

SOLAS



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May 2017






THE SUNDAY TIMES
TOP PERFORMING SCHOOL
OF THE YEAR 2016

We are delighted to have been announced as Northern Ireland's top performing school for 2016 in the Sunday Times Parent Power guide. In 2015, the school had been named as Northern Ireland Secondary School of the Year, and this year the school has been ranked as top performer with the best A Level results in Northern Ireland, with 84.5 per cent of entries achieving A* to B grades, and 63.7% of GCSE A* or A results gained. The school is now at number 38 in the overall UK national rankings - an improvement of six places from 2015.

Principal Mrs Hamilton praised the dedication of her staff in driving standards: "We do strive for excellence and we have high expectations of our pupils but we recognise they are different, that they have different abilities and they learn in different ways, and these things are important. We have a really strong team of staff and they are hard-working and innovative, and they will go well beyond the confines of the classroom. They are so giving of their time. You will find them running classes for pupils, running clubs at lunchtime or after school. All of this adds to the vibrancy of the school because so much is offered to pupils outside of the classroom." Indeed, Rathmore Grammar School provides a wealth of opportunities for students to develop strengths, discover hidden talents and have fun.



FIRST DAYS AT RATHMORE



On my first day I felt nervous and excited to meet new people and was worried I wouldn't make any new friends; but by the end of the week I felt much better because I had settled in well and made loads of friends. I learned my way around the school easily, so I had nothing to worry about. I like having lots of subjects compared to in primary school where you had to stay in one classroom all day. There is much more freedom in Year 8 and in secondary school. In June, before we started school, we played ice breaker games with our new tutor group and our Buddies. Our Buddies are Upper Sixth pupils who helped us settle in to school in our first weeks. The Buddies are really supportive and we can go to them if we have any problems or worries. In our first week, they organised lunch time activities for most days, including a dodgeball competition and Home Economics activities as a tutor group.



The after school clubs are really good, and there are so many to choose from! I am part of the Rathmore Year 8 Gaelic and Soccer teams and they really helped me make friends with others who love sport. At the start of the year we had a Year 8 Mass which was our introduction to the school. There were songs, hymns and prayers in the mass as well as performances by the Senior Choir. It was nice to see the work of the choir in the mass and our year group celebrate together. It was a really lovely atmosphere which made starting our new school very special.

Steven Hughes, Year 8



ART HIGHEST ACHIEVERS

Rathmore's Art department produced many incredible candidates last May, even having multiple students achieving full marks at GCSE and A-Level.

At GCSE, the highest achievers were Rachel Horner, Aisling Bradley, Jack Morrissey and Chloe Cassidy; and at A-Level, Catriona Rafferty received an astounding full mark certificate for her projects. Congratulations to all of these candidates on their achievements.



RUA VISIT

In November 2016, the A-Level art department visited the Royal Ulster Academy exhibition in the Ulster Museum. The art on display was truly fantastic and a massive source of inspiration for everyone who went. From detailed portraits to huge sculptures of insects and boats, there was something for any aspiring artist. The experience was very encouraging and reassuring because it showed us the world of art after education – we saw the true opportunities for young artists of all skills and talents. Overall, it was an exciting afternoon which led to much artistic inspiration, and every member of the department is very excited to return next year!



DAVID HOCKNEY EXHIBITION

In October 2016, the senior school Art department went on several excursions to the David Hockney 'I do, I draw' exhibition in the MAC. Hockney is one of the most celebrated living English artists, so it was a huge excitement to be able to see a broad collection of his works first-hand. In the very contemporary MAC building, which is an art piece in itself, some of Hockney's

most famous works were displayed in a two-room gallery alongside a range of his earlier works right up to his most recent digital drawings.

We were able to draw artistic motivation from many eclectic works, like his eerie, intricate, digital line drawings of trees and one of his most famous works, the print painting "A Large Diver", as well as a

huge range of self-expressive works from his earlier years. It was hugely inspiring to see his progression from early works of his hometown in a depressing, watery grayscale to paintings and drawings bursting with vibrant colour, and everything in between. This was a very exciting opportunity for the Art department!



TRUE COLOURS 2017

In January 2017, the Art department took its annual trip to the Ulster Museum to browse the True Colours art gallery. True Colours collates the most outstanding and cutting-edge art projects from Northern Ireland GCSE and A-Level Art students and displays them in the Ulster Museum for several months. Every year without fail, the work is breathtaking and extremely impressive. From woodwork to fashion pieces, there is something for every artist's taste. Rathmore was once again honoured to have our very own Catriona Rafferty accepted into True Colours (for the third year running!) for her exceptional A2 Art work.

Yet again, True Colours served to inspire and encourage all of the students and teachers in the department for another year of Art and Design.

BUSTA RHYMES SUCCESS!

Congratulations to the junior school pupils who had their poetry published as a part of the Young Writers Busta Rhyme competition. The students were given the opportunity to write on all matter of subjects, from current affairs, religion and identity to love, loss and everything in-between. The published poets included Oisin Conlon, Pearse McBriarty, Roisin Gormley, Patrick Devlin, Joseph Mateer, Stephanie Abogunrin, Feby Babu, Emma Andreou, Luke Kilpatrick, Matthew Boyle, Jack O'Halleron, Niamh Plumb, Aodhan Graham, and Rory Maguire. Well done!



DROP EVERYTHING AND READ



DR PATRICK RYAN

Pat Ryan is an internationally acclaimed storyteller but previously worked as a teacher for many years. He also worked at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and for the BBC for a while. Now Dr Ryan tours Britain, Europe and the U.S. performing, lecturing and conducting workshops. He has been nominated as reading champion and has also published an award winning Shakespeare storybook. Over the years he has collected his own group of stories, folktales, myths, legends, riddles, rhymes and proverbs from all around the world. We are very lucky that he comes to Rathmore every year to tell us these tales and to help us keep storytelling alive in our school.

Gothic Lecture

On Wednesday 25 January, a group of Lower Sixth English pupils attended a lecture and workshop on 'Gothic Fiction' in St. Malachy's College, Belfast. Dr. Eadaoin Agnew, a senior lecturer at Kingston University, London, gave a comprehensive overview of the origins and development of the Gothic genre. She introduced pupils to a Freudian interpretation of Frankenstein and Dracula which proved to be fascinating! Dr. Agnew was delighted to see her old blue uniform in the audience as she is a past pupil of Rathmore.



SEAMUS HEANEY HOMEPLACE

In January, Lower Sixth English pupils travelled to Bellaghy, where Seamus Heaney was born, to visit the newly opened Seamus Heaney HomePlace. We were taken on a tour of the Gallery where we were taught about some of the people who influenced and featured in his work, from his father to the blacksmith who inspired 'The Forge'. We were able to hear Heaney read out his own poetry and visit a recreation of his Dublin study.

We even got to see the pen that 'The Conway Stewart' is about! Afterwards, we attended an in-depth speech on the poetry of Robert Frost and Seamus Heaney given by Dr Fran Brearton from Queen's University Belfast. Then, we took part in a workshop on the writing of Robert Frost, where we analysed his poem 'Out, Out-' with other schools also visiting the HomePlace.

Ribh Brownlee



THE WRITING WORKSHOP WITH BYDDI LEE

Recently, author Byddi Lee came to Rathmore to present a writing workshop that I was lucky enough to take part in. She took us through her journey from Biology teacher at Rathmore to author, before beginning to show us how we would structure and write our own book from beginning to end. Overall, the workshop was a great experience and offered a great insight into the world of an author and writing. After the workshop I felt my dream of writing a novel was much more realistic and achievable.

Matthew Colquhoun



POETRY WORKSHOP

Mrs McClements came back to visit the school in a really fun and informative session on poetry writing. It was a really original approach to writing and creativity which we all found to be inspiring.



DR MARTIN TALK

On the first of March, Dr Matthew Martin of St Mary's University College gave a talk to the Lower Sixth English pupils. His brilliant presentation, 'Some Significant Context and the Music of Everyday Language', helped us in our study of the poetry of Robert Frost and Seamus Heaney, the legendary Irish poet. He taught us his top three rules for proofreading any writing: read it out loud, read it out loud, and read it out loud!



A VISIT FROM MATT GRIFFIN

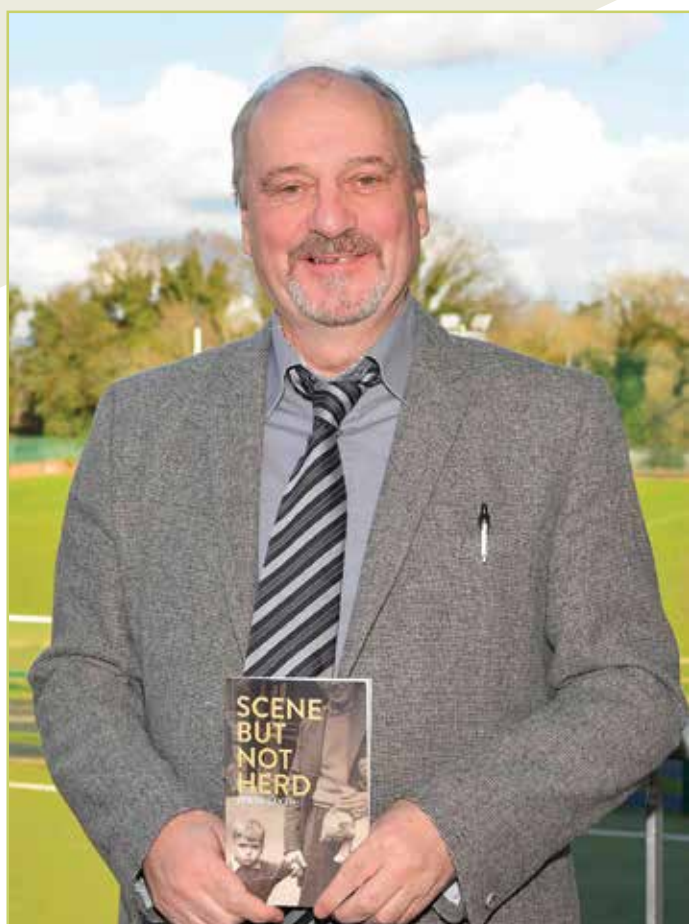
On June 14, author and illustrator Matt Griffin visited Rathmore Grammar School to read an excerpt from his new novel *A Cage of Roots* from the Ayla trilogy. This fantasy story is set in Ireland and tells the tale of Ayla, a 12 year old girl, trapped deep underground by goblins. Matt illustrates his own novels so he let the pupils describe an ogre while he drew it. The result was amazing and currently resides in the library!

Afterwards, he held a Q&A session where we found out all about how he began as an illustrator and how he transitioned to writing his own books. As a young person he constantly sketched and wrote short stories. He never threw out any of his work as it still gives him inspiration!



SCENE BUT NOT HERD BY MR MCSHANE

As part of World Book Week, Year 11 students had the opportunity to hear excerpts from Mr McShane's novel 'Scene But Not Herd' (writing under the pseudonym Irwin Baker), which tells the funny yet brutal recollections of growing up as the youngest child of a family of fourteen in West Belfast. Senior students and members of staff were treated to a lunchtime reading from Mrs Kelly, Mr Tierney and Mrs McCullagh, who all brought the humour and warmth of the tales to life.



NO ALIBIS

In February of this school year, during World Book Week, myself, my fellow L6 mentor Lucy, the members of the Advanced Reading Group and Mrs McCullough paid a visit to No Alibis, an independent bookshop on Botanic Avenue. The experience was very authentic, as the shop is quirky and old-fashioned; when we came in, the owner offered us cups of tea and coffee, while jazz music blared from the speaker system. Specialising in crime genre books, No Alibis offers an atmosphere to rival those of high-street Waterstones and Eason's, with a myriad of novels and non-fiction, giving the club a real selection and opportunity to widen their reading. The highlight of the trip for everyone was definitely when David, the owner, presented a book which he had sourced and had been entirely hand printed and bound in Belfast. Only 1 of 200 copies remained, the other 199 having been shipped off to collectors as far as Australia and South Africa. It was a great opportunity to gain insight into the world of independent stores, a dying breed which offer such valuable and personable experiences, as well as a chance for the Reading Club to peruse the selection of literature on offer!

Jay Kennedy

BAR MOCK TRIAL

On 19 November 2016, a team of sixteen, bright-eyed and eager Lower Sixth students took part in the Bar Mock Trial competition in the Royal Courts of Justice in Belfast City Centre. The Bar Mock Trial is an international law competition with the aim of giving young people an insight into the workings of the legal system, with students taking on the roles of barristers, witnesses and the jury to present their cases in front of real judges.

Preparations began right back in September and with a competitive audition process, the work started right away in search of four barristers, four witnesses, an usher, a court clerk and our jury members. After all the challenge and anticipation, the team was chosen, with myself as defence barrister. After a year of absence, back again was Miss Mulligan to lead us through this exciting contest!

Thus began the real work. With once or twice weekly practices, there's no doubt it required a lot of dedication and perseverance from everybody involved. Rehearsals involved running through our two cases; the first involving an accusation of witness intimidation and the second concerning an assault resulting in actual bodily harm. To guide us through the preparation process were two real-life barristers, Miss Nicola Leonard and Mr John Morrissey. With their immense knowledge and valuable experience, the team knew we were safe under their guidance.

The team itself consisted of two groups; a prosecution team with Donal Mackin and Mark Molloy as the barristers and Ciara Collins and Cliona Young McGahey as the witnesses, and a defence team including Luke Darrah and myself as the barristers and Patrick McLaughlin and Paul Molloy as the witnesses. Hugh-Kelly Bogue also doubled as both court clerk and usher. As defence barrister, it was my job to examine witnesses from both my own side (the defence) and the opponent's, the prosecution. This may sound



easy enough but there's a real knack to it, especially during examination-in-chief where leading questions aren't allowed! It was also my responsibility to write an opening and closing speech which was challenging in that it wasn't just simply about writing a good speech, it had to be persuasive and perceptive, keeping in mind also that delivery was pivotal to success.

When the day of the competition finally came, tensions were high! After all our hard work, we all wanted to do the best we could. When we arrived, it's needless to say we were shocked and daunted at the sheer volume of people in the main foyer! We then found out that the defence team would be going against Oakgrove Integrated College in the first round then the prosecution team would compete against St. Malachy's College and St. Dominic's in rounds two and three. Being one of the first cases of the day was nerve-racking, I think it hit us all pretty suddenly that we weren't doing a simple rehearsal in Miss Mulligan's room anymore, this was the real deal! After putting on our robes, it was time to head to the court room. We introduced ourselves to the other team and then, the trial began. First, the adrenaline

rush and then the dwindling of nerves, we were into the rhythm of it. It was a trial that kept us on our toes but before we knew it, the trial was over, the jury had delivered the verdict we'd hoped for of "Not Guilty" and the Judge himself had decided we won the first round! Now for the prosecution team. The competition again was fierce against St. Malachy's College but the team received the verdict they'd wanted of "Guilty" and the Judge of their case again decided the winners were Rathmore Grammar School! Thus began Round Three. Knowing we were against St. Dominic's who'd been successful in previous years, we didn't keep winning in mind, we just wanted to do our best. I must say, the prosecution team sure put up a good fight! Although in the end we didn't win, I can confidently say everyone performed excellently and it really couldn't have gone any better. The competition definitely confirmed for me at least that I'd like to pursue a career in Law in the future. It goes without saying the entire team would really advocate anyone with or without an interest in Law as it's an extremely enjoyable and worthwhile experience!

Lucy Marron



LOWER VI DEBATING

Rathmore are delighted to have participated in this year's Concern Debates programme. When the team attended the preliminary workshop on Debating Skills in early October they could never have imagined how far they would go in their first year in the programme! So far the team have debated on topics ranging from 'Ending World Hunger by 2030 is an impossible dream' to 'There should be limits to free speech on social media' to 'Europe has failed Africa.' The breadth and depth of the subject matter has always been challenging; it forces the students to think about their own sense of moral justice in our modern world.

The programme gives a voice to the younger generation allowing them to address issues of both national and international significance. It develops the skills of team building whilst simultaneously promoting independent thought. It is evident that Concern truly care about the opinions of today's youth and recognise that they are the future; the organisation of the competition and the enthusiasm of the Concern team is testament to this.

Triumph after triumph, Rathmore made it to the quarter-finals in Dublin on the 23rd March to oppose the proposition that, "Obama

has provided more hope than actual change". After an intense debate against St. Killian's German school in Dublin, Rathmore again came out victorious with team members Tiarnán Daykin, Thomas McKeown, Donal McLaughlin and Caitlin O'Neill all performing with tremendous poise and certainly displaying their oratory skills.

Onwards to the semi-final which took place on the 6th of April against St. Mary's CBS Carlow in the Talbot Hotel, South Dublin. This time, team members Hugh-Kelly Bogue, Megan McEvoy-Morgan, Thomas McKeown and Tiarnán Daykin were proposing that, "Torture is a just means of preventing terrorism". Unfortunately, the team did not make it to the final but they certainly went down with a fight! All team members performed to the best of their ability, certainly a testament to their continuous hard work and determination! The team's efforts have been recognised however, and they will be attending the final in The Helix in Dublin on the 15 May to be awarded "Best New Team". One lucky member will also be given the opportunity to be the timekeeper for the final debate. The team hopes to enter again next year and who knows, maybe next time we'll have a winning team! Congratulations to all involved!



SOROPTIMIST PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION

On November 23rd of last year, myself and three of my fellow Lower Sixth students (Grace Magee, Lara McGlinchey and Jane McWilliams) partook in the annual "Soroptimist" Public Speaking Competition that this year took place in Hillsborough. Our challenge was to write a speech, that was to be no longer than six minutes, on one of ten given quotes. Rathmore did extremely well and came away winning two of the four accredited spots! I was awarded, "Highly Commended" for my speech on the Gandhi quote, "Freedom of the press is a precious privilege that no country forego" and Grace Magee achieved Second Place for her wonderful speech on the WB Yeats quote, "Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire." Altogether, an extremely invaluable and pleasurable experience that equipped all four of us with the unique and esteemed skill of public speaking. We would all definitely recommend it to younger students to take part when they have the opportunity themselves!

