



St. Benildus College Newsletter

Welcome to the first term newsletter of the 2023-2024 academic year. The school returned to curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular activities at the end of August with great energy and positivity displayed by students, teachers, and support staff.

‘Education is the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the world’ (Nelson Mandela).

In light of the above quote, we at St. Benildus College strive to educate all of our students so they fulfil their potential. We endeavour to support each student holistically to develop their unique abilities and interests and we do this by providing a wide range of activities and events throughout the school year in addition to their academic subjects.

Some of the events that took place this term include a wide range of sporting activities, details of which can be seen throughout the newsletter. Debating is promoted to help build our students self-confidence and we are delighted with recent successes in English, Irish and Spanish debating. Our clubs continue to be very popular and meet, before or after school or at lunch time, including Chess, Business Brunch, GSA, and History Clubs. Students have attended a range of talks given by speakers such as Diarmuid Ferriter, Megan Wynne, Paula O’Connor and Richie Sadler on a wide range of topics e.g., Study Skills, Vaping and Social Media. Senior students have travelled to Berlin (Chemistry) and France (French). Students have also visited venues closer to home: Easter 1916 tour of Dublin, visits to see Hamlet, UCD, Mountjoy Jail and the Criminal Courts of Justice. Bonding activities include ice skating, a First Year Fun Afternoon and Third Years completing a Bogathon. There has also been a range of competitions and retreats.

Throughout the school year we have a number of themed weeks which are used to highlight aspects of our school culture and school life. In the first term we had eight different themes. Stand Up Week highlights the

need to support LGBTQ+ students. Science Week shines a spotlight on the importance of science in everyday life and encourages students to consider a career in STEM. Healthy Mind Week focuses on wellbeing, self-care and positivity which is so important for adolescent boys. During Maths Week the teachers in the Maths Department encourage students to enjoy maths and appreciate its importance in everyday life. In Culture Week students had the opportunity to experience a host of different languages and cultures, including dancing and arts. The Career Guidance Department organized College Awareness Week to encourage students to consider the vast array of options available to them at third level. Our Library Coordinator and the English teachers oversaw our Reading Week. They encouraged students to discover the pleasure and value of reading and the wide range of books available in our Library. Our School-Self Evaluation (SSE) focus for this year is our Digital Strategy. Following on from our Digital Literacy/Internet Safety Week in September, our SSE and Digital Strategy Committees are working together to ensure that our students and teachers are supported in their digital journey. This is becoming increasingly important with the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and an increase in fake news and online fraud.

We continue to strive for excellence by setting high expectations for our students. We would like to congratulate the Leaving Certificate Class of 2023 for their excellent results. A particular congratulations must go to the six students who achieved 625 points and a large number of students who achieved in excess of 500 points. We continue to exceed the national averages across many subjects. This is a testament to the hard work, commitment and efforts of the boys, their teachers, and their parents/guardians.

The Sixth Year Debs for the Class of 2023 took place on the 13th October. It was wonderful to see our recent graduates again and have the opportunity to see how they are progressing. We are very proud of each and every one of them and wish them success and happiness always.

The Junior Certificate 2023 results were released on Wednesday, 18th October and the whole school community is extremely proud of the excellent results achieved by our students. Our students continually exceed the national average in their respective subjects and grades with all subjects exceeding the national averages.

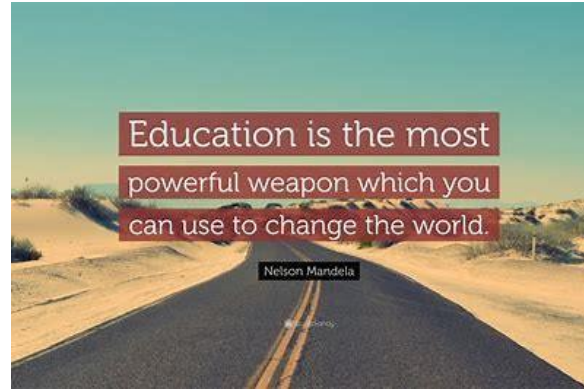
One of our most significant achievements this term as a school community was reaching the €1,000,000 target for our annual charity initiative “Run for Life”. This is an amazing achievement for any school. It would not have been possible without the support of the entire school community and is a testament to your generosity. We would like to give our heartfelt thanks to all the students who completed the run and gathered sponsorship without fail over the years. We must also thank the staff who have given their enthusiastic support for the event each year. This is an accomplishment that the entire St. Benildus College community can be proud of.

It is always lovely to welcome visitors to our school. This term we welcomed Mr. Pat Walsh and Bro. Tom Walsh from De La Salle. This is an important link that we are always happy to preserve as the De La Salle community is at the heart of our ethos at St. Benildus College. We were delighted to host two teachers from Spain in St. Benildus College, Ms. Maria Candelaria Rodriguez Perez and Ms. Maria Immaculada Marquez Ossorio. While they were only with us for two weeks, it was a wonderful opportunity for our students to meet native Spanish speakers and we had the opportunity to show them how varied life is at St Benildus College. Another exceptional visitor was Special Olympics Gold Medal Winner Margaret Turley. Her visit was inspirational for the boys as she showed that you can achieve your dreams with determination and hard work. The second-year boys had chosen the Special Olympics as their charity for Run for Life in 2022/23 and they were delighted to meet an athlete who had benefited from their efforts.

There have been many changes to the fabric of St. Benildus College over the past fifty-seven years and this year was no exception. Investment in the school environment is done on an ongoing basis to maintain a clean and healthy environment that is conducive to teaching and learning and is up to date. This year, in addition to painting, new flooring, new tables, chairs, lockers, the conversion of the photocopying room to a resource room and two rooms converted to resource rooms, both the Woodwork and Constructions Studies Rooms have been completely refurbished. Both rooms are now fully equipped with the latest equipment. Investment in this project exceeded half a million euro. All of the investment in our school would not have been possible without the generosity of parents in paying the voluntary contribution each year.

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to our First Year students who have settled in very well and are a bright, friendly and polite group of young boys. We would also like to extend a warm welcome to the new teachers who have joined us this year. We have been blessed in managing to secure such dedicated and enthusiastic staff and unlike many schools we are delighted to have our full quota of qualified teachers. We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter which gives a snapshot into school life since the start of the academic year

The Senior Leadership Team, Mary Brohan, Lisa Barnes and James Trimble and Newsletter Co-ordinator Ms. Cullen.

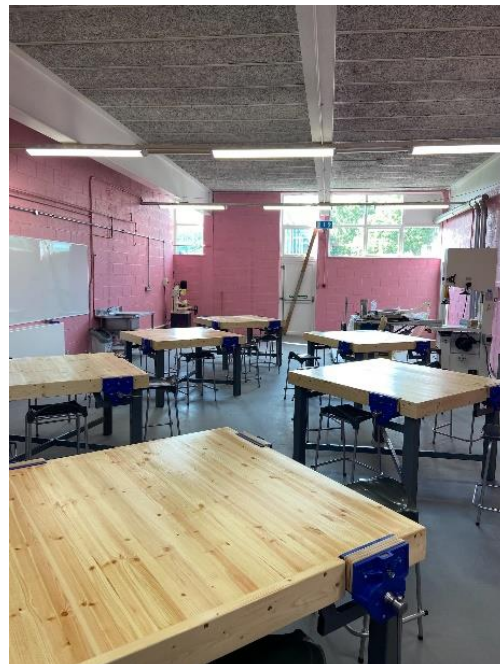


School Improvements

St. Benildus College is always committed to providing the best possible learning environment for our students. This year a number of upgrades to school facilities were undertaken during the summer holidays. These improvements have undoubtedly enhanced the learning environment for our students and have provided them with the most up-to-date resources and equipment to support their learning and development. It is important to recognise the hard work and dedication of everyone involved in making these improvements possible. The Bord of Management, teachers, parents, and our pupils have all play a vital role in creating a bright, safe, and clean learning environment. By working together, we continue to create a space where students can thrive and reach their full potential.

This summer, improvements were made as follows:

- Refurbishment of the woodwork room
- Several new resource rooms created
- Indoor and outdoor painting
- A refurbishment to the sport's hall toilets
- Classrooms and offices repainted
- Astro pitches resurfaced
- New lockers
- New flooring





Exam Success

Leaving Cert

This year St. Benildus College were delighted to celebrate fantastic results from the Leaving Cert Class of 2023. We are extremely proud of each student from this year group and the results they attained, regardless of how many points they achieved. It truly demonstrates how hard work, determination and focus can pay off and we are excited to see what path each of our students take in the years to come. The results the boys achieved were well ahead of national averages in all subjects.

