

# Cathedral Concert!



Our school's Band & Choir enjoyed a night to remember at St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, recently. They were lucky enough to be asked to perform at Action Cancer's 'Sound of Action' Christmas concert on Thursday 6th December, alongside choirs from schools throughout Northern Ireland. The event was hosted by Q Radio's Ibe Sesay, with all money raised going towards funding counselling and complimentary therapy services for children affected by cancer from the age of 5 and above.

Danielle McVeigh (12SC) said that "it was amazing, singing in the Cathedral. All the other choirs were so good, and I felt so nervous when it was our turn. I'm proud of how we performed though – I definitely think we held our own!" Jude Moore (also 12SC) added that "it was an absolute privilege to sing at this concert – I know I will never forget the experience".

Miss Hynds, who was lucky enough to be in the audience, said that "the pupils can be very proud of themselves. Saintfield High School's choir and band sounded amazing! I particularly enjoyed the jazzy version of 'White Christmas' – it brought the house down. Thank you so much to Mrs Birt and Mrs McMordie for their continued dedication to music in our school."



## SAINTFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we end Term 1, and close 2018, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your on-going support. Saintfield High School has continued to make great progress in many areas, and there has been a great deal to celebrate since September 2018. Our hard work has been rewarded by the many personal and academic accomplishments of our boys and girls, and they have been a credit to you and our learning community. I hope you enjoy reading about all the rich and varied experiences our pupils have had the opportunity to engage in since September.

From our annual day of 'Celebrating Success' at the end of October 2018 which recognised a wide range of pupil achievements, to our many sporting and musical successes, to our continued high standards of attendance and uniform, Term 1 has been both busy and extremely productive. We also commenced our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations with a community coffee morning and a staff formal, which was enjoyed by colleagues past and present.

The greatest gifts we continue to share as a thriving school are that of teamwork and collaboration, respect and tolerance; of working together in a spirit of openness and co-operation with mutual respect for one another. It is very rewarding to be able to end 2018 with a strong sense of having completed a good year's work!

I look forward to welcoming our pupils back after the Christmas break when we reopen on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

I wish everyone within our learning community a relaxing and peaceful Christmas and all good wishes for a prosperous new year.

Miss Hynds, Principal

**SHS Newsletter No.**

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**Winter Term ends ~ Friday 21 December 2018 at 12.20pm**  
**Return of pupils for Spring Term ~ Monday 7 January 2019**  
**GCSE Modules for Year 12 commence Tuesday 8 January 2019**  
**Open Night ~ Thursday 17 January 2019**  
**Year 11 Mock Examinations ~ 10 – 16 January 2019**  
**Year 12 Mock Examinations ~ 21 – 25 January 2019**  
**Half-Term ~ 18 – 22 February 2019 (inclusive)**

# Year 9 Champions!



A pair of Year 9 pupils have enjoyed an incredibly successful term in their own chosen sport. Hannah Patterson (9BI) and Reuben Maitland (9TG) were both crowned champions, in Equestrian and Mountain Biking respectively. Reuben was crowned both Ulster and Irish champion in u12 Mountain Biking over the summer. He won both titles at events held in Castlewellan Forest Park. What a terrific achievement!

Hannah, meanwhile, won the Meadows Inter-Schools League (Novice class) following a tough season of early morning events. Hannah said "It was very difficult to win. So many of the other riders were really good. I'm so proud of my victory." Hannah went on to thank Mrs Birt, her mum, and of course, her black pony, 'Ladybug'.

We are very proud of both pupils and their success. Hopefully they continue to go from strength to strength.

# Public Speaking Success!

A group of six Year 12 girls recently took part in the prestigious Soroptmist International Public Speaking competition, held at Down High School on Wednesday 21st November. The girls competed against Year 12 & 13 pupils from Down High, Assumption Grammar School & St Mary's High School, delivering speeches on topics such as 'The true meaning of wealth', 'What does it mean to be 'normal'?' and 'Fake News'.



All of our pupils—Shakira Edemen, Rachel Gourley, Edith Hogg, Katie Hunter, Catherine Rossiter & Erin Sethuraman—acquitted themselves magnificently, speaking with poise and passion on their chosen subject. Erin eventually finished the night as runner-up, amongst a very talented field, and earns the right to be first reserve for the Downpatrick region in the Northern Irish final, held in February. Congratulations are due to Erin, and in fact to all of our young Soroptmists. They can be very proud of themselves.

