



The
OWL

Belfast Royal Academy
Christmas 2020



BELFAST ROYAL ACADEMY

The Belfast Royal Academy was founded in 1785 and is the oldest school in the city. Originally situated near St Anne's Cathedral, in what is now Academy Street, it was transferred to the Cliftonville Road in 1880, when the present building was erected. For more than a century, the School was named Belfast Academy. In 1888, Queen Victoria granted permission for the School to style itself Belfast Royal Academy.

It is a voluntary grammar school and its management is vested in a Board of Governors on which parents and teachers are represented, along with Governors elected by members of the Academy and nominees of the Minister of Education.

Any past pupil who attended BRA for at least three years and who is twenty one or over may, subject to the Governors, become a member of the Academy upon payment of a registration fee of £1. Applications should be made to the Bursar at the School.

Past pupils are encouraged to join the Old Boys' and Old Girls' Associations. The cost of membership and contact details are as follows:

OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

School Liaison Officer: Mrs W Graham
Chairperson: Mrs N. Johns
Vice Chairperson: Ms C. Dillon
Hon. Secretary: Mrs C. McGovern
Hon. Treasurer: Miss J. Richardson
To join the Association, please email: BRAdoldgirls@outlook.com

Registered Charity Number: NIC104739
Annual Membership.....£5.00

OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

President: Mr Trevor Sturgess
Hon. Secretary: Mr P. McKenna c/o Belfast Royal Academy,
Cliftonville Road, Belfast, BT14 6JL or email:
philmac49@gmail.com
Hon. Treasurer: Mr N. Simon, 210 Belfast Road,
Dunadry, Co. Antrim, BT41 2EY
Membership, annual dinner
and alumni enquires: alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net
London and Edinburgh dinner
enquires: doc_malone2004@yahoo.co.uk

Life Membership.....Old Boys' Committee has suspended membership fees.
Membership (School Leaver)First year after leaving is free.

The Owl Team 2020

Editor: Ms Christie

Photographs: Mrs Graydon

The Owl Team: Zara Meadows, Rowan Moore, Alexandra Morgan and Adam Martin

*Thanks to: Mrs Woods, Miss Herron, Ms McBeth, Ms McMullan, Miss Tinman,
Mr. Coulter, Mrs Kerr, Mrs Patterson, Jim Carolan, Eddie McCamley, Caroline Dillon,
Philip McKenna and everyone that contributed articles this year*



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

- Ms. C.R. Dillon, B.A. (Warden)
- Mr. N.W. Beggs
- Dr. A.A.W. Bell, B.Sc., B.Agr.Sc.
- Dr. K.M. Bill, M.B. Ch.B., F.C.A.I., F.R.C.A., F.F.I.C.M.
- Mr. M. L. Blake, LL.B., B.L.; Attorney at Law
- Mrs. K.L. Burns, B.A.
- Mrs. A. Clements, B.A.
- Ms. J. C Cornell, A.B., M.A., M.F.A.
- Dr. J.A. Hill, F.R.Eng., B.Sc., Hon. D.Sc., C.Eng., F.I.C.E., F.I.StructE.
- Mr. K.A. Knox, M.Sc.
- Mrs. C. Latham, B.Ed., M.Sc., P.Q.H.
- Mr. B.W. McCormack, B.Sc. (Econ) F.C.A.
- Mrs. G.E. McGaughey, LL.B., Cert in Professional Legal Studies
- Mrs. G. McQuiston, B.Ed.
- Mr. B.D. Monroe, B.Sc.(Accts), M.Acct., F.C.A.
- Prof. J. A. I. Montgomery, B.A., Ph.D., MISTD FRSA
- Mr. M. Orr, Q.C., S.C.
- Mr. S.B. Orr, LL.B.
- Mr. J.M. Patterson, B.Sc.(Econ.), M.S.Sc., D.C.G.
- Mr. D.E. Porter, M.Sc., C.Eng., M.I.C.E., M.C.I.H.T., M.C.I.W.E.M.
- Mrs C. E. Rowan, B.Sc.(Management)
- Mr. G.R. Simon, F.R.I.C.S.
- Mr. J.D. Twinem, B.A., D.I.S. Pg.Cert., Pg.Dip., M.Sc., M.Inst.L.M., M.C.G.I.
- Mr. D.G. Walsh, B.Sc., M.B.A., C.Eng., M.I.M.E.
- Mr. S.J.S. Warke, A.C.I.I., Dip P.F.S., T.E.P. (Hon. Treasurer)
- Mr. G.W. Watt, M.A.
- Mrs. J. Weir, B.Sc., C.Math., M.I.M.A. (Hon. Secretary)
- Mrs. H. Woods, B.Sc., B.Ed., P.Q.H. (N.I.) (Principal - Non-voting member)

MEMBERS OF STAFF

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Vice Principals
- Senior Teachers
- Mrs. H. Woods, B.Sc., B.Ed., P.Q.H. (N.I.)
- Dr. G. J. N. Brown, B.A., Ph.D.
- Mr. M. T. Wilson, B.Sc., P.Q.H. (N.I.)
- Ms. W. E. Graham, B.A., M.A., P.Q.H. (N.I.)
- Mr. M. C. W. Harte, B.A.
- Mr. P. Dorman, B.Th.
- Mr. T. Hughes, M.Sc.

HEADS OF DEPARTMENT

- ART AND DESIGN
- BUSINESS STUDIES
- BIOLOGY
- CAREERS
- CHEMISTRY
- ENGLISH
- GEOGRAPHY
- HISTORY
- COMPUTING/ DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY
- MATHEMATICS
- MODERN & CLASSICAL LANGUAGES
- MUSIC
- P.E. AND GAMES
- PHYSICS
- RELIGIOUS STUDIES
- TECHNOLOGY
- Mrs. P. Kerr, B.A., A.T.D., M.Ed.
- Mrs. L. Patterson, B.A. (Acting)
- Mrs. G. McQuiston, B.Ed.
- Dr. A. A. W. Bell, B.Sc., B.Agr.Sc., Ph.D.
- Ms. J. R. Adams, B.Ed.
- Dr. B. T. McMurray, B.Sc., Ph.D., M.R.S.C.
- Mr. W. J. W. Spence, B.Ed., M.A.
- Mr. C. A. Stewart, B.Sc.
- Dr. J. A. McCombe, B.A., Ph.D.
- Mrs. A. O'Neill, B.Sc., M.B.A.
- Mr. S. W. Graham, M.A.
- Miss. K.L. Williams, B.A.
- Ms. M. McMullan, M.A., Mus.B., L.T.C.L., A.L.C.M.
- Mr. W.I. McGonigle, B.Ed.
- Mr. R. Budden, M.Sc.
- Mr. P. J. Martin, B.Ed.
- Mr. K. Lunn, B.Ed.

SENIOR SUBJECT TEACHERS

- CLASSICS
- DRAMA AND THEATRE STUDIES
- ECONOMICS
- GERMAN
- GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
- HOME ECONOMICS
- LEARNING FOR LIFE AND WORK
- PHYSICAL EDUCATION
- SOCIOLOGY
- SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
- Mrs. J. McGowan, M.A.
- Miss. S. Tinman, B.A.
- Mr. J. M. Patterson, B.Sc.(Econ.), M.S.Sc., D.C.G.
- Miss. R. McCay, M.A.
- Ms. K. S. Barnett, M.A.
- Mrs. R. Morrison, B.A.
- Mrs. J. Robb, B.Sc.
- Mrs. N. S. Nicholl, B.A.
- Mrs. J. Robb, B.Sc.
- Ms. D. Keenan, M.Sc.



KEY STAGE LEADERS

Key Stage 3	Mrs. K. McIntyre, B.Sc.
Key Stage 4	Ms. S. R. Ardis, B.Sc.
Key Stage 5	Mr. N. Irwin, B.Ed.

HEADS OF YEAR

FORM I	Mrs. G. C. Morris, B.Ed. Mr. P. T. Stretton, B.Ed
FORM II	Mrs. J. C. McNally, B.Sc. PGDip. Mr. M. J. Neill, M.Sc.
FORM III	Miss. H. E. Watson, B.A. Mr. C. R. A. McCarey, B.Sc.
FORM IV	Miss. K. E. Brady, B.Sc. Ms. K. S. Barnett, M.A.
FORM V	Ms. L. Craig, B.A. Mr. P. Porter, B.A., B.D., H.Dip Past. Theol., P.Q.H (N.I.)
FORM LVI	Mrs. R. Morrison, B.A. Mr. D. J. Creighton, B.Sc
FORM MVI	Mrs. L. I. Nicholl, B.Sc. Mr. D. D. Morrison, M.Sc.

CAREERS ADVISERS

Ms. J. R. Adams, B.Ed.	Mr. S. B. Murphy, B.Ed.
------------------------	-------------------------

GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Dr. C. Adair, Ph.D.,	Ms. S. M. McIlhatton, B.Eng.
Mrs. J. C. Bell, B.Sc.	Mrs. S McIlwaine, B.Ed.
Mrs. K. A. Black, B.A.	Mr. A. McKillen, B.Sc.
Dr. C. Burns, B.Sc., Ph.D., M.R.S.C.	Ms. A. McMillen, M.Sci.
Miss V. Carson, M.A., A.L.C.M.	Mrs. H. Miller, B.A.
Mrs. R. Chambers, B.A.	Dr. O. Mort, B.A., Ph.D.
Ms. R. Christie, B.A.	Mrs. D. M. Nicholl, B.A.
Ms. R Corish, B.Sc.	Mrs. R. L. O'Donnell, B.A., Dip. A.D., A.T.D.
Mrs. J. M. Cleland, B.Sc.	Mr. R. Patterson, M.Sc.
Dr. D. Currie, B.Sc., M.Sc., Ph.D.	Mrs. C. Prior, B.Mus.
Mr. G. J. Forde, B.Mus.	Mrs. A. M. Reynolds, B.Sc.
Mrs. F. A. Gilmore, B.Sc.	
Mr. P.D. Rowntree, B.Ed.	Mrs. J. Shaw, B.Sc.
Miss E. Gormley, B.Sc.	Mrs. M. C. Sheeran, B.A.
Mrs. S. Graydon, B.Ed.	Dr. J. C. Shiels B.Sc., Ph.D.

Mrs C.E.A. Hare, B.A.
Mrs. N. Henry, B.Sc.
Miss J. Herron, M.A.
Mrs. C. A. Hughes, B.Sc.
Mr. J. G. McAleer, B.Sc.
Ms. T. McBeth, M.A.
Mrs. G. McCadden, Dip. A.D., A.T.D.
Mrs. S. B. McCoy, B.A.

Mrs. J. Smyth, B.A.
Dr. S. C. Springer, M.Sci., Ph.D.
Mrs. H. Tate, B.A.
Mrs. A. P. Terek, B.Sc.
Miss. V.A.D. Thompson, B.A.
Ms. R. C. Wallace, B.A.
Mrs. M. N. Wilson, B.A.

PREPARATORY DEPARTMENT

Principal, Mr. R. Coulter, M.Ed.

Mrs. Sarah Bell, B.A., P.G.C.E.
Mrs. J. Chapman, B.Ed., P.G.Dip, A.T.S.
Miss. R. Corish, B.Sc.
Mr. P. J. Ingram, B.Ed., M.Sc.

Mrs. J. Lawther, B.Ed.
Mrs. P. Lennon, B.Ed.
Miss N. Friel, B. Ed.
Mrs. E. Wilson, B.Ed.

GRAMMAR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Head of Finance & Corporate Services
Finance Supervisor
Part-time Principal's P.A.
Part-time Senior Administrator/P.A.
Part-time Finance & General Admin
Part-time Finance Administrator
Part-time Finance Administrator
Part-time Librarian
Part-time Librarian

Mr. S. J. Burrows, B.Sc., F.C.C.A.
Mrs. H. McClean, B.A., F.C.A.
Ms. J. Morton
Miss G. Boyd, B.A.
Ms. H. Cathcart, B.Sc.
Mrs. L. Hogg, B.A.
Mrs. T. Crozier
Mrs. T. Corcoran, B.A. PG.Dip. I.M.
Miss E. McAtamney, B.A. PG.Dip. L.I.M.,
M.Sc.

I.C.T. Manager
General Office Manager
Telephonist / Receptionist
General Office Administrator
School Administrator & Events
Co-ordinator & Part-time Principal's P.A.

Mr. J. R. Cleland, B.Sc.
Ms. P. Ferguson
Mrs. A. Foy
Miss C. Reid
Mrs. K. Holland

ANCILLARY STAFF

Laboratory Assistants

Mrs. D. Beattie
Mrs. D. Younge, B.Sc.
Mrs. A. Faulkner, Fd.Sc.
Mr. M. McCreight
Mrs. L. Atkins

Technology & Design Technician
Art & Crafts Technician



Tutor of Arabic Art, Culture and Language
 School Matron
 Study Supervisor
 Study Supervisor
 Part-time Study Supervisor
 Estates Manager
 Grounds Maintenance Supervisor
 Swimming Pool Manager/Instructor
 Maintenance Officer
 Bus Driver
 Bus Driver
 Bus Driver/ Estates Assistant
 Janitor

Mr. K. Berakdar
 Miss N. Ritchie, B.Sc.
 Miss P. Maxwell
 Mrs. S. Griffiths, B.A., P.G.C.E
 Mrs. L. Tucker
 Mrs. J. Lambert, B.Sc., Dip.AAS., RIBA
 Mr. M. A. Gaw, B.Tech.
 Ms. S. Alexander B.Sc.
 Mr. P. McCartney
 Mr. W. Dunn
 Mr. F. McCluskey
 Mr. I. Stinson
 Mr. K. Hogg
 Mr. D. McKee
 Mr. J. Craig
 Mrs. A. Thompson
 Miss S. Astl
 Ms. Y. Colin
 Miss M. Aguilar Martinez
 Mrs. M. Bradley
 Miss R. Cassidy

Supervisory Assistant
 Modern Languages Assistants

Cleaning Operatives

CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

Miss G. Ashe
 Mrs. S. Armstrong Ms. O. McCann
 Mrs. H. Blair
 Mr. D. R. J. Calvert Mr. E. Purcell, B.Sc.
 Mrs. I. Campbell
 Ms. C. Colwell, B.A., P.G. Dip., P.G.C.E.
 Mrs. G. Evrard
 Mr. D.R.D. Graham, B.A., P.G.D.E.
 Mrs. G. Hanna, B.A., P.G.C.E.
 Mr. J. Hawkey
 Mrs. C. Henderson
 Mrs. P. Hill
 Mrs. F. Holley, B.A.Ed.
 Miss P. Hull
 Mrs. S. Kennedy, B.Ed.
 Mrs. E. Leinster, B.A., P.G.C.E.

Mrs. L. Lyons
 Miss E. McAtamney, B.A. PG.Dip. L.I.M.,
 M.Sc.
 Mrs. K. Millin, B.Sc., P.G.C.E.
 Mrs. O. Purcell
 Mrs. A. Rea, B.A., P.G.C.E., B.A.
 Mrs. J. Reid
 Mr. G. Rice
 Miss C. Sirbu, M.A.
 Mrs. K. Tepe
 Mrs. D. Townsend
 Mrs. R. Tsang, B.A.
 Miss G. Ward, B.A., M.A.
 Mrs. H. Watson, B.Sc.
 Mrs. N. Watson
 Miss O. York, BA

**PREPARATORY DEPARTMENT
 PRE-PREPARATORY AND DAYCARE**

ANCILLARY STAFF

Secretary	Mrs. F. Gouk, M.A.
Classroom/After School Club Assistant	Miss H.E. Crossen, B.A., M.A., P.G.C.E.
Pre-Preparatory Group Assistant	Mrs. L. Kyle
Building Supervisor	Mr. R. Crawford
Cook	Mrs. L. Johnston
Part-time Catering Assistant	Mrs. M. McEwan
Classroom Assistant	Miss L. Mitchell
Part-time Classroom Assistant	Mrs. A. Millar

PERIPATETIC MUSIC TUTORS

Maebh Martin
 Colin Boyd
 Amy Fitzsimons
 Gerry McAtasney
 Georgina McChesney
 Rachel McGinley
 Leslie Neish
 Tammy Surginor (Neill)
 Lauren Bingham



Contents

Valete.....9
Obituaries.....16
Lockdown 202018
Distribution of Prizes25
School Societies33
Music in School49
Drama in School54
School Games58
Trips and Events86
Literary Contributions96
Art in School107
Ben Madigan Preparatory School112
Former Pupils’ News121
Births, Marriages and Deaths131

Valete

TREVOR BALDWIN



Trevor Baldwin started with us at the Academy in 1986. In his own education, he was a past Head Boy of Belfast High School, obtained a Masters in Zoology at The Queen’s University, Belfast and gained his teaching qualification at the Stranmillis College of Education where he trained as a teacher of Biology with Science. His career started in Antrim Grammar School but after three years their loss was our gain as he took up the offer to become one of the Academy teaching staff.

Trevor is a teacher of impeccable standards. Early in his career the then Headmaster, W. Sillery, noted his “flawless attendance record and his exemplary standards and attitudes” adding that he was, “a most conscientious, capable and thorough teacher of Ordinary and Advanced Level Biology”. Since when was Biology “ordinary”! Over the years of his career, these attitudes and standards never faulted and three more Principals, Mr Young, Mr Dickson and Mrs Woods, noted similar attributes in the character of Trevor and how he taught and led in BRA.

Pupils will also remember these standards but they will know another Trevor. With classes

who could be trusted and especially senior class, a devious, quick humoured, fun-loving teacher would emerge as the academic year progressed. Every once in a while, tales of pranks would emerge from BB1 and with them a revealing of whole man of TB. His teaching was non-confrontational but expectant of the high standards of conduct that he himself held to.

Early in his career, he committed to the full educational experience of young people at BRA and because of his leadership capacity, he gravitated towards positions of responsibility within the school. He regularly provided support to those applying for Oxford and Cambridge, led the teaching of Health Education, was made Deputy Senior Teacher and Form Master and in 2001 was nominated as a Teacher Governor on the Board of Governors; a position he held for eight years. In 2005, he was promoted to Senior Teacher and remained a valued member of the Senior Leadership team until he decided to complete his teaching career focusing solely on his own classroom teaching. The manner in which Trevor chose to complete his teaching career says much about where his heart lies. In all he did, his primary concern was what was best for the pupils of BRA and so he remained devoted to them throughout.

Trevor has many personal interests and passions. Some he shared with school and others he did not; some involve excellence in precision, others are of historical interest and centre around a connoisseurial appreciation of Scotch and Bushmills whisky! One passion he did share with the Academy, however, was his deep and committed interest in the Air Training Corps Squadron. For many years, he led as Commanding Officer of the ATC benefiting the skills and character of all those who enlisted. We know from personal testimony, the lasting legacy of his

involvement in this extra-curricular work. Trevor also was part of our Global Opportunities work and I personally had the privilege of spending time with Trevor in Malawi. It was a pleasure to see his interaction with the team members and the affection his travel group showed to him during the trip. It confirmed all that I knew about him as a team leader and team builder.

On the announcement of Trevor's retirement, we were all sad but we knew he had many other paths to explore. Some will take him over the hills of Carrickfergus and on some he will be accompanied by his growing number of grandchildren. We know that Liz will love having Trevor around during the day and his four children will be delighted to see more of their dad but one thing is certain, the grandchildren will just be thrilled that they can see their grandpa just about anytime they want.

Trevor, we miss you terribly in the Biology department and our school has lost one of its stalwarts. You were one of the most effective leaders in our school and yet you led without wanting attention or even expecting recognition. In that, is the true fabric of Mr Trevor Baldwin, the man who did what needed to be done and who always did the right thing, not for public praise or self-promotion but because the task was his to do and he did it, perfectly. Thank you Trevor for your impeccable service and contributions to the Biology Department and to the wider school community.

Thank you for your wisdom, your advice and thank you for your humour. Enjoy the trails and don't miss what you go looking for. We will all look forward to you visiting us in the Bruce and we especially look forward to the proper retirement farewell that we will not let Covid-19 rob you of! May God bless this new and exciting time of your life.

A.B.

HEATHER FERRIS

Heather joined the School in 2016 as a classroom assistant having worked as a teacher



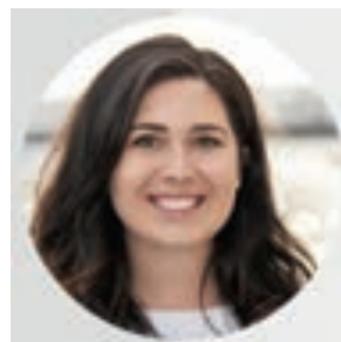
of all three sciences for 28 years in her previous teaching career.

Heather, who has had a long association with BRA was a very calm presence in and around the Learning Support Department who gladly shared her knowledge and expertise with pupils and staff alike. She gave wholeheartedly to both the pastoral care and academic achievement of pupils and it will be hard to replace her.

Heather has taken an opportunity to return to her first love of teaching, providing small group support for those who have been out of school long term. We wish her well in this role.

S.B.

ORLA GLEN



Orla arrived at the School in August 2019 from Victoria in Canada. As a qualified teacher, her skills were very useful in school. Orla brought a strong, caring professionalism to her role and her bright personality quickly endeared her to all of the staff.

Orla's stay was unfortunately cut short by the closure of the School in March 2020. She agonised over the decision to return home however with borders closing she was left with no choice.

With the Canadian border closed, Orla spent the summer traveling her home province, British Columbia. She says that whilst school looks a little different this September she is excited to be back in the classroom working as a primary teacher.

Orla made a big impression on all she came into contact with in the School and she is already missed by many. We wish her well in the future and hope that one day she can return to BRA.

S.B.

CHRIS HUBBLE



Chris joined the School in September 2019 as a classroom assistant after completing his degree in History and Sociology at Queens University Belfast in June 2019. Chris had a love for poetry however he also excelled in teaching maths and science subjects to those pupils who were struggling in these areas. Chris was patient and innovative when working with pupils and his efforts yielded many positive results.

His stay at the School was unfortunately cut short due to the impact of COVID-19, although he did return for a short while in June to work with the pupils that were in school, and at the end of the school year Chris decided to return to England where he is hoping to start a teaching programme. We wish all the best with

this endeavour and thank him for his efforts in the last school year.

S.B.

ELISABETH HULL



Elisabeth Hull was appointed Bursar of Belfast Royal Academy in September 2001 and served the School in this position for 18 years.

As Bursar, Elisabeth had responsibility for School Finances. Using the experience, she had gained in private practice, Elisabeth was able to control the School Finances in a prudent and commercial way with her attention to detail being exemplary. This benefited the School when setting budgets, funding new projects and improving the School capital account.

Elisabeth also had responsibility for the School Estate comprising three separate sites at Cliftonville Road, Castle Grounds and Roughfort playing fields. Under her direction the School completed building extensions and refurbishments totalling many millions of pounds. Examples of recent Building Contracts successfully completed include re-development and expansion of Music, Home Economics and Dining facilities, a new Lower Sixth Form Centre, re-placement stonework to the Crombie rear elevation and tower and a new all-weather hockey pitch at Roughfort.

It has been a privilege to have worked closely with Elisabeth during her full period as Bursar and to witness her ability and her total commitment to Belfast Royal Academy.

We wish her every good fortune for the future as she returns to her alma mater, Belfast High School in the position of Bursar.

G.R.S.

ROLAND JAMISON



Roland Jamison began teaching at the Academy 38 years ago but his footsteps have made their way around Belfast Royal Academy since 1971. As a past pupil of our school he has been no stranger to these hallways. A brief break in his time here came when he studied Zoology at The Queen's University, Belfast from 1977 – 1981 and when, for one year, he attended the Stranmillis College of Education to obtain his teaching qualification in Biology with Physics. In 1982, he was welcomed back as a young, wide-eyed, enthusiastic teacher who quickly became involved in a host of positions across the school.

His ability to relate to people, to find creative solutions and to think outside the box, meant that he naturally displayed relational leadership attributes which were underpinned by pragmatism. He was Chairman of the Staffroom Committee, Chairman of the Catering Committee, Rugby Coach, Form Teacher, House Master, he led the school community service outreach, was an enthusiastic and valuable teacher member of the Senior Choir and Orchestra, he led Save the Children outreach as well as the Drama Society and during lunch in BB3, he started and ran the War Gaming Society through which many pupils found hours of fun and security.

His contributions and huge potential were recognised early in his career and he was

quickly promoted to the Senior Leadership Team of the Academy. When someone gives so much to an institution such as this, the two become one and so the very nature of our school has been shaped by Roly and I know that the Academy has shaped him. We are the better for his giving and for his deep passion to see the Academy be the best it can be. His convictions about the education of young people, spoke of truths often forgotten; that honesty and integrity should be part of every conversation, every relationship and that our subject specifications should be the starting point for learning, not the end, always encouraging the natural flow of knowledge.

Roly held true to his moral beliefs and educated students as young adults and in a manner which benefited them hugely as they moved on with their lives beyond school. In 1991, his dynamism took him to Madison High School in Portland, Oregon as part of the Fulbright Exchange Programme. The lessons about teaching and learning that Roly shared between our schools in this pioneering programme, were early foundations of work recognised today by many educational research papers which promote the sharing of best practice between schools across the globe.

His care for pupils was central to all that he did as he went the second, third and fifteenth mile to provide decades of opportunities to our pupils. Many of these opportunities went unseen and were realised only by those who benefited, however, that was not the case for his stage productions! The lights, the cameras, the sets, the sound, the drama! Stage production upon stage production tell of a man passionately driven to put on a show. His infectious directing lifted the voice of even the quietest pupil, so that packed halls could be transported to different times and places as he staged his version of many popular productions.

On occasion he even dared to take audiences beyond the typical and to visit the imagination of his own creations. Only Fiona and the boys, Scott, Jamie and Robbie, will know of the hours spent writing and scripting the many stage productions he led. From Smike to

Oliver and from Buggy Malone to Mary Poppins, Roly showed just how unique and gifted he is. Over his career, Roly produced 17 plays, 5 of which were written by him. He was no stranger to set building either, completing the sets of 47 plays. Belfast Royal Academy owes him a great debt for the hours spent staging these productions.

A man of such talent with his reputation in the performing arts is bound to be recognised further afield and beyond the school assembly hall. In 1997, Business in the Community did just that and they seconded Roly under the sponsorship of the Department of Education and as part of the Millennium Celebration of Education. He was tasked with the conceptualising, producing and project managing the showcase event, "Challenge 21" at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast.

The deeper purpose of this project was to close the gap between schools and business in the hope of encouraging partnerships to form whilst celebrating all that was good about education in Northern Ireland. Over 700 young people from 45 different schools took part and it was such a success that he was asked to extend the project throughout ROI in the subsequent year. This extended project involved some 1700 young people from 55 schools in a performance entitled, "Doors – Celebrating Lifelong Learning". This is the capacity of Roland Jamison and he thrives on work such as this.

Luckily for us, he returned to BRA and continued to pour out his skill, enthusiasm and talent in leading the school and in leading his classroom. Since his retirement, we miss so much of his input around the school and especially in Biology and even more especially when new life needs to be breathed into some piece of equipment that has not worked in years! Pupils can no longer witness the spectacle of Roly doing a handstand on the front bench whilst drinking a glass of water, just to show how peristalsis works! This is, in short, the essence of what we have now lost; the character who is RJ.

I find it hard to capture in words how Roly has shaped BRA. Our school cares about its staff, pupils and its role in the community of north Belfast and Roly was the personification of this. Always welcoming to visitors or colleagues from other schools, always looking out for the person standing alone at break time, always pushing himself to have the new piece of technology and then having the skills to actually use it to promote the school, which he did in over 150 school promotional videos. We miss all that he offered, even the drone crashes!

His time at the Academy challenges us all to be people who look outward and who ask the bigger questions in life. Roly, thank you for all you have given to the Academy and for challenging, stretching and entertaining the thousands of biologists who entered BB2 and the tens of thousands who knew your work outside of it. As the longest serving teacher to retire this year, I am in no doubt that you Roly, still with the youthfulness of heart reminiscent of the Academy boy who first entered the Crombie in 1971, will have a full, exciting and tremendously interesting retirement. May God bless you in this time and please visit us soon to tell of all the amazing things you are doing.

A.B.

SORCHA LAVERY



Sorcha joined the School in September 2019 having worked in a variety of different educational settings previously. Sorcha has an outgoing, cheerful personality and worked well with the pupils.

Like a number of the other classroom assistants, Sorcha's stay at the School was

unfortunately cut short due to the impact of COVID-19 in 2020, however her work inspired Sorcha to enter the teaching profession and she currently studying for her PGCE.

Sorcha has continued to help the Learning Support team out and Ben Madigan when she has been available but her studies have now taken precedence. We wish her well in the future and hope that she succeeds in achieving her ambitions.

S.B.

