

SOLAS



**Tenth Edition
May 2016**



WELCOME TO RATHMORE



I started Rathmore in September and everyone has been very kind by helping us settle into a new environment. It is a big jump from primary school to secondary school! One way of helping us settle in and make new friends is the summer 'get-to-know' week, where we completed a number of activities with our tutor group and some of the other classes. This helped us make friends and get used to the school. The school also has a great 'Buddy' system. Each Year 8 tutor group has its own Upper 6th 'buddy'. When they come in, they play games or do activities with us and these have been brilliant. The buddies make us feel welcomed into the school and help us to get to know others in the tutor group better.

Cara Morgan – Year 8



SHOWING OUR TRUE COLOURS



Budding Rathmore Artists Showcase at the Ulster Museum

On Thursday 14th January three artists from Rathmore had some of their stunning work unveiled at the CCEA 'True Colours' exhibition which showcased A2 work by Emma McGlade, AS work by Caitriona Rafferty along with Michael O'Neill's GCSE portfolio.

Every year, Northern Ireland's most promising and exciting young artists are selected by CCEA to showcase their GCSE and GCE Art and Design work for thousands of visitors from all over the world. From intricate paintings to innovative sculptures and daring fashion design, the 'True Colours' exhibition reveals the high calibre of creative work produced by our young artists. Irish artist Paddy McCann officially opened the exhibition this year, commenting, "It's a real pleasure to see the level of talent being nurtured in our schools and colleges. The range of work on show is truly inspiring and I am sure it will inspire those budding artists and designers visiting the exhibition."



Emma McGlade was one of 53 local students who was recognised at CCEA's annual GCE Celebrating Excellence Awards recently. The students, from 43 schools across Northern Ireland, were recognised for achieving top marks in the CCEA GCE Summer 2015 examinations. At the event, held for the first time at Parliament Buildings, the Minister for Education, John O'Dowd, congratulated the students on their success at A level. Emma received top marks in Art and Design in Northern Ireland, as well as having her work featured at the True Colours exhibition earlier this year! After an undoubtedly successful A-Level Art and Design career, Emma has continued her studies of the subject at the University of Ulster. Her stunning final piece was a fragmented clay mould of a human body that was suspended in the air, with an impressive portfolio of canvas paintings and experimental work.





PROMISING RATHMORE ARTIST RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

Each year Les Jones, a past President of the Art Society of Ulster, selects the most promising young artist from the True Colours Exhibition and presents them this esteemed award. This year, Les Jones and the current President Dennis Kelly selected our very own Caitriona Rafferty, an Upper Sixth pupil, as their choice in the AS section and this is an outstanding achievement.

Caitriona's AS artwork, on display at True Colours earlier this year, included a simply breathtaking painting of her sister in technicolour acrylic paint as well as a large colouring pencil portrait and her body of supporting work.

The Arts Society of Ulster have invited Caitriona to take part in their Annual Exhibition which will be held at Merville House, Merville Garden Village from 20 June to 2 July 2016. The Rathmore Art Department is delighted and incredibly proud to be represented in the exhibition by such a talented and promising artist, and wish Caitriona all the best of luck in her future artistic endeavours.

TOP ARTISTS AT GCSE

Achieving full marks in an exam is no mean feat, but that's exactly what seven Rathmore students did in their Art and Design GCSE. Congratulations to Amy Devlin, Sophie Boyle, Aoife Murray, Emma Davey, Orla Lavery, Shannon McKinley and Anna Tennyson. While the pupils were allowed to choose their own theme in their portfolio work, for the Externally Set Assignment (ESA) they responded visually to a given title, 'My Space'.



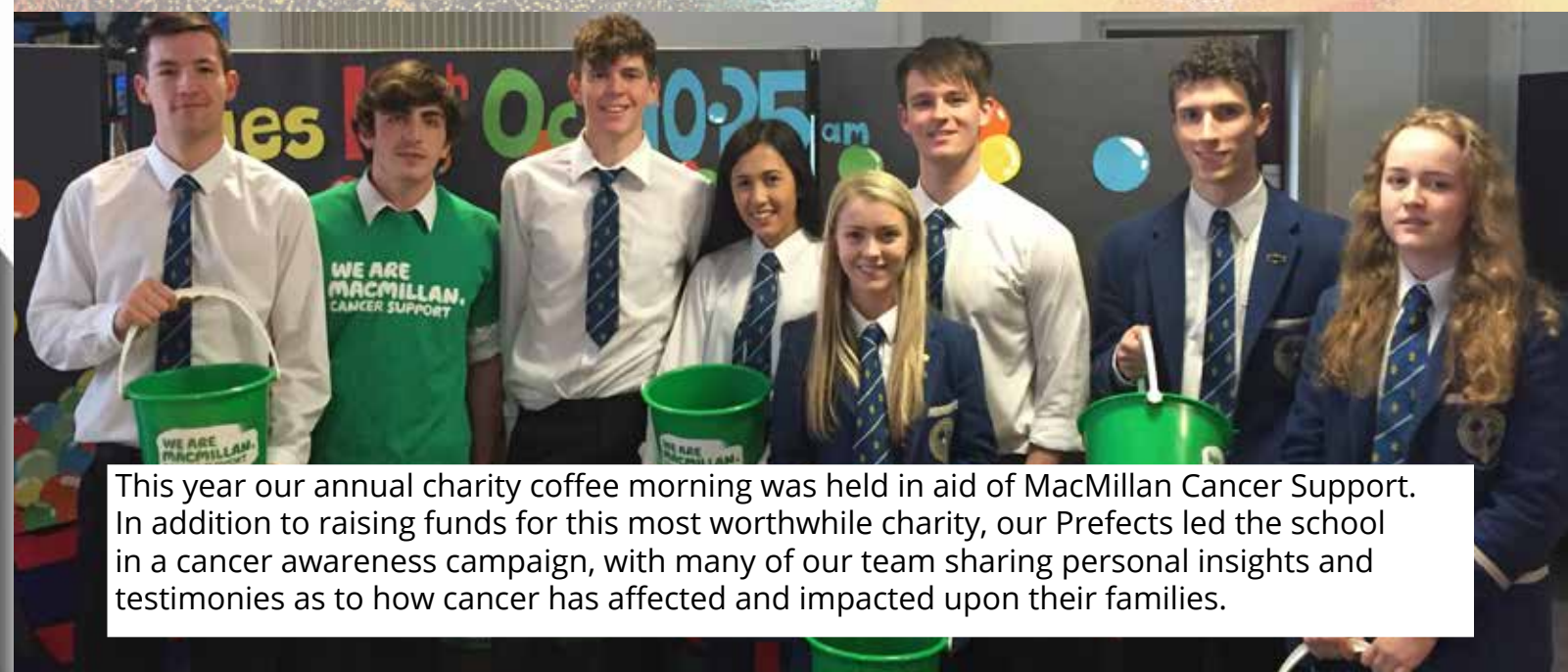
Catholic Caring

Catholic Caring has been a tradition in Rathmore for many years. This annual event is one that we take great pride in as a school and it gives us the opportunity to make a big impact on a family's Christmas within our local community. This year, as is customary, the Prefect Team met up to create presentations for assemblies to launch the campaign. Our aim was to promote the Christmas spirit and raise an awareness of the struggle of others and what they will have to do without if we do not help. We wanted as many families as possible to enjoy Christmas without the financial struggle attached to it, and encourage our pupils to appreciate the real meaning of Christmas.

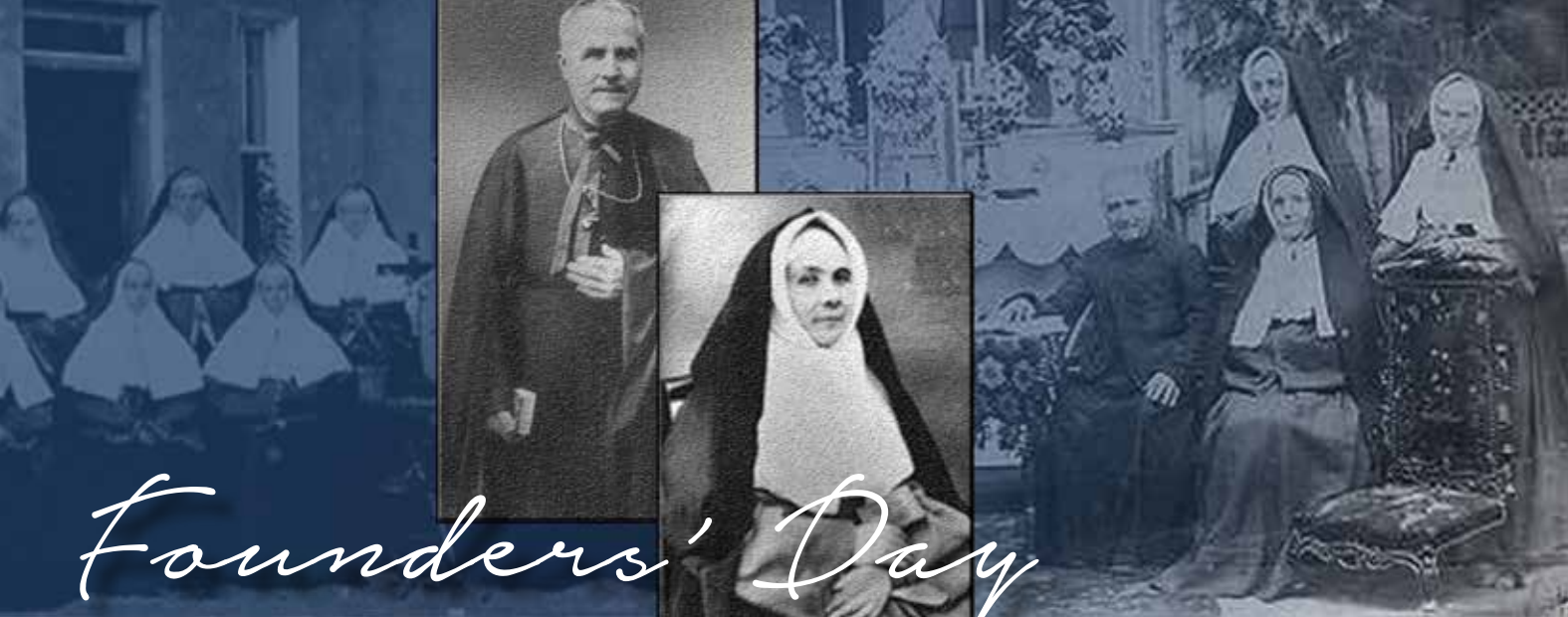
Every tutor group in the school collected food to create a luxury Christmas hamper for a family as well as money to buy toys, clothes and books for a young child. What makes Catholic Caring in Rathmore so special is that it is our own pupils who raise the money and go out to get the gifts and food for a family who otherwise would not be able to give their children the same Christmas that we are all so lucky to have.

On the final day of the campaign, a few weeks before Christmas, the prefects organised the mountain of presents and hampers collected and displayed them in the foyer. It was a very gratifying experience, knowing that together as a school, we can make a real difference to someone's Christmas.

Sarah Doyle (Head Girl) and Dan McKavanagh (Head Boy)



This year our annual charity coffee morning was held in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support. In addition to raising funds for this most worthwhile charity, our Prefects led the school in a cancer awareness campaign, with many of our team sharing personal insights and testimonies as to how cancer has affected and impacted upon their families.



Founders' Day

This year we once again celebrated the efforts of the sisters of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, who are the original founders of Rathmore. The Order came from Béziers to Lisburn in 1870 and set up, under the leadership of Mother Saint Thomas, the first convent outside France and within months had quickly established a primary school for girls.

As the school flourished, plans were made to open a grammar school at Rathmore and on 1st September 1953 Rathmore opened its doors to 36 boarding and day pupils. Since then, Rathmore has grown in size and has continued in the mission of our founders to “enrich through education the life of the people in its care and encourage them, in turn, to bring life to others.”

Today, the staff and pupils at Rathmore continue to pay tribute to the school’s beginnings by celebrating Founders’ Week each year. The canteen provided pastries and juice to all students as part of a special assembly throughout the week and banners of our Founders, Father Jean Gailhac and Mother St. Jean Pelissier Cure, were placed around the school. Founders’ Week is particularly important in celebrating the work of the Sacred Heart of Mary Sisters, reflecting on their legacy and how it influences our school life.

MARHABA RATHMORE!

“Marhaba” is how we say ‘Hello’ in Arabic. Coming into Rathmore, I was afraid but excited to be here. It is very different from my school in Syria. New friends – are they friendly? Yes! A new and different school system – is it hard to adapt? Not really. Are my new teachers great fun? Yes indeed! I love Rathmore. Everyone is caring, supportive and friendly. I think it is an amazing school. It is number one, in my opinion! I have been through a lot in the last year and Rathmore welcomed me with an open heart. It feels like it is home. I’ve made some great friends and I am enjoying school. Rathmore has classes such as HE, IT and technology workshops which I have never done before. My journey from Syria until today has been better than I would have expected. I must say though that the weather isn’t welcoming since I arrived in the airport! I am truly thankful and blessed to be here.

Roudy Azar (Year 10)



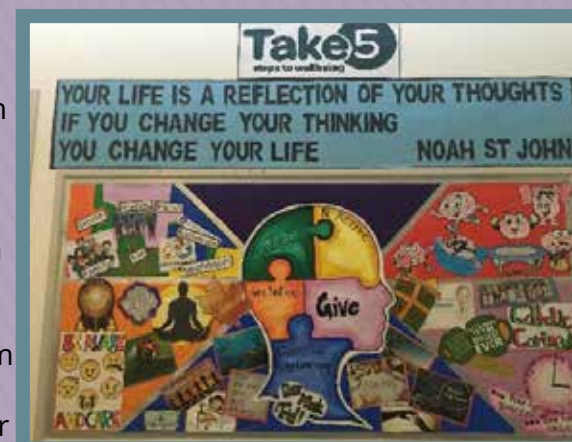
Rathmore School Council

The School Council was established in 2012 and its purpose is to give all pupils the chance to have a voice. It is important that all pupils have channels where their opinions are listened to and taken on board and we feel the council facilitates this. A representative from each tutor group is elected by their peers to sit in the relevant Year Council. Each representative has the responsibility of communicating with their tutor group and presenting their ideas to the Year Council which holds weekly meetings during lunchtime.

Seven Communication Officers are appointed and assigned to each year group.

This year, the School Council focused on Positive Mental Health and Emotional Well-being. Each year group discussed and illustrated the ‘Take 5: Steps to Well-being’ initiative launched by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. The ideas were displayed on a notice board in school and every pupil was then given a ‘Take 5’ leaflet to consolidate the message. In order to prepare for the launch of the campaign, the Communication Officers attended a presentation delivered by Mr. Morgan, from the Belfast Trust, as well as a workshop on Positive Mental Health organised by NICCY (Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People).

Not only does the School Council work closely with the whole student body, but it also takes part in meetings with Senior Management to present the ideas and issues that our pupils want raised.



This year, topics have included canteen prices, access to sport provision, uniform rules, the school environment and access to IT and study facilities.

We produced an internet safety campaign called ‘E-aware’ . During this campaign, leaflets were created which outlined steps that each pupil can take to protect themselves online. In order to reinforce our message, the Communication Officers spoke at each assembly and these visits were strengthened by subsequent discussions in tutor groups. Because we feel this is such an important and relevant topic, we wanted to ensure that the message was preserved and so the ‘E-aware’ leaflet will be included in the student planners starting this September.

Stock Market Challenge Success

Every year, the Stock Market Challenge provides our Business Studies pupils with a unique opportunity to experience the excitement of dealing on a live trading floor, in competition with other schools in the Greater Belfast Area. Our intrepid brokers began the game with a fund of shares and euros worth £21,000. The object of the exercise was to maximise the team's fund value by buying and selling shares in the nine listed companies and by trading in the euro. The game was divided into five 'days' with each 'day' lasting approximately 25 minutes. Our team was made up of a Finance Manager (Brendan), Media Analyst (Ciaran), Investment Analyst (Jenna) and our Floor traders (Anna and Clodagh). Throughout the task, news reports from TV news bulletins, radio news flashes and a daily financial newspaper allowed our team to make informed decisions on which stocks and currencies to buy and sell to maximise their return. Competing against 16 other regional schools, our team won with a final portfolio worth £48,000. Taking part showed our Business Studies pupils what it would be like to work as a trader on the financial markets. The development of essential key skills such as team work, analysis of information and effective communication are also encouraged. The Stock Market Challenge is a fast moving and demanding activity that required our team to work to a high standard under pressure. As they encountered challenges during the exercise, they needed to use their problem solving skills and act together as a team. Well done to all involved!



