) performed exceptionally well, though conditions were ideal the course was particularly challenging. Thanks to Eddie McDonagh and Mr McGlynn for their organisation and preparation of the team as they face into the Leinster Championships on the 12th of February.

### One Act Drama

Auditions were held for the now, annual performance by Blackrock, at the St. Andrew's One Act Drama Festival. Nearly twenty students put themselves forward for consideration however, congratulations to John Daly, Michael Lucey, Adam Patterson (Fifth Year) and Colm Fagan (Fourth Year) on landing the highly coveted roles. Rehearsals are currently underway under the inspirational direction of Mr Cathal Maher.

### European Youth Parliament

Conor Slattery, 5th Year, participated in the Leinster regional session of European Youth Parliament, held in Colaiste Éanna, over the 24-26th of January. EYP is an initiative which aims to develop an interest in European issues in young people. It inspires the youth to question the world around them and come up with innovative solutions to global problems, while emphasising concepts of cooperation and respect. The theme of this year's regional session was "Life in the future: paving the way for a sustainable Europe". Following the conclusion of the Munster session at the end of March, Conor will be informed if he has progressed to the National Session.

### GAA

The U16 GAA team is enjoying a very successful season beating Lucan Community College in their semi final 5:16 to 1:8. This was a great team display by both TY players and Fifth Years alike. Well done to the Fifth Years Matthew McCarthy, James Donohoe, Sam McConnell, top scorer Darragh Dempsey and the superb goalkeeper Robert Kenny. Congratulations to Robert and Darragh for making the Dublin Minor Gaelic Panel for 2020. We wish them the best of luck for the upcoming year.

# Fifth Year Cont'd



## Golf

The senior golf team was successful in the first round of the knockout stages of the Leinster Inter Schools' League Match play after beating St. Michael's comfortably in the end. They are set up to face St. Fintan's High School in the next round. The Irish Senior Schools' final will take place in Macroom Golf Club over Easter. We wish the team, and especially the Fifth Years Alex Bolger (Captain), Paul White and Thomas Harte, the best of luck.

## Rugby and Cheerleading

Commiserations to all involved in the last-minute loss to a strong and persistent Gonzaga side. The manner in which Blackrock faced this defeat was testament to both the players, Mr Vanstone and all involved in coaching and assisting the team. We look to our Cheerleaders, including 5th Years Harvey Lavelle, Freddie Noonan, Naoise Cautley and OJ Meagher Powell to help us get behind the senior 2nds, the house teams and the JCT. Their relentless vigour and drive at the recent Year and Whole School Assemblies and senior match were remarkable.



Congratulations to House 5ths who upheld their unbeaten record with a win over Michael's and are now in the semi-final



Ben Brownlee  
(SCT V Gonzaga)

As the competitive stage of the rugby season has begun, we wish all involved in House Rugby well in their competitions. House 3rd/4ths are progressing in their competitions while the unbeaten House 5ths team, overcame St. Michael's 33-7 on home ground. They will progress to the semi-final stage of the competition, however a win against next opponents, CBC Monkstown, would secure home advantage in the semi-finals of the League.

## Senior Soccer

The presence of Fifth Years on the senior soccer squad is notable and we commend their determination in each game that they play in. Unfortunately, the senior soccer team lost to Benildus 3-0 in the league semi-finals. The squad is now preparing for the Joe McGrath cup, and beyond that the squad is looking forward to the highly

anticipated annual fixture against St. Bede's from Manchester on the 7th of March. Fifth Years, Conor O'Kane and Harvey Lavelle return to the squad as Blackrock are going for 'four in a row' over St. Bede's this year.



Scott Barron and Tom Henderson (SCT V Gonzaga)

## History Senior Cycle Table Quiz

Fifth Years Patrick Calma, Keir McKay, Eoin Whooley and Conor Crumlish represented Blackrock at the History Teachers' Association of Ireland's Senior Cycle Table Quiz placing in a very respectable 5th position. Well done to all and to Ms Harlowe and Conor for organising the team.

## Model United Nations and Debating

On 31st January and 1st February, the annual ROCKMUN Model UN Conference was held in the College. Fourteen schools sent delegations, with total attendance over 250 delegates. Fifth Year students Michael Lucey, Joey Houghton and Andrew McSweeney chaired their own committees, with Steven Corr, Alex Kirrane, Matthew Keeley and Conor Slattery also involved as security. The conference was a huge success overall and we congratulate all those involved. Preparation has already begun for the Wesley College conference, WCDMUN, on February 28th and 29th. We wish all the delegation, including 5th Years good luck at this highly competitive conference. Conor Slattery and Michael Lucey reached the second round of the L&H Senior Schools' debating championships earlier this month. Sadly, they were eliminated by strong sides from Loreto Foxrock and St. Peter's College Wexford. We wish all the debaters well and encourage all students to try out this challenging sport to help develop their critical and analytical skills.

### Dates for your Diary

5th Year Parents' Social Evening	Friday 28th February
Addiction Awareness Day	Thursday 5th March
Easter Exams start	Tuesday 10th March

# The Arts



## Debating

### Senior Debating

Congratulations to Michael White and James Carroll who have progressed to the Leinster Schools' Quarter Finals. Unfortunately, our other teams missed out. Commiserations to Michael Lucey, Conor Slattery, George Francis, Sean O'Connor.

