

BLACKROCK COLLEGE NEWSLETTER



Christmas 2020

Dear Parents,

We have heard repeatedly that this will be a different Christmas. I think that after the endurance test that we have faced over the last term and longer, we are looking forward to it no matter what.

We have become accustomed to making the best of our situation. I believe that we have become more aware that the small things in life matter, that there are everyday miracles that bring pleasure, joy, and fulfilment.

As Christmas beckons, we encourage the boys to reflect on the [birth of Christ](#). From humble beginnings He changed the world.

He is the driving force behind our [Community Spirit](#). The essence of this spirit is that everyone counts; everyone matters; everyone is worthy of our respect, care, and interest.

An essential part of Christian efficacy is being interested in others. Our values are for living, not empty rhetoric. A Blackrock education is about sharing personal values with a mindset on overcoming individualism. It prioritises intelligence, curiosity and compassion over examination outcome, material prosperity and success. Being there, significant in the lives of others, is our focus. Sometimes access to excess can confound us as we succumb to the temptation to fill the longings of our heart with worldly things. We fool ourselves if we believe that everything can be purchased, that anything that makes us feel good is legitimate.

Covid has forced us to consider what is significant in our lives. Covid may have restricted us in where we can go and what we can do but it cannot alter who we are and what we stand for.

I am delighted to report that your sons, our boys, live our values. Our St. Vincent de Paul Appeal is an example of this as the 6th Year 24-hour fast, 5th Year Cyclothon, TY Bubble Soccer Marathon and Mince pie morning, 2nd and 3rd Year Duck Races as well as the Christmas Tree Sales have had record support.

Everyone counts, everyone matters.

As the term closes, we can reflect with pride on our Remembrance Mass at which Brian Herlihy reminded us to think about '[not just who we are but whose we are](#)'; on B.C.R., RockEd (now on YouTube), our Carol Service and Family masses, debates, and Choral singing; on our Art, Public Speaking, Cookery, and Science clubs; on our expansive games programme and of course, on the expertise and diligence within our classrooms.

I thank my colleagues for keeping our show on the road, and so well, our [Spiritan Community](#) for uplifting us, our Union for staying close to us, our boys for providing the inspiration, and you, our Parents for embracing and supporting our mission.

A different Christmas? Maybe so, but the birth of Christ is the one true constant that inspires us all.

Enjoy a well-deserved break and may the joy, hope and love of the Christmas season be with you and your families.

God Bless

ALAN MacGINTY
Principal



Second Year



Our Second-Year boys have now finished their first term in the College and with an excellent track record. They continue to achieve well in their weekly **Application Cards** which are a real indicator of the level of organisation and commitment each boy has demonstrated. These cards provide a valuable opportunity to commend good work and to challenge and change when required. A reminder to check Edulink each Monday to see the most recent card.

Despite the current restrictions most **extra-curricular activities are ongoing and the boys continue to participate very well.** We have large numbers participating in Rugby, as well as keen participation in Cross-Country, Basketball, Rowing, Table Tennis and Swimming. It was great to see our Second Years athletes, **Sami Bishti, Aaron Connolly, Andrew McConn Walsh and Michael Walsh** competing and receiving feedback from 1972 Olympian Philip Conway at a recent event, hosted by Belvedere.



David Mattimoe and Rory Morris on the side-line with Mr MacGinty



Luke Fitzpatrick and Ben O'Halloran training

Well done also to our Second Years participating in MUN, Debating, Dungeons and Dragons, Green Schools, Wellbeing initiatives, Science Club, Art Club, Chess Club and our Music ensembles.

Congratulations to all our Second Years on the quality of their **Scifest projects**

which were on display in the College during November. Well done to **Ishaan Pandey** who was awarded first place for his project: *Effects of Social Media on Teenage Behaviour* and to **Conor McCarron** who achieved second place for his project: *Which Hot Beverage Cools the Fastest*. The Young Innovator Award went to **Jason Marrow** for his work: *The Colour of Memory* and the Bristol Myers Squibb Passion for STEM



Zack Egan-Ruane and Harrison Carr (Junior Debaters)

Award went to **Hamid Azad** and **George McGilton** for their joint project: *Testing the Effect of Preservatives on Chips*. We look forward to presenting them with their awards at our Assembly in January.



Conor Wall at Art Club



Oliver Lee and Conor Blackburn at Art Club

We marked the close of term with two events our **Duck Race** in aid of **Saint Vincent de Paul** and our **Carol Service**. This year the Carol Service was streamed from the Chapel into the classrooms and boys were allowed to wear their Christmas jumpers. Both of these events hopefully reminded us of the true spirit of Christmas .

When the new term commences, the boys will embark on *Auxilium* which is our Programme of service, whereby each boy gives some time in the service of his community. This is our fourth year running *Auxilium*, which aims to help the boys discover something of their own giftedness: the gift of themselves, their time, and their talents and, in the process, helps them to understand how their actions impact on the world around them.



Dates for your Diary

January: Information Presentation Online for Second Year Parents on the Junior Cycle and 'Auxilium'. (Date TBC)
Friday 5th February: Progress Cards
Thursday 11th February: Second Year Parent-Teacher Meeting (TBC)

Third Year



I am sure the Third Years will agree with me when I say the first term has passed very quickly. I am sure the year group are looking forward to the holidays at this point and to a well-earned rest. When Christmas reports come home there will be a chance to look back on how the first term has gone academically and while I hope there are pleasant surprises with subject grades, it is important to remember we are still a work in progress. The Christmas exams will have proven a step up from last year and I'm sure have posed a challenge to all, but we look now to build on this. Page 68 in the homework journal provides the students with an opportunity to reflect on term one and a chance to set some targets/goals as we return after Christmas.

Whilst COVID has had an impact it is great to see the level of commitment the year group has had to the

extracurricular programme as they continue to participate in great numbers. Congratulations to Jack Angulo on his election as Captain of the JCT, Donie Grehan and Derry Moloney as Vice



Third Year Family Mass

Captains and Jack Pollard who completes the leadership team. We wish them well and look forward to the forthcoming draw.

When we returned after midterm, I was delighted that so many of you were able to join online for the Third Year Family Mass. Thank you to the house captains who participated in the liturgy and who in general have been of terrific support. I would particularly like to mention our cantors on the day Daniel Flannery and Patrick Ryan whose incredible talent added so much to the liturgy.

As we go to print there is certainly a sense of excitement building with the holidays on the horizon. The year are currently returning their Duck Race cards



James Clancy , Cian Dennehy , Charlie Woodcock House 10's



Harry Pierce, Junior Debater

Third Year Cont'd



– thank you all for your generosity. Also, Mr O' Farrells CSPE class have been busy preparing gifts for the SVP shoe box appeal. Well done to all – you will make a difference to people's lives this Christmas. Finally, we had Carol Service on Thursday, December 17th which was a wonderful occasion on which to end the year. May I wish you all a peaceful and happy Christmas and I look forward to welcoming the boys back in the New Year.

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 6th January – Classes Recommence
Sunday 17th January – Leman Concert
Parent Teacher Meeting – Date and Format TBC

Transition Year



It has been an incredibly busy first term in Transition Year with Blackrock College Radio and the Soccer Marathon being two of the standout events. The achievements of this TY group so far would stand to scrutiny in any normal year, but in these extraordinary Covid-19 times, it has been a real privilege to see how these fantastic young men have come together as a year group with a non-stop 'can-do' attitude.

TY is an extremely busy year, a carousel of opportunities on a weekly basis. At the Dean's interviews in August I spoke to the boys about the importance of taking time to reflect over the course of the year. The Christmas break offers the opportunity to do just that. Have they been making the most of the many opportunities available to them? Are they participating in the extracurricular programme? If the answer to these and other similar questions is yes, then well done on a super first term and look to push on from here in the new year. If the answer is no, then I urge the boys to learn their lesson and come back in the new year with a renewed vow to make the most of their TY experience and get involved. January is a great time for positive resolutions!



