

# BLACKROCK COLLEGE NEWSLETTER



## Christmas 2021

Dear Parents,

It was great to have our annual Carol Service back in the Sports Hall after a two-year absence. Fr. Paddy Dundon told us that "the story of Christmas informs us that things don't work out as planned."

Despite Covid restrictions and storm Barra, our celebration of the Birth of Christ was a joyous and uplifting occasion.

Christmas is a story of resilience, of courage, of love.

Resilience is keeping going when it would be easier to quit. Courage is providing that voice that keeps others going, particularly when they struggle to do so. And love; it is especially a story of love, is giving without any expectation of return, like the love of a parent for a child, of God for us.

Fr. Paddy told us that 'O Holy Night' is his favourite Carol. Adam James, Mark Phelan and Kai Murtagh (all 6th Year) certainly did it justice.

**"Truly He taught us to love one another,  
His law is love and His Gospel is peace".**

This is the recurring theme at Blackrock as we strive, in the words of Fr. Cormac, to **Reach Out** with **Care** and **Kindness**. A Blackrock education is a call to serve, to set aside individualism and embrace others. We are aware that for some, Christmas is a tough time. We must embrace the lonely, the bereaved, the forlorn, the destitute. To 'Be There' for others is the ultimate challenge, be they in our family, our school, our city, our country or globally.

The response to our St. Vincent de Paul Appeal has been phenomenal. The 6th Year Fast, 5th Year Cyclothon, Transition Year Soccer Marathon, sale of mince pies and Blackrock honey; the Table Quizzes in 2nd and 3rd Year and the Christmas Tree project have revealed yet again the depths of compassion, commitment, and character within our boys.

**"Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother.  
And in His name all oppression shall cease".**

This year's Noel Turley Memorial match between the S.C.T. and St. Michael's was a celebration of our shared heritage as we highlighted the work of Spirasi, the Spiritan unit that works with victims of torture, refugees in Ireland. It was a great occasion under the stewardship of the Unions, Chaplains and Transition Year boys from both schools and although our next encounter may be different in its nature (the first round of the senior cup!), there is no denying the underlying bond - cor unum et anima una – between us.

We can look forward to the New Year with great hope, galvanised by the can-do attitude of my colleagues and the boys, the prayers of our Spiritan Community and the encouragement of our Parents' Council and College Union; inspired by the outstanding Jesus Christ Superstar, the incomparable BCR and the many Pastoral, Sporting, Cultural and club activities which are the bedrock of our community.

Things happen at Blackrock, inside and outside the classroom because of the energy, effort and expertise of my colleagues. It never stops. The recent 'school closure' for Storm Barra provided further evidence of this as classes continued online thanks to a team of Teachers who are committed to your sons.

Finally, Blackrock is the place it is because the spirit of Christmas, time and thoughtfulness, generosity and gratitude, care and consideration is much more than a seasonal step.

**"Led by the light of faith severely beaming  
with glowing hearts by His cradle we stand".**

God Bless

**ALAN MacGINTY**  
Principal



Kai Murtagh (Sixth Year) in Jesus Christ Superstar

# Message from the Deans



The door closes on the BCR studio following a very professional and entertaining week of broadcast, the dust barely settles in the Jubilee Hall after a sell-out week of *Jesus Christ Superstar* and work begins in earnest on the Saint Vincent de Paul Christmas Tree compound. Those who tuned in to BCR or made it to the show in the Jubilee Hall got to experience first-hand the tremendous talent we have here in the College. As Christmas trees arrive at the College it reminds us that the exams are fast approaching.

The second half of the term always passes very quickly. We return after midterm to Science Week, Family Masses in 3rd and 4th Year and in academics we had the chance to acknowledge the achievements of our prize winners from 2020-21 in a scaled back ceremony while the aural for Irish and Modern Languages took place ahead of the Christmas exams. The Eucharistic Adoration in mid-December provided a welcome opportunity to pause and reflect. Students took up this opportunity in great numbers – faith is truly alive and well. Despite the inclement weather, there continues to be a great enthusiasm for the extracurricular programme no longer curtailed by Covid restrictions. Great numbers participate on the pitches, in the water and on the courts. A particular highlight was the senior basketball team making it to the regional final played in the National Basketball Arena.

Despite the exams looming large on the horizon, the Carol Service provides a timely reminder of this joyful season. Storm Barra may have delayed the service, but it did not dampen the spirits. It is always great to hear the students in full voice. There is such a festive atmosphere around the school with Christmas jumpers and ties a plenty.

As Deans it is ever rewarding to see the efforts the students put in to support our St Vincent de Paul Christmas appeal. The Second and Third Years used their general knowledge in a new event this year, the SVP Table Quiz to fundraise for the this most worthy cause. Transition Years braved the cold for their Soccer Marathon, hamper delivery and found time for the Mince Pie Morning which saw Blackrock Honey on sale for the first time! 5th Years took part in the physical challenge of the Cyclothon while 6th Years challenged themselves both physically and mentally with a 24 Hour Fast. We commend the students on their efforts and commitment – raising an incredible amount of money. It affirms our ethos and what the Christmas Season is all about.

While the exams may not be as welcome as the holidays which follow, students should view them as an opportunity to gauge their progress. They will pose a challenge and the results may require a review of their application in class and in study. However, a new year and new term will provide students with an opportunity for a fresh start, and we anticipate their return with renewed vigour and focus.

We hope the Christmas break provides the students with an opportunity to rest and recharge the batteries, we commend them for all their work this term academically, in the arts and in sport.

We wish you all a very peaceful and happy Christmas.

Mr. T. Ryan ( 6th Year Dean ), Ms C. Dobbyn ( 5th Year Dean ), Mr P. O'Neill ( 4th Year Dean ),  
Mr O. Brennan ( 3rd Year Dean ), Ms R. Harlowe ( 2nd Year Dean )

## Fifth Year Talents on Display

On the pitches, on the courts, in the pool and on the lakes, on the stages of MUN, RockEd, Public Speaking, Debating and the Musical, in Art Club, Chess Club and the CADLC and in the domains of Environmental Awareness, Wellbeing, Commerce and Economics the involvement of Fifth Years in College life is outstanding, welcomed and encouraged.

## The Class of 2022

and the extended Blackrock College community gathered in Sandford Parish Church on Friday 19th November to offer support to Conn O'Byrne (6th Year), his father Mura, sister Emily and brother Finn on the loss of their mother and our much-loved colleague Brigid. Conn's outstanding tribute to his Mum on this morning will live in the memory for a very long time. May Brigid Rest in Peace. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

# Message from the Deans Cont'd



A tremendous effort of selfless giving by the **Class of 2023**. The broad spread of activity included coaching, beach cleans and neighbourhood gardening to sleep outs and of course the Care Home Parcels that have been so warmly received by elderly residents in a number of local Care Homes. In its first year, the bar of the **Senior Cycle Auxilium Programme** has been set high. Meaningful reflections demonstrate the personal growth of students. A resounding success, a resounding well done.



*Fifth Year Students proudly showing the Care Home parcels put together as part of their Auxilium Programme.*

A big thank you to Mr O'Farrell's **Third Year** religion class who answered the call of the **Saint Vincent de Paul Shoe Box Appeal**, and each donated wonderfully wrapped parcels with presents. I commend the class on their generosity and efforts. These gifts are always warmly received.

On 2nd November, Ms Pierce, Ms Harlowe, Mr Byrne and Mr Goodwin accompanied the **6th Year History students** on a day trip to Belfast. A most insightful and informative day saw the group meet activists involved in conflict resolution in the Houben Centre and undertake a tour of Belfast visiting the Peace Walls, Stormont and the Republican plot in Milltown Cemetery.

More than 150 students took part in the **TY Soccer Marathon** in aid of Saint Vincent De Paul on Friday 26th November. Bubble Football made its return, and the boys quite literally threw themselves into that with great enthusiasm. Congratulations to Mr. Grant, Mr. Cavanagh and past pupils (Jeff Kenny, Rob Kenny, Charlie O'Carroll, Ronan Cowhey and Peter Quinlan) on a 3-0 victory over the students in the first game and on the mercy shown to the students in the 1-1 draw in the second game. Special thanks to the student coordinators (Alex Kenny, Thomas Carroll, Will Probert, Sam Merren, Greg Murphy, Conor Regan, Patrick Ryan, Jack Leyden and Jack Gormley) on a job well done and to the boys who raised €15,888.90 for St Vincent DePaul, while showing exemplary good humour and cooperation throughout the day!



*TY Soccer Marathon*

It is great to see such large number of **Second Years** participating in **sports and activities** both inside and outside the College. Well done to all participating in MUN, Debating, Dungeons and Dragons, Green Schools, the Wellbeing Committee, Science Club, Art Club, Chess Club, Choir and our Music ensembles. A great new addition to Second Year activities this year is the Monday morning Cinema and Book Club which attracts a group of regular attendees. All welcome.

On Tuesday 30th November, in the presence of Robert Brophy (President PPU), Fr Cormac O'Brolchain and the Senior Leadership team, the 6th Year **Prize winners** from the **Class of 2022** belatedly received their awards. In particular, we congratulate Michael White who received the Academic Gold Medal for 5th Year and Connor Hayes who received the Student Leadership Award from his peers.