This year, the Leaving Cert results were particularly special for six of our students: Keelan Murphy, Niall O' Mahony, Sean Horan, Fionn O' Riordan, Leo Troy, and Ronan Walsh. These students all received the maximum points of 625. It is a wonderful achievement which each student should be immensely proud of. Ronan Walsh and Fionn O' Riordan have gone on to study engineering. Keelan Murphy is planning to study Computer Science. Sean Horan has gone on to study Economics and Finance. Leo Troy is studying Commerce while Niall O' Mahony is studying medicine. We wish each of our boys the best of luck with all their future endeavours and look forward to hearing about their future successes. We spoke to Ronan Walsh to hear more about his time and experiences with our school.

Leaving Cert Success Story: Ronan Walsh

1. What subjects did you study for the Leaving Cert?

I studied the core subjects English, Irish and Maths, and picked the option subjects Spanish, Physics, Applied Maths and DCG.

2. How did you decide on these subjects?

I believe languages are a very important skill to develop. I enjoyed studying Spanish at Junior Cycle level, and decided to keep it up for the Leaving Cert as I would be able to consider more college courses with it.

I understood that it was important to also study a science at LC. I knew I wanted to study in the STEM area, and a science subject would be required. I enjoyed maths and the physics section of Junior Cert Science, so I chose Physics.

My maths teacher from 2nd and 3rd Year, Mr. Casey, recommended that I take Applied Maths in 5th Year, and I am very glad that I did. There is a considerable overlap with Physics and HL Maths, so it helped me improve in those subjects too.

I took Technical Graphics at JC, and I decided to keep it on in the form of DCG at Leaving Cert. I knew the sketching and computer skills I would learn from the project would help me at college, and I already had a base understanding of the drawing side of the subject.

3. How did you cope with the pressure of study and exams?

I think in order to get into the habit of studying, you must make your weekly goals and expectations

attainable. For me, I found evening study very helpful in 6th Year, as it gave me time to dedicate towards study every day.

It is also vital to build up the level of study you do over the course of the year. I started with only a small amount and added it up as I came closer to midterms and the Mocks. By increasing the amount of work bit by bit, I ended up happily spending several hours a night revising, without feeling overwhelmed. Of course, downtime through sports and hobbies is essential to keep happy and healthy, and to keep motivated towards study.

Despite all the stress that accompanies exams, I realised that as the LC came closer, so too did the end of my time at St. Benildus. Everybody was in the same boat together, so in those last few weeks a lot of fun and final memories accompanied the extensive revision and exam prep, and helped make that period an enjoyable, although busy, one.

4. How did you find your Senior Cycle experience when parts of your Junior Cycle and Transition Year were interrupted with Covid and online learning? Was it a big transition for you?

I greatly enjoyed my time at St. Benildus College. I found the transition to Fifth Year challenging after a year of fun in TY. There were still remnants of COVID as well, namely masks, which complicated the transition further. However, after two terms of online learning, I was just happy to be physically back at school. Luckily, I was able to settle back in quickly enough and start the journey of Senior Cycle. The Leaving Cert exams themselves were also a strange new experience, as they were our first State exams after the Junior Cert was cancelled. Despite this, I believe I had a good foundation in every subject thanks to my Junior Cycle experience, which supported my studies at LC level.

5. What factors do you think helped contribute to your outstanding grades?

I believe that subject choice can play a significant role in achieving high grades, as it allows you to set yourself up for success. I made sure to pick subjects that I had an interest in, but also ones I was suited to and had the potential to achieve good grades in. In my case, I chose subjects which I was familiar with, and which had high maths content. It is important to start study early and not to leave things to the last minute. In 5th Year I did my homework, studied for class tests, and revised content regularly. This way, by 6th Year when I began studying daily and revising old content, it was more familiar and easier to learn. I also set up study timetables in plenty of time before Christmas and Summer exams, so that by the Mocks I was used to studying and had an idea of what my exam techniques would be.

6. What areas of school life were you involved with while you were in St. Benildus College?

I was a Student Council representative for my year group in 1st, 2nd, and 4th Year. I also played for the First Year rugby team.

In Transition Year I worked as a TY Mentor for 1st Year students and was a member of the TY Yearbook Committee.

I took part in Run for Life in some form or another every year. The events themselves in Junior Cycle, helping steward the run in TY and 5th Year, and taking part in the Senior Soccer tournament in Senior Cycle.

In 5th Year I was selected as a Senior Prefect and worked over the course of the year to improve student life and increase and promote student leadership in the College.

In 6th Year I was part of a group who represented the school in the IMTA Team Maths competition, making it to the national final and coming 5th in Ireland.

7. How did you balance study with hobbies?

Life doesn't stop while the Leaving Cert is creeping up and underway, so you must incorporate it into your life as best as you can. I always ensured that I met up with friends regularly and had fun every few weeks.

As exams get closer, it can feel like there is no time for sports or pastimes. However, spending some time on hobbies each week is so important, and will actually help with learning. Exercise is also essential to stay happy and healthy. I would try to go to the gym with friends a few times a week, and many of my classmates kept up a sport throughout 6th Year. During a time where you are focusing so much, it is vital to take time out to relax and decompress, even something as simple as going for a walk in the evening, or sitting down to watch TV with family.

8. What are your stand out memories from your time in school?

- Run for Life in 1st- 3rd Year – Dancing, football, the Run itself
- The 2nd Year trip to Barcelona
- The surreal day the school closed for COVID (and the belief we would be back in two weeks, not six months later!)
- The first day back after COVID (and 1st day of Transition Year)
- Learning Chinese and Italian, going hiking and canoeing, airsoft, and mountain biking, playing football and rounders in TY.
- The last Run for Life and last Sports Day
- The Prefects' Student/Teacher Christmas Quiz (and Christmas jumper day)
- The students winning the Student-Teacher football match
- Being awarded the Principal's Award (and giving a speech to the entire year group: students, parents, and all the teachers at graduation!)
- The first day of the Leaving Cert.
- The last day of the Leaving Cert.
- Results day, and going back in to see all the teachers and achieving maximum points of 625 with five of my classmates
- Seeing my name up on the wall of the school for the Principal's Award.

9. What advice would you give to 6th Year students this year?

It is never too late to start studying, you would be surprised at how much revision you can get done once you get into good habits. Try to maintain consistency and develop those good habits.

Learn from the mocks – Make mistakes there and figure out what approaches to take for your exams in June.

Work hard at your projects and orals – They can be the difference between grades.

Find out what works for you – Everybody learns, revises, and examines differently.

Be kind to yourself – The Leaving Cert is one of the most challenging things you will undertake in life, so accept it for what it is and take it as it comes.

Do not give up sports, as those one or two training sessions during the week give you a chance to get outside and clear your head from the stress of school.

Make the most of your final year at St. Benildus College, and the many lasts to come over the course of the year.

Try and enjoy the journey, it will all be over before you know it – believe me!!

10. What's next for you?

I am currently studying Engineering at UCD, and I am loving college life. It has been a transition since the Leaving Cert, but there are many new experiences, and there is now an exciting new frontier to discover.

I have earned my Light Aircraft Pilots' Licence (LAPL) and am looking to upgrade to the Private Pilots' Licence (PPL) soon. After my degree I would like to get into the aviation industry and begin flight training. There are several programs available, such as Aer Lingus' Future Pilot Programme and the Air Corps' Cadetship, which pay for the training and guarantee a job upon completion. However, nothing is set in stone, and I can happily say that at the moment I am not sure where I might end up!!!

Ronan Walsh – Class of 2023





Exam Success

Junior Cert

Robert Kennedy

How did you cope with the pressure of study and exams?

I tried to remain as focused as I could during class time and that meant homework and exams never felt too stressful. I took class tests seriously which helped me to prepare for the bigger exams like the Mocks and then later the Junior Cert itself. I think it's important to pace yourself and find a healthy balance between work and free time.

How did you remain motivated?

I wanted to make sure that all the work that I put in First, Second and Third year didn't go to waste. As each year went by, I was building confidence in skills I had developed. I felt that I ended First Year with a good foundation of knowledge and was able to continuously build on this, seeing improvements in my work as time went by.

What areas of school life are you involved with, especially in TY?

In TY, I'm one of the lead roles in the musical. I also help out with football teams within the school. Previously, I was also part of the Student Council.

How do you balance study with your hobbies?