### Present Versus Past Pupils' Debate

The Past versus Present Debate is always eagerly awaited and this year we were fully rewarded with a most entertaining evening of quality speeches. A full Lecture Room was very attentive as both sides addressed the motion, "This House believes that this generation has been handed a bleak future."



Robert McCarthy (Class of 2011) Best Speaker at the Past V Present Pupils' Debate

The Past Pupils were very ably represented by: Tom Dwan (2019); Robert McCarthy (2011); Barry O'Donnell (1989); and Toirleac O'Brien (1975). The Present Pupils had a strong team consisting of: John Huggard; Mark Landers; Mark McGrane; and Oliver Bosworth.

The evening was chaired by Eoin Martin (2005). The adjudicators were Ms Cathy Kelleher, Ms Caroline Pierce, John Sheil and Michael Ryan (2019).

The boys won the evening and so the trophy will rest in our trophy cabinet until next year. The night's best speaker was adjudged to be Robert McCarthy.

Special thanks to all those who participated and especially to Shane Murphy (1981) for his effort and enthusiasm in ensuring that the links between Past Pupils and present pupils are maintained.

## Junior Debating

12 students from Junior Debating participated in the Castleknock Community College Matheson MACE Debating Competition on Saturday, January 25th.

## Teams:

Luca Kenny & Patrick Hayden (2nd Year)  
Peter McVeigh & AJ Adoghe (2nd Year)  
Daniel Keeley & Jack Salley Dempsey (3rd Year)  
Amlan Parida & Jack Leyden (2nd Year)  
Ben Kieran Glennon & Conor Hughes (3rd Year)  
Alec Linklater (3rd Year) & Oisín Daly (2nd Year)

We are very grateful to Michael White and James Carroll (both TY) who volunteered to judge some of the other schools in the preliminary rounds of this debating competition.



Winners of the Castleknock Community College MACE on January 25th.

In the final round, Ben Kieran Glennon and Conor Hughes represented Closing Government alongside two students from Loreto on The Green and they were in opposition to students from Belvedere College and St. Conleth's School. Ben and Conor were unanimously voted as the winning team in the Castleknock Community College Matheson MACE. Congratulations to everyone who participated in this event, especially to those who participated in a Debating Competition for the very first time.

Our most recent competition was held on Saturday, February 8th in Colasite na hInse, Bettystown, Co. Meath. 13 representatives from 2nd and 3rd Year spent 8 hours in tough debating in Coláiste na hInse.

## Teams:

Ben Kieran Glennon (3rd Year) & Gregory Quinn (2nd Year)  
Daniel Keeley & Conor Hughes (both 3rd Year)  
Alec Linklater (3rd Year)  
AJ Adoghe & Harry Pierce (both 2nd Year)  
Patrick Hayden & Luca Kenny (both 2nd Year)  
Peter McVeigh & Amlan Parida (both 2nd Year)  
Oisín Daly & Jack Leyden (both 2nd Year)



# The Arts Cont'd



Ben Kieran- Glennon and Gregory Quinn qualified to the final of this MACE competing alongside Wesley College in Proposition and against Belvedere College and Coláiste na hInse in Opposition. Gregory was nominated as 7th best speaker out of 112 students. Ben Kieran-Glennon was voted best speaker in that same competition.

Patrick Hayden & Luca Kenny were selected among 7 other teams in Ireland to compete in Oxford University in the ICYD competition in May.

The following students have qualified to compete in the Leinster Finals on February 29th:

Ben Kieran-Glennon, Conor Hughes, Daniel Keeley (all 3rd Year), Luca Kenny, Patrick Hayden, Gregory Quinn, A.J. Adoghe, Amlan Parida and Harry Pierce (all 2nd Year).

## New Decade New Art

A vibrant exhibition curated by the Art Club was on display in the Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre from the 8th to the 21st of January 2020.

The exhibition featured examples of sculpture, printmaking, photography, painting, drawings, collaborative and experimental artwork.



Ben Harvey (Fifth Year)



John Daly (Fifth Year)



Sam Burke Kennedy (Fifth Year)



Joey McEntee (Fifth Year)



Art Club work in Progress



## Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre Events and Activities

The Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre is a busy and vibrant place in the school. Mr Weir's Art Club showcased a wonderful exhibition in January. There were also a couple of very lively Thursday Tunes sessions at lunchtime. Students used the first session to practise for the Leman concert and the second session was for Wellbeing Day, which was a great way to show how music can have a positive effect a person's wellbeing. Students who come to these sessions can sing, play an instrument or just sit back and enjoy the music. The debating team meet every Tuesday after school in the library and they organised a Teacher Vs Student debate on wellbeing during lunchtime. Tuesday Talks is organised

by Ms Kelleher each month. The first one to kick off this year was on New Year Resolutions. Random students spoke about topics such as the new activity or sport they'd like to try, what they predict could happen in 2020 and life lessons they had learned.

## Research Skills

Keeping up with the objective of students learning how to effectively research online, Ms A. Dillon continued to give 2nd Year geography students lessons on how to research the media for their CBA "Geography in the News". She also gave classes to 5th Year students on how to research for a religion project and a talk on copyright to 2nd Years. Students can find plenty of research tips under the Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre folder in Moodle. Here they will find lists of subject resources for Business and Economics, History, Science, Geography, RE and Art as well as various help sheets such as "How to evaluate a website" and "Finding free to use Images online".

## Reading Promotion

TY, 5th and 6th Year students may have noticed the various book posters displayed around their corridors. These posters promote different books that are available in the library and include an inspirational quote about reading. The idea is to not only advertise books but also show students the value of reading for pleasure. Ms A. Dillon is building on the already abundant library book collection and believes there is a book to suit every student and teacher's taste.