Visit to the Coca Cola Factory



The Year 11 Business Studies pupils had an educational site visit to the Coca Cola HBC Bottling plant in Lisburn. The day got off to a great start with a choice of bottled Coke beverages and an informative DVD on the history of Coke; how it was formed and who brought it to Ireland, as well as some impromptu market research on our opinions of different brands. We were then given headsets which enabled us to hear our tour guide Ashley explain the production process involved in making a variety of drinks.

We were able to see the bottles being processed and stored, ready for delivery to wholesalers and retailers. We really enjoyed this and discovered many new facts. For example, 60 cans are produced in the factory every second and 250,000 bottles leave the plant in Lisburn every day. After this, we played a number of interactive games and ended the day viewing posters that provided information about shareholders, owners and the famous 7X formula of Coke.



A TASTE OF THINGS TO COME

Year 11 Business Studies students had the opportunity to visit the Tayto Castle in Craigavon in February and even met the famous Mr Tayto! Pupils were given a guided tour of the factory, learning about various aspects of the company as they went. In 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!



FRANCIS' SCONES ALL GONE

When I first heard about the Young Enterprise Club, I was so excited and couldn't wait to join! At the first meeting, Mrs Murphy asked us to form groups and in doing so, I made new friends. At the second meeting, we were assigned our challenge. Each group was given £10 and told to try and make as much of a profit as they could. I thought I should make jam as my grandpa has lots of home-grown fruit. Also, I thought it would be good to bake scones to sell to the teachers. I did, however, have to get up very early to bake, as fresh scones sell best! There was a lot of interest in my jam and scones and many people seem to have enjoyed eating them! After Lent, I am going to make tray bakes and hopefully these will also sell well as all the profits go to charity. The club is a great learning experience for all and I hope even more people will join in the future.

Francis Clenaghan 9G

Pope John Paul II Award

On Thursday 5th February, twenty-two Year 14 pupils received the Pope John Paul II Award at a ceremony in St Peter's Cathedral. Joining with over 200 other recipients of the Award from around the Diocese, the night was filled with prayer, song and reflections of the voluntary and youth work undertaken throughout Down and Connor. The night of celebration marked the end of two years of voluntary service carried out in school, social and parish settings. Our pupils were involved in a range of voluntary activities in school including visiting Park Manor Nursing Home after school, leading prayer services and assisting with various after-school clubs. In their parishes, our pupils undertook a range of roles including being Ministers of the Eucharist and Word, facilitating Children's Liturgy, helping with youth clubs and coaching sports. As part of their social outreach, our pupils volunteered to help with many of our local charities. Many pupils also chose to travel to Lourdes and beyond in order to volunteer over their summer holidays.



The recipients of the Pope John Paul II Award were Aisling Agnew, Marie Therese Clenaghan, Sian Crossey, Eve Devlin, Sarah Doyle, Caoimhe Glover, Gemma Goan, Owen Kelly, Deirbhile Kennedy, Aoife Leggett, Eadaoin MacRandal, Jennifer McCann, Matthew McCaughey, Eimear McCourt, Amy McCoy, Grace McManus, Alannah McQuillan, Cliona Meenan, Catherine Murray, Katherine Nelson, Aoife O'Reilly, Caitriona Rafferty.



Last year I took part in the Pope John Paul II Gold Award. The highlight for me was volunteering in the Give Kids the World Village in Orlando Florida when on holiday last year. It is a very special place run by the Make-a-Wish Foundation and provides families with life-limited children a place to create magical memories. It was an incredible experience to meet and assist families who live in very challenging situations. I was inspired with their ability to maintain a positive outlook on life. It was a humbling yet amazing experience and I hope to return this year and volunteer again. Another part of completing my award involved sharing my love of music with my parish. I play the cello in my parish folk group which has given me the opportunity to play at many parish events, weddings and funerals. Through my love of music and participation in parish liturgies I have been fortunate to engage with many like-minded people. The Pope John Paul award also allows young people to volunteer in many school and community groups such as homework club, cookery club, GIFT, parish pilgrimages, nursing homes and more. The list is endless. Completing this award has enabled me to grow as a person and my many positive experiences have helped me to appreciate and value the important things in life. I would encourage as many young people as possible to consider participating in the Pope John Paul award. **Amy McCoy (Year 14)**



TRUE HAPPINESS IN FIJI

As part of my Pope John Paul II award, I took the opportunity to volunteer abroad to try to spread the Catholic ethos of Rathmore beyond our local community.

During the summer of 2015, I travelled independently to Fiji to complete two weeks of voluntary work at Treasure House Orphanage. As the eldest in my family, I've always looked out for my younger brother and sisters and I am interested in going into a caring profession. Therefore, I was particularly interested in the town of Nadi, Fiji, where an orphanage needed volunteers to help with the care of children.

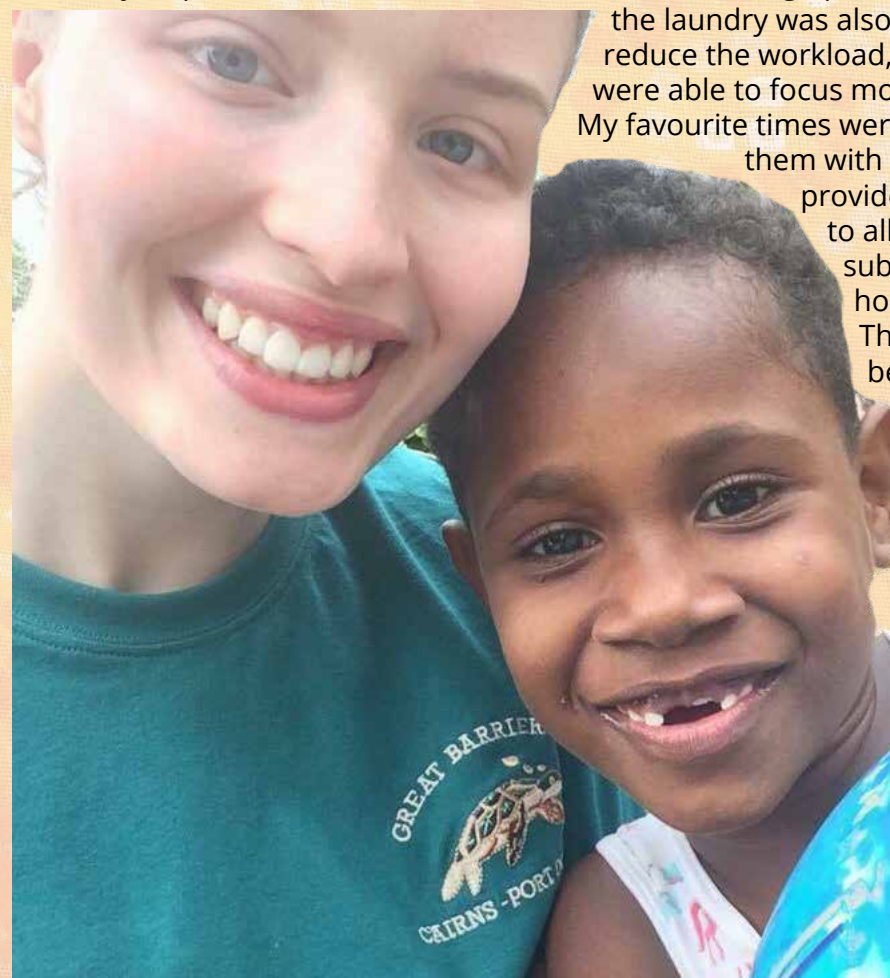
I researched the charity advertising the project and where Fiji was, and luckily it wasn't far from where I was going on my summer holidays that year, so I was able to make the journey from Melbourne, Australia by myself.

I lived with a host family during my stay and learned about a new culture which I had never been exposed to. The day after I arrived, I went to meet the staff and all of the children at the orphanage. I was overwhelmed by the welcome I received. I immediately became part of the Treasure House family and made many new lifelong friends while I was there. I helped the housemothers with the cooking, preparing meals suited to each child's dietary requirements, and I assisted them with cleaning up all the dishes after each meal. Drying and sorting

the laundry was also a task I was involved in and by helping to reduce the workload, I really made a difference as the housemothers were able to focus more of their time on activities with the children. My favourite times were spent with the children themselves, helping them with homework and their reading and writing, and I provided great help with their English tasks. I listened to all of their interests, including what their favourite subjects were and what they liked best about the home.

The children suggested that the orphanage could be more colourful, so, with the permission of the manager of the orphanage, I led a team of five volunteers to paint the house and surrounding fence with the vibrant colours that the children had picked out. They were so happy with how it looked and I was pleased that I was able to make a lasting difference before I left.

Going to Fiji taught me the poignant lesson of learning to be more appreciative of everything, and that true happiness comes from bringing joy to others and establishing new connections. It was a surreal experience that I will definitely remember for the rest of my life. **Caitriona Rafferty (Year 14)**





"Working for a Just World" is Trócaire's motto and this year, the focus of Rathmore's Trócaire campaign was on the plight of the refugees crossing into Europe from the Middle East.

As a school community we felt we had to take a stand. Our Prefect Team soon set to work to raise awareness and organise events which would allow us to contribute to Trócaire's refugee aid programme.

The most moving and poignant moment of the whole Trócaire campaign was the sponsored silence, inspired by the idea that "to hear, one must be silent".

Each student was sponsored by family and friends to spend the last three periods in complete silence, culminating with the gathering of our entire school community in the courtyard for the last thirty minutes. It was immensely powerful to witness our whole school standing side by side; each tutor group holding a poster they had designed to express the refugee's plight.





1916

OFF TO DUBLIN.....

This year commemorates 100 years since the 1916 Easter Rising, undoubtedly one of the most important and significant events in modern Irish History. In light of this, the annual Upper Sixth History trip had even greater meaning and significance.

We began our day in resting place of some centuries. Greeting you elaborately decorated Daniel O'Connell. Charles Stewart Parnell, the resting place of navigated us around of these significant After an enjoyable before meeting Easter Rising in Moore Street the Rising and the footsteps was issued and which was used the week of the brought to life the course of time for us to re-lived the famous fight for Easter 1916.

Dublin with a visit to Glasnevin Cemetery. This 120-acre site is the of the most prominent Irish Nationalists of the 19th and 20th on arrival to the cemetery is a huge tower standing over an crypt – the resting place of none other than "the Liberator", Not too far from O'Connell lies the remains of prominent Home Rule Politician, and a little further away again, Eamon de Valera and Michael Collins. Our tour guide expertly the cemetery, sharing with us stories and tales of the role each figures had to play in the fight for Irish freedom.

morning, we headed in to the city centre for a bite of lunch our next tour guide, Eoin, who led us around Dublin on an Walking Tour. Starting at Trinity College Dublin and finishing via the GPO, Eoin's narrative explained to us the events of the impact that it had on the people in Dublin. We walked in of Padraig Pearse to the very building where the surrender ventured through the main floor of the General Post Office as the headquarters of the Provisional Government during Rising. Eoin's enthusiastic and insightful narrative certainly this significant event which served to mould and change history on this island. Never was there a more appropriate re-engage with this aspect of our history. On our trip we events and walked through the very streets where this Irish freedom took place during that fateful week of



MUNICH - AN ASTONISHING CITY WITH A HARROWING PAST

There was a buzz in the air as we said goodbye to our friends and boarded the school bus to Dublin. It was a journey filled with singing, laughing and the tangible excitement of exploring a place we had never been before.

Our Aer Lingus flight touched down in Munich late Friday night and on our coach from the airport we passed an eclectic combination of historic buildings and incredible contemporary architecture such as the enormous Allianz Arena, Bayern Munich's home grounds.

Soon, we were checking into our Hostel, Haus International, which we were sharing with other teens from across the globe. After dinner we investigated and found the Hostel had its very own club equipped with pool tables, arcade games and even a vending machine for pizza!

The first day began with a trip to the metro by tram, the main transport link of the district. From there, we were guided around the city centre by the charming German tour guide Elsa where we admired the Frauenkirche Cathedral and State Parliament building. During our trip we became more exposed to the historic background of Munich. We visited the Documentation Centre for the History of Nazism and even saw the beer hall where Adolf Hitler himself met with other party members, plotting their first attempt to seize power in 1923 through the Munich Putsch.

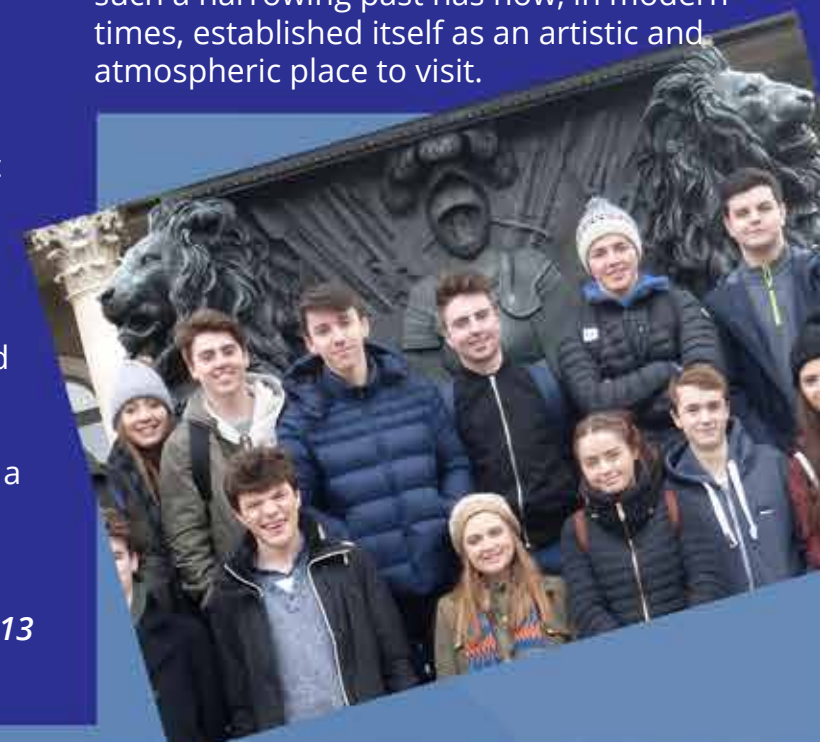
On Sunday we visited the Olympic Tower, soaring above both the vintage 1972 Olympic Stadium and the modernistic Olympic Hall. The view from the top of the tower was breathtaking, with the whole city and even the Alps laid out before us. At the pinnacle of the tower was a museum of famous Rock and Pop stars with artifacts and autographs from icons such as the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and Elvis. Later that night we were treated to a game of bowling at a nearby bowling alley.

James Brady - Year 13

alley. Competition was fierce within groups but eventually two winners were crowned (to the dismay of the rest of us) and we made our way back to the Youth Hostel for dinner before setting back out on our travels, walking the city at night. The night life was buzzing as cars and people bustled in the streets and it became clear that Munich truly came alive at night. Each cinema we passed was packed full and cafes were working hard to keep up with customer orders.

On our final day we visited Dachau Concentration Camp. Here the world seemed to stand still as the wind stopped and birds fell quiet. 42,000 lives were snatched away by the Nazis in this death camp through gas poisoning, starvation and manual labour. We paid tribute at the Catholic Church memorial where old barracks stood as a mark of respect for the suffering of Dachau's prisoners. Walking though where such horrific moments in history took place will remain as an experience never to be forgotten.

The History trip to Munich was a once in a lifetime educational experience that we can all say we thoroughly enjoyed and will remember for years to come. The nights we sat up playing cards and laughing with each other brought all the students together and strengthened our friendships which has translated back into our school life. The history and information we experienced and observed is highly relevant to what we are learning in class and really brings the course to life. It is truly astonishing how a city with such a harrowing past has now, in modern times, established itself as an artistic and atmospheric place to visit.



IN A FIELD OF THEIR OWN.

The Geography department has been clocking up the mileage this year with field trips to Colin Glen Forest Park (Year 12), the Titanic Quarter (Year 11) and the all time favourite Upper Sixth trip to Newcastle, County Down. These practical excursions allow pupils studying Geography the opportunity to get hands on experience of urban planning, studying geology and wildlife, tourism and careers associated with the subject.

BUDDING SCIENTISTS

The Science Club takes place every Wednesday at 1:15pm in Science 5 and is open to all Year 8 pupils with a keen interest in the subject.