# Appointment of Prefects, 2018-19

The school were delighted to announce, back in September, the appointment of Prefects for the academic year 2018/2019. Our Head Boy for this forthcoming year is **Shaun Lin** of 12AT, and our Head Girl is **Erin Sethuraman**, also of 12AT. Deputy Head Girls are **Rachel Gourley** (also responsible for assisting the Head of Senior School ) and **Katie Hunter** (also responsible for School Marketing & Hospitality) and Deputy Head Boys are **Aaron Jennings** (also our Sports Ambassador) and Jake Nixon (also responsible for School Marketing & Hospitality)

The above pupils are ably supported by a team of eager and talented Prefects:

Ethan Dodd—*assistant to Head of Junior School*  
 Rebecca Connolly—*responsible for school ICT*  
 Danielle McVeigh—*Mentor responsible for 8CR*  
 Loris Carson—*Mentor responsible for 8CR*  
 Ellie-Mae McCartney—*Mentor responsible for 9BI*  
 Hollie-Mae Sweetlove—*Mentor responsible for 9HU*  
 Sarah Cushley— *Mentor responsible for 9TG*  
 Vicky Getty—*Mentor responsible for 10MU*

Lauren Kirk—*Mentor responsible for 8MY*  
 Sophie Thompson—*Mentor responsible for 8MY*  
 Curtis Magill—*Mentor responsible for 9BI*  
 Nikita Kirk—*Mentor responsible for 8JA*  
 Shania Hands—*Mentor responsible for 8JA*  
 Aimee Cushley— *Mentor responsible for 9HU*  
 Isacc Pentland—*Mentor responsible for 9TG*  
 Bethany Peters—*Mentor responsible for 10CA*  
 Catherine Rossiter—*Mentor responsible for 10CP*

Miss Hynds, the Senior Teachers, and all the teaching staff of Saintfield High School would like to wish our Prefects good luck for the academic year. We are confident that our boys and girls will make great ambassadors for the school.



Miss Hynds, Mrs Elliott, Mrs Bradley & Mr Carter pose with our prefects for 2017-18

# Farewell, Mrs Maxwell!

It is with a heavy heart that the staff, pupils and wider school community of Saintfield High School must bid farewell to our long-serving school secretary, Mrs Karen Maxwell. Mrs Maxwell retires on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> December after a long and distinguished career, which of course included more than 20 years of steadfast service to Saintfield High School.

Mrs Maxwell's calm demeanour, precise eye for detail and easy good humour have helped make her a central part of school life over the last two decades. Her work behind the scenes has helped so many aspects of school life – from attendance registers to exam results, and nearly everything in between – run smoothly during her tenure. She will be sorely missed, but we are certain that everyone connected with the school would like to join us in wishing her a long and happy retirement!



## Careers Update

The Careers Department have enjoyed a successful term, staging a number of useful events for our pupils in recent weeks. Year 12 pupils visited the NI Skills Exhibition at the Titanic Exhibition Centre back in November, visiting stalls and presentations from a host of employers and training establishments

Year 12 pupils also participated in the school's annual Mock Interview programme, facilitated by Comber Rotary Club. Jessica Dunlop (12SC) remarked that she was "a bit nervous before the interview, but I actually think it went well and was undoubtedly a good experience for me"

Pupils from Years 10, 11 & 12 took part in a number of worthwhile and relevant 'Study Skills' workshops, hosted by Sentinus and Eye4Education. Thank you to Comber Rotary Club, Sentinus, and all other outside agencies and employers, for their continued support of our school's Careers programme.



*Year 12 pupils Daniel, James & Ben take part in a cookery demonstration at the NI Skills Exhibition.*

## Sixty Years of Saintfield High School

As most of you will be aware, since September, we have been celebrating a very significant milestone in our school's history: Saintfield High School is 60! A series of events, such as our Community Coffee Morning, and Staff Formal held at La Mon Hotel, have already been held to mark the occasion, with several more exciting events planned between now and June. **A specially commissioned '60th Anniversary Newsletter', looking back on the storied history of our school, is available to purchase from the school office at a price of £3.** Here, though, we have the thoughts and reflections of Mr Robert Mills, who was principal of the school between 1991 and 2004.

### Thoughts of a retired principal...



When the vacancy of Principalship was advertised, I decided to pay a visit to the school, which was then under the threat of closure. After much deliberation, I applied, and was appointed to begin in January, 1991. I felt confident that things could be turned around with the support of my new colleagues. It soon became clear that urgent attention was needed.

That first day as Principal chilled me, with the frightening fact that 'the buck stopped here'.

Walking around the school and playground I met with and talked to the children, and was welcomed and encouraged. I met the staff briefly in the 'old' staffroom, which was claustrophobic and fairly depressing! They seemed to be as uneasy as I felt myself on that first encounter.

The initial focus had to be on raising the standard of teaching and pastoral care for pupils, with consideration given to the training needs of all employees. The requisition of textbooks and essential materials for the next year was another priority. The S.E.E.L.B. undertook essential maintenance and classrooms were refurbished in rotation. A new staffroom was provided in order to raise staff morale and secure a workspace. Additional temporary classrooms were added systematically.

By the end of 1991 the next challenge was to convince potential parents that S.H.S. was the school for their sons and daughters. I visited all the primary schools in our catchment area. By June the intake had risen to almost fill our quota and in the ensuing years we had the unenviable task of having to refuse entry to as many applicants as we enrolled.