## Literacy and Numeracy

Starting in February, each month there will be a Literacy and Numeracy quiz question that all students can enter, and one lucky student can win a prize. Students can access the questions under the Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre folder in Moodle or by scanning the QR code displayed on the Literacy and Numeracy notice board in the Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre.

## Student Librarians

Frazier McGinn and Jamie Starr-Bourke, two of the student librarians from 3rd Year, have started working behind the library desk in the Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre each Friday at lunchtime. They manage the desk by themselves and are learning all aspects of working behind a library desk including navigating the library catalogue, stocktaking, cataloguing, issuing, returning and renewing books. They're doing such a wonderful job they are well on their way to becoming fully fledged librarians!

## Music & Drama

'Hear Me Roar' – what a great start to the decade!

This musical year began with the thirty fourth Leman Festival Concert taking place in the sold-out National Concert Hall on January 19th. This year's theme celebrated female composers and artists and there was a real feel-good factor about the whole show. The immense talent and hard work of all our singers, musicians, crew, management and production team was clear and the concert was greatly received by our enthusiastic audience. Congratulations to everyone involved – a team of over two hundred and fifty!



Ciarán Drohan and Thomas Grennell (Sixth Years) performing at the Leman Concert

We have had two Thursday Tunes so far this year with a diverse range of performers, from french horn to ukulele. This is a great platform for students to perform in a relaxed setting for their peers and staff where all can share some music over a lunch break. Thank you to all who have attended and performed so far; we look forward to seeing you and some more people at the next one.



Michael Cagney performing at the Leman Concert

Preparations are now well underway for 'Wesley Interscholls' Music Festival. We have a record number of entries this year (over sixty) and we're excited for what is always a great weekend. We would love your support so please come up to Wesley College on March 6th and 7th to see our choirs, orchestra, jazz band, traditional group, soloists, duets and bands all perform. We wish all competitors the very best of luck!

Finally, the Junior Musical takes place during the last term this year, April 28th – May 1st. Auditions have taken place and rehearsals have begun with Mr. Savage and Mr. Grumley Traynor. We were delighted with over 100 auditionees and they made the casting very difficult for us due to the excellent standard.

Hope to see you at our next performance!



# Snapshot of 1st Half Term 2020



Oliver Bosworth at the Past V Present Pupils' Debate



Paul Mc Gowan talks to Fourth Years about Dragons' Den



Students in the City Centre with The Holy Ghost Prep Students from Philadelphia



'Rock V Gonzaga UI4s



Ceoltóirí Carraige perform at the Leman Concert



Myles Dunnion with his Mum and sister at the Fifth Year Family Mass



Michael O' Sullivan with his Mum and brother at the Fifth Year Family Mass



SCTV Gonzaga



JCT V St Andrew's



Adam Harvey ( Sixth Year ) performs at the Leman Concert



# Snapshot of 1st Half Term 2020



Tom Dwan (2019), Barry O'Donnell (1989), Toirleac O'Brien (1975) and Robert McCarthy (2011), Stephen Mullin (1983) President of the Union, John Huggard, Oliver Bosworth, Mark Landers and Mark McGrane (all 6th Year) at the Past v Present Debate



TY Students in in Machakos, Kenya



Tom O' Connor ( Sixth Year ) MC at the Leman Concert



Joey Carbery at the Cup Rally



Robbie Manning ( 6th Year ) at the Cup Rally



Sean Strange (Holy Ghost Prep), Bobby Dowling and James Flannery(TY) at the EPIC Ireland Interactive Museum



The Cheerleaders at the Cup Rally



The Boarders' Choir at the Leman Concert



ROCKMUN Model UN Conference



# Archive Update



## Step into the past with Fr. Ebenrecht's meticulous journals

Fr. Ebenrecht kept detailed journals spanning from 1884-1914. These journals give a surprising glimpse into life in any given year, noting many special events and school news.

In the spirit of this Spring edition of the newsletter, let's look at **Fr. Ebenrecht's journal from February 1889 – 131 years ago**. Featuring some interesting notes:

\* Fr. Superior sharing a ferry crossing from Kingstown to France with **Arthur Balfour** – then Chief Secretary for Ireland

\* Snowball fights to entertain the boys during heavy February snows. Some things don't change much in 131 years!

\* Castle resident and University College student P.J. Kelly winning first place in the Inspectorship of National Schools exam. You may see them note his athletic prowess - see **photo of P.J. Kelly's champion high jump**.

