



HILL TOP NEWS



91st Edition
October 2022

A Newsletter from St John's College

St John's welcomes its new Year 8 students



Halloween Holidays



Friday 28th October -
Friday 4th November
(inclusive)

SCHOOL DETAILS

PRINCIPAL:

Ms C Doherty

SCHOOL ADDRESS:

37 Omagh Road

Dromore

Co Tyrone

BT 78 3AL

Telephone: 02882 898284





Erin Slevin, Shauna Teague & Ava Teague



Megan McGirr and Molly McWilliams pictured with Ms Doherty Principal and Mr Nelson, Head of English



Ryan Campbell, Oisín Campbell, Ms Doherty Principal, Nathan Hunter & James Daly



Kiera Kelly pictured with Ms Kelly & Ms McSorley



RESULTS SUMMER 2022



Conall Quinn with his teacher Mr Nelson

It was an absolute delight to welcome back our Year 12 students for their results in August. We are immensely proud of each and every one of our students and wish them all great success in the future.



Sinead Barrett & Orla Maguire checking their results



Niamh Carney pictured with her mum Una



Molly McManus celebrating with her mum Andrea & Cathlin Leonard with her mum Una



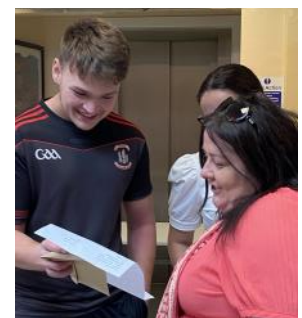
James Daly, Pearse Marlow & Paschal Donnelly



Edward Liggett, James Daly & Conor McWilliams



Ryan & Oisín Campbell



Marcus Kelly pictured with Ms McLaughlin

Year 8 celebrate Induction Day

On Thursday 6th October our Year 8 Induction Night took place with our New Year 8 students and their parents. This was a liturgical celebration organised by Year 8 Form Teachers. Each student had the opportunity to light their own personalised candle. Thank you to our readers and everyone that took part.



EA REACH Programme with Year 9's

REACH - Resilience Education Assisting Change to Happen is a dedicated youth work programme which supports students, teachers and parents within schools across Northern Ireland to improve the emotional health and wellbeing outcomes for our children and young people.

Our Year 9's began the six-week programme on Tuesday 18th October led by Kelley Fox McNally. Their first workshop involved lots of "getting to know you" activities like "Heads or Tails", "Which would you prefer". A lot of fun was had by all.



GCSE PE ORIENTEERING

Congratulations to our Year 11 GCSE PE class who completed their Orienteering assessment on Wednesday 21st September at the Palace Stables Demesne Armagh. We had a beautiful day out and the students all worked very hard on the day for their practical assessment.



Year 10 Photography

In Art and Design, Year 10 got to go out into the countryside to take photos using their own phones. Back in school they then manipulated these images in Photoshop.



SHARED EDUCATION 2022

Shared Education has started this year again for our Year 8 students. They will be working alongside students from 3 local primary schools: Tummery PS, Dromore PS and Drumlish PS.

They have started working in mixed groups on Thursday afternoons at St John's. One group will be working with Mr Logue in Technology, where they are manufacturing Bird houses. Another group will be learning about and practicing Healthy eating in Home Economics with Mrs Murphy and the final group will be with Mr McCrystal in the gym where they will be covering a unit called 'Getting to know you'.

We look forward to seeing the finished products and learning taking place throughout the year.



Pollination Grant 2022-2023



Since winning the Pollinating Garden Grant in June – we have put the money to great use. Necessary gardening equipment was purchased such as a lawn mower, power washer, spades, hose pipes, garden gloves etc. Mountain Hill Contracts, Trillick, cleared the garden of overgrown shrubs, wild bushes. They resurfaced the garden with soil, built up the pond, re-laid the paths and floored the greenhouse. All in preparation for the creation of a more accessible space for the whole school.

Our afterschool gardening club have already started to plant flowers and vegetables that will attract a host of pollinating wildlife. Areas for picnic tables and benches for class groups have been planned and hope to be installed soon.

