

PULSE



newsletter

March 2011 Vol. 4

St. Patrick's Grammar School

**WE'RE ON TOP OF
THE WORLD**



The countdown is on; we are currently enjoying our last few weeks, days, hours in our old school. While we can't wait to get into our new building with its state-of-the-art facilities, we are going to miss one or two things about the building we have spent many happy times in (okay, there have been some difficult times too!)

Some teachers will miss their comfy old chairs or familiarly untidy office, their old white boards and overhead projectors or having their own classroom or their own office.

We students seem to be less sentimental and many I have spoken to have struggled to find something that they will miss. But, if we rack our brains, we can all identify a memory or a quality that we associate with our old school. For some it will be a memory of making new friends and experiencing new things, maybe a time they beat a personal or school record on Sports Day, maybe a time they performed to a live audience from the stage in the gym, in a musical event or at the Drama Festival. Perhaps it is just the recollection of sharing a laugh with your friends, on the way up the hill to school or a really good game of football in the yard.

As the first of April approaches and we cross out the days on the calendar, we will always remember the first time that we stepped through those double doors and came face to face with the school emblem: Signum Fidei. And even if, right now, we can't think of anything we will miss, no doubt in the years ahead in our new school, we will have many conversations which will begin, 'Do you remember in the old school...'

When we look forward, we can't help but look back.

Keith McAuley, 10Q

Dates for Your Diary

- **Thursday 10th March**
Annual School Concert 7.30pm in the Great Hall.
- **Sunday 13th March**
2.00pm - 5.00pm - last chance to say good-bye to the old school - all welcome!
- **Wednesday 16th March**
Year 12 Options Day/Parent-Teacher Meeting for Year 13.
- **Thursday 17th & Friday 18th March**
School closed for students.
- **Wednesday 23rd March**
Year 10 Options Day.
Study Skills Seminar for parents at 7.30pm.
- **Friday 1st April**
Handover of new school building.
School closed for students.
- **Monday 4th April**
Years 12, 13 and 14 only in the new school.
- **Tuesday 5th April**
Years 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 only in the new school.
- **Wednesday 6th April**
Years 8, 9, 12, 13, 14 only in the new school.
- **Thursday 7th April**
All students in new school.
- **Tuesday 12th April**
Whole school photo.
- **Monday 18th April**
Post 16 Information Evening.
- **Wednesday 20th April**
Last day of term – midday closure.
- **Tuesday 3rd May**
Start of third term.
- **Monday 30th May**
School closed for students.
- **Wednesday 1st June**
Summer exams begin.
- **Tuesday 28th June**
Last day of term – midday closure.



Moving the old to make way for the new

Four weeks and counting to the opening of our new school...

Music News Stars in 'Yer' Eyes

Congratulations to the members of the band who won the school heat of Stars in 'Yer' Eyes: Matthew Campbell, Kevin Burns, Abraham McCauley and Luke Hanna.

They performed *The Middle* by the band, Jimmy Eat the World to a delighted audience at the concert held in the school in February. Runners-up were school band, When Pigs Fly, consisting of James Bell, Phelim McAleenan, Jack Dougherty and Aidan Fallon.

In third place were three members of Audio Cavalry (Abraham McCauley, Sean Hogan and James Conway) a band that has raced to number one in the Northern Ireland download charts, this time accompanied by Liam McCartan on bass instead of the original bassist, Carl Small (SERC). To say a great evening was enjoyed by all would not do justice to this great night which showcased so much school talent,



All the acts at rehearsal

from Year 8 to Year 14. We are all looking forward to the final of the Stars in 'Yer' Eyes competition to be held in the Ulster Hall on 26th May. In the meantime why not check out Audio Cavalry on Facebook?

In other MUSIC NEWS, congratulations also to Conor Martin, 14K, on being selected to play the cello, for the Northern Ireland Youth Orchestra. This is a great achievement for Conor and we wish him well.

From the Panto to Performing Shakespeare!

Year 12 Performing Arts students had the great opportunity to visit Newry Town Hall in January, during pantomime season. They had unprecedented back-stage access and the opportunity to interview lighting and sound engineers and even cast members.



Year 12 Performing Arts Students at the Opera House

Afterwards they settled down to watch the pantomime itself, *Snow White*. A great time was had by all. Oh yes it was!

In February students in Years 9 and 10 took part in the Annual Drama Festival. The Year 9 classes kicked off a wonderful day full of fun and drama. Special congratulations go to 9Q who picked up the award for Best Performance for *Ernie's Incredible Illucinations*. Well done also to Callum Millar who won Best Actor for his portrayal of Tom Sawyer and to Conor Wilson and Caelan Savage, who picked up Best Supporting Actor awards.

In the afternoon it just got better with the Year 10 classes performing extracts from Shakespeare's plays. 10Q was first up with *Julius Caesar*. It was really worth watching with the dramatic scenes of the conspirators plotting to kill Caesar, right up to the assassination of Caesar.