# Message from the Deans Cont'd



L Gibney, C McDonagh, N.Vidal, J Casey, M O  
Loughlin 2nd Year SVP Table Quiz

It was great to see such enthusiasm in **Second Year** for the annual Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal which this year was a new initiative, a **Table Quiz**. Well done to the winning Team 'Paris' (H. Barry, T. Cunningham, J. Kearns, D. McDaid, T. Taylor and C. White) from de Valera House on 54 points and to the joint runners up, on 51 points each; 'Buenos Aires' (C. Byrne, D. Gray, Y. Ma, O. Murphy and J. Shen) from McQuaid House and 'Perth' (H. Carroll, D. Healy, S. LeBolloch, C. Murphy and H O'Sullivan) from Shanahan House. Most importantly, sincere thanks to all who contributed so generously, raising a total of **€5371** for this very worthwhile cause.

On Tuesday 23rd November, Ms. Natasha Drew gave a most informative and comprehensive online presentation on the **CAO process to the 6th Year Parents**. Information presented on this night has been made available online via the parents' section of the College website.

**Third Year** have been ably represented in recent **debating** competitions. Zack Egan Ruane, Shane Hamilton, Darragh O'Neill and Ishaan Pandey took part in a MACE against Holy Child. In November they competed in the opening round of the Junior Schools' Debating Competition and qualified for the second round with Ishaan and Darragh coming first in their room. On the 26th of November they faced against their senior counterparts in the College. The senior team perhaps lucky to win? – that's open to debate.

We commiserate with Hugo Kelly, Kevin Keane, Jimmy Gilligan, Murray Baker, Patrick Morris, Ronin O'Halloran and Conor Hayes, **Sixth Year members of the Senior Basketball Team** defeated by 4 points in the Leinster Final by Moyle Park. We wish them well in their All-Ireland Cup Semi-Final vs St. Brendan's Belmullet.

Congratulations to Andrew McCarthy on his victory in the **Senior Science Quiz** held in the College during Science Week 2021. Andrew is the first confirmed **6th Year** attendee for Prize Day 2022!

We congratulate the large **Fifth Year** cast, band, and crew members on a wonderful spectacle of such a powerful musical, **Jesus Christ Superstar**. The brilliant talent, energy, enthusiasm, and passion on display was also evident shortly after at the joyful Carol service. Both are a fabulous example of the commitment and drive of the Class of 2023, and we look forward to the Leman concert for a further showcasing of talent.



Eoin Healy (TY) and Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD

**TY Blackrock College Radio** happens because the entire year group and many Transition Year teachers work together to make it happen. The week of broadcasting brings significant pressure for the boys, like juggling the broadcast of a pre-recorded show, recording an interview and conducting a live interview with government minister all in the same timeslot but TY students responded magnificently to this challenge, while also acquiring new skills. Among the many guests were Taoiseach Michael Martin, Christy Dignam, all of whom were incredibly gracious with their time. Richard Boyd Barrett's interview launched the station on Monday 15th of November. An outstanding week of broadcasting thanks to the studio managers, the tech, advertising and news teams, the producers of showcase, noon show and guests and requests; All top class !



# Message from the Deans Cont'd



The College Musical **Jesus Christ Superstar** received a standing ovation every night and we pay tribute to the **18 sixth years students** who contributed to the success of this production. In particular we highlight the outstanding onstage contributions of Kai Murtagh (Jesus), Colm Fagan (Judas), Mark McCabe (Caiaphas) and John McDermott (Herod).



Kai Murtagh and Colm Fagan (Sixth Years) perform in Jesus Christ Superstar

The Christmas break offers the opportunity for **TY students to reflect**. Have they been making the most of the many opportunities available to them? If the answer is yes, 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!

When the new term commences, **Second Years** will embark on **Auxilium** which is our Programme of Service to others, whereby each boy gives some time in the service of his community. This is our fifth 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.

Congratulations to **Third Years** Conor McCarron and Ishaan Pandey who have qualified for the **BT Young Scientist Competition** in January. Conor's project looks at the effects of social media on teenagers' behaviour. Ishaan's project focuses on the rate of cooling of beverages in relation to their heat capacity. We wish them all the best in the competition.

**TY Activities.** The entire TY Year group continue with their Gaisce activities. This term a group assisted elderly residents in St. Glathule Community Centre with IT skills and training. In early November the year group went out on Tuesday Tours to either Jumpzone, Footee Golf or GoQuest. Students attended the Tallaght University Hospital Webinar series looking at areas such as Medicine, Occupational Therapy, Pharmacy and Physiotherapy. More than 40 students assisted Willow Junior School with their Science week. Congratulations to the TY Spirasi Ambassadors who along with their counterparts from St. Michael's College raised over €22,000 for Spirasi as part of the Fr. Noel Turley cup match in UCD. Special mention must go to Patrick Hayden who gave a spectacular performance in the Senior Musical *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

There was a terrific atmosphere as **Third Year's** general knowledge was put to the test with the **Saint Vincent de Paul Table Quiz** on the Friday, December 10th. Donations are still coming in, but we have certainly surpassed our fundraising target. Well done to the year group in their fundraising endeavours – it is top class. Particular thanks to the wonderful House Captains who have driven this new event.

Our **6th Year debating teams** of Matthew O'Donnell & Colm Fagan and James Carroll & Michael White have progressed in the L+H (UCD) School's Debating competition and we wish them continued success into 2022.

Congratulations to **Sixth Years** Patrick Corbett, Cian Ryan and Sean Purcell (Kilmacud Crokes) and Jack Davy, Jacques de Patoul, Alex English & Harry Kennedy (Clanna Gael / Fontenoy) who all enjoyed victory at minor level in the recent Dublin GAA Football and Hurling Championship Finals

As well as students taking part in **online workshops** for Computer Science and Chemistry, **Fifth Year** also represented the College remarkably well at this year's CLR Comhairle na Óige and more still look forward to taking part in training to become Safer Internet Day Ambassadors

# Message from the Deans Cont'd



It was wonderful to welcome back students and parents to our **3rd Year Family Mass** held in the College in November. It was an inspiring liturgy enhanced by our 3rd Year musicians, choir, and cantors. Thank you to all student who volunteered for roles that morning.

154 **Sixth Year** students completed a **24-hour fast**, raising over 9500 euro, on behalf of the SVP Society between Thursday 25th and Friday 26th November. First prize in the raffle, organized by the 6th Year Parents' Committee, went to David MacHale. A wonderful 24 hours in the life of the Class of 2022.

Congratulations to all our **Second Years** on the quality of their **Scifest projects** which were on display in the College during November. We look forward to hearing the outcome and presenting them with their awards in January. Congratulations especially to James Donohoe on his qualification for the BT Young Scientist Competition for his project 'Would a three-day weekend improve mental health and stress levels in Ireland?'. We wish James all the very best in this most prestigious competition.

It is great to see **3rd Year** playing alongside 4th Years in the **Junior Gaelic Football** teams. Charlie Harty making his presence known with a goal against Oatlands. We wish Charlie, Michael Duncan, Rory Donoghue, Ronan French and James Neary all the best in the Dublin Schools Quarter Final to be played after Christmas.

**Fifth Year students** greatly appreciated the **Career Seminars** provided by the Career Guidance Department and the Past Pupils' Union. All are encouraged to continue to submit Career Plans and to explore as many career options as possible.

Our **Sixth Year badminton** players, under the guidance of Ms Ni Siocháin, have completed a busy half-term and it is hoped that teams involving Vincent Pang, Thomas King & Mark O'Reilly (Div.2) and Josh Scallan, Matthew Kane, Tim Jordan and Michael Paran (Div.3) have qualified from their groups for the semi-final stages.

I congratulate our academic prize winners who we recognised with a scaled back ceremony on the 30th of November. It was great to see our **Third Years prize winners** acknowledged for what would have been a challenging year academically.

Congratulations to **Theo Galligan (Second Year)** on a super **chess tournament** where he came third among a group of Senior chess players.



James Neary with his parents at the 3rd Year Family Mass.

We congratulate James Brophy (**6th Year**) on playing a key role in the **Leinster's UI8's Tennis** Interprovincial success at Castleknock LTC over the weekend of 6th/7th November.

Date for your Diary:  
The **6th Year Parent-Teacher** meeting is planned for Thursday 13th January from 4.15pm to 6.45pm. Further information about this event will be shared with all by the Senior Leadership Team in the New Year.



Fifth Year Career Talks.

We congratulate Gus McCarthy (Captain), Ruben Moloney and Zach Quirke (Vice-Captains) on their appointment to these SCT Leadership roles. A 20-14 victory over St Michael's in the Noel Turley Trophy game in the Belfield Bowl on 13th November was a most promising result and we wish the SCT squad and coaching team well for their opening Cup match when they will meet the same opponents.

# Message from the Deans Cont'd



The traditional **TY Mince Pie Morning** went ahead on Saturday 4th December. Dublin Barista School led by James McCormack (Class of 1999) kindly donated their time and resources to coordinate our expert TY Baristas who served coffees and mince pies. Honey from the Blackrock College Bees was also available. A phenomenal €2,122 was raised for the St Vincent de Paul. Thanks also to Ms. Marren for her work with her Home Economics and Cookery Module classes who made such delicious mince pies.

