



THE ABBEY *Way*

THE ABBEY CHRISTIAN BROTHERS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Work begins on the 'NEW ABBEY'



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The Board of Governors cut the first sod

New School Update



Members of the Abbey Christian Brothers' Community survey the site of the new school

The ceremony was attended by Bishop John McAreavey who, in blessing the ground, praised both the past years of educational service of the Christian Brothers in the area and their major financial and educational commitment to the future generations of pupils. Representing the Department of Education for Northern Ireland, Mr Brian McLawrence, confirmed the commitment of the Department to the development of a modern educational infrastructure for the 21st Century in Northern Ireland and expressed his thanks to the efforts of Samuel Stevenson & Sons the Architects to bring the project to its current level.

In conclusion, the Headmaster of the Abbey Christian Brothers' Grammar School, Mr Dermot McGovern, spoke of his delight that this major project (which had been so long in the process of planning) was now beginning on a beautiful, elevated site and stated his confirmation that the building work which was in the capable hands of Woodvale Construction, Omagh would be completed for occupation in September 2009.

Abbey Community Celebrate the

The 7th November marked a special day in the educational provision for the communities of Newry, South Down and South Armagh when the Christian Brothers confirmed their commitment to future generations of boys in these areas as the first work commenced on the building project of a new £17.5 million school to replace the current Abbey Grammar School at Courtenay Hill.

Attending the first sod-cutting ceremony on a green-field 26 acre site on Ashgrove Road, Newry was, a group of pupils representing the 7 year-groups attending the present school. Brother Kevin Mullan, Provincial Leader of the Christian Brothers, and Brother Leo Kelly, Chairman of the Abbey Christian Brothers, expressed their satisfaction that the historic role of the Christian Brothers in the Newry area would be continued in the new state-of-the-art building and that this resource would serve future generations of boys from all the local communities.



Members of the Abbey staff pictured at the site of the new school



Representatives of the whole Abbey community at the historic turning of the first sod

History Trip

In October a group of Fifth and Sixth year students went to Berlin and Krakow as part of a History Department Educational Visit. The group spent 3 nights in East Berlin and two in the historic city of Krakow. Philip McClory shares his memories of the journey that saw the group visit some of the most chilling reminders of the Third REICH.

As all students who go on a school trip know, it's not what is organised in the itinerary that usually counts. For most trips, students couldn't give a damn where they're dragged to or what monotonous tour guide they have to endure. Their moment is at two o'clock in the morning where they get to relive their childhoods by knocking on the doors of people they'll never see again, causing as much hassle for hostel staff up to the point where someone makes a formal complaint, lying low till three, and doing it all again. This trip may not have been an exception (let's be honest) yet, despite ourselves, we actually enjoyed the tours, the museum, even the concentration camps. Learning, as embarrassing as it is, can be fun after all.

guide around East Berlin: Richard, who by his attitude was the only man in history who wanted to climb over the wall into East Berlin. Stopping up the road from a gothic beggar, he lamented to us how this financial sponge, and others like him, got paid more for doing



nothing than getting a job (although it didn't have the desired effect; a few in the group considered giving him applause on the way back). While we agreed that the state paying for the medical well-being of the beggar's dog (that's right) was excessive, there was no real room for debate if we hadn't concurred; Richard looked like he'd handled his fair share of piano wire, and even with the American accent his constant negativity about reunification was...unsettling.

In Berlin, there were a few highlights, such as the national museum (containing all the Nazi paraphernalia that Mel Gibson could ask for and an impressive array of weaponry from the Medieval ages), Checkpoint Charlie, McDonald's binges, bowling, and the "mindless shopping" hour. The capital was impressive, and the dedication to which the Germans honestly recorded the best-and worst-moments in their history was impressive.

Poland was even better, in my opinion. The hotel was great, bar the food, and the huge number of Liverpool students made Abbey behaviour seem better by comparison (although I could never open our room's door,

and was shamefully humbled when both an attendant and a friendly English woman managed it without a bother). Krakow was beautifully designed, as opposed to the grey flats of East Berlin, with Italian architecture everywhere. The Poles take their Catholicism seriously, and the national spirit of a country accustomed to being the punch bag of Europe throughout history touched a chord; we saw in Poland values much the same as our own.



It was the concentration camps that defined the trip. In both camps we visited, the sheer scale of murder was beyond normal comprehension. In Ireland it's known that 6 million Jews died, yet our tragedy of the Troubles takes precedence despite the fact that that entire conflict spanning three decades racked up the death toll of one day in Auschwitz. Our guide there was a Polish Jew by descent; a soft spoken man who made us realise, as we gazed on the countless photographs of victims, the room containing 2 tons of hair, the corpses being bulldozed into mass graves, that such atrocities could have happened just as easily to us. The aura of the camp at least has ensured that our group can never forget to remember the lesson of Auschwitz to humanity...

"Those who do not learn from history are forced to relive it".

Move Over Dr. Johnson!

Wouldn't it be nice to go out and buy the newspaper some morning or watch the TV some evening and see a new word being used as part of the headlines? No? Well what if you had created the word in the headline and it was being used by thousands, maybe millions of people across the planet? Such a situation could happen soon for Abbey student, Ryan Brockwell. Last year when he was a Second Year, Ryan entered a competition organised by Harper Collins Dictionaries. As part of the competition pupils had to either put forward a case for the inclusion of a word from their area or they could create their own word and

provide a definition. Ryan came up with the word 'ecolite' and the judges were so impressed they awarded him first prize and flew over from headquarters in England to congratulate him. As well as winning prizes for himself, he also won £500 worth of books for the Abbey English Department. From this year you will be able to find the word 'ecolite' in every Collins English Dictionary.

Ecolite: (noun) someone who uses green energy in order to try and prevent global warming.



After what was a long journey, we arrived in Berlin (the bus to Belfast was somewhat lengthened by a woeful rendition of Aero smith's "Don't want to miss a thing". For legal purposes I'm obliged to omit the name, but for personal satisfaction, it was MARK QUINN and by (EXPLETIVE) it was brutal).