Overall, this grant is a brilliant opportunity to enhance the grounds as well as doing our bit for the environment and climate change. We now have a blank canvas which we will continue to develop over the coming months.

Photos below show the garden before and after the renovations. We hope to reveal more changes next year.

BEFORE

AFTER



Year 12 Young Enterprise (Study Skills)

We were delighted to welcome Young Enterprise back into St Johns to lead Year 12 in their successful programme - Study Skills.

This course develops our pupils understanding of what types of learners they are and what strategies and techniques they can use in preparation for exams.

Thanks to Rebecca for leading a successful session. We look forward to more of these sessions throughout the year.



Year 8 Townland Project.

The Year 8's were kept busy over a few weeks studying about townlands and how their townlands derived their names. Most placenames in Ireland are adaptations of the Irish names to English phonology and spelling.

The students presented their townlands in a poster showing the original Irish name of their townland and what it means.



**St John's College
Adult Night Classes
2022**

Contact the school office if you are interested in any of the above night classes. All classes are subject to numbers and are on a first come, first served basis.
02882898284

Limited places left on all courses!

Extended Schools Programme



Gardening Club

Our afterschool Gardening club started on Tuesday 11th October. We have 12 club members from Years 8, 9 and 11.

Clare-Louise Doyle runs the club every Tuesday 3.30pm – 4.30pm and it will continue for another 4 weeks this term, starting up again after Christmas.

The pupils have planted scallions and cauliflowers. In the new year, we hope to have our polytunnel installed with raised beds for planting vegetables and flowers.

HALLOWEEN STORIES

'Pumpkin Carving' by Sean Robertson

Last Halloween, John moved into his new house in a little town called Burb. It was a quiet town with friendly neighbours. John had spent the day unpacking and had nothing in the house to eat or drink. He decided to walk to the nearest shop so he could find his way around his new town. In the shop he picked up the local newspaper called 'Burb Breaking News'. He was horrified to read about a local killer on the loose, nicknamed Pumpkin Man. John was shocked that this perfect little town could also be home to a serial killer.

A few days passed and John gradually forgot about the news article and began to settle into life in his new town. After a long day John wearily plodded up the stairs to bed and just as he was switching off his light he heard the most blood-curdling scream. It seemed to come from the neighbour's house. He quickly looked out of his window but couldn't see anyone. All he saw were the Halloween decorations hanging brightly in the street. He then heard the sound of leaves crunching outside in his garden. He could feel the dread growing inside him and his heart was pounding so hard he thought it would explode. John grabbed the baseball bat from his room and ran downstairs to the front door and peered through the spyhole. The door got the most violent thump. John wasn't sure if it was the sound of his heart or someone actually at the door, but he still could see nothing outside.

Within seconds the living room window smashed and a pumpkin rolled across the floor. It was carved with the most evil face. John was frozen with fear, all he could do was watch as someone climbed through the window and stood in front of him. As their eyes locked, gruesome bloodshot eyes peered at John through a pumpkin head. Blood dripped from a machete like an ice-cream melting on a sunny day. He began to walk towards John, raising the dripping machete. John ran upstairs and locked himself in the bathroom. He could hear the footsteps, slow but very heavy on the stairs. John tried the window but knew it was too small for him to climb through. At that minute he noticed a small door in the ceiling; was this the attic door he wondered? He quickly climbed on the edge of the bath and opened the hatch. As John climbed into the attic, the machete sliced the door like an onion. Suddenly the worst pain he had ever experienced shot through his body. He looked down to see his foot lying in the bath below him. The blood was spurting from this leg like a waterfall and he eventually lost his grip.

The only thing left to say about that night

It wasn't the pumpkin that was carved that Halloween!