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 18th of December. It is so critical given the pace of the year and opportunities on offer week to week that the boys see their fundraising efforts go full circle. The trip to deliver the hampers to the families in Killinarden in West Tallaght is incredibly impactful. Thank you to the parents who helped with the delivery, without whose support this fantastic project would not be possible

**The Christmas Trees** project is a staple of the SVP Christmas appeal in the College and in the weeks leading up to Christmas all of **Transition Year** has at some point had the opportunity to work in the trees and develop their salesperson skills!

After suffering the heartbreak of a last-minute penalty Cup loss to Clonkeen College, we congratulate Max Mooney and the **Senior Soccer Squad** on their qualification for the League semi-final after securing a gutsy 3-3 away draw against a talented Coláiste Eanna side.

## Cyclothon in Aid of SVP.

Eight hours, three bikes, 993km and €5000 later the **Fifth Years** were delighted with such a highly charged day of good spirit, energy, and drive in aid of such a worthwhile cause. As always, we are so grateful to MCSPORT.IE for their sponsorship of the bikes and this year were delighted to have the additional sponsorship of VIT-HIT as well as their supply of refreshments for the day.



David Crowley, Fifth Year, at the Cyclothon

## TY Dates for the Diary:

January 6/7/11/13/14 – Part two of the Leadership Course.  
2-10 January – Holy Ghost Prep USA Visit  
Sunday 23rd January – Leman Concert  
23-28 January – Catholic Schools' Week  
31 January -04 February – Wellbeing Week  
Friday 4th February – TY Corporate Duck Race  
Monday 14th – Friday 18th February – Work Experience

Congratulations to our **6th Year French Debating team** of Eoin Dunne, Michael Paran, John Duffy & Mark McCabe who have successfully negotiated their way through two rounds of their competition. They will debate with St. Leo's of Carlow in Round 3 in January. We wish them well with this.

We hope many families will join us in celebration and prayer at the **Fifth Year Family Mass** on 30th January. Wishing you all a happy and healthy Christmas break as we look forward to 2022 with high hopes of continued good humour, commitment, and excellence.

We were delighted to welcome so many back to the College for the **TY Family Mass** and it was wonderful to see so many grandparents present. Mr. Madden and his team did a superb job; the wonderful decoration of the church, the mass itself, the music, and so much more besides. Thanks to Jim Murphy, President of the Blackrock College Conference of SVP, who reminded the boys of the difference they have made to so many through their service to SVP. The numbers that tuned in online were fantastic also. My thanks also to Fr.O'Brolchain and Fr.Nash for celebrating the mass.



# Message from the Deans Cont'd



Well done to the **Third Years rowers** involved in the recent Skibbereen Head of the River competition. Elliott Tomkin Beddy and Louis Kelly finished 1st in the J14 double sculls, with Lucas Perez alongside Gregory Quinn (TY) who finished 1st in the J15. In the J14 4x+ Blackrock A Patrick Cody, Ciaran Murphy and Jason Marrow came home in 2nd place and in the Blackrock B Scott Plower, Fionn Whelan, James Hodgins, Peter O'Connor and Cian Hanley gave an impressive performance. Finally, our J14 4x+ of Elliott, Louis, Matthew Neary, Jack Buckley, and Ben McElligott missed out on 3rd by only 3 seconds.

The leadership of members of the **Class of 2022** at this year's senior Carol Service on Thursday 9th December was impressive to witness. In particular we thank Adam James, Mark Phelan and Kai Murtagh for their wonderful rendition of 'O Holy Night' which marked a most joyful end to a very busy but fulfilling term.



Fifth Years Freddy O'Connell, Guy Mangan and Oisín Tiernan sleeping out as part of their Auxilium Service.



TY Mince Pie and Coffee morning in aid of St Vincent de Paul



Third Years Cian O'Donoghue, Conor Grennan, Henry Browne and Daire Casey from Mr O'Farrell's Religion Class



Third Years at the Carol Service.



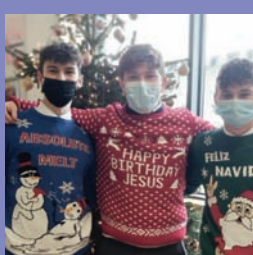
Fifth Year House Captains celebrating the end of Auxilium.



Fifth Years working hard at the DLR Comhairde na N'Oige



Sam O'Donovan, Thomas Downey, Daniel Bennet, Joe Morrissey, 5th Year.



Fifth Years Theo Claffey, Charles Quinn and Matthew Sorensen getting in the festive spirit.



Conor Ryan Fifth Year cleaning up litter as part of his Auxilium Service



JCTV RBAI



JCTV Crescent



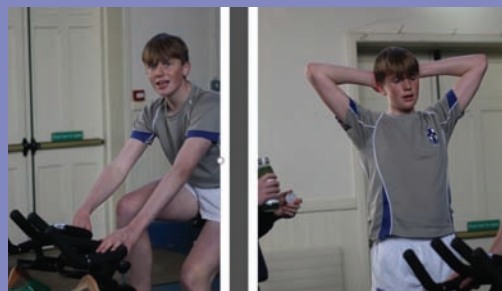
Patrick Clancy with his parents at the Third-Year Family Mass



George Francis and Mark McCabe (Six Years) perform Jesus Christ Superstar



# Message from the Deans Cont'd



Evan Lyons Fifth Year resting after his efforts at the Cyclothon.



Some Fifth Year Choir and Orchestra members getting ready for the Carol Service



Cian Sheehy and Ben O'Connell receiving prizes from Mr R. Brophy(President PPU, class of 1982)) on Prize Day.



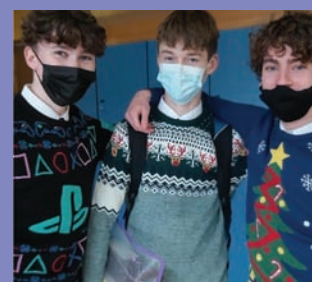
Adam James, Mark Phelan and Karl Murtagh at the Carol Service



Fifth Years Finn Tyrell and James Mason



Fifth Years enjoying the Carol Service



Edward Spain, Dan Barry, and Jack Burke Fifth Year.



James Brophy receives a prize from his father Mr. R. Brophy (President of the PPU and class of 1982) on Prize Day



TY students working hard on the SVP Christmas Tree Project .



Mark Dempsey with his Mum at the TY Family Mass



Tom Hayden (2nd Year) at the Dublin Cross Country Championships in Abbottstown on Sunday, 17th October. These were the 'even age' championships where Tom ran UI6.



O Daly, G Laing, M Moyna, J Pelegrin, T Boret 2nd Year SVP Table Quiz



B Luengo, P Doorly-McErlean, M O'Donnell, A Echevarria at the 2nd Year SVP Table Quiz



M Ahearne, C Sinnott, J Mulsow, L Holland, J Donohoe at the 2nd Year SVP Table Quiz



Jimmy Gilligan, Freddie Mullin & Ross Halpin (Sixth Year )



Rory O'Shea, Sean Purcell, Mikey Coleman, Matthew Gammell, David O'Riordan ( Sixth Years )



Alex Brady, Tom King, Max Mooney (Sixth Year )



Alex Millar, Federico Mei, Matthew Harvey, John McDermott (Sixth Year)



# Green Schools



## Christmas Campaign

The Committee's Christmas Campaign hopes to raise awareness of how we can reduce, reuse, and recycle this Christmas. Our posters highlight ways to cut down on waste. We advise not to support "fast fashion" and to recycle not only waste, but also leftovers from Christmas feasts, into sandwiches! In addition, we encourage everyone to be mindful of what gifts they buy and where they come from. Our message: **Think sustainable; think ethical.**



Great to see the new Bike Racks being used!!

## Bin Audit

The Committee is currently working towards the Global Citizenship-Litter and Waste flag. There are several steps involved in this two-year campaign which has some ambitious goals, and we are currently doing a bin audit. We have 172, 94 general bins and 78 recycling bins so plenty of work to do to examine how we can best use them.

## Bike Racks

As October drew to a close, the Green School Committee gathered for the blessing and official opening of the new Bike Racks. The new bike racks now accommodate 110 uncovered and 100 covered racks and have already

supported a significant increase in students cycling to school. During this ceremony, we were joined by Fr O Brolchain, Mr MacGinty, Ms Wyse, Ms Harlowe, Mr O Shea and Mr O Connor, Head of Maintenance and Grounds. We also, celebrated raising our new flag obtained by the school over the past two years. The Green Flag for Travel was raised by Secretary, Frazer McGinn, and Vice Chairman Matthew O'Donnell. The Global Citizenship flag was raised by Chairman Robert McNabb. The Green Schools Committee are delighted to have the flags up and flying, representing the hard work of our entire Committee over the past year.

Below: Simple ways to reduce waste this Christmas poster designed by David Walsh and Frazer McGinn



# Campus Development Programme Update



## Virtual Tour of The Blackrock College Chapel

We recently completed work on the first of several planned virtual tours of our campus buildings. These tours are designed to enable viewers to explore the facilities on our campus and to learn how these buildings contribute to life at Blackrock College and Willow Park.