It was really important to me not to become overwhelmed or overly stressed throughout Third Year so I kept up the extra-curricular activities and hobbies I was involved in. I fit them around my study plans. As the exams crept closer, I did become more focused on study but throughout the year it was a great outlet to help maintain my focus and concentration.

What advice would you give to Third Year students this year?

I think it's important to find a balance between study and your extracurricular activities. It helps to maintain a healthy mindset throughout the year. While the Junior Cycle is an important part of school, I don't think it should define you if you don't do as well as you hoped. There are plenty of opportunities to improve in Senior Cycle.

What's next for you?

Currently, I'm just enjoying Transition Year. As I get closer to Fifth Year I'll start thinking more about what subjects I plan to choose and what I hope to do after school.

Jack Dillon

How did you cope with the pressure of study and exams?

I followed a study timetable but I wasn't too rigid with it. I thought it was important to be flexible with my time to cater for things that crop up throughout the week. I also kept up soccer and GAA. This was a good outlet to reduce stress. I thought it was important to socialise and hang out with friends too. This allowed me to stay focused as the exams approached.

How did you remain motivated?

I imagined how proud and fulfilled I would be when I got my results back and they were as good as I wanted them to be. Throughout Third Year I also spent time reviewing my class tests and homework so I could see how I could improve. Using exam papers also helped to see what was expected from me by the end of Third Year.

What areas of school life are you involved with, especially in TY?

I'm involved in the musical. I'm part of the Chorus. I've been getting stuck in to the different activities of TY. It's nice not to have to focus on exams and have some fun.

How did you balance study with your hobbies?

I kept up sports outside of school. Usually, I would finish my homework and study, have dinner and then I could fit training in the evenings. That helped me get a good balance between sports and studying for the Junior Cert. I think balance is key to managing stress and looking after yourself throughout the year.

What advice would you give to the third years this year?

I'd tell them to try their best and try not to worry too much. The Junior Cycle is a good stepping stone for the Leaving Cert so you can learn from the exams and then see how best to improve your study.

What's next for you?

To enjoy TY! As we get closer to Fifth Year, I'll start thinking about bigger decisions!



Opening Mass

The opening year school Mass was held at the Church of St. Laurence O' Toole, where the school community gathered to celebrate the beginning of another academic year. The Mass was centered around the theme of 'New Beginnings' and the boys were exemplary in their conduct, displaying respect and attentiveness throughout the proceedings. We extend our gratitude to Fr. Donie for leading the Mass, and to the Religion and music department who helped prepare the students. The offertory procession and readings were conducted by a number of students, who also provided music for the occasion. The event was attended by over 900 people and was a resounding success.



Themed Weeks

Reading Week

From author visits to literary games, book nooks and more; Reading Week was certainly an exciting chapter of our school year.

The week kicked off with First Years attending ‘An Audience with Niall de Búrca.’ De Búrca is an Irish storyteller who kept the First years entertained with stories, jokes, and drama from start to finish. The Third and Fifth Years were able to attend a creative writing workshop by the best-selling author Sheila Forsey. There were lively discussions on how to create interesting settings, characters, and plots lines for a short story. The Sixth Years had a chance to take a break from their busy schedules, put their feet up with a cup of coffee and read a newspaper while the Second and Fourth Years were able to take part in a number of literary competitions.

On top of all this, there were opportunities for students to recommend interesting novels they had read, attend book clubs in the library and a real-life ‘Where’s Wally?’ competition. A huge thank you to Ms. Downey and Ms. Lyons who created such an interactive and enjoyable week. It was a fantastic opportunity for everyone to dive into the magical world of books and explore new stories.





Digital Literacy Week

This year we celebrated Digital Literacy week in the College. It was a great opportunity for us all to reflect on how much we use our phones, the importance of taking breaks away from our screens and increasing our understanding of online safety.

There were numerous events that took place throughout the week to engage all year groups. The Junior Cycle students took part in a number of fun and interactive games based on how to remain safe online. The First Years also took part in a screen time survey. This survey was taken on the Monday morning and encouraged students to understand their digital habits and guide future digital awareness efforts. This survey was taken again on the Thursday to see what improvements each student had made!

Our TY students participated in the Microsoft DreamSpace and created a promotional video to be shared on social media profiles. As well as this Transition Year students explored different ways of composing music through technology, creating pieces of music for different film scenes and some interesting beats for themselves! Fifth Year students were also involved in class debates that centered around the use of technology in education. As well as this, all students were encouraged to make themselves aware of eBooks and productivity apps to support and improve study and learning. SPHE classes were dedicated to digital well-being and responsible internet use with a number of interesting conversations taking place throughout each class. There was even something for the parents with Richard Hogan starting his seven-week course on parenting our tech-savvy children.

Throughout the week members of the Student Council made daily announcements that shared important information on digital awareness and tips to stay safe online and a number of promotional posters were placed around the school, designed to raise awareness about responsible digital usage and cybersecurity. It was a great week to embrace the digital era while also understanding how to maintain healthy and safe boundaries when navigating the online world.





Healthy Mind Week

This year we celebrated Healthy Mind Week from the 9th to the 13th of October in St. Benildus College. Having a healthy mind is key to your overall health and well-being. In order to support both students and teachers, a number of activities were planned to raise awareness on the importance of looking after our mental health. These activities also provided an opportunity to take time out from our busy days and prioritise our own wellbeing.

Students were encouraged to take part in a class of meditation, mindfulness, and meditative colouring. They watched videos on breathing exercises, gratitude meditations, completed body scans or listened to music while colouring in some mindful images. This allowed everyone to tune in to how they were feeling and take a moment to slow down within their day.

As part of Active flags, Mr. Curran and the TY's organised a 2km walk around the school. This encouraged students to get moving, clear their heads while having a chance to catch up with their classmates. Students were also given the opportunity to take a break from their busy schedules and play some board games! This was a great way to relax and have some fun with friends. On Wednesday morning, students and staff had the opportunity to take part in a sunrise yoga class with pastries and hot chocolate to enjoy afterwards. Finally, classes were scheduled to have a time out in class and watch a comedy on Netflix with a treat provided. Teachers were also involved in the action throughout the week! A big thank you to Ms. Lloyd for organising such a relaxing and uplifting week. It gave us all time to add a little wellness into our lives and, hopefully, will encourage us to continue these practices outside of Healthy Mind Week too!



Maths Week

This year we celebrated Maths Week from the 16th to the 20th of October. Throughout the week, there were a number of activities and games that all students could get involved with. These activities ranged from fun quizzes and puzzles to more serious problem-solving challenges. Some of the events students took part in included a game of countdown, a paper airplane competition, and a number of mathematical puzzles! First Year students were given the opportunity to take part in an exciting maths treasure hunt. This was a great way for students to explore different areas of maths in a fun and interactive way with a prize at the end for the winning team. Congratulations to Conor McLoughlin and Henry Flynn who won!

The students in Second, Fourth and Fifth Year all took part in the Maggie Gough Maths Competition. This competition is run annually by IMTA - The Irish Maths Teachers Association. This year there were 18,794 entries from 215 schools across the country. Only four students achieved the maximum 20 points and a total of 55 achieved 16 or higher. Cadhla Cronin in Fifth Year came in First Place in Benildus with a total of 15 points, which is an incredible achievement. Tim Swan in Fourth Year and Hayk Avetisyan in Second Year came in joint second place. They each received a One for All voucher to congratulate them on their win. Well done to all the students who took part!

Maths Week is not just about promoting maths among students; it also aims to raise awareness about the importance of maths in our daily lives. Maths is an essential subject that has applications in almost every field, from science and engineering to finance and economics. By promoting maths education, we can help students develop critical thinking skills that will be useful throughout their lives. Well done to everyone who got involved.



Stand Up Week

All students and staff took part in our annual LGBTQ+ Stand Up Awareness Week from the 13th to the 17th of November. There were a wide variety of activities planned. Some of these events included origami lessons; pride colouring and LGBTQ+ themed quizzes within lessons. On Wednesday there was also a non-uniform day organised by the school. Students were asked to dress up in bright and colourful clothing. They paid €2 on the day with all proceeds going to BeLonG To, the charity that organises Stand Up Week and supports our LGBTQ+ students. The Fifth Years also had a talk from two members of the Emerald Warriors, an LGBTQ+ rugby club.

As well as this, there was lunchtime karaoke in the canteen on Wednesday and the Friday. Both events were packed with students jumping up to sing a few songs. There was a fantastic atmosphere around the school each day. This was partly due to the bell being replaced by an LGBTQ+ inspired song but mainly due to everyone's enthusiastic involvement with the campaign. The way students got involved and showed their support is a testament to the Lasallian ethos of our school. Well done to everyone who got involved to help make the week so special!