CATHY LEONARD



A former pupil of Dominican College, Cathy graduated from Queen's University with a BSc (Hons) in Pharmacy. She completed her PGCE also at Queen's University and was appointed to the staff of the Academy in 2019 as temporary teacher of Chemistry. During this time, she proved herself to be an outstanding classroom practitioner with a passion for teaching Chemistry across all ages.

In her classroom she endeavoured to be always polite, courteous and held herself to the highest standards whilst embracing innovation in her teaching strategies. She expected similarly high standards from her students and so helped them develop and mature in their learning of Chemistry but also in themselves as young people. Cathy moved on to join Down High to teach Chemistry and we wish her every success in this and in her future career.

B.M.M.

NUALA LOUGHRAN



Nuala joined the School in December 2011 from St. Malachy's College where she had also worked as the School Matron for the previous six years. Nuala's previous 15 years nursing experience, which was also spent working with children, was a great base for her and she used all of her experience to help the pupils in BRA with a vast array of issues on a day to day basis.

Over the years, Nuala has played a key role in the experience that thousands of BRA pupils have enjoyed, however, Nuala has also been very involved with the rest of the staff. Matron has a key role within the School working with pupils, teachers and all other staff.

Nuala had a very engaging personality and made the most of the opportunities for social interaction within the School. It was obvious that Nuala really enjoyed her job. Towards the end of her time with BRA, Nuala got the chance to work alongside her daughter Holly which I know she really enjoyed.

Unfortunately, as with a lot of staff this year, Nuala's departure from the School did not afford the chance for a proper send-off. Nuala is already enjoying her retirement. She is spending a lot of time on the beach and loving having her grandson Theo up for holidays and weekends. She goes swimming in the sea every morning with a group of women called "The Sea Birds" and is hoping to do some voluntary work for The Olive Branch and help with fundraising. They are a group supporting people with mental health problems. We wish Nuala all the best in her retirement and none of us doubt she will enjoy herself.

S.B.

CHRIS YATES



Chris Yeates joined the School in August 2019 as a 6th. Form Study Supervisor after a long career in banking and insurance. Chris fitted right in to the BRA 'way' very quickly. He was respected by students for his firm but fair manner, and he was liked by all of the staff he came into contact with.

Chris loved sport, especially cricket, and was an exceptional player. He was to have helped in the coaching of the BRA boys, but the closure of the School for the summer term due to COVID-19 prevented him from having any significant opportunity to work with the teams.

During the summer, an opportunity arose back in the banking world which was too good to turn down and he is now working as a business consultant with financial organisations. He is self-employed which provides him with plenty of flexibility to spend some time on the golf course. We wish him well in the future.

S.B.



Obituaries

PAUL CUPPLES



Paul Cupples graduated in 1979 from Queen's University with a Computer Science degree, but it was as a teacher of Mathematics that he was appointed to Belfast Royal Academy. That was the year before the Sinclair ZX 80 came into our homes. Back then in school, we had to depend on log tables, slide rules and the odd Hewlett Packard calculator. A network management team was formed and Paul, along with Noel Moore and Norman McLeod oversaw the introduction of computers into the Academy, with standalone and later networked BBC Microcomputers and R M Nimbus machines making their appearance.

It was Paul who oversaw the establishment of Computing and ICT in the school,

introducing A Level Computing in 1996 and A Level ICT in 1999 before becoming Head of the ICT and Computing Department in 2002. By its very nature, this subject area, more than any other, experienced change. Paul's involvement as an assistant examiner for the specification and his role as chairman of the Computer Studies Panel at Queen's University meant that he was not only aware of these changes, but had influence in the evolution of the subject in Northern Ireland. Annual trips to Research Machines conferences in England served to keep Paul abreast of developments in computer hardware. He taught many pupils who went on to have careers in IT and also established links with the industry and with organisations such as "Bring I.T. On".

Running the I.T. Department not only involved work within the department, but also organising the numerous other members of staff who had taken on responsibility for teaching Microsoft Office applications delivering the "Using ICT" element of the Key Stage 3 curriculum. Fortunately, Paul was highly organised.

Despite running his department, Paul was much involved in the extra-curricular life of the school. He would spend Wednesday afternoons supervising the fitness suite or at the pool and was a skills section assessor for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. The I.T. suite proved very popular when Paul hosted the "2002 World Cup

Breakfast Club" in front of his new interactive whiteboard. He somehow managed to get a place on the February half-term Swedish exchange in 2012.

Along with his wife Jessie, who is a qualified nurse, Paul travelled with the school to Malawi on a number of occasions. In 2010 he led the staff team of 10 on a 12-day mission to Mulanje Mission on a building project in the mission school. This made a lasting impact not only on the school in Mulanje, but also on the members of staff involved. The Cupples were truly an Academy family, since Paul's 5 children also attended BRA.

Paul suffered a stroke in 2012, causing him to retire on medical grounds in 2014. However, it was not to be a long and happy retirement since he was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease in 2017. Despite this, Paul maintained his happy disposition and could regularly be seen supporting the Ulster rugby team at the Kingspan Stadium in his motorised wheelchair. He was passionate about helping others and, despite his illness, seized the opportunity to do this through his work for Christians Against Poverty. Paul's Christian faith shone through his life in school and sustained him throughout his illness.

N.E.M.

GEORGE MCCONNELL



George McConnell was recruited to the staff in 1957 and thereafter made his career in the school. He became a successful schoolmaster and an invaluable addition to the life of the Academy.

For many former pupils, Mr McConnell will be synonymous with the teaching of Economics, but at the beginning of his career he taught History and English, and his abiding interest in the former remained with him for the rest of his life. Away from the classroom, he also made an impressive contribution to the development of generations of young people.

In cooperation with Harry Davies, John Reid and David Carruthers, he became involved in the training of boys in swimming, diving and life-saving. In those early days there was no school swimming-pool and the club practised in the Falls Baths and in the Grove Swimming Pool on the Shore Road.

In the 1960s his abundant energy found an outlet in the Boy Scout movement, which then had a greater presence in schools than it has today.

That indispensable record of school, and indeed, social life, the *Owl*, reveals how active Mr McConnell was in the Debating Society. A noted controversialist himself, his presence helped sustain the popular meetings within the school, and he helped organise as well as assisted in the transport of debaters to the venues for the excellent series of Inter-School competitions.

As the Academy expanded in the 1960s and 1970s Mr McConnell contributed significantly to the widening of the curriculum by introducing Economics and Political Studies as Sixth Form subjects. In subsequent years the subjects became increasingly popular options for those pupils who demonstrated an interest in as well as an aptitude for these disciplines. As

Senior Master George was responsible for the associated development of the School Library, and as Chair of the Library Committee he dramatically expanded the range of material available to the pupils, especially in the fields of Politics, History, Economics, and the History of Science – all subjects in which he himself had a deep and reflective interest. As one of the most erudite members of staff his conversation enlivened many staffrooms discussions. He and his wife Alison, who also taught at the Academy, and who predeceased him, were very generous hosts and often held convivial gatherings for their colleagues at the end of the Christmas term.

George McConnell was proud of his parents’ modest background in the Woodvale District of North Belfast, and grateful for the sacrifices they had made to ensure that he, his two brothers and his sister had access to the best possible educational opportunities available to them. He was aware that Academy pupils came from a variety of social and economic backgrounds, and his enthusiasm for reading was not only a personal pleasure, but also, he believed, a route by which young people from families of limited means could advance themselves. He could – and often did – quote the Scriptures as often as he did Karl Marx or John Maynard Keynes, because the basic text of his life’s work was from the Book of Proverbs: *“Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get Wisdom.”*

E.M.C.

Extract from George McConnell’s eulogy

My dad became a teacher at Belfast Royal Academy in 1957 and taught there for forty years: initially English and History and, subsequently, Economics. He developed a rapport with his sixth form classes, and we

have lost count of the numerous former pupils who have kept in touch or spoken fondly of him – indeed he was recently mentioned in in the *Belfast Telegraph* by Angela Magowan, a former pupil who is now head of the CBI in Northern Ireland.

We were touched to hear that the school flew its flag at half mast in honour of our father. My dad retired from teaching in 1997 and this allowed him to devote more time to the three pursuits he favoured most: reading, gardening and playing Bridge.

My sister and I would especially like to thank a number of people here today. Ken and Lynn Hawtin, Eddie McCamley, Stephen Morrow, Joan McCoy and Patsy Morelli, Penny Beggs, Sarah Duncan and the Jacobs family.



The School officially closed for Forms I – MVI on Monday 23rd March 2020 owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Summer 2020 GCSE and A-Level examinations were cancelled. During the closure, the School continued to support the community by supervising the children of key workers.

Whilst School was closed, staff managed to find many ways to keep in touch with and to support pupils and each other.

On return to school, life was very different. A new mask policy was introduced. Pupils were encouraged to wear a face mask to prevent the spread of the virus. A new one-way system was also introduced to help keep pupils and staff safe.



SPANISH COOKING LESSONS



One way that contact was maintained over the lockdown that forced schools to shut and saw teachers and students alike staying at home with their families was through the Spanish cooking lessons that took place for students. Not only an educational activity, but also an enjoyable one that would have allowed the students involved to gain new skills and perfect their new meals.

Rowan Moore

PERIPATETIC MUSIC LESSONS



The Music Department were also heavily involved in maintaining contact over lockdown with their pupils. The music teachers held peripatetic music lessons over Zoom when the school unexpectedly shut on the 23rd March 2020. This allowed the music students in BRA to continue their music lessons so that their progress was not

disrupted. Students who had their grades coming up could make steady progress and to work towards their goal of achieving these musical grades. Lessons continued once the lockdown restrictions began to be lifted in May and, for some, into the summer months.

Rowan Moore

PASTORAL MESSAGES



Over lockdown it was clear that the pupils of BRA missed the teaching staff and that this feeling was reciprocated. Although involved in online lessons, with some years doing Zoom lessons, it was not the same as being in a classroom. Many things cannot be translated through a screen and, although it was highly beneficial to have these lessons, many things were missed. There is only so much personality that you can pick up through a screen. A lesson on your own, in front of a computer screen, will never amount to face to face interaction in a class room with a teacher and class that you have grasped the dynamic of and were missing during lockdown.

While all this digital learning was beneficial to our academic career and highly appreciated, there was something about school life that still felt like it was missing. When Mr Jamison posted the “2020 BRA Staff Not the Christmas Revue” it provided great laughter and a sense of unity amongst staff and teachers. Teachers got involved in a range of activities from ‘Pointless’, involving Mr Hughes, Mrs Craig and Ms Corish to the iconic Superman cameo that is a staple in the staff revue involving Mr Irwin, Mr Harte and Mr Morrison, to name

a few. At the end of the video, all of the teaching staff were shown with a message saying, “We Miss You” - a feeling that was unanimous amongst both the teachers and the pupils of BRA.

Rowan Moore

LOCKDOWN QUIZZES

2020 has seen many unprecedented things come to pass but I can emphatically say that when this year began I could not have envisaged myself miming power ballads on the school Facebook page to hundreds of BRA pupils, parents and alumni. These have indeed been strange times.

At the beginning of lockdown, when we were all yanked out of the familiar togetherness of daily school life, I had decided to run a small quiz for staff on Zoom to help recreate a sense of fraternity.

With our current proficiency it is easy to forget the early days of this technology when Zoom was uncharted territory and so the event migrated to the more amenable environment of Facebook and in the process became public. Everyone in any way connected to the school (and beyond) was invited to take part and thus the BRA Lockdown Quiz was born. After that initial quiz, it became a Friday night routine over the following three months and Mr Cleland did a sterling job promoting it (and by affixing the adjective ‘great’ gave it a sense of grandeur which it unfortunately never lived up to).

Thinking that everyone would enjoy me humiliating myself and with the hope that it is (allegedly) a good thing to take one outside one’s comfort zone, I decided that the music rounds would challenge the limits of my shame. Thus for the third round the challenge was to identify whatever songs I

butchered on the piano, gargled in an unseemly manner, mimed (with often unseemly dancing) or bashed put on the bells. Your forbearance with this trying round was appreciated and I can assure you that nobody felt more relief than I when moving on to round 4 each week.



In my attempts to avoid general knowledge rounds, we shared linked rounds, list rounds, quotes/catchphrase attribution, questions related to my Lego collection and more but perhaps the two most defining rounds were the guest teacher round and the ‘Smooched Together’ round. In the former many members of staff kindly agreed to film themselves asking (and answering) a question. Their contributions were so appreciated and I enjoyed seeing familiar faces again as much as everyone else. Particular thanks to Ms Barnett for her regular contribution of a scene from history that she had drawn on her iPad with impressive skill (cringingly branded as Barn-art by a quizmaster who now realises how poorly that works as wordplay). Each week, culminated with the ‘Smooched Together’ round. This was based on a format appropriated from Richard Osman’s House of Games but unfortunately renamed because I repeatedly failed to recall the official name.

There were frequent problems and I choose to think gave it a homespun charm...rather than rendering it a grossly unprofessional debacle. The first teacher round was interrupted by me scurrying off camera to try and stop the answers being read out

before the questions (and unfortunately subtitles captured most of my absent ‘oh no, oh no...please stop...the stress’), I nearly choked gargling a Stevie Wonder classic, some overenthusiastic miming led to me audibly performing the songs and ending the stream each week often left me broadcasting for longer than intended.

I am so appreciative to everyone who took part and, while I was touched by the generous thanks, I will continue to assert that the gratitude must be from me to the participants. Lockdown was an isolating time for many of us and I really was glad of this opportunity to recapture a bit of the BRA spirit. The participation was always enthusiastic, forgiving and in great spirit and really did show the best of our extended school community. When I set up a charity page for the NI Hospice I couldn’t have hoped that the BRA extended family would donate (including Gift Aid) nearly £2000 but it is, in retrospect, characteristically generous of you all.

Amongst those ten hours of quiz immortalised on Facebook, there are some odd moments which I would be reluctant to revisit but overall I will certainly remember Friday nights during lockdown with great fondness. It was an unusual event for unusual times and the willing involvement



of so many is testament to the BRA spirit in challenging times.

S.C.S.

STAFF SINGING

Another Event organised over lockdown was the Staff Singing. This was organised by Mr Jamison and is part of the final staff Zoom meeting of the year. The staff rendition of, “One Day More!” from the musical, Les Misérables was sung by Mr Jamison who took the opportunity to use the to showcase his musical talents and those of the other staff: Ms Macbeth, Mrs Reynolds, Mrs Black, Ms McIntyre, Mrs Graydon, Mr Morrison and Mr Forde. The staff singing acted as a tribute to Mr Jamison as not only was it the last staff meeting of the academic year, but his last ever staff meeting as a member of the BRA teaching staff. He was a dedicated, fun loving member of staff, as shown by his final addition to this staff meeting, and he will be truly missed.

Rowan Moore

TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Mr Jamison made leaps and bounds in the new world of Zoom and technology that we were presented with when lockdown struck. He organised the Senior Trad group to be involved in the “2020 BRA Staff Not Christmas Revue”. Mr Jamison asked

Ronan Poots (LVI) to pick a tune and the other pupils that are involved in the Trad Group had to learn it. They had a week to do so and to record themselves playing alongside the original recording of Ronan playing the tune.



Mr Jamison then synced all their individual videos and put it in the staff revue. The tune that Ronan picked to play was called, “Liz Carroll’s”. This not only allowed the Trad group to do what they love, play traditional music, but gave them the chance to play together at a time when everyone was isolated in their own home, reminding everyone of the importance that good music and friends can have in times like what we were presented with in March 2020.

Rowan Moore

PPE DONATIONS



In order to provide help to the Coronavirus frontline, the school’s Technology department came together to donate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to the key workers of the NHS who needed it most. Also, The Old Girls’ Association put together a series of videos thanking key workers who are associated with the School for their efforts in combatting the virus. In keeping with government guidelines, the pupils of key workers were facilitated within School from the beginning of the nationwide lockdown, and this programme ran smoothly and effectively for the remaining months which would have been our usual term.

Zara Meadows

VIRTUAL LESSONS



Virtual lessons were conducted on Zoom as soon as the lockdown commenced on the week beginning 23rd March. Special revision sessions were held the week prior to the end-of-year assessments that replaced junior and middle school examinations at the start of June. These were opportunities for entire year-sets to get together to go over the work of their courses with their teachers present to answer any pressing questions.

Zara Meadows

PARENT INFORMATION EVENINGS

Parents were enabled to ask any questions and raise any concerns that they may have had at the Parents' Information Evenings that were held in June. The Principal, the three Vice Principals and the Heads of Year were in attendance on Zoom for each meeting. There was also a virtual parents' meeting organised by the Principal and Dr Brown on Wednesday 17 June at 6 p.m. to address some of the most pertinent issues of Fourth Year in relation to their GCSE course. Each pupil in the school was also contacted at least once via telephone also by the Principal or one of the Vice Principals, as well as their Head of Year.

Zara Meadows

VIRTUAL RELAY



In the summer term, there was an abundance of fun to be had outdoors, while still maintaining social distancing guidelines. The Transatlantic Virtual Relay took place across all four houses, and was won by Currie, who led from start to finish. Shaw edged out Cairns by 7miles for second place, with Pottinger finishing the race off in fourth place.

Zara Meadows



Distribution of Prizes

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

2019 – 20 ACADEMIC YEAR

Traditionally, the Principal of the Academy delivers his or her report covering the previous academic year at the Annual Prize Distribution ceremony – one of the highlights of the School calendar which is an opportunity to gather together as a community to celebrate the achievements of our pupils. However, these are extraordinary times and, like many of our normal activities, Prize Day has been curtailed by the restrictions imposed by the Government in response to the coronavirus pandemic. This report is therefore, a written record of the achievements and successes of the past academic year, the 234th in the School's history.

The 2019 – 20 academic year began in the normal busy fashion with the publication of examination results, induction of new pupils, welcoming back current pupils and staff and settling down into the familiar rhythm of school life. Little did any of us know what was to come in the Spring term as a result of a virus that few of us had heard of back in September 2019. We welcomed new members of teaching and support staff to the Academy during the course of the year and are delighted that we have been able to attract such well qualified and experienced colleagues who joined a staff who continue to excel in their energy and commitment to the School. Following a review of roles within the Senior Leadership Team, a number of new internal appointments were made in pastoral roles and the Examinations Team.

At the end of this year, we said farewell to two long-serving members of the Biology department – Mr Roly Jamison and Mr Trevor

Baldwin. Formerly a pupil of the school, Mr Jamison's natural exuberance in the classroom will be sorely missed. I doubt many pupils will ever forget his demonstration of peristalsis by drinking a class of water whilst standing on his head or his spectacular experiments. However, I would surmise that Mr Jamison derived just as much pleasure and sense of satisfaction from his contribution to the extra-curricular side of the school as he did in the classroom. He was fully involved in many aspects of school life but in particular played a significant role in every school production since he began teaching, either as Director, Producer or Stage Manager, and this followed his own enthusiastic involvement as a performer whilst a pupil of the Academy.

Mr Baldwin made a significant contribution to the School through his involvement in every aspect of school life as a teacher, Senior Teacher and Governor and also through the academic, pastoral and extra-curricular curricula. In addition to his expertise in the classroom and his pupil-centered approach to pastoral care, Mr Baldwin led the Air Training Corps in School for many years. In this role, he upheld the values that we hold in high regard – service to others, charity work, respect and independent learning. Mr Baldwin was an outstanding teacher who was well-respected by pupils and his colleagues for his professionalism and commitment to the School.

With a combined 72 years' service, Mr Baldwin and Mr Jamison transmitted to generations of Academy pupils a love and understanding of Biology that many former pupils have carried forward into their adult lives. They both stand as role models for the positive impact teachers can have on the lives of their pupils. Both are wished every success as they move forward into new opportunities



and phases of their lives. They leave us with a deep expression of respect, gratitude and affection for them both from the entire community of Belfast Royal Academy.

The Head of Finance and Corporate Services, Miss Elisabeth Hull, resigned after 19 years of dedicated service to the School. The financial position of the school was significantly strengthened under her leadership – a tribute to her professional skills and knowledge. Miss Hull worked closely with Governors to oversee considerable improvement of the School estate through a number of School Enhancement Projects and improvement schemes and her attention to detail in liaising with various professionals at each stage of the plan from inception to delivery was much valued. We wish her success and professional fulfilment in her new position as Bursar in Belfast High School.

The Principal's PA, Mrs Pat Hughes retired in December 2019 and the School Matron, Mrs Nuala Loughran, retired in June 2020. We thank them for the contribution they have made to the School over many years and wish them health and happiness in their retirement.

In October, a Sustaining Improvement Inspection took place. The report confirmed that the School has the capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective development planning. Levels of safeguarding reflect the highest standards expected by the Department of Education and there is a strong and effective culture of self-improvement at all levels within the school. The report is an affirmation of everything that the School community has achieved and a challenge to make it better still.

The Senior School production, *A Servant to Two Masters* was held over three nights in mid-November. The physical comedy and levels of energy on display provided many hilarious moments and the talented cast and crew deserve much credit for all their hard work in staging such a professional show at a very busy time of the year. The joint production of *Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* in December was a

very successful collaboration between Belfast Royal Academy and St Malachy's College pupils and further strengthened the relationship between the two schools.

In October, eighty Sixth Form students travelled to Methodist College to listen to the personal testimony of Susan Pollack, a Holocaust survivor. With few Holocaust survivors still living today, this was for many a once in a lifetime opportunity and our students were left feeling inspired by Ms Pollack's strength and resilience. It was a day when History came to life.

We recognise the need for 'character building' in young people and Academy pupils have many opportunities in developing this inside and outside the classroom. Perhaps nothing encompasses this more than the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. The School's record in this is outstanding, with around 450 pupils involved at various levels at any one time but what is also striking is how they go about it. The fact, for example, that a number of Middle Sixth choose to volunteer as Young Leaders to assist with the running of the scheme, and volunteer in youth groups and clubs outside school to provide opportunities for others. Indeed, there is a multitude of examples of older pupils helping and leading others, whether that be as Registration Prefects, on the School Council or as Library Mentors.

Our Senior pupils have also increased their understanding of a range of issues such as world poverty, homelessness, asylum and discrimination through their involvement with Habitat for Humanity and have volunteered to work with Syrian Refugees as mentors with Conway Education's homework club. A focus on leadership has also been apparent in our House competitions, which have become more varied and numerous this year. From the Rubik's Cube Challenge to the Sponsored Walk to Christmas gift appeal to pumpkin carving to gingerbread house making, pupils across the School have combined to compete and have fun and what is noteworthy about our House events is the emphasis it places on taking part.

The pupils who gain most from our House structure are those who consistently volunteer, show up and pitch in because they are team players, reliable and trustworthy: valuable qualities indeed. And we remain ever-conscious of the need for our pupils to become responsible citizens – looking out beyond ourselves to the city, region and world outside. Through each House, pupils fundraise for nominated charities and thereby develop a sense of service and giving back. This is a hallmark of our pupils as they progress through the School – developing a 'mind to be kind'. Thanks to the commitment and enthusiasm of staff, coaches, parents and Governors, sport continues to be well supported and catered for at Belfast Royal Academy. A significant number of our pupils are involved in sport in more than 20 activities at both team and individual level. This level of participation is outstanding and is worth celebrating.

In particular, the 1st XI Girls 'hockey team performed outstandingly well in March when they won the Ulster Hockey Schools 'Cup for the first time in 46 years in a decisive 4:2 victory against Friends 'School Lisburn. Goals were scored by Niamh McIvor, Megan Warke, Julia Uprichard (Captain) and Abbie Braniff. The team and coaches, Mr Stephen Watt and Mrs Nadine Nicholl, are to be commended for the indomitable spirit that they demonstrated throughout the competition and also for uniting the School community on such a thrilling occasion at Lisnagarvey Hockey Club in front of so many pupils, parents and generations of former pupils.

The following day was also a momentous occasion when we held an open air assembly to pay tribute to the team and coaches, to acknowledge this historic win and to allow the team captain, Julia Uprichard to present the Cup to the School. It was a moment to savour and one which will – justifiably - live long in our memories. A number of the 1st XI hockey team received representative honours at either Ulster or Irish level. In February Niamh McIvor, Lower Sixth and Emma Uprichard Form 5 were named in the Ireland U18 & U16 Hockey squads which travelled to Lillehall at



the end of February, to play a 3-match series against England.

The girls 'Intermediate and Senior Netball teams had a very successful year with the Intermediate team reaching the final of the League in a match against Wallace High School. In what proved to be a very close and hard-fought match, the BRA team finished runners-up with the final score 15-11. Three pupils, Nada Hawela, Catelyn Burns and Siobhan Baine, were selected for the Northern Ireland Netball U17 squad.

The School has had a long and proud tradition of playing rugby with former pupils representing their school, Ulster and Ireland at various stage. Iain Henderson was appointed Captain of the Ulster Rugby Team in November 2019 and M6 Leaver 2019, Tom Stewart played throughout the last season for the Ulster U20 squad.

Sadly, due to the decline in extra-curricular provision in many grammar schools, it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide fixtures for B and C teams and there is a danger that our players have a disconnect with school rugby and lose the incentive to train and participate. In recognition of this gap, Academy Rugby Club started an initiative in conjunction with Ulster Rugby that was launched in the Autumn term to offer the opportunity for players aged 15 years up to train and play matches in order to continue to develop as players and remain engaged with the sport into adulthood. We are extremely grateful to Academy Rugby Club for reaching out to the School in order to preserve our pupils 'commitment to and enjoyment in the game of rugby.

The 1st XV rugby team reached the last 16 of the Schools 'Cup competition and faced RBAI at Osborne Playing Fields. On a glorious sunny morning, the BRA side was the first to score following a try by Captain Rob Sturgess which was converted by Ollie Parkes. However, after this promising start, the sense of occasion seemed to overwhelm the BRA side who conceded several tries from a dominant RBAI side. Ollie scored a



consolation try towards the end of full-time giving a final score of 47:12. At times, the quality of rugby played by the BRA team was of a fantastic calibre but there was a lack of consistency in approach which prevented the team from scoring more tries. Whilst it was disappointing for the players, coaches and supporters to have lost out on the chance to compete in a semi-final match, the team can be proud of the commitment and tenacity they demonstrated throughout the competition, both in matches and training sessions. I hope that the M6 leavers will continue to enjoy playing rugby at university and in adulthood.

The Medallion Rugby team defeated Wallace High School in the quarter-final of the Medallion Shield and faced Campbell College in the semi-final which was also played at Osborne Playing Fields. In the first half, Campbell College dominated the match and the score at half-time was 31:0. However, the BRA team showed great spirit in the second half scoring a try and preventing Campbell from scoring any more points. We are extremely proud that the team reached the semi-final stage in the competition and know that firm foundations have been laid for these players as they progress in their rugby career.

In March, the U14 rugby team defeated Campbell College in the final of the Plate at the RBAI Tournament. The boys defeated Dromore, Bangor, and Coleraine in the group stage losing one match to RBAI. They defeated Sullivan in the semi-final.

The continued high level of participation in equestrian sports is a tribute to the energy of Mr Murphy, Mrs Graydon and their band of pupils and parents who devote so much time to the sport they love. Teams represented the School throughout the year with individual and team success in various show jumping competitions.

The benefits of having our own swimming pool on site, an experienced instructor and enthusiastic PE staff are reflected in the results that pupils have at individual and team level in swimming, lifesaving and water polo competitions. The Form 1 Swimming team raced at the Irish Minor Schools'

Championships at the beginning of February in the National Aquatic Centre, Dublin. The Girls 'Relay team (Erin Gray, Eve McKeown, Ines Scott & Sarah Teague) were 3rd in the Medley Relay and 4th in the Freestyle Relay and the Boys 'Relay team (Samuel Hipolito, Bryn Mawhinney, Olivier Staworzynski & Robbie Tosh) finished 7th in the Medley Relay and 9th in the Freestyle Relay. Many of the planned competitive aquatic events were cancelled as a result of the pandemic and all members of the various teams and staff are eagerly anticipating the resumption of pool-based competitions.

In Athletics, Bryanna Catney (U19 800m) and Erin McMahon (U19 400m) won silver medals at NI and Ulster Athletics Indoor Championships at Abbottstown at the beginning of February.

In cycling, Ciaran Dixon, L6, was selected to compete for Ireland at the European Cyclocross Championships in Silvelle, Italy in November 2019.

In golf, Tom McKibbin, L6, won the Bridgestone Boys 'International Order of Merit for 2019 following a superb season. Noah Bickerstaff, Form 4, won the U14 Leinster Boys 'Open Championship at the end of October at Elmgreen Golf Club, Dublin. Noah won by 2 shots with a score of -2, breaking the course record for an under-18 player into the bargain. Noah was also selected for the U16 Ulster Provincial team.

In the past year, numerous colleagues have been generous enough to give hours and days of their time to provide a range of school trip opportunities which have been enthusiastically taken up by pupils in every year in the school. Pupils have travelled to Lyon for a French languages trip, to Asturias for a Spanish exchange, to Austria for a ski-trip alongside various residential Scripture Union trips.