The Blackrock College Chapel virtual tour features embedded videos and several information posts that help the viewer to get a good understanding of the Chapel and its prominent role at Blackrock. The tour can be experienced on this link - <https://my.treedis.com/tour/blackrock-chapel>.

Later in the 2021/22 academic year we will complete work on virtual tours of the Blackrock College building, the Castle, the Sports Hall, Willow Park

Junior School and Willow Park Senior School.



# Wellbeing



## BLACKROCK COLLEGE WELLBEING

We have recently invested in a Cubbie Sensory Hub. The Cubbie is designed to help students that are neuro-divergent or who have autism to pre-empt and prevent sensory overloads. As it has been installed in different schools it is becoming very apparent that the Cubbie can be used for so much more than that particularly with students who are experiencing anxiety. The programmes in the Cubbie can either calm or alert a student depending on their specific need. We look forward to integrating its use into our AEN and Counselling departments as another way that Blackrock College can support and enhance student wellbeing





# Snapshot of 2nd Half Term 2021



Winners of the Third Year SVP Table Quiz



Patrick Clancy JCTV Crescent



The Cast of Jesus Christ Superstar



Fifth Year Cyclothon for SVP



House Captains Jamie Rogan, Philippe leRoux, Oliver Coffey and Louis Dignam at the Fifth Year Cyclothon



Matthew Wyse, (2nd Year) Ben O Halloran (3rd Year; Geoff Wall, ( 2nd Year ) Brian Walsh, Leo McDonagh (Third Year) JCTV Crescent



Ben Cantwell (Fifth Year) accepting his prize from R. Brophy (President of the PPU, Class of 1982 ) on Prize Day



JCTV Crescent



Sean Waters with his parents at the Third Year Family Mass



Niall McNamara accepting his prize from Mr R. Brophy (President of the PPU, Class of 1982) on Prize Day.



The Cast of Jesus Christ Superstar



# Snapshot of 2nd Half Term 2021



Jason Marrow with his parents at the Third Year Family Mass



The Choir at the Carol Service



JCTV Crescent



Evan McCourt against Matthew Collins



Concentration at Chess Competition



Michael Curley with his family at the TY family Mass



Hugh Galligan with his parents at the TY Family Mass



Rory White with his family at the TY Family Mass



TY students Mark Dempsey and Callum Burns working hard at the VDP Christmas Tree Project



Fifth Year's at the Carol Service



Blackrock College Team at The Noel Turley Memorial Trophy



# Snapshot of 2nd Half Term 2021



Eoghan Walsh (Fifth Year) The Noel Turley Memorial Trophy



Gus McCarthy (SCT Captain) accepts the trophy from Catherine Turley, Noel Turley's widow, at the Noel Turley Memorial Cup final



Mr G. O' Sullivan reads at the Carol Service.



J 2nds V RBAI



Enjoying the action at the Noel Turley Memorial Cup Trophy



J 2nds V RBAI



Jonathan Hoffman ( Fifth Year )



Castle 3rds V Belvedere



J 4ths s V St Gerard's



Dylan O' Connor (Third Year) J4ths V St Gerard's



Cian O 'Connell and Johnny O'Sullivan (Third Year)  
JCT V RBAI



Daniel Bennet and Tom Cherico ( Fifth Year ) Senior  
Soccer Team V Marian College



# Snapshot of 2nd Half Term 2021



Colts V St Andrew's College



Colts V St. Andrew's College



Harry Mellon ( Fifth Year ) and Tommy Hanrahan ( Sixth Year ) (Senior Soccer Team V Marian College)



Father O'Brolchain CSSp , Mr R. Brophy ( President of the PPU and Class of 1982 ) and Mr A. MacGinty ( Principal ) at Prize Day



Mr MacGinty addresses the prize-winners on Prize Day



Fifth Years at Career Talks



Career Talks for Fifth Years in the CADLC



'Rock Under 14As and UI4Bs V St Michael's College



Rugby UI4 A and UI4B 'Rock V Clongowes



# Snapshot of 2nd Half Term 2021



H Carroll & N Vidal ( Second Year) U 14sA and U 14sB  
v St Michael's



Left Hugo Carroll & Cael Sinnott (Second Year) U 14sA  
and U 14sB v St Michael's



J Browne (Second Year)  
U 14sA and U 14sB v St Michael's



Dinn, F Bracken & C Martin (Second Year) U 14sA and U  
14sB v St Michael's



Sixth Years from De Valera House  
on Christmas Jumper Day



Sixth Years from Mc Quaid House  
on Christmas Jumper Day



Sixth Years from Shanahan House  
on Christmas Jumper Day



Sixth Years from Leman House  
on Christmas Jumper Day



Sixth Years from Ebenrecht House  
on Christmas Jumper Day



Sixth Years from Duff House  
on Christmas Jumper Day



Boarders (Class Of 2022)  
on Christmas Jumper Day



Sixth Years from Duff House  
on Christmas Jumper Day



# The Arts



Lorcan Little's sculpture (Fifth Year)



Alex Hopkins (Fifth Year )



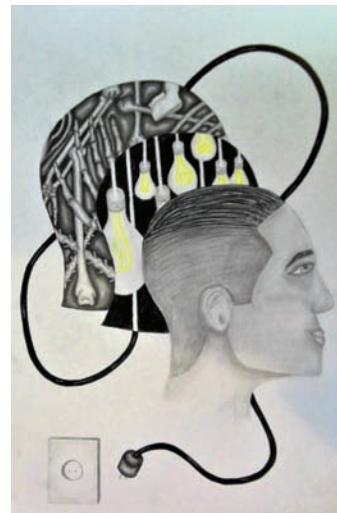
Student Curators



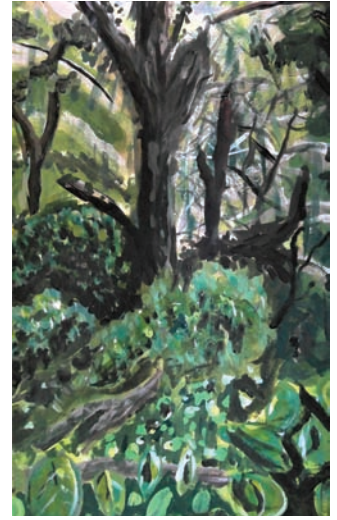
Mark McGurk (Fifth Year)



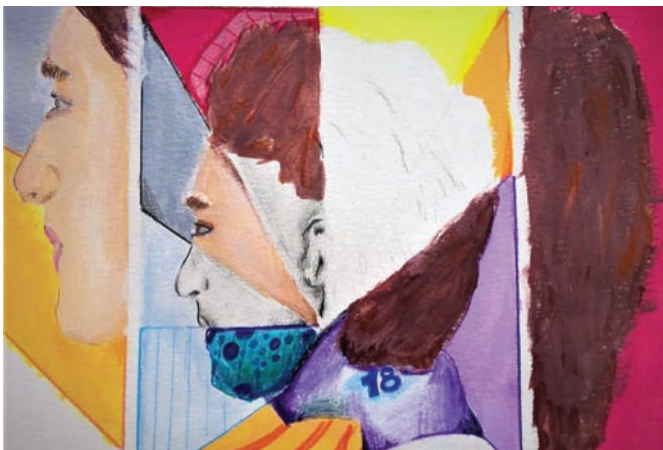
Dixen Chongo ( Fifth Year )



Andrea Andersson (Sixth Year )



Andrea Andersson (Sixth Year )



Borja Luengo (Second Year)



Conor Casey (Fifth Year)



Liam Lowes (Fifth Year)



Matthew Gammell (Sixth Year)





## SENIOR ENGLISH DEBATING

It has been another busy term for the Senior English Debating Society.

We continue to participate in the Leinster Schools' Debating Competition, via Zoom. In the most recent round, Ben Kieran-Glenon (5th Year) and Patrick Hayden (4th Year) opposed the motion that *This House Regrets the Influence of the Catholic Church on Schools in Ireland*. The adjudicators awarded them second place. Both Ben and Patrick go through to the next phase of the competition, along with Colm Fagan (6th Year), Matthew O'Donnell (6th Year), Michael White (6th Year) and James Carroll (6th Year). We look forward to continuing with the competition after the Christmas break.

On Friday 26th November, we had our first in-house of the year debate between the Junior and Senior Debating Societies. As always, this was a hotly contested competition. Representing the Senior Society were Michael White, Matthew O'Donnell, James Carroll, and Patrick Hayden. They successfully proposed the motion that the voting age should be the same as the age of criminal responsibility. We congratulate the boys on their narrowly clinched victory and commend the Junior Society for providing such formidable competition. A particular word of praise goes to Ishaan Pandey (3rd Year) who was awarded Best Speaker by the adjudicators.

The Transition Year members of the society continue to take part in the Concern Debates. In the most recent round of the competition, Patrick Hayden (Captain), along with Oisín Daly, Greg Quinn and Senan McCloskey (all 4th Year) defeated Deansgrange Community College. They successfully proposed the motion that the problems associated with solving world hunger are insurmountable. Congratulations to Patrick and his team; we look forward to competing in the next League Stage of the competition after the Christmas Holidays.