Fionn Graham at Art Club

Blackrock College Radio

If I were to summarise the students' approach to making BCR happen I would 'Adapt, Improve and Overcome'. The movement into Level 5 restrictions did not stop this group one little bit. Phone interviews became the necessary norm, and the boys did fantastically in this regard. Even during the week of broadcast, we were able to record a telephone interview with An Taoiseach Micheál Martin while simultaneously broadcasting another programme. Don't ask me how! We were delighted to have Senator Barry Ward for a live telephone interview to launch the station on Monday 16th November. It was an outstanding week of 47.5 hours of broadcasting after more than two months of preparation. The Studio Managers and Tech Team were phenomenal. Their work ethic, dedication and talent were amazing to witness. When you see how students engage with guests from the world of politics, sports, the arts, and other areas you realise that BCR stretches far beyond a "TY Project". From advertising to the news team to showcase, noon show and guests and requests, the quality produced by the boys was exceptional.



TY Students preparing for BCR



TY Students preparing for BCR



TY Students preparing for BCR

Soccer Marathon

A record 150 transition year students took part in the annual soccer marathon in aid of Saint Vincent De Paul on Friday 27th November. While it was a very cold start to the start to the day, spirits and enthusiasm were high as the day kicked off.

Level-5 restrictions meant there was a necessary reimagining of the format of the soccer marathon and the Soccer Marathon Coordinators in TY (Jake O'Gorman, Jamie Ahern O'Connell, Sam O'Donovan, Jack O'Sullivan and David Mooney) did a

wonderful job as students were divided up by house, in multiple locations to take on the activities of the day – football rounders, penalties and crossbar challenge, basketball bungee, football tennis and the undoubted highlight – bubble football on the 4G pitch.

The winning team from each individual house tournament in the Bubble Football Tournament advanced to the inter-house finals to decide who would take on the teacher team that evening under lights on the 4G. Shanahan was the winning team and they easily emerged victorious in the final game of the day versus the teacher team on a score line of 5-2!

I would like to thank my colleagues who played on the night: Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Grant, Mr. McGlynn, Mr. Maher and Mr. Halpin. I would also like to thank the past pupils who came in to assist with the running of the event on the day. I would like to especially thank the student coordinators of the event who did a superb job throughout. Finally, I commend the boys on their incredible fund raising efforts as we collected €17,241 for St Vincent DePaul, and their energy and cooperation throughout the day. Well done!

Mince Pie Morning

The traditional TY Mince Pie morning went ahead on Saturday 5th December in the car park beside the Christmas Trees. Dublin Barista School led by past pupil James McCormack (class of 1999) kindly came in to coordinate our expert TY Barista's in making and serving coffees and some very tasty mince pies made by our TY Home Economics and Cookery Module students were served up as well. A record €1,089.30 was raised and my thanks to Ms. Skeehan for putting such a fantastic morning together.

Hampers

We took delivery from the wholesalers for the hampers and TY students counted, sorted and packed 200+ hampers ready for delivery on Saturday morning the 19th December. It is so critical given the pace of the year and opportunities on offer week to week that the boys have opportunities where possible to see their fundraising efforts go full circle. The trip to deliver the hampers to the families in Killinarden in West Tallaght is humbling and powerful in equal measure and I thank all the parents who helped with the delivery, your support as always is hugely appreciated.

TY Family Mass

The TY Family mass is an integral part of the TY calendar and a truly memorable occasion. This year was no different. Mr. Madden and his team did a superb job of putting it all together; the wonderful decoration of the church, the mass itself, the music, remembering grandparents in a special way and so much more. My thanks to Jim Murphy, President of the Blackrock College SVP, who delivered a powerful homily



Tom Cosgrave and Freddy O' Conail at the Soccer Marathon in aid of St Vincent de Paul



Mathew Burke Kennedy and Eoghan Walsh at the Soccer Marathon in aid of St Vincent de Paul

Transition Year Cont'd



reminding the boys of the difference they have made to so many through their service to SVP. Fantastic numbers tuned in online. I could not speak more highly of this group of boys and thanks to all parents and guardians for their constant support of not just the boys but the TY Team also.

Christmas Trees

We received the following email from a Booterstown resident regarding the Christmas Trees:

"Dear Sir / Madam,
I just wanted to write a quick note after buying a Christmas tree at your school late on Saturday evening (28th). My wife and I were so impressed by the young gentleman who helped us in the buying process. I regret not picking up his name but he could not have been more polite and courteous (despite dealing with very fussy customers!) and made the whole process a very enjoyable experience.



Frazer McGinn reading at the Fourth Year Family Mass



Gregg Barron selling Christmas Trees in aid of St Vincent de Paul

Teenagers have received a lot of bad press during this pandemic, most of which has been unfair. I hope you can pass on my congratulations to the entire team for supporting such an excellent cause and for being so pleasant to their customers. Regards, Morgan McElligott, Booterstown"

I have little doubt the above has been the experience of so many over the course of the Christmas season and it is yet another reason to be proud of this group of TY students.



TY Students selling Christmas Trees in aid of St Vincent de Paul

Dates for your Diary

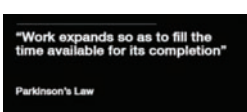
January 7/8/12/14/15/21/22 – Part two of the Leadership Course.
Sunday 17th January – Leman Concert
24th-29th January – Catholic Schools Week
01-05 February – Wellbeing Week
Friday 5th February – TY Corporate Duck Race

Fifth Year



The second half of term one has continued to highlight the determined and productive work ethic of the class of 2022. They continue to make significant contributions to school life through their pleasant, courteous, and cooperative manner and their vast involvement in and contribution to school activities.

Together with continuing to set short term academic goals, students are learning to manage their time effectively. The Christmas Examinations provide a worthwhile opportunity for all to get an indicator of where they stand as the term draws to a close. Student ownership of and accountability for results are key to the learning process and all students are encouraged to reflect meaningfully on their exam performance.



continue to engage with extra-curricular activities, understanding that being energised, refreshed, and recharged from exercise will inevitably lead to increased study productivity.

In managing their time, students are reminded that work expands to fill the time available for its completion. It is therefore imperative that all

We are grateful to Head Career Guidance Ms. Natasha Drew who together with Mr. Maurice Tunney and the Past-Pupils' Union organised the hugely worthwhile and engaging Career Seminars for Fifth Years. Students heard speakers share their experiences in several career areas including Medicine, Accounting, Finance, Law and Marketing. The seminars were very insightful, starting many career focused conversations. Students are encouraged to continue to submit Career Plans to Mr. O'Nuallain and to consult websites such as qualifax.ie and careersportal.ie to explore the many third level course options available.



Mr Brian O'Neill, Speaking about his experience with Sales and Marketing.. Fifth Year Career Seminars, Students Connor Hayes, Mark O'Reilly and Harry Kennedy.



Callum O'Brien, Sean Purcell, Harry McLaughlin, Jacques De Patoul

The 'Be There and Be Caring' spirit of the Class of 2022 was on full display during the recent St. Vincent de Paul fundraiser. Over 200 students were involved in the 8 Hour Inter-House Cyclothon. Good humour, healthy competition and vibrant music with buskers ensured that the College Quad came to life and all enjoyed a wonderful event. The House Captains were excellent in their leadership and participation in this event which was made possible by our in-house support teams and MCSPORT.IE who continue to sponsor the top of the range spinning bikes. Bright Motor Group Bray, was the lead presenting sponsor, and Damovo Ireland made a generous donation. The biggest thank you of all and a huge well done is owed to the students for their enthusiasm, participation and determined fundraising of a remarkable €10,100 to help such a worthwhile cause.