Music is an integral part of School life and makes a significant contribution to building pupils 'character and instilling life values which will almost always reflect a positive attitude. The sense of ceremony in our usual

Prize Day event is greatly enhanced by the contribution made by the choir and orchestra. The audience at Spires last October had the opportunity to enjoy the fruits of many hours of rehearsal by pupils and staff of the Music Department in the various pieces that were performed. The Carol Service is always a lovely finale for the Autumn term and this year's service in Rosemary Presbyterian Church had a very special atmosphere imbued by the retelling of the familiar Christmas story, positive participation from the choirs and orchestra and universally well-pitched and paced readings. This year, BRA pupils gave a very strong performance at the Ballymena Music Festival in both group and individual classes with the Senior Strings placed 1st in the String Orchestra Class.

Given the central role that Music has within the Academy, in retrospect, it seems fitting that the annual Spring Concert in the Ulster Hall on Thursday 12 March was the last public event we were able to hold before the School closed. The atmosphere was even more heightened than usual as a result of tensions and fears about the coronavirus pandemic and there were slightly fewer people present in the audience than previous years but it was a magnificent performance. The second half was devoted to a joint choral and orchestral performance of Karl Jenkins, The Armed Man which richly deserved the standing ovation.

Sincere thanks to Ms McMullan, Mr Forde, Mrs Prior and Miss Carson for all of their hard work with pupils in preparation for all the concerts and events throughout the year.

Away from the sports field and music department, other extra-curricular activities engage the talents of pupils in a variety of ways. The newly founded Environmental Group had an extremely active year under the enthusiastic leadership of Miss Herron. In February, the group attended the 'Women on the Front Line of Climate Change' Exhibition at Stormont and heard stories of African women and how they are coping with changing climate in their lives. Continuing the theme of thinking of others, the group raised over £700 through their Australian wildfire crisis

fundraising efforts. Money was raised for the New South Wales R.S.P.C.A and the N.S.W. Fire Service.

The Bridge Teams produced pleasing results in a number of competitions including the Ulster Schools 'Teams competition. The Senior Team finished in second place and BRA also finished first and second in the junior section. BRA performed well in the Irish Tournament with Joshua Boyd and Xander Todd finished 2nd in the Irish Schools 'Pairs and the U19 team of Xander Todd, Joshua Boyd, EJ Atienza and JP Miller placed as the top school team.

The A-Level French debating team distinguished themselves by winning the Queen's University Senior Debate against the legalisation of soft drugs, on 4 March. Our team, comprising of Layla Creaney, Varia Peters and Alex Pina Semedo, presented convincing arguments in French, and fought off stiff competition to win their debate against St Patrick's Grammar School, Armagh, with Varia Peters being selected as the best speaker of the group.

Our team of KS3 and KS4 Chemistry students (Joseph Golden, Oscar Hill, EJ Nazareth & Nada Hawela), who finished in a terrific 2nd place in the 'Top of the Bench 'competition organised by Queen's University.

Our talented dancers took part and were enormously successful at the Northern Ireland Creative Movement and Aerobic Championships in early March. The Academy swept the boards with six 1st placings in team and solo events, four 2nd placings and two 3rd placings.

The Junior Maths team completed in the regional final of the UK Maths Trust's Team Challenge. They performed very well and came second in Northern Ireland (by only one point out of the 240 available). They were an excellent team who worked hard in training for the event.

The Careers provision continues to be a major strength of the school with pupils receiving





invaluable interview practice for university admissions and exposure to many professions by attending Careers Fairs, talks by BRA alumni and conventions organised by the dedicated Careers Department.

Our Pupil Council, elected each September by the full pupil body, worked through the course of the year on behalf of all pupils within the School. Their leadership has seen an increase in charity fundraising initiatives, contribution to Anti-Bullying Week through assemblies and further development in our catering provision for all pupils.

The Registration Prefects, Prefects and Senior Prefects all play a similar role in leading and contributing to the well-being of our School community through their active involvement in the life of their peers and younger year groups. I would like to pay tribute to the sterling contribution made in the smooth running of the school by the Head Girl, Eva Hayward, Head Boy, Lorcan Convery, Deputy Head Girls, Olivia Donaldson and Olivia Quinn and Deputy Head Boys Nik Kane and David Russell. The willingness of all of these groups of pupils to give of themselves for the betterment of others and the community at large, stand as positive examples of active citizens expressing themselves within the overall life of the School.

Through all of these examples, and there are so many more that could be given, we see our pupils learning and developing outside the classroom as a component of their overall development as people. Young people, who are up for a challenge, confident enough to try, thrilled if they succeed but able to derive satisfaction through participating and giving their best.

A great sense of service has been demonstrated by our fabulous parent-teacher association, Friends of the Academy in numerous social and fund raising events throughout the year, including a table quiz, Welcome Breakfast for our new Form 1 parents and staff and the very popular uniform sales. The highlight of the FOTA calendar was the hugely successful fashion show in early February which featured

a number of fashion outlets modelled by pupils and staff. The finale showcased the work of former pupil Nicola Glass who is the New York-based designer for Kate Spade. The evening brought together the whole school community, created a fantastic atmosphere, highlighted the work of a very worthwhile charity, Outside In, which supports the homeless and raised very welcome funds for the school. We are indebted to all members of FOTA who worked tirelessly over a number of months to bring this event to such a successful conclusion.

“There are decades where nothing happens, and there are weeks where decades happen.”
-Vladimir Lenin.

Week beginning 16th March 2020 was such a week. Amid the announcement that the Government had taken the decision to close schools from Monday 23rd March and to cancel all public examinations, everything had to change. Our new way of norm has changed so much and a great deal of what we had previously taken for granted has changed out of all recognition.

Belfast Royal Academy has endured many challenges since its foundation in 1785 including, in the last century, the First and Second World Wars in which many former pupils made the ultimate sacrifice and the ravages of the Troubles when the School community was tested repeatedly yet never found to be wanting. What defines us across the ages, is the spirit with which successive generations of Academy pupils and staff have responded to challenge, rather than the intrinsic nature of these challenges themselves.

Staff and pupils quickly adapted to online learning using the Google Classroom platform with lessons and assemblies posted online. In addition, we held virtual parents' information evenings, a virtual Sports Day and online quizzes throughout this period of lockdown. All of this contributed to provide academic and pastoral support to all pupils throughout the Spring and Summer terms. There is no doubt, that pupils embraced digital technology with speed and enthusiasm and, in some case,

improved their independent learning skills. However, we were acutely aware that remote learning is a poor substitute for face-face learning and how much our pupils missed out on interactions with staff and their peers, involvement in extra-curricular activities, attending school trips and residential opportunities and the camaraderie that comes from being a member of a large, vibrant community.

The closure was, perhaps, felt most keenly by the MVI Leavers who did not enjoy all of the traditional rites of passage including the Leavers 'Dinner. However, we were able to organise a farewell lunch consisting of pizza and ice-cream and a year-group photograph to provide some positive memories of their truncated last year of school. Our MVI leavers are just at the start of their personal journeys in life and I hope that the values fostered in Belfast Royal Academy and by their families will help them with all the decisions they will make. On behalf of all the staff and Governors, I wish our leavers health and happiness in their road through life. We thank them for the contribution they have made to the Academy throughout their school careers and look forward to hearing about their experiences in the future.

The School is a very quiet and soulless place without the noise and energy of our pupils and we were so delighted to welcome pupils back at the end of August. As the public examinations were cancelled in April by the Minister of Education, pupils received Centre Assessment Grades (CAGs) as their examination results at GCSE, AS and A2 level. The ensuing examination grading debacle has been well documented since results day in August. For the record, my colleagues and I feel a deep sense of frustration that, having rigorously and robustly followed the processes, in the knowledge that standardisation was intended to ensure consistency, the statistical model did not then work out and had to be abandoned. There are many lessons to be learned from our collective experience this year at ministerial level, within examination boards and at individual school level to ensure that our current Form 5 and



Sixth Form pupils are not disadvantaged as a result of the situation this year.

Our priority for this year is to ensure the health and well-being of all members of our community, to provide full-time face-face education for all of our pupils for as long as we are able to and to create the conditions for our pupils to thrive despite the very difficult circumstances we all find ourselves living in. I am confident that we will be able to fulfil this commitment due to the values and commitment demonstrated by all the teaching and support staff throughout the first period of lockdown and since the pupils returned to school in August. Staff, pupils, parents and Governors are an integral part of the collective responsibility that binds the Academy together and which provides cohesion and strength to our whole school community.

Day in, day out, over the past tumultuous year, the teachers have gone above and beyond, to help pupils learn and grow, not just as students of their subject but as active, enthusiastic and responsible young people. The same is most certainly true of our support staff, who step up to whatever challenge face them, with good humour and generosity. On behalf of all the Belfast Royal Academy pupils and parents, I would like to thank all of my colleagues for everything they have done over the past year in service of our pupils – all of their endeavours are very much appreciated. A particular thank you to the Vice Principals – Dr Brown, Mr Wilson and Ms Graham - who have been a huge support to the School and to me personally.

Finally, I would like, on behalf of the school community, to say a huge thank you to our fantastic Board of Governors who put in so many unheralded, unpaid and largely unrecognised hours on behalf of the pupils.

2020 will be remembered as the year of the pandemic – when we all learned to live with new and heightened anxieties, to adapt our normal way of working and amend our procedures for key events and activities. We have learned much about ourselves and others and how we respond to a time of crisis. We

have shown initiative, solved problems and supported each other when necessary with words of reassurance, encouragement and humour. The manner in which pupils and colleagues, supported by families, coped with both the enforced school closure and education restart has been typically BRA, reflecting our School motto Per Vias Sapientiae, by the ways of wisdom. We exist to serve the interests of our pupils and, with hope, wisdom and a little courage, we will continue to find a way forward in order to meet the needs of our community to the best of our ability.

H.W.



School Societies

BOARD GAMES CLUB

The Board Games Club in the library continued to run very successfully on the first Friday of each month during lunch. The games played ranged from classic to modern. Students used their critical thinking skills to master the games, whilst simultaneously enjoying an element of fun and competition.

E.M.T.

BRIDGE CLUB

Bridge is a card game that challenges the mind but also allows friendships to develop in school and across Ireland with other pupils. New members are welcome and should speak to Mr. Graham in M10 about joining, or anyone wearing a red or blue blazer for Bridge. The highlight of the year continues to be the trip to Galway to compete in the Irish Schools' Teams competition. The club meets at lunchtimes during the weeks and special beginner sessions are sometimes run near the start of each year.



This year the school finished 2nd (EJ Atienza, JP Miller, Joshua Boyd, and Xander Todd) and 4th (Nathan Fung, Robbie Morrow, Alex Scott and Ewan Todd) in the Irish Schools' Championships 'Gold Final' in Galway. The other teams consisting of Sasha Trombino, Hannah Toal, Felicity Fagan, Aileana McDowell, Tiffany Chow, Gabriel Brown and David Eyjolfsson competed in the 'Silver Final'. This was a great performance although the first team were disappointed not to win, losing by the slimmest of margins.

In the Irish Schools' Pairs, which for the second year also took place in Galway over the same weekend, Joshua Boyd and Xander Todd came 2nd with Alex Scott and Ewan Todd 5th.

In the Ulster Pairs, held in BRA, Nathan Fung and Robbie Morrow finished 2nd and Jamie Wilson and Emily Warnock came 3rd.





In the Ulster Teams, held in Carrick, EJ Atienza, JP Miller, Joshua Boyd, and Xander Todd finished 2nd and Nathan Fung, Robbie Morrow, Alex Scott and Tiffany Chow finished 3rd.

We also had a good representation in the beginner competitions and we look forward to seeing their progress in the next few years.

A big thank-you to Dr Lomas for her continued support for the club throughout the year and organising extra bridge lessons. Finally, thanks to Dr Springer and Dr Lomas for accompanying the students to Galway for the Irish competitions.

S.G.

CHESS CLUB

As ever, Chess started up at the beginning of term. As ever, lunchtimes in M4 became busy. As ever, sandwiches were munched as games were played. As ever, new members were perplexed by how the horsey moved in such an odd way. As ever, someone would castle against someone who didn't know of this magic, provoking a disagreement needing my arbitration. In a completely unprecedented fashion, Chess stopped abruptly in March because of the pandemic. It may be a while before it can start up again but I look forward to

welcoming everyone back to Chess club when possible.

S.C.S.

CLASSICS SOCIETY AND GREEK CLUB

A Middle Sixth pupil, Callisto Stephenson, ran a very successful lunchtime club every Tuesday for Form I pupils interested in Greek and Roman Mythology and the Latin in 'Harry Potter'.

In the Greek Club, various pupils worked hard to learn Ancient Greek. This year, the JACT certificates in Ancient Greek were offered as an option to pupils.

J.M.G.

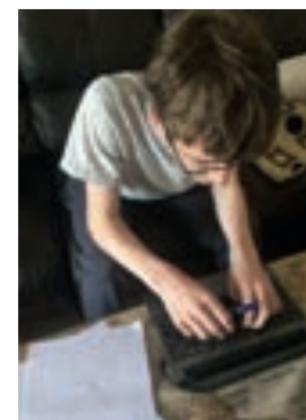
EXTRACURRICULAR MATHS

Many pupils, once again, took part in the UK Maths Trust's individual challenges. A number of certificates were awarded and some pupils qualified for the elite further rounds. The school representatives performed impressively in competitive, extracurricular maths (albeit with some disruption this year due to Covid-19).

At Senior level there were 8 silver and 5 bronze awards from 22 entries. At Intermediate level pupils achieved 5 gold, 15 silver and 20 bronze awards. Riya Raghuram (FIV), Jude Morrison (FIV), Ben Golden (FV), Donal McGrath and Joseph McGuigan (FV) qualified for the next round (the Kangaroo). Only two pupils were able to sit the following round in the days before the school closure and results are pending.



The Junior Challenge moved online because of school closures for lockdown. Pupils were coordinated to sit the test at home and 26 participated with 2 silver and 12 bronze awards being achieved.



In team competitions, the Senior team of John Gibson (LVI), Jude Moorehead (LVI), Samuel Hakken (MVI) and Joshua Thompson (MVI) narrowly missed out on

finishing in the top 3 at the Queen's University competition.

In the UKMT Senior Team challenge the team of John Gibson (LVI), Jude Moorehead (LVI), Zak Thabeth (MVI) and Joshua Thompson (MVI) came fourth in the NI regional final. The Junior Team of Jamie Wilson (FII), Sofia Rea-Lavery (FII), Oliver Pearce (FIII) and Harrison Kirk (FIII) came second in NI regional final of the UKMT Junior Challenge and missed out on winning by the narrowest of margins.

The enthusiasm and talent of BRA's mathematicians continues to impress me. The numbers who try out for the teams and the dedication of those who complete. Some of their experiences are reflected upon below.

S.C.S.

SENIOR TEAMS



Through a challenging set of questions, a group of five Senior pupils were selected to represent the school in two Senior maths competitions. We met every Monday and Thursday lunchtime in our home turf of M4. Through much teamwork we came on leaps and bounds in run up to the first competition (the UKMT Team Senior Challenge) at St Malachy's College.

We started the day by walking down to St. Malachy's where we were greeted with tea, coffee, biscuits and a sheet of warm-up questions. The mathematics began with the group round followed by the crossnumber, shuttle round and then relay round.

After a rocky start, we improved steadily and were delighted to finish by placing 4th in Northern Ireland. Joshua's experience, from the previous years, would prove to be invaluable during the competition. He was the Captain and his familiarity with the format of the competition enabled him to guide us on the day and ease some pre-existing nerves from the newer competitors. Joshua also made the final decisions with regards to our final answers submitted to the referee.

The experience was thoroughly enjoyable and made us feel even more prepared for the next competition at Queen's. For this event we had a change in personnel as Zak Thabeth replaced Sam for this competition. Zak had already been part of the Senior Maths Team from the previous year and added invaluable experience and insight for the QUB competition.



With the help of Dr Springer, the four of us prepared for Queen's very diligently by working on tough questions from previous events or ones that were similar. On the day, we started off well. At the end of each round, the

results were announced and we always managed to place in the top three. Unfortunately, our consistent, high-quality performance did not carry over to the final round.



In the final round, we had to watch a short five-minute video about theoretical physics, after which we were asked questions. Some were on observation of details rather than the content (such as 'What time was read on the clock in the shop?') and as our eye for detail was not on par with our mathematical ability, we dropped down to 4th overall, which was a disappointing finish after such a promising start.

Both competitions were challenging but very rewarding experiences and we were proud to represent our school at events in which we have a long tradition of success.

John Gibson (LVI) and Jude Moorehead (LVI)

JUNIOR TEAMS

On the 6th of March, we went to the Regional Final of the UKMT Team Challenge held at St Malachy's College. Four of us attended and we were accompanied by Dr Springer. The competition lasted most of the school day and consisted of four rounds.



The first round was a maths problem round, in which we were given fifteen questions and half an hour in which to solve them. This was good to start with, as the time allowance was quite lenient and allowed for us to confirm all our answers by checking.

We then did the crossnumber (a crossword puzzle with numbers instead of letters). For this, we were split into two sub teams, where one team would attempt the 'down' problems and the other the 'across'. This round went well, although we did lose a few points to small mistakes.

The third round had us split into two smaller teams again. This time each team was given two questions; however, in order to solve each sub-team's question, we had to get the answer to the other sub-team's

question. We did a few of these, and for each one we only had five minutes. These were definitely the most challenging part of the competition. Finally, we did a speed number round. We went into our separate teams and had to solve a question and run up the hall to a teacher, who would give us the next question to hand to the other team if it was right. This round was quite hectic as all the running made it feel fast paced.

In the end, we came second in the competition, losing to Friends School by one point. It was really good fun and was made better by the practices organised beforehand by Dr Springer; they were enjoyable and helped us to prepare for the competition. We were all disappointed to lose by one point, but everyone enjoyed the day and had a good time.

Oliver Pearce (FIII)

INTO FILM CLUB

On Thursday 21st November, 18 pupils from the B.R.A Into Film Club attended the annual Into Film Festival. The festival is the world's largest youth film festival. It is an annual, three-week programme of over 2700 free cinema screenings, activities and workshops for 5-19 year-olds held in venues across the United Kingdom.



The Academy pupils watched Damien Chazelle's 'First Man' as part of the festival. It is a biographical drama following the years leading up to the Neil Armstrong's Apollo 11 mission to the moon in 1969. The film club members greatly enjoyed having the opportunity to watch the film at the Odeon Cinema, Victoria Square and getting to learn more about man first landing on the moon.



Later in the year, a group of ten Sixth Form pupils attended a special film classification debate and schools-only screening of 'Joker' to mark the 30th anniversary of the Cinemagic Festival. The film classification debate was led by representatives from both the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) and the Irish Film Classification Office (IFCO) at the Odeon Cinema, Victoria Square. Pupils had all their questions concerning how and why films need to be classified answered. The workshop looked at how and why classification can differ in different countries and regions. Pupils watched Todd Phillips 'Joker' as a case study following the debate. Getting to meet representatives from both the BBFC and IFCO was a great opportunity and pupils greatly enjoyed the trip.

E.M.T.

JUNIOR BOOK CLUB

The Junior Book Club had a very busy and enjoyable year shadowing the Northern Ireland Book Award. The Northern Ireland Book Award is an annual event for post-primary schools across Northern Ireland. Local book award schemes to encourage and develop a love of reading had been springing up in England and Scotland but no such award existed in Northern Ireland. In an attempt to rectify this, two school librarians decided to introduce such a scheme to the province in 2009. The whole emphasis is on books that are exciting and encourage children to read more books. The overriding aim is to see book-centred social interaction and debate amongst young people.

The shortlist this year for the award was drawn up by the SLANI (School Librarian Association Northern Ireland) committee following a list of nominations from those with school library responsibility across Northern Ireland. The following titles made it to the shortlist and were enjoyed by the Junior Book Club:

- Rosie Loves Jack by Mel Darbon
- The Boy at the Back of the Class by Onjali Q Rauf
- A Good Girl's Guide to Murder by Holly Jackson
- Mud by Emily Thomas
- Scavengers by Darren Simpson
- High Rise Mystery by Sharma Jackson

E.M.

JUNIOR SCRIPTURE UNION

Every Wednesday lunchtime, Forms I - III are able to come together along with the Scripture Union (SU) Committee

and our amazing teachers, Mr Morrison and Mrs Graydon, where they can discover more about God and His unconditional love for us.

Junior Committee is made up of pupils from Forms V – MVI, who are eager to share the 'Good News' with fellow Academy members. With this eagerness inside each one of us, the Committee put in its best effort to relate real-life problems and fears potentially encountered by the Junior school and direct them towards the Bible, in order to reassure them that their pain has a purpose and that God is in control. With this intention in mind this year, we covered a range of topics throughout the course of the year, including 'The fruit of the spirit' and commonly asked questions such as 'What does it mean to be a Christian?' 'How do we resist temptation?' 'How can we stand up for our faith?' and many more. These topics were carefully chosen by the Committee for the Junior SU to feel supported in their faith, with the hope that their talks would be easy to relate to and enlightening.



In Belfast Royal Academy we are hugely blessed with this opportunity to engage with Junior pupils and create lasting friendships with both Senior pupils and the teachers. Personally, from going to Junior SU myself and now being on committee, I have had the privilege of experiencing this firsthand. Without the love of God shining

through all who attend, it would not be possible to have such an outstanding experience and such wonderful memories to cherish.

Getting involved in school societies is exciting and fun, but I have never found a better club to join within school. Junior and Senior SU is more than a club. Rather, it is a family that leads you to grow with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Scripture Union is the most beneficial school society you could join, in my opinion, and we are so lucky to have such a huge community and evangelistic outreach.



Junior SU are able to get involved with many events and trips throughout the year such as pizza evenings, Crown Jesus Ministries' events and, of course, the best weekend in the whole school year... 'The Big SU Weekend'. All events involve fun, food and a whole lot of Jesus! 'The Big SU Weekend' is another opportunity for Junior pupils to strengthen their relationships with Senior pupils and teachers, alongside a fun packed weekend with their friends. I cannot encourage you enough to come along to either the Junior or Senior SU each week and of course the 'Weekend'. It will change your school life forever.

Sadly, this year, the SU Committee had to say goodbye to four MVI members: Wrienne Salvatierra, Fabienne Cochrane, Julia Forbes and Magdalena

Szlachta. They will be greatly missed as they were a huge part of SU, with their inspiring talks and their incredible banter that always brought many laughs throughout the year. We pray that they will continue to grow in their faith and encourage others, like they did during their time in BRA.



Lastly, we pray that God will continue to use the SU Committee as instruments in bringing God's word to the pupils of the Academy in the years to come.

Rachel McGrath (V)

LIBRARY CLUB



At Library Club pupils trained to become pupil librarians. Organising pupils to help with the library not only ensures the smooth day-to-day running of the library, but also helps develop a sense of responsibility, achievement and self-esteem in pupils. Examples of

some of the duties carried out by our pupil librarians included:

- Helping in the library during breaks and lunches
- Shelving fiction books in A-Z order
- Shelving non-fiction books by subject order
- Keeping a section of the stock tidy and in the correct order
- Helping with library displays
- Helping other students find what they are looking for
- Helping the librarian with the issuing and returning of materials

The pupil librarians gave up their free time before school, break, lunch and after school to fulfil their assigned duties.

E.M.

POLITICS SOCIETY



Our year together was cut short, but the Society had had opportunity to meet on numerous occasions prior to lockdown to discuss a range of political events and issues. Middle Sixth students lead talks on a range of issues, such as Brexit negotiations, the impact of Parliament and foreign affairs. One particularly memorable lunchtime was Edward Ferrin sharing his vision for an independent Northern Ireland, the Democratic Republic of Northern

Ireland. Although light-hearted in nature, the ideas Edward shared sparked great discussion about how new states can achieve democracy, checks and balances that prevent abuse of power and constitutional law. We also enjoyed a cinema trip to see Official Secrets, based on the true story of an intelligence specialist who leaked information about the decision to invade Iraq in 2003 and the resulting court case. It was a fascinating look at morals involved in war.

Politics Society students were probably some of the few to be excited by the prospect of a General Election and in the first term, students also organised and led a House Mock General Election for all forms which took place just a week before the real thing. The results revealed support for Johnson's Conservatives in the UK parties ballot, with Labour and the Greens not far behind. In the NI parties ballot, it was the DUP that won, with Alliance and Sinn Fein. Interestingly, the real General Election showed a decline in votes for the Liberal Democrats which was mirrored in our election and psephologists would be fascinated that that Greens did well in UK elections but their support fell away in the NI one. The contest between the houses saw Shaw take the victory, with a 4% higher turnout than Currie.



Finally, eight of our Lower and Middle Sixth students applied for a place on the

Politics Matters group, a cross-community group of political engaged young people from BRA, St. Malachy's and Dominican College. We were fortunate to have political commentator David McCann facilitate our group and lead our sessions. The group chose as their topic to research the lack of devolved government in NI. Although devolution was restored in January, the group made convincing arguments about the opportunities and threats that this now posed. It was disappointing not to get the chance to present the report of their findings to MLAs and school leaders at Stormont in April. However, as part of the experience students visited both Stormont and Westminster, which provided a wonderful opportunity to understand more about politics and to walk the corridors of power.

K.S.B.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

It was a busy but truncated year for the School Council in 2019-2020. After an enjoyable Team Building Day at Lost City Golf, the School Council had its non-uniform day in October. The School Council decided to split the money raised for this fund-raising activity between Jigsaw CCC, NI Children's Hospice, Lighthouse and UNICEF. To promote International Children's day all pupils were encouraged to wear something blue to school. Representatives from Jigsaw CCC, NI Children's Hospice and Lighthouse received cheques for £650 at whole-school Assemblies in December.

To promote the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Lucy Smyth (Form I) won a competition to be Principal of Belfast Royal Academy for a day in

November. As part of her new role, Lucy led the Staff Briefing, visited a number of classrooms and also implemented the following rules:

1. All teachers were expected to play their favourite song at the start of each lesson (dancing was optional).
2. When homework was set this had to be sung by the class teacher, or by performing charades. Failure to do so resulted in the pupils being exempt from completing the homework.
3. Form I pupils were allowed out 10 minutes early at lunch.

Mrs Woods became Lucy for the day, donned her school uniform and participated in Lucy's Music and Chemistry classes.



The School Council also decided to recognise Anti-Bullying week in November by organising a number of whole-school activities and various Assembly representations.

Other issues discussed by the Pupil and School Councils throughout the year included the food provision in the canteen; ways to reduce litter throughout the school site; recycling facilities; and the possibility of the installation of more water fountains around school.

The Head Boy and Head Girl addressed whole-school assemblies regarding these various issues in December.

T.H.

SENIOR DEBATING SOCIETY

Last year, the pupils most involved with the society were drawn from MVI which meant that this year we had to find a new crop of young people interested in debating. Those volunteering to speak were mostly drawn from forms IV and MVI.

As usual, pupils were involved in selecting motions in which they had a personal interest. We started the year with a debate on the desirability of pupils missing school to participate in climate change protests, a topic on which there were strongly held opinions. A debate on the merits of banning smacking also produced some strong views.

Towards the end of the first term, attention switched to the inter-school debating competition, with Ellie Byrne and Amy McDowell selected to represent the school. We were fortunate that the competition organisers selected the topic of pupil involvement in climate change protests as that topic had been debated earlier in the term. Our team defeated Portadown College in the first round of the competition held at Bangor Grammar School.

Unfortunately, we were knocked out in the second round of the competition by Campbell College as we were unexpectedly required to replace one team member, with her substitute having little time to repair.

Before the school shut down in March due to the coronavirus outbreak, we had

the opportunity for more lunchtime debates, the most popular of which was on the motion, "This House believes that Harry and Meghan are national traitors."

As ever, we hope that pupils not only found the experience of debating enjoyable, but that they learned valuable skills for life beyond school.

M.P./H.T.

SENIOR SCRIPTURE UNION



As it was my last year at BRA and therefore my last year on the Scripture Union Committee, I knew I had to make SU 2019-2020 memorable and unforgettable. Little did I know what was in store for us!

This year, I decided to be on the Senior Committee and so I was part of a group of BRA pupils in charge of the weekly Senior School meetings every Friday, under the guidance of Dr McComb who is always there to help us out when the talk unexpectedly finishes earlier than anticipated.

We collectively decided to choose the theme, "Who Is God?" tackling a wide range of topics from the Holy Trinity to who God was, and still is,

in the Bible.