'Emily'

One spine chilling Halloween night, my best friend Clodagh came over. We were just lying on my bed talking about stuff. The rain was pouring down heavily on the windows and the trees were dancing in the wind. Clodagh came up with the best idea. We felt in a spooky mood so we decided to go to the shop and get a doll. We watched the movie 'Annabelle' and thought it would be an innovative idea to see if the doll would move. The rain stopped so we headed off to this mysterious antique doll shop I always walked by. Every time I walk past this shop, I feel like the dolls are staring at me. As we went in through the door, it sounded like a screeching child wanting its mummy. I got a feeling that made me uncomfortable.

My mum called me and Clodagh down for dinner. We left Emily on the bed and went downstairs. We were enjoying our soup when we heard banging coming from upstairs. We thought it was my brother, but I remembered that my brother was out with his friends. Clodagh and I looked at each other with horror on our faces. We ran upstairs and looked on the bed. She's gone. My blood went cold. I told Clodagh to look in the bathroom and I would go look in my brother's room.

Emily was nowhere to be seen. I shouted 'Clodagh!'. She didn't respond. I walked into the bathroom. I didn't see Clodagh anywhere. As I move to leave the bathroom, the door handle won't work. The lights flickered on and off. I thought 'This is all a dream, it can't be real'. I turned to see Emily and Clodagh, and a knife with blood dripping at the end of it. And I realised: I'm *not* dreaming.

Cara- Rose McCloughan



My Halloween Story

It was a perfect day for a boat trip. The sun was shining, diving equipment packed and a picnic basket ready for the trip. My phone rang. It was James telling me he couldn't come anymore. I decided to go on ahead alone. It would be a pity to miss the day away. I sailed for a few hours and thought to stop for a break. It was almost evening now; I should head back but the water looked lovely so I jumped in. I dived deeper and deeper down. Suddenly the water started to rush around me. What was happening?!

I was struggling to breath, my oxygen was running out fast. I couldn't call for help, who would hear me, I was in the middle of the ocean! I started to swim to the top of the water... but something was holding me down. Panicking, I took one last deep breath and with all of my strength I started to kick my legs and pull my arms through the water as quickly as possible. Something started to move below me. The sea was pitch black and cold as ice. I couldn't see anything, but I knew whatever it was big and strong. I have always heard the stories of the myth of the sea serpent. It is said that on Halloween night it swims the ocean feeding on all the people's souls that dare to enter its sea. Only one person has ever made it out alive, an old sailor, named Sam Fletcher. Some say that the serpent let him live to tell the tale about the night the Peggy sank...

There was a storm like never seen before. The ship lost its way and ended up lost at sea on Halloween night. Sam told the story of how the sea serpent's shrieks could be heard for miles before the attack, as if it to taunt the sailors. What happened that night can only be described as something from your worst nightmares. A snake-like creature rose high out of the deep black sea with eyes as red as coals from a fire, hundreds of razor-sharp teeth, and a scream that literally made the skin fall off the sailors' bones. It was a terrifying night. They say the ghosts of "The Peggy's" sailors that died that night can still be seen whaling in a shipwrecked boat as it crashes through the waves. Sam was found weeks later by a passing ship; he was only 27 at the time but his hair had turned completely white from the fear. He was still in so much shock he could hardly speak.

I am so tired now my body is aching, but I must keep swimming. Out of the corner of my eye I see a flash then one more, then another- what is happening? I am almost out of air now, have I died? Has this beast got me? I close my eyes, await my fate ...

"CAOLAN!" screamed the voice from downstairs. I woke with a jump "Are you ready for school?" A dream. It had all been a dream.

Caolan Donnelly



HALLOWEEN STORIES

It was a dark stormy night near All Hallows' Eve. The ground was wet and the wind was strong. All around us the houses creaked and banged as the wind was getting stronger. It was dark inside because the electric went off a couple of minutes before it permanently went off because of the lightning outside.

My wife wasn't well and so she was sleeping up in her bed. She hadn't been well for a few days and the doctor had just been and told her to rest. I heard a crying noise outside, so I went to see what it was, but there was nothing there.

