

THORNHILL COLLEGE YEARBOOK

2018/19





The **Thornhill College Yearbook** for 2018/19 offers a mere snapshot of the variety of events and range of aspects of the busy and fruitful life of the college; academic, artistic, musical, sporting and charitable, *et cetera*. It showcases the impressive talents of many of our students who are wonderful ambassadors for our school in whatever field they aspire towards. In a busy, vibrant school such as ours with the wealth of talent in our student body, this yearbook can only provide a flavour of the extensive range of activities and opportunities available to our young people. It allows us to share our pride and appreciation for them with a wide audience. It also reflects the contribution of our students, in great ways and small, to enriching their own lives, those of the wider school community and to the wider society in Derry and its surrounding area.

2018/19 saw a number of particularly adventurous school trips organised for our students, most notably to China and Russia. These trips reflect the tremendous work and commitment of the many members of staff who organised them, and facilitated the wonderful educational experiences of the students who joined in them. The students' reports of those trips reflect their engagement and enthusiasm for learning about the world around them.

I wish to thank all of the students and staff who contributed to the making of this **Yearbook**, and shared with us something of the range of experiences enjoyed by students of our school over the past twelve months. They have given us a tangible, more rounded record of the life and work of Thornhill College which promotes the holistic development of all our students and encourages them to ***be the best they can be*** in all their interactions.

PRIZE-GIVING, 2018



Ms Sharon Mallett, Principal, presenting the **Outstanding Achievement in Humanities Award** to Sinéad Hunter. Included are Mr John MacCrossan, Chair, Board of Governors, and Ms Fiona McCandless, Department of Infrastructure, Northern Ireland.



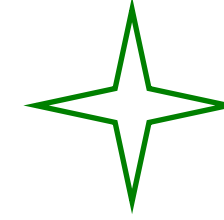
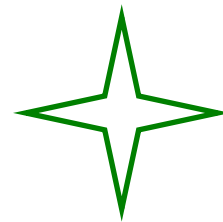
Ms Sharon Mallett, Principal, presenting the **Principal's Cup for Outstanding Achievement** to Amelia Conwell and Amy English. Included are Mr John MacCrossan, Chair, Board of Governors, and Ms Fiona McCandless, Department of Infrastructure, Northern Ireland.



Students who achieved **3 A*-A grades at A Level**, with Ms Sharon Mallett, Principal, and Ms Fiona McCandless, DINI.



Students who achieved **2 A*-A grades at A Level**, with Mrs Siobhán Porter, School Governor, and Mrs Cathy Mallon, Vice-principal.



Students who achieved **1st Place in A Level subjects**, with Mrs Orla Donnelly, Vice Principal, Ms Alicia McWilliams, Senior Teacher, and Dr Nigel Morewood, Head of Year.

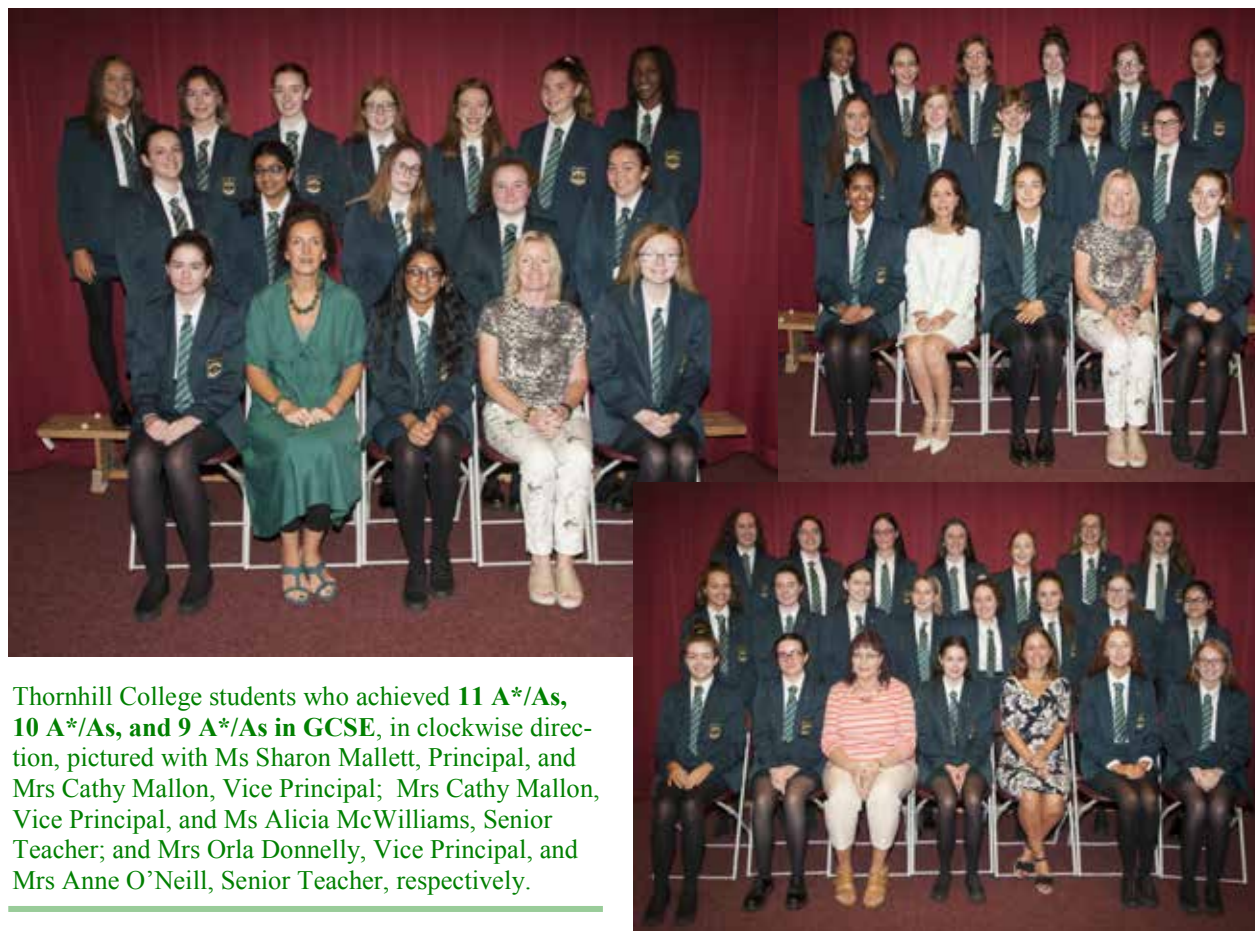


Students who received **Special School Awards**, with Mrs Cathy Mallon, Vice Principal, and Mrs Anne O'Neill, Senior Teacher.





