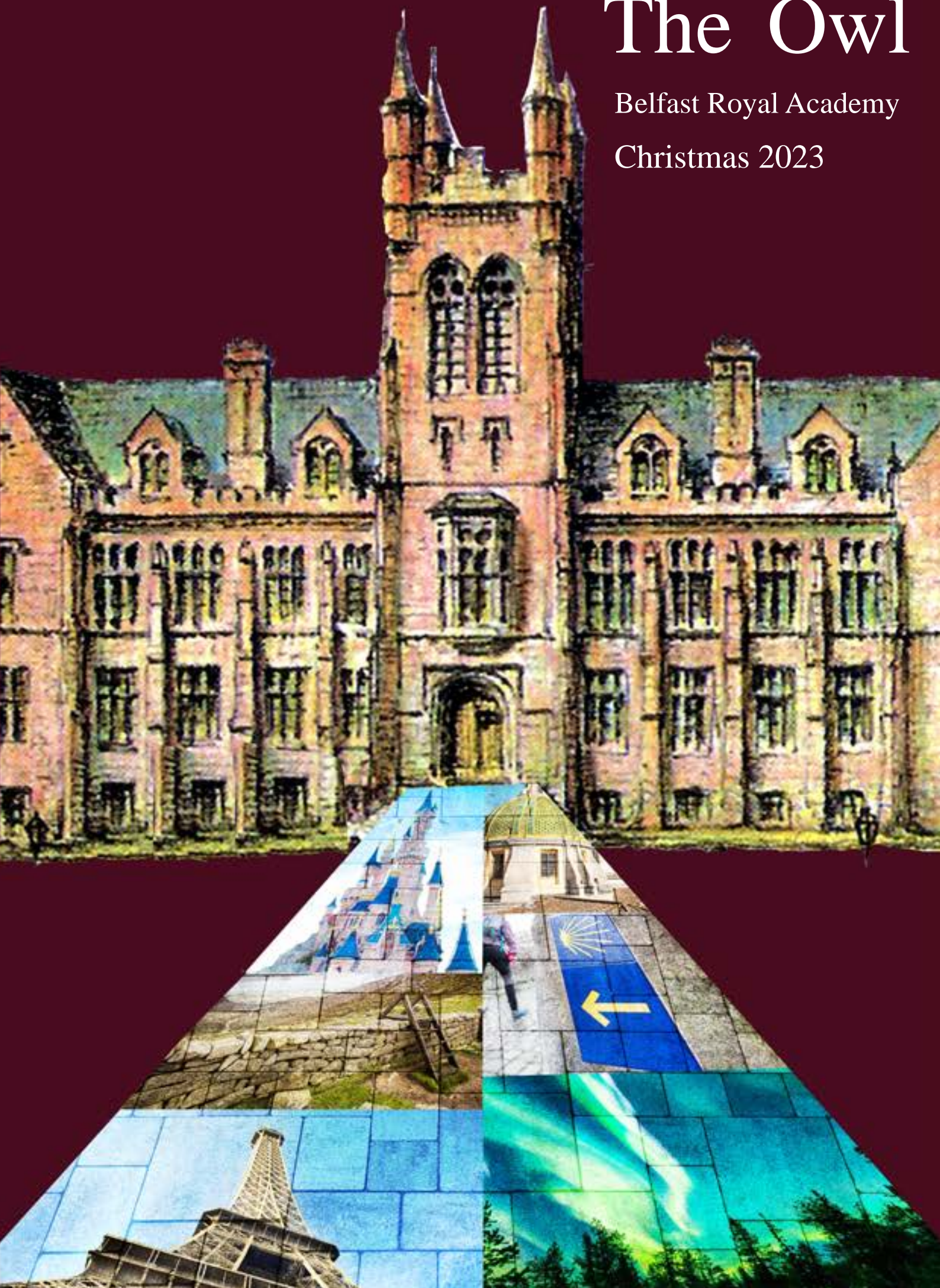


The Owl

Belfast Royal Academy

Christmas 2023



The Owl Team 2023

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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 approval of the Board of Governors, become a member of the Academy upon the payment of a registration fee of £1. Applications should be made to the Head of Finance and Corporate Services 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:

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Valete

ROSEMARY MORRISON



Rosemary clearly missed the classroom and started to do some substitute teaching in Bloomfield Collegiate and Cavehill PS, once all her daughters were at school. In August 2000, Rosemary returned to the Academy to step in on a temporary basis in the Home Economics department and the rest, as they say, is history.

She quickly established herself as an excellent classroom teacher, Head of Department and Head of Year in a few short years. Many lifelong friendships with pupils were formed over the years and as a Head of Year, she took almost three years groups through B.R.A. over the course of eighteen years. She has carried out this role with dedication and a willingness to help in all situations.

Mrs Rosemary Morrison has a long history within the corridors of B.R.A. She first entered as a pupil, Miss Rosemary Fairclough, from Skegoneil Primary school in September 1974. Throughout her time in school, she was a model pupil, particularly good at Mathematics, sport and obviously she had dynamic flair for Domestic Science, as it was known then.

On completing her A-Levels in Pure Mathematics and Statistics, English and Home Economics, she was accepted to study Home Economics at the University of Ulster at Jordanstown in 1981. On completion of her teacher training, she took up a post in Ballymena Girls High School, teaching Junior mathematics and Home Economics. She remained there full-time until the birth of her eldest daughter, after which she became a full-time mum for several years.

Rosemary has been an invaluable member of staff- no set of FV-LVI interviews was ever too much, no catered event, school play, or ladies' lunch was ever beyond her. In Malawi, she was a calm and ever unflappable influence and I know she thoroughly enjoyed her trips there. As Rosemary closes a massive chapter in her life, we at B.R.A. just want to wish her every happiness. Life will not be the same but, like everything in life, we will have to learn to work without her as she starts a new and exciting phase. Thank you, Rosemary, for your friendship and guidance. I, and all the Academy family, wish you every happiness in your retirement.
L.N.

PAUL PORTER



Paul began his teaching career in Lumen Christi College, Derry before responding to an advert placed by Headmaster, Mr Billy Young in October 2005 to take up a job share position in French in B.R.A. Paul's covering letter included the line: "As a teacher, I hope to motivate students to do their best, to extend their personal limits and to develop the skills and knowledge that are necessary for them to become mature and contributing members of their community." I think we will all agree that Paul has certainly fulfilled this ambition, both as a classroom practitioner and, more recently, in his pastoral leadership role. He understands the most important reason why we do the job that we do - that we can all make a massive difference to the young people in our care, even if some of them do not recognise this until many years later.

It did not take long for Paul to become an outstanding classroom teacher. His lessons are vibrant and busy, and his pupils invariably become confident and enthusiastic linguists. In terms of value for money, Paul certainly ticks that box as he can teach French, German, Latin, Spanish and probably a bit of Irish! He is an entire languages department in one package.

Paul's passion for the Arabic Language and Culture project that he co-ordinated in B.R.A. for many years reflected his strong belief that classical and modern foreign languages are a

core element of any pupil's education. Through championing Arabic language and culture, and that of French and German and Latin, he emphasised the importance of teaching language to enhance cultural understanding, breaking down barriers and empowering pupils to become global citizens.

Paul was professionally ambitious and rightly so. In 2006, he was made a full-time permanent teacher of French and in 2012 he was appointed to the position of Head of Modern Foreign Languages and in March 2017, he completed the PQH qualification.

Paul is a dynamic but thoughtful leader. He asks for advice and weighs up his options when caution is required. He had the confidence to deal effectively with complex and challenging staffing issues and always led from the front, garnering him the support and respect of his department. His membership of the Senior Leadership Team meetings provided him with experience of strategic, whole-school issues and he contributed effectively to discussion. Paul always listened and was willing to take on board the opinions of others. He empowered his team and instilled in them a professional self-belief. There are many colleagues and pupils who are grateful to Paul for his time, thoughtfulness and insight.

All school leaders themselves are, to an extent, the product of the professional journey that they have been on. Whilst on that journey, we never stop learning from colleagues and from experiences which can be referred to at a later date. Paul's professional career began as a chaplain and this experience has helped to shape his educational philosophy and his calling to the pastoral aspect of school life. The career break that he took during the 2019 – 20 academic year to work as a pastoral leader in an educational retreat in Donegal was a brave move to step away from the security of a teaching post for a year. However, Paul's rationale was sound – he wished to explore a focus that was dear to his heart - the area of improvement of children's mental health, resilience and wellbeing. The Governors did not require much convincing to grant this career break as they knew that Paul's experience would be of great benefit to the pupils in his care.

Paul took over the position of Head of Year in September 2018, relinquishing his role as Subject Leader in order to focus on this pastoral role. His approach to the Head of Year position was centred on an insistence that the interests of the individual child come first and that the child's voice should always be heard. With his cohort of boys who have just completed MVI, he quickly gained their confidence and respect through his approachable, good humoured and fatherly manner. He held the boys to the highest standards and would be quick to pull up those who fell short. He encouraged the boys in his care to become gentlemen and asked them to reflect how their behaviour represented their character.

Paul ran a lunchtime film club that was much appreciated by the pupils and also co-ordinated the School karting team, providing opportunities for these pupils to compete at local and national competitions. Above all his many professional qualities and attributes, Paul is a devoted family man. His arduous 130-mile round trip every single day would have sorely tested many of us and the fact that he did this for 16-17 years is a testament to his loyalty and dedication to the Academy. However, his family now need him to be closer to home.

Paul has left his mark on the Academy as a wonderful colleague, one who is collegiate and a great team player, a colleague who has integrity and who is loyal, warm and, above all, kind. We wish him and his family, particularly his daughter Jenna, good luck and best wishes for this new stage in their lives.

H.W.

STUART ROBERTS



Stuart Roberts joined Belfast Royal Academy in 2021 as a Teacher of Art and Design. He undertook his degree in Fine Art, Painting and Printmaking at the Glasgow School of Art. Prior to working in Belfast Royal Academy, he held posts in schools such as Bangor Grammar School, Royal Belfast Academical Institution and Antrim Grammar. The pupils were able to develop their knowledge and skills with his support and encouragement.

Within school, he dedicated many lunch time hours to working with the art clubs. The staff benefited from his many hobbies, which included gardening and cooking.

Stuart was able to develop a good rapport with students and engaged them well in learning the core elements of Art and Design. He was a valued member of the Art and Design Department and was enthusiastic about this subject. Stuart has moved on to work in Antrim Grammar as an Art and Design and Moving Image Arts Teacher. We wish him every success in his new post.

L.A.P.

We say farewell to a number of the Learning Support Team: Abbie O'Neill, Kirby Thompson, Jessica Hunter, Olivia Yorke, Eva Clarke, Cristina Sirbu and Claire Winning - and wish them all the best.

Obituaries



EMMA ALLEN

Emma was born on 22 June 1978 and died on 30 September 2022. She attended B.R.A. from the 1989-90 academic year until 1995-96, following which she went up to St John's College Cambridge to read music. While there, she enthusiastically engaged in College musical life, serving as president of the St John's Music Society.

That theme extended to her first job, as online editor digitalising Grove's monumental Dictionary of Music and Musicians. Much of Emma's professional life was spent at the National Archives, in a variety of rewarding roles, but in 2015 she left to become director of digital development in Parliament, and in 2019 she took up a post as head of digital capability at Arup - work she enormously relished. She was also delighted to put her expertise to use in the voluntary sector, as board trustee of the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

Her approach to life was, to the end, characterised by a cheerful and thoughtful concern for others. In 2021, Emma was diagnosed with a recurrence of the cancer which had first afflicted her some fifteen years earlier. She was married to Dr Alec Mulinder, who survives her.



CHARLOTTE GAULT

It is with much sadness that the School received news that a prominent, former member of staff, Miss Charlotte Gault, passed away on 22nd August 2023, aged 88.

Miss Gault joined the English Department in 1963, where she taught for three years before leaving to teach for a time at the Alliance Girls' High School, Kikuyu, Kenya. She returned to the Academy in 1969. In 1976, she left the Academy to become Head of English at Friends' School, Lisburn. As noted by Mr Lord in his address at Prize Day on 27th October 1976, "this appointment deprived the Academy of one of our most valued members of staff."

Aside from her classroom teaching, Miss Gault was the producer of "three transcendently lovely productions- *The Miser*, *Twelfth Night* and *Romeo and Juliet*." In the same report written by Stephen Connolly in the bicentenary edition of The Owl in 1985, he noted "the dominant quality which she restored to the centre of her productions was that of lyricism. They glowed with tenderness and gentleness and stressed the emotionalism in human relationships. The production of

Romeo and Juliet was quite remarkable.”

Beyond teaching, Charlotte was a regular attendee at Ulster Orchestra concerts. She was also fully involved in the work of St. Nicholas’ Parish Church, Lisburn Road, where she was a Parish Reader. The photograph shows Charlotte as part of a team from St. Nicholas’ Parish Church presenting (from the studio...aka Choir Room) a morning service on Radio Ulster on Sunday, July 17, 2016.

We extend our condolences to her family.



ROBIN REID

The Academy community was saddened to learn of the death on Thursday 6th April of Mr Robin ‘Sticky’ Reid. Robin’s association with the school was unparalleled - beginning as a pupil in 1941, returning to teach Chemistry in 1960 at the beginning of a career that spanned 35 years with 20 of them as Head of Chemistry, Master in Charge of Cricket, and as a loyal member and former President of the Old Boys’ Association.

Robin was a gifted student of Chemistry both at school and at Queen’s University, Belfast and this extended to his teaching role when he gained a reputation as an outstanding classroom practitioner. He was fully involved in the evolution of the GCSE and A-Level syllabuses and in training teachers throughout Northern Ireland in the development of skills required to teach and assess to the highest standards.

Robin was keen to imbue his love of sport in others and coached rugby for 22 years and cricket for 24 years in B.R.A. His interest in and passion for cricket extended beyond school teams through his involvement in the Northern Cricket Union Schools’ Committee for 17 years and his role as manager of many Ulster Schools’ XI teams.

His extracurricular activities were not confined to the sports pitch. Robin was Stage Manager for many memorable school plays including “Toad of Toad Hall”, “The Heart’s a Wonder” and “The Tempest”. Following his retirement from the teaching

staff in 1995, Robin enjoyed playing golf as a member of Knock Golf Club. He was a stalwart of both the Academy Rugby Club and the Old Boys’ Association where he enjoyed the Golf Competitions and was a loyal attender of the Monthly Luncheons.

Robin always retained a keen interest in Academy matters and, alongside his wife Judith, herself a former member of the B.R.A Chemistry Department, attended all four reunions in the summer of 2022. The affection with which his former pupils greeted him was a mark of the esteem in which he was held and the positive impact he had on so many pupils’ lives as a teacher, sports coach and mentor.

We extend our deepest sympathies to his wife Judith and entire family circle.

‘It is with a very heavy heart that I record the passing of Robin Reid, former President of the Association in 1988/89.

I first met Robin in 1978 when I started teaching at the Academy. In the years that followed, until his retirement in 1995, he was my mentor and friend. He took a keen interest in my professional development, and I shall forever be grateful to him.

When I retired from teaching in 2011, we met up frequently for coffee, at Old Boys’ lunches and a catch-up chat. He retained his interest in all things Academy until the end. He will be much missed by all who knew him.’

L.C.

Distribution of Prizes

The Annual Distribution of Prizes took place this year on Friday 6th October at The Spire's Centre. The Warden, Prof. J. A. I. Montgomery, delivered an engaging speech which focused on the enriching and powerful nature of education.

The Guest of Honour, Prof. Stephen Smartt, urged prize-winners to grasp opportunities and listen to the advice and guidance of teachers. He highlighted the importance of the School's core values, particularly within the context of an ever-changing society in which the internet plays a fundamental role.

In closing, Prof. Smartt left pupils with the motivational notion that by working hard, setting high standards and being themselves, they will be able to achieve great things.

The Senior Orchestra gave a rousing performance of 'Pomp and Circumstance' by E. Elgar, while the Chamber Choir gave a gripping rendition of G. Orban's 'Daemon Irrepat Callidus.'

We are most grateful to Rev. M. Taylor for opening the prize-giving ceremony.

THE PRINCIPAL'S ADDRESS

Good afternoon, Warden, Reverend Taylor, ladies and gentlemen, pupils, colleagues, Governors and our guest speaker, Professor Stephen Smartt. I am delighted to provide a report on the 2022-23 academic year and to recognise the achievements of our pupils.

Prof. Smartt was clearly preordained for academic achievement with the surname he was born with. He left the Academy in 1987 to go to Queen's, initially with the intention of studying electrical engineering but changed course to graduate in Physics and Applied Mathematics, followed by a PhD in Astrophysics. As you can imagine, Professor Smartt was a very serious and hardworking pupil whilst at

B.R.A. so I am afraid there are no funny stories about him being a teenage reprobate who came good, or if there are, they are buried very well!

When he was at school, he was taught O-level Chemistry by one Dr Louis Campbell – attaining an A grade and by some quirk of the timetable, Dr Campbell taught him A-Level Chemistry where he did not attain an A grade! I am not really sure what went wrong here – how did someone with such intellectual prowess as Prof. Smartt not achieve the top grade in A-Level Chemistry? All I can say, Stephen is that Dr Campbell is here now so perhaps it is not too late to launch an appeal...

He spent 5 years as a research fellow at the University of Cambridge and was appointed a lecturer at Queen's in 2004. He was appointed Professor of Astrophysics in 2006, the youngest astrophysics professor in the UK at the time. In October 2022 Stephen was appointed to the Philip Wetton Chair of Astrophysics at the University of Oxford and is a Professorial Fellow of Christ Church, Oxford. So, Professor Smartt clearly knows his onions, especially his stellar ones, and richly deserves all his many academic accolades.

However, what is so welcome about an individual who has reached the highest echelons of academia is the passion that Professor Smartt displays about the public's understanding of science. He regularly gives lectures and talks to schools and we were very grateful to him for hosting a visit at Oxford for B.R.A. pupils in June of this year.

Professor Smartt – thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to present our prizes this year.

One of our most remarkable former pupils who entered Belfast Academy in 1801, was another celebrated astronomer and physicist. Rev. Dr John Thomas Romney Robinson was a child prodigy, reading avidly by the time he was three, and having

a book of his poetry published when he was only 13. He became Rector of Enniskillen, was made a fellow of Trinity College Dublin in 1814 at the age of 22 and became Director of Armagh Observatory when he was 31 – a post he would hold for nearly 59 years! With the help of the Archbishop and his own innate enthusiasm for science, he obtained a number of new instruments and performed numerous observations, culminating in his catalogue of stars: which was published 1859 in Dublin. On the moon – Robinson crater is named in his honour. He had a real sense of curiosity about where he was and he conducted a bizarre experiment to check the longitude of Armagh and Dublin as shown on maps of the time. This involved firing rockets simultaneously in Dublin and Armagh measuring them from the summit of Slieve Gullion which then provided evidence that Armagh was further west of Dublin than anyone had previously suspected by a distance of nearly 50 centimetres.

Apart from astronomy, he also had great interest in meteorology. He invented the cup anemometer, the wind-measuring device that is, with only minor changes, still in widespread use to this day. Robinson and Smartt are one of a number of learned Academy alumni who have had considerable influence in the world of science – Prof. James Stirling, a phenomenal physicist, who transformed particle physics through his research and Prof. Carl Murray, whose work on the Cassini mission to Saturn led to the discovery of its two new moons. We are proud of the world-wide influence Academy pupils have had and continue to have because of their 'energy' to excel and the 'mass' of knowledge to prove it! The keen physicists in the audience will see what I did there!

Through the early years of their education, Robinson, Stirling, Smartt and Murray belonged to Belfast Royal Academy. And although this focus is on science and, in particular, Physics, the aim of an Academy education is to pave the way for individuals to excel across the full gamut of industries and professions - humanities, performing arts, medicine, creative arts, law, service industries, education, sport. We look forward to seeing how our current pupils and most recent MVI Leavers will carve a path in well-established professions and in other disciplines that are just at the seedling stage.

There have, of course, been numerous challenges

thrown at all of us in recent times, and schools have certainly not been spared that. The use of aerated concrete which is prone to collapse in some schools across the UK has raised the possibility of a return to online lessons – a prospect that very few of us would welcome. It remains to be seen the extent of the impact in the Northern Ireland school estate but at least we know that the Crombie building is made of sterner stuff! Over the past few months, we have found ourselves considering as educators the very fast-moving possibilities and pitfalls presented by chatbots. As is the case for so many different businesses and industries, in the world of education the potential of AI is nothing short of extraordinary, hugely exciting and terrifying in equal measure, if we stop to think about the extent to which it can and will transform our lives in so many ways. One thing for sure is that it is here to stay; indeed, in the decade to come, I suspect the use of AI will be one of the biggest, if not the biggest, topics of discussions in schools and universities, alongside tackling climate change and the importance of sustainability. And I can say with some certainty, that Belfast Royal Academy pupils will be involved, in a very positive way, in all of these issues.

Everybody in this room has some connection with Belfast Royal Academy – as a current or former pupil, a member of staff, a parent or a Governor – we are all proud to say that we belong in some way to this fantastic school. As you will hear from my report, our pupils' accomplishments across a wide range of activities are impressive. Let us not forget that our core business is teaching and learning – as reflected in the School's motto – Per vias sapientiae – along the paths of wisdom. However, alongside instilling academic rigour, fostering intellectual curiosity and encouraging creative thinking, there is also a need, just as crucially, for us to seek to develop character, to inculcate in our pupils a desire to think of others and the environment in which they live, to teach values and good manners which will serve them well for life.

None of us succeeds or fails by ourselves, we succeed or fail as a group and there are many important teams within the Belfast Royal Academy community group.

I would like to pay tribute to the Warden, Professor Ian Montgomery for his dedication to this key role and to our Board of Governors who



put in so many unheralded, unpaid and largely unrecognised hours on behalf of the pupils.

I am hugely indebted to the Academy teaching staff who, day after day, seek to inspire, nurture and support every pupil, to unlock the potential they see, and help them to discover new, sometimes hidden talents, such that they are able to 'develop and shine' during their time at school.

The same can be said of our wonderful support staff, who are equally deserving of our gratitude for all that they do, sometimes very visibly, sometimes more behind the scenes, to help ensure that all runs smoothly, and that all members of the community are well looked after, catered for and provided with a positive environment in which to work and study.

Our focus on developing oracy skills under the guidance of our literacy co-ordinator, Dr Adair, was very successful last year. Expertly led by a parent with legal expertise, Mr Brian Cole, our Magistrates' Mock Trial Team made up of 20 Form III pupils, won the national final of the competition in May, having prepared diligently in weekly training sessions throughout the year. Harry Nicholson, LVI was placed second in Gresham College's oracy competition held in London in January and junior and senior debating societies continue to thrive. Inspired by Miss Herron, Mr Spence and other members of the English Department, it has been wonderful to see our pupils excel in creative writing this year with pupils winning across the board in many competitions including the BBC Two Minute Tales, contributing to the North Belfast Area Learning Community Poetry Anthology and a new youth magazine, "Write up your street". It is exciting to see how many of our pupils are spending their own time writing for pleasure.

The former pupil, after whom one of our new prizes has been dedicated, would I am sure, be pleased to see that the ancient art of debating remains a key component of the extra-curricular provision in the Academy. Ruairi McAleese, who died at the age of 40 in 2019, had been a brilliant member of our School Debating Team, and had won the Northern Ireland Debating Competition on 2 occasions.

On leaving school in 1998, he studied at Oxford

University where he took a first in law from Magdalen College and won multiple prizes.

By day he was a government solicitor in the legal service. Latterly, he worked in the Treasury. He threw himself into community activities in Camden. But he had a real interest in LGBTQ+ rights and when the 2010 Equality Act was being developed, he asked to be allowed to work on it.

We are grateful to his many friends who have organised the funding for this prize – the Ruairi McAleese Debating Prize – and hope that this will be a fitting tribute to his legacy as an outstanding debater.

It has been great to see the level of engagement in external competitions elsewhere too. Two pupils completed the Sentinus Research Academy over the summer and five Academy students attended the All-Ireland Linguistics Final in Dublin, after reaching the top 100 in all of Ireland in the preliminary stage. Two of our pupils attained Bronze Awards in this prestigious competition. Over 150 pupils once again took part in the UK Maths Trust's individual challenges and the number of certificates awarded and qualifiers for the elite further rounds continues to be impressive.

At Senior level pupils achieved 5 golds, 9 silver and 18 bronze awards. Eleanor Green (MVI), Oscar Hill (LVI), Sarah McCarney (MVI) and Riya Raghuram (MVI) qualified for the next round (the Senior Kangaroo) with Sarah and Riya achieving merit certificates for their performance. Similar success has been enjoyed by pupils in the British Science Association's Crest Awards in the Biology, Physics and Chemistry Olympiads.

The Careers Programme continues to go from strength to strength, with significant contribution from alumni in delivering careers talks, assisting with our newly created Sixth Form societies and support with work experience. Our role model initiative has showcased the wide variety of disciplines and professions our alumni are involved with and this has a two-fold impact – it provides inspiration and also instils confidence in our pupils who can see people like them succeeding in so many areas. Overseen expertly by Ms Adams, pupils have personalised guidance on careers,

support with apprenticeships applications, mock interviews and the individual support of a UCAS mentor to help with university applications. More still is planned for this academic year.

Very ably supported by their four House Captains, our Heads of House have grown the number of competitions throughout last year with 40 house events which raised a fantastic £8000 for the charities nominated by each of the houses. Regular updates on the current point score have ensured a healthy rivalry and, more importantly, the opportunity for pupils to develop links with others in different year groups through the regular House Assemblies. The highlight of the house competitions was undoubtedly the sponsored walk which was conducted in blistering heat over the Cavehill route in June. Our normal strategy of wearing multiple waterproof layers and hoping that no-one succumbs to hypothermia had to be jettisoned in favour of updating staff with symptoms of heat stroke! For the first time in a long time – probably since Henry Pottinger himself attended the Academy – Pottinger house won the Evans Trophy. Our thanks to Mr Dorman and all the House Staff for keeping this crucial element of our theme of belonging to be as vibrant, enjoyable and wide-ranging as it is.

In addition to House Charities, our pupils have supported other organisations. Junior pupils raised money for the NI Cancer Fund for Children through the Read-On sponsored event, our ongoing support for Save the Children fund is possible through non-uniform days and barbeques, pupils and families donated an amazing number of toys for the annual Christmas toy appeal and pupils and staff give of their time to support the Habitat for Humanity projects. Pupils were clearly delighted to see the return of a wide range of educational visits on offer last year after the dearth of trips due to COVID-19. Such was the demand that we had to put on more than one trip for a couple of destinations and I thought the school was going to attract sponsorship from Easy Jet. Hence there were two ski trips over the Christmas break, two trips to Naples, incorporating visits to the Herculaneum and Pompeii, and two junior language trips to Paris. There was a very successful Geography trip to Iceland, a Scripture Union trip to Poland, a Sixth Form study visit to Oxford and Cambridge and a rugby training camp to Dublin.



The Camino de Santiago trip was reinstated this year after a 3-year break, with 40 pupils and 7 adults undertaking the next stage of the ambitious project to walk the full 800 km of the route from Pamploma to Santiago de Compestella. Such trips are wonderfully enriching, and I am very grateful to my colleagues for giving up their time to run them. This is also true of the superb D of E Team led by our team of volunteers, who were out on numerous practice and qualifying expeditions over the past year with 173 pupils completing bronze, silver or gold awards.

In sport, fixtures have taken place every Saturday and mid-week throughout the year from the beginning of September and in all types of weather thanks to the enthusiasm from all members of the PE Department, teaching staff and coaches. Particular mention should go to Intermediate A netball team who beat St Paul's, Bessbrook in the NI Intermediate Final Competition and to the 4th XI hockey team who won their final against Royal School Armagh. The Medallion Rugby team reached the semi-final of the Medallion Shield, narrowly missing out on a place in the final to Ballymena Academy and the 1st XI girls' hockey team reached the semi-final of the Schools' Cup, losing to Strathearn Grammar School. There were superb performances from our dancers at the NICMAC Creative Movement & Aerobic Championships before Easter, where all our teams won either gold or silver medals: Our swimmers, cricketers, athletes, cross country participants, showjumpers and gymnasts have all enjoyed considerable success too over the course of the year. A significant number of pupils were selected at Ulster level in girls' hockey, netball, rugby and athletics and their ongoing success bodes well for the various sporting competitions we will participate in throughout the course of this year. Our sporting programme culminated with a hugely enjoyable Sports Day over at Mary Peters' track in June. Thank you also to parents who ensure that pupils are turned out for matches each Saturday on time and who are show up at various fixtures, both at Roughfort and at sporting venues across Northern Ireland, to support the teams. The development work at Roughfort Playing Fields to enhance our facilities is exciting, with the resurfacing of the hockey pitch completed over the summer and the completion of the new pavilion scheduled for November. Suffice to say, ambition and the appetite

for more sporting success is growing year on year.

The same can certainly be said for the Performing and Creative Arts. The Autumn Term saw a hugely accomplished performance of the school musical *School of Rock*, under the leadership of Director of Music, Ms McMullan and Subject Leader of Drama, Ms Tinman. This was a production which delighted not just parents and families, but also fellow pupils, staff, governors as well as alumni who returned to see it.

The Music Department also ensured that the Christmas Carol Service which was held once again in St Anne's Cathedral was of the highest standard as was the Spring Concert held in the Ulster Hall. 8 pupils were selected for the Ulster Youth Orchestra. The UYO was founded in 1993 and provides a unique musical experience for Northern Ireland's most promising young talent. B.R.A. has the highest proportion of pupils in the orchestra of any other school in Northern Ireland which is a testimony to their commitment to their individual instruments and a reflection of the calibre of musical experience they are exposed to within the Music Department.

Emma Allen was a former pupil of the school who left B.R.A. in 1996, following which she went to St John's College, Cambridge to read music. She enthusiastically engaged in College musical life, serving as president of the St John's Music Society. Much of Emma's professional life was spent at the National Archives, in a variety of rewarding roles, but in 2015 she left to become director of digital development in Parliament, and in 2019 she took up a post as head of digital capability at Arup, a multinational consultancy firm. Her approach to life was, to the end, characterised by a cheerful and thoughtful concern for others. Her parents have generously dedicated a music prize in her honour, and we are pleased that they are with us this afternoon to see this presented for the first time. Various alumni groups play a significant role in promoting the school and fundraising and we are very grateful for the efforts of the Old Boys' Association, the Old Girls' Association and members of the 1785 Foundation for everything that they do for their alma mater. The 4 reunions that were held this year for leavers who left 50, 40, 30 and 20 years ago are a reminder that, no matter how old you are, you can still be intimidated by the beady eye of your former

headmaster or teacher, especially if you feel your skirt is a tad short or you did not put on a tie! The excited chatter of groups of friends who set eyes on each other for the first time in many years was, at times, deafening and the various groups proved impervious to the many, many blows from Philip McKenna's whistle as he manfully attempted to shepherd them together for the group photograph. It was like herding cats. However, the motto *Academy Till I Die* appears to be just as relevant to the pupils who last set foot in the Crombie building in 1973 as it does for our 2023 leavers.

Friends of the Academy, under the energy and enthusiasm of the Chairperson, Mrs Kim Burns, is one of the first groups that new parents to the school encounter. Through hosting the Welcome Breakfast in August for those nervous Form I parents to the uniform sales that take place at key stages throughout the year and the social events that raise funds and allow parents to meet others, FOTA is an extremely valued and integral part of Academy life, and we are indebted to Mrs Burns and her dedicated team for the time and commitment they give. Examination Results are not the most important thing about a young person's education, but we are realistic enough to recognise their importance in opening career pathways. Having high expectations is one of our core values and visitors to our school will have noticed posters around school emblazoned with our WIG – our Wildly Important Goal – in terms of examination results at GCSE, AS and A-Level. I am delighted to report that the pupils whose results are celebrated this afternoon, exceeded these targets and are now forging a path with even more impressive targets in their sights. At A-Level, 89.2% of pupils attained 3 or more A-Levels at grades A* - C, with our top performer, outgoing Head Girl Riya Raghuram obtaining an outstanding 5 A* grades. In 10 departments, no pupil achieved less than a C grade and 54% of our pupils obtained at least 3 A grades at A level – a very impressive achievement given the impact that two extended periods of school closure had made on their educational journey.

At AS level, 81.3% of pupils attained at least 3 AS passes grades A – C which means that their WIG will be the height of some super backcombed beehive by the time we get to Easter!

At GCSE, 98% of pupils achieved at least 7 GCSE passes grades A* - C and almost half of the cohort attained 7 grades A* or A or higher. 14 departments had a 100% grade A* - C record and every pupil who wished to return to B.R.A. had the grades to do so. Three of last year's Form V pupils attained an impressive 10 A* grades, Niall Blaskett, Lucy Chambers and Katie McCarney and Jamie Wilson achieved an outstanding 10 A* grades and 1 A grade.

This year marks the departure of two long serving members of teaching staff – Mrs Rosemary Morrison, subject Leader of Home Economics and Mr Paul Porter, Head of Year, and teacher of Modern and Classical Languages. Mrs Morrison has been a pupil, a parent and a teacher for many years and she undertook the Head of Year role and Subject Leader role to an extremely high standard. We wish her health and happiness in her retirement. Mr Porter has swapped his arduous journey from Derry every day to spend time with his family. The school benefited hugely from his passion for languages and his pastoral care for the pupils in his care as Head of Year, but we understand that his priorities are now closer to home. We wish him and his family good health and courage in the years ahead. We also marked the departure of the Head of Finance and Corporate Services, Mr Simon Burrows.

Our outgoing Head Boy Oliver Scott, Head Girl Riya Raghuram and Deputies Archie Armstrong and Jack Saunders, Connie McDaid and Cara McGrath (or The Big Six, as they were known) were excellent student leaders both for their year group and the whole school population. Their commitment to serving the school through their attendance at formal school events, organisation of duties and representing the school in music and sporting activities was commendable and will no doubt stand them in good stead in their future careers. To our MVI Leavers who are taking up their places in universities all around the UK and Ireland, in Amsterdam and in the United States, embarking on apprenticeships or gap years or employment – this is your time to shine.

I hope that you will look back at your time in Belfast Royal Academy and view this as time well spent. Time spent in the pursuit of academic knowledge, yes, but also in learning about yourself,

developing in character and living and breathing the School's values – respect for knowledge, having high standards, working hard and valuing diversity. You take with you our sense of hope for the future and for what can be achieved by the Class of 2023 in Northern Ireland and further afield.

Stephen Hawking's words seem apt:

“Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious. And however difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at. It matters that you don't just give up.”

Warden – this concludes my report for the 2022 – 23 academic year.