Once again, we commend all our members for their commitment to debating in the College. It has been a fantastic term, and we look forward to building on this in the new year.

## Junior Debating

Junior Debating has enjoyed a full term of competitions and friendly debates. This term, four teams from Blackrock College competed in the preliminary rounds of the Leinster Junior Schools' Debating Competition which was organised by the Law and the Literary and Historical Society in UCD. Team A: Jamie Browne Lynch & Josh Murphy. Team B: Tom Hayden & Cillian Staunton. Team C: Ishaan Pandey & Darragh O'Neill. Team D: Shane Hamilton & Zack Egan-Ruane. Blackrock C came 1st in Round 1 and 2nd in Round 3; and Blackrock D came 1st in Round 2. We eagerly await news of qualifiers to the next round, which should take place in the new year.



Debaters from Blackrock College and Holy Child Killiney



Josh Murphy and Jamie Brown Lynch (2nd Year) Winners of the Holy Child Killiney debate November 9th

Four teams also competed in the Spar Debates hosted by Holy Child Killiney in November: Team 1: Ishaan Pandey & Darragh O'Neill, Team 2: Brian Carroll & Josh Murphy. Team 3: Cillian Staunton & Jamie Browne Lynch, Team 4: Shane Hamilton & Zack Egan-Ruane. Blackrock Team 3 came 1st in this competition.

Lastly, this term we also competed against the Blackrock College Senior Debating Team on November 26th. Five speakers debated confidently and definitively against their senior opponents: Tom Hayden, Cillian Staunton, Ishaan Pandey, Zack Egan Ruane and Darragh O'Neill. Ishaan Pandey (3rd Year) was voted as the overall best speaker in this debate.

We look forward to next term. Four teams hope to qualify in February for a place in the International Competition for Young Debaters in Oxford University – ICYD 2022: Tom Hayden, Brian Carroll, Jamie Brown Lynch, Cillian Staunton, Conall Byrne, Josh Murphy, Leo Allen and Ishaan Pandey. We will also be hosting the Junior Debaters from Holy Child Killiney and of course, we look forward to our yearly debate with Willow Park 1st Year Debaters.



## M.U.N.

In recent months Model United Nations has had their weekly meetings every Friday in the CADLC, with intense debate across several different committees on topics such as, dealing with plastics, climate change and Myanmar. Students from Second to Sixth Year have taken an active part in all these meetings with our senior members chairing. As well as the debating, a lot of preparation is being put into ROCKMUN 2022 which will see Blackrock College hosting several schools in a Model United Nations conference this coming January. This is something that was put off last year due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic however the students have put a lot of effort into ensuring that it happens this year, provided public health advice supports it.



**BLACKROCK COLLEGE C.S.Sp.**  
**MUSIC & DRAMA**

Despite Storm Barra's agenda and "through the rude wind's wild lament, and the bitter weather", we held two back-to-back Carol Services this year (on our third attempt) on Thursday December 9th – one for the junior and the other for the senior years. Our singers and musicians were spread right across the Sports Hall as it was "time for singing Christmas songs" with gusto and enthusiasm. Congratulations to all who took part in this special occasion and thanks to all who made it possible – household and maintenance staff, sound professionals, teachers, students, readers, choirs, musicians, and of course the congregation.

The Adult Choir returned in full (masked) voice to the College Chapel for the Past Parents' Association Carol Service which took place on Sunday November 28th and was streamed via the Chapel Webcam. This can still be viewed at the following link: <https://www.churchservices.tv/blackrockcollege/archive/recordings/cSGMplfPxyKODE>.

The Third- and Fourth- Year Family Masses took place on November 7th and December 5th respectively. Students from both years ably provided the music supporting the liturgy and they were accompanied excellently by our Fifth-Year organ scholar, Gavin Bowen-O'Connor. Well done to all involved.



Luke Lysaght-Walsh with his parents at the Third Year Family Mass

We were very lucky that our Senior Musical, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, was just in the right window and we had 4 shows and a preview night with live audiences. This was magical and fed the performance-starved students and audiences. Thank you to everyone who attended and supported the show.

Now our attention turns to preparations for the Leman Festival Concert as we enter the season we fondly call 'Lemanuary'. As was the case last year, this promises to be a Leman like no other, and the show must (and will) go on. Watch this space!

# The Arts Cont'd



Mr. Grumley Traynor conducting the Orchestra at the Carol Service



Shane O'Sullivan (Sixth Year) at the Carol Service



Eoghan Dunne (Sixth Year) at the Carol Service

## Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre

It has been another great few weeks for the Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre. David Rudden and Graham Tugwell gave a masterclass on how to write RPGs for Dungeons and Dragons. Cinema and Book Club are meeting every Monday at 8am and Green Schools, Debating, Student Wellbeing, Global Citizenship (check) meet on a weekly or fortnightly basis

## Puzzle of the week

Each week a new puzzle/ riddle is posted on the CADLC website and shared via MS Teams. Puzzles vary from easy to difficult. It's a fun way to encourage students to use their critical thinking and logical skills. To date there has been over 450 entries. Students can see the puzzle by going to <https://library.blackrockcollege.com/puzzles-games-and-quizzes/>



Puzzle of the Week

## Science Week

To celebrate science week (8-12 November), TY students put together an exhibition on different ologies including zoology, serpentryology, apiology, orthology and palaeontology. Women in science were displayed in the front of the CADLC and students were invited to a lunch time Kahoot quiz on the Friday. Ms A. Dillon gave a talk to Ms Shevlin's TY science class on conspiracy theories, where the class discussed why people believe in conspiracy theories, what to watch out for and examples of conspiracies that actually happened.



Kahoot Science Quiz

## Maths Week

For Maths Week, each year group had to solve a different maths problem via MS Forms. Results are displayed on the notice board in the library.

## Commemorating the Treaty

To commemorate 100 years of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, Mr Byrne's History Class took part in a lively lunch time debate in the library: This house would accept the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. Speakers represented historical figures such as Arthur Griffith, Eamon De Valera and Michael Collins.

## Library Classes

Ms A Dillon gave Mr Campbell's TY Geography class a lesson on how to research for Geography. The class learned about the resources available on the library website, why it's important not to trust anonymous resources, how to do a reverse image search and using google street view.

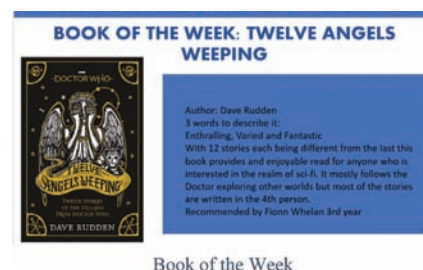
## International Men's Day

To promote the Be Caring ethos of the school Mr O'Reilly's TY RE class completed PowerPoint slides on a man they admire that is doing/has done something caring. These slides were displayed outside the CADLC and some were displayed on the digital screens.



## Promoting Books

Graphic novels have proven to be very popular this year. This section of the library has been updated with lots of new books, in particular Marvel and DC Comics. Students continue to send in book recommendations and there are now 120 recommendations on the Rockreads app. Ms A Dillon has displayed book posters in various corridors around the school and each week a Book of the Week, selected by a student, is displayed on the digital screens.



Book of the Week

## Chess Club Day

On Friday 3rd December, students were invited to come play chess in the library during lunch time. A big thank you to chess club for providing extra chess sets and for giving the novices amongst us some very helpful tips.



Chess Club Day

# Science



This year, Science Week, ran from Monday 8th of November until Friday the 12th November. It was a very visual and all-inclusive week. Along St. Patrick's Corridor were over 150 posters with information about STEM careers as well as 'SciFlix', 'The Chemistry of Covid' and 'Chemistry Nobel Prizes' poster displays.

A display of 'Women in Science' and a TY Biology 'Ology' were exhibited in the CADLC.

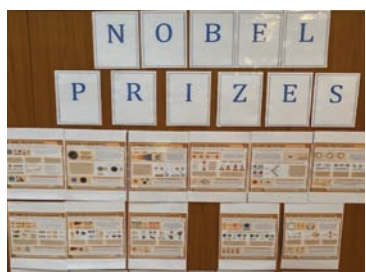
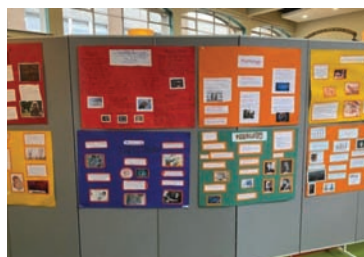
Posters of celebrities, sports stars and actors stating their Science Degree and where they graduated from were displayed in the Fifth- and Sixth-Year Rec areas.

## Displays





# Science Cont'd



## Photography Competition.

This year there was a great interest in the Science Week photography competition. Sixty-three students and staff entered photographs, with participation from all year groups. This year's theme was 'How Science helps us in our lives'. This really got the students thinking about how some may of our activities involves Science in one way or another. There were many different interpretations of this theme. The entrants were examined, and the top photos were short listed and displayed on the windows of the DLC. The science teachers voted for the best photo.



