



BALLYMENA ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

CARING FOR THE INDIVIDUAL, INSPIRING
LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT



WELCOME

Welcome to the first Ballymena Academy Newsletter, a publication designed to share good news and celebrate some of the many successes of our pupils. Read about the variety of opportunities on offer here in school and the life journeys our pupils go on when they leave. In all that we do, our aim is to inspire learning and achievement.



CHICAGO AND ALL THAT JAZZ!

This year, under the direction of Mrs Nelson, The Ballymena Academy Players performed Chicago: The Musical to sell-out audiences in the W.H.Mol Assembly Hall. The lead roles of Velma Kelly and Roxy Hart were performed impeccably by Rebecca Wallace (Year 14) and Grace Wilkinson (Year 13) with a hugely talented supporting cast.

The camaraderie among the cast and backstage teams and the new friendships made highlight how important these co-curricular opportunities are for our pupils. A massive thank you must go to all the staff involved in making this production possible and to the audiences for making these performances so memorable.

Finally, to each and every pupil involved both on and off the stage, thank you. We know how hard you have worked to put on such a special performance and you should be so proud of what you have achieved!

Chicago is, of course, just the latest in the long line of quality drama productions which have graced the W.H. Mol Assembly Hall and we thought it would be nice to look back through some recent history and remind you all of some past performances.

From inventive adaptations of Shakespeare, to the pathos of Oh What a Lovely War and from the witty classic that is Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest, to the sheer unadulterated fun of Bugsy Malone, hundreds of our pupils have participated in these performances. Nor is it just the cast who feel the glory as they are supported every year by dedicated and talented backstage teams.



With these photographs, we recognise some of the fantastic past performances and we'd love to be able to celebrate others in the future.



So, if you have any images from one of the school plays or musicals which you'd like to share with us, please contact Mrs Coulter at rcoulter125@ballymenaacademy.org.uk and we'll add your photographs to our archive.



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WELCOME - MR NICHOLL

In September we were delighted to welcome Mr John Nicholl as Head of Boys' P.E. and Director of Rugby. In this short interview Mr Nicholl shares his rugby memories whilst playing for Ballymena Academy as a pupil and what he hopes to achieve in his new role.

What are your best rugby memories both from your playing career and your coaching career?

My best rugby memory as a former pupil of Ballymena Academy is getting to the Medallion Shield final in 2001. We were undefeated for the whole season but unfortunately lost in the final to MCB at Ravenhill.

I remember the buzz and excitement of arriving like a professional at Ravenhill and running out in front of the school's supporters. It was a very special feeling followed by heart break at the final whistle. A great memory regardless.

As a fan of the game, I felt very fortunate to be on the Ballymena RFC 1st XV coaching team when Ballymena were promoted in the All Ireland League in 2014. We had to win on the last day of the season, which we did, defeating Barnhall at Eaton Park in front of our home supporters. That was a very special feeling and my first experience of success as a young coach.

How have you enjoyed your time at Ballymena Academy so far?

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time so far. As a past pupil, I am fortunate to know my way around the school and some of my old teachers are still here; it was nice to see some familiar faces when I started in August.

All the staff have made me feel very welcome, especially in the P.E. department.

What do you hope to achieve in your new role as Director of Rugby?

In my last school I really enjoyed the pastoral element of teaching and I hope to continue that link with the pupils of Ballymena Academy.



On the rugby side of things, I hope to provide coaches with a platform to grow and get involved with teams. I also hope to continue to increase the numbers of pupils playing rugby and see them play the game for as long as possible. Success comes in many ways for rugby players at Ballymena Academy, and I am sure we will continue to win competitions, play fair, competitive rugby and educate our players about the important values that come from within the game.

One of my own personal goals does include winning Schools' Cups.

What advice would you give to young aspiring rugby players in school?

Train hard, listen and apply yourself. Be the best version of yourself every time you take the field. Don't be afraid to make mistakes and be creative, but above all else be a good person and enjoy your sport!

Rugby is a simple game which I would encourage every pupil to try. Pupils can make friends and memories for life through the game.

I am here today at this school because of the doors that my own teachers and the game itself offered me when I first started at Ballymena Academy. Simply put, get involved!

BA FOUNDATION

The BA Foundation has been established to help Ballymena Academy to continue to offer the educational experience that previous generations benefited from and accepted as a given. We know that many former pupils of our school and their parents have fond memories of their time here and we hope our friends and alumni will support our efforts to keep providing an enriched education that is still free for everyone, regardless of background.

We want to reconnect with our past pupils, to enable them to connect with one another, build the BA community and promote and sustain the excellence of our school. We have held events during 2021 and 2022 in Belfast, London and Edinburgh with more planned in early 2023. We are also very excited about our Gala Dinner featuring former Irish Rugby Captain, Rory Best at Galgorm Resort and Spa in June 2023. Our Alumni in Focus for this issue is Rachel Brady, a 2009 leaver who is currently Associate Director in Project Management & Building Consultancy at CBRE, London.