2023 PRIZE LIST

FORM I

Connolly, Aaron	Morris, James K
Dalton, Benjamin A	O’Hara, Evie
Fularczyk, Nicola	O’Kane, Rosie E
Gao, Joshua S Y	Orr, W Tom
Geddis, Evan A	Pandiaraj, Vismithaa Sai
Goodman, Evan C	Press, Jonah R G
Hipkins, Sophia A	Reilly, Marianne F
Holmes, Mathilda A O	Rogers, Hope C
Hurson, Cian E	Rowan, Peter F
Kelly, Grace A	Savage, Kristen R
Lada, Oliver	Schilling, Christian G
Lockhart, Maggie I E	Sedgwick, William J
McAteer, Meabh M	Teague, Ryan D
McCarey, Isabella G	Vrabelova, Noelle J
McCormick, Lily C	Zbanski, Dawid
Moore, Finn J	

HONOURABLE MENTION

Alexander, Lucy M	Jones, Leila
Braithwaite, Noah G	Kelly, Tiarnan J
Davey, Rose H	Manson, Ella O
Courtney, Joshua W	McDonald, Amie
Gamble, Jessica E	Singh, Ciaran
Hawkins, Matthew	Warnock, Rachel E I

FORM II

Adair, James G	Ingram, Charlotte R A
Adams, Molly J	Johnston, Holly J
Bickerstaff, Scott R	Lunn, Jacob P J M
Campbell, Elsa J	Mallon, Harry J
Chojnacka, Zuzanna	McCall, Olivia R
Cleland, Adam	McCune, Isabelle K
Crainey, Jake P	McFarlane, Amy E
Crawford, Layla R	McLaughlin, Ben R
Cunningham, Niamh	McLean, Harry R C
Curley, Jessica J	Millin, Nathan C J
Dann, Conall J A	Mulholland, Melissa R
Drake, Eva A	Pogue, Ryan M
Forsythe-Horan, Ben T	Scott, H Moss C
Gordon, Emilia K	Smyth, Jessica E
Graham, Kady J	Wilson, Jenna M

HONOURABLE MENTION

Brogan, Shay V	McFerran, Steven J
Eneh, Lois C C	O’Kane, Ella H
Goodchild, Rhianna P	O’Kane, Zoe T
Kelly, Mitchell N	Simpson, Isabella M
Kerr, Daniel J	Whittle, Lucy
McCullough, Michael R P	Williamson, Harry L T
McCusker, Lorcan X	

FORM III

Adam, Ella J	Marron, Charlotte E
Aidaroos, Shimous	McCullough, Vincent
Armstrong, Mya	McKeown, Rebecca L
Bryan, Finn K	McVeigh, Lucy E
Callaghan, Leah	McVeigh, Sophie R
Crowe, Elizabeth G	Murphy, Eleanor E
Curley, Bethany R	O’Brien, Erin S
Dalzell-McGhee, Rebekah A	O’Reilly, Miah E
Gordon, Jacob T	Raghuram, Keshav
Kyle, Lucas M	Rossal, Nadia E
Lane, Timothy J A	Stevenson, Lucy G
Lewis, Evie R	Suresh, Arjun
Lockhart, Sam J R	Toal, Elizabeth R
Maitland, Daniel J	Tohani, Ria L
Manson, Eve L	Wilkinson, Oliver



DEPARTMENTAL PRIZES

FORM IV

Akmad, Aliyah N	Art and Design, Biology, Chemistry, Spanish
Baird, Ryan L D	English Literature
Campbell, Maya M	Chemistry, English Language, French, Latin, Physics
Carter, Aaron J	Business Studies, History
Chen, Sean	Biology, Chemistry, German, Physics
Chowne, Sophia S	Art and Design
Clarkson, Leo J	English Literature
Clements, Ruby I	Geography, Technology
Craig, Jude C	Computer Science
Daniels, Hope C E	Physical Education, Religious Studies, Spanish
Donald, Ellie S	General Excellence
French, Alex A	German
Gilmore, Madison M	Drama
Gray, Erin S	Physical Education
Haridy, Ahmed	Spanish
Januszevska, Wiktoria	Computer Science, French
Junk, Annabelle	Technology
Kearney, Clodagh	English Language
Kirkpatrick, Rebecca C	Food and Nutrition
Kulig, Oliver	English Language, English Literature, Geography, History, Latin
Marshall, James K	Music
McCrea, Toby	Economics
McCullough, Lauren S	Biology, Latin
McCurley, Toby J	Physics
McGahan, Flynn	Computer Science
McLaughlin, Jacob R	English Language, French
McQueen, Alex N	Music
Morrison, James R	Mathematics
Nethercott, Edward H	Music
O'Carroll, Ella R	Drama, Religious Studies
O'Connor, Henry A P	Geography
O'Hanlon, Patrick J	Economics
O'Kane, Harry D	Economics, Mathematics
Payot, Gail L	Business Studies
Quinn, Erin L	Business Studies
Rankin, Hannah J L	Art and Design
Scott, Ines A J	Art and Design, Drama, English Language
Shute, Imogen	German
Smith, Cruz J	Science
Smyth, Lucy K	Mathematics
Strong, Beth S	Religious Studies
Taylor, Finn L	Technology
Teague, Sarah	Physical Education

Wallace, Malachy P	Physics
Watt, Lucy P	History

HONOURABLE MENTION

FORM IV

Akmad, Aliyah N	Physics
Beattie, Jai	Food and Nutrition
Blair, Adrianna	Spanish
Blayney, Lydia L	English Language
Brolly, Aaron W	Physical Education
Campbell, Maya M	Biology
Carter, Aaron J	Technology
Chen, Sean	History
Clements, Ruby I	Art and Design
Craig, Chloe A	Biology
Crawford, Ella	Business Studies
Daniels, Hope C E	French, Mathematics
Donald, Ellie S	Business Studies, Drama, Religious Studies
Donaldson, Rosa J	History
Dowey, Jack A	Science
Dwyer, Emily R	Drama
Gonsalves, Liam	German
Gourley, Ruben	Science
Gray, Erin S	Geography
Hipolito, Samuel G	Music
Januszevska, Wiktoria	English Language, History, Latin
John, Breakthrough M	Computer Science
Kearney, Clodagh	Computer Science
Kulig, Oliver	Chemistry, French
Laughlin, Maya	Food and Nutrition
McCurley, Toby J	Biology
McKeown, Eve G H	Spanish, Technology
McKinty, Abigail E B	Music
McLaughlin, Jacob R	Chemistry, Physics
McLaughlin, Ruairi M	Science
McQueen, Alex N	Art and Design
Moore, Evie	Drama
O'Hanlon, Patrick J	Chemistry, Mathematics
O'Hara, Christopher T	Technology
O'Kane, Harry D	Spanish
O'Kane, Jamie E	German
Payot, Gail L	Music
Peters, Yasha M J S	Economics
Pollock, Lucca	Computer Science
Quinn, Erin L	English Literature, Religious Studies
Rolleston, Lewis J E	English Literature



Scott, Ines A J	English Literature, French, Physics, Religious Studies
Smyth, Lucy K	Economics
Spence, Adam S J	Business Studies
Staworzynski, Olivier P	Latin
Strong, Beth S	English Language
Wallace, Malachy P	Latin, Mathematics
Woods, Rosie A	Geography
Yearsley, Finn L M	Geography
Yip, Rigby A	German

DEPARTMENTAL PRIZES

FORM V

Anderson, Rachael A	English Language, German
Bacon, Jack	Geography
Baxter, Mark A	Technology
Blaskett, Niall I	English Language, History, Latin, Music, Exceptional Performance
Bosket, Anouk	Food and Nutrition, Physical Education
Chambers, Lucy H	Biology, English Language, English Literature, Exceptional Performance
Dann, Niamh B	Physical Education
Falls, Anna E P	Science
Finnegan, Eva E M	Mathematics, Technology
Gallagher, Eamonn G	Digital Technology
Gastar, Kian F	Music
Gibson, Gabrielle	Business Studies
Gibson, Mia G J	Further Mathematics, Physics
Gilchrist, Ciara E	Art and Design
Graham, Melissa	German, Religious Studies
Hewitt, Adam D	Physical Education
Hui, Moses	Digital Technology, Further Mathematics, Mathematics
Kerr, Ethan B	Business Studies
Kilpatrick, Ella E	Drama
Lane, Jessica S	Biology, Chemistry, French, Physics
Lizlovs, Sasha	Computer Science, Technology
Martin, Jane H	Music
McCarney, Katie E	Biology, Chemistry, French, History, Mathematics, Physics, Religious Studies, Exceptional Performance
McGuigan, Conor S	Economics
McKittrick, Max	Digital Technology
McWilliams, Anna J	Art and Design, Geography
Mills, Kristopher T	Economics
Nemeth, Benjamin	Computer Science
O'Brien, Adam T	Mathematics
O'Dowd, Anna	Chemistry, Further Mathematics, Spanish
Orr, Mia N	Latin



Pandiaraj, Madhumitha	English Language
Piddington, Zoe	Food and Nutrition
Riddell, Aoife M	Drama
Rogan, Grace	Drama
Rossal, Nathan C	German, Mathematics, Physics
Srikanth, Samvritha	Art and Design
Walsh, Clara E	English Language, English Literature, Latin, Religious Studies
Warnock, Emily S	Geography
Watters, Maria R	Music, Spanish
Whiteside, Matthew	Business Studies, English Literature, History, Spanish
Wilson, James T	French, Latin, Exceptional Performance

HONOURABLE MENTION

FORM IV

Adams, Claudia Y	General Excellence
Agnew, Robyn E	General Excellence
Blaskett, Niall I	English Literature, French, Further Mathematics, Mathematics, Physics
Cairns, Adam T B	Digital Technology
Calwell, Ryan	Physical Education
Chambers, Lucy H	French, History
Chesnel, Amandine A C	Geography, Latin, General Excellence
Clarke, Billie A A	Science
Cleland, Joel	Technology
Curran, Anna C	Art and Design, German
Davidson, Penny J	Drama
Finnegan, Eva E M	Chemistry
Gallagher, Ellie	General Excellence
Geddis, Katie C	Art and Design
Gibson, Gabrielle	Religious Studies
Gibson, Mia G J	Biology, Chemistry
Gilchrist, Ciara	Food and Nutrition
Gillespie, Jasmine R	General Excellence
Graham, Daniel S	General Excellence
Grant, Joshua J	Science
Gregg, Noah	Economics, General Excellence
Gribbon, Rosa	Computer Science, General Excellence
Guy, Ben S	Technology, General Excellence
Hackett, Rachel C	Business Studies, General Excellence
Horkan, Katie E	German, General Excellence
Hui, Moses	Physics
Hume, Charlotte M	Food and Nutrition, General Excellence
Johnston, Katie-Anna S	Geography
Kerr, Rosa E	French, Spanish, General Excellence
Kirkpatrick, Katie M P	Business Studies
Lane, Jessica S	Mathematics, Music
Lizlovs, Sasha	Biology



Lyons, Lucy B	Drama
McCall, Jenna R	General Excellence
McCarney, Katie E	English Literature
McKean, Kalee M	General Excellence
McKenna, Tom A	Economics, English Language
McLean, Sarah J	General Excellence
McVicker, Luan	Business Studies, General Excellence
Meekin, Emily	History, General Excellence
Milne, Georgia M	Science
Mitchell, Eva	Digital Technology
Murphy, Aidan S	Spanish
Nemeth, Benjamin	Further Mathematics
O'Dowd, Anna	Biology, Computer Science, Physics
O'Gorman, Michael P	General Excellence
Orr, Mia N	Religious Studies
Pandiaraj, Madhumitha	Chemistry, German, History, Physics, Religious Studies
Philip, Fiona	General Excellence
Quinn, Darragh F	General Excellence
Rea-Lavery, Sofia L	English Literature, General Excellence
Reid, Max	Physical Education
Riddell, Aoife M	Latin
Robinson, E Grace	General Excellence
Rooney, Seraphina A E	General Excellence
Rossal, Nathan C	Computer Science, Technology
Saji, Diana	Art and Design
Saneesh Krishna, Aditi	French, General Excellence
Schilling, Clara E	Music, General Excellence
Shore, Freya R	General Excellence
Stewart, Beth A	Drama, General Excellence
Toal, Annabelle C	English Language, General Excellence
Walsh, Clara E	Spanish
Watters, Maria R	English Language
Welsh, Nathan J	Physical Education

Donaldson, Daisie B	Religious Studies
Donnan, Hollie A	Physical Education
Elliott, Mark D	History, Religious Studies
Eneh, Iruoma B	Digital Technology
Ferguson, Andrew J	Government and Politics
Gillen, Grace M	Art and Design, Geography
Gilmore, Jay S	Biology, Software Systems Development
Gilmour, Jack S	Government and Politics, Software Systems Development
Golden, Joseph L	Chemistry, Mathematics, Moving Image Arts
Harold, Joshua C	Business Studies
Harvey, Emma A	General Excellence
Hill, Oscar T	Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics, Software Systems Development
Hughes, Sarah B	Digital Technology
Kirk, Harrison S	Biology, Music
McLaughlin, Matthew R	Business Studies, Economics, Mathematics
E McQuiston, Matthew J	General Excellence
Millard, Riona J	Technology
Montgomery, Sasha	English Literature
Morwood, Felix F	Biology, English Literature
Nicholson, Harry	Business Studies, English Literature, French
O'Hara, Alessandro R	Technology
O'Kane, Joe M	Music
Pearce, Oliver P D	Physics
Rankin, Matthew A	Music
Reilly-Stewart, Hugo J	General Excellence
Sabri, Zaynab	French, Spanish
Scott, Aoife M G	Physical Education
Smith, Casey J	General Excellence
Simon, Alex N	Art and Design
Sterritt, Brianna M	History
Wright, Ezra M A	General Excellence
Zhou, Diana	English Language

DEPARTMENTAL PRIZES

HONOURABLE MENTION

FORM LVI

FORM LVI

Adam, Beth M	History, Religious Studies
Agnew-Boyce, Kitty	Art and Design
Bell, Ellie R	Geography, Nutrition and Food Science, Spanish
Brogan, Sarah E	Spanish
Burns, Emma E	Sociology
Campbell, Cara J	French, Government and Politics, Sociology
Choi, Etta	Physical Education
Chow, Tiffany T	Health and Social Care
Connolly Mulcahy, Dara M	Economics
Dillon-Wright, Haydn A	Economics, Geography
Doherty, Cormac	Chemistry, Physics

Adam, Beth M	Business Studies
Akmad, Aoife M	Spanish, General Excellence
Allen, Matthew J	General Excellence
Baine, Aodhan S	Economics, General Excellence
Barr, Katie	General Excellence
Beattie, Rachel G	Technology
Boone, Charlotte L	Government and Politics, General Excellence
Brogan, Sarah E	Physics
Burns, Sophie E	Health and Social Care, General Excellence
Cairns, Jack D R	English Literature
Callaghan, Beth	General Excellence



Campbell, Cara J	English Literature
Choi, Etta	Nutrition and Food Science
Cleland, Andrew S	Religious Studies, General Excellence
Cole, Oran	General Excellence
Convery, Hannah C	General Excellence
Courtney, Aimee	English Language
Crawford, Georgia M	Physics, General Excellence
Dalzell, Tara A	General Excellence
Doherty, Cormac	Mathematics
Donnan, Hollie A	Health and Social Care
Eneh, Iruoma B	Biology
Evans, Hannah E J	General Excellence
Golden, Joseph L	Physics
Gordon, Rory A F	Geography
Gueye-Dorval, Carla-Lina	General Excellence
Hamilton, Molly K	Mathematics, General Excellence
Harold, Joshua C	Economics, Government and Politics
Harvey, Emma A	Biology, Religious Studies, General Excellence
Henderson, Rex A	General Excellence
Hunter, Layla G	Nutrition and Food Science
Jackson, Matthew J M	Business Studies, Technology
Joseph, Alana	General Excellence
Kelly, Shannen L	French, General Excellence
Kirk, Harrison S	Chemistry
Logan, Alice R	General Excellence
McCord, Leah C	Art and Design
McGrath, Lois R	English Language
McKay, Mia E	Art and Design, Geography
McLaughlin, Matthew R E	Chemistry
McMahon, Cara	English Literature, Spanish
McQuiston, Matthew J	Business Studies, Physical Education
Morrison, Natasha E	General Excellence
Muldoon, Megan G	Geography
Murugaperumal, Gopi G	General Excellence
Muldoon, Megan G	Digital Technology
Ogilby, Grace	French, General Excellence
Oliver, Rebekah H A	English Language
O'Reilly, Ryan P	General Excellence
Pearce, Oliver P D	Chemistry, Mathematics
Ramsey, Lois D	Sociology
Rankin, Matthew A	Software Systems Development
Reilly-Stewart, Hugo J	Government and Politics, Music
Robinson, Ciara A	Biology, General Excellence
Samama, Jeb-Jeb J	Sociology, General Excellence
Scott, Aoife M G	History
Smith, Casey J	Sociology, Spanish, General Excellence
Stewart, Daniel J	General Excellence
Storey, Brooke A	French
Taylor, Elyse R T	General Excellence
Topping, Anna	Health and Social Care, General Excellence



Walker, Aoife R	Moving Image Arts
Wright, Ezra M A	History, Religious Studies, General Excellence
Zgutczynska, Martyna Z	History

DEPARTMENTAL PRIZES**Form MVI**

Anderson, Ben M	Geography
Armstrong, Archie H	Sociology
Baxter, Scott E	Technology
Black, Eleanor P	English Literature, Music, Spanish, Exceptional Performance
Braniff, Abbie A	Physical Education
Burton, Jacob J	Computing
Clokey, Matt J	Religious Studies
Coyle, Jack R	History
Elliott, Ellyn C	Art and Design
Enriquez, Robert	Digital Technology
Ferguson, Ryan C	Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics, Exceptional Performance
Gamble, Hannah M	Business Studies, Life and Health Sciences
George, Henry R A	Business Studies, Physical Education
Gillam, Connor M	History
Hasan, Noah D	General Excellence
Hayward, Theo P	Economics, Music
Hillis, Emma M	Spanish
Hoogelander, Ebony M	Drama and Theatre Studies, English Literature
Hooks, Holly K	Art and Design
Kane, David G	Technology
Lennon, Lara S D	Geography
Loane, Ellen B	Biology, French
Loane, Jude T	English Language
Loat, Sarah C	Government and Politics
Mack, Joshua D R	Government and Politics, Religious Studies
Majury, Abi E	Health and Social Care
Mallon, Sophia M	French
McCarney, Sarah P R	Chemistry, Further Mathematics, Physics, Exceptional Performance
McDaid, Connie A	Exceptional Performance
McGrath, Cara J	Exceptional Performance
McIvor, Ellie F	Business Studies, Drama and Theatre Studies
McKnight, Abbie M	Exceptional Performance
Mullan, Matthew H	Drama and Theatre Studies, Economics
Nazareth, EJ	Further Mathematics, Mathematics, Exceptional Performance
Newton, Natasha H	Mathematics, Exceptional Performance



Raghuram, Riya	Mathematics, Exceptional Performance Biology, Chemistry, Further Mathematics, Mathematics, Physics, Exceptional Performance
Ramalho-McCourt, Sofia	Technology
Richardson, Katye-Louise	Art and Design
Ritchie, Ben E	Business Studies
Rutherford, Sophie C M	General Excellence
Scott, H Oliver	Economics, Government and Politics
Shephard, Leah M	Sociology
Smyth, Oliver J	Physical Education
Spence, Charlotte B	Software Systems Development
Sturgess, Kate H	Moving Image Arts
Taylor, Eve V	Geography, History
Thompson, Hannah E	Exceptional Performance
Toal, Kaitlyn H	Biology, Sociology
Todd, Naomi E	History, Spanish
Upritchard, Grace S	English Literature
Watt, Ellen E	Religious Studies
Whiteside, Callum S	Music
Zboralska, Emilia	French

HONOURABLE MENTION**Form MVI**

Akmad, Miko Z	Technology
Atienza, EJ	Further Mathematics, General Excellence
Balgos, Jericho A D	General Excellence
Beattie, Charlotte E	Nutrition and Food Science
Beattie, Olivia E	Health and Social Care
Boyd, Jessica R	General Excellence
Burton, Jacob J	Physical Education
Campbell, Emily M	General Excellence
Carroll, Rebecca H	Sociology
Collins, Emily T	Business Studies
Del Castillo, Lorena	Spanish, General Excellence
Dickson, Ryan J	Life and Health Sciences, General Excellence
Doherty, Alex L	Life and Health Sciences, General Excellence
Drummond, Faith M	General Excellence
Eyjolfsson, David A	Economics
Ferguson, Ryan C	Biology
Ghosh, Soham J	Physics, General Excellence
Gilchrist, Noah J	Drama and Theatre Studies, General Excel-
Glendinning, William R	lence History, General Excellence
Green, Eleanor E	Mathematics
Hariri, Kiyan	Computing
Hasan, Noah D	English Literature, Government and Politics, Religious Studies
Hetherington, Jason R	Technology



Hew, Alice B Y	General Excellence
Higgins, Amy S	Physical Education
Houston, Daniel K	Moving Image Arts
Irwin, Bradley	General Excellence
Jan-Dickens, Kian S	Religious Studies
Johnston, Charlie L	Technology
Joseph, Alby	General Excellence
Mack, Joshua D R	Software Systems Development
Magee, Nina S	Art and Design
McCammon, Alanis	Life and Health Sciences
McCarney, Sarah P R	Mathematics
McDowell, Aileana L	English Language
McGrath, Cara J	Biology
McGuigan, Christopher M	History, General Excellence
McIvor, Ellie F	Music
McKnight, Abbie M	Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics
Millar, Ethan J	English Language
Miller, JP G L R	General Excellence
Monaghan, Anna S	Government and Politics
Morrison, Emilie M O	Drama and Theatre Studies
Morrow, Robbie J	Digital Technology
Mullan, Matthew H	English Literature
Murray, Evie V G	Moving Image Arts
Nazareth, EJ	Chemistry, French, Physics
Nethercott, Rory A	Music, Software Systems Development
Newton, Natasha H	Chemistry, Physics
Noble, Conall C	Computing
O'Hara, Ryan H	Business Studies, Spanish, General Excellence History
Osman, Lugin A E O	Religious Studies
Richardson, Katye-Louise	Physical Education
Ritchie, Ben E	English Literature, Spanish
Rutherford, Sophie C M	General Excellence
Scott, Isabella C	General Excellence
Scott, Katie	English Language
Shaw, Logan J A	Art and Design
Sturgess, Kate H	Government and Politics
Taylor, Eve V U	Drama and Theatre Studies
pritchard, Grace S	General Excellence
Vasilache, Gabriella	Health and Social Care
Watt, Ellen E	Economics, General Excellence
Wiley, Ethan J	Sociology, General Excellence
Wilson, Anna E	



SPECIAL PRIZES

ANNE BARRON PRIZE (Ben Madigan)	Ellie S Kitson
MCCORMICK PRIZE (English)	Keshav Raghuram
HAROLD RAINEY MEMORIAL PRIZE (GCSE English)	Rachael A Anderson
R. S. J. H. MAGOWAN PRIZE (GCSE Geography)	Anna J McWilliams
MARY A. HYNDMAN PRIZE (GCSE Home Economics)	Anouk Bosket
CLYDE PRIZE (GCSE Religious Studies)	Katie E McCarney
TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN AWARD Sponsored by LB Property Developments (GCSE Technology and Design)	Eva E M Finnegan
JACKSON PRIZE (GCSE Science)	Jessica S Lane
S. S. N. PIERCE MEMORIAL TROPHY (for outstanding endeavour at GCSE)	Rachael A Anderson
FREDERICK WHITE MEMORIAL PRIZE (For the top performance at GCSE)	James T Wilson
J. N. SHEARMAN MEMORIAL PRIZE (Classics)	Oscar T Hill
R. H. HARTE MEMORIAL PRIZE (Greek)	Clara E Walsh
R. J. BRYCE MEMORIAL PRIZE (Irish Studies)	Matthew H Mullan
J. C. PICKEN MEMORIAL PRIZE (Art and Design)	Ellyn C Elliott
AMY DICKSON TROPHY AND PRIZE (Art and Design)	Holly K Hooks
ALLISON HERON PRIZE (Biology)	Riya Raghuram



MCCLAY PRIZE (Business Studies)	Ellie F McIvor C
DR L.H. CAMPBELL PRIZE (Chemistry)	Jude W Morrison
MERVYN SEMPLE PRIZE (Chemistry)	Riya Raghuram
SIR SAMUEL FERGUSON PRIZE (English Literature)	Ebony M Hoogelander
THE J. W. AND EVELYN DARBYSHIRE AWARD (Geography)	Ben M Anderson
ANTHONY TAYLOR MEMORIAL PRIZE (History)	Jack R Coyle
T. R. COLLIER PRIZE (Mathematics)	E J Nazareth
G. B. TAYLOR MEMORIAL PRIZE (Mathematics)	Sarah P R McCarney
THE W. L. CLEMENTS MEMORIAL PRIZE (Music)	Ryan C Ferguson
R. M. FANNIN MEMORIAL PRIZE (Music)	Theo P Hayward
MIDDLETON PRIZE (Music)	Rory A Nethercott
LEO FORTE PRIZE (Music)	Connor M Gillam
EMMA ALLEN MEMORIAL PRIZE (Music)	Eleanor P Black
THE ANNE CAMPBELL CUP (Nutrition and Food Science)	Charlotte E Beattie
KNOX PRIZE (Physical Education)	Abbie A Braniff
HAROLD HUTCHINSON PRIZE (Religious Studies)	Daisie B Donaldson
MCCAUGHEY PRIZE (Science)	Riya Raghuram



WALTER TATE PRIZES

Economics	Matthew H Mullan
Government and Politics	Sarah C Loat
Physics	Sarah P R McCarney
Chemistry	Sarah P R McCarney
Religious Studies	Joshua D R Mack
Sociology	Archie H Armstrong

SIR DONALD CURRIE SCHOLARSHIPS
(for the top overall performance in the Form)

Form I	Maggie I E Lockhart
Form II	Molly Adams
Form III	Keshav Raghuram
Form IV	Oliver Kulig
Form V	Katie E McCarney

LEAVING SCHOLARSHIPS

SIR PAUL GIRVAN	Jack R Coyle
J. M. CLEMENTS	Kaitlyn H Toal
SIR FRANCIS EVANS	Soham J Ghosh
WHITEHEAD	Callum S Whiteside
MAURICE JACKSON	Connie A McDaid
HUGH GIRVAN	Cara J McGrath
WALTER TATE	Bradley Irwin
KNOX	Katie Scott
ANTHONY TAYLOR	Abbie M McKnight
C. B. and A. M. MURRAY	Natasha H Newton
McCLEERY	Hannah E Thompson



G. B. TAYLOR	Ethan J Willey
PICKEN	Ellen B Loane
ARCHIBALD	JP G L R Miller
BRUCE and PIM PRIZE	Noah J Gilchrist
THE BEGGS FAMILY PRIZE	Ben E Ritchie
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY BURSARY	Riya Raghuram
W. A. RAW BURSARY (Modern Languages)	Emma M Hillis
MacDERMOTT TRAVELLING BURSARY (Modern Languages)	Sophia M Mallon
SHEARMAN TRAVELLING BURSARY (Modern Languages)	Eleanor P Black
GLORIA SIDWELL (née KINKEAD) MEMORIAL BURSARY (Art and Design)	Katie-Louise Richardson
J. S. LOUGHRIDGE BURSARY (Geography)	Haydn A Dillon-Wright
THE MONA McCONNELL CARES AWARD (For work in the Community)	Noah G Braithwaite William J A Green
J. J. KANE MEMORIAL PRIZE (For contributions to ‘The Owl’)	Clara E Walsh
THE MARK LONG POETRY PRIZE	Myia O’Sullivan
THE RUAIRI McALEESE MEMORIAL DEBATING PRIZE	Oliver Kulig



THE ERIC STRAIN MEMORIAL CUP
(Duke of Edinburgh Gold Leader)

TENNANT SALVER
(Chair of Sixth Form Centre Committee)

TROPHY FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE PERFORMING ARTS
(Presented by the Old Girls' Association)

J. C. PICKEN BAT
(for overall contribution to Cricket in School, presented by the Old Boys' Association)

OWL TROPHY
(Presented by W. H. and J. Gray for outstanding endeavour at Advanced Level)

N. M. SAVAGE AWARD
(for the most impressive combination of academic attainment, prowess in organized games and sense of corporate responsibility)

ULSTER UNIVERSITY ENDEAVOUR CUP
(for outstanding achievement throughout the year)

WALTER TATE AWARD
(Head Girl)

MARTIN PRIZE
(Deputy Head Girls)

WHITEHEAD AWARD
(Head Boy)

ANNUAL PRIZE FOR BOYS
(Deputy Head Boys)

THE EVANS TROPHY
Pottinger Captains:

Faith M Drummond
Lara S D Lennon

Anna Saunders

Ellie F McIvor

David G Kane

Kevwe A T Obukene

H Oliver Scott

Kate H Sturgess

Riya Raghuram

Connie A McDaid
Cara J McGrath

H Oliver Scott

Archie H Armstrong
Jack R Saunders

Matthew R E McLaughlin
Ciara R Murray

School Societies

JUNIOR SCRIPTURE UNION



Every Wednesday lunchtime, Junior SU is held in the Sixth Form Study Centre for Forms I – III. At SU, we play games and build friendships with others of all ages whilst exploring the word of God and trying to find out what it means to live out faith as pupils of B.R.A. Junior SU is run by the Junior SU committee, made up of Forms V-MVI pupils who serve by organising activities and games and sharing talks on topics we think to be the most encouraging and helpful for the Junior members. Committee is diligently supported by the help of Mr Morrison and Mrs Graydon.

We began the year following the Scripture Union NI “The One Another” series. We explored how we relate to and treat others as a community who trust

and follow Jesus’ example and unpacked what the Bible has to say on these ideas. This was a great practical way for us to focus on the fundamentals of faith and how that should be applied in our daily lives.

From January onwards, we delved a bit deeper into God’s word through our series in the Psalms. Each committee member led a talk sharing a Psalm that was special to them and how its message impacts their relationship with God and daily life. Many great discussions were held about some of the bigger topics brought out of these talks. This was helpful for both those looking to further their walk with God and introducing key biblical messages to those who haven’t yet begun a faith journey.



Aside from weekly meetings, Junior SU members were also able to attend the ‘Big SU weekend’ in Castlewellsan castle which was an amazing opportunity to grow closer to God and as a community. Through our end of term Christmas and Easter events, committee and the Junior SU members were able to bond further as we met all year round and it was so encouraging to see everyone grow in their faiths as the year progressed.



We ended the year with our annual SU BBQ which was the perfect way to celebrate together the amazing year we have had at Junior SU. There is no other society in school quite like it, and I pray Junior SU will continue to encourage in faith all its members for years to come.



Lucy Chambers (LVI)

SENIOR SCRIPTURE UNION

During the past year, a unique group has thrived in the hearts of its senior students – the Senior Scripture Union. This vibrant community has played a pivotal role in fostering the spiritual growth, unity, and compassion among its members through a series of inspiring events and weekly meetings.

The foundation of Senior Scripture Union is built on the weekly meetings, carefully planned, and carried out by the incredibly dedicated Senior Committee. These meetings provided a safe and welcoming space where senior students could openly discuss their faith and share personal experiences. Over the course of the year, the committee introduced various interactive sessions, including guest speakers from Crown Jesus Ministry, Bible studies, and committee/teacher panels for students to pose questions and seek answers. These adaptations have enabled members to engage with their faith in a more personal and meaningful way.



Throughout the year, the committee held multiple events both for fundraising and encouraging faith and friendships throughout the Senior SU. We held a Christmas event for all year groups in which two committee members spoke about how Jesus' birth

continues to immensely impact our lives, along with activities and songs from our incredible worship band. Further in the year, we held our annual Senior Weekend at Seaview House in Kilkeel. We were very fortunate to have our guest speaker, Andrew Mullan, join us and lead four sessions over the course of the weekend. To finish the year, all members from both Junior and Senior SU came together for the SU BBQ held at Ben Madigan. It was a perfect way to end the year and begin new friendships for the following year.



Senior SU has helped so many students in all areas of their life, through examination stress, nurturing their faith through hardships and daily issues that need some guidance. Particularly for the Middle Sixth, who contributed to nearly half of the Senior SU members, unbreakable and indomitable friendships were created that will encourage them through the next step of their faith in whatever path they have chosen. Lastly, there is no doubt that the new Senior committee will help Senior SU flourish and impact the lives of so many students. This year, we were blessed with incredible staff members who, without them, SU would not have been as amazing as it was. With special mention to Mr Morrison and Mrs Graydon who are the very core of Scripture Union in Belfast Royal Academy and continue to guide us all with great knowledge and compassion.

Sofia Ramalho-McCourt (MVI)

THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

The school library has been run by two Librarians since 2012, Mrs T Corcoran and Mrs E Doris (née McAtamney). Mrs Corcoran joined the school in August 2007 as the fulltime librarian. On return from maternity leave in 2012, Tara entered a job share with Mrs E Doris. In September 2022, Mrs Corcoran applied for a post at another school nearer to home. She was successful and left the school in October. We would like to wish Mrs Corcoran the very best for the future and thank her for everything she brought to the Academy. In October 2022, Mrs E Doris became the fulltime librarian.

The library continued to meet the educational, informative and recreational needs of both pupils and staff during the 2022/23 academic year. Besides serving the pupils in their studies and teachers in their research, the library continued its aim of creating interest in reading amongst the pupils by providing the best resources and environment. The school joined up with Oxford University to participate in the Oxplore Book Club. This was a fabulous experience and pupils got to meet with many renowned authors during the club. The Northern Ireland Book Award also returned after several years of a break due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils greatly enjoyed the opportunity to partake in this regional award once again.

The library thoroughly enjoyed joining with committees, departments and clubs throughout the school to co-host interesting events and competitions. Mrs Doris organised and ran many quizzes to promote wellbeing as part of her role on the school wellbeing committee. A club known as Imagination Club took place every Monday during lunch in the library. This was a great opportunity for the library to team up with Laura Atkins, our art technician, to run interesting book-related art projects. We created clay bookworms, mini books and many other fabulous and imaginative pieces throughout the year.

Forms I and II classes continued to attend weekly library classes as part of their studies in English. They continued to take part in the very successful Accelerated Reader programme.

Many pupils continued to help out in the library as

Pupil Librarians before school, during break, lunch and after school.

NATIONAL POETRY DAY CELEBRATED AT THE ACADEMY LIBRARY

“Remember your words can plant gardens or burn whole forests down.”

Poet Gemma Troy

The theme of National Poetry Day 2022 was ‘The Environment’ and we wanted words to plant gardens and not burn forests. The importance of reconnecting with nature felt more important than ever with the cost-of-living crisis and soaring energy prices. We had a small box of worn and tattered books to send to recycling. We decided to use these tattered books to create beautiful pieces of art and literature. Pupils made their own mini books and created their own 6-word poems inside to celebrate National Poetry Day. We also stretched the theme of ‘The Environment’ to last longer than just on National Poetry Day. We decided to keep up our recycling vibe throughout the entire academic year. The library Christmas tree became a wonder of beautiful, recycled creations from pupils at the library ‘Imagination Club’. Pupils also created stunning Christmas trees using recycled books.



WORLD BOOK DAY CELEBRATED AT THE ACADEMY LIBRARY



The school library was bustling with activity on Thursday 3rd March 2022 to celebrate World Book Day. Both staff and pupils took part in a Wonka Golden Ticket chocolate bar competition. Mr McCarey and several pupils were the ones lucky enough to find a golden ticket inside their chocolate bars. Pupils also made their own mini books and entered a 6-word story competition. A special World Book Day Scavenger Hunt took place. Library classes were all treated to a story aloud to celebrate World Book Day. A week-long Scholastic Book Fair was also held to celebrate World Book Day.



SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR

For an entire week in October, the school library was abuzz. Academy pupils were bowing their heads over book trolleys, excitedly discussing what they hoped to purchase at the Scholastic Book Fair.



The Academy Book Fair provided something critical and unique for pupils. The fair showed that books are not something to be dreaded, nor viewed as compulsory and difficult. Instead, books are desirable, talked about, and treasured.



The tell-tale signs of the upcoming book fair not only got Academy pupils excited about books, but it also got them talking about books of their own accord, rather than being compelled to discuss assigned reading in the classroom.



The unique sounds, smells, and sights of the library book fair are hard to beat. Heavy metal cases that are like a band’s equipment, except full of books, rolled into the school library to mark our National Poetry Day celebrations. £903.60 was raised and the School Library has been awarded £482.16 worth of free books, as a result. We were absolutely delighted with such a success and with our lovely new books. It had been our most successful book fair since 2008. The Spring 2023 Book Fair in February made £608.24 and earned us £304.94 in free books for the library.

MEETING FAMOUS AUTHORS



Book Club in March 2021. Although originally only intended to be available as part of the university's COVID-19 pandemic response, the series has continued. Academy book club pupils have greatly enjoyed being part of the Oxplore Book Club and have really enjoyed the live question and answer Zoom sessions with famous authors.



These are the authors we got to meet live during the academic year:

- Frances Hardinge
- Dan Smith
- Elle McNicholl
- Robert Muchamore
- Katherine Webber

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.



MILLIONAIRE READERS

The 2022/23 academic year saw our highest number of Millionaire Readers on record since starting Accelerated Reader in the 2011/12 academic year. Well done to the following pupils on becoming millionaire readers: -

PUPIL
Peter Rowan
Alice Adams
Sophia Hipkins
Shay Brogan
Alex Mawhinney
Holly Ireland
Lorcan Mccusker
Joshua Gao
Neil McAuley
Lily McCormick
Oliver Lada
Joe Roberts
Theo Makula
Molly Adams
Evie Drake
Vitsmithaa Pandiaraj
Adam Gilmour
William Green
Rosa Clarkson
Moss Scott
Eva Drake
Jack Knox
Ryan Teague
Leila Jones
Marianne Reilly
Sidnak Singh
Aidan Gillespie
Jack Caldwell
Stefan Marinescu
Hubert Dabrowski
Emily Anderson
Gabriel Biskupski
Anna McLoughlin
Hope Rogers

E.Doris

POLITICS SOCIETY

Politics Society returned to regular Friday lunchtime meetings this year with some dedicated Form V, Lower VI and Middle VI students coming to share ideas, discuss issues and debate with each other. With another turbulent year in British politics, we had no shortage of topics for discussion, covering the end of the Johnson premiership, the beginning and end of Truss' premiership and the strikes that took place in many sectors. Our lunchtime sessions are always rooted in current affairs and topical issues like the censorship of Roald Dahl's books and the protests in Iran following the death of Masha Amini were also examined. We were grateful to have the assistance of Mr Graham from the History Department during the year; his love of politics was evident in the lunchtime sessions he facilitated.



In March, six students attended the Northern Ireland Youth Forum event marking the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. This event brought together over 150 young people from a range of different schools, youth groups and organisations. By its very nature it was focused, not just on this seminal moment the history of NI, but also on its future and young people's hopes for peace. Some politicians were there and spoke about young people's role in building for the future, while others were notable by their absence. The passion on display that night from young people served to remind the politicians and decision-makers that young people have a stake in our society and cannot be overlooked.

K.S.B.

LAW AND POLITICS SOCIETY

In February 2023, our newly formed LVI Law and Politics career pathway society met for the first time. We were fortunate to have been ably assisted by alumnus Andrew Palmer, BL who has had an active role as Patron of the Society. He helped choose our President (Cara McMahon) and Vice Presidents (Harry Nicholson and Jeb-Jeb Samama), and came into school to meet with the students, inspiring them with his stories of both studying and practising law and telling them about his own school experience.



to the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Bill of Rights such as the right to marry and freedom of expression. We debated and discussed with each other on these issues during our meeting.



During the summer, Andrew and Ms Barnett provided us with a reading list to help develop our knowledge of law and politics. Overall, the Society experience has cemented my aspiration to study law, and I am looking forward to the last few months of being President.'

K.S.B.