David O'Riordan
5th Year SVP Cyclothon



James McCarthy, Alexx Finalay, Mark McCabe, Freddie Mullin, Ms Caroline Dobbyn, Mr Jim Murphy SVP, Harry Kennedy, Ronan McNamara, Charlie O'Brien

As the sun sets on the exceptional year 2020 and the joy of the Christmas Carol Service resonates, the Class of 2022 have many musical, sporting, extra and co-curricular endeavours to continue and look forward to. We hope many families will join us in celebration and prayer at the Fifth Year Family Mass on 31st January.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy Christmas break as we look forward to 2021 with high hopes of continued good humour, commitment and excellence.



John Sheridan and Eunan Maguire
(Class of 1990)



Brian Storan

Fifth Year Cont'd



Luke Brophy



John McDermott, Padraig Foley, Davitt Gilvarry and Max Mooney



Oran Smith And Will Fitzgerald



Matthew Kane



Adam Tunney And Sean Harty at the SVP Cyclothon



Matthew O'Donnell

Sixth Year



Even amid ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, the second half of Term 1 has been a very busy and productive period for the class of 2021 who have continued to show impressive leadership in all aspects of College life.

On an **academic** front, Credit List numbers have remained at encouraging levels and as they enter the new year the Class of 2021 has been advised to press ahead with their study plans, giving Leaving Certificate projects a particular focus at this time. With the Home Economics projects already signed off on and the DCG 'dashcam' projects concluding in early January, there is a real sense that the 6th Years are entering the business end of the academic year. We congratulate Donal De Buitléir on his victory in the Senior Science Quiz held during Science week in the college. For the first time ever, a tie-break round was needed to separate the top 3 students and commiserations to Robbie Gallagher & Darragh Harrison who missed out by the narrowest of margins. We are also delighted to note that our Irish, English and Modern Language debating teams are still making progress in their respective competitions. We wish them well for Term 2.



Darragh Harrison (3rd), Ms Jennifer Groves (Head of Science), Donal De Buitléir (1st), Robbie Gallagher (2nd) Senior Science Quiz 2020

On the **extra-curricular** front numbers involved in our school-based sports are very high with all 6th Year sports coaches reporting weekly attendance figures that are extremely healthy indeed. It is hoped that level 3 restrictions will continue to be relaxed as we move into Term 2 thus allowing some competitive fixtures to take place in all disciplines. With that in mind, we wish James Culhane (Capt), Michael Moloney (VC) and Rory McGuire (Leader) and the rest of the SCT squad well as they continue their preparations for this year's Cup competition. The Cheerleading team for 2021 will be led by Freddie Noonan and he will be assisted by Sam Bruton, Cian Macken, Alex O'Keeffe and Adam Power in this important student-led leadership role. We wish this group well and look forward to a Blue & White January in the College! A new and most welcome addition to the extra-curricular programme this year has been the Friday Social Soccer coaching programme and we thank Tina Murphy of the 6th Year Parents' Committee and Mr Evan O'Brien, our Games master, for offering the 6th Year students this opportunity that has been availed of in large numbers.



6th Year House Captains await the hungry mob at the end of the 24 hour Fast!



Gareth Stewart Lord and Max Reid lead the way to the Jubilee Hall at the end of the 6th Year Fast

of the college's annual Christmas fund-raising for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the 6th Year House Representatives organised a 24-hour sponsored fast between the 26th and 27th of November. Accompanying this, the 6th Year Parents' committee under the leadership of Dee Kelly sourced prizes from the parent body to run a Raffle alongside the fast. Records were broken across the board with 164 students completing the fast and an amazing €13,800 raised for the SVP. The fast concluded with a socially distanced meal in the Jubilee Hall for all participants. Ben Hogan was the winner of the Graduation Gift Set identified by the House Representatives as the first prize in the raffle. Many thanks once



Food Glorious Food 1 – Christian Thoms



Food Glorious Food 2 Stephen Corr



Food Glorious Food 3 Freddie Noonan



Over 160 'socially distanced' members of the Class of 2021 await the results of the Raffle

This very supportive relationship between 6th Year parents and the college community was also seen on the **pastoral outreach** front this term. As part

Sixth Year Cont'd



again to all parents who contributed prizes and to Albert, Mary and their team for the most welcome meal served up. An outstandingly positive 24 hours in the lives of the Class of 2021!



John Cawley draws the winning ticket

Finally on the liturgy front, we congratulate and thank the sixth year students who will serve as Eucharistic Ministers this year. Fr Paddy Dundon CSSp commissioned this group during the term and these young men will minister at the morning 8.15am Eucharist, the Boarders and Family Masses throughout the year. They will also help the college community celebrate the Feast of Epiphany on our return to school on January 6th. The leadership of members of the Class of 2021 in word and song at this year's online Carol Service was also most impressive to witness. In particular we thank Alex Kelly



Eucharistic Ministers Alex Simpson & Tomas Harte with Fr Paddy Dundon CSSp



Keir Mackay & Patrick Calma untangle Christmas lights for the 6th Year Tree



John Kennedy & Keir Mackay decorating the 6th Year Christmas Tree

(organist) and Michael Lucey, Sean Probert and Daniel Welch for their lovely rendition of 'O Holy Night' which marked a most joyful end to a very busy but fulfilling term.

Wishing all a very happy Christmas and hopefully for our 6th Year students, 2021 will be a year when dreams will be fulfilled, and aspirations realised.

Important Date for your 2020 Diary

TBC - 6th Year Parent / Teacher Meeting



Ben Hogan receives his prize from Ms Crimmins



Class of 2021 Eucharistic Ministers with Mr Madden & Ms Crimmins (Pastoral Team)

The Arts

Another inspired and inspiring selection of work from the Art students in the College.



Henry Browne (Second Year)



Frank Cusano (Third Year)



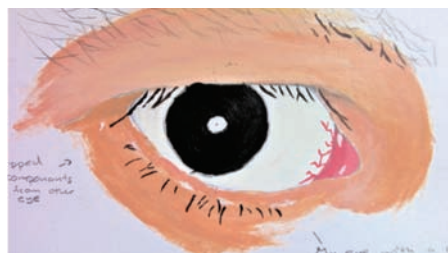
Kai Murtagh (Fifth Year)



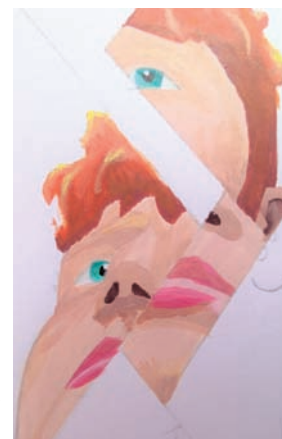
Donal deBuitreir (Sixth Year)



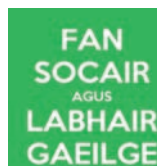
Fionn Graham (Transition Year)



Conor Flannery (Sixth Year)



Conor Alken (Fifth Year)



Moladh Mór do Lucht na Díospóireachta

Tá moladh mór ag an gColáiste do na scoláirí díograiseacha, dúthrachta, a ghlacann páirt i gCumann Díospóireachta an Cholaíste. Buailéann idir Shóisearaigh agus Shinsearaigh le chéile, gach uile mhaidin Déardaoin ag a 8:00 r.n. I láthair na huaire, is iad Patrick Hayden, Conor McCarron agus Peter O'Connor (Dara Bliain) atá ag dul i ngleic leis an dúshlán, agus iad ag cur isteach ar Chomórtas Óráide an Phiarsaigh.

Ag leibhéal na Sinsearach, is iad Jack Burke (Idirbhliain), Joey Haughton, Matthew Keeley, Max Murphy (Séú Bliain go léir), Joshua Scallan (Cúigiú Bliain) atá ar phainéal díospóireachta na Sinsearach, don chomórtas atá á reachtáil ag *Gael Linn*. Anuas ar raidhse díospóireachtaí inmheánacha, rinne na scoláirí a n-oráidí a réamhthairfead agus a sheoladh, ag tús na míosa seo, don chéad bhabhta den chomórtas. Guímid gach rath orthu amach anseo.