Lucy Marron



QUEEN'S WOMEN GRADUATES PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION

Rathmore also participated this year in the 'Irish Federation of University Women' public speaking competition on 7 February 2017. The team consisted of Katie Boyle (Year 11), Megan Husband (Year 11) and Caila Lowry (Year 10). The students were given a set of topics in advance and then on the night, given a specific area within that topic to speak on; they only had 30 minutes before the competition to write their speech! What a challenge! Megan spoke on 'What is family?', Katie on 'My Ideal Holiday' and Caila on, 'What is more important: job satisfaction or money?' The competition was an excellent opportunity for the girls to practise their public speaking skills and become more confident in expressing their opinions in front of an audience. It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience for the team. Well done girls and keep up the great work!



POPE JOHN PAUL II GOLD AWARD

On Thursday 9 February, alongside other members of my year, I received my Gold Pope John Paul II Award. It is a faith achievement award and is earned through taking part in parish and social activities over a sixteen month period.

Over the course of the award, I became involved in a range of voluntary services. As a member of multiple choirs within school, I sang at various masses throughout the year and was encouraged to become a member of the Cairde Dé team. I therefore helped conduct the order and content of services, led Eucharistic Adoration three times a week and was even able to distribute Ashes on Ash Wednesday.

Through my strong desire to help those less fortunate, I volunteered with Action Cancer, campaigning for Breast Cancer Awareness, Cancer Focus and assisted in the organisation and collection of the Shoebox Appeal for refugees during Christmas.

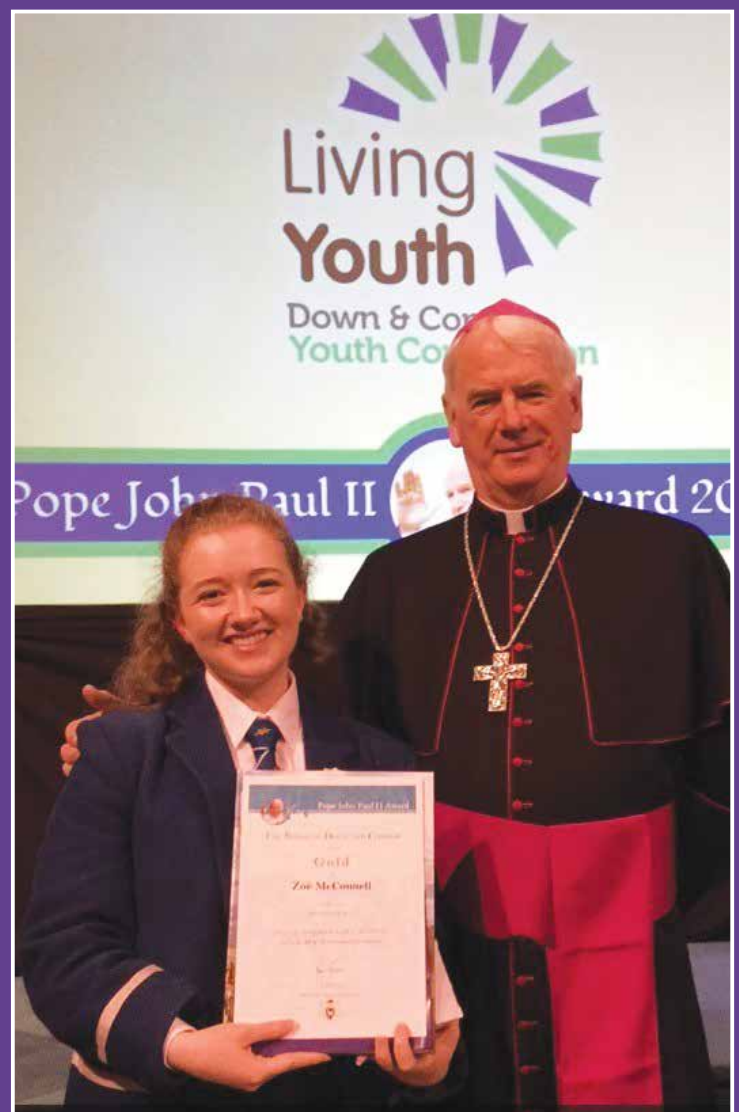
Over the last seven years, I have embraced the ethos of our school. This coupled with my strong faith, led me to apply to the Down and Connor Youth Team for summer 2016. As a member of the team I travelled to Lourdes with over 100 young people, coordinators and priests to aid people of varying illnesses and capabilities within our diocese on their pilgrimage. The nine day period was intense and yet extremely rewarding. I was allocated a pilgrim whose wheelchair I pushed around Lourdes. I aided and supported her and others to make their pilgrimage as enjoyable as possible. The pilgrims were so appreciative of the youth team and whether it was taking them shopping, for ice cream or just to have a chat, it made going the extra step completely worthwhile. Despite being physically and emotionally challenging, Lourdes has enabled me to empathise with people of different conditions and capabilities.

Most importantly I met so many extraordinary young people on the team and formed incredible friendships which have only strengthened over this past year. Lourdes was one of the most remarkable places I have travelled to and after my time there, I understood the joy and peace previous members spoke about finding there. The unity of the team did not end in Lourdes, with multiple reunions taking place throughout the year. Most recently I attended a fundraiser for the pilgrimage at 'The Emerald Ball' in Titanic Belfast.

For me, this award was made by the people I met through completing it. The friends I made in Lourdes have taught me the true meaning of friendship and have encouraged me to push my boundaries and step outside my comfort zone. The Pope John Paul II Award has enabled

me to grow spiritually, emotionally and physically as a person. Going to Lourdes taught me to truly appreciate everything we have and that true joy and peace comes from helping others achieve that very joy. It was a remarkable experience and I cannot wait to return this year.

Zoë McConnell





WORLD YOUTH DAY

In late July of 2016 I travelled to Krakow, Poland, to attend World Youth Day with Living Youth. Though apprehensive at first, this turned out to be one of the most eye-opening experiences of my life. An additional benefit of this trip was that it included four days in the Czech Republic. On the first day of this section of the trip, we landed in Vaclav Havel airport in the capital city of Prague. This is a city where we encountered wonderful historical landmarks, cathedrals and castles around every corner. Prague was a city that embraced and protected its history with a sense of pride that was difficult, if not impossible to overlook.

Our time in Prague built up to World Youth Day as many pilgrims followed our trek through the city. We spent the first days travelling to see the sights such as; the child of Prague, Charles Bridge and St Vitus Cathedral. What stands out most in my memory, was our spontaneous performance of the Macarena in which we were accompanied by fellow pilgrims from other countries. Even though the language barrier prevented each group from understanding one another, our shared Catholicism and the world renowned 'Macarena' brought us together. The locals did not, at first, seem overly pleased with our rendition of the song, outside of one of the oldest and holiest buildings in the city, but somehow, through random pilgrims shouting "Heeey Macarena," in uniformed choreography, they eventually found it entertaining.

As our time in Prague came to an end, we gathered our belongings and boarded the coach, leaving the beautiful country of The Czech Republic behind, and embarked on the next leg of our journey to Krakow. The long bus journey was punctuated with moments of hilarity such as when one of our group leaders, Father Andrew Black, crowd surfed down the coach.

Before we attended World Youth Day, we visited Auschwitz where Father Andrew provided us with an informative tour of the death camps, which was greatly enhanced by meaningful moments of prayer. My visit to the death camps was a heart wrenching experience, however it is one that everyone should have the opportunity to undertake.

Contrary to the title, World Youth Day, the event was actually a religious festival spanning 3 days. The opening ceremony took place in Blonia Park where our group was located approximately 150 yards from the Pope. The mass was attended by 500,000 people who had journeyed from every corner of the planet. Following Mass, we returned to our Hostel and enjoyed the company of friends old and new. The next morning, we trekked 13-miles to our next destination. This hike resulted in some serious sunburn that I would have

to nurse for the rest of the pilgrimage. I can honestly say, it was all worth it. After passing security and reaching the Area labelled "A12", we nestled down with our backpacks, water and sleeping bags for the night ahead. In order for us to spend the time we had sitting around waiting for the next ceremony to begin, we entertained ourselves by playing a makeshift game of American football with fellow American pilgrims. Unfortunately, I must admit, we lost badly! That day's Mass, that was presided at by Pope Francis, was attended by over 3 million people. This was followed by Eucharistic Adoration by candle light, which supplied one of the most awe-inspiring spectacles one could hope for. The vision of 3 million lit candles accompanied by the flags of many nations, all under the same star-filled Polish sky.

The next day, after the closing Mass of this year's World Youth Day festival, we left Krakow for an overnight stay in Brno, and flew home.

In conclusion, this was an experience that I would recommend to everyone. It made me feel truly proud of being Irish, Catholic and a member of a universal community of faith.

Joel Webb



Advent Carol Service

As Advent drew to a close, we gathered as a school community to prepare for the coming of Jesus in our annual Carol Service. The service was led by our Upper Sixth pupils who were joined by some Year 8 readers. In many ways, the oldest and youngest pupils leading our Carol Service reflected the efforts of our whole school in providing toys and hampers to St Vincent de Paul's Catholic Caring campaign. The service was beautifully accompanied by the exceptional musical talents of our orchestras and choirs who elevated us into the Christmas spirit and helped us to focus on the true meaning of Christmas.



Easter Liturgy

In reflecting on the suffering of Christ's Passion, our Easter Liturgy helped us to focus on the unnecessary plight of those who suffer the most from Climate Change. Our Trócaire campaign focused on the pressing issue of global warming. Pope Francis' call to 'hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor' (Laudato Si) became a focal point for our efforts to equate environmental justice with social justice. So too, our Way of the Cross examined how we are called to share in the life-giving mission of Jesus and how we can make a meaningful impact when we perform a small act that is done well.



POPE JOHN PAUL II AWARD

A very warm congratulations to our twenty-two Upper Sixth pupils who were awarded the Pope John Paul II Award by Bishop Noel Trainor on Thursday 9 February. The celebration was held in St Mary's Chapel Lane, where the volunteer work carried out by our pupils over a two-year period was recognised in this most worthwhile award. The recipients of the Award carried out voluntary service in a wide range of

parish and social settings that included leading Children's Liturgy, ministering as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and Ministers of the Word. In addition to volunteering to support a wide range of activities in school, some of our pupils had the opportunity to travel to Lourdes and World Youth Day in Poland during the summer holiday.

The recipients of the Award are: Carla Abbate, Olivia Adair, Holly Boyle, James Brady, Fiona Duffy, Aoife Fin-negan, Orla Lavery, Zoë McConnell, James McGeown, Bronach McKinney, Emily McStravick, Tara Martin, Orla Meenan, Beth O'Connor, Mark O'Hanlon, Paul O'Hanlon, Lucy O'Neill, Michael Rogan, Alice Soult, Shannagh Taylor, Joel Webb and Callum Whitten.



ROSARY CLUB

During the Lenten Season, it is important to remember those in the world less fortunate than ourselves, and when Our Lady appeared to three children in the Portuguese village of Fátima one hundred years ago, She requested that the Holy Rosary be said to help achieve peace in the world.

At Rathmore, we honour that request by attending the Rosary Club in the school chapel. Over the course of Lent, it is open to everyone at Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 1:30. The Rosary Club was founded by Sister Helen thirty years ago, and has since become a Rathmore tradition.

"LifeWorks" Visits Lower Sixth

Year 13 pupils who study A-Level RE study many issues relating to Medical Ethics as part of their course and on the 27 October, the pupils benefited from a visit by the "LifeWorks" team. "LifeWorks" is a non-profit organisation which seeks to defend the rights of the most vulnerable in society, the unborn and thus emphasise the value of life and the dignity of every person. During the talk pupils discussed the value of human life, debated when personhood began and compassionately listened to testimonies from parents who had bravely chosen life when receiving a terminal diagnosis for their unborn baby. The presentation also echoed the consumerist attitudes that are associated with abortion, most specifically the "Gendercide" taking place in India and China.

Whilst the purpose of the presentation was to further prepare pupils for the "Life and death issues" unit of the AS module, students

were also encouraged to fearlessly uphold the Sanctity of Life and ultimately live out the Rathmore motto, "Ut Vitam Habeant" ("That they may have Life"). Lower Sixth pupil Niamh Keane reinforced this, explaining, "Before the talk I had mixed views on abortion and the idea of when life began. Thanks to the information and stories from real life scenarios I was able to form my own opinion and now have a greater

understanding of the underlying issues which underpin the abortion debate."

To conclude the thought-provoking presentation, Year 12 and Lower Sixth pupils were invited to enter a national essay writing competition, discussing one of Martin Luther King's most famous teachings, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter".



Sister Patricia Visit

Sr. Patricia Speigut visited Rathmore on Tuesday 20th September to talk about the work she does in Nakuru, Kenya. Originally born and raised in Belfast, Sister Patricia became a midwife before being called to the religious life. She joined the Franciscan Missionary Sisters and in 1998 founded the Love and Hope Centre to primarily offer medical support, nutritional support and counselling to those affected by HIV/ Aids in Nakuru.

I thought that Sister Patricia's stories of life in Kenya were inspiring yet horrifying to say the least. They gave us an insight as to how people live every day without simple things such as food and water, and of the trouble this country has, from gang related violence to poverty. It was truly astounding to relate from our lives. We are healthy, happy kids, compared to the kids in Kenya who are without parents or guardians or a roof over their heads.

Che Smyth

MY FIRST RETREAT IN RATHMORE

My first retreat in Rathmore was on Wednesday 22 March. I was very excited as I had never been on a retreat and heard from another tutor group that it was great fun. We got to wear our normal clothes into school so it felt that we were not with the rest of the school. When we arrived at the convent we went into an R.E classroom with Miss Wright and sat down.

The first thing we did was stack up all the chairs and put the tables to the side, to make the room more spacious. Then we discussed what a retreat is and what we were going to do that day. A retreat is where you usually go away to a chapel or parish and take some time out to reflect on your faith and pray. Miss Wright said that we did not need to go away because we had the facilities for a retreat in the convent.

Next, we played a few 'ice breaker' games so we could get to know each other. For the first game, we passed round a toilet roll and we had to take between 1-10 squares of it, then we took it in turns to say as many facts of the squares of paper you took about either yourself or Rathmore. Then we played a game called Human Bingo, where you have to find out facts about each other and fill their name in the box. The hard thing was you were only allowed to use the person's name once! This game was really fun because I got to learn interesting facts about people in my tutor group that I didn't know before.

After that we focused on the question 'Who am I?'. To explore this further, we got into groups of about 5-6 and were given 15 pieces of spaghetti and some masking tape. We had to try and build a tall tower out of spaghetti and stick a marshmallow on top. This task was called 'The Marshmallow Challenge' and it was my favourite. It was really hard because the spaghetti kept snapping with the weight of the masking tape. We had to work as a team to stick the spaghetti together and it was really funny at the end when our tower collapsed and snapped in half! We learnt a lot about ourselves and each other

from this task and discovered qualities that we have. We noted ten good qualities about ourselves around a picture of our face and then on the other side we wrote ten qualities we want to develop in the future.

Next, we talked about the question 'Who are we?' and how we belong to Rathmore as part of the school community. We read the parable of the Good Samaritan and agreed that the moral was 'don't judge a book by its cover' and be kind to all. At Rathmore, we will meet a variety of people but we are all equal in the eyes of God. As we grow together we discover new things. It is important to support each other when things are difficult and enjoy the memories we will make here at our school.

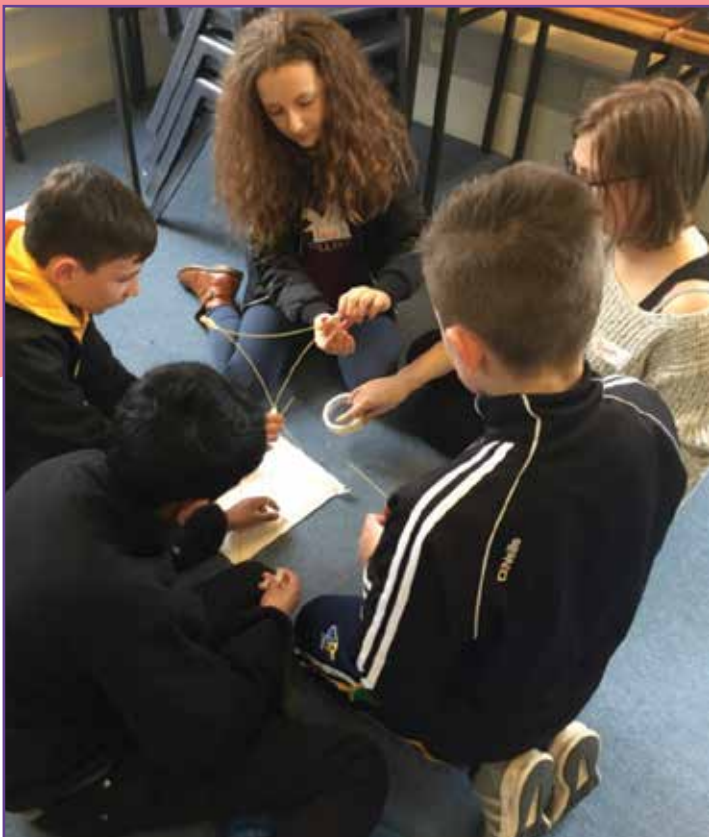
Then we prepared for Mass by rehearsing a hymn and sorting out the readings and gifts. After lunch we celebrated Mass with Father McGrady. I read the First Reading from the prophet Isaiah with the message 'Do not be afraid'. We then received the Body and Blood of Christ; for some of us it was the first time to receive Communion under both species.

