

HEADMASTER'S NOTES

Welcome once again to the Midleton College magazine which reviews the events of the school year 2005-06. I would like to thank all those who have supported the magazine either through the submission of articles, updates on former pupils or the submission of advertisements.

I would like to begin my reflection of the last school year by focusing on changes in membership of the Board of Governors. The last year has seen the retirement of The O'Donovan as a Governor. Dan O'Donovan is a man with a belief in the value of doing things well. He has brought wisdom and spirit to the Board and he represented the interests of West Cork with vigour and understanding. On behalf of the College I would like to pay tribute to his 18 years of service to the College as a Governor and thank him for his continuing interest in the well-being of all things at Midleton College.

Likewise it is a pleasure to welcome our new Governors Mr Ivan Wolfe and Mrs Olive Simonin. Both of our new Governors are parents of current pupils while also both having a long association with Midleton College. The task of being a Governor involves working to promote the ethos of the College while also undertaking to act as trustee for all aspects of College activity. I am extremely grateful to them both for offering to serve the College community in this manner and look forward to the contribution that they bring to the team of Governors.

The Challenge of Adolescence

In Ireland today we are members of *a nation* that continues to experience change as a facet of daily life. We live in a country where 10% of the community are now non-Irish nationals by birth; a country where property has become such a focus point for investment that 1 in 6 houses lie vacant, according to CSO data. We are citizens of a country that according to CSO figures has more bought more private jets per head of population than any other within the European Union in the last two years.

We live in *a region* which continues to experience development and economic growth, where new industrial start-ups are a visible reality in many areas. We live in a region where employment is expanding and the expansion of urban areas will continue over the next decade.

We live in *a town* which is growing and changing at a rapid rate even by the standards of other similar sized towns across the country. The past year alone in Midleton has seen the completion of the new roundabout, the further development of Market Green, the renewal of the fairground area and the completion of significant preparatory works for the re-opening of the Cork to Midleton line due in 2008.

In all the dimensions of Irish society of which this school is part, national, regional and local change and development continue to be dominant aspects of our lives. Within this whirlwind of change stands our school, one hopes as point of continuity within which our pupils develop a sense of confidence and security to be able to grow and develop. We cannot ignore the changes that are occurring in the structuring of our society. We must acknowledge that many of the societal changes that are taking place improve the society to which we belong. However, we must also remember the values that have been entrusted to us within the school and ensure that these are protected and nurtured by our appropriate engagement with the changing legislative and educational requirements that we face.

Review of Academic Achievements: Leaving Certificate

Central to the activity of Middleton College lies the educational journey of each one of our pupils. I would like to begin my review of the last year by focusing on those whose educational journey within the school concluded last June with the Leaving Certificate.

For each of the 52 pupils the release of the results of the State examinations is a time for nervous anticipation. Much was made in the media this year of the view that 'the Points Race is over'. This is not a view I concur with. While it is certainly an immensely important social change that there are now sufficient places at Third Level for all those who wish to study, there remain tight limits on numbers of places available for entry into many of the most sought-after degree courses. The 'market-place' concept still exists in relation to transfer from second level to third level and this will continue to apply in the year to come.

The class of 2006 can look back with great pride on their individual and collective achievements in the State examinations. 68% of all papers taken were taken at Honours level. This is the highest % in this category since 2001. 88.5% of all papers taken at Honours level received Honours grades, also the highest figure since 2001. 99.6% of all papers taken were passed, the second highest pass rate on record. **In all 55% of last years Leaving Certificate candidates in the College attained over 400 CAO Points** with an average Points score per paper of just on 60 or a C3 at Honours level.

I would like to offer particular congratulations to **Mr Ray Power's Biology class** who recorded a stunning 92% Honours attainment rate including 11 **A grades!** The overall % of A grades at Honours level was once again impressive, at 16% the third highest rate on record.

Hal Hodson was the highest scorer in the State exams attaining 575 Points in the Leaving. Hal has now gone on to Trinity College Dublin to study English and Maths. Hal, in his final two years, was a member of the Mungret Cup winning team, was captain of the senior Cricket team and played the role of the Lion in the Wizard of Oz. Hal was awarded the Moore Memorial Prize for attaining the highest Leaving Certificate results.

