

# Bish E-Zine Summer 2021

Here comes the sun...

Dear Friends of the Bish,

As another school year draws to a close, perhaps the strangest we have seen, I would like to invite you to view and enjoy our latest ezine. I take this opportunity to look back at the high points of the last 9 months and remember all of our friends and families who suffered bereavements during this past 12 months. I remember particularly former colleague Eugene Dunleavy who passed away early in 2021, Patrician Brothers' Br. Cormac Commins and Br. Linus Walker who also passed away, may they rest in peace.

This has been a year like no other, yet we still are able to celebrate the milestones of the year in our ezine. We celebrated our 6th years significant achievement of completing 5/6-years in the Bish this week. We were able to bring the group together, in a socially distanced informal gathering, to present each individual 6th year pupil with a number of mementos of their time with us.

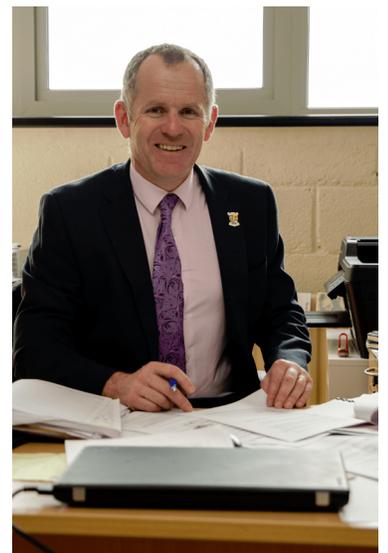
This month also saw our first ever Bish Arts Festival "Buzz at the Bish" take place. It certainly showcased the talents of both our students and staff in an environment that was very different than we had been used to. The words of Phillida Eves, Artist Creative Associate, Arts Council of Ireland, described the festival best; "I honestly have never felt and witnessed such a genuine sense of empowerment, taking of responsibility and pride that the lads had in the Buzz at the Bish. I heard numerous boys saying that it was the best week of their time in the school, the most fun and that they had loved it all."

The pictures below certainly give a good sense of the fun involved. It brought a piece of normality to Nuns' Island after a very different year. Our thanks go out to all of our Creative Schools team, very capably lead by Ms Nic Aoidh and also Ms Connolly and indeed all of the Bish staff who were involved in supporting the successful running of the festival.

This was the year that school buildings closed, again, after Christmas. Teachers and pupils immediately set about running an on-line timetable that matched exactly our in-person provision. It worked much better than we could have hoped for, although nothing matches face to face daily interactions. We had the incremental reintroduction of pupils and teachers back into the Bish from March 1st, each of those small steps were celebrated. Our final term, since Easter, was a very positive conclusion to the last 14 months where Covid-19 dominated. There have been a number of positive developments in recent weeks, please God that will continue over the summer months. I look forward to welcoming all of our students back to Nuns' Island in late August. I wish our graduating 6th year class well in their upcoming Leaving Cert exams. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our Bish teachers and staff for all of the work they do on a daily basis to look after our Bish students and give them every opportunity to succeed.

Have a restful and enjoyable summer. Enjoy the photos.

John Madden



# RECONNECTING

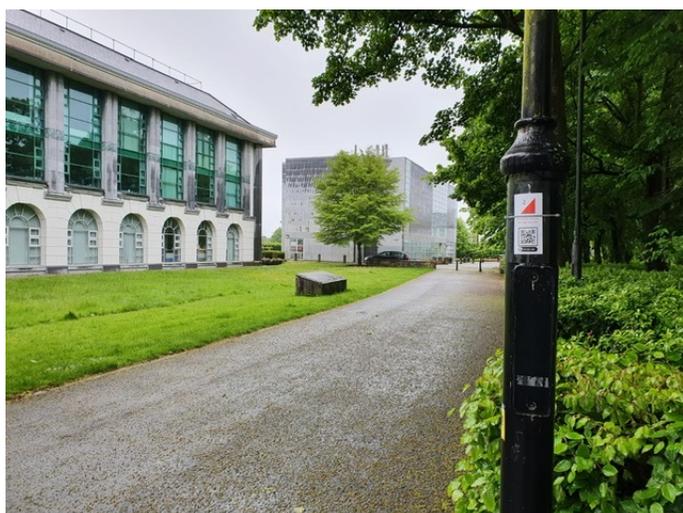


We thought it was important following lockdown to encourage the lads to reconnect when they came back to school. All students had a Wellbeing hour where they enjoyed a treat in the sun. The hot chocolates went down well.