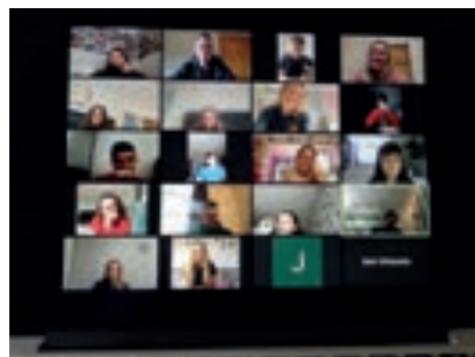
I would, personally, say that every Friday lunch was the highlight of my week. Being able to hear and spread the word of God weekly, encouraging others at SU to become more comfortable in their faith and that's not to forget the donuts Mrs Graydon provided for us (which were also a highlight). On behalf of everyone from SU, thank you!

One of the many achievements of SU this year was being able to work with SHINE Northern Ireland, which is an organisation that focuses on the Christian faith among the youth. They gave the SU committee a variety of topics like Fear and Trust to tackle through videos which definitely made SU a lot more interactive and engaging.

We went on our annual Senior SU trip, but this year was quite different with a change of venue. We stayed at the Portadown Faith Mission Centre. A big thank you to Andy Thompson who went through the Book of Revelation with us. As per usual, the weekend was a huge success in terms of spreading God's word and learning more about Him. But the weekend never fails to make memorable moments: from beating Mr Morrison at football, to Dr Bell destroying everybody at every game of pool, Mrs Morrison being an absolute legend at mini golf, Mrs Graydon for staying up late-night with us to chat and then waking up really early to make the hockey girls breakfast and, of course, trying to teach Mr Wilson a couple of tik tok dances. A big thank you to all these teachers that never fail to make every weekend a success, not only keeping us safe but also encouraging us in our faith.



and we discussed two chapters of the book each session, being led by either Dr Bell or Mr Morrison. Without a doubt, this was an amazing testament to the kind of teachers involved in SU, going out of their way to set up every Zoom meeting and leading the sessions during lockdown in order to encourage us more in our faith. We owe them a BIG THANK YOU!



But it didn't stop there, we also wanted the rest of SU involved, so we had a quiz hosted by Mr Morrison and also we were blessed to have a speaker share with us about leadership and how to be effective leaders: Allistair a theology pastor from Hillsong Church and College, Australia who was a past pupil of BRA. The weekly Wednesday sessions with the Poland Group were such a huge success we decided to continue even after we finished the book and we managed to cover the entire book of Joshua.



As we all know, the school year was cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This also meant that we weren't able to go on our mission trip to Poland, though this was upsetting news for us, we didn't let this stop us from serving the Lord. During lockdown we decided to continue having weekly meetings every Wednesday through Zoom for those who had intended on travelling on the Poland Mission Trip. Dr Bell had introduced us to the book called "In The Grip of Grace" by Max Lucado



My last year on the SU Committee wasn't what I pictured but there's not one thing I would change about it. A massive thanks to all the teachers, especially Mr Morrison who always goes above and beyond in everything they do for SU.

It has been a pleasure serving the Lord alongside all the committee members and all the teachers who have helped me grow in my own faith. I'm definitely going to miss serving the Lord at BRA but I am excited to use the experience I have gained from SU to continue serving the Lord beyond BRA. I can't wait to see the next generation of SU members; without a doubt the future of SU is bright. Also if you ever need a guest speaker I'm always ready!

Wrienne Salvatierra (MVI)

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

During 2019-2020, our large membership continued to remain strong at 380 pupils from Forms III to Middle VI: this means that the Academy continues to have one of the largest school-based Award Centres in Northern Ireland.

Continued effort on the part of our members produced a very creditable number of Awards gained during the course of the year: 52 Bronze Awards, 20 Silver Awards and 13 Gold Awards.

The total number of awards gained from 1984 to date are: Bronze – 1,455; Silver – 725; Gold – 477.

Congratulations must go to the past pupils who gained the Gold Award: Ellen Dalzell, Andrew Dorman, Gavin Gilfillan, Aaron Henderson, Hannah Marshall, Elizabeth McCauley, Tim McKee, Rosie McQueen, Gary Nelson,

Ciara Patterson, Jasmine Ross, Richard Simon and Philip Simon.

Unfortunately, due to COVID, our expedition programme was curtailed dramatically this year. By early March all our Bronze, Silver and Gold participants had completed their training classes and training weekends, and they were ready to put their training into practice on their upcoming expeditions. However, with the expedition season being cancelled due to lockdown, it has been impossible to get them out as planned.

Due to the pandemic, the D of E made a number of alterations to the rules and requirements. The key part of this is the introduction of the Certificate of Achievement for those at any level who have completed their Volunteering, Skill and Physical sections. This is an encouraging development and a reminder that the Award is made up of more than the Expeditions.

We would like to send our congratulations to Aimee Courtney (Form III) for being the first of our participants to complete her Bronze Certificate of Achievement.

Rules have also been relaxed around the activity periods for any section, to enable greater flexibility throughout lockdown and in the coming months.

Many of our pupils have been working on activities which they maybe wouldn't have considered or been able to complete prior to lockdown – such as a family table tennis tournament for three months! Our pupils have had to show a much greater flexibility and determination to plan and proceed with their activities in this time, and work with Assessors in a different way. With face-to-face contact severely restricted or even impossible at times, working with Assessors has had to change. Some



have arranged to chat on video calls with their Assessors or share fitness tracker app screenshots to verify their progress.

We wish all our participants the best of luck as they progress with their activities.

We are indebted to the many people who were willing to give of their free time to make possible the huge undertaking of the Expedition section. We sincerely thank the following teachers, past pupils and adult helpers who generously gave their time and assistance in the early stages of this school year:

Matthew Blair
Rebecca Burns
Holly Grant
Emma McAllister
Dennis McArthur
Peter McArthur
Maurice Miller
Gabbie Moore
Catherine Nelson
Gary Nelson
Abby Reid
Martin Scott
Shelley Wilson

Very special thanks must also go to the following people: Maurice Miller, Holly Grant and Shelley Wilson for their outstanding contribution in overseeing all aspects of the Expedition section; Billy Dunn, Fergal McCluskey and Ian Stinson for driving the school bus on many weekends and for their valued assistance; Shelley Wilson and Holly Grant for Award administration; Joanna Clarke and Niall Mowbray from the Education Authority for very valuable assistance with administration work; and the Gold Award Leaders of 2019-2020 for assistance with the running of the D of E in the school.

Many thanks also to the Tent Team for their efforts in the early part of the school year for helping to manage and maintain our large stock of camping equipment prior to lockdown.

Although the Volunteering, Physical, Skill and Residential Sections are primarily co-ordinated and supported by the DofE staff, we still have school staff members who run various activities enabling the participants to complete their sections. We would like to thank the staff of the P.E. and Music Departments for all their much appreciated help throughout the past year. We thank Brian McLaughlin and Robert Armstrong for all their work in training the kayak canoeists on Friday afternoons. Many thanks are due to the numerous members of staff who gave up their time to act as Skills section assessors.

Within the Skills section, 38 pupils took part in the Bronze Award Fire Service Courses held at Whitla Street Fire Station. We warmly thank the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service for the provision of the courses and Maurice Miller for supervising the classes.

Thanks must go to Maurice Miller for his help in looking after our finances.

We would like to say a huge thank you to the school office staff who have been a wonderful help this year collecting forms etc. and distributing participants' logs, projects and other important information.

The Academy's Open Nights in January 2020 were a great success and all aspects of school life were on show to prospective pupils and their parents. Many thanks to all of those who helped to make the impressive DofE in the Lower Sixth Form Common Room so effective.

In conclusion, 2019-2020 was a highly unusual year for everyone, but one in which our participants have shown an even greater resilience, determination, initiative, drive, commitment and sense of responsibility to others than what we would normally expect. We are incredibly proud of those who are pursuing their Certificate of Achievement and remind them to keep in touch.

Finally, pride of place and congratulations must go to the following pupils and past pupils who gained awards during the past year:

BRONZE AWARD

Jessica Boyd (IV)
Aoife Caldwell (IV)
Erin Cunningham (MVI)
Nathan Davidson (LVI)
Cameron Devlin (IV)
Benjamin Dewhurst (IV)
Faith Drummond (V)
Jack Gillespie (V)
Eleanor Green (IV)
Theo Hayward (IV)
Lauren Hetherington (LVI)
Ebony Hoogelander (LVI)
Aleena Jain (IV)
Kian Jan-Dickens (IV)
Alby Joseph (IV)
Lara Lennon (IV)
Helen Marshall (IV)
Shanti Mawhinney (IV)
Shannon McBride (V)
Sarah McCarney (IV)
Cara McGrath (IV)
Daniel McIlroy (LVI)
Grace McIlroy (-)
Lucy McMahan-Beattie (LVI)
Natasha Newton (IV)
Jamie O'Brien (IV)
Daisy Purvis (IV)
Ross Pyper (-)
Riya Raghuram (IV)
Rachel Ramsey (V)
Christopher Reid (LVI)

Peter Richardson (IV)
Isabella Scott (IV)
Oliver Scott (IV)
Ryan Simpson (LVI)
Olivia Snoddy (LVI)
Kate Sturgess (IV)
Emily Swann (IV)
Eve Taylor (IV)
Jaana Tharun (IV)
Hannah Thompson (IV)
Ellie Watson (LVI)
Lucy-Beth Watson (IV)
Emma Watt (-)
Callum Whiteside (IV)
Jamie Whitla (LVI)
Ethan Willey (IV)
Anna Wilson (IV)
Archie Wylie (LVI)
Emilla Zboralska (IV)

BRONZE & SILVER AWARD

Kerry Uprichard (LVI)

SILVER AWARD

Fabienne Cochrane (MVI)
Ryan Creaney (LVI)
Erin Cunningham (MVI)
Sivannah Delos Reyes (-)
Sabriel Gergett (LVI)
Maia Hamilton (MVI)
Lucy Handcock (V)
Ella Harvey (LVI)
Roan Kershaw (-)
Hannah Marshall (-)
Adam Martin (LVI)
Leah McCarter (LVI)
Nicole McClean (LVI)
Naoise McCormick (MVI)
Jennifer McCorry (-)
Adam McCready (LVI)

SILVER & GOLD AWARD

Philip Simon (-)
Richard Simon (-)

GOLD AWARD



Ellen Dalzell (-)
 Andrew Dorman (-)
 Gavin Gilfillan (-)
 Aaron Henderson (-)
 Hannah Marshall (-)
 Elizabeth McCauley (-)
 Tom McKee (-)
 Rosie McQueen (-)
 Gary Nelson (-)
 Ciara Patterson (-)
 Jasmine Ross (-)

Maurice, Shelley & Holly



YOUNG EINSTEIN CLUB



The Young Einstein Club had another enjoyable year in school. It continues to provide Junior school pupils with a relaxed environment where science is, above all, fun. We enjoyed getting in a twist with Mobius Strips; we were amazed by the hidden properties of rice and we had fun building and launching paper rockets. There was great excitement at our annual House Competition which this year took the form of a Science Quiz. Pottinger were awarded 1st place and the quiz was such a success that we intend to host it again in the future.

We thank our outgoing LVI committee for all their help throughout the year and especially our faithful Junior pupils who approached each experiment with limitless enthusiasm.

J.P.C./N.H./J.B.

Music in School

2019/2020 proved to be a very busy and exciting year for the Music Department. Rehearsals commenced immediately in September for all groups. With only seven rehearsals between the beginning of the new school year and the Senior Orchestra and Chamber Choirs performances at Prize Day, we settled down to concentrate on the music chosen for that occasion. The Senior Orchestra performed *Radetsky March* by Strauss and the Chamber Choir sang *If Ye love Me* by Thomas Tallis. With all the hard work and the favourable acoustics of Spires, the performances turned out to be an enjoyable experience for all involved.

Immediately after the half term break, rehearsals commenced for the Senior and Junior Carol Services. Once again the Chamber Choir, along with the Senior, Intermediate and Junior Choirs performed at the Senior Carol Service in Rosemary Presbyterian with solos from Ellie McIvor and Sarah McIlroy. The Chamber Choir and Boys' Choir also performed carols in the Junior Carol service on the last day of term.

January and February also proved to be extremely busy months. Many groups performed during the Open Evenings in the second week of January. Prospective pupils were treated to a wide range of music performed by the Big Band, Traditional Group, Saxophone Quartet, Senior and Junior Strings and the Brass Band. These smaller instrumental groups made up largely of members of the Senior Orchestra and Wind Band have proven to be invaluable to the Music Department.

Many thanks must go to the pupils who are members of three or four instrumental

groups as well as a choral group – they willingly give up nearly every lunchtime and stay after school regularly until 4:30pm.

The success of these smaller ensembles was demonstrated when the Senior Strings travelled to Ballymena Festival on St. Valentine's Day and won their class against other prominent grammar schools. They were placed first in the String Orchestra Class at Ballymena Festival and the following pupils were placed in their classes:

Viola Solo, Post-Primary, 14 years and under: Theo Hayward 1st

Violin solo, 13-14 years: Hugo Reilly Stewart 1st

Rory Nethercott Highly Commended

Cello Solo, 15-17 years: Jonny Hayward 1st

Double Bass Solo, 14-17 years: Jonny Hayward 1st

Quartet for Strings: BRA String Quartet 2nd

Trio for Strings: Hayward Trio 2nd

Violin Solo, Open: Eva Hayward 2nd

Anna Quinn Highly Commended

Viola Solo, Open: Theo Hayward 1st

Cello Solo, Open: Neil Og Martin 3rd
 Clarinet Solo, Open: Giulia Marro 1st

Pianoforte Solo, 14-15 years: Kian Jan Dickens Highly Commended

The Annual Spring Concert in March was a huge success. Fourteen different groups and over three hundred students performed to a packed Ulster Hall. With so many different musical genres represented it really was a feast of music. The performance of 'The Armed Man' was truly special, considering that just a few days later, we would be in lock-down. Special mention must go to the various members of M6 for whom this was to be their last concert. There are simply too many to mention by name in this short article but Mr Forde, Mrs Prior and myself have greatly appreciated your support during your time at BRA.

All in all, we had much cause for celebration and I am looking forward to the next academic year already!

M.M.M.



The Music Department would like to take this opportunity to thank the various members of staff who sing, conduct, accompany and take part in so many instrumental and choral groups. Without your support the Music Department would find it very difficult to produce music of such a high standard. Thanks also to the instrumental teachers in the school who have shown such commitment to the pupils that they teach in school throughout the year.

Finally, news of some successes in the wider choral and instrumental scene. Eve Henderson gained a place in the Ulster Youth Choir while Eva Hayward, Theo Hayward, Jonny Hayward and Maya Reilly-Stewart gained places in the Ulster Youth Orchestra. These places are all highly prized and gained only by audition against the stiffest of competition province wide. Many congratulations to them all.





Drama in School

A SERVANT TO TWO MASTERS



The Autumn term saw the Senior Dramatic Society tackle the Commedia Dell'Arte classic *A Servant to Two Masters*. Written by Italian playwright Carlo Goldoni in 1746 and adapted for modern audiences by British writer Lee Hall in 1999, *A Servant to Two Masters* was the first scripted version of Commedia dell'arte, the improvised physical tradition of comedy, popular in Europe between the 16th and 18th centuries. Set in Venice, the play follows the fortunes of Truffaldino Battachio, a mostly well-meaning and somewhat underfed servant who, on a mission to earn a little extra cash,



takes on two masters at the same time! Complications arise as he endeavours to keep the knowledge of each master a secret from the other with some hilarious results. As a set text for A Level Drama and Theatre, I knew the potential this fast-paced show would have on creating a magical theatrical experience. After two days of auditions, our cast of thirty four were ready to breathe fresh life into these classic characters.



The principal cast was led by Oisin Gaffey (MVT) who played the role of Truffaldino. Starring in nearly every single scene meant

Oisin was required at every rehearsal for two and a half months before the curtain went up mid-November: his enthusiasm and dedication was inspiring and it was a joy to watch him flourish in the role.



Able support was provided by veterans of the Academy stage, Lorcan Convery (MVT) and Aoife Bennett (MVT) who starred as Truffaldino's masters Florindo and Beatrice, who in a plot twist are lost lovers in desperate search of one another! Others making a return to the stage included Niamh Rogan (LVI) as feisty servant Smeraldina; Eve Henderson (LVI) as pompous know-it-all Dr Lombardi; Anna Midgley (MVT) as local innkeeper Brighella; and Stuart Rea (LVI) as one half of the self-absorbed lovers, Silvio.



Rounding out the cast were newcomers Ross Johnston (LVI) as Pantaloon, the miserly head of an aristocratic family, and Jayne Kennedy (V) as his spoilt daughter and the object of Silvio's affections, Clarice.



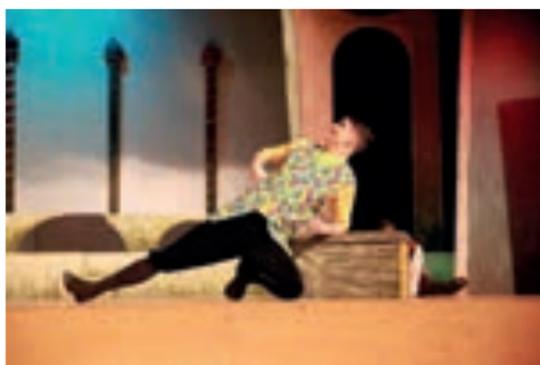
The spirit of the original production was kept alive as in true commedia style, some scenes were rewritten so as many talented actors could be cast as possible. This was no more evident than in Act One's climactic dinner party scene where Truffaldino attempts to serve both masters food at the same time. This extract is notoriously difficult to stage, but our exceptional cast of waiters made it look easy through their flawless choreography and teamwork.



A special mention must go to Cuann McAuley (LVI) who, in his scene stealing turn as elderly waiter Caecilius, paid homage to traditional commedia by using his acrobatic skills to hilarious and surprising effect! Whether a major character or a member of the ensemble, all cast members worked tirelessly during rehearsals and were integral to the success of the production.



While our cast entertained the audience from the stage, our crew was made up of several equally talented personnel who deserve a lot of credit. Mr Jamison once again led the set construction, ably supported by Mr McCreight and Mr McCartney who gave up many afternoons building the set. The Art Department, led by Mrs Kerr, worked tirelessly to ensure the Venetian Rialto was brought to life and the set looked fantastic on the night. Mrs McIlwaine took charge of lighting design and her dedication at rehearsals and on the nights of the play ensured the production looked visually spectacular. On the nights of the show she was ably supported by Caleb Tennyson (MVI) who took charge of the sound booth during the performances.



The incredibly talented Dr Lomas once again created stunning costumes to mirror the fashion of 18th century Italy. Whether it was searching charity shops for a bargain, textile shops for material or late night sewing

sessions turning curtains into dresses, she willingly gave up her time to create the fantastic costumes seen on stage. On performance nights, Miss Williams helped to organise costumes backstage while Miss Watson led the hair and make-up team.



The ever enthusiastic and supportive Dr Springer led his props team in tracing many weird and wonderful objects including photoshopping hilarious miniature portraits of cast members and acquiring the most beautiful bowl of fruit anyone has ever seen! Our talented stage crew ensured quick scene changes each night and deserve a great deal of credit for their professionalism backstage. Finally, a special thanks must go to Mr Spence, Mr Berakdar and Mr Martin who put their acting skills to the test and gamely joined in with all the fun on stage during the aforementioned dinner party scene closing out Act One in somewhat messy style!



As you can see, the production was a real team effort. I am overwhelmed by the talent and commitment exhibited by each member of the cast and crew and I know the show would not have been the success it was without them. Extra-curricular drama continues to go from strength to strength in the Academy and with the wealth of talent amongst our pupils and the support of both staff and parents, I am confident it will continue to prosper.



S.L.T.



School Games

1ST XV



“Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best you are capable of becoming” -John Wooden.

Senior rugby began mid in mid-July. This summer period has become an integral part of preparation for senior rugby. This involved training, both in the gym and the sports hall, to maximise player strength and conditioning for September.

The season started with a game against Ballyclare High School. Played on a crisp morning in Ballyclare, BRA started the game very well scoring a well worked try through Aaron Gooderham. The score at half time was 7-5 to Ballyclare. It was a very tight encounter. Disappointingly, the second half was not like that of the first. Poor defensive decisions, on several occasions, led to Ballyclare taking advantage and winning very comfortably in the end (52-17). Jack McKee and Eliot Donaldson scored two late tries for BRA. This wasn't the start to the season the team was looking for, but all were keen to respond quickly. In the fixture against Methodist college, players showed great character and physicality. The highlight was a superb try for Captain Rob

Sturgess. Methody won the game, but the 1st XV had shown their true capability in the fixture with a great team performance. This laid the platform for an excellent win the following week versus Sullivan Upper School. Zach Burton scored a fantastic individual try, along with scores from Ollie Parkes and Adam Gooderham. The team defended with true resilience and held out to win 19-10.

This win was moral boosting and deserved. The team had worked hard to improve and fulfil their potential. The restructuring of the Schools' Cup meant the team was to play Belfast High, Bainbridge Academy and Coleraine Grammar School in the group stages of the competition. The winner of the group and four best runners up would then progress to the last 16 of the Schools' Cup.

Belfast High would come first. Before this, the team played a very physical encounter against Wallace High School. BRA. lost 38-7. Although a heavy defeat, the team showed great character. With one week to go before the first group game, preparation was in full flow. A less intensive training week building up to the game which was to take place on a Friday afternoon. This gave the opportunity to draw a good crowd for what was a great game. It took the team time to settle into the game. BRA scored an early, well worked try through Louis West. Belfast High came back immediately and put BRA under pressure for large spells of the first half. The half time score 7-0. The second half was excellent. BRA played some great rugby. Further tries came from Ollie Parkes, Rob Sturgess, Jack Davis and Adam Gooderham. Five tries in total gave

the players a bonus point win in the group stage. A great start to the cup campaign!

This game was followed by another good win away to Royal School Dungannon. Tries from Andrew Greer, Malachi Swen, Ollie Parkes, Eliot Donaldson and Louis West gave BRA an impressive 33-12 win. After this game, came the half term break. Players had trained and progressed very well over this early part of the season. Results had been very encouraging, but there was still work to be done.

The return of school gave the 1st XV an opportunity to play Bangor Grammar School on the first Wednesday back. This was a poor performance. Bangor, playing a very open brand, scored 56 points unanswered. Given the progress that had been made up to this point, this was a setback. The next game was to be Coleraine Grammar School in the next group stage game of the Schools' Cup. This game was going to be the biggest test in the group stage. Two very evenly matched sides who knew if they won this had a very good chance of winning the group.

It was a wet morning in Coleraine but the team warmed up well and looked ready for the encounter. Coleraine started strongly and took a 5-0 lead midway through the first half. The game ebbed and flowed. Both teams made lots of errors. With 10 mins to play BRA scored a well worked, patient try through Cameron Dougan which Ollie Parkes converted to take the score to 7-5 BRA. Having held out sustained pressure from Coleraine, BRA gave away a penalty with seconds left on the clock. Coleraine kicked the penalty to win the game 8-7. A very difficult defeat, but with the glimmer of a losing bonus point there was still plenty to play for.

Although players were somewhat downbeat, the togetherness of the group was beginning to show. Players continued to commit well to all aspects of training. It was clear this group aspired to make it out of the group stages. There were two games before the last group stage game against Banbridge. These were against Dalriada and Regent House. The team had two convincing wins. Defeating Dalriada

46-12 with tries from Zach Burton x3, Liam Davis, Ben Brown and Louis West x2. The game against Regent House finished 39-7 with tries from Louis West, Jack Davis x2, Ben Brown, Zach Burton and Ryan Jameson. These wins were an excellent platform going into the final group stage game against Banbridge. The team new a bonus point win (4 tries or more) would be enough to see them progress to the last 16 of the Schools' Cup.

The way the group stage draw had fallen both previous games were away from home. The game against Bainbridge was at Roughfort. The pitch was in immaculate condition. A big thank you must go to our groundsman Anton who keeps Roughfort in pristine condition. The 1st XV pitch is without question one of the best surfaces in the country and we are incredibly grateful for all he does to maintain this and add to the experience of playing for BRA 1st XV.

The team started very well, scoring an early try to settle any nerves. Although Banbridge played with great spirit and determination, BRA were simply too strong on the day. The final score of 52-12. The bonus point win meant the team would progress out of the group as one of the best runners up. Tries were scored by Rob Sturgess, Ollie Parkes, Jack Davis, Ben Brown, Louis West, Jack Mckee and Ryan Jameson. An excellent all round team performance.

The Christmas break was now just around the corner. It had been an excellent term's work. The team was beginning to gel very well. Players took a break for a week or so over Christmas. After Christmas, it was time to prepare for two difficult away fixtures to Campbell College and Enniskillen Royal Grammar school. Both games proved to be a real test. With some key players missing, it gave an opportunity for some others to claim their place in the Schools' Cup squad. In the game against Campbell College, the team lost 25-5. BRA played very well going into the second half 7-0 down. An excellent set piece try from Cameron Dougan in the second half brought the scores level. However, in the last

20 minutes, CCB proved to be too strong running in some late scores.

An away trip to Enniskillen is never easy. They were a particularly strong team. Although a heavy defeat, some players put their hands up for selection moving forward. This was very encouraging for all of us as coaching staff!

Players returned to their school routine the following Monday. Preparation was now solely into getting ready for our last 16 Schools' Cup game. The team had been drawn away to R.B.A.I. players knew they would need to be at their very best! However, it was exactly where they wanted to be, competing with the very best in the competition. There was a buzz and excitement. Schools' cup days at Osborne park are special.

There were two games to come before this encounter. There was a narrow defeat (24-17) to a fancied Friends' School Lisburn side. BRA points came from a fantastic score by Liam Davis, created by Elliot Donaldson, a try from Nik Kane and Andrew Greer. There was then a fixture against Grosvenor Grammar School with BRA winning comfortably 37-5 with tries from Rob Sturgess, Ollie Parkes, Jack Davis, Jack McKee, Malachi Swen and Aaron Gooderham.

The Senior and Medallion squad took a weekend to go away and refine their game plans in preparation for the Schools' cup and Medallion Shield. The trip to Johnston House estate was fantastic. This state of the art facility has everything any sports team needs on site. A gym, swimming pool, meeting room, pitches all within walking distance. This trip gave a great opportunity to bond and develop further. As a team, players leave the weekend and always comment on how the intensity of the weekend puts them in a better place. It was fantastic to have the medallion along as well who were able to learn and progress from senior players. All preparation had been done. The time had come to take the trip across to South Belfast to face R.B.A.I.

In the week building up to this game, we had reiterated to players continuously that this was going to be special and something to be savoured and remembered. The team woke up to a beautiful Saturday morning. The pitch at Osborne was in superb condition and a large crowd started to build. Exactly what we expected and memories that school boy players need to relish and remember...this doesn't happen often in life!

The first XV led by Captain Rob Sturgess walked the infamous steps down on to Cranmore 1. BRA came flying out of the blocks. The first 30 minutes were as intense as the team had played all season. Inst looked slightly stunned. BRA were rewarded with a superb try by Rob Sturgess, created by Jack Davis and Ollie Parkes. BRA led 7-0 with 25 minutes gone on the clock. The ten minutes before half time were a great learning. Inst scored three tries unanswered. Players switched off for ten minutes and it proved very costly. 21-7 down at half time was not what we expected given the first 25 minutes.

Inst scored immediately after half time. Heads dropped. Inst went on to win 47-12 deservedly. Ollie Parkes scored a late consolation try.

The exit from the Schools cup was difficult to process. Players were, understandably, very disappointed. So much work and effort had gone into this and we had a chance give the start. There was so much, however, for players to learn from this experience. It was time to put energy into the subsidiary shield competition.

The team was drawn away to Down High School. There had been a few injuries against R.B.A.I. However, a strong team was fielded. Unfortunately, after the Inst defeat we never got the intensity back that there was in previous weeks. A tight game against Down High ended in a 14-12 defeat, tries from Malachi Swen and Lee Russell. A game that BRA should have won but wasn't to be.

As the season drew to a close, it was evident these players had been truly committed to

achieve what they did. They had added to the legacy of wearing a BRA 1st XV Jersey. As a coaching staff it was a pleasure to work with this group. To those that leave we wish you well. Continue to give to the game that you all love, elsewhere. To those that remain, learn from the season past and be sure to give yourself the self-satisfaction that come the end of next season you have become the best you are capable of becoming.

I would like to thank Brian McLaughlin for his continued expertise and support, David Campbell for his work conditioning players, Chris McCarey for his support with the team and organising all fixtures throughout the year, Luke Bonar for his support in video analysis and Daryl Service as team Physio. Without these members of staff Senior players wouldn't get the fantastic experience they do. Finally, I would like to thank Rob Sturgess for his leadership as Captain throughout the year.

D.J.C. / B.M.L.