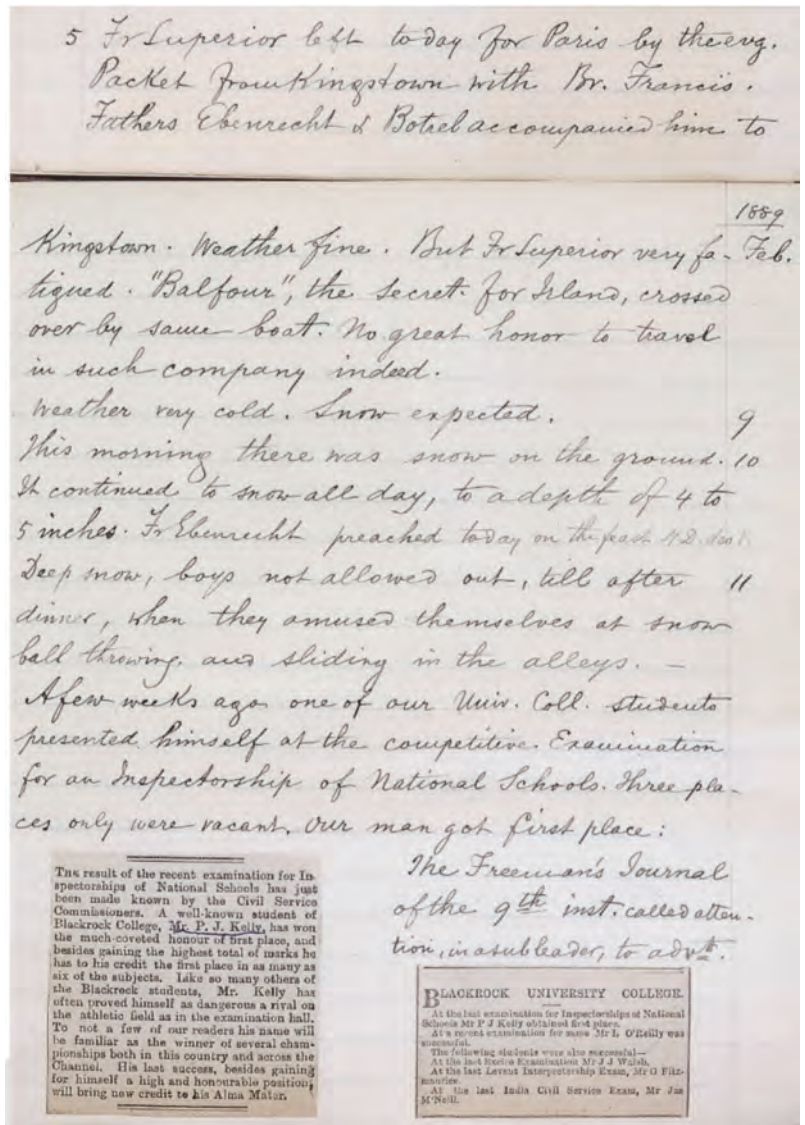
**All of Fr. Ebenrecht's journals are available to read digitally in the archive.**



Boys playing, 1899



P.J. Kelly high jump



## Green Schools



of the survey is to gather data as a step on the road to getting a Travel Flag for the Campus. To get a Travel Flag we need to increase the number of students walking, cycling, using public transport or carpooling on the way to school.

Over time, the Green Schools' Committee have been reducing single use plastic in the College by offering 'keep cup' and 'drink bottle' alternatives, kindly sponsored by Blackrock College and Carne Group. We are delighted to



We have had a busy term which, in keeping with our Travel theme, began with a campus-wide Travel Survey. We had an excellent response rate and will be using the data to create an action plan. The aim

note that the funds raised to date amount to €1,038 and all proceeds go to the Spiritan Machakos Project.

Also, this term, we supported the TY Beach Clean-up as well as the recent Dev Ed Blackrock/Willow Park Beach Clean-up.

We contributed to Catholic Schools' Week with a Nature Treasure Hunt Activity, to promote student engagement with the Natural World and this was very well received.

Forthcoming events for the Green Schools' Committee include Environmental Awareness Week scheduled to begin on Monday 24 February.





## Feast of the Epiphany (Jan 6th)

Term 2 opened on the feast of the Epiphany and Fr. O'Brolchain celebrated Mass for the Class of 2020. In a most insightful homily, he used the Magi as a role model for the assembled 6th Year students by identifying two key qualities that the Wise Men demonstrated in the gospel story. Despite many challenges, these travellers 'Never Gave Up' and in the end 'They Got There' and Fr Cormac challenged the 6th Years to imitate these Magi in 2020.

## Parent-Teacher Meeting (Jan 9th)

There was a very large attendance at the 6th Year Parent-Teacher Meeting on Thursday January 9th. The feedback was extremely positive and all present felt it was most beneficial to have this meeting immediately on our return to school when feedback from Christmas examinations could be shared and plans of work for terms 2 and 3 outlined.

## Leaving Certificate Projects (Jan 17th)

Friday 17th January saw the first of the practical project submissions for Leaving Certificate 2020. Many thanks to Mr Boyle for the time given to students that ensured that all DCG projects based on the design of gaming headsets were submitted on time. Leaving Certificate examination numbers have also been posted on notice boards and distributed to all students.

## Leman Concert (Jan 19th)

The 34th Leman Festival Concert was held on Sunday 19th January in the National Concert Hall. An amazing 48 members of the Class of 2020 were involved in this wonderful celebration of musical talent in the College. The standard of performance on the night was outstanding and congratulations to all involved. In particular, it is worth noting the contribution of 6th Year soloists, Callum Byrne, Mark Landers, Elliot McNamara, Michael Cagney, Andrew Jones, Robert Murphy, Matt Smith, Adam Harvey and Jamie Sood; our duets of Aidan Canavan & Harry O'Leary and Ciaran Drohan & Peter O'Grady; Rockapella, the 6th Year Band Panda Propaganda and our most accomplished MCs for the night, Oliver Bosworth and Tom O'Connor. We also thank Adam Harvey and Rob Murphy for their contribution to a most successful Thursday Tunes concert to highlight Wellbeing in Blackrock on Thursday 23rd January.