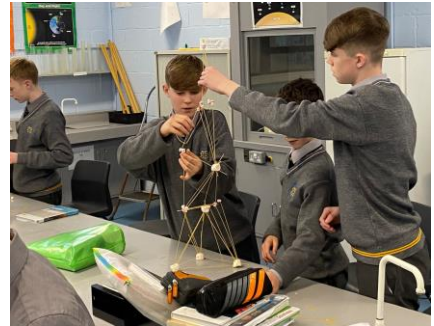


Science Week

National Science Week was celebrated in the College with many fun, interesting and engaging classroom, and lunchtime activities. This week provides students with an opportunity to engage with STEM subjects in a fun and interactive way. It also helps to promote scientific literacy and critical thinking skills among students, which are essential skills for success in the modern world. By participating in Science Week, students developed their problem-solving skills, creativity, and teamwork abilities.

This year a jam-packed schedule was put together by the Science department for all our keen young scientists to enjoy. Activities included classroom quiz, Science '30 Seconds', periodic table bingo, a treasure hunt, heart dissection, dry ice demonstration, photobooth and a tower building competition.

The First Years also took part in a cell modelling competition as part of Science Week. The boys were tasked with building a cell model from materials they found at home. Some wonderfully creative cells were built and will be left on display in the Biology lab for the next few weeks. There was a very high standard but the following six students were selected as winners: James Walsh, Senan Owens, Daine Varghese, Conor McLoughlin, Aedan Wren, Conor Wren.



College Awareness Week

This year we celebrated College Awareness Week from the 20th to the 24th of November. There were a number of initiatives that unfolded throughout the week with students actively participating in various events, marking this week as a memorable chapter in their educational journey!

Mock Graduation

Our First Year students experienced the thrill of a mock graduation. The ceremonial cap and gown served as a symbolic representation of the bright futures awaiting our young men.

UCD Campus Tour

Our Second Year students had the opportunity to explore University College Dublin (UCD). This campus tour provided invaluable insights into the vibrant academic life, facilities, and the rich history of one of Ireland's leading universities.

Competitions

There were various competitions held throughout the week. From quizzes to campus treasure hunts.

Careers Fair

Undoubtedly, the highlight of College Awareness Week 2023 was the Careers Fair for our Fourth, Fifth- and Sixth-Year students. The presence of University representatives from UCD, DCU, TU Dublin, IADT, NCI, BFEI and An Garda Síochána as well as our accomplished college undergraduates provided our students with a unique opportunity to gain insights into diverse career paths, academic pursuits, and the limitless possibilities that lie ahead. We were thrilled to have some of the St Raphaela's senior girls in attendance, adding a wonderful dimension to the event and emphasizing the importance of unity in educational pursuits. The engagement and enthusiasm at the fair were truly inspiring.

A special thank you to our esteemed past pupils:

Samuel Marin Lee, Samuel O'Riordan, David Langley, Andrew Roberts, Adam O'Farrell, Darragh O'Connor, Joshua Walsh, Kevin Byrne and Kevin McArdle who took the time to attend the event and share their valuable experiences. Their presence added a personal touch to the week, illustrating the tangible successes that arise from the foundation laid at St. Benildus College.

College Awareness Week has not only provided our students with a glimpse into the future but has equipped them with the knowledge, inspiration, and confidence to pursue their aspirations. The exposure to various academic and career paths will undoubtedly serve as a guiding light as they navigate their educational journeys.

As we wrap up this week, let's carry the spirit of ambition, curiosity, and achievement into the days and weeks ahead. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of College Awareness Week at St. Benildus College. Together, we are shaping the future leaders of tomorrow!



Culture Week

This year Culture Week took place from the 27th of November until the 1st of December. There were various activities running that students could get involved in. On Monday, TY students engaged in a day of culture workshops. Students got the opportunity to try various modules and learn more about different cultures. These included: Chinese Art, Arabic and Dancing, Italian and Cuisine, Japanese, Portuguese and Capoeira, Austrian Culture, and speakers from TU Dublin

All students in the school were given the opportunity to engage with various modules such as Italian, Irish Sign Language, a Film Festival, Cultural Quizzes and a Treasure Hunt throughout the week. At the end of each day, students who could speak another language taught the school two or three phrases and also played a song over the school intercom. One of the highlights of the week was a debate run by the Association of Teachers of Spanish hosted in the school on Tuesday evening. The team was comprised of Anthony Lavan and Matthew O Fylnn from Sixth year and Oisín Walsh and Andrew Sargent from Fifth Year. St Benildus College were up against Loreto College Foxrock and were victorious at the big event. Andrew Lavan was also given an award for 'Best Speaker.' A wonderful achievement for all involved. Culture Week was a great opportunity to learn and experience a range of different cultures in a fun and interactive way.



School Clubs and Activities

Cookery Club

Over six weeks in October and November, every class in First Year was given the opportunity to take part in Cookery Club. A very enthusiastic bunch from each class were guided through the baking of an apple crumble. They took to the task with ease and interest and were a pleasure to work with! As can be seen from the photos attached, they went home very happy! First Year watch out for the next round of Cookery club coming soon. All are welcome to join.



GSA Club

The GSA club is a student led group that meets at lunchtimes on Wednesdays at 12:10 and Fridays at 12:50. The group is now in its third year and was set up to allow students who are members of the LGBTQ+ community to meet in a place where they will feel safe and comfortable. It also is a place where members of the LGBTQ+ community and their friends can come together and discuss topical issues, listen to music, play some board games, and offer ideas to enable the voices of all members of our school community be heard. Each week is different in the club as it's a safe environment where issues from TV and Movies with LGBTQ+ issues, topical issues that students may have come across in the media and social media are discussed, to listening to and playing music depending on what the students want to discuss or participate in. It is also an opportunity for students to input ideas for the LGBTQ+ noticeboard or to discuss something they saw on the noticeboard. The club is open to all members of the school community, so we encourage new members to come along and join the club.



Third Year Bog Bonding

In September the Third Years took part in the Bogathon course in Co. Laois. A demanding but enjoyable activity to challenge all the boys. A great event to kick start the year and prepare them to get focused for the year ahead.



First Year Activity Afternoon

In September, all First Years took part in a well-being activities afternoon. These activities included basketball, soccer, chess, and a number of other fun games! It was a fun and enjoyable afternoon for the First Years to get to know each other a little better and have a break after the first few weeks of secondary school. There was great competition between all class groups and a great way to finish off a busy school day!





Fifth Year Footee

Fifth Year students enjoyed a trip to Footee in Tallaght to dabble in a number of activities including human foosball, bubble football, footgolf, archery and laser tag. From last man standing to bubble football, to capture the flag in laser tag and the many arguments over goals in human foosball, Footee proved a great success! If muddy clothes are a sign of a good time, then they had a ball. A huge well done to the Fifth Years who were a pleasure to deal with throughout the day.



Parenting the Tech-Savvy Child

This year we were delighted to have Richard Hogan deliver our first *Parenting the Tech-Savvy Child* online training for parents which commenced on the 27th of September.

Parenting and Technology Institute (PATI) Webinars were delivered via the Zoom over the course of 7 weeks with interactive features for parents using a unique link to access the programme. The *Parenting the Tech-Savvy Child* programme consisted of 7 seven modules:

Module 1 Age of Technology

Module 2 Boundaries

Module 3 Gaming

Module 4 Pornography

Module 5 Cyberbullying

Module 6 Social media and Anxiety

Module 7 Thriving as a Family

There were many benefits to the programme and parents learned progressive approaches to modern parenting, helping them to understand how to support their child or teenage in a helpful, supportive, and positive way. Parents were upskilled to adopt modern parenting approaches where technology is all around.

We believe that this supportive programme helps parents to navigate the tech-savvy child's world. The programme has also promoted harmony between the joints systems of home and school.

The programme has helped parents who are now better skilled and knowledgeable about the nuances of modern world and our hope is that the programme will have a positive impact on family life, enabling parents to develop better skills for the myriad issues they face in our modern world. The feedback we received from parents about the programme has been overwhelmingly positive and we would like to acknowledge the support of the Parents Association who contributed towards the cost of the programme.