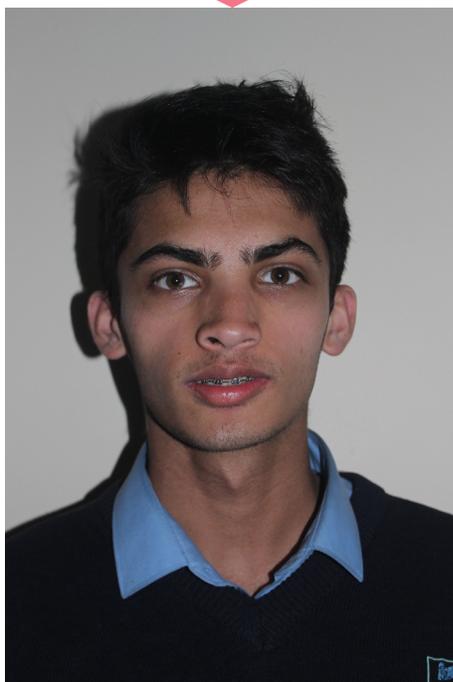


# TRANSITION YEAR

Our TYs made the best of the remaining weeks in school with workshops from Whizz Kids and a day of orienteering around the city where they had to seek out QR codes in teams. No day would be complete without plenty of food as well.



# NUIG EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIPS



Lovely to hear that two of our former students received Excellence Scholarships this year from NUIG. Ashik Alihi (Class of 2020) and Aaron Browne (Class of 2019). Well done to both.

## ALUMNI



Two incredible former students. On the left is Damien Browne who is currently scaling Mount Everest and on the right is Tadhg Leader who is living the dream and playing American football. You never know where life will take you!

# GAISCE

Lockdown proved to be a busy time for many students who made the most of it and completed community, personal and physical activities to achieve their bronze Gaisce awards. A fantastic achievement - well done to all. We will have presentations for the current TY Gaisce class in September.



## SHARE THE LOAD CYCLE AGAINST SUICIDE

Huge congratulations and well done to Ross Bradley and Adam MacDonnchadha (3rd Years) who took on the 'Share the Load' Cycle Against Suicide Challenge cycling more than 670km throughout the month of May. The buddy cycle replaced the annual main cycling event which we were due to be a part of this year. Incredibly proud of these two students. Fantastic ambassadors in the promotion of this great cause.



# TRÓCAIRE



Huge congratulations and well done to the TY students and Ms. Holden who organised a No Uniform Day raising €1000 for Trócaire. Pictured are some of the students from TY, John Madden (Principal), Ruth Holden and Marie Anne Michel from Trócaire.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Great to see so many of our students enthusiastic about volunteering their time and looking out for their community, We had a few class groups out doing community clean ups thanks to the support of Galway City Council and An Taisce. They provided us with Hi-Viz jackets as well as bags, gloves and pickers. When no end of year trips could occur, it is a testament to our students that they wanted to do some good in their locality instead and were happy to get out in the fresh air. Well done to all involved. It is important for us all to be mindful of our surroundings.



# HEADSTRONG WALKS FROM DARKNESS INTO LIGHT



4.30a.m we met at the school and walked along the Prom from Darkness into Light in aid of Pieta House. The Headstrong Team are a group of students who promote positive mental health in our school and as ambassadors, they represent our whole school community. We know that many students walked that morning and we want to applaud you all for this. The Headstrong Committee have made many suggestions and implemented a number of them around the school following the layout for Cycle Against Suicide's Headstrong Programme. This year, despite podding, restrictions and lockdown, they organised our Remembrance Tree in November, highlighting the theme of Grief. They also created a number of PowerPoints and display boards which were exhibited around the school. There are many plans for September to facilitate more interaction with students through peer support. Well done and thank you to Daragh, Conor, Shane, Stephen and Evan.