SENIOR DEBATING SOCIETY



Cara writes about her experience in leading the Society:

'I was thrilled when I got the letter to tell me that my application for President of the Law and Politics Society had been successful and although we've only had a few months meeting together, we've been able to cover a lot of ground. In February, I went with Harry and Jeb-Jeb to the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) Age Law Reform conference. I was touched by hearing a neurodiverse young person's story of age discrimination. This experience has inspired me to fight against injustice in the future.

In April, Harry, Jeb-Jeb and I led a presentation on human rights and civil liberties. Although we presented on an unfamiliar subject area, I really enjoyed the experience of reading and researching more about the European Convention on Human Rights and gathering recent case studies relating

The Senior Debating Society flourished in the school year, 2022-23. Fortnightly debates were held in C7 during Monday lunch times, and crowds of thirty to forty pupils were very common. Many new pupils joined the society, with a lot of very talented speakers discovering their ability for the first time. In the interim weeks, a committee of very interested pupils decided on motions and picked speakers. A huge range of topics was discussed, and social issues tended to be the most popular. These ranged from the involvement of technology in human reproduction, the merits and demerits of social media, and a very heated debate on the motion "Vaping does More Harm than Good."



As usual, political themes were also well supported and intensely argued. The traditional and popular motion on the abolition of the British monarchy continued to draw a large crowd and incited a heated set of arguments. A debate on the Scottish Government's Gender Legislation Reform was equally popular and discussed with much passion by both the proposition and opposition. Less serious debates also tended to be popular, with "This House does not Believe in Ghosts" bringing much humour to the floor. Several pupils deserve special credit for their consistent involvement in the debating society and in the skill which they demonstrated. These include Luca Barsalini, Grace Kirkpatrick Oliver Kulig, Abigail Love, Finlay McKee, Mia Orr, Madhumitha Pandiaraj Clara Walsh and Emily Warnock. We were delighted to hear that a new debating cup has been awarded to the school in memory of a former pupil, Ruari McAleese, who was part of a school team to win the

Northern Ireland Schools Debating competition. It is fitting that his contribution to our society has been remembered in this way by his friends and peers, and we thank them for this generous donation.

H. T. / J.M.P.

THE SCHOOL COUNCIL

The School Council had a busy and productive year. The non-uniform day in September raised £2400. This money was used to support two local Charities, PIPS and Angels' Wishes, as well as helping to fund extra counselling sessions for pupils through local organisation, Jigsaw. Throughout the year, the council debated many initiatives brought forward from their peers. This was done in a respectful and mature way. The Council helped to shape the R.S.E. curriculum, debated locker provision, school clubs and societies and many other topics. The council successfully negotiated the permission for pupils to wear the quarter zip games top under the school blazers and selected the design of the school diary from photographs submitted by pupils. I would like to thank all councillors for their dedication, maturity and commitment to this vital area of school life.

THE SCHOOL COUNCIL 2022/23

F1- Izabel-la Baksh, Ben Dalton
F2- Leo Philip, Olivia Mitchell
F3- Harry McIntyre, Holly Green
F4- Toby McCrea, Wiktoria Januszezewska
F5- Madhumitha Pundiaraj, Ethan Doloughan
L6- Oliver Pearce, Ellie Bell
M6- Summer Moreland, Jude Crook
Head Boy- Oliver Scott
Head Girl- Riya Raghuram

C.M.C.

SAVE THE CHILDREN

This year, the Save the Children committee were keen to get all the members of the school community involved by organising several fundraising events for the charity.

To kick off the school year, we assisted with the Great B.R.A. Bake-Off. Students from all year groups showcased their baking skills and creativity through a range of cakes, cookies and buns which were then judged by a panel of teachers. After much deliberation, the winners were chosen, each securing valuable points for their Houses. The committee then sold the bakes at lunch, with all proceeds going to the Save the Children charity.

The Christmas season at B.R.A. brought many great fundraising opportunities. The first was the Staff Christmas Jumper Day, which encouraged all members of the teaching and support staff to show off their fantastic Christmas wardrobes. The festive spirit continued in the form of the Staff Revue, where teachers across every department prepared a showcase which included singing, dancing and stand-up comedy. The talents of the staff were shown in full force as they took on roles from TV shows such as *Stranger Things* and channelled their inner 'Swiftie,' performing pop hits like *Shake it Off*. The fabulous displays were thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils in the audience who donated generously to Save the Children at the door.

Our annual non-uniform day was very successful and gave the school population the opportunity to attend classes in their own clothes for a day in return for a donation to the charity.

The year ended on a high with the BBQ at the annual Sponsored Walk. As usual, the committee and staff prepared burgers for the pupils which were very gratefully received after their arduous walk over Cavehill.

Thanks to the generous support of the school community and the hard work of staff, we were able to raise over £5000 for the Save the Children charity. The committee would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms McMillen, Mrs McIntyre and all the dedicated staff in school, without which our events

would not be possible. Their continued support allowed us to raise money for an amazing cause and made our time on the committee a terrific experience!

Save the Children Committee

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY



Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organisation that helps families build and improve places to call home. Habitat believes that affordable housing plays a critical role in strong and stable communities.



Prior to getting involved with Habitat's "Change Makers Programme" at school we, as a group, knew very little about the organisation, so this was a great opportunity for us all to understand more about the mission, aims and goals of Habitat for Humanity. We met with Peter Graham, a leader from Habitat, who took us through a training workshop in order to provide us with more insight. Collectively, we all came to a better understanding of the work Habitat for Humanity does through receiving new perspectives from people in different countries as well as our own. In our local communities, Habitat enables people to improve their homes for less cost and partners with corporations such as QMAC Construction and JP Corry to ensure that there is a steady stream of quality stock in the stores.

During our volunteer day, we were able to aid in the refurbishment of a warehouse into the Habitat ReStore on Crumlin Road, which supports local people to learn new skills and divert tons of reusable material from landfill. We were able to see the importance of volunteer work, as it allows organisations such as Habitat for Humanity to fulfil its mission.



As a team, we were able to raise £1500 for Habitat for Humanity. We created a Valentine's Day Tuck Shop which was highly successful among the junior pupils. Additionally, we also received donations at our annual Sponsored Walk. We are pleased to have raised a large sum for this cause.

Carla-Lina Gueye-Dorval, Debby Ogunleye (LVI)

BOYS' CHOIR

While B.R.A. offers a wide range of clubs, sports and musical opportunities which do an amazing job at highlighting the talent in our school, we have seen no extra-curricular activity with a greater sense of fellowship than Boys' Choir. Every Wednesday in J9 all are welcome, from Chamber Choir singers to those with no prior experience, to come and witness the companionship and camaraderie in our rehearsals. Indeed, throughout the years we have been involved in Boys' Choir, we have always been made to feel welcome. In addition, all of the pupils who have been regular attenders hope to continue in order to support new members.

One of the two major events that the Boys' Choir participates in is the Christmas Assembly at the end of term. There are few better demonstrations of our choir's ability than when we treat the school to our annual rendition of *Merry Christmas Everyone*, to send them off for the Christmas holidays. Last year our performance took place outside the dramatic Crombie building in the school's main playground in front of everyone! Our second major event is the Spring Concert. It takes place in the Ulster Hall and is the final event of the year for the Boys' Choir. That is where our skills are truly evident. Last year we sang a medley combining the rugby anthems of Wales, France and Ireland and we finished with a rousing rendition of *I'll Tell Me Ma*. We were incredibly popular and it was the highlight of the evening for many parents!

The success and quality of our choir were due in no small part to the staff (Mr Dorman, Mr Graham, Mr Harte, Mr Healy and Mr McAleer) who performed alongside us. We were also elevated by the instrumentalists who lent their musical talent to our performances. Mr McCabe played the cornet, Matthew Rankin played the drums and Callum Whiteside accompanied us on the piano. These contributions really added to our *Rugby Anthem Medley* and helped it feel far more impactful. Indeed, the musicians' commitment to rehearsals demonstrated the loyalty everyone feels towards the choir.

Boys' Choir has been an amazing group to have been part of in school. The choir is only possible due to Mrs McCombe and her ability to put up with us! She takes it upon herself to play the piano, organise, conduct and fine-tune our singing. Mrs McCombe has been the heart and soul of our choir and an incredible community has grown because of it. Truly, there are few opportunities in B.R.A. which are quite as unique and special as Boys' Choir. We could not recommend your participation in the choir enough and we encourage all boys, regardless of ability, to come along and attend every Wednesday.

Alex McCarey, Mark Elliott and Oliver Pearce
(LVI)

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 racing boats powered by washing up liquid. There was great excitement at our annual House Competition which this year took the form of a Science Quiz. It was very closely contested and, in the end, Pottinger and Cairns shared 1st place.



We would like to thank Mrs Henry and Mrs Bell for their many years of commitment to the Young Einstein Club and extend a warm welcome to Mr McAleer as he joins the team. We would also like to thank our faithful junior pupils who approached each experiment with limitless enthusiasm. A special mention must also go to our amazing outgoing Sixth Form committee for all their help

throughout year and the wonderful moments when they recalled their own experiences of being a junior pupil at the Young Einstein Club!

J.P.C.

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD



The last school year has been another challenging but successful one for our DofE participants. Hopefully, the last impacts of COVID-19 restrictions have been brought to a close with the final backlog of expeditions completed, but our DofE participants rose to the challenge, progressing their sections and many achieving their Certificates of Achievement and full Awards.

Registration numbers remained high, with 314 pupils signing up or continuing to work on Awards.

We achieved a full year of expeditions as well as completing the catch ups for our Lower Sixth pupils who went on to complete their Bronze, Silver and Gold Expeditions in one year. It was a very busy year for the supervisors who ended up with near back-to-back expeditions throughout April, May and June, meaning they only got three weekends off!

It is only with great thanks to our team of volunteers that we were able to run any of our expeditions, and

to work with so many participants to help them complete their Expedition section – 143 of them!



DofE have continued to issue Certificates of Achievement for anyone who completes the Volunteering, Physical and Skill sections of their Award, recognising that many were hugely impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. This will continue to be available for any participant who enrolled on a DofE Award after June 2018 and complete these sections by 31st October 2023. The Certificate is a formal recognition, by the DofE, of their dedication to their programmes and everything they have achieved through these three sections, as well as their resilience in coping with ongoing uncertainty.



With the lifting of restrictions, it has been much easier for our participants to return to clubs and groups, though many have continued with activities they had started while under lockdown. Volunteering for community activities has included checking up on neighbours, gardening and tutoring kids, as well as getting involved in litter-picking in local neighbourhoods and sports leadership. Tent Team has also restarted, with a pupils' meeting after school on a Friday to check, repair and pack the tents ready for expeditions - a tremendous help when so many expeditions were taking place in such a short period of time.

Potentially, the most easily completed section continues to be Physical - with many of our participants tracking their daily walks or runs that had started as a way to get out of the house, some of which built up into challenges to raise money for charity. Hockey, rugby, netball, swimming and cricket continue to be popular activities with hiking, dance, fencing and squash making the list too.

Our kayaking course ran again this year with Brain McLaughlin and Robert Armstrong providing a fantastic opportunity for 22 Bronze participants. This highly popular course trains participants in the safe handling of a kayak canoe and paddling skills, all in the safety of the school swimming pool.



As for Skills, there have been a range of activities taking place - learning a language, cooking, crochet, playing a musical instrument, singing, vegetable growing, sailing navigation theory, photography, money management, drama and

drawing all included in this year's Awards list.

In the last school year, we have had 53 Bronze Awards, 18 Silver Awards and 4 Gold Awards successfully completed, alongside 16 Bronze, 7 Silver and 4 Gold Certificates of Achievement, which is a fantastic achievement in itself, considering the difficult circumstances.

The total number of awards gained from 1984 to date are now: 1,541 Bronze; 757 Silver; 486 Gold. 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 volunteer supervisors who generously gave their time and assistance whenever possible this school year:-

Matthew Blair
Holly Grant
Dennis McArthur
Maurice Miller
Catherine Nelson
Gary Nelson
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; Matthew Blair and Catherine Nelson for additional Expedition support; Shelley Wilson for Award administration and re-starting Tent Team on Friday afternoons.

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. Many thanks are due to the numerous members of staff who gave up their time to act as Skills section assessors.

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 fantastic, as always, helping us collect forms etc and distributing important information.

And we would also like to thank the Expedition Assessors who have worked with us this year on our many weekends, ensuring the participants all have as good an experience as possible, while meeting the conditions of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. These Assessors volunteer their time and enjoy meeting and motivating the young people undertaking the expedition challenges, so it is hugely gratifying when they feedback positive reports of their interactions.

In conclusion, 2022-23 was a jam-packed year that hopefully now sees us return to a more normal routine. Our participants have shown resilience, determination, initiative, drive and commitment to progress through their Awards. We are incredibly proud of those who are pursuing their Certificates of Achievement and Awards 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

Aliyah Akmad (IV)
Matthew Anderson (III)
Finlay Baird (IV)
Maddie Beggs (V)
Daithi Brogan (IV)
Grace Cahill (IV)
Leah Callaghan (III)
Zixuan(Sean) Chen (IV)
Sophia Chowne (IV)
Andrew Cleland (LVI)
Hope Daniels (IV)
Haydn Dillon-Wright (LVI)
Ellie Donald (IV)
Emily Dwyer (IV)
Madison Gilmore (IV)
Jacob Gordon (III)
Erin Gray (IV)
Jack Harris (IV)
Anna Hughes (III)
Wiktoria Januszewska (IV)
Samuel Johnston (IV)
Ema Jones (IV)
Alana Joseph (LVI)
Annabelle Junk (IV)
Rebecca Kirkpatrick (IV)
Stuart Knox (IV)
Oliver Kulig (IV)
Ava Logan (IV)
Bryn Mawhinney (IV)
Finn McAlorum (IV)
Alex McCarey (LVI)
Hugo McCollam (IV)
Harry McIntyre (III)
Abigail McKinty (IV)
Ieuan Mclean (LVI)
Odhran Moan (IV)
Jack Monroe (IV)
Megan Morris (IV)
James Morrison (IV)
Adam O'Brien (V)
Jack O'Kane (III)
Jamie O'Kane (IV)
Aidan O'Rourke (LVI)
Gail Payot (IV)
Scarlett Platt-Bell (IV)



Kaitlyn Toal (MVI)
Ethan Walsh (III)
Lucy Watt (IV)
Rosie Woods (IV)

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT:
Bronze

Joel Cleland (V)
Rory Gordon (LVI)
Erin Gray (IV)
Stevie Head (LVI)
Matthew Hughes (V)
Wiktoria Januszezwska (IV)
Ema Jones (IV)
Ciaran Lavery (III)
Adam Moore (III)
Megan Morris (IV)
Eleanor Murphy (III)
Erin O’Brien (III)
Jamie O’Kane (IV)
Oliver Pearce (LVI)
Jeb-Jeb Samama (LVI)
Olivier Staworzynski (IV)
Lucca Pollock (IV)
Hannah Rankin (IV)
Matthew Rankin (LVI)
Jeb-Jeb Samama (LVI)
Toby Sayers (IV)
Katie Scott (MVI)
Mya Seymour (IV)
Alexander Simon (III)
Lucy Smyth (IV)
Olivier Staworzynski (IV)
Jacob Stewart (IV)
Sarah Teague (IV)

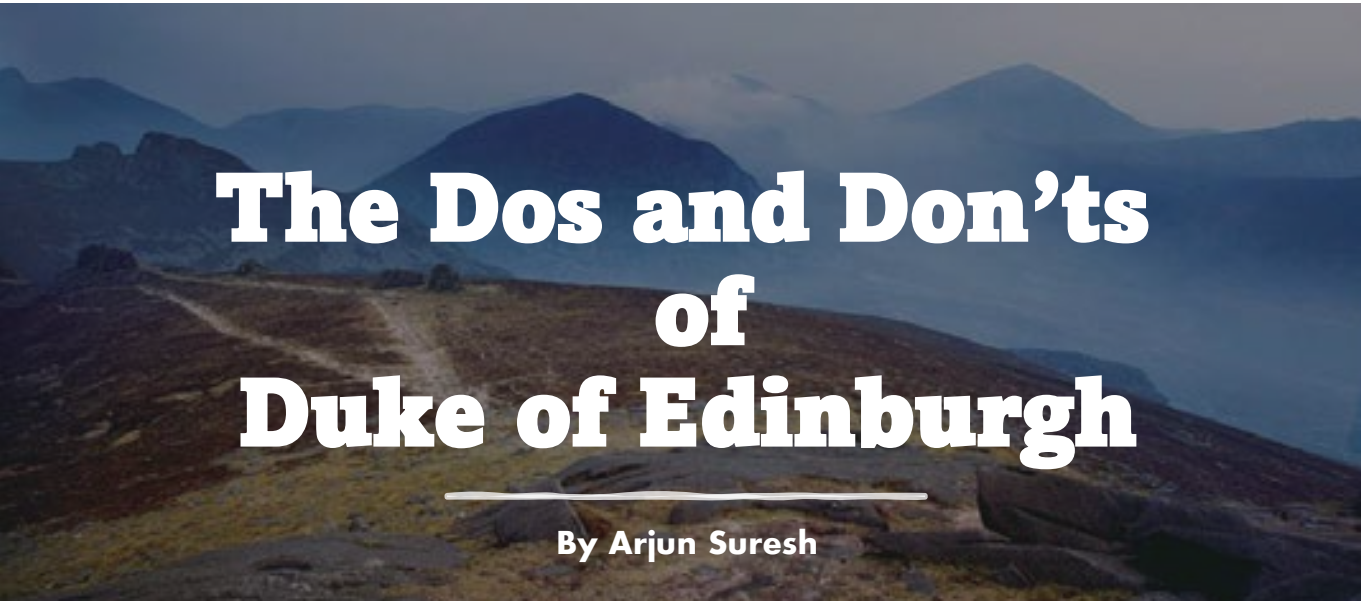
Silver

Josh Manson (LVI)
Lucy McKnight (MVI)

Gold

Lara Lennon (MVI)
Evan Robinson (-)
Kate Sturgess (MVI)
Rob Sturgess (-)

Maurice, Shelley, Holly, Matthew & Catherine

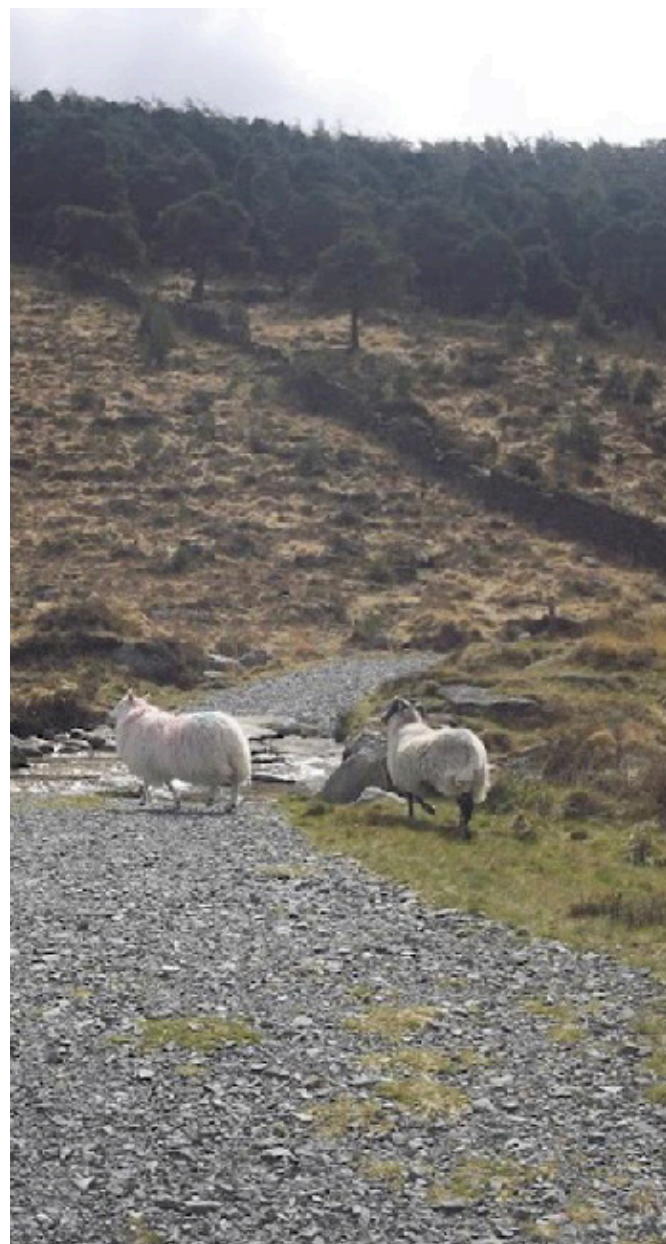


What you might not want to do...

- **Bring extra equipment/ stuff you don’t need**One person in my group brought an extra pair of shoes and a pillow these items were unnecessary and just added weight to his bag affecting his performance over time.
- **Split up from your group**It’s better to stick as a team, this is because if someone gets injured or if something goes wrong, there will be enough people to call supervisors, look after the person, call for help .etc. Also, it helps your team stay on track.
- **Not waterproofing your stuff properly**Most of the things inside your bag would be ruined/ not optimal if it gets wet. It can rain at any time during an expedition and it’s important to always be prepared, as drying those things is near impossible.
- **Not bringing the right first aid and survival equipment**This can be the deciding factor life and death situation. Making sure you’re well-equipped helps reduce the chance of anyone getting seriously hurt/injured.
- **Not making sure you have the right type of sleeping bag**Made the mistake of just assuming that my brother had the right type but it was a summer one while we needed a 3 season one. I ended up shivering all night during the practice expedition.
- **Not making sure that you are picking up all your rubbish**This could make the campsite less favourable for others and harm the environment.

Spelga Dam
(Where I had lunch the second day)

MAN'S INFLUENCE ON THE MOURNE'S



Some photos of man-made impacts!

As we were walking in the Mourne's, we came across some man-made impacts, for example river crossing and pathways have made it helpful for people (maybe even some animals) to be able to walk through the mountains more safely.

Stiles and rocks made it easier to locate the best route to cross a river as some area may be slippery and too fast flowing to safely cross.

Literary Contributions

POSITIVITY

When I stumbled into school with my face wearing
a frown,
a girl came up to me and saw I was feeling down.
She asked me if I was okay,
I knew if I told her, it would take the stress away.

I said, "I feel like there is nothing I can do."
And she replied, "Don't worry, I have been there
too."
I was so glad that finally somebody understood me!
All it took was someone to ask if I was alright and
healthy.

Now, I am walking proudly out of school,
my mind is free, it used to be cruel.
So, if you see someone with inactivity,
make sure to spread some positivity.

Rachel Warnock (II)

SANCTUARY

Books in messy piles across the floor,
mugs with the dregs of coffee,
days old.

Pages plastered to the walls,
nonsensical words on the floorboards.
A mindscape of my mind,
chaos and calm,
increasingly unachievable,
yet just on the edge of sight.
Poems and quotes scrawling across my hands,
across my arms, across my skin.
Scrapes from trees on my knees and shins,
photographs through leaves.
The buzz of music coming from headphones,

The volume up too high.
Such a beautiful mess,
comforting my soul, my inner child.
These things growing into thoughts,
into triumphs.
Thoughts provoking buried memories,
like finding a pearl in a sea food dinner.

Charlei Hill (IV)



Jolie Boyd (V)

GRANDMOTHER

Beyond the shadow of reality,
the box ladder of legacy looms,
each puzzle within decorated as they deserve.
A howl fissures the dusty floor,
warning or waiting, hovering patiently.
Your box rattles with wooden mystery:
its edges rounded by guiding hands,
painted the same blue of the belt-buckle shoes
I used to awe at, the proof of amity
you struck with the living.
Others – I do know not their names,
left you absent of blood, bone, or body,
where the cruelty of unkind men
and thoughtless fate left briskly
and without worry.
It is in the coming masterpiece,
born smeared and stained,
that you pass to me, that lies the beginning,
beyond sterile smiles, the betrayal
of the capitalist dream.
How you laid for me the side pieces
with bleached fingers, arthritic hands,
seizing chipped bronze as gold.
And if dawn declares her fondest glory
and greets you without the warmth
of your seventy-years, my melancholic hands
calloused by pen and pencil,
not linen mills or knitting needles,
will take the box from the shelf every year,
and remember – not regret –
your life-long metamorphosis.

Abbie Gibson (LVI)



Ciara Gilchrist (V)

We were only trying to fix you
didn't ease my pain;
a pitiful excuse
for such senseless demolition.
I felt every crack, every fissure
as I screamed.
The windows shattered; the bricks imploded
as I sobbed.
Then you came, in the dead of night;
undeterred by the walls collapsing in around us;
you held me tight,
let me break in your arms.
Red sun rising on a new day;
you handed me a brick,
wiped the tears,
helped my shaking legs stand,
and told me to build.
Flashbacks became foundations –
a frame constructed of fears fought and conquered.
I toughened new bricks with talking;
by tackling the past,
and didn't hide the scars stitched into glass.
Now, after bawling and breaking
and building a hundred times over,
it's a little different than before.
But it's home again.

Clara Walsh (V)

So that the stunted soul and shunned spirit shall
once more sing...
And the hollow heart shall once more harmonise.

Grace Uprichard (MVI)

FLY

Away from the nest they fled,
Let past lose sight of what's ahead,
4 ducks ready to fly,
3 ducks ready to rise,
Their road goes awry,
Only to realise,
Their path;
Further in the day,
The nest bird lay,
Gathering energy lost, to run aloft;
Aloft to the three,
Lost in a tree,
Only then felt free,
To speak;
Speak its lies,
Its own lies, to others, tries
To tell the story of another,
Another defence of one older,
Their pride;
Only to the third, truths uttered,
Weights lifted, they stuttered,
It only took these truths to fly,
For there to no longer be a lie

Sasha Lizlovs (V)



Leah Hetherington (V)

THE SILENCING OF SILENCE

Oh, how doomed are we at her damning desire!
How haunted are we at her very hands!
How plagued are we by her painful poignant
pleasure!
That this universal suffering is rendered so solitary.
That Death has so maliciously plucked at my
heartstrings with her merciless melodies...
And how bold and daring must one consider
oneself
when in the fatal face of death to be considered a
longing luthier,
and shamefully scold her in all her beautiful
brutality and silence this serenade of sorrow.

Katye-Louise Richardson (MVI)



WILL YOU BE MY FRIEND?

I saw her standing by the wall
and asked if she's ok, her face so sad and forlorn.

What can I do to help I asked?
Explaining she replied, be my friend?
Let me see, of course, I joyfully made clear.
Light-heartedly we agreed and
Blissfully skipped across the yard
Energetically, and enthusiastically we played.
Into a beautiful friendship it has grown, where,
Now we are old and grey, happy and best friends
Grateful that we saw each other, content and
jubilant.

Friends are what can matter, who give us strength
and hope,
who make us laugh, who hold our hands
and help us when we're down.
So, when you see them standing, standing all alone,
reach out, smile and ask are you ok, and will you
be my friend?

Darragh Quinn (V)



Klaudia Maciejowska (LVI)

DOLLY

I'm a doll, crafted by my roots,
Wooden and cracked, ruined, yet I'm still of use.
I'm to be loved and played with,
And because I'm a doll, I have no choice in the
matter.

I want my wood to be carved, fixed and improved.

I was perfect, but the years went by and my wood
aged,
And as my wood aged, my thoughts changed,
Being a doll doesn't suit me as much anymore.

I'd like to lose my features which so define me as
a doll,
My long brunette locks and my pink lips and round
chest.
But to give these up is to give up those who crafted
me,

Those who played with me and those who loved
me.
I'm a doll, a pretty doll, I sit still and take my
orders.

They play with me and manipulate me but it's not
me.
I'm told to love being a doll. It's part of who I am.
I'm a doll. I wish I wasn't.

Myia O'Sullivan (LVI)
Joint Winner of the Jigsaw Youth Prize for
Writing



Niamh Dann (V)

THIS MALLOW'S ANTICIPATING STORY

One evening whilst Olivia the marshmallow
was chatting with her friends, Cindy walked in
to make hot cocoa. She made it then grabbed the
marshmallows and they started to worry. She
opened it then poured them on top. All the mallows
were screaming in the hot cocoa, apart from three.

Olivia and her friends survived, although they fell
to the floor. They were bruised but ok compared
to the others. They stood still until Cindy left,
otherwise she would see them. They wanted to
travel, but to where? They settled on the oven
as their destination and started their journey!

It was difficult to get there, due to the freezing tiles,
so when they made it, they were lucky to discover
it was warm! Too warm. OH NO! One of Olivia's
friends was melting! The other two were struggling
to the middle whilst wondering, "Where to next?"

This time they settled on the fridge-freezer.
They helped their half-scorched friend along the
journey. When they arrived, it was cold, unlike
the oven. Too cold. "Aaaahh!" Screamed Olivia's
other friend, He was freezing! So, the other
two hauled him over to the middle to defrost.

Once he was defrosted, they were chatting about their
journey then unexpectedly they heard footsteps.....
DAD! He was coming in to do the dishes! "Ruuunn!"
Exclaimed one of them, as they all sprinted to the
cupboards, but Dad entered before they could get
there! They stopped, but he saw them anyway!

He set down the dishes, picked them up and slipped
them one by one into his mouth! Once standing,
he realised Mum was right behind him, and she
was MAD! "GET THOSE FILTHY THINGS
OUT OF YOUR GUB! AND DON'T EAT OFF
THE FLOOR!" Dad just swallowed and laughed!

Katie McWatters (I)
Winner of BBC's Two Minute Tales Competition
(9-12 age category)



Maria Watters (V)

SHADOW IN SNOW

The snow lay thickly that night. As the old
grandfather clock struck midnight, its deep chimes
bellowing throughout the house, all life was
dormant. A candle flickered upon the mantelpiece,
burned down to a stub, illuminating a quiet scene:
an ornate, comfortable living room, complete
with a plush burgundy sofa, covered in throws
and pillows. Upon this sofa, a small shadow sat,
smaller than the cushions which it made its place
in, before doing something notably un-shadowlike:
it sat up and stretched its mouth wide in a yawn.

Unfurling itself into its feline form, the inky black
cat slipped nimbly down onto the thick, cream
carpet and began to make its way towards the exit.
The aged mahogany door stood before the cat
like a silent soldier, a small opening in its bottom
allowing it to slip through into the onyx night.
Stepping out onto the cold concrete, the cat began
its twilight prow, following a familiar path - down
the steps, along the wall, into the shrubby garden.
However, something this night was somehow

different, magical... cold? From the feline's eye level, all that could be seen was an unblemished layer of white, covering the grass like a sheet of marble, sheltering it from the frigid night-time air. The cat, trepidatious at this new development, looked upon the layer for a few seconds before steeling itself – it was going to touch it.

Slowly, a paw reached out towards the blanket of alabaster ice, finally meeting its mark with a satisfying crunch. The cat pondered this new sensation – cold, yes, but a refreshing cold, not at all the harsh bite it had expected. Gaining confidence now, the small shadow stepped boldly forward into the crisp whiteness, to bound about joyously until morning light.

That serendipitous night, shadow met snow.

Niall Blaskett (V)
Winner of BBC's Two Minute Tales
Competition (13-16 age category)



Savannah McCorry (V)



Julia Robinson (V)

Art in School

All pupils from each of our Art and Design GCSE and A-Level groups had the fantastic opportunity to visit the Royal Ulster Academy of Arts' 141st Annual Art Exhibition in the Ulster Museum. These trips helped enhance their courses as they received a range of exhibition tours alongside workshops and a talk by local artist Simon McWilliams.



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Congratulations to our Art and Design student Ellyn Elliott whose textile work was selected for the CCEA True Colours Virtual Exhibition. The exhibition showcased the top candidates from Northern Ireland.

Our Form IV pupils had the opportunity to be involved in designing and making two life-size

scarecrows to be part of the Hillsborough Castle Scarecrow Parade 2022. Our pupils enjoyed two very active and creative sessions with artist Sue Cathcart and helper Linda who assisted them in bringing to life their Ice Queen and King Kong designs for the Kings, Queens and Rulers theme. The scarecrows were displayed alongside many others created by local schools and community groups in partnership with local artists.



A2 and AS Level Art students were very privileged this year to have the opportunity to view the private art collection of B.R.A. alumnus Dr Bernard Jaffa in Belfast. Dr Jaffa very kindly offered to host the pupils and their teachers for a morning to visit his home, view his wonderful art collection and hear about his passion for art. He shared his love and appreciation of the works of many celebrated

Irish artists, including Gerard Dillon, Dan O'Neill, Neil Shawcross, Basil Blackshaw, and fellow B.R.A. alumnus Colin Middleton. Dr Jaffa took time to speak to all the pupils about their own art projects and reminisce about his time at school.

The Art and Design Department continued with its many highly successful Art Clubs. After-school and lunchtime Fantasy Art Clubs, Comic Creators Club, LS Art Club and Inktober drawing Challenge Month, all led by Art Technician Laura Atkins as well as a new Senior Art Club led by Art and Design teacher Mrs Hare.



Students are encouraged to be involved in the art world through competitions and projects outside of the normal school curriculum. Katie Geddis (V) had a winning entry in the University of Ulster LGBT+ History Month Art Competition and Jai Beattie (IV) won 1st place in the Newington Credit Union's Chapter 3 Art Competition. We had seven students from our Art and Design classes continue for a second year in the Beat Carnival programme. This was a good relationship project, aiming to unite and celebrate young people's individual 'single' stories of growing up in NI.



The North Belfast Area Learning Community Schools' Art Exhibition took place in October, hosted by the University of Ulster. Ten of our own outstanding Art and Design pupils, along with their family and friends, were invited to celebrate their Art successes over the last year.



It was a wonderful evening, despite the rainy weather, and they were able to view their creative work alongside that of several other North Belfast schools in University of Ulster's exciting new campus.



The Art and Design Department invited three wonderful past pupils to give an information talk to our Sixth Form students who would be applying to various fields of Art for their further education. Kathleen Malone is undertaking Fine Art, Ellie Walsh is undertaking Fashion and Aine Crawford is undertaking Foundation Art, all at the University of Ulster. They shared insight into their degree courses and current art portfolio work as well as answering questions.



Forms IV, V, LVI and MVI students had the pleasure of listening to a talk by visiting Co-course Director Dr Henry Melki, of BDes Hons Animation at University of Ulster Belfast in school in October.



Animation is a studio-focused, highly creative course, specialising in computer animation for games, VFX, feature and TV animation and Dr Melki gave an insight into the course and opportunities available to students after progressing through the degree.



Senior students from Belfast Royal Academy and St Malachy's College had the opportunity of a shared education trip to the MAC Belfast for the Ron Mueck Exhibition. Students were given a talk on the impressive sculpture pieces on display and then took part in a drawing workshop to fully take in the experience. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed their experience at the MAC.



Sixth Form students from across Belfast gathered at the Ulster University Belfast campus to explore dreams for themselves and the city as part of the 4 Corners Festival. Elliott McKeown, Mia McKay and Michael O'Reilly, along with Mrs Patterson (Art and Design Subject Leader) attended the photography workshop led by award-winning photographer, Mal McCann (Irish News) who gave support and teaching on developing skills in smartphone photography and considering new perspectives on their city and their future.

The Creative Art Society was introduced this year. Past pupil Kim Mawhinney is the patron and our President Leah McCord and Vice Presidents Mia McKay and Joseph Golden were nominated.

We had Student Teacher, Emily Scott completing her teaching practice with us for eight weeks during the months of April and May. Emily worked with the students and supported junior art classes, senior student art tutorials, taught a connected STEAM project and got involved in the many Art Clubs taking place in the Art and Design Department.



The Owl Cover for 2021-22 was designed by Leah McCord.

L.A.P.

ART CLUBS

IMAGINATION CLUB

Each Monday at lunchtime, students met in the library to create literary-inspired arts and crafts, from air-dry clay bookworms to their own DIY tiny poetry books.

AFTER-SCHOOL FANTASY ART CLUB

Members met each Monday afternoon to learn about becoming fantasy artists. In the first term, they were transported to a fantasy world and chose from different world biomes to have their characters live.



They learned to draw anatomy and clothing styles, use colour theory and create their own weapons and armour. Students worked together collaboratively to create tribes and design fantasy banners with canvas and paint, and then at the end of the year they created their own magical potions with glue gun wax seals, mica powder solutions and glass monster eyes in real glass potion bottles.



LUNCHTIME FANTASY ART CLUB V2

This took place each Tuesday lunchtime in the Art and Design Department. An overflow of students who wanted to take part in Fantasy Art Club came together to enjoy a simplified version of the activities from the after-school club.

COMIC CREATORS CLUB



Each Thursday lunchtime, our fantastic comic artists and Form IV helpers, Charlei Hill and Jai Beattie, joined together to learn how to draw characters, come up with exciting story plots and make mini comics to practise their comic creating skills.



LS ART CLUB

Members gathered in the Learning Support Suite each Friday lunchtime to allow for some fun and creative projects in a quieter, more relaxed space.



We designed our own fantasy swords for the Sword in the Stone, told magnificent stories about the hordes of objects our pet dragons might collect, created the tallest towers in the land and so many other imaginative projects. Each week, a new creative challenge was presented to members, they worked individually and collaboratively, and there was always time at the end to share their creations.

L.A

INKTOBER 2022

All pupils were invited to take part in the Inktober Drawing Challenge for the sixth year running.

Students joined together in the Art and Design Department every break-time for the entire month of October to draw from the official Inktober prompts list, encourage one another and experiment with various ink media, from markers to traditional ink dip pens.



Drawings were displayed daily in the Art and Design Department and Inktober badges were awarded to all those who took part, with special badges for being able to complete a drawing for all 31 days.