Frazer McGinn, 'Power and Poison - How Science can simultaneously help but also destroy life'

Frazer McGinn (Fifth Year), won first prize in the student section with his photo entry called 'Power and Poison - How science can simultaneously help but also destroy life (the incinerator)'



Harrison Carr, Third Year, was Runner-Up with his photo entry called 'Shooting'

Frazer will go on to enter the ISTA Photography Competition titled, "Energy in Today's World". We wish him the best of luck.

## How Science Helps us Live our Lives

Covid has reminded us that science literally helps us live our lives. Because of the marvelous work done throughout the world by scientists to develop, manufacture and distribute vaccines great-grandmother Sheila lived through a global pandemic to see, to hold and to hug her great granddaughter, Grace.



Cathy Kelleher won the staff category with a beautiful photo entitled: 'Thank you, Science!'

## Dave's Jungle

Dave's Jungle 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 – and we have booked this event again for Science Week 2022.



Darragh Bowler Fourth Year holding Charlotte



Ciaran Patchell Fifth Year with Charlotte the Tarantula on his head.



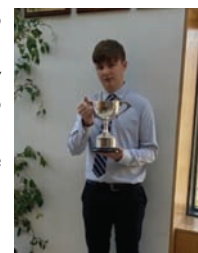
Tom O'Riordan Fifth Year with Gus

## SciFest

While very different to previous years, this was the school's 8th SciFest School Competition. The Second-Year students assembled their SciFest projects during the week. There were 122 projects displayed along the Science corridor. Students have demonstrated their knowledge of Science and Technology through their creative and innovative projects. Due to Covid and the judging for SciFest will be in-house and the finalists will be sent onto SciFest who will decide on overall winners

## Senior Science Quiz

As there was no Senior Science ISTA quiz this year due to Covid, we decided to open the Senior Science quiz to all Fifth- and Sixth-Year students. This was held on Tuesday 9th November from 1:10pm-1:40pm. Students had to answer ten questions on Biology, Chemistry, Physics and General Knowledge. Twenty students took part in the quiz. The over all winner was Andrew McCarthy (Sixth Year) and the runner up was Colm Fagan (Sixth Year).



Andrew McCarthy winner of the Senior Science Quiz

## 3rd Year Quiz.

There was no 3rd Year Science Quiz in the Lecture Hall but we adapted and had the quizzes in the lab with the class teacher, as we did last year. The quizzes took place during their last Science lesson of the week. There were prizes for the winners in each class. Feedback from 3rd year teachers was that it was a noisy, enthusiastic, competitive, fun-filled hour and the students loved it.



Winners from 36 Science Gareth Hughes, Adam Dungan and Alec Parsons



Winners from 35 Science Jack Keaveny, Nick Fu and Ray Morris

## Staff Quiz

The Staff Quiz took place on Thursday 11th November. There were five teams of four. It was great to bring back some pre Covid normality along with some competitive fun. It was also useful to encourage younger and new staff members to speak out and compete and served as a lively, competitive socialisation event for teachers of all generations.

## Careers in Chemistry

On Thursday 11th, from 10:30-12:30, all Fifth-Year chemistry students took part in a Zoom talk in the DLC on Careers in Chemistry, hosted by Trinity College.

## Junior Science Kahoot Quiz

This quiz took place in the CADLC during lunch on Friday 12th November. It was open to all Second and Third students. Students were encouraged to look

# Science Cont'd



at the 'Ology' Poster Exhibition. Some questions from the posters came up in the quiz.

## Conspiracy Theories

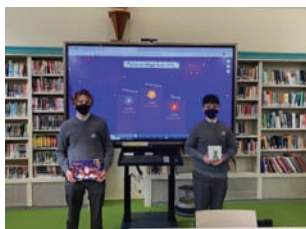
43 Biology attended a talk in the digital learning centre with Ms Dillon about conspiracy theories. This was an extremely thought-provoking lesson which truly engaged the student imagination. It will hopefully encourage them to dig deeper into the headlines that they read and be true scientists by examining research and evidence before jumping to conclusions.



Seán Tracey in Fifth was one of 230 students from across Ireland who took part in Round 1 of the biology section of the Irish Olympiad of Experimental Science. Sean was successful and is now one of forty to qualify for Round 2, where he will also be presented with a IrEOES Cert of Achievement. This takes place in DCU in January 2022. Round 2 is a three-hour test. The top 6 students will receive a medal and will be invited to take part in a training and final selection process, also taking part in DCU.



Sean Tracey (Fifth Year)



First Place Alex Parsons in Third Year,  
Runner up Daniel Moore in Second Year



The following students' projects have qualified for the virtual BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition, 12-14 January 2022. We wish them the best of luck.

## Social and Behavioural Sciences

*Effects of Social Media on Teenagers' Behaviour* - Ishaan Pandey (Third Year)  
*Would a three-day weekend improve mental health and stress levels in Ireland?* James Donohue (Second Year)

## Chemical, Physical & Mathematical Sciences

*Investigating the Effect of Concentration on Temperature in an Exothermic Reaction* – Simon Considine and Diarmaid Byrne (Fifth Year)  
*The Rate of Cooling of Beverages in Relation to their Heat - Capacity* Conor McCarron (Third Year)

## Science Club

Students dissecting pig tails and ears



Louis Glavin and Garreth Hughes (Third Year) making homemade Bath Bombs



# Archives



I started working as archivist here in Blackrock College in August this year. It was soon apparent to me that among our most valuable records in the collection are the student account ledgers. These large-sized, hard-back volumes date as far back as 1862, just two years following the college's foundation in 1860. When the French College of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (as Blackrock College was originally named) opened its doors on 5 September 1860 under the leadership of Père Jules Leman, there were just two boarders and six day students. These numbers grew exponentially over the ensuing decades; by 1875 there were 180 boarders, as well as day students and scholastics (junior seminarians). This development is reflected in the ledgers: in 1862 a single ledger sufficed for all the student accounts, but as early as 1864 a separate ledger was required to account for the scholastics. In the 1870s the ledgers started to proliferate to encompass students in the newly launched third-level Civil Service training division in the college (1874) and, by the end of that decade, students at the Catholic University. Students of these two third-level institutions were accommodated in the recently acquired Williamstown Castle. By the 1890s, therefore, separate ledgers were required for boarders, day students, scholastics and students or lodgers within the Castle. This practice endured well into the twentieth century.

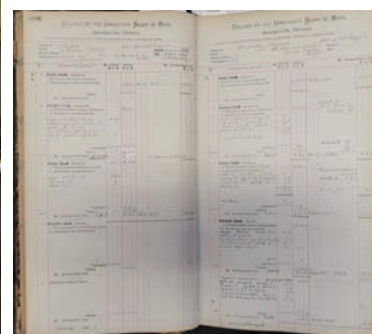
The management of these different categories of students amounted to a lot of book-keeping and, consequently, a lot of ledgers. Each student's tuition, board and other expenses were noted on a term-by-term basis, along with details of their date-of-birth, parents, address etc. It is because of this meticulous detail that the ledgers are of such value today. Blackrock College Archives regularly receive queries from descendants of past students, historians, genealogists and other researchers regarding past students from

the nineteenth- and early-20th century. We are fortunate to have this invaluable and continuous historic record source relating to thousands of the college's past student body.

However, as these images show, these ledgers are showing their age now. Their bindings, in many instances, have come loose and show signs of wear and tear. Some of the ledger spines have fallen off and are now lost. Others which are bound in leather display signs of an affliction experienced by 19th century leather treatments: red rot. This is the flaking off of the leather surface, an unappealing deterioration which contaminates neighbouring volumes. Among the plans prioritised for the archives in 2022, therefore, will be the stabilisation, preservation, and conservation of these important ledgers so that their value as an important component in the College's institutional memory will endure.



Some of the oldest student account ledgers in the archives.



Two ledger entries relating to boarding students in the academic year 1892-93



# Pastoral Care Programme



As we draw the first term to a close and as we approach Christmas, the words of Fr Cormac O'Brolcháin CSSp at the 3rd Year Family Mass in early November continue to challenge us ... "be the best you can be". Blackrock College CSSp is a Spiritan School and inspired by the Holy Spirit – it is our heritage and our ethos to be the best we can be, continuing from the words of Claude Poullart des Places over 300 years ago whose vocation was to prepare missionaries but to leave God put them to work – the same aim is still to the fore of all things Rock – we all need to strive to be the best we can be.

November is a special time when we remember those who have died. With the Remembrance Tree in the College Chapel, each class was invited to write names of loved ones that have died and place them on the tree. Fr Tom Nash CSSp celebrated the College's Annual Mass of Remembrance on the traditional last Wednesday evening in November in the College Chapel. This November was particularly difficult for all in the College as our great friend and colleague, Brigid O'Byrne died on Monday 15th November. Fr Tom in his homily reminded us that life has changed not ended and that love never dies. Fr Tom reminds us that "God became the way we are through the birth of Jesus at Christmas so that we can be like God in the Resurrection of Easter" – God is with us – even in the pain of death and of parting. May Brigid and all our departed rest in peace and may they rise in eternal glory.

As November ended, the final Sunday in November was unusually the First Sunday of Advent – the beginning of the Church's New Year and we had our first of the College's Carol Services, the first always with our Past Parents. Of course, in Covid times, it was not possible to have a single Carol Service for the whole College Community to come together



Oscar Cross with his Dad at the Third Year family Mass



Patrick Clancy with his parents at the Third Year Family Mass



Father Paddy Dundion CSSp at the Carol Service



Mark Walsh with his Mum and grandmother at the TY Family Mass

and consequently we had a further four Carol Services during December!