The College commends the diligent, dedicated students who take part in the College's Irish Debating Society. Both Junior and Senior students meet every Thursday at 8:00a.m. Presently, Patrick Hayden, Conor McCarron agus Peter O'Connor (all Second Year) assume the challenge as they enter *Comórtas Óráide an Phiarsaigh*.

At Senior level, Jack Burke (Transition Year), Joey Haughton, Matthew Keeley, Max Murphy (all Sixth Year), Joshua Scallan (Fifth Year) feature on the Senior Debating Panel for the competition, which is being managed by *Gael Linn*. In addition to plenty of in-house debates, the students pre-recorded and submitted their speeches, at the beginning of this month, for the first round of the competition. We wish them every success in the future.

The Arts Cont'd



Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre

The Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre is a very active space; teachers use it for classe, Dungeon's and Dragon's Club meet on Wednesday afternoons, MUN and debaters are meeting regularly and there are still plenty of students coming in to borrow books.

Drop Everything and Read

Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) takes place on Friday of Progress Week. At 3:10 the bell rings and all students and teachers drop what they are doing so they can pick up a book and read. The idea is to encourage students to read for pleasure, which will help their studies, Mental Health and wellbeing. It is important we all take time out from the stresses of daily life and there is no better way of doing this than reading a good book.



Dr Maguire's 6th Year Latin during DEAR

Christmas Reading Survey

Over 286 students responded to a survey what "Book would you like to get for Christmas?". A great variety of books were recommended like 'The Cherub series' by Michael Muchamore, 'Harry Potter' by J.K. Rowling, sports biographies, horror books, classics and lots more. The purpose of the survey was to create a recommended reading list for students and get some great ideas of what can be added to library collection.

International Men's Day: Be Caring Campaign

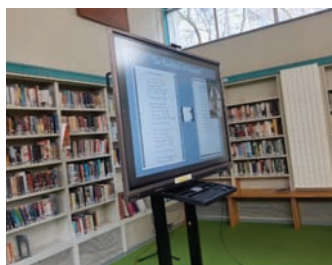
To mark International Men's Day and promote the school's Be Caring ethos, students prepared projects on a man they admire who has done/is doing something caring. These men were shared on the digital screens across the school. Students came up with great examples from sports stars like Mark Rushford to philanthropists like Chuck Feeney.



Be Caring International Men's Day

Poetry Ireland – Virtual Workshop

The National Library of Ireland is offering free poetry workshops on Seamus Heaney poetry to 3rd and 6th Year students. Classes have come to the library to connect virtually. The workshops have been highly engaging and informative. The presenter encouraged students to participate by asking them questions, looking for comments etc. The purpose of the workshop is to help students have a greater understanding and appreciation of Seamus Heaney poetry.



Screen from NLI Seamus Heaney Workshop

Christmas Book Tree

Passers-by were probably wondering what members of the Library Committee were doing with the pile of books in the meeting room of the Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre. They were building a Christmas Tree entirely out of books! Thanks should go to 4th Year students Frazer McGinn and Jamie Starr Bourke for their tremendous hard work in creating this great tree. Over 264 entered a competition to guess the number of books on the Tree. Well done to Fionn Graham (4th Yr) & Mark O'Connor (6th Yr) who correctly guessed the right answer and won a €50 One4All Voucher each.



Christmas Book Tree

Junior Debating

Monday and Friday lunchtimes are host to robust, dynamic, challenging and often humorous debates from 2nd and 3rd Year students. This term, we have four students: Darragh O'Neil and Ishaan Pandey, Shane Hamilton and Carl Ferdinand Hattendorf competing in the UCD Debating Competition, having completed two rounds before Christmas and they will have one final round after Christmas. We are proud to announce that Ben Kieran-Glennon and Gregory Quinn qualified to compete in the Quarter Finals of the National MACE Debate, competing against 36 other National

Finalists. Their place in the competition did not progress further, but we are proud that they have proven themselves to be within the top best speakers in Ireland. We look forward to another term of debating, with one final debate against the Senior Debating Team before we leave for the Christmas holidays.

Senior Debating

Senior Debating has continued despite masks and social distancing, with nine Blackrock teams competing in the Leinster Schools' Debating Competition over zoom. Motions included "This house would ban targeted advertising for under 18s" and "This house would continue striking for climate change despite COVID restrictions." After the preliminary rounds, five Blackrock teams have qualified for the next round of the competition.



Patrick Hayden (3rd Year) was unanimously voted as Best Speaker in the Junior v Senior Debate.



Michael Lucey (6th Year) Senior Debater

A TY team is competing in the Concern Debating Competition, also taking place digitally. After three rounds, the Blackrock Team is currently eighth place on the national table. As well as the Concern Competition, TY students took part in a debate against St. Mary's College during English Class. The motion was "This house believes college degrees are not worth it". The TY Team, on the opposition, won the debate.

Overall, it has been a great term for Senior Debating, with knockout rounds in Leinster Schools' and Concern to come in the New Year.

Music & Drama

As Christmas trees spring up around the campus and the festive season kicks in, it is peculiar to not be carolling in large groups and as a whole school in the sports hall, however that won't stop us finding a safe way to celebrate and make some music! For our boys, we are streaming a carol service that will be watched in all classes and for our wider community, the Past Parents' Association Carol Service was streamed from the College Chapel on Sunday 13th December.

The addition of the livestream of the College Chapel has been one of the great positives for us in recent months. Morning Mass is celebrated every Monday to Friday morning at 8:15am during term and you can access this via the link on the homepage of the Blackrock College website and here: <https://www.churchservices.tv/blackrockcollege>. We have also broadcast our Second, Third, Fourth- and Sixth-Year Family Masses via the Chapel Livestream. While we cannot wait until our choirs and instrumentalists can fully participate in these again, special thanks must go to our cantors and organists who have really added to the celebrations of the eucharist with their song. The Mass of Remembrance also took place in this format and it is great that we can now connect with lots of people globally as they tune in online.

The Movie Musical is up and running and the teams of students and staff are continuing to enjoy all the new challenges they face in the first project of its kind that we have done. We are continuing to work on this into the new year and look forward to announcing a release date – watch this space!

The Blackrock College Adult Choir have continued to rehearse online every Tuesday evening and we have had great attendance, participation, and fun! They are currently recording their piece for the Leman Concert and look forward to sharing it with everyone.

January has definitely been renamed 'Lemanuary' by the Music and Drama Department and the thirty fifth annual Leman Festival Concert is shaping up to be a fantastic celebration of our musical talents in the College. This will be streamed live on YouTube on Saturday 6th February 2020 and we will send out full details closer to the event.

Although it's been said many times, many ways: "Merry Christmas to you".

The Arts Cont'd



Dungeons and Dragons Club

September 2020 saw the establishment of the Blackrock College Dungeons and Dragons Club based in the Library/CADLC each Wednesday afternoon. For the uninitiated, Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) is a tabletop role playing game for those with active imaginations. Each group consists of 4-6 players under the guidance of a Dungeon Master (DM). At the start of each campaign (which may last several weeks) players design characters from a wide variety of options (choosing their character's race, class, and background, each with different skills and characteristics). The DM guides them on the adventure, runs the game playing all other characters they encounter on their journey.

The club has flourished, with fourteen regular members from Second Years up to Fifth Years. Age and jumper colour form no boundaries here! Initially led by two DM's (Daire Casey and Daniel Spencer, both 2nd Year) the Club is delighted to welcome Mr Natin as a third DM just in time for the inaugural Christmas Party.

This year's party will be One Shot Session (an adventure run for only one day) based on the movie 'The Nightmare before Christmas' with DM Daire Casey custom

designing the adventure and creating a stock of characters for players to choose from.

As the year moves on, we look to encourage more players to take on the role of DM and help encourage in new players.

Thanks to Ms Andrea Dillon for all her support in establishing the club, providing us with display spaces and D&D resources.