2ND XV

After a slow start to the season, the 2nd XV grew from strength to strength after the Halloween half-term, when combinations within the side started to form. Solidified by a front row of Sam Jameson, Ryan Simpson and Morgan Curran, the try scoring exploits of backrow Ben Lonsdale, Robin Montgomery and Sam Caldwell formed a solid half back pairing with the ever-improving Keaton Morrison and Matthew Todd in the centre. Strong performances arrived at home against Grosvenor and Bangor with a superb away win versus Royal School Dungannon.

The undoubted highlight of the season was the 2nd XV Trophy Quarter Final win against a very strong Dalriada side with a passionate crowd and home referee. Despite all these factors, the team showed great character and resilience to battle to a tight victory, led by the boot of Jack Magowan and a defensive stand on the last phase, holding the ball up over the line to earn a much-deserved victory. Unfortunately, the Trophy run would end away

to Friends' in the semi-final, but the growth of team throughout the season should not be forgotten with many players showing the ability to push on for 1st XV places next season.

L.B. / D.C.

3RD XV

The 3rd XV had an enjoyable season, with some entertaining rugby played throughout the campaign. Many boys had the opportunity to play on this team and all did so with an abundance of enthusiasm and great willingness to represent the school proudly. The team was ably captained by Lee Russell. Lee's unorthodox style of play often lifted the side. His chip kick against Ballyclare will live long in the memory.

I wish all the boys every success next season. They are a young squad and I am confident that many of these players will represent the school at a higher level. My thanks to Mr Irwin for his help and humour this season.

O.T.M. / N.I.

MEDALLION XV



The Medallion had a very successful season, they reached the semi-final of the Medallion Shield losing to eventual winners Campbell College, the only side to defeat them throughout the season.

The season started with wins over Rainey, Ballyclare, Wallace, Dungannon, Sullivan and Armagh. The highlight of the pre-Halloween fixtures being a 48-47 victory away to Methody. This was an epic game full of

running rugby. The most pleasing thing was the determination of the players to win with the match coming down to the final kick of the game with the side having been behind for the entire match. Josh McKee stepped up to slot a tricky penalty and seal a much deserved victory. The side remained unbeaten in the fixtures between Halloween and Christmas. The highlight of this period being a victory over Coleraine Grammar school, a side who had dominated at this age group for the previous three years.



The side suffered their first defeat away to Campbell College in a fixture over the Christmas period. The side underperformed in difficult conditions. It served, however, as a reality check and focused the minds on the upcoming Medallion Shield.



The Medallion Shield draw was not kind; the side were drawn away to Coleraine Grammar School. In terrible conditions, the determination and resilience of the team came to the fore again. Despite going behind to an early try, the side dominated proceedings and went on to win the match. This was a fantastic

victory that sent the side into the quarter finals with confidence.



The quarter final was a home fixture against Wallace High School. Once again, conditions were terrible with gale force winds blowing straight down the pitch at Roughfort. BRA played with the wind in the first half and failed to register any points. This left the team to face an uphill battle in the second half. The team responded to the half-time war cries and gave the performance of their lives to allow Wallace to score a only single penalty. On a rare visit to the Wallace half, Josh McKee slotted a penalty to leave the scores at 3-3. This was how the match finished and thus a replay was scheduled for the following Tuesday at Wallace.



This was once again a nail bitter, BRA scored an early converted try and it appeared as though they would win comfortably. However, Wallace had other ideas and took control of the game. In the second half, Wallace completely dominated the game in terms of territory and possession. BRA faced wave after wave of attack and it seemed inevitable that Wallace would score. BRA, however, were not to be beaten and defended like lions, Wallace were restricted to two penalties. The final whistle brought jubilant scenes and place against Campbell College in the semi-final.

Medallion Shield. I wish all the boys success in their rugby careers

I.M.G.

U13 A XV

The U13 A team experienced a very successful and encouraging rugby season, providing much promise and expectation for the future. The season opened with back to back 40-0 wins against Rainey Endowed and Ballyclare High. Outstanding early season form was shown by Jack Bacon and Samuel Clarke, who demonstrated his ability from the kicking tee as well as making some line breaking runs from full-back.

A game away to Armagh Royal followed, with forward Aaron Caldwell showing his scoring potential, as well as tries from consistent team captain Hadwyn Hughes and Frank Davis. The steady hand of Adam Cairns proved vital for the team's continuity and Aaron Thompson proved defensively solid on the wing.

The semi-final was played at R.B.A.I. It was a match dominated by Campbell who raced out of the blocks scoring three unanswered early tries. It appeared as though the lads were overawed by the occasion and they struggled to get going. BRA did eventually get into the game and scored a second half try, Campbell did not register any points in the second half. Sadly, however, the damage had been done and Campbell College progressed to the final.



This was a really enjoyable season with a very talented group of boys who promise much for the future. They were excellently led by captain Oliver Scott. I would like to thank Mr Patterson for helping to coach the side throughout the season. His enthusiasm and expertise were invaluable.

C.M.C.

UNDER 14 A XV AND B XV

The under 14 rugby season proved to be one which was very competitive. It was heartening to have a strong B side and lots of boys willing to play rugby. There were some very strong performances throughout the season from both teams. The A team had a memorable win against Campbell College in the final of the under 14 plate at R.B.A.I., also defeating Sullivan and Bangor Grammar on the way. There were excellent performances against Methody and R.B.A.I. were perhaps we did not get what we deserved in terms of result. There were good wins against Coleraine, Armagh and Dungannon and plenty of very good rugby played. Thanks to Alex Place and Joshua Harold who captained the As and Bs respectively. Congratulations to Alex and Josh Manson who were both part of the Medallion squad that reached the semi- final of the

More success was to follow in October and November with handsome victories versus Dungannon Royal and Bangor Grammar. During this period, the team were reaping the benefits of training sessions where pattern and positional play were coming into focus; astute players such as Kain McGrory and Jake Carpenter helped to develop a strong pod structure in the pack. Positional changes were also afoot, with athletic full-back Aidan Murphy making a positive switch to the wing, Daniel Blayney alternating between the pack and centre, and skilful out half Oliver Cox making the transition to front row after a conversation with Old Boy Tom Stewart.

An exceptional 50-0 win against Coleraine would prove to be the peak of the season, seeing a return of the outstanding Adam Hewitt to the centre of an increasingly settled backline. Both he and the mercurial Frank Davis showed an ability to cut out the back line of an entire team with individual tries first kicked from hand. This win was underpinned by an exceptional individual performance from influential scrum-half Harper McCloskey, who capped a fine display with an excellent try.

Following this run of form, failure to adapt to difficult conditions with a less exuberant game plan combined with a little overconfidence, resulted in a deflating draw against Dalriada. A poor back line display was saved in part by the emergence of the committed Nathan Rossal, ever improving Noah Gregg, and aggressive Ethan Kerr in the pack.

Rossal would again justify his promotion in a much changed side against Regent, where a 29-19 win allowed the likes of the mobile Evan Lemon and rangy Sam Saunders to prove their leadership as the team returned to winning ways. Individual brilliance from the influential Daniel Blayney was again on display to push the team over the line in what was a very pleasing performance.

Post-Christmas saw a downturn in form for the team, mainly due to injury. Heavy losses to Campbell and R.B.A.I. came at a time where a depleted squad could not cope with a loss of continuity. However, a performance versus Banbridge Academy seen the emergence of players such as the tenacious Jack Webb to add more competition for places in the team.

Special thanks must go to captain Hadwyn Hughes for his organisation and support this year. I know he will prove to be an exceptional leader throughout his school career and beyond. This is a squad with considerable talent and togetherness, and I firmly believe they will have many successes in the near future. Finally, I would like to thank all of the parents and guardians who passionately supported the team throughout the season.

P.T.S.

BOYS' HOCKEY

1ST XI

The season started with optimism going into our first Prior Shield match versus Ballyclare, but lost 3-1, then a second Prior Shield match versus Methody, we bounced back with a 3-1 win to keep us in with a chance of progressing through the group stages. David Monahan scored two and Brandon Magee scored the

other. Our third Prior Shield match was away to Armagh, which was lost comprehensively 5-0. This was disappointing as we did not perform at all well. The last Prior Shield group match was against Bangor, away. During the first half, we were very much in the game and playing well, but against the run of play they scored two quick goals and we simply could not convert good play and chances, which was very disappointing, as the performance was much better than against Armagh. This, unfortunately, ruled us out of progressing through to the quarter-finals.



Post-Christmas, we were entered for the Burney Cup and were drawn against the favourites: Friends'. We came up with a game plan and were focused on producing a good performance, over expecting a result. A 12-0 loss sounds like a terrible result, but the coaching staff were extremely proud of the players' performance for the full 70 minutes of the match and we walked off with respect from the Friends' players, which was most pleasing.

This defeat put us into the Burney Cup Plate competition in which we were drawn against Bangor, who defeated us 6-0, in what transpired to be the last match of the season. This was a disappointing end to an outstanding contribution to Boys' Hockey at BRA from Christopher Pollock and David Russell, Captain and Vice-Captain respectively. Chris and David played for the 1st XI since Form IV and have been admirable leaders and performers for the 1st XI every season. We have watched their talents and skills develop over the years and we hope that they will both

go on to play their hockey at club level for many years to come.

With a good group of talented Form IV players coming through to play senior hockey next season, we are optimistic that we can continue to improve and build on the progress made this season. We wish to thank the senior players for their commitment to training and matches throughout the year and for their good humour, sportsmanship and camaraderie throughout the season.

K.L.

GIRLS' HOCKEY

The Girls' Hockey club welcomed the expertise and experience of elite coach Stephen Watt for a third season. Stephen's main focus again would be with the 1st XI and 2A XI squads although he would also have an important input working with the Junior teams through the week.

For the 2019/20 season, we fielded four Senior and four Junior teams every week for our Saturday morning fixtures. Some weeks we also played an U15s team, if the opposing school were able to provide one, such were the high numbers attending our Senior club. In addition to our eight regular teams, the 1st year club practised every Saturday.

After Christmas, the Form I team played some friendly fixtures against Sullivan Upper, Methodist College, Friends' and Belfast High. The usual conclusion to the Form I season is to participate in the long established annual tournament hosted by Grosvenor Grammar School. Also the Carrick Grammar and Killicomaine Junior High Form I tournaments. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 these tournaments did not happen.

As always the club boasted girls who had gained representative honours:

- Niamh McIvor represented Ulster and Irish U18s.
- Emma Uprichard represented Ulster and Irish U16.

- Olivia Beattie and Abbie Braniff represented Ulster U16s.
- Olivia Beattie, Abbie Braniff, Sasha Logan, Eve Thompson and Emma Uprichard all represented Belfast U15 Schools.

N.N.

1ST XI

Played: 22 Won: 16 Drew: 2 Lost: 5

Captain: Julia Uprichard
Vice-Captain: Megan Warke
Top goal scorer: Niamh McIvor



1st XI Squad: Erin Lavery, Molly Mccourt, Olivia Beattie, Abbie Braniff, Ellie Collins, Aoife Corry, Emma Dobbin, Olivia Donaldson, Rebecca Dwyer, Sasha Logan, Anna Matthews, Niamh Mcivor, Eve Thompson, Olivia Thompson, Emma Uprichard, Julia Uprichard, Kerry Uprichard and Megan Warke.

In her fourth and final year of representing BRA, 1st XI, Julia Uprichard captained the team and Megan Warke was Vice Captain. Both girls played an integral part in the team's success. The season started with a successful team building trip to the North Coast where we



played matches against Coleraine Ladies and Raphoe Ladies.



The 1st XI won their Super League group by beating Wallace High, Portadown College and Lurgan College. The reward for winning our group in the Super League was to be placed in the third round of the Senior Schools' Cup. We drew Victoria College, who we had beaten narrowly last season in the Cup. This season was a more convincing 5-2 win with Niamh McIvor scoring a hat trick and Megan Warke and Aoife Corry scoring the other two goals. This win gave the team confidence and belief going forward to the quarter-final stage, where we met Ballyclare High, and in the end we proved the better team with a 3-1 win, Niamh McIvor scoring one and Emma Uprichard getting the other two goals.



In the semi-final to be played at the Stormont pitches, we were drawn against Banbridge

Academy. Having played Banbridge in the Super League semi-final at the same venue, we knew that this draw was not going to be easy. Having lost narrowly last time on penalty runs, we were prepared to go out and show Banbridge that this time it would be different.

Before the semi-final day arrived, we went on tour to Edinburgh. The timing of the tour worked in perfectly as it provided us with the opportunity to play two very good Scottish schools in George Watson and Mary Erskine Grammar, giving us crucial preparation for the semi-final.

The semi-final match was very close and ended up finishing scoreless. Again, our semi-final against Banbridge Academy needed to be decided by penalty runs.

On this occasion, the outcome was in our favour winning 5-4 through the drama of 'sudden death'!



Goalkeeper, Erin Lavery, was the hero of the hour making the winning save after Niamh McIvor had scored ours. This took us into the final of the Schools, Cup where we would meet Friends' School.

The whistle went and the game got underway, BRA conceded early as our nerves had not settled.

As the match progressed, we rose to the occasion and scored shortly after, with Niamh McIvor getting a touch in front of the Friends' keeper set up by Emma Uprichard.

Goals followed on by Megan Warke, Julia Uprichard and Abbie Braniff, with Friends' scoring a late goal to make the final score 4-2. An outstanding team performance! BRA lifted the cup for the first time in 46 years! The celebrations went on long into the night!



From August and throughout the season, we trained hard for all our matches with our main purpose of getting to the the final, which truly is a school girl's dream.

The final day arrived on March 4th. Excitement and joy filled this closely bonded group of girls with some nerves on the side for a few players and coaches. Pre match preparations involved putting our BRA ribbons on, getting the music blasting and most importantly imagining the victory that we were about to achieve. Our pre match lunch included meeting members of the last BRA Schools' Cup winning team from 1974!



A massive thank you from all the girls goes out to all those supporters that joined us on this very special occasion but especially to those past Schools' Cup winners proudly wearing their honours blazers from all those years ago.

This achievement would not have been possible without the input from our dedicated coaches, Mrs Nicholl and Stephen Watt. We have greatly appreciated their tactical input and their words of encouragement throughout the season leading up to and including the final.

Megan Warke(LVI)

2A XI

Played: 18 Won: 8 Drew: 5 Lost: 5

2nd XI Squad: *Molly Mccourt, Erin Lavery, Sophia Del Castillo, Monica Del Castillo, Ellen Loane, Ruby Dougan, Ellie Collins, Olivia Donaldson, Anna Matthews, Rebecca Dwyer, Aoife Corry, Kerry Uprichard, Beth Hillis, Rebecca Parkes, Lorena Del Castillo and Eve Patterson Wilson.*

The squad had started the season travelling to the North Coast along with the 1st XI squad where they played matches against Coleraine Ladies and Raphoe Ladies. The trip proved both enjoyable and successful in terms of team building and team performances. The team was captained by Sophia Del Castillo with Olivia Donaldson as Vice-Captain. Both girls were in their last year at BRA and proved themselves to be excellent leaders both on and off the pitch. The team had a good combination of younger and experienced players and did not take long to gel together.

They had excellent wins against Strathearn and Banbridge Academy in the first month of the new season. The team got a bye into the 2nd round of their Cup where they drew Dromore High away. A convincing 5-0 win over Dromore saw us progress to the 3rd round where we drew Foyle College at home. The match against Sullivan produced another convincing win, this time winning 3-0. Unfortunately, they could not repeat this

performance in the quarter-final against a strong Ballymena Academy team who ended our cup run by beating us 1-0.

The team had hoped and deserved to progress further after a fully committed season which started as early as August for them and it was disappointing for them to exit the cup at the quarter-final stage. They were a lovely group of girls who demonstrated a fantastic work ethic alongside the 1sts all season, some of whom also represented the 1sts.

N.N.

2B XI

Played: 15 Won: 9 Drew: 3 Lost: 3

Captain: Amie Bradley
Vice-Captain: Wrienne Salvatierra
Top goal scorer: Amie Bradley
Player of the year: Wrienne Salvatierra
Goals scored: 27

2BXI Squad: *Wrienne Salvatierra, Julia Forbes, Sabriel Gergett, Ella Harvey, Sophie Bloomfield, Amie Bradley, Ellen Loane, Megan Bloomfield, Eden McCoubrey, Fabienne Cochrane, Eve Patterson Wilson, Ella Linton, Anna Saunders, Kate Sturgess, Hannah Thompson, Amy Higgins and Sarah Saunders.*



This season, I had the pleasure of having another fantastic 2B XI side and we enjoyed yet another successful season to date. We made it to the semi-finals of the Gibson Cup and also won the South-East Antrim League.



An abundance of players always arrived to training and matches with enthusiasm and a will to win attitude. With so many keen players turning out to training I had a very tough job of deciding this year's 2B XI. This year's success was down to a group of girls from Form IV – MVI who bonded as a team very quickly. Team morale and spirit remained high throughout the season. It was a great pleasure to work with such a dedicated and enthusiastic group of girls.



Every season, the girls compete in the Gibson Cup which begins in October. The matches were played in an initial group stage. The girls produced three excellent results which enabled

them to progress into the next round. We faced a very strong Rainey side in the quarter-final. Fortunately, we drew a home fixture which helped us come away with a 2-1 win, our Captain Amie Bradley scoring both goals. The semi-final saw the team being drawn to Strathearn. We played at neutral venue, Jordanstown University. On the day, we did not perform to our usual standard, maybe nerves got the better of us. Panic both on and off the ball during the first half led to us conceding one goal, which we were unable to come back from.

Gibson Cup Results – Semi Finalists

Wallace:
Win: 2-0 (Goal Scorers: Ellen Loane, Lorena Del Castillo)

Limavady:
Win: 1-1

Omagh:
Win: 2-0 (Goal Scorers: Fabienne Cochrane, Amie Bradley)

Quarter-Final v Rainey:
Win: 2-1 (Goal Scorer: Amie Bradley)

Semi-Final v Strathearn:
Lost: 1-0



This season the 2BXI successfully regained the South East Antrim League title. The League consisted of Antrim Grammar, Ballyclare High School, Belfast High School, Carrick Grammar and Larne Grammar.

South East Antrim League Results – League Winners

Belfast High:
Win: 1-0

Ballyclare High:
Win: 3-2

Larne Grammar:
Win: 1-0

Carrick Grammar:
Withdrew

Antrim Grammar:
Withdrew

As a special thanks to the team for working so hard and showing commitment throughout the season. In early March, we had a team afternoon at We Are Vertigo, Titanic, followed by pizza! It was a lovely way to end the 2019/20 season.



Special thanks must go to Amie Bradley and Wrienne Salvatierra who were an excellent Captain and Vice-Captain, motivating and encouraging our team. The five MVI girls leaving this year will be greatly missed. I hope

that Amie, Wrienne, Fabienne, Sophie and Julia will carry on playing hockey at university or club level.

J.R.S.

CAPTAIN'S REPORT

At the start of the season, we got off to a slow start during our friendly matches and didn't play as well as we had expected. Through working hard together at training and with the commitment of Mrs Shaw, by the time League matches came, we were set and ready to play to our expected standard. We were determined to do better this year as last year we had placed second in the League.

Every single match we played, each player on the team gave 110%, for which I have to thank every single one of them. Whilst winning the League was on our minds, we also had our cup matches. Coming up to the cup matches, nerves started to set in as getting to the final last year and losing was on a lot of our minds and we were hoping to do one better this year.

Unfortunately, we did not play our best when it came to the semi-final. However, we did not let that faze us as we played our best when it came to our League matches, leading us to win the League. I could not be more proud of the girls I got to play alongside this year. They made my last year of school hockey unforgettable. I wish them all the best in the future!

Amie Bradley (MVI)

3RD XI

Played: 10 Won: 4 Drew: 3 Lost: 3

Captain: Abbie Baxter
Top goal scorer: Eva McGoldrick
Player of the year: Kate Sturgess
Goals scored: 16

3rdXI/U15 Squad: Aoife Caldwell, Abbie Baxter, Amy Harpur, Jayne Kennedy, Caitlyn Hennessy, Ellie Walsh, Lucy Handcock, Jessica Porter, Rachel McGrath, Bella Scott, Kate Sturgess, Charlotte Beattie Logan,

Hannah Beattie, Eva McGoldrick, Kaitlyn McCalmont, Katie Craig, Molly Lapworth, Regan Greer, Ellie McIvor and Grace Jamison.

The 3rd XI side was a pleasure to coach this season. The 3rd XI was made up of a mixture of girls from Form IV-LVI. This season, we had a pool of around 25 or more players for our 3rd XI. It was great to see such a good turnout, although it meant that a lot of players were rotated each week for matches. I thank the girls for having such a good attitude and sticking with their school hockey.

Notable victories throughout the season came against Hunter House (2-0) and Grosvenor Grammar (5-1).

On the 23rd October, the 3rd XI played in the third round of the Cup. We had a superb team performance with many of the U15 group also playing. We beat Slemish 2-0 at home. This led us to playing Ballyclare High early December in the quarter final of the 3rd XI Cup. It was a very tight game; the girls were very unlucky not to progress to the next round, losing only 2-1 away to B.H.S.. Kaitlyn McCalmont scored our only goal and Charlotte Beattie was player of the match.

I would like to thank the girls and in particular our Captain and top goal scorer, Abbie Baxter, for their dedication and hard work this year. It has been a very enjoyable and successful season for a talented group of players. I look forward to working with some of you again next season.

J.R.S.

CAPTAIN'S REPORT

The skill level of the entire team has improved massively throughout the season and everyone should be very proud of themselves. Overall, we had a successful season which included a fantastic 3-0 win against Slemish in the first round of the 3rd XI cup. We managed to make it all the way to the quarter final where we, unfortunately, lost 2-1 to Ballyclare High school. However, we ended the season on a

high note with a 2-0 win against Belfast High. I have been honoured to captain such a fantastic team. I would like to thank Mrs Shaw for coaching and encouraging us throughout the season. Well done to everybody and I wish you all the best for next season!

Abbie Baxter (LVI)

U14 A XI

14 A XI Squad: Elyse Taylor, Daisie Donaldson, Sophie Burns, Mia Collins, Rachel Beattie, Beth Adam, Beth Callaghan, Lois McGrath, Hannah O'Kane, Emma Harvey, Evie Caldwell, Madeline Morwood, Emily Anderson, Zoë Place, Anouk Bosket and Anna O'Dowd.



CAPTAIN'S REPORT

We had a really good season this year although, sadly, we could not finish it. Despite this, we worked very well as a team and our skills improved greatly. We had many great wins. One that stands out to me is one of the first matches back at the start of the new season. The match was against Larne High. We won 4-0 thanks to the goal scorers: Emily Anderson (who scored two goals), Rachel Beattie and Lois McGrath. We have improved as a team due to everyone working hard and made amazing memories over the past season. We have had our ups and downs together and we made it into the semi-final of the shield but, sadly, lost to Sullivan Upper School after penalty runs. Thank you to Miss Corish and all the other coaches for giving up their free time

to coach us and helping us to be the best team we could be.

Sophie Burns (III)

U14 B XI

14 B XI Squad: Rachel Baird, Beth Callaghan, Abigail Davis, Kara Craig, Leah McCord, Ciara Murray, Catherine McCormack, Sarah Brogan, Alex Mulholland, Ruth Matthews-Devine, Charlotte Boone, Riona Millard, Aimee Courtney, Molly Hamilton, Emma Sheppard, Emily Lavery, Aleah McClinton, Cara Johns, Alice Logan, Natasha Morrison and Tara Dazzel.



Firstly, I must convey my pride in the attitude, perseverance and commitment of the under 14 hockey players to both their team and their school on and off the pitch this season. Technically the girls have improved individually and, as a team, they have produced some delightful passages of play, leading to success on the pitch.

Unfortunately, we made an exit to the Ulster U14 Junior Cup competition in round three due to a wonder goal from Omagh Academy, narrowly losing 1-0. However, we then continued into the Ulster Shield competition, were the team battled through to the semi-final stage to face Sullivan Upper School. This game went to extra time and subsequently we were defeated on penalty runs after a valiant effort from the girls. Sullivan Upper School went on to subsequently lift the trophy.

Both our A and B squad have had successes on the pitch this season, and it was great to have so many girls wanting to compete and represent the school across the Province. I firmly believe the discipline, teamwork and resilience that sport can nurture and develop in our pupils is a priceless part of their school experience at Belfast Royal Academy. I would like to make a special mention to our captains for the role they have fulfilled this season, and to Rachel Beattie on her individual achievements with the U15 Ulster Talent Development Squad.

Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, our much anticipated Paris Hockey Tour in March was cancelled only days before departure. The disappointment was felt by all, including myself. I believe, in the future, this period of time will provide a moment to reflect upon and gain encouragement from as an experience of how we have overcome a negative situation. I would like to thank the bursar, Simon Burrows for his diligence in dealing with this matter, and also to our kit sponsors McCormack Demolition, Monkstown Dental Practice and Belfast Audi. I wish all the girls continued success in their Senior hockey career, and I look forward to following their progress over the coming years.

R.E.C.

CAPTAIN'S REPORT

This year the Under 14Bs worked really hard. As we progressed throughout the season, we started to pick up some more wins against Wallace, Belfast High and Ballyclare High. The team played amazingly all season and our teamwork started improving. I would like to say thank you to Miss Corish and Miss Allen for coaching us all season. I would also like to thank all the girls for attending training and coming to the Saturday morning matches. All the girls have showed a great amount of talent; it has been a pleasure to captain them.

Abigail Davis (III)

U13 A XI

Played: 16 Won: 8 Drew: 4 Lost: 4

Captain: Anouk Bosket

Vice-Captain: Faith Hillis

Top Goal Scorer: Anna O'Dowd

U13 A XI Squad: Phia Parry, Anna Morrow, Sophie Hollywood, Zoe Place, Julia Robinson, Emma Campbell, Emily Anderson, Anouk Bosket, Faith Hillis, Anna O'Dowd, Jenna McCall, Lucy Chambers, Maddie Beggs, Emily Saunders.



CAPTAIN'S REPORT

The U13 A's had a steady start to the season with a few well contested matches against both Banbridge Academy and Wallace High, each ending in a draw. As the team settled, we lost a few hard fought games and drew a few more, but the girls worked consistently to achieve good wins in the season against Antrim, Belfast High, Carrick, Larne, Grosvenor, Methody and Sullivan.

By far our toughest matches of the season were against Friends' and Ballymena Academy. However, we kept our heads up and were consistent and diligent in training to learn from our defeats.

Unfortunately, it was also a season that, through injury, bad weather, Norovirus and Covid-19 saw some matches postponed or cancelled as well as the season coming to an abrupt end. We were denied the opportunity to play Glenlola and Victoria but it was a match against Ballyclare High that could have seen us win the South Antrim League!

Our team has worked hard and turned up for training in all sorts of weather and I'm very proud to have Captained them this year, alongside Faith. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank both Miss Brady and Stephen Watt for all their hard work and patience with developing our team this year. We look forward to consolidating the skills and training that they have provided into the 20/21 season.

Anouk Bosket (II)

U13 B XI

Played: 12 Won: 5 Drew: 5 Lost: 2

Captain: Ella Kilpatrick

Vice-Captain: Ellie Gallagher

Top Goal Scorer: Ruby Bickerstaff



U13 B XI Squad: Maya Anderson, Ella Kilpatrick, Jane Martin, Ciara Gilchrist, Annabelle Toal, Ellie Gallagher, Caitlin Shaw, Zoe Piddington, Jessica Lane, Emily Meekin, Lucy Lyons, Ruby Bickerstaff, Gabrielle Gibson, Claudia Adams, Bethany Gibson, Grace Rogan, Tanisha Biswas, Sophia McGrugan, Freya Shore, Katie McCarney, Robyn Agnew, Sophie Graham, Fiona Philip, Katie-Anna Johnston, Madhumitha Pandiaraj

CAPTAIN'S REPORT

Over the season, I have saw a real improvement in all of the girls who trained and played matches. They are so driven and determined in everything they do and always do it with a smile on their faces. The team have

never disappointed and always played to the best of their abilities. The U13B squad were an outstanding team and I cannot wait for the many more years of hockey to come!

Ella Kilpatrick (II)

Both squads have worked very hard during training and matches to improve their hockey skills and fitness throughout the season. It was fantastic to see so many players participate each week and it was unfortunate that our season finished early due to Covid-19. That being said, we celebrated several wins throughout the year and finished our season with a very enjoyable trip to the inflatable park at We Are Vertigo.

I would like to thank the girls for their dedication and hard work this year, it has been a very enjoyable and successful season. I would also like to thank Mr Watt and Miss Anderson for all of their coaching and umpiring throughout the year.

K.E.B.

OWLS LADIES' HOCKEY CLUB

JUNIOR HOCKEY

The 2019/2020 season has been another successful year for Owls Ladies Junior section. We have continued to grow in numbers and develop a love for hockey in girls aged 5-15.

Our Juniors are split into three sections: Under (Minis), Under 13 and Under 15.