After Mass we had a guided meditation with relaxing music led by Miss Wright. I really enjoyed this and found it very relaxing. It gave me time to think about how far I have come since I started Rathmore. I remember at the start of the year being very nervous about starting but now I have settled in really well and have made lots of new friends.

Finally, we completed an evaluation where we talked about the impact that the Retreat had on each of us. We watched a scene from the movie 'Shrek' where he talked about Ogres having 'layers like onions'. We used this as a metaphor for humans having many layers that we reveal at different stages of our lives.

Overall the retreat allowed us to understand how far we have come, and reflect on the person we want to become in the future. It was very enjoyable and cannot wait to do it again in Year 9.

Olivia Crilly



TRÓCAIRE TALK

To mark the beginning of Lent and the start of our annual Trócaire campaign, some of our pupils had the opportunity to listen to a talk given by Hérve Bund, the Director of Trócaire in Honduras. He gave us an incredible insight into life in Honduras, a country that suffers from the world's highest murder rate. Hérve explained that the work of Trócaire in Honduras revolved around helping the poorest and most disadvantaged people whose hardships have been exacerbated by the devastating impact of climate change. Honduras, like many Latin American countries, bears little responsibility for the factors contributing to global warming; it suffers a disproportionate impact due to its location between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and its climate. In particular, families living in low-lying land are particularly susceptible to flooding and are forced to flee their homes, often at night, up to four times a year. Hérve informed us that the people of Honduras, with whom he works, are greatly encouraged by the prayers and support from Ireland and that their resilience and resolve to mitigate the effects of climate change are buoyed by the support that they receive from all who support Trócaire. This was a fitting way to launch our Lenten campaign that heightened our awareness of the uneven distribution of the impact the global warming and climate change are having on countries around the world and hardened our resolve to "live more simply, so that others might simply live".



PRAYER GROUP

The Lower 6 prayer group, Cairde Dé, had another very successful year, leading many aspects of prayer life throughout the school. Under the direction of Fiona Collins, our Senior pupils organised and led Eucharistic Adoration every day in the Convent chapel. The Prayer Buddy initiative, where pupils in the junior school volunteer to pray for older pupils who are sitting exams, continued to be popular. One of the highlights of the year was the series of Faith Talks, where invited guests shared aspects of their faith life and development with the Cairde Dé team. This year we were delighted to be joined by Laura Whinnery, a youth-worker involved in various aspects of faith development and our own past pupil Fr Conor McCarthy. Fr Conor gave our pupils a very interesting insight into his personal faith journey and it was a unique privilege to hear how someone who had sat in the same seats only a few years ago was now a priest inspiring others in their own journey of faith.

2017 - BATTLEFIELDS

This summer, I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to visit the Battlefields with the history department upon the centenary of the historic and brutal Battle of the Somme. The experience was harrowing, deeply moving, and one which I will not soon forget.

We began our adventures with a fleeting visit to Paris. It was truly mesmerising to see the cobbled streets, ornate bridges and undeniably 'French' architecture. We saw sights such as The Louvre, Notre Dame and even The Eiffel Tower, and needless to say it was astounding. We also were able to enjoy a boat tour along the Seine - a definite highlight of our first day away.

Our second day was no less exhilarating than the first. We visited the Army Museum in Paris and even saw the tomb of notorious war leader Napoleon Bonaparte. Before long, we were whisked away from Paris and began our venture to Belgium. On route, we visited the Palace of Versailles - one of the highlights of the trip. The sheer beauty of the Palace was unbelievable, and it felt almost dream-like to see the inside of such a classical 'fairytale' castle. After this stop we made our way over the border and arrived in Belgium.

After a peaceful night's sleep it was time for the main event, our trip to the Battlefields. Our first stop was at the Newfoundland Memorial Park, where we were shocked to see the remnants of trenches and shells which had survived long after the war. It felt unsettling to be standing in the exact spot where so many had lost their lives. Following a visit to the Lochnager Crater we set out for possibly the most emotional part of our trip - a visit to the multiple grave sites for both the Allies and German soldiers. We also visited Delville Wood and explored Ireland's contribution to the Battle by visiting the Ulster Tower and the Island of Ireland Peace Park.

Although by no means a joyful experience, the visit was deeply emotional and I felt such a strong connection to those who had fallen on the battlefields. It was truly a once in a lifetime opportunity. My trip to France and Belgium was one of the best experiences of my time in school. It was a brilliant trip and I'm so thankful that I got to take part.

Matthew McAteer



DUBLIN 2017

Our A-Level study of the Partition of Ireland allowed for the History department to once again venture out on our annual Upper Sixth class trip to Dublin to explore the streets in which the rebellion of Easter 1916 was fought. We met our tour guide, Lorcan, outside the gates of Trinity College and began our day with a walking tour of Dublin itself to visit some of the key buildings associated with the Rising. We visited important sites, including the GPO and Dublin Castle, and some of the buildings that the rebels occupied during the Rising. Lorcan's lively, yet poignant account of the events of Easter 1916 certainly brought this aspect of our course to life in a thoroughly meaningful and informative way.

The reality of the events of the Rising and the years of turmoil that followed was reinforced by our afternoon visit to the Glasnevin cemetery a few miles outside of Dublin City. Memorials for the rebels and other key figures throughout Irish history such as Michael Collins and Éamonn de Valera were pointed out to us by our enthusiastic tour guide, and some of the lesser known individuals from our period of study gave a whole new perspective to our learning. This was an invaluable and worthwhile historical venture, one which we all enjoyed and couldn't recommend highly enough.

Sarah Rose Ferris

BERLIN 2017

The History department's annual trip to Berlin took place this year from the 10- 13 February, and was one of the best overseas trips I've been on to date. On the first day, we took a tour of the "Topography of Terror" – a museum built on the site of the former SS barracks and offices. This provided an insightful look into the Nazi regime. We also visited the National Holocaust Memorial and Museum – an intricate and poignant place of remembrance in the centre of Berlin dedicated to the victims of Nazi persecution. One of the most interesting sites we saw on the first day was the remains of the Berlin wall. The Capitalist East side of the wall was riddled with colourful graffiti, whereas the West Communist east side was very plain, a striking example of how contradictorily the two ideologies worked. The main highlight for me on the second day was our visit to the Nazi concentration camp, Sachsenhausen. This very chilling place witnessed some of the most horrific events in history, and although much of it was destroyed, the still air and chilling atmosphere was still rife. This was definitely an experience that stuck with me, and one I will never forget. We had a wonderful trip overall. The museums, the buildings and the people were all much more than I could have hoped for. I found the trip to be both educational and exciting and I would definitely recommend the trip to anyone interested in the history of Nazi Germany. Trust me, you won't regret it.



Matthew Miskimmon





DC TERROR TOURS

On Sunday 5 February, the Lower Sixth Politics class participated in an extremely educational and interesting "Terror Tours" trip which is designed to inform individuals of the many tragic incidents of 'the Troubles' that occurred between 1971 and 1998 in Belfast City Centre where many of the events took place. The unique walking tour of the City Centre visits the actual sites of some of the most significant incidents. The tour explains how the Troubles began, tells the stories of the people involved, their place in the conflict and the effect these attacks and incidents had on the city and its people. It also shows how far the city has come since the ceasefires and the Peace Process.

THE STUDENT FORUM

Three Lower Sixth and two Upper Sixth politics students attended the Queen's University Student forum on Wednesday 22 March. This was an incredibly entertaining and informative question and answer session with local political figures and journalists. The talk included questions such as "What's next for Northern Ireland after the death of Martin McGuinness?" and the effects of Brexit on students. The five of us thoroughly enjoyed the Student Forum as it broadened our perspective on the political spectrum and news in Northern Ireland.

EU Mock Council

Last October, myself and two other students from my class (Christopher Stewart and Patrick Boyle) participated in the EU Mock Council meeting for 2016. The EU Mock Council is an imitation of a European Parliament session, except the delegates come from schools around Northern Ireland to participate in different debates. To give the competition a little more realism, each school represents an EU member state and Christopher, Patrick and I represented Luxembourg. The topics discussed were the EU's entry into TTIP (a trade deal with Canada and the USA) and the terms of Britain's withdrawal from the EU. I certainly found it a worthwhile experience as I found it helped me to appreciate the skills that politicians need to excel in those large debates. Politics Society Rathmore has a long tradition of hosting political debate through our strong Politics Society and in February we followed this tradition by holding an Alternative Hustings so that many of the first time voters in the student body could get a chance to hear from some candidates from smaller parties ahead of making their choice on 2 March. The candidates who attended were George Jabbour from NI Conservatives, Gerry Carroll from People Before Profit and two past pupils in Sean Burns of the Cross-Community Labour Alternative and Ellen Murray of the Green Party. A large crowd was drawn from across the year groups and the debate ranged from topics such as NI's unusual electoral system and its merits to economic policy and environmental questions. All in all, I can say that I'm very glad to have participated in this event.

Donal Mackin



Stormont Trip 2017

The day started off by taking the bus from the gates of the school down to Stormont House and upon arrival we were met by a representative of the Stormont education staff and brought to a meeting room off to the side of the building, where we would spend most of the day. We listened to a presentation from the Chair of the Justice Committee and we asked her questions which helped with our course. After this we spent some time in the assembly chamber listening to the MLAs, though since this was after Martin McGuinness resigned it was practically empty.

Though we did get to hear from two MLAs and a representative of a party. We listened to Paula Bradshaw from the Alliance party and asked her questions on the upcoming elections and got the Alliance's opinion on the RHI scandal. We also got to hear from Claire Hanna, who had previously visited the school and our class for questions and answers. The third person we listened to was from the UUP who has worked for the party for many years. This interview helped me especially as I was doing an presentation on the party and the history and policies. At the end of the day we spent about half an hour inside the chamber listening to the goings on in the world of Stormont. This was a really engaging and informative day for students of Politics.

George Mitchell Institute Opening

Friday 24 June 2016 marked the official opening of The Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice. As an academic institute of Queen's University Belfast, its aim is to address the global challenge of conflict by leading research into building a peaceful, secure and inclusive society. Researchers from a variety of fields as diverse as politics, mental health, planning and computer engineering came together with a focus on four research priority areas: legacy issues, justice and rights, security, ideology and beliefs.

The launch event, was attended by many key and influential players in the Good Friday Agreement, addressing the set topic of 'What is next for Northern Ireland?'

Speeches from guest speakers included Jonathan Powell, who was Tony Blair's chief of staff, and Tim O'Connor, who worked in the Department of Foreign Affairs during the peace process, chaired by the BBC's Dr William Crawley. Speakers

highlighted the hard work and dedication of many, in particular Senator Mitchell in creating a peaceful and secure society in Northern Ireland. However, with the results of the historical Brexit referendum, speakers proposed their outlooks on the effect of this decision for Northern Ireland.

This was followed by speeches from Mr Mitchell and award-winning author Colum McCann, after which Senator Mitchell unveiled a plaque to mark the occasion. Senator Mitchell made a series of arguments depicting how the establishment of this new institute would build on previous conclusions in order to maintain a society without hostility. He also reinforced the importance of education in transforming societies by stating, "Universities in any free society are the protectors of individual liberty but most importantly the opportunity of free and open expression."

Speaking ahead of the event, Senator Mitchell said: "Through research, education and civic engagement, the Institute aims to make a difference to the lives of ordinary people who are struggling with the aftermath of conflict by empowering them to realise fairness, justice and tolerance."

As a student of Government and Politics and young person of the generation after the Good Friday Agreement, I spoke of my true ambition in the youth of Northern Ireland who, with the presence of optimistic idealism among us will be responsible for forging the future of Northern Ireland. Although in light of recent events, including the collapse of the institutions which has surged a wave of disappointment and disillusionment throughout the province, the principle of persistence I advocated in my speech must be remembered. We all aspire to the same ideals a chance for happiness; prosperity and embedded peace in our future and the talent, potential and space for growth of young people in Northern Ireland will see its future secure.

Sarah-Frances Kirk



Our YIGGY trip to Westminster

Over the past few months, myself and a group of students from different schools across Belfast met every week at YMCA to discuss topics from identity, culture and justice to how different governments worked. After applying to the course and going through an interview, we had the opportunity to go to Derry and meet with the Apprentice Boys, as well as going to Dublin to have a tour around Dáil Éireann and the Irish Houses of Parliament.

At the start of February, Mark Malloy, Katherine Doherty and myself had the chance to go to London to visit Westminster as part of our Youth in Government course. On the first day of our trip we got to see the popular theatre show *Wicked* which was surprisingly good! The following day was a Wednesday, and so we got to go into the houses of parliament during Prime Minister's Questions. We even got to see Jeremy Corbyn on his way in to question Theresa May. Afterwards, the SDLP MP for South Belfast, Alasdair McDonnell, spoke to us about what he does as an MP, how to get involved in Politics and talking about what we thought of the PMQs. Personally, I thought the trip was amazing and a great introduction into British Politics.

Since then, we were able to host a hustling shortly after the results of the 2017 NI assembly were released. Councillors from DUP, UUP, Alliance debated questions from the audience along with Sean Burns from the Cross-Community Labour Alternative party. It was really interesting to see the parties in charge of our country debating on things that actually mattered to young people. On top of this, we recently went into Stormont to go through the day of an MLA. We had a tour around the Assembly and Senate rooms and then each debated for and against our motions. Mine was "This house proposes reducing the legal voting age to 16" which sadly did not pass. All in all, Mark Malloy and I found the Youth in Government course to be truly engaging and a good way to expand our knowledge on both society and politics. Stay YIGGY!



All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad (AILO)

Six of our talented lateral thinkers competed against 1300 other students on the island of Ireland to solve complex puzzles such as deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics, decoding numerical spy codes, and interpreting ancient Mayan poetry.

AILO introduces students to linguistics (the study of human language) and to the application of logic to problems of language understanding and translation. The goal of the competition is to develop students' problem-solving skills and to inspire them to consider the fascinating range of careers at the intersection of linguistics, language and computing.

All of our students acquitted themselves excellently, and were placed around the top 10% of competitors. However, the ingenuity, logical ability and willingness to think around corners won two of the 100 coveted places in the All-Ireland final for Year 12 pupils Jude Horner and John Higgins.

Special congratulations go to Jude, who was awarded a commendation for his top ten performance in the Junior category. John, although he is only in Year 12, qualified as a Senior, and also acquitted himself admirably against sixth year students.

Well done to all our competitors, and keep honing those problem-solving skills for next year's competition.



MADRID EXCHANGE 2016

During the last week of school before breaking up for the Summer, thirteen lucky Year 11 Spanish students jetted off to the sunny city of Madrid for the annual Spanish Exchange.

We were overwhelmed by the welcome and hospitality that we received from our Spanish families. Each student was paired up with their exchange partner based on likes and interests. We spent the entire week hearing and speaking Spanish and experiencing Spanish culture. Our time in Madrid was both educational and enjoyable as we participated in activities ranging from a visit to the Opera House to a fun day at the theme park.

In September, we were reunited with our Spanish partners in Belfast. While they were in Ireland we had the opportunity to show them our culture and reciprocate their hospitality. It was an emotional and sad goodbye but strong bonds of friendship still remain.

Olivia Boyle and Lauren Leckey



INTERVIEW WITH ANUSKA



Where are you from and tell me a bit about it?

I was born in Venezuela, because my parents and my grandparents lived there for many years, but I moved to Spain when I was ten years old because that is where my parents and grandparents are from, Galicia to be exact.

Tell me a bit about yourself.

I like to travel a lot and I travel at any opportunity. Travelling is where I spend all of my money. I like to read a lot, I like music especially rock and I play the guitar. I also like art and photography.

What is your favourite country you have visited?

I love Russia, because I speak Russian and I love everything about Russian and I love Bulgaria.

What did you study in Spain?

I studied Fine arts, but I didn't finish it. I studied English studies in Spain, and graphic design in America.

What is your favourite subject

In general? My favourite are languages because they are fun, useful and easy for me and because I love writing more than numbers.

Do you like Ireland?

Yes, I like Ireland, it looks a lot like Galicia because it is also very green and it rains a bit. I like the Irish people because they're really nice. I don't like Irish food, because the Irish don't eat as much fish or seafood as in Spain and I miss Spanish food.

What is your favourite food in Ireland?

In Ireland? My favourite food is... that's a difficult question... fish and chips!

What is your favourite thing about Ireland?

My favourite thing about Ireland would be the incredible students that are here in Rathmore and how well I get on with them.

Anuska, ¿de dónde eres y cuéntame sobre eso?

"Nací en Venezuela, porque mis padres y mis abuelos viven allí desde hace muchos años pero me fui a España cuando tenía diez años porque mis abuelos y mis padres son españoles, de Galicia exactamente."

Dime un poco sobre ti.

Me gusta mucho viajar y viajo cada vez que tengo oportunidad. Viajar es donde gasto todo mi dinero. Me gusta mucho leer. Me gusta la música, especialmente me gusta el rock y tocar la guitarra. También, me gusta el arte, y la fotografía.

¿Cuál es tu país favorito de los que hayas visitado?

Me encanta Rusia, porque hablo ruso y me gusta todo lo ruso, y me encanta Bulgaria.

¿Qué estudiaste en España?

Estudí Filología Inglesa en España, y Diseño Gráfico en los Estados Unidos.

¿Qué es tu asignatura favorita?

¿En general? Los idiomas porque son divertidos, útiles y fáciles para mí y porque me gusta más las letras que los números

¿Te gusta Irlanda?

Sí, me gusta Irlanda. Se parece mucho a Galicia porque también es muy verde y llueve bastante. Me gusta la gente de Irlanda porque son muy simpáticos. No me gusta la comida irlandesa, porque los irlandeses no comen pescado ni marisco y echo mucho de menos la comida española.