Students who achieved **1st Place in GCSE subjects** with their awards, pictured with Mrs Anne O'Neill, Senior Teacher, and Mrs Bronagh Simpson, Year Head.



Thornhill College students who achieved **11 A*/As, 10 A*/As, and 9 A*/As in GCSE**, in clockwise direction, pictured with Ms Sharon Mallett, Principal, and Mrs Cathy Mallon, Vice Principal; Mrs Cathy Mallon, Vice Principal, and Ms Alicia McWilliams, Senior Teacher; and Mrs Orla Donnelly, Vice Principal, and Mrs Anne O'Neill, Senior Teacher, respectively.



Year 13 students who received **Academic Awards**, with Mrs Cathy Mallon, Vice Principal, Mr Declan McCay, Head of Senior School, and Ms Bríd Flanagan, Year Head.



Anna McGinley receiving the **Award for Outstanding Achievement in GCSE**. Pictured with Mr John MacCrossan, Chair of the Board of Governors, Ms Sharon Mallett, Principal, and Ms Fiona McCandless, Department of Infrastructure in Northern Ireland.

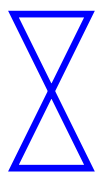


Molly Duffy with her **Voice of the Future Award**, with Ms Maeve Connolly, Drama Teacher.



Highest Academic Achievers with their awards, pictured with Fr Colum Clerkin, School Governor, Mrs Elizabeth McCloskey, School Governor, Mr Declan McCay, Head of Senior School, and Mrs Fiona Kearney, Head of Middle School.

ART



Rebecca Mulhern



Gemma Logue



Erin Ward



Beth O'Donnell



Alfie Mathews



Nia Foster



ART TRIP NEW YORK CITY



*I cannot put into words how stunning
the view was from the spire of the
Empire State Building!*

We had a rocky start to our 2018 New York adventure, with our flight being cancelled and we had to be driven to Dublin from Derry, and then onwards to Shannon to get the next flight to Newark International. After a long flight, we finally arrived at our hotel, and almost immediately we all headed out for a much anticipated visit to the **Empire State Building**. I cannot put into words how stunning the view was from the spire.



The next morning, we grabbed an early breakfast and went to arguably the greatest museum in New York; **The Met**. We were all in awe to see the famous *Starry Night*, which was extremely overwhelming, to say the absolute least.

As typical tourists do, we couldn't and didn't, avoid a walk through **Central Park**, and I watched as classmates leaped and played with a lady making bubbles in the courtyard. Perhaps my favourite moment of the trip, and I know I can speak for many others, was having the pleasure to see *Wicked* on **Broadway**. An utterly spellbinding experience, it was the highlight for me definitely. The **MOMA** was next on our itinerary, a wonderful museum full of thought provoking exhibitions. After dinner, we took a break from Art tourism and visited the **9/11 Memorial**, a chilling and poignant experience. Later we went on the **Coney Island Ferry** around the **Statue of Liberty**, and the view did not disappoint. We finished out our adventurous three days with a stop at the **Whitney Museum**, for one last look at the cultural explosion of the NY Art scene.

The journey home left us all an exhausted, and entirely grateful group and landing back on home soil was a breath of fresh air. However I miss the out of this world feeling that New York provided. I would go back in a heartbeat.

Katelyn Brolly, 13 E

MUSIC

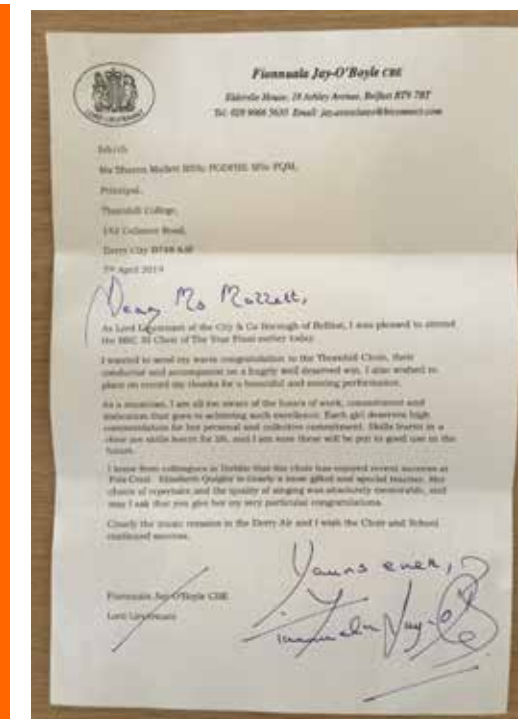


BBC
NORTHERN
IRELAND
SCHOOL
CHOIR OF
THE YEAR

2019

"I wanted to send my warm
congratulation to the Thornhill Choir,
their conductor and accompanist on a
hugely deserved win. ... Each girl
deserves high commendation for her
personal and collective commitment. ...
Elizabeth Quigley is clearly a most
gifted and special teacher. Her choice
of repertoire and the quality of singing
were absolutely memorable ..."

**Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyce,
Lord Lieutenant of Belfast**



INTERNATIONAL CHORAL
FESTIVAL

SCHOOL CHOIR OF THE
YEAR

2018

PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Cara Lafferty on leading the Irish team to a bronze medal in the **Schools International Athletic Board Cross Country Championships**.



Congratulations to the **Junior Netball Team** who won the **Northern Ireland Junior League** title.



Year 8 Cross Country District Champions: Grace Doherty, Ava Carlin, Maebh Coyle, Hannah Wade, Freya McDaid & Katie Peace.

Thornhill girls had a very successful day as our school hosted the **District Schools Cross Country Championships** for the very first time. This is a major event in the schools' Sports calendar in which students from forty schools from Antrim, Derry and Donegal compete



Cara O'Loughlin, District Champion.



Gaelic U20 Football Team for the Ulster Finals.