Table 1: DM Daire Casey: Fionn Whelan (Second Years), Patrick Hayden, Sean Barry (Third Years) Fintan Ballard (Second Year), James O'Carroll, Luke Brophy and George Francis (Fifth Years)

Table 2: DM Daniel Spencer: Alex Parsons (Second Years), Donal Robson, Simon Consadine (Third Years) and Sam Murphy (Fifth Year)

A Day in the Life of Blackrock College



A Day in the Life of Blackrock College

In his Christmas message to the Blackrock Community Mr MacGinty pays tribute to our fortifying community spirit. An African proverb reminds us that

"It takes a whole village to raise a child."

In Blackrock College, everyday an entire community of people interacts with our students, so that they may flourish, experience, and grow in a safe and healthy environment.

Interesting variations of the proverb are found in many African cultures: In Kihaya (Bahaya) there is a saying, "Omwana taba womoi," which translates as

"A child belongs not to one parent or home"

Kijita's (Wajita) proverb, "Omwana taba womoi," means

"regardless of a child's biological parents, its upbringing belongs to the community."

In Swahili, the proverb "Asiye funzwa na mamae hufunzwa na ulimwengu" means roughly the same,

"Whomsoever is not taught by the mother will be taught by the world."

The following is a snapshot of some of the people who make up our village, our community i.e.

"Team Blackrock College"



Ms Irene Dunne, Pastoral Team



Fr Paddy Dundon, CSSP



John O'Connor, Grounds Team



Ms Emily Ryan and Mr Steve Lambe, AEN Department



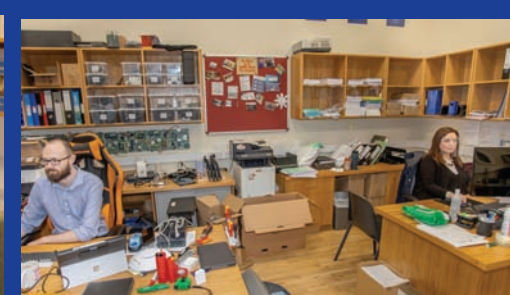
Ms Andrea Dillon, Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre



Ms Miriam Doyle, Finance Team



Ms Maria Flynn, Administration Team



Mr John Montgomery and Ms Elizabeth Roughneen, IT Department

A Day in the Life of Blackrock College Cont'd



Mr Pat Smith,
Housekeeping Team



Ms Jackie Scott,
Administration Team



Ms Joanne Donagher, Finance Team



Ms Orla Keenan and Ms Flordeliza Varia, Catering Team



Ms Magdalena Marcinczyk, Catering Team



Ms Maja Tomic and Ms Magdalena Marcinczyk,
Catering Team



Mr Colm Feighery, Maintenance
Team



Aisling Carr , Nurse in the
Castle



Every year we are delighted to welcome new teachers to Blackrock College



Ms Clare Foley, Archivist



Mr Sheve Mooneenuth
Babooram, Maintenance Team



Mr Alan Sheridan,
Housekeeping Team



Ms Joanne Ritchie, Senior
Science Laboratory Technician



The Teaching Staff

Snapshot of 2nd Half Term 2020



Members of the Rowing Club at the Blessing of the Boats



Father Paddy Dundon celebrates the Third Year Family Mass



Gavin Bowen -O'Connor at the Fourth Year Family Mass



Oscar Dougan (Fourth Year) selling Christmas Trees in aid of Saint Vincent de Paul



Gregg Barron , Captain of the JCT Team 2020 , receiving the cup from Mr A. MacGinty .



Oisín Tiernan and Ted Power (Transition Year) at the Blessing of the Boats



Frazer McGinn (Fourth Year) at the Mince Pie Coffee Morning in aid of St Vincent de Paul



Fifth Years on Christmas Jumper Day



Eoin Maher (Transition Year)



Mr E O' Brien showing TY students how to kick the ball !



'We are all individuals' Sixth Years



The IT Department Creatively Upcycling

Snapshot of 2nd Half Term 2020



Adam Power receives his prize from Mr Kearney



Jamie Rogan (Transition Year) at the Soccer Marathon in aid of St Vincent de Paul



Philip Sharpe at the Fifth Year Career Talks



Louis McDermott (Transition Year) at the Soccer Marathon in aid of St Vincent de Paul



John Sheridan (Class of 1990) Fifth Year Career talks



Transition Years at the Soccer Marathon in aid of St Vincent de Paul



Hugo Lavin (Transition Year) at the Soccer Marathon in aid of St Vincent de Paul



Eoin Dunne at the Fifth Year Cyclothon in aid of St.Vincent de Paul (First Cyclist)



Harry Ballard at the Fifth Year Cyclothon in aid of St.Vincent de Paul



Colm Kelly and Ethan Conor (Sixth Year) enjoying their lunch ,post the VDP 24 hour fast

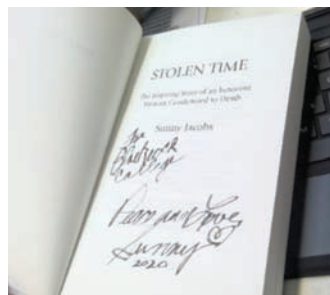


Harrison Carr, Mark Cox, Luke Beale, Michael Walsh, Isaac Moss, Darragh O'Neill and Michael Cunningham (Second Year)

Global Citizenship Team



The Global Citizenship Committee in Blackrock College will focus on the theme of Regeneration throughout the following year. We have started our year strong with a variety of exciting projects. We kicked off the year with a series of BCR interviews. The first interview was an investigation into the justice system from a national and international perspective. Jack Burke and Will Woods of Transition Year interviewed two exonerated death row prisoners, Sunny Jacobs and Peter Pringle. Through the life stories of these two victims of the justice system the GCE Team investigated the current role of the special criminal court and the controversies surrounding it. Sunny and Peter kindly gifted signed copies of their autobiographies to Blackrock College after the interview.



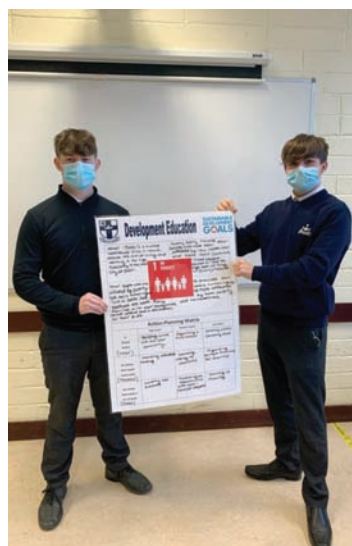
A signed copy of Sunny Jacobs' autobiography which is now available in the library

The second BCR interview marked the launch of our collaboration project with our sister school in Kenya, Holy Ghost school Sultan Hammud. Frazer McGinn, Fionn Graham and Jamie Starr Bourke interviewed Fr. John Wambu of Holy Ghost school. They gained insights into the school life of their peers in Sultan Hammud. We hope to continue to build our relations with our sister school throughout the coming year.



Jamie Starr Bourke, Frazer McGinn and Fionn Graham interview Fr. John Wambu of Holy Ghost School Sultan Hammud

Blackrock College has been chosen by the NGO Development Perspectives to take part in the Sustainable Development Goal Challenge. Each month we will focus on different SDGs. Through learning about these goals in a creative and practical way we can help bring these goals into focus in our own lives.

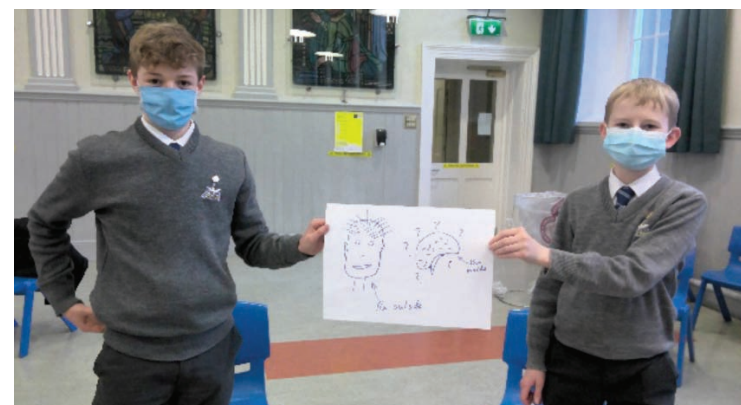


Daniel Turley and Will Woods investigate the Sustainable Development Goal number 1 - No Poverty. The students focused on the current homelessness crisis in Dublin



Christopher Nolan, Conor Ennis and Jack Bourke investigated SDG 10, Reduced inequalities. The students focused on the issue of racism in our society.