We checked into our hostel, and that night did what all students do on school trips; stay up to a god-forsaken hour of the morning, talking about nothing in particular, and my personal favourite of "pretending to know how to play poker until you go all in with "all reds, lads"". In the morning, the trip's activities proved their worth. No one can forget our



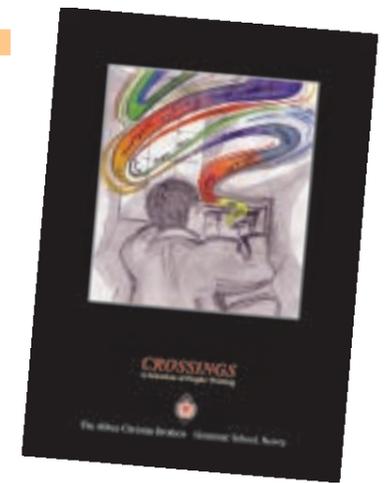
Ryan Brockwell will soon be looking up his own word

Book Launch

Monday the 10th of December saw the launch of a book comprised solely of pupils' work from the last fifteen years in the school. The book, entitled *Crossings* is an eclectic mix of poetry, short stories, novel extracts, scripts, reviews and essays written by past and present pupils. Several of the writers, including Philip Knox, Stephen Begley, Daniel Sutherland and Jarlath Gregory have either won National competitions and awards for their work or have gone on to pursue writing as a career. This book helps to showcase their achievements with some of the

best writing that has recently occurred in the school.

Monday night saw pupils, parents, staff (past and present) and friends of the Abbey come together to celebrate the work of those involved. Indeed, many of the pupils present read from their work much, to the appreciation of a receptive audience. Although the school's own Abbey Press has published eighteen titles to date, it is safe to say that this book will hold a special place in the history of Arts in the school. Well done to all concerned..



Retreat: 2nd ANNUAL KAIROS RETREAT GIVES 6TH YEAR FOOD FOR THOUGHT

On Wednesday 21st November twelve lower sixth students went on the Kairos Retreat which lasted three days. They were given no information about the Retreat beforehand. The following contains the words and thoughts of some of those twelve.

When I went on the Kairos Retreat I wasn't too sure what to expect. I had gone on the basis of what other people in seventh year had told me and the fact that I would get three days out of school wasn't so bad either. Looking back on the Retreat, not knowing fully

what I was going to be doing, only added to the enjoyment whenever the retreat took place. The only adults there when we arrived were the School Chaplain and Fr Brendan Kearns. Someone had mentioned that we'd be on a ration of dry toast and water for the three days. But that was the first surprise. We were staying in an old Victorian House with lots of ground and fantastic rooms. The food was excellent and there was plenty of it. The retreat started as soon as we arrived. Personally I got a lot out of the retreat. The activities we did

led to an eye-opening experience in which I learnt a lot about myself and my life. I learned about what kind of person I am and the way I treat others. Also I learnt about how important my family are to me and God's role in my life. It was strange to discover that if we look at the ordinary things of life that's where we find God. I have a new found respect for boys I didn't really know or like and I have strengthened bonds with my friends. The activities which helped me discover these things were coupled with going to the local swimming pool where great craic was had. The whole experience was nothing that I thought it was going to be and it caught me completely off guard. It's hard to explain Kairos to those who were not there because by its nature it demands confidentiality. It's difficult to describe in words what effect Kairos has on a person but the retreat is an unforgettable experience and will be one of the best things I have done in the Abbey and quite possibly in the rest of my life. I would strongly recommend that others go on this retreat as they will gain so much from it.

Thanks to the twelve students who took part in the retreat and for their contributions to this article.



Poetry:

In this Issue **The Abbey Way** is featuring samples of pupils' work that have been published in *"Crossings."*

Here is a poem, written by Seán Fearon (now in Breffni 3) when he was in first year.

A Bad Dream

by Sean Fearon (Breffni 1)

In a quiet valley with a glistening pool,
Children played merrily, just returning from school.
All was quiet, all was well
A beautiful music from a swinging church bell.

They played 'hide-and-seek'
and climbed in the trees,
Along with the butterflies, the rabbits, the bees.
Flowers danced in the wind and swayed
with their cheers,
Noone was sad, noone in tears.

But from the horizon dark shapes were emerging,
A young boy warned them, their fear was surging.
They ran for the hills, unable to be saved,
All were scared, noone was brave.

The aircraft approached them,
their engines purring,
They were going to kill them, they were not caring.
They swooped from the sky releasing explosive,
They had no reason, they had no motive.

And then he woke up, he'd had a bad dream.
All was well- or so it did seem.
He opened the drapes, gazed out, saw then
That children were playing merrily again.

A Level:

KEVIN DELIVERS SIX OF THE BEST

Over the last number of years Slí na Mainistreach has reported on the success of various year groups and, to be honest, we have been running out of superlatives to describe the success, which has been growing year on year. Just when we thought things couldn't get any better, along came the class of 2007!

The most significant statistic from these results is that more pupils at the Abbey are obtaining the top grades. An unbelievable 50% of all results were grade A, 76% grades A or B and 94% grades A-C.

Again the number of pupils at the Abbey achieving top grades in their 3, 4 or even 6 subjects continues to rise. A total of 27 boys achieved 3 or more grade A's.

Top pupil Kevin O'Reilly, from Bessbrook, achieved 6 A grades and shall be studying Actuarial Studies at Queen's University Belfast. Ten boys achieved at least 4 A grades. Due to ill health Kevin missed a lot of school but his determination to succeed resulted in him achieving the school's best set of 'A' level grades ever, with top grades in ICT, Spanish, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics and Further Mathematics.

Mr Dermot McGovern, Headmaster, congratulated this exceptional group of pupils on their results. He indicated that virtually every boy achieved his first choice university place. He paid tribute to his hard working staff and thanked them for all their efforts and dedication to the welfare of their students. He acknowledged the strong school-parental links that also helped the boys to achieve their best.

Lower sixth students also received their AS results, and all at the Abbey are confident that the exceptional standard of 'A' level results will be repeated next year. With preparations well under way for the new school, and an increase in the number of subjects in lower sixth now including English Language, Accounting and Vocational Courses, including Applied ICT and Construction, the Abbey continues to be a popular choice for 'A' level study.



Darren and Richard pictured with Mr Grogan

Past Pupils: FORMER STUDENTS RETURN TO ZAMBIA

A new International Voluntary Service Programme for 18-25 year olds was successfully launched, as part of Edmund Rice Centre's youth ministry.

The programme aims to give 18-25 year olds who have had previous experience of Edmund Rice Camps and/or the Developing World Immersion Programme a chance to deepen their experience.

Eight young people from across Ireland were selected to take part. They have worked in placements in their own local areas and visited Lusaka in Zambia for 3 weeks - July/ August '07.

This programme was organised in conjunction with the International Spirituality Centre in Lusaka, where the volunteers stayed during their visit. The programme also involves workshops which give them a chance to reflect on the reasons behind the poverty and marginalisation they encounter and also to explore any questions in relation to their faith that may surface.

The photograph (left) shows Abbey ex-students Richard Gilmore and Darren Rowland who travelled to Lusaka in August along with teacher, Mr Mark Grogan.

Chess Club

I joined the chess club this year, and so far it has been great fun. I have met new people outside of my form class and outside of my year and have made new friends.