SENIOR ART CLUB

Senior Art Club was a new club open to Forms IV-MVI pupils this year. Approximately 20 pupils gathered each week in A5 on a Thursday afternoon to create a range of artworks. During the first term, we focused on ceramic techniques and after Christmas we looked at printmaking processes. Pupils were shown the different materials and techniques and were then able to bring their own creativity into their designs.

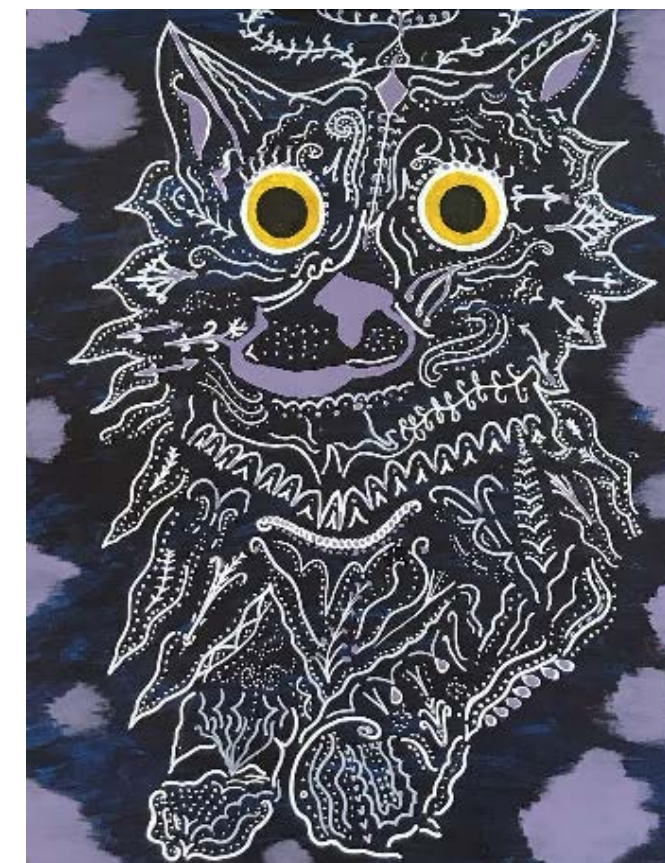
Pupils first had the opportunity to design and make their own ceramic paint palettes and water pots. For Halloween, we made ceramic pumpkins and witches' hats, and after half-term, time was spent glazing the handcrafted painting sets.



After Christmas, pupils had the opportunity to experiment with creating some lino prints and our final technique of the year was drypoint etching. Using CDs and the printing press, pupils created a range of highly original artworks.



C.E.H.



Cara Houston (V)



Samvritha Srikanth (V)

Music in School

2022/2023 has proven to be a very busy and exciting year for the Music Department. Rehearsals commenced in September for all groups. The Orchestra immediately began rehearsing for a joint workshop with the St Malachy's orchestra and quickly tried to navigate their way around the tricky rhythms and accidentals of Berlioz's *March to the Scaffold*. 4th October quickly came around and all pupils enjoyed the day of playing music and making new friends, as well as gaining valuable insights on how to actually play their instrument from the Ulster Orchestra tutors.



Prize Day quickly came around two weeks later, and the Orchestra performed the *March of the Scaffold* by Berlioz that they rehearsed for the joint workshop and the Chamber Choir sang *Ave Verum Corpus* by Mozart. Our new music teacher, Mr Davison, accompanied the choir and congregational singing on the organ and seemed to enjoy the experience. With all the hard work and the favourable acoustics of Spires, the performances turned out to be an enjoyable experience for all involved.

We returned after half-term and rehearsals took over for the school musical *School of Rock*. I must mention the musicians who helped me so admirably by performing in the Band – Eleanor Black and Callum Whiteside (keys), Matthew

Rankin (drums), Joe O'Kane (bass), Gail Payot and Jacob Gordon (guitar). In fact, by the last performance, I simply sat there and directed a few key moments – they were fully on the ball.



The Carol Service took place on Tuesday 20th December in St Anne's Cathedral. The Chamber Choir performed *O Radiant Dawn* by J. Macmillan and *O Magnum Mysterium* by M. Lauridsen, with the Senior Choir singing such stalwarts as *Torches*, *The Little Drummer Boy*, *Angel's Carol* and the fabulous *Sans Day Carol*. The Orchestra accompanied the carols for the congregational singing and performed with great aplomb, despite being squeezed into the tiniest ever space in the cathedral!



undisputed champions of unison choral singing at B.R.A., entertained the end of year festivities with their rendition of various Christmas carols. It was a joy to watch their virtuous little faces singing gleefully about the forthcoming holidays and the possibility of Santa Claus delivering their much longed- for presents. Such youth, such innocence, and that was only the staff.



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, Senior Traditional Group, Senior and Junior String Quartets. 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. We really do appreciate it even though that sentiment may not always come across (you know we love you all really).



The Annual Spring Concert in March was a huge success. Fourteen different groups and over two hundred students performed to a packed Ulster Hall. With so many different musical genres represented throughout the two evenings, it really was a feast of music. Theo Hayward and Eleanor Black performed the MVI solo, (it is a credit to this pupil that over ten pupils auditioned for this coveted spot), and it was a fabulous evening. Again, the Boys' Choir managed to do something that many men can't – sing and move their arms at the same time.



Special mention must go to the various members of MVI for whom this will be their last concert - Aoife Dann, Rachel Duncan, David Eyjolfsson, Ryan Ferguson (trad leader extraordinaire), Soham Ghosh, Noah Gilchrist, Connor Gillam, Eleanor Green, Theo Hayward, Ebony Hoogelander, Holly Hooks, Kian Jan-Dickens, Anjana Kandel, David Kane, Lara Lennon, Sasha Logan, Sophia Mallon, Helen Marshall, Edgars Martinovs, Sarah McCarmey, Cara McGrath, Lois McGrath, Ellie McIvor, Elliott McKeown, Abbie McKnight, Cara McMahon, Anna Monaghan, Fiona Murray, EJ



Nazareth, Rory Nethercott, Natasha Newton, Jamie O’Brien, Riya Raghuram, Sophie Rutherford, Tianna Savage, Bella Scott, Katie Scott, Charlotte Spence, Kate Sturgess, Eve Taylor, Hannah Thompson, Caitlyn Toal, Grace Uprichard, Lucy Beth Watson, Ellen Watt, Cassie Watt, Ethan Willey, Anna Wilson and Emilia Zboralska. Mr Davison, Mrs Prior and I have greatly appreciated your support (and gossip) during your time at B.R.A.

The Chamber Choir enjoyed the Ulster Youth Choir’s Workshop with Andrew Nunn in April, with many pupils auditioning for and gaining a place in the Ulster Youth Choir and Ulster Youth Training Choir. The Chamber Choir finished their year by performing Evensong in St Anne’s Cathedral on Sunday 30th April for the dedication of the final remembrance quilt for all victims of the Troubles by the people of Southeast Fermanagh. They sang the Stanford Mag and Nunc in Bb, St Patrick’s Blessing by Rutter as well as the usual sung responses and psalm. Theo Hayward also performed a Faure’s Elegie on the viola during a moment of reflection for all victims of the Troubles.



Ten pupils gained a place in the Ulster Youth Orchestra: Olivier Staworzynski (Form IV double bass), Alex McQueen (Form V cello), Maria Watters (Form V violin), Jamie Wilson (Form V violin), Matthew Rankin (LVI percussion), Hugo Reilly Stewart (LVI violin), Harrison Kirk (LVI trumpet), Theo Hayward (MVI viola), Connor Gillam (MVI violin) and Rory Nethercott (MVI violin). Joe O’Kane (LVI piano) gained a place in the Ulster Youth Jazz Orchestra.

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.

M.M.M.



ARTS HONOURS AWARDS

MINOR NEWAWARD

- Adam, Ella
- Black, Jonah
- Clark, Aaliyah
- Clarke, Rosa
- Curran, Sophie
- Dalzell, Rebekah
- Dann, Aoife
- Downey, Ella Sofia
- Duffy, Zara
- Easdon, Rachel
- Eyjolsson, Michael
- Johnston, Cora
- Johnston, Samuel
- Lane, Timothy
- Laverty, Ciarin
- Marron, Charlotte
- McCarthy, Roisin
- McCracken, Nathaniel
- McKeown, Rebecca
- McNevison, Leah
- McVeigh, Lucy
- McVeigh, Sophie
- Murphy, Eleanor
- O’Kane, Aoife
- O’Brien, Erin
- O’Reilly, Miah
- Press, Hannah
- Raghuram, Keshav
- Stevenson, Lucy
- Watters, Maria
- Wilson, Sophie

INTERMEDIATE NEW AWARD

- Anderson, Rachel
- Balili, Adrienne
- Biswas, Tanisha
- Blaskett, Niall
- Chesnel, Amandine
- Chowne, Sophia
- Craig, Chloe
- Crossan, Eva
- Curran, Anna
- Donald, Lucy
- Donaldson, Rosa
- Finnegan, Jane
- Gillam, Thomas
- Hetherington, Leah
- Hillis, Faith
- Horkan, Katie
- Jones, Ema
- Kearney, Clodagh
- Kerr, Rosa
- Kirkpatrick, Rebecca
- Lane, Jessica
- Mallon, Amber
- Martin, Jane
- Mawhinney, Bryn
- McAuley, Clodagh
- McCarney, Katie
- McCauley, Jessie
- McCollam, Hugo
- McKeown, Eve
- McKinty, Abigail
- McLean, Sarah
- McQueen, Alex
- McWilliams, Anna
- Mirfield, Jasmine
- Nethercott, Ed
- O’Brien, Adam
- O’Carroll, Ella
- O’Kane, Joe
- Pandiaraj, Madhumitha
- Payot, Gail
- Piddington, Zoe
- Quinn, Darragh
- Rooney, Seraphina
- Saunders, Emily
- Sayers, Toby
- Schilling, Clara
- Scott, Ines
- Staworzynski, Olivier



Stewart, Beth
Toal, Annabelle
Warnock, Emily
Wilson, Jamie

MAJOR NEW AWARD

Simon, Alex
Logan, Alice
Cleland, Andrew
Murray, Ciara
Doherty, Cormac
Ogilby, Grace
Kirk, Harrison
Reilly-Stewart, Hugo
Rankin, Matthew
Millard, Riona
Hooks, Holly
Jan-Dickens, Kian



MUSIC SCHOLARSHIPS

From September 2023, Music Scholarships to Belfast Royal Academy will be offered at Form I, Form IV and 6th form entry. Successful applicants will receive £250 towards tuition on their chosen instrument. Music Scholarships will not be means tested but will be awarded on the basis of written application, references, audition and are offered in order to attract a strong core of musicians each year group of the school.

We will be looking to attract pupils that will enhance the musical life of the school and help promote advanced music-making. There is no need for an instrument that we are looking for but we are primarily looking to recruit pupils who play instruments (including singing) that would be of obvious value to choirs, bands and ensembles.

Scholarships will be open to pupils entering Form I, Form IV and 6th Form in September 2023. Each scholarship will last the length of the Key Stage and there will be two scholarships awarded in Form I, two in Form IV and two in U6. Therefore, pupils who are awarded the KS3 or KS4 Music Scholarship will be expected to reapply at the start of the next Key Stage.

Application forms will be available via the School website from May 1st and the closing date for applications for the KS3 and KS4 scholarships will be 15th June. Auditions will be held in the last week of June 2023. The 6th Form scholarship application will open at the end of August 2023 with auditions at the start of September. As this is the first year of the new scholarship system, scholarships will be available in both U6 and M6 for this year only.

MUSIC NEWS

Congratulations to the following pupils who gained a place in the Ulster Youth Orchestra (UYO):

Violin: Hugo Reilly-Stewart (Year 10), Rory Netherwood, Matti Waters, Declan Gilson, Jamie Wilson
Viola: Theo Hayward
Cello: Alex McCann
Perussion: Matthew Rappin

Thank you to:
Mrs C Prior, Mr C Davidson, Mrs V McCombe, Dr G McAliskey, Mrs J Chapman, Mr J McCabe, Mr M Harris, Mr J McAlister, Mr R Graham, Mr S Healy & Mr P Donaghy



Belfast Royal Academy

Spring Concert

**Tuesday
14th March 2023
Ulster Hall, Belfast
7pm**



PROGRAMME		
Senior Orchestra	Lord of the Dance (Tin Whistle: Fiona Murray)	R. Hardiman arr: L. Moore
Ben Madigan	I see the Light	A. Menken & G. Slater
	Jungle Jamboree	D. Hawthorne
M6 Solo	ELEANOR BLACK (clannet) Vivace quasi una Samba	G. Lyons
Junior Strings (accompanist: Callum Whiteside)	Enchanted	T. Swift arr: T. Winter
	Under Pressure	Queen arr: D. Burdett
Big Band	Runaway Baby	B. Mars arr: P. Murtha
	Ain't No Mountain High Enough	N. Ashford arr: P. Murtha
Junior Choir (accompanist: Joe O'Kane)	Deep Down in my Soul	G. Partington
	When the Saints go Marching In	Ted! arr: Mac Huff
Senior Strings	Prelude	E. Grieg
	Concerto No 3 movt. 1 (soloists: Rory Netherwood, Connor Gilson & Theo Hayward)	A. Vivaldi
Junior Traditional Group (leaders: Jane Finnegan & Jessie McCauley)	Prelude Polka, Paddy's Polka, St. Ann's Reel & Sally Gardens	
Chamber Choir (accompanist: Harrison Kirk)	Incantations	M. McEvoy
	The Seal Lullaby	K. Wallace
Senior Orchestra	Diamonds are Forever (soloist: Ellie McIvor)	J. Berry arr: D. McKenzie



Spring Concert 2022



Interval

Wind Band	<i>The A-Team</i>	M. Post arr. P. Murtha
	<i>Instant Concert</i>	Harold L. Walters
Intermediate Choir (accompanist: Joe O'Kane)	<i>Let the River Run</i>	C. Simon arr. Mac Huff
	<i>Chasing Cars</i>	G. Lightbody arr. R. Emerson
Senior Traditional Group (leaders: Ryan Ferguson & Fiona Murray)	<i>Dülmann Highland, Rights of Man, Grenaghán Viaduct & Damien's Reel</i>	
Saxophone Quartet	<i>Back Beat Boogie</i>	C. Gumbley
Clarinet Trio	<i>Chattanooga Choo Choo</i>	
Boys' Choir (accompanist: Calum Whiteside)	<i>Rugby Anthems Medley</i>	Trad. arr. VMC
	<i>I'll Tell Me Ma</i>	Trad. arr. VMC
MS Solo	<i>THEO HAYWARD (viola) Elegy</i>	G. Faure
Senior Choir (accompanist: Harrison Kirk)	<i>Kyrie (soloist: Ellie McIvor)</i>	F. Schubert
	<i>West Side Story</i>	L. Bernstein arr. W. Stickles
	<i>Draft On</i>	M. Lauridsen
	<i>Nothing Else Matters/Enter</i>	J. Hetfield arr. MMB

Senior Choir



SOPHOMORE
 Rachael Anderson
 Tanisha Brown
 Jessica Boyd
 Aolia Caldwell
 Lucy Chambers
 Amandine Chesnel
 Rebecca Crooks
 Anna Curran
 Lucy Donald
 Jane Finnegan
 Leah Hetherington
 Faith Hiles
 Katie Horkan
 Holly Hook
 Rose Kent
 Jessica Lane
 Aliana Logan
 Abby Lyons
 Amber Mason
 Sophia Mason
 Jane Martin
 Sydney McCauley
 Kaiti McCarley
 Lauren McCarty
 Grace McGrath
 Elise Melvor
 Sarah Melvoin
 Anna McWhorter
 Jasmine Mifford
 Madhu Pandita
 Fiona Philp
 Zoe Pilkington
 Rylee Raghuram

Grace Robinson
 Seraphina Rooney
 Emily Saunders
 Tanna Savage
 Clara Schilling
 Beth Stewart
 Kate Sturgess
 Hannah Thompson
 Annabel Toal
 Maria Walters
 Anna Wilson

ALTO
 Elsie Bell
 Eleanor Black
 Sophie Burns
 Berna Calaghan
 Aodie Duncanson
 Rachel Duncan
 Blessing Enieh
 Eleanor Green
 Carla-Lisa Gueys
 Alana Joseph
 Emma Kandel
 Jennifer Kelly
 Lara Ledson
 Holly Marshall
 Eileen McCarthy
 Lee McGrath
 Abby McKnight
 Riona Millard
 Clara Murray
 Fiona Murray
 Natasha Newton
 Grace Ogilby
 Doreen Ogunleye

Sophie Rutherford
 Aoife Scott
 Katie Scott
 Bella Scott
 Alex Simon
 Charlotte Spence
 Caitlyn Toal
 Grace Uphrad
 Emily Waincock
 Lucy Beth Watson
 Cassie Watt
 Ellen Watt
 Emilia Zboralska
 Diana Zhou

TENOR
 Jonah Black
 Niall Blacksett
 Cormac Doherty
 David Elyonsson
 Michael Elyonsson
 Soham Ghosh
 Thomas Gilliam
 Giona Gonsalves
 Sammie Harrison
 Harrison Kirk
 Timothy Lane
 Garas Lavery
 Daniel Matfield
 Hugo McColiam
 Vincent McGuilough
 Jacob McLaughlin
 Felix Menwood
 Finn McMorris
 Ed Nethercott
 Keshav Raghuram
 Matthew Rankin
 Hugh Reilly-Stewart

Toby Sayers
 Oliver Stan-
 worynski
 Nathaniel
 McCracken

BASS
 Jack Cairns
 Andrew Cleland
 Jakub Dabrowski
 Robert Ennskie
 Ryan Ferguson
 Kuan Giesler
 Connor Gillam
 Jack Gilmore
 David Kate
 Jackie Lin
 Theo Hayward
 Kian Jan-
 Dickens
 Aidan Murphy
 Rory Nethercott
 Adam O'Brien
 Joe O'Brien
 Daragh Quinn
 Zachary Saun-
 ders
 Jamie Wilson

Senior Orchestra



1ST VIOLIN
 Connor Gilam**
 Rory Nethercott
 Hugo Reilly-Stewart
 Jamie Wilson
 Ryan Ferguson
 Cara McMahon
 Anna Wilson
 Jessica Boyd
 Cara Campbell
 Rachael Anderson
 Katie Norman
 Jessica Lane
 Thomas Gilam

2ND VIOLIN
 Maria Walters*
 Jane Finnegan
 Chloe Craig
 Riya Raghuram
 Katie McCauley
 Madhumita Pandurang
 Eleanor Murphy
 Michael Gyorffon
 Rebecca McKeown
 Lucy Stevenson
 Eva Costahan
 Zach Saunders
 Toby Sayers
 Tanna Savage
 Finn McKeown
 Sarah Brogan
 Leah O'Donnell

CELLO
 Kian Jan-Dickens*
 EJ Nazareth
 Alex McQueen
 Rosa Kerr
 Clodagh Kearney
 Timothy Lane

DOUBLE BASS
 Olivier Staworzynski*

FLUTE
 Sasha Logan*
 Sophia Mallon
 Noah Gilchrist
 Aislinn Logan
 Grace Ogilby
 Leah Hetherington
 Jessie McCauley

CLARINET
 Eleanor Black*
 Aoife Dann
 Beth Stewart
 Abigail McKinty
 Rebecca Kirkpatrick
 Sophia Chowne

TRUMPET
 Harrison Kirk*
 Ed Nethercott
 Rosam McCauley
 Adam O'Brien
 Emily Warnock

TROMBONE
 Riona Milard*
 Andrew Cleland
 Jonah Black
 Finlay Baird

HORN/SAX
 Holly Hooks*
 Jamie O'Brien
 Seraphina Rooney
 Cormac Doherty
 Keshav Raghuram

PERCUSSION
 Matthew Rankin*
 Robbie Tosh
 Benjamin Boyd

* = Leader
 ** = Section Principal

Ben Madigan

Jessica Glendinning	Amber Molwaine-Biggins	Harry Quinn	Drummers
George Cole	Thomas McRitchie	Hollie Sinnerton	Cameron Bell
Jacob Dallas	Lily Marshall	Jaisha Strain	Quinn Ingram
Joseph Dallas	Darcy Patterson	Aatish	Thomas McRitchie
Francesca Fitzpatrick	Cara Grimbridge	Thapa Shubarna	Garragh Morris
Sofia Fitzpatrick	Marley Hannan	Abigail Thompson	Ethan Platzöder
	Isabella McBurney		

Intermediate Choir

Ella Adam	Rebekah Datzell	Matilda Magill	Eleanor Murphy
Adrienne Baili	Rosa Donaldson	Charlotte Marron	Erin O'Brien
Freyja Bowler	Ella Sofia Downey	Lauren McCullough	Ella O'Carroll
Leah Carter	Zara Duffy	Lola Maister	Mash O'Reilly
Stephanie Chow	Rachel Eason	Eve McKewen	Call Payton
Sophia Chowne	Madison Gilmore	Rebecca McKewen	Harsh Press
Aaliyah Clark	Mia Gracey	Abigail McKinry	Erin Quinn
Rosa Clarke	Wiktorja Januszewska	Leah McNeivison	Holly Ross
Annie Clawson	Cora Johnson	Alex McQueen	Ines Scott
Craig Cunn	Jessie Jones	Sophy McVeigh	Beatrice Seath
Charlie Crooks	Annabelle Jurk	Lucy McVeigh	Liz Stevenson
Katie Crook	Clodagh Kearney	Eve Moore	Elizabeth Toal
Ella Crossan	Roghayeh Karmy	Aleesha Moriarty	Ria Tohani
Elizabeth Crowe		Jan-Moore	Sophie Wilson

Boys' Choir

Nail Blaskett	Joshua Harold	Harry McIntyre	Toby Sayers
Jack Cairns	Ther Hayward	Elliot McKeeven	Alexander Scott
Loanne Chen	Olive Kulig	Jacob McLaughlin	Oliver Staworczynski
Leslie Clarke	Lucy Kyle	Jack Mercer	
Leo Clarkson	Daniel Lane	Ryan Montgomery	Arun Suresh
Audron Davidson	Timothy Lins	EJ Nazareth	Charlie Swann
Mark Elliott	Jacky Lin	Ed Nethercott	Robert Todd
David Eyrilsson	Matthew Mallon	Jamie O'Kane	Ethan Willey
Andrew Ferguson	Edgars Martinovs	Joe O'Kane	Mr P Dorman
Ryan Ferguson	Finn McAlorum	Olive Pearce	Mr R Graham
Saham Ghosh	Alex McCarrey	Keshav Raghuram	Mr M Harle
Liam Gonsalves	Hugo McCollam	Matthew Rankin	Mr S Healy
Jackdon Haddock	Nathaniel McCracken	Hugo Reilly-Stewart	Mr J McAleer
			Mr J McCabe
			(Jovette)

Junior Traditional Group

FIDDLE	TIN WHISTLE/FLUTE	GUITAR
Jane Finnegan (leader)	Jessie McCauley (leader)	Arlie O Kane
Bela Jozs	Eire O'Brien	Leah Callaghan
Zachary Saunders	Isla Gilam	Gail Poyot
Eleanor Murphy	Samuel Johnston	Charlotte Maconn
Lara Morrow	Niamh Cunningham	Sophie Wilson
Alex McQueen	Lorcan Shane	Owen McKee
		Kelvin Ogunleye
BANJO	BOOHRAN	Jacob Gordon
Maria Mallon	Hugo McCollam	Owen O Kane
CONCERTINA		
Siobhan O'Moideall		

Senior Strings

1ST VIOLIN	2ND VIOLIN	VIOLA
Rory Nethercott	Maria Watters	Theo Hayward
Connor Gillam	Jane Finnegan	David Eyojifson
Hugo Reilly Stewart	Jessica Lane	Alex Simon
Ryan Ferguson	Riya Raghuvar	Lucy Donald
Janine Wilson	Kate Horlan	
Cara Campbell	Rachel Anderson	CELLO
Aria McMahen	Chloe Craig	E.J Nazareth
Aria Wilson	Helen Marshall	Kian Jan-Dickens
Jessica Boyd	Eva Crossan	Alex McQueen
Thomas Gillam	Sarah Brogan	Clodagh Kearney
	Zachary Saunders	
		DOUBLE BASS
		Oliwer Stawczyszyn

Big Band



<u>SAXOPHONE</u> Cormac Doherty Bryn Mahwinney Keshav Raghuram Samrithra Sinarath Eleanor Black Aoife Dann	<u>TRUMPET</u> Harrison Kirk Emily Warnock Ed Nethercott Adam O'Brien Rosin McCarthy	<u>PERCUSSION</u> Matthew Rankin Jake Coulter	<u>GUITAR</u> Gail Payot
	<u>PIANO</u> Niall Loughran	<u>BASS GUITAR</u> Joe O'Kane	<u>TROMBONE</u> Noelia Millard Andrew Cleland Jonah Black

Junior Choir

Emily Anderson	Sophie Harris	Nathan Millin
Leo Bell	Leila Jones	Jayden Najara
Eva Brady	Maja Jones	Ella O'Kane
Melissa Calhoun	Julia Kaya	Rosie O'Kane
Zuzanna Chojnacka	Olivia Kalinowski	Zoe O'Kane
Rosa Clarkson	Oliver Lada	Yamitha Pandiaraj
Joshua Courtney	James Lard	Hope Rogers
May Curnan	Maggie Lockhart	Peter Rowan
Hubert Dabrowski	Lily Macauliffe	Kristen Savage
Eyre Drake	Amelia Manley	Christian Schilling
Gemma Duffy	Lily Marston	Phoebe Scott
Olivia Fulecznyk	Ellie McBride	Leila Scullion
Isla Gorman	Isabella McEwen	Daniel Simmer
Jessica Haddock	Niamh McKenna	Sophia Simon
		Pudha Srikanth

Wind Band

FLUTE Sophia Mason Grace Ogilby Fiona Murray Alice Logan Jessie McCauley Amber Maillon Erin O'Brien Samara Johnson Sam Lockhart Leah Hetherington Eve McKewen Zara Duffy Lily Macaulay Vismitha Pandoraj Harry Paul Lucy McVeigh Sophie McVeigh Isla Gilman Mervyn Wilson	CLARINET Eleanor Black David Kane Beth Stewart Abigail McKinley Rebecca Kirkpatrick Sophia Chowdhry Emma Murray Melissa Cafferty Hope Rogers	ALTO SAXOPHONE Zara Murray Cormac Doherty Alex McQueen Birn Mathewson Keshav Raghavan Samantha Sirkus TENOR HORN Jamie O'Brien Holly Hooks Seraphina Robey Matthew Wonnacott Jackie Lin	TRUMPET Harman Kirk Adam O'Brien Emily Warburton Ed Nethercott Roisin McCarthy Harry McIntyre Kyle Rooney Miki Pratt Alfie Gualandieri James O'Kane
	TENOR SAXOPHONE Kaitlyn Lavery Colleen Lavery	TROMBONE Rhona Millard Andrew Cleland Finlay Baird Emily Blain	PERCUSSION Matthew Rani Hugo Reilly Rory Haywood Theo Nethercott Connor Gieson

Chamber Choir



SOPRANO	ALTO	TENOR	BASS
Aoife Caldwell	Eleanor Black	Niall Blackett	Jack Cairns
Eleanor Green	Alex Simin	Harrison Kirk	Theo Hayward
Eliel Mohr	Eileen Watt	Matthew Rankin	Rory Nethercott
Jasmine McInch	Rachel Duncan	Janine Wilson	Connor Gilliam
Riya Raghunath	Katie Jordan		Kian Jan-Dickens
Fiona Ellis	Jane Martin		
Holly Hooks			
Jessie McCauley			
Gara McGrath			
Annabelle Toal			

Saxophone & Clarinet Group

Alto 1	Tenor Saxophone
Wendy Mackintosh	Alannah Mackintosh

Senior Traditional Group



FIDDLE
Ryan Ferguson (leader)
Rory Nethercott
Connor Gilliam
Theo Hayward
Katie Horisk
Jessica Lane
Thomas Gilliam

FLUTE
Grace Ogilby
Sophia Mallon
Noah Gatchist

BANJO
Jamie Finnegan

TIN WHISTLE
Fiona Murray (co-leader)
Celia Murray
Jenifer McCauley

GUITAR
Matthew Rankin
Kate Sturges
Eleanor Black

CONCERTINA
Jamie Wilson

BASS GUITAR
Joe O'Rama

Junior Strings

1ST VIOLIN
Eleanor Murphy
Michael Lyallson
James Adair
Rebecca McKewen
Apple O'Kane
Lucy Stevenson
Sophie Curran
Zoe O'Kane
Odhran McAtner

2ND VIOLIN
Maggie Lookhart
Boye Li
Elvie Drake
Mearbh McAtner
David Zbarski
Fadh McKenna

VIOLA
Gemma Duffy
Lorcan McCusker

CELLO
Timothy Lane
Lella Jones

Saxophone & Clarinet Group



Alto 1
Keshav Raghavaram

Alto 2
Alex McQueen
Bryn Marshiney

Alto 3
Cjara Murray
Samsara Sankar

Tenor Saxophone
Eleanor Black
Reuben LeMay

Clarinet Trio
Eleanor Black
Abigail McGinty
Sophia Christie

Photo Courtesy: The Backyard Band

Drama in School

SCHOOL OF ROCK



After a three year break due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Autumn term saw the Drama and Music departments team up to produce Andrew Lloyd Webber's adaptation of School of Rock. As this would be the first whole school production since 2019 and the first musical since Hairspray in 2016, anticipation was rife amongst the student body as a new generation was given the opportunity to showcase their singing and acting talents on the main stage. After two days of auditions, our diverse and talented cast of twenty-nine started rehearsals in early September.



Starting life as a movie directed by Academy Award nominee Richard Linklater and written by Emmy nominee Mike White, School of Rock was both a commercial and critical success when it first hit the big screen in 2003. A decade later, Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber adapted the screenplay for the stage, turning the story into a must-see musical which played to packed out audiences across the world. The show tells the story of Dewey Finn, an overly enthusiastic guitarist who, after being thrown out of his band, finds himself in desperate need of work. Posing as a substitute teacher at an elite private elementary school, he exposes his students to the hard rock gods he idolises and emulates – much to the consternation of the uptight principal Rosalie Mullins. Along the way, Dewey finds self-worth, a proper job, and, most importantly, he teaches the children and their parents the beauty of rock and roll!



Our principal cast was led by Matthew Mullan (MVI) who, having made his main stage debut in a supporting role in 2019's A Servant to Two Masters, took on the lead role of Dewey Finn. Starring in nearly every scene meant Matthew was required at every rehearsal for two and a half months before the curtain went up mid-November: his enthusiasm and dedication were inspiring, and it was a joy to watch him flourish in his first leading role. Able support was

provided by fellow veterans of the Academy stage Ellie McIvor (MVI) who played Rosalie Mullins, the Principal of Horace Green school who despite her prudish exterior, longs to be as carefree as she was in her youth, and Jasmine Mirfield (LVI) as the demanding and domineering Patty who makes it her mission to have Dewey thrown out of the apartment she shares with her subordinate boyfriend Ned.



Playing Ned, Dewey's hapless best friend and flat mate, was Jack Cairns (LVI) who while no stranger to Musical Theatre circles in Northern Ireland, was making his debut on the Academy stage.



Rounding out the principal cast, and playing the children of Horace Green, was a host of actors who were also making their debuts in front of a larger audience: Jane Martin (V) played Summer, a high achieving girl who takes no nonsense and excels as the band's manager; Niall Blaskett (V) played Lawrence, an unconfident boy who Dewey inspires to believe in himself and his abilities as the band's keyboard player; Rosa Kerr (V) starred as Zack, the band's lead guitarist who desperately wants to impress his father, while Clodagh Kearney (IV) played cellist-turned bassist Katie, and Amy Fowler (IV) starred as the rambunctious drummer Freddie. Special mention must also go to scene-stealer Piaras Millar (MVI) who played flamboyant and sassy costume designer Billy, and Summer Moreland (MVI) who displayed her amazing vocal range whilst playing the shy but vocal powerhouse Tomika. 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 individuals who deserve a lot of credit. Paying homage to the spirit of the original production, where the cast of children play their instruments live on-stage, Ms McMullan assembled an incredible wealth of talented musicians from Forms III-MVI who provided the beating heart of the show as our very own School of Rock live band.



While drummer Matthew Rankin (substituted by Academy alumnus Matthew Logan on the performance nights) and bassist Joe O’Kane (LVI) steadily held down the rhythm section, guitarists Gail Payot (IV) and Jacob Gordan (III) showcased ability well beyond their years as they shredded their guitars and shaped the hard rock sound required in numbers such as ‘When I Climb to the Top of Mount Rock’ and the titular track ‘School of Rock’. Completing the band and providing some beautiful melodies were keyboardists extraordinaire Eleanor Black (MVI) and Callum Whiteside. The professionalism displayed by these incredible musicians added another dimension to the show and for that they deserve the highest of praise and thanks. Mrs Thornton also played a pivotal role in choreographing the key dance numbers. Whether it was leading the students in a regimented march for ‘Here at Horace Green’ or having them raucously rock out to arguably the show’s most famous musical number, ‘Stick it to the Man’, Mrs Thornton’s enthusiasm was infectious, and the show wouldn’t have looked as good without her.



Behind the scenes, Ella O’Carroll (IV), Lauren McCullough (IV) and Alfie Stewart (I) were our technical geniuses working the lights and sound booth. Under the supervision of Mr Davison, all three students gave up a lot of time to attend rehearsals and displayed professionalism and creativity beyond their years in designing a lighting and sound plan to make the show look visually spectacular each night. While we decided to keep our set minimalistic, we still had to somehow convince our audience they were witnessing scenes set in locations such as a classroom, a dive bar and Dewey’s messy apartment.



A-Level Art student Holly Hooks (MVI) was ably supported by Leah McCord (LVI) in designing, constructing, and painting key set pieces such as a jukebox and turning Lawrence’s keyboard into a grand piano! On performance nights, Mrs McNally helped to organise costumes backstage (ensuring many a mullet was worn!), while Miss Williams and Miss Robinson led the hair and make-up team, with a particular highlight being Ned’s finale transformation into a ‘Rock God’ with full KISS

“The Catman” make-up being used to full effect! The ever enthusiastic and supportive Dr Springer led his props team in tracing many weird and wonderful objects, while our Stage Crew, made up of LVI pupils and overseen by Mr McAleer, ensured smooth scene changes during each performance, keeping chaos to a minimum as band instruments (including a full drumkit and keyboard on risers) were wheeled on and off in quick succession!

As you can see, the production was a real team effort. Ms McMullan and I were overwhelmed by the talent and commitment exhibited by each and every member of the cast and crew, and we know the show would not have been the success it was without them.



It is safe to say the future of both the Music and Drama departments is bright and with the wealth of talent amongst our pupils, and the support of both parents and staff, I am confident they will continue to prosper.

S.L.T



School Games

RUGBY

1ST XV



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 great game against touring side Eton College. Played on a wet Saturday morning at Roughfort, conditions made it a very difficult and scrappy game! Although the team played with great endeavour, they came up short with Eton scoring a late converted try to win 0-7.

Next up came a game against Ballyclare as a mid-week fixture. Henry George scored a good individual try, with B.R.A. winning the game narrowly. Royal School Armagh was our next fixture played on a beautiful September morning at Roughfort. Trailing 17-0 at half-time, the team made a fantastic comeback to win the game 18-17, with Captain Oliver Scott scoring a great last minute try to claim the victory! Momentum was good going into our next games against Methodist College Belfast and Sullivan Upper School. Both games were played at Roughfort with a disappointing 28-10 loss to Methody but an excellent 23-7 win over Sullivan!

The 2022/23 season saw the school arrange to play the annual Wallace High School fixture on a Friday evening at The Dub Queen's University Belfast. The Arena pitch was in excellent condition and there was a great atmosphere around the ground in the build up to the game. B.R.A. started the game very slowly, conceding three early converted tries to a strong Wallace team. With Wallace leading 21-0 at half-time, it seemed a difficult prospect to get back into the game. Wallace defended superbly well, even though they had been reduced to 14 men. B.R.A. could simply not break Wallace down. Wallace kicked a late penalty to take a deserved 24-0 win. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Queen's Sport for the use of their fantastic facility. It is an experience players will not forget.

It was important to try and get some confidence back into the team following this defeat. Players had been really motivated by the prospect but knew they had not lived up to their potential on the evening. Larne Grammar brought an extended squad to Roughfort for our next game. This allowed the coaching team to have a look at some other players from the 2nd XV. A fantastic 55-5 win was the outcome with some excellent team and individual tries.

All preparation had been done. In the week building up to this game, we had reiterated to players that Armagh is always a very difficult place to go to! The morning was crisp and a large crowd gathered to watch the game. Although the team made a good start to the game, ill discipline was proving a weakness. Armagh kicked at goal well and took their opportunities when they needed to. Training 11-0 at half time, we knew that if we could take our chances we were still very much in the game. However, Armagh scored late on to take the score 10 18-0- a well-deserved victory.

Up next was Ballymena Academy who had a particularly strong team. Ballymena won the game 15-0 in the end. B.R.A. showed some excellent defending at times and their team attack was starting to really come together. Although defeat was tough to take, potential was really starting to show.