¿Cuál es tu comida favorita?

¿En Irlanda? Mi comida favorita en Irlanda es... es una pregunta muy difícil... fish y chips.

¿Cuál es tu cosa favorita en Irlanda?

Mi cosa favorita en Irlanda son los alumnos tan increíbles que tiene Rathmore y lo bien que me lo paso con ellos.

SPANISH CLUB

Hello, my name is Nevina Jayan. I am a Year 8 pupil here at Rathmore, and one of the clubs I have joined this year is the Spanish Club. Spanish club is amazing; it is taken by the Spanish assistant Anuska and is on every Thursday lunchtime. Spanish Club is one of my favourite clubs. Every time we go, there is something different ready for us to do. First, we started looking at animals. For example, did you know that monkey in Spanish is Mono? We also practise what we are learning in class, e.g. countries, nationalities, classroom objects, etc. We play a lot of games; most of the time, it is boys against girls. I have been going for up to ten weeks now and I have enjoyed every single week. We always enter and leave the room with a big smile on our faces. Anuska is great fun to be around and I have learnt a lot from her. Spanish club is a great way to take the language outside of the classroom, and, of course, to make new friends.



DONEGAL LANGUAGES AND ADVENTURE CENTRE JUNE 2016

At the end of June a large group of our Year 8 French and German pupils went off on a very successful trip to the Languages and Adventure Centre in Bundoran, County Donegal. This very well-established centre offers pupils the opportunity to participate in a wide range of indoor and outdoor sporting activities, while at the same time improving their language skills through fun-based but fairly rigorous language workshops.

Accompanied by Mrs. McCaffrey, Ms Vieussens and Ms Kelly, our 47 strong group set off full of enthusiasm for the trip ahead. Once again, Collie and his large team of coaches and assistants are to be commended not only for their professionalism and efficiency, but also for their ability to deliver a packed programme in the most good-humoured and encouraging way; nothing is too much trouble for them. They have a delightful way with the pupils and can somehow manage to get even the most bleary-eyed twelve year olds to put their heart and soul into any outdoor pursuit first thing in the morning! Our pupils had the opportunity to take part in activities such as high rope climbing, abseiling, surfing and, the absolute favourite, cliff-jumping. The timing of the cliff-jumping activity is dependent on the tide, so we had to wait until almost nine o'clock in the evening to begin our cliff jumping! At the Centre every pupil gets the chance to grow and develop in confidence, participating in sports and outdoor activities that they might never before have even contemplated. Furthermore, many activities require group work, collegial thinking and mutual support, thus developing team spirit and togetherness.

The language content of the three-day residential course is also considerable. Our pupils received two 3 hour tuition sessions in their chosen language (French or German). Nicky, a qualified French and German teacher, provided the language teaching for all our pupils this year and delivered a thorough programme well-suited to the level of our Year 8 pupils. They certainly went back to Rathmore having developed their vocabulary and their language skills.



GERMAN DEBATE HOSTED BY QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

On Friday 10 February, three Lower Sixth German students, Michael Kelly, Claire McGloin and Chloe Cassidy, took part in a German language debating competition at Queen's University. Seven teams of AS and A2 students from across Northern Ireland participated in the debates and were judged by a panel of three native-speaking German professors, Barbara Boyle (QUB), Aline Muff (QUB) and Angela Vaupel (St Mary's UC, also the Honorary German Consul for Northern Ireland). The judges praised the students' daring and creative communication skills, critical thinking and speeches that showed both individuality and effective teamwork.

The team had only two weeks after the motion was announced to prepare and perfect their arguments, assisted by their classmates. Each team member had to prepare and deliver a speech which on the day was followed by a summary speech given by each team captain. Michael was an excellent captain for our team.



The motion of our debate was "Die Gesundheit der heutigen Jugend ist viel schlechter, verglichen mit der Gesundheit ihrer Eltern in deren Jugendalter", which translates to "The health of today's youth is much poorer when compared with the health of their parents in their youth", and our team opposed the motion against Strathearn School/Campbell College. We thought that this was a challenging argument, but we were well prepared and felt ready for the challenge. Our hard work paid off and we won our debate, with our captain Michael winning the Best Speaker of the competition and our school's team being placed second overall, with Methodist College taking the winning spot.

GERMAN EXCHANGE JUNE 2017

Last June, pupils from the Year 11 German class were given an opportunity to take part in an exchange with pupils from our partner school in Bonn, the Nicolaus-Cusanus- Gymnasium. We were matched up according to our hobbies and interests and had already been communicating online with each other a few months beforehand, so it was exciting to finally get to meet each other. We were all very nervous about staying with a German family for a week, but we settled in quickly because we were made feel so welcome. The weather was beautiful – the sun shone every day and it was very warm. We did lots of really enjoyable activities, including a trip to Cologne where we visited the cathedral and climbed the 533 steps (yes, we counted every step on the way up!) to the top of the cathedral tower. Later that afternoon we visited Cologne Zoo and later we even managed to fit in some shopping.

My favourite day was the day we spent at Phantasialand, a huge theme park with lots of exciting rides and rollercoasters, like the Black Mamba and The Talocan. In the evenings we spent time with our German partners and we all got along really well.

Not only was the exchange extremely enjoyable, but it was also a great opportunity to improve our German- our German partners were very patient and were very helpful when we had difficulties using some words or phrases. It was an amazing experience and we made lots of new friends with whom we still keep in contact- it was definitely one of the best experiences I have had so far.

Anna Lavery



DER DEUTSCHKLUB

Rathmore offers many opportunities for Year 8 pupils to get involved in school life, one of them being the German Club, der Deutschklub which was led this year by our German assistant, Simone Junker, who was assisted by pupils from the AS German class. The Club meets every Tuesday at lunchtime. The pupils this year have enjoyed the many activities and have learnt a lot about German culture and language. Together we

have made some typical German foods like Schokokrossies and "die sehr lecker waren". Not only did we get to eat the delicious Schokokrossies but we also came away with lots of useful German vocabulary which we had learned along the way.

We also learned about the tradition of making a Schultüte for children on their first day of school and filling it with lots of delicious sweets, coloured pens and pencils that they will need for school.

The German Club is a great way to widen your knowledge of German culture, to learn lots of new words, meet new friends and have "viel Spaß" (great fun). We sang German songs, helped by Michael and Conor playing the guitar, we learned new crafts and got to eat some yummy food!

Der Deutschklub macht unheimlich viel Spaß- mach mal mit!

Alaoise Thomas

WORK EXPERIENCE IN GERMANY

During our week of Work Experience all eight of us who study German AS took advantage of the amazing opportunity of completing our placements in Bonn, Germany. Not only did we get to experience a week in our chosen field of work, but we also were able to practise our German in the country itself – wie besser, eine Sprache und deren Kultur zu lernen als vor Ort?

Our chosen placements were varied, Thomas and Alaóise went to a law firm, Chloe to an architect's office and Michael went to a local primary school. Catherine was very brave and jetted off to Hamburg where she immersed herself in the German language

and culture. Marise and I both chose to go to the primary school, the GS Gotenschule which is just beside our partner school the Nicolaus Cusanus Gymnasium. Whilst there, we observed various lessons, we helped the children with their homework in the afterschool club, and even managed to teach them a couple of English lessons. Having real conversations with people in a foreign language was an amazing experience!

Once I managed to resist the temptation of reverting to English when things got difficult, I found that speaking in German was so much fun and got a lot easier as the week went on. It was also great to see all the people I had met when I took part in our school Exchange in Year 11.

When we weren't working, there was lots to

see and do, the highlights of which were the trip to Cologne Cathedral and sampling the German cuisine like Wiener Schnitzel and Bratwurst mit Currysoße.

I would definitely recommend the experience to all German students!

Conor Martin



COLÁISTE MHACHAIRE RABHARTAIGH

Anuraidh, chuaigh mé chun na Gaeltachta i Machaire Rabhartaigh i gContae Dhún na nGall ar feadh trí seachtaine.

Chuaigh mé ann le mo chairde agus bhí craic iontach againn ar an bhus. Nuair a bhain muid an Ghaeltacht amach, chuaigh muid isteach go dtí an halla mór. Tamall gairid ina dhiaidh sin, chuaigh mé go Teach Mháire Mhic Róibín. Bhí ochtar eile ag fanacht ann, Conor, Thomas, Liam, Dáire, Darragh, Odhran, Tiarnan agus Cathal. Bhí an chéad tráthnóna saor againn agus ansin bhí céilí againn.

Bhí mé i Rang Sheáin, bhí craic iontach ann i rith na seachtaine agus d'fhoghlaim muid cuid mhór rudaí nua.

I rith na laethanta, is minic a thit an tóin as an spéir, mar is dual d'Éirinn! Ach le fírinne, níor chuir an aimsir isteach ná amach orainn mar gur cuma faoin aimsir nuair atá tú sa Ghaeltacht! Ar an láimh éile, bhí cúpla lá ann nuair a bhí an ghrian ag scoilteadh na gcloch mar sin de chuaigh muid chun na trá agus d'imir mé iománaíocht agus peil le mo chairde.

Bhí an tseachtain dheireanach ar an tseachtain is fearr i mo shaol. Chuaigh muid go Leitir Ceanainn agus cheannaigh mé éadaí don chéilí bréig éide i Siopa Pennies. Ansin, bhí oíche den scoth againn ag an chéilí féin.

Ar an oíche dheireanach bhí muid gléasta suas don chéilí mór. Bhain mise Duais an Phríomhoide agus bhí mé iontach bródúil. Bhain Caoimhe Venning, as an rang Gaeilge s'agam, cailín an chúrsa fosta, ansin thosaigh an Céilí Mór agus chríochnaigh sé le hAmhrán na bhFiann. Bhí sé iontach tochtmhar agus mothúchánach mar bhí muid ag dul abhaile.

Sa halla mór an mhaidin dar gcionn, bhí deora i súile gach duine, d'fhág muid slán ag an cheantar agus chuaigh muid abhaile ar an bhus. Bhí an-dúil agam sna céilithe, sna ranganna agus sa chraic. Bhuail mé le daoine nua agus chuir mé snas agus blas ar mo chuid Gaeilge. Rachainn ar ais inniu, dá dtiocfadh liom!

Dáire Mac Stiofáin

CLUB NA GAELTACHTA

Ag am lóin gach Déardaoin téim chuig Club na Gaeltachta le mo chairde. Imrönn muid cluichí, éisteanm muid le ceol traidisiúnta agus bíonn muid ag canadh amhráin Ghaeilge ón Ghaeltacht. Bíonn craic ar dóigh ann agus thig linn snas a chur ar an Ghaeilge s'againne ag an am céanna - bígí linn!

Leóna Ní Mhisteíl



FÁINNE

Rinne an Rang Gaeilge i mBliain 10 an Fáinne Airgid i mí Feabhra. Bhí siad ag caint faoin teaghlach agus faoin cheantar s'acu. D'éirigh leo ar fad!



ABAIR 2017

Ar an 7ú de Mhí Aibreáin, chuaigh mé féin agus mo chomhscóláire, Alaóise Thomas chuig Ardscoil Naomh Doimín do chomórtas de chuid Gael Linn darb ainm 'Abair'. Is Comórtas Caint Phoiblí é d' ardscoileanna i gCúige Uladh.

Bhí seacht scoil ag glacadh páirte sa chomórtas ó bhliain 12 go dtí bliain 14. Bhí an caighdeán ard agus mar gheall air sin, bhí muid uilig neirbhíseach ach corraithe ag an am céanna! Labhair na hiomaitheoirí faoi ábhair éagsúla iontacha ó Donald Trump go ríomhairí nua-aoiseacha, dar ndóighe, agus bhí siad uilig iontach suimiúil.

Bhí mise ag labhairt faoi 'Tábhacht an Oideachais' agus bhí Alaóise ag labhairt faoin 'Eireannachas'. Is dócha go raibh an bheirt againn imníoch ar dtús ach nuair a thosaigh muid a chaint, bhain muid muid an-sult as.

Tháinig mise sa dara háit i Roinn C do na scoileanna gramadaí agus ghnóthaigh mé ait sa bhabhta ceannais. Bhí mé iontach bródúil ar fad asainn beirt, cé nár bhain mé an Chraobh. Eispéireas iontach a bhí ann agus ba dheas mo chairde ón Ghaeltacht a fheicéail arís!

Sinéad Nic Uilliam



LANGUAGE HIGH ACHIEVERS

The Faculty of Languages had no shortage of success in 2016, with two of our pupils pulling off an incredible treble at GCSE! Thomas McKeown attained First place in Northern Ireland in German and James Gallagher attained First place in Spanish and Second place in French in Northern Ireland. Both pupils were invited to the CCEA Awards ceremony in the beautiful Titanic building in April and are pictured here. A tremendous achievement by both pupils!

Other high achievers include Mark Conlon who was placed joint 3rd in GCSE Spanish; Daniel Biging Loughran was placed joint 3rd in German and Hannah Matthews was placed joint 2nd in A-Level German.

LANGUAGES WEEK

As always, Rathmore prides itself on a love for diversity and a celebration for cultures around the world, so when Languages Week came around again in September 2016, we were eager to be a part of this national event! To celebrate, our school canteen provided us with amazing different dishes from around the world each day of the week, decorating the canteen with flags, posters and music from each country! Our corridors and classrooms were also vibrant and diverse with phrases from various different languages, making it impossible not to learn something new every day! On this week it was difficult not to see a student of Rathmore reading new phrases and sporting a new wristband or sticker with a phrase in a language from around the world. This week was greatly enjoyed by all and we can't wait for the next!



MANDARIN

Hi, My name is Xuefei Wang (汪雪菲), I am from Hunan, China. I taught English in Zhuzhou Foreign Language School before I came to Rathmore as part of the British Council and Confucius Institute programme allowing me to become a Chinese teacher in Rathmore Grammar School since September 2016. There are about 30 students who are learning Chinese now and all of the students have developed greatly since the start of the year. Some of the students have already taken the HSK exam in April, with others sitting their exam in June!

NEWS FROM THE GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT



YEAR 11 FIELD TRIPS TO COLIN GLEN FOREST PARK

In June 2016, our Year 11 students went on trips to Colin Glen Forest Field Centre to undertake a river study that formed part of the GCSE Controlled Assessment. The students studied the changes to the river from source to mouth as it wended its way through the forest park. The Park Ranger, Paul Bennett, gave us a very interesting guided tour of the park explaining all the different changes to the river along with explanations of the associated geology and wildlife.



YEAR 13 FIELD TRIP TO MAGILLIGAN, DERRY

In October 2016, our current Year 13 students set off for a one night residential to Magilligan Field Centre in County Derry. The main part of the field trip was a beach study investigating sand dune changes. The students also studied a local river and woodland, important parts of AS Physical Geography. It was clear all students lucky enough to go really enjoyed the experience which was invaluable to their career as a geography student in the school.



YEAR 14 NEWCASTLE FIELD TRIPS

In March 2016 our current Year 14 students went to Newcastle, County Down. This was part of their A2 tourism section and we studied tourists' perception of the town using questionnaires. There was a talk by a tourism manager in the Information Centre at Newcastle. It was a good way for the students to end their geography careers in the school. Let's hope this cemented their interest in geography forever!



YEAR 12 WORLDWIDE QUIZ

In November 2016, a team of three keen Year 12 geographers set off to Queen's University Geosciences with Mr Wilson to compete in the NI Finals of the "Worldwise Geography Quiz". The team was comprised of Anthony Gallagher, Eva McLean and Matthew Donaghy, who all competed excellently on the day and came out with 4th place! Well done to all involved!



QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY AUTUMN LECTURES

On five Tuesday evenings during Autumn, Queen's University organised a series of A-Level Geography lectures on a range of relevant, interesting topics such as the melting of tundra glaciers in the Arctic. Mrs Wright attended these lectures with some of our students. These lectures are given by recognised experts in their field and give our students the experience of attending a university lecture.



GEOGRAPHY CLUB

Each Thursday lunchtime, budding Geographers meet to explore a number of diverse and interesting geographical issues. Following the Italian earthquakes during the summer, we were intrigued by what the causes of these were. Therefore, during our first "Geo Club" meeting of this school year, we investigated the cause of earthquakes and subsequently simulated our own earthquake using party poppers! Continuing with our theme of the restless earth, we also constructed our own volcano models and simulated eruptions using vinegar and baking soda. This year, we have also examined the rock cycle through rock sort activities, a fossil hunt around the Convent and even creating our very own rock cycle, using different types of chocolate (this activity proved very popular!). Who says geography isn't fun?



REGIONAL WINNERS OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOLS GEOLOGY CHALLENGE

On Wednesday 22nd February, six Lower Sixth students (Caitlin Cullen, Nuala Hamill, Catherine Mullan, Oisín Donnelly, Ronan Donnelly and Michael Tennyson) attended the Regional Heat of the Schools Geology Challenge, held at Methodist College Belfast. The team presented a poster and five minute presentation on the tsunami geohazard. The team excelled during their presentation and won the heat. They qualified to attend the Final in May, which is held at the Geological Society's headquarters in London.



Visit to Coca-Cola

Our recent visit to the Coca Cola HBC plant in Lisburn gave our Year 11 pupils the opportunity to enrich their understanding of Business Studies in a practical way. An informative DVD presentation which illustrated how Coca Cola made its way to Ireland was followed by a guided gallery tour of the main state of the art production facility, experiencing a 'bird's eye view' of how the products are manufactured, bottled, packaged and stored. This was followed by an opportunity to explore the world of Coca Cola, its marketing, information on the internal structure of HBC and the objectives of the company including its commitment to recycling and the environment.