I learnt how to play chess from my dad, and although there was no chess club at my primary school, there were a couple of boards and we sometimes played during our spare time. I was therefore glad to hear that the Abbey had a Chess Club. However, I think it doesn't really matter how long you have been playing if at all; you can learn pretty quickly just by coming along and taking part.

I was part of the Junior Chess Team (up to

3rd years) that recently played against St Columb's Derry. I was up against a 2nd year pupil, and started well but about halfway through the match I made a mistake and lost my queen - that was the beginning of the end, but I enjoyed the experience.

I know more matches are planned later this year - some being away - so I'm looking forward to travelling away with the school.

Basically I have enjoyed the club and would recommend others to come along on a Tuesday from 3:20 to 4:30.

Ethan Wroe Or1



Abbey & St Columb's Junior Chess Teams

As Gaeilge: Mo Chéad Mhí Mar Scolaire Na Mainistreach

Ar dtús bhí mé an-neirbhíeach. Ní raibh aithne agam ach ar dhuine amháin sa chéad bhliain, Conall an t-ainm atá air ach ag deireadh an lae ní raibh mé chomh neirbhíeach.

Bhí mo chéad mhí sa Mainistreach iontach maith. Níl an obair bhaile ró-dheachair. Ar dtús shíl mé go mbeadh muid ag fail a lán obair bhaile ach ní mar a shíltear a bhítear.

Bhí sé maith go raibh duine ann chun muid a thabhairt thart fán scoil go dtí ár ranganna. Tá na múinteoirí iontach deas. Is í Máistreás Hughes ár múinteoir foirme.

Is é an Bhéarla an t-abhair is fearr liom. Is í Iníon Nic Giolla Íosa an múinteoir Béarla. Tá sí an-deas duinn. Is maith liom Éalain chomh maith. Tá muid ag tarraingt pictiúir de

bláthanna.

San Eolaíocht rinne muid cáca milis agus d'íth muid é. Bhí sé an blasta ar fad.

Sa Ghaeilge fuair mé amach go mbéinn féin agus Conall le Máistir McKeivitt ach an Aoinne chun snás a chur ar ár gcuid Gaeilge.

Tá an bia ón bhialann iontach deas. Inné fuair mé borgaire agus bhí sé an deas ar fad. Téim gach Máirt le Conall.

Fuair muid ár mBíobla Gidion coicís ó shin. Baineann muid úsáid asti i rang Teasc Críostaí. Is í Bean Mhic Iomhair an múinteoir ranga.

Sa dara tseachtain ní raibh mé chomh neirbhíeach. Bhí cairde nua déanta agam agus bhí mé iontach sásta sa scoil.

Bhí mé ábalta dul thart an scoil go dtí na

ranganna difriúla go h-iontach furasta agus gan a bheith mall.

Sa tríú seachtain chuaigh muid go dtí an leabharlann le Iníon Nic Giolla Íosa. Fuir mé leabhar Doctor Who amach as. Tá sé iontach maith ar fad.

Is é an t-aon rud nach maith liom faoin scoil an méid siúlóid a bhíonn le déanamh gach lá mar caithfidh mé siúl abhaile agus dul amach ag siúl leis mo mhadadh i ndiaidh sin.

Sa teicneolaíocht tá muid ag tógáil frog as adhmad. Is iad rothanna beaga a chosa agus baintear úsáid as liathróidí beaga mar shúile.

Tá mé ag baint an-súlt as scoil na Mainistreach.

James Meehan
Sliabh Mís a hAon

Turas Go Rath Cairn

My journey to Rath Cairn began when I took part in the Abair competition. I was granted a place in the all-Ireland public speaking competition organised by Gael Linn, a group set up to promote the use of Irish language with all ages. Anyway, after completing my speech, entitled Reabhloid na Gaeilge, I only had 3 or four days to learn it off by heart, which I assure you is an immense task when you don't understand most of it. I spent three nights at home with the head down, repeating lines time and time again hoping to memorise phrases. There was one line of the speech which related to my task, bhí sé lan de cacanna. This is how I felt about the speech but after a few sessions of translation with Mr. McKeivitt and Mrs. McClean I began to come around to the idea that there was some hope for me yet. We left the school on Wednesday (Mrs. McClean, mo chara Deaglan agus mise of course!) and several hours, wrong turns and missing road signs later we arrived at Rath Cairn to a very welcoming Niamh ***(don't know 2nd name). We were directed to our accommodation and had a bite to eat before going to the public school for a quiz night and interaction with the other competitors. My team came fourth overall and a good night's

craic was had by all, I could only hope I would do this well the next day in the competition. After the quiz we went back to the teach loistín and got a night of sleep. We were awoken the next morning at eight o'clock and served a tasty breakfast in order to prepare us for the day ahead. Upon arrival to the competition I discovered that I would be the 19th speaker, giving me some time to prepare and also to get an idea of the standard of speakers from both Scotland

and Ireland, and I must commend both sides on their excellent performances. My name was called after an hour or so and I have never been more nervous in all my life, but fortunately all of the words came out in the right order and I was proud of how I did. I was unlucky as not to win but I must give congratulations to those who did as they were well deserving of their awards. The experience itself will help me for future competitions and I am more than glad to have taken part!

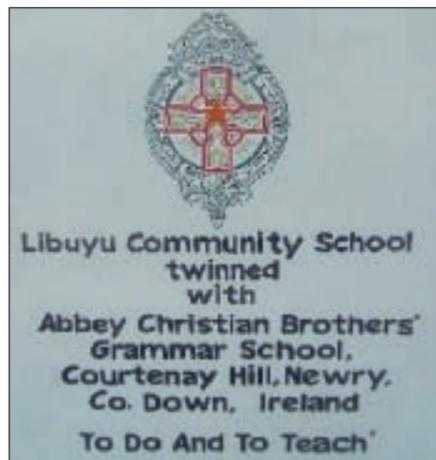


Deaglán i mbun ceoil,



Michael i mbun cainte.

Abbey Twinned With Libuyu Community School Zambia



Abbey Twinned With Libuyu Community School
The Abbey Christian Brothers' Grammar School was twinned with Libuyu Community School,



Livingstone Zambia in August 2007.

Libuyu Community School is one of three schools under the Livingstone Street Children's Association (LISCA). It is located deep within the Libuyu Compound, in north Livingstone.



On Monday 20th August 2007 at 9am, the rehabilitation of Libuyu Community School was officially opened by the Mayor of Livingstone and Mark Grogan (representing the Abbey CBS Community).

Libuyu Community School was badly run down. When we worked in the school in March 2005 the roof was full of holes. The facilities were non-existent, toilets were unsanitary and not fit for use. A sewer ran through the school yard and rats were a common site. Classrooms were shells of rooms. This was not an environment where teaching and learning could succeed. The children had no facilities for a feeding programme; there was no kitchen and many were hungry during lessons.