As well as having fun with friends and meeting new people from other classes, the Year 8 pupils are also learning about Science and fulfilling their curiosities of how things work. The club is run by Lower Sixth pupils and the budding junior scientists learn a lot from their knowledge and experience. The Club is recommended to all Year 8 pupils with a growing appreciation and fascination for the world around them as well as those who wish to learn in a new and fun fashion!



Bog Children

In September, my class and I visited the Peatlands Park in Dungannon. We arrived at around ten o'clock and walked around the park whilst learning about the unique ecosystem and environment of the peatlands, including the famously eerie preserving nature of marshland. I found the depth of the deceptively shallow looking marshland particularly interesting as in places the ground looked solid but was in fact a marsh which could be over two metres deep, and many of us almost fell into it!

We moved on to an area of peatlands where we used quadrats to assess the diversity of plant life in the area. However, despite the fact we were sixth formers, the discovery of two frogs and a particularly hairy caterpillar soon became the centre of everyone's attention! Following lunch, we headed home slightly wetter than when we arrived but inspired by an interesting and informative visit to the Peatlands Park. The bus journey home was nonetheless dramatic as the surprise entry of three wasps made the journey stressful to say the least...!

The trip, whilst being enjoyable, was also useful as it was beneficial to see the theory that we learnt about in the classroom physically in front of us. Overall the trip was thoroughly worthwhile and I hope to get the opportunity to attend many more outings and during my time studying A-Level Biology.

Luke O'Kane



ECO-WARRIORS TURN OUT TO BE ECO-FRIENDLY

Leaving a computer on overnight generates enough carbon dioxide to fill a double-decker bus. Therefore this year, as a part of our Eco-Schools campaign, Rathmore switched off! Eco-Schools meetings are held every Thursday at lunchtime and the team is led by Mr Graham. This year the club was made up of Year 13 pupils and we discussed areas of environmental concern within our school and tried to decide the best ways to deal with each issue. During the meetings, the group discussed many ideas such as energy resources and recycling and one of our largest initiatives was the big switch off. We switched off classroom lights, computers, projectors and any other devices when they were not being used in order to be more eco-friendly. In the run up to the launch of our switch-off campaign, we began a publicity campaign to encourage both staff and pupils to get involved. Our Eco-Schools team created informative posters and notices which were displayed throughout the school and we promoted our campaign by going around each tutor group. With each visit, we explained our goals and how pupils could help us achieve them. In the following weeks the Eco-Schools team visited assemblies to encourage all pupils in the school to continue to switch off in order to reduce our carbon footprint.

A sub group of the Eco-Schools team in school participated in a competition hosted by CCEA recently. The team consisted of Heather Greig, Orla Lavery, Anna Tennyson, Georgia Moore, and me. The brief for the competition was to create an eco-friendly and sustainable sports facility for our school. We worked together with Mr Graham to create an innovative design which was to be cognisant of using environmentally friendly and sustainable materials. The technology department also helped us with some computer modelling of our project ideas. We had to consider the site for the facility, the design of the building, the materials



we would use and the renewable energy technologies we could employ to make our sports facility as sustainable as possible. Our first task was to compile a report outlining our aspirational facility. From this we were successfully selected as one of the final 10 schools out of the 70 schools which entered. We then created a poster and presentation of our final concept.

On Friday the 5th of February we attended the Ulster University in Jordanstown to present our concept to a panel of judges which consisted of many respected and prestigious figures in the field of environmental innovation. We set up a stand to display our poster laying out our design and the attributes of the facility; we then delivered a short presentation to the judges. Although we didn't win this time, the whole team gained a lot from this experience and found it intriguing, insightful and enlightening. I thoroughly enjoyed participating in this competition.

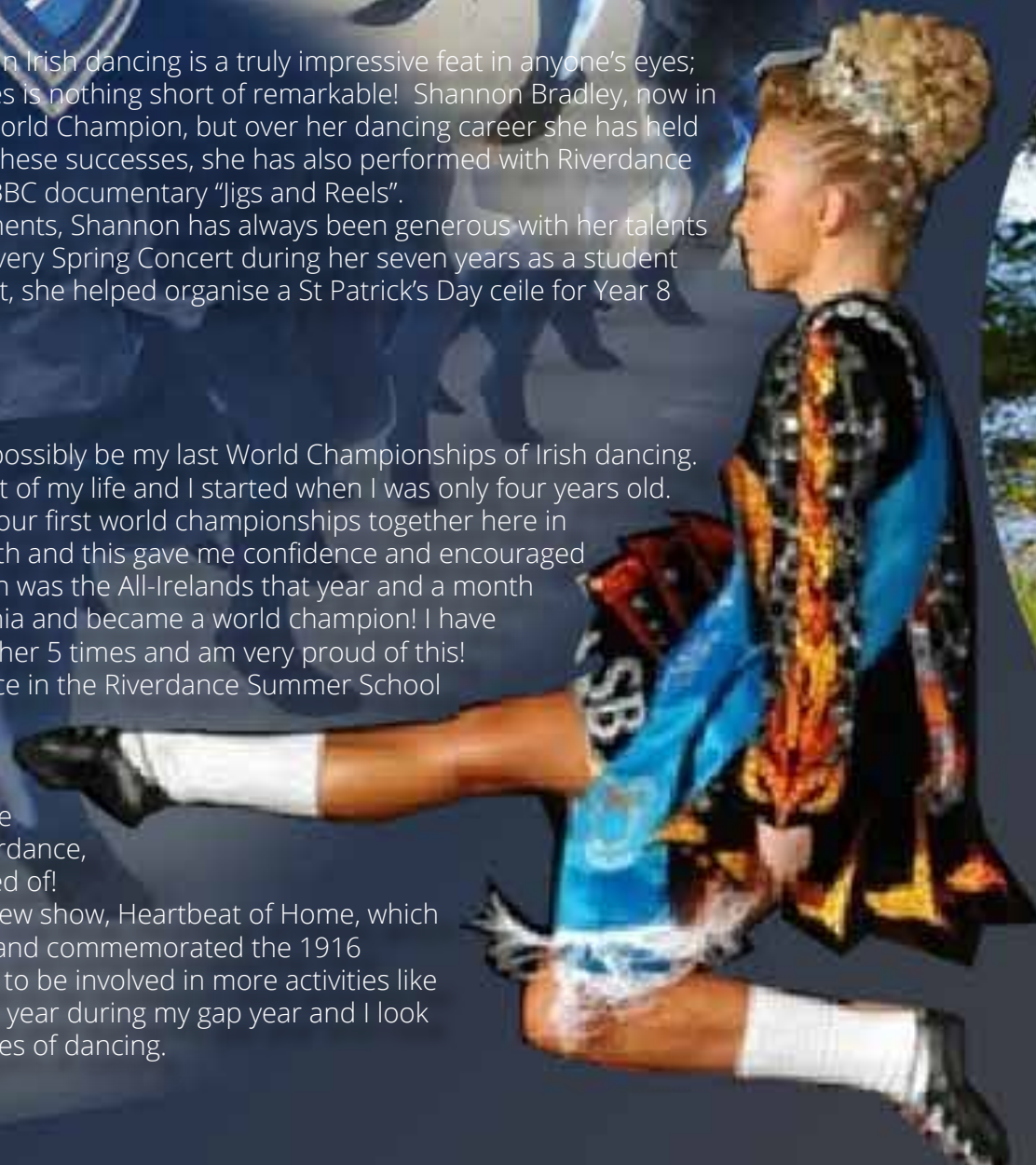
Georgia Moore (Year 13)

SHANNON BRADLEY WORLD CHAMPION

Being crowned 'World Champion' in Irish dancing is a truly impressive feat in anyone's eyes; however, winning this title six times is nothing short of remarkable! Shannon Bradley, now in Upper Sixth, is not only six time World Champion, but over her dancing career she has held every other world title. To add to these successes, she has also performed with Riverdance and was recently featured in the BBC documentary "Jigs and Reels". Despite these incredible achievements, Shannon has always been generous with her talents and time. She has performed in every Spring Concert during her seven years as a student in Rathmore and, as Year 8 prefect, she helped organise a St Patrick's Day ceile for Year 8 pupils in March of this year.

My Life in Dancing

This year I competed in what will possibly be my last World Championships of Irish dancing. Irish dancing has been a huge part of my life and I started when I was only four years old. My sister and I both competed in our first world championships together here in Belfast when I was ten. I placed 5th and this gave me confidence and encouraged me to work harder. My first big win was the All-Irelands that year and a month or so later I travelled to Philadelphia and became a world champion! I have since been awarded this title another 5 times and am very proud of this! Last summer I was awarded a place in the Riverdance Summer School 2015 which was hugely exciting. We trained every day and from those awarded a place, six people were then picked to perform in the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin with Riverdance, something I had only ever dreamed of! Since then I participated in their new show, Heartbeat of Home, which took place in Croke Park recently and commemorated the 1916 Easter Rising. In the future, I hope to be involved in more activities like this or even tour with a show next year during my gap year and I look forward to experiencing more styles of dancing.



LONDON CALLING

Over St. Patrick's Day, seventeen GCSE Music pupils from Year 11 and 12 hopped across the pond for a whirlwind visit to London and we had been anticipating this trip for months! Mrs Agnew and Mr Strange had planned lots of things for us to do and visit in the two days we'd be spending there, including seeing the musical Wicked and a concert in St. Martin's in the Field, Trafalgar Square.

We stayed at the Waterloo Premier Inn, right in the centre of London: a five minute walk from Big Ben and the London Eye. Personally, I loved the location of the hotel; it was such a busy and bustling area and there were so many people around.

As soon as we dropped our bags off at the hotel on the first day, we went sightseeing around London. In Westminster Abbey, amongst all the buried monarchs and famous memorials like the Unknown Warrior, we were directed towards the graves of Handel and Purcell. The voice on the tannoy system even announced that the Abbey was pleased to welcome Rathmore Grammar School!

It was only right to visit the Catholic Westminster Cathedral too, a few minutes walk away, which was equally beautiful but very different in terms of historical content and architectural design. Later in the evening, we went out for dinner and then on to see "Wicked", which we study as part of our GCSE Music course. The staging, singing and atmosphere were truly out of this world and we all loved it!

Everyone was exhausted after the early start on the first day but we eagerly got up the next day for more sightseeing. This time we made our way to the Prince Albert Memorial in Hyde Park, followed by some photos on the steps of the Royal Albert Hall in front of Mr Strange's old haunt, the Royal College of Music. Next, we headed to the Natural History Museum around the corner where the huge dinosaur displays were breathtaking, followed by a tube over to The Mall and Buckingham Palace. This led onto a visit to Trafalgar Square, where we listened to a concert of Irish Choral Music in St. Martin's; we even got to join in some congregational hymns for St. Patrick's Day.

To round off our short trip, we visited Downing Street, Covent Garden and the Horse Guards Parade. On a few occasions, the traffic near us was halted by royal escorts on motorbikes as Prince William made his way around London to attend various functions.... Or did he know that Rathmore was in town and he wanted a glimpse....?! I loved every minute of the trip. It was such a valuable and exciting experience. I think it opened everyone's eyes in terms of broadening our horizons outside Belfast. For some, it was their first time in London. For many like me, it will not be the last!

Anna Horner Year 12



Competitions

This year, Rathmore's musicians ventured out to locations across the province to represent our School in a range of musical competitions and festivals. We are very proud of their achievements and hope to build on their successes next year!

Hollywood Music Festival

Aoife O'Reilly

Folk Song unaccompanied

1st place

Thomas McKeown

Advanced Trad. Instrument Solo

1st place

Eva McKee

Flute Gr5 -6

1st place

Ballymena Music Festival

Colm Mohan
Ryan Harrison

Unaccompanied Bach, Open
Flute Solo, Open

Highly Commended
2nd place
Awarded Most Promising Woodwind Player

Maeve Ramsey
Megan Kerr
Darragh Doonan

Brass Solo, Open
Violin Solo, 15-16 yrs
Piano Solo, Open
Jnr Instrumentalist of the Year
Jnr Instrumentalist of the Year
Jnr Instrumentalist of the Year

2nd place
Highly Commended
Highly Commended

Ellie Martin
John Johnston



Irish Youth Music Awards

Vincent Hale and Thomas Griffin won the Belfast Heat of the Irish Youth Music Awards and their band Red House will participate in the All-Ireland final held at the Aviva Stadium in Dublin. The boys already have a large and enthusiastic following within and outside of Rathmore, and we look forward to hearing more from these rock stars in the near future!



Ulster Youth Choir

The very inspiring and charismatic Alan Leech from Ulster Youth Choir held a workshop with our Chamber Choir in January, and afterwards held auditions for the two summer courses this year. Congratulations to all those who took part in the auditions. The following places were offered for the Summer 2016 courses:

Training Choir: Medb O'Kane, Roma Bannon, Megan McCorry, Eve Devlin, Rachel Horner, Anna Horner, John Johnston, Hugh Kelly, Vincent Hale, Caoilfhinn Farrell, Caitriona Rafferty
Senior Choir: Aoife O'Reilly

Lunchtime Informal Concerts

For the first time we have started to hold a series of lunchtime concerts which are held once a month. They offer musicians from all years the opportunity to perform in front of a small and enthusiastic audience in the Music Department. The aim is to provide our musicians with the opportunity to experience all the aspects of live performance, including how to manage nerves, in a supportive and relaxed environment.

These short concerts have been very popular and have included a range of genres and styles from rock bands to classical soloists and Trad. groups. Many other subject teachers have attended the concerts and have commented on how nice it is to see their students in a whole new light! Well done to all our performers this year; keep it up! The more performance experience you accrue, the easier it gets.....

BBC Radio Ulster School Choir of the Year 2016

In February, our Chamber Choir travelled to the Share Discovery Village, Lisnaskea to compete for the first time in the Choir of the Year competition. Mrs Agnew and our singers practised hard in the weeks coming up to the heat; they certainly acquitted themselves with loyalty and distinction, and this was evident in the high quality of their singing in the radio broadcast on March 6th. They sang Bruckner's Locus Iste and Lauridsen's Sure On This Shining Night. The adjudicators commented on the quality of their performance and look forward to our return next year!





A KING IS BORN

In December my class (8G), was chosen to perform The Nativity for the whole school. It was such a privilege to be chosen and we were honoured to be part of the school's annual Carol Service! We were very excited about this opportunity and everyone was given the chance to be involved. I got to be King Herod!

After many weeks of preparation, we were finally ready to perform in the apt setting of St Anne's Church. As we watched the crowds arrive, the nerves started to set in. However, the beautiful singing by the Junior and Senior Choir helped to provide a prayerful atmosphere, and our nerves soon faded away. It was quite remarkable that we, the youngest in the school, were now ready to lead all the older pupils in a Christmas reflection!

I thoroughly enjoyed playing Herod and working with my classmates in the planning, practising and performance of our Nativity. It also made me more conscious of the important message for all of us – that Christmas is much more than the materialism that we so often get caught up in and how important it is to take time out, as a community, to prepare for the coming of Christmas.

Conor McCann (Year 8)



Our Lenten Liturgy was led by our Lower Sixth pupils and allowed us to reflect on Christ's Passion. In a special way, we prayed and reflected on the plight of the refugees and displaced peoples around the world.

Year 8 Welcome Mass

At the beginning of the year, the new Year 8 pupils attended a special Mass with our families to welcome us into Rathmore. During the Mass, Fr McGrady encouraged and inspired us to become part of the school and its strong community. Many people sang and played instruments and it gave us a sense of what we might be able to do and achieve in our future at Rathmore. Overall, the Mass made us feel very welcome and gave us all confidence as we try to find our feet and place within the school community. It is definitely one of the memories that I will carry with me throughout my years to come at Rathmore.

Patrick Devlin (Year 8)

2nd in Northern Ireland A Level Religious Studies

Congratulations to Shauna McKee, who achieved the second highest marks in CCEA A Level Religious Studies. This was made even more impressive by the fact that her second place was out of 2,401 pupils, the second largest subject at A Level in Northern Ireland. This remarkable achievement was also recognised by Queen's University Belfast, who, through the Theology Department, awarded Shauna with a prize to acknowledge her achievement. She is pictured here with her subject teachers Mrs McKeogh and Mr O'Callaghan at Speech Day.



Do not stand on the sidelines. Be a part of the revolution of Tenderness and Mercy.