The next two games were against Bangor Grammar School and Campbell College Belfast. The game against Bangor was played in Bangor midweek. B.R.A. showed some fantastic attacking rugby. Winning the game 52-7, the highlight being a superb individual try from Frank Davis. Our game against Campbell College was played on Friday evening at CIYMS. The team started the game superbly, with Oliver Scott scoring a great try. This was to be the only try the team would score on a tough evening, with Campbell deservedly winning 28-5.

At this stage of the season, it was hoped that some consistency would start to appear in performances. The Schools' Cup was not far away, but there was still plenty of work to be done.

The following game against Dalriada saw another good victory recorded. Played on a dry morning at Roughfort, a great 43-0 win was recorded. This was followed up with another great performance versus Regent House winning 55-5.

Coleraine Grammar played the team next in Coleraine. As mentioned, consistency was now going to be a really important part of the success of this team. On a damp morning in Coleraine, the team looked flat and never really got going. Coleraine recorded a deserved 28-0 win.

The Christmas break was now just around the corner. It had been an excellent term's work, with some really good performances. 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 a fixture against Omagh Academy. This game 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. Omagh however recorded a 24-13 victory. This was not good enough! A performance we were not proud of and a clear indication that there was work to be done. The following week, we had our senior rugby

trip to Johnston House in Dublin. Preparation was now solely into getting ready for our Schools Cup game. The team had been drawn home to Methodist College Belfast. 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 are special.

The two days in Dublin could not have come at a better time. The team took time to analyse the game against Omagh and try to get some answers for such a poor performance. We got some fantastic training sessions done and some great team meetings. The group was beginning to bond really well. A fixture had been organised again a strong Terence side in Dublin. Played on a fast 3G surface, the team performed fantastically well; a performance we were really proud of. Ben Dewhurst scored two great tries early in the contest. Although narrowly defeated in the end, real confidence had been taken from this game!

All preparation had been done. In the week building up to the Methody game, we had reiterated to players that we were in a really good place. The morning was crisp and a large crowd gathered to watch the game at Roughfort. Methody started the better of the two teams, taking an early lead. B.R.A. showed great heart and started to show some confidence once the game had settled. Trailing at half-time, the message was to keep going and that chances would come! B.R.A. worked their way back into the game, getting the score to 22-22 with minutes to play. Scores came from Ben Dewhurst, Scott Baxter and Jacob Burton. The atmosphere was incredible and was truly every schoolboy's dream! However, in the dying minutes, poor discipline gave Methody a line out on the B.R.A. 5m line which resulted in a heart-breaking score. Methody converted to win the game 29-22.

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. However, there was so much for players to learn from this experience. It was time to put energy into the Subsidiary Shield competition. The team was drawn at home to Enniskillen Royal Grammar. It was a blustery morning at Roughfort. The team performed really well and got a well-deserved win. This led them to a semi-final versus Down

High School. The team did not perform to their true ability, losing the game and exiting the competition. As a coaching staff, it was a pleasure to work with this group. To those leaving, we wish you well- continue to give to the game that you all love, elsewhere. I would like to thank Chris McCarey for his continued expertise and support; Mike Bentley for his work conditioning players; Luke Bonnar 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 Oliver Scott for his leadership as Captain throughout the year.

D.J.C.

2nd XV



The 2XV entered the season with a strong squad and high hopes of a successful campaign. A core group of committed and motivated Middle Sixth pupils is incredibly valuable to a 2XV and that is exactly what we had, led by our captain Daniel Houston.

We started the season with a trip to local rivals Ballyclare and came away with a comprehensive 48-10 win. Player of the Match was Josh McLaughlin. Game two gave us the chance to play our first home game of the season against a very impressive Armagh side. A last-minute Adam Hewitt try gave B.R.A. a 24-19 win in an incredibly tight contest. Player of the Match was Adam Hewitt.

A tough game against Methody was next up and although the game ended in a 28-19 loss, we

learned a lot in defeat. Player of the Match was Chris O'Donnell. We bounced back with a hard-fought 35-12 win over Sullivan, with Archie Armstrong being named Player of the Match, and a 38-0 win over Bangor. Player of the Match here was Adam Gooderham. These matches preceded a much-fancied game with the Wallace team. An incredible second-half comeback from 14 points down brought with it a 21-14 win and a real sense of achievement. Player of the Match was Josh Harold.

The next two fixtures were against quality opposition and a loss to Ballymena (22-12) was followed by another to Campbell College (17-0). Oran Cole and Max McKittrick were each named Player of the Match, respectively. These were disappointing results, but the performances put in by a stretched squad were encouraging.

The group was determined to get back to winning ways before the 2XV Cup began and they did just that with a trio of convincing wins. A 31-0 win versus Dalriada (Player of the Match: Aaron Caldwell) a 24-7 win against Regent (Player of the Match: Jack Coyle) and a 33-0 win versus Coleraine (Player of the Match: Max McKittrick) got the team back on track.

The 2XV Cup draw was made and it was an extremely difficult one, an away tie against R.B.A.I. We fought well but were outplayed on the day and Inst took a deserved 42-17 win (Player of the Match: Ollie Cox)

Although it was a huge disappointment to depart the Cup competition, the group decided to attack the 2XV Plate head on. A dominant 43-12 win over Omagh in the Quarter Finals was a great start (Player of the Match: Chris Sayers) This set up a tricky away Semi-Final against Enniskillen which brought an impressive 22-0 (Player of the Match: Jacob Burton)

This meant it was another meeting with Armagh in the 2XV Plate Final. Armagh started strongly, holding a 14-0 lead at half-time and although B.R.A. rallied to within a score, we just couldn't quite manage to get over the line in the closing stages. This meant an agonising 14-12 loss and showed how finals are decided on such fine margins (Player of the Match: Adam Hewitt)

Although there is a tinge of disappointment for what could have been, the season was a huge

success. Every player who wore a 2XV shirt during the season showed the commitment, positivity and work ethic that makes a team special. We, as their coaches, are incredibly proud of the playing group and thank each one of them for a brilliant season!

J.P.

3rd XV



The season started with a very inexperienced and youthful side due to a large representation of Form V players, who were making their first steps in Senior Rugby. Early season matches provided a mixed set of results, but improvements were made game by game. We were handed a tough draw in the first round of the 3XV Cup, home to Campbell who after a very physical encounter, were convincing winners on the day.

Our focus for the remainder of the season was now on the Plate Competition. Each match played in the Plate saw strides forward in terms of performance, confidence, and enjoyment. Our best performance of the season saw us defeat a good R.B.A.I. 5XV at Roughfort and in the semi-final we defeated a Regent HS 3XV who we had narrowly beaten in Newtownards at the start of the season.

This left us with a final to play against Wallace High School at the House of Sport under lights on a Friday night. Wallace had put a large score on us a few months earlier, but both players and coaches knew it would be a tighter affair this time round. Each and every player in the squad rose to the occasion and although we lost the final to a score of

15-0, no one was at fault and 100% had been given.

The coaches would like to thank the squad for their efforts over the course of the season and wish all the players who will be stepping up to the Senior Squad all the best for the future. Special mention to Ethan Kerr (V) who was player of the season and Hayden Dillon-Wright who was voted most improved.

N.I., S.H., Rory Gordon

MEDALLION A



The Medallion squad of 2022 – 2023 had an extremely successful campaign. Both the 'A' and 'B' team would compete at the highest levels of Form IV rugby and progressed weekly as a group from September to March.

The 'A' squad had a very positive season, winning 14 games and losing 5, one of those in the semi-final of the Medallion Shield by 1 point.

The squad had good wins against Armagh (7-5), Sullivan (26-22), Dromore (30 -20) and Regent House (17-15) while coming up short in some very close games against Campbell (14-6), Ballymena (14-13) and Wallace (15-5).

Throughout the season the squad grew and developed their style of play and the tight 5 of Elias, Dominic, Luke and Jaydin were always at the coal face providing the launchpad for many attacking moves. Luke and Jaydin were essential, not only in the lineout but also in the loose, developing some excellent handling skills. All three were dangerous, particularly

Dominic 5 yards from the line on a “Shooter.”

The back row was always a threat in attack and defence- Zach, Aaron and Robbie always gave their best in every game. In attack, they always threatened the gain line and would score plenty of tries throughout the season, while defensively they provided a rock-solid platform any team struggled to get through.

The halfbacks of Connor and Alex were the “perfect match,” Connor’s energy and drive finely balanced by the calm thoughtful, presence of Alex. Connor coming back from injury gave the team a lift and I hope he fulfils his ambition of playing at the Kingspan / Aviva. As a player and Captain, Connor was always giving 100% to his team and deserves credit for the time and effort he puts into his game. Alex grew throughout the season and his semi-final try nearly put the team through to the Medallion Shield Final. His communication, style and ability were all of a high standard and I look forward to him playing in the Schools Cup in years to come.

At Centre, James and Caleb provided another unique pairing- James, with his flair and energy, mixed with Caleb’s power, gave our midfield a finely tuned balance. It was a pleasure to see these two develop into fine young rugby players as the season progressed and hopefully Caleb can go one step further next year. James, I have no doubt, will go on the play a lot of 1st XV rugby and make another coach’s blood pressure rise with his ability to try the impossible and, for the most part, pull it off!

The back three provided pace, power and defensive solidarity throughout the season and developed their kicking and high ball skills to a very high standard. Reuban, Harry and Chris all provided an electric lift to the team with ball in hand and, again, I hope to see them progress well into senior rugby.

C.G.N.

MEDALLION B



The year started slowly for this squad of players who showed a lot of potential, but initially struggled to get results on the pitch. Early season losses to Wallace (37-7), Methody (45-0) and Ballyclare (35-0) were not ideal and required some soul-searching from the players and staff.

The squad developed their game and particularly their defence. After Halloween, they went on a winning run which include wins over Sullivan (45-29), Wallace (12-0), Campbell (12-10), Methody (21-14) and Dromore (26-19). This shows the ability the squad has and how they progressed throughout the season. If there was a competition for the ‘B’ team, then I have no doubt they would have won it.

The squad benefitted from a range of leadership and ability demonstrated by senior players Stuart, George, Josh, Bertie, Toby, Henry, Owen, and their excellent captain Toby. The lineout became a particularly useful weapon throughout the season as our height from Toby, Bertie and Owen became overpowering for other teams. The strength of Yasha, Yaseen and Robert became more effective as they used their agility in combination with their power.

In the backs Stuart, George and Finn controlled the games beautifully, kicking into space and letting strong runners like Henry and Nicholas play off them. The standard achieved by this squad must not be undervalued and I have high hopes that many of these players will be involved in 1st XV, 2nd XV or 3rd XV success over the coming years.

There are too many people to thank for a season as successful as this. However, our sponsors who provided kits for the boys require our gratitude, as do the parents who provide support every week and transport the players to the games; without you, the games wouldn’t run. Lastly, I would like to thank Mr Shields, Mr McAuley and Mr Creighton who gave up their time and efforts to work with the boys across the season.

C.G.N.

U14 RUGBY



The U14 rugby squads had a very successful year and enjoyed a series of excellent wins. The boys started the season in fine form, with wins against Ballyclare, Royal School Armagh, Sullivan and Wallace. The boys developed an excellent playing style through the first half term which was characterised through a hard-running game and resolute defence.

Following some disappointing results against Campbell and R.B.A.I., the boys bounced back with pleasing results against Coleraine, Regent and Bangor.

The highlight of the year was the U14 tournament at R.B.A.I. They boys were drawn in a tough group with Regent, Ballymena and M.C.B. However, they had saved their best rugby of the year for this moment and topped the group having conceded no tries. They were edged out by Campbell in a tight semi-final, but the boys had shown their true potential which was particularly pleasing. The U14Bs developed a lot over the course of

the year and demonstrated terrific character and resilience, often in the face of bigger opposition. Oscar Coiley, Elijah Fitzpatrick, Carey Hughes, Ben Boyd, Ciaran Laverty and Matthew Anderson covered the front row positions. Adam Carpenter had a great season in the second row and was well supported by Alex Molyneaux, Adam Moore and Zach Simpson. The back row excelled all year. Daniel Henderson, Alex Simon and Antoni Derezinski formed a formidable trio and all three are excellent prospects moving forward.

Max Brennan, Isaac Mukula and Blake McCloskey developed a lot at half back throughout the year, while the centres were made up of a combination of Caleb McWhinney and Harrison McMahan. The back three posed a threat in every game and was made up of Daniel Ogilby, Joe Donnelly, Finn Hanna and Daniel Bell.

This is a promising squad of players, and they have the potential to be very successful in the future. They were a pleasure to coach, and I look forward to tracking their progress.

P.R.R

BOYS' HOCKEY

FORM III



The Under 14 hockey team only had a few matches, all of which they lost in the 2022-23 season. However, that is only a small part of the story. On Thursday afternoons, under the expert coaching of Steven Watt, the 'team players' made excellent progress through their sessions at the Valley and there is much potential for the future with this group.

At the start of the year, we had Bryce Morrow as our Goalkeeper, who did admirably. However, during the season Clarke Clendinning emerged to take over the role. Clarke, as a footballer, was fleet of foot and has good reactions, but he has a bit to work on in his technique.

From defence, the team was captained by Aaron Knott who played at sweeper (although was prone to a marauding ramble up front from time to time). Aaron also played cup matches with the Under 15s and made the Taylor cup group who were narrowly beaten by Markethill in the final of that competition. Aaron is an excellent competitor, never taking a backward step. However, he needs to ally this with a little more skill and finesse if he is to realise his full potential. Michal Woloszyn played at right back most of the time. Fast and powerful, he competed well and was a disciplined marker and tackler. Arjun Suresh also operated in defence. He was another who didn't back down from the physical challenge but needs to improve his composure on the ball. Lewis Gray also held down the position of left back. He was very enthusiastic in his approach and willing

to learn and to improve. As the season went on, you could really see an improvement in his basic skills. Vincent McCullough was another option in defence. He had good pace and desire and was good at making himself a nuisance for opposition attackers.

In midfield, Michael Eyjolfsson was one of the players who improved most during the course of the year. He has a low centre of gravity and very good basic skills. He needs to impose himself more fully on the game and would do well to communicate more on the pitch. Another who made the step up to play with the Under 15s in the cup games was Sam Lockhart. Sam is a good athlete who operated at right midfield and right wing. His stick skills improved during the course of the year but could be more assured when he is under pressure. Heaven Raju played primarily at left midfield. He has good basic stick skills and a good competitive instinct. Another who plied his trade in midfield was Finlay Jackson. One of the technically more accomplished players, we were shorn of his talents, due to a football injury. When he returned, he brought an element of control in centre midfield, but he needs to assume more responsibility and be a bit more proactive in the game.

Bryce Morrow, following his conversion from goalkeeper, played in midfield or upfront. He has decent stick skills but needs to impose himself a little more physically in the game. Harry McIntyre had better basic technique than many of the others and was better at holding the ball up and bringing other players into the game than most. One player who showed a marked level of improvement was Cormac McCollam. Nobody showed a greater level of commitment to extra practices than he did and as such it was of little surprise to see the progress he made in his basic skills. When he stepped up to play with the Under 15s, it felt like he lacked a little bit of confidence, but his basic skills were a step above many of his peers. Austen Miskimmin-Young was another who played in midfield or up front. His basic stick skills are very solid, but he is another who needs to make his decisions a little bit quicker to move the ball away from the contact area. Finn Gregg and Keshav Raghuram were others to feature for the team and both proved to be useful options off the bench.

I hope the boys enjoyed the season and that they all get involved in hockey clubs outside of school to improve upon the progress they made this year.

FORM IV



With the Form IV group at Games on a Tuesday, our group was split. Max Colvin, Ben Montgomery, Jude Craig and Jacob Clements, along with James Quigley and Matthew McFarland at different stages, trained alongside the girls with Steven Watt. This undoubtedly allowed these boys to improve their technical ability throughout the year, as was evidenced as most of them went on to make their debuts for the 1st XI during the course of the season. There were some chastening defeats to Campbell early on in the season and to a very formidable Bangor Grammar school side in the second round of the Richardson Cup. However, we also enjoyed success over the Bangor 'B' Team and were comfortable victors against The Boys' Model in the first round of the Cup.

Jacky Lin was our goalkeeper. Jacky is brave and his technique, while unpolished at the beginning of the year, undoubtedly improved over the course of the season. In defence, Max Colvin was our sweeper, captain and technically most accomplished player. He led the side well, both vocally and by example. His basic skills are very sound and his decision-making generally very good. Alongside Max in defence, Ewan Bickerstaff often started. Ewan, a convert from rugby at the start of the season, is a little behind in terms of his stick skills, ball control and confidence, but he has a fine competitive instinct and never-say-die attitude. Malachy Wallace showed a quiet determination on the field at right or left back. He never appeared too confident on the ball, but his basic skills are perhaps better than his self-confidence. He needs to gain a little bit more composure on the ball. Daniel Kirk usually started

as the other full back. He has sound technique and makes good decisions on the pitch. He needs to make and act upon those decisions more quickly on the pitch if he is to become a more effective player. Conor Burnett and Ryan Graham also operated in defence. Ryan is physically very strong and quick and was a significant obstacle for opposition attackers to get around. However, he lacked composure on the ball.

In Midfield, Jude Craig occupied the centre berth. Jude has good basic skills and is composed on the ball. He needs to work on dropping into deeper spaces to provide Max an option for a shorter pass when we are playing out from the back. Ben Montgomery played on the right, operating a different role for the U15s than he was asked to provide when he stepped up to the 1st XI. If he continues on the right, he needs to improve upon his ability to get round the outside and closer to the opposition bye-line with the ball. James Quigley and Sam Hipolito were the others employed in midfield. James is another who suffers a little from a lack of confidence in his own abilities. He, like several others, has good basic skills and was prone to making good decisions on the ball. Sam, like Ewan, had transferred across from rugby. Naturally left-handed, you could see him wanting to get the ball into unnatural hockey playing positions. His technique improved markedly during the year.

Up front, Jacob Clements carried our main goal threat. He made intelligent movements and is adept at finding himself in good positions in the circle. He was also good at holding the ball up and bringing others into play. Matthew McFarland was the other forward. Matthew worked tirelessly for the team and practised enthusiastically. However, he had a tendency to drift a little bit during games and was not always positionally disciplined, particularly when the opposition was in possession of the ball.

TAYLOR CUP



The U16 Taylor cup saw Form III pupils Cormac and Aaron joined by Max, Jude, James, Ben, Sam, Jacob and Ewan from Form IV. Their number was supplemented by Charles Smallwood, Jamie Wilson, Joel Cleland, Adam O'Brien and Bradley Coburn. This group will form the basis of the 1st XI for the next few years.

In the Quarter Final of the Taylor Cup, we travelled to the Boys Model, where a controlled performance resulted in a very comfortable 6-0 victory. Jacob Clements got the ball rolling with an early goal. He added one more, while Cormac McCollam's progress during the course of the season was rewarded with a hat-trick. Jude Craig's late goal rounded off the scoring.

We faced a much stiffer task against Markethill at Roughfort in the Semi-Final. Despite Bradley Coburn's excellent performance in goal, our defences were breached once, but not through a lack of effort and, although there were a few half chances and some short corner opportunities, Markethill held on. Our guests just about deserved their victory in an open and exciting contest. Whilst the result was bitterly disappointing, the performance suggested there is much to be optimistic about for the 1st XI over the next few seasons.

I would like to finish by thanking Mr Creighton for his organisational assistance with these groups and to Mr Watt for his excellent technical coaching. The level of improvement in the boys' basic skills throughout the season was evident.

I hope the boys have enjoyed their hockey and that they continue to play and enjoy the game in their remaining time in school and beyond.

M.G.H.

GIRLS' HOCKEY

2022/23 season was a successful season and yet we suffered extremely disappointing losses. All 5 of our cup teams reached their Semi-final, but only one went on to win their Cup, a fantastic achievement for our 4th XI, the first 4th XI in B.R.A hockey to do so!

The Girls' Hockey club welcomed back the expertise of elite coach Stephen Watt for this season. Stephen's focus again would be with the 1st XI and 2AXI squads, although he would also have an important input working with the junior teams through the week.

For the 2022/23 season, we fielded 4 Senior and 4 Junior teams every week for our Saturday morning fixtures. Some mid-week matches were also played by a 5th XI, such were the high numbers attending our Senior club.

In addition to our 8 regular teams, the Form I club practised every Saturday.

8-a-side Form I teams played friendly fixtures against Sullivan Upper, Methodist College, and Belfast High, with full 11-a-side matches against Wallace High, Carrick Grammar, Friends School and Antrim Grammar.

A Form I team also competed in a Ulster Hockey blitz and then the annual Grosvenor tournament to complete their season.

REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS

Ulster U21: Olivia Beattie (Olivia went on to secure a full field hockey scholarship to Rutgers University, New Jersey)

Ulster U18: Abbie Braniff

Ulster U18: Rachel Beattie

Ulster U16: Zoe Place

Ulster U16: Beth Strong

Ulster U16: Alex Snoddy

1ST XI

**PLAYED: 24 WON: 19
DREW: 2 LOST: 3**



Captain: Olivia Beattie

Vice-captains: Sasha Logan, Abbie Braniff

1st XI SQUAD: *Olivia Beattie, Sasha Logan, Abbie Braniff, Lorena Del Castillo, Aoife Caldwell, Daisie Donaldson, Emily Anderson, Ella Kilpatrick, Rachel Beattie, Lois McGrath, Anouk Bosket, Zoe Place, Alex Snoddy, Sophie Burns, Beth Strong, Beth Callaghan, Holly Woodside.*

It was fitting that Olivia Beattie was the Captain and Abbie Braniff and Sasha Logan were the 2 Vice-Captains in the girls' 4th and final season representing B.R.A's 1st XI.

A productive pre-season programme in August had the girls well prepared for the SuperLeague competition which starts off the new season! The four teams drawn within our group included Friends School Lisburn, Limavady Grammar, Strathearn School and Ballyclare High School.

The pre-season programme had paid off as the girls played some superb hockey, winning all four matches. As winners of the group, we are rewarded with a home tie in the quarterfinal.



This year, we drew Methody but unfortunately failed to produce the standard of hockey we had played in the group stages, losing 2-0.

Winning our Superleague group also rewarded us by seeding us in the 3rd round of the Senior School's Cup.

It was Belfast High School who progressed to meet us in the 3rd round. Goals from Beth Callaghan and Lorena Del Castillo secured a 2-0 win for us, taking us through to the quarterfinals of the Cup.



We produced another 2-0 win in the quarterfinals against Sullivan Upper School, Sasha Logan and Abbie Braniff getting the goals this time.

To progress to the semi-finals of the Schools Cup was an excellent achievement for a team that had seen a lot of changes.

The semi-final draw pitched us against Strathearn School whom we had previously beaten in the Superleague 2-1, but it had been a close match, so we were taking nothing for granted.

On this occasion, Strathearn earned their 1-0 win and deservedly progressed to the final, while we were left bitterly disappointed but more disappointed that our level of performance on the day hadn't been as good as we knew it could be.

Overall, the 2022/23 season can be regarded a very successful one because of the achievements in both of these competitions and the fact that we played 24 matches and only lost 4.

The girls' commitment to training was outstanding and it is hoped that the big matches they lost will contribute to the development of the players returning to play for the 1sts next season.

A huge thank you to Stephen who gave and continues to give a huge commitment to the team!

N.S.N.

2ND XI

**PLAYED: 23 WON:
17 DREW: 5 LOST: 1**

Captain: Beth Adam



2NDXI SQUAD: Ella Kirkpatrick, Beth Strong, Rachel Beattie, Beth Adam (Captain), Amy Higgins, Emily Anderson, Alex Snoddy, Anna O'Dowd, Faith Hillis, Evie Caldwell, Beth Callaghan, Hope Daniels, Sophie Hollywood

CAPTAIN'S REPORT

This season was a very successful one for the 2ndXI. Coming off the back of winning the Shield in the previous season, we wanted to continue this run of success which we did, as we remained undefeated until our last match. Despite being a very young team, we were arguably one of the best 2ndXI teams the school has seen.

We started the season as a completely new team with a match against Friends. Having never played together, we were 2-0 down after the first quarter, but we pulled it together and managed to end the match with a 4-2 win. This determination to come back from 2 goals down showed us how well we could play together and gave us hope for a good season.

Throughout the season, we were consistent in winning all of our friendlies and we started our journey in the cup at the end of November with a 4-0 win away to

Dalriada. Achieving such a convincing win in the cup proved once again the high standard of this team. Our cup run continued with a 1-0 win against Wallace. This was a very tight game but with a goal from Evie Caldwell in the second quarter and the strong efforts from the girls to prevent a Wallace goal, the game ended in another B.R.A. victory.

Again, we had a tight game in the quarter final of the cup against away to Victoria. However, we were able to play our game and we fought hard to ensure the match ended in a 2-1 win with goals from Alex Snoddy and Erin Gray.

In our semi-final, we drew Strathearn which was always going to be a tough match. It was definitely one of our best team performances as everybody played well and fought for a goal. We were strong in defence and attack, winning multiple penalty corners but unfortunately, we were not able to find the back of the net. The game ended with a 0-0 draw resulting in the dreaded penalty runs. Despite our best efforts, Strathearn came away with the victory.

I am so proud of this team in raising the standards of 2ndXI hockey in B.R.A. and I am excited to see what the future holds for us, building on the hurt and upset from our defeat in the semi-final to drive us on in the upcoming season. None of this would have been possible without our amazing coaches. Thank you to Mrs Nicholl for making our hockey enjoyable with her encouragement and enthusiasm. Thank you also to Stephen who worked so hard in getting the best performances from us.

Beth Adam

3RD XI



Captain: Kate Sturgess

Vice-Captain: Hannah Thompson

3rd XI Player of the Year : Kate Sturgess/Hannah Thompson

3rd XI Top Goal Scorer : Maya Campbell 6 goals scored in 15 matches

3RD XI SQUAD: Elyse Taylor, Hannah Thompson, Kate Sturgess, Julia Robinson, Emma Harvey, Hannah Cole, Emma Campbell, Grace McAllister, Jenna McCall, Bella Scott, Charlotte Beattie, Anna Saunders, Chloe Craig, Maya Campbell, Maddie Beggs.

This season, I had the pleasure of having another fantastic 2BXI side and we enjoyed yet another successful season to date. We made it to the Quarterfinals of the Gibson Cup.



The 2022/23 season began with training matches at the start of September to try and establish our new squads for the season ahead. Our first Saturday fixture against Belfast High School was cancelled due to the Queen's passing. Our first game was at home to Friends, we were delighted to come away with a 1-0 win, our goal being scored by Chloe Craig. Chloe went on to be one of our key forwards scoring many goals this season.

We had some notable wins against Strathearn (2-0), Coleraine(5-1),Larne(4-0)andVictoriaCollege(7-0).

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 3rd XI. This year's success was down to a group of girls from Forms IV – MVI who bonded as a team very quickly. Our strength was working together as a team. The girls showed excellent communication skills working together and, in turn, our passing ability was our strength.

Every season, the girls compete in the Gibson Cup which begins in October. The first round was due to be against Victoria. Victoria conceded the game. We therefore went through to the second round against Ballymena. The game was played at Ballymena

Academy. The girls played the best game of the season which resulted in a fantastic 2-1 win, progressing us to the Quarterfinals. Hannah Thompson scored both of our goals from two penalty corners. For the third time this season we met Ballyclare High School. The first two games we drew 0-0 and 1-1. We played the Quarter-Final at home on 23rd January. Nerves and emotions were high and we looked nervous on the pitch. Ballyclare were leading most of the game, but we managed to equalise within the last few minutes of the game. This led us to penalty runs. Although these runs were well rehearsed during training, the Ballyclare keeper was excellent, and it just didn't go our way on the day. We lost on sudden death.

GIBSON CUP RESULTS – QUARTER FINALISTS

Fixture	Result
1st Round Vs Victoria College	Conceded
2nd Round Vs Ballymena	Won 2-1
Quarter-Final Vs Ballyclare	Lost 1-2

In January, we were very unlucky to lose one of our key players in defence, Emma Harvey. Emma sustained a knee injury on a ski trip which meant Emma couldn't be involved in our Cup match. We hope that Emma will recover very soon and be back playing with us in MVI.

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.

As a special thanks to the team for working so hard and showing commitment throughout the season, in early March we had a team evening at

Scrapyard Golf followed by a trip to McDonalds! It was a lovely way to end the 2022/23 season.

A very special thanks must go to Kate Sturgess and Hannah Thompson 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 Kate, Hannah, Bella, Charlotte and Anna will carry on playing hockey at University or Club level.

J.R.S

CAPTAIN'S REPORT



In my opinion, this season was a complete success; we only lost one game, and it was due to penalty runs. With this, we also only conceded 6 goals whilst scoring 26. This demonstrates the team's strength and determination. I felt confident in this squad from our first match, and they have yet to disappoint me. We played as a team from the start, we really clicked, which was difficult because our team had changed much since last year. I don't think I've ever been more enthusiastic for the season ahead. I am very proud of my team and can't wait to watch where the young ones go and how they develop over the next few years, with this season being my last season, along with my Vice Captain Hannah Thompson, Bella Scott, Charlotte Beattie and Anna Saunders.

This season was rather bittersweet, especially with the cup, narrowly missing out on it in the

Quarterfinals. The last four teams in the cup were all very close in terms of skill and desire, and I genuinely feel we could have gone all the way. Nevertheless, we were unlucky, given that one of our best players, Emma Harvey, our right back, was injured on the ski trip. In the match, I was really amazed by my team's comeback and strong performance, especially to Maya, Grace, Chloe and Bella for being so incredibly brave going up and taking the penalty runs. We are so good as a team, I'm so happy with how our passing has come along, playing to our strengths.

Most of our finest goals have come through passing; in one of our most recent games, against Strathearn, Julia passed to Maya, who sprinted with it and passed to Jenna on the opposite side of the D scoring with a clinical finish. Another example came against Larne, when the ball was precisely played from myself to Anna to Chloe to Emma around the keeper to the backboard. This season's passing was wonderful, and our ball possession has always been exceptional, as has our drive.

We were all worried heading into our first cup match because there was so much riding on it, but we didn't let the emotions get the best of us. Our 2-touch hockey and triangle passing worked so beautifully in the first quarter. I'm very happy with how we performed as a group; we were all over them. We were in complete control after scoring twice from penalty corners. They came back with all their might in the second quarter. They made a swift breakthrough while we were unprepared, causing panic and anxiety to emerge; they attained their goal. It should not have happened. We should have stayed closer to our players, and we did not allow it to happen again. We came out strong after halftime and stayed strong for the rest of the half, clinching our victory. We could have won by a lot more if we had played like we did in the first quarter. This enabled us to reach the Quarterfinals; Ballyclare high.

We came out timid and terrified in the first quarter since it was Ballyclare, which allowed them to score on a pure fluke. We didn't allow that to get to us, though, and came out strong, pushing for a goal. We undoubtedly had more possession and scoring chances, which is a credit to ourselves. We came out ready in the third quarter but fumbled a little bit, losing our composure, allowing them to score a second goal. Hannah got hit, which startled us into

playing much better; we panicked but remained in control. Finally, in the fourth quarter, we went out to win, stronger and more disciplined than before. We earned a penalty corner and took it, opting for number one - Hannah's straight strike. We were back in the game when it went directly into the corner. We sustained our fight, allowing us to score one more goal in the closing two minutes to equalise the score.

The moment has arrived to execute penalties. The worst way to lose since it is entirely dependent on luck. Elyse stepped up and saved BHS first run. I went first for us, just missing the post. Anxiety was rising as we approached BHS's fourth girl, who got it in. Bella finally went, bringing the score to 1-1. They got it in, my chance again I just missed, it hit my foot, and it was done. Another loss after four years on the 3s.

During the season, though, we were always eager for the ball and showed persistence. This team's commitment is something I am grateful for. It was disappointing not to have a league this year, but I'll simply say we won because we earned it. I'm really pleased with everyone's performance, and how we came together as a team as a result of several team building events and concluding the season with a mini golf night thanks to Mrs Shaw was genuinely uplifting for all of us. I've had another great year as captain, and I genuinely love this squad. This year, they poured their entire heart and soul into each match, and I couldn't have asked for anything more. I am confident that we would have won the cup. However, these things happen, and we go on. I won't dwell on it as I don't take it as a loss because of the fight we gave to get it back to 2-2, truly incredible. For this season I just wanted to have fun and I'd say we definitely did that. Mrs Shaw's dedication to turning up every week and leading us is always greatly appreciated. I've never been so thankful for a coach; she has honestly gone above and beyond for me over the last four years, and I will truly miss her next year. She has made every team seem like a family, and she has never made myself or anybody else feel excluded. Thank you, miss. Also thank you always to Samantha McGrath for showing up every week and umpiring with a smile, we really appreciate you!

Kate Sturgess

4TH XI



Captain: Maddie Beggs

Vice-Captain: Grace McAllister

4th XI Player of the Year: Maddie Beggs

4th XI Top Goal Scorer: Maya Campbell

4TH XI SQUAD: Gail Payot, Anna Morrow, Ema Jones, Phoebe Bradley, Hannah Cole, Harriet Brobyn, Caitlin Shaw, Maddie Beggs, Grace McAllister, Chloe Craig, Maya Campbell, Rosa Donaldson, Ellie Gallagher, Ellie Donald, Lucy Smyth.

Fixture	Result
1st Round Vs Friends	Won
Quarter-Final Vs Wallace	Won 1-1 GS Chloe Craig (Won 3-0 penalty runs)
Semi-Final Vs Ballymena	Won 1-0 GS Maya Campbell
Finals Vs Armagh	Won 0-0 (Won 3-0 penalty runs)

The 2022/23 season began with training matches at the start of September to try and establish our new squads for the season ahead. Our first Saturday fixture against Belfast High School was cancelled due to the Queen's passing. Our first game was against Friends. Although we played well, we unfortunately narrowly lost this game 1-0. This season, we had notable wins against Ballyclare High (2-0) and Strathearn (3-2).



The 2022/23 season has been the most successful to date, with this group of girls winning the 4thXI Cup Final in March at Playball, Stormont. This has been the first squad to win this Cup. This team dedicated a lot of time to prepare for this match. On Tuesday 14th March we started off our day together, with a very enjoyable team breakfast in Sozo. We travelled to Playball, Stormont for the Final. The

match proved to be the best team performance of the season, with great support and encouragement from our supporters. A huge congratulations to this fantastic bunch of girls who worked so hard all season to win the Cup at the end of the season in March. Please see the Cup results below.

4TH XI CUP - WINNERS



As a special thanks to the team for working so hard and showing commitment throughout the season, in early March we had a team evening at Scrapyard Golf followed by a trip to McDonalds! It was a lovely way to end the 2022/23 season.

A very special mention to our Captain Maddie who led by example this season and was especially motivating in leading her team throughout the Cup run. Maddie had a busy season playing for both the 3rd XI and 4th XI.

J.R.S

CAPTAIN'S REPORT

The 4XI team had a great season last year, from only playing together for the first time at the start of the season as a team to becoming the first ever 4XI team to win the cup, the whole team played with 100 per cent every single match and gave it their all. Outside of school, we also did team building activities like the night before our final, when we all came to my house and played twister and karaoke and got to know each other a lot more. We formed bonds with one another which made our performance on the pitch a lot stronger which I believe was a big factor in the victory at the end of the season.



Every single player on the 4XI came to training every single week and gave it their all and it was all worth it in the end when we came out with the only victory of the season of all sports in our school.

Our keeper was unbelievable in the final, not conceding any goals, as well as the girls that stepped up to take the penalty runs when it came to 0-0 at full time. This was also the case when it came to the same situation in our quarter final against Wallace, when the girls stepped up for the first time and won us the match 3-0, as well as performing spectacularly at the final, coming out with the same result.

I want to thank Mrs Shaw and our consistent umpire Samantha McGrath who encouraged us from the side lines throughout the season and my team for a great season.
Maddie Beggs

5TH XI

Captain: Ellie Gallagher

5THXI SQUAD: Rosie Woods, Lucy Lyons, Abigail McKinty, Phoebe Bradley, Annabelle Junk, Emily Meekin, Ellie Gallagher, Ruby Latham, Zoe Piddington, Freya Shore, Ruby Bickerstaff, Emily Dwyer, Ellie Donald, Rebecca Kirkpatrick, Sophia Chowne, Rosa Donaldson

We are very lucky to have such a large pool of players in our Senior Hockey Club. As a result of this, the past few years we have been able to form a 5th XI, made up of a group of Form IV and V girls. This team were able to mainly play matches on a Tuesday afternoon throughout the season. The 4th XI had a great win against Regent House. They finished the season with 0-0 draw away to Strathearn.

Thank you to this squad of players for their enthusiasm and commitment throughout the 2022/23 season, I look forward to working with you all again next season.

J.R.S

U13A XI



In the end we couldn't have done it without our amazing coach Miss Robinson and the help of Stephen Watt. I am so proud of everyone on this team and can't wait to play with these developing players again next year in the Junior Cup.

Keri Gray

Captain: Keri Gray

Vice-captain: Maja Jones

Player of Year – Maja Jones

Top goalscorer: Keri Gray

Most improved: Holly Johnston

U13A SQUAD: Molly Adams, Erin Colvin, Niamh Cunningham, Martha Donaldson, Emilia Gordon, Keri Gray, Hollie Hipkins, Charlotte Ingram, Holly Johnston, Maja Jones, Molly Long, Olivia McCall, Jessica Smyth, Lucy Whittley.

