

RATHMORE



July
2022

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS NEWSLETTER



A Year in Review

Our Junior hurlers meeting Donal Nugent to celebrate their successful season.

School life has a flow and a rhythm to it which even the disruption of the last few years has been unable to displace for long. The academic year has reasserted itself, settling back into the predictable patterns and the return of the exam season. Who would have thought that pupils and staff would ever miss examinations? But, now that they are back, the pupils appear to have welcomed the opportunity to show what they are capable of and, as for the staff, centre assessed and centre determined grades will not linger fondly in anyone's memory.

Our pupils have the natural resilience and strength of youth and this has been augmented of course by a well-considered pastoral support programme delivered by experienced staff who care. So, as the school year has progressed the pupils have been quick to flex their curricular and extracurricular muscles and their achievements have been certainly impressive.

Outstanding moments ranged from our McFarland Cup winning hurlers, to the most successful year in school football for over a quarter of a century. There were spirited performances from our Camogie

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Basketball All-Ireland Success

and Netball teams and we also enjoyed All-Ireland success with our basketballers winning in Dublin. Then we had seven pupils qualifying for the All-Ireland Cross-Country, where Lughaidh Mallon finished in first place in the Intermediate Boys'.

We also enjoyed celebrating our pupils' success in other areas of school life including a sublime performance from Hannah McCann in the BBC School Soloist of the Year, Fíonn McCann won the Northern Ireland BBC Young Reporter of the Year competition and Leia Phoenix in Year 12 was awarded first prize in the Anthea Bell national translation competition organised by Queen's College, Oxford. The achievements and successes of our pupils are simply too numerous to squeeze into this newsletter but we will fill you in on all of our top stories in much more detail when we launch this year's digital edition of our Solas school magazine .

So, looking back over the events of the year there is certainly a lot to appreciate and be grateful for. The months have been packed with activity, challenges and achievements, and, paradoxically, while August of last year feels like an age ago, the time has swept by with amazing speed.

Now that the summer holidays have arrived it is time to apply the brakes a little and I hope you can all savour your time together. Whether you get to vacation abroad, baking under a foreign sun, or spend quality time huddled behind a windbreak on one of Ireland's many breathtakingly beautiful but meteorologically unpredictable beaches, I hope your summer is a great one.

Dr Arthur Donnelly, Principal

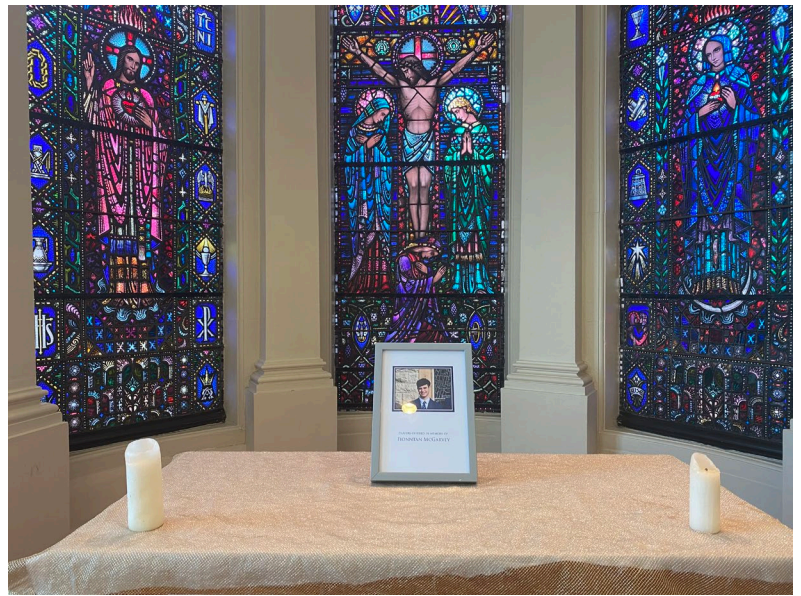


Hannah McCann, who represented the school in the BBC School Soloist of the Year, our Junior Camogie team, and the Intermediate and Senior pupils who qualified for the All-Ireland Cross-Country where Lughaidh Mallon won first place in the Intermediate Boys' race.