Beginning on the 8th of December 2015, Pope Francis called upon all the faithful to live out the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. Naturally, this became our liturgical theme for the year and our Advent, Ash Wednesday and Easter liturgies have helped us explore how to "be merciful like the Father" and to find practical ways to live this out in our school community and beyond. Our Lower Sixth Prayer group worked with Fiona Collins to create new opportunities to deepen the spiritual and prayer life of our school. In addition to continuing the daily Eucharistic Adoration in the Convent Chapel, the group also organised morning prayer services for younger students during Advent and Lent. They have recently built on the success of last year's Prayer Buddy initiative and even found the time to go on pilgrimage with Fiona to St Patrick's Church in Donegal Street to visit the Door of Mercy. In order to help keep the Year of Mercy alive and to help us reflect on the message of the Jubilee Year, the Art and RE Departments worked together to create a visual display based on our spectacular Convent door.





We are standing on the shoulders of the ones who went before us...

We say Farewell...

What changes have you noticed in Rathmore throughout your career?

Well the curriculum has changed rapidly. The fact the curriculum has changed so much means teachers and pupils do not benefit from consistency. I do believe the core values of Rathmore are steadfast and continue to be present. The school is about integrity, social justice and a concept of education that is not defined by academic accolades alone but rather by becoming a person capable of making a worthwhile contribution to society.

How would you describe your time in Rathmore?

I have been very lucky and thoroughly enjoyed my time in Rathmore. I've been very fortunate with the teaching staff and pupils with whom I've always had a rapport. I've never come into school dreading the day; there's always been a deep contentment with being at Rathmore. It's that sense of being somewhere where you feel you truly belong.

Do you feel RE is still as valued today as it once was?

I believe the message of what RE gives is as important today – that is, a value system based on the belief in a loving God that will challenge you every day to treat everyone equally and see the world as a global community. I believe in an active, creative and caring Spirit that energises and supports our lives.

What is your fondest memory?

When I look back, it will be both Trócaire and Catholic Caring that I think of most fondly. These projects really galvanise the school community and project our values of social justice and community through awareness raising. I firmly believe that we are all good at heart.

If you could change one thing during your time at Rathmore, what would it be?

I suppose it would be the consistency of the curriculum. We should give children a chance to be taught a course teachers are very familiar with. I think the A*, A and B for everyone at A-level is a very difficult challenge and I wish it was more like the way it was. When I started teaching, a C was recognised as a very good qualification but it is becoming less and less so. The idea that school is easier nowadays is a complete myth. In fact, things have never been more difficult and challenging for our students. The idea that it is “easier nowadays” is just not fair. I believe the A* grade should be so elite that it does not impact on the university opportunities of students who achieve As and Bs. It should be a grade pupils aspire to, not one they feel pressure to achieve.

What advice would you give to a new teacher coming to Rathmore?

Two things. Firstly, you must have a professional attitude towards your subject as well as a passion for it. I believe our staff has a love for teaching. Secondly, you must have a love of and a belief in pupils. You should enjoy being around them.

What are you going to miss most about the school?

The life. I will miss the totality of school life - even the small things such as assemblies. I have enjoyed the day to day ordinary school operations. It's been amazing and I've loved it.

What's at the top of your bucket list?

New challenges. I think I will need a new challenge to keep myself occupied. I like to have challenges in my life to make me think and inspire me to do better things.

What's the most important lesson that life has taught you?

Appreciate every day. Value the people you are with, value friendship and don't take it for granted. Take a moment to reflect on it, enjoy it. Don't give up on things because there's a difficulty; continue to work for it if you believe it's worth fighting for. Love life and cherish your experiences. It's important to live in the moment and find a joy in your life because when you do, that is when things will fall into place.

What would you say has been your greatest achievement in your career?

I think it would be the way in which we've allowed the ethos of Rathmore to come alive in terms of all we've done through the promotion of social justice and positive mental health. I started the Catholic Caring and Trócaire campaigns in the form that they are in today and this includes the Big Sale and Sponsored Silence. As a staff we have a vision for our pupils to become more than just grades, more than academic success. We want them to become big parts of the world we live in. I believe I can claim my part in contributing to the building up of a Rathmore community that is filled with really great pupils who will become equally great adults.

How have you seen the students change throughout the years?

I do genuinely believe that students are becoming more and more stressed under a more pressurised environment but, in saying that, students are amazingly resilient. They have an enormous ability to fight back and beat the odds, which is something I continue to see in them. You get your energy from pupils and within them you can observe a real joy in living and the gift of living in the moment. Sometimes they get caught up in certain issues but they will always continue progressing.

How do you see Rathmore progressing in the future?

I would hope we hold onto our core values which are about justice as well as building a confident, articulate person who can respect the views of others while passionately holding onto their own. I hope we continue to help students find their purpose and be happy in life. That would be what I hope to see in students. I can see the curriculum continuing to be in a state of flux and I hope that by holding onto our core values we can adapt readily to the new and changing curriculum. I hope that we always will be able to do our best for our students.

Together as one, the entire school community is enormously thankful to Mr Donaghy for his contribution to Rathmore. Whether it be through taking the time to talk and joke with pupils or being a reliable friend and colleague to the teaching staff, Rathmore is very grateful for the role he has played in our school lives and is proud of everything he has achieved as a teacher, Head of RE, Year Head and Vice Principal. We are humbled by his 35 years of dedication to our school and his presence will be sorely missed. We all wish Mr Donaghy the best of luck in his retirement and expect that he will live this new chapter in his life to the full.



Mr Donaghy
Vice Principal (Pastoral)

...we are stronger for their courage, wiser

for their words, grateful for their vision.



What is your fondest memory?

This is my fondest memory. I had the most amazing class one year for A-Level, and they were in Lower Sixth when my Mummy died. Mummy died on the 9th May, and my Upper Sixth had their Leavers' Mass that night. I said to the class, 'Girls, I don't think I'm going to make it to your Mass tomorrow night', and I explained that Mummy wasn't good. She died sadly on the Wednesday night and when I went into school days later, they were all waiting for me, in the theatre, with flowers, cards and gifts and I just started crying. That would be massive now, in my memory.

What advice would you give to new teachers entering the school?

Just to get involved in the life of the school, and try to make it fun – make time to enjoy other people's company. The other thing I would say to them is, be passionate about what you do. You have to be passionate about your subject to love it.

What will you miss the most?

The girls at my table! And the staff – the staff are very, very kind. But we won't lose touch. Maybe every fortnight or every month, I'll come up and have my lunch with them!

What is top of your bucket list for when you retire?

Well, we've definitely decided that Mrs Flannagan, Mrs Keelan and I will be jetting off to Spain in September. After that, my intention is to go to Australia in January and February to see my son, and go for about six weeks. While I'm there I also want to get to see the Australian Open. I've always said I want to see a proper tennis tournament.

What is the most important lesson life has taught you?

Probably going to Africa taught me a lot such as to be happy with yourself. You're never going to be perfect, but look at yourself and grow to like yourself and what you have, because there are people far worse off than us.

Mrs McGivern

Was teaching your first choice as a profession?
Absolutely. I am a past pupil and it was the wonderful teaching in Rathmore that inspired me to pursue this career. Mr. Eamon Hamill in particular was a great inspiration.

How would you describe your time in Rathmore?

My time here has been as close to perfection as it could have been. I first came to Rathmore the day before I turned 12 and I am still here as I approach the end of a wonderful career! During my time as a pupil I was on the prefect team which I enjoyed and my career has been nothing short of amazing. I love the subject I teach and I love the children whom I teach. During my time at Rathmore I have made many friends for life.

What will you miss the most?

I'll miss learning new things from the children. I'll miss the collegiality as Rathmore really is a team. I'll definitely miss the daily contact with my very close friends. However, I won't miss the early morning starts in the winter- I'm definitely a summer person!



Now that you're retiring, will you take on any new hobbies or interests?

I am going to go travelling with my husband - hopefully to many interesting places. The first trip we hope to make will be to Beijing and walk part of the Great Wall of China. I also intend to be the best Nana ever to my grandchildren!

What is the most important lesson life has taught you?

Life is precious, you have to embrace it and not take it for granted. My motto would be: everyday if you think something nice about someone you should say it. You never know when a kind remark can make a difference in how someone is feeling about themselves.

Mrs Flannagan

What changes have you noticed in Rathmore or teaching during your career?

The only changes I have seen in Rathmore are in the 'fabric,' new buildings, great facilities (especially sporting) and the introduction of technology. The really important aspects of the school are as they were way back in 1977 ... and before! Namely: the ethos, the quality of the education and the pastoral programme. Believe me, Rathmore was ahead of the times in 1977 and is still ahead today – no school does it better!

How would you describe your time in Rathmore?

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in Rathmore; from the day and hour I left the school to go and work in Queen's in 1990, I regretted the move. It took me 16 years to get back in again ... someone was looking out for me! My time in Rathmore has been the most professionally satisfying time of my life, working with wonderful people right across the board – including the teaching, administrative, learning support and auxiliary staff, and of course, the pupils down the years.

What is your fondest memory?

Sports Days, winning teams (particularly the Herald Cup winning team of 2011), pupils fully immersed and engaged in Physical Education. Also, the many laughs that the PE staff have had that left me with tears (of joy!) running down my cheeks!

What will you miss the most?

The Rathmore 'family.'

What is the most important lesson life has taught you?

Níor bhris focal maith fiacail riamh! (A kind word never broke anyone's tooth!)

Mr Gardner



Bright Futures Ahead!!!

How would you describe your time in Rathmore?
I have been so fortunate to be educated and then work in an environment where I have been valued and supported through every stage of my life. I can honestly say my time here has been happy, positive and rewarding. Rathmore has always been a central part of my life which has left its stamp on me as a person. I will take away many wonderful memories of my time here.

Do you remember your first day? What was it like? Who was there?

As a pupil I remember coming up the school lane for the first time and encountering the magical sight of the convent building set amidst the vibrantly coloured hydrangea bushes - a sight that is still as beautiful. I also remember that the whole of the First Year could fit into one Art classroom – oh, how we have grown! It took me weeks to be able to call my former teachers by their first names – it was surreal.

What is your fondest memory?

There have been so many over the years – pupil successes, pupils who have been "real" characters,



our staff masses in the Convent in December and especially our Catholic Caring campaigns which sum up who we are and what we are about. Oh, and my one and my only ski trip to America, even if I never made it off the nursery slope!!

Now that you are retiring, will you take on any new hobbies or interests?

I would love to take up walking and perhaps join a walking club. I've also always wanted to learn how to play the piano. Mr Swann has actually promised to teach me. I would also like to spend some time working with Macmillan or Cancer Focus. Top of my bucket list is to go on a cruise and definitely to visit New York.

What is the most important thing life has taught you?

Don't count the days. Make the days count.

Mrs Keelan

Beauty *AND THE* Beast





AN INTERVIEW WITH THE STARS

The school show was an amazing experience. It gave me the opportunity to make new friends and playing such a huge role, while still wearing a blue shirt, gave me great confidence. The cast was amazing to work with and I am grateful to every staff member or pupil who contributed to the production. Playing "The Beast" was a challenge. The huge costume and the burning lights left me dying of heat onstage while the face-paint took just under an hour to do every day! And because "The Beast" shouts so much, I had to force feed myself endless amounts of lemon and honey so I wouldn't lose my voice. But even the challenges, weekend rehearsals and stressful moments led to amazing memories and a worthwhile experience. I loved every part of "Beauty and the Beast", right from the audition process to the last curtain call. **Tiarnan Daykin - 'The Beast'**

As a character, Gaston is the epitome of cockiness, greed and disrespect – so it was going to take a lot of effort to get into this role! I loved getting to know the character and many a night was spent at home brushing my teeth all the while perfecting my dazzling smile! Gaston felt like he was a "treat for the eyes" and I hope that this is what I gave the audiences each and every time. The school show was, in the words of Gaston, a "dream" and I am delighted that I got involved. **Johann Drayne - 'Gaston'**

I played the part of Babette in this year's production. I really had so much fun as every rehearsal gave me the opportunity to learn something new. Because of the show, I can now hold a conversation in a less mediocre French accent! It's been such a rewarding experience and I'd love to do it all again. **Sophie Boyle - 'Babette'**

The role of Belle was a challenging but thoroughly enjoyable two months. Even those long Sunday rehearsals were worth it! I had so much fun and will always remember this wonderful opportunity. **Anna Tennyson - 'Belle'**

This year, I played the part of the Wardrobe in our school's production of Beauty and the Beast. I am so glad that I have had the experience of performing in one of my favourite musicals, especially in my last year of school! **Aoife Reilly - 'The Wardrobe'**

I played the part of Gaston's diminutive and bumbling sidekick 'Lefou'. It was an incredible experience and definitely the highlight of my time in Rathmore so far! Being only 5th year I am thrilled that I will have the opportunity to audition again for the show in Upper Sixth and I can't wait to see what our next production will be. I would encourage everyone to try out as it really is a great opportunity. **Jack Morrissey - 'Lefou'**

Performing the role of Mrs Potts was honestly a dream come true for me. From the moment I heard that the Drama and Music departments had chosen Beauty and the Beast as our school production, I knew that was the role I really wanted to play. Rehearsals were genuinely so much fun, and it's safe to say I've made amazing friends from the cast. Without the show I would never have crossed paths with so many of the other pupils and I've gained such great experience by working as part of the huge team. To top it all off, getting to sing the iconic title number of the show dressed as a teapot is something I'll never forget - it was the perfect start to my final year in Rathmore! **Ciara Mallon - 'Mrs Potts'**



BEAUTY AND THE PITTS

What's a musical without the music? Not much, as I'm sure you can imagine. You may ask, "where does the music come from?" Just in front of the stage, where the singers, dancers and crew do their thing, a number of lonely musicians hide behind a fence in a hole in the ground, adding the music to the musical. However to us musicians, the Beauty and the Beast pit was more than just a hole in the ground! It was a cosy little haven from the busy routine of day to day life.

The pit consisted of a small orchestra which, for many weeks, had been preparing for the three day musical marathon that would present all the talent that the Music, Drama and Art departments had to offer. The preparation was the hardest step. Many of us had never played in an environment such as this before. New music and new people meant a lot of work, but the songs were upbeat and enjoyable and each player had their own time to shine in the spotlight. Next came the rehearsals. Our aim was to put the drama and music together to create something wonderful...but we had a lot of work to do! Songs were cut, and then cut some more; people's abilities were pushed, then pushed some more and each and every single pupil had their own responsibility. It was at this point we got our first taste of the pit. It was small and cramped with very little room where the only thing to see was the audience's feet. Yet, it had a sense of comfort about it. It was cosy, warm and everyone enjoyed playing the music and making jokes.

Then came the first performance. Even though the audience consisted exclusively of Primary 7s, there was an anxious and apprehensive feeling about the place. People rushed about, the adrenaline flowing through their bodies. The musicians in the pit were perhaps not so stressed. We knew what we had to do, and would only follow the voices of those above us. A blue haze fell over the hall and, hidden behind our fence, we began to play. The audience chorused 'ooooohhhhhh' as the music softened for Belle's (played by Anna Tennyson) entrance onto the stage. Birdsong sang from the flute as the lead actress delicately sang the opening song, 'Belle'. The musical unfolded and children's favourites – such as 'Beauty and the Beast' and 'Be Our Guest' – created a stir amongst the pupils. It was a success, but we still had a lot to work to do before the official opening.

The night was here. The school was in a stir and as the Music and Drama departments scuttled from room to room. I sat patiently in my chair in the corner, enchanted by the hustle and bustle. The realisation hit me that now was the point of hit or miss.

We took our places in the pit and watched as each parent, friend and pupil slid through the doors and shuffled to their seats, unaware of what they were about to see. High and low expectations flew through the audience until the lights dimmed once more to that familiar blue tint. Once again the audience chorused 'ooooooooohhhhhhhhhh' and we began to play.

By the end of the night we were tired but anxious to see the audience's reaction to the final number of scenes and perhaps most importantly, the big finale. I think we all cherished their reaction which was one of immense delight and enjoyment. In those final few moments each actor came on stage as we repeated the final minute or two of 'Be Our Guest' for the curtain call. Each actor smiled with joy and pride as they saw the faces of those they entertained; those they made smile, cry and laugh.

And so we sat in our pit, silently pleased with the work we had put in. The show had been a success, a huge success. For two more nights, the show went on and for two more nights the audience was thrilled at the performance we presented.

After the third night of the show we were happy and privileged to be invited on stage where we were applauded for our efforts and thanked for our service as musicians. I will never forget the admiration of those who looked at us and applauded us. I finally understood the thrill of performance and I finally understood how each actor felt as they received the same congratulations.