U13B XI

The U13Bs have been enthusiastic throughout the season, working hard to develop our skills. We've notably improved our teamwork during training. The camaraderie and B.R.A. team spirit is what I love most, and I know we'll continue onwards and upwards. It has been an honour to captain the team and I am really excited to see what next season brings.

Layla Crawford

U14A



**PLAYED: 17 WON: 9
DREW: 3 LOST: 5**

Captain: Rosa Clarke

Vice-Captain: Leah Callaghan

Top Goal Scorers: Eve Manson & Leah McNevison

U14A SQUAD: Leah Carter, Ella Adam, Mollie Bacon, Keri Gray, Hannah Press, Leah Callaghan, Sophia Morwood, Rosa Clarke, Ella Sofia Downey, Leah McNevison, Eve Manson, Holly Ross, Kayla Adair, Evie Lewis, Maja Jones.

CAPTAIN'S REPORT

I am very proud to have led the U14 cup squad this year. We had a very successful season, making it to the semi-final of the cup, narrowly missing out on a place in the final. We signed off this year winning all games but two and three games we drew. We are proud of each other not only in how we played, but also in how we bonded and fought together sharing the same desire to win and play as one. How we performed this year has prepared us very well for senior hockey at B.R.A. As a team we are all extremely thankful for the great coaching and constant support from Miss Brady and Stephen Watt. Thanks also to Miss Jackson for umpiring, and Mrs Nicholl for helping us too. We will treasure our memories of this hockey season.

Rosa Clarke

U14B

**PLAYED: 11 WON: 5
DREW: 2 LOST: 4**



Captain: Cate O'Dowd

Vice-Captain: Anna Hughes

Top Goal Scorer: Cate O'Dowd

U14B Squad: Cora Johnston, Ria Tohani, Rachel Easdon, Evie Lewis, Zara Duffy, Anna Hughes, Eleanor Murphy, Erin O'Brien, Kara McCoubrey, Aoife O'Kane, Cate O'Dowd, Kayla Adair, Rebecca Petticrew, Lucy Stevenson, Annie Clawson, Rose Keenan, Sophie Wilson.

CAPTAIN'S REPORT

This year the U14Bs played amazingly well and worked hard. Our teamwork and effort improved as we played our matches throughout the season, as we won and drew most matches. I want to thank Miss Brady and Mrs. Nicholl for coaching and supporting us throughout the year and to thank all the girls in the team who showed up for training and our matches. It was a pleasure to be the captain this season.

Cate O'Dowd

It was fantastic to see the U14A team reach the Semi-final of the Junior Cup Competition, losing narrowly (2-1) to Banbridge Academy. The squad worked with determination throughout the year to improve their technical skills and match play and were unfortunate not to reach the cup final. The U14Bs had a very good season and were dedicated to improving each week. The girls put in a great effort to improving both skills and fitness.

I would like to thank the players for their enthusiasm and energy this year, it has been a very enjoyable and successful season. I would also like to thank Mr Watt, Miss Jackson and Mrs Nicholl for all of their coaching and umpiring throughout the year.

K.E.B.

CRICKET



1ST XI

**PLAYED: 9 WON: 6
LOST: 2 DREW: 1**

Captain: DG Kane

After an aborted attempt to play the same opposition a week earlier, the Belfast Royal Academy 1st XI started their season with a trip to a damp Wallace High School on the last Saturday in April. After winning the toss David Kane, as would become his custom, asked Wallace to bat first. The innings got off to a gentle start as Olly Scott and Connor McVicker, the latter inexplicably bowling a couple

of no-balls despite sensibly reducing his run-up, bowled a tight line and length. Alex Armstrong came on as first change and immediately picked up a couple of wickets. The Wallace innings meandered along until the 11th over. Bowled by Fiona Murray, 4 tight balls were followed by 2 full tosses which Josh Kama took a liking to, dispatching to the boundary. The 13th over followed a similar pattern and Wallace suddenly had a bit of momentum. Rory Gordon removed the dangerous Kama, as Wallace posted 116-5 in their 20 overs.



Our opening partnership only survived until the 3rd over before Olly Scott was removed by Kama. Connor McVicker batted well for his 25, while Max Wylie, after a circumspect start, was just hitting his straps when he fell for 12. However, when Matthew Williamson fell for a 4-ball duck, we were in a spot of bother at 55-4 in the 12th over. Up stepped Harvey Latham and Adam Gooderham, with some clean hitting, especially from the latter, with his favourite flick over square leg, to add 51 in exactly 6 overs and ensure a 5-wicket victory.

This match was followed by a fixture at Roughfort against Antrim Grammar in the Schools' Cup. David Kane invited our guests to bat first, a decision that he may have been regretting as the Antrim top 3, and Sam Magee (44) got off to a great start. However, from 94-3 at the halfway point we bowled much better in the second half to restrict Antrim to 117 all out. Alex Armstrong, who had taken a bit of punishment from Magee, had the last laugh, picking up his wicket and two others, while Max Wylie bowled full and straight to pick up a further three cheap wickets as well. Ollie Scott led our response well in spite of losing his opening partner, McVicker in the second over. Alongside Max Wylie,

they took us to a great position at 55-1 in the 9th over. However, we lost a wicket in each of the next 4 overs to be reduced to 62-5 and in more than a spot of bother. Matthew Williamson's composed 30 not out, alongside some solid defence from Peter Richardson and David Kane, guided us home.

Methodist College were the next opponents in the Schools' Cup, entertained at the Castle Grounds. Winning the toss, David Kane invited Methody to bat, a decision he may have been regretting as the visitors passed 50 in less than 8 overs. Amy Hunter's 24 was generously supplemented by a smattering of wides and no-balls from Messers McVicker, Scott and Armstrong. The big hitting of Armstrong and Gibbs took Methody past 120 in the 17th over. Then Kane threw the ball to Max Wylie, who hatched the crazy plan of bowling full and straight – 6-13 off 3 overs later and Methody's very strong position was reined in as they finished all out for 157. Olly Scott fell in the second over of our reply, but some excellent betting from McVicker (67) and Wylie (40) took the score to 118 -2 when Max departed and 140-3 upon Connor's demise. Despite a late wobble, Peter Richardson's boundary saw us home by 4 wickets.

Four days later, Friends' School Lisburn were the visitors to the Castle Ground. Some tight bowling from Wylie, Scott and Armstrong and a couple of wickets for Rory Gordon helped restrict FSL to 92-3 in their 20 overs. Despite the loss of Scott, who was struggling for form early on, McVicker (34) and Wylie (30*) picked up where they had left off and helped ensure an 8-wicket victory.

So, it was with a fair degree of confidence that we travelled to Holywood to take on Sullivan in the Schools' Cup Quarter-Final. Sullivan won the toss and elected to bat, which at 15-2, didn't look a great decision. When Max Shannon departed the crease (and the scene to answer the call of IKEA) to an excellent catch by Peter Richardson, B.R.A. looked in the box seats. However, some excellent hitting from Angus Farrell (82) including four 4s and eight 6s saw Sullivan post a formidable 152 all out. Max Wylie was again the pick of the bowlers with 3-16 off 6 overs, ably supported by Oliver Scott 2-28 off 6, while Alex Armstrong picked up 3-27, including the key wicket of Farrell.



Our reply started very well as Ollie Scott suddenly found some form. He hit some excellent shots all round the ground as he raced to 40 off 30 balls, before holing out to the square leg boundary. In partnership with McVicker, we raced to 67 in the 9th over before Scott departed. When Wylie and Gooderham were removed in quick succession, we were 80-3. Things were starting to look shaky when McVicker (29) was out to Keown and when Latham departed soon after at 102-5, mild panic was starting to settle in. Peter 'The Wall' Richardson's decision to drop anchor was doing nothing to ease those nerves as he blocked and left 24 of his first 28 deliveries. However, Matthew Williamson, by contrast, was scoring at a run a ball on his way to 34 and as Peter removed the shackles with the finish line approaching, his 17 not out helped ensure a 5-wicket victory with 9 balls to spare.

The excitement of the victory on Friday night created something of a hangover as we were not at our best the next day for the trip to Osborne Park to play a very strong R.B.A.I. side. David Kane won the toss and elected to field. However, the hosts' very accomplished opening pair of Leckey and Palmer delivered a masterclass in skilful batting and excellent running between the wickets, adding 36 in 4.2 overs before Palmer was removed bowled by Ollie Scott. Without taking many risks, they put the balls in gaps and put our boundary riders under pressure, continually turning ones into twos. Leckey batted excellently throughout his 73, coming off just 52 balls without really taking any excessive risks. Had we not bowled well in the last couple of overs to keep their score in check, the total could have been more formidable than the 142 they set. Still, it was a tough task even before Mr Harte tinkered with the batting order. Their new ball bowling was good, but on a slow turning wicket it was their spinners who proved particularly difficult for our batsmen, and we fell short of the target finishing with 97 -7 Kane, Williamson and McVicker the only batsmen to make it into double figures.

As the good weather continued, we welcomed a numerically challenged Ballyclare High School to the Castle. The opening pair of Scarlett and Lutton started well, adding 39 in just under 8 overs. However, when Lutton was dismissed by Alex Armstrong, it was evident that the rest of the cast

wouldn't provide as much support for Scarlett who composed an accomplished 47. Alex Armstrong, with 4 wickets, was the pick of our bowlers, alongside Kane and McVicker who picked up a couple of wickets each. Ollie Scott's disappointing form with the bat returned as he fell cheaply, but contributions from Gooderham, Wylie and Latham ensured a 6-wicket victory, with plenty of time to spare.

The draw for the Schools' Cup Semi-final was nearly as kind as it could have been, as we avoided the two best sides in the competition in R.B.A.I. and Campbell College. However, our trip to the North-West to face Strabane Academy was far from a formality. In the peak of the June heatwave, we set off on the long journey over the Glenshane Pass and towards Fox Lodge. The combination of a small and lightning fast outfield would ensure that a big score was on the cards. The Strabane openers provided a solid base, but it was the impetus provided by Britton in the middle order that helped the hosts establish a healthy total of 210-4 of their 30 overs. Much more comfortable against the spin and medium pace than the quick bowlers, Connor McVicker returned to take his wicket, but not until after he had contributed 64 runs of 38 balls including a big hit which damaged a solar panel on the roof of the pavilion. He wasn't alone as all the Strabane batsmen got starts, but thankfully none of the others went on to post a really big total.

Connor McVicker's excellent 103 not out was the cornerstone of our reply, albeit he was helped by some pretty abject attempted catches. The problem was that while fortune favoured Connor in this regard, others were not so lucky. The catches Cooke held on to in order to get rid of Max Wylie and David Kane, especially when the latter looked capable of providing the support Connor required to get us over the line. Connor paced his innings very well. He was particularly strong driving the ball down the ground when the Strabane bowlers over pitched. To score a century in a Schools' Cup Semi-Final is no mean feat, to do so as a Form IV pupil illustrates the powers of concentration and good decision-making, which sometimes lie latent in the young man.

It was a disappointing end for the six guys and a girl who will not have the opportunity to go one better next year and felt like a real missed opportunity. Although, in truth, as Strabane were to find out, R.B.A.I. may

have proved a bridge too far had we made it through.

Our season finished with the traditional Old Boys' match towards the end of June. The old boys continued their remarkable run of winning the toss and, as ever, elected to bat. They reached 221-5 in their 28 overs. Matthew Palmer and Jordan McClurkin scored 30s before both falling to Alex Armstrong who also picked up the wicket of top-scorer Max Braniff. Alex's wickets did come at a cost as the old boys hit a total of nine 6s in their innings. The pick of our bowlers was David Kane who bowled with more control than anyone else and picked up a couple of wickets.

Our reply started poorly as we lost Peter Richardson early on, but Ollie Scott found his batting form from the Sullivan game as he scored his first half century of the season. Wylie, Gooderham and Latham all made contributions in their final outings for the school, but a flurry of wickets (notably the elder Kane having the younger Kane caught by Ryan Armstrong) left us requiring a rear-guard action by Hewitt and James Murray to hold on for the draw.

I would like to thank all the players for their efforts through the season, but particularly those whose time with the school has come to an end. David Kane skippered the side well and the all-round quality of his game was rewarded by his selection for the NCU U19s and the Ulster Schools' Interpro sides. Ollie Scott was always enthusiastic whether running in with the new ball, putting pressure on his batting partners running between the wickets or in the field. It was a shame we only saw the best of his batting in the two excellent innings against Sullivan and the Old Boys.' Max Wylie was evidence of the old adage that if you bowl full and straight you won't go too far wrong. He also developed another gear with his batting this year, which was markedly improved on last. Adam Gooderham, Harvey Latham and Peter Richardson all made telling contributions with the bat and very often in clutch situations. Fiona Murray was also a very reliable fielder and useful bowling option when called upon and, to my knowledge at least, has trailed a blaze as the first female to have played for the "Boys'" 1st XI. I wish them all the best and hope that they will continue to play and enjoy the game.

In addition to David, Alex Armstrong was also selected for the Schools' Interpro game, where his rear-guard action helped ensure a draw for the Ulster Schools' side. He was also selected for the Ulster Schools' Tour and for the Irish U17s side who played Scotland. Connor McVicker was selected for the NCU U15s, a suitable reward for his contributions with the bat.

I would like to extend my thanks to DJ Creighton for his support over the course of the year, and to Mark Crawford and Anton Gaw for the quality of the playing facilities at the Castle and Roughfort.

MATCH SUMMARIES:

Wallace High School (a) 29/4/23 BRA won by 5 wickets

Wallace 116-5 ARA Armstrong 4-0-2-17-, RAF Gordon 4-0-2-19

BRA 117-5 CM McVicker 25, AT Gooderham 38

Antrim Grammar School (h) Schools' Cup 1st Round 3/5/23 BRA won by 4 wickets

Antrim 117 all out ARA Armstrong 66-1-3-33, MR Wylie 5-2-3-5

BRA 120-6 HO Scott 27, MD Williamson 30*

Methodist College Belfast (h) Schools' Cup 2nd Round 16/5/23 BRA won by 4 wickets

Methody 157 all out MR Wylie 3-0-6-15

BRA 161-4 CM McVicker 67, MR Wylie 40

Friends School Lisburn (h) 20/5/23 BRA won by 8 wickets

Friends 92-3 RAF Gordon 4-0-2-24
BRA 93-2 CM McVicker 34, MR Wylie 32*

Sullivan Upper School (a) 26/5/23 ¼ Final Schools' Cup BRA won by 5 wickets

Sullivan 152 all out HO Scott 6-1-2-28, MR Wylie 6-0-16-3, ARA Armstrong 3.4-0-27-3





BRA 155-5 HO Scott 46, CM McVicker 29, MD Williamson 34*

Royal Belfast Academical Institution (a) 27/5/23
BRA lost by 45 runs

RBAI 142-8 HO Scott 4-0-25-2, MR Wylie 4-1-3-25, ARA Armstrong 4-1-2-23

BRA 97-7

Ballyclare High School (h) 3/6/23 BRA
won by 6 wickets

Ballyclare 92 all out ARA Armstrong 4-1-4-9, DG Kane 3-1-2-18, CM McVicker 3-0-2-11

BRA 94-4 MR Wylie 27, AT Gooderham 20*, HA Latham 24

Strabane Academy (a) 5/6/2023 Semi-Final
Schools' Cup lost by 29 runs

Strabane Academy 210-4 CM McVicker 6-0-2-58

BRA 181 all out CM McVicker 103*

BRA Old Boys (h) 23/6/23 Match Drawn

Old Boys 221-5 ARA Armstrong 11-1-3-83, DG Kane 7-0-2-40

BRA 140-8 HO Scott 58

M.G.H.



GOLF

There was mixed success this year for the Golf team. Unfortunately, we didn't win any of the events we entered, but came runner-up in the Irish Schools Junior Championship.

On a pleasant but windy November day at Kirkistown Golf Club, our senior golf team consisting of Peter Richardson, Jack Moffett, Ben McIlroy and Josh Mckee had a top 10 finish in the Ulster Schools Scratch Competition.

Our other Senior tournament, the Irish Schools Championship, saw a 'below par' team performance from the boys. The team, consisting of Peter Richardson, Jack Moffett, Ben McIlroy and Josh Mckee were placed outside the 'top 10' where there were some good individual performances. Sadly, it wasn't enough as others struggled to get to grips with the tricky Spa Golf course.

Our Junior team, on the other hand, had better fortunes in their two competitions. Our team, consisting of George Patterson-Wilson, Alex French and Ben McIlroy, finished runner-up in the Irish Schools Junior competition, played at Portadown Golf Course. We were edged out narrowly by a very good Lurgan team.

Our other Junior event, the Ulster Schools Junior Competition, saw the team, consisting of Matthew Anderson, Alfie Davis, Alex French and George Patterson-Wilson, finish 6th. This was played at Spa Golf Club. As with our seniors at Spa, earlier in the year, there were some good individual performances, but consistency let a few of the boys down. Going forward, I am filled with much optimism for the future of B.R.A. golf, thanks to some

of our extremely strong Junior golfers, who at different stages have already represented our senior team and are currently all playing off single figure handicaps.

BOYS' ATHLETICS



Athletics continues to be a popular option for pupils during the summer term. There was much success, both collectively and individually, throughout the season. Special congratulations to Lorcan Bell, Antoni Derezenski, Daniel Ogilby who all became Ulster Champions in their respective events. Congratulations to the Junior Boys team who won the Junior Boys' Cup for the most points won at Ulster Schools' Championships. Daniel Ogilby deserves a special mention for winning a bronze medal in the Junior Boys Triple Jump at the Irish Schools Championships, clinching the medal with his very last jump, a magnificent achievement.



DISTRICT RESULTS

MINI BOYS

P.M.

1st 100m Jacob Picking 13.3 s

1st 4 x 100m Relay 55.2s

1st High Jump Joshua Canavan 1.31m

6th 100m Harrison Orr 14.56 s

3RD TEAM COMPETITION

MINOR BOYS

1st 100m Jack McNabb 12.5 secs, 1st Long Jump 5.06m

1st 800m Evan Tosh 2.19

2nd 4 x 100 m Relay 52.8 s

3rd High Jump Adam Young 1.33

4th High Jump Josh Fletcher 1.33

6th 800m Max Strong 2.27

2ND TEAM COMPETITION

JUNIOR BOYS

1st 800m Michael Woloszyn 2.19

1st Triple Jump Daniel Ogilby 11.00m,
2nd Long Jump 5.23

1st Shot Putt Antoni Derezenski 11.46m,
1st Hammer 28.58

2nd Triple Jump Joseph Donnelly 10.69m

2nd Javelin Alex Molyneaux 23.08m

2nd Hammer Oscar Coiley 25.74m,
4th Shot Putt 9.73m



4th 200m Caleb McWhinney 26.7,
6th 100m 13.2s

2ND TEAM COMPETITION

INTER BOYS

1st 4 x 100m relay 47.50

1st Long Jump Chris O’Hara 5.38, 5th 100m 12.3

1st 400m Hurdles Finn McAlorum 87.9, 2nd 100m Hurdles 19.04

2nd 200m Reuben Gourley 25.16 s

2nd 1500m Oscar Purvis 4.35

2nd Shot Yasha Peters 10.40 m, 2nd Hammer 23.64

2nd Discus Zach Archer 25.96m

2nd High Jump Alex French 1.56m

3rd Discus Aaron Caldwell 24.59m

3rd 200m Breakthrough John 26.38

3rd 400m Max McKittrick 58.17

4th 100m Chester Enriquez 12.1 s

4th 800m Johnny Nicholson 2.13

5th 400m Robbie Tosh 9.84 s

5th Hammer Kain McGorry 18.69m

6th Shot Aaron Brolly 8.65m

1ST TEAM COMPETITION

SENIOR BOYS

2nd Long Jump Matthew Mallon 5.09m, 3rd High Jump 1.55m

3rd 1500m Hugo Reilly Stuart 4.35

ULSTER SCHOOLS’ ATHLETICS
CHAMPIONSHIP 2023

MINI BOYS

3rd 100m Jacob Picking 13.06s

8th High Jump Josh Canavan 1.36 m

MINOR BOYS

3rd 800m Evan Tosh 2.14

4th 100m Jack McNabb 12.39, 5th Long Jump 4.92

5th 4 x 100m relay 52.08

JUNIOR BOYS

1st Triple Jump Daniel Ogilby 11.23,
7th Long Jump 5.04

1st Hammer Antoni Derezenski 29.30,
2nd Shot 11.14

2nd Hammer Oscar Coiley 26.30

3rd Triple Jump Joseph Donnelly 10.90

7th Javelin Alex Molyneaux 26.61

INTERMEDIATE BOYS

1st 1500m Lorcan Bell Steeple Chase 4.54

4th 100m Finn McAlorum Hurdles 16.98

5th Hammer Yasha Peters 23.34, 8th Shot 9.63

5th 4 x 100m relay 47.76

6th Discus Zach Archer 25.27

7th Discus Aaron Caldwell 23.97

7th High Jump Alex French 1.55

8th 200m Reuben Gourley 25.2

8th 400m Max McKittrick 1.01

SENIOR BOYS

4th 1500m Hugo Reilly Stuart 4.11

IRISH SCHOOLS’ ATHLETICS
CHAMPIONSHIPS

JUNIOR BOYS

3rd Triple Jump Daniel Ogilby 10.95m

7th Triple Jump Joseph Donnelly 10.41m

7th Shot Putt Antoni Derezenski 11.27m, 5th Hammer 31.35m

6th Hammer Oscar Coiley 30.43m

C.M.C.



GIRLS’ ATHLETICS REPORT

As always, the athletics season arrived mid-March with large numbers of enthusiastic athletes turning out to practice during games, after school and on Saturday mornings at both Roughfort and Antrim Forum. This laid the foundations for a successful season to come at District, Ulster and Irish level.

In all, 50 girls represented B.R.A. at the District Championships, with many debutant performances. The girls successfully achieved 5 Gold, 6 Silver and 8 Bronze medals.

There were distinguished performances from Keri Gray, Holly Johnston, Esther Lawrence, Eve Manson, Hope Daniels, Grace McAllister,

Two girls qualified for the Irish Championships in Tullamore. To reach this level is a superb achievement for our athletes, well done to both Eve Manson, Grace McAllister, Emma Campbell and Wiktoria Januszewska

Sports day was held on Monday 19th June at The Mary Peters Track with approximately 530 pupils from Forms 1-4 taking part. A very enjoyable day was had by all with Currie House winning the overall trophy. Well done to all that took part in this event.

Thank you to all staff who helped coach and support our athletes at athletics this season. Thank you also to Ms Ritchie and Miss O’Neill for all their hard work during winter athletics in the sports hall, their coaching and enthusiasm has been invaluable.

GIRLS’ DISTRICT ATHLETICS
RESULTS 2023

TUESDAY 2ND MAY

ANTRIM FORUM

Top 6 in each event





MINI GIRLS' RESULTS

Mini Relay 6th

MINOR RESULTS

Keri Gray 2nd 75mH Qualifies for Ulster Schools'

Holly Johnston 2nd High Jump Qualifies for Ulster Schools'

Esther Lawrence 2nd Shot Qualifies for Ulster Schools'

Minor relay 2nd Qualifies for Ulster Schools'

Niamh Cunningham 3rd Shot Qualifies for Ulster Schools'

Esther Lawrence 4th 800m

Jessica Smyth 5th High Jump

Molly Adams 6th 100m

Keri Gray 6th Long Jump



JUNIOR RESULTS

Eve Manson 1st 100m and 200m Qualifies for Ulster Schools'

Junior Relay 2nd Qualifies for Ulster Schools'
Sophia Morwood 3rd 800m and 75mH Qualifies for Ulster Schools'

Rosa Clarke 4th 75mH

Isabella O'Connor 4th Shot

Erin O'Brien 4th Javelin

Evie Lewis 4th Hammer

Ella Sofia Downey 5th 100m

Rosa Clarke 5th 800m

Holly Ross 5th Hammer

Hannah Press 6th Discus

INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

Hope Daniels 1st 80mH Qualifies for Ulster Schools'

Hope Daniels 1st 300mH Qualifies for Ulster Schools'

Emma Campbell 1st Triple Jump Qualifies for Ulster Schools'

Grace McAllister 1st Javelin Qualifies for Ulster Schools'

Wiktoria Januszevska 2nd Shot Qualifies for Ulster Schools'

Phoebe Bradley 3rd Javelin Qualifies for Ulster Schools'

Wiktoria Januszevska 3rd Hammer Qualifies for Ulster Schools'

Anouk Bosket 3rd 100m Qualifies for Ulster Schools'

Faith Hillis 3rd 300m Qualifies for Ulster Schools'
Schools' Inter Relay 3rd Qualifies for Ulster Schools'

Chloe Craig 4th 800m

Gail Payot 4th Discus and hammer

Anouk Bosket 5th 200m

Ines Scott 5th 800m

Emma Campbell 6th Long Jump



GIRLS' ULSTER ATHLETICS RESULTS 2023

FRIDAY 19TH MAY & SATURDAY 20TH MAY

ANTRIM FORUM

MINOR GIRLS

Minor Relay 4th

Keri Gray 75mH 5th

Esther Lawrence Shot 6th

Holly Johnston High Jump 7th

JUNIOR GIRLS

Eve Manson 100m 1st Qualified for Irish Schools'

Eve Manson 200m 3rd Qualified for Irish Schools'

Sophia Morwood 75mH 4th

Junior Relay 5th



**INTERMEDIATE GIRLS**

Grace McAllister Javelin 1st
Qualified for Irish Schools'

Emma Campbell Triple Jump 4th

Intermediate Relay 4th

Hope Daniels 300mH 5th

Anouk Bosket 100m 5th

Hope Daniels 80mH 6th

Phoebe Bradley Javelin 7th

Wiktoria Januszevska Hammer 7th

JUNIOR GIRLS

Eve Manson 100m 1st
Qualified for Irish Schools'

Eve Manson 200m 3rd
Qualified for Irish Schools'

Sophia Morwood 75mH 4th

Junior Relay 5th

**GIRLS' IRISH SCHOOLS'
ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2023**

**FRIDAY 2ND AND
SATURDAY 3RD JUNE**

TULLAMORE

The Irish Schools' athletics championships took place on Saturday 3rd June at Tullamore. Congratulations to Eve Manson (Form III) who was 8th in the 100m, and Grace McAllister (Form V) who was 8th in the javelin.

**IRISH SCHOOLS' U17
INTERPROVINCIAL**

SATURDAY 24TH JUNE

CARLOW

Well done to Grace McAllister (V) who was selected for the U17 Ulster Schools' Athletics team. She represented Ulster at the Tailteann Irish Schools' Interprovincial on Saturday 24th June in Carlow. Grace was placed 9th in the javelin with a throw of 32m.

J.R.S.

FOOTBALL CLUB

In the 2022/23 season, the football team competed in the Grammar School League, Belfast Cup and Northern Ireland Cup.

The League competition was played from October to April and involved fixtures against seven grammar schools. The campaign got off to a difficult start, with losses to Regent House, R.B.A.I., Campbell College and Belfast High. Although there were periods of good play in all four games, poor defensive decisions and missed chances cost the team dearly.

The second half of the season saw much improved performances. Hard-fought wins against Bangor Grammar (3-1) and Methodist College (2-1) sandwiched a loss to Grosvenor Grammar.

The team finished the campaign in 7th place.

In the Belfast Cup, the Academy had a challenging draw for the opening group stage. The players gave their all in two difficult games. A heavy loss to an experienced Ashfield Boys' team was followed by a 2-2 draw with Campbell College.

A 2-0 loss in the Northern Ireland Cup to a talented Limavady side, that included several Irish League players, meant the school went into the Plate competition. Impact Training College was the opposition in the first round of this, and the team lost 1-0, conceding a last-minute goal from a corner when the game looked destined for penalties.

There were strong performances over the course of the season from MVI pupils Ethan Millar, Harry Bassett and Conall Noble, and the absence of these players for 2023/24 will be significant. However, the experience gained by the younger members of the team will stand them in good stead. With some promising Form V students joining the squad, the group should be competitive in the upcoming season.

R.B.

NETBALL

B.R.A. netball had a successful season overall. Ten teams played competitive matches, with Minor, Junior, Intermediate and Senior squads playing in the District League Competition. The Senior A team reached the Semi-final of their league and Semi-final of the Cup Competition. Congratulations to the Intermediate A squad won the Plate Competition against St Paul's Bessbrook (23-20). This was a fantastic achievement for a dedicated and talented group of players.

It is fantastic to see numerous pupils competing at representative level. I would like to thank all of the players and coaches for their hard work this season.

**REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS**

U13 Regional Development Squad- Emilia Gordon, Jessica Smyth, Keri Gray, Gwen Clements

U15 Regional Development Squad – Maria Mallon, Lucy Smyth

U17 Northern Ireland Development Squad- Erin Gray, Wiktoria Januszevska, Ciara Murray

U19/21 Northern Ireland Development Squad- Fiona Murray

FORM I NETBALL

Form I netball was well attended. The players were enthusiastic and worked hard to improve their skills and fitness. The girls enjoyed some friendly matches and House Competitions throughout the year. I

would like to thank the girls for their dedication at training. The level of participation was excellent and we will continue to build upon the skills and promise shown next season. Congratulations to Kristen Savage who was awarded Player of the Year and to Nicola Fularczyk and Maggie Lockhart who were awarded Most Improved.

MINOR NETBALL



MINOR 'A' SQUAD: Darcey Moriarty, Niamh Cunningham, Amy McFarlane, Keri Gray, Jessica Smyth, Gwen Clements, Emilia Gordon, Lois Eneh, Holly Johnston, Ruby Johnston.

Player of the Year: Emilia Gordon
Most Improved Player: Gwen Clements
Captain: Gwen Clements

This 2022-23 season has been such a learning curve. Getting captain of the A team was such a highlight. What I loved about the season was that no matter what place we were in the league, everyone on the team gave full effort from start to finish. Whether we won or lost, we went straight back at it and our confidence in each other never deteriorated. Everyone pushed to the final minute and gave their full heart into the game and sometimes the score didn't reflect that, but it felt so amazing to be part of such a committed team.

Gwen Clements

MINOR 'B' SQUAD: Eva Gormley, Jenna Wilson, Deena Hariri, Zoe Falls, Olivia McCall, Maja Jones, Charlotte Barber, Hannah Wonnacott, Hollie Hipkins, Farrah Laughlin, Jessica Oliver.



Player of the Year: Zoe Falls
Most Improved Player: Jenna Wilson
Captain: Olivia McCall

The Minor 'B' netball team had a great season this year with wins against many schools including Girls' Model (18-2), St Joseph's (8-4) and St Dominic's (5-1). We drew a difficult match against Methody (3-3) and lost to Regent (3-2). Thank you to Mrs Winning for her time and commitment to helping us develop our skills and Miss Brady for organising our matches. All the team trained hard and played exceptionally well in every match. I look forward to playing with them again next season.

Olivia McCall

JUNIOR NETBALL



JUNIOR 'A' SQUAD: Isabella O'Connor, Alicia McMullan, Sophia Morwood, Rosa Clarke, Lucy McVeigh, Kacie O'Reilly, Zara Duffy, Sophie McVeigh, Beatrice Seath, Miah O'Reilly

Player of the Year: Kacie O'Reilly
Most Improved Player: Isabella O'Connor
Captain: Sophia Morwood

JUNIOR 'B' SQUAD: Sophie Curran, Rebekah McKeown, Miah O'Reilly, Erin O'Brien, Eimear Tate, Rebecca Petticrew, Lola Mateer, Rebekah Dalzell, Olivia Irvine, Sophie McVeigh, Lucy McVeigh.



Player of the Year: Sophie McVeigh
Most Improved Player: Rebecca Petticrew
Captain: Miah O'Reilly

This year, our Junior 'B' team did very well. We played matches against a variety of schools, including Methody, Girls' Model and Dominican

which we all won. Hunterhouse and Aquinas beat us, but we played to the best of our abilities and worked hard to the end. I'm very proud of the team and look forward to next year.

Miah O'Reilly

INTERMEDIATE NETBALL



INTERMEDIATE 'A' SQUAD: Emma Campbell, Aditi Saneesh Krishna, Penny Davidson, Wiktoria Januszewska, Anna Falls, Lucy Smyth, Maria Mallon, Beth Strong, Jane Martin, Erin Gray, Siofra McCormick, Ruby Hanna, Hope Daniels.

Player of the Year: Anna Falls
Most Improved Player: Lucy Smyth
Captain: Anna Falls

As captain of the Intermediate 'A' team, I think that we have had a very successful season. Everyone in the team has contributed highly to the squad and as a result we have won many matches. The team also had notable wins against Assumption (14-13) and progressed to the final of the plate competition. During the season, everyone on the team became a lot closer to each other and a lot of new friendships have come around. Each player has truly given it their all this season and have gone into every match with a positive mindset. Even after being defeated in some games, everyone made the effort to pick their heads up and strive towards the next match. I would like to thank everyone in the team for such an enjoyable season and of course Miss Brady and

Mrs Winning for organising our matches and the amazing support we get from them. The team and I are very proud of how far we have come and are determined that next year's season will be even better.

Anna Falls

INTERMEDIATE 'B' SQUAD: Wiktoria Januszevska, Harriet Brobyn, Maria Mallon, Hope Daniels, Ines Scott, Rosa Gribbon, Rachel Hackett, Siofra McCormick, Beth Strong, Alex Snoddy, Erin Quinn, Imogen Shute, Megan Morris



Player of the Year: Maria Mallon / Wiktoria Januszevska

Most Improved Player: Hope Daniels

Captain: Wiktoria Januszevska

This year, the Intermediate 'B' team had a great season throughout the league. We had many great wins and came out feeling very proud. However, when we came into the quarterfinals of the league, we were unfortunately beaten. We played as a unit throughout the whole season and despite our loss, we still had fun and learned from our mistakes. All of us played our best and played a part of the team and that is what made us so strong. I believe that our team is very good when playing together and I wish the very best to every single player moving up and developing next year! I really enjoyed being captain of this team as we all respected and enjoyed playing together which made the whole season very enjoyable.

Wiktoria Januszevska

SENIOR NETBALL



SENIOR 'A' SQUAD: Fiona Murray, Abbie Braniff, Ciara Murray, Layla Hunter, Tara Dalzell, Sofia McCourt, Etta Choi, Beth Adam, Anna Falls, Penny Davidson, Erin Gray, Maria Mallon.

Player of the Year: Fiona Murray

Most Improved Player: Layla Hunter

Captain: Fiona Murray

This year, the Senior 'A' team had a very enjoyable and successful season. We started the season strong with a 33-19 win over Victoria, which gave us confidence going into our next matches. We followed this up with wins against St Dominic's (56-8), Rathmore (29-24), Belfast High and Methody. The hard work as a team, both on and off the court, in training and matches really helped to push us forward. We started our cup campaign with a comfortable win over Assumption Grammar and progressed to the quarter final where we played a tough match against Rathmore coming away with a 28-25 win! This put us through to the semi-finals of both the league and the cup, which was a massive achievement for B.R.A. netball. Sadly, this is where our winning streak came to an end. We drew Our Lady and Saint Patrick's College Knock in the league and after a hard-fought match, we narrowly lost. In the cup semi-final, we drew Methody and, again, after a well contested match, we unfortunately lost 29-22. Even though the end of the season may have been disappointing, credit must be given to all the girls who took the court and fought throughout the season, attended training and gym and made

Senior netball as enjoyable as it was. A massive thank you must go to Miss Brady and Mrs Winning for their endless support every year. Miss Brady has worked tirelessly from the beginning to organise everything, and this doesn't go unnoticed, so thank you! Also, to Mrs Winning, thank you for dedicating so much of your time to B.R.A. netball and being so invested in us. We always appreciate your positivity, kind words and wisdom on the side lines.

SENIOR 'B' SQUAD: Kate Sturgess, Erin McCrea, Eleanor Green, Rachel Hackett, Rosa Gribbon, Clara Walsh, Lucy Chambers, Jenna McCall, Eva Mitchell, Zoe Ingram.

Player of the Year: Rosa Gribbon

Most Improved Player: Lucy Chambers

Captain: Eleanor Green/Kate Sturgess

This year, we had limited matches due to a smaller league draw. However, this didn't prevent us from having a good time collectively, as this group is exceptionally devoted and enthusiastic. With this being my last year at school netball, I couldn't have picked a better team to be a part of. On the court, we were extremely strong at every position so I have no doubt they will be great next season, and with this I would like to express my gratitude to each and every player for their strong motivation and commitment throughout the season. Finally, a massive thank you to Mrs Winning and Miss Brady for all the brilliant coaching and support this year and always. They have truly helped the last 7 years of netball be extremely fulfilling and enjoyable!!

K. Sturgess

I would like to thank all players for their continued motivation and efforts throughout the year. I would like to wish the senior players who are in MVI and are leaving B.R.A. the best of luck in their future endeavours and hope they continue to excel on the netball court!

K.E.B.

Trips and Events

CAMINO DE SANTIAGO TRIP



pupils picked up the baton and accepted the challenge of walking 140 kilometres from Viana to Burgos in six days. Drawn from Forms IV and Lower Sixth, the pupils were an absolute credit to the school and themselves. Despite aches, pains, blisters, and fatigue, they covered the daily distances in good spirits; they coped with the early nights and the even earlier starts; they battled through the deep thick treacherous red clays of Rioja and the hot, steep dusty paths of the mountains of Atapuerca; they rose to the challenges of Spanish cuisine, communal living, and washing their own clothes; they practised their Spanish on a range of unsuspecting locals of all ages; and they put up with the peculiar idiosyncrasies of a bunch of teachers and support staff.