BANK OF IRELAND VISIT

Year 12 Business Studies pupils had the opportunity to interview Maggie Henry, the Manager of the Bank of Ireland, Lisburn Road at the start of October this year. This was an opportunity to discuss with Maggie various aspects of the business including the implementation and implications of new technology in banking and the importance of training both from an employees and an employer's perspective. This informative visit was set up to help prepare them for their Controlled Assessment task that each Year 12 GCSE Business Studies student carries out. It was an opportunity to gather primary data for those investigating the bank and for others it gave them a structure to enable them to ask questions to the owners/managers of their chosen business.



Bank of Ireland



TAYTO VISIT 2017



Year 11 Business Studies students had the opportunity to visit the Tayto Castle in Tandragee. They were able to go on a guided tour around the factory, learning about various aspects of the company. Around the production facility, the group learnt how the famous crisps and snacks were produced, packaged and distributed. This unique first-hand experience has greatly enhanced their understanding of

the Marketing and Production modules of their GCSE specification, bringing the subject to life and enabling them to understand it more fully. The educational side of the visit was undoubtedly beneficial to the students – but tasting the crisps directly from the production line and receiving some free samples was, of course an added bonus for many in the group!



YOUNG ENTERPRISE 2016-2017 BROC

'BROC' meaning 'badger' in Irish, is the name of this year's Rathmore Young Enterprise Company Initiative, named after Badger's Lane, a road that many of the students of Rathmore walk up and down each day. And this year, BROC is aiming to tackle the growing epidemic of childhood obesity, one lunch box at a time, with their product the LunchBroc: A compartmentalised lunch

box that comes with a guide for parents so they can fill their child's school bag with a healthy and tasty lunch each day! The company has received some accolades as, after networking with health associations and the government, we have received a stamp of approval from the Public Health Service, who guarantee that each recipe found in the guide is healthy and balanced. In addition to this they have secured an order of over 200 units of their product with the HSCNI and were successful in their primary interview to the YE competition, and are looking forward to (hopefully) some success at this year's annual 'Big Celebration'.



YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR

In early April, as part of the BROC Young Enterprise Initiative I was able to partake in the Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award. This sub-competition was all about initiative and being able to communicate a business idea, so I decided that I would enter with my home-business, Tabby Cat Crafts, which focuses around commissioned art, animation and costume pieces.

As part of the competition I had to complete an interview, where I spoke to three top business executives and they asked me a series of questions about my experience in YE, and my business in itself. The experience made me nervous, but I felt that with so much business experience under my belt I was in for a good opportunity of winning the Belfast category - and win I did! On the day of the Big Celebration, the Young Enterprise Award Ceremony, I took home the trophy that crowned me winner of the Belfast category for 2017.

In May, I will be attending another interview, and then another awards ceremony later on in the month in which I could be awarded one of two places in the Northern Ireland category to move on to the finals in Vancouver, Canada. If successful I'll be taking part in lectures and business seminars, and hopefully get a week long holiday out of it!

Cliona Young McGahey

STOCK MARKET CHALLENGE SUCCESS

The Dealing Room is an accessible and enjoyable collaborative learning experience provided for the Year 11 pupils in the Business Studies Department.

In the online competition students worked in pairs on two linked screens: one for the investment analyst and one for the media analyst. Starting with a fund of £300,000 their task was to increase the value of their starting fund by buying and selling shares in 10 companies. In order to make the right investment decisions students needed to do their

research. They had to decide whether a news story would have a positive or negative effect on the share prices. The games enabled the students to develop essential quantitative skills, improve their business and economic understanding, and develop their skills in collaborative and time-pressured team games. Four members of Year 11 were successful in the Qualifying stages and will represent the school at the Belfast final in the PwC office in Belfast, competing against five other finalist schools.



YEAR 13 VISIT TO QUEEN'S TRADING ROOMS

In January 2016, our Year 13 Business Studies pupils visited Queen's School of Management Faculty to view their new trading rooms. The First Derivatives Trading Room is an educational and enjoyable experience which allows pupils to learn about finance and investment in an interactive setting. The visit can be used to illustrate the real world applications of concepts being studied in school, and can be tailored to focus on aspects of Maths, Economics, Accountancy, or Business Studies.

Imitating the style of a professional trading room, students have access to the Bloomberg professional service – a market leader in financial data, news and analytics. The Trading Room aims to bridge the gap between financial theory and practice and consequently improve student employability.

The visit also provides an insight into various aspects of accounting and finance and the opportunities which they afford to students at third level education. Our pupils found the visit to be both interesting and of high value in informing their future career decisions.



BFI ACADEMY

This year I applied for the BFI Academy and was lucky enough to have been accepted into this amazing scheme in London. Run in partnership with the National Film and Television School, I had the opportunity to use industry standard equipment and be mentored by the professionals of the film world. Masterclasses were featured throughout the experience, including a talk from director Asif Kapadia, director of the Oscar winning "Amy". On our arrival we were greeted by Nik Powell founder of Virgin Records who gave us a motivational speech on his life's journey and the successes to come out of the film school. Taking part in a pre-residential in March was an opportunity to get to know my team and our tutor, director Eva Reilly. We talked over our script and in the upcoming weeks we discussed our plans for the film over social media.

During the eleven days in April we worked on a film, my team was assigned "Look At What The Cat Dragged In". The story centres an agoraphobic teenager who has been abandoned by his mother,

who then goes on to find an unlikely companion in the form of a stray cat. My specific role on the shoot was sound, mixing and booming was a great way to explore different parts of a film set that I had not yet considered. In post production we were able to use a professional Dolby recording studio and learn about what goes into sound design. As well as working on our film we received professional vocal coaching to help our presentation skills and then took part in a marketing presentation judged by Nik Powell. Winning this gave the team an extra boost of confidence to push through and finish the post production of our film making it the best it could possibly be.

Travelling to London and meeting 66 new people was a unique experience and I now have connections all over the UK. The opportunities that the BFI Academy can offer is endless; and this was proved when one evening some of last year's participants came to visit the hotel. This group of people who were sitting in the same place as me last year were now working on the set of Star Wars at Pinewood studios. At the end of the

eleven days our movie premiered at the BFI London South Bank. Nik Powell, joined by "Fresh Meat" and "Misfits" actress Zawe Ashton, presented us with our certificates and congratulated us on our achievement.

After the screening there was a networking event where we got the chance to mix with industry professionals and possibly pick up some work. After meeting some very interesting people such as the cinematographer from "Trainspotting" and getting some cards from production companies, it was time to leave the BFI and sadly all the great new people that I had met. Learning at the NFTS was an unforgettable experience and has given me an invaluable insight into the industry.

Anna Campfield



CINEMA REALISM WORKSHOP

On 17 October our Upper Sixth Media Studies class visited the SSE in Belfast for Cinemagic's workshop on Cinema Realism. Tony McKibbin from the University of Edinburgh hosted the talk on the narrative and visual style of realism in world cinema, focusing on movements including British Social Realism, Italian Neo Realism, The French New Wave, Cinéma Vérité and Poetic Realism. After a really interesting interactive discussion on Realism, we had the opportunity to watch Pierre and Luc Dardenne's Palme d'Or winning film 'Rosetta', which was very stark and thought-provoking. We had further heated debate about the film afterwards which was immensely enjoyable.



PITCH THAT BRIEF!

"Pitch That Brief" is an event held by Cinemagic in the Titanic Quarter which encourages students of Film and Media to take part in a miniature competition of pitching a film idea to BBC NI Commissioning Executive, Justin Binding, for the series 'True North'. 'True North', is a hugely successful television show about true stories in Northern Ireland. We were divided into different groups to pitch our television episode, and after researching and debating our ideas, we were finally ready to pitch. One of the teams from Rathmore won the competition due to the strength of their idea based around filming life inside a local take-away restaurant. It was a frantic and inspiring workshop and really gave us a taste of how to present our ideas to distribution companies. I can honestly say that 'Pitch That Brief' was a fun and rewarding experience.

Cliona Young McGahey



INSPIRATIONAL TALK FOR RATHMORE MUSICIANS

In November, GCSE and A Level musicians were treated to a fascinating address by Mr John Sullivan Kelly, musician and inspirational speaker. Founder and former CEO of the Irish Chamber Orchestra, Mr Kelly was in Belfast attending a corporate event and was kind enough to spare some time in the afternoon to come to Rathmore and share with our musicians his musical journey, thoughts and tips on achieving their goals, practising, playing from memory and much more. Engaging and entertaining, Mr Kelly provided our musicians with much food for thought.



Magical School Carol Service

Over 140 Rathmore musicians performed in a truly enchanting School Carol Service held on Sunday 11 December in the historic St. Patrick's Church on Donegall Street.

The Senior Choir, Girls' Choir, Junior Choir, Chamber Choir, Senior Strings and Symphony Orchestra all featured in the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, which retells the Christmas narrative through sacred music and readings.

This was undoubtedly an extremely special occasion which certainly showed our students are a real credit to the School; many parents, staff and parishioners commented on how fantastic our students sounded and how professionally and reverently they conducted themselves.

Congratulations and many thanks and to all those who took part.



Rathmore Musicians at the Ulster Hall

Lucky Rathmore GCSE and A level musicians had the wonderful opportunity to attend two Ulster Orchestra concerts this year! Seeing conductor and classical pianist Barry Douglas playing the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto performance on 30 September was a rare treat; which was followed by Beethoven's infamous Symphony No. 5 (during which our students followed the score). On 8 October also, the Ulster Orchestra played some of the most famous classical music used in TV programmes and advertisements over the years, such as Saint-Saëns' "Danse Macabre" and Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries".

A worthwhile and enjoyable experience for all students given this superb opportunity.

Rathmore A Level Musicians were also given the chance to visit the Ulster Hall on Thursday 23rd February to watch a rehearsal of one of the new AS set works, the Brahms Violin Concerto. The conductor and manager of the Ulster Orchestra kindly allowed our students to 'sit in' for two hours and watch them play and rehearse this great work with Viviane Hagner, the violin soloist.



To analyse and read the score of this music with a live orchestra and soloist is something our students will not forget – what an experience!



Ballymena Music Festival

A growing number of soloists and ensembles entered the Ballymena Festival this year. In our second venture as a school to the festival, our Senior Strings group came 1st in their class, performing Vivaldi's "Storms" from the Four Seasons and Strauss' "Pizzicato Polka". Among other winners were Ryan Harrison who was awarded 2nd place with his flute solo playing the 3rd movement from Mozart's 2nd Flute Concerto and also Eva McKee who came 1st in her group playing Edward German's, "Salterello". Massive congratulations to all who took part and we look forward to defending our titles next year!

Music Trip to London March 2017



Just two days before St. Patrick's Day, the Music Department decided to take a trip to Ye Olde London! The Upper Sixth Music class along with GCSE music students from Years 11 and 12, not to mention Mr Strange and Mrs Agnew by our sides, trekked to London for a two day stay. The plan was to go sightseeing around the numerous famous landmarks, attending concerts in the Royal Academy of Music and watching the renowned "Les Misérables" at the Queen's Theatre!

When we arrived at Gatwick, the sun shone brighter than it had in Belfast; the weather really could not have been better! We hopped on the train to Victoria, where we would be making our way over to Westminster to our hotel. After offloading, we walked through Horse Guards Parade and towards Buckingham Palace, where we sat and soaked up our surroundings. Later on, we had some down time to explore Covent Garden, and also the seemingly endless shops and restaurants around the centre of London. The buzz on the streets and people was undeniable, especially exciting also for those of our group who'd never been!

Finally, we reached the main event of the trip, Les Mis! And surprise, surprise, it did not disappoint! The performance really was a rollercoaster of emotion; with laughter, silence and a few tear-jerking moments.

The weather on the second day was not quite as good, but still nicer than Belfast as we made our way to South Kensington to visit the world famous Royal Albert Hall. South Kensington was like something straight out of the Victorian times; the streets wide and the buildings wealthy. Making our way to the RAH, we passed all sorts of sights, from the Imperial College of London to the Royal College of Music. The steps up to the RAH were split in the middle by a large monument dedicated to Prince Albert, the man who bought the land possible for the hall.

The auditorium was huge, spanning thousands of seats and astounding every one of us. We got to visit the Royal retiring room as well as the Royal entrance where the Queen, her family and her guests would enter and wait for the show to start. We also discovered that one of the boxes in the hall was up for sale... for £2 million. Not that far off the Rathmore Music Department budget!

After visiting the hall, we walked back through South Kensington and took the underground to Baker Street, home of the famous fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes. Next stop was the Royal Academy of Music. We were guided downstairs to a small

recital hall where we had the pleasure of listening to works for violin and piano by Brahms and by Clara Schumann. All three works were played beautifully and gave us a taste of the phenomenal talent in The Academy.

The penultimate stop on our journey was Steinway Hall, a show room and workshop for the world's most prestigious pianos, the very same pianos used by superstars like Barry Douglas and Lang Lang. These pianos are made with the finest craftsmanship and the cost certainly reflected that, with some pianos being nearly £370k. After playing a few, Mr Strange certainly understood why and (jokingly) even asked them for a job! We learnt about what made Steinway pianos special as well as how pianos have advanced since they were first created.

To everyone's disappointment, the time came when we had to go and we made our way to the airport. After a smooth plane journey back, we were greeted with some very familiar faces...blistering winds and a face-numbing cold- Northern Ireland's way of saying "Welcome Home".

Ryan Harrison and Olivia Adair.





Spring Concert 2017

This year's Spring Concert was as exciting as ever. The various acts, from bands to orchestras, choirs to traditional groups, proved that there was something for everyone to enjoy. The show opened with the Concert Band, conducted by Mrs Agnew. They played two pieces, one of which was a medley of famous movie themes familiar to everyone, including Jurassic Park and Forrest Gump! This was followed by Bratsche, our rock band. Bratsche played Let Her Go by Mac Demarco, and they certainly appealed to the younger members of the audience!

The large Junior Strings gave an energetic rendition of Lord of the Dance; there was definitely lots of enthusiasm in this performance from our youngest string players! The Senior Strings then performed their Ballymena Festival winning programme of Strauss and Vivaldi, which was warmly received by the audience; very few people have heard a piece played completely pizzicato!

One of the annual highlights of our Spring Concert that everyone looks forward to is the collaboration between our Junior and Senior Irish Traditional Groups and our team of award winning Irish Dancers. They didn't disappoint! A high-kicking, energetic and polished performance from all involved!

Junior, Senior, Girls' and Chamber Choirs sang a variety of pieces in different genres. Although our School Organ decided to pack it in that day, we made do with piano for Fauré's Requiem. Senior Choir soloists Catriona Hagan, Johann Drayne and Luke O'Kane all shone in their performances of the Pie Jesu and Libera Me movements. The Girls' Choir's performance of I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair from South Pacific included a truly dynamic dance routine! The tongue twisters in the Junior Choir's pacy account of The Rhythm of Life were handled with ease and they drew a strong applause from our audience.

The Brass Ensemble performed a traditional Welsh song and Pastime with Good Company. This group displayed silky ensemble skills and made a great noise! The Concert finished with a highly energetic performance from the Symphony Orchestra. They played Dvorak's Slavonic Dance and a medley from the Pirates of the Caribbean film, accompanied by pirate hats supplied in secret by the percussion section! They received a well-deserved standing ovation after playing an encore, and this definitely ended the concert with a bang!

Johann and I would like to say thank you to all the students and staff involved in this year's concert for their hard work and dedication. As Music Prefects, we have thoroughly enjoyed our time in the Music Department and we hope we have encouraged others to fulfil their musical potential.

Maeve Ramsey



drama

In the Drama department, A2 students produced two very different devised drama productions this year. One was in the style of 'Realism' entitled, 'The Imperium,' a dark tale of how power and wealth corrupts. The second piece was in the style of the 'Theatre of cruelty' named 'The Session', where we explored a range of mental health issues, especially multiple personality disorders. They were both extremely successful. Each production was very well received by all of our audiences and all candidates did very well on the day of moderation.



'Alice Milligan - a Girl of Genius'



The Aisling Ghéar Theatre Company brought the superb production Alice Milligan – a Girl of Genius to Rathmore in November. This unique one-woman show charts the extraordinary life of a remarkable pioneer.

Born in Omagh in 1866, Alice Milligan was one of thirteen children in a large middle class Protestant Unionist family. She attended Methodist College, Belfast before studying at King's College London.

She was a journalist, political activist, feminist, human rights campaigner, cultural ambassador and theatre pioneer. She was also a friend and colleague of many leading figures in the Irish revival and political arena, including WB Yeats, Tomas McDonagh, Arthur Griffith, Maud Gonne, Roger Casement and James Connolly.

She established and edited The Northern Patriot and The Shan Van Vocht. These journals were not just political in nature but also included poems, plays and stories in a bid to promote Irish culture.

She was a member of Inghinidhe na hEireann (or Daughters of Ireland) and of Sinn Féin. She was also an organiser of the Irish language movement in Ulster. Alice died in 1953 at the age of 87 and was buried in the old Drumragh Graveyard.

'Alice Milligan - a Girl of Genius' was written by Susannah McKenna with the role of Alice played by Diona Doherty. We really learned a great deal about stagecraft and writing, but also the almost forgotten story of one of the greatest literary and cultural pioneers from these shores.