PARENTS' ASSOCIATION'S COLOUR RUN, 2018

CHINA TRIP, 2018



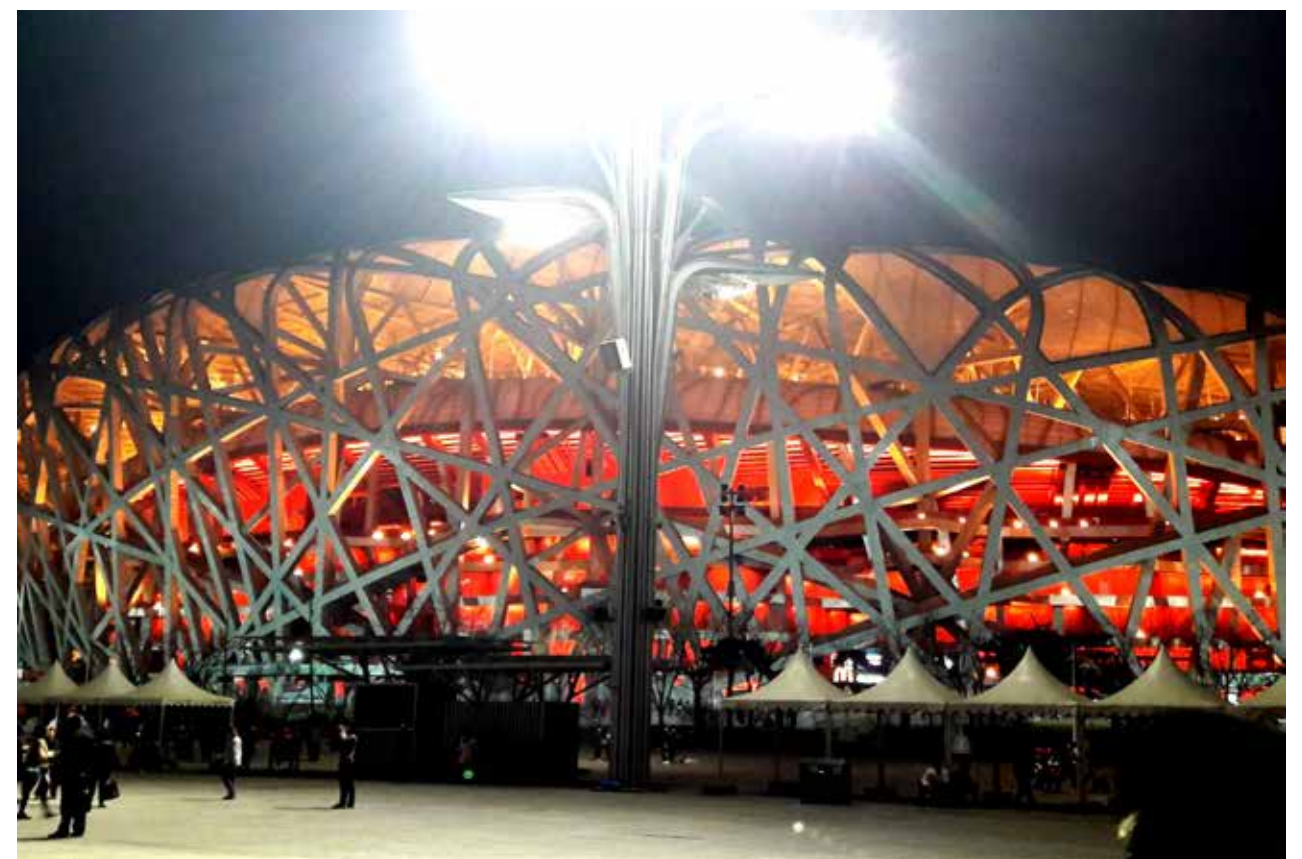
To say the Thornhill College trip to China in Easter 2018 was the experience of a lifetime would be an understatement. The trip was truly one of, if not the most, amazing experience of my time at Thornhill so far. A journey to the other side of the world, to a very different world from Derry.



The trip involved a very early start for all the girls on the trip, leaving the school for Dublin Airport at 7 am that morning. We made it to the airport and got through the check – in with no problems. It was extremely amusing to all the foreign tourists who had just gotten off their flights to see a pack of girls in matching green baseball caps bombarding through all the shops while we waited to board our flight.

The travelling consisted of 2 flights; the 1st from Dublin to Istanbul, and the 2nd from Istanbul to Beijing. A total of 14 hours travel was involved in getting all the way to China, but every hour was worth it.

After we had landed in Beijing, we dropped our bags at the hotel and made our way to our first tourist attraction – The Bird Nest – a stadium situated in central Beijing. This gave us the opportunity to see one of the many icons of the city, as well as giving us a feel of China's 'night life'.



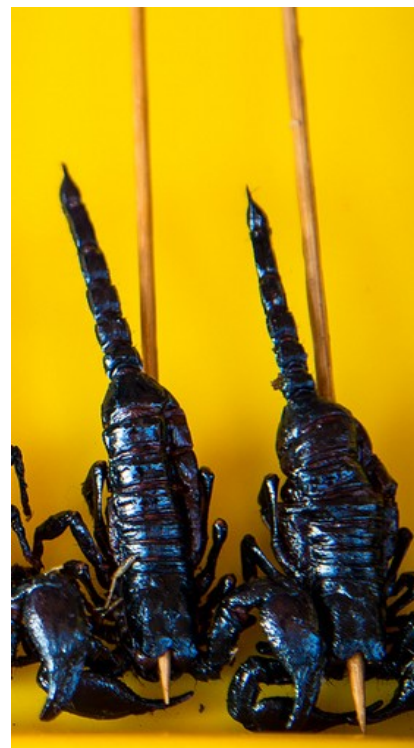


Needless to say, we made a visit to the Great Wall of China whilst on our stay, and even though nothing beats our Derry city walls (!), this experience was unbelievable. It was a major insight to one of the key focal points in China's history, and was an all-round amazing



Of course, we couldn't have flown all the way across the world without trying some of the traditional food of the region, so we were taken to a local house for our lunch on one of the days. A family kindly cooked for all of us and were very hospitable the whole time we were there. As most of us were used to the 'Rice Bowl' or the 'Mandarin Palace', we didn't know what to expect, and even though it was different, the food was fantastic, even if it did take a couple of tries before grasping the art of using chopsticks.