Examples of Some of the feedback received

- *Thanks so much for organising this course- we have found it to be hugely beneficial as a family (parent of Fifth Year student)*
- *What an insight into the frightening world our children live in- really thought provoking and useful (parent of a Second Year student)*
- *I would just like to thank you and the deputies for organising this course- it has become a highlight of our week and is so useful. Every day we are grateful that our son has a place in your school (parent of a First Year student)*
- *I am the parent of xxx in xxxx. I attended the seminar last night with very low expectations. It was truly excellent, so engaging and very relevant and helpful. I'm excited for the next ones! Thank you for arranging this for our parent community (parent of a Second Year student).*

- *Thank you so much for this. The session was really good, he's an amazing communicator. Next week will be better again, we're talking boundaries!! A huge thanks to the school and PA for allowing us to partake.(parent of a Third Year student)*
- *The sessions are truly fantastic- I only wish I had access to such a course when xxxx was in First Year but it is great to have this insight for my younger children. Yet another brilliant initiative from St. Benildus College. I sing the praises of the College everywhere I go- thanks again and enjoy your weekend (parent of a Sixth Year student)*



**PARENTING
THE TECH-SAVVY
CHILD**

Transition Year

TY Class Bonding Trip (4.1) - Surfing in Brittas Bay

On Friday the first of September, all the TY classes went on a class bonding trip. My class, 4.1, went to Brittas Bay Surfing School. We took a bus down to Brittas Bay, and upon arrival got on our wetsuits and life vests. The weather was lovely, and perfect for surfing. We took the surfboards to the shore and after a quick induction we were in the water. The waves looked rather timid from the shore, but they seemed to pick up once we started. The instructors gave us different challenges to complete on the surfboards, for example: 'Driving a car' & 'the 180'. We surfed for around an hour before getting out the water and getting dry. It was a great trip, and a brilliant way to kick start Transition Year.

TY Class Bonding Trip (4.2) – Baysports

At the beginning of the year, 4.2 visited Baysports, Athlone, where they paddled, kayaked, and climbed across Loch Ree. They started off with a paddle board race which saw everyone get soaked. Followed by kayaking in pairs under the unusual shining sun. The day ended with fun and games on Baysports's waterpark, filled with plenty of slides and other obstacles. The TYs were then treated to nice hot showers and got the chance to wind down on the coach home. This brilliant day helped everyone grow closer with their new classmates and paved the way for the exciting year to come.

Class Bonding Trip (4.3 and 4.4) - Footee

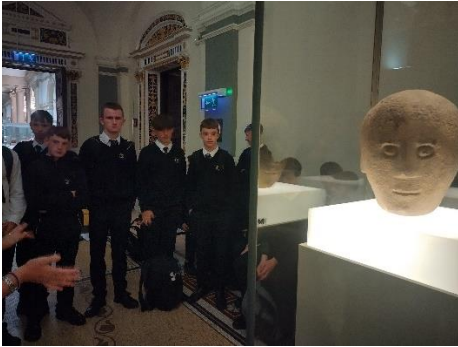
4.3 and 4.4's Transition Year class bonding trip was to Footee in Tallaght. Everyone was extremely excited for the trip, and we arrived there soon after 9am, where the weather was perfect. We began by doing Footgolf on a beautiful but challenging course and after two long, hard hours we stopped for lunch, with the warm cookies at the shop being absolutely scintillating. After this we played bubble football, where we got divided into two teams with everyone determined to knock each other over. We finished with laser tag, and human foosball to round off a wonderful day, where everyone was wrecked coming off the bus when we arrived back at the school.

Class Bonding Trip (4.5) – Killruddery

When 4.5 arrived at Killruddery we signed in at reception and were brought into the forest where we were split into two groups. The first two challenges we did were hang tough and wall sits. The third challenge was that we had to build a shelter. The fourth challenge was an obstacle course and then a game where we had to get to the end of a log without falling off while our teammates were on the log. The final two tasks were one a rase to beat the other teams at three mini tasks such as answer the riddles solve the square puzzle and beat the ball maze and the second challenge was archery after that we had lunch and returned to the school.

National Museum of Archaeology:

TY class 4.1, accompanied by Ms. Kerr and Mr. O'Keefe, enjoyed a guided tour of the National Museum of Archaeology on Kildare Street today, as part of their archaeology module. They learnt about the Mesolithic, the Neolithic, and Bronze Age eras through the fascinating artefacts on display, including the Tara Brooch and the Ardagh Chalice. Afterwards they enjoyed a saunter up Grafton Street and some lunch. A wonderful outing for class 4.1.



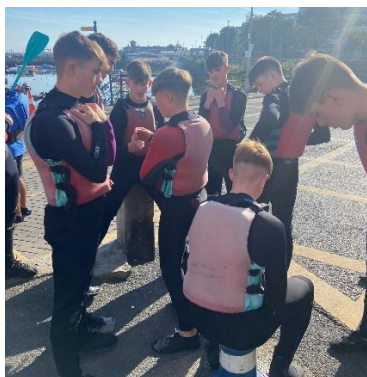
Dun Laoghaire Swim:

In October all the Fourth Years headed to the Dun Laoghaire baths for a swim and to bond with their year group. The TY's braved the cold waves and enjoyed the afternoon, having a break from their normal routine and getting to know each other a little better. It was an enjoyable afternoon for everyone involved and a great way to wake everyone up after a busy few weeks back to school!



Kayaking:

All the Transition Year classes had the opportunity to go kayaking in Dun Laoghaire. We made our way to the location by taking the 75 or 75A bus, walking, or cycling. After changing into semi-dampened wetsuits, we were taken on a motorboat to the middle of the north pier where we were placed into kayaks in pairs or by ourselves. We then paddled around a large ship at anchor and to specific areas of the pier. Although there were many kamikaze attempts to flip other people's kayaks, these efforts mostly ended in mutual destruction or the invading party being left soaked and shivering. After mastering the art of kayaking, our two mentors decided to play a game with us. The game consisted of two teams attempting to throw a tennis ball to their respective teammates in order for them to catch it. Each catch was worth one point. Due to the lack of mobility when wearing a life jacket while kayaking, catching the ball was a difficult task but at the end of the day, one side emerged victorious. We then raced back to where we originally got into our kayaks and jumped back into the blisteringly cold water one by one. Finally, we ate lunch on the edge of the pier before taking a bus back to school.



Spanish Cooking Class:

On Monday 16th October, TY students showed off their culinary skills and created a three-course meal from start to finish! They cooked chickpeas and chorizo, spiced pork with tomatoes and paprika accompanied by arepas and Pico de Gallo and churros! There was great enthusiasm from all involved and excellent cooking skills were displayed by all.

Gaisce:

Gaisce is one of the most interesting and enjoyable events available during Transition Year. It is an award that can be achieved for young adults between the ages of 15 and 25. Due to the reduced workload in Fourth Year, Transition Year is a perfect time to learn new skills and help the local community. Gaisce rewards students in three different levels: gold, silver, and bronze. Most begin with bronze, but some who are of the permitted age choose to start with silver. The course consists of four main components: personal skills, physical skills, community involvement and an adventure journey.

This year all TY's were given the opportunity to take part in Gaisce. In September, a 25km hike was organised up Comeragh mountain. The Fourth Years were split into two groups with each group completing the hike on different dates. Students walked 12.5km both up and down the mountain which took around 6 hours to complete each day! Not only did students take part in the hike but camped overnight when they reached the top. The weather was windy and cold and so everyone was ready for an early night to rest and recover before the trip back down. While the hike was challenging at times, there was a great feeling of accomplishment after everyone had completed the walk. It was a great opportunity and all Fourth Years are excited to continue their Gaisce adventure.



Open Day

Record numbers attended our Open Day this year on the 26th of September. It was lovely to welcome them all and a great opportunity for them to see a typical school day in action. Students were happy to show the wide-ranging extra-curricular activities we have on offer as well as providing tours of the school, giving everyone the chance to experience some teaching and learning in action! A huge well done to all the students involved today and to Mr. Cosgrove for his fantastic organisation.



Library News

*“Books to the ceiling,
Books to the sky,
My pile of books is a mile high.
How I love them!
How I need them!
I'll have a long beard by the time I read them.”
— Arnold Lobel*

Reading Week (18th -22nd September 2023)

This school year our Library got off to a page-turning start with a Reading Week filled with activities for all: First Years were entertained by storyteller Niall de Burca, Second Years wowed with their Short Story Competition entries, Third Years and Fifth Years took inspiration from creative writing workshops with author Sheila Forsey, Transition Years found brevity to be the soul of wit in their Twitterature Challenge, and Sixth Years enjoyed a break with coffee and current affairs from the Irish Times. Meanwhile, all years were invited to take part in writing “reader recommendations,” in relaxing with a good book during Religion class, and in testing their observation skills and literary knowledge with the "Where's Wally?" and "Judge a Book by its Cover" competitions. The final chapter was the announcement of our prize winners – congratulations to all!