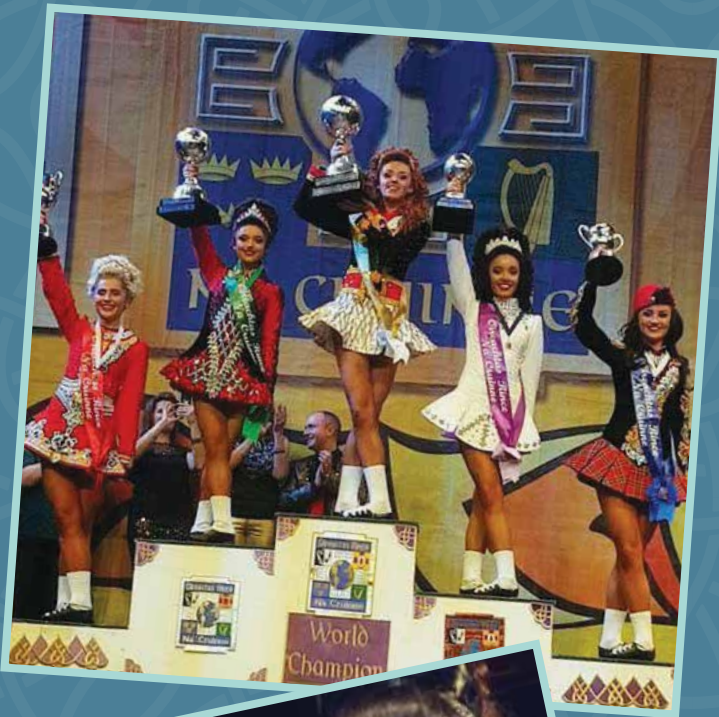
Susannah has written sketches for the BBC such as 'Wake Watchers' and 'Late Licence' and has even toured to New York with shows she's written! Susannah handed out copies of scripts that she's written and did exercises with us such as '24 Hours in Belfast' to help us tap into our creative side and learn how to form a storyboard.

Ríbh Brownlee

Irish Dancing World Champions

Two Rathmore pupils saw off stiff competition over the Easter holidays to become World Champions at the recent World Irish Dance Championships in the City West Hotel in Dublin. Blanaid O'Neill in Year 8 won her title for the second time, with Clodagh Davis in Year 12 triumphant for a third. Both girls dance for the Doherty-Petri school which is based between Belfast and New York.

Shannon Bradley who just finished her time at Rathmore (and is now going on to study Medicine) won for a spectacular seventh time! Miss Bell had the pleasure of seeing Shannon win. The week before the Championships, Blanaid helped Miss Bell teach some of our members of staff to Irish dance in aid of Trócaire. Rathmore's "Riverprance" went down a treat, which goes to show that just about anything is possible with hard work and dedication!



virtual entrepreneur

VR Home is an intriguing and visually impressive interactive experience that looks to have quite a great deal of potential, and the application was developed by a 14 year-old coder and Rathmore student Dan O'Neill for HTC Vive.

Considering how solid VR Home is at its current stage, you'd think Dan has a lot more experience with game development than he actually does. "I have never made a game before, but over a few years I have made some pretty popular Minecraft mods and am constantly playing around with various different programming languages," he says. Some of that work directly inspired features in VR Home, specifically a scrapped mod idea that turned into the functional televisions you'll find in your virtual living space.

It took the past seven months to put everything together, investing all of his Christmas, birthday, and accrued pocket money into it and he wants to

reinvest 90% of whatever he earns from its release into more assets for the game. "When I first got the HTC Vive there was next to nothing on the market, so I started messing around in Unity," Dan says. "When I first opened it, I tried to make a simple apartment, and it looked great. After a few days of playing about with that, I realised that having the ability to design rooms and then walk about them in VR was a lot of fun, so the next day I began developing VR Home."

Dan is hard at work improving the game while it's in Early Access with plans to add multiplayer, customer model imports, PDF books, and thousands of furniture models to the final game. Creatively he's bringing his ideas to fruition but also creating a program that brings his own personal dreams to life. His own ideal dwelling "would be a beautiful, large home as I can't afford one in real life" but, he says, "it's nice to have the option to have one in VR".



Virtual Rathmore

On Monday 9 December, past pupil Ciaran Daly came back to Rathmore's Media Studies and ICT departments to give a really fun and interactive talk on Virtual Reality gaming and to showcase the environment artwork he has done on Sony's new VR games. Ciaran is an Environment Artist at Sony Interactive Entertainment in London. He studied a BA and MA in Computer Games Art at Teeside University. He was able to give students and teachers the experience of immersing themselves in the VR world, including a deep-sea descent in a shark tank, which was both exhilarating and terrifying in equal measure!

Girls in IT

In October Year 13 and 14 girls currently studying A-Level ICT or Computing attended an IT3SIXTY event in the Waterfront Hall, which aimed to address the huge gender imbalance in the IT sector worldwide by encouraging and inspiring young girls such as ourselves to pursue a career within the IT industry. We partook in three workshops; the first of which being an introduction to coding and insight into one of the biggest growing industries in the world - an

industry which is extremely lacking in women. The next demonstrated the problem-solving aspect to the IT sector and the final was a marketing exercise. This not only educated us in some of the key aspects of the industry, but gave us an idea to the plethora of opportunities that the IT community has to offer us as young women. It was a worthwhile experience and proved valuable when making decisions as to the nature of our third level education.



Code Club

Junior school pupils with an interest in computing meet every Wednesday for the Rathmore Code Club. The club is open for any junior school pupils who wish to improve their computing skills or learn to code. Here, pupils can work on their IT homework or personal projects in an active learning environment, with teachers on hand to assist pupils or answer any questions they may have. This term, the pupils have been designing and creating a Gladiator computer game for the BAFTA Young Coders competition. The competition showcases the best young coders around the UK and the winner is selected in May.

Senior Maths Challenge

This year, eighty five Sixth Form students participated in the Senior Maths challenge with twenty nine receiving bronze awards, nine receiving silver awards and four achieving gold awards.

Congratulations to Stephanie Hamilton (Year 14) and Caolan Plumb (Year 13) for placing first in their respective year groups and also to Johann Drayne who joined them for the Senior Kangaroo Event in the subsequent stage of the competition.



Maths Club

Every Tuesday at lunchtime, myself and my brother, Aidan attend the Maths Club. Mrs Aldworth and the Sixth Year Buddies make the whole idea of maths fun and come up with great games, prizes and most of all a great warm welcoming environment. I really enjoy Maths Club and I hope that this prompts future pupils to join this wonderful club too!



CREATIVE BRIDGES

Our class went to Stranmillis University College to participate in the 'Creative Bridges' event held there. It was a thoroughly positive experience. The event began with a masterclass in civil engineering from five civil engineers. This was both informative and intriguing and gave good insight into careers in engineering and the important contributions engineers make to society.

We then were instructed to construct a bridge using basic materials, such as plastic, string and lollipop sticks. Our bridge had to bear a weight of at least two kilograms. Our group worked together effectively to build a bridge which surpassed all criteria. We came second overall in the competition.

Overall the day was very enjoyable and worthwhile; we were able to participate in engineering based tasks and communicate with pupils from other schools.

Sean Boyle and Matthew Jordan



THE "DALY" FORECAST

As part of a project on careers in Physics, my class was required to interview professionals who use Physics on a daily basis. My group opted to interview past pupil and BBC NI weather presenter Cecilia Daly.

Upon arrival at the BBC studios we were given visitor badges and taken on a tour of the studio. We then interviewed Cecilia Daly with a number of pre-prepared questions on her career and how Physics is heavily involved in meteorology.

I found the experience thoroughly enjoyable and interesting as I learned about the wide range of uses for Physics in weather forecasting and prediction. Fortunately, we received a high mark for this task!

Eoghan de Brún

CIVILISATION BELFAST

On Friday 3 March, a group of fellow Year 13 students and I took part in an event called Civilisation Belfast which was presented by Queen's University Belfast. The aim of the event was to allow pupils to gain an insight into the world of civil engineering, the types of jobs available through a civil engineering pathway and how it affects our everyday life.

Initially, we gathered at the John Weir building within Queen's grounds. There, we took part in a mock lecture that gave us a glimpse into how the Civil Engineering course is taught at Queen's. Included in the lecture were multiple videos and clips of various projects run by Queen's including the planning and construction of a giant Meccano bridge, which won Queen's a Guinness World Record.

Following the lecture we spent the rest of the day touring various locations across Belfast, including the Lagan Weir and the Northern Ireland Water Plant. We were given interesting information on how civil engineering was involved at these locations but also how it ensures that most services within the city of Belfast run smoothly.

Mid-way through the day, we were brought to Aecom, a Fortune 500 company, where we had lunch and were allowed to interview recent graduate engineers and also some engineers who had been working in civil engineering for thirty years.

This experience was fantastic as it allowed us to gain information from those already working in the field of civil engineering and gave us a first-hand insight into this career. Overall, I found the Civilisation Belfast event not only extremely enjoyable and entertaining but also very informative and useful as it allowed us to see how Belfast has developed, through the eyes of a civil engineer.

Matthew Mc Cullough



Queen's University
Belfast

PEATLANDS BIOLOGY TRIP

On 27 September the AS Biology class went on a field trip to Peatlands Park in Dungannon. We had an outdoor class which was very useful and insightful. I found that using the outdoors as a tool for learning furthered the in-class knowledge of my classmates and I. Overall I had a great day whilst gaining skills that remain with me throughout my studies.

Becky Convery



ECO SCHOOLS

I have been a part of Eco-Schools since Year 8 and I have very much enjoyed taking part in the group to make our school more environmentally friendly. My role throughout the years has changed from being in the club to enjoy activities, to presenting assemblies for the juniors in the school. We meet every Tuesday at lunchtime and the meetings are run by Mr. Graham.



We were split into groups for each topic of concern. My group's topic was Healthy Eating and our target audience was the Year 9. Our whole group came together to design a colourful poster and presentation for the assembly. We tried our best to make the presentation at assembly interesting and motivational, encouraging the younger students to eat healthily and create an atmosphere that would make the message

last for them. We hoped that our presentation impacted on them as we all know that taking care of our bodies is extremely important and should be encouraged in the junior students.

We all worked very well together as a team to make a presentation that captured the attention of the younger students and we look forward to the next topic in Eco-Schools!

Niamh O'Brien

Eco Schools Alternative Transport

The primary focus of the Eco Schools programme for Year 10 was "Alternative Methods of Transport". My group and I were tasked with creating an interesting and informative presentation, promoting the use of alternative methods of transport, to be delivered at a Year 10 assembly. Initially, under the guidance of Mr. Graham, we created a Powerpoint presentation which outlined the major aspects of our agenda. In addition to this presentation, we recorded a short "Carpool Karaoke" video featuring some teachers (Mr. Graham, Mr. McIlvenny, Miss Boyle and Mr. Jackson) which was a resounding success during the assembly. Due to the popularity of this video amongst students and staff members alike, we were asked to display it to a large audience with the proceeds from entrance costs being donated to Trocaire. The film was well received whilst raising awareness of the Eco Schools campaign.

Conclusively, I believe this year's Eco Schools programme has been greatly successful, generating support from students, raising awareness about alternative ways of eating, living and moving; and fundraising for charity.

James Gallagher

The Garden Project



Annually the Year 10 pupils learn valuable skills and information about the growth of crops as part of the Garden Project in the Biology department. They begin their work by sowing vegetable and plant seeds in the greenhouse and then, after carefully tending to them for the correct amount of time, transfer them into the outdoor garden plots. Throughout the year the pupils chart the progress of their crops and in Year 11 complete the project by harvesting their plants and making all the hard work pay off.



Switch-off Fortnight:

This year as part of Rathmore's Eco-Schools campaign "Switch-off fortnight" took place from 21 November to 5 December 2016. At our weekly lunchtime meetings, we discussed areas in which our school wasn't being as environmentally friendly as it could be and how we as a community in Rathmore could combat this issue as quickly as possible. We took note that there were a lot of electrical

devices and appliances being left on when they weren't in use such as projectors, computers, whiteboards and classroom lights. Our Eco-Schools team tackled this area of concern within our school promptly by creating posters and distributing them all around the school in order to inform both staff and pupils of this on-going environmental issue. The posters informed pupils and staff on ways in which they could save energy around the school and when distributing the posters to classrooms, we briefly explained what our campaign was all

about. We as a team worked collaboratively in order to ensure that energy was being saved all around the school by switching off computer monitors and projectors when they were not in use, particularly over lunch time and switching off classroom lights when they were not in use or there was no need for a light to be on. If you continue to switch off, the UK could save £170 million per year and become a more eco-friendly place for everyone.

Niamh Molloy



Workshop review



NOM-NOM-NOM

In January 2017, the Home Economics Department organised an exciting subject based workshop. They invited representatives from the Trading Standards Agency, the Environmental Health Service as well as the Head Chef of Mourne Seafood Bar and a Personal Trainer .

The Year 10 were able to watch and get involved in a cooking demonstration by the chef where he made two delicious dishes- spiced cod and hake bites served with salad and a dip, and fruit salad with a mint and yoghurt twist. These dishes were thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils with many asking for seconds- and the recipe!

The Personal Trainer was able to tell the pupils just how important nutrition is with respect to sport. They emphasised that without a good knowledge of food and nutrients, it is very hard to succeed and become stronger in your sport.

Both the representatives from Trading Standards, and Environmental Health, used visual aids to help with their presentation showing counterfeit goods such as perfume, football tops and make-up to pictures of unhygienic foods such as mice baked into bread, or beetles in dried milk.

The Year 10 pupils found these workshops both entertaining and informative, which made this event very successful overall!

LMC

Wendy Donaldson from The Livestock and Meat commission came to visit Year 9 students in November 2016. This was an informative and tasty visit, as the pupils were informed about the rules and regulations of meat production as well as the importance of buying farm quality assured produce. Wendy also prepared and cooked beef chilli with rice, creamy beef stir-fry and Hoisin beef noodles which the students were allowed to try. They were also given some recipes and information in a booklet which they were able to take home with them.

This was a very worthwhile visit and the Year 9 thoroughly enjoyed the delicious samples that they were able to taste, with many of them taking the recipe book home to try the other creative recipe ideas.



BON APPETIT



COOKERY CLUB

Cookery Club takes place in Home Economics on Monday afternoons. Years 8 to 10 are invited to attend, with each year group having their own 8 week session. The club started with the Year 9 who were able to prepare and cook dishes such as chilli nachos and chocolate fudge cake. After completing their session the pupils received a pizza party and certificates of completion. The Year 10 session was more complex and the practicals chosen were both fun and challenging, ranging from Mars Bar scones to honey chilli chicken. Everything that was made seemed to go down a treat!



Future Chef

Rathmore has had a strong tradition of success in the Future Chef cooking competition, therefore this year I thought I would enter it just to see how far I could go. I never imagined for a second that I would get as far as the Regional Finals!

At the beginning of December, the school heats were held in the HE Department. There were 14 competitors and each of us was given the same brief. As you can imagine there was a wide range of dishes. I made a family favourite chicken dish and was delighted when it was chosen with Adam to go forward to the regional final of the competition. The pressure was on to come up with a new and exciting dish that would impress the judges in the final that was to be held in mid-February. However, practice makes perfect- so for most of January we stayed behind after school, twice a week to gain more experience at cooking out dishes. During these weeks we were fortunate to be supported by all members of the HE Department and our mentor, the renowned Head Chef of the Merchant Hotel, Johnny Leake. He tweaked my main course of salmon and couscous by changing the sauce and this made a significant difference to the overall taste! For dessert I was making a caramelised orange cake. Johnny also gave

us tips on presentation and timing for the competition. Adam and I succeed in winning the area final and were then allowed to progress to the regional final, which was very exciting and made the hard work worthwhile!

The regional final was held in the Belfast Met on Valentine's Day. There were six competitors, which included me and Adam. Each of us had our own station to work at in the state of the art kitchens with every piece of equipment you needed! There were five judges who walked about watching us carefully. There was so much pressure during the hour and a half, making sure everything was at the correct temperature and it was all ready on time. Adam was making monkfish with beans and a chocolate fondant for dessert which looked delicious. Although neither of us was chosen to represent Northern Ireland in the final in London, we both agreed that each stage of the competition was exciting and we gained so much invaluable experience. I would like to thank the entire HE department for all their support and encouragement and a special thanks to Johnny Leake for giving up his time to mentor us.

Sarah McGirr



BASKETBALL

I've been in the basketball team for three years now and every year I've seen huge progress within the collective. Girls who had never touched a basketball in their lives are now playing like professionals, with the help of our coach Breda. We've all put so much time and effort into working on our skills and knowledge of the game and along the way we've built up such great friendships. I have made great friends with people who I didn't expect to, and together we have won lots of matches, competitions and the Ulster Schools' twice. Our team has even managed to play in the All-Irelands, which is such a massive achievement for the team and our school. I couldn't ask for a better group of girls to play alongside.

Ciara McGlinchey



CASEMENT CUP

Friday 9 December, 2016 was a night to forget for the Casement Cup team of Rathmore Grammar School, as they were beaten at the last hurdle by St Patrick's of Keady. The first half started off well with the teams looking level, and end to end play became the tone of the game. Frees from Rathmore captain Donal McKernan kept the side in it, with Keady knocking over some fine points from play. With Lorcan Heenan making things difficult for the Keady full forward line, it was mostly points from outside the 45 being scored; but a late first half goal for the Armagh side gave them a real confidence boost. The teams went in at half time with only a few point between them, the opposition being on the better side of things.

Rathmore started the second half off strongly with the midfield driving everything forward, but Keady proved too strong in the last fifteen, scoring point after point, and beating Rathmore well in the end. Casement Cup defeats have never prevented Rathmore from coming back again the next year, and no doubt they will be back in 2017 on the hunt for their long sought-after Casement Cup title.

Matthew Jones



ALL STARS

The school is very proud of Upper Sixth student Donal McKernan as he was the only player in the 2016-17 Danske Bank Ulster Schools' Hurling All-Stars team to have earned the award for a second time. The Sarsfield's clubman was chosen from a selection that is drawn from ten different schools. Donal was a recipient of an All-Star for his scintillating displays as he helped Rathmore to the final of the Casement Cup where they were defeated by St. Patrick's, Keady.