Our Minis section is for girls aged 5-11. Training sessions take place on a Wednesday evening and Saturday morning. During our training sessions, the girls experience hockey through a range of progressive drills and games led by experienced coaches.

In addition to our promising Under 11 section, we have an excellent Under 13 and Under 15 section. Throughout the season all sections are led by qualified coaches. They are able to gain match experience, and develop their love for

the sport. This year, we had the pleasure of entering two teams for each section into their respective competitions. Our players showed hard work and determination whilst honing their skills during Ulster Hockey Blitz days and League matches.

Unfortunately, our matches came to an abrupt halt due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The girls missed out on a number of tournaments and social events. However, we plan to make up for that when the new season commences!

We hope that next season will bring further success and we will continue to strengthen our coaching teams, training and match opportunities.

All new members are welcome. If you are interested in joining the club, please contact: owlsladieshockeyclub@hotmail.com

Training information can be found below:

- **Under 13:** Wednesdays 6.00-7.00pm BRA Playing Fields, Mallusk (Astro Pitch)
- **Under 15:** Mondays 6.00-7.00pm BRA Playing Fields, Mallusk (Astro Pitch)
- **Minis (P1-P7):** Saturdays 10.30-11.30 BRA Playing Fields, Mallusk (Gravel Pitch)

SENIOR HOCKEY

Owls Ladies Hockey Club were enjoying a successful season in 2019/2020, fielding three Senior squads each week. Unfortunately, the season was cut short due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, despite this the 1st XI squad finished fourth in the Senior 2 League. The 2nd XI finished mid table in Junior Four, a great result after being promoted last year. The 3rd XI had an extremely successful season securing a top three finish in their League.

Although we had several players in the process of trials, unfortunately, the annual Interprovincial Tournaments did not go ahead this year. We hope to see this back up and running next season.

Recognition should be given to the members of Owls hockey team who were part of BRA 1st

XI who won the Ulster Schools 'Cup. It was a fantastic occasion that showcased the talent, hard work, growth and development of the BRA hockey club and we are delighted to be able to continue our club links with the school.

Going into the 2020/21 season, we are looking forward to getting back to playing hockey and progressing as a club. We hope that this season will bring even more success for all of our players and we encourage new players, coaches and club volunteers to get involved!

All new members are welcome. For further information please contact: owlsladieshockeyclub@hotmail.com

Training Times:

- **Monday:** 7.00pm-9.00pm BRA Playing Fields, Mallusk (Astro Pitch)
- **Wednesday:** 7.00pm-9.00pm BRA Playing Fields, Mallusk (Astro Pitch)

K.E.B.

NETBALL

This year we had eleven teams playing competitive games. The Junior, Intermediate and Senior teams each played in Premier Leagues for their age group. All other teams played in the District League Competition. It was great to see the dedication and commitment given by both players and coaches involved.

The Intermediate Premier squad played in the Northern Ireland League Finals and came runners up against Wallace High School.

Both the Intermediate and Senior Premier teams reached the finals of the Northern Ireland Shield Competition. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, the matches were unable to be played.

Netball has continued to grow with talented and committed players emerging throughout the club. It is great to see many players competing at representative level. I would like

to thank all of the players and coaches for their hard work this season.

Representative Honours:

- U13/U15 Regional Development Academy did not take place due to Covid-19.
- U17 Northern Ireland Development Squad – Fiona Murray
- U17 Northern Ireland Squad- Siobhan Baine, Nada Hawela, Catelyn Burns
- U19 Northern Ireland Development Squad- Fabienne Cochrane, Ellie Collins, Leah Doran
- U21 Northern Ireland Long Squad- Nada Hawela



FORM I

We had forty form one girls who attended netball training on a weekly basis this year. The girls trained on a Monday afternoon with two teams playing successful, competitive matches against Girls 'Model to begin the season. The players were extremely enthusiastic, committed and came determined to improve their skills. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 we were unable to compete in the District League Competition and our season was cut short. However, I hope we continue to build upon the skills and promise shown next season.

K.E.B.

MINOR 'A' NETBALL

Captain: *Anna Falls*

Minor A Squad: *Seraphina Rooney, Rosa Gribbon, Mya Pearson, Anna Falls, Emma Campbell, Eva Mitchell, Melissa Graham, Jenna McCall, Penny Davidson and Clara Walsh.*

MINOR 'B' NETBALL

Captain: *Katie McMeekin*

Minor B Squad: *Emily Saunders, Lucy Chambers, Lucy Lyons, Jane Martin, Clara Walsh, Ruby Hanna, Rachel Hackett, Lucy McKenna, Katie McMeekin, Rebecca Crooks and Hannah Keed.*

Commitment from the minor netball squad was super and we had consistently high numbers at training each week. The Minor 'A' team had mixed results in the League against a strong group, only losing to a strong team from Dominican College. The Minor 'B' team also had mixed results with notable wins against Girls 'Model and Dominican. The players trained hard each week to improve their skills and were always very enthusiastic and competitive. I would like to thank the girls for their effort and look forward to training with them in the coming season.

K.E.B.

JUNIOR 'PREMIER' NETBALL

Captain: *Shannen Kelly*

Junior Premier Squad: *Layla Hunter, Shannen Kelly, Ciara Murray, Tara Dalzell, Etta Choi, Beth Adam, Erin McCrea, Eva Perry- Obana and Debby Ogunleye.*

This season was a great one for the Junior netball team. We triumphantly won all of our League matches, making it to the quarter finals, where we played Killicomaine Junior High and narrowly lost 15-17.

Our first match of the season was played against Dominican; the final score was 15-9 to us. In November, we played against Ballymena Academy. The final score being 14-11 to BRA. Layla Hunter was awarded player of the match at both games for her excellent work as Goal Attack.

Our third League match of the season was against Carrick Grammar. By the second quarter we were up 12-0 and it was decided that Carrick would forfeit, and we would only play one more quarter due to a traffic delay. This final 'quarter' would be played with our team's positions mixed! This also allowed Carrick to develop their match strategies.

We went on to the quarter finals, where we, sadly, lost to a strong team. Tara Dalzell was awarded player of the match. We are very proud of how far we got this season and hope to make it even further next season!

Shannen Kelly(III)

JUNIOR 'A' NETBALL

Captain: *Molly Cash*

Junior A Squad: *Debby Ogunleye, Alana Joseph, Eva Perry-Obana, Jasmine Mirfield, Molly Cash, Robyn McDonald, Casey Smith, Lauren Douglas, Carla-Lina Gueye-Dorval, Mia Sittlington, Erin McCann and Abi Coulter.*

We had a very enjoyable season and trained hard each week to develop our ability to play as a team. We had mixed success during our matches this season and, unfortunately, did not qualify for our League Finals. We will continue to work hard and improve our skills next season.

Molly Cash (III)

The Junior netball squads worked hard each week to develop their technical and tactical match play. I would like to thank the girls for their enthusiasm, determination and

willingness to learn at training. Their high standards highlight great promise for BRA netball in the future!

K.E.B.

INTERMEDIATE 'PREMIER' NETBALL



Captain: *Catelyn Burns*

Intermediate 'Premier' Squad: *Charlotte Stronge, Kristie Monro, Nada Hawela, Catelyn Burns, Katie Keed, Siobhan Baine, Emma Connolly, Mia McCurley, Fiona Murray, Molly Connolly.*

This year was a very successful one for our Intermediate Premier Team. Unfortunately, we didn't have the best start, losing our first cup match, but we picked ourselves back up and made it to the final of both the Northern Ireland Shield and League! Unfortunately, we lost to Wallace in the League final after a hard, tight match with some tears shed. Even though we had a disappointing end to the season we grew much stronger as a team this year with maximum effort from all players.

Catelyn Burns (V)

INTERMEDIATE 'A' NETBALL

Captain: *Fiona Murray*

Intermediate 'A' Squad: *Caitlin Mooney, Kate Sturgess, Fiona Murray, Abbie Braniff, Eleanor Green, Faith Drummond, Sophia*

Ramalho- McCourt, Molly Connolly, Sophie Doran

This season was a challenging one as it was our first in the Intermediate League. Our first match was against Dominican College; we played a very good match in both attack and defence which paid off as we secured our first win of the season. Our next two matches were against a very good Carrick Grammar team, our first match was very well fought and closely contested but unfortunately, we could not bring it back and lost by a few goals. Our next Carrick Grammar game was much more difficult. As a team we struggled to bring the ball up the court which ultimately lost us match. Although this season did not go as well as we would have liked, we have high hopes for next year! A massive thank you to Mrs Winning and Miss Brady for all the brilliant coaching this season and we cannot wait to come back next season.

Fiona Murray (IV)

Commitment from the Intermediate netball squad was excellent. I would like to congratulate and thank the girls for their effort and teamwork throughout the season. Both teams fought hard in tough Leagues- well done to all of the players who took the court! I would also like to congratulate Catelyn Burns, Nada Hawela and Siobhan Baine for being selected to represent The Northern Ireland U17 squad at the European Championships. Fiona Murray also trained with the U17 Development squad and showed great potential on the court. I hope to see the girls build upon their success next season.

K.E.B.

SENIOR 'PREMIER' NETBALL



Captain: Leah Doran

Senior 'Premier' Squad: Julia Forbes, Olivia Snoddy, Leah Doran, Ellie Collins, Lois Sharpe, Fabienne Cochrane, Jessica Kendell, Erin McMahon, Ella Harvey, Charlotte Stronge, Ellie Murray

It was a successful year that, sadly, came to end quicker than expected. Our first match of the season was against Rathmore in the cup competition, we lost 39-19 to the strong side. We went on to do very well in the cup reaching the final stages. Following this match, we went on to play Thornhill in the shield competition. We won this match with a score of 21-14 showing our strengths as we were all ready for the upcoming matches to follow in the season.

We then went onto play Wallace. This turned out to be a tough game but we achieved a 14-14 score to draw. Our team played in the semi-final of the Shield against Glenlola and we won this game with a score of 21-15, unfortunately, due to Covid-19 we did not get to play the Northern Ireland shield final. Overall, our Senior squad has a great season finishing on a high note. Our whole team and I would personally like to thank both Mrs Winning and Miss Brady for excellent coaching and organisation though out the year.

Leah Doran (LVI)

SENIOR 'A' NETBALL

Captain: Layla Creaney

Senior 'A' Squad: Nicole McClean, Eden McCoubrey, Bethany Hunter, Nia McVicker, Ellie Murray, Ella Harvey, Lauren Macauley, Mia Delargy-Dubois, Charlotte Kerfoot, Layla Creaney, Molly Noble

The Senior A team this year was made up of twelve girls from Lower and Middle Sixth who had very little experience working together. This lack of experience became evident as we played and lost our first match, albeit by a slim margin. This loss spurred us on to start working hard together. Over the course of the year, we got to know each other and more

importantly learned to work as a team to succeed in our matches.

We went on to win our next match at home to Glenlola and we finished the season on a high note with a win against Wallace at Lisburn Racquets. Personally, it was a pleasure for me to Captain the senior team in my last year of Netball at BRA, especially given the high quality and effort from my team. I know the lower sixth girls will go on to more success next year, in whatever they choose to pursue and I can only say how proud I am of the team and wish them all the best.

Layla Creaney (MVI)



It was a great achievement for the Senior Premier squad to reach the Northern Ireland Shield Final. The teams worked very hard at both training and matches. I thank the squads for their continued motivation and efforts throughout the year and look forward to next year.

Many of this season's Senior players are in MVI and sadly we must say farewell. I would like to thank each girl for her commitment and determination throughout many years of netball and I hope they continue playing in the future.

K.E.B.

BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY

The school entered a full range of teams for the District cross country championships and there were some excellent results. The Mini boys team were 4th out of 11 teams. Alex French was a very credible 17th out of 79 competitors. The Minor boys were 3rd out of 8 teams. Max Reid had an outstanding result finishing 3rd out of 66 competitors. Johnny Nicholson finished 13th out of 66 competitors. Frank Davis finished in 20th place. Hugo Reilly Stewart had a very good run finishing 7th in the Junior section and David Monahan also qualified in the intermediate Boys section. Ciaron Dixon also had a very good run finishing 5th out of 17 competitors.

The Ulster championships produced some excellent performances. Max Reid was the top performer finishing 7th and qualifying for the Irish championships. Ciaron Dixon was 21st out of 74 and narrowly missed Irish qualification. Hugo Reilly Stewart also had a great run finishing 17th.

Max Reid finished 13th out of 127 competitors at the Irish championships which was an excellent result. Congratulations to all the boys that took part.

I.M.



GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

The girls 'Cross Country team competed well in the 2020 District Championships held at Ormeau Park. Although no team qualified, our Mini and Minor teams deserve a lot of credit for their 4th & 5th place finishes respectively.

A team was entered into 4 of the 5 age group levels:

Form I (Minis)

Erin Gray, Maria Mallon, Ines Scott, Lydia Blaney, Emma Jones and Eve McKeown.

Form II (Minors)

Lucy Chambers, Anouk Bosket, Anna O'Doud, Faith Hillis, Caitlin Shaw and Anna Falls.

Form III (Juniors)

Madeline Morwood, Tara Dalzell, Aoife Scott

Form IV & V (Intermediates)

Anna Saunders, Abbie Braniff, Lucy McKnight, Mai Irwin and Mai Reilly Stewart.

Sixth Form (Seniors)

Aoife Corry and Olivia Snoddy.



However, only individual runners qualified for the Ulster finals which requires a top 15 finish:

QUALIFIERS

Minis: Ines Scott, finished 54 out of 124 runners.



Minor: Anouk Bosket 51, Faith Hillis 64 out of 123 runners.

Juniors: Tara Dalzell 26, Madeline Morwood 57 out of 110 runners.

Inters: Maia Erwin 53 out of 85 runners.
Senior: Bryanna Catney 26, Olivia Snoddy 42 out of 65 runners.



FOOTBALL CLUB

In the 2019/20 season, the football team competed in the League, Belfast Cup and Northern Ireland Cup.

Although the global pandemic cut the season short, the team still managed to play nine fixtures in total.

Our League campaign started with a 4-2 loss to Bangor Grammar. This was the first competitive game for the team and it showed, with defensive errors and uncertainty regarding positional play costing the team dearly. However, the second fixture against R.B.A.I. saw a much improved performance. Ben Skillen scored the only goal of the game to secure the team's first three points, although credit must also go to Nathan Kerr who pulled off some world-class saves. Losses to Regent House and Campbell College sandwiched a 3-0 victory over Methodist College.

In the Belfast Cup, the new format saw the Academy drawn against Bangor Grammar and Regent House in the group stage. In each game the Academy scored first but then struggled to contain talented opposition, going down 4-1 away to Regent and 3-1 at home to Bangor.

The team travelled to Fivemiletown in the Northern Ireland Cup 1st round. Again they scored first, when Oliver McGrath ran onto a long ball and calmly rounded the keeper. In the second period the opposition put the Academy defence under sustained pressure and scored with 10 minutes to go. And just as it looked like going to extra-time, Fivemiletown scored a second, when their centre forward cut in from the right and slotted past goalkeeper Nathan Kerr. This was a disappointing finish to the game, especially after such a disciplined defensive performance. In the Plate competition the boys convincingly beat Slemish College 8-0, with Oliver McGrath and Ben Skillen both scoring hat-tricks. However, the team were unable to progress further, going down 5-1 to Ballynahinch High.



These six girls deserve to be congratulated as they all put in gutsy performances at the Ulster finals which are held every year at Mallusk and are always of a very high standard.

N. N.

The results do not tell the whole story. Every practice was well attended with the squad keen and eager to learn and progress. The games were played in good spirit, with each player showing grit and determination.

R.B.

BOYS' GOLF



There was mixed success this year for the Golf team. Unfortunately, we did not win any of the events we entered but were very close in two of the competitions.

On a pleasant, but windy November day at Kirkistown Golf Club, our senior golf team consisting of Keaton Morrison and Noah Bickerstaff, Ryan Armstrong and Josh Mckee finished 6th the Ulster Schools Scratch Competition.

Our other Senior tournament, the Irish Schools Championship saw another 'below par' performance from the team consisting of Keaton Morrison, Ben Hopkins, Noah Bickerstaff and Josh Mckee. Where there were some good individual performances, as a team, we struggled to come to grips with the Spa Golf course and were placed outside the 'top 10'.

Our Junior team on the other hand had better fortunes in their two competitions. Our team consisting of Ben Anderson, Noah Bickerstaff,

Josh McKee and Peter Richardson finished runner-up in the Ulster Schools Junior competition, played at the beautiful Moyola Park Golf Course. We were edged out narrowly by a very good Coleraine team.



Our other Junior event, the Irish Schools Junior Competition, saw the team consisting of Noah Bickerstaff, Josh McKee and Ben Anderson finish a very commendable 3rd place. This was played at the 'not so glamorous' Ballymena Golf Club. None-the-less, the boys performed to their credit and were beaten narrowly by a strong Ballyclare High school team.

Yet again this year, our Senior team was hampered in our selection throughout the year by not being able to call upon Tom McKibben as he was playing in other competitions outside school. This was unfortunate but gave others the chance to play.

Going forward, I am filled with much optimism for the future of BRA Golf, thanks to some of our extremely strong Junior golfers, notably Noah, Josh and Ben who have at different stages have already represented our senior team and are currently all playing off single figure handicaps.

I would like to put on record my gratitude to parents and grandparents who gave up their time and travelled to all parts of the country in order for the boys to compete. Without them,

many of these fixtures may not be able to happen.

P.M.

SHOWJUMPING



Our Showjumping team of Olivia Quinn, Tori Jewiss and Erin McCrea had their first outing this term at the Schools 'competition held at the Meadows Equestrian Centre. They had a promising start to the competition, which will run over the coming months. We welcomed the newest members to the team, Tori Jewiss & her pony Mojo.



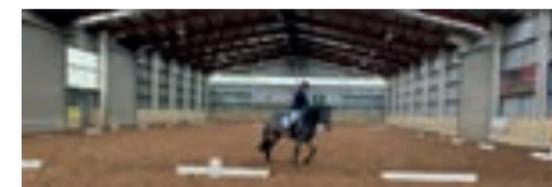
On Saturday 5th October, the Show Jumping team took part in the 2nd round of the TRI Inter Schools 'Show Jumping League at the Meadows Equestrian Centre, Lurgan. They put up a great performance to finish on a zero score and pick up 5th place in a very fast competition. Olivia Quinn also finished 5th in the 1.10 Individual Class.



On Saturday 19th October, the Show Jumping team took part in the 3rd leg of the TRI Inter Schools 'Show Jumping League. The girls put in an excellent performance to finish in 4th place.

On Saturday 2nd November, the Show Jumping team took part in the 4th round of the TRI Inter Schools 'Show Jumping League at the Meadows Equestrian Centre, Lurgan. They put up a great performance to finish on a zero score and pick up 7th place in a very competitive class. Erin McCrea also finished 4th in the 1m Individual Class.

On Saturday 9th November two members of the showjumping team braved the elements to take part in the Ulster Schools 'Dressage competition held at Gransha Equestrian Centre.



Erin McCrea took part in the KS3 Prelim class on two of her ponies, finishing well in the class. Olivia Quinn took part in the Novice class and finished in 4th place. The team finished 8th overall in the competition. Thank you to Glenola Collegiate for organising the event.



On Saturday 16th November, the Show Jumping team took part in the penultimate round of the TRI Inter Schools 'Show Jumping League at the Meadows Equestrian Centre, Lurgan. They put up a great performance to finish on a zero score and pick up 4th place. Erin McCrea also finished 4th in the 1m Individual Class.



On Saturday 30th November, the Show Jumping team took part in the final round of the TRI Inter Schools 'Show Jumping League at the Meadows Equestrian Centre, Lurgan. They put up a great performance to finish in 5th place. The team finished 6th overall in the League. We would like to express our thanks to the team, and for the support of their parents throughout the duration of the League. Team consisted of: Olivia Quinn, Victoria Jewiss and Erin McCrea.

S.E.G.

SWIMMING

The school swim club had a shortened season this year but performed to an extremely high standard in all the competitions entered. There was a strong showing from the Junior and Intermediate school in the Swim Ulster Schools 'Competition held at the Bangor Aurora pool in October.



The Intermediate boys relay team (Jericho Balgos (4), Luke Calwell (4), James Strutt (5), Cal Young-McClinton (4)) won double gold in the freestyle and medley relays, and pupils Erin Gray (1), Eve McKeown (1), Ines Scott (1), Bryn Mawhinney (1) and Oliver Staworzynski (1) qualified individually for the Irish Minor Schools 'Championships.

They were joined at the competition by Sarah Teague (1), Robbie Tosh (1) and Samuel Hipolito (1) to form relay teams. The form I girls team went on to achieve a gold medal in the Irish Minor Schools medley relay and placed 4th in the freestyle relay.



The Junior and Intermediate Cup was held in January, and again the school saw lots of success, winning both individual and relay medals. The intermediate girls relay team (Sophie Doran (4), Lara Lennon (4), Rachael McGrath (5), Giulia Allen (5), Siobhan Baine (5)) were third in the medley and freestyle relays, while the intermediate boys team continued their domination with two first place relay placings.



In February, members of the school's swimming and water polo teams volunteered to assist with the running of the Ulster Special



Olympics Regional Swimming Event. Pupils spent the day at Lagan Valley LeisurePlex in Lisburn assisting with marshalling, timekeeping, and cheering on the competitors in a day of fun competition.

S.A.

WATER POLO

The boy's Senior water polo squad stepped up their training this year, coming off the back of three consecutive Ulster Provincial Trophy wins. The team led by captain Ewan Purdy (MVI) and vice-captain Adam Mahood (LVI) committed to early morning training and extra swim sessions. The season started strongly with back to back friendly wins against R.B.A.I. in December and January. The Canada Trophy, held from January through February, saw the team up against strong opposition. They finished in fourth place overall, after several rounds of matches held at RBAI Pool.

S.A.

LIFESAVING

While the most prestigious competition of the school's lifesaving calendar was cancelled this year, the lifesaving club saw a surge in membership from both the Junior and Senior school. The lifesaving club ran from September, with lunchtime sessions available to all competent swimmers. The club members improved their fitness and learned valuable life skills, including personal survival, first aid and practical water rescue technique.

S.A.



Trips and Events

FRENCH EXCHANGE



Lessons in Lycée L'Oiselet



La Grotte de Choranche



Free time in the park with our exchange partners



Dinner with our exchange partners



Picnic at Pont en Royans



Au revoir

GEOGRAPHY FIELD TRIPS



FI Geography Fieldwork



LVI Geography Fieldwork



FI Geography Fieldwork



LVI Geography Fieldwork



FI Geography Fieldwork

CHEMISTRY COMPETITION



LVI Geography Fieldwork



MVI Geography Dundrum



MVI Geography Dundrum



MVI Geography Dundrum



MVI Geography Dundrum



Royal Society of Chemistry

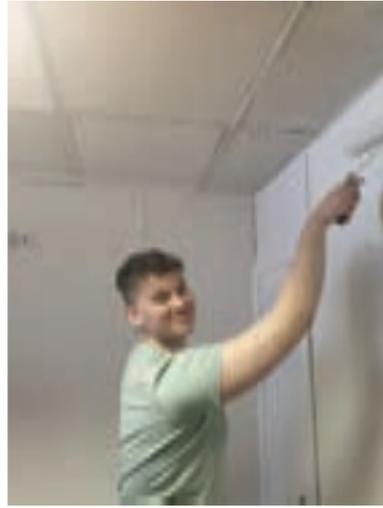


Separating Pollutants

EUROPEAN MOCK COUNCIL



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY



SKI TRIP

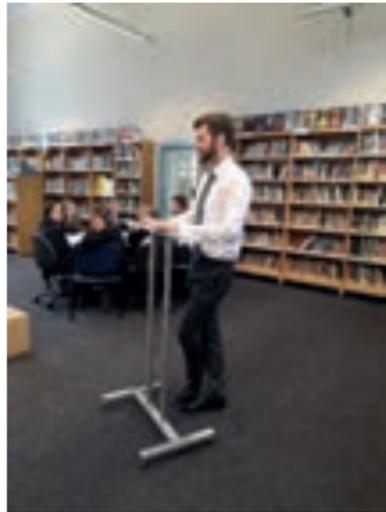


PRIMARY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE



LVI Primary School Experience

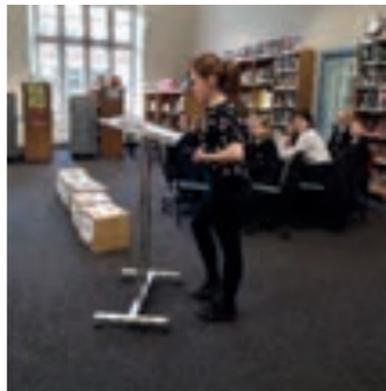
NATIONAL POETRY DAY



Dr Springer reading a poem



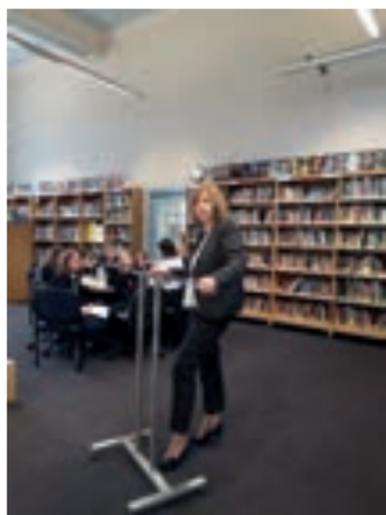
Mr J Hawkey



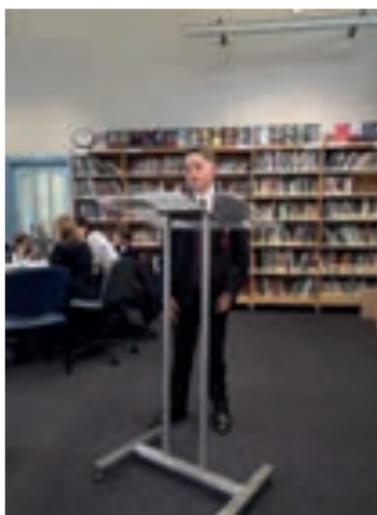
Miss McAtamney reading a poem



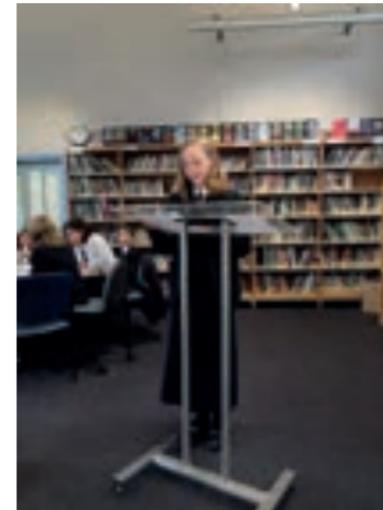
Dr Mort



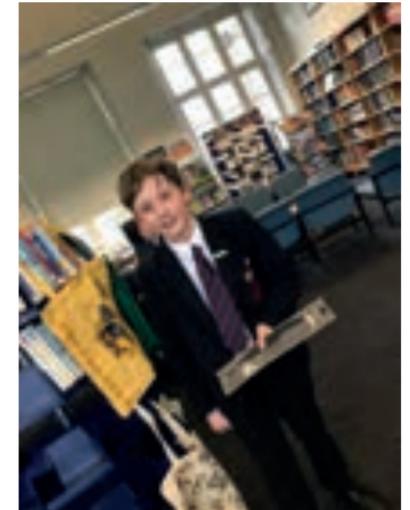
Mrs Woods reading a poem



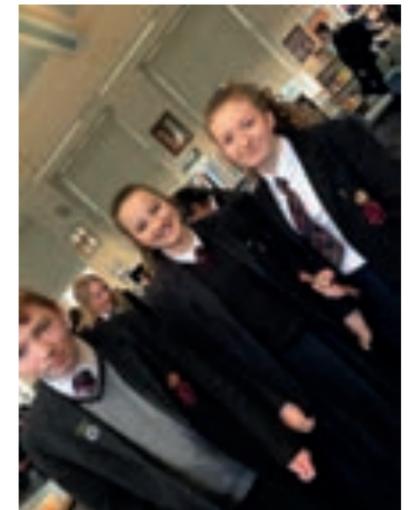
Pupils reading at National Poetry Day



WORLD BOOK DAY



Jamie Wilson



Form III Pupils



Amandine Chesnel

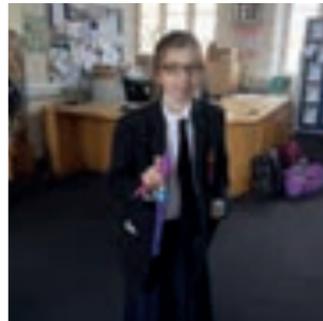


Madeleine Morwood



Olivia Hadden

WORLD BOOK DAY QUIZ WINNERS



World Book Day Librarians

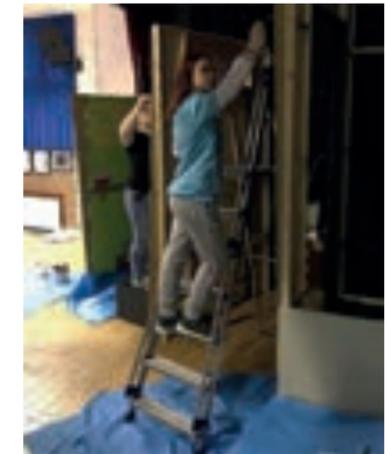
HADRIAN'S WALL



NORTH BELFAST AREA LEARNING COMMUNITY EXHIBITION



SCHOOL PLAY SET PAINTING



TRUE COLOURS EXHIBITION

Form LVI and MVI trip to True Colours Exhibition at the Ulster Museum



Sinead Cheung Form V

Literary Contributions

Dear Future Self,

I am writing to you to remind you of a time when you were removed from every-day life and school education, this was called lockdown. This may all seem like a distant memory, but I shall refresh it. In the past few weeks I have been learning how to work independently and handle my free time. Between balancing online piano classes, drama lessons and a lot of school work, it has taken quite a while to get used to this new regime but as time progresses I'm sure I will eventually find lockdown as a new sense of normality.