## P.E. MINDFULNESS

It's been a difficult year for the P.E department planning out a year of activities for all groups with the current restrictions in place. Running and badminton have been the covid friendly activities of the year but they have also encouraged mindfulness as well. The Headspace app is a fantastic free resource that can be used to help alleviate anxiety and create a sense of calm. As you can see from the photograph, our students really embraced it.



# BUZZ AT THE BISH

And what a buzz it was. 3 days of arts and creativity including sculpture, painting, skill challenges, karaoke, outdoor cinema, bee instruction, photography...the list goes on. Trojan work put into this by our Creative Schools Team led by Ms. NicAoidh and Ms. Connolly. Wonderful to see so much colour and life in the school after a difficult year due to Covid-19 restrictions.









# CLASS AWARDS

Well done and congratulations to students in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year who were presented with awards for 'Most Diligent Student' and 'School Spirit' awards by their Year Heads.



Smiles all round from our first years!

1A - Most Diligent Student: Oisín Costello and School Spirit: Kevin Halligan.

1B - Most Diligent Student: Alastair Morton and School Spirit: Scott Davitt.

1C - Most Diligent Student: Andrew Finnerty and School Spirit: Aron Ellis Gurgurov.

1D - Most Diligent Student: Adam Sultan and School Spirit: Michael Monaghan.

1E - Most Diligent Student: Eoin Lennon and School Spirit: Tom Fagan.

# CLASS AWARDS



2A - William Duggan (School Spirit) and Jaineel Senthilkumar (Most Diligent Student)



2B - Mark McSweeney (School Spirit) and Eoin Cleary (Most Diligent Student)



2C - Sean Bates (Most Diligent Student) and Emmet Walsh (School Spirit)



2D - Rory Carroll (School Spirit) and Daniel Lynch (Most Diligent Student)



2E - Eoin Cunningham (School Spirit) and Oisín Hoban (Most Diligent Student)



2F - Edward O' Reilly (Most Diligent Student) and Sean Nolan (School Spirit)



3A - Michael Salmon (Most Diligent Student) and Luka Chinchaladze (Absent) (School Spirit)



3B - Adam MacDonnchadha (School Spirit) and Ewan McCaffrey (Most Diligent Student)



3C - Joseph O' Leary (School Spirit) and Killian Murphy (Most Diligent Student)



3D - Finn Keady (Most Diligent Student) and Ciaran Walsh (Absent) (School Spirit)