The installation of the Web Camera in the College Chapel continues to provide a link outside the College railings, with over 100,000 online "visitors" during the year – with on average between 300 and 400 joining Fr Paddy Dundon CSSp for Daily Mass at 8.15am each school morning during term – the Web Camera has also allowed RTE to broadcast two Masses on the RTE News Channel during November and December.

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.

So many other wonderful faith-filled liturgies and occasions have been celebrated during this busy half term... Eucharistic Adoration, Transition Year Family Mass, Staff Christmas Eucharist, Reconciliation Services, and the opening of a new Prayer Room for staff and students.

As Fr Cormac suggested at the beginning of this half term, "be the best you can be" – the wish for all in our College Community is for us all to be the best we can be during Christmastide – and as Fr Cormac said at the Transition Year Family Mass with Grandparents, to be loving people at home and elsewhere, we need to cherish **LIFE** in our families [Listening ... Interior life ... Forgiving ... Excitement].

Listening and really hearing and understanding each other,  
Interior life when we take time to pray and to think,  
Forgiving all who hurt us before we go to sleep each night  
Excitement with life – do something exciting!

May we practice LIFE this Christmas! Peace and Joy to all – be the best you can be.



## Dungeons and Dragons Club



Dungeons and Dragons Club recently welcomed new members thanks to the great work done promoting the Club at the Inaugural Clubs' Day run by the Student Wellbeing Committee. There are now three tables up and running! Cillian Staunton (One of the Magnificent Dozen of new Second Year members!) stepped up to the challenge of being Dungeon Master for the first time, mentored by veteran DM Patrick Hayden (Fourth Year). The campaign has been a great success. Daniel Spencer and Fionn Whelan (Third Year), acting as co-DM's together, have orchestrated a super campaign producing the nosiest and most animated players in the Club! Storm Barra may have forced the School Building to close, but D&D continued online with a

surprise One Shot Campaign designed by Daire Casey (Third Year). Despite it only being one term into the Academic Year the club has already achieved many of the goals set out for the year. New friendships are forming, confidence and teamwork are growing and imaginations are definitely running wild..... Come down to the CADLC and see for yourselves every Wednesday afternoon.  
Artwork by Club Members:



# Guidance and Counselling



**CAO** – The 6th Year CAO talk for parents was slightly different this year; a video presentation was sent out to all parents. Due to Covid we could not meet in person. Parents are advised to contact Ms. Drew if they have any concerns. All 6th Year students did attend a similar CAO talk in person in school and each was given a CAO guide booklet.



With the CAO application deadline approaching on February 1st, any student who is unsure of the CAO or college options should contact Ms. Drew. All students will apply online at [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie) where they can avail of a reduced application fee of €30 if they apply before January 20th, 2022. The regular fee of €45 applies to applications made between January 20th and February 1st, 2022.

Any student with additional educational needs can contact Ms. Emily Ryan and any student with medical/mental health concerns 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](http://www.accesscollege.ie).

**NUI:** All exemption forms must have the students CAO number listed. Students with Irish and/or 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 who already have exemptions will have to contact the relevant bodies (NUI/TCD) to add their CAO numbers to their file if not already done.

Students with state exemptions must fill in a NUI form and post to the NUI in Merrion Sq. The address is on the top of the form.

Downloadable from <http://www.nui.ie/college/docs/exemption.pdf> this needs to be filled in and sent to NUI with your CAO number, 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 needs to be filled in and sent to TCD with supporting documents, your

CAO number 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. Contact Ms. Drew.

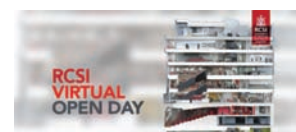


**HPAT** - Students applying for entry to Medicine in 2022 need to register for CAO to receive their CAO number so they can register for the HPAT-Ireland examination. HPAT-Ireland registration will close on January 21st 2022. HPAT-Ireland 2022 is being held via an online proctoring service on Friday, 18 and Monday, 21 February 2022. Results are released in late June. Our 6th Year students have been participating in a HPAT preparation course on Saturday mornings in the College, interested students are welcome to join.



Fifth Years attend Career Talks

RCSI is holding a virtual Open Day from 10 – 2 on January 5th 2021; any student wishing to attend must register online via the RCSI website.



**UCAS** – Approximately 15 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 26th January 2021. Any 6th Year considering making a UCAS application should indicate this to Ms Drew as soon as possible.

Students are required to submit a completed reference template form (available from Ms. Drew) along with CV to Ms. Drew. The requests must be submitted before Christmas 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.

## Sport



### SOCCER

The senior soccer team has had a busy November period. An entertaining 3-3 draw against a strong Coláiste Éanna side saw our qualification to the knock-out round of the metropolitan league. Captain Max Mooney (6th Year) and the rest of the senior soccer squad look forward to a knockout game against St. Benildus.

A new fixture for the senior soccer team is a trip of Millfield School in February. We look forward to this fixture and hope that it is a relationship that will continue for many years.



Senior Soccer Team V Marian College

### SCT

The senior rugby squad has continued to train hard and build towards the Cup Campaign post-Christmas. Whilst injuries have held back some, opportunity has arisen for others. A collective, determined attitude has shown through in the notoriously difficult autumn term set of fixtures. Well done to everyone who has stepped up and made a difference during this difficult spell. Hard-fought victories over RBAI, St Michael's and Clongowes lead the team nicely into further challenges to come against Belvedere, Leinster Clubs and St Mary's as the Christmas break approaches.

The very best of luck to the senior leadership team of captain Gus McCarthy, and vice captains Ruben Moloney and Zach Quirke (all 6th Year) as they work towards the first round of the cup against St Michael's in late January.



Eoin Power and Mikey Coleman (Sixth Year) Castle 3rds V Belvedere



'Rock U14As and U14 Bs V St Michael's College



Castle 3rds V Belvedere



Blackrock College V St Michael's at the Noel Turley Memorial Cup final in UCD





Colts V St. Andrew's



JCTV Crescent



Declan Cadden (Third Year) 2nds V RBAI



Michael Percival, Cian Sheehy and Tom Yaxley (Third Year) J4ths V St Gerard's



Jamie Hudson and Niall McCarthy (3rd Year) J2nds V RBAI



Luke Coffey (Second Year) JCTV RBAI

## CHESS

Chess Club has been kept busy over the last few weeks. There have been many online tournaments via Lichess organised by our coach Hector amongst Irish schools. In the most recent online tournament, we placed 2nd with a total of 113 points. Ronan Prior (4th Year) and Evan McCourt (5th Year) competed in the Irish Junior Chess Championships 2021 over the mid-term break. This was an online tournament. Evan placed 9th in Ireland in the U19's and Ronan Prior placed 12th in Ireland in U16's. A huge congratulations to them both.



Chess Players Concentrating and Spectating



Evan McCourt (5th Year) won 1st place in the Christmas Chess Tournament



Matthew Collins (6th Year) with Ms C. Wyse came 2nd in the Christmas Chess Tournament



John Duffy (6th Year) at the Christmas Chess Tournament

On Tuesday 30th of November we held our annual Blackrock Christmas Chess Tournament. 12 students took part over the course of two days. There was a great mix of students from all year groups. With help from our coach Hector there were 5 rounds of five-minute games with a three second increment. Opponents were carefully selected by Hector to ensure a fair tournament. Well done to everyone that took part. Huge congratulations to Evan McCourt (5th Year) on placing first, Matthew Collins (6th Year) and Theo Galligan (2nd Year) on placing third.

## GAA

### Dublin Junior Gaelic Football Schools 1st Round

#### Blackrock College 6-16 Oatlands College 3-1

Congratulations to Mark Dempsey (Captain) and the junior football team in a convincing win against Oatlands College. Right from the outset Blackrock were in control. Goals from Sam Kilroy (4th Year), Philip Guinan (4th Year), James Clancy (4th

Year), Charlie Harty (3rd Year) and Mark Dempsey (4th Year) strengthened their lead throughout the first half. The score line at half-time reflected the dominance Blackrock had leading 5-8 to 0-1.

The team never let the standards slip in the second half and continued notching on points throughout while Ethan Tracey (4th Year) added to our goal tally. Oatlands showed great character in the last quarter and their efforts were rewarded scoring three consolatory goals of their own.

With many Blackrock players absent due to injury, other players firmly grabbed the opportunity to put their hands up for selection. This game illustrated the pool of Gaelic football talent Blackrock possesses at this age group. We are now through to the Dublin schools quarter final after Christmas as Clonkeen gave us a walkover.



Thanks to Mr. O'Brien and Robert Kenny (Class of 2021) for organising and coaching the team.

UI14 A and UI14B Rugby 'Rock V Clongowes

## JCT

The second term is always a busy one for cup squads as we move closer to the main cup draw; this year has been no different. A number of high profile and high intensity friendly matches have taken their toll and the depth of the squad has been hugely tested. The collective have stood up to the challenges thrown in their path though with hard-fought victories against RBAI, Clongowes, Mary's and Crescent. Wallace and St Michael's await this side of the Christmas break, before we build through the final stages of our preparations during the holiday period thereafter. It has certainly been an excellent term for the group as a whole with great team spirit evident throughout the group. We wish all the squad well as they prepare for our Cup Campaign in the New Year.