I remembered that I had to feed the animals, so I then I heard the strange noise again. It was louder thought it was the cat, but she was nowhere to be could hear it again. I couldn't hear anything so I it so I could see.



went back inside to get the food for the animals and this time, so I ran outside to see what it was. This time I seen. I fed the animals and stayed outside to see if I went back inside, got a candle out of the drawer and lit

I was about to fall asleep and then I heard the I could see anything. I heard the noise again and it I slowly opened the big creaking door, getting more and more nervous as I opened it. Something was not feeling right! I looked in the shed, but I saw nothing until I went to leave and I saw something in the corner of my eye. I froze in fear. There was someone standing in the corner of the shed. It was a woman wearing a white ragged robe. I called out for her to leave but she didn't move. She was crying and wailing. I told her to stop crying and to calm down so I could talk to her, but she didn't stop crying and shouting. I soon realised that she was not from this world. She was glowing and as she moved her feet were not touching the ground. She was floating in the air and moving closer to me, her wailing getting louder and louder until I couldn't even hear. I got so scared and ran for my life. I thought she was coming for me, and my life was over. I could feel my heartbeat in my chest. It felt like it was going to stop beating. I ran into the house and up the stairs. I knew I had just witnessed a BANSHEE and what that might mean for my family. When I got upstairs my dear wife had passed away. **Sophia Devlin**

Halloween Story by Turlough McManus

It was a cold dark night. The wind was howling and the rain was beating against my window as I lay in bed trying to get to sleep. There was a weird crying noise coming from outside. I was scared but I was also curious. I got out of bed and peeked between the gap in the curtains, but it was hard to see what was going on with all the rain. I could see a light in the distance flashing on and off. The crying noise grew louder. It was as if someone was trying to send me a message to tell me that they were coming for me. I slid onto the floor and crept back towards the bed, shaking with fear, hoping and praying that nobody could get me. The next I knew, I woke up to the sun shining and I realised it was all a big bad dream!



HALLOWEEN NIGHT

Whoosh! Wham! BANG!!! What was that? We all stopped what we were doing and stood still for a few seconds. 'It's just the wind' said dad, breaking the silence. 'A branch on the tree must've hit the window'. Ok. 'Calm down' I tell myself, it's nothing to worry about. I don't like this weather. I don't like this time of year. I don't even like Halloween. Outside, the street is filled with the noisy excitement of children, all dressed up in fancy dress costumes, happily running from door-to-door shouting 'Trick or treat'. As I look out of the window, I wonder how they don't notice. Why don't they hear what I hear? The screeching whistle of the wind, the moaning and groaning of the trees, even the battering of the pelting rain doesn't dampen their spirits. I wish I didn't hear the warning sounds that something bad was about to happen.

'We're off' shouted mum. 'Are you sure you don't want to come with us?' 'Yes, I'm sure' I said, 'have a good time!' I don't want to go to the fireworks display this year. All that whizzing and fizzing, popping and banging. Instead, I curl up on the sofa. I turn on the tv and search for something to watch. A comedy film, I think. Something light-hearted and jolly that will lift my mood. I pull the curtains and reassure myself that I'm safe. I'm in my own home where the smells of the Halloween treats calm me down. 'Pumpkins, spice and all things nice' I say out loud as though I'm comforting someone else. I laugh at myself and realise my feelings are just my mind playing tricks.

Thump! Wallop! Slam! Oh no. It's happening, isn't it? And who is talking to me? What are those mutterings? Why is someone whispering? Where are they? My heart is beating so fast it feels like it's going to come out of my chest. 'Be brave' I tell myself. You need to go to the kitchen and see what's causing that racket. I open the door with a shaking hand, slowly, very slowly, afraid of what's on the other side. What a mess! Cupboard doors are swinging open. Cups and plates are being flung across the floor. It's all happening so fast, everything is spinning, the ear-piercing sounds of smashing and crashing is too much to bear. I put my hands to my ears and close my eyes. I think I might pass out. Everything goes black.

'We're home!' I hear my mum's voice through the darkness. I open my eyes. They feel groggy and everything is blurry. Then I see my mum smiling down at me, laughing that I can never watch a film all the way to the end without falling asleep. It was all a dream.

Annie McGurran