Then it was 10K with *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, a comedy which changed the atmosphere completely. 10L's *Twelfth Night* opened up with probably one the funniest scenes of the afternoon, thanks to James McKibben and Owen Milligan. Finally, it was the turn of 10D to perform their tragic romance, *Romeo and Juliet*.

Congratulations to 10Q who won Best Performance, Liam Anderson and Carl Hagen who picked up Best Actor awards and Diarmuid O'Rourke, who won the Best Supporting Actor award.

The whole day was full of talent and laughter, drama and emotion, which we all really enjoyed.



A scene from 'Ernie's Incredible Illucinations'

Oisín Morgan 10Q

PARENT POWER



Writer-in-Residence,
Damian Gorman

At the beginning of March, the Parents' Association hosted a writing workshop for parents of our students and those of our partners in the local community.

We were delighted to welcome our Writer-in-Residence, Mr Damian Gorman, to facilitate the workshop entitled *Six Rules for the Writing of Anything*. Damian described the workshop as 'doing exactly what it says on the tin – giving people half-a-dozen helpful hints for approaching any piece of creative writing, be it a letter, a diary entry, a life story, or that book which we've promised to write one day, but

have never begun!'

All who attended thoroughly enjoyed the evening and picked up many useful writing tips – who knows what literary wonders this great evening will give life to!

Parents' Association Event:

Next Event: If you are interested in finding out how to support your son in his study in the junior school, why not attend the seminar on study skills for parents on 23rd March? Contact Ms K McLoughlin for details.

Read Read Read Read.....

Congratulations to all students who got involved in sponsored reading to raise money for ClicSargent. In all, an amazing £5000 was collected for this great cause. 12K raised almost £1000, with 8D very nearly matching this. Thanks to all the parents, relations and friends who supported us. As a result of our continued support of ClicSargent (last year we were the second highest contributor in the U.K.) we have won a Walker Book Party! More details to follow soon.

As a specialist school in English and Religion, with a focus on literacy, our work to promote reading and writing continues in many ways. From story-telling sessions to creative writing classes, from quizzes to paired reading schemes, the activities are many and varied.

Recently we received over one hundred entries from our four partner primaries for the Narnia, short story writing competition. The standard of entries was amazingly impressive. After much consideration the panel awarded first place in the competition to David Pito, St. Patrick's, Saul. Our congratulations to him and thank-you to all who participated.

St. Patrick's Grammar School

SVP Conference - The Year So Far

The Saint Vincent de Paul Conference in St Patrick's Grammar school makes a significant impact on the life of the school community. The group meets each Wednesday break time with Miss Magill to discuss initiatives and events.



Some members, including the President Ciaran Mullan and the Vice President Naomi Flynn, took the opportunity to go to the Schools' Conferences meeting in the Balmoral Hotel, in Belfast, in November.

Throughout November and December funds were raised through popular cake and bun sales in school and also through the ASDA Christmas bag pack, which raised a total of £3400.

In January, senior members of the local SVP Conference facilitated visitation training and, so far, three visitations to a local nursing home have taken place. We have really enjoyed these and we are looking forward to more.

In February, a concert featuring school bands, raised more much needed funds. As a group we are looking forward to what the rest of the year has in store.

Conor Martin 14K

JOHN PAUL II AWARD

St. Patrick's has been involved in this award since November 2009 and the current upper sixth students are preparing for the presentation of their awards very soon. All schools in the Diocese of Down and Connor who are participating will gather in Belfast on April 5th to receive individual Bronze, Silver or Gold Awards. Awards are earned by taking part in activities through two strands: Parish Involvement and Social Awareness. A 1500 word presentation must then be prepared which reflects on the young person's spiritual development during this time. Students in St. Patrick's have been involved in numerous activities, at a Parish level: some have chosen to become Eucharistic Ministers or Ministers of the Word, while others have volunteered for the local GIFT programmes, to sing in the choir or to clean the church! The Social Awareness strand has given young people the chance to work in local youth clubs, charity shops, to coach football and lifesaving and to visit the elderly.

As well as the feeling of personal achievement and the deepening of faith that occurs during this time, participation also helps to demonstrate our ability to make an ongoing commitment to a task. Gold Awards are presented to those who have completed twenty weeks of activities in both strands! The award is non-competitive, flexible and voluntary. Religion is for living and by taking an active part in your church and community, you will experience the contentment and fulfilment that comes from serving others, especially those in great need.

Ciaran Mullan 14K



John Paul II Awards Participants

MATHEMATICS CHALLENGE SUCCESS

In November, forty-seven students from Years 12-14 participated in the UK Senior Mathematics Challenge. Pupils in St. Patrick's achieved eight silver and ten bronze certificates. Special congratulations to Dean Millar in Year 14, for achieving the Best in School certificate and well done to Matthew Nugent in Year 13, who just missed being awarded Best in School by one mark!

Well done to all who took part and watch this space for the results of the Junior Challenge, due to take place Friday 6th May.

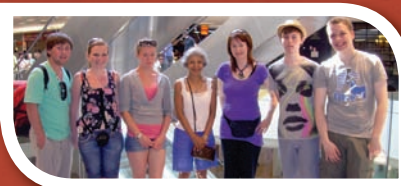
Certificate winners are pictured below. (Missing from the photograph are Patrick Gartland and Jonathon Smyth).