This show was not just a musical, but rather an experience. I made amazing friends through it all and I loved working alongside everyone involved. As a member of the team I would like to congratulate everyone on our huge success.

Ryan Harrison (Year 13)



BONJOUR ET GUTEN TAG BUNDORAN

Our annual trip to the Languages and Adventure Centre in Bundoran, County Donegal took on a new flavour this Summer, when, for the first time, our large group of Year 8s was made up of both French and German pupils. The Centre caters for many different European languages and it was decided that this year our youngest language students from French and German would get the chance to benefit from the language and sporting facilities from one of Donegal's fastest growing attractions. Mrs McCaffrey and Ms McClements set off for what was to be Rathmore's third trip to this centre and we are delighted to be able to say that it equalled if not surpassed our expectations. From the moment we arrived on Monday 15 June, our group of 16 German pupils and 32 French pupils could not have been more pleased. Nicky and her team go out of their way to ensure that every single pupil gets the chance to grow and develop in confidence, not only in their chosen language but also by participating in sports and outdoor activities that they might never before have even contemplated. 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 jumps. It was so reassuring to see that, despite the occasionally negative image presented in the media of our young people today, their competitiveness and love of the outdoors are still there and this was evident in abundance during our three days in Bundoran. Equally delightful was their obvious sense of team spirit in those activities requiring group work and mutual support. The Language and Activity Centre is careful to balance both elements of the course offered and so both languages were very well catered for. Over the three days our pupils received two 3 hour tuition sessions in the language of their choice. Nicky, a qualified French and German teacher, provided the language teaching for all our pupils this year and, being really bubbly and enthusiastic, it was clear that she made the learning fun. Our pupils certainly went back to Rathmore having developed their vocabulary and their language skills in both French and German. All in all a really successful venture! À la prochaine! Bis zum Nächsten!!

Moi, Moche et Méchant

For the past number of years, the teachers and pupils of Rathmore have celebrated the annual European Day of Languages on 26 September. Our celebrations take many different forms, including displays of different cultures, canteen dishes to represent a range of European countries and classroom activities to raise awareness of traditions and customs practised across Europe. This year Ms McMullan organised a showing of the film "Moi, Moche et Méchant" (Despicable Me) for our year 9 pupils in the Drama Lecture Theatre. Since all of our Year 9 pupils study French, this gave them an excellent opportunity to watch a full-length film in the language (with English subtitles of course!). They really enjoyed the afternoon and we hope that this "cinematic experience" will become a regular event in the school calendar.

RATHMORE LINGUISTS ACQUIT THEMSELVES WITH DISTINCTION ON THE EUROPEAN STAGE.

Rathmore's tradition of linguistic excellence has been recognised at European level. In January, five of our outstanding linguists were selected to participate in the prestigious "Juvenes Translatores" Europe-wide competition for schools. A total of 73 schools in the UK were invited to take part. Many congratulations go to Eve Devlin, Catriona Hagan, Déaglán Marken, Hannah Matthews and Catherine Murray, who acquitted themselves thoroughly in French, German, Irish and Spanish.

In particular, Eve Devlin's "remarkable skill" in translation has been individually recognised by the European Commission. Eve was commended for the quality of her work and received a "Special Mention" from the judges.

Eve, and her fellow linguists, had to demonstrate not only their wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, but also their sensitivity to subtle nuances of language and tone. This is a difficult skill to master and it is testament to our students and to their teachers that they rose to the challenge, with great creativity, spirit and tenacity.

Eve, a dual linguist at Rathmore, said:

"I really enjoyed the Juvenes Translatores competition as it challenged me and really made me think. I was translating from French to English, because I study French and Spanish for A level. The competition made me appreciate my language skills and the opportunities that they will offer me in the future. I love French because of the balance between the academic side, such as literature and grammar, and the practical side, such as conversation class and mentoring younger pupils. Next year, I plan to go to Queen's University Belfast to study French and Spanish, and hope to become a conference interpreter for an international organisation such as the EU or the UN."

The study of languages at Rathmore has provided our students with a wealth of exciting career and travel opportunities as well as a set of transferable skills they can bring to any workplace. We wish Eve, and all our other talented linguists, a bright and fulfilling future. Bonne continuation à tous!



La Journée de la Porte Ouverte

This year some of my friends and I volunteered to help out with Open Day in January. Lots of our teachers asked us if we would be available to come in on that Saturday morning to participate in some classroom activities in one or two departments. It is a good idea for Primary 7 pupils to see Key Stage 3 pupils, involved in work that they too would do if they were to choose to come to Rathmore. Now I do like to have a lie-in on a Saturday but I agreed to give up my morning, especially since my older brother was also coming in to assist. I decided that I would help out for some of the morning in the French Department and I have to say that we really enjoyed the experience. We played all sorts of games including computer games in French and were able to invite the P7 pupils to join in. We also chatted with their parents who asked us about our experiences in Rathmore and whether we were enjoying our time here. Best of all, we got to dress up as proper French people – I think our French teachers thought they were only leaving the items out on display but, as you can see from the photo, my friends and I had other ideas! It was a very busy Saturday morning and I hope we played our part in presenting Rathmore to prospective pupils and parents.

Patrick McGeown 9L

Cúrsa Gaeltachta Choláiste Mhuire

Last year I went to Colaiste Mhuire loch an iuir. It was my third year going but the first year I received a scholarship. Due to me getting full marks in my Irish oral, I was awarded a scholarship to the Gaeltacht college by Gael Linn. I was delighted as it meant I could go for half the price. I went to the Gaeltacht along with 4 other friends from Rathmore. We stayed in the same house, Seamus Mhic Seamus, along with 10 others from Armagh. They were all good craic and we had a great time. Our house was 15 minutes walk from the college so we would walk every day. Girls from Rathmore were staying in a house 5 minutes away so we would walk together to ceilis and discos. We stayed for 3 amazing weeks where we made new friends, learnt songs, danced and improved Irish language and had great fun. Towards the end of the course none of us wanted to leave and could have happily stayed in Loch an Iuir for another 3 weeks. I was delighted with my summer and proud that I had received a scholarship. It was a phenomenal experience and I cannot wait to return to the Gaeltacht again as a student and hopefully one day as a ceannaire.

Anuraidh, d'fhreastal mé ar Choláiste Mhuire, Loch an Iúir. Ba é sin an tríú huair dom ar an chúrsa ach bhí sé ar an chéad uair a fuair mé scoláireacht chun na Gaeltachta. De thairbhe marcanna arda i scrúdú na bliana, bhronn Gael Linn scoláireacht orm agus bhí mé ábalta dul ar leath-tháille. Chuir sin lúchair orm. Chuaigh mé go Loch an Iúir i gcuideachta 4 chara ó scoil an Ratha Mhóir. D'fhan muid sa teach céanna, Teach Shéamais Mhic Shéamais, le 10 gasúr as Ard Mhacha. Bhí an chraic ar dóigh. Bhí an teach suite 15 bomaite ar shiúl ón choláiste. Bhí cailíní an Ratha Mhóir ag stopadh i dteach eile, 5 bhomaite ar shiúl agus ba ghnách linn siúl le chéile go dtí an choláiste fa choinne céilí, dioscó nó cluichí spóirt. Chaith muid 3 seachtaine go sona sásta i Loch an Iúir agus bhuaill muid le cairde nua, d'fhoghlaim muid amhráin, damhsaí agus an teanga Ghaeilge. Bhain muid sult mór as. Ba dheas an rud do ghasúir a bhuaill le cailíní i rith an tsamhraidh agus bhí spórt mór ag gach duine. Ag deireadh an chúrsa, bhí fonn orainn fanacht agus 3 seachtaine eile a chaitheamh ann. Thaitin an samhradh go mór liom agus bhí bród orm gur bhain mé scoláireacht agus go raibh mé ábalta cuidiú leis an táille. Taithí ar fheabhas a bhí ann. Ba bhreá liom dul ar ais go Loch an Iúir agus post a fháil mar cheannaire lá éigin.

Breandán Ó Chromtha Year 12

PREPARING FOR A FÁINNE EXAM

As you walk through the corridors of Rathmore Grammar School, it is hard to miss the bright glint of a silver Fáinne on numerous blazers. This year, as a year 10 Irish student, I will be taking my Fáinne exam. This exam takes the format of an oral examination and when you pass the test you receive the silver Fáinne. The silver Fáinne is used to show that the wearer has a basic understanding of the Irish language and is ready and willing to speak it. In preparation for this exam we had to formulate answers to a number of possible questions – not unlike a speaking exam at GCSE level for any other language. In order to prepare as fully as possible An Mhaistir gave us a booklet which we could use to compose the bulk of our answers. I am taking this exam very seriously and I have used every method I know to try to absorb as much vocabulary as possible and to improve my speaking skills. I began to learn my answers by writing them out as many times as I could just to embed them into my head and then I made a key. In my key I used specific letters to signify verbs, adjectives and even key words - this meant that I only had to recall a couple of letters in order to remember the full answer. Of course I can't bring stacks of written answers into my exam so I recorded myself reading my answers out loud and listened to the recording whenever I had a spare moment this also helped to ensure my make sure my pronunciation was correct. Everybody knows that practice makes perfect so anytime my mum, dad or anyone who would listen was free I made them sit down and ask me the questions – sort of like a short, informal mock exam so I got used to speaking my answers out loud to others.

Now the day of my Fáinne exam is so very nearly upon me. I am very nervous because I really want to do well but I know I have prepared as best I can and hopefully that should be enough...wish me luck!

Caoimhe Venning 10G



BONN IST SEHR GUT

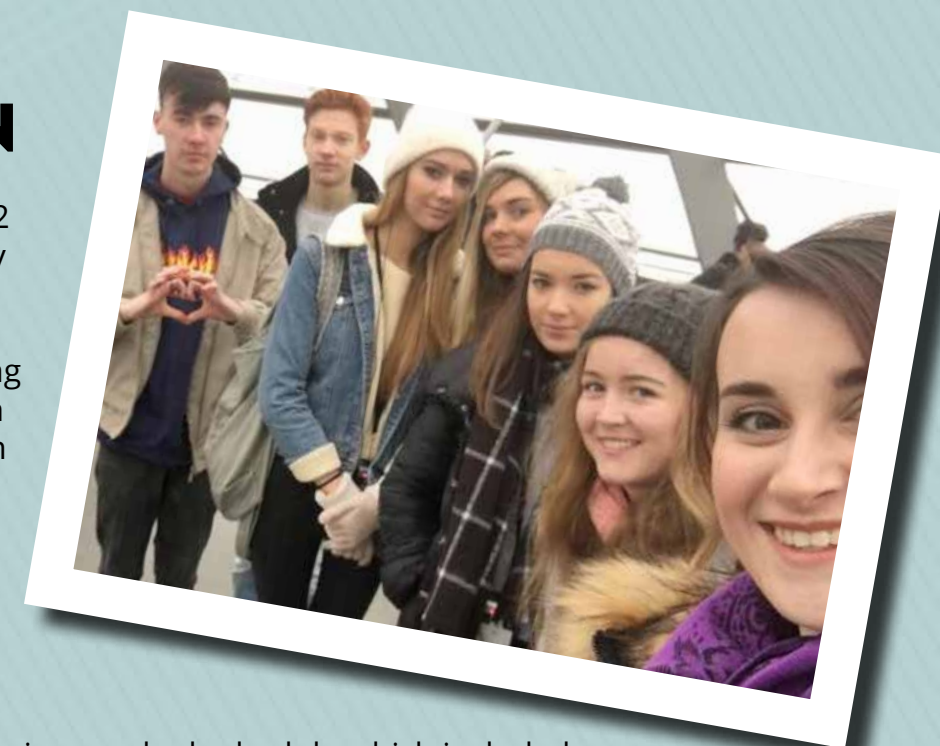
On the 15th June eighteen pupils from our German class flew to Bonn on the first leg of our German Exchange with pupils from the Nicolaus Cusanus Gymnasium. We arrived to a very warm welcome from our host families who took great care of us during our fun-packed week. We all had an amazing time! We spent every day with our exchange partners. We attended school and visited the world famous theme park, Phantasialand- the Black Mamba is certainly not for the faint-hearted!

No trip to the Rhineland would be complete without a visit to Cologne Cathedral. Those of us who were fit enough hiked up the 500 stone steps of the Cathedral, which was a challenge but well worth the climb for the breath-taking view over the whole of Cologne and the surrounding area. Our trip to Bonn was a tremendous opportunity, not only to immerse ourselves in the German lifestyle but to experience the beautiful scenery. It was a great chance for us to have fun together, forge new friendships and create happy memories which will hopefully stay with us long after we've left Rathmore.

Megan McEvoy Morgan & Catherine McGuigan

DIE REISE NACH BERLIN

On the 12th of February our A2 German class, accompanied by Frau Lavery and Orla Lavery, set off to the city of Berlin in preparation for our A2 speaking exam. The exam focuses on an aspect of 20th century German history. There seemed no better way to prepare than by immersing ourselves in the language and rich history of the country, whilst having a fun break in the capital!



We embarked upon a three day jam-packed schedule which included tours, museums and figuring out how to use the underground. It was pretty tiring; nonetheless we had a fantastic time!

During our stay we enjoyed guided walking tours of Berlin and of the former Stasi prison- Hohenschönhausen. We also visited the DDR museum and the dome in the Reichstag which offers an amazing view of the city.

Berlin ist eine pulsierende, sehr sehenswerte Stadt. Es ist immer etwas los und wir hatten dort einen unvergesslichen Aufenthalt!

Hannah Matthews

LOWER SIXTH WORK EXPERIENCE

Catriona Hagan completed work experience at a hospital in Bonn, Germany. As she recounts below, she had a wonderful experience immersing herself in the German language, the vibrant culture and in the medical professional life.

In Lower Sixth, each pupil is required to partake in work experience over the course of a week. As I am currently studying German I was given the option of travelling to Germany to complete my work placement. This was an opportunity I was delighted to avail of.

My initial apprehension proved to be needless, as after the short flight I was met by my exchange partner, her mother and her school teacher. I had already been on a few school trips to Germany, including the exchange in Year 12. However, this time I would be staying with a new exchange partner, someone I had never met before. Luckily, I found it very easy to get along with Kathy, and we are still in contact today. She and her family were very accommodating and always made sure I was entertained and happy.

I was lucky enough to get a placement in a German hospital, the Johanniter Waldkrankenhaus. For the full duration of the week I was stationed mainly on the orthopaedics ward. I was in the hospital each day from seven o'clock in the morning – which was a challenge to say the least – until half four that afternoon. I spent the entire week with the same group of doctors who were incredibly friendly and willing to help me in any way that they could.

On the first day in the hospital I was provided with scrubs that would be mine for the rest of the week and a meal card which I could use in the hospital canteen for lunch. After that I was thrown in at the deep end! I followed Osman, and later Marta (two of the doctors) as they went on their rounds of the ward. After their rounds were finished we went to the doctors room where I chatted in German to all of the doctors on the ward. At the end of the day I was then allowed to attend the evening meeting where the plans for the next day were discussed and the day's operations were reviewed. I also met the head doctor of the hospital who did everything he could to make me feel comfortable and welcome and was surprisingly approachable.

Every day for the rest of the week was varied and always interesting. I was able to sit in on patient consultations, spend time in the emergency ward, visit the laboratory, as well as take bloods and observe two knee replacement operations. I feel that if I had stayed in Northern Ireland, I would not have been able to gain such a valuable experience. It seemed very important to the whole staff that I experienced every part of their hospital in the short time that I was with them.

Everyone in the hospital, not forgetting Kathy's family and friends, spoke German to me the entire week which meant that I was hearing a lot of new vocabulary and I was constantly surrounded by the language. This allowed me to absorb more casual and conversational German as well as specific medical language. I gained a greater understanding of and appreciation for life in Germany and the culture. When I returned home from Germany I was able to see straight away that my German had improved greatly, even my peers in class could tell.

My time in Germany was an incredible experience that I know I will take with me my entire life. I gained valuable work experience, confidence and a friend for life all from just one week. Admittedly there were times when I felt overwhelmed and it was difficult, but these periods were short-lived and I quickly cheered up and began enjoying myself all over again! I would have to say, if you are studying a language at Rathmore, make sure you take the opportunity to do your work experience in a foreign country. It is an experience that gives you a real taste of the local life and stays with you forever.

Catriona Hagan - Lower Sixth

From Belfast to Madrid

On 15th June 2015, sixteen Year 11 pupils and two teachers travelled to Madrid to take part in a week-long exchange programme between Rathmore and our link school, San José.

