

Careers Exploration Week 2022

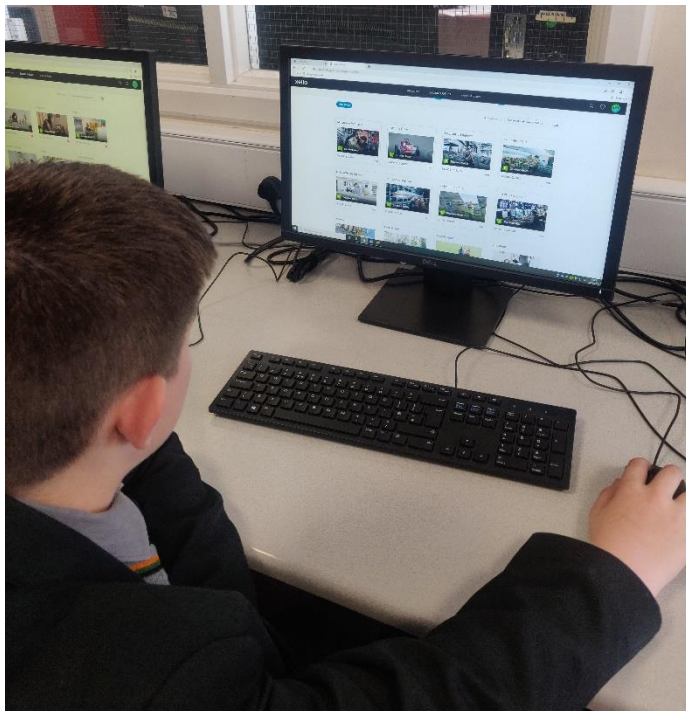
We held our first ever Careers Exploration Week for Years 8 to 11 at the end of June, just after the exams had finished.

The overall aim for the week was to allow students to have the opportunity to research new information about career options and opportunities and see that there are many pathways to success. We also hoped to highlight that students can develop skills now that will be invaluable in their future.

Throughout the week, a number of activities were available for students:

Careers Research

Each form class was allocated a double period in the computer suite for focused careers research using Xello software. Students completed interests and personality questionnaires and were presented with their top career matches. Some of these were just as students had expected, whereas others were a big surprise! Students then completed in-depth research on three career areas and found out information such as the key tasks involved in the job, the skills and qualifications required and whether or not there is a demand for this career area.





Some students from 8D using Xello for Careers research

Careers Talks

We were very fortunate to be able to welcome back six past pupils who very generously gave up their time to come back to St Mary's, with each speaker delivering two talks to different year groups on their own career pathways. Our speakers were as follows:

- Mark McGrann: Tourism Manager for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
- Damian Martin: High Performance Sports Physiologist with the Irish Institute of Sport, working with the Olympic Boxing team.
- Deaglan Bunting: Options Technology, previously a professional footballer with Celtic FC
- Niall McCann: Doctor in the Urology Department, Belfast City Hospital
- Che Ferguson: NGS Team Leader with Randox Clinical Laboratory Services
- Mark Lyons: Lead Manufacturing Engineer with Thales (aerospace engineering)

As well as highlighting key information about the specific careers and routes towards these that students may follow, there were some common themes that apply to all students and any career. These included the importance of getting involved in extra-curricular activities and clubs to build confidence and skills, working as hard as possible in school, researching different careers as widely as possible, aiming high and learning to cope with setbacks to turn negatives into positives.

The speakers all highlighted how their experiences at St Mary's and the input from their teachers have played a key role in their career success. They also spoke about the benefits of the alumni network and their own willingness to help current students who may have an interest in their career area.

Our students loved hearing about the experiences of the past pupils who not so long ago were sitting in the ER Lecture Theatre listening to careers talks themselves! They especially enjoyed hearing the speakers' memories of St Mary's and seeing some old school photos. Although Deaglan showed us a photo of the front of his Year 10 school report, we weren't allowed to see any of the contents!

We are incredibly grateful and would like to sincerely thank these past pupils for giving so generously of their time and for their honesty around their own career stories and some of hurdles and barriers they have had to overcome. The overall message: that career pathways do not follow a straight line; there are many bends and turns along the way, but hard work, transferable skills and resilience will give you the best chance of success!

A big thank you also to Mr Hugh McGettigan, who co-ordinates the St Mary's alumni network, for his help and support in organising the programme of speakers.



Damian Martin, Mrs S Kelly, Mark McGrann and Mrs L O'Connor



Mark McGrann shows students examples of a digital marketing campaign



Mr B McComb, Daniel Burns (10B) and Enda Riley (10D) with Deaglan Bunting



Deaglan Bunting outlines his varied career path



Dr Niall McCann with Mrs L O'Connor



Che Ferguson outlines some of the varied careers available in science



Che Ferguson, Tiarnan Press (8D), Mrs L O'Connor, Caoimhin Thompson (8D) and Mark Lyons

Bring IT On Workshops

As part of Careers Exploration Week, Year 9 students attended Bring IT On workshops and enjoyed learning about the growing opportunities in the technology sector and some of the skills needed to succeed. These workshops were delivered by Peter from Sentinus, who was extremely impressed with the responsiveness, logic and problem solving skills of our Year 9s.