However, this has all changed. There are now bright modern classrooms with facilities including proper blackboards, desks and chairs. A new kitchen along with a store, will provide the children with food each day. A perimeter wall will provide the community school extra security and will mean the children can play without any danger from the surrounding compound.



The rehabilitation opening was attended by many of Livingstone's councillors and civic leaders and included a representative from the Zambian Ministry of Education. It was broadcast on Zambian TV news and also recorded in all local newspapers.



Mr Anthony Ranjan from the Livingstone Rotary club and accountant gave the following speech;

His worship the Major, the Chairman, the Town Clerk, Councillors, Education Officers, Civic leaders, Teachers and Children, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen.

The finances for this project of rehabilitation of Libuyu Community Centre was contributed by the Abbey Christian Brothers' Grammar School from Ireland.

I am pleased to inform you that Libuyu Community School is twinned with Abbey Christian Brothers Grammar school; 25 students and 6 teachers have come to Livingstone to teach and help the school. They came in 2003 then in 2005 and again during this year.

When they were here in 2005, I explained the need to rehabilitate this centre and pleaded for help. In June 2006, Sr. Anne Lyng, Mark Grogan and Hugh Markey met me to consider my request for renovation of Libuyu Community School.



Sr. Anne, Mark and Hugh confirmed of the funds available in September 2006.

These funds are raised by the students and teachers of the school with the help of the local community. Mark, please pass our thanks to the students, teachers and the people involved for the fundraising.

The funds were transferred to Sr. Mary Courtney (a St Francis sister originally from Cavan and linked with Mount Oliver in Dundalk) who managed the funds from November 2006. The contractor was then selected and signed the contract in December 2006.



Today we are so pleased to officially open this beautiful school. The total cost for this project is k108, 762, 000 (£15,000)

The Abbey has also been keen on sponsoring the needy and keep students for further education from grade (7) seven. Through the partnership, we believe our children will be able to benefit.

The Abbey also promised that if we secure the land, they may consider the school building project. In addition to the contribution they made their part of k16, 600, 000. We have so far paid k3, 000, 000 for the land application.

We have also spent about k10, 000, 000 for the training of two teachers at Mosi - o - Tunya Teachers' Training College.



I also want to take this opportunity to thank the rotary club of Livingstone for the borehole, and the Rotary Anns for their regular supply of educational materials and Sun International for the teachers' allowances for one year.

Finally, I would like to thank Livingstone City Council for allowing us to rehabilitate and use the building for the benefit of the children.

God bless all of us and bless our children who are our future.

I thank you.

This day was a proud day for all associated with the Abbey's Immersion Project. However, this is just the beginning as the Abbey will continue to work closely with their newly twinned school. Already the last immersion team has hired a school's inspector to ensure the running of the school. Teachers and students will have financial help in securing further studies in order to become educated and as a result this education can only enhance the current provision of education in the local Community Schools



Zambian Inspector Begins Work



Community School Inspector Employed

In July 2007 the Abbey Christian Brothers' Grammar School employed a school inspector to oversee work at three Community Schools in Livingstone Zambia. The three community school are: Linda, Libuyu and Mwandi.

Mr Teddy Nyirongo (a retired Headteacher) took up the post at Libuyu Community School in July 2007. The post is initially for one year. His main task is to co-ordinate the educational activities for the three community schools.

Mr Nyirongo will be based in an office at the newly refurbished Libuyu Community School in Livingstone.

Libuyu Community School teaches children up to grade 7. The staff consists of head teacher, Peggy Liyungu, and 6 teachers.

Linda Community School teaches children up to grade 7. The staff consists of head teacher Catherine Chilambe and 6 teachers.

Mwandi Community School teaches children up to grade 6. The staff consists of head teacher, Joyce Kanimba, and 6 teachers.

All three schools begin at 8am and finish up around 12:20pm. Libuyu has an afternoon

session from 1pm until 4pm. The Zambian Ministry Of Education curriculum is followed and all schools teach English, Maths, Science, Social Studies, PE, Zambian Language, Art, Home Economics and Music.

A summary of Mr Nyirongo's duties include:

- Ensuring that schools are running for the benefit of children.
- Ensuring that the curriculum is followed strictly.
- Ensuring that teachers discharge their duties properly.
- Ensuring that children are fed (at the centre/community schools).
- Assisting in the classroom Teaching of pupils when the need arises.
- Organising and conducting extra curricular activities and educational tours for the children.
- Developing with strategic plans for children who are permanently staying in the centre for their future.
- Any other duties that may be deemed fit by the school head.



News in Brief:



Nous Allons Gagner!

Maths Challenges:

The Senior Maths Challenge took place this year on Thursday 8th November. A number of students from the upper and lower 6th Maths and Further Maths classes competed in the event, and below are the winners:

Best in School: Ronan McDonald
Silver Certificates: Ronan McDonald, Stephen Campbell, Homesh Sayal.

Bronze Certificates: Sean O'Hagan, Kevin Holsgrove, Adrian McNamee, Michael Doherty, Michael Lynch, Yang Ze, David Fitzpatrick, Mark Rafferty, Christopher McAteer.

Next up are the Junior and Middle school students with the dates just released for their challenges. The Intermediate challenge will take place on Thursday 7th February 2008, with the junior event taking place on Thursday 1st May 2008. Good Luck to all involved.

Seachtain na Gaeilge:

Beidh seachtain na Gaeilge á reachtáil ag Roinn na Gaeilge i Mí an Mhárta. Beidh neart imeachtaí ar súil chun achán scoláire a choinneáil sásta... ar feadh tamail!

Christmas Cards for Zambia:

The members of the Zambian Immersion project would like to thank everyone who contributed to their Christmas Card Appeal by buying cards. The money raised from the sale of the cards went towards the funding aid given to the school featured on the page opposite.

Gaelic Football:

It is back to the drawing board for Abbey teams after a disastrous term for football. The Corn na nÓg squad will be working hard over the Christmas break as they face a quarter final in late January. Looking forward, January will also see the beginning of the Brock Cup, Dalton Cup, Nannery Cup and Ben Dearg Shield. Let's hope the second term provides the Abbey faithful with more joy than the first!

Open Night:

This Year's Open Night for Transferring students will take place on Thursday 31st of January.

French Trip

The French Department is organising a trip to Paris in Spring 2008, departing Wednesday March 5th and returning Saturday 8th March. During the four day stay students will have the chance to visit many of the attractions of the French capital including the Versailles Palace, the Eiffel Tower, Aquaboulevard and a day in Euro Disney. The price of £399 will include return flights to Paris, entrance to all of the above, a three-night stay in good quality accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis and three evening meals in a French restaurant.