## BADMINTON

This has been a very exciting and competitive term for all our teams. Great participation has been very encouraging throughout the term.

Our U19 Division 2 players Vincent Pang (6th Year) Scott Downes (4th Year) Tomas King (6th Year) and Mark O'Reilly (6th Year) have dominated in all three of their games. (5-1 vs St Fintan's, 4-2 vs Sutton Park, 4-2 vs Wesley College A)

The boys had impressive wins in both their single and double pairings. These games have been of high intensity, and we wish them the very best of luck in their final in February.

In Division 3, Blackrock College successfully won 3/4 of their games. (6-0 vs St Belindus College A, 6-0 vs De La Salle B, 6-0 vs Terenure, 3-3 vs King's Hospital.

These boys tallied big wins of 6-0 against their opponents. They enjoyed success both in their singles and doubles. The doubles teams of Josh Scallan and Matthew Kane (Sixth Years) and Michael Paran and Tim Jordan worked well together. They drew with King's Hospital which was a very competitive game. Hopefully the boys will go through on points and proceed to the semi-final stages.

A great effort was made by Richard Ainsworth (6th Year), Conor Reidy (6th Year), Oscar Deally (4th Year) and Gavin Bowen-O'Connor (5th Year) in their games. Temple Carrig and De La Salle A were proven to be stronger sides and despite stellar performances we missed out on qualifying for the next round.

Blackrock's Division 4 players took to the court for their final group stage encounter last Wednesday. A great display of badminton by Arnauld Binder (5th) and Christopher Nolan (5th) saw a win in their double's games for Blackrock College and a draw against Wesley College 3-3. Unfortunately, they lost one game to Gonzaga. Well done also to Shane Gallagher (6th) and Liam Demann (6th) for their continued commitment and support of the other squad members despite an end to their season.

Finally, our Blackrock U19 Division 5 team are into the final where they will play Woodbrook College, Bray in February 2022. We wish Vlad Sukhodolov (5th Year), Jamie Bourke (5th Year), Hugh Gallen (5th Year) and Shaun Loh (6th Year) the very best of luck.

Two U16 teams were entered in Division 3 and 4.

The division 3 team have won 2 games and have lost one. Our division 4 team has lost one game and there are two games remaining in this group stage.

## ATHLETICS

With almost 300 participants, the Blackrock Invitational returned on November 25th, with medal winning performances in the senior cross-country race. The junior teams met with tough competition and after a very close battle for medals, they finished in 4th and 8th place. The young Intermediate team of mostly 3rd Years ran well despite racing in this age group for the first of two years and finished in 8th place.

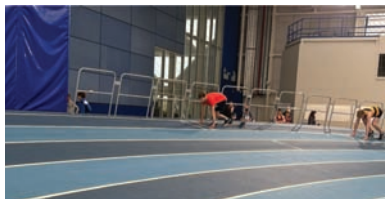
Having 8 athletes to field two teams in the senior race, Blackrock could be expected to dominate the last race of the day. However, several injuries and pull-outs meant only one team -composed of members of each of the original two teams- managed to start the race. Despite these changes, the Senior team of Finn O'Neill (5th Year), Dan Barry (5th Year), James Carroll (6th Year), and Eoin Dunne (6th Year) ran well in a competitive race. Good runs by all athletes meant that the team took home a bronze medal in 3rd place.

Cross country relay teams were as follows:

<b>Minor</b>	Padraig Matthews	Hugo Sellers	James Smyth	Ben Carey
<b>Minor</b>	Adam O'Connor	Casey Graham	Matthew Geraghty	Sam Lynch
<b>Junior</b>	Callum Downes	Jamie Browne-Lynch	Charlie White	Tom Hayden
<b>Junior</b>	Hugh Barry	Adam Kennedy	Lorcan Lawless	Cillian Staunton
<b>Intermediate</b>	Isaac Moss	Patrick Cody	Eddie Totterdale	Patrick Hayden,
<b>Senior</b>	Finn O'Neill	Dan Barry	James Carroll	Eoin Dunne



Liam Norton ( Fifth Year ) and James Carroll ( Sixth Year ) take off in the senior 200m.



Dan Barry ( Fifth Year ) fires out of the starting blocks in the intermediate 200m

## Leinster Schools Athletics Union Combined Events Competition

At the National Indoor Arena, on Saturday 16th October, a team of Blackrock students represented the school in the Leinster combined events. This event required our boys to take part in 5 different disciplines: 60m hurdles, shott putt, 200m, long jump, and 800m throughout the day. The four athletes taking part were James Carroll, Liam Norton, Dan Barry, and Cillian Staunton. (Second Year) All were long-distance specialists; however, the boys practiced each discipline in the weeks leading up to the events, and our four athletes performed well coming home with two medals from the event.



Combined Events Team

Cillian Staunton and Dan Barry worked well however were unlucky to finish outside the medals. Both Liam Norton and James Carroll (Sixth Year) earned silver and bronze medals respectively in the senior competition. As the second athletics outing of the year, it was a great start to have two of our four athletes in the medals. As the Winter cross-country season looms ahead, these athletes will focus on the long-distance training for the next few months before returning to the athletics track in late Spring 2022.

## GOLF

Golf Ireland made the decision early in the year to postpone official school

competition until January 2022 at the earliest. We have a very strong senior panel this year so it is our hope that competition can go ahead in the new year. In the meantime, the team have had two outings. An afternoon in the National Golf Academy at Carton House on November 10th helped the boys hone their skills, making use of the excellent facilities and coaching. This served the Blackrock team well in the challenge match against the junior team in Portmarnock Golf Club on November 21st. The match was seven singles matches, and conditions were sunny, but a stiff sea breeze made it very challenging. The college came out on top, winning 5-2 on the day. Notably, Ben Bracken in 6th year played against Blackrock and represented his home club, Portmarnock on the day and recorded one of their two points. The club were delighted with how the day went, and it is the hope of Portmarnock and Blackrock College that this match can become an annual contest.

Senior Panel: Ross Halpin, Jake Foley, Ben Bracken, James Heavy, Rory O'Shea, Matthew O'Brien, Sean Harty, Jacques De Patoul, Freddy Bracken.

## BASKETBALL UNDER 19

This has been an extremely busy term for the senior basketball team with a match each week since the second week of November. The term started off with a 54-48 win against an excellent Jesus and Mary Gortnor Abbey side from Mayo in the last 16 of the All-Ireland Schools Cup. Over the coming weeks we had our group games in the Basketball Ireland East-Leinster League, overcoming Marian College (75-9), St. Michaels College (44-18) and then St. Conleths College (63-19) to qualify for the East-Leinster Semi-Final. Before the semi-final of the league we had the All-Ireland Quarter Final in the cup where we overcame a strong Our Ladys and St Patricks College side from Belfast on a scoreline of 40-22.



We were then able to focus fully on the league where a fantastic 59-43 semi-final win away to St. Benildus qualifying for the East-Leinster Final v Moyle Park in the National Basketball Arena. Unfortunately in the final we fell just short against an outstanding Moyle Park side on a scoreline of 50-46. At the time of writing however we have final match before the Christmas break in an All-Ireland Semi-Final v St. Brendnas College Belmullett.



## UNDER 16

The U16 basketball team had a very active schedule in November, playing five matches in the space of three weeks. The team were excited to play their first match together against a competitive Larkin Community College. The first game of the All-Ireland Schools' Cup was close and the players did well to lead at the start, unfortunately Larkin clinched a win with a score of 51-45. This loss didn't deter the squad, however, who came back the following day for the first of the group games in the Basketball Ireland East-Leinster League. Their first game at home to Marian College resulted in a win (49-15). The team played another two intense games in their pool, ultimately winning against an excellent St. Michael's team (30-27) and a competitive St. Conleth's side (37-29). The squad qualified for the Quarter Final of the league and travelled away to Hansfield ETSS for a challenging game. Unfortunately, we lost to a well-organised and aggressive Hansfield team (47-33). The players had an impressive term playing together and can look forward to more competitive games together next term.

## Reflection

Robert Hayden, one of the foremost African American poets, was brought up in a tough neighbourhood in Detroit, paradoxically called Paradise Valley. His father worked as a manual labourer and the house was full of tension.

*'Those Winter Sundays' recalls the actions of his father who each Sunday rises early to dutifully make a fire and polish the good shoes for his son. It's only later on in life that Hayden becomes aware of the sacrifice his father, a hard-working parent, made.*

Father Tom Nash CPPs read this poem at the Christmas Staff Eucharist which reminds us that love has many guises, many hues.



Robert Hayden

## Those Winter Sundays

By Robert Hayden

Sundays too my father got up early  
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,  
then with cracked hands that ached  
from labor in the weekday weather made  
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.  
When the rooms were warm, he'd call,  
and slowly I would rise and dress,  
fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,  
who had driven out the cold  
and polished my good shoes as well.  
What did I know, what did I know  
of love's austere and lonely offices?