

RATHMORE



July
2023

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS NEWSLETTER



The Senior MaLarnon Cup team who reached our first final since 2007, and together with the Senior football and hurling teams who reached the final in the Belfast Schools and Casement Cup to round off one of the most successful years of sport at Rathmore,

As the academic year draws to a close, I feel compelled, yet again, to lavish praise on the achievements of our pupils. The bulletin merely offers a flavour of their extracurricular accomplishments but you can check out our latest edition of Solas if you want the full low-down. This year's magazine, the first under the editorial and artistic direction of Ms. Matthew, our head of Moving Image Arts, reflects the vibrancy of school life. It is a veritable cornucopia of pupil extracurricular activities and successes.

Of course our staff deserve a mention too. Their professionalism and enthusiasm throughout the year was nicely rounded off with a flurry of activities including Sports Day, Interclass competitions, excursions and trips, including one to Germany and to Delphi (Galway not Greece, so no oracle but plenty of mud).

Mightily impressive, character building and truly inspiring, this really was one of our most successful and memorable sporting years for a very long time. Our Senior boys' teams reached the final in Gaelic football, hurling and soccer while our Year 9 basketball team excelled at national level and our athletes achieved success at All-Ireland level.

A lot of this success is even more remarkable against the back-drop of a funding crisis in education that threatens to curtail the opportunities that schools can afford to offer to pupils. It is in this context, that I am even more grateful to our staff who volunteer to accompany our pupils to events and trips. Their expertise and professional guidance provides the platform for such success.

Thank you for your continued support for Rathmore. I look forward to seeing you in the new term and wish you all an excellent summer.

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GETTING READY TO WELCOME THE CLASS OF 2030



On June 21st Rathmore welcomed our new enrolment for Year 8.

The eager Primary 7s and their guardians were greeted at the school reception area and given the name of their tutor for the coming year.

While the adults listened to an address from Dr Donnelly in the assembly hall, the P7s joined their tutor groups, and tutor, to get to know each other.

It was a successful morning with all P7s leaving the school much more relaxed, and looking forward to joining us in August.



FAREWELL

We also say farewell to two of our most longstanding colleagues this year with the retirement of H el ene Vieussens, our Head of French, and Ursula Lavery, our Vice Principal and Head of Year 14.

H el ene has been with us for twenty eight years and Ursula for thirty years. Both are linguists and have been passionate and dedicated subject leaders in French and German respectively.

As a native speaker H el ene brought expertise and cultural awareness into the classroom. Her PGCE tutor described her as having the quintessential patience and tolerance of the sympathetic native speaker and she has certainly brought humour and a characteristic frankness to her teaching and working relationships down through the years. Her retirement speech at the staff do was a perfect and very entertaining illustration of her character and warmth.

Ursula's career has been varied, encompassing as it does Head of Year 8, Senior Teacher and Head of Department. Over the last five years as VP she has followed in the shoes of Terry Donaghy and Oonagh McKeogh. Those are some big shoes, but Ursula took on the role of leading Pastoral Care and heading up Safeguarding within the school and brought her own brand of compassion, wisdom and sensitivity to the roles. She carried the responsibility with a calm dignity and unquestionable integrity.

To lose one quality member of staff may seem unfortunate but to lose two.., well you know how the rest of that goes. Suffice it to say that both H el ene and Ursula will be greatly missed, we are in their debt, and wish them health and happiness in their retirement.



ANTHEA BELL PRIZES FOR YOUNG TRANSLATORS

Nothing was lost in translation for our Rathmore linguists Seán Carabine-Phippard (Year 13), Leia Phenix (Year 13) and Ahmed Sharif (Year 12), who have excelled in The Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators, an annual prize organised by The Queen's College, Oxford University. The pupils were awarded commendations for the quality of their translations in French (Seán), Spanish (Leia) and German (Ahmed). They faced stiff competition from schools across the UK - over



15,000 students participated in the prize this year. Leia and Seán are dual linguists, both studying French and Spanish at A level. Ahmed, too, will be taking German in Year 13. Congratulations to our commendees for producing such beautifully crafted labours of love. Rathmore is proud of you and of our flourishing Languages Department.

YEAR 9 MINI-VERSITY

Our Year 9 pupils had the opportunity take part in "Mini-versity" by visiting the University of Ulster and Queen's University, Belfast.

As part of their Careers education, delivered through LLW, pupils were able to begin to explore the range of courses and what life at university might be like. Staff, across the school, displayed their qualifications to help engage pupils in conversations about the wide variety of pathways available. During the week, pupils had the opportunity to take part in their own 'Miniversity' Graduation.



FUTURE FOCUSED

The challenges facing public finances impact all sectors including education. The school acutely needs and relies on help from individual sponsors, both personal and professional, who are in a position to help us create the curricular and extra-curricular opportunities our pupils deserve.