I also had the opportunity while at the food market to try a local delicacy – fried scorpion. Although I was disgusted at the thought of eating a bug off a stick, I figured I would never be presented with the same opportunity twice and might as well do it. So, after gagging and fussing for about 10 minutes (to the local people's amusement, as this is a normal afternoon snack to them) I swallowed my fear and bit the top scorpion off the stick, washed down with Sprite. It wasn't as bad as I'd anticipated. However I concluded that once was still enough and I would not be trying that again.



One of my personal highlights of the trip was our visit to Beijing Zoo. It is one of the most impressive in the world. The enclosures were full of wonderfully exotic animals, some of which I had never heard of before. And of course,



We had the pleasure of being taken to a Chinese gymnastics performance which lasted an hour and a half – but felt like 2 minutes, as our hearts didn't stop pulsating the full time. Every time you thought they'd reached the danger zone and pushed the limits enough, they'd do something even more outgoing and amazed us repeatedly throughout the

We had a chance to practice our negotiation skills on our visit to a market – at which we had to haggle for everything we wanted to buy, and we came out with some very good deals (we all know how hard – headed and scary us Derry girls



During my antics at one of the attractions, I found myself being put in a traditional Chinese wedding dress and photographed. After being talked to by a local woman and with enough ‘gentle’ persuasion from a friend I was on the trip with, I stupidly agreed to go along with it, because us Irish folk are willing to do anything ‘for the craic’. Anyway, it was funny and I looked ridiculous, and lots of passing Thornhill pupils were able to stop and stare at the stupid girl who, at this stage, could seem to be talked into doing anything, and then the woman who had initiated the situation charged me 300 yuan for the prints of the photos, which is £30. I was absolutely mortified at the time but looking at the photos now it’s a memory I always



Overall, this trip was an incredible experience, not just for me, but for all teachers and pupils that had the honour of attending. Our tour guides were so accommodating, the sites were amazing and if I could do it all again I would do it in a heartbeat.

GRACE DOHERTY, 12B,

Eve Flood, 14B, achieved 1st place in the **HSBC Mandarin Speaking Competition**, against 110 contestants from across the UK. She studied the language as part of Thornhill’s Year 13 Enrichment Programme with Guan Changqing. An outstanding achievement!



POLITICS TRIP TO RUSSIA, 2018



DAY 1: St Isaac's Cathedral, Square and the monument to Tsar Nicholas I

On the first day we visited St Isaac's Cathedral, a cathedral that currently functions as a museum in Saint Petersburg and took 40 years to construct. It is dedicated to Saint Isaac of Dalmatia, a patron saint of Peter the Great, who had been born on the feast day of that saint. It was originally built as a cathedral but was turned into a museum by the Soviet government in 1931 and has remained a museum ever since. Outside of the cathedral in the square we saw the monument to Tsar Nicholas I. This was a huge bronze equestrian monument of Nicholas I created by French sculptor Auguste de Montferrand. We were told that the statue was considered a technical wonder at the time of its creation. It is one of only a few bronze statues with only two support points (the rear hooves of the horse). We also met some street performers in traditional Russian dress who took pictures with us.



Neva river

The Neva is a river in north-western Russia flowing from Lake Ladoga through the western part of Leningrad Oblast to the Neva Bay of the Gulf of Finland. It is the fourth largest river in Europe and was completely frozen over when we visited. Our tour guide told us that many people attempt to commute across the river when it is frozen, although this is heavily discouraged by the government.



Folk show

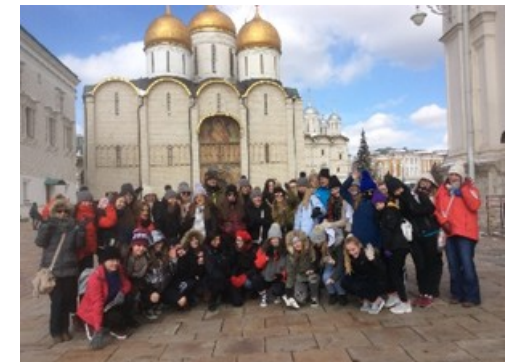
On the first night we visited a folk show in an old palace. This was an incredible experience as we got to experience Russian culture first hand whilst enjoying music, dancing and begrudged audience participation. We also ate in the red star restaurant which was an opportunity to try traditional Russian



DAY 2:

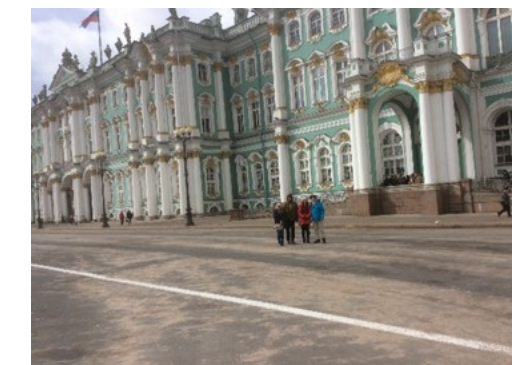
Peter and Paul fortress

The Peter and Paul Fortress is the original citadel of St. Petersburg, Russia, founded by Peter the Great. In the early 1920s, it was still used as a prison and execution ground by the Bolshevik government. This was an incredible experience as it is still an active army base and we could hear drilling in the background. Along with this the fortress sits overlooking the Baltic sea with Finland faintly visible. Walking across the bridge to the fortress it was quite literally BALTIC.



Hermitage Winter Palace

The Winter Palace left us all in awe. It was the official residence of the Russian Emperors from 1732 to 1917. Today, the palace forms the Hermitage Museum. The storming of the palace in 1917, as depicted in Soviet paintings and Sergei Eisenstein's 1927 film October, became an iconic symbol of the Russian Revolution. After studying Russian history extensively during our A Level History course it was an unbelievable experience to visit the place where the soviet state began. The halls of the palace were breath taking with artwork from such figures as Leonardo Da Vinci. Our tour guide informed us that it would take months if not years to see every piece within it.