ALUMNI IN FOCUS - RACHEL BRADY

Dates at BA – 2002-2009

A Levels studied - Physics, Biology, Geography

Stand-out memory of school - Ulster Schools' Hockey Cup Final and the All-Ireland Schools' Hockey Championships were incredible. But also eating doughnuts hanging from retort stands in A-Level Physics class was pretty special too!

University(s) – Northumbria University, Newcastle

Degree(s) gained – BSc (Hons) Building Surveying, MRICS Chartered Building Surveyor

Current Job – Associate Director in Project Management & Building Consultancy at CBRE. I specialise in Occupier Dilapidations which, in commercial real estate, is where a landlord or a tenant is in breach of their lease obligations, and the other party is pursuing a claim in an attempt to recover costs. I also co-lead the Life Sciences sector for consultancy services, working with clients such as Pfizer, AstraZenica and Labcorp.



WAYS TO GIVE...

✓ Give Your Year initiative

✓ Team playing kit

✓ Team warm-up kit

✓ Pitch-side advertising boards

✓ Drama/Music programmes

✓ Work Shadowing

WAYS TO CONNECT...

1 To find out more about the BA Foundation and how you can become involved click [here](#).

2 To find out how you or your business could support the school please email amckay847@ballymenaacademy.org.uk

3 You can also keep up to date with upcoming events on our social media channels: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



BA Foundation

Help Us Maintain Excellence

PARENTS AND FRIENDS GROUP



Ballymena Academy Parents and Friends Group aims to be proactive in contributing to the day-to-day running of the school and therefore your support is essential to help enrich the educational experiences of our young people. Please keep an eye out for future correspondence regarding initiatives and information on how you can become involved in the Parents and Friends Group.

PAST PUPILS' ASSOCIATION

The P.P.A. are delighted to announce a number of events in the coming months. These events are open to past pupils, parents and friends of Ballymena Academy. We aim to raise additional funds for the school and support local charities, whilst allowing people to engage with the wider Ballymena Academy community. Wherever you are in the world, connect with us, renew old friendships and give back to the school that helped define you as the person you are today.

For more details on the events listed below please visit our Facebook page [@BallymenaAcademyPastPupils](https://www.facebook.com/BallymenaAcademyPastPupils)

- Boxing Day Festivities at Ballymena Academy
- BA 'Big Night Out' for recent leavers Eaton Park - 28/12/22
- BA Table Quiz - Eaton Park - 3/03/23

Autumn term co-curricular gallery



TOM COULTER SAILING SUCESS



Tom Coulter began sailing when he was just 11 years old. Now in Year 13, Tom has many years of sailing success behind him and isn't planning on stopping anytime soon. Tom joined the NI Youth Squad in 2019, competing in the Irish Provincials and winning the Ulster Championships two years in a row.

Tom is now part of the Irish Sailing Academy and is currently undertaking winter training to represent Ireland at the Youth World Championships and the Youth Europeans next summer in Poland.

Tom travels to Valencia every 4 weeks to train in the warmer seas and manages to balance this with his school work and his co-curricular involvement in the rugby programme. We wish Tom well as he competes for Ireland in the coming years - well done Tom!



Ballymena Academy
OPEN EVENTS

Thursday 12th January 7:00pm
Saturday 14th January 9:30am

For further information contact 028 2565 2782
or email info@ballymenaacademy.org.uk

The poster features a collage of images: a group of girls in school uniforms, a boy in a suit reading a book, and a couple in formal attire. The Ballymena Academy crest is in the top left corner.



ACADEMY'S GOT TALENT

TUESDAY
7TH FEB

SHOW STARTS AT 7:30PM

TICKETS ON SALE SOON

CANCER RESEARCH UK

The poster features a collage of images: a person playing a guitar, a person with their arms raised, and a person playing a tennis racket. The Ballymena Academy crest is in the top left corner.



A PAST PUPILS' ASSOCIATION EVENT
BOXING DAY FESTIVITIES AT BALLYMENA ACADEMY

CYCLE REGISTRATION 9.30AM
5K FUN RUN REGISTRATION 10:15AM
RUGBY AND HOCKEY 10:30AM
TENNIS 10:30AM

SUPPORTING BALLYMENA ACADEMY AND LOCAL CHARITIES
REFRESHMENTS SERVED IN SIXTH FORM CENTRE FROM 11.30AM - ALL WELCOME!

The poster features silhouettes of a tennis player, a cyclist, and a person playing a racket. The Ballymena Academy crest is in the top right corner.