It became increasingly clear that a new school was needed to meet parental demand. The Department of Education chose to build an extension which enhanced accommodation but did not change the enrolment quota. This planning was conducted during my last year as Principal and I chose to take early retirement feeling that an opportunity had been missed.

I feel most proud that we had made the school one of the best in our Board area, with happy pupils who were achieving their true potential academically, and developing the skills they would need to meet the challenges which lay ahead.

I wish to thank, most sincerely, those colleagues who played such vital roles in moving the school forward, and the support staff who worked so tirelessly and diligently during my time.

I retain a keen interest in the school and its progress. The 60th Anniversary celebrations have much to be proud of: excellent provision, outstanding examination results, happy pupils, contented parents and dedicated staff. I am very proud of my association with S.H.S. and extend to all associated with the school my earnest good wishes. I feel confident that the school will progress from strength to strength in the safe hands of the Principal, the staff, and the Governors.



# Pastoral Programme

Our school's Pastoral Programme continued this term, with a series of informative and important events aimed at helping our pupils make good choices. Pupils from Years 11 and 12 received a very moving and hard-hitting talk, organised by the PSNI, about the dangers of illegal drug use, whilst pupils in Years 10 and 11 all watched a relevant and important drama production, entitled 'Overload', which explored themes of adolescent anxiety and mental health. Our Year 8 pupils, too, worked with Action Mental Health on an extremely worthwhile Anti-Bullying programme. Mr Hugh Roarty of Action Mental Health praised the pupils, saying that for "3 years in a row I have had the pleasure of working with Saintfield High School, both staff and students. There has been great work done in 2018, and I look forward to working together again in 2019".



## Continental Market Visit!

It was a cold, crisp morning on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December, when a group of pupils from Year 12 set off to visit to the Continental Market at City Hall in Belfast. The pupils are all studying the new and exciting Kay Stage 4 course, Understanding Business with Language and Tourism. They were accompanied by their two teachers, Mrs Cullen and Miss Mullen. Pupils had the opportunity to sample authentic European cuisine, ranging from crêpes to paella, whilst soaking up the festive atmosphere. Of course, the good old British sweet stall was very popular, as well more exotic fare, such as kangaroo burgers! Connor Martin (12IR) said "I had a brilliant time. The crepes were delicious. It was a real experience to hear so many different languages all in the one place." The French Department would like to wish everyone 'Joyeux Noël et Bonne Année!'

## Panto Trip!

Our Year 11 Performing Arts pupils enjoyed a recent day out at the MAC theatre in Belfast, for a festive performance of The Elves & the Shoemaker (Oh no they didn't! Oh yes they did! etc. etc.). Pupils were there to study the various aspects of a major stage production, such as costumes, lighting and special effects. Sam Pour said "The show was great fun. I'd never been to the MAC before, but I was very impressed with it."



# Mr Elliott's Sports Round-up!

**FOOTBALL:** Our u14 Football team have had a mixed term. Despite a series of very impressive performance, results have not always gone their way. The term got off to a great start with an incredible 9-0 win against Nendrum College, which was followed up with another rout, with a 6-0 win against Banbridge High School in the N.I Cup. Unfortunately, the team were defeated in the next round of the cup, losing 4-0 against a very strong side from St Mary's Grammar School, Belfast. The boys then came out on the wrong side of a 5-3 thriller against De La Salle, Downpatrick, before losing 4-1 to Lagan College in a close contest, where our team just didn't get the rub of the green. Mr Elliott has been encouraged by the boys' performances though, and has high hopes for the team in the future.



**RUGBY:** Huge congratulations are due to **Cameron Patterson** of 11DE, who has recently been selected to train with the Ulster u16 Development Squad. Only 30 places were available on this elite training panel, with more than 250 young men from across the province under consideration. Cameron, a budding Inside Centre, has done remarkably well to reach this stage, and we wish him every success as the season



**HOCKEY:** The school's Hockey teams have enjoyed a successful term, with a number of terrific performances and strong results under their belts already. Our u14 side (led by Captain Marvel, Lucy Rodgers) defeated Bangor Academy 3-0 and drew 0-0 with Lagan College back in November, before a pair of great wins at the start of December. They ran out 2-0 winners against Nendrum College, and, the very next day, were victorious in a tight match against Strangford Integrated College, with 1-0 the final score. What a great term!

Our u16 side were unlucky to lose 1-0 against Lagan College back in September, despite playing very well. They soon put this disappointment behind them, winning 7-0 against Bangor Academy in November – a terrific result, which included a hat-trick of goals for captain Ellie-Mae McCartney. The team wrapped up the term with another tremendous win, running out with a 6-0 victory against Nendrum College at the start of December.

Our Year 10 boys' team also recorded a great result in their first ever match, back at the end of November. The team ran out 5-0 winners against Boys' Model, Belfast, with Ewan McCoubrey grabbing the headlines with a tremendous trio of goals.