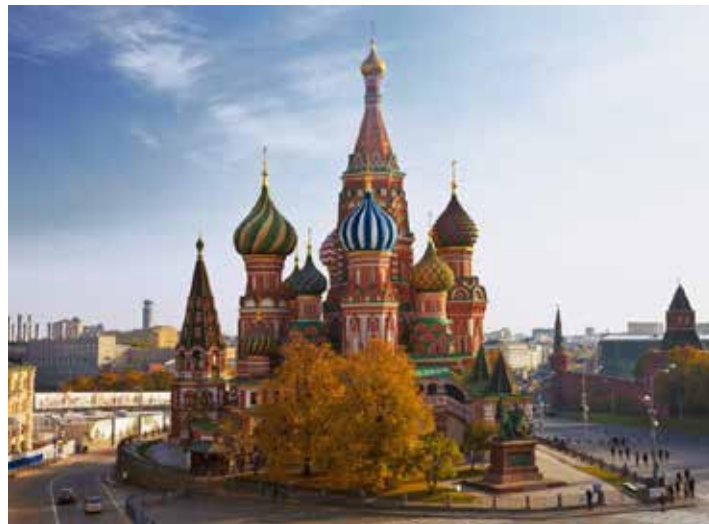
DAY 3:

Christ the Saviour Cathedral

The Cathedral of Christ the Saviour was our first stop in Moscow. It is the tallest Orthodox Christian church in the world and we were able to view the entire inner city from the viewing area at its steeple. We were shocked to learn that the church has been rebuilt on the site following its demolition in 1931 by Stalin. It was interesting that the remaining foundations transformed into the world's largest open air swimming pool by Khrushchev in the 50's.

Red Square

Finally, we got to visit one of the most iconic places in Russia - the Red Square. The square separates the Kremlin, the former royal citadel and now the official residence of the President of Russia, and is the central square of Moscow since the city's major streets, which connect to Russia's major highways. The square was incredibly busy with tourists but it was surreal to stand in a place of such historical and cultural value, where countless foreign dignitaries and Russian premiers had walked before us.



St Basil's Cathedral

St Basil's was instantly recognizable as the monument shown on postcards and the news. Contained behind the incredibly bright towers were eight churches arranged around a ninth, central church of Intercession. We were informed that a tenth church was erected in 1588 over the grave of venerated local saint Basil.

DAY 4:

Kremlin

We visited the heart of the Russian empire on Saint Patrick's day. The hoard of Irish students adorned in green and white must have been easily recognisable as we passed through the lengthy security process before being admitted behind the walls. I don't think any of us comprehended the scale of the Kremlin before entering into it. It is the best known for the Kremlins (Russian citadels) and includes five palaces, four cathedrals, and the enclosing Kremlin Wall with Kremlin towers. In addition, within this complex is the Grand Kremlin Palace that was formerly the tsar's Moscow residence. The complex now serves as the official residence of the President of the Russian Federation and as a museum. Sadly, Putin wasn't at home.

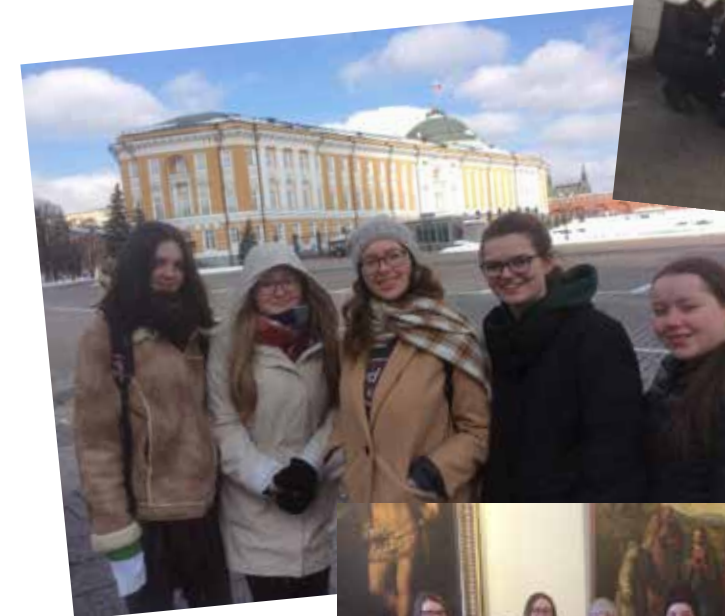


Lenin's mausoleum

This was Lenin's Tomb, situated in Red Square in the center of Moscow serving as the final resting place of the first Soviet leader, Vladimir Lenin. His preserved body has been on public display there since shortly after his death in 1924. The tomb was guarded by heavily armed soldiers and we were given strict instructions to be silent, keep moving while inside and keep our hands in our pockets.



Overall our journey back to the USSR was an incredibly eventful experience filled with excitement and awe at a culture which was so vastly remote from our own. It was an adventure we'll never forget and allowed us to get more involved in the historical and political significance of one of the most influential and interesting countries in the modern world.



FRENCH TRIP



Bonjour! My name is Ava McGinn and I was extremely lucky to be one of 49 girls that flew off to France along with six fantastic teachers on the 17th June 2018. It was an experience that I will never forget filled with fun, laughter, happiness and, of course, French!

It began on the 17th June in Sainsbury's car park. Everyone arrived, barely knowing each other, with their suitcases filled and excitement exploding. We said goodbye to our families and raced onto the bus for a very important passport check before taking off on the road to Belfast International Airport. When we arrived we were split into six groups, each group had a teacher that was responsible for our daily roll calls and questions. Once we finally boarded the plane it began to become a reality – that we were actually heading to France!

When our flight landed at Charles de Gaulle Airport, the madness and fun truly began as we hopped on a bus for a few hours driving through some of Paris and little French towns and villages, on our way to Normandy, where we were staying. We arrived very late, we were all very tired and we didn't have a clue where we were until we were greeted by two excited French leaders called Killian and Sophie and they soon got our energy up filling us



On the 18th June, being the first full day, we visited a beautiful, authentic French town lined with streets of restaurants and shops. In the centre, a huge cathedral towered over the town which we got to explore.



Then we took the bus to our second destination of the day – a caramel factory. This was very different but interesting. We were shown the process on how to make caramels step by step and then we even got to try a selection of them and they were delicious!



19th June was my favourite day of the trip. We visited a typical French market selling a range of items. This challenged our French skills when ordering food and paying, but it was great fun and we definitely had a laugh!