We lived with the Spanish pupils and were made to feel very welcome by our partners and their families. By the end of the week, we truly understood the meaning of “mi casa es su casa” (my house is your house). My partner and I became great friends throughout our week together.

Every day was a new experience, filled with many activities. We saw many of the famous sights of Madrid, including the Royal Palace, the Theatre and la Casa de Campo which is a huge park in the centre of the city where we went rowing. We also went to the zoo and best of all- Madrid's own theme park!

It was surprising how much new vocabulary I learned in only a week and my conversational skills improved greatly, all while having fun and experiencing the Spanish way of life!

When it was our turn to host our partners we reciprocated whole-heartedly. During the day, they went on trips to places such as the Titanic museum and Cultra and at night, everyone enjoyed the cinema, bowling and a ceili night organised by the school. It was amazing to see them again after months and we connected straight away. Even now, I am still in contact with, not only my partner, but also many others from the exchange (I hope to see them in the summer when they come over again!).

The exchange programme has been one of the most rewarding experiences that I've had in school and I would highly recommend it to anyone studying Spanish.



Deutschklub

This year, Year 8 students have been learning about the German language and culture at the Lunchtime Club with our German Assistant, Tirza. They enjoy learning German songs, playing traditional games and discovering more about the country!

The highlight of the German Club is the Intercultural project with a school in Dresden. The Year 8s have been amazed at how much they can already write in German! At Christmas time, they exchanged Weihnachtspäckchen (Christmas parcels). They sent over Christmas cards, traditional treats, mince pies and selection boxes. They were delighted to receive a taste of a German Christmas with Lebkuchen and Spekulatius!



Las prácticas laborales en Madrid

En enero, fui a Madrid con otros tres alumnos para las prácticas laborales. Fuimos al colegio San José y estábamos con niños de seis o siete años durante la semana. Estaba con la misma clase durante toda la semana. Yo no quiero ser profesora - fui para aprender más español. Pero después del primer o segundo día, sentí como conocía a los niños. Me gustó mucho ayudarlos con las clases de inglés y escuchar durante las otras. Fue una experiencia inolvidable.

Olivia Ní Dhonngaile (Lower Sixth)

¡El primer día fui a la escuela secundaria a escuchar una clase de inglés en español! A pesar de que no entendía toda la clase, era muy interesante y escuchando a los hablantes nativos me ayudaba con el ritmo de los 'listenings' en mis exámenes. Luego, a las nueve, fui al colegio de primaria con una maestra que se llama Sandra. Sandra es una maestra de inglés y enseña cuatro clases con alumnos entre seis años y ocho años. Las clases mejoraron mi vocabulario y podía ayudar a los chicos con el trabajo en clase. Cada día los niños hicieron actividades diferentes y me gustó hablar y aprender con ellos. Fue una experiencia maravillosa y me encantaría volver algún día.

Stephanie Maxwell (Lower Sixth)

THE FUTURE OF FILM

BY ELLIE
MCCAFFERY-WILDMAN

Last year, I graduated from a short course named 'The BFI Film Academy'. The course took place in the National Film and Television School in Beaconsfield, London over two weeks during the Easter break. I produced the sound and music for a short film called 'Afterlife'. As the graduates waved goodbye to each other at the BFI on London Southbank, we were not aware of the success that would be continued into the new year.

So far, 'Afterlife' has been screened at a number of prestigious international film festivals, including the British Urban Film Festival, Aesthetica Film Festival and the Portabello Film Festival to name a few. We have also received a number of nominations, including an award from IntoFilm and also, the BFI Future Film Festival. I was delighted to collect an award on behalf of my team for the 2015 Cinemagic Young Filmmaker Festival. I was extremely nervous as the competition was so tough. However, I was very proud when delivering my speech to the other young filmmakers in the theatre.

I have since become closer to the friends I made during the production of 'Afterlife' as last summer, we all decided to enter a competition for a charity named ADCAN. I was the composer and music producer for the project and having never scored before, I was quite apprehensive. We worked meticulously to create the final project which was shortlisted and was screened in London. The advertisement was called 'Colour for Creativity' and was cinematically beautiful.

With the confidence gained from all the filmmaking I had been doing and from my A level in Media Studies, I decided to try my hand at directing. So in October of 2015, I began working on a short film called 'ZOMBIEQUALITY'. The piece was to be entered into a film competition named the 'Cinemagic Young Filmmaker Contest'. There were set rules and I only had 24 hours to make the film. Tensions were running high as I sat in the lecture theatre in the Ulster Museum, waiting for my film to be screened. Irish director, Michael Lennox (Oscar and BAFTA nominated for 'Boogaloo and Graham') named 'ZOMBIEQUALITY' as the winner. I felt a wave of relief rush over me. My very own project had won and I could not have been more proud! I was able to ask Michael some questions and he told me he looked forward to working with me in the future.

Following this, I saw a window of opportunity in a competition with 21st Century Fox and IntoFilm to create a 60 second campaign film for the release of 'Her Name Is Malala', a documentary on Nobel Peace Prize winner, Malala Yousafzai. Wanting more film experience and based on an inspirational story, the script wrote itself and I gathered my friends to help me with the film. I campaigned my film 'A Message To Malala' all over social media and managed to be shortlisted for screening with Fox HQ in Soho Square London.

Currently, I am working on a documentary with Cinemagic for Gentle Dental in which I will be working as director with a number of schools across Northern Ireland. Following my exams in June, I have just secured a job as cinematographer on my first ever feature length film, named 'Gone' which will be shot in Ireland. All being well, I am hoping to study Film, Photography and Media in the University Of Leeds next year. I am incredibly excited for what the coming years hold and the future is looking very bright.



Pitch That Brief

After an initial introduction, we were quickly set our task for the day which was to come up with an idea for an episode of BBC Northern Ireland's 'True North'. Local filmmaker Bryan Henry Martin, who led the day, explained the concept of what we had to produce. He did this by showing us previous examples of the "True North" series that he and others had recently produced and then he set us the task of choosing an appropriate topic to address.

Shortly after we had settled on our topic, we were advised to work out the finer details as to how we would produce this show if it was to air on television. The class was split up into two groups of approximately six, with each group having to settle on an idea and then work out the logistics of how they would choose to produce it.

In the afternoon, groups had to pitch their documentary idea to Commissioning Executive for BBC Northern Ireland, Justin Binding. One of the groups decided to create a documentary following the lives of children going through recent parental separation, while the other came up with the idea of a documentary based around the life of a local motorcycle champion who had suffered greatly throughout his life - both physically and emotionally. In the end, the latter idea was an extremely, if not the most, successful pitch. The group behind it were later named the winners of the "Pitch that Brief" competition due to the originality of their idea. Overall the day was a success as we were given tips on how to approach a career in the industry as well as how to formulate and pitch a brief for a documentary - something which we all found incredibly interesting and which will be of great benefit to those of us who wish to enter the industry in the future.



GOOD VIBRATIONS

On Friday 6 October, Rathmore's Media Studies students attended the first day of the 2015 Cinemagic festival to see multi-award winning local film Good Vibrations. After the screening, we got to meet and have a Q&A session with Good Vibrations screenwriter, Colin Carberry. we asked a few interesting questions, including how the inspiration for writing came about and how long it takes to write a screenplay. The day was fun and informative, with sound advice on how to get a break into the film industry.

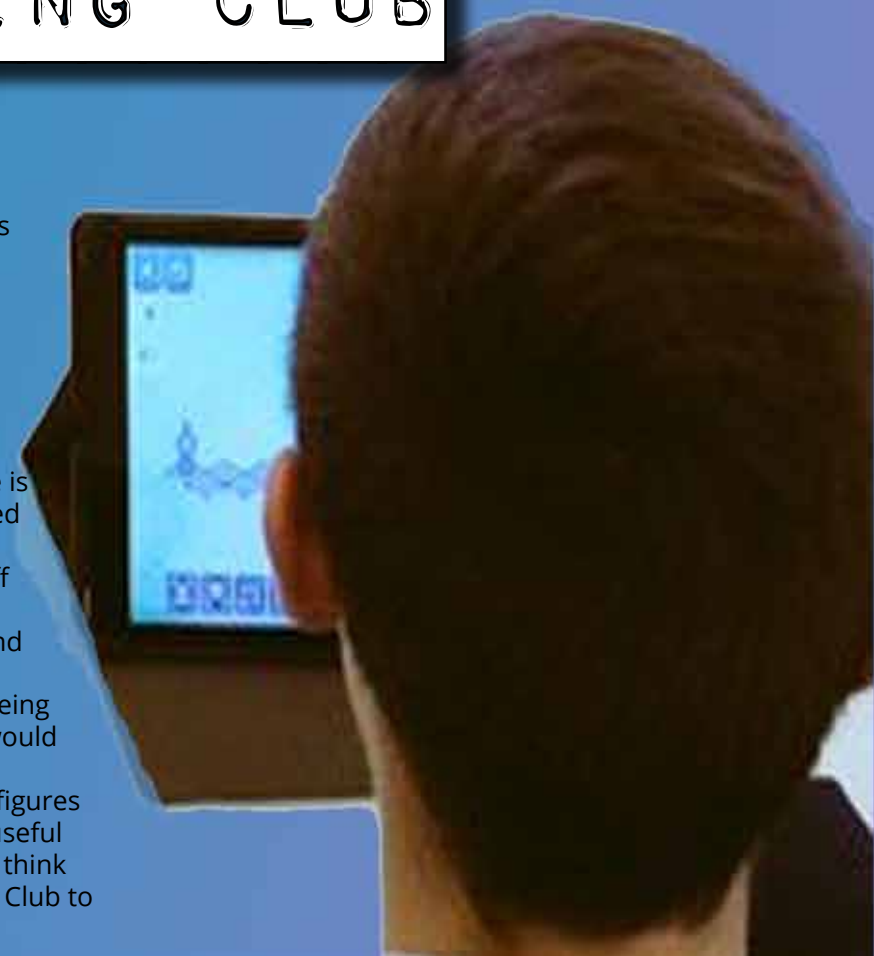




JUNIOR CODING CLUB

The Code Club meets every Monday after school and the club is now in its fourth year at Rathmore after initially being introduced as a way to encourage students to study Computer Science at GCSE. Over the years, the club has grown and evolved and it helps our pupils develop a passion for programming (a skill that is becoming more and more valuable in the expanding IT sector). The Code Club makes learning to code interesting and enjoyable because it teaches programming concepts through programs which are familiar to students. One example is the use of 'Scratch', a program that students can use to develop their own games. What makes it even more enjoyable is that Lower Sixth computing students who have studied programming at GCSE also attend the club to provide one-on-one help to younger pupils. This year, the staff and senior pupils have been helping students from Years 8 to 11 understand how programming works and how to use languages such as HTML and Python.

"I love taking part in Code Club as I'm confident that being able to code will create opportunities in my future. I would like more girls to join so they can help me break the stereotypical boundaries and introduce more female figures into the world of I.T and computing. Coding will be a useful skill in a world of advancing technology so even if you think you are terrible at I.T, you should come along to Code Club to help you improve your skills!" **Cara Morgan**



BRING IT ON



In March Year 13 and 14 ICT and Computing students ventured to the Titanic building for the 5th annual "Bring IT On" event which coincided with National ICT day. Bring IT On NI is a careers programme to get young people, aged 14-19, excited about following a career in the IT industry as well as aiming to reduce the gender imbalance in the industry.

The first event was an interactive workshop where students were shown Microsoft's 'Touch Develop', a website that allows people to use drag and drop commands to create apps, similar to "Scratch", which our junior students at Rathmore

use in their ICT classes. All the participants were then given the task of following one of the tutorials in order to create their own 'Flappy Bird' game and the winner received a Bluetooth speaker for their technical effort. Another section of the event was a presentation given by a keynote speaker. A Microsoft employee and long-time programmer gave an engaging presentation on the importance of innovation. He used Scratch to make a game on his computer to help children learn maths and then went on to use a motion sensor (the Xbox Kinect) to map the movements of his body. This all meant that he could play this game using the movement of his hands and feet! He spoke about how he has helped teach his own children about programming and encouraged all the students present to start keeping portfolios of their projects and achievements throughout the years. Rathmore pupils are familiar with Scratch and found the idea of combining it with the Xbox sensor, original and inspiring. The final section of the day was an employers meet and greet. Various IT employers and universities from Northern Ireland were present and they spoke to students about employment opportunities, university courses and apprenticeships. Industry giants such as Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Fujitsu, and Allstate were there, providing information and advice for students aspiring to have careers in the IT sector. We were surprised to learn that there are more jobs available in the sector than there are graduates to fill them and this was especially inspiring to all. Finally, at the end of a busy day, all students were given a 'Quizmaster' device, which allowed them to answer various survey questions. The survey on the day showed that most students found the Employer Zone the most interesting section. This was a fantastic result for Bring IT On, whose main aim for the day was to encourage more students to follow this career path.

Our pupils had a fantastic day and left W5 with contacts and gift bags which included headphones and of course some free stationary! But perhaps most importantly, they left the event contemplating and planning their future in the IT sector.

Sarah Quinn (Year 13)



DROP EVERYTHING AND READ

The Rathmore DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) initiative continues to reflect and encourage the reading life of students and staff alike. This year saw the tree in the foyer mirroring different aspects of Rathmore, particularly its passion for reading. The opening line of Keats' 'Ode to Autumn' was surrounded by cascading leaves detailing our new Year Eight's favourite novels. Halloween arrived and so too did a week of dropping everything and reading in the midst of morning lessons. This time, a series of photographs showing avid readers hung off the branches of our tree.

Winter beckoned and so began our Christmas Catholic Caring Campaign. Once again the tree became the symbol of Rathmore life. This time, the spirit of giving and reading joined forces in a gorgeous display of books. Now, as well as toys and clothes, each child receives books on Christmas morning as well. In February, Valentine's Day was acknowledged by 10J who decorated and wrote sentiments of romantic verse on hearts which were falling from the tree.

Then we reached the high part of our DEAR campaign on National Book Day. Our senior pupils read and discussed the work of Leontia Flynn and Kenneth Gregory with the writers themselves. The venue was the library – the heartbeat of the DEAR campaign.

We look forward to June and another week of dropping everything and reading as well as welcoming our new Year Eight pupils to the tradition of Rathmore Reading.

Ode To Autumn

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun,
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run.
John Keats

As part of Rathmore's 'Reading Week', author and past pupil Kenneth Gregory visited the school in March of this year to speak about his first novel "The Polaris Whisper".

In what he admitted to be a sentimental introduction to his talk, Mr Gregory spoke to the young pupils about his time at Rathmore, explaining that he never really had a talent for English, even going as far as to claim that his old English teacher had told him that he would have been the last of his pupils that he'd expect to write a novel. "You have about the same chance of being an author as you do of becoming a professional golfer - about one in fifty thousand", Gregory said, giving a lesson on the importance of hard work and determination.

"When you are writing, you just don't know how good or bad you are, so the best you can do is just write. And write every day. Even if you are only writing a little bit."

He then went on to speak about his work as a writer, his process and his experience in the industry. "I don't write standard books" enjoys breaking literary norms in his "The Polaris Whisper" in two separate seemed intent on finding new ways. He said, "I think books have become it's important to change things become too predictable and I to be honest".

said Gregory, explaining how he writing. For example Gregory set time scales, thirty years apart and to subvert standard literary form. like comfort food...and that's why up...I don't like thrillers, they've think we're smarter than that



Dear Leontia Flynn,

A local poet, Leontia Flynn paid a visit to Rathmore on Thursday 3rd March this year, where she presented a poetry reading in the library for Lower and Upper Sixth pupils. Flynn spoke of how her poems are based upon her everyday life, her family and the real experiences she has gone through.

The first poem she read was 'The Examination Room' in which she describes having a nightmare about sitting an exam, and the feeling of dread that went along with it. Flynn was extremely open and honest about her journey to becoming a poet. She spoke of how she walked out of her own exams and left university, but wrote poetry every day for years to find her own distinctive style. Despite not attending university to study poetry, Leontia Flynn has taught classes in the past and has given lectures on the subject. When asked about how she got interested in poetry, she told us that she first read it in school, and then continued to do so outside the classroom for her own enjoyment, and throughout the session, she mentioned the various places that her success in poetry has taken her, including Paris, Berlin, Rome, Monaco and various states in America.