After an unfortunate three-year hiatus caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic, pupils and staff from Belfast Royal Academy returned once more to the Camino de Santiago in June 2023. The Camino de Santiago is a mystical mediaeval pilgrimage route that stretches over 820 kilometres from the town of St Jean Pied du Port in the south of France to the city of Santiago de Compostela in the northwest of Spain.



In June 2019, 30 pupils started our journey on the Camino de Santiago by walking 85 kilometres from Pamplona to Viana in four days, and this year 40

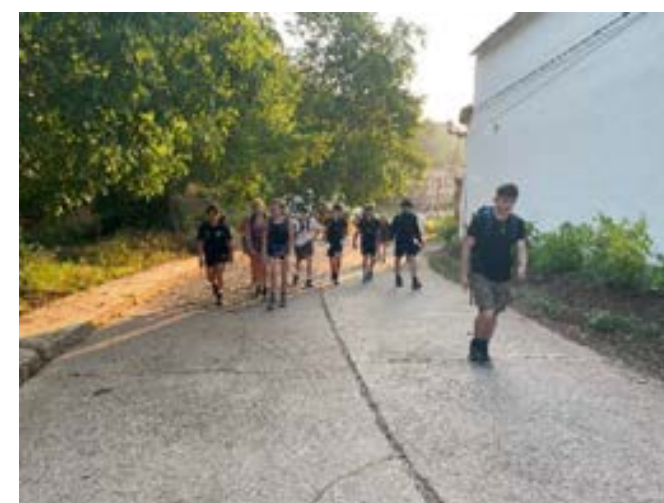


This year, the Way took us through the ancient towns of Navarrete, Nájera, Santo Domingo de la Calzada, and Belorado, and the beautiful historic cities of Logroño and Burgos. Taken together, los Peregrinos de la Real Academia de Belfast have now completed 225 kilometres of the Camino de Santiago and we are well on our way to becoming the only school to ever complete the entire route. Next year, we hope to push on further towards achieving our goal and to complete the 175 kilometres from Burgos to Leon, remembering always that it's the journey that matters, not the destination.

It is an absolute joy and privilege for me to be part of Team Camino and to help so many young people learn more about the world and themselves, whilst having a brilliant time in the great Spanish outdoors.



On behalf of the pupils, I would like to conclude by thanking all the staff who make our adventures possible. Without their kindness, tolerance, patience and commitment, we would not have been able to make it out of Belfast.



And to one and all I say: *No olvides que siempre estás en el Camino.*

El Ramón de Asturias, Castilla y León

The Camino de Santiago offers a multifaceted experience that combines spirituality, personal growth, cultural immersion, and adventure. People are drawn to it for a variety of reasons, but most find it to be a transformative and rewarding journey.

There is no doubt that Staff were delighted to offer the Camino trip to Lower Sixth and Form IV pupils once again. There were some concerns that the next leg would not be as memorable as the first, but this anxiety very quickly disappeared...

From frogs being lobbed into windows; meet ups with local Spaniards; Jack and Dani's 90s ballad sing-a-longs; Jamie's Gandalf staff; Izzy's Dutch braiding skills and dancing into Burgos with a rendition of Guantanamo - the 2023 Camino group did not disappoint.



However, what I will remember and treasure most are the conversations, the reflections and the deep thinking that took place. The Camino isn't easy, but pupils and staff alike reminded one another that like all challenges in life, we take them step by step and we get there.

¡Viva el Camino!

K.L.W.

THE CLASSICS AND GEOGRAPHY TRIP TO NAPLES

School trips are an integral part of the educational journey, providing pupils with the opportunities to explore new environments and learn in an interactive manner. The Form III trip to Naples in March 2023 certainly delivered plenty of opportunities as it was an immersive learning experience that allowed pupils to make lasting memories.



The five-day trip offered a packed schedule that took the pupils and teachers on a tour around the West Coast of Italy to places such as the Amalfi Coast, Sorrento and Capri. The trip was organised by the Subject Leaders for the Geography and Classics & Modern Languages departments, Mr Nash and Miss Williams, and it allowed pupils to see and experience what they had been taught about in the classroom first-hand.



On the trip, we visited the Amalfi Coast and embarked on a boat tour around the island of Capri, observing cases of coastal erosion up-close - something we had learned about in Form II Geography. Having covered the topic of volcanoes in our Geography classes earlier in the year, we hiked up Mount Vesuvius, one of the most famous volcanoes in the world. We were able to look right into the crater of the active volcano which was amazing.



Next, we visited the famous ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum, two cities that had been preserved by the volcanic ash from the eruption in 79 CE. On our tour around the ruins of Pompeii, we saw the remains of the amphitheatre, the town baths and the forum (which was the centre of town life) as well as the preserved plaster casts of the bodies of the residents caught in the eruption. While exploring the ruins of Herculaneum, we got to walk through the once busy streets and enter the houses and civic buildings, which was so atmospheric, affording us a glimpse into what life in the city was like in Roman times.



The trip was not just educational from a school curriculum perspective; we were exposed to the social and cultural aspects of Italian life throughout our trip. On our day excursions to Capri and Amalfi, we experienced the bustling streets, interacted with local shopkeepers, and purchased souvenirs, before returning to our hotel in Sorrento where we had leisure time to explore the town in the evenings.

We were also able to enhance our understanding of Italian cuisine through workshops taught by locals. We thoroughly enjoyed these workshops as we got to make (and taste!) pizza using fresh ingredients from the region and lemon sorbet using the famous Sorrento lemons.

The Naples Trip was a once in a lifetime experience, allowing us to make memories, strengthen bonds and form new friendships.



Thank you to all the staff in school who helped to make the trip happen.

And finally, a huge thank you to both Mr Nash and Miss Williams for organising such an amazing and memorable trip!

Eleanor Murphy (III)



The coming of Spring also meant the beginning of a spectacular school trip for pupils belonging to Forms III and IV, who spent 5 days at the Bay of Naples in Italy at the end of March. Even under Italy's sweltering Spring heat, everybody had an absolute blast, visiting a variety of locations, like the stunning scenery of the Amalfi Coast, the ruins of the once-buried city of Pompeii, and the rugged cliffs and charming towns of the Isle of Capri. The trip also featured a great range of workshops and events, like an ice-cream making workshop, where the colourful gatherings of people who would never otherwise have interacted were able to bond, laugh, and make friends with one another.

As a pupil participating in the event myself, my favourite moment was by far the pizza-making workshop organised for us on day 2. There, using ingredients and equipment locally sourced from Italy (including an oven that could cook a pizza in 2 minutes!) we were shown how to make a stupefyingly delicious meal accustomed to our own tastes, all by our own hands. The staff, cooks and

demonstrators were nothing but kind - not just here, but throughout the whole trip - and everyone was full, not just with food, but with laughter and joy.



Of course, those of us who can proudly consider ourselves participants of the 2023 Naples trip are extensively grateful to Miss Williams and Mr Nash, who organised the whole ordeal, and all the other teachers who supervised us, organised silly night-time quizzes, and who managed to put up with swarms of restless pupils for an entire week. A special thanks also goes to the locals and holiday staff who so kindly arranged this absolute blast of a trip for us. Without them, one of the best weeks of our lives would never have come to pass!

Oliver Kulig (IV)



FORM II PARIS TRIP



Going to Paris will go down as one of the most amazing and unforgettable experiences I will ever have. Not only did I get to see the city of Paris, but I learned about being independent and managing my time and money. Paris is an incredible city, and I am so lucky and grateful to have been able to go and explore it with my friends.

Our trip began at 1am outside B.R.A. We got on the bus and were off to Dublin. It was great fun as we were all so excited to be on our way to Paris! Once we arrived in Dublin, we headed through the airport in the very early hours of the morning. We were given a set amount of time and a meeting point and then were able to have free time to do some shopping in the airport or get some food. We then got on the plane and then eventually arrived in France.

As soon as we received our luggage, we hopped on the bus and headed to the Sacré- Coeur and Montmartre, where we got dropped off near our destination and we had a short walk to a square. I remember being amazed by how gorgeous it was.

We split into groups and had a meet time and place to gather later on. We then were sent to find lunch. My friends and I went to a pizza restaurant and it was delicious. The Sacré-Coeur was incredible and so beautiful. Montmartre was fantastic as I loved seeing the shops and the streets there. We also got to see the Musée du Louvre and the Jardin des Tuileries. The Louvre was stunning. We got to go shopping for a small amount of time under the Louvre in a shopping centre. It was a gorgeous day, so it was lovely to walk through the Jardin de Tuileries. After this, we went for dinner at the Monte Carlo restaurant and then had a short amount of free time to go shopping. Then we went back to the hotel which was roughly an hour away. Our hotel was lovely. We all got into our rooms and were told what to do for the following day.



Day 2 was very exciting. Going to Disneyland may have been the best bit of the trip. It was a lovely day and we were all very excited. We had to meet at the hotel for breakfast at 8am and then headed off. We arrived then got into the park. The parade that we saw was so good and everyone enjoyed it a lot. We were then told where to meet and a time to meet

back up at later on. Then we got into groups with our friends and went off to have fun! My friends and I went on so many rides including Indiana Jones, Hyperspace Mountain, It's a Small World and Orbitron Flying Machines. We went on Indiana Jones 4 or 5 times! We got some good food as well. We met up at certain times throughout the day to check everyone was okay. Everyone then received a voucher to spend in a restaurant of their choice for dinner. At around 8pm, we got back on the bus and headed to the hotel after a very long but amazing day!

Day 3 was all about the sights! We met at 8am again for breakfast and then got on the bus, ready to do some sightseeing! We got to the Eiffel Tower at around 9am. It was incredible. It was amazing to see something in real life after seeing so many pictures of it. Not only did we get to see it, but we got to climb the stairs, all the way to the second level! The sights that we saw were gorgeous and it was a lovely way to spend our morning. Then we got lunch from a shop and got to go on a cruise along the River Seine. It was mesmerising to see the bridges and the buildings on the side of the river as they were stunning. It was lovely and warm and the cruise was so relaxing. We got back on the coach and then got a very interesting tour of Paris. I personally love history but whether you do or not you will love this tour. I learnt so many interesting facts about the city and saw so many famous landmarks around the city centre, including the Arc de Triomphe.



Day 4 was very fun. We met for breakfast and checked out of the hotel at around 8.30am. We boarded the coach with our luggage and went to see the Montparnasse Tower which was spectacular. It felt like we could see for miles whilst at the top. It also had a very good gift shop which we could use to get some gifts for our family. Afterwards, we went to get a tour of the Stade de France. This was incredible. As someone who doesn't know very much about football, I thoroughly enjoyed this. We got to see all of the special unseen parts of it, including the jail that they have, a hospital and the changing rooms. There were lots of photo opportunities here as well as throughout the whole trip. The final part of our trip was free time to do some final shopping before having to board the coach for the final time and head to Charles de Gaulle airport to board our plane. Unfortunately, our plane was slightly delayed, but we had fun sitting together in the airport and getting some dinner before getting the plane back to Dublin and then back on the bus to B.R.A. By the time we got home it was 3 am. We then got our hoodies a few days later to go along with our lanyards and Mickey Mouse ears to remember the trip. I am so grateful to see such an iconic city with my friends. We had the loveliest teachers there with us to help us when we needed it. Getting to see Paris was truly amazing and I will never forget it.

Jessica Smyth (II)



The Form II Paris trip was a great opportunity to experience the city of Paris and practise my French. We visited historical monuments like the Eiffel tower and the Arc De Triomphe. The warm weather was a pleasure. The food was amazing throughout the day, from a selection of French cuisine in the breakfast buffet, all the way to the pizza and the other fantastic dining experiences. I thought the highlight of the trip was the Stade De France. We enjoyed a tour around the whole stadium, learnt about the history, saw the inner working of the stadium and got to visit the locker room. When we visited, the tour guides allowed us to do a walkout through the tunnel and out on to the pitch. The sheer size of the Stadium was incredible. Euro Disney was another star of the show. It was amazing. The thrills from the rides were like no other, from the huge roller coasters to the carousels and haunted mansions- there's something for everybody. I think the Paris trip is something you will not want to miss out on!

Rory Lemon (II)

SKI TRIP TO ERHWALD



The ski trip to Erhwald was over the New Year in January 2023. We travelled in the early hours of 31st December with 120 pupils. It was so popular this year that another group of LVI pupils had arrived a few days earlier and stayed in a different hotel.

The ski trip was a brilliant experience. It was an opportunity to learn or develop the skill of skiing, but also an opportunity for fun, friendship and making new memories.



Whether you were a beginner, intermediate or advanced skier, everyone enjoyed their days on the slopes. Each day started very early with a big breakfast and then a bus ride to the slopes. We were put into ski ability groups and headed off in different directions. We made new friendships and had many laughs throughout the day. The instructors were amazing and took time to help us improve day by day. By the end of the trip, we were all able to ski down the big mountain with ease.



However, skiing wasn't the only fun we had during the week. We went ice skating, swimming, shopping and, of course, après-ski!! In the hotel we played pool, table football and karaoke. We made great memories and really enjoyed getting to know the staff a bit more. We thoroughly enjoyed our time in Austria and can not wait until we go back to do it all again.

Emma Campbell and Eva Mitchell (LVI)

ICELAND



The Geography Department had been thinking of a Senior School Field Trip for a long time and finally got to explore the opportunity after COVID-19. Iceland, The land of Ice and Fire, was the chosen destination as it linked in well with the A-Level course and it was an opportunity to explore a country most of us had never been to before.

5 Staff and 40 students took up the opportunity and after a year of planning, February 2023 came along very quickly. After a 2-3 hour flight and listening to



some of our students practise their Icelandic on the plane (not an easy language to pick up quickly!) we headed straight to our first destination. After landing in a snow-covered Reykjavik, we headed off to the "hotly" anticipated Blue lagoon. Students were able to see first-hand how the Geothermal power provided by the volcanic activity creates outdoor spa pools in the rocky craters. Some students indulged in a silica mud mask or three, while others practised their Instagram poses among the milky blue waters.



In the evening, we took on the challenge of finding the Aurora Borealis. Unfortunately for our students, the weather had started to close in and the clouds obscured our view after searching for two hours. The spirits were still high however and the lights of Reykjavik reflected in the clouds gave the impression we caught the Northern Lights as planned.



Day two started with a trip to the Hellisheidi Power Station, which gave students an opportunity to see how a geothermal powerplant provides power to the cities and towns of Iceland. This renewable form of energy is highly valued in Iceland and the scale of their powerplant was inspiring.



This busy day took in some beautiful natural Geography. We visited the Kerid crater lake which was formed by Volcanoes 3000 years ago; Gulfoss Waterfall which is one of the most famous in Europe; the Great Geysirs which sprayed water up to 25 ft high (and smelt of rotten eggs) and finally Pingvellir National Park, where we could witness the Mid Atlantic Ridge and the action of plate tectonics.

The evening allowed us to explore the capital and students enjoyed some down time in an Escape Room team activity and a walk along the Rainbow Road in the city centre.

Our last full day was impacted by the weather, strong gale force winds meant that our coach could not travel to the far south of the island (it risked blowing over). We then adjusted our plans and took in some more of the Physical Landscape visiting Skogafoss Waterfall, Seljalandsfoss Waterfall and some of the islands iconic black sand beaches. This was a beautiful but challenging day and students were commended for their "get on with it" attitude in the face of the high winds and rain!

The evening took in some bowling and relaxation in and around the city centre which was well deserved.

The final day was a "travel day" and allowed time to reflect on an extremely busy few days. The students were a credit to themselves and received praise from tourists and locals regularly throughout the trip for their behaviour and manners. Hopefully we can go to Iceland again in the future and continue to make memories in the Volcanic capital of Europe.

C.G.N

CERN TRIP

In March 2023, the Sixth Form physics classes, along with physics students from St Malachy's, had the opportunity to travel to Geneva, Switzerland for 3 days to visit CERN.

Upon arrival, we got to explore the local area and got to know our fellow physicists, with a scavenger hunt in the park and a boat trip on Lake Geneva.



The next morning, we were up bright and early to go and visit the United Nations Office at Geneva, including the giant Broken Chair, a monument which symbolises opposition to land mines and armed violence. We were lucky enough to get a guided tour of the buildings and to listen in on a conference of the Human Rights Council. We all learned a lot from this fascinating insight into international relations and diplomacy. To round off the day, we spent time with our newfound friends and enjoyed pizza together.



On our final day, we travelled into France to visit the site of the CERN large hadron collider, the world's largest and most powerful particle accelerator. This was an amazing opportunity for us to see the real-life work behind the physics we were studying for our A-Level course. We were shown the control centre and listened to a lecture from past B.R.A. pupil and current senior theoretical physicist at CERN, Dr Matthew McCullough.

For some of us, this was our last school trip and we all had a fantastic time. Everyone learned a lot and many friendships were formed and strengthened!

Sophia Mallon and Natasha Newton
(MVI) THE

SU POLAND TEAM



For us, the Poland journey didn't necessarily start on the 9th of February 2023, it was October time in 2022 when the official planning began. We would meet every Monday breaktime and work with other students who had volunteered to help us with our learning of Polish, so we could be prepared for what was to come. Although it was daunting and difficult at the time, it was worth it when we arrived in Poland, as being able to have the simple conversation of 'Hello, what's your name?' and a 'how are you?' made all the difference. As the trip grew closer and closer, we started to have more frequent meetings, planning the basis of the trip and what we planned to do across the few days that we were there. After all our hard work and lack of lunchtimes due to the frequent planning meetings, the time finally came, Poland 2023!

9th February 2023. The first day of our Poland journey started before the sun had even risen. At 12.30am, among the crowd of tired looking faces waiting for the Dublin express bus, were nineteen overly excited looking pupils. The Poland team were ready to set off for Dublin Airport. After lots of sleeping and laughter on the bus, we had finally arrived at the airport, just over two hours later. After checking in and breezing through security, we all had a bit of free time before the flight... meaning we all rushed to Starbucks! When the time came, we regrouped, which was not difficult as we could be spotted from a mile off due to our luminous orange hoodies... and we headed to our gate to board the plane. Touchdown, Poland here we come! As soon as

we got off the plane the freezing air hit us like bricks, -6 degrees. We went through security again and it was finally time to meet our contact in Poland, Henryk, who greeted us all with open arms. We then followed Henryk to the bus where our real journey began.



Our first stop was a trip into Warsaw old town. Words can't describe how beautiful it was. Henryk gave us a tour as he led us to a traditional Polish food restaurant. The food consisted of a range of different meats and other vegetables that we wouldn't normally eat in Northern Ireland. Next stop was the Warsaw Uprising Museum. The museum was like nothing I have ever seen before. It was so amazing to learn about the country's history, and we even got to see a full-size model of a war plane they used. Although we were tired after 14 hours of travelling, the excitement was keeping us all awake. We then travelled from the Museum to a youth meeting where we had fellowship time with them. Two of our team members shared their testimony and we sang a few songs and then listened to their talk. Even though we could not understand a word of it, the atmosphere in the room was enough to feel God's presence working through everyone. After sharing some pizza and attempting to put our Polish skills to the test, we headed to our accommodation and got some sleep in preparation for the early start the next day.



The next day was yet again another early start as we set off to a local primary school where we delivered a talk and worshipped together through song, despite the language barrier. Henryk then took us to Makro to collect donated food in bulk.



We then split into two groups, one organising the food parcels while the other went for lunch to try some more of the Polish cuisine. We alternated and started to distribute the food parcels. These were made up for impoverished people and families who may not be able to afford the essential food items. Delivering these boxes to people's homes was an emotional experience for all of us as we were so shocked to see just how differently these amazing people lived and yet they continued to stay so positive through their struggles, making us all realise how fortunate we truly are. We had some free time and arrived back just as the young people were arriving. It was time to begin camp for the weekend. We opened the camp with a testimony, talk and some worship songs and overall, just trying to meet the campers who were all

so amazing and welcoming. We finished the night with our daily devotional, and we all went round and shared a personal highlight and/or difficulty of the day, helping us to debrief and reflect on everything that had happened. This became a nightly tradition.



In the morning, we returned to the camp and met up with our new friends as we all went on a walk. The walk consisted of a lot of snowballs being thrown and attempted conversation through Google Translate, which proved to be our best friend throughout the weekend. The walk back to the camp gave us the chance to spend more time speaking with the young people and hearing about their amazing stories. For me, this was a really moving experience and one I will never forget. The rest of the day was a series of workshops that we had planned prior to the trip. There were things such as first aid, sport and many more. I was a part of the 'how to read your Bible' group with our amazing translator Svetlana, who helped us significantly as we would not be able to do the workshop without her. Once the workshops were over, we regrouped again to have our last nightly meeting which was very moving for us all. Even though we were all battling

to stay awake, there was Just Dance and games that kept us awake and we had a brilliant last night with the young people as we laughed along with each other as if we had known each other for a lifetime.



The last day of the camp for young people was bittersweet. Although we had such an amazing time, it was difficult to part with all the amazing Polish and Ukrainian young people and leaders we had met and become so close with. We were all one big family. We ended with one final talk and a few songs.



The songs were my personal favourite part of the meetings as although we could not always understand the words of each other's songs, we interacted and took part through actions and dancing and always had a fun time. After the meeting, two young people decided to give their life to God. Our

prayers had been answered. Although it was the end of the camp, it was the beginning of their walk with God. We couldn't have asked for a better way to finish off the weekend. It was finally time to say our goodbyes, which were filled with photos, hugs and even a few tears. Later that night, we went back into the old town where we all stuffed our faces with Polish delicacies and bought too many souvenirs. The last night for us was filled with many emotions as we had experienced so much together as a group the previous four days and knowing that it was all coming to end was quite hard to comprehend.



The last day was possibly the most emotionally challenging of them all. We had an early start to ensure we were packed in time, and we set off to a Polish Sunday school to sing a few songs for the children. From the Sunday school, we travelled to a Ukrainian refugee camp. The camp had brought most of us to tears, just knowing each person at the camp had been through many hardships over the past year and continue to do so day by day was so difficult but the thing that struck me most of all was how cheerful and happy they were, even though they were struggling.



The refugee camp was a revelation on how fortunate we are and not to take anything for granted. And that marked the end of our Poland journey, we travelled home. Even though it was over, the memories will continue to live on forever. God's love is universal.

Grace Rogan (V)

POLITICS TRIPS

Teaching Politics can not solely be taught in the classroom, and I am pleased to report that our AS and A-Level students were able to take advantage of some trips to enhance and enrich their study. In September, some Middle VI students attended a workshop considering the possibilities and challenges that a single equality act would bring to Northern Ireland. This workshop had participants from a variety of different stakeholders, and it was pleasing to hear how valued our students' contributions were in the discussion. In March, with the return to studying AS1 on the Government and Politics of NI, we went to Stormont for a visit.

With the suspension of the Assembly and no Executive in place, we were able to sit in the Assembly chamber for a debate on lowering the voting age. During the afternoon, we heard from an Assembly committee clerk, Phillip Brett MLA (DUP) and Robbie Butler MLA (UUP). Students displayed their knowledge and curiosity in asking insightful questions and discussing current affairs.



Also in March, several Politics students made their way to the Penthouse of the Europa Hotel to hear from political scientist, Professor Jonathan Tonge from the University of Liverpool, although perhaps more famous as an election expert on BBC NI's coverage of NI elections. He gave a talk on the Assembly election results from May 2022 and what it means for the parties moving forward, essential to our students given the Advance Information we had received! The talk was part of the Imagine! Belfast Festival and attended by people from all ages and backgrounds and even with the venue

packed with a sold-out audience, our students were not deterred from contributing to the debate and asking some very insightful questions.



Our last trip of the year was for Lower VI to Hillsborough Castle in April for an event marking the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. A very good day's programme was put together, and B.R.A. was one of only four schools in attendance. In the morning, we heard from a panel involved in the negotiations which resulted in the Good Friday Agreement which included Tony Blair's adviser, Alastair Campbell; former SDLP leader, Mark Durkan; David Trimble's adviser, David Kerr, NI Women's Coalition leader, Monica McWilliams; and Tim O'Connor, a senior member of the Irish Government's negotiation team.



They shared personal and moving testimony of the weeks and months that led to the Good Friday Agreement but also for the future of Northern Ireland. Indeed, the panelists all spoke about how in that week they had attended many events marking the anniversary but considered this event with 100 young people from across NI the most important.



Monica McWilliams gave each school copies of her autobiography Stand Up, Speak Out, and Alastair Campbell arranged to have a copy of his new book But What Can I Do? to be sent to each student attending just as soon as it was published in May. The panelists spoke movingly about the contribution participants that have since passed away made, such as Mo Mowlam, David Ervine, John Hume, Seamus Mallon and David Trimble. The final surprise of the morning came when Alastair Campbell retrieved from behind a curtain his bagpipes to play the lament he wrote for those leading players.



Following the panel, the schools were split, and B.R.A. students were given a tour of Hillsborough Castle. This was 'the morning after the night before' when a Gala Dinner had been held for all the local, national and international guests in Northern Ireland that week to mark the anniversary and as much as we would like to believe the red carpet had been rolled out specially for us, the reality is it was still there from the night before!



During the tour of the Castle, as we stood in the entrance hallway hearing about the portraits on display, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Chris Heaton-Harris MP burst in through one door on his way to a meeting and gave us a few moments of his time. Later on in the tour, we spotted US Special Envoy, Joe Kennedy III in the State Dining Hall as he was wined and dined, and, no doubt, talked business. The day finished with a spoken word workshop which challenged students to become just like US poet and activist, Amanda Gorman, in imagining what the next twenty-five years could hold for Northern Ireland.



It is always a wonderful experience to be able to take students out of the classroom to experience and to meet the politicians, decision makers and key players, and this year was no exception. Finally, I am indebted to LC and RMC for accompanying us on Politics trips throughout the year, making them possible for the students.

K.S.B.

POLITICS IN ACTION

In this 25th anniversary year of the Good Friday Agreement, our seven students who successfully applied and gained a place on the Politics in Action team with their St. Malachy's College and Dominican College counterparts had an exciting and eventful year. Once again, our group was led and facilitated by Dr. David McCann of Ulster University, deputy editor of the Slugger O'Toole website and a BBC NI election pundit.



The focus of the group was improving the Good Friday Agreement twenty-five years on and through their meetings from October to February looked at four key areas: the criteria for a border poll, proportional representation, inclusive politics and ensuring participation.

In October, our visit to Stormont coincided with the recall petition for an Executive to be formed and students got to hear first-hand from the chamber the debate and the results of another failed attempt to elect an Assembly Speaker. During the course of the meetings, the students met politicians from a range of parties, including Kellie Armstrong (Alliance), Phillip Brett (DUP), Robbie Butler (UUP), Fiona Ferguson (People Before Profit) and Mal O'Hara (Green Party NI); and the broadcaster and comedian Tim McGarry. The final report was presented by the students to political commentator, Alex Kane and the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Tina Brown (Sinn Féin) in City Hall.



The finale of the year was held at Queen's University in April with all the Politics in Action cluster groups from across NI for a fringe event to their three-day Agreement Twenty-Five conference. This was attended by Bill and Hillary Clinton, former US Senator George Mitchell, former political leaders, Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern amongst many other politicians and advisers from 1998 and current politicians like Rishi Sunak, Leo Varadkar and Ursula von der Lyon. Each group had a stand with a summary of their research and ideas and students were able to chat to each other and meet some of the special guests that were brought to them.



Our North Belfast Cluster were able to share their ideas with Cherie Blair, who spent a considerable amount of time with the group. Later, Tony Blair also came to the North Belfast display. He had been sent a copy of the report and had mentioned it in his evidence to the Northern Ireland Affairs Select Committee when he was interviewed in March 2023. The Minister for State for Northern Ireland, Steve Baker also spoke to our students about their report and even asked for it to be emailed to him.

After the busyness of the morning, the afternoon was much calmer as students gathered to hear from two panels that had been assembled. The first was an all-female panel which included Monica McWilliams and the second focused on young people and politics, with elected representatives from the main political parties who are definitely closer to the beginning of their political careers than the end. Hearing directly from them about the challenges and career highs was certainly memorable.

The students left Queen's that day with souvenir hoodies of the day, a phone full of selfies with local, national and international politicians and memories that will last a lifetime which I hope will propel them forward to build the next twenty-five years.

K.S.B.

THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF CHEMISTRY TOP OF THE BENCH COMPETITION

On the 19th January, a team of two Form III pupils, one Form IV pupil and one Form V pupil competed in the Top of the Bench Northern Ireland Local Section Heat at the David Keir Building, Stranmillis Road, Belfast. The team consisted of Eleanor Murphy, Keshav Raghuram, Maya Campbell and Anna O'Dowd and were up against nine other schools from across the province.



The aim of the competition is to raise awareness and enthusiasm in Chemistry and to make them aware of what Chemistry is like at university. The competition consisted of four sections. The first section involved some simple experiments in the teaching laboratory, based on Electrochemistry. The second section was a test paper exercise covering the pupil's knowledge of key fundamentals of KS3 and KS4 topics.

The third section was a poster presentation which the pupils had prepared prior to the competition. The fourth section was a short quiz of three rounds on general Chemistry questions.



After over two hours of competition, the B.R.A. team finished third and I congratulate them on their performance. Hopefully the experience gained was invaluable to the members of the team and they were a credit to the school.

B.M.M.

FOTA SECRETARY'S REPORT

The 2022/2023 year brought a return to normality for the FOTA committee and our activities throughout the year. The ability to meet again in person lifted everyone's spirits.

Once again, thank you to all members for your continued commitment and dedication to FOTA over this year.

Our first meeting of the year was held in September, with subsequent meetings held in the Heritage Room in the Crombie building each month.

In this meeting we welcomed Mr Trevor Hughes to the committee as our new senior staff member following the departure of Mr Wilson. We look forward to getting to know Mr Hughes as we work together over the coming year and again wish Mr Wilson the best in his new role as Principal at Antrim Grammar.

Our AGM was held on 11th October 2022, with the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports for the year being presented.

Officers for the coming year were elected, with the following being confirmed in post:

Chair: Kim Burns

Vice chair: Deborah McAuley

Treasurer: Niamh Knox

Secretary: Alison Monroe

At the end of the year Andrea Kerns and Kayleigh Williams both resigned from the committee. We would like to thank them for their contribution over the years and are very grateful to Miss Williams for agreeing to continue as Social Secretary until a replacement is found.

EVENTS

This year saw a return of a number of our traditional fundraising events which were generally well attended. These helped us raise significant funds to use in supporting the school while building relationships with families at the school.

UNIFORM SALES

Our first uniform sale of the academic year was held in November. While smaller than the summer event, it was still well attended. The main sale was then held in June.



This timing enables parents of new Form I pupils to attend to purchase uniform items before their children start school. Attendance at this event was exceptional, with parents queuing outside the school gates well before opening time.

It's important to note that pupils are also able to purchase uniform items from FOTA throughout the year. They do not have to wait for one of the dedicated sales events. If a pupil is in need of an item of uniform, they or their parents should contact the school office who will in turn contact FOTA.

Parents continue to express their gratitude to the school and FOTA for running these events. With increasing pressure on household budgets, the price of school uniforms is coming under increasing scrutiny. Preloved uniform sales have been running at B.R.A. for over 30 years and this is a service we are proud to provide to our parents.

Many thanks to everyone who assisted with the logistics of running these sales.

FORM I PARENTS' BREAKFAST

A breakfast for the parents of new Form I pupils for the 2022/23 academic year took place in August 2022. This year, we were able to provide a buffet-style continental breakfast for the parents of our new pupils. This event was well received by parents, who appreciated the thought and effort to make them welcome as part of the Academy family.



Again, many thanks to all who assisted with these events.

STAFF APPRECIATION

Following the Form I Parents' Breakfast, we were able to run a similar staff appreciation event. This was a small token to demonstrate our appreciation of everything all staff do to ensure the safe, secure and smooth running of the school. At Christmas, chocolates were given to staff to further demonstrate our thanks.

QUIZ

The famous B.R.A. quiz made a welcome return at the end of September, with an unprecedented number of attendees. With Dr Springer again acting as quiz master, attendees were treated to a wide variety of differing question rounds, including music played by Dr Springer himself!

FOTA are again in Dr Springer's debt for the time and effort he put in to ensure everyone had such an enjoyable and fun evening.

CHRISTMAS CRAFT EVENING

December saw a highly enjoyable Christmas ceramics workshop take place in the Art Department. Our thanks go to Mrs Patterson and Mrs Hare for facilitating this.



OPEN NIGHTS

January saw a return to in person Open Nights. FOTA provided refreshments for this and once again ran a photo booth for prospective parents and pupils. The Sorting Hat was a particular hit with prospective pupils!

NIGHT AT THE RACES



A hog roast accompanied a racing-themed evening at the Academy Hub in May. While not as well attended as had been hoped, the evening was still a success at providing an opportunity for people to get together and raise funds for FOTA.



WELCOME EVENT

FOTA attended the Form I Welcome Event in June where information on FOTA was shared with the parents of new pupils and they were provided with the opportunity to purchase items of preloved uniform.

DONATIONS

MERIT & REWARD SCHEME

FOTA once again donated £1,000 to the Merit & Reward scheme. Pupils love to see their name on the Merit wheel in Assembly! By the end of the year, over 70 pupils had received prizes through this, ranging from a voucher for a free curry chip, to pizza vouchers and cinema tickets. We are glad to be able to support such a positive reward-based activity within the school.

CHROMEBOOKS

Following a request from the school, FOTA agreed to donate £3,500 to the school to fund the purchase of 24 Chromebooks. These will be used throughout the school to support pupils in various subjects.

TRAINING BIBS

A number of training bibs were purchased for use by the Sports Department. These were first used at Sports Day, enabling the different Houses to be easily identified.

A. Monroe

Ben Madigan Preparatory School

BEN MADIGAN PREPARATORY SCHOOL'S YEAR OF SPORTING TRIUMPHS

Sports play a crucial role in moulding young minds, fostering camaraderie, and building character. Ben Madigan Preparatory School's past academic year was a testament to these principles. As we eagerly await the upcoming sports season, let's revisit the defining moments of our athletic journey.

On February 1st, our rugby team secured an exhilarating victory against Fairview Primary School, with a final score of 40-30. The standout moment was Harry Knox's remarkable individual try, where he fearlessly outpaced three defenders..



At Strandtown Primary School on February 24th, our rugby team engaged in intense matches during the blitz, leaving us with unforgettable memories.



On June 6th, another memorable rugby blitz unfolded at Belfast Royal Academy's Roughfort Playing Fields. Facing five opponents, our team claimed four victories, with Brisa Orr's sensational try against Whiteabbey standing out. Simultaneously, our hockey team participated in the blitz against the same schools, securing five wins, with Oliver Manley's defensive prowess shining through.

Our swimmers made waves at the Ben Madigan Swimming Gala on May 23rd, with several top-three finishes, including a commendable second place for our relay team in the freestyle race.



Ben Madigan Preparatory School's Sports Day on May 10th showcased our students' athletic talents, emphasising our commitment to fitness and fun. A personal highlight from that day was the support from parents and pupils alike for every pupil in 400-metre races as they encouraged each pupil to the finish line. These events inspired many students to explore sports beyond the school gates, with several joining external sports clubs.



Looking ahead, we plan to expand our sports offerings, introducing teams in swimming, netball, football, and cricket. We also plan to host more events at our wonderful school, promoting healthy competition and camaraderie among schools in the region.



In conclusion, sports are more than games; they embody passion, perseverance, and unity. Ben Madigan Preparatory School remains committed to nurturing these values through sports, with the past year reaffirming their transformative power in shaping young lives. As we embark on a new sporting chapter, our enthusiasm and dedication to success remain unwavering.



Ben Madigan, in partnership with our close neighbours, Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School (Park Lodge) entered the CASE PEACE IV Shared Education Project for 2022 – 23 (Year 6).

Both schools, with classes from P3-P7, came together at various times throughout the year to participate in school trips, specialist music, sport and art lessons.

Various classes had trips to Breckenhill and Greenmount, and the children participated in a series of topical art lessons at Park Lodge with a specialist Art teacher, as well as music lessons at Ben Madigan where the children had experience using a variety of percussion instruments.

The programme, in its sixth and last year, was much enjoyed as all the projects, trips and lessons were funded by the Shared Education Project.

Ben Madigan was also able to invest in new speakers and a variety of classroom resources and PE equipment using the funding.

The children very much enjoyed the outings and valuable friendships were made between the two schools. Teaching staff were able to share ideas and expertise.

Although the Programme has drawn to a close, both schools hope to remain in contact and organise future events and trips, building on good relationships and friendships made over the years.

Mrs P.E. Lennon

BELFAST PROMS



PANCAKE TUESDAY



ASSEMBLIES

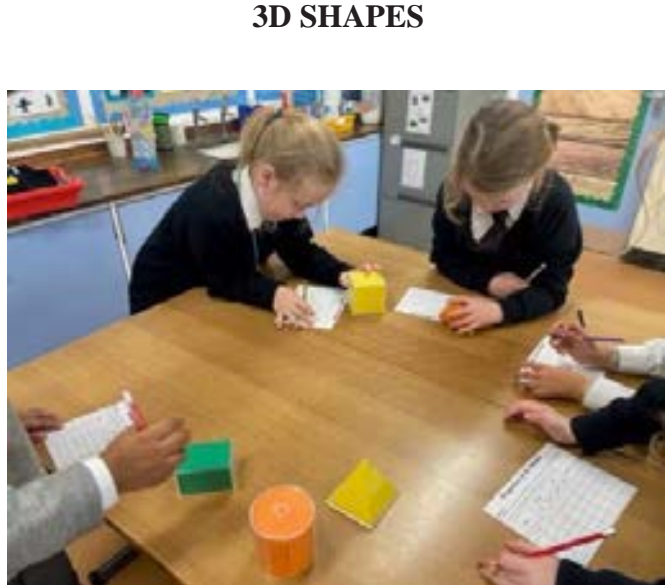




AUTUMN



SUPERHEROES



CLASS TIME



Alumni News

ALUMNI – KEEP IN TOUCH!