Reading Week 2023 Prize Winners L-R: Diarmaid Boylan (4.3) - Winner of "Judge a Book by its Cover" Quiz, Oisín Hurrell (4.2) - Winner of TY Twitterature Challenge, Theo Flynn (2.8)

Winner of 2nd Year Short Story Competition, Cillian Keane (5.5) - Winner of "Where's Wally?" Quest.

Journaling Workshop (23rd October 2023)



Our Library hosted a fantastic Journaling Workshop designed to improve the mental well-being of students with author and former teacher Megan Wynne. 40 Fifth Year students took part in the one-hour event, where Megan shared her advice, techniques, and personal experience of the benefits of journaling, ensuring that they left armed with new strategies and lots of good vibes! Sincere thanks to Megan for sharing her time and expertise, and also to Stillorgan Library who organised this great opportunity and DLR Libraries who funded it.

Culture Week (27th November – 1st December 2023)



On 14th November 1923, William Butler Yeats won the Nobel Prize for Literature. He attended the Nobel award ceremony in Sweden on 10th December 1923, noting in his speech: “I consider that this honour has come to me less as an individual than as a representative of Irish literature, it is part of Europe’s welcome to the Free State.” We marked the 100th Anniversary of W.B. Yeats’ Nobel Prize during Culture Week 2023 with a display of ten of his poems and the chance for all students and staff to vote for/nominate their favourite Yeats poem. The ten selected poems were: The Lake Isle of Innisfree, The Wild Swans at Coole, The Second Coming, What Then?, Easter 1916, When You Are Old, The Fiddler of Dooney, No Second Troy, An Irish Airman Foresees his Death and Aedh Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven. We hope this inspires you to remember your own favourite Yeats poem or to look up one of our ten chosen poems and immerse yourself in the beauty of Yeats’ literary talent.

TY Librarians



Meet our Transition Year Library assistants:

(Back l-r) Daniel Fox, Ross Fitzgerald, Cormac Donohue, Conor McIntyre, Thomas Joyce, Eoin Kavanagh, (Front l-r) Diarmuid Boylan, Ted Kelly, James Gavra Boland, Jack Dugan, (Absent from photo) Noah Harty, Cian O’Gorman, Joe Quigley. Every Wednesday 12.10 - 1.30pm, they’ll help you choose and borrow a book AND they’re available for a full class visit to the Library through the teachers’ “Book a Librarian” scheme. Make sure you call in to keep them busy and to stoke your own love of reading!

Study Skills



During this term, our Sixth, Fifth, Third, Second and First Year students received seminars on study skills to support and encourage them as they work towards their exams, whether they are class quizzes and Christmas tests or Mocks and State Exams. In the spirit of rapid revision, here are our **Top 7 Study Tips** for students to implement as the in-house and mock exams draw near:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Dedicate a study space | A specific study area aids concentration and productivity. |
| 2. Be consistent | A routine of regular study aids understanding and memory. |
| 3. Opt for shorter sessions | Sessions of 25 mins followed by a 5 min break promote focus. |
| 4. Remove distractions | Don’t multitask – put phones away and turn the music off. |
| 5. Take notes | Flashcards, diagrams, mind-maps are powerful memory tools. |
| 6. Test yourself | Self-quiz while studying a topic and as a regular review. |
| 7. Prioritise sleep | Enough sleep is essential for retention, recall and well-being. |

History News

The History Department has been busy bringing History to life this term. Here's what we've been up to in October:



Fifth Years took part in the Dublin Festival of History 2023 with a fieldtrip to the Royal Irish Academy for History Research for Schools Day with Ms Downey.



First Years got their hands dirty at The Big Dig workshop with the School of Irish Archaeology.



Transition Years got up close and personal with archaeological artefacts at the National Museum with Ms Kerr.

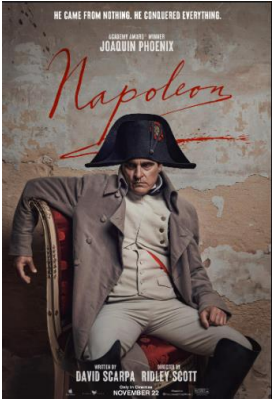


3.6 followed in the footsteps of the Irish Volunteers on a 1916 Walking Tour with Mr Doyle.



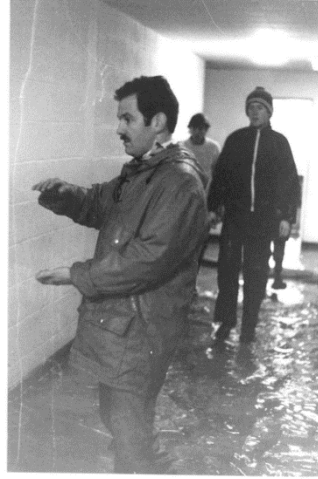
Third, Fifth and Sixth Year Classics students stepped back in time at UCD Classical Museum with Mr Fahy.

And in November:



Fifth Year History students dedicated an afternoon to evaluating Ridley Scott's historical epic, "Napoleon" at Stillorgan cinema. The verdict? The critics are divided and so are we. The students gave it 6/10, while Ms. Downey covered her face in her hands and cried when Joaquin Phoenix's Napoleon shouted at a British ambassador, "You think you're so great because you have BOATS". You'll just have to see it for yourself to decide!

BLAST FROM THE PAST!



These photos show flooding at St Benildus College in the early 1980s. Heavy rain and a burst water main left the grounds, classrooms, and corridors under water. Principal Br. Philbert Cronin hired a water pump, and staff and students rolled up their sleeves for the clean-up process! Thanks to Mr. Frank Scott, who taught Geography, Economics, and chess at the College 1973-2002, for these fantastic photos.

A Visit from Diarmaid Ferriter

On 30th November Diarmaid Ferriter, UCD Professor of Modern Irish History and past pupil of St Benildus College, took time out from his busy schedule to speak to our current and prospective Leaving Cert. History students on “Why History Matters?”, stating “*We don’t only study History to learn the lessons of the past. We study History to know who we are*”.



He also inspected our Second Years’ CBA projects on “The Past in My Place” and, having cast his expert eye over all 171 posters, selected the 16 most outstanding submissions. Congratulations to Bobby Lonergan and Shane Fox (2.4), John Cronin, Alfie Carroll and Bobby Geraghty (2.5), Fergus Clancy, Ryan Cunningham, Evan Kinsella and Luke Leyden (2.6), Finlay Blizzard (2.7), Ruadhán McGuire, Egor Byron, Theo Flynn and Adam Brogan (2.8), and Drew O’Malley and Joe Crane (2.9) on their fantastic History CBA work!



Dr Ferriter was presented with an original artwork by talented Fifth Year student Conall Coughlan as a memento of his visit and a gesture of our thanks.



Sixth Year French Trip to Nîmes

DAY 1 by Rían McDonagh

It was an early start to kick off the trip to Nîmes. We were up on Thursday morning at 3am and met at the Ryanair drop off point at 4:30am. After a smooth flight, we landed in Nîmes and were greeted by our bus driver, Jamal, a very pleasant and friendly man. An hour's drive ensued and finally we arrived at Montpellier, the city in which we spent most of our day. Exploring the winding streets and bustling roads, we did a bit of shopping and a lot of eating. The Boulangerie's were not short of customers that day! Baguette in hand, we returned to our meeting point at the Office De Tourisme and walked to meet our tour guide, Nina. She gave us a very in-depth tour of the street art of Montpellier which was very interesting and took our minds of the 28-degree heat for a couple of hours. Returning to our bus, Jamal drove us to our hotel in Caissargues, just outside Nîmes. We had less than 30 minutes to settle down and unpack before heading to the restaurant down the road for some burgers and chips. The very eventful day paired with the early start resulted in an early night for most of the group, and we enjoyed catching up on the lost sleep.



DAY 2 by Conor Doyle

We began the day bright and early, refreshed after a much-needed sleep after our flight the morning prior. A sense of excitement brewed with a feeling of anticipation building as the lads were ready to embark on our first full day in the beautiful city of Nîmes. To start, we took the bus to the town greeted by our knowledgeable tour guide, who had developed quite a friendship with Mr O Sullivan over their shared love for history. Following this, he described the different elements and components of the town and the history of local monuments, to the awe of us students, all whilst taking us on a breathtaking walk showcasing the astonishing views of the small town. It was certainly an intriguing start to our first day.