Some of the skills you learnt during this time might surprise you now as you may think you always possessed them, but you didn't. Prior to the corona virus quarantine, I had a routine that largely depended on my mum and teachers organising me. All your classes were set times, drama and piano were done in big groups and getting together with friends was a simple part of everyday life.

I learnt that I could adapt to different situations, that staying connected with family and friends were really important for my mental health and in order to continue these relationships I had to seek out the help of technology and devices. Another thing that I realised at this time was that in daily life my busy tasks kept me exercised and I now realise that lockdown has taught me how I have to replace these parts of my schedule with focused fitness like running, cycling, trampolining, skipping and sit ups.

You took for granted how close you were to your brother and how all the family depended on each other but let me tell you

how strong and important that connection is. You realised you were the lucky one as you had such a loving and supportive family through these foggy times. I didn't appreciate that school was such a carefully thought out and organised system and how much I needed it, but also how my teachers can make your learning experience fun because sitting at a laptop is incredibly boring.

To conclude this letter, appreciate the resilience you built up and the people in your life that make it special because it can be taken away so easily. I thought everyone was appreciated at this current time but I never would have known how important all the shopkeepers, bin collectors, doctors, nurses, teachers, cleaners, care workers and many more amazing people risk their lives every day for us.

Best wishes

Your younger self.

Theo Purcell (I)

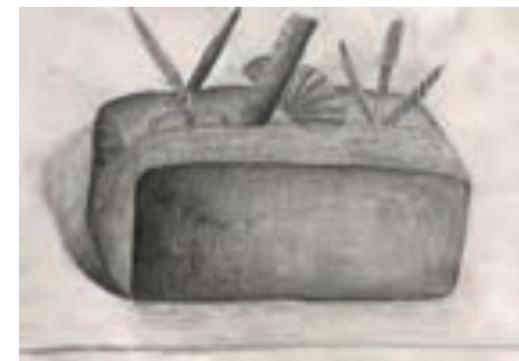


Aoife Akmad (II)

The Amazing Piglet

There once was a pig called Piglet,
As happy as could be, he lived with his
friends;
Pooh, Eeyore and Tiger, they were his
family.
They live in a 100-acre wood,
Which I wish I could!
He loves eating food just like me,
I wish he could be part of the family!
Piglet likes to fidget, he also falls asleep –
So when he drifts off, we all weep!
Piglet is tiny but he has a big heart,
We love you Piglet as we said at the start.
Piglet represents a model pig,
Who stands up for what he believes in,
And season, any year,
Piglet always has a helping ear,
To listen to your problems and know what
way to steer.
Piglet is a childhood friend of mine and
with his little pink face and curly tail,
Him and Pooh never fail.
So as Piglet said,
If you live to be 100, I want to live to be 100
minus 1 day,
So I never have to live without you.
To all the pigs in the world like Piglet.

Eve McKeown (I)



Jessica Lane (II)

The Pig of Pigs

The Pig of pigs,
The King of the farm.
They don't like wearing wigs,

But they love living in Larne.

We love their tail,
We love their snout.
When we see them about,
We run and shout.

Dear Pigs we do love you, more than a zoo.
We love you more than ducks,
We love you more than cows.
And when we see you around, everyone
stops and bows.

Pigs like apples,
And so do we.
They go well with breakfast,
And with tea.

You are the king, as we said before.
And you're way better than any wild boar.

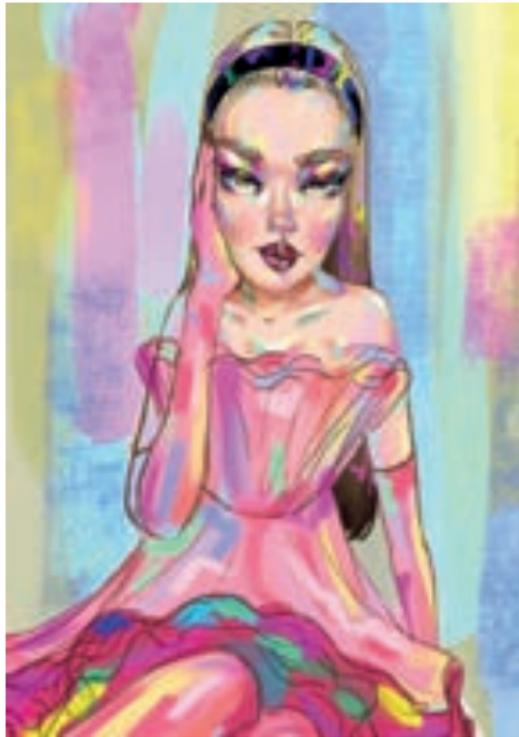
You rule the farm,
So it will come to no harm.

The Pig of pigs,
The king of the farm.
You are the best,
And the world is blessed.

Emily Warnock and Anna Curran (II)



Grace McIlroy (V)



Eoghan Hughes (LVI)

Little Pigs

The sow all alone with tiny little piglets,
All gathered round for the tale -
The tale of the of *The Big Bad Farmer!*
As they suckled and snorted she began to speak:

*He is big and round like an elephant calf,
Loud and boisterous like a young hound,
He carries a GUN over his shoulder just
like an army general.*

The tiny little piglets squealed at this fact,
Thinking that maybe he would have THEM
for his DINNER,
Instead of the chickens and geese and hens
Oh-no! Thought the piglets but the farmer
thought OH YES!

Ariana Hill (I)

Pig

Trotting through
the farm
as if he owns the place,

Little piggy
Snorts and grunts,
At the
Crooked, old gate.

Splashing through
Rich, dirty puddles,
Making his way through,
Jumping over
Mini hurdles
And making his entrance too.

His muddy hoofs
Turn and twist,
Spinning through the gate,
His springy tail
Catches up
Before it's too late.

Snorting to catch
His breath,
He makes the final jump,
Bouncing over the
Mossy log,
And landing on his rump.

Farmer Sam
Lifts him up
Into his straw-lined pen
Curling up,
With siblings pink
Altogether again.

Scarlett Platt-Bell (I)



Aloife Walker (II)

The Curse of Drummere United

Toby McAuley and James Murphy are two youngsters from Liverpool who can't live without each other - or football. They play for one of the top teams, Carlisle Star, well, they used to, until the money-seeking, mischievous club Drummere United came along!

They bought out the whole premiership but Toby and James both refused the offers. They played on at Carlisle but it just wasn't the same, they lost every match with embarrassing margins like 13-2. So Toby and James' times were up at Carlisle Star.

James' clock read 7:30am. He got changed and had breakfast to meet Toby for their walk to Paisley Park. They could refuse no more. They trotted down the road to the Drummere trials. When they got there they were told to put on bibs and go to pitch 2. This was it, they were in the same team, ready to go - until brilliance became betrayal...

The score, 0-0 as James made a run. Toby was screaming for the ball but James went it alone and hit it straight at the goalkeeper. Toby was infuriated as the match ended 0-0. He followed everyone going to the coaches to find out who'd advance. They said well done to all 132 of the potential players then proceeded to call out the names of the people who had made it.

Kyle Stevenson and Marcus Reid were called but no sign of Toby or James being called until the final two were announced. "And the last 2 people coming back are Ryan Wilson and James Murphy, thanks for participating and the boys I just mentioned, come to speak to me now."

Toby left straight away. He didn't speak to his friend for months. James played for Drummere and Toby joined Berlin City. During pre-season, Drummere was set to play Berlin City! The pitch was none other than Paisley. Before, they didn't take a glance at each other. The game started off

well for Drummere but Berlin quickly gained their stride. Marcus Reid got a chance on goal for Drummere on his wicked left foot, the commentators were going ballistic as the shot bended and headed for the top bins but the Berlin keeper made a heroic save, punching the ball in front of James Murphy. Emerging from the box, was Toby. This was it, both of them as fast as they could with all their frustration into the 50-50 and...

CRACK!

Lying in a patch of grass - Toby and James. They were stretchered off the pitch and driven to the nearest hospital.

When they got home James lifted up his newspaper and the top headline was 'Local super team, Drummere United have gone bust! ` James gave up hope to play footie again but not Toby. Once he was prepared he left Berlin and re-joined Carlisle Star. Once he returned, he struggled up the hill but it was worth it. When he got up he looked straight ahead and there in a Carlisle Star kit was James Murphy!

Adam Spence (I)



**Mason Shevlin F5
Who am I?**

I am rich and skilful.
I am saddest when I am on the subs bench.

I feel happy most of the time.
I am very good with a ball.
I sound like a man.
Love me because I have made you happy.
Remember me because of the emotions I gave you.

Johnny Nicholson (II)

Guess Who?

I am small, colourful and delicious.
I am happiest when I'm hanging with my bros.
I feel like falling.
I look like a drop of blood.
I sound like a child.
I taste like an explosion of juice and tiny seeds.
Love me because of my magnificent colour.
Remember me because of my delicious taste and flavour.

Harper McCloskey (II)



Kathleen Malone (V)

What am I?

Hearing the noise of you coming home,
I'm filled with happiness knowing it's my own.
My tail wiggling in joy,
Every once in a while I'll get a new toy.
Going on hikes to see beautiful sights,
I'll stay with you on your sleepless nights.
You'll never find two of the same,
Some breeds are harder to tame.
When it is needed I'll protect you,

I'll bare my teeth to a threat not caring who.
Sometimes I'll beg for your food,
I'm always there to cheer you up when you're in a bad mood.
Can't you see I'm happy as can be?
As long as you'll never leave me.
Yes, sometimes I can make a mess,
And we can do things that make you stress.
But all we want is a loving home,
And a loving owner to call my own.
You will never regret staying with us as we grow old,
And we will eventually listen to what were told.
We leave paw prints in your heart,
We are as priceless as fine art.
So think of us as you must,
But we will always treat you with trust.

Sophie Graham (II)

Sausage rolls

I am a god, a warrior and I enjoy being tucked
into a 13.5 tog hot and cosy duvet.
I feel like a million pounds.
I am a small child lying under the covers,
And I sound like gold falling on diamonds.
I taste like an Oscar award, love me because I love myself.
Remember me because you will see my beautiful companions all over the place.

Kris Mills (II)

The Runaway Turkeys

Out came the Christmas trees and tinsel as Christmas day was fast approaching.
Tomorrow, the turkeys would be sent off.
However, the turkeys had no intention of becoming Christmas dinner. They had a plan.

As the day faded away the turkeys began to assemble. One by one they silently strutted

over to the timber gate. It was up to the turkey in front to open the gate. Swift as the wind, the turkey opened the gate. As it swung open it gave a great groan. All the turkeys froze. Fortunately, the night remained silent.

Soon, the team of turkeys were on their way. Their challenge was to get through the town and into the woods. On they strutted, illuminated by the moonlight. Within half an hour the turkeys had made it to the town.

They hesitantly began to waddle into the town. An anxious look had formed on their faces. Who knew what they would meet in here? Yet they kept moving forward without looking back.

Suddenly, the turkeys came to an abrupt halt. Just ahead of them a light still shone in the butcher's window. How could they pass without being seen? "If only we could fly like reindeers," they thought.

Then the turkeys had an ingenious idea. They would disguise themselves! Beside the butchers was a joke shop. Slowly, the turkeys tip-clawed towards it, making sure to stay in the shadows. Methodically they began to form a turkey-tower. The turkey on top started to peck the lock and soon the door opened. As the turkeys toppled in, they spotted exactly what they needed. Chicken masks!

So the runaway turkeys pulled on their disguises and strode past the butcher's shop leaving the poor man staring at his eggnog thinking, "but I only had one glass!"

Ciara Gilchrist (II)



Melissa Graham (II)

The Gold-rimmed Spectacles

One Christmas, not so long ago, there was a little boy, who lived in a narrow, winding street in the city of Belfast. This Christmas was going to be the same as always, the one at which there were no neatly-wrapped gifts under the Christmas tree. The one which didn't even have a Christmas tree! The problem was that they were a poor family who could only just afford a stale loaf of bread each day. Joe was a grateful young boy, and although he was poor, he had a kind, gentle soul which could make anyone smile.

It was Christmas Eve when Joe spotted a lonely figure, in a brown tweed coat, who seemed disorientated and lost. The man had a long, wispy, white beard of snow, and his bright blue eyes sparkled as if they were diamonds that had just been polished. He wore gold-rimmed spectacles and seemed to be consulting a shopping list of some sort. Joe, being a kind-hearted boy, approached the man to offer help. The man replied with a strangely jolly voice that he

needed a place to stay. Many thoughts raced through Joe's head. He could have just directed him to the nearest hostel, but instead he invited him to his humble abode.

They made it to the threshold, without a minute to spare, as almost immediately snow came down like sugar going through a sieve. Joe made him a cosy bed on the settee and with that, everyone slept soundly the whole night, or so they thought! Waking up the next morning, they were to find delicious waffles and mugs of steaming hot chocolate, a Christmas tree with presents galore, and a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, beside a long list of good and naughty children. Father Christmas had been to stay!

Jamie Wilson (II)



A Plane Journey

We were ready to go.

After three delays, two bag checks and a dull taxi ride to the airport, the whole family was ready to depart for our holiday. The decision to go to Disneyland for the

holidays was made four months ago and since then it had been a long wait, but now the day we had been waiting for was finally here! The moment I set foot on the plane, I felt the butterflies in my stomach spring to life. I had never been on a plane before, so this was a surreal experience in my eyes. 'So many seats, I exclaimed. Where will we go?' I sat down with my older cousin Sofia, who scowled wearily, as I buckled myself in. Then, like the booming roar of a gargantuan lion, the plane's engine's turned on. In what seemed like a flash the plane took off. I shut my eyes as tight as I could and grabbed onto my cousin's hand. 'Ewww! Get off!' she wailed and yanked her hand back. 'You'll be fine, idiot.' Still, I kept my eyes squeezed shut until we were airborne.

Once we were up the plane was actually awesome! 'It's like a whole new world!' I said, amazed by my new surroundings. I decided to read a book, a new one I got that day in fact. But it was only a few minutes before our journey took an unsettling turn. 'That's weird...', Sofia remarked, 'The plane is tilting', and sure enough it was. The water bottle (that I had set on the tray on the next seat for safe keeping) had toppled over and rolled right off onto the floor. I realised that there were two possibilities: Either the pilot had spontaneously decided to pursue his lifelong dream of being a stunt pilot or the engine had failed. Unfortunately, it was the latter!

The plane began to plummet to the ground in a spiral-like motion. I screamed, of course, and once again grabbed onto my cousin beside me. However, this time she didn't push me away. She was screaming too. Were we going to die?!

Suddenly, the aeroplanes announcement system switched on and the voice of a shell shocked co-pilot said, 'Please do not worry, passengers', which was quite ironic considering the circumstances. 'We are going to have to pull in for an emergency

landing. Sorry for any inconvenience'. I looked out the window beside me before shutting my eyes tight.

The plane fell for what felt like an eternity and then... It stopped. For a solid ten seconds I thought I was dead, a goner, kaput, but then I opened my eyes.

The plane was flying perfectly fine. 'Some dream you were having there,' Sofia smirked. 'Help me! Help! I'm falling!' she mocked.

'We ... we... we're alive?' I stammered.

'Of course we are, dummy!'

Our Disneyland adventure continued on after all.

Harrison Kirk (III)



A Plane Journey

I couldn't wait for three o'clock. Not because school was out for summer, not even because it is my birthday, but because I get to go flying (for the first time) today!

I have loved the idea since I was little. Every time I started daydreaming in class, I could almost feel the wind rushing past me, leaping over clouds, dodging raindrops like a child...Then I'd get yelled at for not paying attention, snapping me out of my thoughts. I always wish I could stay there for a little longer.

I heard the bell ring to signal the end of school. I almost leaped out of my chair in

excitement and rushed to the door as quickly as possible without looking like a lunatic.

"Hey, Jack, calm down," Charlie called. He was coming with me. "Where's your mum's car?"

"Just down the street," I replied quickly. "Let's go!"

As we exited the school gates, I saw my mum parked just where she said she'd be, waving over at me cheerfully.

"Happy 18th birthday!" she almost sang. I just smiled back and climbed into the car, followed by Charlie. Oh, how much I was going to love this! Occasionally, she tried to slip in an embarrassing story and I'd have to redirect the conversation as best as I could. It didn't dampen my mood, though. Not one bit.

Mum pulled up to a large warehouse. That was where the planes were stored, I suppose. The buildings itself wasn't very impressive or inviting, but it wasn't meant to be. It was what was inside that mattered! As soon as the car engine stopped, I fumbled with my seatbelt and hurried to get it undone. Mum had that quizzical, 'You're mentally four years old' look on her face. I just laughed.

A man walked out from behind the warehouse to greet us. He talked us through the basics of flying a plane (most of which I already knew) and made us sign a form which just meant 'Don't do anything stupid or else you'll have to pay for it'. His serious demeanour lifted as he introduced us to Jamie Coulter, the owner and manager of the Edinburgh Flight Academy. He now donned a bright smile which was oddly familiar, but I shrugged it off, probably just nerves.

"Come, follow me," he gestured towards the warehouse. "I'll take one of you into

the air at a time and talk you through the controls of the plane. You obviously won't get to fly yourself unless you've take lessons already, but you will get into the air."

Charlie and I nodded excitedly as Jamie opened the ginormous gates of the warehouse, revealing a huge number of planes. I stood there, gawking in amazement at the wonder before me. There was everything in there from old war planes (fortunately not in use) to the dazzling white of stunning new models. Jamie turned and grinned at Charlie and me.

"Who wants to go first?!"

Grace Ogilby (III)



Sam McClelland canvas (LVI)

Wolves

Eyes closed, they circle,

A pack of wolves prowling around
You're terrified, and they know.
To survive, Stand your ground.

The danger will pass,
As scary as it seems,
You will wake up from,
This shell-shocked dream.

The wolves shift their form
To fears, phobias, people,
Spiders, closed spaces,
The dark, people.

Just take a deep breath.
Your mind needs to clear.
Soon enough those wolves will flee
And vanish with your fear.

Rachel Duncan (IV)

YOUNG WRITERS ANTHOLOGY



Congratulations to Gopi Murugaperumal (III) who had his short story selected for publication in the Young Writers anthology.

Shush

The room was dark, obviously. Any haunted house would be dark. I stood with my rubber chainsaw and gruesome mask. I always thought haunted house attractions were bogus, but it was an easy way to make money. The house usually echoes with screams and cries of visitors, however today it was eerily silent. I treaded through the hallways to find anyone, noticing a strong stench in the air and red stains on the

floor. I stopped. In front of me was a corpse of a young man. I froze in fear as a hand closed my mouth and silenced me.

Gopi Gaurav Murugaperumal (III)



Olivia Jones (V)

POETRY ALOUD SUCCESS



Ethan Carter, Kathleen Malone, Julia Miszuk and Veda Muruga Perumal competed in the regional rounds of Poetry Aloud 2019 at the Linen Hall Library, Belfast.

Congratulations to Kathleen Malone for reaching the final held at the National Library of Ireland – a truly remarkable achievement. Her delivery of Dylan Thomas' "And Death Shall Have No Dominion" was simply mesmerising.

Poetry Aloud is an annual poetry speaking competition open to all post-primary students on the island of Ireland. It is organised by Poetry Ireland and the National Library of Ireland. Since it was launched in 2006, Poetry Aloud has grown

from just a few hundred entries to over 2,000.

The late Seamus Heaney was a significant supporter of Poetry Aloud. When he won the David Cohen Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Literature, he nominated Poetry Aloud for the accompanying Clarissa Luard Award, and he remarked, "I truly believe Poetry Aloud deserves all the support it can get, because it promotes literature, and, in particular, poetry, widely, intimately and to inestimable effect. But fundamentally, I choose it because it brings poetry into the memory and affections of the young in a way that will make it a lifelong possession and value".

O.T.M.

TOWER POETRY COMPETITION



Congratulations to Lower Sixth pupil, Zara Meadows, who was an award winner in the 2020 Tower Poetry Competition, organised by Christ Church, Oxford. The theme for this year was 'Trees'. Zara won £250 for herself and £150 for the School for her entry, "Tree Hugger, Summer 2005". Well done to Zara for her achievement in a prestigious competition which attracted entries from throughout the UK.

Tree Hugger, Summer 2005

Memory is wet ink, sticky to touch,
So that when you do, your fingerprints peel

And cling to the image, my dad's toolbox
glue.

Memory is wet ink, underdeveloped,
As I am only two, my brain as soft as the
Bark I sink my softly swollen palms into.

Memory is wet ink, a permanent
annoyance,
Brown-green stains on denim knees, arts
and crafts
Gone wrong; no one ever told me what to
do.

Memory is wet ink, wet branches after rain,
Sap-slicked like baby's hair post-bath, I
laugh: oh, tree,
I don't remember being born and neither do
you.

Zara Meadows (LVI)



Rachel Rosbotham (V)



Ellie Burn (LVI)



Ella Cairns (V)



Ellie Walsh (V)

Art in School



Ella Cairns Form V

Due to Covid-19 CCEA did not have the opportunity to identify our full mark/nearly full mark candidates at GCSE, AS and A2, however Mr Roy Donaldson from John Bush Systems presented three of our top rank Art & Design students with a Student Art Pack award.

Caitlyn Sahin MVI.
Vivienne Johnston MVI.
Nia McVicker MVI.

All Art & Design GCSE, AS and A2 Level pupils attended the 2020 True Colours Exhibition at the Ulster Museum.

The MVI and LVI Art & Design pupils attended the 2020 Royal Ulster Academy Annual Exhibition at the Ulster Museum.

The Department is used every week for Duke of Edinburgh Art & Design projects as well as CCEA GCSE, AS and A Level units of work.

The Friends of the Academy very kindly donated a sum of money to invest in a new camera for the department.

Khaled Berakdar teaches Arabic Culture, oral, written and listening lessons to all of the Form 1 and Form 3 and enrichment programmes to Senior pupils. He supports the Art Teachers in embedding the lessons with Art and Design masterclasses and

workshops. Thursday lunch hour each week the Art Department ran an Arabic Culture Club run by our Arabic Tutor Khaled Berakdar. Learning the Arabic alphabet and numeracy and Arabic conversation.

QFI during lockdown gave our Form 1 and 3 year groups the opportunity to take part in their International Poster Competition. The following pupils were shortlisted for this prestigious International award, Erin Gray Form 1 and Aoife Akmad Form 3 are two of the six finalists. The six went to a vote for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places and Aoife Akmad won third placing in the contest. She will receive a Prize in an Amazon e-gift card. The US QFI team were overwhelmed by the 'Big' response from our BRA pupils.

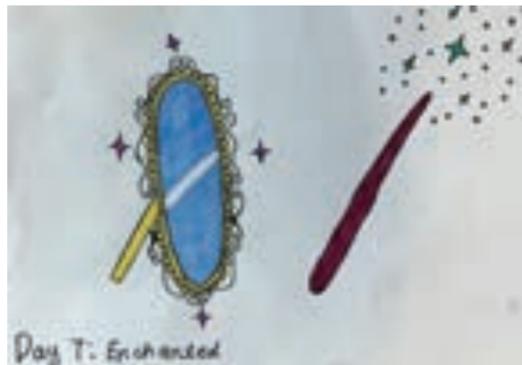
The Art Department continues with the highly successful Art Clubs. Art and Design Club on Monday after-school and Mini Art Club every lunchtime run by Art Technician Laura Atkins. After-school club members designed their own fantasy world, created a world map and their own characters. They had the opportunity to experiment with traditional ink dipping pens, paper staining techniques and embellishing processes. Students took part in National Art competitions, art challenges and they made Artist Trading Cards. Its great success encouraged pupils to attend a Mini Art Club that took place each

lunchtime to take part in weekly themed activities and support one another.

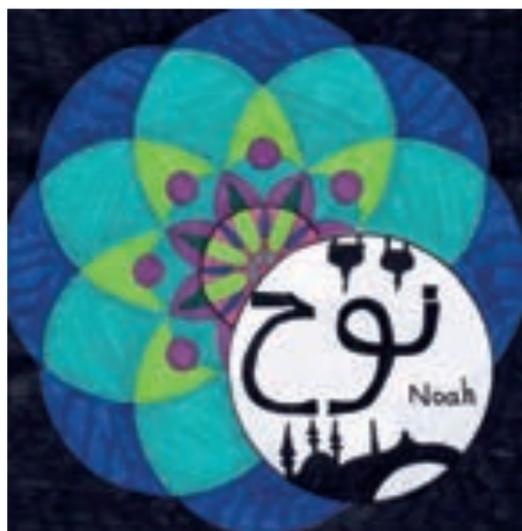


All pupils were invited to take part in the Inktober Challenge for a third year running, in which artists all over the world during October complete one ink drawing a day for the entire month. Students joined together in the Art Department every break-time for the whole month of October to draw and encourage one another using the official

Inktober prompts list. Drawings were displayed daily in the Art Department.

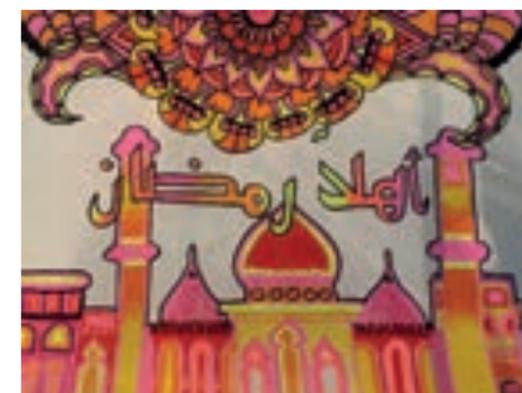


QFI visitor Tony Calderbank spent the morning and afternoon on Tuesday 4th February, touring the Arabic with Art and Mathematics Project currently underway at Belfast Royal Academy. He had the opportunity to observe the Arabic Languages classes for Form 1 and 3. He also viewed Art projects on display by our enrichment groups of Forms 4 - 6 who have taken inspiration from the Arab world. Tony had the opportunity to see the Laser Cutter machine and Kiln in action courtesy of the QFI grant provision.



Conway Education Centre Volunteering. Form 6 students are involved in a homework club run by the Conway Education Centre that supports volunteers

to 12 to 19 refugee children/young people in primary and secondary school. This takes place on Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, during term time. This volunteering role requires the commitment of one hour per week and includes offering guidance and support to enable children to complete homework tasks. The afternoons are busy and have a real positive vibe, the children and young people are very eager to improve their English and to complete homework successfully alongside our BRA student volunteers.



North Belfast Area Learning Community Schools' Art Exhibition featured artworks from BRA, showcased at the Duncairn Arts and Culture Centre. Artwork from Eoghan Hughes, Thea Reddington, Eirinn Fitzsimons, Nakisa Towfighi, Molly-Agnew Boyce, Caitlin Joyce, Vivienne Johnston, Oliver McBride, Rebecca Martin and Sinead Cheung were on display.



On Thursday 12th December Shakira Douglas L6 received a prize of a limited edition print by Keith Drury depicting the Causeway Port for joint 1st place in the St Anne's Cathedral painting competition hosted by 'In the Beginning Collective'.





Pupils are encouraged to be involved in the art world through competitions and projects outside of the normal school curriculum. The majority of our Form 4 pupils entered the National Texaco Children's Art Competition, unfortunately due to Covid-19 the selection panel has been postponed.



The Department continues to develop staff and pupils training in the use of ICT hardware and software.

The Department continues to give pupils an insight into the Art and Design Career routes.

Ben Madigan Preparatory School requested a painted mural to be displayed in their newly refurbished library. GCSE Art and Design BRA students have taken on the task of completing a collaborative painting on the theme of book and comic characters. The completed panel was unveiled on Wednesday 18th of December and our painting group presented Dr Campbell with a commemorative plaque to be displayed with the painting in the library.