## Careers Fair (Jan 16th) & Career Interviews (Feb 12th)

It has been a very busy term on the Career Guidance front with all students required to register with the CAO before February 1st. To further assist decision making for 3rd level, Ms Drew organised the first ever Careers Fair for 6th Year parents and sons in the College. A combination of exhibition stands (28 colleges present), lectures and first-hand experiences of courses shared by recent past pupils resulted in a most valuable evening for the Class of 2020 and certainly a new addition to the Blackrock Senior Cycle calendar to build on.

On Tuesday 28th January, to assist preparation for the Career Interviews programme, Robert Connolly of Amicus Recruitment spoke to the year

group on how to prepare an impactful CV. In response, over 50 final year students signed up to avail of the Career Mock Interviews organised by the Careers' Department in association with the Past Pupils' Union on Wednesday 12th February. Past students came to the College to provide formal interviews across a broad spectrum of disciplines and the students who attended were most appreciative of the advice offered. Many thanks to Ms. Natasha Drew (Head of Careers) and Mr Maurice Tunney (PPU) for their co-ordination of this most valuable evening.

## Rock MUN (Jan 31st)

Between Friday 31st January and Saturday 1st February, the College played host to 170 delegates from 14 schools for the annual ROCKMUN gathering. This year's event was co-ordinated by the 6th Year organising committee of Tom Dooley, Mark McGrane, Oliver Bosworth and Aaron Ryan and we congratulate them on a wonderful occasion. Many thanks too, to all other 6th Year students who assisted with this event over the weekend.

## Past v Present Debate (Feb 6th)

On Thursday 6th February John Huggard, Mark Landers, Mark McGrane and Oliver Bosworth represented the Class of 2020 in the annual Past versus Present Debate. At the end of a most entertaining evening, they were successful in convincing the adjudicators that 'This generation has been handed a bleak future'. We thank all participating students and past pupils for the generous giving of their time and talent.

## Extra-Curricular Programme

Sixth year students have continued to participate in a wide variety of College activities this half-term...

Firstly we commiserate with Mark Morrissey and the rest of the SCT squad who suffered the heartbreak of a last minute 22 to 21 defeat at the hands of Gonzaga College in Donnybrook on Sunday 26th January. As Mr MacGinty noted, this team 'gave their all. No more is expected.' We thank the Cheerleading Team under the leadership of Gerard Jones for leading a huge turnout of supporters both in the stand in Donnybrook and back in the boy's refectory on the Sunday evening. We wish the cheerleaders well for the rest of the JCT campaign.

Despite the SCT defeat, the rugby season continues, and we offer our best wishes to the Senior 2nds and Castle Rugby teams competing in Leinster Branch Rugby Leagues. Opening successes against Terenure, Belvedere, St Michael's and Kilkenny College have provided much encouragement and it is hoped that the 6th Year students participating will enjoy their final weeks of involvement in competitive rugby at schools' level.

Unfortunately, the senior soccer team, under the captaincy of Ronan Cowhey, was defeated by St. Benildus College in the semi-final of the Dublin Metropolitan League. Despite exiting the League, the squad is preparing for their participation in the Joe McGrath Cup and the visit of St. Bede's of Manchester in March.



Mark McGrane accepts the trophy at the Past v Present Pupils' Debate



Mark Landers at the Past V Present Pupils' Debate



Neil McNally at the Cup Rally



Callum Byrne, John Huggard and Mark Landers perform at the Leman



Aidan Canavan and Harry O'Leary perform at the Leman Concert

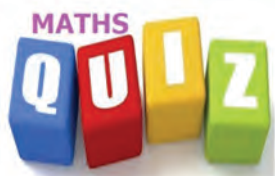
# Sixth Year Cont'd



Elsewhere on the sporting front, our Senior Golf Team featuring Robert Galligan and Tom Kelly have qualified for the All Ireland Finals in April as a result of being crowned Leinster Champions with victory over St. Benildus in Delgany Golf Club. This squad have also reached the quarter-final of the Leinster league and we wish them well in both competitions going forward. Luke O'Brien was the 6th Year member of the senior badminton team that finished runner-up to DLS Churchtown in both the U19 Div2 Dublin and Leinster finals. A tough end to an excellent season! Finally, Cormac Fahy was a member of the senior cross-country team that won the East-Leinster Championships in Santry on 21st January. We wish them well for the Leinster final.

It has also been a very busy half term on the academic front with the 6th Year students being offered a wide mix of opportunities. On January 15th, the English Department arranged for LC students to attend a very well received performance of Hamlet in the Astra Theatre in UCD. In Irish, students were treated to a most engaging 'performance' of the tSraith Pictiúiri that form part of the Leaving Cert Oral and in Business, students travelled to Dublin Port to see at first hand aspects of their academic course in action.

Blackrock entered two Maths teams of Michael Gadaloff, Oliver Bosworth, Aidan Canavan, David Ryan, Aaron Ryan, Oisín Luff, Jamie Dowling & Andrew Kennedy in the Annual School Maths Quiz organised by the Dublin Branch of the IMTA. In a very competitive event, both teams finished one point behind the winners, tied for 4th out of 45 teams. Many thanks to Mr. Costello for facilitating this opportunity.



## Finally

The 6th Year Parents' Committee and House Representatives' work on behalf of the Class of 2020 is ongoing with sub-committees planning all aspects of the end of year DVD, the Graduation in May and the Summer Project in Machakos, Kenya next summer. We wish them continued success with this work.

