

ISSUE 2

APRIL 2007

THE BELL

St. Benedict's College



Guigh agus foghlaim

The Newsletter of St. Benedict's College, Randalstown

Visit of President Mary McAleese



SOUVENIR EDITION

President McAleese Visits St. Benedict's College

Thursday 29th March 2007 was a momentous day in the history of St Benedict's College, as it was the day on which the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, accompanied by her husband, Dr Martin McAleese, visited our college.

She arrived in the St. Benedict's College grounds at 11.15 a.m. and was met by the Principal, Mr Sean McAuley, and the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Fr. Con Boyle. Flanked by a guard of honour comprising Year 12 pupils, the President made her way to the Memorial Garden which she rededicated to the memory of Catherine Graham, Christina Maguire, and all of the deceased past pupils of St. Malachy's and St. Olcan's High Schools.

The President and her husband then made their way into the main college building. They met all the members of the teaching staff of St. Benedict's College in the front hall, before proceeding to the Sports Hall where all of the pupils in Years 8 to 11, along with invited guests, were gathered. As the President entered the packed Sports Hall she was met with enthusiastic and sustained applause. The National Anthem was played, the Presidential party took their places, and



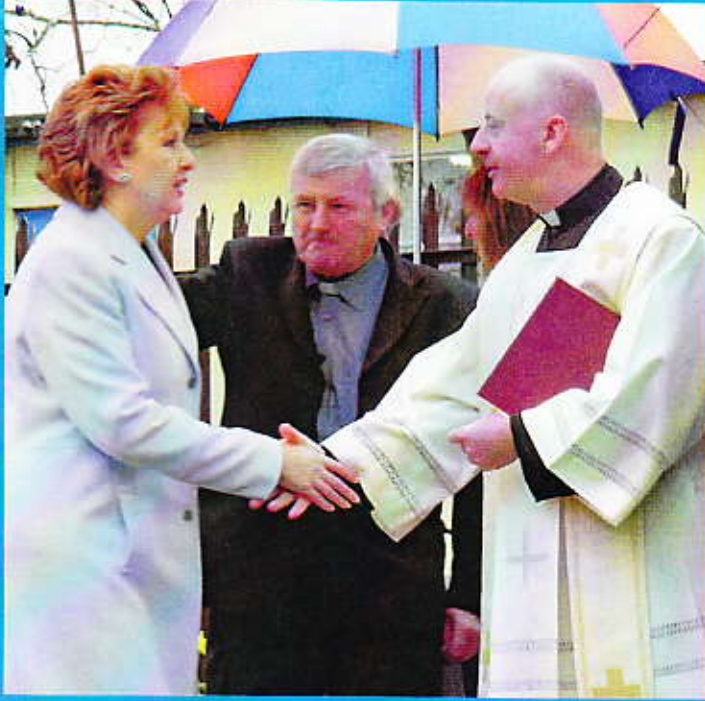
a ten minute programme of traditional music was played by the St. Benedict's College Traditional Orchestra, featuring the solo singing talents of Annie McCarroll, a Year 12 student. The Traditional Orchestra was led by Mr Colm O'Kane. The President then spoke to her audience. She told us that exactly one week prior to her visit to our college, she had met Pope Benedict XVI in Rome, the Pontiff with whom we share our name. She told of her travels to Louvain in Belgium and to Bobbio in Italy, telling of the great influence the Irish have had on Christianity throughout Europe. Mrs McAleese told us to "live our best lives", to seize the opportunities offered by a peaceful and prosperous Ireland. Speaking directly to the pupils, she told them how much she would like to wear the St. Benedict's College uniform and to have fifty or sixty years to take advantage of the prospects offered by the exciting Ireland of the twenty-first century.

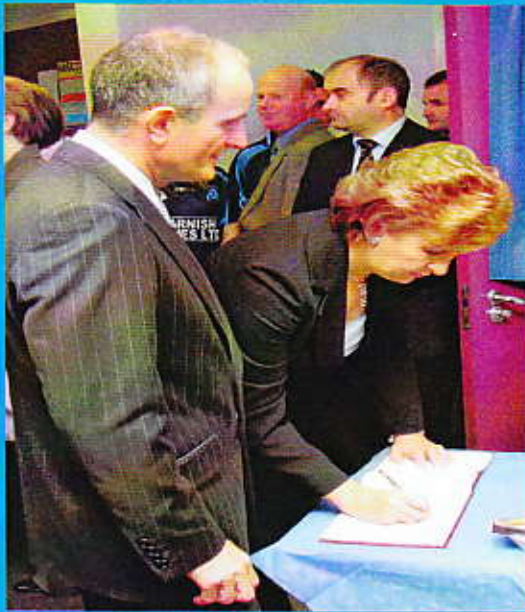
The President's speech was over all too quickly. The Vice Principal of St Benedict's College, Mrs Ethna Kelly, presented President McAleese with an original piece of cut glass, inscribed with the College crest, in honour of the occasion. The audience then responded sincerely to the request of the M.C., Mr Diarmuid Shivers, to be upstanding for the President as she left the Sports Hall. A tremendous round of applause erupted as President McAleese left the Hall. She and her husband both smiled and waved as they made their way to the final part of their visit.

The final destination was the Staff Room, where the President met members of the St. Benedict's College secretarial and ancillary staff, the Heads of Year (representing the teaching staff), members of the Board of Governors, the Maguire and Graham families, local principals and other invited guests.

The President left St. Benedict's College at noon, making her way to her car through the Year 12 guard of honour, chatting and having a laugh with senior pupils. She bade goodbye to Mr McAuley and to Fr. Boyle before taking her seat alongside her husband in her official car. Her entourage then left the College grounds, making its way towards the Cistercian Abbey of Our Lady of Bethlehem at Portglenone.

We have all been left with very happy memories of a really special day in St. Benedict's College, some of which are contained within the photographs in this souvenir edition of *The Bell*. This is a day which we will be talking about for years to come. It was an important recognition of the good work that is carried out by everyone in St. Benedict's College. So you can see why these memories are so exceptional. We'd like you to share them with us.





Photograph Copyright BBC Online

All material is copyright and may not be used without permission of the College.
Tel: 028 94472411 Fax: 028 9447 3372 E-mail: Info@stbenedicts.randalstown.ni.sch.uk