On the 2nd of December, the GCE Team took part in a workshop run by Ms. McGuire and Ms. Byrne. The workshop investigated the similarities and difference between charity and justice. Students explored the concepts of interdependence, charity, justice, and sustainability through a variety of active games and activities.



Edward Wilson and Robert McHale display their artwork during a workshop activity.



Frazer McGinn, Jamie Starr Bourke and Aaron Murtagh present their proposed action plan which centres around SDG 12, Sustainable Consumption and Production.



Robert McHale, Harry Pierce, Conor Ennis and Frazer McGinn discuss the Sustainable Development Goals as they try and place them in order of importance

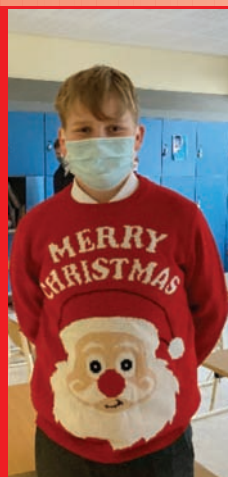
Snapshot of Christmas Celebrations



James Harvey (Fifth Year)



Peter O Connor, Jason Marrow and Philip Duffy
(Second Years)



Ben Evers (Second Year)



Liam McFadden, Jack Thorpe, Max Mooney,
Sam Murphy and Cian O'Brien (Fifth Year)



Daniel Welch singing ' O Holy Night' at the Carol Service



Freddie Noonan (Sixth Year) playing the Cello
at Christmas Carol Service



Father O' Brolchain blessing
the Crib at the Carol Service



Jamie Blackburn, Matthew O'Donnell, Alex Brophy
and Robert McNabb (Fifth Year)



Sixth Years on Christmas Jumper Day



Blackrock College Chapel , the magnificent setting for our
Carol Service , Christmas 2020



Oscar Bourke Mullaney



Ciarán Olan & Alex Kelly



Mark Murphy

Archives Update



It has been a quiet few months, with fewer visitors and researchers from outside the school setting foot inside the archive's office. However, this has given some time to complete important tasks, including the large-scale conservation project of the photomontage boards on Our Lady's Corridor.



Our Lady's Corridor, 1915

The photomontage frames cover much of the early years of the college, and one has been made for every decade since. Unfortunately many of the mount boards and photos have experienced severe damage from sunlight and damp, leading to peeling photos, or tidemarks and discolouration on the mounts.

The photos face risk of further damage by remaining in the same environment, and currently look very neglected. In order to properly preserve the remaining photos, it was decided that the current boards would be taken down, replicated digitally, and printed to fit the existing frames. The damaged photos could



Our Lady's Corridor, 1915

then be removed, stored securely, and undergo conservation if necessary.

The work on this was painstakingly slow at times – some unique photos had to go through digital conservation with Photoshop and other digital tools. There were less damaged copies of some photos in the archives, which were tracked down by combing through files and folders. The copies were scanned for use in the newly printed replicas.

The photographs were then sent to Boyle Design, who replicated the unique boards with digital lettering replacing the hand lettered originals, and digital scans of the original photos. The new designs closely match the aesthetic of the originals.

The old frames then had to be cleaned, with the rusted frame inserts removed, and new inserts placed to secure the items. The process is ongoing, you may notice some of the frames missing from Our Lady's Corridor as the work continues.

Thanks to Boyle Design for the help with this project.



Example of old damaged board – below is the updated boards with the changes implemented



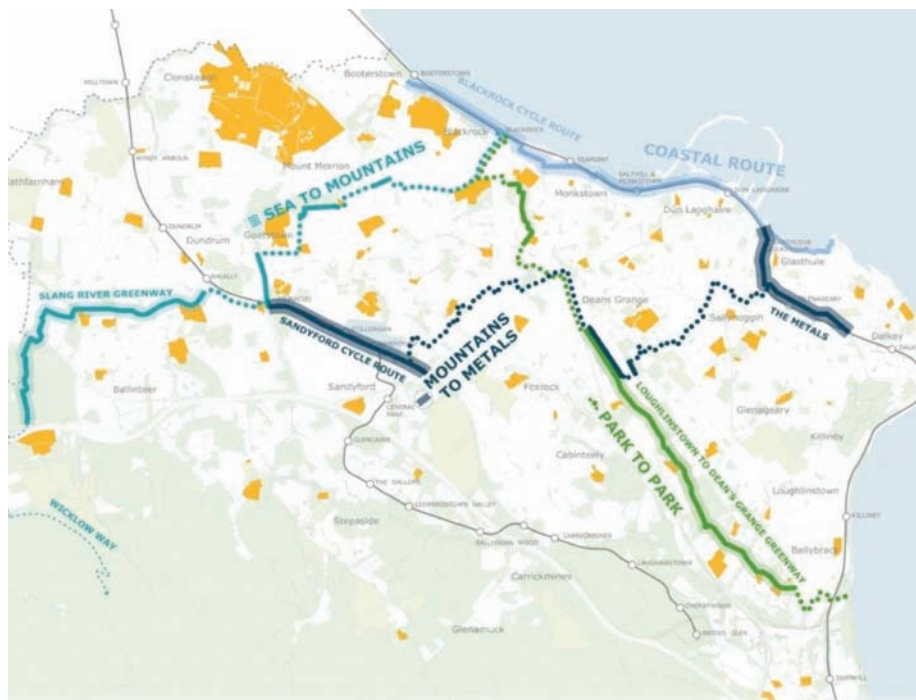
The updated pieces look fantastic and breathe new life into the rich history of Blackrock – many of these photos have been unrecognisable for years.

Green Schools



This term the main achievements of the Green Schools Committee was to apply for new bike racks for the College and to make a submission to Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council as part of their Active Schools safer travel initiative online consultation. Now that more boys are cycling to school, the proposed improvements in cycling infrastructure under the initiative are very welcome. We include a map here and recommend you visit the DLR website which is very useful if you plan on cycling to school. <https://www.dlrcoco.ie/en/environment/active-school-travel>

In addition, in November, the members of the Green Schools Committee attended an online Travel Conference for secondary schools with a focus on Ireland's 2040 vision. The conference was hosted by Actress and Climate Activist Aoiheann McCann and included talks and activities from national and international expert speakers with backgrounds in sustainable travel, urban planning and design, and the arts. Lots done, lots more to do. We look forward to continuing our work for climate action in 2021.



Guidance and Counselling



CAO

The 6th Year CAO talk for parents was slightly different this year. Due to Covid we could not meet in person. A presentation video was emailed out to all the parents. There was positive feedback from the video and its contents. Parents are advised to contact Ms. Drew if they have any concerns.

With the CAO application deadline approaching on February 1st, the current 6th Year students are now seriously researching their college options and choices. Any student who is unsure should contact MS. Drew.

All students will apply online at www.cao.ie where they can avail of a reduced application fee of €30 if they apply before January 20th 2021. The regular fee of €45 applies to applications made between January 20th and February 1st 2021.



If any student has additional needs, a medical condition and/or mental health concerns, they should contact Ms. Drew to discuss. DARE applicants are advised to get these applications underway as soon as possible. Students can find out more regarding the DARE scheme on www.accesscollege.ie. The liaison person in the school for filling in the DARE application is Mr Owen Brennan.

Students with Irish and Third Language exemptions must also take necessary action to notify the relevant Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) of their exemption(s) and to submit any supporting documentation to them.