TRIBUTE TO FIONNTÁN AND DANIEL

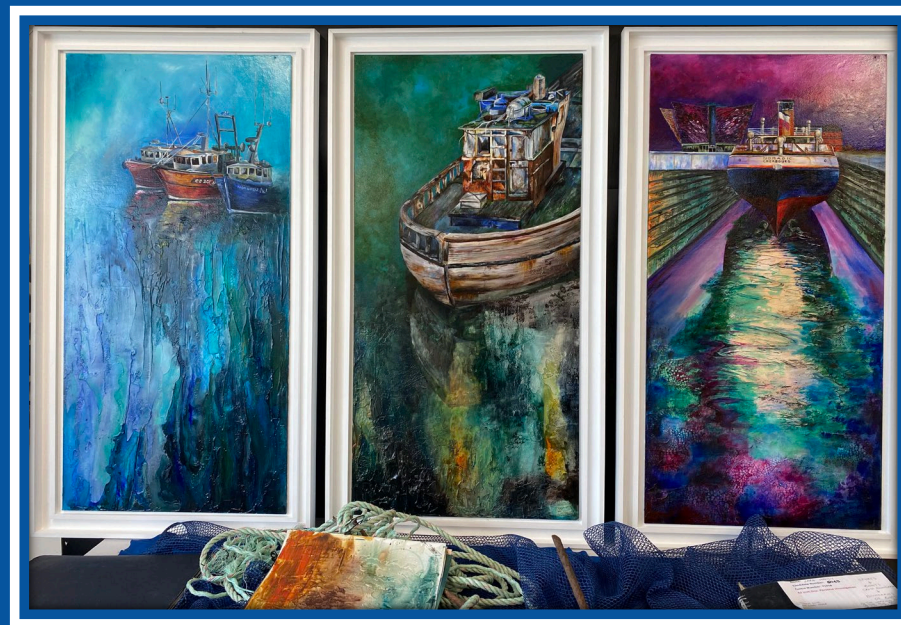
Our school community was left bereft by the devastating news that two recent past pupils had died. Fionntán McGarvey, who was in his first year at university and Daniel O'Neill, who studied with us up to GCSE level and was studying Computer Science at university.

Both pupils belonged to the same year group in school. Our convent chapel provides great sanctuary during difficult times in school. A number of our past pupils, who had left the school last year, came back to visit so that they could be a support to each other and share in a prayer service together.



We continue to keep both boys and their families and friends in our prayers.

VIRTUAL ART GALLERY



Lara Hanly, Upper VI, selected a nautical theme for her final project.

One of the highlights of our school year is to celebrate the artistic achievements and excellence of our pupils by hosting a week-long gallery and inviting their families and friends to enjoy walking through the exhibition and savouring the exquisite talent on show.

This year, we are delighted to share a virtual exhibition of the final projects produced by our GCSE, AS and A2 level pupils. We are grateful for the encouragement and support that they receive from the staff in our Art department.



Visit our virtual art gallery on our school website

ANTHEA BELL PRIZE FOR YOUNG TRANSLATORS

Congratulations to French student Leia Phenix in Year 12 who has won the Northern Ireland section of the Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators, run by the Queen's College, Oxford.

Entries to the competition were judged by team of Oxford undergraduates and professional translators and the judges were very impressed by the standard of entries.

The organisers commented on Leia's fantastic achievement as they received over 3,200 submissions from more than 260 schools in the UK. Over 14,000 pupils took part in the competition task alone in 2022. Leia will be taking French for A level next year and we are very proud of her.



YEAR 12 PUPIL WINS FIRST PLACE IN IRELAND



Mr Seamus McDonald visited Rathmore to present prizes for the Knights of St. Columbanus Essay Writing Competition. We were delighted that out of eighty-two competitors,

Aleena Rahman achieved First Place in Ireland for her 2000-word essay on the dignity of migrants. Aleena received €300 worth of vouchers for her prize.