Yvonne Jermyn, who attained 540 points in the Leaving Certificate, was also captain of the senior hockey team, senior day girl and a member of the Irish National Youth Orchestra. Yvonne was this year's recipient of the Maura Lee West Prize for Outstanding Achievement. Yvonne is now studying Physiotherapy in Robert Gordon University.

Jilly Fleming and John Robert Ryall, both began their schooling at Adair National School, moved together from there to Midleton, and in due course were respectively Head Boy and Head Girl. Jilly and JR were both outstanding in their roles, along with Yvonne and Senior Day Boy, Cathal MacSweeney, providing positive leadership for their peers and younger pupils and displaying a constant commitment to the best interests of the College community.

Kate Phelan, an outstanding linguist, attained A grades in both English and French and is now studying English at TCD. **Ian O'Brien and Tom Eastaway**, fine science students throughout their years in the College both attained over 500 CAO points including A grades in Physics and Chemistry. **Lynn Morgan**, having attained 505 CAO points is now studying Biochemistry in UCC while **Kate Ross and Caroline Levis**, who entertained the College on many occasions at musicals and music evenings, were both awarded the B.D. Cairns Prize for Singing at the College Prize Day.

Junior Certificate

This is the 30th year in which the Intermediate Shield has been awarded. It was inaugurated in 1976 in memory of Paula Wolfe and Siobhan Cook. This year the Shield was awarded to **Barry Cunningham** who attained the highest set of grades in the Junior Certificate exams. Barry attained 8 Honours A grades, 1B and 1C. **Daragh Matthews, Clare Stead and Kieran James** were each awarded prizes in languages and science, reflecting the broad spectrum of their abilities. **Alison Kavanagh** was awarded the Midleton College Scholarship Prize in recognition of the commitment she displayed to her studies and the excellent set of results she obtained, including two A grades at Higher level. **Meg O'Hanlon and Rorke MacMonagle**, two students whose studies have improved significantly in the last two years, were each awarded the Midleton College Association Prize.

The Junior Certificate class matched the achievements of the 6th Years with three-quarters of all papers being taken at Honours level and **Honours being attained in 88% of all papers taken at that level**. Of particular note was the extremely high uptake at Honours level in core subjects. **90% of all candidates sat English at Honours level, 74% sat Maths at Honours level, 90% in Science and French, 95% in Geography, 88% in History**. This bodes well for the potential of this group as they move through to senior cycle and is a credit to the commitment of all of the pupils to their study over the course of Junior Cycle.

I would like to extend congratulations to each of the candidates in the state examinations of 2006 in the hope that they believe the grades they received were a fair reflection of their subject-based abilities and commitment to their studies.

In other year groups, it was an impressive year for **the Jermyn family. Owen and Colin** attained first place in 2nd and 4th Form respectively. **Edel and Julie Coyne** attained 6th & 7th Class places in 1st year, where **Daniel James, Caleb Powell and Michelle Callan** were the leading prizewinners.

Form 5 recorded an encouraging set of results in the summer examinations which, if supported by continued application through sixth form, suggest they can achieve similar levels of personal and collective success as their predecessors in 2006. **Roisin Stronach, Caroline Murphy and Alan O'Regan** were once again the leading prizewinners in this form group.

Learning beyond the classroom

Our curriculum is a broad one which extends beyond the classroom. We aim to provide a range of studies and activities which allow our pupils to engage in team and individual research and activities that supports their social integration, develops their personal skills and is an environment where they may constructively challenge themselves.

In a variety of subject areas learning is extended beyond the classroom. In geography the opportunity for field work study is provided to pupils throughout the school. Last year pupils visited Waterford and Kerry and once again senior geography pupils were offered the chance to participate in detailed field work in the Netherlands. Higher Level Leaving Certificate Irish pupils visited Corch igCaoine Gaelteacht at Sleah Head for an immersion course prior to the Oral examinations. English pupils in Transition Year completed a creative response project on the streets and buildings of Cork, the results of which were displayed at the Transition Year awards ceremony. Art students worked off campus with Eileen Singleton in mosaics and ceramics. In History, 1st year pupils had the thrilling experience of making and firing a bow and arrow, while in science, pupils carried out research in Fota Wildlife Park and the ESB station at Aghada.