Peter from Sentinus introduces Bring IT On



Some of the Year 9 students who won water bottles for great answers!

Careers Competition

Students were invited to use the information they gathered during their research as the basis for presenting information on their ideal career in a medium of their choice.

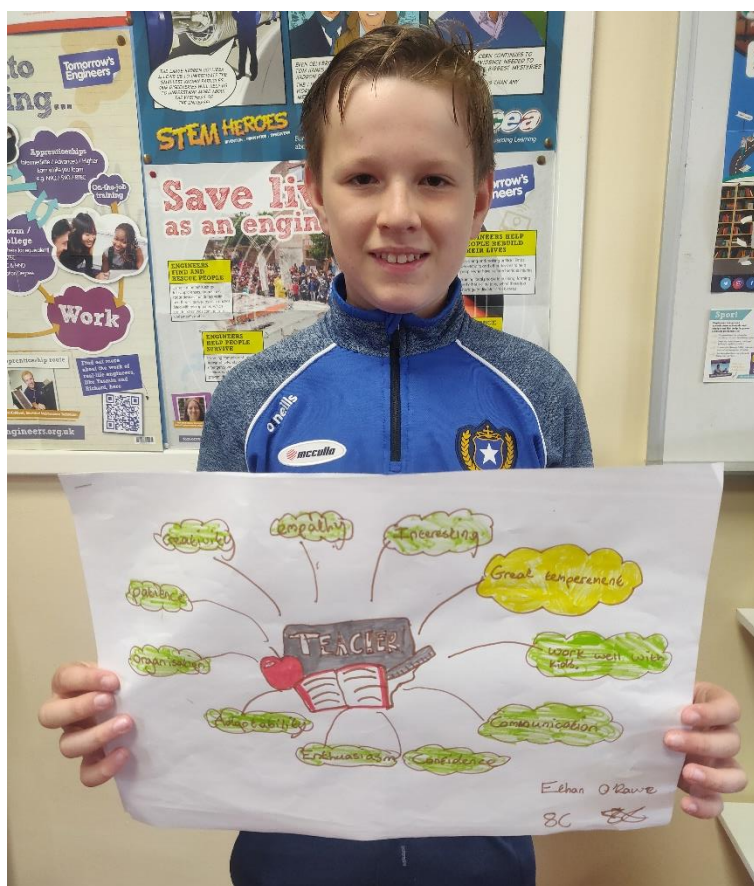
The quality of the entries was superb, making the judging very difficult. In addition to posters, PowerPoints and written reports, we even had a musical entry, as Jamie Tyrrell from 8A demonstrated his guitar skills. In the end, the panel selected the following winners:

Overall Winner:	Ethan O'Rawe (8C)
Year 8 Winner:	Dylan Saunders (8G)
Year 9 Winner:	Ruairi Robinson (9D)
Year 10 Winner:	Aaron Brady (10F)
Year 11 Winner:	Aodán Ashe (11H)

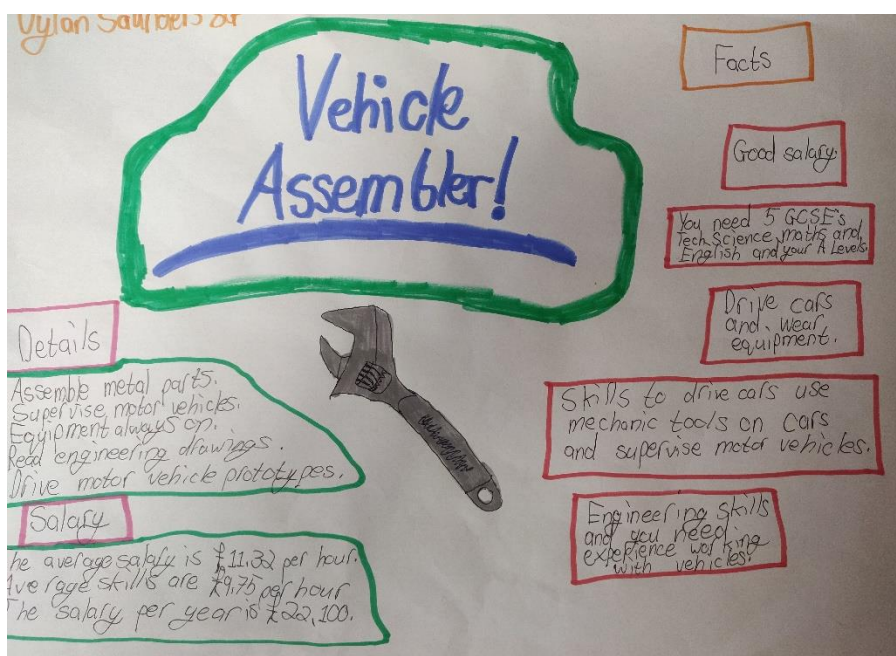
Thank you to all students who took the time to come up with their entries, and congratulations to the winners, who were each presented with a voucher and a certificate at the end of year Celebration Events. Due to the quality of the Year 8 entries, we gave a few additional small prizes to recognise those who narrowly missed out on an overall prize!