In the Development Office, we continue to maintain and grow connections with former pupils and staff connected with B.R.A., with almost 8900 alumni on our database. The benefits of alumni membership are many and wide-reaching. Being part of the Alumni Association allows our former pupils and staff members to enjoy the benefits of their ongoing association with the School and each other - socially, professionally and commercially. Furthermore, as B.R.A.'s most loyal supporters, our alumni are an invaluable resource for the school, playing a vital role in giving back to pupils and the school through volunteering their time, advice, skills and philanthropic support in a myriad of different ways. These small acts of support are often the beginning of a success story for current pupils. We recognise the School's alumni as ambassadors and great role models for Belfast Royal Academy, who know first-hand the education and valuable life lessons that can come out of B.R.A., and use that knowledge to shape current and future pupils.

We are also very appreciative of the continued support shown by the wider B.R.A. community, including the assistance the School has received in many forms from current parents, associates and supporters. Without this ongoing wider network, Belfast Royal Academy would not be the vibrant and progressive school we are today.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

We are incredibly proud of all our former pupils and the impact they have had and continue to have both in Northern Ireland and around the world. Linked by a common educational heritage, our alumni can benefit the school and themselves by staying in touch.

There are various ways to keep in touch with the school – by joining the Academy Alumni Association or through membership of the Old Boys' and Old Girls' Associations.

You can join the Alumni Association online in the Alumni section of the website www.belfastroyalacademy.com or by emailing alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net

Membership is free and open to all past pupils and former staff. Alumni members will receive regular email updates and newsletters and be eligible to attend any alumni events. Your contributions and news are always welcome. Please ensure your contact details are up-to-date and let us know of any changes by emailing alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net – in this way, our alumni can remain part of Belfast Royal Academy's future, not just its past.

SCHOOL REUNIONS

This year, another four Alumni Reunion lunch events were held in School, celebrating 50-, 40, 30- and 20-year anniversaries for the Classes of 1973, 1983, 1993 and 2003. It was wonderful to welcome so many former pupils back to the Academy to join us for a celebratory lunch and tour of the School. Former classmates and friends were thrilled to be reunited back at B.R.A., with even some of their favourite former teachers in attendance! We were so pleased that so many people made the effort to join us at these reunion events, many of whom had travelled far to be able to attend.



B.R.A. CLASS OF 1983 – 40 YEAR REUNION



B.R.A. CLASS OF 1993 – 30 YEAR REUNION



B.R.A. CLASS OF 2003 – 20 YEAR REUNION

Following on from the success of these reunions, we are planning to host similar events for the Classes of 1974, 1984, 1994 and 2004 next year. We look forward to welcoming many more of you back to meet up with former classmates and teachers, enjoy a tour of the School and take in all the changes since you last visited, and remember everything that is exactly as it was, all those years ago.

Dates for the reunions in 2024 are as follows:

Class of 1974 – 50-year Reunion –
Friday 21st June

Class of 1984 – 40-year Reunion –
Friday 24th May

Class of 1994 – 30-year Reunion –
Friday 7th June

Class of 2004 – 20-year Reunion –
Friday 14th June

For further information, please email
alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net

C.O'K

THE 1785 FOUNDATION – OUR ANNUAL FUND



The 1785 Foundation, named after the year the school was founded, is a keyway in which the entire Belfast Royal Academy community can support the School. The Foundation is the ideal opportunity for alumni to reconnect with the Academy, and for supporters and current parents to share some of the pride and ambition that we have for our pupils and support the School on a regular basis. The Foundation continues to grow, and we are grateful to all our new members who joined this year.

B.R.A. was founded to provide an exceptional education for young people from all walks of life. The School has always demonstrated a strong social purpose and an ethos of caring for pupils from diverse backgrounds. While we strive to provide a secure and supportive environment for all pupils, we recognise that, from time to time, some pupils need additional care and support, and we are most grateful to Foundation members for their ongoing support to enable us to do this. For instance,

- Providing nutritious breakfast or break time snacks from outside the General Office to pupils who would otherwise go without;
- Funding counselling and professional guidance sessions to pupils;
- Funding the purchase of specific sports kit, trips or equipment, thus ensuring that many more pupils can participate in sporting events or the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

The School also has plans for a range of future development projects as well as academic and cultural programmes which will enhance the school experience of pupils for many years to come. **The 1785 Foundation** will play a major role in the fulfilment of these plans.

HOW TO JOIN

You can become a member of the 1785 Foundation by making a one-off or a regular contribution. All Foundation members will receive news and information about the school as well as recognition in the Foundation's membership review. Donors who contribute at higher levels will receive additional benefits including invitations to an annual reception and selected school events.

THE 1785 FOUNDATION

Plan	Contribution	Annual Total Contribution	Donation on over 5 year period including gift aid
Bronze	£1.78 monthly	£21.42	£133.50
Silver	£1.78 weekly	£92.56	£587.50
Gold	£17.86 monthly	£214.20	£1338.75
Platinum	£178.50 Quarterly	£714	£4462.50

UK taxpayers can Gift Aid their donations and increase its value to the school by 25% at no extra cost to them. The school will claim the basic rate tax paid on the value of your donation from HMRC.

To find out more, visit the **SUPPORT US** section of the school website –

www.belfastroyalacademy.com

or email the Development Office
development@belfastroyalacademy.net

C.O'K

ANNE MADDEN



Congratulations to Academy alumnus, Anne Madden, on her novel *The Wilderness Way*, inspired by a true story. Anne is one of four sisters, all of whom attended the Academy at the same time.

CLARE SHUTE



Former pupil, Clare Shute, recently celebrated her admission to the Royal College of Ophthalmologists with daughter, Imogen, who is in Form V at the Academy. We congratulate her on such a prestigious achievement.

MICHAEL HERBERT



Forestside Shopping Centre in South Belfast has been purchased by Mussenden Properties Limited, a vehicle for Michael Herbert, former pupil of the Academy. The deal is set to create around 150 jobs.

JUST THE TWO OF US (AND 10,000 GAMBIAIS)

PAMELA MORGAN (NEE KNOX)
B.R.A. 1972

BRIAN HARROLD
MOMODOU JOOF



Walking with a guide in the jungle in Gambia we asked, “where is that smoke coming from?” The path led us to the village of Bafaluto, and a whole new venture in life. The feeling of hopelessness was overwhelming, and the poverty was unbelievable- no chairs, tables, beds, not even a hook on the wall of the Adobe built houses. Yet the villagers took us in and gave us two dusty bottles of Fanta for free! We always say they turned out to be the dearest drinks we ever had. I was moved by the pride the women had in their houses when it was all so basic.

Was there something we can do to help? We decided to find someone to help us locally and the next day Mr Joof was at a school we visited, a recently retired teacher, Momodou Joof, who had studied rural development and he has been our man on the ground for 16 years. We met with the villagers a few days later and I insisted the women attend the meeting. They drew a chequerboard on the ground with squares representing different ideas. A clinic, a road, clean water, electricity, a market garden and then every villager voted with stones for what they wanted most. The pile of stones for clean water was the biggest by far and the market garden was strongly supported by all the women. We went off to get the prices and started to fund raise. We registered with the Northern Ireland charities commission. In 2008 we funded and irrigated a fenced garden of 6 acres allowing at least 50 families to have plots plus a clean water system with 11 standpipes providing drinking water to 750 folk who were living there in 2008. The population is now over 2000 and when we were back in January 2020, we helped them to extend the distribution network and the number of standpipes, for which the villagers dug the trenches. We had put an economic activity into the village and the money from the sale of vegetables, honey and bricks keeps the system maintained and economically viable. This is a total cost of 35,000 sterling per clean water system fully operational and with the solar panels there are zero running costs.

That was the start and we have now completed nine villages, eight on the more impoverished North Bank of the Gambia River We have got cleverer and learned to use gravity to provide clean water to more than one village from one borehole, solar panels and storage tank even when they are as far apart as 3 km. Villagers provide all the Labour. After completing

Bafaluto in 2008, we have since completed M’bullet Ba and Njongon in 2011 from one borehole and Kerr Wally, Chessey. And N’dofin in 2015, again from a single borehole and a distribution system. More recently the villages of Samba Jassin and Mallick Sarr have clean water systems in 2021. In January 2023 we visited all of the villages, they are all working well. We have completed Jamagen this summer with a complete water system and cooperative garden. The population has grown in each village because of the clean water, so the projects in 2023 have been new inverters and extra solar panels, and more tanks to extend the older systems.



The women in the villages tell me how it has changed their lives being able to turn on a tap, how they have more time for the children and the gardens and how the health of the children and themselves has improved every year. The infant mortality rate in our villages has dropped significantly. The mobile phone network has improved in the Gambia and they can send pictures of work being completed and how the gardens are growing. We have extended the range of economic activities by developing beekeeping, brick making, chicken breeding and improved vegetable production through the introduction of Drip Feed irrigation.

We are delighted that the projects have all been so successful and the younger generation in the villages are very active in ensuring everything is looked after and expanded. We insist that every meeting and committee must have women involved and voting.

We fund raise from family and friends. I run jewellery workshops teaching people how to make and repair jewellery. My partner Brian Harrold does wood turning and we sell his lovely pens and bowls. Plus, we have a picture framing workshop in the garden. In our retirement we trained to a professional level to be able to frame pictures, prints, textiles and all the money we make goes to our projects in Gambia. Mr Joof, our man on the ground, is 70 but we have developed a team of young men and women in each village to look after each project for the future. The economic activities and the small payments they make for the water ensure the systems will continue in the future with or without us. The next project is a clinic in Brikama looking for a clean water system.

They do not want charity they just want a fair chance. Every time I visit it is humbling to see how they smile, laugh and dance even when they have nothing. This is the best thing we have ever done in our lives. We believe that by contributing to these villages and improving lives, we can prevent more Gambians wanting to come to Europe. You can read more about us or even donate, 100% will go to the Gambia since there are zero administration costs.

Our website is www.pingcharity.co.uk
my email is pamelaatpingcharity@gmail.com

OLD BOYS’ ASSOCIATION



The B.R.A. OBA Annual General Meeting was held on 26th April 2022. The Senior Vice-President, Mr Philip McKenna was elected President. He thanked his predecessor, Bobby Gray for his efforts during 2022-23 and for organising the Alf Chapman Memorial installation and Mr & Mrs Ken Houston’s visit for that ceremony. Bobby hosted successful OBA dinners and represented the OBA at many of our invitational dinners. Mr Iain Knox was elected Senior Vice-President and Mr Paul Scoffield was elected Junior Vice-President.

THE B.R.A. OBA ANNUAL DINNER



B.R.A. OBA Annual Dinner - The Europa - 26-Nov-2022
Mrs Hilary Woods BRA Principal Bobby Gray President BRA OBA Colin Barkley Dr Moyna Bill BRA Warden

The B.R.A. OBA Annual Dinner, held at The Europa Hotel, is our major annual function. The dinner was held on 26th November 2022, and is scheduled for Saturday 25th November 2023 at The Hilton Hotel. These are hosted by the current B.R.A. OBA President. If you have not previously attended and would like to be kept informed, please email the Alumni Office at alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net.

THE B.R.A. FORMER PUPILS' LONDON & EDINBURGH DINNERS



The B.R.A. Former Pupils' London Dinner was held at the R.A.F. Club on Friday 11th March 2023. It was very pleasing to see this dinner up and running successfully again after it had to be cancelled in 2021 due to COVID-19. Thanks for another successful event are due to David Haslett and Dr. Louis Campbell. The guest speaker was Lynne Foster, of the London Metropolitan Police. The 2024 London Dinner is scheduled for Friday 8th March 2024.

This year's BRA Edinburgh Dinner was held on



Friday 21 st April 2023 at the New Club. The guest speakers were Ken Houston who proposed the toast to the school, and the Principal, Mrs Hilary Woods who replied with an update on the School.

INTRODUCTION FOR M R KEN HOUSTON

It is my pleasure to introduce one of the most outstanding all-round sportsmen in rugby, cricket and athletics who graced the school sports field in the late 1950s.

To the younger pupils, he was a hero who we would take the opportunity to watch after we had played our junior matches.

In his final year, Ken was Head Boy, played rugby for the 1st XV and Ulster Schools, and was Captain of the 1st XI Cricket, Ulster & Irish Schools XI. Ken played for Ulster schools at cricket for 3 years and Ireland schools for 2 years. Ken was the first Academy pupil to score a century at the Castle grounds.

'H' seemed a popular initial with the 1st XV as Ulster schools had Hutton, Hilditch and Hughes as fellow B.R.A. representatives. Sam Hutton was also a rugby international in later years.

The following was written about the 1958 - 59 cricket season when Ken was Captain and top scorer with an aggregate of an incredible 506 runs.

"A superlative and dedicated captain who looked after a very young side with an astute combination of command and persuasion. He utilised the team talents in a manner that raised its full potential, and the team was undefeated by schools, Inst and Campbell were beaten. The season will be remembered as Ken Houston's Year."

To crown the year, he was chosen as 12th man for the Gentlemen of Ireland v Yorkshire a great honour for a schoolboy.

After leaving school, Ken gained a physics degree at Queens University, and then a final year at Oxford University, where he scored a memorial try in the varsity match. Ken made his mark in

rugby by being capped 6 times for Ireland which were limited by injuries. He was only 19 when he won his first cap in South Africa in May 1961. It was a great joy for us that when contacted to unveil the plaque to Mr Alf Chapman in June 2022, Ken agreed immediately. He and his wife, Jean, made the trip and when asked to propose the toast to the school tonight he again agreed immediately. Ken, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you and Jean tonight and ask you to propose the Toast to the school.

Bobby Gray
B.R.A. OBA President
2022-2023

KEN HOUSTON'S SPEECH

A year has passed since the 2022 dinner, where I was an ordinary punter sitting with the hoi polloi at the bottom table. Am I speaking loudly enough for you lot down there to hear me? This evening, it gives me great pleasure to be here on the top table, even though I am having to sing for my supper. No, no, Jean, I am certainly not going to sing. At the age of eleven, I was thrown out of Miss Curran's B.R.A. choir, never again to challenge for a place in the choral limelight.

A highly enjoyable aspect of the last twelve months was my visit, along with Jean, to The Castle Grounds in June. I unveiled the plaque commemorating Mr Alf Chapman. I suppose some of the younger people here tonight did not know Mr Chapman, that most skilful of groundsmen and most renowned of cricket coaches, that great man. B.R.A.'s international cricketers turned out that day and I was thrilled to make their acquaintance.

The trip to Belfast included a tour of the school in Cliftonville Road, kindly conducted by the Principal. Many thanks, again, for that, Hilary. The tour started in your office, some 63 years after my last visit there. That occasion was not a happy one for me and some fellow members of the rugby 1st XV. We had misbehaved on a rugby tour to Dublin and had to answer for our sins. We shook in our shoes in front of the unholy trinity of Mr Darbyshire (Headmaster), Mr Lord (Vice-Principal) and Miss Savage, (what a name for a Senior Mistress). However, the cricket season that followed gave me

the opportunity of mending my reputation and I left the Academy in June 1959 with my head held high.

On becoming a university student, there followed several years of misbehaving on rugby tours not just to Dublin but to all corners of Ireland and Britain and to France, South Africa and Argentina. As these tours were well funded by the Irish Rugby Football Union and other benefactors, they were greatly enjoyed by a penniless student. Spending a weekend in The Shelbourne Hotel in Dublin was quite an improvement on eating pie and beans in a grotty flat off the Lisburn Road. Our sporting hero when I was at school was, of course, the legendary BRA Old Boy Jack Kyle, out half in the Irish team that first won the Triple Crown and Grand Slam in 1948. One Saturday afternoon he gave me a little lesson in manners. At the end of an Ulster match at Ravenhill I, along with many other schoolboys, invaded the pitch seeking autographs. When I thrust my book and pencil at him, he smiled and said "not now, we're clapping in the opposition".

Today B.R.A. has another British and Irish Lions hero in old boy Iain Henderson who, having already won a Triple Crown and Grand Slam, now aims for the World Cup. I have no doubt that when you have Iain along to the school as an honoured guest, he will tell tales of modern rugby. I hope you will excuse me if I reminisce about the old days.

A great Irish centre three-quarter partnership in the fifties was forged by Tony O'Reilly and Ulsterman Cecil Pedlow. On one occasion Cecil complained to Tony: "O'Reilly" says he, "we have played together eighteen times and you have only given me three passes" "Pedlow" came the reply "Do you think that if I had given you more than three passes, you would have got eighteen caps?" I was part of the Irish tour to South Africa in 1961. We landed in Johannesburg in May, a few days after South Africa had left the Commonwealth and become a republic. A group of large Afrikaan farmers greeted us and requested a group photograph. "We republicans, Irish and South African, must stick together" was the cry. Well, I was clutching my British passport, ready to protest my loyalty to the crown. However, the Afrikaaners were very welcoming and very big, so I pocketed my passport and, for the time it took to take the photograph, I became a republican.

I still smile when I see the Ulstermen in the Irish team at Lansdowne Road tight-lipped during the Irish National Anthem. The introduction of the Irish Rugby Anthem was a good move. Concussion to players is a hot potato these days. A bit different from 1906 when England first went to Paris to play France. At the height of the clash, the England number eight was not just concussed, he was knocked out, totally unconscious. In response the England captain declared: “No Englishman falls on foreign soil. Wing forwards, carry him from scrum to scrum until he comes round.” Ah, the good old amateur days.

To return to the early fifties, I arrived at the Academy, in September 1952, having been preceded by my three sisters. The youngest, Sheena, was a prefect in the Upper Sixth. At that time, boys in Form I wore short trousers and knee socks. Mr Lord embarrassed Sheena by telling her, with his typical hand gesture “Sheena, you really must get your little brother to keep his socks up”. When I graduated to Form II, I wore long trousers and abandoned knee socks, not to be worn again until, here in Edinburgh, I took up Scottish Country Dancing and needed knee socks to wear with my kilt. My dear wife took me in hand. In addition to developing my skills at the dancing, she made me a pair of strong garters.

The rugby pitches at The Castle Grounds were very muddy in mid-winter, as rainwater drained off the Cave Hill on to the terrace. A couple of memories stand out. Following a playground accident, I wore a false tooth on a small plate. One Saturday morning I forgot to take it out before taking to the field. The inevitable happened and, as I was tackled from behind, the plate flew out of my mouth into the mud. As we were about to score, I naturally played on. At half time, the referee lined up both teams across the field and a sweep located the missing denture. “No, Ken” said the ref, “do not put your plate back in, I’ll keep it in my pocket”. In a cup match in my last year, the heavy pitch got the better of me and I was hit with cramp in both calves, simultaneously. I went down as if poleaxed. My dear father, greatly alarmed by my spectacular collapse, rushed to my side from the touchline. Oh, I was embarrassed!

I did particularly enjoy some aspects of attending a co-educational day school. The Friday evening society meetings: debating, music, science, followed by a group-walk up the Antrim Road gave us the opportunity to develop our social skills. There were setbacks, however. At the end of the Form I Christmas party, I plucked up the courage to ask a girl if I could walk her home. I was crushed when she told me that she was being collected by her father. That was the first of many frustrating excuses received over the years from Academy girls: “I will be washing my hair that night”.....”I go to the Girl Guides on that night”and even, “I just don’t want to go out with you”. Such were the trials of teenage romance. Principal, you told me of many of the achievements of the modern school and I saw with my own eyes the wide range of facilities. I also sensed a very encouraging atmosphere in the bearing of the pupils as I passed individuals and groups.

The school motto is Per Vias Sapientiae, Along the Roads of Wisdom.....we were taught Latin in the fifties. Does that still happen, Principal?

Knowledge, Scientia, is another pillar of education which I am sure is strong at B.R.A. By the way, do you know the difference between wisdom and knowledge? Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit and wisdom is not putting it into a fruit salad. In physics we did a lot of experimental work, though why we were asked to conduct magnetism investigations in the attics of the main building I will never understand. We were surrounded by ironwork, holding up the ceilings, which I am sure was responsible for the bizarre results we obtained in pursuit of Gauss and Oersted.

On the periphery of the main subjects in Forms I and II, we had a weekly period of woodwork which I greatly enjoyed. My coffee table and my bookcase are in use to this day. Four years ago, they were joined by matching furniture. I had joined an Adult Education class provided by the City of Edinburgh Council. I defy anyone to distinguish between the 1953 and the 2019 models, as they are well-nigh identical, right down to the same gaps in the joints and the same camber on the shelves.

After taking a degree in physics at Queen’s and a Diploma in Education at Oxford, I came to Edinburgh to teach physics at Merchiston Castle School. As was the way in boarding schools, I also coached rugby and cricket and became a housemaster. Undeterred by my experience of the repercussions of misbehaviour on a school rugby tour, I brought the Merchiston teams to play B.R.A. and other Ulster schools. I kept this up in the early seventies when the Troubles were, perhaps at their worst. I felt it important to keep contact with people in the province and was pleased that some Scottish boys could experience for themselves just how Ulster people were coping in those ghastly times. It still delights me that the Academy survived those dreadful days. The school could hardly have been in a more dangerous position at the foot of Cliftonville Road but still all the difficulties were faced down. Back at Merchiston, a colleague, Frank Hadden had taken over coaching the 1st XV. He looked further than Ulster for school tours. To allow him to concentrate on coaching I was manager, and we took boys to Portugal, Japan, Australia and Argentina. No misbehaviour on those tours of course, by players or staff. Frank went on to coach the senior national side, more successfully than many.

Over the years, over the centuries, many people have written about school life. From books such as Tom Brown’s *Schooldays* in the nineteenth century, through the nineteen fifties *Red Circle* stories in the *Hotspur* comic to today’s television with *Grange Hill*, *Waterloo Road* and *Derry Girls*. The stories of school life are known to us all.

In reality, we know that Belfast Royal Academy is a fine, fine school and I am proud to be an old boy. I ask you all to stand and drink a toast to the school:

“The Academy.”

**Ken Houston
B.R.A. 1952-1960**



BRA Business Breakfast - 10 Square Hotel - 16-May-2023
George Armstrong CEO Scanmatix Hilary Woods BRA Principal Lisa Strutt Leadership Coach Joanne Harvey Communications & Dev't Manager Michael McDowell Breakfast MC

BUSINESS BREAKFASTS

These breakfasts are aimed at younger former pupils who are still working and who would like to widen their business contacts. Some current B.R.A. pupils have also attended. These breakfasts have had between 20 and 40 attendees and are usually held at the Ten Square Hotel. The most recent breakfast was held on 16th May 2023. The speakers were George Armstrong - CEO Scanmatix and Lisa Strutt - Leadership Coach. Please email the Alumni Office at alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net if you would like to be on the notification list.



MONTHLY LUNCHEON CLUB

The monthly lunches attract between 40 and 50 members – mostly retired members of the Association. The attached photo is from the last

time we lunched at the Royal Belfast Golf Club. Robin Reid initiated and coordinated these lunches for many years, with the help of local hosts. The Old Boys' Association greatly appreciates Robin's efforts, and we are grateful to Robb Fletcher for stepping in to run these going forward. If you would like to be copied on these announcements, please email Robb at braob.luncheon.

GOLF

The Association plans to hold two golf outings each year. The first outing was held on 15th June 2023 at Malone Golf Club.

The second outing was Captain's Day held at the Royal Belfast Golf Club on Friday 8th September 2023, and was won by Iain Knox. The Combined winner for 2023 was Iain Knox.



Photo shows this year's captain, Andrew Magee presenting Iain Knox with the overall cup. Any former pupil interested in playing in these competitions should contact Ken Knox at ken@cd-group.com. The dates for 2024 are Thursday 13th June at Malone GC and Friday 13th September at Royal Belfast GC.

MOLLY MALONE CUP PLAYED AGAIN AFTER 15-YEAR BREAK

This team of Sheldon Coulter, Iain Knox, Nik Simon and Tim Weir won against an Old Belvedere team in Dublin and brought that trophy back to Belfast. It was great to see this trophy being played for again after a break of 15 years.



TOM MCKIBBIN HAS COMMENCED HIS CAREER AS A PROFESSIONAL GOLFER.



Former Ben Madigan and B.R.A. pupil, Tom McKibbin must be congratulated on his recent amazing win at the Porsche European Open in Germany. This was Tom's first win as a professional on the DP World Tour. This is an immense achievement and at only 20, he's the youngest Irish winner on the DP World Tour since Rory McIlroy won his maiden title at the Dubai Desert Classic at 19 in 2009. We look forward to a bright golfing future ahead for Tom!

CRICKET



The annual cricket match between an Academy XI and the B.R.A. 1st XI was played on 23rd June 2023. The photo of the Castle Grounds is a reminder that it is a beautiful location for sporting events.



RUGBY



Two leading rugby alumni, Tom Stewart and rugby giant Iain Henderson, were selected for the 42-man Irish Summer Training Squad ahead of the Rugby World Cup in France in September and October. Tom was one of only four uncapped players in

that squad, which includes seven Ulster players, including Iain. Further congratulations must also go to Tom who was named Ulster Rugby Supporters' Club Player of the Year in the recent Ulster Rugby Heineken awards. Also, congratulations to Tom Stewart on his first cap for Ireland against Italy.

As we go to press, we are in the middle of the Rugby World Cup. Iain Henderson is playing in his 3rd Rugby World Cup, and Ireland have just defeated the current World Cup holders, South Africa, 13-8 in Paris on 23rd September 2023. I was fortunate to be at that match and watch 'Hendy' rally the troops in those tense, but so exciting, dying moments. Whatever happens—that was a truly memorable night!

SOCCER: CALLUM MARSHALL



Congratulations to Callum Marshall on scoring a great goal and winning the FA Youth Cup with West Ham. Also, congratulations on getting his first cap for Northern Ireland.

B.R.A. OBA NEWS BAFTA WIN FOR B.R.A. ALUMNUS

Huge congratulations to former pupil Peter Anderson (class of '88) on his recent amazing accolade of winning a BAFTA! Peter and his team at Peter Anderson Studios were winners of the Titles and Graphic Identity Award, for their work on the creation and design of the opening credits on Apple TV's *Bad Sisters*. Peter is one of our recent #RoleModels to help inspire future generations of pupils about what opportunities life can bring after leaving B.R.A.



THE COLIN MIDDLETON GALLERY

In May, we were delighted to welcome guests to the official opening of our new Colin Middleton Gallery in school. This stunning new gallery of eleven fine art reproductions of some of Middleton's most iconic works is displayed on the walls of the Darbyshire Building stairwell and is a very fitting tribute to one of the School's most illustrious artistic alumni. Colin Middleton (MBE) was born in 1910 near Cavehill in North Belfast. He attended Belfast Royal Academy, leaving in 1927 to work in his family's damask design firm of Page and Middleton in Belfast. Middleton went on to become one of Ireland's most outstanding artists of the Twentieth Century. He was a landscape artist, figure painter, and surrealist and his artwork covered an eclectic variety of modernist styles.

The Gallery was very generously curated and gifted to the School by another former pupil, Dr Brian Metcalfe, who has a personal interest in Middleton's work. Dr Metcalfe has a broad family connection to the Academy, with many

members of his family receiving their education here, including his mother, Beattie, our oldest alumna at the grand age of 101, who also enjoyed the gallery opening. Over forty guests heard a talk from Middleton's daughter, Jane Middleton-Giddens, who came especially from Barcelona to attend the event which honoured her father's work. It was a wonderful sunny evening, enjoyed by all who attended and was the ideal opportunity to showcase this special tribute to this former pupil.

Be sure to take time to view the Gallery on your next visit to school, or to find out more about this famous artist and his work you can visit our website <https://www.belfastroyalacademy.com/colin-middleton-gallery>

Pictured below (L-R) are Dr Brian Metcalfe, Mrs Jane Middleton-Giddens and Mrs Hilary Woods (Principal)

OBA DONATIONS TO B.R.A. – WW II MEMORIAL REPLACEMENT



The annual discussions between the Principal and the President, on behalf of the B.R.A. OBA Old Boys' Association, to identify where the OBA can make financial contributions to the School. The plan is for the OBA to fund a replacement in stone of the WW II memorial which would better match with the existing WW I memorial. The planning and design are well under way, and a planned unveiling date is 10th November 2023. In September 2023 the OBA started funding 'House Ties' for Form I boys – while the Old Girls funded similar for Form I girls.

B.R.A. OBA Website:

The BRA OBA website is at:

www.braoba.com has had a major revision and provides news and archive documents.

FUTURE DATES

B.R.A. GALA DINNER: Saturday 27th April 2024

Golf: Picken Cup Thursday 13th June 2024 at Malone Golf Club.

**Golf: Captain's day:
Friday 13th September 2024 at Royal Belfast Golf Club.**

**Annual Dinner 2024 at the Belfast Hilton Hotel:
(Provisional date) 24th November 2024.**

**London Dinner(s):
Friday 8th March 2024.**

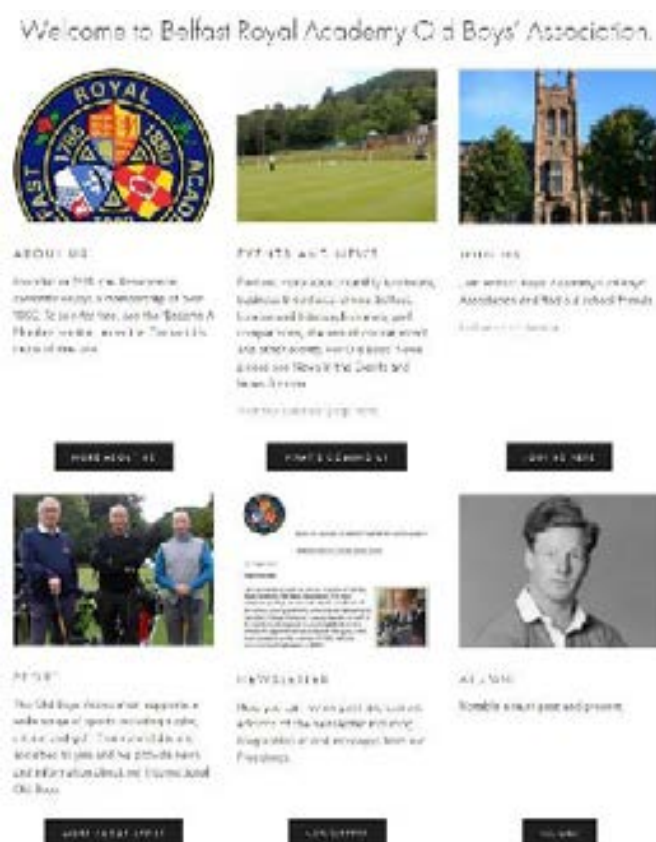
CONTACTING THE B.R.A. OBA

The Membership fee is currently suspended. New members are always welcome! Please notify the Alumni Office at alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net to register with the Association, or notification of changes to email address, or contact details. Notification of reunions is very welcome.

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 interest to other Old Boys.

Michael McDowell promotes the Association on social media through the Old Boys' Twitter account @TheBRAoldboys.
Thank you.

Philip McKenna,
BRA OBA President 2023-2024
philmac49@gmail.com



OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

Belfast Royal Academy Old Girls' Association is a networking community of female pupils who previously attended the School, along with current and past female staff. Our Membership is global, with members from around the world, including many local ladies still living in Northern Ireland and other parts of the UK and Ireland.

A very warm welcome to our new members and, as always, we would like to extend an invitation to all past female pupils, as we continue to expand our network. Maintaining a link with Belfast Royal Academy is very special and we know that our members have many cherished memories of their time at school.

Our aim is to support pupils of Belfast Royal Academy with all aspects of school life. We provide opportunities for our members to network, socialise and help raise funds for the School.

CONNECTING WITH PUPILS

Every December, we hold our Christmas Coffee Morning, this year it took place on the 19th December 2022. This is always a relaxed morning, meeting with the MVI girls, learning about their plans for university, gap years, and employment.

Along with hearing about all the preparations for the social event of the year, that is the formal!!



We had a second opportunity to meet with the MVI on the 26 April 2023. The purpose of this was to explain how the Old Girls' Association helps to support the School financially, through our fundraising events and also to explain that if they need any help or assistance with career advice or general support on leaving school, that we provide that support as required.

It really was a pleasure to chat with the Head Girl, Riya Raghuram and her Deputies, Cara McGrath and Connie McDaid, along with their peers and we very much look forward to meeting them at future events.

FUNDRAISING

December also saw the annual Christmas Wreath sale. This has developed into a key activity in our fundraising calendar. There was a great 'buzz' in the playground on the collection morning. Again, we would like to thank all those who ordered and supported this event to raise funds for the School.



May saw the return of the annual hanging basket and planter sale, which continued to be a great success. Hanging baskets and planters were once again provided by Dundonald Nurseries. Our thanks go again to all those who placed orders and helped to raise funds for the pupils of B.R.A. The quality of baskets and planters was very high, with many still in bloom as this article is written.

EASYFUNDRAISING

Don't forget, we are registered with Easyfundraising! This is an easy way to help us raise funds at no additional cost to you. The Association earns commissions from online purchases made by our members on a huge variety of shopping sites, including Amazon, Currys, ASOS, Marks and Spencers amongst hundreds of others.

So, when you are next shopping online simply follow these simple steps:

Step 1
click www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/braoldgirlsassoc/?q=bra&cat=cause-autosuggest

Step 2 - shop as normal.

Step 3 - A donation will be made automatically to The Old Girls' Association based on a percentage of what you spend online, at no extra cost to you!

With funds raised from various sources we were able to provide funding for a set of Chromebooks for Modern Languages. Previously we funded similar for the English department as the School updates the technology available to pupils. We were delighted to fund the School dance team with a donation of £1000 towards the cost of costumes. The dance team has been very successful in recent years.

EVENTS

AFTERNOON TEA

We were spoilt in this academic year to be able to host two Afternoon Tea events. The first took place on 8 October 2022 at the Kingfisher Country Estate, the former Hilton in Templepatrick. This was a lovely afternoon, and the food and outlook were second to none.

In June one of our Members, Diana Fitzpatrick, invited us to the iconic Ulster Reform Club. Mrs Fitzpatrick gave a brief history of this once 'Gentlemen's Club' and the role it played in the economic development of Belfast. We are very proud



that one of our members has served as President of such an institution. The venue was exquisite, and we look forward to a return visit.

We are very grateful to have had an excellent turn out to both events. Thanks goes to all who sponsored raffle prizes.

HOCKEY MATCH



On the 19th June the OGA Hockey team faced B.R.A.'s 1st XI at V36, due to refurbishments to the hockey pitch at Roughfort. The weather held and both teams played competitively, and we were honoured to have Erin Getty and Niamh McIvor, who have both been capped for Ireland. The final score was OGA 1 – BRA 6.

Goal scorers:

OGA – Rebecca Dwyer

B.R.A. – Olivia Beattie, Abbie Braniff x2, Lois McGrath and Alex Snoddy

Many to all the spectators who came to support both teams.

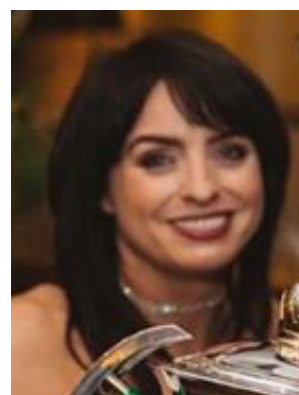
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our AGM was held again via Zoom on the 2 February 2023. The agenda covered fundraising, membership update, accounts and planned events for the forthcoming year.

The committee remains as follows:



Caroline Dillon
Chairperson



Nikki Johns
Vice Chairperson



Johanna Richardson
Hon. Treasurer



Claire McGovern
Hon. Secretary

STAY CONNECTED

We love hearing from our members, please get in touch if you have some news to share. If you would like to register as a Member of the Old Girls' Association and would like to offer your support, please go to our new automated registration form at Old Girls'... | Belfast Royal Academy

Our annual membership is an optional £5. Members who are previous life members can also subscribe to the annual fee if they wish. All fees contribute to our financial contributions that we pass onto the School.

Get in touch:

email – braoldgirls@outlook.com

twitter – @braoldgirls

Facebook – BRAformergirls



Births, Deaths and Marriages

BIRTHS

McKENNA: 10th January 2023, to Alan & May, twin boys Ethan and Euan, brothers to twins Amelia and Callum.

MARRIAGES

BARRINGTON-McBETH: 9th July 2023, Mark Barrington and Tracy McBeth

DORIS- McATAMNEY: 5th August, Eamann Doris and Eileen McAtamney

LEOPOLD- MAGRILL: 22nd October 2023, Rachel Leopold and Ben Magrill

DEATHS

ALLEN: 30th September 2022, Emma

BARBOUR: Hamish

CLARKE: 29th September 2023, William David (Billy)

ELLIOTT: 24th February 2023, Albert

GAULT: 22nd August 2023, Charlotte

HALLIDAY: 12th November 2022, Professor Henry

LONGMORE: 27th December 2022, Desmond

MCILHAGGER: 29th November 2022, Professor Robert

REID: 6th April 2023, Robin

SHEPARD: 8th Nov 2022, John





Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