We then travelled to Mont-Saint-Michel. It is joined to land by a bridge, but in the evening the water would surround it therefore only 50 people lived there. It is very old but extremely beautiful. It is almost like a castle that you had to climb up to through cobbled streets and steps. The view from the top was breath-taking and worth every step. We were allowed to wander the different streets and visit even more shops – I absolutely loved it!

On the 20th of June we had an activity day in Château de la Baudonnière, surrounded by many fields of animals and places to lie in the sun. Here we were taught fencing and bread making through French. It was so enjoyable and I made many new friends through this. We got to take a look at all the animals as we walked through the forest just outside the château.



On the 21st of June we were all quite sad that the trip was coming to an end but this didn't stop us from having a blast! On this day we got to learn about the history of the Normandy beaches and why they are famous landmarks today. We visited the beaches, a 360° cinema which explained in the words of those effected during the war what happened, the war memorial site and, of course, the Bayeux Tapestry.



Overall the French Trip was amazing – I would definitely recommend it and beg to do it again! The accommodation was more than perfect as we could visit the beach for fun and games as this was just beside us. We even had a French themed fancy dress night which was brilliant. The food was lovely and definitely showed a French twist to everyday meals and I even got to try a snail! On the last night we finished with a surprise party filled with music and dance that finished the trip on a high! It was so well organised and the teachers were great fun – I just wish I could relive it all over again! Merci!

Ava McGinn, 11D

WHO IS THE TEACHER?



HISTORY TRIP TO AUSCHWITZ, 2019



Auschwitz was the largest Nazi German Concentration Camp and Death Camp.

In the years 1940-1945 the Nazis deported at least 1,300,000 people to Auschwitz:
1,100,000 Jews
140,000-150,000 Poles,
23,000 Roma (Gypsies),
15,000 Soviet Prisoners of War,

Here are two pictures of the railway tracks from Birkenau-Auschwitz that I took on the Thornhill History trip in March 2019.

Auschwitz was located at a railway junction with 44 parallel tracks—rail lines that were used to transport Jews from throughout Europe to their death.



Arbeit Macht Frei is a German phrase meaning 'work sets you free'. This appeared at the entrance of Auschwitz.



This a picture of an authentic train car that travelled from Germany with Jews inside.



These hair-brushes belonged to people who were taken to Auschwitz to be killed.



Suitcases and shoes of the dead.





Visiting Auschwitz was for me a very emotional yet educational experience. It is hard to believe that one human being could do this to another. I left with a heavy heart yet with hope that this would never be allowed to happen again.

Amy Vaughan-McGilloway, 11E



On the 19th of January we met up at 3am to make our way to Austria. When we arrived at the hotel in Ehrwald we got all our rooms sorted, and then got our equipment fitted. On the first day we were put into different groups and each group was given an instructor. My first instructor was called Jo. For the first day we stayed on the flat ground to learn how to ski. On the second day we went on to the more adventurous 'magic carpet', on which I fell on a few times before I became proficient. Then I got put into a different group with a new instructor called Robert. That night we went out to see a ski show.

On the 3rd day of skiing we went up the T-bar onto a higher level, with another instructor, named David. In that afternoon session the skiing was much easier. We went down the blue slopes, which were steep but manageable. In the evening we all enjoyed some well-earned pizza. Next day we took a ski lift to even higher slopes, from which we skied down a few times. We finished the day by shopping in the local village.

By the time the last day came most of us were able to ski down the challenging 'red' slopes. We raced down and our speed was timed. We gave presents to the instructors for training us to ski so well. They told us our times, and gave us a certificate and medal. We spent the night at karaoke, which was a fun way to round off a marvellous week on our Ski Trip.

Emer Kelly-O'Hara, 11D



FASHION SHOW FOR TROCAIRE



The 11th Junior Fashion Show was again a great success this year. The Year 13 Pope John Paul II group organised and worked with the Junior form classes on their designs. Each class was given the task to create a design inspired by a culture around the world, or an idea for out of this world. The final designs were outstanding and showed great imagination and interpretation of the themes. The event raised £505 for Trocaire. Well done!

Mrs Ciara Collins

MORE FUND RAISING



9B raised an incredible £514.58
(+€4.50) for Trócaire!



Oxford School Debating Competition 2019



My name is Molly Duffy and I have been a member of the Debating Society since I began here at Thornhill College. Over the years I have taken part in various debates covering a wide range of topics which I never would have taken an interest in before. This year in March, Hannah Lappin, Rebecca Harrigan, and I had the privilege of visiting Oxford University to experience what it is like to take debating to the next level and also watch the many different styles and ways that people all over the world chose to debate. This trip opened so many doors for myself and the other girls as well as giving us the chance to see what Oxford University is really like!

The night before the competition was spent reading and revising all the possible topics that may have come up as a motion, it was challenging but enjoyable nonetheless. Next morning we were up bright and early as we prepared ourselves for what would be a thrilling day ahead. As we gathered in the commons room we were seated amongst the world's best debating teams which followed with each team being appointed their opposition and of course, the chosen motion.

We then made our way to the room where the debates would take place. The debate itself was structured in a format with the two teams facing each other and the adjudicator at the top of the table. Each speech lasted no more than five minutes although had extra time for the opposing team to rebut. After four extremely tough debates, we got the results and were amazed to find that we had been placed 1st in one of the toughest rounds. However, this was just a clear reflection of the time and effort spent leading up to the competition.

Overall, the experience at Oxford was beyond amazing and an incredible opportunity for us girls. We met friends and fellow pupils from all over Europe including students from Oxford University itself. This opportunity was also a reflection of the copious amount of work and effort put in to our debates and the dedication every week since September. We would also like to extend great thanks to our fabulous teacher Miss Connolly, without her by our sides and always cheering us on, we would never have accomplished the skills to attend this competition!

Molly Duffy, 11D

SEACHTAIN NA GAEILGE, 2019

Céilí Mór agus Fáinne!

Year 10 students of Irish were special guests at the school's Céilí on the 14th of March 2019, and not only for their dancing skills and fun! On the night they were presented, on stage, with their well-deserved Fáinne Airgid or Silver Fáinne.