GCSE - Prize Night EXCELLENT GCSE RESULTS AT ABBEY

The Middle-School class of 2007 graduated to lower sixth with flying colours, following another outstanding set of GCSE results in August.

The top performers with 11A*/A Grades were Cathal MacDhaibheid (9 A*, 2 A's) David Fitzpatrick (7 A*, 4 A's), Michael Lynch (6A*, 5 A's) and Christopher McAteer (6 A*, 5 A's). Thirteen boys obtained 10 A*/A Grades, including: Deaglan Brady, Michael Campbell, Christopher Cunningham, David Cunningham, David Digney, Michael Doherty, Declan Magee, Cormac Markey, Liam McGahon, Michael McVerry, Conal O'Hare, Mark Rafferty and Daniel Sutherland. Francis Agnew obtained 9 A*/A Grades. Six students achieved 8 A*/A Grades including Thomas O'Hagan, David O'Hare, Shane O'Hare, Oliver Boyle, Donal Daly and Jonathan Murchan.

The successful students were able to select a number of new subjects that the school made available for the first time including A Levels in English Language and Accounts and Vocational qualifications in Applied ICT and Construction. This is currently being complemented by Lower 6th Students adding to their AS studies in the current academic year with accredited vocational enrichment programmes across the range of subject areas including Consumer and Employment Law, Business Enterprise, Electronics Manufacturing, Website Design, Sports Injuries, Practical Caring Skills and Information Technology.

A delighted Headmaster, Mr Dermot McGovern, thanked staff and parents and congratulated all the pupils who received



Mr Dermot McGovern, Headmaster congratulates the top achievers in this year's GCSE examinations. Four boys achieved an outstanding 11 A*/A grades or above. Included are David Fitzpatrick, Michael Lynch and Christopher McAteer. Also included are Vice Principals Mr Ronan Ruddy and Mr Paul O'Shea. Missing from photograph is Cathal MacDhaibheid.

GCSE results - not only the boys who had done exceptionally well but also the boys who had done as well as they possibly could. He believes that a number of factors have combined to help with this year's success, including a very dedicated, committed and highly professional staff who got the best out of this year's group. The most valuable gift any teacher can give a pupil in the Abbey is

their own time, and this was given in abundance.

Support from parents was another area highlighted by Mr McGovern that facilitated these results, working in harmony with the Abbey by attending parent/teacher meetings and helping to implement recommendations that were agreed at 'Progress Meetings' that were set up to support pupils.



24 pupils from The Abbey Christian Brothers' Grammar School got at least 8 or more A grades in their GCSE examinations. They are: Deaglan Brady, Michael Campbell, Christopher Cunningham, David Cunningham, David Digney, Michael Doherty, Liam McGahon, Michael McVerry, Conal O'Hare, Mark Rafferty, Daniel Sutherland, Francis Agnew, Thomas O'Hagan, Oliver Boyle, Donal Daly, David Fitzpatrick, Michael Lynch and Christopher McAteer. Missing from photograph are Cathal MacDhaibheid, Declan Magee, Cormac Markey, David O'Hare, Shane O'Hare and Jonathan Murchan.

Technology PATRICK BURNS SCOOPS TOP ENGINEER FOR BRITAIN AWARD

Fourth Year pupil, Patrick Burns, picked up top prize in the Young Engineers for Britain competition in London on Monday 17th September 2007 with his project 'Automatic Hazard System'. Patrick's project is a unique device which incorporates both audio and visual warning aids to enable the driver to change his wheel safely whilst minimising any potential personal risk from oncoming vehicles.

This is the third time that Patrick has celebrated success with his innovative and creative project. As reported in the last issue of Slí na Mainistreach in June, Patrick won the junior category of the BT Young Scientist and Technology competition in the RDS, Dublin. This was followed by him winning the Northern Ireland Regional final of the Young Engineers for Britain competition at Seagate Young Innovators in the Odyssey in Belfast in June. As a regional finalist Patrick was invited to represent Northern Ireland at the prestigious National Engineering Finals hosted in the grandeur of the Royal Naval College in Greenwich, London. Patrick competed against the top Regional finalists from throughout the United Kingdom. Judges were overwhelmed by the exceptional standard of design and craftsmanship demonstrated by Patrick and his expertise ultimately culminated in him being crowned 'Young Engineer for Britain' This is the first time the Abbey has won this 'blue ribbon' Technology event.

Patrick, from Forkhill, won a specially commissioned trophy designed and manufactured to celebrate highlights in technological design, including parts of a Rolls Royce jet engine, Honda Formula 1 racing car and the first ever Concorde. He also picked up a cheque for £1500. The school also received £1000. He also won one of the Special Awards for 'Engineering for Safety and Security' for which he won another Trophy and £250 to add to his tally. Mr Gerard Savage, his Technology teacher, said that, 'Patrick was an excellent Ambassador for the Abbey. The Technology Department and indeed the entire School community are justifiably proud of his dedication and commitment to this project'. Mr Gerard Savage his Technology teacher and Mr. Sean Higgins, Technology Technician travelled to London with Patrick.



Patrick Burns with his prize winning project

TOP ELECTRONICS COMPANY VISIT ABBEY GRAMMAR TO PRESENT AWARDS



In the last edition of Slí na Mainistreach we reported the success of current year 11 pupils, Adam Magill and Mathew Mc Cartney at last year's BT Young Scientist and Technology exhibition in Dublin. During the last term both students received another major boost when three high profile electronic engineers took time out from their hectic schedule at Analogue Devices in Limerick, to travel to The Abbey Christian Brothers' Grammar School in Newry to present awards, meet staff and pupils and discuss travel arrangements with the two lucky pupils and their parents who have won a trip to America in the summer. Bill Hunt, Design Engineer Manager, Ann O'Sullivan, Process Engineering Manager and Mike O'Connor, Design Evaluation Engineer stayed in the Canal Court Hotel during their visit. They are one of the top Electronics companies in the world. They employ 1500 people at the Limerick site and 8500 worldwide. The Technology Department and Headmaster joined them on their arrival in Newry for a meal. This was an opportunity for everyone to relax and discuss educational and industrial issues and

concerns both in Northern Ireland and The Republic. During their visit to the Abbey they presented Adam and Matthew with the Trophy for The Analogue Devices Technology Award that they won at The ESAT Science and Technology Competition at the RDS in Dublin in January last. The school was also presented with a Cheque for £2,000-00 as part of this award. As part of their prize the two boys are travelling to America with their fathers and shall be guests of Analogue Devices. Mike O'Connor shall be travelling with them and his visit gave the boys and their parents a chance to discuss the travel arrangements which includes visiting electronics companies on both the East and West coast of the USA. Before the Engineers travelled back home they visited the Technology Department and looked at the type of work that was being done (including software packages, standard of design folders, and the influence of ICT in designing electronic circuits) spoke to pupils about their work and viewed the plans for the new school.