Students with state exemptions must fill in a NUI form and post to the NUI in Merrion Sq. The address is on the form. Downloadable from <http://www.nui.ie/college/docs/exemption.pdf> This needs to be filled in and sent to NUI with supporting documents and relevant signatures.

Trinity College have their own waiver form available from <https://www.tcd.ie/study/assets/PDF/tcd-language-waiver-application-form.pdf> This should be filled in and sent to TCD with supporting

documents and relevant signatures.

Any student considering making a UCD Ad Astra Scholarship (Elite Athlete/Performing Arts) should do so by January 31st ; applications can now be made online via the UCD website. There is a 6th Year "Teams" page called "scholarships" with relevant information uploaded there.

HPAT - Students applying for entry to Medicine in 2021 need to register for CAO to receive their CAO number so they can register for the HPAT-Ireland examination. HPAT-Ireland registration will close on January 20th, 2021, the HPAT test will take place in various centres around the country on February 22nd 2021. Results are released mid-June. Our 6th Year students have been participating in a HPAT preparation course on Saturday mornings in the College.



RCSI are holding an open day from 10 – 2 on January 5th 2021, any student



wishing to attend must register online via the RCSI website.

UCAS – Approximately 14 students from 6th Year have begun their UCAS applications for a range of universities in the UK. The deadline is fast approaching, and students need to be aware of this as the UCAS application is quite detailed. The deadline is the 15th January 2021. Any 6th Year considering making a UCAS application should indicate this to Ms Drew as soon as possible. Applications for school references must be submitted 2 weeks in advance if they are to be returned before the deadline. Mr. Brian Savage is the liaison person for references.

The Guidance Department would like to wish all students and their families a pleasant, restful and safe Christmas.

Wellbeing



Despite no feature days in the Wellbeing Committee's calendar since our last report back in October, we have not stood still! The 6th Year student leaders of the committee met individually with a selection of students from every year, to create the inaugural Wellbeing Focus Groups. The focus groups allowed us to engage directly with the student body on their thoughts and opinions surrounding wellbeing and wellbeing initiatives. I think all involved would agree that the focus groups were a resounding success and were much more fruitful than a survey ever would have been.

The committee would also like to highlight the Wellbeing Anonymous Tool. The tool, which features as a tab on each year group's Microsoft Teams page, enables students to confide a plenary of issues they may be facing including Mental Health, bullying or any wellbeing concern with the confidence of complete anonymity. The anonymous tool links directly with Ms Natasha Drew, but it is at the student's discretion to decide if they wish to discuss their issue and with whom.

Finally, the committee will welcome their elected Chairperson Max Mannion (5th Year) and Secretary Sam Cahill (5th Year) into their new roles in the new year, as the 6th Year representatives take a step back from the management of the committee. I wish Max and Sam all the best in their new roles – the Wellbeing Committee is in good hands!



This year, Science Week ran from Monday 9th of November until Friday the 13th against a societal background never experienced in our life. There were over 150 posters along St. Patrick's Corridor with information about STEM careers. There were posters of celebrities, sports stars and actors stating their Science Degree and where they graduated from. There were also posters in the Fifth- and Sixth-Year Rec areas. A new display along St. Patrick's corridor was 'SciFlix'. We had posters of Science documentaries and movies which are available on Netflix. We had a display of *Women in Science* and an 'Ology' Exhibition in the DLC.



Dave's Jungle opened the week introducing his reptile pets. It was a great success again. While all masked, the physical interaction with the animals appeals to all Year groups and some teachers too. It is both an engaging and educational experience for the boys.



Phyllis the Rhino Iguana



Odhrán O'Connor (Fifth Year) holding Liam Molony holding a Burmese Python
Charlotte the Tarantula with Mark McGrath (Fifth Year) looking on .



Liam Molony holding a Burmese Python

The Senior Science Quiz was held on Tuesday 10th in the Senior Biology lab. There was a great turnout of 24 students. Each student had to answer 10 questions on Biology, Physics, Chemistry and General Knowledge. For the first time ever, we had two students tying



Senior Science Quiz



Senior Science Quiz

for first, Donal De Buitleir and Robbie Gallagher and three students tying for 3rd, Rory Shiel, Darragh Harrison and Conor Slattery. On Thursday 12th, we held a Tie-Break round. Students had to answer 2 questions on Biology, Chemistry, Physics and General Knowledge. The over all winner was Donal De Buitleir, runner up was Robbie Gallagher and 3rd was Darragh Harrison.



Tie Break Round: Back Row L-R; Rory Shiel, Conor Slattery and Donal De Buitleir
Front Row L-R Darragh Harrison and Robbie Gallagher,



Darragh Harrison (3rd Place), Donal De Buitleir (1st Place) and Robbie Gallagher (3rd Place)

There was no Third Year Science Quiz in the Lecture Hall but we adapted and had the quizzes in the lab with the class teacher. The quizzes were held on the 12th and 13th of November. This is always an enthusiastic, noisy, fun-filled afternoon and the students didn't disappoint this year with their very active participation.



This was the school's 7th SciFest School Competition. The 2nd Year students assembled their SciFest projects during the week. There are 134 projects displayed along the Science corridor. Students have demonstrated their knowledge of Science and Technology through their creative and innovative projects. The projects were judged externally by the SciFest judges this year.



SciFest Awards

1st place: *Effects of Social Media on Teenage Behaviour* - Ishaan Pandley
2nd place: *Which hot beverage cools the fastest* - Conor McCarron
AbbVie Young Innovator Award: *The Colour of Memory* - Jason Marrow
Bristol Myers Squibb Passion for STEM Award: *Testing the Effect of Preservatives on Chips* - Hamid Azad and George McGilton



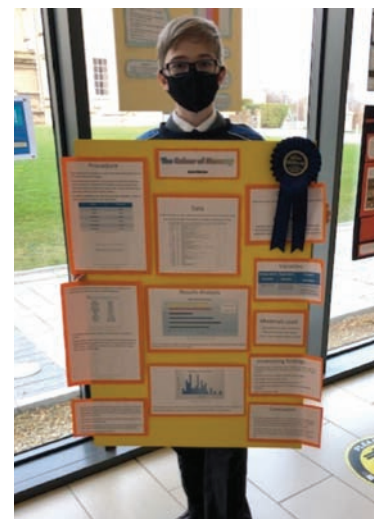
1st place: Effects of Social Media on Teenage Behaviour - Ishaan Pandley



2nd place: Which hot beverage cools the fastest - Conor McCarron



Bristol Myers Squibb Passion for STEM Award: Testing the Effect of Preservatives on Chips – Hamid Azad and George McGilton



AbbVie Young Innovator Award: The Colour of Memory - Jason Marrow

Pastoral Care Programme



Blackrock is a community – we come together to celebrate, to share, to hope, to prepare ... to be Community and the Holy Spirit is always in our midst.

November... a time of remembering.

Returning from mid-term on Monday 2nd November, the **Feast of All Saints**, we began the month of the Holy Souls by remembering those that have died.

During our **Mass of Remembrance** with celebrants Fr Tom Nash CSSp and Fr Paddy Dundon CSSp on 25th November, our Deputy Principal, Mr Brian Herlihy spoke about his dad Mr Pat Herlihy RIP, who died in March, during the early days of our first lockdown. He spoke of "great lives lived" and that remembering our loved ones is important as it reminds us of not just who we are but whose we are. Because we are an Easter people, we believe that life has changed not ended, a new chapter has begun. Unfortunately, we were not able to welcome our bereaved families in person to join us in the College Chapel for our Mass of Remembrance but with our recently installed webcam, we were joined from 11 different countries – a far greater outreach than was ever possible pre-Covid.

On the last Friday of November, we concluded our month of the Holy Souls with **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** in the College Chapel. There was constant stream of boys voluntarily visiting the College Chapel – faith is alive among the boys – they are an encouragement to us all.

Family Masses... a time of coming together.

Our Family Masses are high points throughout our school year. Due to Covid, the size of our congregation is limited to Boarders and House Captains of each year group.