### Please Note

**There will be mid-term supervised study available for all 6th Year students from 9.30am and 12.30pm & 1.30pm and 4.30pm between Wednesday 19th and Friday 21st of February. There is no charge for this facility.**



# CAKE SALE

## In Aid of Machakos 2020

### ST. PATRICK'S CORRIDOR Tuesday February 25th 10am - 12 noon.

### Dates for your Diary

Monday 24th February:	6th Year Mock Orals
Monday 2nd March:	Modern Languages Easter Aural Tests
Tuesday 3rd March:	Irish Easter Aural Tests
Wednesday 4th March:	Anticipated Easter Exams Commence
Friday 6th March:	Full Easter Exams Commence
Monday 23rd March:	Modern Language Leaving Cert Orals
Monday 30th March:	Irish Leaving Certificate Orals
Friday 3rd April:	End of Term

# Wellbeing



On Monday 20th January students and teachers were greeted by over a thousand positive post-it notes as Well Being Day took place in the school. This feature day highlights the importance of looking after each student's wellbeing. The committee organised various initiatives like Thursday Tunes, a themed debate and fruit at lunchtime in line with the Healthy Body Healthy Mind theme.





# Guidance and Counselling



## CAO

6th Year students have now made their CAO applications which were submitted by February 1st. 17 students in total submitted UCAS applications this year, double the amount from last year.



**HPAT** - Several students will sit the HPAT-Ireland test on the 22nd February 2020. These students have had the opportunity to participate in a HPAT preparation course that has been available in the school on Saturday mornings.

They have also taken several practice tests and good progress has been made. We wish the all the best of luck, they put in a lot of hours practising for this test.

**PLC** - Open days have commenced for Post Leaving Certificate courses and several students have begun submitting applications for these courses. Further information is available from the career counsellors in the College, on the careers' noticeboard and from the websites of the PLC colleges themselves. Applications for these courses are on a first come first serve basis. Please apply online now if you are considering this option.

**Careers Fair** - I would just like to thank everyone involved in our first Careers Fair.

We invited 196 students from 6th Year along with their parents.

We received great feedback from the students and the parents regarding the information received at the stands, the talks and the evening as a whole. There was a great atmosphere and lots of clarity for the boys.

**CVs & Interviews** - This year we held a CV workshop in advance of the Mock interviews for 6th Years. Mr. Robert Connolly from AMICUS Search

and Recruitment presented the workshop and it was open to all 6th Years. The students found it highly informative. The mock interviews will be held on the evening of the 12th February. This event is organised with the assistance of the Past Pupils' Union. The interviewers on the night, all past pupils, will approach the evening in a very professional manner while sharing their own wealth of experiences with the Sixth-Year students. Students who participate in the programme will submit a Curriculum Vitae prior to their interview. Immediately following the formal interview each candidate will be given useful feedback and coaching about his preparation for and performance at the interview. This has proved to be a very valuable learning experience in the past and we are hopeful for its continued success in the future.

**Courses** - I use [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie) to compile a list of courses and I use [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie) to get specific details on a course.

## Dates for your Diary

DARE Section in the CAO - Answer yes to question 1 and complete questions and personal statement, Click the declaration and the submit button by -1st March 2020.

DARE Section B (school section) & Section C (Disability Report) submit by registered post to CAO before 15th March 2020.

NUI exemptions - Tick box on CAO by 1st February 2020 and submit documentation to, NUI, 49 Merrion Square, D2. (Forms available online from NUI)

# Science



All Second- and Fourth-Year students visited the BT Young Scientist exhibition in January.

The Third Years have completed their CBA 2 - a research project, Science in Society. They will then be awarded one of four descriptors - Exceptional, Above Expectations, In Line with Expectations or Yet to meet Expectations. They will be awarded one of the four descriptors which will be on their profile of achievements in September.

All the Second-Year students have completed their CBA 1 - Extended Experimental Investigation. The students must propose and test a hypothesis and use the Scientific Method to complete their investigation. They will then be awarded one of four descriptors - Exceptional, Above Expectations, In Line with Expectations or Yet to meet Expectations



Ethan Leon-Ryan and Max Mullen

Congratulations to Max Mullen and Ethan Leon-Ryan from Third Year who were awarded a Certificate of Excellence in STEM from SciFest.



Mr Jim Rossiter and Ms Christine Wyse brought a group of Fourth Year Chemistry students to the Science Gallery's

PLASTIC exhibition in Trinity College. This exhibition explores our relationship with plastic. The unsustainability of this relationship is well-documented, but to stop using plastic is not an option. The exhibition displayed the many ways it has revolutionised industrial design and modern medicine. The boys explored the ways in which we can responsibly use this versatile material, while also changing our approach to living with plastic. An interesting and eye-opening experience!



Ali Sherif, Alex Finlay, Hugh O'Riordan, Colm Cowhey, Shane O'Sullivan, James Treanor and Will Fitzgerald

## Science Club

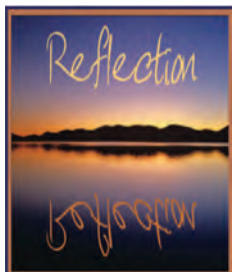
Since the start of the new term the students in Science Club have been using a variety of industry grade instruments on loan from Amgen Biotech giving the students hands-on training in current molecular biology techniques and experiments. It has been a great experience for the boys seeing techniques that are used in solving criminal investigations including the agarose gel shown where the boys had to solve "who burgled the jewelry shop" by matching the bands from a sample found at the crime scene to the suspects. After the Easter exams, the boys in Science Club will start focusing on their submissions for the BT Young Scientist 2021 competition.