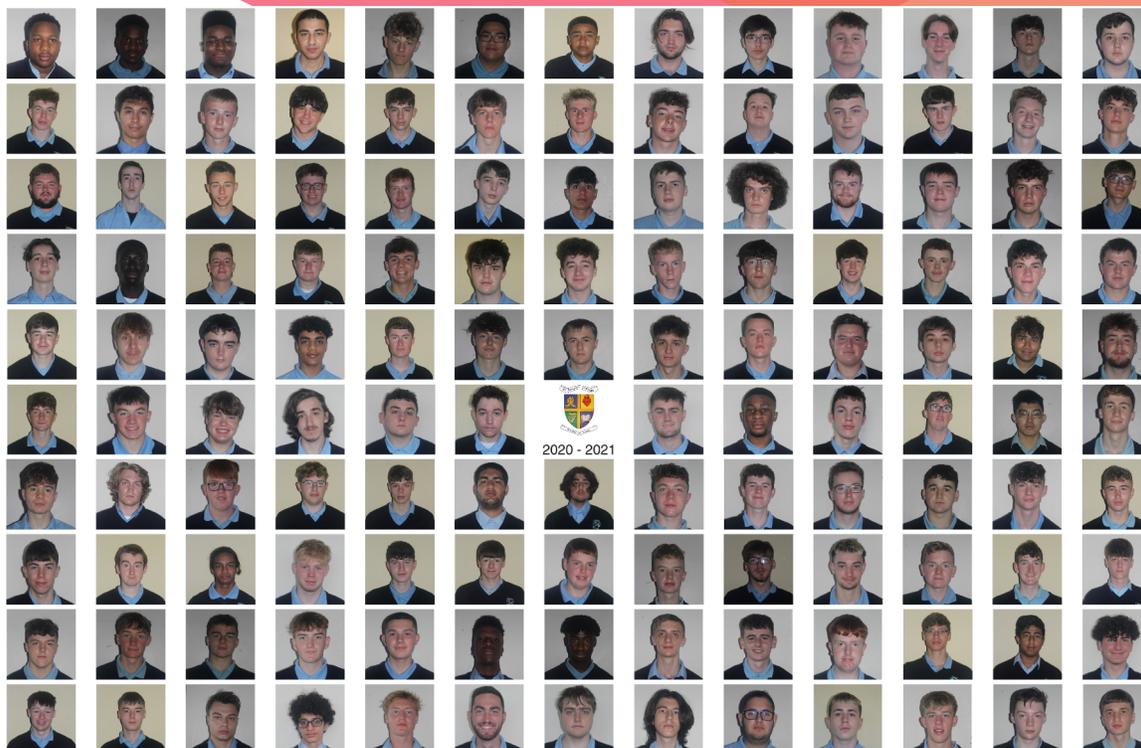


3E - Darragh McDonagh (Most Diligent Student) and Cian Melis Gonzales (School Spirit)



3E - Daniel Philpott (School Spirit) and Harry Wall (Most Diligent Student)

# GRADUATING CLASS OF 2021



When we were first faced with the pandemic and the first school closure in March 2020, the focus was on the 6th years and supporting them through their Leaving Cert however I distinctly remember thinking 'what about our fifth years'? How will they cope? How will they be affected? It's hard to believe that's more than a year ago and the environment is so different to what we once knew. Not only did you miss 'in school' time in 5th year but you also missed being in school after Christmas this year as well. And how did you all respond? You rallied. You logged on, you used Teams, you engaged with the online platforms. It wasn't the same, we'll all admit that, but you did it nonetheless. We took the soccer balls away (we're really sorry about that!) and the hurls. You wore masks, you sanitised your hands (with a bit of prompting), you stayed 2 meters apart (with a few reminders) and you did it all with smiles on your faces. You continued to be the amazing, incredible lads that you've always been. You said please and thank you. You put the heads down and you got on with things. It's not to say it didn't affect you because we know it did and it still does. When you should be together celebrating your graduation in the Augustinian Church, you are apart.

The word resilience gets used a lot in modern day society. Building resilience. Building coping strategies. Being resilient doesn't mean things don't get you down. It doesn't mean you don't struggle. What it does mean is that when you're faced with a challenge, with adversity, you look at your support network. You look at how you can move forward. Class of 2021 you are resilient. You have struggled but you continue to fight. You continue to ask for help. You continue to try. And I'm in awe of you for this. At 17/18 years of age I don't think I had that kind of resilience.

Graduating secondary school is an incredible stepping stone in your life and even more so during a pandemic. In the words of Robert Frost 'Men work together... whether they work together or apart'. You have been separated and apart from everything familiar to you and yet you have stayed united as a group. Please be mindful of this going forward. The words of our motto 'take care of one another' are more important now than ever before. Look out for one another. Reach out to someone if they seem quieter than usual. When you go on to college or work, look out for the people around you. Be mindful of others. Be mindful of yourselves. And when times get tough, remember your support network; your parents, guardians, families, friends and teachers who are there in the background, encouraging you to continue onwards, comforting you when you need help and congratulating and celebrating with you when you achieve your goals.

We are so proud of the men you have become. Congratulations Class of 2021.

# GRADUATION



Massive congratulations to all our graduates.

While it was not possible to have our Graduation Mass together, we had a lovely outdoor celebration with our 6th Years in the Pres and then streamed the Mass online. The photos above are of our 7 award winners: Liam Melody (STEM Award), Oisín Porter (Eamon Kelly Memorial Award), Daniel O'Flaherty (Eugene Dunleavy Sports Award), Mark Regan (Spirit of the Bish Award), Cian Murphy (The O' Connor Cup Award for Outstanding Personal Achievement), Stephen Keenan (The Arts and Culture Engagement Award) and Dara Colleran (The Brother Angelus Moore Cup for Academic Excellence).

# THROUGH THE YEARS... (BEFORE COVID)



We hope you have enjoyed this snapshot of the Bish. All our Ezines can be found on our website:



[www.bish.ie](http://www.bish.ie)

Go to the Parents/Students Tab and scroll to Downloads.