The **Third Year Family Mass** was celebrated on Sunday 8th November by Fr Paddy Dundon CSSp and the theme was "Family". The homily was delivered by Sean O'Connor [5th Year] and he spoke about the importance of our links with the elderly – about really "connecting" with the elderly. Sean drew inspiration from his Pastoral Placement during Transition Year in



Mr Madden at the Third Year Family Mass

Our Lady's Manor, Dalkey and he encouraged us all to be open to their wealth of life experience and advice which they can give - - Sean was inspirational.

The **Transition Year Family Mass** was celebrated on Sunday 6th December by Fr Cormac O'Brolcháin CSSp and the theme was "For Christ's sake, share". On this occasion Mr Jim Murphy, President of the St Vincent de Paul Conference in the College, delivered the homily. Jim outlined some of the projects which VdeP are involved in because of the fundraising and awareness generated by the boys in the College...hampers, educational programmes, 3rd Level Support and mentoring, Work Placements and Internships – creating and delivering opportunities quietly – another example of loving your neighbour.



Mr Jim Murphy, President of the St Vincent de Paul Conference in the College delivered the Homily at the TY Family Mass .



Sean Treacey at the Fourth Year Family Mass

Eucharistic Ministers... a time for example.

Congratulations to Scott Barron, Sam Bruton, Milo Byrnes, John Cawley, Alex Cronnelly, Daragh Dempsey, Jack Fitzpatrick, Robbie Gallagher, Thomas Harte, Matthew Keeley, Rory McGuire, Charlie Mullin, Oscar O'Brien, Alex O'Keefe, Jack Roche and Alex Simpson [all 6th Year], who were commissioned as Ministers of the Eucharist in the College earlier this term.

PAST PARENTS' RETREAT AND CAROL SERVICE

The 2020 Past Parents' Association (PPA) Retreat was delivered from the College Chapel on Wednesday 9th December. The event was broadcast live via the College website and featured a talk from Fr Paddy Moran CSSp, an

Pastoral Care Programme Cont'd



Advent reflection by Sean Goan, who for 25 years was a member of the teaching staff at Blackrock College, and a chat hosted by PPA Chair Dermot Horan and Fr Cormac O'Brolchain CSSp.

This is the link to the talk by Fr Paddy Moran CSSP and the discussion between Dermot Horan and Fr Cormac O'Brolchain CSSp:
<https://www.churchservices.tv/blackrockcollege/archive/recordings/2yQEs3tFmR7HV0a>

This is the link to Sean Goan's Advent reflection:
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&v=gmCHnBHNlks>

On Sunday December 13th the annual PPA Carol Service was broadcast live from the College Chapel. It was a wonderful event led by Dermot Horan and fellow PPA Committee member Bernie Lloyd and featured stunning festive musical arrangements performed by Killian Grumley-Traynor and Simon Morgan.



Dermot Horan in conversation with Fr Cormac O'Brolchain CSSp

This is the link to the recorded event:
<https://www.churchservices.tv/blackrockcollege/archive/recordings/M3OoRlzghmN6cXI>

Carol Service.... a time of joy.

"Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation, oh come, let us adore Him" echoed around the College as our Annual Carol Service was live streamed from the College Chapel. With a limited number of lectors and cantors in the College Chapel – the joy of this celebration reached far beyond the Chapel into the corridors and classrooms as well as countries on every continent. The boys wore their Christmas Jumpers in their classrooms, each year corridor and assembly area was decorated and boxes of chocolates shared in every classroom. This year's Carol Service was enjoyed by the much wider community which is Blackrock; past and present parents, past pupils, families, retired staff members, Spiritans all around the world as well as the nursing homes and residential units associated with the Transition Year Pastoral Placement Programme. This was in the words of a carol "Joy to the world".

Boarders Carol Service

<https://www.churchservices.tv/blackrockcollege/archive/recordings/o4FKIEz5eMa2jAv>

Advent... a time to take time.

As we approach Christmas, we have much to reflect on in 2020. Our world changed suddenly on 12th March when our schools and county went into lockdown. Teaching and learning went online. We all struggled in different ways, but many great initiatives have been born, many new opportunities investigated and implemented. We are now in a different place. Coronavirus has not defeated us – while we have been separated in many ways, we have also become closer; Community is what makes Blackrock special – our Community has never been stronger – the Holy Spirit is with us.

"O come all ye faithful
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem,
Come and behold him, born the King of angels.
O come let us adore Him.



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

Sport



Chess Club

This year, chess club held their first ever Christmas Chess tournament on Wednesday 16th December. We had a great turn out of 24 players in total with students from different year groups. Huge congratulations to Team B: Conor Hughes, George Francis, Rory O' Kane and Conor Wall for winning, with a score of 43 points. In second place was Team F: John Duffy, Mark McCabe, Andrew Welch and Senan McCloskey. In third place was Team D: Liam Norton, Colum Corless, Peter McVeigh and Mark Goss-Keogh. A massive well done too all who took part, it was a great day! Chess club is every Monday and Thursday 3:45-45 in JS2, new members always welcome.



1st Place Team B: Rory O' Kane, Conor Hughes, George Francis and Conor Wall

JCT Medal Ceremony:

The president of the Leinster Branch, Robert Deacon (2019-2020) and the chairman of the Leinster schools' Committee, Conor Montayne presented the medals and the Junior Cup to captain Gregg Barron and his squad on Thursday, 3rd December, bringing to a closure a long season. The cup is shared with Newbridge College our co-finalists. Pictured below is the full squad with the JCT trophy.



JCT Cup Team 2020



Theo Byrnes receiving his Junior Cup Medal from the President of the Leinster Branch, Robert Deacon (2019-2020)

Rowing Blessing of the Boats:

The Rowing clubs annual blessing of the boats took place on Saturday, December 5th. Fr O'Brolchain presided over a lovely liturgy in which he described rowing as a 'Diamond sport' and that the rowers epitomised that 'never give up' spirit of the College. Due to the restrictions on numbers, unfortunately, only 15 people could attend the annual blessing of the boats.



Father O' Brolchain at the annual 'Blessing of the Boats' ceremony

The Kavanagh Brothers

It was a great honour to host the legendary Ronnie Kavanagh and his family as we celebrated the achievements of an extraordinary Blackrock family. Ronnie left Blackrock in 1949 before carving out a successful international rugby career during which he won 35 caps. He won an SCT title alongside his brother Patrick in 1948 and captained the 1949 team that retained the cup. The many feats of Ronnie, Patrick and Gene Kavanagh are detailed in a display on St Patrick's Corridor in the College.



Rees Kavanagh (Class of 1979) with his father Ronnie (Class of 1949)



Socially Distant Training is ongoing on Wednesday afternoons

Photos courtesy Rock Photography
www.rockphotography.ie

Reflection for Christmas 2020



Brent Geese on the Front Lawn of Blackrock College, December 2020

Every winter Ireland hosts 95% of the flyway population of light-bellied Brent goose *Branta bernicla hrota* coming from East Canada and provides essential feeding and roosting habitats at various sites across the country. Each year we welcome the overwintering Brent Geese in the grounds of Blackrock College with great joy and excitement. We can learn important life lessons from Geese:

Lessons from Geese

1. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an “uplift” for the birds following. By flying in a “V” formation the flock adds 71 per cent greater flying range than if the bird flew alone.

Lesson: People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and more easily because they are travelling on the thrust of one another.

2. Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone, and quickly get back into formation to take advantage of the birds immediately in front.

Lesson: If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed where we want to go and be willing to accept their help as well as give ours to others.

3. When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies at the point position.

Lesson: It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and share the leadership with people. As with geese, we are interdependent on each other.

4. The geese in formation “honk” from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Lesson: We need to make sure our “honking” from behind is encouraging and not something else.

5. When a goose gets sick or wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it is able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out on their own, with another formation, or catch up with the flock.

Lesson: If we have as much sense as the geese, we too will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong.

Milton Olson