Creative Writing:

This issue of Slí na Mainstreach is featuring some articles and poems from the newly launched: "Crossings," a collection of literature written by Abbey Men, Past and Present.



A piece of autobiography based on a reading of "Cider With Rosie" by Laurie Lee.

The Attic Door

"You must never open it," said my brother, "Promise me you'll never open it."

"Bu-" I glanced back at the door. "I better not catch you up here again, Conor." Jack said, ignoring me. "Okay, okay." I went over to the attic ladder.

"And Conor, I mean it." It was mid-term and boredom had led my brother and me to the attic to see if we could find anything to quench our thirst for fun but instead I had found a small door behind the water pump. When I told Jack he became very strange and said not to go in. I asked him what was behind the mysterious door but he ignored me and told me to never to go in. He made me promise.

I couldn't sleep that night as my mind wandered back to that small door behind the water tank. At three o'clock I could wait no longer. I quietly lowered the attic ladder and tip-toed up it, cautious of waking anyone, especially Jack. Once up I crept towards the concealed door. As I approached it I had a momentary hesitation but eventually my curiosity got the better of me and I slowly opened the rickety door. What I saw in the small, gloomy room I couldn't believe; there were pictures and old newspaper articles littered around the room. I caught sight of the closest one; it read:

DRUNKARD MURDERS MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN IN ALLEYWAY

Heading: LOST

Each Saturday, my da would take me to the grandly titled 'Variety Market'. The market, known better for its shabbiness and its wheeler-dealers, was a veritable jungle to me. Once you were in, it was almost impossible to get out.

On entering, you were rapidly swallowed in a strange mixture of aromas, a concoction of burger vans, Kilkeel herrings and soggy antiques. The stallholders were amazing - an assortment of accents and languages; several flogging battered bicycles, tattered T-shirts, 'genuine' Burberry caps and jumbled junk. All at knockdown prices (of course).

Big Martha would stand at her traditional stall, harassing people to buy her 'quality Irish shpuds'.

"Half stone for a pound, can't beat it. C'mon, seven pounds for a quid!" She terrified me. She was as feminine as Lily Savage, barked like an old mutt and smelt of stale stout. A large woman, you had to circumnavigate her to avoid her.

I must have been five or six at the time. Da and I were on our usual route. Before venturing to the market, he'd drop into Dapper McAleavey's curio-shop. Junk-collecting, being a major addiction of my da's, he'd stop anywhere that had anything remotely collectable. His favourites were LPs, football programmes, books, photographs... anything others discarded, he probably collected. I felt like Steptoe's son.

We'd enter the market already laden with knickknacks picked up in Dapper's. The gates at the market entrance were unbelievably tall, taller even than da. Their swamp-green paint was peeling and their scaly, rusty skin was exposed to the cool winter air. For me, they were a climbing-frame, part of the jungle gym. I couldn't help but climb them, getting closer to the top each time I tried.

Da's first stop was Lyla's stall. Lyla was a white-haired, perma-tanned pensioner, still earning a few extra quid selling vulgar ornaments and women's tights. Nothing caught da's fancy.

After Lyla's stall, his next port of call was Eugene. Eugene, a toothless, woolly-hat wearing, chain-smoking, Shaftie would peddle da all the craic.

With his Falls Road accent and a gummy delivery, I could barely understand him. I could make out "All right wee man?" but that was the lot. He'd usually have something for da, but never for the right price. Da would haggle

Below the heading was a picture of my dad. My dad! I felt like vomiting. I felt angry. They had kept this a secret from me for eleven years! Telling me my dad was a good man when he was really a cold-blooded drunken murderer! My own mother had kept this entire thing a secret from me. And Jack! Jack had known all about this and still he didn't tell me the truth about something as big and important as this! I rushed out of the room, down the ladder and into mum's bedroom, "Why didn't you tell me?" I asked in a raised voice.

"What are you talking about Conor?" mum said as she turned on her bed-side lamp.

"Why didn't you tell me the truth about him?" I demanded.

"About who Conor, I don't know what your talk-"

"About dad!" I interrupted.

"Oh Conor, I'm sorry, I just couldn't pluck up enough courage to tell you."

"Yet you told Jack." I replied

"Jack is fifteen."

Eugene down, and down, until the price was right.

Once all the regular stalls were visited, to kill time we browsed for a few minutes. Eclectic Da stopped at a stall selling CDs of "Ireland's Finest Country Singers", with Daniel O'Donnell blasting eerily through the speakers.

From the corner of my eye, an illuminated, conspicuous-red stall flashed a welcome. It was a Manchester United Aladdin's Cave: hats, posters, towels, books, T-shirts, key fobs, pennants, pin badges, programmes, anti-Scouser bumper stickers, ten-inch models of Keano, Cantona, Giggsy, Sharpe, headbands, wristbands, assorted flags, footballs, teddy-bears, Fred the Red toys, scarves. All "official" Old Trafford commodities of course. I was in heaven. Not knowing where to start or where the stall ended, I was the child in the sweet shop. If I had enough money, I'd buy everything! I soon found myself lost amongst the Man U memorabilia, scanning every book, eyeing each shirt for size.

Still in a Man U rapture, I shuddered as a sharp breeze swept through me. The winter chill licked my neck - a scarf was exactly what the doctor ordered. A ravishing red scarf with snow-white tassel, endorsed by the King - Eric Cantona, sporting the Red Devil crest and a number 7, caught my eye. I rushed to da for a fiver. I couldn't wait until the scarlet scarf was wrapped warmly round my neck. But where was he?

I panicked. The first rush turned to a mad dash around the market. Like a headless chicken, I frantically searched every stall. Blinded by my own fear, I even bumped painfully into Big Martha. I prayed and hoped that I'd wake up and discover that this was all a horrible nightmare.

The nightmare continued. Deserted, abandoned, side-lined. Unfamiliar faces flew past me. Da had been gone so long; I couldn't even remember what he was wearing.

For what seemed like an eternity, I stood in the one spot, too afraid to move, too cold to search again.

Suddenly, red-faced da came bounding through the tunnel of the green gates, launched me in the air like the FA Cup, and swooped me over his shoulder like a half hundredweight of Kerr's Pinks. Between the expletives, I could make out "Thank Jaysus I found you!" He carried me triumphantly from the market, and whispered a warning in my ear, "Don't tell your mother son!"

Cathal MacDhaibheaid

"And I'm thirteen yet you still keep the biggest secret of my life from me."

"I really am sorry; Conor, I should have told you."

"Yeah, you should have." I stormed out of the room.