Conor McCann achieved second place for his response on respect and Leah Dunn achieved third place for her essay on protecting the planet. Well done to all our successful contributors.

STUDENT SUCCESS

FIFTH WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP FOR BLANAID

Blanaid O'Neill in Lower Sixth has won the World Irish Dancing Championships in Belfast for the fifth time. In our latest edition of Solas, Blanaid explains what it takes to maintain this level of elite success. Well done Blanaid on this excellent achievement.



LOWER SIXTH PUPILS ENJOY CAMBRIDGE AND OXFORD EXPERIENCES

Well done to Stephanie Abogunrin who has been accepted onto a LPN Course for Law at Christ's College Cambridge.

Congratulations to Aoife Lavery who has been accepted onto the UNIQ course for Biology and Aneesha Batek who hopes to read Law at university.



FINTRU WORK EXPERIENCE – QUIZ SUCCESS

Congratulation to Year 13 students who won an employability quiz after a Fintru work experience this week. Zach Keane was in 1st place, Alex O'Connor was 2nd and Liam Muckian was in 3rd place.



FUTURE FOCUSED

In our first newsletter in June 2021 we set out our intentions for the School Development Strategy.

Much has been achieved since then in terms of ICT infrastructure and our focus in the incoming year will be in two key areas, Careers and fundraising.

The community of Rathmore is our greatest resource extending from the infectious enthusiasm of our new Year 8 intake back through time to all who have come before them, with their experience, insight, friendships and connections. The people make the school.

We want to develop and strengthen our links with Rathmore alumni and friends so that we might explore how we can better support each other.

So please do answer the questions on the following [link](#) and we will add your information to our database and get in touch with you after the summer break.

Careers

If you are interested in being involved in any aspect of careers support for our pupils we would love to hear from you. We are looking for help in a wide number of areas ranging from mentoring a student, providing work experience or just speaking to pupils about your career journey since leaving school. If you would like to help or would simply like to hear more, contact [Donna Magee](#)



Fundraising

It is never easy to ask for money, especially in the current economic climate. But then we aren't asking for ourselves but for the pupils. So if you think about it like that, it would be

irresponsible not to. Now there is a lot that we would like to do on behalf of our pupils but at the moment I would like to focus on one area.

You can see from this newsletter that our pupils have achieved fantastic success in a variety of sporting activities this year. Our pitch and track facilities give pupils the best possible environment to develop their sporting skills and to simply have good fun and enjoy themselves. It also provides the school with a source of revenue too, where again, we can feed any income right back into the school for the good of the pupils.

However, our 3G pitch is in need of replacement and planning is underway to bring this about. The catch is that there is no Government funding available for this project which means we have to find funding for it ourselves. If you would be willing to assist financially with this project we would be more than grateful and it would enrich the lives of our pupils for many years to come.

For further information please contact Donna Magee either by telephone on 02890610115 or by email alumni@rathmoregrammarschool.org



Our school football teams enjoyed the most successful season in over 25 years. Our Careers department, in conjunction with Queen's University Belfast, organised a "Mini-versity" experience for Year 9 pupils.



ALL – IRELAND CHAMPIONS

The Under-16 Basketballers were the latest team to peak during the pressure of a final. The challenge set down by Skibbereen in the All-Ireland Final became the catalyst for a superb display of athleticism that saw Rathmore win out on the day. This was no surprise to their dedicated coach Jim Martin. Whilst cliché it is true none-the-less, our basketballers are first to train (at 7.30am in the midst of winter) and the last to leave (our Under 16s have been studying in school to await precious court time at 16.30 each day). Such is the close nature of the basketball teams in school, that the Under 16 team would have acutely felt the disappointment of the near miss of the senior team; they had their All-Ireland hopes dashed a month previous.

Led by Jacob Byrne (Year 12), this committed group was determined to go all the way and they set out their stall convincingly from the tip-off. The pace of the final was exhilarating and exhausting at the same time. The Rathmore team was buoyed by the chants of their travelling supporters. Little did they know that their year group was gathered in the Assembly Hall to cheer on the team from afar.



Watch the final again