Aisling Press, District Manager at Danske Bank, in announcing the Danske Bank Ulster Schools' All Stars Hurling Team stated:

"The Ulster Schools' All-Stars is a fantastic celebration of GAA youth and something that we at Danske Bank are extremely proud to be part of. The commitment and dedication required to be even nominated for an All-Star award is immense, and I would like to congratulate all of the players who were selected to participate in the trials, as well as the fifteen outstanding hurlers we are honouring here today. This passion for excellence is truly commendable and we are delighted to support the players here today and all who are a part of the Ulster Schools GAA."

Jimmy Smyth, Chairman of the Ulster Schools' GAA, also congratulated the recipients. "To achieve an Ulster Schools' All Star Award is to rightly earn a place in hurling's Hall of Fame. These awards recognise and reward these talented players' prowess, commitment and endeavour on the hurling field."

Donal officially received his award at a sumptuous Gala Banquet on Friday 31 March 2017 in the Europa Hotel Belfast, with his family, Mrs Hamilton, Mr Collins and Mr Peden in attendance. Congratulations Donal on this outstanding achievement!



CROSS COUNTRY SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIPS

This was my final year representing Rathmore in the annual Cross Country School Championships and I was determined to finish on a high. On Wednesday 1 February along with Owen McGinnity (Lower 6th), we competed in the District B schools Cross Country in the hope of qualifying into the Ulster's. Over a distance of 5.5km in Ormeau Park, we were able to successfully qualify into the Ulster's, with myself finishing in 2nd place, whilst Owen was 4th. On 22 February, we then competed in the Ulster schools cross country at Mallusk playing fields. We were competing against the top athletes in Ulster, over a distance of 6.2km. As the distance was longer and conditions were worse, we knew that we had to run tactically in order to perform to our best. We both had good runs, finishing in 4th and 10th place, and safely qualifying into the Irish Schools' Cross Country. This was the final race of the season and we were back at Mallusk, competing in a longer and more competitive field. On Saturday 11 March, we raced over the distance of 7km against the most elite athletes at our age, and both finished our season on a high, as I finished 9th and Owen finished quite far up the field as well.

Eoin McCann



BOB DOCHERTY CUP

From 10 - 12 April 2017, I will represent Northern Ireland in an annual home nations tournament, the Bob Docherty Girls Under 15 Cup. The competition will consist of teams from the Republic of Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, a local Dublin team called Shelbourne and of course, Northern Ireland. It is to be held in Dublin and is sure to be a great experience.

To make the squad I had to play a lot of trial matches and take part in extra training sessions but it was all worth it in the end! I play the position of centre back so my job is to prevent the opposition from scoring and to start up play from the back. We have been drawn to play both England and Shelbourne in the group stages, so we know it will be a tough test but hopefully a successful one!

Anna Wilson



JUDO

I have been playing Judo from the age of five at the Yamakwai Judo Club based in Andersonstown Leisure Centre. I train with my club twice a week on Mondays and Thursdays and I also train weekly with the national squad and compete all over Ireland.

2016/17 has been my most successful year to date, having gained numerous titles which include Northern Ireland Schools Champion, Swords Open Champion, Northern Ireland Champion and Irish Open Champion.

In March this year I represented Northern Ireland at an international training camp hosted by Judo Scotland in Tulliallan, Perthshire. It was my first time playing Judo outside Ireland. This camp was a big step up for me, training from 8.00am until 7.00pm for two days. It was tough but the experience I gained was invaluable and thoroughly enjoyed the weekend. My aim for the future is to represent Ireland at international level.

Caolan McKee



GIRLS GAELIC TEAM

I have been playing for the school team for five years now, competing in finals and semi-finals of Ulster Championships, Belfast League and School Leagues. The experience for me and my teammates has been an unforgettable one and I have made so many memories from being on the team. This was my last year in U16, and we made it into the Ulster Final, which unfortunately we lost. Rathmore played valiantly right until the very end, but sadly, we were beaten.

Playing on the Under 16 team has been a brilliant experience for me, and has allowed me to develop skills not only as a team player, but a team member. Despite the final score not being exactly what we wanted, it was a great match to play and a great way to end my time on the team. We may not have got it this year, but the Rathmore Girls Gaelic team definitely did the school proud, and no doubt this team will come back even better and ready for success next year!

Orlaith Bradley, Year 12



ULSTER FINAL

We arrived into school early on 31 January ahead of our Ulster Final in Garvagh later that day. Everybody was a bundle of nerves and after a team photograph in our new jumpers, we hopped onto the bus. The bus up was quieter and more subdued compared to our normal noisy journeys (apologies to our valued drivers!) but this was easily explained with the final looming over us.

We arrived at the grounds and piled into the changing room. Our manager, Seamy McKenna, delivered an inspiring team talk, called out the starting team and we ran out onto the pitch for our warm-up. The adrenaline ran thick in our blood as we knocked the silly mistakes out of us before the match. We lined out against our opponents, St. Columba's, Glenties, familiar rivals as a result of the previous year's tight quarter-final.

The game began and soon, Glenties had gone two goals up. Prepared for a fight, our defence got their shape and excellent running from Eimear Matthews and Emma Ferran in midfield resulted in good balls into our forwards and we got a few points on the board. Unfortunately, Antoinette McKernan suffered a nasty dislocation to her ankle and she was rushed off to hospital, along with our supporters. A quickly taken free from Ellen Morgan produced a well-needed goal but we went in at half-time trailing by five.

A motivating speech from Seamy, reminding us of our strength as a team and our own drive to be here, gave us the belief we needed in ourselves. We managed to get some vital scores at the start of the second half, with Ellie Walsh picking up Glenties' star forward. However, for every point we scored, Glenties would answer it. When their full back was sin-binned, we

upped the tempo, knowing that this would be our final chance but it just wasn't to be. Glenties' experience and hunger allowed them to run out deserving winners.

After the tears and anger subsided (a few weeks later!), we were able to recognise what we had actually achieved. This was the first match that we as a team had ever lost since we started Rathmore together. We progressed to the final of a higher division, a year and a half after our U14 Ulster success. This was as a result of our own choice to aim and commit for Ulster

this year. We slogged away at training all year and upped our usual number of sessions because we shared the one hunger, drive and goal. We are grateful for the support from the school throughout the year and we have become excellent role models to other females in our school. Despite not getting the result we hoped for on the day, we still achieved something this year and a big thanks must go to our coaches, Seamy and Nicola, for their unwavering commitment throughout the year. We will definitely be back again!

Ciara Larkin



NETBALL YEAR 14

With this being our last year of school netball, we were nervous yet also excited for the season ahead. Unfortunately, we lost many players over the last few years due to exams and other commitments, but this didn't stop us as we received help from excellent players in the years below. With the hunger for one more Northern Ireland title before hanging up our Rathmore kits for good, we trained hard and were rewarded by winning all our matches and beating teams such as St Dominic's and Assumption, securing our place in the Belfast Finals, where it was announced that we were to play Methody.

On the day, the atmosphere in the hall was incredible; our supporters buoyed us from

start to finish. We gained a strong lead and as expected the match was fast and intense. When the final whistle blew, we were all relieved and ecstatic as we had beaten Methody and we were the winners of the Belfast Finals! We had given one of our best performances on court and had fought hard until the end. To finish off our Rathmore netball careers, we made it through to the Northern Ireland Shield semi-finals against Sacred Heart Omagh. We played an amazing game but unfortunately it wasn't enough to beat this fantastic side. All in all, we played an extremely exciting match with only four goals in it. Both the Sixth form students on the team and the younger players had an amazing and unforgettable year in netball.

Tara Martin Year 14



EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

After four sets of trials I was selected to play for the Northern Ireland U17 Development squad in the European Championships, held in the Antrim forum this March. For seven months we trained most Saturdays for four hours in preparation for the tournament, where we played four intense matches from Friday through to Sunday against Gibraltar, Switzerland, Dubai and the Republic of Ireland. We placed third in the Europeans and fourth in the challenge section, narrowly missing out to Gibraltar, with a final score of 44:45. In our final match we played a passionate Ireland team, giving our best ever performance and defeating them 61:17. As a team we were happy with our games, it was everyone's first cap and we were against the fierce Europeans. I have fond memories of ice cold refreshing ice-baths, international crowds, Antrim's Holiday Inn- what an event!

Cenka Drayne



GOLF TEAM

On 25 April last year, students Ciara Brennan and Olivia McCrystal competed in the Irish Junior Cup with their coach and teacher, Mrs Agnew, in which they came first in overall. The girls took home the Junior Cup with a seven-point win over Gorey Community School. The pair shot 23 and 14 gross points respectively, winning with 37 points in total. The girls collected their awards at this year's Speech Day, as the Junior Champions 2016. This is a massive achievement for the girls and they will undoubtedly have further success in the future.



SWIMMING

In September, I competed at the World Lifesaving Championships 2016, where I finished 7th for my age in the 100m mannequin carry. In this same competition,

our relay team broke the British Senior Records in the 4x50m medley relay and the 4x50m obstacle relay. In February of this year, I competed at the National Speed Lifesaving Championships 2017, picking up two gold, two silver and one bronze medal in the senior category. My performances in this competition allowed me to be selected

for the RLSS UK Performance Squad. Also in my swimming, my relay team broke the Ulster Junior record in the 4x200m freestyle relay. This has been a fantastic year for me in all of the competitions I have participated in.

Odhran Mallon

SKI TRIP

On 27 December, a group of our Year 13 students travelled to Lillehammer, Norway for the annual ski trip. We spent a week skiing at the Hafjell Olympic Ski centre. My instructor was called Rune and brought us beginners on green and blue slopes to start and it really is harder than it looks!

Throughout the week, we took part in various activities in the evenings. On the first evening we went to the cinema; it was interesting to see how different the cinema was than our own. On the second evening we also got to watch an Ice hockey match, the atmosphere was immense and so lively, and the Norwegians next to us were definitely crazy!

The best night for me was New Year's Eve as we had a fancy dress party and my friend Niamh and I dressed up as Sully and Boo from 'Monsters Inc.' Without doubt though, the teacher's version of the Smurfs had to be winner of the best costume - I still don't know how they got all that blue paint off.

Of course we had the traditional quiz and poster nights which was surprisingly one of the funniest nights. After the quiz night we were able to walk up a mountain in the area to see the Northern Lights; however, after walking and waiting for nearly an hour and a half, we unfortunately didn't see them, but the view of the town's lights shining over the river in the dark was indescribable.

Of course we all returned to Belfast exhausted, and also some with a few injuries here and there. However, everyone had an amazing experience and made memories they will never forget. I would strongly recommend anyone that has the opportunity to go on the ski trip and to make the most of it, as I would do anything to go again.

Conall Roberts



JUNIOR SKI

On 8 April 2017, twenty-nine Junior students met up with their teachers at the International Airport at 4.30am, to make their bleary-eyed journey to Milan and then onwards to the chic ski resort of Madonna Di Campiglio. After getting settled in and fitted for skis, poles and helmets the group took a wander around the very picturesque town before catching dinner and a very early night in anticipation of the first day's skiing ahead.

On the first day the group were largely based around the bottom of the station, but high praise from their instructors saw them taking the gondola up to the top of the Grotte mountain the very next day to improve their technique. It was amazing to see students, who had initially struggled to stand up, overcome their fears and aches to then bravely ski down the slopes. Three separate instructors commented that the Rathmore groups were the best they'd had all season, as they listened carefully to instruction, were respectful and were very quick learners.

Skiing was not the only activity on the fun-filled agenda. Students were treated to delicious pizza nights in local Pizzeria, where they could also practise their newly learned Italian phrases. Mrs Heaney and Mrs Murphy had students racking their brains in a very tough Quiz Night. We spent four hours in the amazing Flying Park, where even Mr Tierney overcame his fear of heights to climb trees and brave the zip wires. There was great friendly rivalry with Ballyclare High School (with whom we shared the hotel) in the epic football matches played out the back on the pitch. We also spent a great evening in a local bowling alley, where the competition was fierce! The following Saturday, the group set off once more at 4.30am to be reunited with friends and family back home. Thanks to Mr Collins and all the teachers for making it such a week to remember!



ROAD TO THE FINAL – U15 BELFAST CUP FINAL

It has definitely not been an easy journey to the Belfast Cup final, but as captain I am extremely glad that we can say that we made it. Coached by Mr Graham, we have gelled more as a team and have better understanding, not only of each other, but also what it means to play as a team. Under the influence of Mr Graham and Mr Jackson, we have grown more confident in our both our attacking and defending ability, and can cope a lot better with more physical sides.

It has been a truly nerve-wrecking experience, but the pride that I take in the fact that we have come this far is surreal. Our journey started against Bangor away back in October, a match we eventually won 2-0 thanks to goals from myself and John Savage. We progressed to the last 8 play-off

stages, having to play St. Joseph's, a game that this time we won a lot more comfortably, with a score line of 3-0, with goals again from John Savage, Fearghal Henry and a wonder goal from Niall Richmond. Rathmore progressed to the quarter-final play-off, with perhaps what we thought would be our most difficult game yet, having to play Ashfield Boys. Nevertheless, we remained confident and dug deep to win the game 2-0, goals coming from John Savage and Fearghal Henry. Anxious of the semi-final draw, for the third time this season we had to play Laurelhill, who previously have been a force to be reckoned with. With an early opener from John Savage in the first minute, the game remained extremely tense until the final whistle. Laurelhill upped their game equalising just after the start of the second

half. Thankfully, due to a mistake from Laurelhill's left back, John Savage was yet again calm under pressure and calmly struck the ball home to win us the match, with a final score of 2-1. We are extremely proud of our efforts thus far and look forward to the final game against St. Pat's Barnageagh in June. We will continue to work and train hard as a team, hoping to bring back our first piece of footballing silverware in over four years.

The Year 11 football team also look forward to our finals in the Lisburn league, as well as the final in the Lisburn league cup, both matches of which are against Laurelhill.

Liam Mitchell



LIFE SAVING

Last year my sister Beata and I attended a lifesaving course as part of her PE GCSE. She was the trainee learning how to save lives in crisis situations in the pool or if someone collapsed on the street; I was the casualty but I still had the chance to learn about how to cope in these situations. Our trainer, Agnes taught us lots of different procedures including CPR, braises, wounds and burns, shock, heart attacks/strokes, and more. It really paid off as three months ago we visited the Lord Mayor for our certificates. Beata received a Bronze Award for her course. I received a certificate for acting as casualty. I learned so many new things and can still remember the stages of many of those life saving procedures.

Fay Powell



Arkwright Scholarships

The Arkwright Scholarships Trust administers one of the most prestigious scholarship schemes in the UK. Schools must be invited into the process before they can submit applications, with a limited number of schools in Northern Ireland being offered this prestigious opportunity. The scholarship is open to applicants studying Technology and Design at GCSE, aiming to discover and support their studies at GCE level through financial assistance and academic mentoring with qualified engineers. Nine students undertook this process

which involved an in-depth application form and a two hour aptitude paper. The top students were then selected for interview – four students were selected from Rathmore (Mark Conlon, Conall Campbell, Matthew Miskimmon and Daniel McBride Mallon). In July, all four students were notified that they had been recommended for scholarship and have been successfully paired with appropriate sponsors.

2016 is the fourth year that Arkwright Trust has had affiliations with NI schools. With four confirmed scholarships, the Technology and Design department has continued with a strong influence in such a prestigious scholarship programme.

Schlumberger - Girls into Engineering

The Technology department recently took several of its budding female GCSE students to an event which was held to promote careers in engineering for women. Students were treated to a thorough site tour, participated in group workshops and heard from leading female engineers about the type of work they are involved with. They also had the opportunity to ask about career paths, subjects studied and travel opportunities that a career in engineering could offer. It was a very enjoyable and informative day for all involved.



Year 9 - National Women in Engineering Day

To mark National Women in Engineering Day 2016, Lagan Construction Group hosted a site visit for local schoolgirls from Rathmore Grammar School at Lagan Building Contractors £18 million project at City Quays 2 in Belfast. Lagan Building Contractors, part of Lagan Construction Group, are currently delivering the City Quays 2 project as part of Belfast Harbour's 20-acre regeneration plan for the area.

The event was supported by the Women's Engineering Society who co-ordinate

and promote the National Women in Engineering Day campaign. The National Women in Engineering Day which is held annually is an international awareness campaign to raise the profile of women in engineering and focus attention on the amazing career opportunities available to girls within the industry. On the day, pupils were given an insight into Lagan Building Contractor's project at City Quays 2 with a site tour and the girls also got to meet with Lagan Construction Group's own female engineers to learn about the opportunities within engineering as a career path.

Colin Loughran, CEO of Lagan Construction Group commented: "Lagan Construction Group are proud to work in partnership with the Women's Engineering Society to

encourage more women to participate and achieve as engineers, scientists and as leaders within the construction industry."

Dawn Bonfield, CEO Woman Engineering Society commented: "We have been surprised and delighted by the response to National Women in Engineering Day this year despite the European Referendum taking place on the same day! This event now seems to be embedded in the calendar as a day on which we take the initiative to encourage and inspire girls and women in their engineering careers and promote diversity and inclusion of all kinds in engineering. We are grateful to everybody who has worked hard to promote this day and celebrate the contribution of women in engineering."



INNOVATION LAB COMPETITION: RETHINK LANDFILL PROJECT

On 6 April, a group of our A-Level Technology students took part in the 'Innovation Lab Design Challenge.' The group consisted of myself, Megan O'Reilly, Odhran Doherty, Chloe Cassidy and our team manager Matthew Miskimmon. We were also assisted through the project by Rebecca Walsh, who works for the Innovation Lab Company and visited the school to check on our progress and also held small workshops to improve our skills, and of course Mr Beegan was a great help too!

So what was the challenge? We were asked to re-design the current landfill bin to reduce waste in Northern Ireland. We created and carried out surveys about waste management in the local area, had brainstorming sessions, drew concepts and final ideas which then concluded to our final working prototype of the bin.