The girls have been working towards this goal for three years and their achievement is a wonderful recognition of the language skills they have developed over that time. External examiners visited the school to test the students and they were highly impressed by the standard of language.

Tá mé ar Cholaíste Chnoc na nDealg. Tá an scoil suite cúpla míle taobh amuigh de Dhoire ar imeall na cathrach. Is scoil ghramadaí í agus is scoil cailíní í. Is scoil mhór í fosta. ('freisin' for Dr. Jefferies!!) Tá thart fá 1,400 daltaí ar an scoil agus tá thart fá 100 múinteoirí ar an scoil.



RANG 10C



RANG 10D



RANG 10E



The Céilí was the centre piece of **Seachtain na Gaeilge** (Irish Language Week) in Thornhill and indeed the teachers got involved by using their Irish in various ways, from phrases to full conversations, also emails and one teacher even produced a video in Irish! Maith thú Mrs Quigg!!!

Bingó as Gaeilge - duaiseanna/uibheacha Cásca!

Next step for some teachers could also be the Fáinne challenge and if they need any assistance, the girls of 10C, 10D and 10E featured in the photographs will be well equipped to support. One well-known boxer has made the effort also and you may enjoy watching his journey on the BBC iPlayer.



TECHNOLOGY & DESIGN

In March 2019 Students from 9G and 9H attended a **Science Made Simple Show** at St Mary's College, Derry. Interactive experiments showed students how Technology improves the quality of our lives 'From the Cradle to Grave'. The students watched a live ultrasound and discovered how engineers can 3D print a new hip joint.



9B gained a valuable understanding of the different Engineering Sectors when they attended a Careers Day as part of Engineers Week. This event was supported by a large group of local and global Engineering Firms such as Seagate, E and I Engineering, DuPont, Ulster University and many other influential companies, that worked together to raise awareness of STEM related subjects and job opportunities for the future of our students.



The Technology and Design Department, with Firmus Energy, Kier Group and the Utility Regulator Chief Executive, installed a time capsule in our school grounds packed with a range of items about Thornhill College and everyday life to mark the completion of the natural gas pipeline to Derry. The capsule was packed by Head Girl Sarah Kelly and Deputy Nicole Hamill Gormley along with Erin Ferry, Aisling Mortimer, Beth Bradley, Dearhail Durkan, Trinity McKeever, Faustina Collins, Aoibheann McElhone and Lexi Melrose. This project gave the students an insight to STEM pathways towards future careers.



SCIENCE FAIR 2018



SCIENCE FAIR 2018 was another great success with Year 10 students showing their enthusiastic engagement with Science, and real talent, to a panel of judges. The winning entry was that of a team of students in 10D whose project was focused on 'Plant growth under the spectrum of Light'. The winners are shown here with their trophy, together with the organiser of the Thornhill College Science Fair, Mr Michael McCloskey, Head of Key Stage 3 Science.



Our Science Fair winning team won the **NW SciFest 'Life Science Award'** in April 2019.

OUR TIME AT THORNHILL



Let me begin by saying Wow !

It is a privilege and honour to be able to share with my Thornhill family something of what this fantastic school has done in shaping each of our lives over the last 7 years and preparing us for the next stage in our adventures.

There may be laughter, tears, the need to sample the famous school buns and tray bakes to help forever remember that beautiful aroma – but this nostalgia is not because we are heartbroken or indeed hungry, but it reflects the fondness and emotions conjured on what has been the focal point of our lives.

Arriving at the school gates in September 2012, aged 12 (just) and listening to the Script on my Mammy's radio -the song was 'Hall of Fame'. I felt butterflies in my stomach as I watched hundreds of girls arrive -a crowd of pristine Green Blazers. I came from a small primary school, with only 5 girls joining Thornhill that year .

By the 2nd day I was friends with everyone in my class, and this quickly grew as I engaged in various sports clubs and after school activities. I marvelled at the school as an organization, Ms Hamilton who was the principal then and all the Teachers and staff who without exception looked and acted professionally, whilst they sought to welcome all students and make them feel part of the school – and yet somehow they also managed to provide, develop and educate us all and present unlimited opportunities for the future. When I look today at our principal, Ms Mallett and our teachers and staff, I continue to see them as exemplars of professionalism, education and inclusiveness ... but we know they don't need to promote this school for the next generation of primary school children – everyone of us that has come through it is an ambassador. Indeed, today, I suspect none of the Senior Year have butterflies, rather we have lumps in our throats.

I've often stared at my blazer pocket, reading the school Motto, *Adveniat Regnum Tuum* - ("Thy Kingdom come" for those of you who don't speak Latin) and pondered on its significance – I always liked the interpretation of Catherine McAuley, founder of the Sisters of Mercy, who stated that the school strives "to fit young woman for Earth without unfitting them for heaven". Indeed we have grown academically, socially and personally in an environment characterized by ethics, integrity, nurture and fun. The friendships and relationships we have made will endure and undoubtedly form the basis of many a future catch-up, reunions and nights out filled with reminiscence.



This year has been a rollercoaster year – it started off with the usual summer catchup, then the excitement of the formal (what a superb evening !), maybe one or two 18 birthday parties , the little matter of deciding on potential courses and UCAS applications, studying, realising that we are the Senior Year of the school and as such have to behave and present a responsible persona, and all of a sudden its now April ! ...but we did get the Thornhill hoodie and I don't think there's a person who won't wear this with pride , promoting with zest how good this school is.

The seven years seem to pass in a blur of activity – I'll never forget some of the amazing opportunities I have had to travel here at Thornhill - from Gortatole with my best friends, to Liverpool with the netball team for a netball match and to Beijing in China for one of the best cultural experiences that I've ever had in my life! However walking through the food markets with girls eating live scorpions was, shall we say, interesting ! Throughout these years I am thrilled to have been exposed to many amazing things such as the City of Culture, the Fleadh and even Feile through Gaelic! Indeed, even on this, my last year of school, I had the honour of travelling to the USA to an Educational Conference, with Ms Hamilton and Nicole Gormley (deputy head girl), of being one of the members of the Thornhill Gaelic team that reached an Ulster Final and I watched many of my friends win as members of Thornhill Choir which just won N Ireland Choir of the year! The latter definitely deserves a hot chocolate Friday with Ms Mallett as it was spectacular!