SOROPTOMIST SUCCESS

The Soroptomist Public Speaking Competition is an annual, female only, event that attracts competitors from across Ireland and the UK. It aims to give women a platform on which they can voice their opinions on a variety of interesting, and, at times, contentious topics. This year, four Year 13 pupils (Sarah Quinn, Maeve Ramsey, Katie Walsh and Claire McCloskey) and one Year 12 pupil (Eve Brennan) took to the stage in the Hillsborough Village centre. The girls spoke about a range of issues including the role of the NHS and the dangers of striving for perfection. One by one, they took to the stage and delivered their speeches with passion, all the while trying to keep an eye out for the dreaded red light which meant they were running out of time! At the end of the event, we were all delighted when Claire McCloskey was announced as the overall winner who would go forward to the grand Northern Ireland final.

A word from our winner...

My speech was on "Human Trafficking - where does the responsibility lie?" This was undoubtedly a difficult topic to research but I felt passionate about the plight of those involved. I returned to the Hillsborough Village Centre on the 6th February to deliver my speech again; however, this time, there was the added difficulty of an impromptu five minute speech on the previously unknown topic of "My Ambition in Life..." I was incredibly relieved when this section was over and although I did not win the overall final, I am so pleased I took part and take pride in my title as district winner.

Creative Writing Club

Our Creative Writing Club, 'The Rathmore Owls', meets each Thursday during lunch time. It is open to all Year 8 to 10 students who are interested. Each week we are given the opportunity to write freely in the form of a story or a poem and sometimes we enter our work into competitions such as, 'The Poetry Trials' or BBC Radio 2's '500 Words'. We are given an image, story starter or a title to work with and these help to inspire us to interpret and write in our own personal way. We then share our piece of writing with the rest of the club. Some people just swap over with their partner, others read them aloud and some even perform them! There is no pressure to share your piece but everyone is very supportive and gives their honest opinion on the work.

Recently some of our members found out that poems we entered into the 'The Poetry Trials' competition are going to be published in a book for our school library along with many other libraries across the UK. I wouldn't have had this wonderful opportunity if I hadn't joined the Creative Writing Club! A number of us have also received certificates commending us for our entries into the '500 Words Competition'.

The club is fun, enjoyable and a great way to make new friends. It gives you an opportunity to develop your skills by writing in a variety of styles as well as learning from the ideas of others. I would definitely advise anyone who enjoys writing to give it a go!

Marianne Toal Year 8



READY, SET, DEBATE.

Can you think on your feet? Can you respect the ideas of others while putting forward a forceful and well-structured argument? If so, then this is the club for you!

The Junior Debating Club meets every Tuesday and is open to all Year 8 and 9 pupils. The aim of the club is simple - to develop each member's confidence and debating skills. Over recent months, the group has completed a number of tasks which range from quick fire games of "Yes/No" to more serious debates such as "Reality TV is destructive to society" and "Summer Holidays are too long". With each task, the members can work on crucial skills such as listening to, responding to and challenging what they hear, as well as voice projection and body language. Not only that, it's a great opportunity to establish new friendships. "Debate Club is a fantastic and friendly place where you can argue your ideas and voice your own opinions"

David Magee (Year 9)

"The main debate that we did this year was on summer holidays and whether or not they should be reduced to four weeks. I was spokesperson for the opposition! It was a bit scary at first but I had the rest of the team to help me. Over the lunch period, we debated our ideas back and forth and I was delighted when it was announced that my side had won! After that, we had an individual debate on "Books are better than TV" and I think both sides argued this well. Overall, Debate Club has made me much more confident when presenting my ideas and talking to people"

Shea McNally Year 9



The Bar Mock Trial – four words which can cause excitement and passion but also fear and anxiety in equal measure! This is an annual event in which pupils from schools across Northern Ireland and the UK compete in a series of mock trials. However, don't let the word 'mock' fool you. It is a highly competitive event that involves a great deal of preparation. Not to mention it takes place in a real courtroom and you are marked by a real Judge!

While many auditioned to be part of the team, it was soon whittled down to four barristers, four witnesses, a court clerk, an usher and five jury members. Then the hard work really began! From September, the team worked tirelessly during lunch and after school to prepare both the prosecution and defence for two cases. Also, simply knowing the details of each case is not enough. You have to become the person and act the role. Thankfully, we had two barrister mentors, Mr John Morrissey and Ms Nicola Leonard, who were incredibly supportive and generous with their time.

Finally, the day came and we all headed off to the Royal Courts of Justice in Belfast early on Saturday, 28th November. As our barristers put on their wigs and gowns, it was time to show what all our hard work was for. In Case One, our opponents (St Dominic's) were formidable; however, our team was not to be deterred. While the jury decided against us, we were pleased with our performance. Case two was undoubtedly more complicated because there were two separate charges. This time, our barristers picked up on a weakness in the prosecution's case and they, along with our solid witness statements, succeeded in getting a winning result. We were delighted and very proud when the judge said that our witnesses were the best he had seen all day! When the results were announced, we were disappointed that we hadn't been selected to proceed to the final round; however, the team was confident that they had worked as hard as they could and that they performed brilliantly on the day.

Lucia Shannon – Barrister

The competition took place in November and in my opinion, having to be in town for half past eight in the morning was one of the hardest struggles, never mind the public speaking that followed! Performing in a real courthouse in front of a real judge and barristers was as daunting as you'd expect, yet very exhilarating and exciting at the same time. Despite the initial fear, I thoroughly enjoyed the day and my confidence and public speaking skills have improved greatly.

Ella Magee - Usher

The role of Usher meant that I was there to help with the administration of the court. Before the trial, I had to learn the order of procedure and the affirmation to swear in any witnesses. Just before it all started, I made my way to the chambers to collect the judge for our trial and bring him or her to the courtroom. Despite my initial fears, they were all incredibly friendly and genuinely supportive of the event. During the trial I escorted witnesses to the witness box and announced them to the court. If anyone was to disturb the session, I was also given the power to remove them from court to prevent any interruptions although sadly, I didn't get the chance to do this!

Aoife Murray – Court Clerk

I applied to take part because it seemed interesting and I wanted to learn a bit more about what a career in law would be like; but I don't think any of us could have predicted how intensive our practice sessions would be! I took on the role of the Court Clerk in the team. This meant I had to swear in witnesses and jurors, read out the charges to the court and after each of our trials, collect the scoresheet from the judge - the real life judge - in their private office. Awkward small talk with High Court Judges aside, I really enjoyed my role and the whole experience gave a real insight into how the courts operate and what it would be like to work in one. While I've since decided a career in law isn't for me, I would strongly recommend taking part in the Bar Mock Trial to anyone with even a slight interest in law as it is a really great and entertaining experience!



BPW Public Speaking Competition

In October, three Year 13 pupils ventured out to the Newforge Country Club in Belfast to take part in the BPW Public Speaking Competition. The competition is a public meeting in microcosm and so the pupils had to adopt the roles of Chairperson (Aoife Leggett), Speaker (Katie Nelson) and Expressor of Thanks (Luke O' Kane). To make the task even more daunting, on the night the Chairperson and Expressor of Thanks have to work with a speaker from a different school and therefore the ability to think on your feet is an absolute must.

Katie spoke on the topic that "Sugar is the new tobacco" and despite some difficult questions from the floor, she performed with confidence and poise. At the end of the night, the Rathmore team was declared as the runners up and the pupils were very pleased with their achievement.



What a Farce

The Drama Department AS and A2 students took part in their practical examination.

The A2 wrote and performed a Farce titled 'The Plays and the Thing'.

AS students performed two edited extracts from 'The Visit' by Friedrich Durrenmatt.

All students did extremely well and all three performances were a great success.

YOUNG ENTERPRISE

PRIMEPRIMEPRIMEPRIMEPRIMEPRIMEPRIME

The Rathmore 2016 Young Enterprise company is called Prime and our focus is to promote health and well-being in the busy lives of students. Our company was launched in September 2015 and has been organised, developed and evolved by lower sixth pupils with the help and guidance of Mr Higgins and our business advisor Mr Barry Kilmartin. To initially raise money, we sold hoodies for the ski trip to Austria at Christmas and sold a total of 87 hoodies to students and teachers. Another fundraising scheme of ours was to sell candy canes at different points around the school at Christmas to other students before school, at break and lunch. These were only a small part of our mission and were all contributing to help us develop our final product. Our focal point when brainstorming ideas for a product was something that promoted fitness and reminded young people to care for their bodies. We initially formulated the idea of an app that would be made with the help of the City Council to raise awareness of recycling and how to improve our environment, as well as keeping track of the individual's fitness routine. After debate, we decided that we wanted to create a drink that would supply vitamins and minerals that may be lacking in adolescent diets. The focal point of this product was a dispensable cap that would contain these vitamins and a flavour, as storing the ingredients in powder form keeps them fresh and more effective than being left in a mixed drink. In order to obtain these caps, we first began by working with a company in Sweden that could supply them, infused with vitamins and a probiotic (which promotes the well-being of the digestive system). After much communication over email and phone calls, the order could not be completed. We then faced the challenge of finding another company that could supply this rare product, and we began communication with a company from Canada offering a vitamin infused cap that came with different flavours and vitamin contents. After a few weeks this interaction ended similarly to the previous, and although many were disheartened, the company continued to grow and we focused on using our entrepreneurial skills on selling simply water both to students in school and to companies such as Citi Golf. This experience has taught me to explore my entrepreneurial skills and given me a brief insight into the world of business. Being able to communicate with suppliers from different countries and continents has shown me that business is worldwide and has given me unique opportunities not readily available to students of my age. It also developed my money handling skills and ability to coordinate and work effectively in a team whilst having fun.

PRIMEPRIMEPRIMEPRIMEPRIME



A 5* MASTER CLASS!

On Thursday 28th February, Johnny Leake, Head Chef of the Merchant Hotel in Belfast, came to visit Rathmore to give us a master class in cooking. He demonstrated his excellent professional culinary skills while sharing advice on how to enter the profession. Johnny prepared duck breast with lentil ragu and tortellini pasta filled with smoked seafood. For dessert he made chocolate coffee mousse in a chocolate dome with strawberry and mango salsa decorated with gold leaves. While cooking, he told us about where the Merchant sources its food as well as giving an overview of a day in the life of a chef. He also explained about the different opportunities for chefs in Northern Ireland. He gave us some original advice on pursuing our aspirations and to top it off we got to taste some delicious food!

Eva McKee and Lorcan O'Neill Year 10



Future Chef

This year I was lucky enough to compete in the prestigious cooking competition, "Future Chef". Cooking is a strong passion of mine, so as soon as I heard about the competition, my first thoughts were to enter. I was a little nervous and reconsidered entering but I am so glad that I did.

One Wednesday, after school, we held the School Heats. There were roughly 10 competitors, all of whom were excited, nervous and eager to begin. We were given an hour to prepare a main course. There was a range of dishes, from chicken to tuna, however I decided to make Vietnamese Chicken Curry. Mrs. Loughran, Ms. Gibson and our very own national finalist from the previous year, Ciaran Liddy, judged everyone's dishes and Adam O'Neill and I were lucky enough to be chosen to progress to the regional final. Before we competed in the regional final, we had the privilege of being mentored by Johnny Leake, the renowned Head Chef of the Merchant Hotel. This involved us watching Johnny working in the kitchens of the Merchant and actually getting the chance to work hands on. It was an amazing experience and I gained a lot of valuable knowledge.

The final was being held in the Belfast MET.

We were the first to arrive and sitting around waiting allowed the nerves to kick in. We got changed into our chef whites which we were told to wear with pride as it was a big achievement for us to get this far. The kitchen was spectacular and it certainly felt like an honour cooking in it.

Before we started, the judges came around and talked to each of us telling us not to worry about them walking around and to stay calm. They took a look at our recipes and the judges and the MET students' surprise at my plans to temper chocolate sent my nerves into over drive! We had to prepare two main courses and two desserts in one and a half hours. I was personally very proud of my dessert, a Chocolate Sphere with a coffee mousse, and was even more proud when the judges complimented me on it afterwards. Adam made a Chocolate Fondant, which was equally visually attractive and delicious.

It felt like forever waiting for the judges to reach their final decision and they did admit that it had been a hard one. Unfortunately, there could only be one winner and this was Katie Russell from Banbridge Academy.

Despite the outcome, this was still one of the most enjoyable, informative and valuable experiences of my life and I will always carry the lessons I learnt with me. I must say a special thanks to Johnny Leake for being an amazing mentor along the way.

Ciara Larkin Year 11

Youth in Government trips to Derry and Dublin

In November, Christy Conlon, Stephanie Maxwell and I took part in a two night residential in Derry. As well as workshops on conflict, team building and a movie night, we visited the Siege Museum where we found out about the Siege of Derry which took place in the Seventeenth Century. It was really interesting to hear from people with different views and backgrounds and it helped us understand that conflict is viewed and reacted to differently by different communities.

In January we visited Leinster House, Dublin where we were given a tour of the building and told about the workings of the Irish political system and its history. We then visited and spoke to the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, who are responsible for promoting the interests of Ireland in the European Union and the wider world. The trip was a brilliant opportunity to find out more about a political system different from our own.

Emily McStravick

Politics Plus –Inspiration for Young Female Leaders

On 22nd October, the girls of the Lower Sixth Politics class attended an event hosted by "Politics Plus" for young female leaders who wanted to inspire change, influence public policy and champion equal opportunities for women. The event was held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont, and participants were given the opportunity to meet role models, connect with politicians, ask questions, get inspired and make their voices heard. We were able to listen to a series of great speakers, including: Mairead Healy (who founded 'Future Voices', a program to help disadvantaged young people in Ireland); Senator Ivana Bacik (Reid Professor of Criminal Law, Criminology and Penology at Trinity College, Fellow of Trinity College Dublin since 2005 and a Senator for the UCD constituency of Seanad Éireann in July 2007) and finally, Jackie Henry (Deloitte Senior Partner for Northern Ireland). We were also given the opportunity to question a panel of MLAs on their views regarding women and the 'glass ceiling' theory that many believe exists not only in politics but medicine, law and business. The event was informative, engaging and encouraged all of the young people present not to be hindered by anyone or anything with regards to their education and professional career.

Crime and Punishment in Crumlin Road Gaol

In December, our Sociology class was lucky enough to visit Crumlin Road Gaol. We went on this trip in order to investigate aspects of Crime and Punishment, which related to our A2 course. We got to see various areas of the prison such as the condemned man's cell, the classrooms used by the prisoners and the processing and searching offices. The Crumlin Road Gaol closed its doors in 1996 and one of the reasons was because of the impact of the Good Friday Agreement. It was a really worthwhile experience.

Politics Society

On the 8th October 2015 the Rathmore Politics Society welcomed Queen's University Lecturer Dr Heather Johnson from the School of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy. Dr Johnson gave us an insightful and meaningful explanation of the current migrant crisis that Europe now faces as a direct consequence of the Syrian conflict. In 2015, approximately 3,770 migrants died crossing the Mediterranean Sea alone. With the threat of terrorism, Dr Johnson presented arguments to remove the stereotypical stigma associated with the refugee crisis.

NICCY Workshop

In November, pupils from the AS Politics class attended a workshop run by NICCY. NICCY is the Northern Irish Commissioner for Children and Young People. The Commissioner's role is to safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people.

Sixth-form Politics Students Air Their Views

On Friday 11th September, three of the Year 14 Government and Politics students were invited to participate in the Good Morning Ulster, BBC NI radio programme. Oscar Jameson, Finbar Devlin and Leah Kelly (recorded for Evening Extra), offered their opinions on recent topical issues. Their informed and mature responses clearly impressed the show's presenters, Karen Patterson and Conor Bradford, who hoped that the eloquence of the young people might provoke a positive reaction from our politicians.

Youth In Government GoTo Westminster

In January of this year, the Youth in Government Panel made the trip to Westminster and three Rathmore pupils (Christy Conlon, Stephanie Maxwell and Emily Stravick) were lucky enough to attend. While they were in London, they had the opportunity to meet with the MP for South Belfast, Dr Alisdair McDonnell. He talked to the group about his position on the European Union, the future of the SDLP and the possible reduction of the voting age. He also addressed his view on the current nature of Northern Irish Politics and how we, as young people, can have a positive impact on the local political scene. While in Westminster, the group was also given a tour of the Parliament Buildings, including both the House of Commons and House of Lords.

To finish off the exciting trip, they were given entry to watch the commons debate the European Union, as MPs stated their positions on whether they would campaign to leave or to remain inside the EU. The debate was chaired by British Prime Minister David Cameron and all pupils felt privileged to be allowed to listen to such an important and topical discussion.