We were given an area to set up a display with research, drawing pages and of course our bin. We had to deliver our presentation and show our prototype to members of Belfast city council, Eco-Schools and the Innovation Lab. We were up against Lagan College and Bangor Grammar School. We gave a ten minute presentation followed by a Q&A session from the audience.

After all the groups had presented and the judges deliberated we won the award for best presentation! Overall, the competition was a great opportunity to put our skills into action and we all had a really great experience!

Joshua Beatty



YEAR 8 STEM CLUB

For the first week of the Year 8 STEM Club, we took part in some fun maths activities. Working together in teams, we carried out investigative work that required us to use our maths skills to complete a scavenger hunt around the school! It was so much fun and there was a lot of competition to be the first team back!

Our Year 8 STEM Club continued in Technology with us using engineering to make a product that lights up when it senses an incoming text or call! We used our maths skills to measure and mark out their product before removing the waste material to place a simple circuit and a laser cut section. We were looking forward to the next week's challenge in Biology!

In the Biology STEM club, we investigated the senses. We looked specifically at taste and carried out a practical investigation using small sweets. We tried to work out the flavour using all our senses – taste, sight and smell. We then held our noses and closed our eyes when eating the sweets. Some of us found it really hard to figure out the sweet flavour without the use of our nose sensing smell and our eyes seeing the colour!

The Chemistry STEM activity involved making bath bombs and bouncy balls from common household substances. We used baking soda, citric acid (or kettle descaler) and baby oil to make the bath bombs. We even coloured them with food colourings and gave them scents using essential oils! We made bouncy balls out of custard powder, PVA glue and Borax (washing powder). It got very messy and the lab still smells of lavender!



THE PEACE PLEDGE

Back in 2016 the Student Council was tasked with a challenge to make a Peace Pledge that will not only represent what it is like to be in Rathmore but will build a bridge; a symbolic bridge which links and unifies both Protestants and Catholics. On 21 September Amazing the Space brought together 3,500 young people from schools across Northern Ireland at the Eikon Exhibition Centre, Maze to celebrate their role in peacebuilding which coincided with the UN International Peace Day. I represented the school with a few other members from Student Council. Last year my job was to introduce Yasmin Kayali, from Aleppo in Syria. Yasmin talked about the conflict in her country which has been going on for years and how she believes that there should be no war. The main attraction was a 4.5 metre stainless steel sculpture, designed by artist Maurice Harron. The Peace Pledge was very successful as over 400 primary and secondary schools entered. The event was attended by former Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness and Junior Minister Alastair Ross.

Aidan Kilmartin



YOUNG ENTERPRISE

Years 8 and 9 participated in Young Enterprise programmes this year. In October Year 8 engaged in a programme entitled 'Your School Your Business' where they had the opportunity to look at the school as an organisation and investigate different roles within the school. The Bursar assisted by allowing pupils to interview him about his role.

The Year 9 course gave students the opportunity to develop their entrepreneurial skills. Students competed against the clock and each other to design a product to bring to market. Enterprise in Action engages and excites students with an inspirational, high impact and high energy enterprise experience.

THE TENNER CHALLENGE

Charity has always been very important at Rathmore, and one thing that goes hand in hand with charity is the Youth Philanthropy Initiative. The YPI is an organisation that enables students of all ages to learn valuable skills and help their local community by creating a presentation on a charity of their choice. In each school, YPI donates several thousand pounds to the winning group. This is where the Tenner Challenge comes in. The Tenner Challenge allows other students to advance their business ideas by building a business from an initial £10. The teams must present their ideas to the LLW department, who then choose a select few to be granted the starting fund. The teams are then allowed to sell with all profits going to the runners up from the YPI Challenge.

For our business, we chose to sell drinks as we saw that there was a high demand among the pupils of Rathmore. With early success, we had an idea. And after a quick meeting, we were granted permission to sell at the school's Spring Concert. So far, we have learnt organisational and planning skills and what it is like to run a business. We have really enjoyed and hope to continue this business in the near future.

Luke Kilpatrick and Matthew Cummings





TRÓCAIRE

For this year's Trócaire campaign, our focus was on climate change. We have witnessed how people in Honduras are struggling to survive hurricanes and constant flooding; and families in South Sudan and Somalia are suffering extreme hunger caused by drought and conflict. As an increasingly important issue, we put in as much effort as possible to raise as much money as we could.

There were activities organised for each year group so everyone could be involved. From the Sixth Form sponsored spin and non-

uniform day, the school was really beginning to buzz with all that was happening and it was really great to be a part of creating that!

My favourite event however, had to be the infamous student teacher basketball match. I'm still hoping that Cliona O'Doherty has fully recovered after being floored by Mr Collins! The carpool karaoke that was created by our Eco-Schools team was also a great hit!

I think that our biggest event had to be 'Rathmore's Got Talent,' with such a talented school like ours it would have been a shame not to. A wide group of students ranging from Year 8 to Upper Sixth took part, and even some of the teachers got involved too.

On the 31 March, this year's Trócaire campaign culminated with a whole school March For Justice. Everyone was sponsored for this 8km walk and it was great to see such a powerful symbol of our whole school uniting as one to raise the issue of climate change and the impact it is having on the Third World in particular. It is our duty to ensure that justice, proper climate planning and meaningful change begins now before it is too late.

Nicole Kelly





RATHMORE'S GOT TALENT!

During this year's Lenten Campaign, in order to raise much needed funds for Trócaire, staff and pupils decided to put on two lunchtime shows of "Rathmore's Got Talent!". In the lead up, auditions were held where the judges saw everything from beatboxing, Bollywood dancing and gymnastics, to singing, magic tricks and acting! The standard of acts was so incredibly high and it was no mean feat choosing our finalists.

On the two days of the shows, pupils eagerly took their seats in a sold out assembly hall and waited in anticipation for the entertainment to begin! The dramatic X Factor music started up, the smoke machine kicked into action and the curtains opened to reveal our judges...let the show begin!

Mrs McCavana, aka Dervla O'Leary kept everything running smoothly and a number of teachers took on the contentious roles of Simon Cowell, Nicole Scherzinger and Sharon Osbourne. To say they were often divided in their opinion would be an understatement and the audience booed and clapped as they cheered their classmates along. Not to be outdone, the wider staff community wanted in on the act as well, so, in between every pupil act was a staff act too! These ranged from a powerful rendition of Abba's famous 'Waterloo' (complete with carefully crafted choreography) and Mr McIlvenny's moving and powerful (albeit brief) classical musical number, to a performance which would put RiverDance to shame and even our own all staff band who rocked the assembly hall to "Teenage Kicks".

As the bell went to return to class, everyone felt a huge sense of pride in what the pupils and staff had achieved - a great success all round!



STUDENT COUNCIL

At the start of this academic year, I was appointed Communication Officer for Year 8. We meet on a Monday at lunchtime when the representatives from each tutor group give me feedback on what their group has discussed during the previous week. Our discussions are always lively and I can see that Year 8 really enjoy having an input in to areas which directly affect them in school. Throughout the year, the student body raised issues themselves within tutor group which they wanted to be discussed at council level and at other times students were asked to discuss whole school issues such as behaviour inside and outside the classroom, the canteen, student planners and homework. The Student Council has met with Mrs Hamilton on three occasions and we appreciate this

opportunity to meet with our Principal. Some of the points raised included uniform, clubs, continuous assessment and strategies to ensure that all students feel safe and happy in school.

I am very proud of Year 8 as it is they who suggested launching our Uniform Recycle Initiative. I hope all students get behind this very worthwhile campaign to help and support others in our school community.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my role as Communication Officer this year. It has allowed me to develop my leadership skills as well as get to know some great Year 8 students! In Rathmore, Pupil Voice is an integral part of school life and I have felt even more connected to school being a member of the School Council.

Catrina Reilly





HONEYWELL LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

At the beginning of March, I was awarded the chance to visit the NASA Space Centre in Alabama on a scholarship as part of the Honeywell Leadership Challenge Academy. I was joined by 320 students from 45 countries and 27 states who were given the opportunity to participate in some of the same training simulations as NASA astronauts.

We were divided into six teams - I was in Team Determination. I first met my team underneath the real Saturn V rocket which is, to this day, the biggest, heaviest and most powerful rocket on Earth. We learnt team building skills on both high and low ropes courses such as rock climbing, and on STEM based challenges such as a Mission Control simulation and a fighter jet simulation. In Mission Control, we were each given realistic roles on a space shuttle and on the International Space Station. I was EGIL, which meant I was controlling the environment on the space shuttle to make sure it reached the ISS. In the fighter jets, we used simulators used by real pilots and we

had to defend Miami from a terrorist attack, deciding each member's strengths and weaknesses in order to develop an action plan. We built our own model rockets and programmed Raspberry Pis to make accelerometers; simulated medical, search & rescue and logistics teams in a tornado, which took place in the local shopping centre. We then gave a press conference of what we managed to do - and in the midst of this flurry of activity, we sat in the sun eating the best ice cream I've ever tasted!

Each night we had activities such as karaoke and a quiz and we also had an engineering challenge where we had to design, build and present a heat shield to the rest of the teams. My team was called WEVA and although our original model only lasted 6 seconds, our remodel won with an improvement of up to 3 minutes.



We talked with leaders such as municipal court judge Sybil Cleveland and astronaut Hoot Gibson, who has been to space five times and flown almost every modern fighter jet. At Honeywell, I met friends that I have spoken to every day since, who I plan to reconnect with when I hopefully return next year as an Ambassador. I learned skills that I will carry with me through school, further education and my future career.

Eimir McKegey

OUR YPI DAY AT QUEEN'S

On 9 of June 2016, Niall McNama and I went to Queen's University Belfast, to host and compere a celebration of the past year's successful Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) campaign. The presentation was held in the famous Sir William Whitla Hall. Firstly, before the main ceremony began, we quickly and nervously prepared our lines along with any other announcements we had to make. Luckily we had Mrs Murphy to help guide us through the whole process! Then came the actual event where a range of moving presentations were made including our own winning group from Rathmore, who won £3,000 for their chosen charity PIPS. Niall and I had to introduce all these people and provide snippets of information and background on each as well as give a short conclusion near the end. At the end, we all had complimentary lunch together which gave us as chance to chat more with all the participants, past and present, and sponsors that attended the event. I really enjoyed the day and found it a wonderful experience!

Anna Wilson



TRIP TO CRUMLIN ROAD GAOL

Back in December the two A-Level Sociology classes visited Crumlin Road Gaol as part of our Crime and Deviance module. The prison opened in 1846 and played host to many men, women and even children over the years. Some of the more well-known prisoners included Eamon De Valera, Martin McGuinness, Michael Stone and Bobby Sands. On our trip we saw the Hanging Cell where from 1901 to 1961 seventeen prisoners were executed for various crimes. The death penalty in Northern Ireland was abolished four years later in 1965. We also saw the underground tunnel that led prisoners from the Gaol to the courthouse and vice versa. The trip related very well back to our course in that we were told about the treatment of offenders and how this changed from punishment to rehabilitation. The Gaol closed in March 1996 and is the only Victorian prison remaining in Northern Ireland.

BANK OF IRELAND STUDENT OF THE YEAR

Last year I participated in the Tenner Challenge and won the Bank of Ireland trophy for Enterprise. I made buns, scones and jam to sell to pupils and teachers. It was a very educational experience which I highly enjoyed. This year on Open Day I was asked to continue to sell buns and I am so glad I did, it was one of the most fun days I have had this year. I encourage all Year 9s that have this opportunity to take it.

Francis Clenaghan



PASTORAL WORKSHOPS YEAR 9

The students of Year 9 have been fortunate to take part in a number of pastoral activities and workshops this year, all of which have complimented the discussions and work completed in extended tutor group. Firstly, each tutor group was led in discussion by the charity 'MACS' which is focused primarily on young people. The workshops encouraged our pupils to communicate their thoughts and feelings and gave practical advice on how to cope with problems they may face. Pupils have also been lucky enough to have two visits from the 'Love for Life' organisation. The first presentation focused on the importance of making healthy choices in relationships and the second on ensuring that pupils keep themselves safe while online. Social media has so many positive attributes but as the guest speakers explained, when used incorrectly, can cause a lot of damage and hurt.

Finally, not only have the Year 9 been involved in lots of pastoral activities, but they've been leading them too! This year, the tutor groups have accepted the challenge of delivering an assembly to their peers. A lot of planning and preparation went into each one and pupils were able to choose a topic which they felt strongly about or wanted their classmates and friends to know about. These ranged from "Peer Pressure" and "Words Can Hurt" to a presentation on "Fatima" and the "Origins of St Valentine's Day".



Friends of the cancer centre

In October, we organised the annual Senior School Coffee Morning and this year, all the money raised was donated to Friends of the Cancer Centre. In the run up to the event, we met with members from the organisation who informed us where exactly all the money raised would go and how it would be spent. The centre focuses on three areas- clinical care, patient comfort and care, and research. In the last year the charity has invested £1.4 million into local cancer services through the life-saving and life-changing projects. It was great to know specifically how we were helping. The coffee morning overall was an excellent success in raising an outstanding £2,400 for Friends of the Cancer Centre.





In Memory of Martin Donaghy

On 6 November 2016, the school community lost one of its most endearing and enduring characters with the untimely passing of Martin Donaghy.

"Big Martin", as he was fondly known by staff and pupils alike, was a larger than life character who contributed to the vivacity of the school in a multitude of ways. He was earnest and fun-loving and always had a cheerful word to brighten even the dullest of days.

Martin began teaching at Rathmore in 1974 as a teacher of Mathematics, but by 1984 was also teaching Computing and was the Head of ICT. He was a great solver of problems, in particular the perennial headache that was the school timetable. Every break time he held court in Crossword Corner, where his inimitable catchphrase was "it fits, so put it in!". Invariably the word was also right.

He was a great lover of football, an avid supporter of West Ham, Chairman and Honorary Secretary of Northern Ireland

Schools Soccer; and his enthusiasm for the sport was infectious. He also oversaw the weekly organisation of the staff five-side competitions.

Martin was always a dependable addition on many school trips, particularly on the French and Spanish trips where he confused and delighted locals with his own dialect of Esperanto. "Esperanto" translates as "one who hopes", and in many ways this is the inspiration of Martin's legacy- to be ever optimistic, to always have a cheerful word and live life to the full.

Martin and his family were helped immeasurably by the work of the Friends of the Cancer Centre who gave amazing support and care to Martin from his diagnosis in December 2015, throughout his treatment until his death in November last year. This ranged from simple luxuries like newspapers in the Bridgewater Suite where Martin could do his beloved crosswords, to the indispensable 24 hour

helpline. Many members of Martin's family and colleagues recently ran the Belfast Marathon to raise funds for the Friends of the Cancer Centre.

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Donaghy15



Catholic Caring



As part of Catholic Caring 2016, I was delighted to have the opportunity to go into town with my buddy Danielle and my friend Emer. Our job was to buy clothes for children of families that struggle with finances at Christmas time. My other buddy James brought my friends Beth and Meabh to choose toys.

It was good to see what a difference each tutor group could make to families under pressure. When each tutor group's hampers, clothes and toys were put on display in the foyer, it was great to see the Christmas joy in giving was still alive in Rathmore.

Niamh Scannell

THE PREFECT TEAM



Not many people know what goes on behind the closed doors of RE6. Between assemblies, sponsorship and brainstorming - we've had our hands full from day one, and it has been a blast! I'll never forget running around the canteen like a headless chicken during the Coffee Morning, making sure there was enough hot water and milk to go around; or racing between the front and back of the line of students, hundreds long, taking pictures for the sponsored walk.

Many people ask what it is exactly that Aoife and I do - we organise the Prefect Team, splitting the workload and helping to arrange ideas, ready to pitch them to Mrs McKeogh. Obviously we help out in the hands-on work too, cutting and sticking posters together and chasing tutor groups up on sponsorship and hampers; but we have our extra jobs, like any prefect. Since neither Aoife or I are assigned to a department or another year, our job is to focus on the team and make sure that we can do the best we can. Although no one knows what goes on behind closed doors, I hope I've shed a little light into the frantic and rewarding past year I've enjoyed as Head Boy.

Ryan Harrison Year14

I found that being Head Girl this year was a really valuable experience and I've learnt so much from it. While it can be stressful and demands a lot of time, it's great to be able to be so hands-on in the organisation of whole school events like the Coffee Morning, Catholic Caring and Trócaire. The rest of the Prefect Team were amazing to work with and we achieved a great deal this year, raising almost £16,000 for Trócaire alone! My favourite event would have to be the Coffee Morning for Friends of the Cancer Centre - it was our first event and it was great to see our hard work pay off for the first time. I'm glad I've been able to contribute to the life of the school and I hope that Ryan, the Prefect Team and I have not only helped to raise money this year, but create some memorable and enjoyable events for the whole school.

Aoife Murray



THE EDITORIAL TEAM

We really hope that you have enjoyed reading this edition of Solas magazine - it is testament to the fantastic achievements of our pupils both academically and in their extracurricular successes. This magazine celebrates the wonderful diversity of talent and interests of our students, showing that they live out our school motto, Ut Vitam Habeant, to the full.

Special thanks must be paid to Mr Paddy Boyle for his outstanding photography which really enhances the magazine - his help is greatly appreciated. We are very grateful to all the members of staff, who not only give so freely of their time towards organising so much extracurricular activity, but also for their help in supplying the Editorial Team with articles and pictures.

Congratulations to Laura Walsh in Upper Sixth for her fantastic self-portrait which was used as this year's front cover.

Editorial Team: Ribh Brownlee, Lucy Marron, Grace Magee, Chloe Cassidy, Jane McWilliams, Jennifer Hughes, Aisling Bradley, Cliona Young McGahey, James Gallagher, Donal Mackin, Jay Kennedy, Eimir McKegney & Alaoise Thomas.

Mr C. Tierney