# Pastoral Care Programme



**3rd Year Days of Reflection** – The start of the new calendar year is also the time when our Third-Year students participate in their days of reflection. This is the first time that students in the College travel to an 'off campus' retreat and once again the venue was the facilities provided by the Sisters, Disciples of the Divine Master, at the top of Newtownpark Avenue. The Retreat leader was Mr. Gerry Keegan.



The following comments by the 3rd Year House Representatives highlight what the young men take from this day of retreat... "I wanted some time to stop and think after a very busy Christmas – it was great to have this time and to keep the Junior Cert Exams in perspective" ... "I have been arguing a lot at home with my parents about stupid things just to annoy them, Gerry in his talks challenged me to re-think why I fight so much" ... "The day was great fun – it made me feel good about myself and how lucky I am" ... "Gerry is just amazing – he had a tough time growing up but he believes that Jesus really loves him – I find a lot of our faith hard to understand but behind all of this, Jesus loves me too."

Many thanks to Sr. M. Brid Geraghty for organising the facilities, Ms Anita McGlynn, Mr. Garry Sullivan & Ms Lorraine Crimmins for accompanying the students, the House Reps for their leadership on each day and to Mr. Owen Brennan for his ongoing support of this most important Third Year event.

**Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament** – On Friday 31st January at the end of Catholic Schools' Week, we had Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after morning mass in the College Chapel.

We were delighted that several First Holy Communion Students from Willow Park took the time with their teachers to come and join us in silent prayer throughout the morning.

The frequency of Exposition has increased this year; there are two more dates planned for Friday 28th February and Friday 1st May. Adoration will take place after 8.15am Morning Mass on both mornings and will conclude at 11.45am. All family members, parents, grandparents, past and present students as well as staff are welcome to attend.

**Matthew 25 Programme 5 & 6** – The Matthew 25 Programme has continued this term. Two more religion class groups, have spent two weeks on pastoral placement, befriending clients and supporting the amazing work undertaken by the staff in each of the thirteen venues that we attend.

The following comments taken from Matthew 25 Journals give some insight into the broad learning that is taking place... "It was interesting to see how important religion is in many of these people's lives and how giving thanks for what you



Matthew Canacott, James Coyle and Charlie Mc Carthy at the Fifth Year Family Mass

have is important" ... "I have learned how lucky I am, and I have also learned a lot about autism, the great work and effort that people put in to help others" ... "I really enjoyed this placement each day. Working with people that I have never met before was giving me nerves, especially as I was on my own, but it turns out that I really enjoyed it and I would do it all over again" ... "I loved it and want to go back over mid-term and help again".



David Arbuthnott with his mum at the Fifth Year Family Mass

**Fifth Year Family Mass** – On Sunday 2nd February, Fr Myles Healy CSSp celebrated the 5th Year Family Mass. It was a special day in the life of the College as it marked the Feast Day of Venerable Francis Libermann CSSp, one of the Founders of the Spiritans. Fr Myles spoke about the Joy of the Gospels and about how Fr Libermann has still a powerful impact and influence on us all.



Joseph Neary with his grandmother, mum and sister at the Fifth Year Family Mass

**Grandparents Morning of Reflection / Retreat**  
**Wednesday 1st April 2020 - 9.15am to 12.15pm in the College.**

**Please email [fmadden@blackrockcollege.com](mailto:fmadden@blackrockcollege.com) or phone 01 275 2125 to register [Places are limited].**

**[Optional attendance at Morning Mass in College Chapel at 8.15am**

**followed by a tour of the College at 8.45am before the Retreat begins on 1st April 2020]**

**Join us for Morning Mass in the College Chapel any Mon - Fri at 8.15am.**

**If you have any special intention or anniversary you would like remembered, please email**

**[fmadden@blackrockcollege.com](mailto:fmadden@blackrockcollege.com)**

**or phone 01 275 2125. All are welcome to attend this Morning Mass.**



## Basketball

### U19

Senior Basketball Inter-Schools Invitational:

Blackrock College 48 Templecarrig 28

This was the first game of a new senior basketball tournament which has started this year between Blackrock College, St. Michael's, Newpark, De La Salle Churchtown and Templecarrig. This is a combined U16 and U19 panel with the focus being the development of next year's senior team in advance of September 2020.



Several U16 players got their first taste of senior basketball and they more than stood up to the task. Tom Cherico (3rd Year) was excellent scoring five points in the first quarter alone. Ronin O'Hallorin (TY) was outstanding on offence scoring 13 points. However, with completely different fives beginning the first and second quarter and regular changes throughout, the entire squad got significant game time and can be very

pleased with their efforts. Next up for Nico Coll (Captain – 5th Year) is Newpark away.

### U16

The 2nd Year Basketball League started during the third week of January.

Blackrock 2nd Years played their first match of the year against St Benildus on 16 January, they won the game by 4 points - Blackrock 21, St Benildus 17. Cormac Morris and Luca Knierim were the only scorers of the game. Although it was a relatively low scoring game, it was very exciting from start to finish. Blackrock proved that they were the stronger team by being in the lead for the entire game.

They went on to win their second game of the league. They faced St Conleth's on 27 January. Blackrock won by 13 points. Blackrock 26, St Conleth's 13. Blackrock took the lead in the opening quarter by scoring 5 points, while St Conleth's scored 3 points. Blackrock dominated the second quarter with 11 points, their winning streak continued in the third and fourth quarter as 10 points were scored between the final quarters.