We have ambitious plans to develop our offerings in music and the creative arts, to enhance our sports facilities and to extend the reach and impact of our Careers education. Above all, we hope to secure and develop our Pastoral Care and counselling services to help our young people.

All of this necessary work is funded by our voluntary contributions and financial donations from our supporters. However, support of any kind, from any member of our Alumni and Friends, who is in a position to add value to our school's capacity to enrich the lives of our young people is much needed and appreciated. Should you be in a position to offer support in any way please do not hesitate to express this interest to our Bursar, Donna Magee dmagee919@c2ken.net

On that note, may I share with you a date for your diary, **Wednesday 25 October 2023** sees the return of our **Careers Taster Evening** (our first since 2018). We hope to invite as many of our Alumni and school supporters to join with our pupils from Year 10 to Sixth Form as they explore the range of pathways and Careers opportunities open to them. With your support, they will have a first-hand opportunity to meet you and discuss your career pathway and how you came to be where you are now (we require all levels of expertise from CEO's to recent graduates). We have found this event to be a brilliant experience for our pupils pivotal and I would be delighted if you or your company would join us on the evening. Please express your interest and availability by contacting our Head of Careers, Mrs Stephanie Murphy smurphy158@c2ken.net

Thanks to all our Alumni, parents, friends and supporters for the investment of your time, encouragement and financial support.



Rathmore was delighted to celebrate International Women's Day with four inspirational women; Claire Hanna MP, a past pupil, Rosalynd Smith, past pupil, Managing Director of Fintru, Dr Caoimhe Carbery, past pupil, Data Scientist working on Cybercrime at eBay and Michelle O'Neill, First Minister Designate.



Louis Cameron, Upper VI won the Sentinus NI 'Senior' Young Scientist Award



Year 13 English Literature pupils had the opportunity to visit the Seamus Heaney Homestead. One of many local field trips that enrich and bring alive the learning experience of pupils.

JUNIOR GERMAN TRIP



40 pupils from Years 9+10 German went on a trip to Boppard, Germany from 19-23 June 2023. We took a (very) early morning flight from Dublin to Frankfurt and made our way to the hotel. During the next 5 days the pupils and staff all enjoyed a host of excursions and cultural experiences; from seeing an array of animals at the extensive Cologne Zoo, to sampling the delights of a chocolate factory – definitely a highlight for all present, the group was impressed by the local sights and wonders of the region.

On the first evening the group took a boat cruise along the enchanting River Rhine, travelling as far as the famous Loreley Rock, at which point the boat turned to make its way back. What was unexpected was that a group of retirees who, upon enquiry make that journey once a year, began to sing a piece in German about the Loreley Rock. This unaccompanied, four-part choir serenaded the pupils and staff on the boat as we headed back to our pick-up point.

As much as the wonders of the Ehrenbreitstein Fortress, the Marksburg Castle and Cologne Cathedral astonished and amazed the group, the highlight of the trip took place towards the end of the trip, a day in the aptly named 'Phantasialand'. From early morning to late evening, both pupils and staff alike experienced the adrenaline rush of various rides that would prove to be an incredible end to an incredible trip.

The trip may have only lasted 5 days, but the memories made and the friendships fostered will last a lot longer, hopefully for the rest of the lives of all those present.

It took me nearly a year to plan this amazing experience, but I couldn't have done it without the willingness and help of my colleagues, whom I would like to thank. To Mr McIlvenny, Mr Forde, Miss Cullen and Miss Boyle, a massive 'Vielen Dank' for coming on the trip and for enabling our pupils to have such an experience.

Bis zum nächsten Mal! (Until the next time!)

Herr Newell



YEAR TEN DELPHI TRIP

The PE trip to the Delphi Centre in Mayo took place from the 20th-23rd June.

49 pupils from Year 10 took part in the activities along with four staff.

The trip was blessed with great weather, and we all had a fantastic time both at the centre and the beach at Louisburgh.

Thank you to Mr McCormick for organising and all the staff who made the trip possible - Ms Cassidy, Ms McEvoy-Morgan and Mr Scullion.



YEAR 11 GEOGRAPHY URBAN FIELDTRIP



Year 11 Geography classes headed out on a Belfast Bus Trip and Tour of the Titanic Quarter. The focus was on looking at city zones and regeneration as part of their Urban Geography Unit.

YEAR 8 MATHS CLUB



On the second last week of term the members of the year 8 Maths Club, accompanied by Mrs Aldworth, went to W5 Belfast, the interactive discovery centre. A great time was had by all.



One group was lucky enough to get access into Olympic House and up to the top floor viewing gallery!

W5

YEAR 11 – LET'S GO HYDRO!