The next morning I woke up with half a mind not to talk to my mum at all but then realised she was the one who knew most about dad. I walked downstairs to find her in the kitchen making herself breakfast. "Did dad really die in a car accident or is that another secret you've kept from me?" I asked.

"Your father didn't die in a car accident Conor. After the murder he was imprisoned and he will be for the next sixty years - if he survives them." She replied.

I felt the anger I had felt when I saw the newspaper article rising up once again inside me like a phoenix arising once more from a flame. I was angry at dad, who did not seem like a father right now, I was angry at mum and I was angry at Jack. Just another lie about my father, crashing upon me like a brick wall, a dead end.

Stephen Grant

Music Review:

ONLY THE GOOD DIE YOUNG

"Great rock and roll is usually made by people who don't have a home. They're looking for some place to be, some place to go, some place to literally call their own."

This statement, made by the Senior Editor of Rolling Stone Magazine, David Fricke, was used to describe the majority of musicians that emerged from the "hippie" generation of the 1960's; a crowd of renegades and gypsies who would change the face of music forever. These gypsies included Jimi Hendrix, a black guitar hero who stunned the world with his reinvention of the electric guitar. He influenced a young, black, Irish man whose eyes had been opened to see the possibilities of what a black man could achieve in the music business.

Son to a Brazilian father and an Irish, Catholic mother, on August 20th 1949, Phil Lynott was born into an unfair world that would treat him badly throughout his childhood. In the mid 1960's, Lynott met drummer Brian Downey. He began singing and learning Bass Guitar. The duo, along with guitarist Eric Bell, formed Thin Lizzy in 1967.

Lynott now began to use his talent as a songwriter. His catalogue of songs expanded, and consisted of memorable compositions

about working class lovers, intergalactic jailbreaks and his native country. He brought Thin Lizzy through the ranks to be one of the most successful and influential bands of their time. Songs such as, "The Boys are back in Town," and, "Waiting for an Alibi," brought them to the World's attention and displayed an unknown reservoir of talent in Ireland, which eventually opened doors for bands like, "U2," and, "Stiff Little Fingers."

Thin Lizzy disbanded in 1983. Years later, when it looked as though a reunion was certain ... disaster struck. Like Hendrix, Lynott also died young during the height of his excess. He died on 4th January 1986 of heart failure and pneumonia.

Looking back, it's easy to see that he was a "hippie" in his own right. He united Catholics and Protestants together while in Thin Lizzy, and all in the name of music. However, he was different from most hippies. He had a home. He embraced his home country and created some of the greatest music of all time about his homeland. He was a poet, a storyteller, a rebel and a vagabond, but simply.... he was a Rocker who loved life and the sounds it contained.

Conor Hughes 61



Statue of Phil Lynott found on Grafton Street, Dublin

From an Orator

A great roar of approval,
Crackles forth towards the sky,
This spin artist in wool,
With a spark in his eye,
Bids me attempt, if I dare,
To regain my applause,
So I rise, as all stare,
And concoct my own clause.

The debate is on freedom,
On democracy's worth,
I am in opposition,
Subjected to mirth.
For beside me lie outcasts,
With skills non-existent,
And courage that lasts,
Only-barely an instant.

My words grate off each other
Like flint for a fire,
My arguments smoulder,
Their funeral pyre,
For those who sit silent,
Unable to scorn,
The votes cast astound,
And an orator born.

Philip McClory (Age 16)

My Dream

I want to be remembered for the rest of time,
As the person who fought against crime.
I want to be loved by everyone,
And let the innocent have good fun.

I want to play football like George Best,
Because he is better than all the rest.
I want to be as smart as Albert Einstein,
Or maybe be a lumberjack and cut down pine.

It is on football that I am very keen,
I can't until Hallowe'en.
All the ghosts and ghouls and stuff,
Or maybe zombies taking snuff.

Now I'm getting off the point,
It is nights that I want to anoint.
All my life I've had a dream,
Of paddling down a gentle stream.

I really, really love my life.

Eoin Hughes (Breffni 1)

Art News: More success for Paul in Schools Environmental Calendar Poster competition



Paul McAleenan (Or3) has had his work selected to feature in the Schools' Environmental Calendar 2008. He entered a competition issued by Newry & Mourne District Council and produced an extremely creative response to promoting recycling as a major environmental concern. Paul was invited to a special Prize Giving Event on Tuesday 13th November in the Sean Hollywood Arts Centre.

31 schools in the district entered the competition. A great number of 3rd year students entered and the council was very positive about the quality of entries. The standard was so high this year that they created 2 new categories: "Highly Commended" and "Commended". Connor Hogan (BR3), Aaron Maguire (OR3) & Ryan McCorry(OR3)



were each presented with "Highly Commended Certificates". Congratulations to all four boys and well done to all other students who took part in the competition.

The Real Estate Revolution

This year's Young Enterprise members, have one simple vision – to change the property market! Eugene McAteer, David Burns, Niall O'Donnell, Myles Gray, James Murphy and I have created Spektrum Property, a new and exciting property website that has been tailored to the local population. Our work extends the narrow estate agent market of Newry and Mourne into a much broader feature and focuses on saving the potential client thousands of pounds. Our customers will experience a highly proficient service, which will help you combine your own skills and preferences with our broad spectrum of expertise to sell your property in the fast-moving marketplace of the business world. To find out more information on our innovative and exciting project, please visit: <http://www.spektrum-property.com>

Paul Toner
61E



Pastoral Care: Annual 'love for life' Seminar highlights pupils' choice



On Wednesday October 3rd all Year 8 students were involved in an interactive workshop hosted by the 'Love for Life' team. The title of the workshop was 'Who's Choosing?', which looks at a number of issues around self-esteem and personal development. The presentation encourages young people to appreciate their own uniqueness and value. It identifies various influences and seeks to encourage pupils to make their own choices, based on positive influences with special emphasis given to friendships. It also looks at the consequences of engaging in risk taking behaviours. The presentation was part of the students' Personal Development module in Learning for Life and Work.

The Abbey choir get some practice time in Rome



Taking some time out



Sight seeing at the Trevi Fountain



Music: Abbey Choir Tour to Rome 2007

"Are we nearly there yet?" was the early call from the boys, but we had only just finished the pre-tour joint concert in Newry Cathedral with the Vigil Choir, and there was still one more fundraiser to go - bag-packing in M&S. Eventually we did arrive into the heat of Ciampino Airport, Rome, and took a short transfer to our accommodation. I had promised all in the party that the Palazzola was set in a piece of paradise, up in the mountains overlooking a volcanic lake and Castel Gandolfo, not only that the Palazzola had a swimming pool, games room, internet café, caves (with bats and lizards) to explore, and plenty of space for kicking a ball or catching a Frisbee. And the food! Three course lunches and dinners, al fresco (multo vino for the adults), and all Italian in style. Good company, cuisine and culture: the three 'C's of life can't be beaten.