But I think I speak for everyone when I say that the second part of the day was one that will not be easily forgotten! We were told we would arrive at La Manade Agnel, a bull farm. Upon arriving, we were greeted

by a group of ferocious bulls running swiftly towards us, prompting some of the group to take a few steps back. Thankfully, we were guarded by a metal fence! There we watched in sheer amazement as men and women, of all ages performed many tricks and games with the animals, my personal favourite being “Le Bouquet”, where the *gardians* (local cowboys) would try and snatch this bouquet tenaciously from one another whilst on horseback.

Finally, after a long day of fun we arrived at a local vineyard, le Château de Grande Cassagne. Here we met with Ms Bonfiglio’s dad, as students we could finally see the source of her humour. We also met a couple, fifth generation winemakers on this land, responsible for the large-scale production of the wine. We were then shown the recently harvested grape plants along with these large bioreactors where the grape juice is processed and turned to wine. Furthermore, we got to chance to try some popular French delicacy’s *La fougasse d’Aigues-Mortes* (sweet) and *La fougasse aux gratons* (savoury), my favourite being the first one, this bread like food with a lovely tang of orange blossom.



DAY 3 by Seán Will Ryan

Our voyage got off to an early start, our sleepy heads piled into the bus and off we went to Ms. Bonfiglio’s hometown of Vauvert. We got to the quaint town of Vauvert, the bus squeezed through the narrow streets and the beautiful buildings. We emerged from the bus and strolled to the town market. The signature Southern French architecture resembled the set of a Disney movie. We got to try a selection of authentic French pastries from a ‘*Boulangerie*’. We indulged in several ‘*Chouquettes*’, ‘*fougasse aux gratons*’ and ‘*sacristains*’, they were all delicious and devoured (with great haste).

We proceeded to have a brisk ramble around the market before making our way back onto the bus and off to the salt farm! The salt farm was certainly a unique experience. As something we use often, it was intriguing to see where it comes from, how it is formed, how it is harvested. We garnered an appreciation for the pride the people working there have for their salts! The sheer size of the farm and the large mountains of salt harvested were amazing. We then proceeded to the coastal village of Le Grau-du-Roi where we stopped for lunch and some beach time!! The enjoyment of the sun (by some) was short lived as we learned that one cannot walk shirtless in a town, as coastal as it may be.

Next, we were off to go horse riding, something which most of were eager and raring to go try from the moment we got our hands on the itinerary. The bus ride there provided another well needed chance to reset and try soak in the southern French countryside. We set off on the horses along a scenic trail, down through a lovely aesthetic beach along the Mediterranean coastline, *La plage de l'Espiguette*. As we travelled, a couple of us started to come to terms with the horses which we travelled on. Others, however, had to battle with the horse, struggling to keep up and follow along! While a challenge, it only added to the fun. After two hours absorbing the radiating heat of the fabulous French sun, we returned in one piece and set off back to our new temporary home for the weekend (the hotel). On the way back, there was one last thing to tick off for the day. We made a short stop to see a medieval tower, *La tour Carbonnière*, one of the few remaining structures of that era in Southern France's rich history.



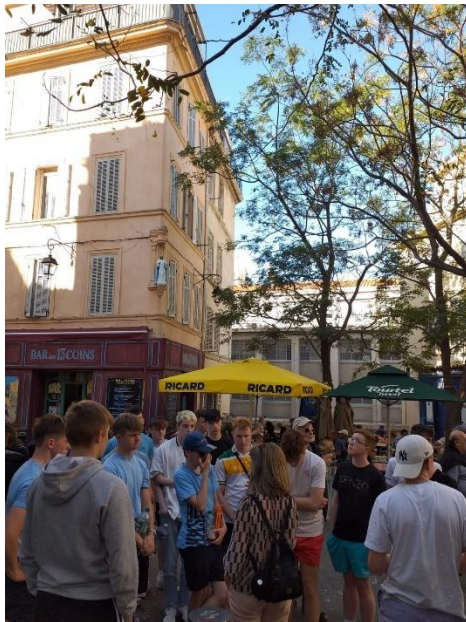
Day 4 by Conor Doyle

A day of anticipation and excitement had arrived beginning bright and early, as we embarked on our long voyage to France's oldest city, Marseille. Upon arrival, we met with our knowledgeable tour guide just outside The City Hall of Marseille. Here, she outlined the history of the picturesque port dating back to World War 2 and offered an intriguing insight into the daily lives of locals and the history of the city's monuments and

buildings. Perhaps the most interesting part of the city though, was the aesthetic blend of modern and old buildings as a result of the destruction from the Second World War. Following this, after a long but enjoyable morning of historical wonder we walked eagerly to the local ‘Boulangerie’, where we had the pleasure of trying the famous French bread baguettes and it most certainly did not disappoint.

Shortly after, we left Marseille, giving us the opportunity to enjoy our second nap of the day (at least for our teachers). Our next destination being ‘Les saintes maire de la mer’, a coastal town two hours away from Marseille and an hour from Nîmes. We luckily had the pleasure of exploring this fascinating place from its local markets to mystical views and rocky piers stretching out past the horizon of the sea. Thankfully, we also got the chance to swim in the lovely and warm French sea as the sun beamed down, not quite the same as our turbulent seas back in Dublin. After, we managed to see the town’s most integral monument ‘L’église’, a humble but gorgeous and welcoming church rooted in the history of the town, we learned here about the Saintes Marie and got a real insight into the culture of the local French people.

Finally, we headed back to the hotel, saddened with the realisation that our last day of the trip had come and gone, our memorable and magical story had finished, the last chapter coming to an unfortunate close. I know personally from the people, to the activities, to the food, this trip has been nothing short of unforgettable.



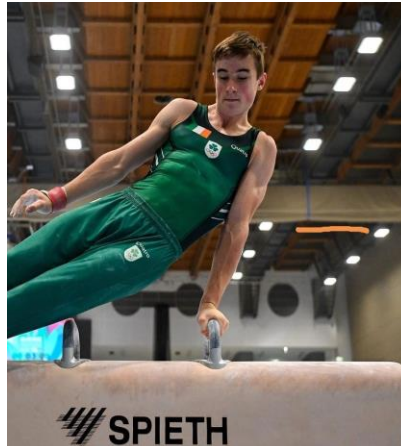
James Hickey: Youth Olympics Games

During the summer holidays James Hickey, Fifth Year, had the privilege of representing Ireland in Gymnastics at the Youth Olympics Games held in Slovenia. It was his first experience of a major international sporting event. It an amazing experience, everything from the Team Ireland atmosphere, the athlete village, the training centers, and competition itself was inspiring and definitely worth the hours of hard work to get there.

"I've learnt so much from this experience and truly believe we can do anything we want if we have a desire, a plan, a great support team and the commitment to work hard. I have some great memories and will always remember this experience. It was fantastic meeting all like-minded athletes, coaches, and officials from lots of different sports, backgrounds, and countries."

The EYOF is the largest European multi-sport event for young athletes between the ages of 14 and 17 and generally occurs every two years. This year it takes place in Maribor, Slovenia and will run from the 23–29 of July.

The EYOF is a prestigious event that plays an important role in the overall development of athletes, as it mimics the Olympic Games model, preparing athletes for the nuances of performing in a multi-sport environment. This year's event saw forty-eight countries across Europe participate in the event, with approximately 4,000 athletes competing.



Sport Football

Since the beginning of the school year, the First Years have participated in multiple sports offered by the school. Over 80 students showed up to the trials for soccer on the mini astro, led by Mr. Haughey and Mr. Doyle. Throughout the next couple of weeks, the students competed against each other for a spot on the team. Eventually, the panel was reduced to forty-four students where two eleven a side games took place on the large astro to decide the final squad.

The First Year football team had their first game of many in a Benildus jersey, against Firhouse Community School in the first round of the Leinster Cup. Our school motto is “We do ordinary things, extraordinarily well” and this was reflected by the lads playing on the day. The lads maintained their composure and high pressure due to their exceptional work rate, especially Andy McDonnell who put in a serious shift in the first 15 minutes of the game at right center mid. Eventually after 20 minutes Lennox Fortune who was playing striker scored the opening goal to put us 1-0 up against the opposition. Lennox scored again to make it a brace to double our lead going into half time. Mr. Haughey and Mr. Doyle gave the team a compelling speech, and ensured the lads knew that their jobs had not changed, despite the winning score. Mr. Doyle also reminded the lads to stay composed and to not switch off, even while they’re winning.