Social Involvement

Our pupils have continued to demonstrate and active involvement in supporting the welfare of others. Last year pupils organized fund-raising activities in support of **the Dr Noonan Fund, Trocaire and Operation Christmas Child**. One of the outstanding achievements by pupils in 2006 has been their fund-raising on behalf of **The Hope Foundation**. During the last school year a group of 29 Transition Year pupils, building on existing links with the Hope Foundation raised the phenomenal sum of 31,000euro. This has provided a night ambulance service in Calcutta which acts as mobile medical support for street children in one of the poorest areas of the city. Five members of 4th Year, accompanied by Mr Paul Cashman had the opportunity to visit Calcutta and see how their efforts were being translated into action by Hope. I would like to thank them for their commitment to the welfare of others and to thank all those who supported this campaign over the course of the last year.

Extra-curricular Activities

While rugby and hockey and cricket remain the major team sports in the College, however it is encouraging to note the increasing levels of participation in orienteering, athletics and table tennis. In girls hockey this year the competitive teams were playing at the highest A level for the first time. This level of competition comes as a result of the successes achieved by the Senior hockey squads over recent years. It is a great tribute to the combined efforts of coaches, players, parents and those who have been kind enough to support the development of hockey in the College. At the same time, competing at A level, often against all-girl schools with 600 – 800 pupils to select from places a great challenge in front of our teams. It is one they are responding to with determination and confidence.

The Minor girls reached the A final following an outstanding semi-final victory against Mount Mercy. Mount Mercy seniors had the previous weekend been crowned All Ireland champions, for our girls to emerge victorious from this game them was exceptional. The squad were captained by Paige Crosbie and coached by Ms Liz Clifford.

Caroline Murphy played at right back for the Irish U19 team which won the Celtic Cup during July. Caroline has consolidated this achievement by being selected for the Munster U21's, only the third pupil in the College's history to achieve this standard.

The SCT captained by Peter Brougham won the Mungret Cup for only the third time in the competition's history. The final, against an imposing Castletroy team who were favorites among the cognoscenti, was an example of the truth of the motto that 'to the faithful and the brave, nothing is impossible'. The seniors played with great unity on the day and were worthy winners. Peter was subsequently awarded a scholarship to the UCC Rugby Academy.

The senior boys hockey team retained the Cup and League they had won the previous year and continued to play with confidence and style. This progress has been maintained at the start of this year with the seniors qualifying for the Irish Schools Hockey championships which took place in Belfast in October. **Darren Farrell has been selected for the Munster U21 Men's team who played in the Interprovincial championships in Dublin.** The U16's boys team had a great Cup run and played well above themselves in the final where they lost narrowly to Bandon in extra-time having been a goal ahead with seven minutes remaining.

The new school year marked the passing of the baton or more accurately *the bat* in table tennis from Mr Morrissey to Mr Seale. Mr Morrissey has overseen table tennis for the last 15 years and has ensured the development and growth of this sport among many pupils. It is to his immense credit that the College can offer six boys teams and three girls teams for pupils to play on. I thank him for all that he has done in this regard.

The MCA were kind enough to fund two more pupils participating on the **Asgard Sail Training Vessel**. This is the 18th year that the MCA has supported this wonderful experience for pupils of the College. **Caroline Levis and Shane O'Brien** were the two pupils selected from 18 applicants. Both survived the rough seas which occurred during

the week but perhaps the difficulties they experienced at sea had some impact on their subsequent third level choices: Shane has gone on to join the Air Corps and Caroline has been accepted into nursing.

In the Arts, the College **Orchestra made its debut at the Carol Service** and performed again at the Easter Music Festival. I congratulate them on their progress to date and look forward to hearing from them once again during the course of this year. **The Christmas drama production of ‘Oklahoma’** provided a suitably entertaining ending to the Christmas term, including a memorable rendition of Cows with Guns’. The Transition Year Art group produced a unique collection of tapestries which were exhibited in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA.