Vive La France!

The A Level French class enjoyed a four-day trip to Paris with Mrs Pollacco, last year, to improve our language skills and to absorb some of the marvellous French culture. We were shown round the major tourist attractions by Yasmine, our guide and tutor. The Louvre, the Eiffel Tower and the Arc de Triomphe were just some of the many wonderful sights we visited. We were also fascinated by the unsung hero of French supermarkets – Monop! Somethings you just need to experience first-hand!

Our time in Paris is best described as 'inoubliable' - from the regular adrenaline rushes of almost missing the metro, to the spectacular views and sights of the city.



Conor Martin 14K

On behalf of the class, thank you to Mrs Pollacco for organising the whole trip.

TAPAS TRIPS TO LA TASCA!



Such was the demand for the after-school trip to sample Spanish food that Miss Bailie had to run two trips on two consecutive evenings! Pictured below are all the hungry students tucking into their tapas in La Tasca! Thanks to Miss Bailie, Miss Cassidy, Mr Tate and Ms Carlin for making these trips possible.

Year 8 Student Commended in Young Person of the Year Award



Congratulations to Liam Gallagher who was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for Valuable Contribution in the Young Person of the Year Award for Allergy N.I.

Liam received the certificate from the Lord Mayor of Newtonabbey, at a dinner he attended with his parents and Form Teacher, Mrs Dresen-Martin, at the end of November.

There were excellent performances by all teams at the County Down Cross Country Championships held in Delamont at the end of January. Year 8 boys came second overall with excellent top 15 performances from Niall and Conor Watters and Keegan Rice. (There were 160 competitors in the race!)

Year 9 boys came third overall with top 20 performances from Pierce Laverty, Daithi Sands, Caolan Magee and Niall McKay.

Patrick Sheridan again excelled in the Year 10 division, in what was the race of the day. He was narrowly pushed into second place by just one second over the 3 Kilometre course.

Well done also to Mark McGrady in Year 11 who finished fourteenth.



The senior boys came second overall, thanks to a memorable run from Eoghan Totten who finished in second place, splitting the Monaghan twins who are the top athletes on the track in their age group, in both Ireland and the U.K. Eoghan was assisted by great runs in the gruelling Six Kilometres by Davy Gilmore, Arthur Morgan and Greg Naughton.

All the students will go forward to represent the school in the Ulster Finals in Mallusk shortly.

SPORTS NEWS SPORTS NEWS SPORTS NEWS

Gaelic Games

The Corn Na nÓg team have completed all of their group games, but unfortunately did not make it out of the group. This was due to the fact the lads lost three of the four games by a single point. It was a case of so near, so far.

The opening group game saw a high scoring affair against St. Patrick's, Dungannon, where the boys lost out on a scoreline of 2-15 to 5-5. Next up was a trip to Newry to take on Abbey CBS, but the team was on the wrong end of a 3-24 to 2-5 scoreline. They regrouped however and battled hard against St. Michael's, Enniskillen but lost out again, 2-15 to 4-8. The final game was make or break against St. MacCartan's, Monaghan, with the winner making the Quarter Finals, but alas, the Monaghan men won it by a point, 4-7 to 3-9. With a bit more rub of the green and a few more scores in each game, they could have made it to the knockout stages. However, they have shown they can compete at this level and will be ready to make the break through next year in the Brock Cup. Strong performances from all involved especially Conor Malone, Laurence Whiffen, Sean Hardy and Shea Reilly, under the management of Mr Fitzsimons and Mr Toner.

In the BT MacLarnon Cup, hopes were high that we could go all the way with a very talented and dedicated group of players. The team began working in September and opened up with wins over St. Louis', Ballymena, 2-7 to 1-9, and La Salle, Belfast, 2-10 to 1-4. A very tough game was to follow against our old rivals, St. Patrick's, Keady, but the boys lost out on a score line of 0-13 to 0-11. This result meant that we would finish in the group and play Patrician, Carrickmacross in the Last 16 game. Training was stepped up over the Christmas break with several sessions in Castle Ward to boost fitness and an excellent friendly game victory over QUB freshers to complete preparations for the next game.

On the day we ran into a very determined and well drilled Carrick team who edged a thriller after extra time. Their corner forward and free taker, Pdraig Keenan, had a superb day notching up 11 points from dead balls to get them through on a score line of 0-18 to 1-12.

There was heartbreak yet again in the MacLarnon for Mr Morgan and Mr Swail, and all the Year 14s who played their last game for the school. To single out any individuals would be an injustice to a great team ethic and players who were superbly dedicated and determined to succeed every time they pulled on the school jersey. We wish them all the best in the future and hope to see them all continue their football careers. All is not lost however, as the Dalton and Treanor Cup teams are gearing up for their competitions this term. The Year 8s also have a busy period of games and blitzes coming up, starting with the Kevin Smith Shield. We wish them all the best in their competitions.

D Morgan

CROSS COUNTRY