The second half started, and it was clear that the lads wanted more and had not finished scoring just yet. Lennox made it a hat trick after a great run and cut back by Kyle Jackson. The lads continued playing good football, and after persistent attacks Kyle got his well-deserved goal. Substitutes were then brought on to give the team more energy for the final 20 minutes. The lads kept up the high work rate and didn’t get complacent, and the game was put to bed by a final, fifth goal for the team by Wayne Redmond. A special credit to the defense, led by captain Daniel White, who managed to ensure the clean sheet. At the final whistle, Mr. Haughey and Mr. Doyle proudly celebrated their team's 5-0 victory. This was not only a tremendous start for the season ahead but also for their career to follow as Benildus players. The lads should be extremely proud of themselves and each other. I truly believe this team will excel as students, on and off the pitch.



Basketball

The U16 team have yet to break their winning streak with three big wins against St. Colmcilles, St. Conleths and Marion college. The U19 team have had a tough start with two tough losses against St. Colmcilles and St. Conleths but a strong win against Marian College. Both teams have shown great skill, determination and teamwork throughout the competition and there is massive potential in all players to succeed in future years.



Chess

On Monday, September 25th, students from our Chess Club participated in the St Andrew's Chess tournament. Two junior groups (Milos Buljovic, Donal O'Donnell, Ethan Finnegan, Patrick Earl, Jake Jestine, Luke Murray, Aidan Camingawan and Kaylem Matthews) and one senior group (Joshua Finnegan, Gagik Avetisyan, Conor McCarthy and Ciarán Guerrine) entered the St Andrew's campus for a day of intense battles, exceptional sportsmanship, and a celebration of intellectual prowess. The tournament comprised over 400 students from schools all over Dublin, Kildare, and Meath and was expertly run by St Andrew's College staff & students. Although Gonzaga ultimately took the tournament's top prize, the Benildus teams scored exceptionally well, with the senior team finishing in the top 10 of the 100 teams that participated. It was a fantastic event for the Chess Club and a valuable learning experience for our teams, who will undoubtedly take their newfound knowledge into future matches and tournaments. Chess Club takes place on Monday afternoon, from 2:50 until 3:40, in the Physics Lab with Mr. McAllen and Mr. McKeever (with the occasional appearance from Mr. Scott) and is open to all Year Groups!



Cross Country

On Wednesday 18th October 26 students from First to Fourth year attended the DSD Cross Country event. First and Second Year students ran in the 1000m trail cross country event. St. Benildus College had great success in the First Year event as Conn McCloskey was the first to cross the finish line, bringing home the gold medal. Conor Pimlott came third and Andy McDonnell came home in fifth place. These results helped the College to claim the gold medal in the team category. It was a great day for all our First Year students who were wearing the St. Benildus Singlet for the first time. There were also great performances from Luca Moran, Liam O'Flaherty, Ronan Byrne, Milo Hanover, Sean O' Kelly and Conor Wren.

In the Second Year race St. Benildus continued the great success set by our First Years, Soren Doyle came second, Cohen Doyle claimed third, Peter McDonnell came fourth and Paddy Carty claimed seventh place. These results helped the College to claim the gold medal in the team category. There were also standout performances from Cormac Sullivan, Daniel Reynolds, Ferdia Gibson, Daniel Sherman and Joe Sheridan.

Finally in the Third and Fourth Year race St. Benildus College finished the day where they started by claiming the gold medal in the team event with Seán Healy second, Tadhg Bartelink fourth and Billy McDonnell ninth. There were also standout performances from Dara Maher, Noah McGee, Sean Regan and Tadhg O' Baoill.

Everyone here in St. Benildus College would like to congratulate all the boys for representing us all so well on the day. Many thanks to DSD for organising such a magnificent day we look forward to coming back next year. Next up is the Blackrock Invitational Cross Country Relay competition!



Rugby

On Friday the 20th of October, the First Years were buzzing for their first rugby blitz for the school. We had two teams, the Yellows and the Blues. Both teams had 12 players each mixed with experienced players and beginners. All players got a great run around as each team played four matches from other schools and then each other! These other schools consisted of St Andrews College, Templeogue College, Colaiste na hIide and St Davids Holy Faith Greystones. Although there were poor conditions and a lot of rain, both Benildus teams played very well as everyone was playing their part. The Yellow team came away with 4 wins out of 4 and the Blue team won 2, drew 1 and unfortunately lost 1 against the Yellows. We got back on the bus very pleased with how the day went. Well done to all involved!



First Year Profiles

Class: 1.4

Name: Aaron Gorman

Favourite thing about St. Benildus: I really like the sport's facilities. I love playing Hurling with my friends and they have really good pitches here. They are way bigger than the pitches we had in primary school.

Favourite subject in the school: My favourite subject is GCSE PE. It's a good way to spend time with friends and I like being active in the middle of the day.

Something interesting about me: I love sports. I play a different sport every day of the week. I play hurling and GAA. I want to take up rugby and get back into football. I also do boxing!

One thing that surprised you about starting Secondary school: I get to see my friends' way more than I did in primary school. When I played hurling in primary school, I'd see some of my teammates but now I go to school with them, I see them every day!



Class: 1.4

Name: Konrad Judziak

Favourite thing about St. Benildus:

I love all the different subjects you can take. It's fun to be able to pick an option subject and have some choice in your timetable.

Favourite subject in the school: I like Computer Studies and Geography. In secondary school teachers go into the subject in a lot more detail. It's interesting to learn about students in a more complex way.

Something interesting about me: I like telling jokes and enjoy putting together stand-up routines.

One thing that surprised you about Secondary school: The building is much bigger than I thought it would be. In my primary school, the sport's building wasn't in a different part of the school. I'm used to everything now though.



Class: 1.5

Name: Maximillian Fusciardi

Favourite thing about St. Benildus: I love all the sport's facilities. There are so many activities and sports to choose from. I want to give soccer, tennis, and basketball a go.

Favourite subject in the school: I really enjoy Business. The teacher is nice and I have found the different topics we've covered this year really interesting.

Something interesting about me: I'm part German. I can speak a little German and I take it as my language.

One thing that surprised you about starting Secondary school: The move from primary to secondary school wasn't as big of a change as I thought it would be. I thought it would be more stressful with all the different subjects and teachers but it was much easier than I expected.

Class: 1.6

Name: Sean Keogh

Favourite thing about St. Benildus: I really like the school day and how fast it seems to go. There are so many different classes and teachers that I think the day goes much quicker than primary school.

Favourite subject in the school: My favourite subject is PE. I like taking part in different activities and getting fresh air throughout the day. I think it is really fun.

Something interesting about me: I have family who live in America. They live in New York and New Jersey and I went to visit them in 2018.

One thing that surprised you about starting Secondary school: I thought there would be more moving around and school would be a bit more confusing to get used to but it was easy enough once I arrived and settled in.





Class: 1.7

Name: Ben Hodgins

Favourite thing about St. Benildus: My favourite thing is probably the different sport's teams. I want to try out for Gaelic Football, Football and Table Tennis. There's really great choice here.

Favourite subject in the school: I like GCSE PE or Graphics. PE is good because I like playing sports. I like Graphics because it's a bit different from other subjects and I like designing things.

Something interesting about me: I am an uncle to my three-year-old niece!

One thing that surprised you about Secondary school: How welcoming everyone was. I thought it would be a bigger step moving from primary school to secondary school but it was easy enough. Everyone was very friendly and helpful.

Class: 1.8

Name: Harry Lambkin

Favourite thing about St. Benildus: The pitches. I love sports and the facilities here are really good quality. It's been fun getting to try them out.

Favourite subject in the school: I like woodwork. It's fun to do practical work in school. I have done a little bit of woodwork before so it's fun to get more experience and learn different skills.

Something interesting about me: I love football! I play it every day.

One thing that surprised you about Secondary school: It was much easier to start than I expected. I thought there would be loads more homework but it hasn't been too bad and the teachers are all really nice.





Class: 1.9

Name: Jack Lynam

Favourite thing about St. Benildus: I really like the different subject choices. It's nice to have different teachers for each class and move around the school a bit more which wasn't like primary school.

Favourite subject in the school: I like Art. I find it really relaxing. It's nice to go down to the art room and be able to be a bit more creative. I find it a nice break.

Something interesting about me: I have twin brothers. They're 9 years old so a little younger than me. They look very similar and both wear glasses and the same shoes. It can get a little confusing!

One thing that surprised you about Secondary school: I didn't realise how big the school would be! I thought it would be one building but there's so much more. I didn't expect the yard and pitches and all the sport's facilities!



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