Oh yes, what about the music? We sung a couple of Masses and performed a major concert in San Eusatchio (a regular concert venue in the centre of Rome). Although the audience was small we were joined by three Christain Brothers who are working in Rome. We saw sights such as Ancient Rome (the Forum & Colosseum), burial grounds (Catacombs & the impressive Fosse Ardeantino), not to mention places such as Trevi Fountain, Pantheon, St Peter's, and all in

at least 40 degrees heat! With lots of gelta, aqua potabile, and sun cream, we all survived and returned home with happy memories of a trip never to be repeated, except perhaps in 2009!

DW



Down to business!

Golf:

Golfing Super Star shares some tricks of the trade



Jack and Danny pictured with Ryder Cup hero Darren Clarke.

Two Abbey pupils, 4th year student Danny Mullan and 5th year Jack Gilseman, were involved golf-coaching course hosted by Darren Clarke. Both students were selected from last year's Abbey Junior Golf Team, which took part in the Darren Clarke Schools' Golf League. They participated in the coaching workshop, hosted at the Moy Valley GC in Co. Kildare, and were able to avail of free coaching from one of the world's top golfers. The event took place on Sunday 11th November and the boys received a number of free golf gifts, including caps and golf balls.



Five-A-Side: Year 8 Trophies Presented

Tennis: Abbey Teams Claim Victory in Newry and Mourne Schools' Tennis Championship

On the 19th October schools from Newry, Warrenpoint and Kilkeel took part in the Newry and Mourne Tennis Championships organised by Sean Sloan, Senior Teacher in Our Lady's Grammar School and Chairman of Newry Tennis Club which hosted the event held on the newly laid courts on the Warrenpoint Road. There were two competitions for boys; U-18s and U-15s.

The Abbey under-15 A team: Conor Campbell, Conor Richmond, Jonathan O'Hare and Henry McLoughlin.

The under-15 B team: David Richmond, Kevin Hegarty, Stephen Grant and Matt Kinsella.

The Abbey under-15 A team made it to the final in a close encounter with St Colman's, edging them out by one crucial game to claim the Cup. The pairing of Conor Campbell and Conor Richmond achieved maximum points to help the team to victory.

There were also two Abbey teams entered in the Senior Tournament. The A-team consisted of Ben Reynolds, David Cunningham, Jack Gilsenan and Jamie Campbell.

The B team involved Jonathan Rafferty, Ethan Toner, Kian Rhoopidur and Féilim O'Connor.

The three top-seeded teams were The Abbey, St Colman's and Newry High with other schools such as St Mark's and St Louis. In the first round of matches in the round-robin event, the Abbey A played Abbey B with Abbey A being victorious. They also defeated St Mark's and St Louis on their way to a showdown, with Newry High needing to win to prevent Newry High taking the trophy. Fortunately Abbey's Jack Gilsenan and Jamie Campbell came from two games down to snatch victory from the brink of defeat, and by winning the overall match put the Abbey top of the group going into the last game. The final match was against deadly rivals and favourites...St Colman's. This was a must win for the Abbey in order to lift the Newry and Mourne Championship. Formidable pair, Ben Reynolds and David Cunningham, convincingly beat Kevin O'Kane and Jackson McEvoy to ensure overall victory!

The Minister of Education Catriona Ruane, Newry Democrat CEO Kieran Maloney and Mayor Michael Cole presented the cup to the proud Abbey captain Ben Reynolds. It's great to see that tennis is alive and well in the Abbey!



Basketball: Abbey back in competitive Action

The Abbey school basketball team started up this year after a disappointing year last year. We started the basketball and then it stopped after a few weeks. This year, however, was different as we had a new coach and a lot more people joining up. When I heard the news that it was starting I was really happy. We started off one Thursday in the school hall. Not that many people showed up. As the weeks went on more arrived and it got better. The problem was the size of the hall.

We were put in the league and started our first under 16 match in Magherafelt. We lost by a large amount but there was only room for improvement. We started to get better as the weeks went by. We started to train with the under 19's and we would train twice or three times a week.

We really started well in our next match against a team from Belfast. Both teams were excellent but, unfortunately, both lost by a single point. I thought we were better in both games but just lost it in about the 3rd quarter but we played some great basketball. We then moved our training to the Sports Centre to give us more experience and to help us on a full size court. I thought it was far better. Our coach, Mrs Mc Clean, was only helping our team improve and help everyone individually. After that even more people joined and our under 16's now have a squad of 24! We headed to Derry for a double match with both under 16's and 19's playing. Both teams lost, in fairness, to really good team. The under 19's were beaten by a margin while the under 16's had a more close game.

I can see that every one in the team is really enjoying it and this can only help the school's team in years to come.

NIALL BYRNE S1A

Abbey Rugby: First Tournament Victory secured with 4 wins



Rugby is beginning to avalanche at the Abbey with U16 & U18 squads regularly training and playing matches and involving over 60 boys. Next term we hope to work with U12's and build on the success they had last year. There has

been greater liaison and support from Newry Rugby Club involving use of facilities, training and fixtures, with the benefit of more boys now joining their local club. Abbey rugby has greatly benefited from the coaching and organisational skills of Hamish Fraser, the URFU Development Officer.

The Under 16s opened their season with back-to-back fixtures against St Colman's and then St Paul's with two excellent victories. They then took part in The Pollock Cup Subsidiary Competition winning 4 and drawing 1, ending up victors of the competition. The team was led admirably by their Captain Mike McGovern and Vice-Captain Darren Marshall who also provided two tries and numerous conversions. A brace of tries also came from John-Benedict Farrell, Mike McCann and Cathal McNally, but it was the excellent team work that provided the victory and the solid defending.

The Under 18s won their opening game of the season against St Colman's with a comfortable 12

- 5 victory. The forwards are much improved on last year and provided a lot more quick ball allowing the silky handling skills of the backs to shine, producing glimpses of champagne rugby. The focus then moved onto a 7's competition held at Armagh Rugby Club for developing schools and despite much exhausting practice and some competent 7's playing on the day, the boys were squeezed out in the semi-finals with a try in the dying seconds to lose 0 - 5 to our local rivals. The commitment in the tackling by Declan Price and the Captain, Finbar Bradley, was outstanding but, unfortunately, not enough. The U18's look forward to the second half of the season with great expectation.

Thanks to Exitex, a local company and sponsor of our shirts, we now have our own match kit and training bibs. The New Year looks good and, as always, let's aim for fast flowing rugby and more victories!

DW (Coach of U16s & U18s)