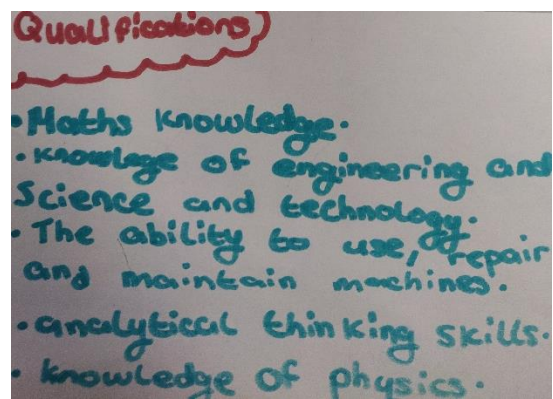
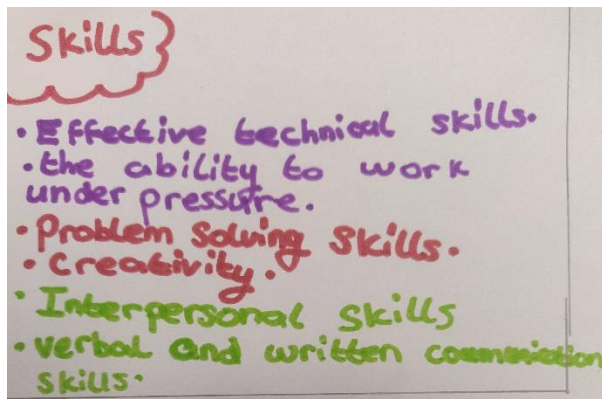
A selection of our amazing entries from Year 8



Our overall winner, Ethan O'Rawe (8C), with his poster. He also wrote an excellent explanation of the reasons why he wants to become a teacher of Irish.



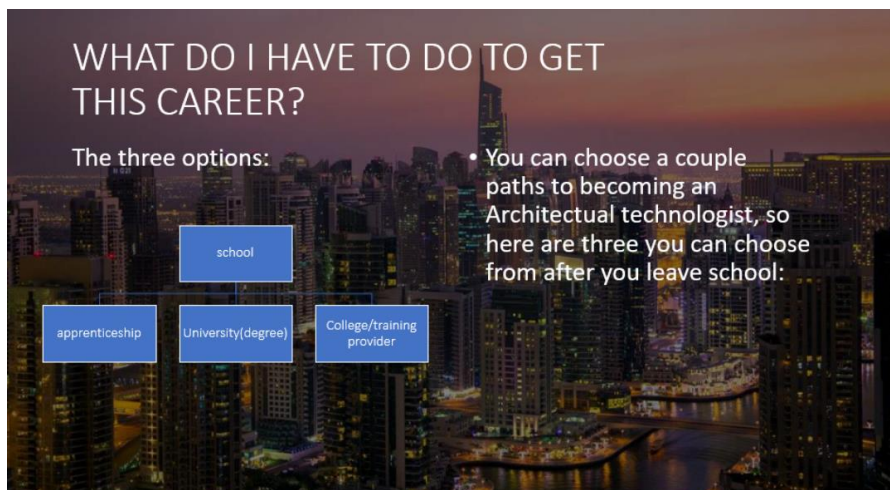
Dylan Saunders (8G) looked at what it takes to become a Vehicle Assembler



Excerpts from Ruairi Robinson's entry, which looked at various aspects of Mechanical Engineering



Ruairi Robinson (9D) with his certificate



One slide from Aaron Brady's PowerPoint on Architectural Technology





Aaron Brady (10F) receives his prize from Mrs O'Connor

How to become a Marine Biologist?

To pursue a career in this captivating field, you must undergo a 3 year undergraduate course in Marine biology, Biology, Ecology, Aquatic Biology, Animal Science, Zoology, Botany or Conservation biology!

To take a marine biology course in university, you must have at A-Level a BBB including Biology and at least one from Chemistry (preferred), Geography, Mathematics or Physics + GCSE Chemistry grade C or GCSE Double Award Science grades CC + GCSE Mathematics grade C

And if you are also interested in the fieldwork of marine biology. You will need to take lessons and become a certified diver!



Aodán Ashe (11H) investigated careers in Biology, focusing on Marine Biology



Aodán Ashe with his certificate