Although I've only had the chance to give a sample of some of our precious experiences , all will be forever engrained in our memories.

I'd like to thank many people and I know I may not capture everyone and do this justice but here goes. My first thank you is to Ms Mallett and all the teachers for encouraging and supporting us, for educating us and striving to help us reach the best of our potential and to become the Thornhill girls that we are and always will be proud to be. I also recognize and thank the supporting technicians who work tirelessly to help make things run smoothly. I also want to thank each of the Deputies and Senior Prefects for all of their hard work and help this year, also to all of the girls who were in the Formal Committee who made it the best night of the year! Indeed, the entire Sixth Form must be thanked as we achieved this as one team. Of course, special mention to Ms Moohan, for always being free to be not only a brilliant friend, but for always smiling, always willing to do everything she could to help us! Thanks to all the Cafeteria staff, to all the Maintenance team, and also special mention to Paddy for all the fond memories in the infamous 'Paddy Wagon' (Legendary). Finally, special thanks to Mrs Mallon, Miss Donnelly, Mr Gallagher, Miss O'Neill, Miss Flanagan and, of course Mr McCay & Miss O'Hara – so many things taken care of that makes school life possible and enjoyable.

Reflecting, I don't wish to leave and will be saddened to pass through the gates in my uniform for the last time – but we know we are well prepared to advance to the next stage of our lives . My one wish for each of you is to be happy in whatever path you choose and this is what truly matters. Let's keep in touch and build on the excellent development through this school of the last 7 years. Walk tall, walk proud and remember our song, "Proudly waves the mercy banner..." I wish you all the very best of luck.



Ashelene, Tia, Anna, Laura, Alice, Bethaney, & Alice.



Sarah, Rose, Lauren, Niamh & Ailish.



Aoibhinn, Emma, Clíodhna & Niamh.



Caoimhe, Ciara, Leah, Meaghan, Cara & Oonagh.



Rachel, Emma, Laura, Caitlin & Aoife.



Leah & Lauren.



Edan, Niamh, Shannan, Leigha, Hannah, Jodie & Ciara.



Naomi, Chloe, Emma, Chloe, Zoe, Laura & Julie.

**SUMMER SCHOOL,
2018**








132 YEARS AND COUNTING ...

Thornhill College was founded in 1887. It was not always known as Thornhill College, nor was it always located off the Culmore Road. In fact, before it was renamed and relocated in 1932 our school had been established for many years at Artillery Street, beside Derry's walls.

In 1886 one of Derry's Sisters of Mercy, Mother Mary Xavier, inherited an annuity of £100 a year, a small fortune in those days, and the Sisters decided to spend it on building a post-primary school for Catholic girls, the first in Derry. It was named *Ard Scoil na Maighdine Mhuire* in honour of Our Lady. The building cost £1,000 "but there were many extras". It was quite impressive. It boasted a state-of-the-art Science Laboratory, Home Economics kitchen, a Music Room and a concert hall, a gymnasium as well as a number of general classrooms. It was also equipped with a central heating system that was "at that period the best on the market". The school first opened its doors to students in September 1887.



The new school established a reputation for academic excellence from the start: "prizes were won by many brilliant pupils who went forth to graduate in the National University of Ireland and other colleges ... Many became outstanding figures in the medical, scientific and teaching worlds".

As its reputation grew so too did the number of students joining the school. In 1929 Mother Teresa Rice, the principal, informed the Board of Governors that, "The number of children in the school is daily increasing". They simply could not be accommodated at Artillery Street. The decision was taken to relocate the entire school to a spacious site in the countryside, to Thornhill House, on the banks of the Foyle beside the Culmore Road.

In September 1932 Mother Teresa and the other teachers from the *Ard Scoil*, together with their students, moved to Thornhill College. Mother Teresa taught Science. Noreen McCool later remembered "the unmitigated bliss of several lessons" spent helping Mother

Teresa during the first day at Thornhill to unpack boxes of test tubes and other apparatus brought from Artillery Street to the brand new Science Room at the top of the spiral staircase. Mother Teresa was to remain as Thornhill's principal until her retirement in 1943.



From 1975 until 1981 1st Year Thornhill students were taught in the former *Ard Scoil* on Artillery Street until an extension was built to accommodate them. This picture shows Mr Eamon McLaughlin with Class 1G outside the *Ard Scoil*

Thornhill College Past Pupils

Our past pupils are a valued part of the community of Thornhill. The obvious connection is that many of the staff, including the Principal, are past pupils. Others come to the school on various occasions during the year, including Careers Days to give advice and information to girls deciding on which career to pursue. Many past pupils now send their daughters to Thornhill as pupils. Reunions and Gatherings of past pupils are continually being held. (Inevitably the School Song is sung on these occasions. We are one of the few schools that has a school song which is sung at all types of occasions, not just reunions.) Anyone wishing to organise a reunion can contact the school for advice. The main means of connecting with past pupils is through the Facebook group “Thornhill College Past Pupils”. This group was founded and is organised by a past pupil. The numbers in the group have increased to almost 4,000. Recently on the Facebook page there was an appeal for past pupil nurses to come to the school to speak on Careers Day. The large number of nurses willing to come to speak to the pupils was overwhelming. It was interesting to realise the wide range of different specialities and expertise among the nurses. One unique feature of the Facebook page is the activity known as “The Thornhill Scarf Challenge”, whereby past pupils are encouraged to get a photograph taken of themselves with the school scarf in places around the world.

There was one memorable event on the Facebook page when the TV show, “Derry Girls” (written by past pupil Lisa McGee) was competing to win the Radio Times comedy champion 2018. It was through the Facebook page that past pupils showed their support and encouraged everyone to vote. As one past pupil put it, the Thornhill Magi worked and Derry Girls won.

I want to thank all the past pupils who voted for me to receive a Foyle Centennial Award in 2018. At the award ceremony it was great to talk to so many of the past pupils who were there. I am always looking out for photographs of pupils when they were at school. I also would like to obtain items to add to Thornhill’s artefact collection. I want to ask past pupils to speak to me whenever and wherever they see me. I really enjoy meeting past pupils.

Thornhill College Archivist & Alumni Officer
Telephone 028 71355800
Email: mohara941@c2kni.net



Margaret O'Hara



CLASS OF 2019