George Kenefick in 6th Form has recently been crowned U19 Helmsman of the Year in sailing; **Nicholas Simonin** returned from a year on scholarship at a school in Sweden which focuses on Orienteering and has represented Ireland at the European Junior Cup held recently near Geneva in Switzerland.

The brief summaries of the achievements of all the above students support the belief that our pupils are young people who are willing to challenge and involve themselves in a range of activities beyond the norm of the school day. In doing so they have the opportunity, both within and beyond the school curriculum, to live active, shared and personally fulfilling lives. In supporting them to do so, I would like to thank each and every one of my colleagues for the contribution they have made to our pupils over the last year.

New Appointments

We welcome Mr Padraig Twomey as Career Guidance Counselor during Ms Ruth Penny’s career break. Ms Maria Castro joins us as a member of the residential staff along with Ms Aoife O’Shea and Mr Mitchell McGuickian. We welcome Ms Cliona Hurley as our new Financial Administrator following Ms Cailin Hammon’s retirement from the position. We all miss Cailin but are delighted to know that she and her family have settled happily in north Tipperary. Ms Kimber Parmer from Vancouver, Canada is our 6th GAP student in the last three years and has joined us in tandem with Mr Hugh Symon from Canberra, Australia. I would like to formally welcome all our new staff members for the abilities they bring and the contribution they are making to the life of the school.

The new school year also saw the appointment of our prefects for the 2006-07 school year. I wish them well in their leadership roles within the College community.

For the 2006-07 school year the Senior Prefects are:

Head Boy	Polo Crosbie	Head Girl	Aisling Kelly
Senior Day Boy	Nicholas Murphy	Senior Day Girl	Charlotte Spink

Curricular developments

Our curriculum and internal administrative structures have undergone review and development over the last year. **The time allocation at Junior Cycle for Art, Music and RE has been doubled for this year's 2nd Year from this year onwards.**

The first 3rd Form French Exchange visit involving College pupils with pupils from Colleges Georges Brassens in Saint Mard near Paris has just been completed. 28 3rd Year pupils spent four days and nights with families in France experiencing French life and culture at first hand.

At senior cycle, **Applied Maths has returned to the formal curriculum and was taken by 7 students in this years Leaving Certificate**, along with one student taking Home Economics and nine who studied German. While the numbers taking these subjects is small, it is a reflection of the College's desire to meet the needs of our pupils where possible.

ELOS

The College has been invited to participate in a new network of schools who are recognized as promoting the concept of European citizenship within their curriculum and overall school life. The ELOS programme will provide opportunity for those pupils with particular interests in languages, the arts and sciences to explore deepen their study through cross-curricular activities within school and virtual and actual exchange experiences beyond the curriculum This programme, the ELOS programme will be formally introduced into the college life and curriculum in 2007 and will be coordinated by Ms Mary Power.

Structural development

This school is a small one with a strong familial dimension to it. The school functions as a partnership between teachers, governors, parents and guardians in support of the key people in the school community: our pupils. Education management in 2006 is a constant stream of preparing documentation, meetings, planning and review. In this regard Midleton College is well served by the members of the in-school management team. First and foremost Mr John Levis, our Deputy Principal, shoulders an enormous volume of administrative and planning work alongside his teaching and extra-curricular involvement. John's commitment is an example to us all. I thank him for all that he does for the College.

I would also like to thank our team of Assistant Principals, Mr Michael Daley, Ivan Leopold, Bud Morrissey and Special Duties Teachers, Mrs Ruth Levis, Ms Mary Power, Mr Leonard O'Mahony and Mr Martin Preston for the responsibilities that they have undertaken in the last year in ensuring the smooth day-to-day running of the College. I would also like to express my gratitude to all those colleagues who participate in the various duty rotas of the school that ensure that all pupils are appropriately supervised at all times, both day and night.

To our administrative team, Ms Margaret Piggot, Ms Rosemarie O'Sullivan-Hourihan, Mrs Wendy Eastaway I offer my thanks for their patience and flexibility in being willing and able to deal with the demands that the entire College community bring to their door.