10 Foundations

In November the Politics Society was lucky to be visited by Ian Campbell who spoke to the group about his charity, '10 Foundations'. This charity works closely with locals, mostly in impoverished areas of the Philippines. The charity aims to build 10 orphanages housing over 400 children.



TOP SECRET

(Do Not Disclose Contents under War Article 23.1.2a)

May 11th, 1940

In November, a group of Year 12 Mathematics and Computing students attended a Coding Workshop in Queen's University Belfast. The day consisted of a talk on the history of coding, followed by a chance to crack some codes of their own.

The highlight of the day was when the pupils were able to use an authentic Enigma machine, as used by the Nazis in World War 2. The pupils heard how the Allies, led by Dr. Allan Turing at Bletchley Park, managed to crack the enigma code which significantly shortened the length of the War.

The whole day was presented by Dr. James Grime, a Mathematician from the Numberphile Youtube channel. Although he is not a household name, some of the pupils considered him famous enough to sheepishly ask for his autograph at the end of the day!

The event was a wonderful experience, which only served to greater enthuse the pupils in their study of Mathematics and Computing.

Senior Maths Challenge



On Friday 13th November, a team consisting of four Further Mathematics students made the journey to Rockport School, Bangor, to take part in the annual Senior Maths Team Challenge run by the United Kingdom Maths Trust. The team was comprised of two upper sixth students: Holly Toner and myself; and two lower sixth students: James McBriarty and Mark Cunningham accompanied by Mrs Thomas. Following prior rigorous practice sessions and a valiant performance on the day, our team was placed 12th in Northern Ireland. Taking part in the challenge was exciting and we all really enjoyed the experience!

Aoife Byrne



FIRST LEGO LEAGUE

The Northern Ireland finals were held recently for the FIRST Lego League. Pupils were given four tasks – design a robot, programme it to perform tasks, research project and core values. Building upon Rathmore’s fantastic track record in this event the team won Robot Performance, achieving a record points score and took overall runners up.

This is a fantastic achievement which reflects the hard work of each team member in conjunction with team mentor Eoin Lavery. The team consisted of: Jack Hayes, Matthew Horner, Jude Horner, Conor O’Hare and Jonah Cartland. Massive congratulations to all

KNOCKING DOWN STEREOTYPES IN ENGINEERING

On the 24th of November, five female Year 12 Technology students had the opportunity to visit the Schlumberger Factory in Newtownabbey. Schlumberger is a large engineering firm that makes products for oil rigs and mining. We arrived at the campus and were taken to a meeting room where we met six other schools. We were given several short talks by a variety of people linked to the company. Afterwards, we ventured on a tour of the factory floor and were shown all the different types of machinery that they use as well as the processes involved in making their products. Then, it was our turn! We had to assemble a timer that the company make and, to add to the pressure, we were timed and judged alongside the other schools. Thankfully, we did quite well!

After lunch we were given a lecture on the opportunities that exist for women in the world of engineering and it was instantly obvious that for many of those in attendance this was the key information from the day. Personally, I feel that the day helped me confirm my A-Level choices and provided an interesting insight into a world that is no longer seen simply as the domain of the male worker.

Maeve Hamill (Year 12)



DESIGN IT, BUILD IT, USE IT!

On Friday 20th November, a group of twenty one Year 9 pupils attended the Sentinus ‘Design it, Build it, Use it’ Stadium Event in the SSE Arena. The event was part of the SSE Friendship Four Ice Hockey tournament where four colleges from USA came to participate in a weekend of fun filled excitement.

During the event, the students gained a valuable insight into various strands of the STEM subjects. The day began with a number of interesting and engaging talks from local STEM businesses. The students gained an insight into local architecture and engineering firms and how these would play a key role in the development of a stadium. After a short break the students got the opportunity to explore W5 and take part in a wide range of exercises which tested their STEM abilities. Finally the students were asked to design and build a stadium using only recycled materials. This was a fast paced and fun activity that not only tested the pupils’ communication and teamwork skills but also their creativity and technological ability. Overall the pupils seemed to really enjoy their time at the ‘Design it, Build it, Use it’ event. They gained insight into the STEM subjects and had an engaging and innovative day.



Horizons in Physics

In September the Year 12 Physics students attended the ‘Horizons in Physics’ event at Queen’s University Belfast. The event consisted of a series of talks entitled, “The Power of Light”. The event illustrated to students the nature of light and some of its applications. The Year 12 students benefitted greatly from this as they had just studied the topic of light and prepared presentations for their peers. Everyone enjoyed the day and coincidentally 2015 was the “Year of Light” which tied in well with the event!



BACK TO THE FUTURE

One of the best things during my first year in Rathmore was the trip to the Ulster Museum. It was fun, exciting and thrilling and gave us a chance to take a break from our usual routine! It was a special trip as we were going to learn about the history of the DeLorean car. When we got there we were taken to a small theatre where we listened to presentations by some students from Queen’s University Belfast. The DeLorean was made famous when one featured as Marty McFly’s time machine in the Back to the Future films. In 2014 an old DeLorean was found (in a cow shed!) and students from Queen’s University worked hard to restore it. In fact, one of the speakers was Nikki Jackson and her grandad actually worked in one of the initial DeLorean factories. The presentation told us lots of interesting information including how the DeLorean company started and how successful it was. I also found it really interesting when the speakers explained how much has changed because of new technologies.

After all that information we needed a break! So, we had lunch as well as a walk around the museum with our friends where we saw loads of sculptures and different pieces of art. After this we went back to the theatre but this time it was to watch ‘Back to the Future – Part II’! The film was brilliant – a real blast from the past! Our day was amazing and the memories of this trip are still so vivid in my mind. It will definitely be something that the whole tutor group will remember fondly from our first year in Rathmore.

Hredya Sajan - (Year 8)

APRES SKI



This year was the first ever Junior Ski trip. Lots of people applied for it and I was one of the lucky ones to get picked to go.

We flew to Italy on the 19th of March and after a 3 hour bus journey we arrived at Madonna Di Campiglio, the resort in which we were staying. This was not my first time skiing but it was the best place I've been to yet. The slopes were amazing and the sun shone all week. On the first morning we were split into groups according to our experience and ability. This helped me improve my technique as I was with people of a similar level. We quickly progressed to the black runs on which many of us enjoyed watching each other fall. The few hours that we weren't skiing or eating, we were doing all of the planned activities. The best one in my opinion was the snow walk. We strapped on the snow shoes and walked into the forests under a full moon. Other nights we went for pizza, had a movie night and we went into the town as well.

By the end of the week, we were doing 7ft jumps in the snowpark, the beginners were doing 360's down black runs, two people were on crutches and we had enough laughs to last a lifetime!

The day we had to leave was a sad one, but on the way home we visited Verona for the day and enjoyed exploring the city and visiting famous landmarks like the Colosseum and Juliet's balcony. It was a brilliant week and I can't wait until the senior trip.

John and Lauren Johnston (Year 10)

On the 27th December, just as everyone was cooling down after all the excitement of Christmas, a group of our Year 13 pupils jetted off to Austria for the annual Senior Rathmore ski trip. We had been promised an unforgettable experience and I for one was not disappointed!

I had never been skiing before and I'll admit that this did make me nervous! My main concern was looking like a production of Bambi on ice...

When we got to Ehrwald, I was astonished by the scenery. Waking up to the image of the imposing mountains bathing in misty fog was something I could see myself getting used to.

Learning to ski from scratch is a lot more difficult than it looks – trust me. On our first day on the nursery slope there were a fair few cases of accidental runaways and slow-motion falls but even this didn't stop us having fun. By day four we moved onto the real runs...this was when the fun really started!

As we spent our New Year's Eve in Austria, we couldn't let it go by without a bang! Our fancy dress party was a huge success and I don't think I will ever be able to get the image of Mr Graham as a high school cheerleader out of my brain or Mr MClennaghan's "hidden" talent for singing...!

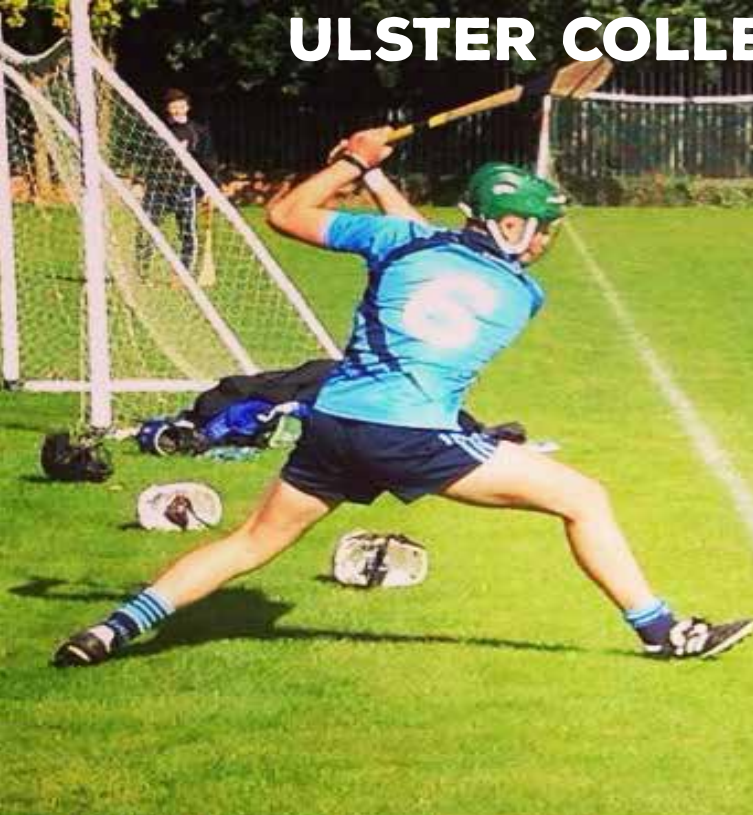
While the skiing was incredible, it was lovely to be able to soak up some Swiss culture and we were lucky to spend our last day in beautiful Zurich.

Needless to say, we all returned to Belfast exhausted, not to mention the few bumps and bruises as souvenirs. Despite any challenges we may have faced, each and every one of us had an incredible time. I would definitely recommend the trip to everyone and would jump at the chance to ski again.

Catriona Hagan – (Year 13)



ULSTER COLLEGES HURLING ALL STAR



Congratulations to Donal McKernan (Year 13) who was awarded a Ulster Colleges Hurling AllStar award for 2015-16. Donal becomes only the 6th pupil from Rathmore to be awarded this coveted prize in its 28 year history. His achievement is all the more remarkable given that he is only in Lower 6th and will have the opportunity to be awarded an All Star next year too.

IRISH JUNIOR GOLF CHAMPIONS

Olivia McCrystal and I are keen golf players and have represented Rathmore on a number of occasions with great success! On 11th March 2016, Olivia and I travelled to Portstewart Golf Club where we won the Junior Cup and as a result, qualified for the Irish Schools Championship.

On Monday 25th April, we headed off to Dublin to take part in this prestigious competition. We were certainly excited but nervous as well as we knew our competitors were strong. Not only that, but it was a cold and windy day – not ideal golfing conditions! There was an incredibly high standard on display that day and I was especially

nervous as I teed off last. Waiting was daunting but it soon came. Olivia and I both held our nerve and achieved 30 points and 35 points respectively and we were delighted with how well we had played. Once the scores were calculated, we were announced as the All Ireland winners! We were so shocked and incredibly proud.

My life revolves around golf and although it can pose some challenges, especially towards

the end of the year when summer exams begin, I absolutely love it. My ultimate goal is to secure a golf scholarship to the USA and, like my brother Patrick, become a professional.



KEEN TO MAKE THE RIGHT MARC

From a young age, my dream has always been to pursue a career in football and now I am a step closer having signed a two year scholarship with Chesterfield Football Club which begins this July.

Throughout my five years, both in and outside of Rathmore, I have progressed through different levels in football. Over the past two years, I have played at some very prestigious events at club, county and international level. In the summer of 2015, I represented County Antrim in the Milk Cup tournament.

Over the past year or so, I have also played fourteen international games for the Northern Ireland Under 15 and Under 16 teams. I have played against Belgium, Estonia and Slovakia twice as well as once against Finland, Poland, Norway, France, England, Peru, Morocco and Republic of Ireland. I have started in eight of these games, played the full game in seven, and captained my country twice. In particular it is a great honour for me personally to have that number of caps for my country, and being Vice Captain is a huge achievement for me.

I will move to Chesterfield for two years on June 26th 2016 and the thought of being part of a professional club and getting to play full time football is unbelievable. Rathmore has been incredibly supportive of me and I am very grateful for everything they have done. Teachers like Mr McCormick have helped me become the person and player I am today. I feel I owe a lot to the school for all that it has provided for me and I hope I can do Rathmore proud!

Marc McKenna (Year 12)



FROM BUDAPEST TO ROTHERHAM

A TALE OF FOOTBALLING SUCCESS

In 2014, I played in the Dale Farm Milk Cup for Global Premier Soccer, and that's where my football journey began. GPS are an American organisation with players from all over the world and I was lucky enough to play alongside players from around the world, including Jamaican and Spanish internationals. The tournament was a great experience as we got to play against top English academies, such as Watford FC, and we ended up finishing runners up in the shield of the tournament.

I was enjoying playing football for my local team Glendowan FC, especially having had a good 2015/16 season where we won the League cup on penalties against Armagh City, the winners of the league.

When our season had finished I received the good news that Rotherham FC, an English academy, had asked me to go on trial at the start of summer. The trial went very well as I felt I had played some of my best football over there and it helped that I got on with all the players as well. During the trial I was given the opportunity to go with the squad on the pre-season tour to Budapest the following month. This was an amazing opportunity for me and while here, I went through an intense training camp and played matches against top Hungarian teams. Following the trip to Budapest, I was offered a two year scholarship with Rotherham which I accepted and start in July.

More recently, I made my international debut for Northern Ireland in the European championships in Israel against a strong Norwegian side whom we drew with, 1-1. Unfortunately we failed to qualify for the elite stage of the tournament having lost 1-0 to France, the current holders of the trophy and 2-1 to the hosts, Israel. Despite this, my time in Israel was an unbelievable experience and one that I will never forget.

Thomas Maguire (Year 12)



YEAR 8 ULSTER CHAMPIONS 2015



U14 ALL IRELAND CHAMPIONS 2016



O'DOHERTY CUP FINALISTS

Our Senior Gaelic Footballers had a very encouraging campaign in the O'Doherty Cup, losing only to St. Mark's Warrenpoint in the final. Despite this year's loss, the youthful nature of the squad offers encouragement for the future and bodes well for a MacLarnon cup run next season.



CROSS-COUNTRY



Eoin McCann and Christy Conlon (Year 13) were selected to represent Northern Ireland in the Home Countries International Cross Country meeting in Falkirk, Scotland. Both boys have shown excellent form in the School's Cross Country competitions this year and have been justly rewarded with this selection.

The Editorial Team



And that's a wrap! We hope you enjoyed immersing yourself into the life of Rathmore with this bumper edition of Solas. It is fitting that the 10th Edition should be so vibrant and that the abundance of life and school-enhancing activities should be so rich and diverse. In fact, there were enough articles to produce the next edition of the school magazine at the same time.

The fact that you're reading this now probably means that you've enjoyed the magazine so much that you want to find out who is responsible for putting it all together? Well, like all the activities showcased from the first page to the last, it is our pupils who shine and succeed when presented with any task or challenge and this momentous task was no different. Our talented editorial team of Lower Sixth pupils are responsible for working with the various departments to compile all the stories and articles. They have worked as a team to produce articles of the highest quality, with the focus of our magazine being the experience of our pupils.

As with all the success stories presented in the magazine, our pupils are always supported by a team of teachers who motivate and direct their efforts. In this regard, we pay special recognition to the editorial and production work of Miss Hunter, Mrs Keag and Mr O'Callaghan. A special word of thanks goes to Mr P. Boyle whose expertise behind the camera has allowed for such spectacular photography that truly enhances this magazine each year.

We have thoroughly enjoyed working together on this magazine and we hope you take as much pleasure in reading it as we did in producing it.

The Editorial Team

Back Row L to R: Miss Hunter; Sophie Boyle; Aoife Murray; Alice Sault; Ella Magee; Megan Foers and Mr O'Callaghan
Front Row L to R: Catriona Hagan; Orla Lavery; Lucia Shannon; Ryan Harrison; Shannon McKinley; Sarah Quinn and Nuala Morgan

*James Daniel Brady absent from photograph