Blackrock will play their third game of the league on Wednesday 5 February against Marian College. They will then play their fourth game against St Michael's College on Friday 14 February. Thanks to coaches: Robert Brusasca (Class of 2019) and Seán Lardner (Class of 2019)



'Rock V Gonzaga U 14

## JCT

Since the Christmas period the junior team has played three fixtures. Tough wins over Munchin's CBC Cork, and Ballymena put them in a good position for the physical encounter that awaited them in the first round of the Junior Cup in the form of St. Andrew's. Congratulations to Gregg Barron and his team on their win against St Andrew's (43 – 0). We wish them well for the remainder of the campaign.



JCTV St Andrew's

## SCT

The senior squad trained hard over the Christmas period in preparation for the cup campaign. Matches in early January saw mixed results with a solid 24-6 victory over Christian's Cork was followed by a late defeat in the final friendly match versus Methody (22-19) up in Belfast.

Defeat aside, the boys went into the game against Gonzaga fully focused and ready to represent the College with quality and passion. And that they did. However, on the day it was not enough to beat a resolute and never-say-die Gonzaga side who battled back from 21-10 down to snatch victory at the depth by a solitary point. Gonzaga must be commended for their tenacity and high quality performance.

Mark Morrissey and his team can be very proud of the way they represented Blackrock both before, during and after the excellent contest. We are very proud of them and thank them for all their efforts throughout the year.



Shane Murray (6th Year) Ben Brownlee (5th Year) and John F. Campbell (6th Year) (SCTV Gonzaga)

# Sport Cont'd

## Badminton

The competitive season is over but not without some encouraging performances and second place in Leinster.

Despite the earlier statement that the U16 didn't progress from their group, they actually did and made it through to a semi-final against a very talented St Fintan's team. Having previously lost 6-0 to St Fintan's in the group stages the team knew they would be up against it. An encouraging display on the day resulted in a 4-2 loss, however the team's performance was far better than the group match earlier in the year. The team on the day was James Sheridan (3rd Year), Joshua Scallan (C), Michael Paran (both TY) and Scott Downes (2nd Year).

Our U19A team played Castleknock College in the semi-final of Division 2 and after the game was tied at 3-3 it went to points scored where we progressed to the final. Held in Whitehall road the U19 finals day saw players from division 1 to division 4 compete for silverware. In the final we faced De La Salle Churchtown and having previously lost to them 5-1 in the group we went in as the underdogs. After the singles matches the teams were level 2-2, and so it came down to the doubles. In two very close games we lost 30-28 and 30-26 which meant we finished as runners up. The following week the same team competed in the Leinster finals and again they met De La Salle in the final, unfortunately for us we lost again 4-2. Nonetheless the team can be very proud of their efforts.

Badminton now is open to everyone and anyone, no necessary experience required. So, if you fancy a game then turn up to the hall on Wednesdays 1-2pm and Thursdays 4-5pm.



A team who finished as runner ups in the Dublin Schools' Badminton Division 2.

## Golf

Congratulations to our senior golf team on their fantastic win over Benildus College in the Leinster finals of the Irish Schools' Senior Matchplay Championship. The match was held in Delgany Golf Club in dreadful conditions with howling winds and driving rain. At the last minute we had a team change as Captain Alex Bolger was unable to play due to illness. We are very lucky with the strength and depth of our squad that Adam Allabbachani seamlessly filled his place. The lads dug deep as Benildus had an equally strong team and the winning of the game came down to the second last hole in the last match, a very tight nail-biting finish. We are now into the All Ireland finals to be held in Macroom Golf Club this April ...this will be our 3rd time in the last 4 years in the All Ireland's but hopefully this will be a case of third time lucky and we will come home victors.

I would like to thank Conor Heart (Class of 2015) and Cathal French (Class of 2019) for their help in the organisation of the team  
Our team on the day: Robert Galligan ( Captain ) (6th Year), Tom Kelly (6th Year), Jake Foley (3rd Year), Adam Allabbachani 4th Year, Matthew O'Brien (4th Year) and Thomas Harte ( sub ) (5th Year)

## Leinster League

Congratulations to our senior golf team who played in the 1st round of the Leinster League in Castle Golf Club last Friday 24th January and having beaten St Michael's 4 up has now secured their place in the quarterfinals. The team on the day was captained by Alex Bolger 5thYear who put in a great performance.

I would like to thank Conor Heart class of 2015 for his assistance and encouragement of the team.



Alex Bolger Captain (5th Year), Matthew O'Brien (4th Year), Paul White (5th Year), Tom Kelly (6th Year) and Thomas Heart (5th Year).

## Soccer

Since their semi-final defeat to St. Benildus the soccer squad has been training hard in preparation for the Joe McGrath Memorial Shield and the visit of St. Bede's on March 7th. We have been drawn against Clongowes and Wilson's Hospital in our section of the draw. This year's final will be hosted here on the front lawn, and the squad are keen to reach this final to represent the College in a final on the front lawn.

## Water Polo

The start of this term has shown both junior and senior teams go from strength to strength. Turnout at training sessions has been very impressive with matches starting soon.

## Swimming

The swimming team is looking forward to competing in the College Cup in April at Clongowes and is training hard for this event.

Photos courtesy Rock Photography  
[www.rockphotography.ie](http://www.rockphotography.ie)

## REFLECTION