The College has a long and strong tradition of an informal but positive working relationship between teachers and parents / guardians. In recent times this has seen formalization through the establishment of the Parent-Teacher Association.

Over the course of the last year, the Board of Governors has undertaken a review of the management structures in the College. One of the goals has been to review the requirements of the Education Act of 1998 which in Section 6 commits schools to the establishment of Boards of Management.

This legislation has proven challenging for those schools whose history of governance significantly pre-dates any relevant legislation from not only the 20th but the 19th Century. The 1998 Act also makes no reference to the governance of the boarding dimension of a second-level school. While recognizing the unique nature of the Patronage of this school, where the Board of Governors are the trustees of the College, the Governors have nonetheless decided that now is the right time to engage in a strategic review of the governance of the College. The Governors have committed themselves to overseeing the appropriate introduction of a Board of Management for the College by September 2007.

This new structure, which will form a central part of the revised governance structures, will have elected representatives from the teaching and parental areas of the College. This will give formal status to a new dimension of the management of the day-to-day activities of the College. It will also bring the College into full compliance with the requirements of the 1998 Education Act and strengthen the partnerships which underpin the success of the College.

Ethos and Enrolment

The College stands in the fortunate position where applications for enrolment run at approximately two for every place available. This high level of application is a welcome reflection of the education that the College aims to provide for our pupils. In ensuring that the College processes the application procedure as required the Board has invested considerable time in ensuring that the College is fully compliant with the new legislative requirements of the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Equal Status Act 2002. The revised Enrolment Policy will govern enrolments for September 2007 and beyond.

Open Day

Both last September and this, the College held an Open Day at which applicant families are invited to view the campus and meet with members of staff and pupils. In September 2005 165 families attended; this year 94 families did so. The response has been extremely positive from many of those who have attended. Once again it has been the pupils who have stolen the show. The most common responses made to me at the end of the Open

days have been ‘How friendly, how kind, how confident’ those pupils who have met with parents have been. To each of them I would like to express my gratitude for their contribution and reiterate the pride that one feels at hearing our pupils so described.

The PTA

Ms Louise Oppermann and Ms Rosemary Stronach, respective Chair and Secretary of the PTA in recent years have both retired from the committee in accordance with the standing provision requiring retirement from the committee after five years service. To them both today I wish to express my thanks for their willingness to serve, to give of their time voluntarily and for the genuine and insightful involvement they having given to the PTA since 2001.

The MCA

Some 70 people attended a reunion organized by the MCA for the classes of 1976/86/96. The organizing committee led by Patrick Hitchmough, Robert Chambers, Daphne Spillane. Mr John Smyth, in his role as President, is due great credit for the energy and enthusiasm he brings to this role and his committee reflects his own energy.

Development Plan

The summer months saw significant re-furbishment works taking place in the campus. Three areas were re-floored, the driveway re-tarred and CCTV installed. The Board have received draft plans for a campus re-development from Frank Murphy and Co., consultant architects and these have been presented to members of staff by Mr Peter Murphy. Parents/guardians will be aware that the College sports pitches have been placed for sale by invitation of tender proposals through Colahan Downing & Co, auctioneers. The Board await a formal report from the auctioneers and it is hoped that this will be forthcoming in the near future. The Board have rightly sought to plan for the vital capital investment that our campus needs to ensure that the high educational standards, co-educational boarding accommodation and wide-ranging programme of activities, all of which I have sought to illuminate here, are provided for to the highest possible standard in the medium-term at Midleton College.

You have read today what this community is capable of achieving in a wide range of activities. Our commitment as a College is to providing a meaningful education experience that equips our students to deal with the challenges of contemporary Irish life. To do so requires an investment of resources-human and physical- that are of the highest capability and standard. It is only by doing this and doing so on an ongoing basis that we will be able to achieve the goals we set ourselves. This is part of the tradition of Midleton College. It is a great tradition and it is one we are committed to living up to.

Simon Thompson
Headmaster

PRIZE DAY 2006

HEADMASTER'S ADDRESS

THE SILVER SPRINGS HOTEL

OCTOBER 27TH