Due to Covid-19 the Annual Art Exhibition was cancelled.



Ben Madigan Preparatory School

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself, Ross Coulter, as the Principal here at Ben Madigan. I am very thankful for this opportunity, it is a pleasure and a privilege to be in this position at a school with such a rich history and culture, and I greatly look forward to providing leadership and management over the years that lie ahead.

As I am sure you can imagine, this has been a very disrupted year for Ben Madigan, with school closing to pupils on Monday 23rd March. This waylaid many exciting school plans including: a residential school trip to Ganaway Activity Centre, a school production scheduled to show at Ballyearl Theatre, a trip to Tayto park near Dublin, Shared Education visits, sports fixtures and also all of the planned standardised tests scheduled for May. Ben Madigan had also been nominated for a ‘best school’ award at the Family First Spring Awards, which were unfortunately cancelled. Despite these disappointments, I am delighted with how teachers, pupils and parents responded, with everyone working their hardest to ensure our pupils were receiving the best education possible under the circumstances. Thank you.

W.R.C.



STAFFING

Last year saw several changes in staff over the course of the academic year. Dr Louis Campbell kindly agreed to act as interim Principal until December. Dr Campbell’s wealth of leadership experience was invaluable during this time and the children of Ben Madigan greatly enjoyed his time in the office. Mr Daniel Warwick left Ben Madigan at Christmas to take up the post of Vice-Principal at Bloomfield PS and Miss Nicola Friel took over in Prep 4 as a permanent member of the teaching staff. Mrs Janine Chapman became a full-time permanent teacher and Mrs Joanne Lawther became the permanent Principal release teacher.

Mrs Pamela Jones left Ben Madigan to return to Knockmore PS at the end of June, with Mrs Sarah Bell returning to join the staff after maternity leave.

CHARITY DONATIONS

A number of charity donations were made this year. We again supported Operation Christmas Child by collecting filled shoe boxes and making online donations. £1077.70 was given to Macmillan Cancer after a coffee morning event organised by the School Development Association. For the annual Children In Need appeal we were able to donate £1000 and £386 was collected to support Tiny Life at the Carol Service.

Thank you to all who helped with these very generous amounts which we hope will enrich the lives of those in need around the world.

SCHOOL DIARY 2019/20

SEPTEMBER 2019

IT experts from NERVE Belfast provided animation training for staff and pupils. Pupils used iPads to create short videos and teachers watched the experts to pick up IT teaching tips.



Ben Madigan opened its doors for a brunch event in support of Macmillan Cancer on the 27th September. The SDA organised this event which was well supported by parents and raised a terrific total of £1077.



Pupils from Prep 6 enjoyed the opportunity to visit HMS Caroline as part of their topic on the First World War. The children learnt about the vital part HMS Caroline played in the Battle of Jutland and experienced what life would have been like on the warship during battle.



Prep 6 pupils enjoying lunch on-board HMS Caroline.

OCTOBER 2019

During October Ben Madigan had visitors to teach us about ‘Active Transport, to help Prep 7 pupils relax ahead of their examinations and we also had Mrs Marshall return to help the children prepare their shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child.

At harvest, rather than decorating the hall, pupils across the school collected items to be donated to the Trussel Trust Foodbank.



The SDA organised enjoyable Halloween discos for Preps 1-3 and Preps 4-7.

Pupils and staff of Ben Madigan attended Belfast Royal Academy’s Prize day.

NOVEMBER 2019

After half term Ben Madigan held a Sponsored Run to raise money for Children in Need. Lots of Pudsey Bears joined in to make it even more fun.



As a result of the sponsored run Ben Madigan made a donation of £1000 to Children in Need. The top three fundraisers were presented with Pudsey Bears.



Anti-Bullying Week began on the 11th of November, with pupils engaged in meaningful lessons and posters displayed around the school.

In sports, Activity NI provided Prep 7 pupils with athletics coaching and the girls' hockey team played a friendly match against Mossley Primary School.

Made for More NI led assembly.

Prep 5 visited Cave Hill park.



Charlotte Ingram became Ben Madigan's first 'Word Millionaire' since the introduction of the Accelerated Reader scheme.

DECEMBER 2019

NERVE continued to provide training and class support to Preps 6 and 7. Pupils in Prep 7 also had the opportunity to participate in a healthy minds workshop.



The cross-country team enjoyed another opportunity to compete, this time at Lisnagarvey High School.



Beautiful, child friendly artwork produced by Belfast Royal Academy pupils was unveiled in our school library.



Preps 1 – 3 produced a beautiful nativity that was enjoyed by all who attended.



Autumn term finished with a plethora of enjoyable Christmas events, including: a visit from Santa, a trip to the Odyssey arena to watch a Christmas movie for Preps 4 – 7, a Prep 4 visit to the Christmas Market, a visit to Funky Monkey and the cinema for Preps 1 – 3 and trip to see Santa at Logwood Garden Centre for Pre-Prep.



Pupils also had fun eating their Christmas dinner at school while wearing festive jumpers.

JANUARY 2020

Mr Coulter joined Ben Madigan as Principal on the first day of the New Year.

Over the course of January pupils enjoyed several educational visits as part of the Shared Education Scheme.



Olympic swimmer Amy Smith came to visit Ben Madigan during a 'Sports for Schools' afternoon. Pupils listened to Amy's inspirational story of how she became an elite level athlete. Fitness coach Jack Rutter also led the pupils through a fitness circuit.



Prep 6 began learning about the Vikings as part of their new topic. A particular highlight was the annual 'Viking Day', where pupils had the opportunity to hold replica Viking artefacts and participate in a range of Viking related activities.

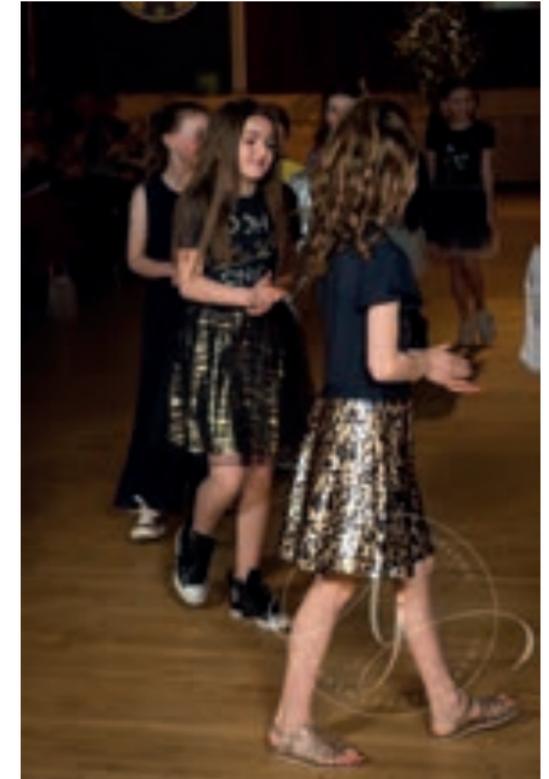


FEBRUARY 2020

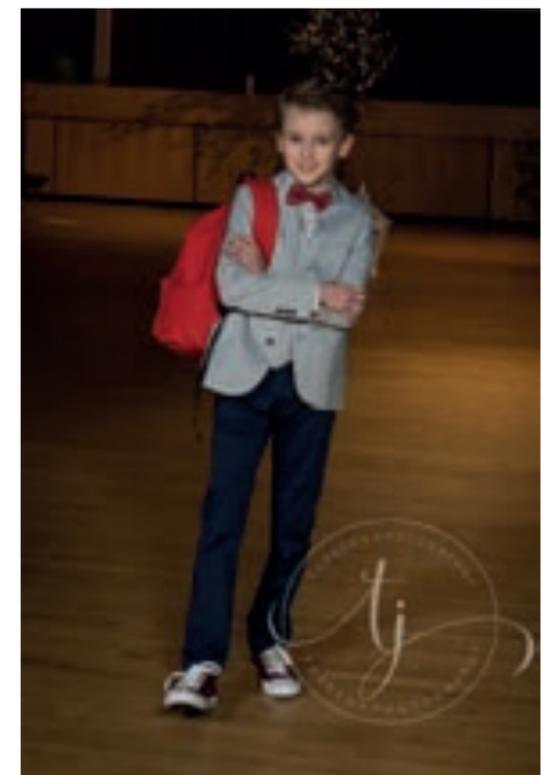
February began with our Scholastic Book Fair which the child enjoyed and also raised a significant amount of money for new books in school.



Pupils from Key Stage Two participated in the Athletics NI sports hall competition.



A selection of Ben Madigan pupils took to the catwalk at the F.O.T.A. fashion show held at Belfast Royal Academy.



MARCH 2020

The school choir successfully applied for a place at the Peace Proms event at the Odyssey's SSE Arena. The choir represented the school beautifully and the pupils enjoyed the quality music on offer.



The girls' hockey team participated in the North Belfast Heat of the Ulster Hockey Tournament. Despite not making it through the girls enjoyed themselves and only had to wait one day before witnessing the Belfast Royal Academy 1st XI win the Schools' Cup final.



To celebrate World Book Day everyone at Ben Madigan dressed up as their favourite book character. Pupils enjoyed displaying their costumes during a special assembly.



SHARED EDUCATION WITH OUR LADY OF LOURDES

This year Ben Madigan entered into the third year of partnering with our neighbouring school Our Lady of Lourdes (Park Lodge) as part of the Shared Education Programme. Pupils from both schools have had lots of opportunity to enjoy fun learning experiences together, forming friendships along the way. These have included drum workshops, visits to Ulster Rugby's Kingspan stadium, W5, the Cavehill visitor Centre, the Ulster Museum and also an outing to the MAC theatre to watch a stirring production of 'Under the Hawthorne Tree'.

R.C.



MUSIC AT BEN MADIGAN

Ben Madigan's annual carol service was held on a dark December night. But as soon as you walked through the doors of Whitehouse Presbyterian Church all thoughts of cold were soon cast from your mind. Everyone in attendance was quickly enveloped in the warmth and happiness of the event and the smiling faces of the children on show. There was not a sound to be heard as Oscar Coiley opened proceedings with a crystal clear rendition of Once in Royal David's City and the room was soon filled with the sounds of song and spoken word. The natural talent of the children, coupled with the careful preparation of dedicated teachers, made for a wonderful evening of entertainment.

Music is not only for special occasions: it is woven into daily life at Ben Madigan. Our weekly assemblies are filled with singing and dancing where the entire school community joins together, with our Pre Prep carefully watching and learning from Prep Seven. Many of our talented children also avail of the specialist music tuition on offer such as Piano, Violin and Drums and are able to showcase their talents. For those children with a particular interest in music, the weekly school choir practice gives them a chance to shine and this year was run by Mrs Chapman and myself.

The choir had a jam packed Spring Term. Having been invited to attend the Peace Proms Concert at the Odyssey Arena in Belfast, there was much to do as there was a great repertoire of music and choreography required to participate. It was not uncommon to hear the sounds of Queen and Disney floating through the corridors during break and lunch times, as our dedicated choir members practised everything until it was just right. The evening itself was a hub of activity and excitement for the children as well as their

supportive parents who turned up in droves to watch the performance. At the end of the night only one question was on everyone's lips - 'Can we do it again next year?'

The annual Belfast Royal Academy Spring Concert held at the prestigious Ulster Hall was a fantastic, yet poignant evening for all involved. As coronavirus and the subsequent lockdown was looming, little did we know it would be the last large gathering of our school family for this year. Backstage, the excitement was at fever pitch as the Ben Madigan Prep. Students waited their turn to grace the stage. The choir sweetly sang 'Hushabye Mountain' from Chitty Chitty Bang Bang with Sophia Simon ending the performance with a beautiful solo. After rapturous applause, the choir split in two and began their second piece 'Anything you can do, I can do better' from Annie Get Your Gun. This was to be the performance of the night as each side of the choir fought it out to be the loudest, quietest, sweetest, fastest side of all. Special mention must go to Halle Sinnerton who had the entire Ulster Hall in stitches with her enthusiasm.

Soon after of course, the world turned upside down. Just days away from our performance of 'Pirates of the Currybean' at the Ballyearl Theatre, schools were unfortunately asked to close. What a play it would have been. Lines had been learnt by heart, choreography had been nailed down and songs had been tuned to perfection all under the watchful eye of Mrs Lennon, our esteemed director. It is hoped that one day soon we will sing, dance and perform together again.

'Those who wish to sing, always find a song' – Plato.

N.F.

Former Pupils' News

TONY DANKER



In June 2020, it was announced that former BRA pupil Tony Danker, who left school in 1990, was to become Director General of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), taking up his duties on 1st November and continuing a highly successful career in the world of business.

After graduating with a degree in Law from the University of Manchester, where he also acted as Chair of the Union of Jewish Students, Tony joined the office of the Chief Rabbi, where he served as Deputy Director to the Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks. In 1996 he became Divisional Director in the Public Affairs Division of the Communications Group, the UK's longest established independent public relations consultancy and which aimed to employ "the best of the best". As Divisional Director he was responsible for the delivery of carefully formulated public affairs programmes designed to enable clients to engage their audiences in the most effective way in the support of key objectives.

In 1998, Tony was appointed Director of Communications in the well-established global management consultancy McKinsey and Co. He took a mid-career break to study at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, obtaining a Masters of Public Administration degree and proceeded to become McKinsey's

Senior Government Consultant. In this capacity he was based in both Washington and London, acting as a consultant in public sector practice.

In 2008, Tony became a Special Adviser in HM Treasury, based in the Cabinet Office and then working with HM Treasury on public sector reform and the economy.

In another departure in 2010, Tony joined the Guardian Media PLC, focusing on policy and strategy. Two years later he became International Director, responsible for the development of international business, including the launch of Guardian US and Guardian Australia. He also served as the organisation's leader of its international, rights and syndication functions and assumed responsibility for the management of its philanthropic partnerships. He then became, in August 2015, Guardian News and Media Chief Strategy Officer, responsible for the Guardian's strategy, business development and data and insight capability, which entailed working on new markets, new businesses and strategic partnerships, as well as global expansion, business development and analyses functions.

Possibly one of the highlights thus far of Tony Danker's glittering career came in October 2017 when he became Chief Executive Officer of "To Be Business", a government and industry body launched by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne and funded by a group of FTSE 100 chairmen and the Chancellor, with the aim of making British industries more productive.

Tony built the organisation from scratch and it now reaches over 5000 small and medium sized enterprise leaders participating in its

programmes, with dozens of leading UK companies forming partnerships with “Be the Business”. Currently, an important aim of “Be the Business” lies in supporting businesses through the Covid-19 crisis.

Tony Danker has been appointed to the leadership of the CBI at a critical moment for UK companies. The Covid-19 pandemic has plunged the economy into deep recession, with the UK poised to sever formal links with the European Union at the end of the Brexit transition period in December. The CBI, working alongside the trades unions and business groups, will have a key role to play in shaping the government’s economic response to the crisis and improving the country’s productivity record.

STEPHEN SMARTT



Stephen Smartt is an astrophysicist who specialises in stellar evolution, supernovae, and time domain sky surveys. After leaving Belfast Royal Academy in 1986, he studied physics and applied mathematics at Queen’s University, Belfast and was awarded a PhD in astrophysics in 1996.

Stephen later worked at the Isaac Newton group of telescopes and held a fellowship at the University of Cambridge. He returned to Belfast in 2004 and established a group working on stellar evolution, supernovae and time domain sky surveys. He is credited with the discovery of stars that explode as supernovae, measuring their mass, luminosity and the chemical elements synthesised. He is Professor of Astrophysics at the School of Mathematics and Physics at Queen’s University, Belfast.

Stephen Smartt was awarded the Philip Leverhulme Prize in 2005, awarded by the Leverhulme Trust to recognise the achievement of outstanding researchers whose work has already attracted international recognition and whose future career is exceptionally promising. He is a member of the Royal Irish Academy and in 2020 was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

OLD BOYS’ ASSOCIATION

The main event in the Association’s calendar is the Annual Dinner. Last year’s Annual Dinner was held at the Europa Hotel on 23rd November, hosted by the BRA OBA President, Moore Dickson.

The speakers at the dinner were:

- The Principal, Mrs Hilary Woods, proposed the toast to the Association.
- The President responded and proposed the toast to our guests.
- Mr Paul Crute responded.
- Mr William Crawley who proposed the toast to the School.

The occasion provided the opportunity for what is a unique photograph, of four “Heads” of the Academy - Mrs Woods and her three predecessors.

The success of the Dinner was again due to the organisational skills of the Dinner Secretary, Iain Knox, and his team, who work extremely hard each year to ensure this event runs smoothly.

Sadly, the 2020 Annual Dinner had to be cancelled due to the Covid19 pandemic. Hopefully we can re-instate this event at the Europa Hotel in November, 2021.

LONDON DINNER

Following on from the success of previous London Dinners, more than 50 Former Pupils attended the seventh annual London Dinner at the RAF Club, Piccadilly on Friday 13th March 2020. The president said Grace and after a delightful meal, invited Michael Haslett to speak on his memories of school – especially

of captaining the only BRA 1st XV to win the Schools Cup outright. Michael stressed that rugby is a team sport, and he felt very fortunate to captain that particularly strong team. Michael then proposed the toast to the School. The Principal responded on behalf of the School and the President’s customary closing remarks left plenty of time for late evening socialising. Our thanks are due to David Haslett, Louis Campbell and Iain Knox for organising this event.



EDINBURGH DINNER

The Edinburgh Dinner which had been planned for 24th April 2020 at the New Club on Princes Street had to be cancelled due to the Covid 19 lockdown. Our thanks are due to David Haslett and Louis Campbell for their organising efforts.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Association was scheduled for 7th April 2020, but was postponed until later in the year. This year’s President, Moore Dickson, agreed to stay in the role in a temporary capacity, until the AGM takes place.

The following officials, who were elected for 2019/2020, will continue in post until the AGM takes place.

President	Moore Dickson
Senior Vice President	Trevor Sturgess
Junior Vice President	Bobby Gray
Hon. Secretary	Philip McKenna
Hon. Treasurer	Nik Simon
Hon. Membership Secretary	Michael McDowell
Dinner Secretary	Iain Knox
Hon. Auditor	Drew Wilkinson

The Committee for 2019/2020 was also elected. The future of the Association depends upon Old Boys becoming involved and we appeal to anyone who has an interest in joining the Committee to contact the Hon. Secretary or any member of the Committee.

RUGBY

Congratulations to Iain Henderson on his appointment as captain of the Ulster XV for the 2020-2021 season. Iain has been an Irish international since his debut in 2012 against South Africa, and was selected to tour with the British and Irish Lions to New Zealand in 2017.

ANNUAL CRICKET MATCH BRA OBS VS THE BRA 1ST XI

Unfortunately, the annual cricket match between an Old Boys’ XI against the School 1st XI was cancelled due to Covid19 lockdown.

GOLF SOCIETY

The Golf Society, organised by Ken & Iain Knox, saw the first outing at Malone Golf Club cancelled due to the Covid 19 lockdown.

Happily, Captain’s day was played as usual at Royal Belfast Golf Club on Friday, 11th, September, 2020. There were 35 participants who enjoyed pleasant weather, good golf, and dinner afterwards in the main dining room to enable the extra spacing requirements. The results this year were:

- **Picken Cup was played for at Royal Belfast G.C. Friday 11th September 2020.**
Winner: **Iain Knox.**
- **Ferguson Cup – not awarded due to Covid19.**

Photos: (1) Iain Knox driving off first T-box. (2) Iain Knox presented with the Picken Cup by (his father) Ken Knox (event organiser).



very popular occasions, with around 50 members attending. There is usually a summer lunch at the Royal Portrush GC in August, but it was cancelled this year due to the pandemic. Lunches are currently suspended.

Photo: monthly lunch at Royal Belfast Yacht Club on 14th November, 2019.



The planned dates for 2021 golf competitions are:

- Picken Cup at Malone GC on Thursday 17th June 2021.
- Captain's Day to be held at Royal Belfast GC on Friday 10th September 2021.

MONTHLY LUNCHES



Robin Reid instigated and co-ordinated these lunches for many years. Early this year, Robin decided to step down, and we are very grateful to him for establishing this programme. Robb Fletcher took over the coordinating role – with the assistance of a local member in each club. These monthly lunches are held mostly in golf clubs around the greater Belfast area. They are

NETWORKING BREAKFASTS



Photo: Michael McDowell, Clare McDowell, Anne Madden, Jonathon McAlpine & Louise Brogan.

The Old Boys' Association, together with the Old Girls' Association, organised a Networking Breakfast on 13th February, 2020. Our Thanks to Michael McDowell, Clare McDowell & Louise Brogan for their efforts. These events are scheduled around a breakfast so that working past pupils can attend for breakfast, listen to two short presentations, and then go on to their jobs. It is unlikely any more breakfasts can be scheduled for some time.

The Breakfast on 13th February, 2020, was held at the Ten Square Hotel, and the speakers were Anne Madden, Communications Manager, Sustrans, and Jonathon McAlpine, Chief Executive, East Belfast Enterprise.

OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION DONATION TO THE SCHOOL 2019-20



Each year, the Old Boys' Association plans to make a financial contribution to the School to support particular projects. In 2019-20, the Association, with the guidance of the Principal, donated £4,250 to purchase various items. These included physics apparatus to equip a laboratory in school in memory of Professor James Stirling, and £600 towards the new hockey video tower.

It is worth noting that the Association has donated over £25,000 to fund various projects in School over the past number of years.

The photograph shows Moore Dickson, OBA President, presenting the cheque to the Principal. Also in the photograph are Trevor Sturgess, Senior Vice President, and Nik Simon, Hon. Treasurer.

OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION DONATION TO THE CAPTAIN TOM MOORE NHS APPEAL

The Committee made a donation of £1,000 to the NHS Appeal organised by Captain Tom Moore.

SUPPORTING THE BRA OLD GIRLS' QUIZ



The OBA was delighted to be asked to assist with the Old Girls' "2020 Quiz Night" held on the 28th, February, 2020 at the Academy Club, Mallusk. A lot of fun was had by all concerned.

Photos: (1) Moore Dickson, OBA President getting things started. (2) Adrian Brown as Quiz-master & (3) Gareth Davis & Adrian Brown doing the audios and number crunching.



OLD BOYS' WEBSITE

The new Old Boys' website emerged last year from a major re-write, led by Martin Blake. Bobby Gray has now taken over as Editor – with support from an editorial team. Our thanks to Bobby for all the work he has put into this in the course of this year. The new website www.braoba.com is now active.

Michael McDowell promotes the Association on Social Media through the Old Boys' Twitter account @TheBRAoldboys.

Jim Carolan has become the Alumni Officer, and will liaise between the Association and the school.

Please inform the Alumni Office at alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net of any items of news for inclusion in The Owl and the Old Boys' Association website. Any notification of births, marriages, deaths or career developments etc. will be very welcome and of considerable interests to other Old Boys.

Obituaries: Thomas Henry McClelland BAag, MIBiol, FRAhS who attended BRA from 1942 to 1953, starting in Wingfield after the war. Henry (Harry) died in Braco

Perthshire, and his memorial service was in Dunblane Cathedral.

John McCall passed away on 6th September, 2020, and also **Arthur Newberry** recently.

Please notify the Alumni Office at alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net of changes of email address, or contact details. Thank you.

New members are always welcome!

Thank you.

Philip McKenna
Hon. Secretary

philmac49@gmail.com

GENERAL REQUEST

Any alumni who were past choristers at St Anne's are asked to get in touch with Mike Alexander at gmcbride42@gmail.com.

OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION



Welcome to the 2019/20 update from the Old Girls' Association. We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new Members, who we look forward to meeting at one of our future events.

The Old Girls' Association is open to all former female pupils and female staff. We have members from all over the world, as far afield as Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America – as well as many local ladies still living in Northern Ireland and

other parts of the UK and Ireland! We are always keen to add new members. Our aim is to support pupils of the School with all aspects of school life. We also aim to provide an opportunity for our Members to network, socialise and help raise funds for the School.



AFTERNOON TEA

On the 19th October 2019 we hosted our 'Afternoon Tea' at the Dunadry Hotel and Country Club.

It was a great success with the event being booked to capacity! The feedback was extremely positive, and I know everyone enjoyed not only the relaxed atmosphere, but the delicious food that was served. We would like to thank all who attended and gave generously to the raffle, as well as those companies that provided raffle prizes.



CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING

In December we met with the MVI girls and hosted a Christmas coffee morning, this was a lovely event and gave us the opportunity to get to know the girls. Unfortunately, we didn't get the opportunity to meet again as planned in May, though we would like to wish them all the very best as they now start university, college or employment. We hope all the girls enjoy the next stage of their lives and we look forward to keeping in touch and hearing their exciting news.



Our AGM was held on the 30th January 2020. Agenda items included fundraising, increasing membership and events for the forthcoming year.



Nikki Johns

Caroline Dillon

Chairperson

Vice Chairperson



Johanna Richardson

Claire McGovern

Hon. Treasurer

Hon. Secretary

BUSINESS BREAKFAST

A Business Breakfast was held at Ten Square on the 13th February 2020, guest speakers were Anne Madden (Policy and Communications Manager at Sustrans) and Jonathon McAlpine (Chief Executive of East Belfast Enterprise).

On the 29th February 2020 a joint Old Girls'/Old Boys' quiz was held at the Academy Club. It was a fantastic evening and the club was packed! Thanks go to Adrian Browne as quiz master and his side kick, Gareth Davis, who was instrumental in the organisation of the event, along with the Old Girls' committee. We are hoping to run more joint events in the future. We would also like to thank all that donated raffle prizes and everyone who purchased a ticket.



LONDON DINNER

The London dinner was held on the 13th March 2020, with a very inspiring speech from Michael Haslett. Unfortunately, the Edinburgh dinner was cancelled due to Covid 19.

We are very grateful to Old Boys Association for continuing to organise these events and we encourage you to attend the dinners in the future.

1ST XV SCHOOL'S CUP WIN

On the 4th March the girls 1st XV won the hockey Schools Cup! We were delighted for the team and wanted to add our congratulations for their fantastic achievement. The Old Girls' Association presented the team with a memento to mark the occasion.



THANK YOU KEY WORKERS

In May, we felt that we would like to acknowledge the important work that many of our former pupils were doing as 'Key Workers' during the Covid 19 pandemic. We were able to compile four moving video compilations to 'Thank the Key Workers'. Our thanks go to everyone who contributed, including James Cleland who painstakingly edited the footage and also to all our former pupils that played such a critical role throughout the pandemic, we are beyond grateful. These video can all be viewed on YouTube.



HANGING BASKETS

At the end of May, we held our hanging basket sale, which was a great success with over 100 being sold. Hanging baskets were provided by Dundonald Nurseries and the quality was again outstanding. We plan to have another plant sale in May 2021.



The Old Girls' committee will liaise with Mrs Woods to ensure that all funds raised this year

will go towards suitable projects that require funding and will enhance the education of all pupils.

During the year our Members have been involved in the School through a range of volunteering.

We love hearing from our all Old Girls who are located in NI and around the world. Please get in touch if you have some news to share.

If you are not already a Member of the Old Girls' Association and would like to support us, please get in touch. Annual membership is just £5 and those who are previous life members can also subscribe to the annual fee. All fees contribute to any financial contribution we are able to give the School.

Events for 2021: TBC

Get in touch:

email – braoldgirls@outlook.com

twitter – [@braoldgirls](https://twitter.com/braoldgirls)

facebook – [BRAformergirls](https://www.facebook.com/BRAformergirls)

We can also be contacted via the Alumni section on the School website.



Births, Deaths and Marriages

BIRTHS

CAIN: 21st February 2020, to Chris and Deirdre, a daughter Eva Rose

COOPER: 15th August 2017, to Hannah, a son Robert Charlie and 14th September 2019, to Hannah, a daughter Lucy Margaret

DELANY: 19th April 2020, to Rebecca (nee Cromie) and Ryan, a son Alexander James

IRWIN: 11th December 2019, to Neil and Tracey, a son Freddie Samuel

GILMORE: 22nd November 2019, to Sarah Quinlan and partner, a daughter Nancy Scarlett

KIERAN: 17th February 2020, to Sara Jane (nee Knox) and Damien, a son Sam Ultan

DEATHS

GIBB: 5TH November 2019, Johnston W

HENDERSON: 14TH January 2020, Roy

MCCLELLAND: 11th November 2019, Thomas Henry 'Harry'

MCCONNEL: 28TH April 2020, Rev John

TOTTEN: 5TH October 2020, Rodney

MARRIAGES

CAIRNS-TSANG: 1ST January 2020, Racheal Carins and Leon Tsang

HANNA-BARTON: 30TH July 2020, Charis Hanna and Rory Barton



